

R . A . A . F  
**PEARCE**



# Australia's Pilot Training Base

LESLIE R. JUBBS



### Cover Photograph

**“Demons”** a very large painting presented to the Pearce Base officers’ Mess in 1981 by the **Artist, Mr J.B..Barrie Gamack**. Mr Gamack was the operations Manager of Hawker De Havilland, a Company with a very long association with RAAF Pearce, by first servicing Vampire jets and later, the Macchi jets.

The painting: **“DEMONS”**

Shows the arrival over Pearce on the 10 March 1938, the first flight of Hawker Demons, with an Avro Anson, from RAAF Laverton Base, Victoria.

FLTLT Wallace Kyle, led the Flight. He was a RAF Exchange Officer, who was born in Kalgoorlie, and later rose to be an Air Vice Marshall. He would return to Western Australia to become Governor during 1975 to 1980.

No 23 Squadron Ground Staff arrived in Perth by train and immediately marched through the City coinciding with the formation of Demons flying overhead.

(Perfect timing)

**This Electronic Version of this book.**

**RAAF Pearce  
Australia's  
Pilot Training Base**

This electronic form of my recently published book (May 2002) has many additional colour photographs and text expanding different Sections on RAAF Base Pearce.

Primarily the objective of this electronic version is for this history of the Base to be available to anyone, Schools, Libraries, Organisations etc.

There are no restrictions on down loading to your hard disk and copying to a Compact Disk (CD) and making duplicates for others.

**There are NO fees involved**

Leslie R.Jubbs.

**Royal Australian Air Force**

**RAAF BASE PEARCE**

**A U S T R A L I A ' S**

**P I L O T T R A I N I N G B A S E**

by

**Leslie R. Jubbs**

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**AIRCDRE Neil Alexander Smith MBE**, Officer Commanding RAAF Base Pearce, and Air Officer Western Australia, entered the Royal Australian Air Force Academy in January 1962 and Graduated in 1965. He subsequently completed a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Sydney.

### **First Posting to RAAF Pearce**

From January 1967 to March 1968 AIRCDRE Smith underwent Pilot Training on No.64 Pilots Course, first at Point Cook and then Graduated at Pearce flying Vampire jets.

Since his first association with Pearce he completed an operational tour flying Mirage aircraft in Malaya with No. 3 Squadron, (Jan 1970 - Dec 1971)

AIRCDRE Smith then returned to engineering duties with No. 482 Squadron followed by promotion and appointment as Senior Engineering Officer with No.77 Squadron.

In 1976 AIRCDRE Smith attended No. 30 RAAF Staff College Course and was then posted to Staff Duties in the Directorate of Aircraft Engineering, Air Force office, Canberra in 1978. Promoted to Wing Commander.

From that period AIRCDRE Smith has held a number of most important positions in the RAAF both in Australia and London. Promoted to Air commodore in February 1992.

With his appointment as Officer Commanding RAAF Base Pearce, and his Air officer Western Australia on 9 March 1992 he brought a wealth of experience and attainments to fulfil his position at Australia's Pilot Training Base.

## Author's Note

As RAAF Base Pearce had no complete history recorded, I was prompted to investigate what was readily available about the base. Fortunately, SQNLDR R.J. Brownell (later AIRCDRE), the first Commanding Officer published a book: **'From Khaki to Blue'** which was the catalyst for me to embark on producing a document to record the history and achievements made at Pearce Base.

Most rewarding discoveries (mainly accidental) led me to some of the pioneering members of the Service, who arrived at Pearce in the 1937/38 period, and also many others, who were associated with the Base. Each reflected enthusiastically of those far off days, the war time period of comradeship, and some with their post war years with the Royal Australian Air Force. All the men and women had one thing in common (but only in the presence of past members of the Service) was their deep affection for their association with the Air Force and its serving personnel.

My only association with Pearce was as N.C.O. in the Air Training Corps during a special course for the four A.T.C. Squadrons in 1942, just prior to my entering the RAAF Air Crew.

Often the historical significance of the day to day operations of a busy Air Force Base is not recognised, but in twenty years time another generation will wonder what occurred. This book is an attempt to accurately present some of the tangible and significant happenings at Australia's Pilot training Base since its conception.

I would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement awarded me by the former Officer Commanding RAAF Base Pearce, AIRCDRE Neil Smith M.B.E, and WGCDR John Oliver.

Leslie R. Jubbs



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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AIRCDRE Neil A, Smith, M.B.E. Officer Commanding RAAF Base Pearce at initial time of writing (1994).

WGCDR John A. Oliver, Head Quarters, RAAF Base Pearce (1994).

SQNLDR Leigh Gordon, No.25 Squadron, RAAF Base Pearce (1994).

FLTLT Brett Middleton, ATC, RAAF Base Pearce (1994).

Battye Library, Perth

Air Marshall Sir Valston Hancock, K.B.E., C.B.E., D.F.C. (Retired)

AIRCDRE Bruce Courtney (Retired)

AIRCDRE A.D. Garrison (Retired)

AIRCDRE D.W. Hitchins (Retired)

AIRCDRE Geoff Newstead (Retired)

WGCDR L.W. Manning (Retired)

Commodore R.N. Partington, AM, Royal Australian Navy.

Captain David Ramsay, Dept of Defence, Canberra

Commander T.B. Wynberg, Chief Staff Officer, RAN Air Station, Nowra.

Commander Vincenzo E.B. Di Pietro, Staff Officer, London

LTCDR P.N. Brown, Senior Naval Officer, RAAF Pearce

Major Robert Chua, Commanding Officer Standard SQN, RSAF, Pearce

Major Willie Chew, Commanding Officer No. 130 SQN, RSAF, Pearce

GPCAPT Jean Harrison, Director of RAAF Nursing (Retired)

Staff Nurse Audry Bennett RAAF Nursing Service (Retired)

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'Dictionary of Western Australians 1829 – 1914' by Rica Erickson, University of W.A. Press 1979.

Mr David Wilson's article, "RAAF Swordfish", 'Wings' 1986

"Unit Badges of the RAAF" by Richard Cluley, RAAF Association Foundation, Victoria.

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'They Speed the Eagles', Patricia Massey Higgins.

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'They wrote it Themselves', Robertson and Mullens.

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 FLTLT John Wadeisha RAAF Reserve  
 WGCDR Eric Main (Retired)  
 SQNLDR A.V. Rose (Retired) 2FTS History  
 WGCDR Leslie Ingram (Retired)  
 FLTLT J.A. Wilsmore (Retired) arrived at Pearce 26 Oct 1937  
 FLTLT Fleming (Retired)  
 Principal Air Chaplain WGCDR Reverend E.C. Sweetman (Retired)  
 Mrs M.G. Wiseman (Band Master L.A.C. A. R. Wiseman Commonwealth Government Award Certificate)  
 Mr Gordon Orton (Bandsman, RAAF Retired)  
 PLTOFF W. Barnes, No. 25 SQN Observer (Retired)  
 Mr William P. Mark RAAF Photographer, Pearce (Retired)  
 Mrs Elanor (Charles) Manford  
 Mr Alan Mitchell ex No. 85 SQN (Retired)  
 Mr Tom Lay ex A.T.C. Cadet  
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