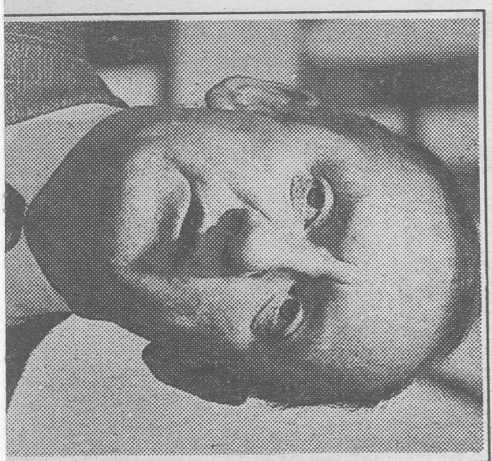


HEALTH DEPARTMENT Operations Employee strategic

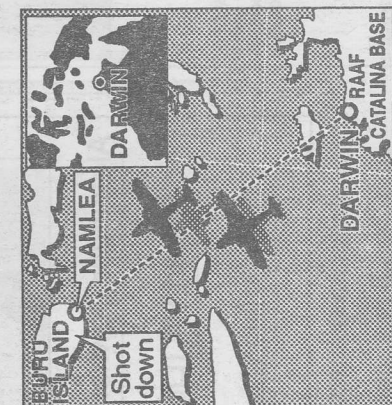


Gilbert Temperley holds a photograph yesterday of brother Tom who piloted the RAAF plane that perished on a long-range bombing mission — Picture: PAUL BURSTON

By PATRICK WALTERS in Jakarta
... in the evening of July 20, 1944, Flying Officer Tom Temperley coaxed his heavily laden Black Cat into the air from RAAF 43 Squadron's base near Darwin harbour.
... of him and eight other crew members of RAAF Catalina A24-45 was a dangerous 16-hour mission aimed at striking Japanese ships in an island and harbour far to the north of Australia.
... together with another Catalina piloted by Swiss-born Flying Officer Armand Etienne, the two flying boats armed with 120kg bombs and 1000kg acoustic mines flew 1000km to Namlea, Buru Island, in the Moluccas.
... they drowned into the night over the Arafura Sea, the cumbersome aircraft eventually lost sight of

each other. Hours later, cruising at around 90 knots, the Catalinas ran into bad weather in the Banda Sea.
According to RAAF records, A24-82 piloted by F/O Etienne could not find the target at Namlea harbour due to bad weather and returned to Darwin safely the next morning.
Tom Temperley's aircraft was not so lucky. Radio contact was lost and it was presumed to have either crashed into the sea or been shot down by anti-aircraft fire over Buru Island. RAAF aerial searches failed to find any trace of the missing plane.
Fifty years later the Indonesian military have told the RAAF they have found wreckage of the lost Catalina in thick jungle less than a day's trek from Namlea town.
For Tom Temperley's elder brother,

Gilbert, 78, and his younger brother Colin, 70, the news came as a relief after half a century of pondering their brother's fate.
The Catalina's crew consisted of Flying Officer Temperley, Flying Officer Ralph Harsley, Pilot Officer Leonard Blackwell, Flight Sergeant George Neate, Flight Sergeant Jack Storer, Sergeant Reginald Wheatland, Flight Sergeant Harold Coggin, Acting Sergeant Ronald Robinson and Air Gunner Adam Thomson.
The RAAF has informed next of kin of four of the crewmen but has been unable to locate relatives of P/O Blackwell, F/Sgt Storer, Sgt Wheatland, A/Sgt Robinson and Air Gunner Thomson.
Next month a specially equipped RAAF team will fly to Ambon by C130 Hercules and then, assisted by the Indonesian armed forces,



will travel to Buru Island to sift through the wreckage.
Buru Island is an extremely rugged, thinly populated island. For many years after the war access to the

island was restricted due to it being one of the centres for the Moluccan secessionist movement.
In February 1946, Gilbert Temperley, then serving with the AIF's 9th armoured regiment, secured a posting to an imaginary unit on Ambon to try to learn more about the fate of the missing Catalina.
As he recalled this week, he met a Buru islander who remembered the crash of a Catalina several years before.
"My Malay wasn't very good so he drew a mud map of the aircraft and said it had crashed somewhere near Namlea," he said.
"I had organised a fishing boat to go to Buru Island but the CO of the Australian forces on Ambon wouldn't let me go. He said there was political unrest on Buru and ordered me back to Darwin."

WW2 crash mystery unlocked after



WALTERS PATRICK 23 9-7-94

Gilbert Temperley holds a photograph yesterday of brother Tom who piloted the RAAF plane that perished on a long-range bombing

By PATRICK WALTERS in Jakarta

EARLY in the evening of July 20, 1944, Flying Officer Tom Temperley coaxed his heavily laden Black Cat into the air from RAAF 43 squadron's base near Darwin harbour.

Ahead of him and eight other crew of RAAF Catalina A24-45 was a dangerous 16-hour mission aimed at striking Japanese ships in an island harbour far to the north of Australia.

Together with another Catalina piloted by Swiss-born Flying Officer Armand Etienne, the two flying boats armed with 120kg bombs and 800kg acoustic mines flew 1000km to Namlea, Buru Island, in the Moluccas.

As they droned into the night over the Arafura Sea, the cumbersome aircraft eventually lost sight of

each other. Hours later, cruising at around 90 knots, the Catalinas ran into bad weather in the Banda Sea.

According to RAAF records, A24-82 piloted by F/O Etienne could not find the target at Namlea harbour due to bad weather and returned to Darwin safely the next morning.

Tom Temperley's aircraft was not so lucky. Radio contact was lost and it was presumed to have either crashed into the sea or been shot down by anti-aircraft fire over Buru Island. RAAF aerial searches failed to find any trace of the missing plane.

Thirty years later the Indonesian military have told the RAAF they have found wreckage of the lost Catalina in thick jungle less than a day's trek from Namlea town.

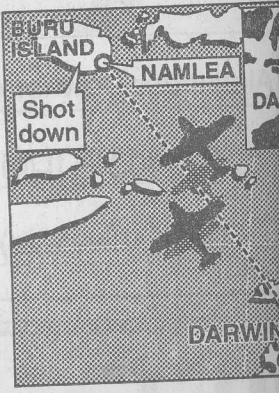
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The Catalina's crew consisted of Flying Officer Temperley, Flying Officer Ralph Harsley, Pilot Officer Leonard Blackwell, Flight Sergeant George Neate, Flight Sergeant Jack Storer, Sergeant Reginald Wheatland, Flight Sergeant Harold Coggin, Acting Sergeant Ronald Robinson and Air Gunner Adam Thomson.

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Next month a specially equipped RAAF team will fly to Ambon by C130 Hercules and then, assisted by the Indonesian armed forces,



will travel to Buru Island through the wreckage. Buru Island is an extremely thinly populated island years after the war a

A mystery unlocked after 50 years



Yesterday of brother Tom who piloted the RAAF plane that perished on a long-range bombing mission — Picture: PAUL BURSTON

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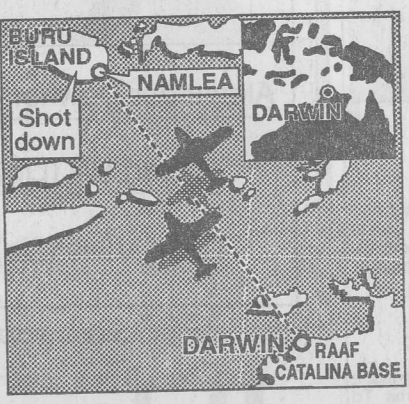
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