

# OLD BUZZ IS PUT BACK IN MOSQUITO

During World War II Australia played a major part in the construction and supply of vital aircraft and two of the most efficient wartime planes emanated from workshops in the Bankstown district.

The "Beaufort Bomber" was rapidly put together on the assembly lines located at the Chullora Railway Workshops and the DH.98 "Mosquito" was produced at the Hawker de Havilland plant at Bankstown Airport.

Today the reproduction of the famous "Mosquito"

aircraft has turned a full circle.

A recent contract won by the giant aerospace company Hawker de Havilland to restore a "Mosquito" has given Hawkers the opportunity to repeat history and work on the aeroplane so it may be seen in its former glory.

The historic war machine will then be exhibited at the Australian War Museum in Canberra.

The aircraft was first used in reconnaissance but it was later realised due to its speed (up to 500 miles per hour because of its lightweight design and its ability to be undetected by radar systems), it could become a more formidable weapon fitted with cannon and machine guns.

It earned its reputation for its successful attacks of enemy convoys and tanks and became the blight of the German forces during World War II.

Some ex-servicemen have said the aeroplane was responsible for a turning point for the Allies during the conflict.

According to the Hawker de Havilland archives the "Mosquito" was one of the most exciting and capable aircraft used by the Allies during World War II and its production in Australia was one of the greatest challenges ever faced by the company.

Hawker's corporate communications manager Carole David gave a brief history of the original manufacture of the famous machine.

"Although considerable preparatory work had already been done by the time the Australian War Cabinet gave formal approval to the Australian Mosquito Project in September 1942, the many challenges faced by de Havilland included the establishment of a completely new factory on the south side of Bankstown Airport," she said.

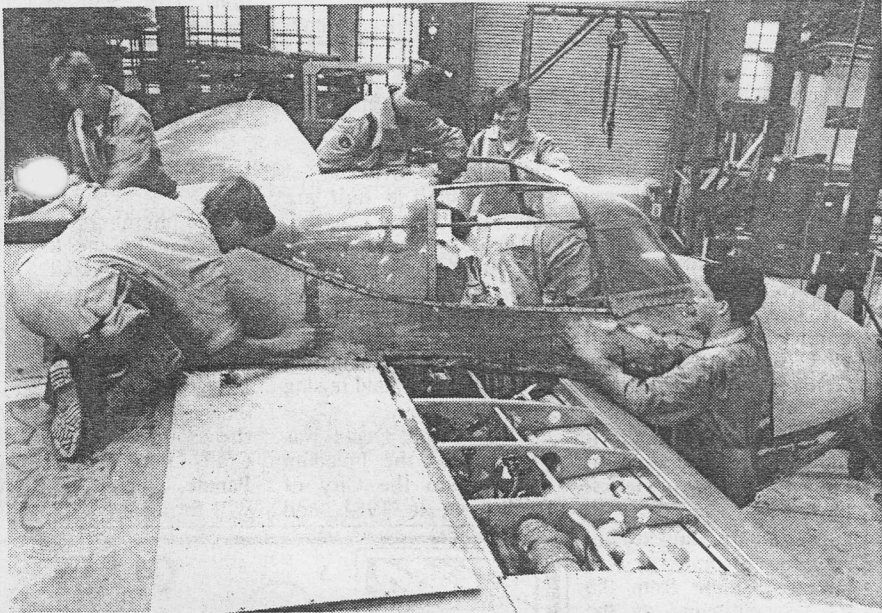
Other challenges included finding Australian timbers used in the overseas "Mosquito" production, and putting together a sub-

contractor team of organisations skilled in wood-working, many of whom had never before been involved in aircraft production.

She said a total of 212 "Mosquito" aircraft were produced by de Havilland in Australia from go-ahead in 1942 to the last delivery in 1948.

The list included MK40 Fighter Bomber (178), MK40 photo reconnaissance (6) MK41 Photo reconnaissance (17) and the T.43 trainer (11).

Mrs David said unfortunately no Australian produced Mosquitoes have remained in flying condition.



Workers from Hawker de Havilland at Bankstown Airport work on restoring the "Mosquito" back to its former glory.

BANKSTOWN TORCH 14.8.91 P.5



Photo: Federal Capital Press

# Mosquito restored to former glory

*An enthusiastic group of volunteers has recently completed the final stage of restoration of a PRMk16 Mosquito photo reconnaissance aircraft under the guidance of the Australian War Memorial (AWM). Pictured are two of the volunteers, Col Hosking and Miles Pointon (in the pilot's seat). Turn to page 2 for the full story.*

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# Mosquito restoration

*From page 1*

Over the past eight months Canberra residents Col Hosking, Miles Pointon, Rob Gee and Owen Burton have helped to restore what is believed to be the only intact aircraft of its kind, despite the manufacture in Australia of 212 Mosquitos.

Only 20 of the 8,000 Mosquitos built in the UK and Canada remain.

The manufacturer, Hawker de Havilland, helped with the initial restoration of the aircraft. Between 1980 and 1993, the company did all the wooden structural repairs, which included a glue injection consolidation process to recover original timber. The AWM provided facilities and materials for this major part of the restoration project.

Col, Miles, Rob and Owen each applied their individual expertise with aircraft design, working two or three days a week on the difficult task of the final stage of restoration.

Col and Rob are former RAAF tradesmen, Owen works for Qantas and Miles is a photographic specialist.

Col Hosking said that restoration involved re-covering the entire wooden frame with Irish linen and madapolam (tightly-woven cotton), a process he described as "a very hard job".

The AWM bought some of the bulk materials for this part of the restoration in the UK, and other hard-to-find items were acquired through pur-

chase, trade, and the generosity of aircraft enthusiasts and veterans.

Col Hosking and Miles Pointon completed much of the "doping" process together, covering the aircraft with special paint to tighten and strengthen the fabric.

During the war, smaller parts for the Mosquitos were often made at home by English women. In that tradition, Miles Pointon has been making plywood hatch covers at his Canberra home. These will be affixed to the aircraft after it has been shifted into its permanent exhibition place.

Despite enthusiasm for the task, Col said that he would not want to fly in the Mosquito, which he described as "wood and a bit of fabric with a couple of engines stuck on it".

Young people, he said, get a false impression of the bombers from movies. They don't realise that they were very cramped inside with not much holding them together: "There's barely room for two people to sit and that's it," he said.

Many Australians flew the 12 tonne Mosquito, with its 15m wingspan, during WWII.

Two squadrons of the RAAF, 456 and 462, used Mosquitos in Europe for missions including night-fighter patrols, bombing raids and the interception of V-1 flying bombs.

In the Pacific, 1 and 87

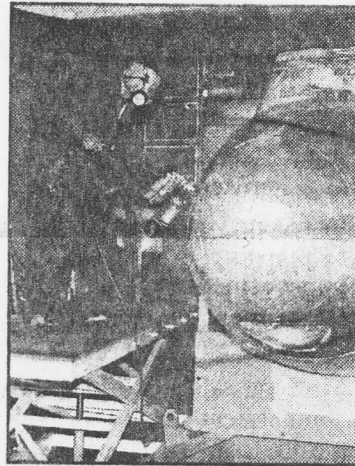


Photo: Courtesy Col Hosking

*Col Hosking spray-paints the Mosquito.*

Squadrons RAAF used them for attack and photographic missions.

The newly restored PR.Mk16 Mosquito, which made its first flight on 29 January 1948, was acquired by the AWM in 1979.

Col, who also worked on the restoration of the bomber 'G' for George, which is on permanent display at the AWM, is now looking forward to his next project.

The men didn't know each other before starting work on the Mosquito project, which was co-ordinated by David Crotty of the AWM, but their love of aircraft created a common bond.

Miles summed up their satisfaction in restoring aircraft: "It will be there for people to see in fifty or a hundred years time."

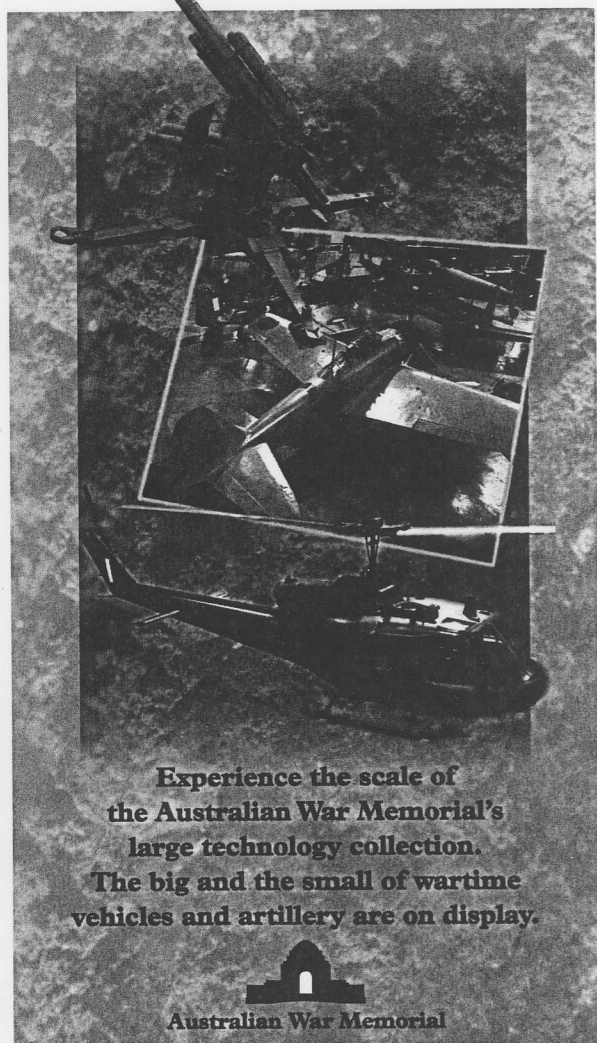
• Anne Barnes

*The Mosquito will remain on public display in the Treloar Centre, Callum Street, Mitchell, ACT, which is open between 11.00am and 4.00pm on Wednesdays and Sundays.*

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**Come and see  
more of the Memorial's  
unique collection at the  
Treloar Technology  
Centre**



**Experience the scale of  
the Australian War Memorial's  
large technology collection.  
The big and the small of wartime  
vehicles and artillery are on display.**



The Chairman of the Council  
of the  
**Australian War Memorial**

General Peter Gration, AC OBE

invites

MR DAVID VINCENT

to attend the

Completion Ceremony for

*De Havilland Mosquito A52-319*

Guest of Honour

Squadron Leader Kym Bonython, AC DFC AFC

in the Treloar Centre

Callan Street, Mitchell ACT

Wednesday 22 January 1997

at 11.00am

RSVP

15 January 1997

06 243 4221

Guests are requested

to be seated by 10.55am

Entry by the Front Entrance