

## In Memory of A.J. "Gus" Day - Flying Instructor

Arrived on this Planet Earth sometime in 1925 - Departed June 5<sup>th</sup> 2001

*Selected entries and details from AJ (Gusty) Day's RAAF and Civil Flying Log*

**Books**



The rank for Gus at the start of the log book is LAC (as one would expect), which has a line through it, then there is recorded a F/Sgt (with line) then P/O (with line) and then F/O which remained clear as in no line passing through it (Gus ended military service as Flying Officer). Year of commencement is 1943, place is the No.8 Elementary Flying Training School (E.F.T.S.) at Narrandera in NSW.

### **Gus is 18 years of age.**

First entry is April 11, Tiger Moth (D.H.-82)<sup>1</sup> A17-530 with F/O Croker for an "Air experience" and "Familiarly with cockpit layout" flight as passenger (not dual), flight time is 30 minutes. On the same day dual instruction flights begin with another 30 minute flight. Training continues the next day, April 12, with two flights totalling 1 hr 10 minutes. Gus ends the week (log book summarised into week-ending) with 5 hours 40 minutes in the log book. The next day, Monday April 19, flying training continues in the DH-82 with F/O Croker up to April 21 when Gus carries out his first solo flight after 7 hours 40 minutes of dual training.

Training continues up to the end of May 28, with only a few days indicating that he is not flying, completing the course in a grand total of 60 hours including 3 hours of night flying and 6 hours of instrument flight and 10 hours 40 minutes experience in the Link Trainer. Gus's "Assessment of Ability" by the CFI of No. 8 E.F.T.S. RAAF Narrandera, N.S.W. on completion of the course on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1943 is "Attained the required standard".

A month later, July 7, Gus commences training in a Wirraway (A20-305) with F/O Castles at the No.7 S.F.T.S. unit at Deniliquin in NSW. Gus passes his Wirraway flying "test" on July 12, 1943 after only 7 hours dual training that includes 15 minutes as the pre-solo test flight, the "I.T.S." component part is passed by Gus on August 24. After 54 hours 55 minutes on Wirraways, Gus completes the "Course 36P" on October 21, 1943 with an "Above average" comment in Bombing, he is recorded as "Average" in "Air Gunnery" section.

It appears (by time) that Gus now goes to England.

There is break from the end of the course (36P) until March 8, 1944 when Gus starts a "P.R. Course" at the 18 E.F.T.S. Fair Oaks (England) in DH-82 with Sgt. Peacock. That course is completed after general day/night/instrument refresher flying on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1944.

Gus now has a grand total of 179 hours 45 minutes of flying in single engine aircraft recorded in his log book.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1944 Gus commences flying in twin engined Oxfords at the No. 15.P. A.F.U. That's completed by July 10 and included a log book training statement "corkscrew". A B.A.T Course commences on July 12 at the No.1 Beam Approach School at RAF Watchfield that is completed on July 17, 1944.

Flying in the Oxfords continues with night IF tests, precision flying and X-country exercises for a grand total of 279 hours and 20 minutes up to September 11, 1944 when Gus is assigned with a crew to fly the Wellington bomber. Training continues in the Wellington with Gus going solo with his crew after 2 hours and 50 minutes of dual instruction over two flights.

Notes in the log book cover things such as "H.L. Bombing", "Cine Gun", and "Adv. Fighter Affiliation" with a number of "X-countries" mentioned. One interesting entry worth mentioning is on November 25<sup>th</sup> with a night flight X-country of 4 hours 20 minutes that included 2 hours 10 minutes of instrument flying with a "flashlight", indicating a training flight with an electric's failure (no electrical power) at night and possibly in cloud.

***In January 1945 Gus is assigned to No. 1661 H.C.U. for training in Lancaster bombers.***

A familiarisation flight is carried out in the Lancaster KBT with F/Lt. Hancock on January 21 for 2 hours and 5 minutes. On February 9, 1945 Gus goes solo for 40 minutes in the Lancaster KBB with his crew after another 2 hour and 10 minute check flight.

The log book shows that Gus has 424 hours and 20 minutes of flying in all types of aircraft and completes the Lancaster familiarisation after 12 hours 15 minutes dual day/night and 41 hours 55 minutes as captain which includes 25 hours 45 minutes of night flying. In March 1945 Gus is assigned to operational squadron No 227.

**By now Gus is only 20 years of age and Captain of a V12 Rolls Royce Merlin powered four-engine (each 1,485 hp) Lancaster bomber in charge of a 6 member crew and about to fly from England to Europe in one of the 1000 (aircraft) bomber raids (normally carried out at night) that eventually bring down Germany and an end to the war.**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1945 Gus and crew carry out their first war operational flight to Whrzburg in Germany in a 7 hour 50 minute night flight with a captain F/L Wake in command, there is some minor damage to the Lancaster during the flight.

Gus trains with his crew for the next few days and on March 21 with Gus at the controls they fly an operational sortie (at night) to Hamburg to take out the Oil refinery. They drop 12,000 lbs. of bombs, one 4000 pounder, and 16 x 500 pounders. Two days later on March 23 there is another "Operations" to Wesel, this time with 14 x 1000 lb. bombs and again at night. Flight times averaged just under 6 hours for each flight.

On April 5 Gus and crew transfer from Balderton to Strubby in Lancaster RF187, that flight taking only 30 minutes of daytime flying time. April 17 saw another war operation, this time to Cham. marshalling yards (rail) with 8 x 1000 and 5 x 500-pound bombs. On April 23 a daylight operation was tried to bomb Flensburg with 14 x 1000 pounders but the mission was abandoned due cloud (the cloud must have been over the target). Flight time recorded as 5 hours 25 minutes.

Training flights continue in the Lancaster with "Fighter Affiliation" flights and formation flying until June 5 when, with F/O Hadden and crew on-board Lancaster 6M678, they take a 4 hour 40 minute daylight flight that is recorded as a "Tour of Ruhr" (a flight over Germany) signifying the end of the war in Europe.

Gus ends his war service with 498 hours, and in May of 1958, 13 years later, recommences to fly again with the Royal Queensland Aero Club at Archerfield ending up with a commercial licence with an instrument and night flying rating by passing his flight test, carried out by Tom Drury another wartime pilot employed by the then Department of Civil Aviation, in a Piper Colt on June 19, 1961.

By October 1961 Gus passes his "Rating Test 'C' " in a 40 minute flight, again with Tom Drury, in an Auster Arrow. Gus by now has his civil commercial pilot licence with instructor rating, with a grand total of 667 hours and 35 minutes in the log book, which includes the 498 hours of war service.

For the next 39 years Gus flew for a living, mainly instructing in single engine aircraft, his multi-engine time did not increase to any degree after the war and totalled 446 hours (war time multi - 311 hrs. 10 minutes).

The last entry recorded in log book number 8, is March 8, 2000 in a Skyfox Gazelle, flight time 1.5 hours. Grand total flying time in all types of aircraft, from Lancaster bombers to ultra-lights, is recorded as 15,660 hours and 20 minutes over a 57-year period (there is no record of any accident or engine failure). Aviation as a whole celebrates only a 100 years of flight in 2003.

Gus departed the planet in 2001 at age 77 after failing to recover from surgery.

<sup>1</sup> As Shown, D.H. not DH

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From within aviation records kept by Gus there was a copy of “High Flight” by John Gillespie Magee, Jnr.

*“Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred  
things you have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlight silence.  
Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung my eager craft through foot-  
less halls of air.  
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace  
where never a lark, or even eagle flew.  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod the high un-trespassed sanctity of space, put out  
my hand, and touched the face of God.”*

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Details by Don Martinez - Student of A.J. (Gus) Day, first flight with Gus May 15, 1965, RQAC Archerfield.

Son Anthony Scott Martinez started flying with Gus on August 8, 1981 at age 16 and passed his PPL (restricted) 3 days before his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in May 1982 - he had to wait the 3 days before filling out the paperwork - Private Pilot Licence's were not issued by the aviation authorities to persons under the age of 17 years.

Anthony asked for and obtained from Gus's family the flying log books and some aviation memoirs that remain in his possession.

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This summary of selections from within the log books commenced October 12, 2002 in Brisbane QLD