

Thake, S...

759.994 ~~ROY~~

PROPERTY OF *Pam*
The Trustees
QUEENSLAND NATIONAL ART
GALLERY



RAAF

WAR PAINTINGS EXHIBITION 1946

PROPERTY OF
The Trustees
QUEENSLAND NATIONAL ART
GALLERY

MELBOURNE SYDNEY BRISBANE
ADELAIDE PERTH HOBART

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE



WAR
PAINTINGS
EXHIBITION
CATALOGUE

1 9 4 6

PROPERTY OF
The Trustees
QUEENSLAND NATIONAL ART
GALLERY

PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF
CATALOGUES FOR THIS EXHIBITION
WILL BE DONATED TO R.A.A.F
WELFARE ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE . . NATIONAL ART GALLERY OF NEW
SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY . . QUEENSLAND NATIONAL ART GALLERY, BRISBANE . . NATIONAL
GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ADELAIDE . . PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA, PERTH . THE TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, HOBART



FIGHTER PILOT

Harold Freedman

With the formation of the War History Section of the Royal Australian Air Force, the first step towards the compilation of a comprehensive review of the activities of the R.A.A.F. in the various theatres of war was made. Originally based on the presentation of written narratives, the scope of this section was subsequently extended to provide visual appreciations on celluloid and canvas of the lives and activities of the men who flew, and those men and women who kept them flying.

The inestimable value of scenes and events painted on the spot or from sketches and field notes is obvious, as they have an atmosphere more valuable than the most accurate word picture.

One of the guiding principles of War History Section has been that the presentation of history should be interesting, and its work has been planned to avoid as far as possible the drab school copybook standard.

This work has been done by airmen, of airmen under combat conditions. The artists lived with the men, shared their hardships. Posterity and the historian of the future will owe them a debt of magnitude, not so much for their factual representation of scenes and events, but for the record of personal reaction to the atmosphere of those times through which we have passed.

The tours of these men have covered Australia, New Guinea, the Netherlands East Indies and Borneo.

With the peace, they now give to the people of Australia a colour picture of the everyday living and fighting conditions of the Royal Australian Air Force — at war and at play.

C. Jones

Air Vice-Marshal

CHIEF OF AIR STAFF - ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

FOREWORD

What are the functions of war art? To illustrate and, if possible, illuminate, some aspects of an extraordinary period. By its very nature war art must be, first of all, a record of events and scenes. We want to know what fighting men, their equipment and their environment looked like at certain times and in certain circumstances. If, in addition, the artist has something more to offer than mere representation, if he can, at the same time, create a work of art and also, by his own insight, offer some interpretation of the inner meaning and feeling of the scene, so much the better. We cannot expect all this all the time. The job precludes it. But, as a starting point, we can demand good craftsmanship; and, once in a while, we can hope for something more.

The Royal Australian Air Force, very wisely, appointed three artists to record its activities and gave them a free hand within certain inevitable limits. They were Flight-Lieutenant Harold Freedman, Flying-Officer Eric Thake and Flying-Officer Max Newton who work, for the most part, respectively, in oil paint, gouache and water-color. They have spent about a year in Australia and the islands to the north, painting the men, machines and stations of the R.A.A.F. Each — which is all to the good — has a very distinct and individual approach. Each has done a job with which the Service can be well pleased. The complete difference in approach of the artists is altogether an advantage. Their work, as a whole, gives an admirable composite of R.A.A.F. activity; and, individually, each beholder may take pleasure in it according to his own artistic beliefs.

Canberra, in the view of a number of people, is the natural repository of all official paintings. Nevertheless, one must feel personally that when there is a large quantity of work to choose from it would be a pity if all war art were to be lodged there permanently, either on the walls or in the store-rooms of the National Memorial. A reasonable distribution could, perhaps, be made between the States with the object of showing the pictures to as great a number of people as possible. This might be achieved either by extended loans or by putting such of the pictures as are chosen in more or less continuous circulation around the Commonwealth.

Each individual has his own views about art — he knows what he likes, which is, at least, a beginning; and, however great the differences in these views, there are few people who will not feel it an advantage that our artists should be concerned with the life — and death — about them, striving, each in his own fashion, to interpret the Australia which we all know and for which the men of the R.A.A.F. and other services have fought and died. Art is never divorced from life; the greatest artists are those who are able most satisfactorily to sum up for us the eternal truths of the human scene.

This exhibition ought to give much satisfaction. One hopes that the example of such organisations as the Royal Australian Air Force will not be forgotten in the days of peace, and that other bodies will enable and encourage our artists to give their talents to the depiction and interpretation of the complex world in which we live.

4 *Clive Turnbull*

HAROLD FREEDMAN

Flight Lieut. R.A.A.F.

1. CREATURES OF THE AIR Oil December, 1944
Bell Airacobras dumped at Moresby take on an atmosphere of strange bird-like creatures of another age.
2. KITTYHAWK INSPECTION .. Oil January, 1945
A general overhaul at No. 11 Repair and Salvage Unit Noemfoor.
3. WINGED HORSE Water Colour .. December, 1944
A dismantled "Lightning" aircraft in the Moresby dump resembles some fantastic winged horse.
4. CONSUMMATUM EST Oil January, 1945
Crashed aircraft stand gauntly in a graveyard at Moresby, their form symbolising the sacrifice of the men who flew them.
5. "SWAPPING YARNS" Oil February, 1945
6. TENT LIGHTS Oil February, 1945
7. MAINTENANCE Water Colour .. February, 1945
Extreme weather conditions in the tropics made it necessary for aircraft under repair to be protected at all times and any "scrounged" material was put to this use.
8. W/T. OPS. Oil February, 1945
One of the nerve centres of a headquarters is the W/T room.
9. FALLEN COMRADE Oil February, 1945
The men who fly and service aircraft form a strong attachment to the 'planes and feel their loss as they would a friend.
10. BEAUFIGHTER PILOT Oil March, 1945
No. 30 Squadron.
11. TELEPHONE EXCHANGE Oil March, 1945
"Spinebashing" at No. 80 Wing Headquarters exchange.
12. FIGHTER PILOT Oil March, 1945
Kittyhawk pilot No. 80 Squadron, Morotai.

HAROLD FREEDMAN

Flight Lieut. R.A.A.F.—*continued*

- 13. NIGHT WATCH Oil July, 1945
In the crew room at No. 82 Wing Headquarters the Intelligence Officer awaits the return of Liberators striking at Borneo.
- 14. BOMBERS Oil July, 1945
Liberators of No. 24 Squadron on the dispersal strip, Morotai.
- 15. BROKEN NOSE Water Colour July, 1945
Liberator of No. 24 Squadron damaged in a crash landing.
- 16. AIRACOBRAS Water Colour January, 1945
Sketch at the dump at Moresby.
- 17. SEARCHLIGHTS Oil July, 1945
A homing aircraft caught in the beam as a safety precaution.
- 18. TENT LIFE Oil August, 1945
- 19. RADAR OPS. Oil August, 1945
Operators in a Fighter Control Unit, Labuan.
- 20. TARAKAN Oil August, 1945
Camp site of No. 26 Repair and Salvage Unit, Tarakan.
- 21. JACKSONS. Oil December, 1945
The original "Seven Mile" drome at Moresby later named after S/Ldr. John Jackson, C.O. of 75 Squadron, who was killed on a mission from this airstrip. Treacherous Owen Stanley Ranges form a rugged background.
- 22. HEAD STUDY OF A PILOT Oil August, 1945
- 23. LIBERATOR INTERIOR Water Colour August, 1945
- 24. BREAKDOWN Oil August, 1945



BOMBERS

Harold Freedman

- 25. GROUND STAFF BLOKE Oil August, 1945
Too much atebirin and jungle tend to make a man melancholy.
- 26. "SWY" Oil September, 1945
Wherever Australians foregather two pennies and a kip can be found.
- 27. AND SO TO BED Oil September, 1945
A typically dismal procession proceeding tentwards after a night at the pictures in Tarakan.
- 28. "ERK" Oil September, 1945
An airman of No. 1 A.C.S. Tarakan.
- 29. ELECTRICAL SECTION Oil September, 1945
Disused floodlights at No. 1 A.C.S. Tarakan.

HAROLD FREEDMAN

Flight Lieut. R.A.A.F.—*continued*

30. THE CHINAMAN Oil October, 1945
Trucks of an airfield construction unit collecting gravel to make a bomber strip at Labuan.
31. AT AN R.S.U. Oil October, 1945
Kittyhawks awaiting repair at No. 22 Repair and Servicing unit.
32. NIGHT MAINTENANCE Oil September, 1945
A Douglas transport on the strip at Labuan. This aircraft was damaged during supply dropping operations to PsOW in Kuching.
33. A FIGHTER ACE Oil January, 1945
This portrait was painted upon the return of the Australian ace from the Middle East.
34. MAN IN CAPE Oil October, 1945
35. 1,000 BOMBER STRIKE Oil December, 1945
An imaginative canvas from a description given by F/Lt. Peter Isaacson D.F.C., D.F.M., A.F.C., of the first thousand bomber raid on Cologne.
36. HEAD STUDY Drawing August, 1945
Due for a southern posting after 20 months tropical service, this airman has "had" the jungle.
37. HEAD STUDY Drawing August, 1945
A fitter of No. 76 Squadron, Labuan.
38. HEAD STUDY — PILOT Drawing August, 1945
39. MAINTENANCE WORKER Drawing September, 1945
40. PILOT Drawing September, 1945
41. RADIO CITY Drawing August, 1945
The maintenance section of No. III Mobile Fighter Control Unit, Labuan.
42. DESTROYED JAP. Drawing August, 1945
Jap. aircraft at Labuan caught on the ground and destroyed by R.A.A.F. bombers.



KAMIRI SEARCHLIGHT

Eric Thake

ERIC THAKE

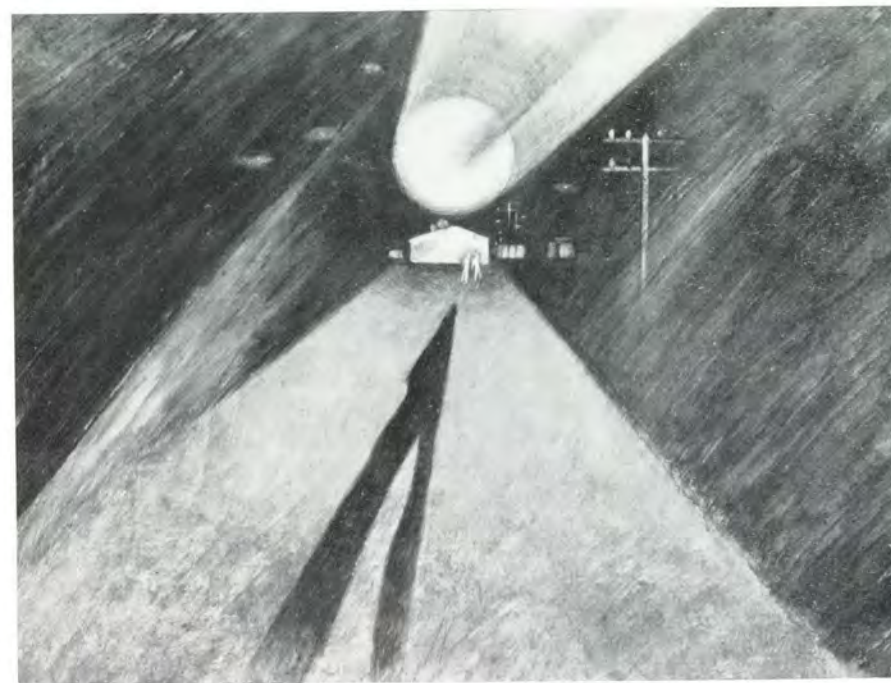
Flying Officer R.A.A.F.

43. KAMIRI SEARCHLIGHT Gouache June, 1945
At Noemfoor Island, on the airstrip set between the jungle and the sea. The remains of a Japanese foxhole can be seen on the beach.
44. SALVAGE DUMP PORT MORESBY Gouache May, 1945
45. PARACHUTE STORE Gouache April, 1945
No. 31 Squadron, Morotai.
46. MORESBY TOTEM Gouache December, 1944
Salvage Dump Pt. Moresby.
47. LOADING FOR BIAK Gouache January, 1945
At Broe Bay, Noemfoor Island, the equipment was loaded on to LCM's and taken out over the reef to the Liberty ships.

ERIC THAKE

Flying Officer R.A.A.F.—*continued*

- 43. KATE AND OSCAR Gouache .. January, 1945
At Kamiri, Noemfoor Island, Japanese planes shot down and pushed on to the side of the strip by bulldozers.
- 49. LONG THOUGHTS Gouache .. January, 1945
TAF. RAAF. Transport Section, Noemfoor Island. This pin-up gallery was started at Nadzab, went to Hollandia, Noemfoor and later to Morotai.
- 50. KITTYHAWKS WIGWAM Gouache .. February, 1945
At No. 22 RSU. Kamiri, Noemfoor Island, the metal became so hot under the tropic sun that it was impossible to work without an awning.
- 51. A.C.S. DUMP Gouache .. February, 1945
At Noemfoor Island, vehicle dump in the jungle.
- 52. LOADING BOMBS FOR MOROTAI Gouache .. February, 1945
At Broe Bay, Noemfoor Island.
- 53. OASIS THEATRE Gouache .. February, 1945
At Noemfoor Island, there was a picture show on at one of the half dozen theatres six nights a week.
- 54. MOROTAI Gouache .. February, 1945
No. 31 Squadron Camp at Morotai, the land of continual mud and rain.
- 55. PIN-UP GALLERY Gouache .. August, 1945
At No. 57 OBU, Alice Springs. Some of these collections were very extensive and their owners very proud of them.
- 56. WATER TOWER Gouache .. August, 1945
No. 57 OBU, Alice Springs.
- 57. BLACK MITCHELL Gouache .. September, 1945
At No. 14 ARD. Gorrie, dismantling a bomber on a northern airstrip.
- 58. STAGING CAMP LARRIMAH .. Gouache .. September, 1945
Larrimah is at the northern end of the convoy route from Alice. The troops entrain here for Darwin.
- 59. LENA Gouache .. September, 1945
At Larrimah. She carries her thirsty passengers north through the ant-hills, broken bottles and bully beef tins.
- 60. BANK OF N.S.W. DARWIN Gouache .. September, 1945



REVOLVING BEACON

Eric Thake

- 61. RADIO TRANSMITTER Gouache .. August, 1945
At No. 57 OBU, Alice Springs. Mulga, Willie-willies, red sand and vast distances.
- 62. BOMBED HOUSE DARWIN Gouache .. October, 1945
Some of the ruined buildings are now almost lost in the long grass and pandanus scrub.
- 63. WRECKED HOUSE DARWIN .. Gouache .. October, 1945
Bottles easily break the fibro-plaster walls and the pieces that remain are nice to draw on.
- 64. GRECIAN DARWIN Gouache .. November, 1945
The concrete piles of the bombed buildings of R.A.A.F. Darwin, the blue skies and the sun-tanned men playing volley-ball remind one of ancient Greece.

ERIC THAKE

Flying Officer R.A.A.F.—*continued*

65. METEOROLOGICAL BALLOON
ALICE SPRINGS Gouache .. August, 1945
The met. balloon bursts at approx. 50,000' the small radio set parachutes down and is sometimes recovered.
66. WRECKED LODESTAR Gouache .. August, 1945
Zebra finches nest in its wings.
67. LIBERATORS FACE Gouache .. November, 1945
The great bombers at night appear like huge crouching insects.
68. CHINESE HOUSE KOEPANG .. Gouache .. September, 1945
Red oleanders blossom amid the white ruins of the town and frigate birds sail in the brilliant blue skies.
69. KOEPANG BAY Gouache .. September, 1945
The invasion fleet in the harbour.
70. REVOLVING BEACON Gouache .. August, 1945
71. AIRSTRIP AT NIGHT Gouache .. August, 1945
72. STREET IN KOEPANG Gouache .. October, 1945
Characteristic colours of this town:—the white buildings, pale blue painted wood work, pink tiles and the dark green trees.
73. JAP. WRECKAGE PENFOEI
AIRSTRIP TIMOR Gouache .. October, 1945
PsOW were employed clearing up the wreckage of their own planes at the airstrip.
74. MIDDAY SPINE BASH.. .. Drawing .. February, 1945
75. NEWS FROM NOEMFOOR Drawing .. February, 1945
76. RAIN PATTERN YMCA HUT .. Drawing .. January, 1945
77. TRANSPORT SECTION No. 80 WING Drawing .. March, 1945
78. THE GREAT CANDLESTICK .. Drawing .. March, 1945
79. SUNDAY AFTERNOON Drawing .. March, 1945
80. LT. GEN. K. YAMADA Drawing .. October, 1945
At Koepang, Timor. Commander of the 48th Jap. Division H.Q. Bima, Flores Is.



AIRMEN'S QUARTERS

Max Newton

81. THE FACE OF JAPAN (1) Drawing .. October, 1945
82. THE FACE OF JAPAN (2) Drawing .. October, 1945
83. THE FACE OF JAPAN (3) Drawing .. October, 1945
84. THE FACE OF JAPAN (4) Drawing .. October, 1945
85. THE FACE OF JAPAN (5) Drawing .. October, 1945
86. THE FACE OF JAPAN (6) Drawing .. October, 1945

The above group of drawings by Eric Thake, of Jap. military and naval Ps.O.W. were employed reconditioning the roads and airstrip of Koepang.

MAX NEWTON

Flying Officer R.A.A.F.

- 87. ARMOURERS' WORK SHOP Water Colour August, 1945
Armourers work on aircraft repairs in shabbily constructed quarters at No. 22 R.S.U. Labuan.
- 88. HOSPITAL WARD Water Colour August, 1945
Interior view of large British marquee used for hospital ward.
- 89. OIL TANK WRECKAGE Water Colour September, 1945
Huge oil storage tanks at Balikpapan blasted by Allied bombs crumbled in the terrific heat of burning oil.
- 90. VICTORIA TOWN Water Colour August, 1945
Ancient capital of Labuan Island, Victoria Town was heavily bombed prior to invasion.
- 91. COOK-HOUSE Water Colour July, 1945
Constructed mainly of scrap materials, the cookhouse of No. 82 Wing Headquarters, Morotai, was an interesting example of wartime island architecture.
- 92. 82 WING HEADQUARTERS Water Colour July, 1945
A collection of oddly designed huts formed No. 82 Wing Headquarters.
- 93. HOSPITAL SITE.. .. Water Colour August, 1945
Ideally situated on the crest of high cliffs this hospital at Labuan commanded an excellent view
- 94. GROUNDED AIRCRAFT Water Colour August, 1945
Kittyhawk awaiting minor repairs at No. 22 R.S.U. Labuan.
- 95. PLANE WRECKAGE Water Colour July, 1945
Remains of a mail plane destroyed by fire while refuelling on the strip at Morotai.
- 96. AIRMEN'S QUARTERS.. .. Water Colour August, 1945
Airmen of 1st T.A.F. Labuan take pride in the regular maintenance of their living quarters.
- 97. SUPPLIES Drawing .. July, 1945
R.A.A.F. supplies arriving by L.S.T. at Morotai.
- 98. CHURCH SERVICE Drawing .. August, 1945
Sunday Church Service at 1st T.A.F. Labuan.
- 99. L.C.M. AT LABUAN Drawing .. September, 1945



COOK HOUSE

Max Newton

- 100. BALIKPAPAN Drawing .. September, 1945
Drenched with burning oil on the day of invasion, the scorched slopes of Parramatta Ridge, Balikpapan, present a desolate appearance.
- 101. WRECKED OIL TANK.. .. Drawing .. September, 1945
- 102. CARD PLAYERS Drawing .. September, 1945
- 103. GROG NIGHT IN AN
AIRMAN'S TENT Drawing .. September, 1945
- 104. LABUAN SKY-LINE Drawing .. August, 1945
- 105. OIL REFINERIES Drawing .. September, 1945
- 106. STORAGE TANKS Drawing .. September, 1945

MAX NEWTON

Flying Officer R.A.A.F.—*continued*

107. BOMBED BUILDING, LABUAN .. Oil August, 1945
Amid the wreckage of a bombed building in Victoria Town, Labuan: Rubble and fallen masonry is gathered by bulldozer for airstrip construction.
108. OIL REFINERY WRECKAGE
BALIKPAPAN Oil September, 1945
Burnt-out oil refineries and storage tanks at Balikpapan.
109. JEEP TAKES A BATH Oil July, 1945
At the end of a day's work, the driver of a R.A.A.F. jeep cleans his vehicle at a water point before returning to his unit.

In this exhibition the R.A.A.F. War Artists have given an expression to all phases of R.A.A.F. activity. A tribute is paid to the outstanding gallantry of the two Royal Australian Air Force Victoria Cross winners: Flight Lieutenant William Ellis Newton Pilot Officer Rawdon Hume Middleton.

Portraits of these distinguished officers will be painted at a later date.

129174

1928