

The Service of Flying Officer Ivor Peatty in WWII - 402805

By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College



Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021
The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII
By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

Part A:

*'I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate...'*

Excerpt from 'An Irish Airman foresees his Death', by William Butler Yeats



Pre-War

Ivor Peatty was born on 4 July 1914 to Arthur and Ellen Peatty in Granville, Sydney. He was the youngest of three brothers. During the Depression, Ivor worked in Queensland for his uncle as a farm goods salesman and later returned to Sydney to work for Elders. A strong swimmer, Ivor volunteered as a surf lifesaver at Dee Why, a skill that would later come to save his life and those of his crewmates¹. When he decided to enlist, his sweetheart begged him not to go. Ivor's strong sense of duty and personal sacrifice was so strong that he ultimately chose to fight for his country.

Figure 1
The 461 Squadron Crest, featuring its motto: 'They shall not pass unseen.'
<https://vwma.org.au/explore/units/392>

During War

'They shall not pass unseen' - this was the fitting motto of 461 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), who worked closely with 10 Squadron as part of the RAAF's coastal command operating the mighty Sunderland aircraft (see Figure 2) in World War II and intercepting German submarines in the Bay of Biscay. 461 Squadron was formed at the Royal Air Force (RAF) base at Mount Batten, Wales on 25 April 1942, earning them the nickname of the ANZAC Squadron. They fought vicious air battles with German aircraft to prevent the sinking of merchant ships carrying vital supplies to England. The squadron lost 20 Sunderlands to enemy actions and sank 6 German submarines throughout the war². All over the world, the unsung heroes of the RAAF have created a legacy for themselves as courageous servicemen with tremendous grit and determination; true ANZAC spirit.



Figure 2
The launching of a 461 Squadron RAAF Sunderland in the UK, 1944
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C260723>

Ivor enlisted on 14 October 1940 in Sydney, aged 26. Between 1940 and 1942, he trained as a pilot in Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme, which trained pilots from all over the Commonwealth³. After completing training, Ivor joined 461 Squadron and was stationed at Pembroke Dock, Wales. Ivor was the second pilot of his crew.

On 30 July 1943, Ivor and his crew took part in one of the most important engagements of that year for 461 Squadron. Whilst on patrol over the Bay of Biscay, the crew of RAF Liberator 53/O spotted two German U-Boats, U-461 and U-462. They homed in other RAAF aircraft to approach the scene, including RAAF Sunderland 461/U of 461 Squadron, which coincidentally was registered as the same name as German U-Boat U-461.

¹ Interview with Janet Byrnes, daughter of Ivor Peatty (27 March 2021)

² No. 461 Squadron n.d., Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U59446>>.

³ Empire Air Training Scheme n.d., Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/raaf/eats>>.

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021

The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII

By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

Flight Lieutenant Dudley Marrows of 461/U managed to get in close past the defence of U-461 and machine-gun its gunners, later releasing depth charges to sink U-461⁴. In an interview, Ivor's crewmate Peter Jensen described seeing 'bodies and bits of body coming up' from the U-boat wreckage, a confronting image indeed⁵. Then 461/U circled back to the flotsam to drop a life raft, saving 15 of the 68 crewmen. One of these was Captain Wolfgang Stiebler, whom the crew would come to meet decades later. The decision went against official RAAF policy, and the crew were scolded upon their return.



Figure 3
'Caught on the Surface' by Robert Taylor, depicting scene of Sunderland U from Squadron 461 of Coastal Command attacking the German U-Boat U-461.
<http://ahoy.tk-jk.net/macslog/CoastalCommandSunderlandU.html>

In an interview, Flight Lieutenant Dudley Marrows said, '...here was a group of Germans in the water shaking their fists at us, well this was one of the most controversial issues from our crew, not one single member of the crew disagreed with my action'⁶.

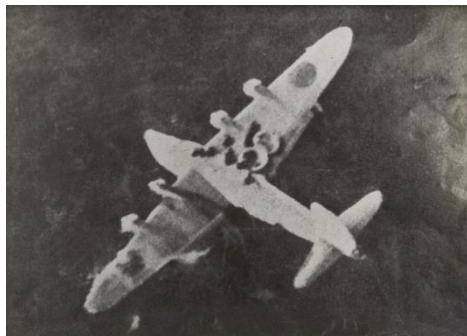


Figure 4
A grainy photograph of Sunderland aircraft (MK III EK 578) of 461 Squadron taken by the crew of one of the JU88's.
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45509>

Just weeks later, on 16 September 1943, Ivor and the crew of Sunderland MK III EK-478 found themselves in grave danger once again. On one of their regular afternoon patrols they were attacked by six German Ju88's of 5 group KG40, in fierce combat, lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes⁷. The Ju88's disabled three of the Sunderland's engines, forcing them to make an emergency landing in a 15-foot swell. In a typically Australian gesture of humour, Ivor blew a kiss to the Germans as they flew away; positive even in the most dismal of situations.

On impact with the water, the Sunderland began to sink. The Sunderland's 3 life rafts deployed, although 2 immediately sank due to shrapnel damage⁸. There was now just 1 life raft left, and it had been tossed away by the rough waves of the Bay of Biscay. A confident swimmer from his time as a lifesaver

before the war, Ivor braved the violent waves of the bay to retrieve the life raft. The crew were then stranded in the open sea, 11 men cramped in one life raft built for 6, for 17 hours until they were rescued by the Sloop HMS Starling⁹.

⁴ Fighting the U-Boats n.d., RAAF, viewed 11 May 2021, <<http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/raaf.htm>>.

⁵ Temora Aviation Museum 2020, Sinking of U 461, online video, 13 October, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y7HgeWEzPM>>.

⁶ Department of Veterans' Affairs 2020, Dudley Marrows – 'They're no different', online video, 9 January, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLUg3pW0Sk>>.

⁷ NAA: A705, 166/32/186; Report addressed to RAAF HQRS Melbourne

⁸ NAA: A705, 166/32/186; Circumstantial Report into Flying Incident to Sunderland EK-578 on 16th September, 1943

⁹ THE CREW OF SUNDERLAND AIRCRAFT (EK578) "E" OF NO 461 SQUADRON RAAF1943, Photograph, Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45511>>.

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021
The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII
By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

Thanks to Ivor's quick thinking and the crew's perseverance, all 11 men were rescued with no casualties, with only one suffering shrapnel wounds to his legs¹⁰.

Post-War

Upon Ivor's discharge on 5 March 1946, he and his English wife, Mary, whom he had married in 1943, moved back to Sydney. They had 3 children, Janet, Vivian and Ross. Mary had their first daughter, Janet, in 1944 while she served as a cipher officer for the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) in London.

Ivor found employment as a salesman with Gramps wines after the war. He was offered a war pension, which he turned down out of pride and unwillingness to accept charity. Following his service, Ivor struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Due to a lack of knowledge about PTSD, many veterans in both WWI and WWII suffered in silence. As a way to cope with his trauma from his service, Ivor drank heavily and was described by his children as volatile at times. Ivor and Mary, born Anglicans, found their wartime experiences so harrowing that they lost faith in God.

In 1979, Ivor and Mary relocated from Sydney to Adelaide. The same year, Ivor and his crew embarked on their squadron reunion tour in Germany. It was on this trip that they met the captain of the U-boat they had fought in July 1943, Wolf Stiebler¹¹. Ivor told his daughter Janet that he had felt no animosity towards the Germans and had realised they were no better or worse than him; just brave young men serving their country out of devotion to duty.

Ivor Peatty passed away in 1991 after a long battle with lymphatic cancer. His legacy is honoured by his 3 children, 5 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren.

ANZAC Spirit

Ivor exhibited many qualities of the ANZAC spirit, namely perseverance and mateship. At the time of WWII, enlistment was voluntary in Australia. The soldiers and nurses who enlisted displayed incredible bravery by risking their lives for their country.

In WWII, casualty rates of pilots were high, and it was not uncommon to hear of pilots never coming home from a patrol. Patrols lasted anywhere from 10-16 hours and the experience was described by 461 Squadron veteran and author Ivan Southall as, '...watching and thinking and listening and you were sore in the pit

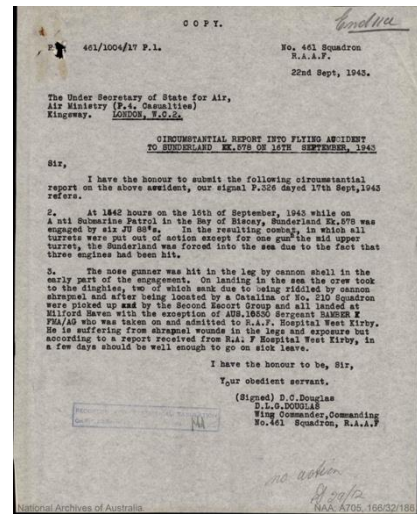


Figure 5
A report stating the circumstances of the flying accident to EK-578.
NAA: A705, 166/32/186; Circumstantial Report into Flying Incident to Sunderland EK-578 on 16th September, 1943



Figure 6
The crew of Sunderland aircraft EK 578, pictured in the life raft from which they were rescued.
(<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45511>)

¹⁰ NAA: A705, 166/32/186; Circumstantial Report into Flying Incident to Sunderland EK-578 on 16th September, 1943

¹¹ Dvoretzky, D 1979, 'No 10 Squadron flies a mission to nostalgia', The Australian Women's Weekly, 30 May, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/47252192/4876552>>.

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021

The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII

By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

of the stomach'¹². For Ivor to embark on these patrols every day, knowing the risks, showed incredible courage and perseverance.

When swimming out in torrential weather to retrieve the life raft for his men, Ivor showed resourcefulness and endurance, personifying the quality of mateship. A strong believer in the importance of mateship, Ivor didn't hesitate to risk his own life for his mates, epitomising the ANZAC spirit. One can barely begin to imagine the stress these brave men would have felt in that overcrowded life raft overnight, with one of their men seriously injured and no apparent hope of rescue. Perseverance is all about putting your head down in a tough situation and getting on with it, and Ivor did exactly that.

In considering the ANZAC spirit, we should not confine it to something only shown in wartime, but rather as a pinnacle of Australian identity, even 76 years after the end of WWII. Ivor showed ANZAC spirit not only in his service but in different areas of his life, such as in his voluntary lifesaving. Post war, Ivor's ANZAC spirit is reflected in the way he reconciled with his past enemies on his war tour, rising above the bitterness, resentment and hate many soldiers on both sides still harboured for each other. Despite his wartime experiences, Ivor persevered, continuing on to live a successful and fulfilling life. Not one to hold onto grudges of the past, Ivor did what every ANZAC aspires to do, and persevered through adversity, showing incredible determination and courage.

Beyond his death, Ivor remains highly respected and admired within my family, as a man who carried himself with utmost honour and bravery. He is remembered by our family as a selfless man who gave his all for his country, his community and his family. Despite the trauma he lived with as a result of the war, Ivor persevered. Ivor's legacy didn't end with the war. The ANZAC spirit that Ivor embodied is still alive in our family as a result of us fondly retelling his story.

Word count: 1498

Part B:

In beginning the process of researching for this biography, I first spoke to my grandmother, Janet, Ivor's daughter, and recorded an hour-long interview with her, in which she spoke of his life before, during and after the war. Next, I referred to the Virtual War Memorial Australia (VWMA) research checklist to find Ivor's service details. I also purchased some of his service records and documents from the National Archives of Australia (NAA). My grandmother was able to lend me some photographs of Ivor and some artefacts from his service, such as his original RAAF patch (see Figure 7) and a booklet about the 461 and 10 Squadrons from their 1979 war reunion tour.



Figure 7
Ivor's RAAF patch

Next, I researched Ivor's captain and crewmate Dudley Marrows, who has numerous articles published about his war experiences. I located a YouTube video¹³ in which two of Ivor's crewmates, Peter Jensen and Dudley Marrows, were interviewed about the circumstances of the sinking of German U-Boat U-461.

¹² first anti U-boat patrol out over the Bay of Biscay n.d., World War II Today, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://ww2today.com/31st-march-1943-a-first-anti-u-boat-patrol-out-over-the-bay-of-biscay/>>.

¹³ Temora Aviation Museum 2020, Sinking of U 461, online video, 13 October, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y7HgeWEzPM>>.

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021

The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII

By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

Former 461 Squadron member Ivan Southall had also recorded an interview with UNSW about his experiences, which was an extremely useful source for understanding the context of life as a 461 Squadron pilot.

Additionally, I browsed the 461 Squadron albums on the VWMA and Australian War Memorial websites, which had photographs of Ivor and his crew in addition to information and context about the photographs. To discover more details about the two incidents Ivor's crew were involved in (mentioned herein), I read contemporaneous reports sent to RAAF headquarters in Melbourne (purchased from the NAA).

Finally, I compiled my research into a folio, making the process of writing the biography much easier. I also made sure to correctly record my sources in a reference list.

I encountered difficulties researching the time Ivor's crew spent in the life raft before being rescued, as different websites cited varying times, such as 14, 17 and 18 hours. Sometimes in history, pertinent details can be contested by different sources. Ultimately, I recorded '17 hours' in the biography, as that is the time my grandmother recalls Ivor stating.

At times, I found it difficult to research Ivor's service, as much of the work published on his crew primarily focused on the incredible piloting of Dudley Marrows. As the crew's captain, Dudley received much of the publicity, rather than each crew member being mentioned. This was a common occurrence in WWII, although it doesn't diminish the value of each crew members service - regardless of rank. In the end, Ivor's story was uncovered through a combination of researching 461 Squadron's history and Ivor's crew's engagements, as well as by watching past interviews of Ivor's crewmates. Although not always totally reliable when searching for factual information, I found speaking to my family members about what they remember of Ivor was a great way to understand his character and personality.

Word count: 472

Bibliography:

Service records:

- National Archives of Australia: A705, PEATTY Ivor Vivian Ross - (Flying Officer); Service Number - 402805; File type - Casualty - Repatriation; Aircraft - Sunderland EK 578; Place - At sea; Date - 16 September 1943, 1929-1960
(<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1076664>)

Websites:

- No. 461 Squadron (RAAF) n.d., Virtual War Memorial Australia, viewed 1 May 2021, <<https://vwma.org.au/explore/units/392>>.
 - No. 461 Squadron n.d., Australian War Memorial, viewed 1 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U59446>>.
 - Jackson, M 2019, Reluctant war hero passionate about community, country and environment, viewed 3 May 2021, <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/reluctant-war-hero-passionate-about-community-country-and-environment-20190820-p52isn.html>>.
 - first anti U-boat patrol out over the Bay of Biscay n.d., World War II Today, viewed 4 May 2021, <<https://ww2today.com/31st-march-1943-a-first-anti-u-boat-patrol-out-over-the-bay-of-biscay>>.
-

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021
The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII
By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

- RAAF 461 Squadron – Courage & Coincidence 2021, Historic War Tours, viewed 4 May 2021, <<https://www.historicwartours.com.au/blog/2021/3/22/raaf-461-squadron-courage-amp-coincidence>>.
- Gregory, MJ n.d., Coastal Command Sunderland, U from Squadron 461, Sinks German U-Boat, U-461 in the Bay of Biscay., viewed 7 May 2021, <<http://ahoy.tk-jk.net/macblog/CoastalCommandSunderlandU.html>>.
- Dudley Marrows' story 2020, Anzac Portal, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/stories-service/veterans-stories/dudley-marrows-story>>.
- Empire Air Training Scheme n.d., Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/raaf/eats>>.
- An Outstanding Pilot - Dudley Marrows DSO DFC n.d., Virtual War Memorial Australia, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://vwma.org.au/research/home-page-archives/an-outstanding-pilot---dudley-marrows-dso-dfc>>.
- Wright, T 2019, The amazing bond of Dudley Marrows and the U-boat captain he saved, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/the-amazing-bond-of-dudley-marrows-and-the-u-boat-captain-he-saved-20190314-p5148y.html>>.
- Fighting the U-Boats n.d., RAAF, viewed 11 May 2021, <<http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/raaf.htm>>.

Photographs:

- RAAF 461 Squadron Crest 1942, Illustration, Virtual War Memorial Australia, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://vwma.org.au/explore/units/392>>.
- THE LAUNCHING OF A SUNDERLAND FLYING BOAT OF "ANZAC" NO. 461 SQUADRON RAAF IN THE UK. 1944, Photograph, Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C260723>>.
- SUNDERLAND AIRCRAFT (MK III EK 578), "E" OF NO. 461 SQUADRON RAAF, SHOT DOWN BY SIX JUNKERS 88'S OF 5 GROUP KG40. 1943, Photograph, Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45509>>.
- THE CREW OF SUNDERLAND AIRCRAFT (EK578) "E" OF NO 461 SQUADRON RAAF1943, Photograph, Australian War Memorial, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45511>>.

News articles:

- Dvoretzky, D 1979, 'No 10 Squadron flies a mission to nostalgia', The Australian Women's Weekly, 30 May, viewed 2 May 2021, <<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/47252192/4876552>>.

Videos:

- Temora Aviation Museum 2020, Sinking of U 461, online video, 13 October, viewed 7 May 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y7HgeWEzPM>>.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs 2020, Dudley Marrows – 'They're no different', online video, 9 January, viewed 10 May 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GILUg3pW0Sk>>.
- Southall, I 2004, pers. Comm., 3 March <<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1529-ivan-southall>>

Other:

- Aeromilitaria 1979, The AIR BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly, Brochure, Aeromilitaria, London.
-

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2021
The Service of Flight Lieutenant Ivor Peatty in WWII
By Matilda Byrnes, Saint Ignatius' College

- Interview with Janet Byrnes, Ivor's daughter (27 March 2021)