



Mildura 2 OTU Heritage Inc

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03 5022 7691 Tues, Fri, Sun. 9.30-12.30

Mildura 2 OTU Heritage Inc added 5 new photos. September 23

Today (23rd of September) back in 1943 was again another tragic day for No. 2 Operational Training Unit; as 74 years ago the fifteenth of 46 fatal aircraft accidents occurred. Pilot Officer Neville Douglas Murphy (429986) was partaking in an exercise as a part of No.23 Fighter Operational Conversion Course onto Kittyhawks. The exercise on this morning was Ground Strafing at the Air to Ground Gunnery Range at Gol Gol near Mildura.

P/O Murphy was aboard Kittyhawk A29-60 and was engaged on his second attack run, the approach looked good as noted by range officer F/O Brian Melnotte Thompson (408060 - DFM), within this approach the evasive action was being practiced, this was called 'Jinking and Weaving'. This Jinking and Weaving continued passed the target for some 800 yards (732m) when in a left skid the nose and port wing dropped that caused the Kittyhawk to hit the ground at 11:32am disintegrating and catching fire ending the Kittyhawk and fatally injuring P/O Murphy. The cause of this crash was deemed unknown, P/O Murphy had 210hrs. & 50 min. total flight time at the time of the crash and he was considered satisfactory within the course as at 23rd of September.

Kittyhawk A29-60 was a P-40E, US serial No. 41-5739, shipped to Australia on SS Robin Tuxtworth and off loaded at Freemantle WA in March 1942, from where it was delivered to the RAAF and allotted directly to 77 Squadron on March 18th and received by the Squadron on April 13th. Seven days later on the 20th it was involved in a landing accident where the port undercarriage folded back causing damage to the port wing tip & port flap, it was repaired at the Squadron that took until August 31st to be operational. Only to be involved again seven days later on September 7th where it crash landed on the beach at Melville Island North of Darwin due to an error with the fuel tank switching when P/O John Gray Gorton (400793 - future Prime Minister of Australia) was flying it, P/O Gorton was OK with A29-60 only receiving a bent propeller, maintenance crews were sent by boat and landed on the Island on 11th to carry out repairs and A29-60 was later flown out by F/L George Robert Shave (579). On February 2nd 1943 it was received at 3AD and was allotted to 20TU Mildura on the 11th, while on route to 20TU it was actually received at 5AD Wagga Wagga and held there until March 30th when it was finally received by 20TU on that same day.

A29-60 then remained with 20TU until written off by this accident; however, A29-60 was involved in only one other recorded incident during its 5 1/2 month service life as a training aircraft. This took place on July 28th where Sgt Ronald James Chambers (424287) taxied off the runway into the mud bogging the wheels causing the Kittyhawk to nose over damaging the propeller only.

Prior to this accident:

- P/O Neville Douglas Murphy was born on the 9th of June 1924 at Unley South Australia, and resided at Norwood with his family, after his schooling he became employed as a chemist junior clerk. Neville enrolled in Cadets aged 17 on the 3rd of April 1942 at No.4 Cadet Wing HQ in Adelaide and became part of No. 69 Squadron ATC.

The 10th of October was a very busy day for Neville as he was released from Cadets and enlisted in the RAAF as Aircrew 2 at SRC Adelaide, to be then posted to 4 ITS (Initial Training school) Mt. Breckan at Victor Harbour in SA all on the same day. By January 6th 1943 he had passed No.30* Flying Course there and was then re-classified & re-mustered 4 days before to LAC (Leading Aircraftsman) & Airman Pilot on the 2nd respectively. One day after completing the 4ITS course he was posted to 11 EFTS (Elementary Flying Training) Benalla on the 7th where he completed also No.30* Flying Course there on the 10th of April 1943. Neville was then posted to 7 SFTS Deniliquin on the 13th where he entered into No.33 Pilots Intermediate Course on 16th and completed that course on the 2nd of June, this steered him into No.33 Pilots Advanced Course on the 8th that was completed with a pass on the 29th of July and was granted a Commission to rank of Pilot Officer on the same day, his flying badge was awarded a day earlier on the 28th on Wirraways.

P/O Murphy then spend time at 1ED from July 31st to August 7th completing a High Altitude Course before arriving at 20TU Mildura on the 8th of August

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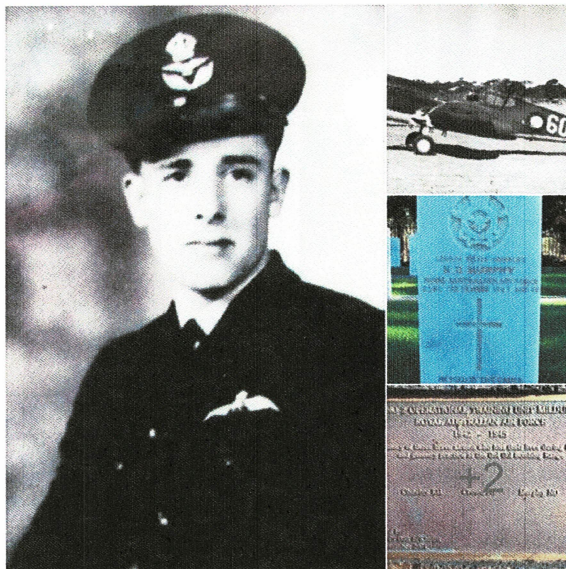
- Sam Arthurson
Maggie Murphy 13m
Geoff Benny 13h
Terry Bush 2d
Mark Horsburgh 34m
Louise Thornton 1d
Donal Craig 1h
Guy Murphy 6h
Jacqueline Ash 1h
Lucy Whipps
Sam Harnett 1h
Nat Esterhuizen 1h
Dominic Shepley 2h
Desi Zed
James Smith 13h
Matt Bunder 5m
Dorothy Harcourt 16h

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1943. P/O N.D. Murphy entered into No.23 Fighter Operational Training Course on Wirraways with 52 other pupils on the 9th, completing this course on the 30th which followed in to No.23 Fighter Operational Conversion Course on Kittyhawks that was to be completed on Friday the 8th of October, however only to be tragically killed 15 days short of completing this Course on Thursday the 23rd of September.

P/O N.D. Murphy aged 19 was buried by RAAF (P/T) Chaplain Rev. A.C. Day in grave C.A. 9 at the War Graves Section of the Mildura Cemetery on the 26th of September 1943, with full RAAF Honours with his parents attending the service. He is memorialized on a Memorial in the Riverside Gardens at Gol Gol, on the Wall of Remembrance - North Terrace/Kintore Avenue Adelaide on Panel 7 on the right wing, the RAAF Memorial at the Mildura Airport and at the AWM on Panel 112 - Anthony

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Lest We Forget



17

Chronological

Wayne T Murphy This is the best information I've ever had about my Cousin Neville Douglas Murphy. I was 2 years and four days old when he died.
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 10 mins

Wayne T Murphy I understand that there are markers on the Gol Gol range where the tragedies occurred. If there are any location plans, please Email to wayne@waymag.com.au
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 7 mins


















Status

Mildura 2 OTU Heritage Inc added 3 new photos.
February 6, 2016

Very few people know just how significant the RAAF No 2 Operational Fighter Training Unit Mildura was; located at the current Mildura Airport this was the biggest Inland Fighter Training Unit in the Southern Hemisphere.

For three years from 1942 to 1945 the traffic on its historic runways made it a key part in Australia's defence network. Just about every fighter pilot who took part in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War either trained here or did a conversion and or ... [See More](#)



-  Sam Arthurson 13m
-  Maggie Murphy 13h
-  Geoff Benny 13h
-  Terry Bush 2d
-  Mark Horsburgh 34m
-  Louise Thornton 1d
-  Donal Craig 1h
-  Guy Murphy 6h
-  Jacqueline Ash 1h
-  Lucy Whipps 1h
-  Sam Harnett 1h
-  Nat Esterhuizen 1h
-  Dominic Shepley 2h
-  Desi Zed 13h
-  James Smith 13h
-  Matt Bunder 5m
-  Dorothy Harcourt 16h

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