



Flight Lieutenant J.B. RIDDALL

[1905 – 1990]

Research has not revealed an image of Flight Lieutenant Riddall.

Flight Lieutenant Riddall was the Secretary of the Club from 1949 to 1952

John Boyd Riddall was born in Manchester, England on 5 April 1905. His father, Glasgow-born Thomas Boyd Riddall [b.1868] was a physician and surgeon; his mother was Mary Louisa [b.1877]. John had two sisters - an elder, Mary Joanna [b.1904] and a younger, Elizabeth [b.1911]. The family employed a governess and two maidservants.

John came to Australia on “Balranald” ex London to Sydney in September 1928 as a “clerk”.

He married Shirley Constance (née Barnett) [1907-1993] at North Sydney in 1935. She had been born in Sydney. They lived in Mosman, Sydney; Gunnedah and Newcastle; and after the war in Hamilton and Taringa. It is not known if they had any children.

In February 1939 in Gunnedah NSW, he enlisted in the Militia – # 482237, in C Company 33rd Battalion – centred on the New England region.

At the time he was employed as the Accountant for the Gunnedah Freezing Works. This may have been a temporary appointment as his address was listed as the Park View Hotel.

He disclosed that he had served in the OTC (Officer Training Corps) in England – which indicates that he may have studied at university in England in the early 1920s.

He transferred to the Reserve in January 1940.

In February 1942 he enlisted in the RAAF in Newcastle, NSW. His number of O16099 indicates that he was an officer in ground crew.

He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in May 1942 after attending No.19 Administrative and Special Duties Course.

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

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He was promoted a Flying Officer in the RAAF Administrative and Special Duties Branch in November 1942.

He was appointed Acting Flight Lieutenant in July 1944.

It appears that Riddall may have been trained as a Japanese linguist in his RAAF service. The Townsville Bulletin carried a story on 10 October 1945 citing "...Probably the first Australian ashore in Japan was Flight Lieutenant J. B. Riddall, R.A.A.F., of Mosman who went in with the first detachment, U.S. Translator and Interpreter Section. Riddall drove a jeep through the Emperor's Palace Gardens, to the astonishment of the Imperial Guards."

The Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) was formed by General McArthur in Melbourne in 1942 with an initial staff of 9 US and 17 Australian personnel. It then moved to Indooroopilly and followed McArthur's HQ northwards. By mid-1945 it had over 4,000 staff.

Riddall's wartime appointment was terminated in January 1946.

His appointment to Temporary Flight Lieutenant was effective in June 1949 on the Active List of the Citizens Air Force.

At the end of 1948, he was appointed Secretary of the Club, succeeding Commander Feldt who had stepped into the role temporarily in June of that year on the retirement of Captain L.G. Hitchcock.

The April 1952 meeting of the Club Committee appointed Major A. W. Booth as Secretary, to succeed the retiring Flight Lieutenant Riddall. John had resigned to take up the role of Office Manager at George Tickle & Co., Brisbane. Tickle was a well-established Brisbane retail distribution and warehousing business which later became Queensland Independent Wholesalers.

By the 1960s John and Shirley had moved to Victoria where they lived at Auburn and then Ivanhoe – he was employed as a company secretary.

By the 1970s John and Shirley had retired back to Brisbane.

Flight Lieutenant Riddall died on 8 Feb 1990 aged 84 and was buried at Caboolture.

During his tenure, Flight Lieutenant Riddall served Presidents Reid, McIntyre, and Amies.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents
- NAA, DVA records