

FlyPast Spotlight

Lockheed Hudson

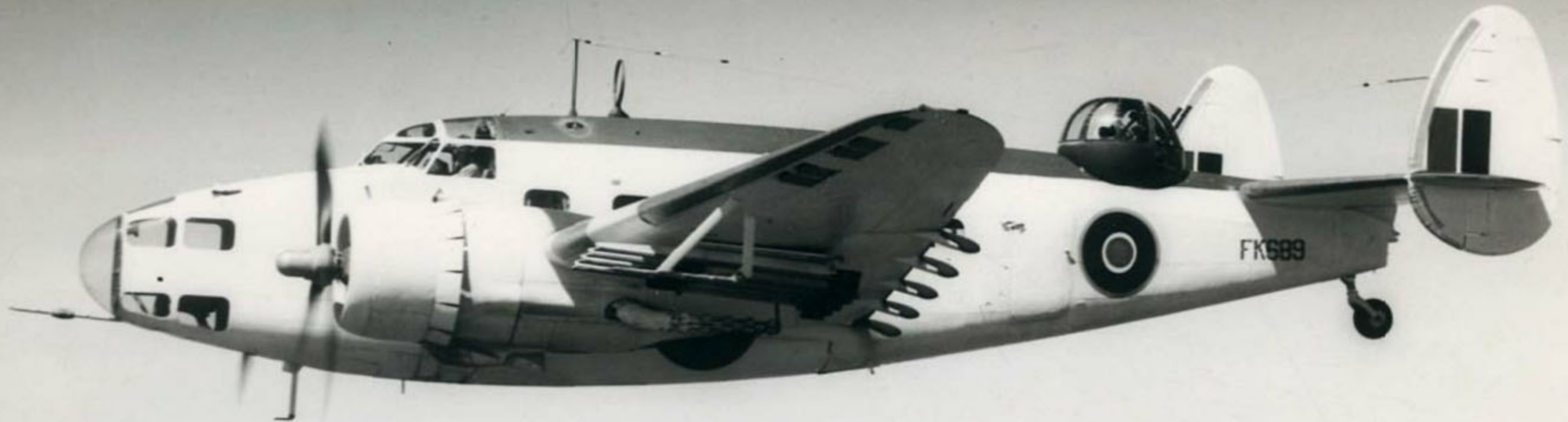
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Main picture
The Temora Aviation Museum's New South Wales-based Hudson III A16-112 (VH-KOY), the world's only airworthy example.
KEY-DUNCAN CUBITT

This month's *Spotlight* shines on one of the most versatile aircraft of World War Two – the Lockheed Hudson



The Lockheed Hudson

Originating from a pre-war design, the Lockheed Hudson served throughout the conflict. We look at its history

Above
Hudson VI FK689 operated with 301 Ferry Training Unit and 500 Squadron during World War Two.

Right
Lockheed Hudson A-28 (Mk.V) AM898.

One of the most durable and trusted aircraft of World War Two, the Lockheed Hudson was used in numerous roles throughout the war. It served as a bomber, reconnaissance aircraft, trainer, transport, and in an anti-submarine capacity, giving some idea of its versatility. Although designed and built in the US, it was primarily operated by the RAF whose initial request for 200 surpassed any previous order the pre-war Lockheed had received.

Aeronautical innovator Clarence 'Kelly' Johnson – who later went on to play major roles in the development of the Lockheed U-2 and SR-71 reconnaissance jets – is often credited with the design of the Hudson, but the bomber actually owes its creation to an earlier machine.

Lockheed had flown its Model 10 Electra for the first time on February 23, 1934. The sleek all-metal monoplane airliner was designed by Hall Hibbard, though Johnson certainly contributed. The distinctive, twin-finned H-shaped tail that was to feature on the



Hudson was his idea, following wind tunnel tests. The resulting Electra is often remembered today as the type in which Amelia Earhart made her ill-fated round-the-world expedition in 1937.

The Model 10 was soon developed into the Super Electra, which made its first flight on July 29, 1937. This scaled-up version of the Model 10 was the civil aircraft on which the Hudson was based. A Lockheed cutaway illustration, showing a Super Electra converted into a light bomber, prompted much interest in the years before the war. The RAF in particular was seeking a maritime patrol aircraft to support its existing Avro Anson. Thus, on December 10, 1938, Lockheed debuted its military version of the airliner. Already proven in aeronautical terms, it rapidly went into production as the Hudson Mk.I

First blood

Hudsons were already in service with the RAF when war broke out. The first batch had been delivered in February 1939, equipping 224 Squadron at Leuchars, Scotland, in May of that year. Seventy-eight were in use at the start of hostilities.

Due to US neutrality, the Hudsons had firstly to be flown from the factory to airfields close to the Canadian border. Having landed, they were then towed over the border into Canada, before being flown to RCAF airfields. From there they were dismantled for transportation by ship to Liverpool. The Boulton Paul dorsal turrets were installed on arrival in the UK.

The pace of technological development during the war years ensured that the Hudson and its contemporaries would soon be outclassed by larger bombers.

SPOT FACT A Focke-Wulf Fw200 was shot down by a Hudson on July 23, 1941

Origin & history

Along with similarly light, twin-engined machines such as the Bristol Blenheim, Hudsons were vulnerable to enemy fighters, especially during daylight raids. That said, they also achieved some significant successes.

A Lockheed Hudson was the somewhat unlikely provider of the RAF's first 'kill' of the war. Over Jutland, Denmark, Flt Lt Womersley was flying N7217 of 224 Squadron and shot down a Dornier Do 18 into the sea on October 8, 1939. Womersley then signalled to nearby Danish vessel *Teddy* which located and rescued the German crew. Hudsons also flew as top cover during the British evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940.

Global warrior

A total of 350 Mk.IIs were built for the RAF, along with 20 Mk.IIs which were supplied with different propellers. Both versions were defended by two 0.303in Browning machine-guns in the turret, plus two fixed in the nose.

The Mk.III added three further Brownings (two beam and one ventral) and upgraded the 1,100hp (820kW) Wright Cyclone radials to 1,200hp (895kW) units. Both the Mk.V and VI swapped these for 1,200hp Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp 14-cylinder radials. The USAAF, who began to operate the Hudson from 1941, designated the Cyclone-powered variant as the A-29 and the Twin Wasp version as the A-28.

The US Navy operated 20 of the latter, calling it the PBO-1.

One of these, operating with VP-82, became the first US aircraft to destroy a German submarine when it sank *U-656* off Newfoundland, Canada, on March 1, 1942. In another first, Hudson 625 of 113 Squadron (RCAF) sank *U-754* on July 31, 1942 – the first submarine to be claimed by RCAF Eastern Command.

Based in the UK, Hudson units of both the RAF and RCAF flew hazardous missions against German shipping and coastal defences (see pages 74-75), and 82 Hudsons from Coastal Command took part in the Thousand Bomber Raid on Bremen on the night of June 25/26, 1942. The latter were intended to make diversionary attacks on the U-boat yards at Deschimag. Cloud cover meant it was impossible to pinpoint the intended target, so bombs were instead dropped in the vicinity of existing fires in Bremen.

In the Far East, it was Hudsons of No.1 Squadron RAAF that made the first Allied attack of the Pacific War. In reply to Japanese raids on Malaya, the unit sank a transport ship, the *Awazisan Maru* off Kota Bharu. The operation took place approximately one hour before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941.

Hudsons were also the first RNZAF aircraft to see combat in the Pacific theatre. Flying NZ2049 on November 23, 1942, Fg Off

George Gudsell was engaged by three Japanese fighters after spotting an enemy



A trio of Lockheed Venturas.

A Family Affair

While the Hudson was the most significant from a military point of view, it was part of a larger 'family' of aircraft. The Hudson's 'sister' was the Lodestar, also developed from the Super Electra. Introduced in March 1940, it was intended for civilian use but many were flown as military transports by the USAAF, US Navy and (via Lend-Lease) the RNZAF. A single Lodestar served with the Israeli Air Force during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

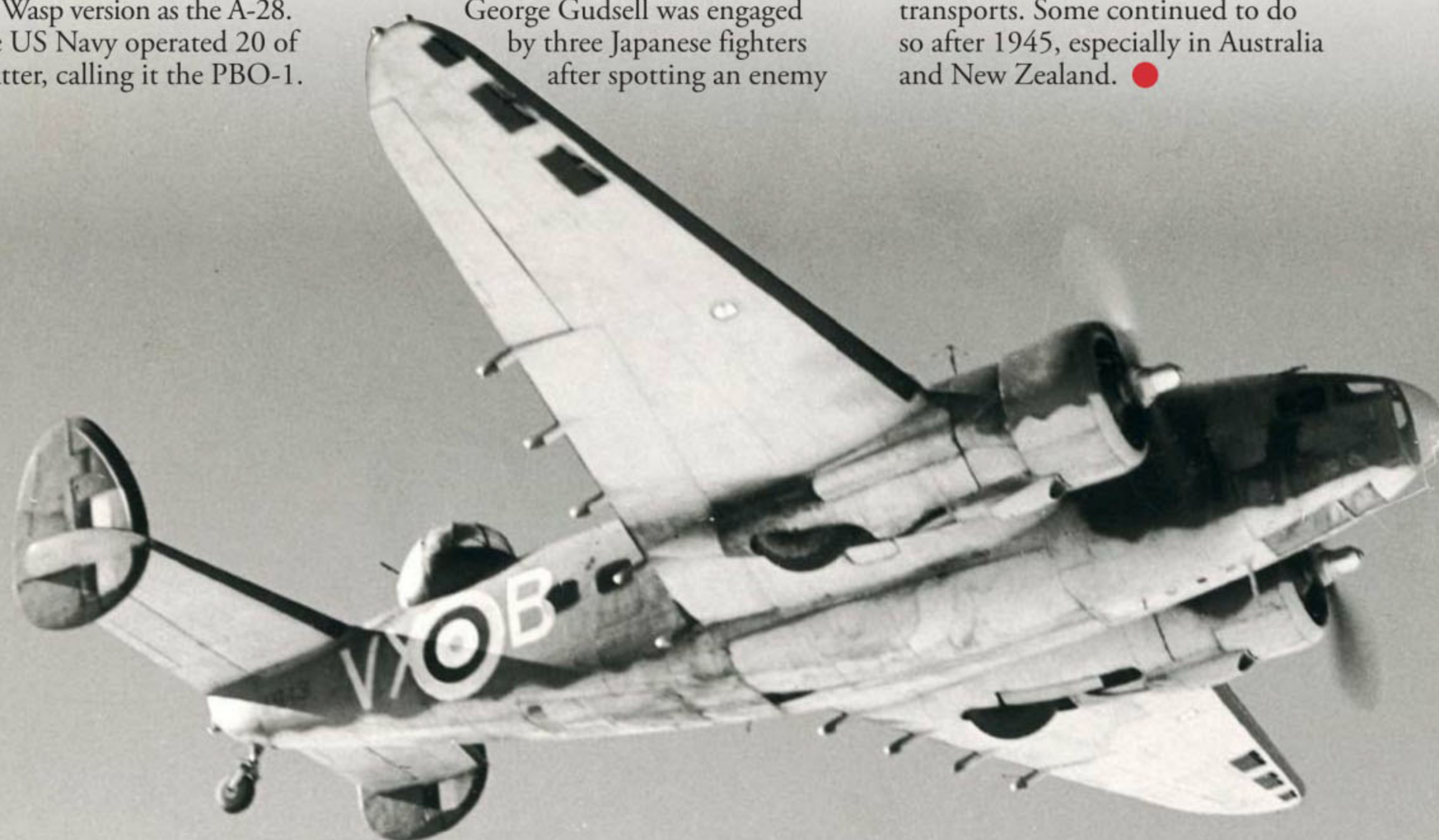
From the Hudson and Lodestar came the Ventura, a larger and heavier machine originally used as a bomber and patrol aircraft. The naval PV-2 Harpoon had an increased wing area and load carrying capability. The family tree did not end with the cessation of hostilities. The civilian Super Ventura airliner included an extended fuselage, larger windows and extra fuel capacity.

Based on the Ventura, but in fact a substantially different design, was the Howard 500, first flown in September 1959. A luxurious executive transport, it could accommodate up to 14 passengers, but only 22 were built.

convoy near Vella Lavella, one of the Solomon Islands. Flying at extremely low level, George managed to evade the interceptors, returning to Henderson Field on Guadalcanal with no casualties.

By mid-1944, Hudsons were being withdrawn from frontline service, though many still served as transports. Some continued to do so after 1945, especially in Australia and New Zealand. ●

Below
Hudson III T9431 'VX-B' of 206 Squadron. This aircraft was lost when it crashed on take-off at Aldergrove, Co Antrim, on April 8, 1942.



Spotlight

Lockheed Hudson

Striking back

The Lockheed Hudson enabled Allied crews to hit hard and at low level, but it had no shortage of rivals

With war imminent, the race was on to produce the weapons that would win it.

For some manufacturers this meant designing completely new aircraft, while others sought to adapt existing machines to military purposes.

The Lockheed Hudson was among the latter and, unlike most of its contemporaries, it flew throughout the war and was used extensively in the conflict's early years. The Hudson was an adapted, militarised version of Lockheed's civilian Super Electra. Proving tough and versatile, it served in many different roles, ranging from anti-submarine duties to transport and training.

Britain had several twin-engined aircraft in the light and medium bomber roles, although most of these

were already outdated by the time they were needed. Like the Hudson, the Bristol Blenheim was originally designed as a civilian aircraft, after Lord Rothermere, owner of the *Daily Mail* newspaper, challenged the British aviation industry to build a fast aircraft capable of carrying six passengers.

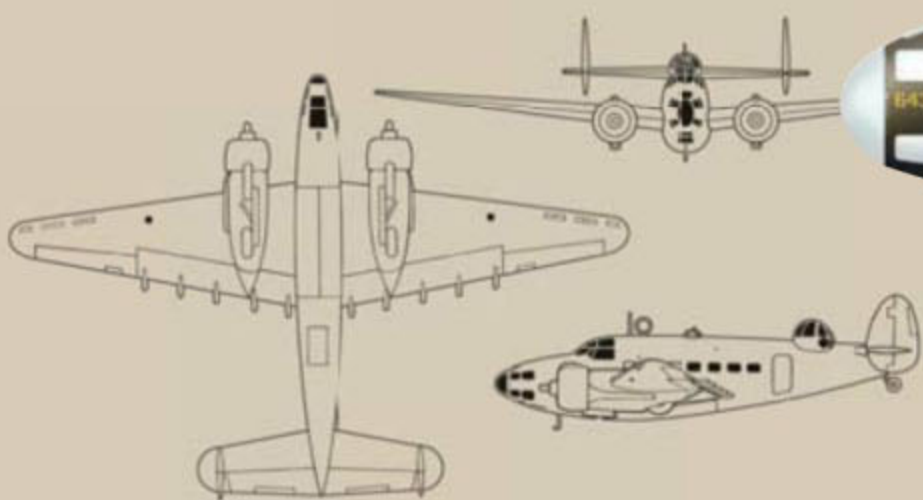
Ironically, although quick when it first entered service, it was the Blenheim's lack of speed that made it vulnerable, and soon confined it to night duties. It was faster than the Hudson, but the latter was more robust and could carry a greater bomb load. Germany's Junkers Ju 88 predated the Hudson, flying for the first time in December 1936. Though little bigger, it could carry a far greater bomb load over similar or longer distances. Along with the Dornier Do

17, it was a huge success and went on to be built in vast numbers.

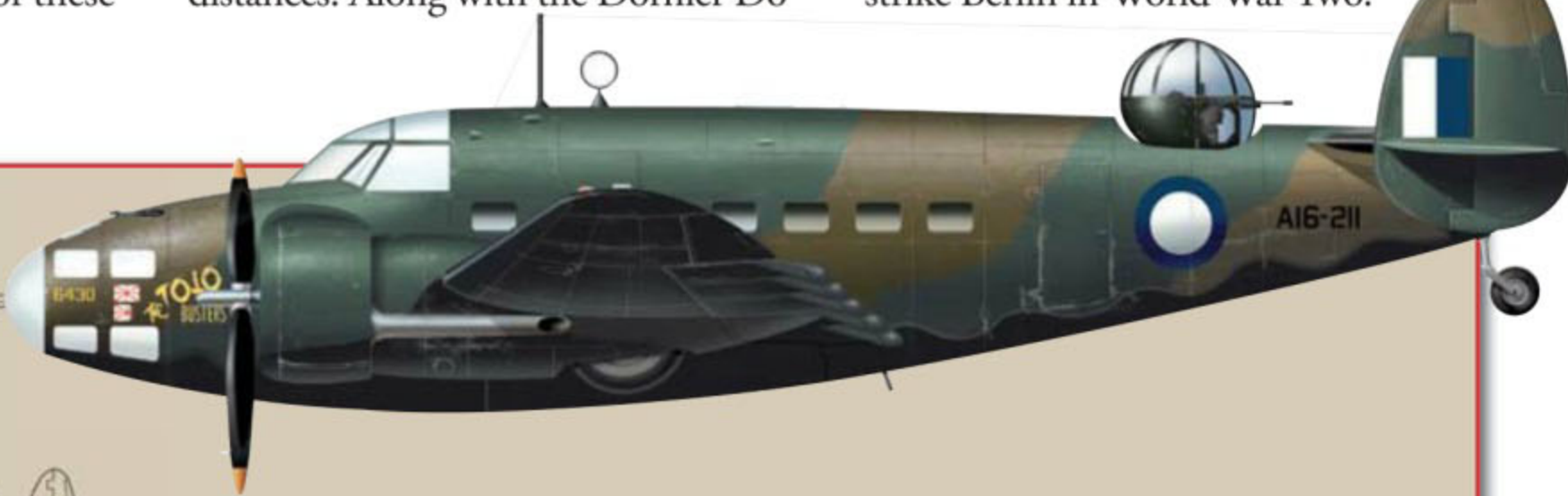
Other than the Hudson, relatively few land-based light strike types emerged from the US in the late 1930s. Later, the North American B-25 Mitchell and Douglas A-20/DB-7 Boston became two of the best-known. These could outperform the Lockheed, but both were entirely new machines of war rather than adaptations of existing aircraft.

Italy had a small measure of success with the Fiat BR.20 Cicogna which went on to serve (briefly and disastrously) in the Battle of Britain. The Soviet Union also debuted a new medium bomber in 1936, the Ilyushin DB-3 (later renamed the Il-4). It could carry a similar payload to the Junkers and was the first Soviet aircraft to strike Berlin in World War Two.

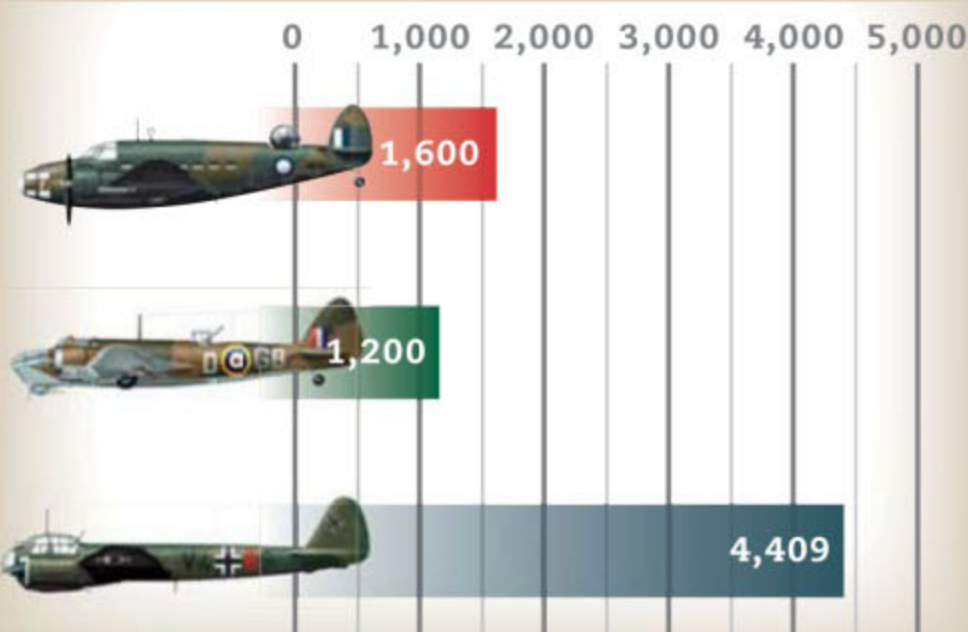
Lockheed Hudson III



Above right
Lockheed Hudson III A16-211 from 2
Squadron RAAF. PETE WEST 2012



AT A GLANCE: BOMB LOAD (lbs)



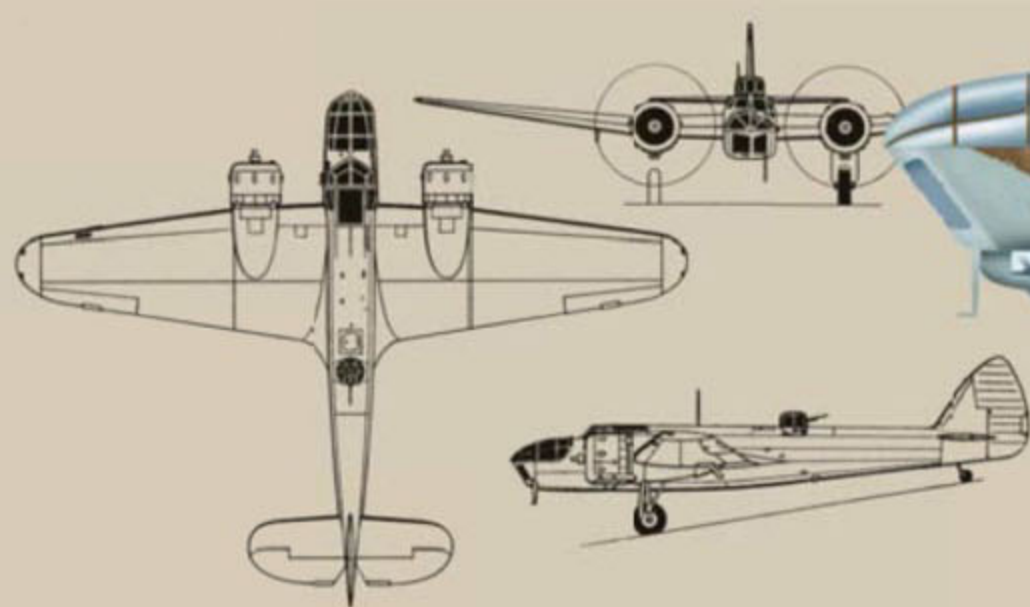
- Construction:** A total of 2,941 Hudsons of all types were built including 428 Mk.III and 800 A-29/Mk.IIIa variants.
- First flight:** The military version of the Super Electra civilian aircraft, the Hudson first flew on December 10, 1938.
- Powerplant:** Two 1,200hp (895kW) Pratt & Whitney R-1820-G205A radials.
- Dimension:** Span 65ft 6in (19.96m), length 44ft 4in, height 10ft 11in, wing area 551ft² (51.2m²).
- Weight:** Empty 13,160lb (5,969kg). Maximum loaded weight 20,000lb.
- Performance:** Max speed 252mph (405km/h) at 15,000ft (4,572m). Initial climb 1,200ft per minute. Service ceiling 25,000ft. Range 1,355 miles (2,183km) or 780 miles with maximum load.
- Armament:** Up to seven 0.303in machine guns in nose, dorsal turret, plus optional ventral and beam positions. Maximum bomb load 1,600lb (726kg).
- Crew:** Four - pilot, navigator, radio operator/gunner, gunner.

Note: performance and weights varied according to role and configuration.

SPOT FACT Its civilian predecessor, the Super Electra, first flew on July 12, 1937

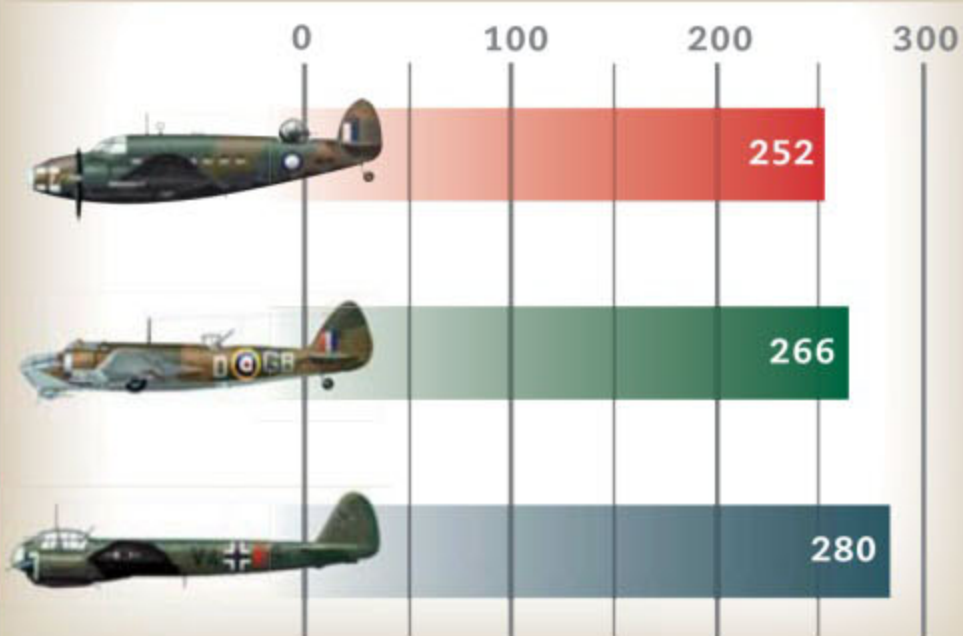
Contemporaries compared

Bristol Blenheim IV



Above right
Bristol Blenheim IV V6028 from 105 Squadron, flown by Wg Cdr Hughie Edwards VC. PETE WEST 2012

AT A GLANCE: SPEED (mph)



Construction: A total of 3,296 Mk.IVs were built in Britain by Bristol (316), Avro (750) and Rootes (2,250) plus 10 by VLT in Finland and 676 by Fairchild in Canada as the Bolingbroke.

First flight: The 'long nose' Blenheim IV first flew on September 24, 1937, as a direct development of the Mk.I.

Powerplant: Two 920hp (686kW) Bristol Mercury XV nine-cylinder radials.

Dimension: Span 56ft 4in (17.17m), length 42ft 7in, height 9ft 10in, wing area 469ft² (43.6m²).

Weight: Empty 9,790lb (4,441kg). Normal loaded weight 13,500lb.

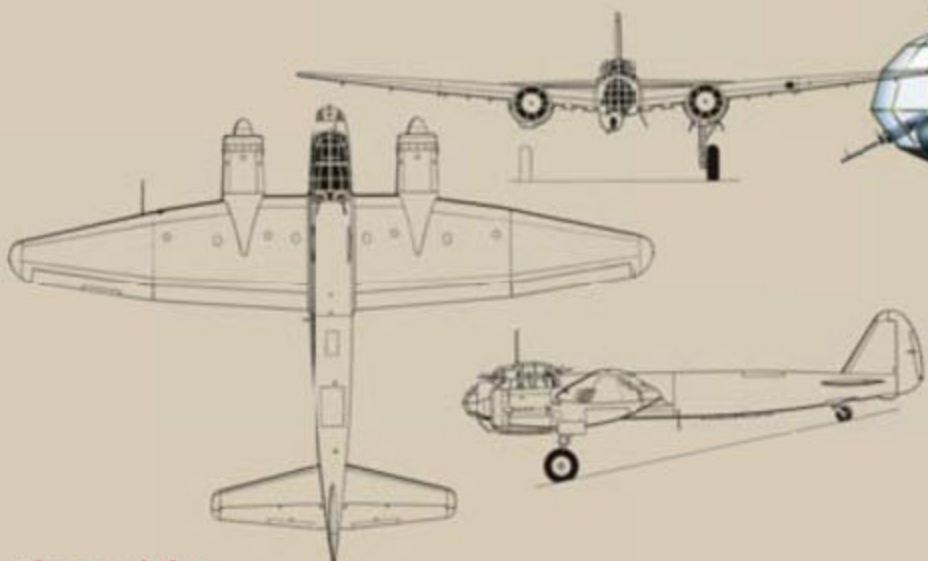
Performance: Max speed 266mph (428km/h) at 11,500ft (3,505m). Initial climb 1,500ft per minute. Service ceiling 24,600ft. Range 1,450 miles (2,333km).

Armament: One 0.303in machine gun in port wing and two in dorsal turret, with an additional one or two in under-nose blister. 1,200lb (540kg) bomb load.

Crew: Three - pilot, navigator/bomb aimer and radio operator/gunner.

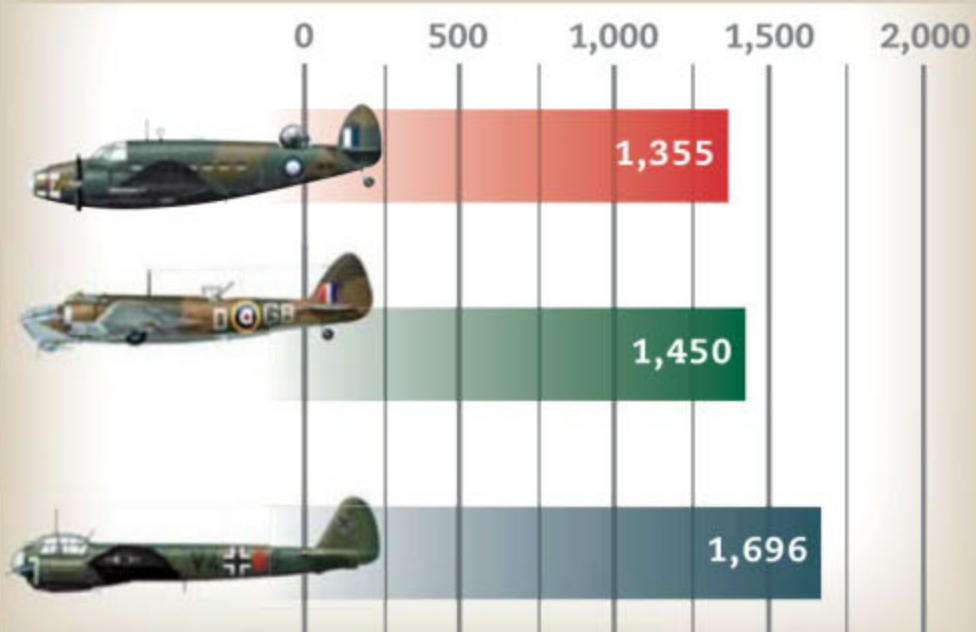
Note: performance and weights varied according to role and configuration.

Junkers Ju 88A



Above right
Junkers Ju 88A-4 V4+BS from KG 1 'Hindenburg'. PETE WEST 2012

AT A GLANCE: RANGE (miles)



Construction: Built by Junkers and sub-contractors at various locations. 14,980 were made of all models, including over 7,000 'A' variants.

First flight: December 21, 1936, by prototype D-AQEN with Capt Kindermann at the controls.

Powerplant: Two 1,200hp (895kW) Junkers Jumo 211B/G inverted V12s.

Dimension: Span 59ft 11in (18.26m), length 47ft 2in, height 15ft 11in, wing area 565ft² (52.5m²).

Weight: Empty 16,975lb (7,700kg). Maximum loaded weight 27,116lb.

Performance: Max speed 280mph (450km/h) at 18,050ft (5,500m). Cruising speed 230mph. Service ceiling 32,150ft. Range 1,696 miles (2,730km).

Armament: One 7.9mm machine gun in the nose, one machine gun in the rear cockpit and one gun in the rear ventral. Maximum bomb load 4,409lb (2,000kg).

Crew: Four - pilot, navigator/bomb aimer, radio operator/gunner and rear gunner.

Note: performance and weights varied according to role and configuration.

1 was presented to the RAF as a gift



Spotlight

**Lockheed
Hudson**

Versatile and

Reliable

Graham Pitchfork examines the exploits of Hudson pilots in a variety of roles



Maritime patrol was one of the roles where there was an urgent need to procure more aircraft for the rapidly-expanding RAF of the late 1930s. In April 1938, a British Purchasing Commission, which included Air Commodore Arthur T Harris, later the Bomber Command chief, visited the USA to examine American designs with a view to possible purchase.

As a result of the commission's recommendations, an initial order for 200 Lockheed Hudsons was placed on June 22. The first arrived in the UK in April 1939 and, in the first weeks of May, the Hudson Training Flight (HTF) was established at Leuchars in Scotland.

Hudson crews provided a vital contribution, particularly during the early years of the U-boat war. But the type's involvement was not limited to maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare. Hudsons also took part, at great cost, in the

'Thousand Bomber' raids deep into Germany. They also excelled in the role of long-range special duties work and in hazardous transports. The exploits of five Hudson pilots well illustrate this versatility.

Dunkirk beaches

Fg Off Derek Hodgkinson joined the RAF on a short-service commission in 1936, and on completion of his flying training, he was instructed in the general reconnaissance role before joining the Anson-equipped 220 Squadron at Bircham Newton in Norfolk. This was to be the third Coastal Command unit to be re-equipped with the Hudson, in anticipation of which Hodgkinson was sent to Leuchars to join the HTF.

After conversion, five instructors remained with the flight to train pilots for the first two squadrons: 224 and 233. Having moved to its war station at Thornaby on Teesside, No.220 starting to receive Hudsons, and Hodgkinson returned to the unit to supervise the converting of the unit's Anson pilots to the new American type.

Once the first crews were operational in the early months of the war, the squadron maintained

Coastal Command Hudson Squadrons

| No. | From | To | Replaced by |
|-----|----------|----------|-------------------|
| 48 | Jun 1941 | Feb 1944 | Dakota |
| 53 | Jul 1941 | Feb 1943 | Whitley |
| 59 | Jul 1941 | Aug 1942 | Liberator |
| 206 | Mar 1940 | Aug 1942 | Fortress |
| 220 | Sep 1939 | Apr 1942 | Fortress |
| 224 | May 1939 | Jul 1942 | Liberator |
| 233 | Aug 1940 | May 1944 | Dakota |
| 251 | Aug 1944 | Aug 1945 | Fortress, Warwick |
| 269 | Mar 1940 | Jul 1945 | Walrus, Warwick |
| 320 | Oct 1940 | Mar 1943 | Mitchell |
| 407 | Jun 1941 | Apr 1943 | Wellington |
| 608 | Jul 1941 | Jul 1944 | Mosquito |

a Battle Flight of three aircraft. During November 1939, Hodgkinson took off on a number of occasions to investigate German maritime reconnaissance aircraft, which usually shied away once the Hudsons were sighted.

On November 25, 1939 he was tasked to find the British submarine *Triad*, which the Admiralty believed was in trouble off the Norwegian coast in very rough seas. He located the submarine and over the next few days monitored its laboured progress until a destroyer arrived to take it in tow. ➔

Left to right
Ken Tarrant (centre) with two of his crew and two rescued seamen.

Derek Hodgkinson DFC.

A Hudson over the Dunkirk beaches.



SPOT FACT Hudsons sighted the German prison ship 'Altmark' leading to its capture



Above
A Hudson I running up on the chocks.

Right
Hudsons on low-level patrol.

For the next few months he patrolled an area stretching from Heligoland Bight in the south to Stavanger in the north. Following the German invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940, activity increased and sorties were flown off the Norwegian coast in addition to supporting convoys which came under increasing attack. On April 6 he was off the Danish coast when Messerschmitt Bf 110s appeared – and 220 lost its first Hudson when one was shot down.

Following the German invasion of the Low Countries and France, on May 10, 1940 operations were increased and Hodgkinson flew convoy escort and anti-submarine sorties. On the 19th he searched for motor torpedo boats in the southern North Sea, and on the 28th the squadron was detached to Bircham Newton for constant patrols over the English Channel to support the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from the Dunkirk beaches. On the 29th, Hodgkinson led three aircraft to the area and on return commented: “The beaches at Dunkirk were so crowded the troops make an easy target for enemy aircraft.”

Target: Bremen

Throughout the rest of 1940, Hodgkinson flew many patrols over the North Sea, and later in the year his squadron commenced attacks against installations in Norway. On November 15 he had just left the Danish coast when he sighted a Heinkel He 115 floatplane flying at



“Hodgkinson’s aircraft was set on fire by an enemy night-fighter. Despite being wounded he managed to ditch his blazing Hudson in the sea”

100ft (30m). He turned and opened fire at 300 yards (274m) with his forward-firing guns.

Inaccurate return fire was encountered but Hodgkinson closed to 150 yards and all the Hudson’s guns were brought into action. The port engine of the He 115 burst into flames and it crashed into the sea. The wreckage and the survivors were photographed before the Hudson headed for base.

On the 25th he hit Kristiansand

airfield with four 250lb (113kg) bombs and in January 1941 he attacked an 800-ton merchant vessel. It was his last ‘op’ with the squadron before he left to be an instructor on 1 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit at Silloth in Cumberland. For his services with 220, Hodgkinson was awarded the DFC. He served as a flight commander on the OTU and his long service at Silloth resulted in an AFC, but he would not be in



England to receive it.

In the spring of 1942, Air Marshal Harris, the newly-appointed AOC-in-C of Bomber Command, launched his 'Thousand Bomber' raids. To make up the numbers, he had to call on OTUs and Coastal Command. Hodgkinson and some of

his fellow instructors were ordered to form scratch crews to take part in the third of these raids, on Bremen on June 25/26, 1942. Totally unsuitable for medium-level bombing over heavily-defended German targets, five Hudsons were lost.

Hodgkinson's aircraft was set on

fire by an enemy night-fighter. Despite being wounded he managed to ditch his blazing Hudson in the sea. It immediately sank, but he escaped and clung to the only piece of wreckage afloat, one of the main wheels, to which his badly injured navigator was also hanging on. The rest of his crew perished.

As the two men's endurance faded in the rough sea, the Lockheed's dinghy suddenly appeared and they clambered in. Next morning they were washed ashore on a Dutch island and taken prisoner.

Shipping strikes

Just before Hodgkinson left 220 Squadron, Plt Off Ken Tarrant joined from the OTU. Initially as the second pilot in one of the four-man crews, he flew his first operation on January 27, 1941. Three aircraft of the battle flight took off at 10:50 hours and headed for the Danish coast where, 100 miles (160km) to the west of Esbjerg, two merchant vessels were sighted.

As the trio approached at low level to investigate, one vessel fired a red flare and turned. The Hudsons climbed to 2,500ft ready for

Off to Stalag Luft III

After recovering in hospital, Derek Hodgkinson was sent to Stalag Luft III where he spent the rest of the war. He remained in the post-war RAF and rose steadily through the ranks, eventually retiring in 1976 as an Air Chief Marshal having been appointed CBE in 1960 and KCB in 1971.

Below
A Hudson of the Silloth-based 1 (Coastal) OTU.



SPOT FACT The 1942 James Cagney film 'Captains of the Clouds' featured Hudsons



Above
James Wagland
DFC, special duties
pilot.

Above right
A Hudson of 500
Squadron off the
North African coast.

an attack. The first two had near misses but one of the 250lb bombs dropped by Tarrant exploded on a ship's bow, which was enveloped by thick smoke. The aircraft was damaged by return fire and had to make an emergency landing in a field on its return.

Operating from Wick in Scotland throughout the summer of 1941, Tarrant flew many patrols over the North Sea and along the Norwegian coast. On May 21, seven Hudsons took off to search for the German battleship *Bismarck* which had been reported leaving the Skaggeak. Poor weather prevented a sighting so Tarrant's crew dropped four 250-pounders on Bergen.

Having served his 'apprenticeship' as a second pilot, Tarrant formed his own crew in the summer. By the middle of 1941, shipping in Norwegian waters had increased as raw materials were transported from the north of the country along the coast to Denmark and on to Dutch ports before transfer to the factories of the Ruhr. These convoys, crucial to the German war machine, became primary targets together with their port facilities.

On September 24, Tarrant attacked a 6,000-ton tanker, which had a heavy naval escort, but two of his bombs hit the target. A few weeks later, the squadron raided shipping in Aalesund harbour. Despite very



heavy anti-aircraft fire, Tarrant achieved a hit on a tanker but had to take evasive action before he could assess the results.

Miraculous escape

On October 29, nine Hudsons of 220 returned to Aalesund and the AOC 18 Group, Air Vice-Marshal R Marix, flew as second pilot on this very successful operation. Tarrant obtained direct hits on a 2,000-ton vessel and then dropped incendiaries and machine-gunned a factory, starting a large fire. Seven ships were sunk or damaged and other port facilities were damaged. The Coastal Command war diary commented: "This was the most brilliant shipping attack of the war by a single squadron." Tarrant was awarded an immediate DFC.

Two days later, Tarrant and his crew had a miraculous escape. During a raid in a fjord in southern Norway, the aircraft hit the top of a small island. Tarrant managed to keep control and climb. The roof of the pilot's cabin was blown off, the pitot head was damaged and all the maps were lost. All excess equipment had to be jettisoned and, with no indication of his airspeed, Tarrant made a successful belly-landing on his return.

Tarrant and his crew were again sent to Aalesund on December 4 when they attacked a 2,500-ton merchant vessel. This was set on fire

but the aircraft was badly damaged and the port engine had to be feathered. Tarrant was wounded and unable to use his left arm. The second pilot, Plt Off Haggas, brought the Hudson back and made an emergency landing at Sumburgh in the Shetlands.

Soon after, 220 started to receive Boeing Fortress Is. After recovering from his wounds, Tarrant returned to the unit as a flight commander and in February 1943 was awarded a Bar to his DFC. After the war he remained in the RAF, retiring as a group captain in 1970.

Special duties

When James Wagland DFC arrived at Tempsford, Bedfordshire (the home of the special duties squadrons) after a short spell at HQ Bomber Command, he had completed a tour on Armstrong Whitworth Whitleys. During his time with the Whitley force, his outstanding navigational ability had come to the attention of Wg Cdr Percy Pickard, who became the irreplaceable leader of 161 Squadron. In November 1942, Wagland became 161's navigation leader, working with Pickard.

Pinpoint navigation over many hundreds of miles was the key to success for crews tasked to find the lights from five or six torches in a farmer's field. This primitive



arrangement marked the dropping or landing zone for delivering supplies and agents to enemy-occupied Europe.

Operations mounted by the two resident squadrons, 138 and 161, ranged from Norway to the south of France. Wagland was responsible for planning and co-ordinating the complex and dangerous routes and providing detailed advice to the crews.

Not content with just fulfilling his crucial ground duties, he took part in many 'ops' with both squadrons, sometimes flying long-range sorties in converted Halifax bombers to Poland and Norway, and at other times piloting Hudsons and Lysanders to land in rough fields in France.

Wagland's early sorties to France in a Hudson were flown with Tempsford's station commander, Gp Capt 'Mouse' Fielden – also captain of the King's Flight. On the night of May 15/16, 1943 they embarked on an operation, but the weather thwarted them. A second attempt four nights later succeeded. The large field was found and the Hudson landed and unloaded three passengers and stores. With insufficient time left for a return in darkness, Fielden decided to head for Algeria.

During the moonlight period of July, Fielden and Wagland were once again forced to fly on to Algeria. They were taking two agents to a field south of Lyon when Fielden dived towards the ground because he thought he had seen a fighter. Wagland commented later: "This did not help navigation."

Legion d'Honneur

Wagland flew most of his sorties to France with the squadron commander, Wg Cdr Bob Hodges (later ACM Sir Lewis Hodges). On the night of September 14/15 they took eight 'Joes', as their unidentified passengers were known, to a field near Cosne. Some passengers for the return flight failed to arrive on time and Hodges had to leave the engines running for fear that if stopped, they may not restart. After ten anxious minutes he decided to take-off with the four who had arrived.

On October 18, Hodges and Wagland, accompanied by a second Hudson, flew to a field near Lons-le-Saunier where Paul Riviere had 18 passengers for England. Using the bends in the River Loire as a final navigation checkpoint, Wagland

led the two aircraft to the torch-lit field. Hodges landed first, dropped off his passengers, collected those for England and took-off again after just three minutes on the ground.

In 1948, the President of France, Vincent Auriol, came to London on a state visit. He asked if it would be possible to trace the crew who had brought him out of France five years earlier. Two years later, Wagland and Hodges were summoned to the French Embassy where they were invested as Officers of the Legion d'Honneur.

The moon period in November saw Hodges and Wagland on Operation Conjurer fly to a field near Anger. Five passengers and eight packages were dropped off and ten passengers were picked up and returned to England.

Conjurer had an interesting and important outcome. Hodges and Wagland reported: "A very straightforward operation and the reception committee was excellent." Unknown to the crew, the whole thing was being observed by the German intelligence service and a few days later four of the passengers were arrested in Paris by the Gestapo. Responsible for organising the reception was the controversial Henri Dericourt: after the war, there was much speculation that he had been working for the Germans.

Wagland was always seeking ways to ease the navigation workload, particularly for the Lysander pilots who flew alone. The radar navigation aid 'Gee' was fitted to a Hudson and Hodges and Wagland set off for France, but the set interfered with the compass and they had to return when they ran into foul weather over the Loire.

The next night they flew

Outstanding navigator

For his services at Tempsford, James Wagland was awarded a Bar to the DFC for "his outstanding navigational ability, skill and determination". He left the RAF at the end of the war as a squadron leader.

*Below
Hudsons of 216 Squadron
in the Western Desert.
Note the turrets have
been removed.*



SPOT FACT The Mk.IIIA was the most widely produced variant



Above
Lew Cody DFC AFC DFM.

Above right
Formal grouping
of 500 Squadron
personnel.

Right
Denis Spotswood,
who became Marshal
of the RAF.

the sortie without 'Gee' and delivered a 'Joe' to a field south of Poitiers where they picked up two passengers, including one of their own pilots who had been forced to abandon his Lysander a month earlier when it became bogged down in an unsuitable field.

Wagland's last Hudson sortie into France was on the night of September 5/6, 1944 but weather interfered with the landing and he diverted to Brussels, which had fallen into Allied hands two days earlier. Three passengers were disembarked.

For his services at Tempsford, Wagland was awarded a Bar to the DFC for "his outstanding navigational ability, skill and determination". He left the RAF at the end of the war as a squadron leader.



Desert deception

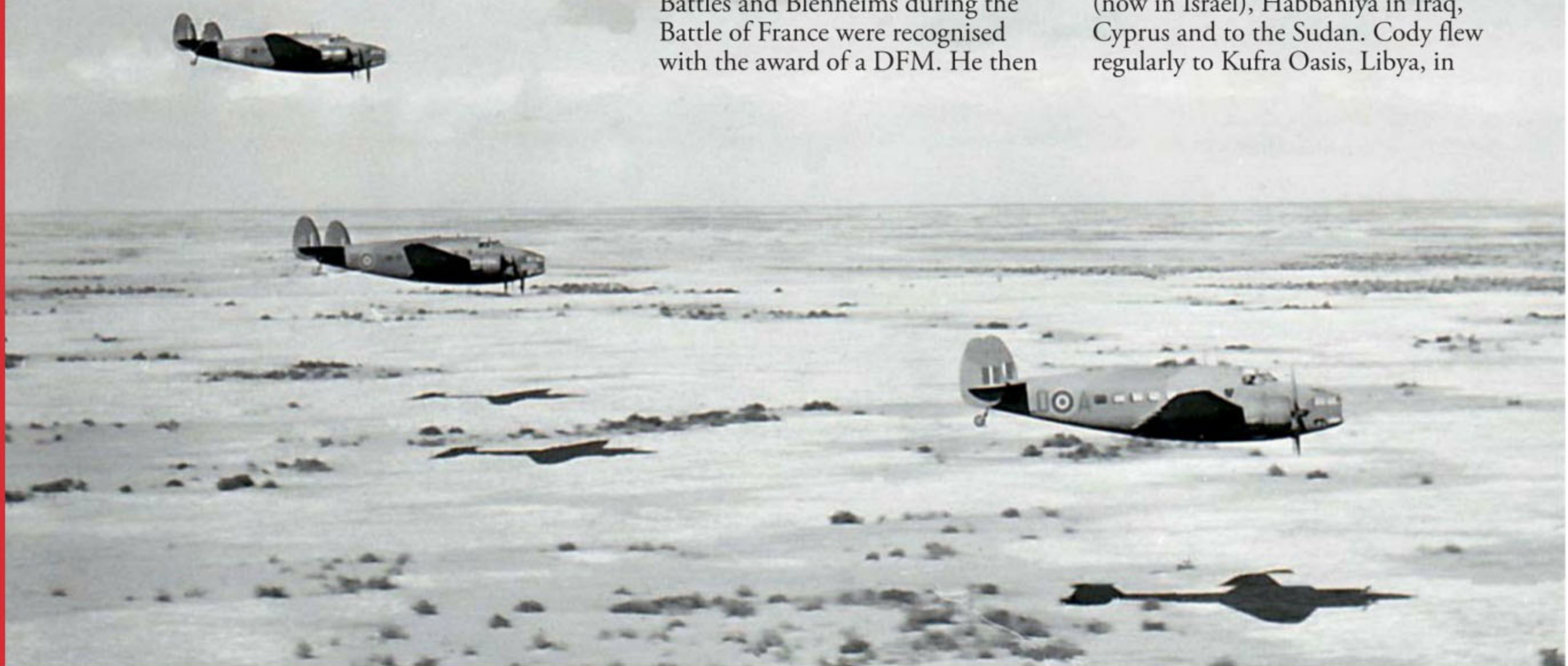
Lew Cody had joined the RAF in November 1938 and trained as an air observer. Over 30 sorties in Battles and Blenheims during the Battle of France were recognised with the award of a DFM. He then

trained as a pilot and flew a number of operations on Blenheims before converting to Hudsons. He joined a pool of pilots who left for the Middle East to reinforce the build-up of multi-engine squadrons in the theatre.

In July 1942, Cody joined the newly-formed Hudson Flight on 216 Squadron, a transport unit that had seen long and distinguished service in the Middle East. The flight operated from Khanka before moving to Cairo West airfield.

Over the next 12 months, Cody flew countless resupply and casualty evacuation sorties in support of the Eighth Army into the many forward landing grounds (LGs). On numerous occasions he landed just hours after the German forces had withdrawn and hasty mine clearing had been completed.

In addition, the Hudsons established weekly runs to Lydda (now in Israel), Habbaniya in Iraq, Cyprus and to the Sudan. Cody flew regularly to Kufra Oasis, Libya, in





support of the Long Range Desert Group; and for special forces on numerous occasions.

Cody was at the controls of EW881, the second of four Hudsons to take-off on a diversion operation as part of General Montgomery's breakout from El Alamein on October 23/24. The aircraft took off at five-minute intervals for the enemy-held airfield at Fuhia. Each was carrying eight self-destroying dummy 'parachute troops' which were dropped to divert attention from the main battle area and cause disruption among German and Italian troops in the area.

Over a period of 30 minutes each aircraft released flares and dropped 'parachutists' between Fuhia and its nearby satellite airfield. The close attention of light flak confirmed that the enemy was well aware of the 'airborne landing'. All returned safely to be congratulated by the AOC on having efficiently completed an important operation.

Behind the lines

As the Allies advanced rapidly through Mersa Matruh towards Tobruk, in mid-November it was necessary to establish a fighter wing well behind enemy lines. Cody flew in to LG.125 with supplies for the secret unit.

The routine for the rest of the year and the early part of 1943 was to re-supply the rapidly advancing armies, and the airfields at Castle Benito, Benina and Marble Arch soon became regular stopping places. During February and March, detachments of Hudsons operated from these forward LGs in support of the army.

With final victory in North

Africa, there was a continuous and demanding requirement for air transport over a huge area which now included routes to Casablanca, Algiers and Gibraltar. In addition, services were established to Karachi in the east and to Khartoum and Takoradi in the south and west. This massive requirement coincided with the arrival of Dakotas, and on May 6, Cody flew his last sortie in a Hudson.

Sub hunting

In August 1941, Denis Spotswood DFC, a very experienced Coastal Command pilot, was sent to Canada to collect a Catalina. None was available and instead he ferried a Hudson across the Atlantic – whereupon he was posted to the OTU to teach others to fly the type. Six months later, he was promoted to wing commander and appointed to lead 500 Squadron based at Stornoway in the Hebrides.

Spotswood flew his first anti-submarine patrol in a Hudson on May 17. Early on the morning of July 27, he was south of the Faroe Islands when he sighted an object on the surface which turned out to be a whale.

An hour later he was rewarded when a surfaced U-Boat was sighted and Spotswood put the Hudson into a shallow dive and approached from up-sun. The submarine dived and a depth charge was dropped on the position. He remained overhead for a further 40 minutes, but there was no further action.

At the end of August the squadron moved to St Eval in Cornwall for operations in the Bay of Biscay, but almost immediately preparations were made to move to Gibraltar

to support Operation Torch, the landings in north-west Africa.

Despite poor weather, on November 5 Spotswood led ten Hudsons on the eight-hour flight to Gibraltar. Almost immediately, the crews were in action with Fg Off Poole and his crew attacking two U-Boats on the same sortie. Once Allied troops were safely ashore after the landings in Algeria, Spotswood took six Hudsons to an airfield just outside Oran.

On the 14th, the squadron was involved in a remarkable action against U-595. The submarine had been damaged and unable to dive following the attentions of two Hudsons of 608 Squadron when six more of 500, already on patrol, were directed to the datum.

Spotswood arrived first and immediately set up an attack, despite fierce anti-aircraft fire from the surfaced sub. His aircraft was hit but continued, his forward guns firing throughout, and the depth charges fell close before he was forced to return to base with his badly-damaged machine. The other Hudsons continued the strike.

Kapitanleutnant Jurgen Quaet-Faslem recognised the hopelessness of his position and ordered all secret equipment and documents to be destroyed. He beached the crippled submarine, still defiantly firing at the Hudsons.

Hudsons of 500 Squadron played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the Allied offensive in north-west Africa. Spotswood was awarded the DSO and there were decorations for five of his pilots. He went on to be appointed Chief of the Air Staff in April 1971, retiring as a Marshal of the Royal Air Force three years later. ●

D-Day service

For his services on 216, Lew Cody was awarded the DFC. In early 1944 he returned to England, piloting Dakotas with 233 Squadron, and dropped men of the 3rd Parachute Brigade on D-Day, later towing gliders to Arnhem and on the Rhine Crossing. For landing a severely-damaged Dakota, he added an AFC to his DFC in January 1945. He remained in the RAF and spent much of his time as a flying instructor before leaving the service in 1965.

Above
A Hudson I showing the pair of nose-mounted 0.303in machine-guns.

Left
No.216 Squadron's special transport Hudsons.



Missing in action

Hudson operations against German shipping were notoriously risky. We profile one aircraft that failed to return, with artwork by **Pete West**

Lockheed Hudson V AM696 'RR-D' of 407 Squadron in 1942.
PETE WEST-2012

Right
The crew of AM696 at Bircham Newton.
Left to right: Don Foley, Daniel McCann, Norman Leckie and Mervyn Lowry. RCAF - WITH THANKS TO THE LECKIE FAMILY

During World War Two, RAF and RCAF units used the Lockheed Hudson to fly anti-submarine sorties over the North Sea, as well as to attack enemy shipping and coastal installations in occupied Denmark and Norway. For crews shot down into the sea on these hazardous operations, there was little chance of rescue.

Hudson AM696 was a Mk.V that operated with two RAF squadrons, 48 and 233, before reaching its final base, Bircham Newton in Norfolk, from which it flew with 407 'Demon' Squadron, an RCAF unit. Both 48 and 233 were engaged in operations over the North Sea. The latter moved to St Eval, Cornwall, in August 1941 to patrol the Bay of Biscay, and joined the former in Gibraltar the following year.

AM696, coded 'RR-D', continued to strike at enemy shipping with 407, which had moved

to Bircham Newton from North Coates, Lincs, in February 1942. On the morning of April 6, the aircraft took off, armed with four 250lb (113kg) bombs, for what would be its final flight. Aboard were Plt Off James 'Don' Foley, Plt Off Herman 'Mervyn' Lowry, W/O Daniel McCann (navigator) and F/Sgt Norman Leckie.

In his memoir *Gathering Of Demons*, fellow pilot Kim Abbott recalled seeing 'RR-D' for the last time: "I was flying a parallel patrol to Don (Foley) under dicey conditions. As we turned we saw a Hudson in the distance heading in the general direction of Denmark between Esbjerg and Sylt and flying a little too high. We assumed it was Don and when he was declared missing we half

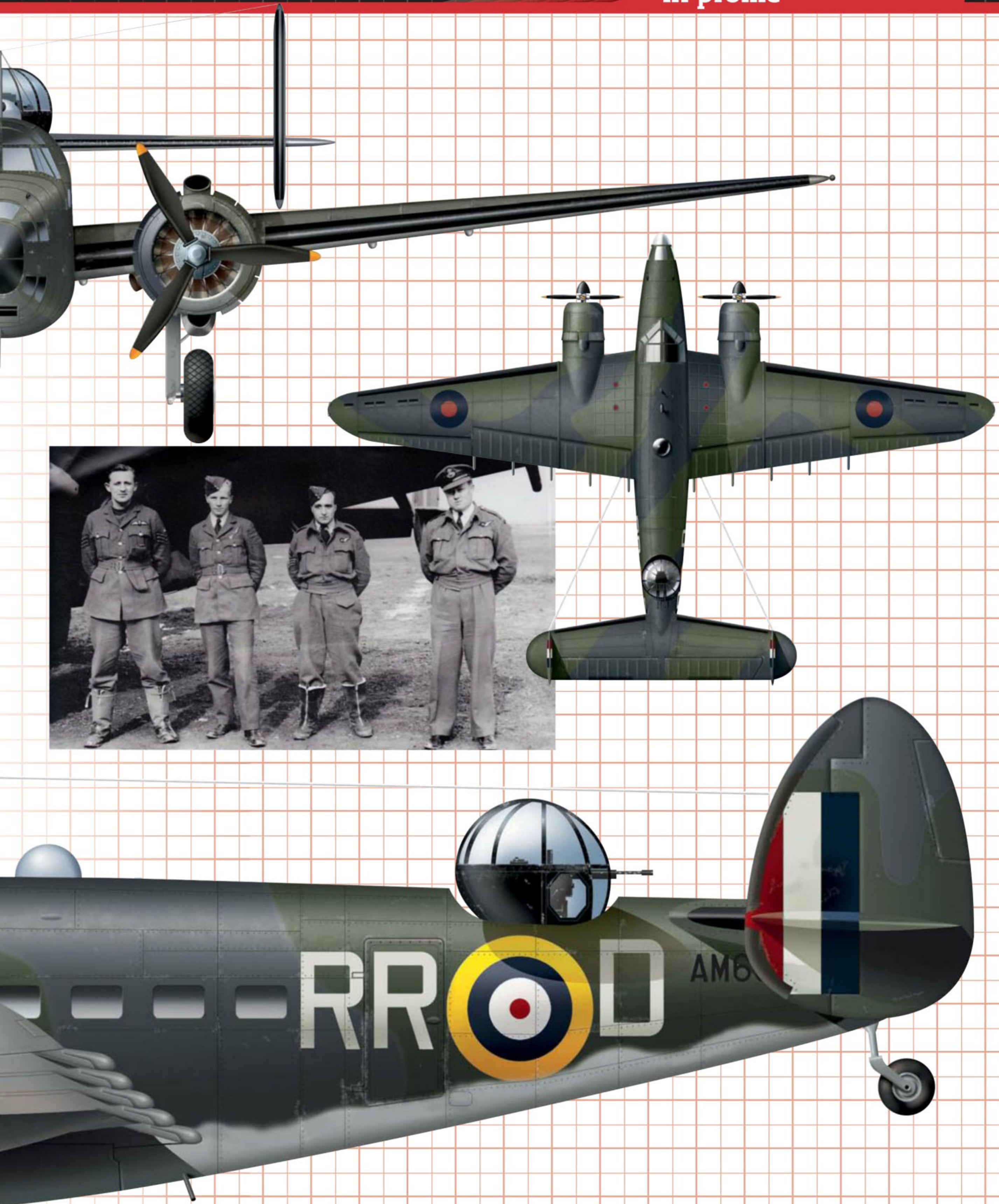
expected to hear that he had gone down over Denmark, but no further word was received."

It seems that AM696 was brought down near to the Danish coast, the Germans recovering only a set of maps bearing the name of Daniel McCann. The second crew to be lost in as many days, daylight patrols to Denmark were promptly discontinued. All four of the crew remain missing in action, and their names are recorded on the Runnymede Memorial near Egham, Surrey.



SPOT FACT 161 Squadron flew Hudsons on clandestine special duties ops

Hudson in profile



409 Mk V.s were produced

Spotlight

Lockheed Hudson

Twice a bomber



Nick Stroud profiles Hendon's much-travelled, multi-tasking, exhibit

Above
Hudson IIIA VH-AGJ in service with Adastra in the early 1960s.
KEC

Right
The only Hudson in the UK, A16-199, is displayed in the Historic Hangars at RAF Museum Hendon.
IAIN DUNCAN-RAF MUSEUM

Of the dozen or so Hudsons that survive today, the RAF Museum's example has had one of the longest and most diverse careers. It has ranged from combat in the Pacific to more peaceful duties as an aerial 'paper boy', a survey platform and frustrated 'warbird'.

Ordered under the Lend-Lease scheme in July 1941, this Hudson was completed at the Lockheed factory at Burbank, California, in January 1942, as part of a batch of Mk.IIIAs for the RAF with which it was intended to serve as FH174. Before it could be dispatched to the UK, it became one of 94 diverted for service with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Shipped to Australia on the SS *Kookaburra*, Hendon's Hudson was issued to 1 Aircraft Depot (AD) at Laverton, Victoria, on April 2 with the RAAF serial A16-199. At the end of June it was delivered to 13 Squadron RAAF, at Hughes, near Darwin, Northern Territory, the unit was in the middle of strikes on Japanese shipping and ground forces in the Netherlands East Indies.

Dishing it out

Hudson -199 was thrown into the action, and over the next nine months participated in bombing, anti-submarine and reconnaissance sorties. On December 21 with Sgt



"Piloted by former RAAF Flt Lt Lionel Van Praag, the Hudson took 73 flying hours, arriving at Strathallan on May 10"

Campbell in command, A16-199 was part of a flight involved in an armed recce, looking for a possible seaplane base in the Aroe Isles. The formation came under attack from enemy aircraft; Campbell attacked a floatplane which caught fire, while the Hudson suffered slight damage.

Better luck came on February 3, 1943, with Wg Cdr 'Jock' Wyte piloting -199 on a raid to Pobo Island in which intense flak was

experienced. A Mitsubishi F1M *Pete* observation floatplane engaged the Hudson but was shot down. Throughout this time 13 Squadron was assisting with Operation Sparrow Force dropping supplies to a behind-the-lines Australian Army unit in Timor.

No.13 was recalled to Canberra in April 1943, but A16-199 remained in theatre and was transferred to 2 Squadron RAAF, which was moving

in to the airstrip at Hughes. On May 11, 1943, the aircraft was on a shipping reconnaissance over the New Guinea coast when a Mitsubishi Ki-21 *Sally* was encountered. Despite being injured in the stomach, navigator Reg Curtis shot the bomber down, for which he was subsequently awarded the DFM.

By early April 1944 Bristol Beauforts were arriving for 2 Squadron which was by then the last Hudson unit in the RAAF. Fg Off Roger Kuring piloted A16-199 on the 8th, making the last Hudson 'op' with the unit.

The following day -199 was issued to 3 Communications Unit for transport and experimental duties with the Radio Physics Laboratory until it was sent to 2 AD at Richmond, New South Wales (NSW), for overhaul and then storage from August 1944.

Paper bomber

In late July 1946 Hudson -199 was offered, via the Commonwealth Disposals Commission, for sale and was acquired by the Macquarie Flying School of Camden, NSW, for £150 (Australian) in September 1947, but was no longer operated.

In December 1950, it was sold to John Fairfax and Sons, owners of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and was placed on the civil register as VH-SMM. Based at Mascot, Sydney, NSW, Fairfax had a fleet of Hudson IVs which air-dropped newspapers to settlements in Sydney's Outback. For commonality, *Mike-Mike* had its Wright Cyclone R-1820s replaced with Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasps and a chute was installed in the rear fuselage. This unusual work continued until VH-SMM

was withdrawn from service in May 1952.

In October 1954 the Hudson was returned to airworthiness for aerial survey work, under charter to Mascot-based Adastral Airways. The following month the engines were fitted with two-speed superchargers to enable the aircraft to undertake survey work up to 25,000ft (7,620m). *Mike-Mike* performed in this role for the next 18 years, a 'disagreement' with power cables in June 1960 notwithstanding. In June 1966 the Hudson was transferred to a subsidiary of Adastral and re-registered six months later as VH-AGJ.

Museum piece

By early 1972 VH-AGJ was in store at Mascot. It attracted the attention of Sir William Roberts for his Strathallan Aircraft Collection at Auchterarder in Scotland, which had opened in 1970. It was snapped up for just under (Aus) \$18,000 in April 1973. [The Australian dollar replaced the Australian pound in the mid-1960s – ED] *Golf-Juliet* was revived and reconditioned by the Hendon Aeroplane Company and on the 19th it left Sydney for the last time for the 12,000-mile (19,312km) flight to its new home. Piloted by former RAAF Flt Lt Lionel Van Praag, the Hudson took 73 flying hours, arriving at Strathallan on May 10. (See the table for more details.)

In Scotland, it was stripped of its Adastral colours and repainted in the markings of 13 Squadron RAAF. The plan was for it to join the flying exhibits at Strathallan and it was put on the British civil register as G-BEOX in March 1977. In July 1981 the museum offered some of

Hudson VH-AGJ's flight to the UK, 1973

| | |
|--------|--|
| Apr 19 | Left Mascot, Sydney, Australia |
| Apr 20 | Staged through Charleville and Mt Isa, Queensland, Australia |
| Apr 21 | Darwin, Northern Territories, Australia, and Kupang, Indonesia |
| Apr 22 | Sourabaya, Indonesia |
| Apr 23 | Singapore |
| Apr 24 | Bangkok, Thailand |
| Apr 25 | Calcutta, India |
| Apr 26 | Delhi, India |
| Apr 27 | Karachi, Pakistan |
| Apr 29 | Dubai and Bahrain |
| Apr 30 | Damascus, Syria |
| May 1 | Athens, Greece, and Rome, Italy |
| May 2 | Marseilles, France |
| May 4 | Gatwick, Sussex, and Prestwick, Scotland |
| May 10 | Arrived at Strathallan, Scotland |

its airframes for auction and Lot 14 was the Hudson. (Strathallan closed its doors to the public on September 30, 1988).

Having long had a Hudson on its 'shopping list', and delighted with the operational provenance of G-BEOX, the RAF Museum successfully bid £16,000 at the July 1981 auction (£64,000 at present-day values). On October 6 it arrived at Hendon, going on show the following year. Today, this much-travelled over-achiever is part of the 'Wings over the Sea' display in the Historic Hangars.

With many thanks to the tireless work of RAF Museum historian Andrew Simpson for his help.

www.rafmuseum.org

Below
Hudson A16-199 in 13 Squadron colours at Strathallan in July 1976. Note Avro Lancaster KB976 in the background, later sold to Kermit Weeks's Fantasy of Flight Museum in Florida.
MIKE STROUD



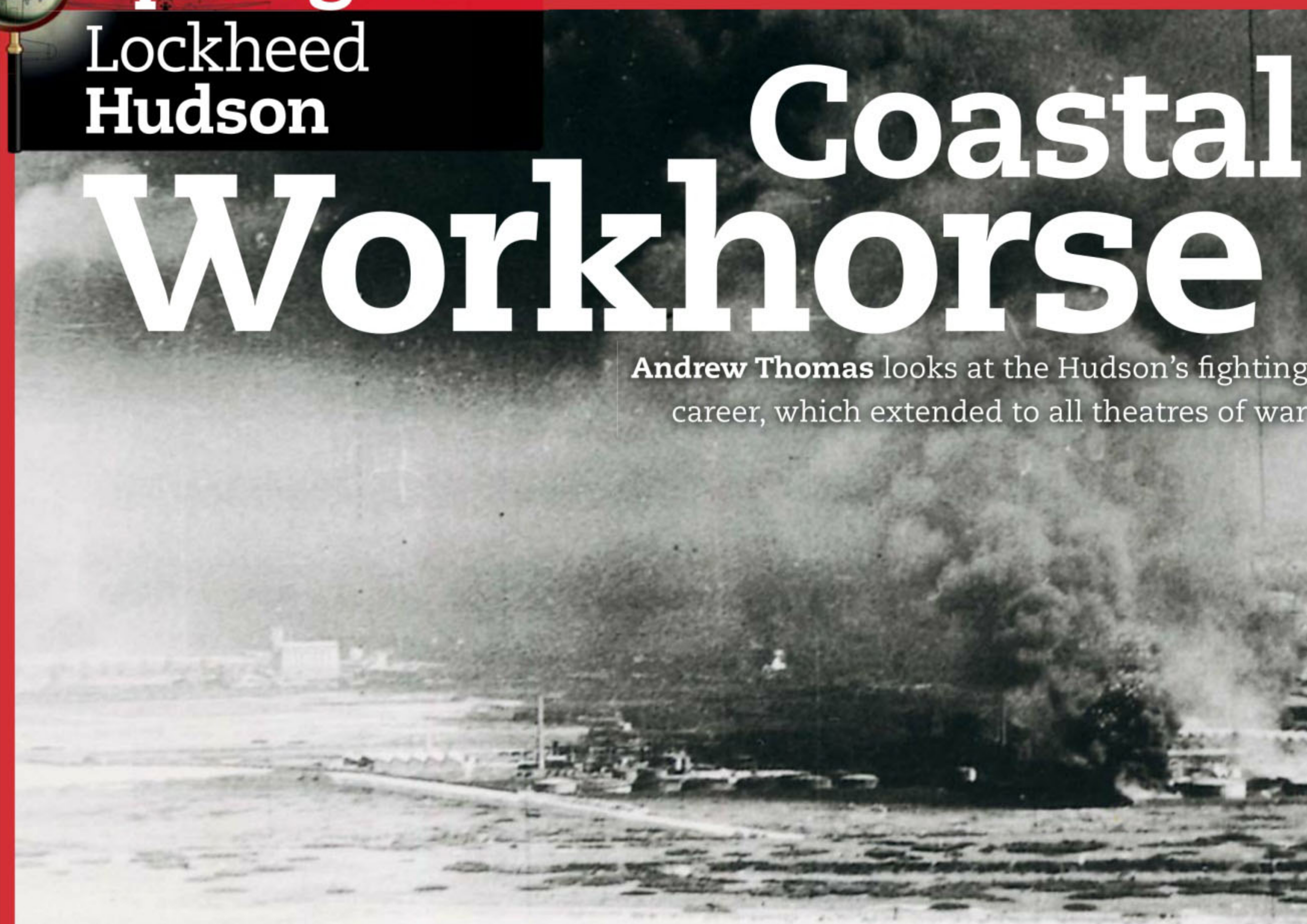


Spotlight

Lockheed Hudson

Coastal Workhorse

Andrew Thomas looks at the Hudson's fighting career, which extended to all theatres of war



Above
A Hudson of 220 Squadron flying past burning oil tanks at Dunkirk during its evacuation in late May 1940.
J D OUGHTON

Top right
Hudson I N7264 'QX-Q' of 224 Squadron helped claim the first RAF air combat victory of World War Two. M POPE

Bottom right
No.224's first victim, a Do 18.
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

Lockheed's Hudson was the first American-built aircraft to see operational service with the RAF during World War Two. That alone would be enough to give it a niche in history, but as it served with such distinction in a variety of roles in every theatre the type secured its name for posterity.

Developed from the successful Type 14 Electra airliner of 1937, it was selected for general reconnaissance by the British Purchasing Commission (BPC). The initial order for 200, placed in June 1938, was controversial as it was felt that the UK's aircraft industry should have met such a need. The Hudson filled an important gap in the RAF inventory and an eventually over 2,000 were delivered.

In service it proved robust and versatile and was eventually flown on anti-submarine and anti-shiping operations, in the photo-reconnaissance, transport, light bomber and meteorological roles and even on occasion as a long-range fighter! It was also used for so-called 'special duties' with the Special

Operations Executive for agent-dropping and pick-ups in occupied Europe.

Early skirmishes

The first 'true' Hudson took to the air on December 10, 1938 from Burbank, California. It differed from the airliner by having more powerful Wright R-1820 Cyclones, a bomb bay and a transparent nose and provision was made for a power-operated dorsal gun turret; the bulbous Boulton Paul type being fitted in Britain after delivery.

Examples arrived by sea in mid-February 1939 and were tested at the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Martlesham Heath, Suffolk. Hudsons first entered Coastal Command service with Wg Cdr 'Hoddy' Hodgson's 224 Squadron at Thornaby, Yorkshire, in May 1939, replacing the unit's Ansons. Conversion by the Hudson Training Flight under Sqn Ldr Bill Rankin continued into the summer.

By August, 224 was deemed ready and, following a move to Leuchars in Scotland, it began sorties over

the North Sea despite some aircraft lacking turrets. Joined by 233 Squadron, the two units began war patrols on September 3. Two days later 224's Fg Off Burton had a brief exchange of fire off the Scottish coast with a Luftwaffe Dornier Do 18 flying-boat. On the 7th, the first Hudson was lost on operations, probably due to severe weather.

Skirmishes continued over the North Sea throughout the month, one crew off the German coast easily evading interception by three biplane fighters. On September 30 during shipping reces, 224 lost an aircraft to flak off Sylt, and another off Wilhelmshaven to a Messerschmitt Bf 109E of 4/JG77; there was just one survivor from the two crews.

A little over a week later over the Skagerrak a trio of 224 Hudsons flown by Flt Lt Womersley, Fg Off Burton and Sgt Cargill encountered Do 18 'M7+UK' of 2/KuFlGr 506. They attacked as one and forced Lt zur See Hornkühl to land on the sea where, after further bursts of fire, the flying-boat began to sink and the crew were picked up by a passing

SPOT FACT Hudsons N7210 and N7212 were fitted with dual controls for training

Hudson in combat




Danish vessel. This was the RAF's first air combat victory of the war.

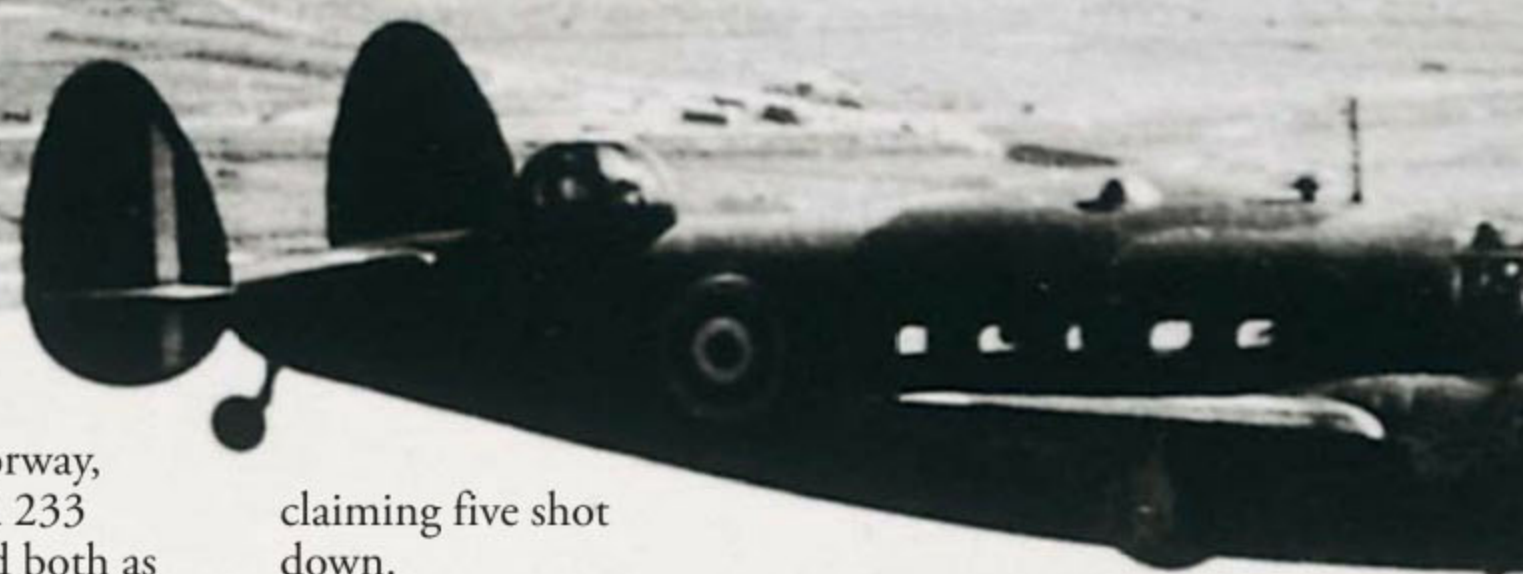
Further Coastal Command units re-equipped with Hudsons into 1940, 14 examples being fitted with the first anti-surface vessel (ASV) radar from January. One of the new squadrons was 220, which came to prominence when, on February 16, it located the German auxiliary ship *Altmark* off Norway. It was boarded by men from HMS *Cossack* and several hundred Allied merchant

seamen prisoners on the ship were freed.

After the invasion of Norway, Hudsons of 220, 224 and 233 Squadrons were employed both as bombers and long-range fighters. No.220 continued these tasks after the invasion of France in May, bombing oil tanks in Rotterdam and patrolling off Dunkirk during the evacuation. On one occasion Hudsons of 220 engaged a formation of Junkers Ju 87 'Stukas',

claiming five shot down.

The first success against a U-boat came on October 25 when three aircraft from 233 led by Plt Off Maudsley in P5156 *E-for-Edward* attacked U-46 off Norway. At least one bomb hit the vessel, blowing a large hole in the stern and forcing her to limp back to port. 



3 Australian cabinet ministers died in a 1940 Hudson crash

SPOT FACT Hudsons attacked Timor in August 1942, supporting encircled Allied troops

Right
King George VI arriving by Hudson to visit 220 Squadron at Thornaby on November 1 1939.
A HENDRIE



shipping has been attacked in the period since April 30, 1942. Several of our crews have successfully attacked three ships each during this period and all have made claims. During the past month six crews are either missing or killed on operations, with a loss of 27 lives."

The diary stated that after every anti-shipping sortie two or three aircraft were badly damaged. It also noted the squadron's flexibility by sending 11 machines on the 'thousand bomber' raid on Bremen on June 23, drawing the comment

Right
Hudson V AM571 'UL-A' of 608 Squadron, August 1941. R A BAGNALL

Flexible warrior

On November 11, 1940 the first Hudsons to be ferried from America by air arrived; all future deliveries were made this way. Further squadrons became operational including the Dutch-manned 320 in late 1940, the Auxiliaries of 608 (North Riding) and the newly-formed 407 Royal Canadian Air Force, both in July 1941. All three specialised in the hazardous anti-shipping role, in which they were to have considerable success – but at the cost of significant losses.

The Canadian unit is typical, its diary entry for May 31, 1942 stating: "83,000 tons of enemy



"On one occasion Hudsons of 220 engaged a formation of Junkers Ju 87 'Stukas', claiming five shot down"



that it had “in the past acted as fighter escort on the St Nazaire raid [March 28] and now having bombed Germany has only one command in which to operate – Army Co-op!”.

U-boat war

The U-boat war in the North Atlantic had also spread to the Canadian seaboard resulting in the RCAF's Home War Establishment expanding its convoy escort force. Eventually four Eastern Air Command units based in Nova

Scotia and Newfoundland were equipped with Hudsons.

The first to form was 113 (Bomber-Reconnaissance) Squadron at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, in February 1942. On June 28 Sqn Ldr ‘Molly’ Small took command and on July 31 he and his crew caught U-754 on the surface south-east of Cape Sable. Although the submarine crash-dived, it was still visible when Small released depth charges. It was a devastatingly accurate attack, the weapons bracketing the U-boat forward of the conning tower. Soon afterwards, the



RAF and Commonwealth Hudson Squadrons

RAF, including Commonwealth units under command: 8*, 24*, 48, 53, 59, 62, 117, 139, 161*, 163, 194, 200, 203*, 206, 216, 217, 220, 224, 233, 251, 267, 269, 271*, 279, 280, 285*, 287*, 288*, 289*, 320 (Dutch), 353, 357*, 407 (RCAF), 459 (RAAF), 500, 512*, 517*, 519, 520, 521, 608.

RAAF, Malaya and Pacific: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 32, 38.

RCAF, ‘Home’ based: 11, 113, 119, 120*, 121*, 122*, 145, 167*, 168*.

RNZAF in the Pacific: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 40, 41*.

*denotes partial equipment

vessel broke the surface to be greeted with machine-gun fire from the Hudson before Small saw it disappear under the waves again. He reported: “Seconds later there was a heavy underwater explosion which brought a large quantity of oil swirling up to the surface.”

‘Molly’ and his crew had claimed the first submarine ‘kill’ by Eastern Air Command. Another soon followed when Fg Off Robinson’s crew from 145 (BR) Squadron at Torbay, Newfoundland, sank U-658 east of St John’s.

As U-boat depredations spread to the US eastern seaboard and the Caribbean, RAF Coastal Command had moved 53 Squadron to Trinidad in July to help beef-up US efforts. Its Hudsons remained there until the end of the year. ➔

Left

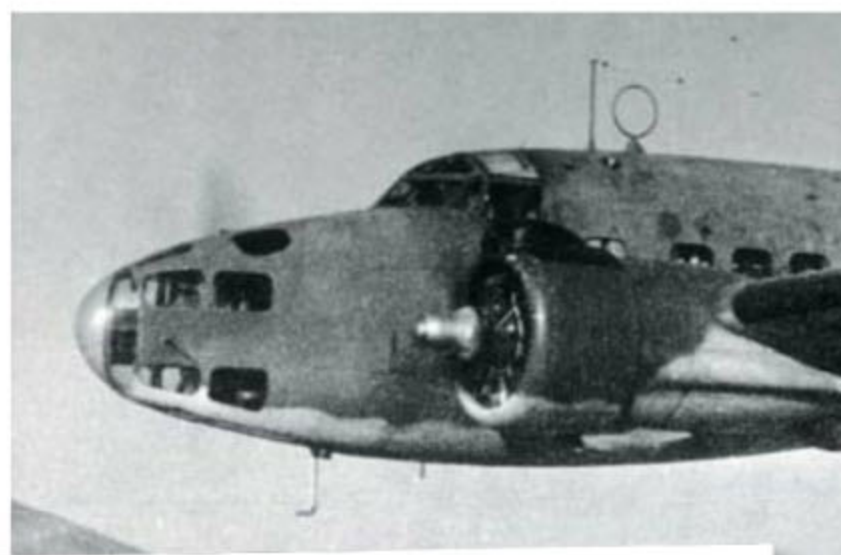
Two members of the Dutch-manned 320 Squadron take a break before bombing up one of the unit’s Hudsons at Leuchars in 1941. ROYAL NETHERLANDS NAVY

Below

Hudsons of 206 Squadron low over the North Sea during a search for enemy shipping off Heligoland in mid-June 1940. MoD



SPOT FACT Hudsons appeared in the 1941 film 'A Yank in the RAF'



Above

A pair of 459 Squadron RAAF Hudsons over the Nile Delta. RAAF

Mediterranean success

On the other side of the Atlantic in late 1942, four Hudson squadrons (48, 233, 500 and 608) had been moved to Gibraltar to provide anti-submarine protection for the invasion of French North Africa. From there, and bases in Africa, they found considerable success as the enemy had concentrated submarines in the western 'Med'.

Right

Fg Off C W Taylor (right) briefing his 407 Squadron crew at Bircham Newton in front of Mk.IIA FH361 'RR-E'. RCAF

Sqn Ldr J B Ensor and crew of 500 Squadron sank U-411 on November 13 to open proceedings. The next day, aircraft of 500 combined with two from 608 to sink U-595, while 233 also got in on the act that day when Plt Off Barling's crew sank U-605. The run of good fortune continued with 500 sinking another on the 17th – Hudsons damaging four more by the end of the month.

Below

Mk.III V9106 'RR-D' of 407 Squadron RCAF behind the barbed wire at North Coates. Note this is not the same aircraft as that featured on pages 74-75. RCAF

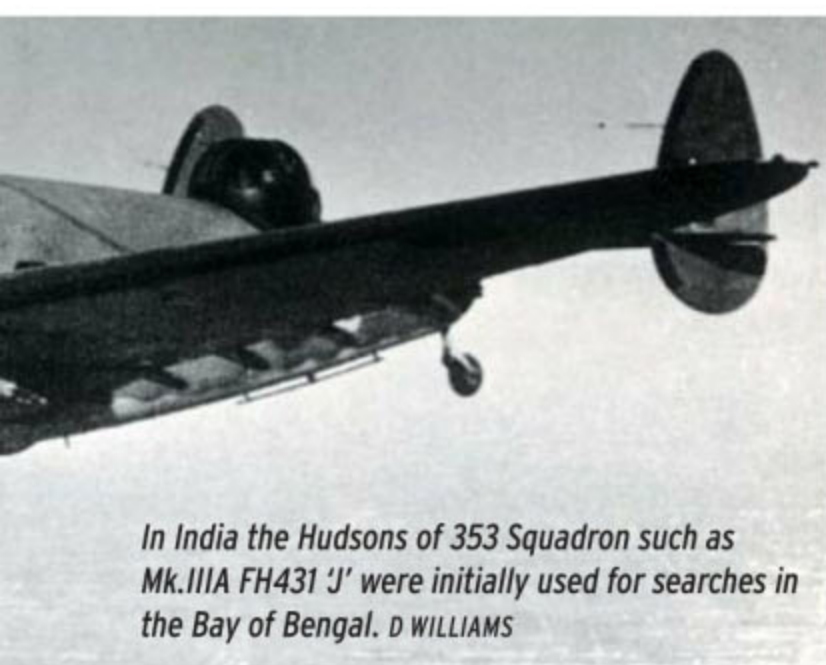


Targets became scarcer into 1943, but in the first six months all four squadrons had sunk no fewer than eight more submarines in what was a remarkable run of success. Fg Off Ogilvie of 608 was the first to use

underwing rocket projectiles, which proved to be devastating for the Germans.

At the other end of the Mediterranean, the Australian 459 Squadron formed in February 1942 at





In India the Hudsons of 353 Squadron such as Mk.IIIA FH431 'J' were initially used for searches in the Bay of Bengal. D WILLIAMS



Left
The only known photo of Hudsons of 4 Squadron RNZAF. E C DARBY

RAF Hudson orders

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Mk.I | 350 |
| Mk.II | 20 |
| Mk.III | 372 |
| Mk.IIIA | 320 |
| Mk.IV | 23 |
| Mk.V | 350 |
| Mk.VI | 410 |

Commonwealth deliveries:

| | |
|-------|-----|
| RAAF | 247 |
| RCAF | 243 |
| RNZAF | 94 |

Left
Turretless Mk.II of 8 Squadron RAAF, Singapore 1940. RAAF

Burg el Arab near Alexandria, Egypt, with Hudsons for recce and anti-shiping work. With both sides in the desert campaign being dependent on lengthy supply lines, 459 played a vital part in interdicting enemy shipping crossing the Mediterranean.

During July, 459 attacked a number of ships – but at great cost, three out of nine aircraft sent on a strike on July 10 being lost. On the 28th it struck two F-boats (supply lighters) off Sidi Barrani: one of them was beached and another was sunk a few days later. F/Sgt Barnard's crew had meanwhile sunk U-97 off Haifa in mid-June. In September the unit supported the little-known and ill-fated campaign in the Aegean, once more concentrating on enemy shipping. Soon afterwards 459 re-equipped with the Hudson's lineal successor, the Lockheed Ventura.

Hudsons also flew with some distinction in the desert as transports after the breakout from El Alamein. In November, 12 Hudsons from 117 and 267 Squadrons moved men and stores to support the Hurricanes of 243 Wing into a landing ground well behind enemy lines. From there the fighters attacked the retreating Afrika Korps, taking them totally by surprise. Over 300 vehicles were destroyed over the four days of Operation Chocolate which was entirely supplied by air.

Against Japan

When the Hudsons of 1 and 8 Squadrons Royal Australian Air Force were delivered to Singapore

during mid-1940 they were the most modern aircraft in the Far East. They had mounted patrols in the days before the Japanese landings on the Malay Peninsula on December 8, 1941 and began attacks immediately.

Both 1 and 8 fought with distinction through the campaign in Malaya and the East Indies, hitting enemy shipping and bombing advancing troops – latterly in Singapore until the airfields there became untenable. The squadrons evacuated to Sumatra and, following enemy landings there, to Java. Because of losses, 8 was disbanded in February with surviving crews concentrated in 1 Squadron.

The remaining aircraft were flown back to Australia in early March, though most of the ground personnel were captured. In January, Hudsons were also issued to 62 Squadron to replace its Blenheims and these engaged in bombing Japanese occupied airfields, but its survivors were also absorbed into 1 Squadron RAAF.

Quickly re-equipped with Hudsons, 139 Squadron was rushed out to Burma in late 1941 where it tried in vain to counter the enemy invasion. On evacuation to India on April 30, its remnants were renamed as 62 Squadron – which received fresh aircraft and mounted attacks on enemy shipping and searches over the Bay of Bengal alongside the newly-formed 353 Squadron.

During a convoy escort on August 18, Plt Off Smith of 353 damaged a Kawanishi H8K *Emily* flying-boat. After a period engaging river traffic in Burma in 1943 both units switched to transport work, joining 194 Squadron which had been thus engaged for some time.

In Australia, further RAAF Hudson units, notably 6 and 32, fought against the Japanese thrust through New Britain to New Guinea. These and others continued the fight in the most difficult conditions into 1943 until eventual re-equipment.

From late 1941 the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) received almost 100 Hudsons for patrol duties over the south-west Pacific. Those of 4 Squadron RNZAF flew anti-submarine searches from Fiji, one crew sighting a submarine 180 miles south west of Suva on May 23, 1943. They attacked, dropping four depth charges which caused an ever-widening oil slick to appear. Hudsons of 3 Squadron moved up to Guadalcanal and joined the Americans in the fighting over the Solomon Islands and the island-hopping advance northwards.

Although by late in the war the Hudson was used for more second-line tasks such as meteorological reconnaissance, the service of the portly aircraft with the Commonwealth had been significant – and truly global. ●

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Survivors



The Temora Aviation Museum's A16-112 (VH-KOY) gets airborne from its home airfield. This aircraft is painted as Hudson III A16-211, which served with 6 Squadron RAAF during the Battle for Milne Bay, New Guinea, in 1942, and later with 2 Squadron in the Dutch East Indies. The museum acquired VH-KOY in May 2004 from Malcolm Long. www.aviationmuseum.com.au

Despite serving in large numbers, the Hudson hasn't fared well in preservation, with less than a dozen being on display. We look at the only example still flying anywhere in the world, and others that survive



A16-112's massive dorsal Boulton Paul turret.

Spotlight Next Month English Electric Canberra

Next month, *'Spotlight'* shines on a highly successful military jet from the Cold War – the English Electric Canberra. We look at the type's use as a bomber, air-racing aircraft, its role in the Falklands War, and much more. Don't miss this issue, in the UK shops on **November 30**, or see **page 38** for our very latest money-saving special offers.



| Mark | Serial | Location and status |
|------|---------|--|
| III | NZ2013 | RNZAF Museum, Wigram, Christchurch, New Zealand. Display |
| III | NZ2031 | Museum of Transport and Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Display |
| III | NZ2035 | Ferrymead Aeronautical Society, Christchurch. Restoration |
| IIIA | A16-199 | RAF Museum Hendon, London. Display |
| IIIA | BW769 | North Atlantic Aviation Museum, Gander, Newfoundland, Canada. Display |
| IIIA | NZ2049 | Wakefield, Nelson, New Zealand. Privately owned. Restoration |
| IVA | A16-22 | RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Victoria, Australia. Major parts in storage |
| IVA | A16-105 | Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia. Restoration |
| IVA | A16-112 | Temora Aviation Museum, New South Wales, Australia. Airworthy |
| IVA | A16-122 | RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Victoria, Australia. Major parts in storage |
| VI | FK466 | National Air Force Museum of Canada, Trenton, Ontario, Canada. Restoration |



VH-KOY's cockpit. ALL KEY-DUNCAN CUBITT