

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ability. In our humble opinion, all these people, who flew and fixed the Skyhawks between the years of 1968 and 1984, did extremely well.

We would like to acknowledge the people who helped us both to achieve this book. The contributors whose stories bring this book to life are listed in detail in Annex B. There are many others though who helped us bring the book to fruition.

Firstly, Marcus Peake, the webmaster at the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia, who seems to be a walking encyclopedia of knowledge. He has found answers to obscure questions, published requests for stories multiple times, and offered us more help when it came to the difficult question of what to do with this huge effort.

Stuart Harwood, the manager and senior curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum, was somebody that Marcus pointed us at. In conversations with him, we discovered that squadron-level documentation had been forwarded to him for safekeeping. These included squadron diaries, authorisation sheets, and squadron linebooks. Although the desire is to digitise these important records, finding the funds to achieve this is a problem. Nevertheless, Stuart had helpful volunteers who perused records to provide us answers to our questions. The turnaround time was remarkable.

Commander Craig Castle RAN at the Navy Office, who answered our questions about publishing, forwarded us the name of Lieutenant Commander Des Woods. Remarkably, Marcus knows him as well, and some of the detail of the project Des recently completed, *Flying Stations II*. So, our thanks to both those gentlemen.

Captain Richard Parry, a colleague of 23 years at our mutual former employer, and a fellow retiree here in Penang, is an ardent amateur military historian. He volunteered to proofread the chapters as I finished them. Each week he sent me (Peter) pages of finely detailed corrections which have made my writing clearer, more readable or both. Many thanks for your painstaking work, Richard.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my patient wife of 31 years, Pam, who has put up with my focus on producing this book. She has had a bit of practice; my PhD took eight years, a huge effort, while I held down a demanding job. Pam made sure I did not get bogged down, diverted me when I needed to be diverted and ensured I ate when I should.

I (Dave) would like to acknowledge my wife Margaret who very patiently waited for me to solicit submissions from maintainers for the book – through the ‘HMAS Nirimba’, ‘VF805/VC724 Skyhawk Squadrons’, ‘A-4G Scooterphiles’ and ‘HMAS Melbourne II’ Facebook pages – then compile them into a reasonable order date wise for inclusion in the book. Despite that, the dog still managed to get its evening walks, which, of course, broke my fixation on the task.

We have tried very hard to be accurate, to acknowledge that everyone is expressing their memories in their own way, from a perspective of nearly 50 years. Any mistakes you may perceive are not theirs, but ours in our production.