

*The Identification
of
Various Aircraft*

being, in this case,

Beaufighter
Aircraft

of

Number 31 Squadron, RAAF

during the period

November, 1942, to November, 1944.

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Acknowledgments

I have worked on this project, through its various incarnations, amendments, revisions and alternations for quite some time. It is easy to think, since I have done this work on my own, that it is exclusively my work and mine alone. But it isn't, nor can any work of this kind ever be. That is because, whilst I have compiled and arranged it, much of it has been derived from sources that are owned, controlled or preserved by others and without that work, this could not have been produced.

Ian Madden, the Historian/Archivist for the Number 31 Squadron Association supplied a number of tremendous photographs. Neville Parnell offered several photographs and gave me permission to quote previous RAF Beaufighter identities from *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980). Mike Mirkovic, the photographic librarian at the Aviation Heritage Museum of WA, supplied many of the photographs that appear within and Mark Harbour willingly offered his thoughts on early Beaufighter delivery schemes. Thank you all very much.

The National Archives of Australia have control over an enormous collection of detailed historically important information, which, with regard to this project, included items such as aircraft status cards, unit history sheets, combat reports (by their various names including interrogation and narrative reports), casualty repatriation files, technical orders, etc. A large quantity of which has, over time, been digitised and made freely available online. For those records not already online, it was a simple matter to either pay for a particular record to be digitised or to order them for viewing in their Reading Room in Canberra. A most excellent collection overseen by professional staff.

Within the collection of the National Library exists a large number of period topographic maps as well as a vast number of vertical photographs taken throughout the first half of the 1940's depicting RAAF aerodromes. Many of the maps and some vertical photographs were available for download. Those that weren't were ordered and that experience was, like the National Archives, painless; with any minor issues quickly and professionally dealt with.

The Australian War Memorial are the custodians of the operational records that include the specific call sign information used to compile the aircraft tables in this and the other volumes in this work. Whilst none of these records has been digitised, they and other records, ledgers and logs can be ordered for viewing in their Research Centre. Many, many long days I spent there reviewing and noting thousands and thousands of pages of original operational records. The AWM's Research Centre can get busy at times, but the staff were always professional and helpful.

Those records though, are still owned by and are on loan from, the Royal Australian Air Force. Their foresight with regard to collecting and preserving a wide range of documents, in addition to the usual unit history type material, that provide such a detailed insight into the activities of the service during conflict and in making that material available via institutions like the AWM and the NAA is gratefully acknowledged as is the RAAF's permission for me to use it.

Finally, a special thank you to Steve Mackenzie for allowing this work to be published on IPMS(NSW).

Introduction

I've had an interest in flying activities, especially of the military variety, for as long as I can remember. When I was quite young, at the sound of an approaching aircraft, no matter if it was an Ansett or TAA DC9 or B727, a Fokker Friendship or just a little single piston engined lightie, if I was outside, then I would *always* look skywards and watch the passage of the aircraft. Perhaps because of their rarity in the skies above where I lived, the distinctive sound of the occasional Orion, rare Huey or exceedingly rare fast jet, would always force me to instantly abandon whatever I was doing and race outside to try and catch a look.

With exposure to plastic model kits during the '70's, I started to learn a bit more about certain types of aeroplanes. Like any kid building plastic aeroplane models, my aircraft recognition improved as I was exposed to types ranging from Sopwith Camels to Grumman F-14's. I particularly developed an interest in piston powered aircraft from the first half of the 1940's; Great War biplanes seemed archaic and jets, whilst fascinating and interesting enough, seemed too exotic. Second World War piston powered machines held the greatest attraction. Being Australian, I suppose it was natural enough that that interest in WW2 piston powered aircraft became focused on RAAF aircraft and, as a consequence, RAAF operations during that period. An evolution of that interest in aircraft themselves (perhaps once I felt that I knew enough about different marks and models) was a level of interest in the camouflage and markings of those aircraft.

In 1981, when I was 16, I bought a copy of Geoffrey Pentland and Peter Malone's *Aircraft of the RAAF 1921-78* and followed that a few months later with Geoffrey Pentland's *RAAF Camouflage & Markings 1939-45 Vol1*. They were the first Australian focused publications that I started my "library" with. I remember wondering, after seeing colour aircraft profiles, reading text and photograph captions in those and later acquisitions, how did these authors know the identities – that is the serial number and individual identification letters – of all of those aeroplanes that they quoted identities for? Did they get that information exclusively from photographs? Certainly, some photos showed both serial number and code letters clearly enough, but most others didn't. I just assumed that the authors had access to more photographs that proved an aircraft's identity, but, for whatever reason, those photos didn't make it into print. But it was always in the back of my mind – how did they really know?

Much more recently, I have found that it wasn't all that uncommon to come across photograph captions in published material, online sources and even museum collections, that made identification claims that weren't supported by the image they referred to – in that the image either didn't show the serial number of the aircraft that the image claimed to depict or didn't show the aircrafts individual identification letter (or both) – and that the identification so claimed, turned out to be incorrect. Another short coming that has cropped up from time to time are photographs of a wartime aircraft in which both the code letters and the serial number are clearly visible, but that the assumption seems to have been made that the aircraft had always carried those code letters when, in some circumstances, it didn't.

Typically, if information appears in print or online, then it is very frequently taken at face value as being reliable and gets quoted and reused. However, if some of that information happens to be wrong, then the historical record becomes altered and incorrect information becomes perpetuated as historical fact.

A few years ago, just to pass the time, I decided that I might as well try and find a way of proving the individual identities of some of those aircraft. I stopped wondering how did *they*, the authors of those books, do it, but how would *I* do it?

Background to Identification Letters

During the early war period, RAAF aircraft wore single letter codes in addition to the aircraft's unique serial number. Number 1 Squadron aircraft wore the letter "A", 2 squadron "B", 3 squadron "C" and so on. The letter served to identify the squadron to which an aircraft belonged; it did not, and was not intended to, identify an individual aircraft within a squadron.

After a proposal by the Air Board to introduce a RAF style code letter system "...using two code letters to indicate individual squadrons and one code letter to indicate individual aircraft in that squadron", the Directors of Operations and Intelligence responded on 22nd May, 1942, saying that "...no recognition letters are to be painted on any R.A.A.F. or U.S. aircraft" and therefore "...action was [to be] taken immediately to remove all markings from aircraft excepting the registration number ..."¹

Despite that though, it was "... common practice in the fighter squadrons of the R.A.A.F. in operational areas, to use a single distinguishing letter on their aircraft in order to distinguish between the various aircraft of the squadron ..." and by October 1942 "... other squadrons of reconnaissance and bombing roles [had sought] permission to use a single distinguishing letter in the same manner ..."²

As a result of this, Air Force Confidential Order number A3 – *Code Letters for Operational and Reserve Squadrons* (AFCO A3/43) was issued on 4th January, 1943. This document described the operational need for the introduction of a system of code letters, the form they were to take and a list of code letters for the specified flying units. It said, in part:

Due to the expansion of the R.A.A.F., it has become necessary to introduce a system of code letters for all operational and reserve squadrons. These letters are to be applied on each side of the fuselage directly forward or aft of the fuselage roundel. ... The code for operational squadrons will take the form of two letters of the alphabet chosen by Air Force Head-Quarters to indicate the squadron, there being no sequence in the choice of the letters. Each aircraft in the squadron will also be identified by a single letter of the alphabet to be chosen by the squadron commander ... THE LETTERS "C" AND "I" WILL NOT BE USED. ... Normally code letters are to be placed, showing the squadron code letters immediately forward of the fuselage roundel with the single individual aircraft distinguishing letter immediately aft the roundel. ... [W]here there is insufficient room on certain aircraft for the two squadron code letters to be placed forward of the roundel ... it is permissible to transpose the position of the letters, thus bringing single letter forward and the squadron code letters aft the fuselage roundel. ... Aircraft under repair or being reconditioned ... which require to be repainted, are not to have code letters applied. It is to be the responsibility of the squadron receiving the aircraft to apply the relevant code letters as soon as possible after receipt of the aircraft. This will not apply if the aircraft is temporarily unserviceable, but is to be returned to the same squadron. Similarly new aircraft received from service contractors will not show code letters – these are to be applied by the squadron upon receipt of the aircraft.³

¹ Letter titled "Aircraft Markings: Individual Distinguishing Letters" from the Air Board to Headquarters, RAAF Command Allied Air Forces SWPA of 6th November 1942; in RAAF Command Headquarters – Recognition Markings on Allied Aircraft; NAA: A11093, 452/D2.

² Letter from Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces to the Secretary, Air Board of 23rd October 1942, *ibid*.

³ AFCO A3/43 – Code Letters for Operational and Reserve Squadrons dated 4.1.43; in Air Force Confidential Orders – Series A and B – and Index, 1943; NAA: A7674, 3.

The squadron code letters accordingly chosen for Number 31 Squadron were “EH”.



31SQN Beaufighter Ic, A19-17/EH-B. It illustrates the code letters referred to in AFCO A3/43 showing the “EH” letters of Number 31 Squadron and the individual identification letter “B”, which at this time was allocated to A19-17. It also illustrates an example of something appearing online and therefore being widely accepted as being what it now appears: a very rare colour photograph of a 31SQN Beaufighter. However, it is a black and white image that has been manipulated by someone to artificially render it in the colours that that person, with the help of a computer program, thinks it may have looked like and is therefore historically misleading in that regard. They’ve chosen to depict the aircraft in Temperate Sea Scheme (TSS) but have made the mistake of transposing the colours. Even if they had chosen to depict it in Temperate Land Scheme (TLS), the way that they have applied the colours would still be the wrong way around. It is interesting though because it shows the aircraft flying with open exhausts and not the usual flame dampers. [*Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P026382 via Mike Mirkovic*].

Methodology

Not having any special access to contemporaneous photographs and because of their relative scarcity, I thought I’d leave them alone as a method of proving an association between a serial number and an identification letter. What else then? Personal log books – no access and anyway the scope would be far too limited. Finding and interviewing veterans – too few survivors and recollections of events from so long ago was more than likely unreliable and useless in so far as the accuracy of what I wanted to achieve. No – what I required was contemporaneous primary source material from official, but not public relations or propaganda type, sources. Official information that wasn’t for public dissemination. Unit History Sheets – some contained identification information (serial number AND identification letters), but the vast majority didn’t. Aircraft Status Cards – no. These primary sources

would be of critical importance for cross-referencing, but they didn't (by and large) provide the information themselves. Post mission Narrative Reports – some yes, but most, no. But even those that did have identification information, some of them didn't seem reliable enough.

Having been a Communications Operator in the RAAF for several years, I guessed that call signs might provide a clue. Call signs would most likely be found in things like radio logs, navigation logs, copies of signal traffic and such like. Investigations along that line soon turned up exactly the sort of information that I was after, the vast majority of which, I was certain, hadn't been seen for many, many decades and never used before.

All that was left, aside from the W/T call sign information, was to extract as much additional information from the operational sources that could be compared directly with information contained in the relevant unit records so as to establish, beyond reasonable doubt, that a certain serial number was (or at least was most likely to be) a particular identification letter; that is to provide evidence of each time the information from the operational sources matched the unit records and each time it didn't.

Primary Source Documents Used to Establish Evidence

Operational Source: Form Mauve

A Form Green (Control) was the method by which an Air Operations Room or higher authority issued orders to squadrons to initiate particular air operations. In most instances, a Form Mauve was an acknowledgement of orders issued by Form Green (Control). But Forms Mauve were also used for other reasons. They were used to advise of delays or amendments to previously sent acknowledgments. They were also used as a Return Report, advising the time and place of returning missions and an initial, brief, report on results. There were several different types of Forms Mauve. Form Mauve (Anti-Submarine). Form Mauve (Convoy). Form Mauve (Reconnaissance). Form Mauve (Strike). Form Mauve (Travel). Depending on the type of Form Mauve and whether it was an acknowledgement, amendment, or return report, decided which pre-formatted paragraphs were used.

This is an example of a Number 31 Squadron Form Mauve (Convoy) from the end of April, 1943:

COO/MC3/30 Apr (C) (1) COO46/1 May (2) 4W EH/GBMO P/O Frith Sgt Warren F/O Budd F/O Taylor (3) 1234 (4) 302330Z 010105Z 010230Z 010345Z (5) 010030Z 010155Z 010320Z 010440Z 1102S 13155E 1100S 13203E 1057S 13210E 1055S 13218E (6) 073 T (7) 010155Z 010320Z 010440Z 010600Z 1100S 13203E 1057S 13210E 1055S 13218E 1053S 13222E (8) 010240Z 010410Z 010530Z 010650Z (G) 7415 8240 8300 (H) 1P3/GBMO (M) Returning direct to Base.⁴

It commences with the identification letters of the operational base that had originated the Mauve, then the Mauve type and number (for that day) and the date. "COO/MC3/30 Apr" literally means: Coomalie / Mauve Convoy number 3 / of 30th April.

⁴ COO/MC3/30 Apr in AWM66, 15/1/38.

Paragraph C, sub-paragraph 1, contains the Operation Title and the date of the operation. The Title of an operation was made up of the identification letters of the operational base from which the mission originated (not necessarily from where it launched from) and a number either between “1” and “49” or between “51” and “99”. If the operation was ordered by the Area Air Operations Room, then the identification letters were followed by a number starting at “1” for each authorised aerodrome and which continued sequentially to “49”. The next number in the sequence for each operational base after “49” was “1” – not “50”, which was never supposed to be used, but “1” – and on it went. It was not a daily system such as existed prior to June 8th, 1942, but a never-ending loop from 1 to 49 which kept rolling around and around. If the operation was authorised by the Commanding Officer of a squadron, then the identification letters were followed by a sequential number between “51” and “99”. The next number after “99” was “51”.

Sub-paragraph 2, contained the number and type of aircraft that would perform the operation. The type of aircraft was usually referred to by a single letter code found in Identification Letters for Aeroplanes.⁵ The letter “W” signified Beaufighter aircraft so, “4W” meant: four Beaufighter’s. Following that were the identification letters of the participating aircraft, in duty number order. “EH/GBMO” meant 31SQN (“EH”) and individual aircraft letters “G”, “B”, “M” and “O”. This was then followed by the aircraft captains’ surnames, in duty number order. There were variations to this configuration, but in this example, that was how it was presented.

Sub-paragraph 3, nominated the duty numbers. “1234” simply meant: duty numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. Duty number 1 would have been the first aircraft planned to take off from Coomalie Creek on an operation that day. When the Operation Title (in this case “COO46”) was combined with the duty number (in this case “1”, “2”, “3” or “4”), the result was the Aeroplane Identification Group. Coomalie 46 duty 1 could have been recorded variously as either COO461, COO46/1 or COO46-1 – they each mean exactly the same thing. However, if they appear as a group of characters run together without a hyphen or a slash, such as “COO46”, it could be either the Operation Title as described above, or the Aeroplane Identification Group for Coomalie 4 duty 6. So, if you come across a two-digit number like that, check its context.

Sub-paragraph 4 was the estimated date/time of departure using the 24-hour clock and in Zulu time. The date was first, being the two-digit calendar day of the month for the time that it was associated with – if the date was ordinarily a single digit number, it would therefore begin with a “0”. The 24-hour clock means that 1 am is 0100 (“zero one hundred hours” or just “zero one hundred”), 2 am: 0200, mid-day or 12 pm: 1200 (“twelve hundred”) which makes 1 pm: 1300, etc. Each time zone has an identifying letter. “Z” is the identifier for the zero-degree (0°) meridian – the Prime Meridian – which runs through Greenwich, England; the location of the Royal Observatory. Accordingly, Greenwich Mean Time, also known as UTC (Universal Time Coordinated), is used as the base-line time around the world and is used extensively in aviation and armed forces. The time zone in which the eastern states of Australia fall is referred to by the letter “K”. This time zone is 10 hours ahead of “Z”. The Northern Territory and South Australia are on a half time zone called “IK” which is 9½ hours ahead of “Z”. Western Australia, “H”, is 8 hours ahead of “Z” time. Coomalie Creek is in the Northern Territory. The estimated time of departure for duty 1, “302330Z” therefore, was 2330 hours (11:30 pm), Zulu time on the 30th which equates to 9 am local on the 1st.

⁵ ASD 205/1 RAAF System of Operational Control. Chapter II Conduct of Operations, p15, Identification Letters for Aeroplanes (paragraph 28) in RAAF Command RAAF System of Control; NAA: AA1966/5, 360.

Sub-paragraph 5 was the estimated time and position of joining the convoy, sub-paragraph 6 was the convoy's track in degrees true, sub-paragraph 7 was the estimated time and position of leaving the convoy and sub-paragraph 8 was the estimated time of arrival back at base for each duty, in duty number order.

Paragraph G contained the frequencies to be used. In this example, a primary and secondary frequency have been nominated plus a frequency for direction finding – high frequency direction finding, HF D/F or “huff duff”. “7415” means 7,415 kilocycles (kcs) – or, in more modern terms, kilohertz (kHz) which is 7.415 megahertz (MHz).

Paragraph H listed the W/T call signs to be used on the frequencies previously nominated. “1P3/GBMO” means duty 1 was “1P3G”, duty 2 “1P3B”, etc. Note that the suffix letters align with the aircraft identification letters.

W/T call signs were known variously as “change daily”, “block” or “confidential” call signs and were designed for transmission by Morse code. Usually they were comprised of a random combination of 3 and sometimes 4 letters and or numbers to which the aircrafts individual identification letter was added as a suffix. If the aircraft did not have an individual identification letter, then the suffix letter typically commenced with “A” and continued through the alphabet, either sequentially, or by blocks of three or four with a gap of three or four letters between each block, depending on how many aircraft were flying using that W/T call sign for that day. Blocks of change daily call signs were promulgated in editions of a publication known as ASD016 (Australian Secret Document 016) – issued to units and formations operating or hosting strike and reconnaissance type aircraft.

Change daily call signs were just that, they changed every 24 hours. If an aircraft was expected to be airborne during the change-over period, then two sets of call signs would be allocated and the change-over time specified in the Forms Mauve.

Change daily or confidential call signs were not and should not be confused with international call signs. Whilst an aircrafts' international call sign would most frequently have been transmitted via W/T, it would have been used when communicating with civil Aeradio ground stations. The W/T call signs referred to in Forms Mauve and described herein were of a tactical nature and would have been meaningless to anyone not involved in the actual operation or control of a particular flight. Also, the Aeroplane Identification Group (for example: COO461) was not a call sign, either W/T or R/T.

Finally, paragraph M, was for amplifying remarks, which in this case, are self-evident.

To pick out the particulars for Coomalie 46 duty 1 we would find that the nominated aircraft was EH-G, the assigned pilot: Pilot Officer Frith, as duty 1, estimated time of departure from Coomalie Creek at 302330Z (11:30 pm Zulu time on the 30th which equates to 9 am local time on the 1st), planning to join the convoy at 010030Z (10 am local) in position 11°02'S 131°55'E, which was supposed to be tracking 073° True. The estimated time and position of leaving the convoy, that is, being relieved by the next aircraft, was at 010155Z (11:25 am local – so, on task for an hour and twenty-five minutes) in position 11°00'S 132°03'E and the estimated time of arrival back at Coomalie Creek was 010240Z (12:10 pm local). Primary frequency was 7415 kHz, secondary 8240 kHz and D/F'ing if necessary on 8300 kHz. W/T call sign was to be 1P3G and the plan was to track direct from the off-task position to Coomalie Creek – that means that they would not be using the normal, established, lanes of entry.

These sub-paragraphs to paragraph "C" have been in regard to a Form Mauve Convoy. Most operational type Forms Mauve had the similar sub-paragraphs, although some had different meanings. As with all procedures and methods, Forms Mauve evolved during the course of the war; some paragraphs and sub-paragraphs changed their purpose. If you can accurately read one type of acknowledgment Form Mauve though, you should be able to work out a differently formatted one easily enough.

Unit Record Source: Unit History Sheets

An RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book was typically used as a diary type narrative to describe a unit's activities. In some units, the information was limited to brief administrative entries, other units recorded more information. An RAAF Form A51, Unit History Sheet – Detail of Operations, was a closely related form that recorded a flying unit's airborne activities; usually recording aircraft serial numbers, aircraft captain's names (sometimes the names of the entire crew) operation number, wheels up and wheels down times for each operational flight. As with the compilation of A50's, A51's varied in detail from unit to unit and month to month – some are extremely detailed, some were just a waste of paper. Together, Forms A50 and A51 form a unit's history and are typically referred to as being one and the same – either the Unit History Sheet, or a units Operations Record Book. It is these unit records that have been used to compare the specific mission and call sign information with that from the relevant Forms Mauve.

Aircraft Service Source: Aircraft Status Cards

Aircraft status cards, or to use their correct name, *RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft*, were a general administrative record of an aircraft's service and apart from recording an aircraft's type and serial number (and usually previous identities if the aircraft had been sourced from overseas) noted its despatch and arrival at various units, occasionally periods of unserviceability and other such activities. They did not record any information about hours or operations flown or markings carried or specifics about an aircraft's employment within a particular flying unit. Entries were made across three columns titled "Date", "Details" and "Authority".

The dates referred to in these cards should be used with caution. They may or may not be the date of the event referred to and at times are actually the date of the entry being made and might not even reflect the date of the authority. It should also be borne in mind that the dates are not necessarily chronological.

Details referred to the reason for the entry being made. Hand written cards can be very difficult to read and frequently used abbreviations. Some abbreviations did not seem to be standardised and variations at times appear.

The general sequence in terms of recording the movement of an aircraft between units was for it to be Allotted, Issued, then Received. Allocation usually referred to an aircraft being "earmarked" for a particular unit. Issued usually referred to the responsibility for it being (or about to be) handed over. Received usually referred to the receiving unit actually taking charge of the aircraft. Recording being what it was, as many variations as one could think of exist in this sequence from a clear chronological recording of each step as it happened through any amount of omissions and disorder through to one entry having an aircraft at one end of the country at a particular unit and the next entry having it being written off charge of another unit at the opposite end of the continent many months later.

Entries were not limited to recording the administrative shuffling of an airframe between units. Others, especially until about July, 1942 (although examples can be found into 1945), referred to the official, semi-regular, reporting of an aircraft's serviceability and often took the form on a card as (say) "C at 12Sqdn":

- C = Serviceable (actually in flying condition).
- E = Unserviceable but expected to be serviceable within 3 days (from date of signal).
- E Star = Unserviceable and expected to be unserviceable for more than 3 days (from date of signal).
- F = Unserviceable for more than 14 days but less than 1 month (from date of signal).
- G = Unserviceable for more than 1 month.
- H = Unserviceable and awaiting conversion or write-off.⁶

As an aside, this reference also gives the meaning of:

- U/E = Unit Establishment.
- I/E = Initial Equipment.
- I/R = Immediate Reserve.

Every defence entity has an establishment whether it is equipment or people. A unit would have an establishment table which set out exactly how many people of which trade group and of what rank were required, how many vehicles and of what type it was supposed to have, etc. Aeroplanes, obviously were no different. Naturally the establishment listed what a unit was *supposed* to have, not what it actually *did* have at any one time and the variation could be above or below (usually below) that required. During the Second World War, the Unit Establishment was broken down into two segments: Initial Equipment and Immediate Reserve. Initial Equipment was the quantity of aeroplanes a unit was supposed to have available for operations and that might be (say) 12 aircraft. The Immediate Reserve was the quantity of aeroplanes, on charge of that unit, that it could cycle through various levels of maintenance or repair in order to keep 12 aircraft available for operations and that might be (say) 6 aircraft. The Unit Establishment would therefore be expressed as "12/6". If aircraft required a deeper level of maintenance or repair than could be provided at its own unit, then the aircraft might be allocated away and that movement would usually result in the Allotted, Issued and Received sequence being recorded on an aircraft's E/E.⁸⁸

⁶ AFO 19/A/9 Aircraft and Aero Engines – Serviceability Reports, para 3, Form of Signal, in Repair of Aircraft on Site of Crash; NAA: A705, 9/1/776.

Back to aircraft status cards. The last column of an entry was the Authority and what was recorded here was the identifier of the signal that ordered or advised of a particular activity or event. For the serviceability reporting referred to above, the signal would be prefixed with a "Q" (or sometimes the squadron number and then a "Q"). "Q" meant "Equipment".⁷

Other letter abbreviations that appear, especially later, refer to aircraft accidents and follow a percentage figure representing the assessed level of damage to an area of an aircraft. Letters such as "U" (undamaged), "M" (repairable at unit), "R" (repairable but beyond unit capacity), "S" (salvageable as components or other items) and "W" (entirely unsalvageable – write off) being commonly seen recorded on cards.

Limitations

The primary source documents consulted in this project contain occasional errors. I've tried to minimise the effect of those contemporaneous errors by collecting as much information that supports a particular claim to identity as I can so that any errors stand out as anomalies. Many times, however, sufficient information doesn't seem to have survived, so any limited associations presented might, themselves, be the anomalies.

For the period April, 1942, until August, 1944, North Western Area Air Operations Room records contain copies of the relevant Forms Green (Control), Mauve, and as appropriate – Forms Blue for each mission for Striking and Reconnaissance Forces operating within that area. These Forms and sometimes other relevant signal traffic, for each mission were grouped together and headed by a Summary Sheet. One mission per Summary Sheet. These Summary Sheets initially were very basic but gradually evolved to include more and more information from the documents that they summarised. These Summary Sheets can and do contain errors. Transcription errors are not uncommon. Omissions are very common, especially during 1942. But, with the inclusion of copies of the coloured Forms (Greens, Mauves, Blues, etc), errors in the Summary Sheet can be detected and corrected. Of course, sometimes an apparent transcription error in a Summary Sheet turns out to be an error in the original document – but at least it can be verified. However, from September 1st, 1944, none of these records seem to remain in existence. They would have been collected, just as they were prior to September 1st, 1944, but they have either since been lost or destroyed. Operations Room records from Number 79 Wing, a constituent formation of North Western Area, *do* exist, covering the period August 1st, 1944, until May, 1945. The short coming with these records though is, they consist exclusively of Summary Sheets – highly detailed Summary Sheets – but only Summary Sheets nevertheless. No copies of the coloured Forms or other signal traffic relevant to them seem to exist. Whilst these Summary Sheets are very detailed and are the only source of this type of information for that period, the fact that they do not contain copies of the documents from which the transcriptions were made means that the inevitable transcription errors cannot be cross checked or verified. They are what they are.

If an entry in a table remarks that the aircraft "apparently" replaced or was "apparently replaced" by another shows only that the correlation between the operational information and the unit records did not match on that occasion. It does not, in itself, prove that an aircraft was or wasn't replaced. As mentioned in the paragraph above, errors in these documents are common. Errors in the operational information tend to be relatively easy to identify – spelling mistakes, context errors or obvious misunderstandings. Errors in those documents relating to the identification of a certain aircraft, by

⁷ Headquarters North Western Area Standing Orders, Section 4, Signals, dated 10th June, 1942, in North Western Area Routine Orders and Confidential Orders; NAA: AA1966/5, 134.

code letters, call sign, etc, also tend to be obvious, because that type of information was usually repeated. Serial number errors in unit records can be nearly impossible to confirm unless the serial so entered has an obvious error – too many digits, not enough digits or digits that represent an aircraft that wasn't on unit strength. If the entry has transposed a digit or two or mistaken a single digit for another and the serial so entered is a valid serial for another squadron aircraft then there is little that can be done to verify its accuracy – hence my use of the word “apparently” in these cases. Readers can use their own judgment in deciding if the replacement might have actually occurred or not.

Aim

So, this volume and others in the series, aims to present evidence from primary source documents, such as those referred to above, that:

- a) proves a correlation between W/T call sign suffixes and individual aircraft code letter assignments,
- b) matches individual aircraft identification letters to specific aircraft serial numbers and,
- c) displays the accumulated body of evidence in a tabular form for easy reference.

How to Read the Tables of Evidence

The aircraft have been listed in numerical order by serial number (except that the Australian built machines have been listed AFTER the imported aircraft) with each aircraft having a page to itself, each of which will have a title similar to this:

Beaufighter Ic
A19-29
Ex T4993

The first line is the type and mark of the aircraft. The type: "Beaufighter" and the mark: "Mark 1c". The little "c" indicated that the aircraft had been originally produced for the RAF's Coastal Command, a little "f" would have indicated Fighter Command.

The second line is the RAAF serial number of the aircraft. "A19" was the prefix given to British Beaufighter aircraft, "A8" to Australian manufactured Beaufighter aircraft. The letter "A" (or: A-group) was a stores/accounting letter signifying aircraft – it did not and does not have anything to do with the role or use of an aircraft – it simply means aircraft. "L" was for clothing and associated equipment. If you were in the army and needed a replacement article of uniform apparel, you went to Q-stores. In the RAAF, you went down to "L-group".

The number "19" was the section identifier for British Beaufighter aircraft; "8" was for Australian Beaufighter's produced by DAP – the Department of Aircraft Production. After the hyphen was the serial number for that individual airframe. So, "A19-29" meant: Aircraft, British Beaufighter number twenty-nine.

The third line notes any previous identities that aircraft may have had. In this case, it's RAF serial number was T4993. There is no previous identity for Australian DAP produced machines.

Neville Parnell's *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) was an early addition to my aviation library and his linking of former RAF serial numbers to RAAF Beaufighter airframes has been used here, with his permission.

If the aircraft flew on operations, a table is similar to this will appear:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/3 01/2		1M1H		Dennett / Meers. Apparently replaced -31.
COO28/1 04/2	<i>G</i>	8X9G		Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO38/6 18/2	<i>G</i>	8X9G		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO40/1 21/2	<i>G</i>	2Y9G		Barnett / Lennon.
COO40/5 21/2	<i>G</i>	2Y9G		Barnett / Lennon.
COO49/1 08/3	<i>G</i>	8Z6G		Savage / Studt.
COO2/2 12/3	<i>G</i>	1P3G		Apparently replaced by A19-45.
COO5/2 16/3	<i>G</i>	1P8G		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO11/2 25/3	<i>G</i>	5P3G		Frith / McLennan.
COO20/4 05/4	<i>G</i>	X3NG		Wilkins / Agnew.
COO46/1 01/5	EH-G	1P3G		Frith / McLennan.
COO49/8 02/5	EH-G	1F9G		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO1/2 04/5	EH-G	3MFG		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO4/3 06/5	EH-G	2T3G		Apparently replaced by A19-63.
COO5/3 09/5	EH-G	3Q4G		Ferguson / Blades.
COO6/2 10/5	EH-G	9B7G		Ferguson / Blades. Strafed on ground MIL.

The first row contains the titles, in bold, of the individual columns. Each successive row is for each individual operational flight that a particular aircraft has been recorded as having been tasked to fly (as derived from W/T call sign information in Forms Mauve) and has been cross-referenced with a particular serial number (as derived from, typically, unit history sheets).

The column titles are:

Mission/Duty Date – contains the Aircraft Identification Group, then the date the mission was launched in dd/m format.

Aircraft Letter – being the individual identification letter of the aircraft as derived from the last letter of the W/T call sign. If it is in *italics*, then the source from which the call sign was taken – the relevant acknowledgement Form Mauve – did not refer specifically to the individual identification letter, only to the W/T call sign. Full three-letter codes were included in acknowledgment Forms Mauve after about mid-April, 1943. If the code letters appear in normal font, then they were specifically listed in the relevant Form Mauve.

W/T Call sign – being the Wireless Telegraphy call sign (transmitted by Morse code) as quoted in the relevant Form Mauve for this aircraft on this flight. If it is in normal font, it appears as quoted in the Form Mauve; if it is in *italics*, it is assumed.

R/T Call sign – being the Radio Telephony call sign (transmitted by voice) if quoted in the relevant Form Mauve. Very rare for these to be allocated until towards the end of 1943.

Remarks – for the pilot's and observer's surnames and for any pertinent information that might be available, or to explain inconsistencies. The pilot's name was quoted in Forms Mauve but not the observer's so the crewing listed here is derived from the unit's A51. Any inconsistencies between Forms Mauve and A51 will be noted in this column.

In the above table, the first row is highlighted in light green. This indicates that, according to the Squadron's A51, this aircraft flew mission Coomalie 26 as duty 3 on February 1st. The individual identification letter as suggested by the W/T call sign was "H", but this does not match the serial number of the aircraft for which this table refers (which is A19-29). The allocated W/T call sign was "1M1H". There was no R/T call sign nominated. The surnames of the crew were Dennett and Meers and a note is included suggesting that the tasked aircraft, aircraft "H", which was A19-31, was replaced by the aircraft for which this table refers; this is because the Unit History Sheet records -29 as flying this mission and not -31. The table for aircraft A19-31 will have an entry for this mission also (because it was tasked to fly it), but it will be highlighted in dark grey because it seems that it did not actually fly as tasked.

The second row, highlighted in dark grey, shows that this aircraft was tasked to fly Coomalie 28 duty 1 on February 4th, but didn't actually fly as it was evidently replaced by another aircraft, Beaufighter A19-51. Similarly, the seventh row, also highlighted in dark grey, shows that this aircraft was tasked to fly Coomalie 2 as duty 2 on March 12th, but was again apparently replaced by another machine.

The third row shows that this aircraft was tasked for and flew mission Coomalie 38 on February 18th as duty 6. The individual aircraft letter as suggested by the W/T call sign was "G" – this has been derived from the last letter of the W/T call sign. It is in *italics* because it is an assumption and was not specifically noted as such in the relevant Form Mauve. The W/T call sign was "8X9G". There was no R/T call sign mentioned in the Form Mauve. The surname of the pilot on that flight was Kearney and the surname of the observer was Ramsay. Each un-highlighted row indicates that the aircraft letter tasked in the Form Mauve matches the serial number recorded in the Squadron's Operations Record Book as having flown the task. For this example aircraft, it will be noted that from May 1st, it was specifically referred to in relevant Forms Mauve by its individual identification letter or letters. It will also be noted that that individual letter, in this case "G", matches the W/T call sign suffix letter. Again, information will be in *italics* only if it wasn't specifically noted as such in official, contemporaneous, documentation.

The mission, date, call sign (and later) the identification letters and the captains surname information within these tables has all come from the Air Operations Room documents held by the Australian War Memorial. This information has been correlated to a certain serial number by cross-referencing with the units A50 and A51 (unit history sheets) which documents are held by the National Archives of Australia and many of which have been digitised and are freely accessible, on-line. The aircraft history information relative to each airframe comes from the aircrafts particular aircraft status card (E/E.88), which documents are also held by the National Archives of Australia and like the unit history sheets, many of them are freely accessible.

To individually cite each and every item of information found within any particular table would produce many more pages of citations than there are pages of aircraft tables therefore, these references have not been cited, but listed only in the bibliography. This should still provide enough specific guidance, by comparing dates, for anyone to find the exact primary source information that has been used in any given circumstance. Similarly, the aircraft type and serial number at the head of each page, can be taken to have come from the aircrafts own E/E.88 – see bibliography for details, if it hasn't, it'll have a citation. Any text appearing before or after a particular table, that has been derived from something that wasn't my own opinion, experience or some widely established (general knowledge) fact, will also have a citation.

Purpose

The purpose then, is to fill a gap in that portion of the historical record relating to the alphanumeric identification of certain aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force during the 1939 to 1945 war and to correct inaccuracies and distortions that have inevitably crept in to that record.

I hope you find the information contained herein useful and interesting.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-8
Ex T4927⁸

After 10 months with No. 30 Squadron (30SQN) and 3 months at No. 5 Aircraft Depot (5AD), Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, A19-8 was received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek, Northern Territory, on July 22nd, 1943.⁹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO36/2 25/7	EH-P	2T2P		Gordon / Jordon.
COO40/13 04/8	EH-P	1R2P		Mitchell / Smith.
COO42/1 06/8	EH-P	HT2P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO42/4 06/8	EH-P	HT2P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO45/3 11/8	EH-P	7O1P		Mitchell / Smith. A51: Whyte / Powell as duty 8.
COO16/5 21/8	EH-P	5W3P		Ferguson / Blades.
COO19/5 23/8	EH-P	7P1P		Mitchell / Smith.
COO20/1 25/8	EH-P	2H2P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO23/3 24/8	EH-P	8H1P		Apparently replaced by A19-30.
COO24/4 26/8	EH-W	7D2W		Whyte / Powell. Apparently replaced -119
COO27/5 30/8	EH-P	4D9P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO35/2 11/9	EH-P	SO8P		Gaunt / Jones.
COO38/8 12/9	EH-P	7R9P		Warren / Doyle.
COO39/2 13/9	EH-P	8G1P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO39/5 13/9	EH-P	8G1P		Ellis / McVinish.
COO40/5 14/9	EH-P	ZD1P		Shorter / McMurchie. Belly Landing.

During the course of mission Coomalie 40 of September 14th, 1943 and whilst over Namtaboeng village on Selaroe Island:

[I]t was noticed that smoke and oil was issuing from the starboard engine ... [so] the pilot set course for BATHURST ISLAND. Flying on the port engine only [the pilot] jettisoned 150 gallons [of] fuel, four flare floats and approximately 1,000 rounds of .303 ammunition. He then fired his cannon and machine gun ammunition in an endeavour to lighten the aircraft which was then at about 200 feet, and on nearing BATHURST ISLAND he had managed to climb to 2,000 feet. Finding it impossible to continue any further owing to the condition of his engines, the pilot then crash landed on the BATHURST ISLAND strip, this later action taking place owing to the difficulty in lowering the undercarriage.¹⁰

The propeller blades and wheel fairings were damaged but considered repairable¹¹ and the cause was attributed to "... excessive chevron leak on airscrew shaft [starboard] Engine ..." ¹² causing the loss of oil.

⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 107.

⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-8 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁰ Confirmatory Memorandum Casualty Bristol Beaufighter No. A19-8 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

¹¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-8 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹² Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-8 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

A19-8 (continued)

The aircraft was subsequently sent to No. 4 Repair and Salvage Unit (4RSU) at Pell, then to No. 14 Aircraft Repair Depot (14ARD) at Gorrie, before being received by 5AD on April 30th, 1944. It was finally received by the Central Flying School (CFS) on August 11th, 1944, but two days later suffered a ground-loop at Parkes, New South Wales. No. 2 Crash Recovery Depot (2CRD) received the wreck on September 12th with the view to report on the aircraft's future which must have been obvious because on the 19th approval was received authorising its conversion to components.¹³

¹³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-8 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-16
Ex T4946¹⁴

This Beaufighter was issued to 31SQN from 1AD, on October 30th, 1942, as a replacement.¹⁵

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO38/9 25/12	A	4B9A		Greenwood / Thompson. Didn't take-off.
COO39/16 26/12	A	5C9A		Cancelled.
COO45/7 29/12	A	5X1A		Thomas / Van Nooten.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/3 04/1	A	7BAA		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO4/4 07/1	A	9SAA		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO5/4 09/1	A	7D6A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO6/4 10/1	A	HV2A		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO15/5 19/1	A	3Q7A		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO17/6 23/1	A	1FWA		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO19/6 24/1	A	1Z3A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO22/3 28/1	A	3J2A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO24/4 31/1	A	1P3A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO30/2 07/2	A	2Y9A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO36/4 15/2	A	7H7A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO37/3 18/2	A	8X9A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO41/7 21/2	A	2Y9A		Apparently replaced by A19-62.
COO42/2 22/2	A	8D3A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO43/2 24/2	A	8N1A		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO46/5 28/2	A	3Z7A		Cohen / Richards.
COO2/3 12/3	A	1P3A		Delaporte / Patterson. Didn't reach target; WX.

By March 22nd, it had been issued to 4RSU for repairs and was back with 31SQN on the 31st.¹⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO17/6 03/4	A	YG8A		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO20/2 05/4	A	X3NA		McKinnon / Wright.
COO33/1 19/4	EH-A	2Y9A		Stanley / Thorncraft. A51: flying A19-19.
COO46/2 01/5	EH-B	1P3B		Warren / Hamilton. Apparently repl -17.
COO49/6 02/5	EH-A	1F9A		Delaporte / Patterson. RTB open hatch.
COO1/3 04/5	EH-A	3MFA		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO4/4 06/5	EH-J	2T3J		McKinnon / Wright. Apparently repl -45.
COO7/6 10/5	EH-A	9B7A		Frith / McLennon. Damaged on ground MIL on return.

¹⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 107.

¹⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-16 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁶ Ibid.

A19-16 (continued)

On May 10th, it was strafed on the ground at Millingimbi, sustaining a relatively small amount of damage to the fuselage and empennage (see entry for A19-72), and was given over to 4RSU again for repairs. It was received back at 31SQN on June 30th.¹⁷

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/9 24/7	EH-A	1D9A		Apparently replaced by A19-17.
COO36/3 25/7	EH-T	2T2T		Entwistle / Webb. Apparently repl -18.
COO38/3 29/7	EH-A	8G1A		McKinnon / Wright.
COO40/18 04/8	EH-J	1R2J		S/L Gordon / Jordan. Apparently repl -117.
COO45/8 11/8	EH-A	7O1A		Whyte / Powell. A51: Mitchell / Smith as duty 3.
COO5/9 17/8	EH-A	9M1A		Warren / Doyle.
COO19/3 23/8	EH-A	7P1A		McKinnon / Wright.
COO23/2 24/8	EH-A	8H1A		Henry / Hooke.
COO21/5 25/8	EH-A	2H2A		Apparently replaced by A19-103.

On August 29th, the aircraft was back at 4RSU again, this time for a double engine change. This was completed and the aircraft handed back to 31SQN, who received it on October 5th.¹⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO11/5 14/10	EH-B	4RCB		Cridland / de Pierres. Apparently repl -17.
COO14/9 19/10	EH-A	OX6A		Hansen / Quinlan. RTB.
COO18/3 24/10	EH-A	HN2A		Stubbs / Taylor.
COO19/2 26/10	EH-A	DM5A		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO21/5 29/10	EH-A	CS3A		Quance / Taylor.
COO23/6 02/11	EH-A	JK7A		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO26/5 06/11	EH-A	4G1A		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO28/7 11/11	EH-A	CP9A		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO31/7 13/11	EH-A	WT7A		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO36/5 17/11	EH-A	1MQA		Henry / Hooke.
COO40/5 21/11	EH-A	4GJA		Ferguson / Blades.
COO49/4 03/12	EH-A	DY2A	Badgirl	Apparently replaced by A19-80.
COO1/4 05/12	EH-A	1NBA		Wickens / Staines.
COO5/5 10/12	EH-A	FO5A	Petrol	Wickens / Staines.
COO7/3 15/12	EH-A	1RVA	Putty	Wickens / Staines.
COO8/7 16/12	EH-A	VJ4A	Bewbang	Wickens / Staines. RTB U/S.
COO13/4 24/12	EH-A	MQ8A	Basin	Apparently replaced by A19-158.
CML23/5 07/1	EH-D	VN2D	Hoodlam D	Rinkin / Mayne. Apparently repl -83.
CML37/1 20/1	EH-D	YM9D	Bebark	Rinkin / Mayne. Apparently repl -83.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

A19-16 (continued)

On January 19th, 1944, the aircraft was allotted to 14ARD at Gorrie, NT, for installation of auxiliary fuel tanks and re-camouflaging. It was recorded as being received by 31SQN again on May 20th, but was allotted on that day to 5AD at Wagga Wagga, who received it on the 24th. From 5AD, A19-16 was received by No. 5 Operational Training Unit (5OTU), Williamtown, New South Wales, on September 11th, 1944. On December 3rd, 1944, it struck a tree during an evidently low-level flight. Aside from relatively minor damage to the airframe and port wing, the port engine overheated due to all of the cylinder cooling fins being obstructed by debris; the aircraft apparently having mown through the very top of a tree where sufficient light growth served to clog the face of the radial engine with mulch; the aircraft made a normal landing back at Williamtown.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-17
Ex T4947²⁰

After being received from the United Kingdom on May 4th, 1942 and assembled by 1AD at RAAF Laverton, Victoria, this machine was issued to 30SQN on June 18th. During August, it suffered an asymmetric wheels up landing and was sent to 7RSU for repairs. It was then allocated to 31SQN who received it at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, on October 25th, 1942.²¹

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/5 23/11	B	2R2B		Thomas / Van Nooten (Attack Report: Delaporte / Patterson)
COO10/6 30/11	B	1H2B		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO13/6 01/12	B	5N8B		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO21/1 09/12	B	2H2B		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO22/5 10/12	F	2R7F		McDonald / Magee. Replaced A19-22.
COO26/9 16/12	B	XW8B		Apparently replaced by A19-67.
COO29/7 19/12	W	B1RW		Smith / Hand. Replaced A19-70.
COO29/9 19/12	B	B1RB		Apparently replaced by A19-47.
COO31/4 22/12	B	4Q1B		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO38/10 25/12	B	4B9B		Thomas / Van Nooten. RTB ASI U/S.
COO39/12 26/12	B	5C9B		Thomas / Van Nooten. Cancelled.
COO41/6 27/12	B	7H7B		Thomas / Van Nooten.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/2 10/1	B	HV2B		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO9/2 13/1	B	9D6B		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO16/3 23/1	B	1FWB		Brundell / Hatfield.
COO18/2 24/1	B	1Z3B		Cohen / Richards.
COO20/3 27/1	B	3NIB		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO23/3 29/1	B	3A8B		Dennett / Meers.
COO26/1 01/2	B	1M1B		Cohen / Richards.
COO28/3 04/2	B	8X9B		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO30/3 07/2	B	2Y9B		Dennett / Meers.
COO33/1 11/2	B	9ZFB		Apparently replaced by A19-63.
COO36/2 15/2	B	7H7B		Cohen / Richards.
COO45/5 25/2	B	9ZFB		McDonald / Magee.
COO46/6 28/2	H	3Z7H		McDonald / Magee. Apparently repl -31.
COO2/4 12/3	B	1P3B		McKinnon / Wright.
COO14/3 30/3	B	5T5B		McDonald / Magee.

Continued →

²⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

²¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-17 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-17 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO31/3 18/4	EH-B	8GPB		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO46/2 01/5	EH-B	1P3B		Apparently replaced by A19-16.
COO65/9 03/5	EH-B	8M2B		Cohen / Richards.
COO2/2 05/5	EH-B	2L1B		Warren / Hamilton.
COO4/5 06/5	EH-B	2T3B		Barnett / Lennon.
COO7/9 10/5	EH-B	9B7B		Warren / Hamilton. RTB due WX.
COO13/4 14/5	EH-B	2U1B		McDonald / Magee.

The aircraft remained with 31SQN at Coomalie Creek until being received by 14ARD at Gorrie, on May 19th, 1943, for a double engine change and a 240-hourly inspection. It was issued back to 31SQN on June 15th, 1943.²²

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO18/12 05/7	EH-B	8G1B		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO20/3 06/7	EH-B	2R2B		Forbes / Erwin.
COO23/4 10/7	EH-B	3WB		Apparently replaced by A19-98.
COO29/1 16/7	EH-B	9G2B		Entwistle / Webb.
COO34/9 24/7	EH-A	1D9A		Muggleton / Hunt. Apparently repl -16.
COO38/1 29/7	EH-B	8G1B		Entwistle / Webb.
COO40/10 04/8	EH-B	1R2B		Entwistle / Webb. RTB.
COO41/2 05/8	EH-B	8A1B		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO43/6 06/8	EH-B	4T2B		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO44/9 06/8	EH-B	4T2B		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO45/1 11/8	EH-B	7O1B		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO5/1 17/8	EH-B	9M1B		Entwistle / Webb.
COO9/2 18/8	EH-B	1M3B		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO9/5 18/8	EH-B	1M3B		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO21/6 25/8	EH-B	2H2B		Entwistle / Webb.
COO24/3 26/8	EH-B	7D2B		Warren / Doyle.
COO27/1 30/8	EH-B	4D9B		Entwistle / Webb. Shot down one Pete.
COO32/4 06/9	EH-B	7BAB		Whyte / Powell.
COO32/7 06/9	EH-B	7BAB		Whyte / Powell.
COO35/8 11/9	EH-B	SO8B		Cridland / de Pierres.
COO42/2 17/9	EH-B	3R3B		Mitchell / Smith.
COO47/3 23/9	EH-B	U3OB		McKinnon / McMurchie.
COO1/1 29/9	EH-B	7TXB		Ferguson / Blades.
COO1/4 29/9	EH-B	7TXB		Ferguson / Blades.
COO2/1 30/9	EH-B	5Y1B		Apparently replaced by A19-43.
COO11/5 14/10	EH-B	4RCB		Apparently replaced by A16-16.
COO14/8 19/10	EH-B	OX6B		Cridland / de Pierres. Failed to Return.

Six Beaufighter's from 31SQN were ordered, as Coomalie 14 of 19th October, to carry out a bombing and strafing attack on Japanese aircraft, barges or any other activity sighted on the Serwatoe River. If no suitable targets presented themselves, then the Trangan Airstrip was to be bombed and strafed. Time on target was to be 190630Z (5 pm Darwin daylight savings time). The route was to be Coomalie

²² Ibid.

A19-17 (continued)

Creek to position 06°25'S 133°40'E, to Serwatoe River, to Trangan Airstrip and then either direct to Coomalie or Millingimbi, at the flight commander's discretion.²³

It was decided to operate from Darwin, where wheels up was planned for 190350Z (2:20 pm Darwin daylight savings time on the 19th) with the six Beaufighters (duties 5 thru 10 inclusive) flying an outbound track of 025° True for 397 nautical miles to the ordered waypoint, then turning right and tracking 094 at 25 for the target area. Time on target was planned to be as ordered and the estimated time of arrival of the aircraft back at Darwin was 0905Z (7:35 pm), having returned from the target via Lane 2 (Cape Hotham) – although it was noted that aircraft may land at Millingimbi in an emergency. Five of the six aircraft would each be carrying two 250-lb bombs fitted with a nose plug and an 11 second delay tail fuse.²⁴

The weather forecast for the Arafura Sea was for 7/10ths altocumulus at 12,000 feet and between 4 and 6/10ths cumulus at 2,000 feet with tops to 7,000 feet. Over the target area about 5/10ths cumulus at 2,000 feet with tops to 8,000 feet was predicted.²⁵

The Squadron's unit history records that the aircraft departed in pairs at 0339Z, 0341Z and 0342Z (2:09, 2:11 and 2:12 pm).²⁶ Coomalie 14 duty 9, A19-16/EH-A, returned to Darwin with engine trouble and landed at 0432Z (3:02 pm).²⁷

The five Beaufighters approached the target area from the west flying the last 120 nautical miles at zero height. Weather was generally fine, with 3/10ths cumulus and unlimited visibility except in isolated rain squalls, one of which was over the mouth of the Serwatoe River so, landfall was made at Feroeni (about 8 nautical miles south) with the aircraft then flying over land until they re-intercepted the Serwatoe River at 0605Z (4:35 pm). Along the river, many populated, large and well-kept villages were noted. A jetty with stacks of stores and a small barge was seen between Laininer and Doka Barat. A squat, double-ended, 40-foot barge with more than a score of Japanese personnel onboard was strafed near the village of Lorlor and considered to have been destroyed and from Garlie, where the river narrows significantly, a well-used road was seen to follow the southern bank of the river for 3 miles before turning south towards Trangan Airstrip which the Beaufighters were overhead at 0615Z (4:45 pm Darwin daylight savings time). The airstrip was described as being in excellent condition with good, bomber sized, revetments and had obviously been in recent, regular use. Bombs were dropped by duty 5 on the western dispersal bays on the south end of the strip and by duty 7 on a gunpit at the south west end of the strip and on a road, but no results were seen; duty 10 couldn't find a target to bomb so left the area still carrying theirs. The aircraft departed the target area via Biltoeboer Bay, on the south-east coast and a single masted lugger under sail was opportunistically strafed without observable results.²⁸

Coomalie 14 duty 8, A19-17, was apparently the last aircraft off the target and passed over the village of Old Krei, on a small headland which forms the northern side of Biltoeboer Bay. Small arms fire was seen to rise from the village. Once over the water, it was noticed that A19-17 was well behind the others and not catching up, so two of the other aircraft turned around and joined up on A19-17 which was flying at 1,500 feet and at 140 knots. They continued on in company for some time until it was

²³ DA/G9/18 Oct in AWM66, 15/1/69.

²⁴ COO/MS1/10 Oct, *ibid*.

²⁵ Summary Sheet Weather Forecast for COO14 of 19th October, 1943, *ibid*.

²⁶ RAAF Form A51 Unit History Sheet, Detail of Operations by No. 31 Squadron entries for COO 14 of 19 October, in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 – Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

²⁷ COO/MS2/19 Oct in AWM66, 15/1/69.

²⁸ DAR/B1/19 Oct, *ibid*.

A19-17 (continued)

noticed that A19-17 now seemed to be behaving in a peculiar manner and that the navigator was in the cockpit with the pilot. The aircraft then dived towards the sea but seemed to recover, only to shortly afterwards dive again and crash into the sea. The two accompanying Beaufighters circled the position for eight minutes but only the aircraft's emergency dinghy and some debris was seen.²⁹

A19-17 had apparently been hit by small arms fire at 0618Z (4:48 pm) as it coasted out over Old Krei Village and crashed into the sea and disintegrated in position 07°45'S 133°38'E.³⁰ The pilot, Flying Officer Francis Herbert Cridland and navigator, Pilot Officer Raymond Baudoin de Pierres were listed as Missing but Believed Killed.³¹

²⁹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-17 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

³⁰ DAR/B1/19 Oct in AWM66, 15/1/69.

³¹ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron, entry for Darwin 19.10.43, in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 to Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-18
Ex T4970³²

This aircraft was received at 1AD for assembly on June 26th, 1942 and went to 50TU on November 2nd. During mid-January, 1943, it suffered a tree-strike (it hit a tree whilst changing station during a low-level formation exercise), but it survived and eventually became due for a 240-hourly and was sent to 5AD towards the end of April for that purpose. It was then received by 31SQN on June 22nd, 1943 and was employed on operations as indicated below.³³

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO18/14 05/7	EH-T	8G1T		Odgen / West.
COO21/1 08/7	EH-T	7R9T		Leithhead / Graves. A51: "-118" in error.
COO21/4 08/7	EH-T	7R9T		Leithhead / Graves. A51: "-118" in error.
COO22/2 09/7	EH-T	1Q2T		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO24/3 11/7	EH-T	3J2T		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO29/2 16/7	EH-T	9G2T		McKinnon / Wright.
COO36/1 25/7	EH-K	2T2K		F/O Taylor / Hocking. Apparently repl -86
COO36/3 25/7	EH-T	2T2T		Apparently replaced by A19-16.
COO36/4 25/7	EH-K	2T2K		F/O Taylor / Hocking. Apparently repl -86
COO40/12 04/8	EH-T	1R2T		McKinnon / Wright.
COO45/7 11/8	EH-T	7O1T		McKinnon / Wright.
COO5/7 17/8	EH-T	9M1T		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO10/6 18/8	EH-T	1M3T		McKinnon / Wright.
COO10/9 18/8	EH-T	1M3T		McKinnon / Wright. Forced Landed.

Coomalie 10 of 18th August, 1943, was a convoy escort which, for A19-18, ended with a forced landing due to a total loss of oil from the starboard engine which was damaged beyond repair. The engine ran dry of oil because the starboard oil cooler had a hole in it. It had a hole in it because a ricochet or some shrapnel (perhaps a shell casing?) bounced off the water and hit it. The ricochet (or shrapnel) existed because the aircraft was firing its guns at the water from, it would seem, a (very) low altitude.³⁴ One wonders how Mr McKinnon went about explaining the circumstance to the Boss; test firing, perhaps. OK, but I wonder what excuse was used for the unnecessarily low altitude! A successful forced landing was executed about 22 miles roughly south-east of Point Stuart with the aircraft being otherwise undamaged. Another Squadron aircraft found them and landed next to the stranded machine, took on its crew and returned to Coomalie Creek.³⁵ 4RSU took charge of the aircraft on August 23rd and effected an engine change (presumably in the field). A19-18 was returned to 31SQN on September 21st.³⁶

³² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

³³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-18 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-18, in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

³⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-18 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-18 (continued)



Oil everywhere! A19-18 after its forced landing. [Image courtesy No. 31 Squadron Association via Ian Madden].

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/2 09/10	EH-T	GN4T		Garnham / Delaney. Forced Landed.

A19-18 suffered another forced landing – a belly landing this time – when, returning from a combined strafing attack and reconnaissance mission (during which SQNLDR Gordon in A19-40 shot down two twin engine Japanese aircraft) and on nearing the Darwin area, the pilot realised that they were unable to reach Coomalie Creek due to lack of fuel. A forced landing was carried out – in a mine field and barbed wire entanglement (!) – close to Bagot Road which is a north-south orientated road running along the western boundary of RAAF Darwin. The aircraft was badly holed by steel stakes in the fuselage, both wings and the empennage; the centre section was holed and strained and both propellers were badly bent.³⁷

The aircraft was taken over by 14ARD on October 24th and, predictably, was assessed as being beyond economic repair.³⁸

³⁷ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-18 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

³⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-18 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-18 (continued)



The aftermath of A19-18's forced landing in a mine field. The emergency life raft has auto-deployed and is at the ready – just in case. *[Photo B Drysdale via N Parnell]*.

Despite this aircraft flying into trees, trying to shoot itself down and belly flopping into mine-fields, no members of her crew sustained any injuries.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-19
Ex T4971³⁹

This Beaufighter was received by 31SQN from 1AD, on October 27th, 1942.⁴⁰

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/3 02/12	C	2R5C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO17/9 02/12	C	2R5C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO23/8 11/12	C	1M3C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO26/12 16/12	C	XW8C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO27/3 18/12	C	4T2C		Barnett / Lennon.
COO30/3 20/12	C	3K2C		Barnett / Lennon.
COO35/2 23/12	C	9A4C		Barnett / Lennon.
COO37/4 24/12		[2]M6S		Madden / Cormie [or Spencer]. Repl -63?
COO38/3 25/12	C	4B9C		S / T. Apparently replaced by A19-72.
COO39/5 26/12	C	5C9C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO40/2 27/12		7H7G		Gabb / Webb. Replaced A19-29 ?
COO43/4 29/12		5X1G		Barnett / Lennon. Replaced A19-29 ?

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/2 07/1	C	9SAC		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO9/1 13/1	C	9D6C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO13/3 17/1	C	6C3C		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO22/5 28/1	C	3J2C		Apparently replaced by A19-62.
COO25/2 30/1		1P3K		Stanley / Thorncraft. "K" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-86.
COO44/1 25/2	C	9ZFC		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO33/2 19/4	EH-W	2Y9W		Delaporte / Patterson. A51: flying A19-16.
COO38/3 23/4	EH-W	8ZDW		Ogden / West.
COO39/2 24/4	EH-W	1E3W		Ogden / West. A51: duty 1.
COO40/1 25/4				Ogden / West. No Mauve.
COO2/1 05/5	EH-W	2L1W		Brannelly / McGrath.
COO2/3 05/5	EH-W	2L1W		Brannelly / McGrath.
COO5/1 09/5	EH-W	3Q4W		Apparently replaced by A19-63.

A19-19 failed to return to Coomalie Creek from a night training exercise on May 12th, 1943.⁴¹ The aircraft had been engaged on a Searchlight Co-operation exercise in the Darwin area however, the crew became lost whilst attempting to return to Coomalie Creek and abandoned the aircraft.⁴² The pilot, Flying Officer Brannelly, was rescued by the army on the 19th, but the observer, Sergeant McGrath, wasn't found.⁴³

³⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁴⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-19 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴¹ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 12.5.43 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 to Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁴² Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-19 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 11.

⁴³ Confirmatory Memorandum dated 22nd May, 1943, regarding A19-19, *ibid*.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-20
Ex T4972⁴⁴

This aircraft was received by 31SQN at Wagga Wagga on September 21st, 1942.⁴⁵ On October 1st, it suffered a tail wheel collapse, requiring repair at 5AD (also at Wagga Wagga), who received the aircraft on October 4th. 31SQN got the aircraft back again on the 23rd and it deployed to North Western Area at the end of October with the rest of the squadron.⁴⁶

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO13/8 01/12	D	5N8D		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO21/2 09/12	D	2H2D		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO23/4 11/12	D	1M3D		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO26/8 16/12	D	XW8D		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO27/5 18/12		4T2P		G / T. Replaced -59. Cancelled.
COO29/3 19/12	D	B1RD		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO30/4 20/12	D	3K2D		Apparently replaced by A19-22.
COO31/3 22/12	D	4Q1D		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO43/2 29/12	D	5X1D		Gabb / Webb. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 43 of December 29th, 1942, was ordered as a strafing attack of Betano, Timor, by four Beaufighters.⁴⁷

The weather forecast as supplied for this operation predicted between 8 and 10/10ths stratocumulus and cumulonimbus at 1,000 feet, lowering in rain. Moderate to heavy thunderstorms in the vicinity of Melville Island. 6 to 8/10ths cumulus and stratocumulus at 2,000 feet over the rest of the Timor Sea. 4 to 6/10ths cumulus increasing to 10/10ths cumulus and cumulonimbus by noon with heavy thunderstorms after 2 pm. Visibility 6 to 10 miles reducing to less than 1 mile in rain. Winds below 8,000 feet 260 at 12 to 15 north of front. South-east to east at 6 to 10 south of front.⁴⁸

Of the four aircraft, one returned to base with electrical unserviceability's and two failed to return.⁴⁹

With regard to Beaufighter A19-20, a supplementary report to the original Air Attack Report was issued on 11th January, 1943:

COO 432 following COO 433 in the first run over the target at 0220/29/Z, flying in northerly course at 100 feet height, fired three bursts of cannon and machine gun at some native huts. COO 432 finished this run by turning to the West and is was then that the observer observed the tail fin smashed by fire either from mortar or bofors gun (Observer saw red ball go through tail of aircraft) – the aircraft was also holed in several places in the tail. At the same time the port motor cut out and although the reason was unknown, it is considered it was caused by A/A (no A/A was observed either before or after the smashing of the tail fin). The Pilot then

⁴⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁴⁵ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 21.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁴⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-20 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁷ DA/G4/28 Dec in AWM66, 15/1/23.

⁴⁸ Batchelor signal X998 of 29/12/42, *ibid*.

⁴⁹ COO/MS4/29 Dec, *ibid*.

A19-20 (continued)

turned the aircraft in an easterly course, and the Observer threw out propaganda pamphlets as instructed. The Pilot was unable to maintain height or speed, and after crossing the Kelan River headed the aircraft out to sea. At this time the speed had decreased to 100 knots and the temperature of the starboard engine had increased to 280° and the controls were acting erratically. The Pilot then crashed landed on the sea about a quarter of a mile out to sea off Cape Netiboot. The tail of the aircraft hit the water first and then the engines – the Observer and the Pilot had braced themselves for this crash, the Pilot also had moved the gun sight out of the way, and the crew quickly escaped through the two top hatches. They climbed onto the wings which were then waist deep, and then swam to the shore. Both Pilot and Observer had Mae Wests and the Pilot also had his revolver. The aircraft sank in about 20 seconds, front going down first followed by the tail – it is estimated that the aircraft sank in 40 feet of water, at low tide about a quarter of a mile off the shore near Cape Netiboot. The Pilot and Observer after swimming ashore, followed a track into the scrub and then camouflaged themselves [with branches?]. Attempting to cross Kelan River, but found mud to be knee deep. Then stopped at river to wash and observed “Nate” approaching at 6000 feet, they made for cover but did not think “Nate” was looking for them, as it flew an even course. The time was now 0430/29/Z, about two hours since the aircraft landed in the sea. Later they crossed the Kelan River higher up, and came to deserted native village – they looked round for food and were successful in finding five eggs which they ate raw. They decided to sleep in one of the huts and were not disturbed during the night. The next day they spent in pushing further inland, the going was heavy, owing to mountainous condition of the country, and they could not find any food – there was plenty of water available from springs and streams. They passed through native huts all of which were deserted, and finally reached a Poste House, which was probably at Fatucuac. They spent the night here and again were undisturbed, although they later heard Japs were only one or two miles away from Fatucuac. The third day, the crew pushed further inland over a creek called “Bamboo Creek”, and here they found palm leaf shelters, built by A.I.F. this fact was deduced by writings on posts and tobacco tins. They then climbed hills endeavouring to locate A.I.F. and subsequently came across two natives – these natives after a lot of gesticulations, which the Australians could not understand, made off, and the two Australians also made off thinking that the natives might be hostile. Continuing the journey inland they came across a very old native in a hut who gave them a meal of boiled maize and eggs. This native and our chaps managed to talk with sign language the native calling them “Australie Soldato”. Then the two natives returned, one of them producing a note signed by a member of A.I.F. and saying that these natives were friendly and would lead them to the A.I.F.

By collaboration with the old native and with many signs and Australian slang words our chaps were made to understand they must first have a good meal, and then they would be taken to the A.I.F. Our chaps then had a good meal of rice, soup and eggs, had a short sleep and then were taken some miles to the A.I.F. After a meal of rice our chaps enjoyed a good nights rest. The next day they rested at the A.I.F. camp at which there were a lot of natives – these natives were all working for the A.I.F. The following day our chaps escorted by member of A.I.F proceeded inland and after seven hours hike, arrived at Head Quarters for tea – here they had a good meal, including Tomatoes and fresh beans. The next day they, and all the A.I.F members left this position and proceeded toward the coast, and after days hiking stopped for the night at a place near Fatoe Luilik. The next morning the party left early, and after hiking all the morning had lunch at a native village near the coast. After lunch they proceeded to the coast arriving there about 2 P.M. The party which had grown to 200 (including Portugese) then dispersed under cover of the scrub just off the beach and waited for the ship, which was to take them off the

A19-20 (continued)

Island. The ship arrived at 11.30 PM at night and 4 ½ hours was spent in getting the two hundred odd personnel on to the ship. This was not easy as the surf was heavy. After everyone was aboard, the ship left the coast of Timor, just before dawn, making an uneventful journey to Darwin where she berthed at about 7PM.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ 31 Squadron Supplementary Report to Air Attack Report No. 19, dated 11th January, 1943 in Attack Reports No. 31 Squadron; NAA: A11312, 4/1/INT/C.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-21
Ex T4973⁵¹

This machine was taken on charge of 31SQN from 2AD at RAAF Richmond on August 23rd, 1942 and was the Squadron's first Beaufighter.⁵² It suffered damage to its left wing and propeller after the left main gear collapsed on September 6th. 5AD took charge of the aircraft the next day to effect repairs. 31SQN got the aircraft back again on October 8th⁵³ and after deploying to NWA with the rest of the Squadron, it flew on operations as detailed below:

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO12/11 30/11	E	1H2E		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO39/8 26/12	E	5C9E		Barnett / Lennon. Landed Darwin.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/3 03/1		7M3U		Barnett / Lennon. Apparently replaced -66.
COO4/6 07/1	E	9SAE		Barnett / Lennon.
COO5/1 09/1	E	7D6E		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO8/4 12/1	E	1FME		Apparently replaced by A19-66.
COO12/2 17/1	E	6C3E		Barnett / Lennon.
COO14/3 19/1	E	3Q7E		Barnett / Lennon.
COO17/5 23/1	E	1FWE		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO18/3 24/1	E	1Z3E		McDonald / Magee.
COO20/2 27/1	E	3NIE		Barnett / Lennon. Forced Landed BAT.

Returning from Coomalie 20, the left-hand engine failed some 150 nautical miles out from Base. The crew finding unsatisfactory weather conditions at Coomalie Creek, diverted to Batchelor and executed a forced landing.⁵⁴ The aircraft was subsequently received by 1RSU on February 1st for repairs. 31SQN received the aircraft back again on March 4th.⁵⁵

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO31/4 18/4	EH-E	8GPE		McCord / Childs.
COO40/1 12/6	EH-Y	1D8Y		Dennett / Meers. Apparently repl -118.
COO48/5 18/6	EH-E	2B1E		McCord / Childs.
COO1/3 20/6	EH-E	7C1E		Ferguson / Blades.
COO3/1 22/6	EH-E	8L4E		McCord / Childs.
COO6/2 24/6	EH-E	7OWE		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO8/1 26/6	EH-E	8A9E		Henry / Hooke.

Continued →

⁵¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁵² RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 23.8.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁵³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-21 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵⁴ Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-21 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

⁵⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-21 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-21 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO21/3 08/7	EH-O	7R9O		Gardiner / Lyne. Apparently repl -116.
COO22/1 09/7	EH-E	1Q2E		Ellis / McVinish.
COO22/4 09/7	EH-E	1Q2E		Ellis / McVinish.
COO27/3 14/7	EH-S	9B7S	[Reg] Putty	Ellis / McVinish. Apparently repl – 63.
COO34/6 24/7	EH-E	1D9E		Ellis / McVinish.
COO5/6 17/8	EH-E	9M1E		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO24/6 26/8	EH-E	7D2E		Mitchell / Smith.
COO27/3 30/8	EH-E	4D9E		McCord / Childs.
COO35/3 11/9	EH-E	SO8E		Whyte / Powell.
COO38/5 12/9	EH-E	7R9E		Mann / Harber.

By early September, the aircraft had fallen due for a 240-hourly and was received at 4RSU on the 13th for that inspection. The aircraft was officially received again by 31SQN on October 30th.⁵⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO23/2 02/11	EH-E	JK7E		Stubbs / Taylor.

On returning from Coomalie 23, the tail wheel collapsed, allegedly because of a heavy landing and the aircraft completed its landing roll dragging the rear fuselage on the ground.⁵⁷ This caused significant damage to the rear fuselage and tail strut and attachments as well as some damage to the rudder and it was off to 4RSU again for rectification. On November 22nd, the squadron got it back again.⁵⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO42/8 23/11	EH-E	3ZGE		Garnham / Delaney.
COO1/6 05/12	EH-E	1NBE		Garnham / Delaney.
COO5/3 10/12	EH-E	FO5E	Petrol	Garnham / Delaney.
COO7/7 15/12	EH-E	1RVE	Putty	Garnham / Delaney.
COO8/5 16/12	EH-E	VJ4E	Bewbang	Garnham / Delaney.

By January 21st, 1944, A19-21 was allotted to 5AD for complete overhaul. The aircraft hadn't been used operationally since mid-December, 1943 and by mid-February, 1944, it was decided that the aircraft was of no further use for operational duties and was ear-marked for use by 5OTU, serving with that unit from August 3rd, 1944.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-21 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

⁵⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-21 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

A19-21 (continued)

On February 14th, 1945, it was involved in a mid-air collision and forced landed on Stockton Beach near RAAF Williamstown, New South Wales.⁶⁰ A19-21 was number 1 of a 3-aircraft low level formation with fighter affiliation exercise. Returning to RAAF Williamstown, the section was in echelon [starboard] at approximately 100 feet approaching 4 miles to run when number 1, A19-21, pulled up sharply to achieve circuit height.⁶¹ A19-48, number 2, attempted to follow and appeared to overshoot and struck -21 from underneath losing its port wing and part of its empennage causing it to roll uncontrollably and crash, killing the crew.⁶² A19-21, with a damaged starboard wing and engine, executed a successful forced landing on Stockton Beach.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Confirmatory Memorandum. Accident Involving Beaufighter A19-21 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

⁶² Confirmatory Memorandum. Accident Involving Beaufighter A19-48 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

⁶³ Confirmatory Memorandum. Accident Involving Beaufighter A19-21 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-22
Ex T4974⁶⁴

This aircraft was received by 31SQN from 1AD on October 11th, 1942.⁶⁵

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/6 22/11	F	YP1F		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO6/6 23/11	F	2R2F		Delaporte / Patterson (Attack Report: Thomas / Van Nooten)
COO10/4 30/11	F	1H2F		Delaporte / Patterson. RTB Eng Failure.
COO13/9 01/12	F	5N8F		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO16/5 02/12	F	2R5F		Apparently replaced by A19-57.
COO17/11 02/12	F	2R5F		Apparently replaced by A19-57.
COO20/3 08/12	F	2A5F		Delaporte / Patterson. Cancelled due WX.
COO21/4 09/12	F	2H2F		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO22/5 10/12	F	2R7F		Apparently replaced by A19-17.
COO26/2 16/12	F	XW8F		Delaporte / Patterson. RTB due weather.
COO27/6 18/12		4T2H		D / P. Replaced by -22. Cancelled.
COO29/2 19/12	F	B1RF		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO30/4 20/12		3K2D		Savage / Studt. Apparently replaced -20.
COO34/6 22/12	F	4Q1F		Cohen / Richards.
COO35/4 23/12	F	9A4F		Smith / Hand. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 35 of 23rd December, 1942, was ordered as a strafing attack on Fuiloro aerodrome, town and adjacent roads, specifically targeting buildings, aerodrome machinery and personnel, by four Beaufighters of 31SQN.⁶⁶

The estimated time of departure was set as 2215Z (8:45 am Darwin daylight savings time) and the route was from Coomalie Creek to Charles Point, then 308° True at 317 nautical miles to the target. Estimated time of arrival back at Coomalie Creek was 0255Z (1:25 pm).⁶⁷

The aircraft departed in two pairs at 2219Z and 2220Z (8:49 and 8:50 am) with A19-22 being the second aircraft in the second pair.⁶⁸

The four Beaufighters were proceeding over the Timor Sea in loose “V” formation at 7,000 feet when, at 2330Z (10 am Darwin time), in position 10°37’S 129°00’E, the observer of duty 2 received a signal via Aldis Lamp from A19-22 saying “engine cut”, but the rest of the message was indecipherable. A19-22 then turned back. The three remaining aircraft continued on to the target.⁶⁹

An aerial search for A19-22 was carried out on the 24th and wreckage was located in Fog Bay, 50 miles south west of Darwin about half a mile off shore. A ground search revealed a W/T log book and an engine performance publication from the missing aircraft washed up on the beach near the wreckage;

⁶⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF’s Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁶⁵ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 11.10.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁶⁶ DA/G3/22 Dec in AWM66, 15/1/22.

⁶⁷ COO/MS5/22 Dec, *ibid.*

⁶⁸ RAAF Form A51 Operations Record Book Detail of the Work Carried Out by 31 Squadron entry for COO35 of 23/12/42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 – Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁶⁹ No. 31 Squadron Attack Report No. 12, dated 23 – 12 – 42 in AWM66, 15/1/22.

A19-22 (continued)

no footprints were found.⁷⁰

Two and a half weeks later, HMAS *SOUTHERN CROSS* arrived to locate and salvage wreckage seen in Fog Bay, thought to be that of the missing Beaufighter, A19-22.

- 1200/8th. Arrived in FOG BAY and endeavoured to find lost plane.
- 1430/8th. Located plane at dead low water, scattered in mud half a mile from the beach. Tide was advancing rapidly and a thorough inspection could not be made so plane was bouyed and we returned to the ship to get salvage gear ready for next low water.
- 1200/9th. Took all possible hands including refugees, and all boats including lugger into wrecked plane. As the water receded work was begun opening escape hatch, which was jammed and had to be cut open, also releasing guns, ammunition, magazines, motors, tail wheel assembly etc. All these were then securely lashed, slung, and bouyed, and the Lugger was used as a camel to break out and float one of the engines. This was successfully carried out, and at high water "SOUTHERN CROSS" was brought in to tow lugger and engine into deep water for salvaging.
- 0800/10th. The following morning at high water, "SOUTHERN CROSS" was again taken in and the second engine was broken out and floated and towed into deep water close to its mate. Bad weather and heavy swell severely hampered operations, and one engine complete with propellers was landed on deck. Heavy rain then made further work impossible.
- 0800/11th. At high water "SOUTHERN CROSS" was taken in and the remainder of the wreckage was landed on deck, leaving only the main body of the plane in the mud. This was too big and too far in the mud for us to handle. Returning to the other engine, salvage operations were commenced although swell was very heavy. Finally the slings chafed through and the engine was lost and is now lying in six fathoms of water, bouyed with a 44 gallon drum, and could easily be recovered with the aid of a diver. The natives who had been sent to search the beaches and bush had recovered another rubber boat, a parachute bridle, an airman's Mae West and helmet, and had also discovered tracks on the beach and in the mud. These were investigated but proved fruitless. One body was discovered in main body of plane, but completely decomposed, and investigations of all facts and circumstances seem to establish the fact that the Navigator escaped from the plane before she crashed, and that the Pilot was trapped and drowned in the plane, the whereabouts of the Navigator being still unknown. Our W/T had broken down, so an effort was made to pass messages through reconnaissance planes without avail.

⁷⁰ Presumption of Death of Crew of Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A19-22 in Casualty Repatriation File Smith Mervyn Campbell 400047; NAA: A705, 163/162/571.

A19-22 (continued)

NOTE: From a conversation with Lieutenant STRATH I formed the opinion that the statement that the Navigator got out was based on opinions of the R.A.A.F. Salvage party.

The body in the aircraft was in neither the pilot's nor the observer's seat but approximately in the centre of the cockpit.⁷¹

The crewmembers of A19-22 where:

Pilot	Warrant Officer Mervyn Campbell Smith, and
Observer	Sergeant Ronald Thomas Hand. ⁷²

⁷¹ Extract from Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. "SOUTHERN CROSS" Letter Dated 12th January, 1943, *ibid*.

⁷² 2BPSO signal P540 OF 24/12 (1942) in Casualty Repatriation File Hand Ronald Thomas 28891; NAA: A705, 163/120/735.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-29
Ex T4993⁷³

After being assembled at 1AD, RAAF Laverton, Victoria, this machine was received by 31SQN at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, on October 13th, 1942.⁷⁴ After deploying to North Western Area, it flew the following operations:

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO8/6 26/11	G	3G7G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO9/3 28/11	G	3Q8G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO18/5 06/12	G	RY6G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO21/6 09/12	G	2H2G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO22/3 10/12	G	2R7G		Madden / Spencer.
COO23/7 11/12	G	1M3G		Madden / Spencer.
COO26/6 16/12	G	XW8G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO30/5 20/12	G	3K2G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO37/5 24/12	G	[2]M6G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO38/4 25/12	G	4B9G		Kearney / Ramsay. RTB Instruments U/S.
COO39/3 26/12	G	5C9G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO40/2 27/12	G	7H7G		Apparently replaced by A19-19 (?)
COO42/3 28/12	G	7UCG		Apparently replaced by A19-57.
COO43/4 29/12	G	5X1G		Apparently replaced by A19-19 (?)

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/3 02/1	G	B7GG		Barnett / Lennon.
COO49/2 03/1	G	7M3G		Biven / Newton.
COO7/4 11/1	G	6SXG		Read / Marr.
COO10/3 14/1	G	6P7G		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO14/1 19/1	G	3Q7G		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO18/1 24/1	G	1Z3G		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO25/4 30/1	G	1P3G		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO26/3 01/2		1M1H		Dennett / Meers. Apparently replaced -31.
COO28/1 04/2	G	8X9G		Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO38/6 18/2	G	8X9G		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO40/1 21/2	G	2Y9G		Barnett / Lennon.
COO40/5 21/2	G	2Y9G		Barnett / Lennon.
COO49/1 08/3	G	8Z6G		Savage / Studt.
COO2/2 12/3	G	1P3G		Apparently replaced by A19-45.
COO5/2 16/3	G	1P8G		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO11/2 25/3	G	5P3G		Frith / McLennan.
COO20/4 05/4	G	X3NG		Wilkins / Agnew.

Continued →

⁷³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁷⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-29 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-29 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO46/1 01/5	EH-G	1P3G		Frith / McLennon.
COO49/8 02/5	EH-G	1F9G		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO1/2 04/5	EH-G	3MFG		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO4/3 06/5	EH-G	2T3G		Apparently replaced by A19-63.
COO5/3 09/5	EH-G	3Q4G		Ferguson / Blades.
COO6/2 10/5	EH-G	9B7G		Ferguson / Blades. Strafed on ground MIL.

A19-29 was the second of two Beaufighters tasked to provide continuous air cover for Force "M", an eastbound convoy consisting of HMAS *INVERELL* escorting the merchant ships *MATHEW FLINDERS* and *YARRA*, from 10 am until 3:30 pm on May 10th, 1943.⁷⁵ The first aircraft was to depart Millingimbi at 9:20 am, locate the convoy (which was expected to occur at 10 am), provide air cover until relieved (at 11:30 am), return to Millingimbi, refuel, depart Millingimbi, take over air cover again (from 1:25 pm until 3:30 pm) and then recover to Coomalie Creek (by 5:20 pm); the second aircraft, A19-29, was to depart Millingimbi one hour and forty minutes later so as to relieve the first aircraft at 11:30 am, provide cover until relieved again by the first aircraft (at 1:25 pm) and then transit direct to Coomalie Creek, landing there at 3:45 pm.⁷⁶

Nine Japanese single seat fighters attacked Millingimbi shortly after 9:30 am, strafing aircraft parked on the aerodrome. A19-29 was damaged, but not significantly.⁷⁷ Another six of the Squadron's aircraft were refuelling at Millingimbi after a strike, one of them was destroyed and another damaged.⁷⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO14/9 14/5	EH-F	2U1F		Warren / Hamilton. Replaced A19-84.
COO16/2 17/5	EH-G	7G9G		McCord / Childs.
COO17/3 19/5	EH-G	2X8G		Frith / McLennon. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 17 of 19th May was ordered as an attack against grounded aircraft and installations at the Japanese airfield of Penfoie near Koepang by at least five short range Beaufighter's of 31SQN. Not less than three Beaufighter's were to attack the target. Time on target was to be sunrise Penfoie time (182153Z – 7:23 am Darwin local time) with the aircraft departing either from Darwin or Coomalie Creek and returning to Drysdale so as to refuel and then returning to Coomalie Creek.⁷⁹

Enroute weather was predicted to be between 5 and 7/10ths cumulus at 2,000 feet with tops to 6,000 feet with 6 to 8/10ths stratocumulus at 2,000 feet and ground haze for Penfoie; visibility was likely to be 10 to 12 miles.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ DA/G6/8 May in AWM66, 15/1/39.

⁷⁶ COO/MC2/8 May, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ COO/B2/10 May, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ COO/B1/10 May, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ DA/G3/18 May in AWM66, 15/1/41.

⁸⁰ Summary Sheet Weather Forecast for Coomalie 17/19 May, *ibid.*

A19-29 (continued)

31SQN tasked seven Beaufighter's for the job, operating from Coomalie Creek. Wheels up was planned for 181900Z (4:30 am Darwin time on the 19th) with the route simply Coomalie Penfoie direct; time on target 2153Z (7:23 am). Wheels down at Drysdale was estimated to be at 2335Z (9:05 am Darwin time).⁸¹

Time on target was 182154Z (7:24 am Darwin time). Buildings and personnel on the aerodrome as well as aircraft on the ground were strafed, with two bombers claimed as destroyed plus two bombers and one fighter damaged. Intense and accurate light, medium and heavy calibre Anti-Aircraft fire was encountered coming from the whole perimeter of the aerodrome and an aircraft, thought to have been a Beaufighter, crashed and burnt at the base of a hill about four miles south west of Penfoie; another, unidentified machine, was seen to crash and burn on a ridge top, three miles south west of the aerodrome. These might have been duty 3 (A19-29) and duty 6 (A19-58), both of which failed to return.⁸²

⁸¹ COO/MS2/18 May, *ibid.*

⁸² COO/B1/19 May, *ibid.*

Beaufighter Ic
A19-30
Ex T4994⁸³

After assembly at 1AD, Laverton, Victoria, A19-30 served with 30SQN from the end of September, 1942, until being sent to 5AD at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, during February, 1943, for rectification of structural damage caused by enemy action. 31SQN received the aircraft on June 24th, 1943.⁸⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO12/4 01/7	EH-H	8B8H		McCord / Childs.
COO15/5 03/7	EH-H	8O2H		Henry / Hooke.
COO16/1 05/7	EH-H	8G1H		Henry / Hooke.
COO20/2 06/7	EH-H	2R2H		McCord / Childs.
COO20/7 06/7	EH-G	2R2G		Leithhead. A51: Ogden / West. Apparently replaced A19-40.
COO21/2 08/7	EH-H	7R9H		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO29/5 16/7	EH-H	9G2H		Ellis / McVinish.
COO33/6 23/7	EH-H	7O4H		Henry / Hooke.
COO34/1 24/7	EH-H	1D9H		Henry / Hooke.
COO40/8 03/8	EH-H	1N5H		Henry / Hooke.
COO45/4 11/8	EH-H	7O1H		Gardiner / Lyne.
COO4/2 16/8	EH-H	5N2H	Lakey	Henry / Hooke.
COO5/2 17/8	EH-H	9M1H		Ferguson / Blades. RTB.
COO13/7 19/8	EH-H	8A1H	Olive	Henry / Hooke.
COO16/2 21/8	EH-H	5W3H		Henry / Hooke.
COO20/3 25/8	EH-H	2H2H		Mitchell / Smith.
COO23/3 24/8	EH-P	8H1P		F/O Taylor / Hocking. Apparently repl -8.
COO24/5 26/8	EH-H	7D2H		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO32/6 06/9	EH-H	7BAH		Henry / Hooke.
COO35/4 11/9	EH-H	SO8H		Henry / Hooke.
COO40/3 14/9	EH-H	ZD1H		McCord / Childs.
COO40/9 14/9	EH-H	ZD1H		Cancelled.
COO42/6 17/9	EH-H	3R3H		Ellis / McVinish. Forced Landed.

Coomalie 47 of 2nd of January, 1943, was a continuous convoy escort from 2359Z/1 until 0400Z/2 (10:29 am to 2:30 pm Darwin daylight savings time on January 2nd) to be conducted by a single Beaufighter from 31SQN for the convoy comprising HMAS *KALGOORLIE* escorting the Merchant Vessels *PERIOD*, *ALAGNA* and *PLATYPUS*.⁸⁵ The convoys position, course and speed at 2030Z (7 am Darwin time on the 2nd) was reported to have been 10°52'S 132°28'E, heading 073° at 7 knots. Upon reaching position 10°48'S 132°40'E, the convoy would alter course to 095° and at position 10°53'S 133°20'E, change course again to 120°.⁸⁶

⁸³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁸⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-30 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁸⁵ DA/G8/1 Jan in AWM66, 15/1/23.

⁸⁶ DA/W2/1 Jan, *ibid*.

A19-30 (continued)

At 11:30 am, returning from Coomalie 42, A19-30 forced landed about 5 miles east of Millingimbi⁸⁷ in position 12°12'S 134°30'E due to fuel shortage, but in doing so, suffered a bird strike which severed oil lines between the oil cooler the starboard engine. Since the aircraft had been landed in open country and the damage from the bird strike easily repairable, the crew elected to wait for a Squadron repair party, who had been appraised of the situation, to reach them and effect repairs so as the crew could then depart for Coomalie Creek. It all turned to custard though, when, after the necessary repairs, the aircraft swung during take-off and struck a termite mound, ripping the undercarriage off, buckling the wings, bending both props back and straining the centre section. Luckily the crew weren't injured.⁸⁸

4RSU officially took charge of the wreck on September 28th, 1943. Then, on November 18th, it was recorded as having been loaded on SS *ALAGNA*, the consigned aircraft apparently by then being beyond the capacity of units within NWA to repair and allotment was therefore requested to a southern Aircraft Depot on arrival. By January 11th, 1944, it was discovered that the aircraft hadn't been received aboard *ALAGNA*. Although shortly afterwards, on January 19th, it was reported that two pairs of engines and two pairs of mainplanes had indeed been loaded, but the propellers and the fuselages had not. Eventually, on March 7th, 1944, 5AD formally received the aircraft from 4RSU. They decided that the aircraft wasn't fit to repair, nor was it a suitable candidate for allocation as an instructional airframe, due in part, to a "deficiency on receipt of many parts in short supply ...". What there was, was broken up for spare parts.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-30 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

⁸⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft No. A19-30, *ibid*.

⁸⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-30 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-31
Ex T4995⁹⁰

This aircraft was recorded by 31SQN as being received by them on September 16th, 1942.⁹¹

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO2/6 17/11	H	5J8H 3ZYH		McDonald / Magee.
COO3/2 19/11	H	4G8H		McDonald / Magee.
COO6/2 23/11	H	2R2H		McDonald / Magee.
COO8/1 26/11	H	3G7H		Cook / Cotter.
COO10/3 30/11		1H2P		Greenwood / Thompson. App repl -59.
COO13/5 01/12	H	5N8H		McDonald / McGee.
COO26/15 16/12	H	XW8H		Duty not required. Did not fly.
COO27/6 18/12	H	4T2H		Replaced by A19-22.
COO27/8 18/12		4T2S		McDonald / Magee. Replaced A19-63.
COO31/2 22/12	H	4Q1H		McDonald / Magee.
COO37/6 24/12		[2]M6X		Biven / Newton. App replaced -71 ?

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/4 04/1	H	7BAH		Thomas / Van Nooten.
COO5/3 09/1	H	7D6H		McDonald / Magee.
COO6/1 10/1	H	HV2H		Dennett / Meers.
COO20/1 27/1	H	3NIH		McDonald / Magee.
COO25/3 30/1		1P3T		McDonald / Magee. "T" believed to have been future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-81.
COO26/3 01/2	H	1M1H		Apparently replaced by A19-29.
COO29/1 05/2	H	Q8ZH		McDonald / Magee.
COO37/4 18/2	H	8X9H		McDonald / Magee.
COO42/3 22/2	H	8D3H		McDonald / Magee.
COO46/6 28/2	H	3Z7H		Apparently replaced by A19-17.
COO11/1 25/3	H	5P3H		Replaced by A19-80.

It was destroyed by fire as a result of a strafing attack by Japanese aircraft on Coomalie Creek airstrip on March 2nd, 1943.⁹² Some three weeks later, it seems that the machine was erroneously tasked to flying Coomalie 11; the mistake being realized, it's position in the operation was taken by another aircraft.

⁹⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁹¹ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 16.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁹² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-31 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-36
Ex T5000⁹³

This aircraft served its first operational tour with 30SQN and, after suffering a wheels up landing as a result of battle damage during November, 1942, was sent down to 3AD at Amberley, Queensland, for repair. After an extended period at 3AD, it was received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek, on October 11th, 1943.⁹⁴ It was recorded as flying the following operations:

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO14/6 19/10	EH-O	OX6O		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO16/2 21/10	EH-Z	LU6Z		S/L Gordon / Jordan. Apparently replaced A19-103, but RTB.
COO23/4 02/11	EH-O	JK7O		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO26/2 06/11	EH-O	4G1O		Wickens / Staines.
COO28/6 11/11	EH-O	CP9O		Quance / Taylor.
COO36/7 17/11	EH-M	1MQM		Warren / McMurchie. Apparently repl -51
COO40/6 21/11	EH-O	4GJO		Gerdes / McMillan.

During the course of Coomalie 40, the aircraft was on the receiving end of a short burst of machine gun fire from a Japanese Rufe, its bullets passing all around the Navigator. Shortly afterwards the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire which blew a 12-inch hole in the left wing, scattered shrapnel along the port side of the fuselage, ruptured the starboard inner fuel tank (which luckily self-sealed) and rendered all of the Beaufighters guns inert. The crew escaped injury.⁹⁵ For mission details of Coomalie 40 of 21st November, 1943, see the entry for A19-145.

Repairs were to be effected by 14ARD who received the aircraft on November 24th. It was recorded as being received back at 31SQN on May 20th, 1944, but was allotted away to 5AD on the same day. It was received down at 5AD, Wagga Wagga, on May 24th and went to 5OTU on August 28th, meeting its end after crashing into the sea just off shore near Evans Head after a mid-air collision with another Beaufighter.⁹⁶

⁹³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 108.

⁹⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-36 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁹⁵ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter A.19-36, in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 2; NAA: A9845, 12.

⁹⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-36 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-40
Ex T5004⁹⁷

This machine served with 30SQN and then with 50TU before being received by 31SQN on June 10th, 1943,⁹⁸ who made use of it on the following operations:

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/1 19/6	EH-G	3S2G		Dennett / Meers.
COO4/4 22/6	EH-G	8L4G		Dennett / Meers.
COO6/5 24/6	EH-G	7OWG		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO12/1 01/7	EH-G	8B8G		Dennett / Meers.
COO15/4 03/7	EH-V	8O2V		Gillespie / Cameron. Apparently repl -78.
COO16/2 05/7	EH-U	8G1U		Gardiner / Lyne. Apparently repl -43.
COO17/16 05/7	EH-G	8G1G		Forbes / Erwin.
COO20/7 06/7	EH-G	2R2G		Apparently replaced by A19-30.

On July 9th, it was recorded as being received by 4RSU; and being returned to 31SQN ten days later on the 19th.⁹⁹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/11 24/7	EH-G	1D9G		Leithhead / Graves.
COO7/11 17/8	EH-G	9M1G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO10/8 18/8	EH-G	1M3G		McCutcheon / Shaw.

An engine change became necessary and it was taken on charge by 4RSU on August 22nd. 31SQN took the aircraft back on September 7th.¹⁰⁰

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO35/7 11/9	EH-G	SO8G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO38/9 12/9	EH-G	7R9G		Entwistle / Webb.
COO39/3 13/9	EH-G	8G1G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO40/4 14/9	EH-G	ZD1G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO41/3 15/9	EH-G	7O4G		Apparently replaced by A19-116.
COO42/4 17/9	EH-G	3R3G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO2/2 30/9	EH-G	5Y1G		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO7/1 09/10	EH-G	GN4G		S/L Gordon / Jordan. Shot down 2 "Nick". Crash Landed. LIV.

Six Beaufighter's from 31SQN were ordered to carry out a harassing attack on Selaru Island followed by an armed reconnaissance around the Tanimbar Islands. Time on target at Selaru was to be 090001Z (10:31 am Darwin daylight savings time on the 9th) with the route stipulated as being from Coomalie Creek to position 08°08'S 130°20'E, to Selaru where, in addition to strafing any aircraft or activity on or in the vicinity of the airfield, one aircraft was to bomb a suspected stores dump in a clump of trees

⁹⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

⁹⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-40 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

A19-40 (continued)

just south of the mouth of Kerval Creek near the beach. Coming off the airfield, all were to make for the north of the island where another aircraft was to bomb any barges seen in Adoet Harbour, or bomb the village if no barges were to be seen. Then all aircraft were to form-up and proceed up the west coast of Jamdena Island to Larat where, if no shipping had been attacked by then, were to drop the balance of their bombs on that portion of Larat Village north of the jetty and then head back to Coomalie via Saumlaki Harbour. Locals out fishing were to be left alone.¹⁰¹

Wheels up was planned for 082200Z (8:30 am Darwin daylight savings time on the 9th), time on target at Selaru 090001Z (10:31 am) and wheels down again at Coomalie at 090245Z (1:15 pm). Four of the six Beaufighter's would each be carrying two 250-lb bombs fitted with 11 second delay fuses.¹⁰²

Selaru airfield was attacked at 082355Z (10:25 am Darwin time). 15 minutes later, whilst flying at 800 feet in the vicinity of Namtaboeng Village, a twin-engined Japanese fighter was sighted. Squadron Leader Gordon jettisoned his bombs and chased the Japanese fighter back towards Kerval Creek. During this chase, the Japanese aircraft was making about 235 knots and was weaving sufficiently to allow its rear gunner to defend his aircraft with well-aimed fire from a single gun turret. Gordon, now travelling at 250 knots, closed to 25 yards behind the Japanese aircraft and despite the accurate fire from the Japanese rear gunner, opened fire. The Japanese aircraft disintegrated and crashed into the sea about 100 yards off shore. The mission continued and on the homeward journey, when the formation was flying south-west down the east coast of Selaru, another twin-engined Japanese fighter attacked A19-40 at 090115Z (11:45 am Darwin time) in the vicinity of Foersoer Village at 2,000 feet. A19-40 was lagging about 1,000 yards behind the rest of the formation and flying at 130 knots. The Japanese machine attacked from the Beaufighter's 7 o'clock and fired from a range of 200 yards, hitting the port engine, and starboard aileron. Having completed its attack, the Japanese aircraft took up a position about 400 yards off to the right of A19-40 and cruised alongside for a short time. Evidently satisfied that A19-40 was of no further threat, the Japanese aircraft then accelerated and turned in front of the Beaufighter so as to pursue the other Beaufighter's up ahead. Squadron Leader Gordon opened up both engines, closed to 350 yards behind the Japanese aircraft and fired causing flames to erupt from the left wing root. The Japanese aircraft slowly lost height and crashed into the sea off the south west end of Selaru Island. With some 50 bullet holes, the port engine inoperative, no oil or hydraulic pressure and fuel tanks just about empty,¹⁰³ A19-40 was successfully belly landed at Livingstone Airstrip at 090305Z (1:35 pm Darwin time) without injury.¹⁰⁴

The two Japanese twin-engined fighters were described as being slightly smaller than a Beaufighter with more pointed wing extremities and an Anson-like tail, equipped with a power operated rear turret with a single gun, two machine guns in each wing leading edge, outboard of the engines, two cannon each side of the nose and inline machine guns. They were greenish in colour with red roundels surrounded by a white ring.¹⁰⁵ They seem likely to have both been Kawasaki Ki-45 Army Type 2 Two-Seat Fighter's which type had been given the Allied Air Forces reporting name "Nick".

¹⁰¹ DA/G5/8 Oct in AWM66, 15/1/67.

¹⁰² COO/MS1/8 Oct, *ibid.*

¹⁰³ COO/B1/9 Oct, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ COO/MS2/9 Oct, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ COO/B1/9 Oct, *ibid.*

A19-40 (continued)



Looking south at the aftermath of A19-40's arrival at Livingstone Strip on October 9th, 1943. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P000511 via Mike Mirkovic].

Beaufighter Ic
A19-43
Ex T5049¹⁰⁶

This machine served with 5OTU until being received by 31SQN on June 20th, 1943.¹⁰⁷

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO15/7 03/7	EH-U	8O2U		Ogden / West.
COO16/2 05/7	EH-U	8G1U		Apparently replaced by A19-40.
COO17/15 05/7	EH-U	8G1U		McCord / Childs.
COO20/5 06/7	EH-U	2R2U		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO29/4 16/7	EH-U	9G2U		Ogden / West.
COO34/2 24/7	EH-U	1D9U		Gardiner / Lyne.
COO38/6 29/7	EH-U	8G1U		Odgen / West. RTB, then re-launched.
COO40/1 03/8	EH-U	1N5U		Gardiner / Lyne.
COO40/15 04/8	EH-U	1R2U		Ogden / West.
COO45/6 11/8	EH-U	7O1U		Ellis / McVinish.
COO4/3 16/8	EH-U	5N2U	Lakey	Ellis / McVinish.
COO7/12 17/8	EH-F	9M1F		Mitchell / Smith. Apparently repl -84.
COO9/4 18/8	EH-U	1M3U		Ferguson / Blades.
COO13/6 19/8	EH-U	8A1U	Olive	Gardiner / Lyne.
COO16/3 21/8	EH-U	5W3U		McCord / Childs. Shot down 1 "Rufe".
COO25/2 27/8	EH-U	3T8U	Homer	Willard / Butler.
COO30/2 04/9	EH-U	1A5U		Ogden / West.
COO30/5 04/9	EH-U	1A5U		Ogden / West.
COO58/2 06/9	EH-U	7BAU		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO36/10 11/9	EH-U	SO8U		McCord / Childs.
COO35/9 11/9	EH-U	SO8U		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO38/10 12/9	EH-U	7R9U		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO42/5 17/9	EH-U	3R3U		Ogden / West. Forced Landed. RTS.

Returning from Coomalie 42 low on fuel and attempting to make Millingimbi, A19-43 was forced to make a precautionary landing on mud flats south west of Skirmish Point, near Maningrida; about 37 nautical miles west of Millingimbi. Fuel was flown out and the aircraft later returned to Coomalie Creek undamaged.¹⁰⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO48/8 23/9	EH-U	U3OU		Apparently replaced by A19-80.
COO49/3 26/9	EH-U	Q5PU		Gaunt / Jones.
COO1/3 29/9	EH-U	7TXU		Mitchell / Smith.
COO2/1 30/9	EH-B	5Y1B		McKinnon / McMurchie. App repl -17.

Continued →

¹⁰⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁰⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-43 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁰⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter No. A19-43 in Beaufighter Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

A19-43 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/5 09/10	EH-U	GN4U		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO9/3 11/10	EH-U	LU6U	Camplike	Mitchell / Smith.
COO10/3 12/10	EH-U	FM7U	Fearless	Ogden / West.
COO11/2 14/10	EH-U	4RCU		Ogden / West.
COO15/2 20/10	EH-U	FM7U	Cleaner	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO16/1 21/10	EH-U	LU6U		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO16/4 21/10	EH-U	LU6U		Replaced by A19-51.
COO18/6 24/10	EH-U	HN2U		Mitchell / Smith.
COO19/5 26/10	EH-U	DM5U		Gaunt / Jones.

On October 29th, this aircraft was received by 4RSU for a 240-hourly. It was recorded as being received back at 31SQN on February 1st, 1944, but was allotted to 5OTU on the 7th. After travelling via 5AD, 5OTU received the machine on June 7th, 1944.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-43 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-45
Ex T5051¹¹⁰

This aircraft was issued to 31SQN from 1AD on October 18th, 1942.¹¹¹

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/4 22/11	J	YP1J		Cook / Cotter. RTB W/T trouble.
COO6/4 23/11	J	2R2J		Cook / Cotter.
COO12/13 30/11	J	1H2J		Apparently replaced by A19-69 which FTR.
COO14/12 01/12		5N8S		Smith / Coburn. Replaced A19-63.
DAR30/2 08/12	J	Q8RJ		Became Coomalie 20.
COO20/1 08/12	J	2A5J		Cook / Cotter.
COO21/3 09/12	J	2H2J		Cohen / Richards.
COO23/5 11/12	J	1M3J		Gabb / Webb.

Returning from Coomalie 23 and landing in a cross-wind, the aircraft swung and eventually ground looped.¹¹² It was sent to 1RSU for repairs and returned to 31SQN on January 4th, 1943.¹¹³

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/3 10/1	J	HV2J		Cook / Cotter.
COO10/2 14/1	J	6P7J		McDonald / Magee.
COO40/2 21/2	J	2Y9J		Apparently replaced by A19-58.
COO45/6 25/2	J	9ZFJ		McKinnon / Wright.
COO46/4 28/2	J	3Z7J		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO49/4 08/3	J	8Z6J		McDavitt / Cotter. RTB ICS U/S.
COO1/3 09/3	J	8W4J		Apparently replaced by A19-84.
COO2/2 12/3	J	1P3G		McDavitt / Cotter. Apparently repl -29. Didn't reach target; WX.
COO5/6 16/3	J	1P8J		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO7/2 19/3	J	7Q6J		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO9/3 21/3	J	7TNJ		McDonald / Magee.
COO13/2 27/3	J	2U1J		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO17/5 03/4	J	YG8J		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO38/1 23/4	EH-J	8ZDJ		McKinnon / Wright.
COO39/1 24/4	EH-J	1E3J		McKinnon / Wright. No record in A51.
COO40/3 25/4				U/S. No Mauve.
COO4/4 06/5	EH-J	2T3J		Apparently replaced by A19-16.
COO7/7 10/5	EH-J	9B7J		Did not take-off.
COO14/8 14/5	EH-J	2U1J		Whyte / Powell.
COO16/5 17/5	EH-J	7G9J		McKinnon / Wright.
COO17/4 19/5	EH-J	2X8J		Taylor / Cobern. Ditched.

¹¹⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹¹¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-45 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹¹² Memorandum in Accordance with A.F.O. 18/E/2 Paragraph 5 – Aircraft A19-45, in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

¹¹³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-45 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-45 (continued)

Coomalie 17 of 19th May, 1943, was ordered as an attack against grounded aircraft and installations at the Japanese airfield of Penfoie near Koepang.¹¹⁴ See also entry for A19-29.

Time on target was 182154Z (7:24 am Darwin time on the 19th). Buildings and personnel on the aerodrome as well as aircraft on the ground were strafed, with two bombers claimed as destroyed plus two bombers and one fighter damaged. Intense and accurate light, medium and heavy calibre Anti-Aircraft fire was encountered coming from the whole perimeter of the aerodrome and an aircraft, thought to have been a Beaufighter, crashed and burnt at the base of a hill about four miles south west of Penfoie; another, unidentified machine, was seen to crash and burn on a ridge top, three miles south west of the aerodrome. These might have been duty 3 (A19-29) and duty 6 (A19-58), both of which failed to return. Duty 7, A19-57, collided with a tree on leaving the target and sustained extensive damage to both wings, the nose, both undercarriage, exhaust rings and airscrews. Two Japanese A6M "Zeke's" were patrolling at 3,000 feet above Penfoie and a third was observed to have taken-off during the attack. At 2215Z (7:45 am Darwin time), the first of their attacks commenced above Penfoie and continued until some 100 nautical miles out over the Timor Sea. Their attacks were executed singly by diving from 1,000 feet and then making a level attack at sea-level from between 6 and 7 o'clock and then breaking off at between 800 and 500 yards. Duty 5, A19-47, had hydraulic and oil lines broken and control cables severed and duty 7, A19-57, already damaged by a tree strike when egressing the target, now also received hits to the wings and fuselage; the observer was able to answer the attacks by using the rearward facing free gun and fired 100 rounds at the attacking Japanese aircraft. Duty 4 ditched in position 11°30'S 124°50'E, but it isn't clear whether the cause was from anti-aircraft fire sustained over the target or by interception by the Japanese fighters.¹¹⁵

The crew members of A19-45 were:

Pilot	Pilot Officer Robert MacDonald Taylor, and
Navigator	Sergeant Geoffrey Charles Cobern. ¹¹⁶

Neither of them was seen or heard from again and they were both presumed to have lost their lives at sea on 19th May, 1943.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ DA/G3/18 May in AWM66, 15/1/41.

¹¹⁵ COO/B1/19 May, *ibid*.

¹¹⁶ 2BPSO signal M56 of 19 May (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Cobern Geoffrey Charles 5841; NAA: A705, 166/8/115.

¹¹⁷ Department of Air Minute Paper, Presumption of Death of Crew of Beaufighter Aircraft A19-45, *ibid*.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-46
Ex T5052¹¹⁸

This aircraft arrived at 1AD from the UK on June 7th, 1942¹¹⁹ and was received on September 23rd by 31SQN at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.¹²⁰



Beaufighter Mk Ic, A19-46, probably at 1AD towards the end of the assembly process and therefore shortly before delivery to 31SQN. There seems to be very little contrast between the two top-side camouflage colours which should have been RAF Dark Green and Dark Earth. It gives every indication of wearing whatever paint scheme it came out of the box with, including the Black, British applied, RAAF serial number. The only local variation seems to be that the yellow ring around the fuselage roundel has been removed. The red centres on the fuselage and underwing roundels and the leading red band on the fin stripe remain. The discolouration on the rudder seems to be on the photographic print rather than the aircraft. [State Library of South Australia image BRG 213/121/7/VOL1/22A].

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO2/4 17/11	K	5J8K 3ZYK		Riding / Clarke. Failed to Return.

A19-46 became the Squadron's first operational loss when, on November 17th, 1942, a wing tip hit the water whilst executing a steep turn at very low level causing the aircraft to crash.

Coomalie 2 of 17th November, 1942, was to have been a strafing attack on Bobonaro by three Beaufighter's of 31SQN, departing Coomalie Creek at first light.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹¹⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-46 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹²⁰ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 23.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹²¹ DA/G2/16 Nov in AWM66, 15/1/18.

A19-46 (continued)

These aircraft (duties 4, 5 and 6) departed Coomalie Creek at 2040Z (7:10 am Darwin daylight savings time).¹²²

Duty 5 landed at 0140Z (12:10 pm) and duty 6 at 0145Z (12:15 pm) at Coomalie Creek. They reported that the wing tip of duty 4, A19-46, touched the sea in approximate position 10°12'S 124°12'E [off the mouth of the Mina River !], causing the aircraft to crash and be completely destroyed. Duties 5 and 6 said that they were in formation with duty 4 and did not locate their assigned target but were attacked at different times by three Japanese aircraft south west of Beaco. They reported the prevailing weather conditions as having been good with scattered cumulus at 3 to 4,000 feet.¹²³

Two twin engine bombers, thought to be Sally's, were encountered. The first reported attack on the formation of three Beaufighter's was by a twin engine bomber, about 30 miles south east of Beaco, from which the formation outdistanced the attacker. Then, off Beaco, the Beaufighter's altered course to the south west to travel along the coast [towards Betano and Beco]. At this time, a second Japanese aircraft was reportedly observed climbing over Beaco. This aircraft followed the Beaufighter's along the coast. Off Cape Batoe – Poetih [now Tandjung Batuputih – just south west of the mouth of the Mena River at about 10°13'S 124°06'E] the formation finally turned back around to the north east to head back along the coast. On turning, the starboard wing of Coomalie 2 duty 4 struck the sea. The wing was torn off and Beaufighter nose-dived into sea some 2 to 4 miles off the coast. Duties 5 and 6 reported that they were then attacked by another Japanese aircraft off Cape Ela [about 10°10'S 124°24'E] and then outdistanced their attacker.¹²⁴

Operation: COO.2. 4-5-6.

Number of Aircraft: Three (3)

<u>Crews of Aircraft:</u>	<u>Captain</u> S/L RIDING. F/L COOK. F/O McDONALD.	<u>Observer.</u> W/O CLARK. SGT. COTTER. P/O MAGEE.
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Object. Strafing [sic] BOBONARO.

Visibility: 20 – 30 Miles.

REPORT: Target was not reached.
COO. 24, 25, 26, in "Vic" formation approached Coast of TIMOR on approximately 300° course in direction of BEACO flying at 5,000' – At position 30 to 40 miles S.E. of BEACO at 2255/16/Z one (1) enemy 2 engined aircraft was sighted on port side flying approximately 1000 ft above on a course of approx. 100°. This enemy aircraft passed behind and above our formation making beam attack on COO.26 from nose gun – well within range. Passing at rear of formation enemy attacked COO.25 coming out of sun over tail of COO.25 – fired side guns – tracer observed. Our formation continued and outdistanced attacker. One (1) mile off BEACO COO.26 observed 2nd two engine enemy aircraft making climbing turn from direction of BEACO. Our formation then turned S.W. proceeding along coast close to the water with enemy aircraft following; formation passed BETANO in endeavour

¹²² COO/MS2/17 Nov, ibid.

¹²³ COO/MS4/17 Nov, ibid.

¹²⁴ COO/B2/17 Nov, ibid.

A19-46 (continued)

to outdistance enemy. Off CAPE BATOE-POETIH formation turned to right towards land and immediately after turning COO.26 observed 2nd enemy aircraft 3000 yds dead in front and flying at about 1500 feet – evasive action was then taken by sharp turn to right on to 150° course and in this turn tip of starboard wing of COO.24 struck the water – this wing was torn off and COO.24 nose dived into the sea two (2) to four (4) miles off CAPE BATOE-POETIH. Following this turn COO.26 behind COO.25 observed 2nd enemy aircraft on port rear quarter flying 500 to 1000 feet and within range – enemy fired front guns at COO.26.

At this time 2320Z/16 port motor of COO.25 became erratic and finally ceased to operate – due to burnt out plug. However, both CoO.25 & 26 continued on 150° course for 15 minutes at which time attacker was outdistanced COO.25 & 26 then turned to homing course and made for base in formation COO.26 keeping behind COO.25 because COO.25 was flying back with port motor U.S.

OBSERVATIONS.

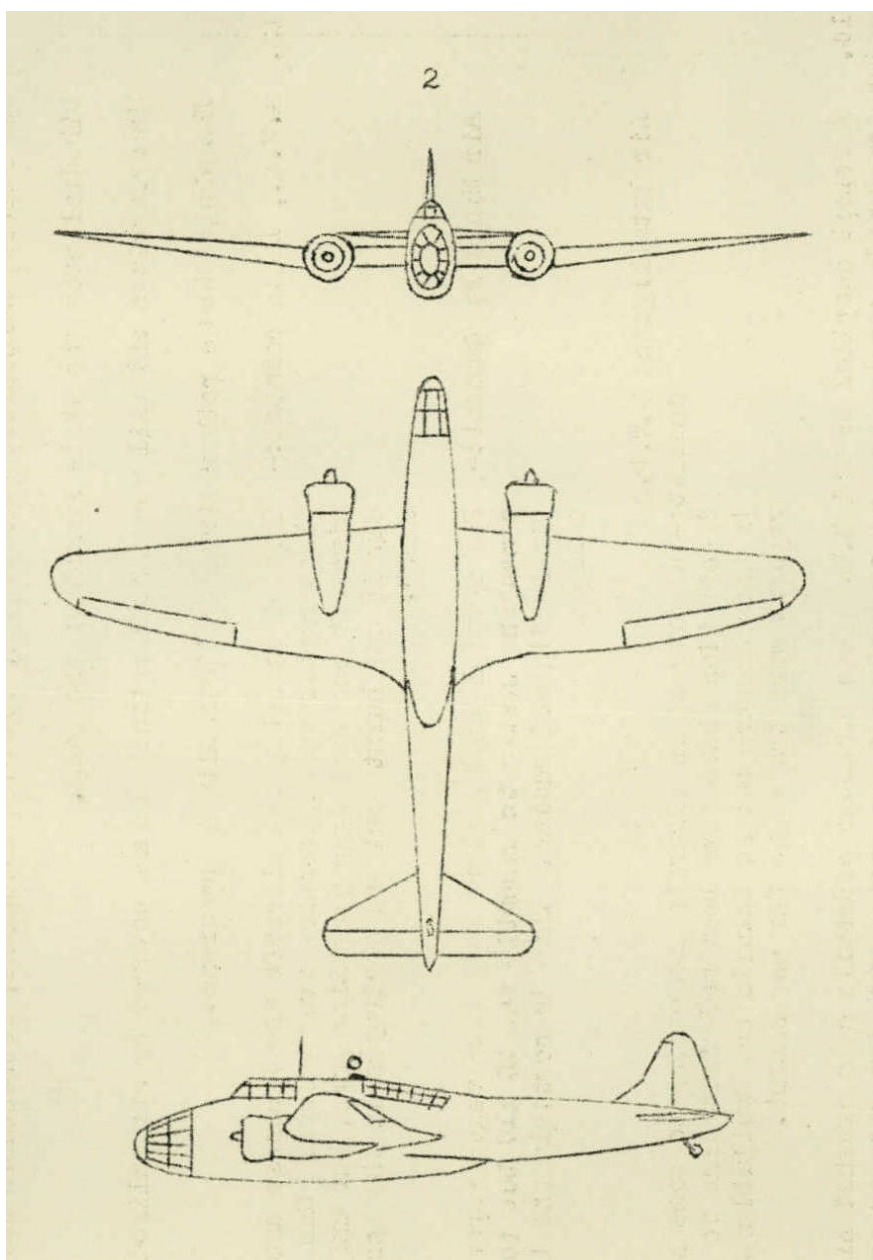
No fire was made from our aircraft on this operation. No damage to ourcraft [sic] from enemy attacks.

The points brought out to identify the two (2) enemy aircraft engaged in this action in conjunction with report by operation COO.1 are as follows. Slight Dihedral – motors in line centred or slightly below wings – high fin with red circle – wing span in proximity of 60 feet – Gun Fire observed from nose – tracer and puffs of smoke suggest cannon. Gunfire from side or belly – tracer only. Gun fire observed from tail or belly – tracer and puffs of smoke suggestion cannon. The Hump on the under fuselage is more like No.99 on Page 9 Intelligence Summary 38 – not so pronounced as illustration on Page 8 No 41. The motors appeared larger than illustration in Intelligence Summary 38. The speed estimated by Pilots is 230 to 240 knots. All this information seems to indicate Type No.99 (LILY). Colour described only as dark and probably mottled bronze.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ No. 31 Squadron Air Combat Report No. 1 dated 17th November, 1942, *ibid*.

A19-46 (continued)

Luckily, copies of the two Intelligence Summaries referred to still exist.¹²⁶

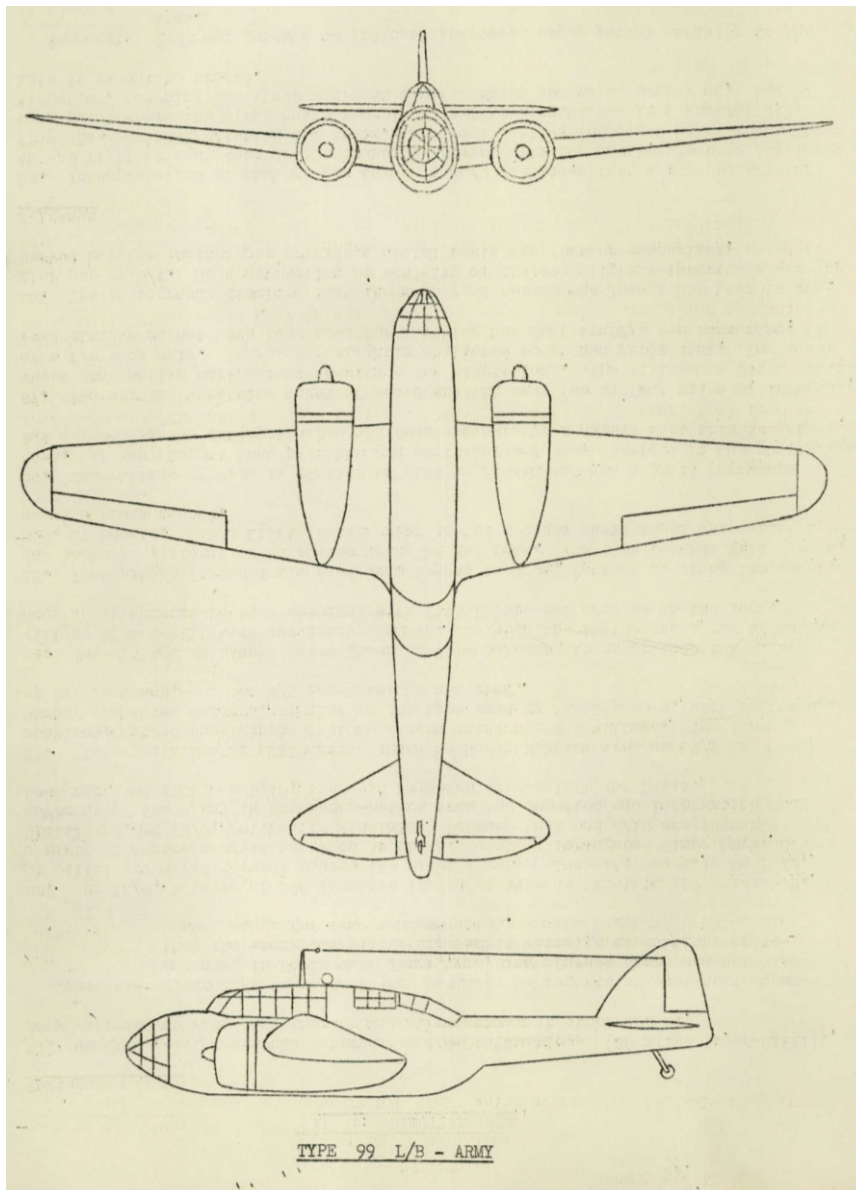


Drawing No. 2, "No.99 twin-engine light bomber". Intelligence Summary No. 38, p9. [NAA: AA1966/5, 39].

¹²⁶ Allied Air Force Intelligence Summary – No 25/18 August 1942 to No 43/17 October 1942; NAA: AA1966/5, 39.

A19-46 (continued)

And,



Type 99 Light Bomber. Intelligence Summary No. 41, p8. [NAA: AA1966/5, 39].

In his 1996 book, *"Coomalie Charlie's Commandos"*, Ken McDonald, who was the pilot flying Coomalie 2 duty 6, stated that "there was no active interception, Squadron Leader Riding's port wing hit the water during a left hand turn ...".¹²⁷ Both of those points may well have been the actual case, but the information contained in 31 Squadron's Air Combat Report No. 1, related above and, for that matter, from the return report Mauve and the Form Blue, seems to have been almost exclusively prepared from duty 6's – that is, McDonald's own – contemporaneous observations and they seem emphatic in that the flight was intercepted, that they thought that they were being engaged and that duty 4 speared in during a sharp right hand turn. It is also worth noting just how far off course these Beaufighters were when the decision was finally made to turn around, resulting in Riding and Clark's wing tip touching the water with catastrophic consequences.

¹²⁷ Kenneth Neal McDonald, *Coomalie Charlie's Commandos – 31 Squadron RAAF Beaufighters at Darwin 1942-43* (1996) 15.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-47
Ex T5053¹²⁸

A19-47 was recorded as having been received by 31SQN on October 11th, 1942, at Wagga Wagga,¹²⁹ New South Wales (the aircraft status card records the date as the 13th).¹³⁰

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/2 25/11	L	8J9L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO10/5 30/11	L	1H2L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO14/11 01/12	L	5N8L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO20/4 08/12	L	2A5L		Blundell / Hatfield. Cancelled due WX.
COO22/4 10/12	L	2R7L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO23/9 11/12	L	1M3L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO27/9 18/12	L	4T2L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO29/1 19/12	L	B1RL		Replaced by A19-58.
COO29/9 19/12		B1RB		Blundell / Hatfield. Replaced A19-17.
COO35/3 23/12	L	9A4L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO37/3 24/12	L	[2]M6L		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO38/8 25/12	L	4B9L		Blundell / Hatfield. RTB engine U/S.
COO39/14 26/12	L	5C9L		Blundell / Hatfield. RTB U/S.
COO41/7 27/12	L	7H7L		Blundell / Hatfield.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO23/2 29/1	L	3A8L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO24/5 31/1	L	1P3L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO34/3 13/2	L	3Z7L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO37/2 18/2	L	8X9L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO40/4 21/2	L	2Y9L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO45/4 25/2	L	9ZFL		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO46/8 28/2		3Z7N		Stanley / Thorncraft. Apparently repl -57.
COO5/5 16/3	L	1P8L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO9/2 21/3	L	7TNL		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO14/2 30/3	L	5T5L		Blundell / Hatfield. A51: duty 4.
COO18/1 04/4	L	6M3L		Blundell / Hatfield.
COO23/3 10/4	L	3Q8L		Apparently replaced by A19-72.
COO47/3 02/5	EH-L	1F9L		Terry / Doyle.
COO48/1 03/5	EH-L	8M2L		Terry / Doyle.
COO48/4 03/5	EH-L	8M2L		Terry / Doyle.
COO4/6 06/5	EH-L	2T3L		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO7/5 10/5	EH-L	9B7L		Did not take-off.
COO13/3 14/5	EH-L	2U1L		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO16/6 17/5	EH-L	7G9L		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO17/5 19/5	EH-L	2X8L		Delaporte / Patterson.

¹²⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹²⁹ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 11.10.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹³⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-47 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-47 (continued)

Coomalie 17 of 19th May, 1943, was ordered as an attack against grounded aircraft and installations at the Japanese airfield of Penfoie near Koepong by at least five short range Beaufighter's of 31SQN.¹³¹ See also the entry for Beaufighter A19-29.

During the attack, A19-47 had hydraulic and oil lines broken and control cables severed¹³² but managed to make a safe landing at Drysdale at 182350Z (9:20 am Darwin time).¹³³ The damage was such that it was stranded at Drysdale until repairs could be carried out.¹³⁴

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/2 29/5	EH-L	2X8L		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO29/1 30/5	EH-L	1P3L		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO29/3 30/5	EH-L	1P3L		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO30/5 31/5	EH-L	1F9L		Whyte / Powell.
COO34/5 01/6				Operation cancelled.
COO35/5 02/6	EH-L	9C3L		Dennett / Meers.

A19-47 fell due for a 240-hourly and an engine change early in June, 1943 and was accordingly received by 14ARD at Gorrie on June 6th; it was handed back to 31SQN at Coomalie Creek on August 18th.¹³⁵

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/6 21/8	EH-L	5W3L		Gardiner / Lyne. Failed to Return.

On its first operation after returning from maintenance, it was involved in a mid-air collision with A19-63 during operation Coomalie 16 on August 21st, 1943 and both aircraft were destroyed.¹³⁶

Coomalie 16 was ordered as an attack on Japanese float planes at Taberfane by between six and eight Beaufighter's of 31SQN operating from Millingimbi. Time on target was to be at 210530Z (3 pm Darwin time on August 21st). 31SQN was to provide its own top cover.¹³⁷

31SQN tasked seven Beaufighter's (duties 2 to 8 inclusive) to take part.¹³⁸ They descended 100 miles out from the target area and made their run-in at sea level. At 210535Z (2:35 pm Darwin time), immediately prior reaching the target, the top cover – duties 6, 7 and 8 – pulled up to 2,500 feet and the strike force – duties 2, 3, 4 and 5 – to 500 feet. Straight away, three "Rufes" and a "Pete" were seen just getting airborne from the float plane beach and another "Rufe" had just taken off from Taberfane; a Jake was seen in the bend of a creek, but too late for the attacking Beaufighters to do anything about. Duty 7 observed duty 6 (A19-47) and 8 (A19-63) dive on the "Pete" but they collided with each other while making their converging attack. A mainplane of each broke away and they crashed in flames opposite the float-plane beach and were destroyed. The "Pete" was seen

¹³¹ DA/G3/18 May in AWM66, 15/1/41.

¹³² COO/B1/19 May, *ibid*.

¹³³ Drysdale signal D19 of 19th May, 1943, *ibid*.

¹³⁴ COO/MS2/19 May, *ibid*.

¹³⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-47 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹³⁶ *ibid*.

¹³⁷ DA/G4/20 Aug in AWM66, 15/1/57.

¹³⁸ COO/MS1/20 Aug, *ibid*.

A19-47 (continued)

descending through 200 feet south of the float plane beach, smoking heavily and was considered to have been probably destroyed.¹³⁹

The crew of A19-47 were:

Pilot	Flight Lieutenant Francis Joseph Gardiner, and
Navigator	Flying Officer Lewis John Lyne. ¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ MIL/B1/21 Aug, ibid.

¹⁴⁰ 2BPSO signal M290 of 21/8 (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Lyne Lewis John 13986; NAA: A705, 166/25/65.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-51
Ex T5071¹⁴¹

After assembly at 1AD, this aircraft was delivered to 31SQN on October 3rd, 1942,¹⁴² arriving at Coomalie Creek on October 4th.¹⁴³

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/2 17/11	M	ZH9M 3BOM		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO5/10 22/11	M	5JHM		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO6/3 23/11	M	2R2M		Apparently replaced by A19-62.
COO7/5 25/11	M	8J9M		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO9/4 28/11		3Q8T		McDavitt / McNamara. Apparently replaced A19-65.
COO13/3 01/12	M	5N8M		McDavitt / McNamara. Unserviceable.
COO18/1 06/12	M	RY6M		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO25/1 15/12	M	3RZM		Savage / Studt.
COO26/10 16/12	M	XW8M		Savage / Studt.
COO39/7 26/12	M	5C9M		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO40/3 27/12	M	7H7M		Barnett / Lennon.
COO42/4 28/12	M	7UCM		Kearney / Ramsay.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO25/1 30/1		1P3D		Biven / Newton. "D" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-83.
COO26/2 01/2		1M1R		Biven / Newton. Apparently replaced -62.
COO28/1 04/2		8X9G		Barnett / Lennon. Apparently replaced -29
COO34/4 13/2	M	3Z7M		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO36/3 15/2	M	7H7M		Barnett / Lennon.
COO38/5 18/2	M	8X9M		Barnett / Lennon.
COO46/2 28/2	M	3Z7M		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO18/2 04/4	M	6M3M		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO46/3 01/5	EH-M	1P3M		Budd / McQueen.
COO47/2 02/5	EH-M	1F9M		Madden / Cormie.
COO48/3 03/5	EH-M	8M2M		Madden / Cormie.
COO5/2 09/5	EH-M	3Q4M		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO6/1 10/5	EH-M	9B7M		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO6/3 10/5	EH-M	9B7M		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO13/2 14/5	EH-M	2U1M		Wilkins / Agnew.
COO16/3 17/5	EH-M	7G9M		Wilkins / Agnew.
COO17/1 19/5	EH-M	2X8M		Biven / Newton.
COO30/3 31/5	EH-M	1F9M		Apparently replaced by A19-116.

¹⁴¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁴² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-51 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁴³ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 4.10.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

A19-51 (continued)

A19-51 received relatively minor battle damage on May 19th, 1943, immediately after which it was sent to 14ARD for repairs and also for a double engine change and a 240-hourly. It seems it's absence from the Squadron wasn't noticed by someone, because the aircraft seems to have been nominated to take part in an operation on May 31st. On July 20th, 1943, it was back with 31SQN.¹⁴⁴

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/3 24/7	EH-M	1D9M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO38/5 29/7	EH-M	8G1M		Apparently replaced by A19-63.
COO40/17 04/8	EH-M	1R2M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO44/10 06/8		4T2M		Gardiner / Lyne.
COO47/1 12/8	EH-M	2D3M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO47/4 12/8	EH-M	2D3M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO5/4 17/8	EH-M	9M1M		F/L Taylor / Taylor. Lost 3' of S wingtip.
COO35/6 11/9	EH-M	SO8M		Ogden / West.
COO38/7 12/9	EH-M	7R9M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO40/1 14/9	EH-M	ZD1M		Henry / Hooke.
COO40/8 14/9	EH-M	ZD1M		Cancelled.
COO42/3 17/9	EH-M	3R3M		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO3/2 01/10	EH-M	YS4M	Toady	Ellis. A51: F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO4/1 02/10	EH-Q	CN5Q	Scuttling	Muggleton / Hunt. Apparently repl -80.
COO4/4 02/10	EH-Q	CN5Q	Scuttling	Muggleton / Hunt. Apparently repl -80.
COO7/6 09/10	EH-M	GN4M		Ferguson / Blades.
COO11/1 14/10	EH-M	4RCM		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO14/10 19/10	EH-M	OX6M		Warren / McMurchie.
COO16/4 21/10	EH-M	LU6M		S/L Gordon / Jordan. Replaced -43.
COO18/4 24/10	EH-M	HN2M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO19/6 26/10	EH-M	DM5M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO21/2 29/10	EH-M	CS3M		Ferguson / Blades.
COO23/5 02/11	EH-M	JK7M		Garnham / Delaney.
COO26/6 06/11	EH-M	4G1M		Archer / Holland.
COO28/8 11/11	EH-M	CP9M		Garnham / Delaney.
COO36/7 17/11	EH-M	1MQM		Apparently replaced by A19-36.
COO38/3 19/11	EH-M	PR7M		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO40/3 21/11	EH-M	4GJM		Archer / Holland.
COO42/6 23/11	EH-M	3ZGM		Ellis / McVinish.
COO49/1 03/12	EH-M	DY2M	Badgirl	Ellis / McVinish.
COO49/5 03/12	EH-M	DY2M	Badgirl	Ellis / McVinish.
COO1/2 05/12	EH-M	1NBM		Apparently replaced by A19-158.
COO6/9 10/12	EH-M	UA9M	Dawdle	Ellis / McVinish.
COO7/5 15/12	EH-M	1RVM	Putty	Ellis / McVinish.
COO8/8 16/12	EH-M	VJ4M	Bewbang	Ellis / McVinish. U/S at Darwin.
COO12/2 22/12	EH-M	4RCM	Putty M	Ellis / McVinish.
COO13/1 24/12	EH-N	MQ8N	Basin	Archer. A51: Ellis / McVinish. Apparently replaced A19-158.
COO16/1 31/12	EH-M	HP4M	Banquet	Ellis / McVinish.

Continued →

¹⁴⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-51 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-51 (continued)

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML19/3 04/1	EH-M	LF1M	Paddock	Ellis / McVinish.
CML23/4 07/1	EH-M	VN2M	Hoodlam M	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML28/9 14/1	EH-M	3YOM	Bepmonk	Ellis / McVinish.
CML40/5 22/1	EH-M	3CAM	Cable M	Ellis / McVinish.

On January 31st, 1944, it was received at 5AD for a complete overhaul during which it was assessed as being no longer fit for operational service. Early in July, 1944, it went to Number 1 Aircraft Performance Unit (1APU) for photographic trials and from there went to 5OTU during mid-May, 1945. It was eventually stored and finally authorised for write-off during May, 1946.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-57
Ex T5083¹⁴⁶

31SQN noted that they received this aircraft on October 6th¹⁴⁷ but its aircraft status card recorded that it was received from 1AD on September 29th, 1942.¹⁴⁸

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO5/7 22/11	N	5JHN		Savage / Studt.
COO7/1 25/11	N	8J9N		Savage / Studt.
COO9/1 28/11	N	3Q8N		Madden / Spencer.
COO11/9 30/11		1H2R		Biven / Newton. Apparently replaced -62.
COO13/2 01/12	N	5N8N		Apparently replaced by A19-66.
COO15/14 01/12	N	5N8N		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO16/5 02/12		2R5F		Kearney / Ramsay. Replaced A19-22.
COO17/11 02/12		2R5F		Kearney / Ramsay. Replaced A19-22.
COO18/4 06/12	N	RY6N		Stanley / Thorncroft.
COO19/1 07/12	N	2F4N		Savage / Studt.
COO23/1 11/12	N	1M3N		Savage / Studt.
COO38/1 25/12	N	4B9N		Savage / Studt.
COO39/1 26/12	N	5C9N		Savage / Studt.
COO42/3 28/12		7UCG		Entwistle / Angew. Replaced A19-29.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/4 03/1	N	7M3N		Savage / Studt.
COO2/5 04/1	N	7BAN		Savage / Studt.
COO7/1 11/1	N	6SXN		Savage / Studt.
COO8/1 12/1	N	1FMN		Savage / Studt.
COO14/2 19/1	N	3Q7N		Savage / Studt.
COO16/1 23/1	N	1FWN		Savage / Studt.
COO24/1 31/1	N	1P3N		Savage / Studt.
COO29/2 05/2	N	Q8ZN		Savage / Studt.
COO40/3 21/2	N	2Y9N		Savage / Studt.
COO46/1 28/2		3Z7Y		Read / Marr. Apparently replaced A19-72.
COO46/8 28/2	N	3Z7N		Apparently replaced by A19-47.

With an engine change due, A19-57 was sent to 4RSU who had it from March 13th to the 31st.¹⁴⁹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO22/3 09/4	N	8ZDN		Frith / McLennen.
COO23/4 10/4	N	3Q8N		Stanley / Thorncraft.

Continued →

¹⁴⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁴⁷ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 6.10.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁴⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-57 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

A19-57 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/9 02/5	EH-N	1F9N		White / Powell.
COO65/8 03/5	EH-N	8M2N		Savage / Cotter.
COO4/1 06/5	EH-N	2T3N		Savage / Cotter.
COO13/6 14/5	EH-N	2U1N		Ogden / West.
COO16/1 17/5	EH-N	7G9N		Savage / Studt.
COO17/7 19/5	EH-N	2X8N		Kearney / Ramsay.

Coomalie 17 of 19th May, 1943, was ordered as an attack against grounded aircraft and installations at the Japanese airfield of Penfoie near Koepang.¹⁵⁰ See also entry for A19-29.

Time on target was 182154Z (7:24 am Darwin time). Buildings and personnel on the aerodrome as well as aircraft on the ground were strafed, with two bombers claimed as destroyed plus two bombers and one fighter damaged. Intense and accurate light, medium and heavy calibre Anti-Aircraft fire was encountered coming from the whole perimeter of the aerodrome and an aircraft, thought to have been a Beaufighter, crashed and burnt at the base of a hill about four miles south west of Penfoie; another, unidentified machine, was seen to crash and burn on a ridge top, three miles south west of the aerodrome. These might have been duty 3 (A19-29) and duty 6 (A19-58), both of which failed to return. A19-57, collided with a tree on leaving the target and sustained extensive damage to both wings, the nose, both undercarriage, exhaust rings and airscrews. Two Japanese A6M "Zeke's" were patrolling at 3,000 feet above Penfoie and a third was observed to have taken-off during the attack. At 2215Z (7:45 am Darwin time), the first of their attacks commenced above Penfoie and continued until some 100 nautical miles out over the Timor Sea. Their attacks were executed singly by diving from 1,000 feet and then making a level attack at sea-level from between 6 and 7 o'clock and then breaking off at between 800 and 500 yards. A19-57, already damaged by a tree strike when egressing the target, now also received hits to the wings and fuselage; the observer was able to answer the attacks by using the rearward facing free gun and fired 100 rounds at the attacking Japanese aircraft.¹⁵¹

A19-57 landed at Drysdale at 182350Z (9:20 am Darwin local time on the 19th)¹⁵² and at Coomalie at 190316Z (12:46 pm).¹⁵³

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/5 29/5	EH-N	2X8N		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO30/1 31/5	EH-N	1F9N		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO40/7 12/6	EH-N	1D8N		Barnett / Lennon. Crashed on landing.

Landing at about 8 pm local time on the night of June 12th, after returning from operations, the aircraft ground-looped violently to the left as a result of a flat tyre,¹⁵⁴ damaging the fuselage and starboard engine and causing significant damage to the right wing. The aircraft was sent to 4RSU for repairs who sent it off to 14ARD a week later. It remained at 14ARD for some time with the intention of repairing the damage, but on November 26th, the decision was made to convert the aircraft into components.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ DA/G3/18 May in AWM66, 15/1/41.

¹⁵¹ COO/B1/19 May, *ibid*.

¹⁵² Drysdale signal D19 of 19th May, 1943, *ibid*.

¹⁵³ COO/MS2/19 May, *ibid*.

¹⁵⁴ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty Bristol Beaufighter A19-57 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

¹⁵⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-57 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-58
Ex T5084¹⁵⁶

31SQN received this aircraft on September 30th, 1942,¹⁵⁷ from 1AD.¹⁵⁸

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO2/5 17/11	O	5J8O 3ZY0		Cook / Cotter.
COO10/2 30/11	O	1H2O		Cook / Cotter.
COO14/10 01/12	O	5N8O		Cook / Cotter.
COO26/7 16/12	O	XW8O		Cook / Cotter.
COO27/4 18/12	O	4T2O		Cook / Cotter. Cancelled.
COO29/1 19/12		B1RL		McDonald / Magee. Replaced A19-47.
COO29/8 19/12	O	B1RO		Cook / Cotter.
COO34/7 22/12	O	4Q1O		Cook / Cotter.
COO36/6 23/12	O	9A4O		Only A51 record. Cook / Richards.
COO37/1 24/12	O	[2]M6O		Cook / Cotter.
COO38/6 25/12	O	4B9O		Cook / Cotter. Landed Batchelor.
COO39/15 26/12	O	5C9O		McDonald / Magee.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/3 11/1	O	6SXO		Cook / Cotter.
COO10/1 14/1	O	6P7O		Cook / Cotter. RTB ICS U/S.
COO16/4 23/1	O	1FWO		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO23/1 29/1	O	3A8O		Cohen / Richards.
COO30/1 07/2	O	2Y9O		Cohen / Richards.
COO39/8 18/2	O	8X9O		Cohen / Richards. RTB U/S.
COO40/2 21/2		2Y9J		Wilkins / McNamara. Apparently repl -45.

It ground looped on landing from Coomalie 40 and was sent off to 4RSU for repairs. By mid-March it was back with 31SQN.¹⁵⁹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/3 19/3	O	7Q6O		McKinnon / Wright.
COO13/1 27/3	O	2U1O		Dennett / Meers.
COO14/4 30/3	O	5T5O		Greenwood / Thompson. A51: duty 1.
COO23/1 10/4	O	3Q8O		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO31/2 18/4	EH-O	8GPO		White / Webb.
COO33/3 19/4	EH-O	2Y9O		Armstrong / Robertson.

Continued →

¹⁵⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁵⁷ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book entry of 30.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁵⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-58 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

A19-58 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO46/4 01/5	EH-O	1P30		Taylor / Cobern.
COO49/7 02/5	EH-O	1F90		McDonald / Magee.
COO7/8 10/5	EH-O	9B70		Maddern / Cormie. RTB due WX.
COO13/1 14/5	EH-O	2U10		Cohen / Richards.
COO16/7 17/5	EH-O	7G90		Barnett / Lennon.
COO17/6 19/5	EH-O	2X80		Armstrong / Robertson. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 17 of 19th May was ordered as an attack against grounded aircraft and installations at the Japanese airfield of Penfoie near Koepang.¹⁶⁰ See also entry for A19-29.

Time on target was 182154Z (7:24 am Darwin time). Buildings and personnel on the aerodrome as well as aircraft on the ground were strafed, with two bombers claimed as destroyed plus two bombers and one fighter damaged. Intense and accurate light, medium and heavy calibre Anti-Aircraft fire was encountered coming from the whole perimeter of the aerodrome and an aircraft, thought to have been a Beaufighter, crashed and burnt at the base of a hill about four miles south west of Penfoie; another, unidentified machine, was seen to crash and burn on a ridge top, three miles south west of the aerodrome. These might have been duty 3 (A19-29) and duty 6 (A19-58), both of which failed to return.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ DA/G3/18 May in AWM66, 15/1/41.

¹⁶¹ COO/B1/19 May, *ibid.*

Beaufighter Ic
A19-59
Ex T5090¹⁶²

31SQN's A50 records this aircraft as being received by the Squadron on September 6th, 1942,¹⁶³ however on that date, the aircraft's status card recorded that the aircraft, evidently still on charge at 1AD, suffered a failure of the tail strut assembly whilst taxiing, damaging the rear fuselage. After local repairs, the aircraft was, according to its E/E.88, then received by 31SQN on September 28th.¹⁶⁴

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/1 19/11	P	4G8P		Dennett / Meers.
COO4/3 22/11	P	YP1P		Dennett / Meers.
COO10/3 30/11	P	1H2P		Apparently replaced by A19-31.
COO13/4 01/12	P	5N8P		Dennett / Meers.
COO16/1 02/12	P	2R5P		Dennett / Meers.
COO17/7 02/12	P	2R5P		Dennett / Meers.
DAR30/3 08/12	P	Q8RP		Became Coomalie 20.
COO20/2 08/12	P	2A5P		Dennett / Meers.
COO26/13 16/12	P	XW8P		Duty not required. Did not fly.
COO27/5 18/12	P	4T2P		Replaced by A19-20.
COO28/11 18/12	P	4T2P		Dennett / Meers.
COO37/2 24/12	P	[2]M6P		Cohen / Richards.
COO39/11 26/12	P	5C9P		Dennett / Meers. Cancelled.
COO41/8 27/12	P	7H7P		Dennett / Meers.
COO45/6 29/12	P	5X1P		Delaporte / Patterson.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/2 04/01	P	7BAP		Dennett / Meers.

1RSU received A19-59 on January 18th, 1943, for repairs after the self-sealing covering for the starboard outer fuel tank caught fire;¹⁶⁵ 31SQN got her back again on February 9th.¹⁶⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/1 13/2	P	3Z7P		Dennett / Meers. RTB electrical U/S.
COO39/9 18/2		8X9P		Cohen / Richards. Replaced A19-58.
COO41/6 21/2	P	2Y9P		Dennett / Meers.
COO42/1 22/2	P	8D3P		Cohen / Richards.
COO43/1 24/2	P	8N1P		Dennett / Meers.
COO46/7 28/2	P	3Z7P		Dennett / Meers.

Continued →

¹⁶² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁶³ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 6.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁶⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-59 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁶⁵ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-59 of 5/1/43 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

¹⁶⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-59 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-59 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO9/6 21/3	P	7TNP		Delaporte / Patterson. RTB engine trouble.
COO25/4 11/4	P	9C3P		Armstrong / Robertson. CANX due WX.
COO43/1 26/4	EH-P	9D2P		Greenwood / Thompson. Failed to Return.

North Western Area ordered an (armed) reconnaissance of the Aru Islands to be carried out by two short-range Beaufighter's of 31SQN as Coomalie 43 on April 26th, 1943. The object of the reconnaissance was to locate and attack any floatplanes seen in the air or on the ground with the focus to be on the Taberfane/Maikoor and Dobo areas. Both aircraft were to operate from Millingimbi and time on target was to be 260530Z (3 pm Darwin time).¹⁶⁷

The weather forecast predicted an active trough running about 15 nautical miles either side of the 7° South parallel marked by 9/10ths cumulus at 1,000 feet with tops to 10,000 feet, rain showers, plus broken altostratus and altocumulus at 10,000 feet. Elsewhere, 3/10ths cumulus at 2,000 feet with tops to 6,000 feet was likely.¹⁶⁸

Coomalie 43 duty 2, A19-63, landed back at Millingimbi at 260750Z (5:20 pm Darwin time) and reported that they had last seen A19-59 at 260427Z (1:57 pm Darwin time) in position 09°11'S 134°35'E outbound from Millingimbi tracking 002° True.¹⁶⁹ Duty 2 had made a reconnaissance of the Taberfane and Maikoor area without any sightings and strafed the village of Rebi (on Babi Island, a small island between Maikoor and Dobo), but due to all four cannon's suffering from stoppages and the intercom being on the blink, did not continue on to Dobo. They reported scattered rain storms over the Aru's and a bad front over the sea.¹⁷⁰

En-route weather wasn't responsible for the loss of A19-59, however. A19-59 was shot down into the sea by eight Japanese fighters. The pilot spent 18 hours in the water before making it ashore on one of the Aru Islands. Later that day, he was captured and spent the rest of the conflict as a Prisoner of War.¹⁷¹ The navigator wasn't seen or heard of again and is presumed to have lost his life. A19-59's crew were:

Pilot	Flight Lieutenant C.A. Greenwood ¹⁷² and
Navigator	Sergeant Colin William Thompson. ¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ DA/G7/25 Apr in AWM66, 15/1/37.

¹⁶⁸ Summary Sheet Weather Forecast for Coomalie 43 of 26th April (1943), *ibid*.

¹⁶⁹ COO/MS1/27 Apr, *ibid*.

¹⁷⁰ COO/B1/27 Apr, *ibid*.

¹⁷¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 104.

¹⁷² Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty F/Lt C.A. Greenwood (800) in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 3; NAA: A9845, 13.

¹⁷³ RAAF Form P/P25 Personal Record of Service – Airmen in Personal File Thompson Colin William 36712; NAA: A9301, 36712.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-60
Ex T5091¹⁷⁴

This aircraft was received by 31SQN on September 20th, 1942.¹⁷⁵

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO5/9 22/11	Q	5JHQ		Taylor / Hasenohr.
COO7/6 25/11	Q	8J9Q		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO8/5 26/11	Q	3G7Q		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO23/2 11/12	Q	1M3Q		Taylor / Hasenohr. Returned engine U/S.

On December 15th, the left-hand engine failed during take-off causing the aircraft to ground-loop and, whilst being taxied back into one of the parking inserts, was then damaged when the starboard undercarriage collapsed. It was found that the undercarriage torque rods were broken and the hydraulic ram bent, the starboard wing was also buckled. Off to 1RSU it went around mid-January, 1943 and they handed it over to 4RSU on March 5th. 31SQN got it back again on April 1st, 1943, but within a few days it was back at 4RSU for an engine change. On April 18th, it was handed back to 31SQN.¹⁷⁶

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/1 02/5	EH-T	1F9T		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO47/4 02/5	EH-T	1F9T		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO48/2 03/5	EH-T	8M2T		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO4/2 06/5	EH-T	2T3T		Budd / McQueen. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 4 of May 6th, 1943, was an attack on float-planes located at the mouth of the Maikoor River or in the vicinity of Taberfane, Wangal and Maikoor and was to be conducted by six (but in the event of separation en-route, no less than three) short-range Beaufighter's of 31SQN operating from Millingimbi. Time on target was specified as being 7:15 am local time. Aircraft were to approach at between 1,000 and 2,000 feet to enable a visual search to be carried out prior to attack. Crews were reminded that the float-planes may be on the water, beached or camouflaged. An American B-24 had reported seeing six A6M2-N "Rufes" and a F1M2 "Pete" taking off from that area on the 4th.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 109.

¹⁷⁵ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 20.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁷⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-60 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁷⁷ DA/G2/5 May in AWM66, 15/1/39.

A19-60 (continued)

Apparently,

[t]he aircraft took off from MILLINGIMBI at 051940Z and made landfall over P. ENOE ISLAND at 052223Z, and then to CAPE NGABORDAMLOE at 1,000 feet. They flew up the Island past ERERSIN and struck the MAIKOOR RIVER 18 Miles from the mouth. Then they went down the River sweeping from side to side searching. There was no sign of anything until they entered the Bay and then they saw the float planes in a line from TABERFANE to about half a mile South. The first seven (7) float planes were drawn up on the beach from TABERFANE South, and beyond these three (3) float planes on the water by the edge of the beach. These were [strafed] and all burnt. Further damage was inflicted on petrol supplies and store houses. After ten minutes on the target, the Flight left. It was then that the Flight Leader noticed one aircraft was missing and all the aircraft returned to search for the missing one. Ten minutes were spent in searching over the target area at 180 knots and no sign of the aircraft was seen. A19-63 flown by Flying Officer KEARNEY was ordered to go to MILLINGIMBI and to search on the way for the missing aircraft ... [A19-60] was last seen going into attack. It was not seen to crash or to be in trouble.¹⁷⁸

Coomalie 4 duties 1, 4, 5 and 6 landed back at Coomalie at 0136Z (11:06 am Darwin time) and duty 3 landed at Millingimbi at 0135Z and at Coomalie at 0340Z (11:35 am and 1:10 pm local time).¹⁷⁹ The consensus regarding weather in the target area was cloud between sea-level and 1,200 feet and visibility 5 nautical miles.¹⁸⁰

The crew of Coomalie 4 duty 2, A19-60, were:

Pilot	Flying Officer W.J.C. Budd ¹⁸¹ and
Navigator	Flying Officer Finlay McQueen. ¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Casualties, F/O W.J.C. Budd (406971) Pilot, F/O. F. McQueen (207758) Navigator BW No. 31 Squadron in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4; NAA: A9845, 14.

¹⁷⁹ COO/MS3/6 May in AWM66, 15/1/39.

¹⁸⁰ COO/B1/6 May, *ibid*.

¹⁸¹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualties F/O W.J.C Budd (406971) Pilot, F/O F. McQueen (207758) Navigator BW, No. 31 Squadron in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4; NAA: A9845, 14.

¹⁸² RAAF Form P/P26, record of Service – Officers – RAAF in Personal File McQueen Finlay 207758; NAA: A9300, MCQUEEN F.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-62
Ex T5089¹⁸³

31SQN received A19-62 on September 16th, 1942.¹⁸⁴

1942/1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/3 17/11	R	ZH9R 3BOR		Biven / Newton.
COO3/4 19/11	R	1J3R		Biven / Newton.
COO6/3 23/11	M	2R2M		Greenwood / Thompson. Apparently repl -51.
COO11/9 30/11	R	1H2R		Apparently replaced by A19-57.
COO15/15 01/12	R	5N8R		Biven / Spencer.
COO16/2 02/12	R	2R5R		Biven / Newton.
COO17/8 02/12	R	2R5R		Biven / Newton.
COO18/6 06/12	S	RY6S		Thomas / Van Nooten. Replaced A19-63.
COO22/2 10/12	R	2R7R		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO23/6 11/12	R	1M3R		McDavitt / McNamara. Returned elec U/S.
COO25/2 15/12	R	3RZR		Biven / Newton.
COO30/1 20/12	R	3K2R		Biven / Newton.
COO38/2 25/12	R	4B9R		Biven / Newton. Landed Darwin.
COO39/6 26/12	R	5C9R		Biven / Newton. Cancelled.
COO6/6 10/1	R	HV2R		Cancelled due WX.
COO8/3 12/1	R	1FMR		Biven / Newton.
COO12/1 17/1	R	6C3R		Biven / Newton.
COO16/2 23/1	R	1FWR		Barnett / Lennon.
COO22/5 28/1	C	3J2C		Stanley / Thorncraft. Apparently repl -19.
COO24/3 31/1	R	1P3R		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO26/2 01/2	R	1M1R		Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO31/3 09/2	U	9A7U		Barnett / Lennon. Apparently repl -62.
COO41/7 21/2	A	2Y9A		Biven / Newton. Apparently replaced -16.
COO44/2 25/2	R	9ZFR		Biven / Newton.
COO46/3 28/2	R	3Z7R		Biven / Newton.
COO47/2 04/3	R	9N9R		Savage / Studt.
COO5/4 16/3	R	1P8R		McDonald / Magee.
COO7/1 19/3	R	7Q6R		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO20/3 05/4	R	X3NR		Biven / Newton.
COO38/2 23/4	EH-R	8ZDR		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO39/3 24/4	EH-R	1E3R		Kearney / Ramsay. A51: duty 2.
COO40/2 25/4				Kearney / Ramsay. No Mauve.

On April 29th, 1943, it was received by 4RSU and had auxiliary fuel tanks fitted before being handed back to 31SQN on May 31st.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

¹⁸⁴ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 16.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁸⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-62 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-62 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO38/3 06/6	EH-R	3Y8R		Biven / Newton.
COO40/8 12/6	EH-R	1D8R		Ogden / West.
COO45/3 14/6	EH-R	3JQR		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO48/4 18/6	EH-R	2B1R		Henry / Hooke.
COO4/10 22/6	EH-R	8L4R		Ogden / West. Crashed on landing.

On June 22nd, it was extensively damaged during a night landing after returning from operation Coomalie 4 with battle damage. The aircraft suffered damage to the front fuselage, centre section, both wings, both undercarriage legs, both engines and propellers and the empennage including the stern frame. It was received by 14ARD on July 1st, but on October 11th, it was authorised for conversion to components.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-63
Ex T5075¹⁸⁷

31SQN recorded receiving this aircraft on September 3rd, 1942.¹⁸⁸

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/2 22/11	S	YP1S		Madden / Spencer. RTB engine trouble.
COO7/4 25/11	S	8J9S		Madden / Spencer.
COO8/4 26/11	S	3G7S		Dennett / Meers.
COO11/8 30/11	S	1H2S		Madden / Spencer.
COO13/1 01/12	S	5N8S		Madden / Spencer.
COO14/12 01/12	S	5N8S		Replaced by A19-45.
COO18/6 06/12	S	RY6S		Apparently replaced by A19-62.
COO25/3 15/12	S	3RZS		Madden / Spencer. RTB engine U/S.
COO26/11 16/12	S	XW8S		Madden / Spencer.
COO27/7 18/12		4T2Y		Madden / Cormie. Replaced A19-72.
COO27/8 18/12	S	4T2S		Replaced by A19-31.
COO29/6 19/12	S	B1RS		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO30/2 20/12	S	3K2S		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO35/1 23/12	S	9A4S		Savage / Studt.
COO37/4 24/12	S	[2]M6S		Apparently replaced by A19-19.
COO39/4 26/12	S	5C9S		Madden / Cormie.
COO40/1 27/12	S	7H7S		Biven / Newton.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/5 07/1	S	9SAS		Madden / Cormie.
COO5/2 09/1	S	7D6S		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO7/2 11/1		6SXU		Biven / Newton. Apparently replaced -66.
COO8/2 12/1	S	1FMS		Madden / Cormie.
COO19/4 24/1	S	1Z3S		Madden / Cormie.
COO22/4 28/1	S	3J2S		Wilkins / McNamara.
COO24/6 31/1	S	1P3S		Madden / Cormie.
COO29/3 05/2	S	Q8ZS		Madden / Ramsay.
COO31/2 09/2		9A7F		Madden / Ramsay. "F" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-84. Duty cancelled.
COO33/1 11/2		9ZFB		Stanley / Thorncraft. Apparently repl -17.
COO34/2 13/2	S	3Z7S		Biven / Newton.
COO38/7 18/2	S	8X9S		Madden / McNamara.

A19-63 was received by 4RSU on February 21st, 1943, for a 240-hourly and an engine change. They handed the aircraft back to 31SQN on April 1st, 1943.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

¹⁸⁸ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 3.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁸⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-63 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-63 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO22/4 09/4	S	8ZDS		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO43/2 25/4	EH-S	9D2S		McDavitt / Taylor.
COO4/3 06/5	EH-G	2T3G		Kearney / Ramsay. Apparently repl -29.
COO5/1 09/5	EH-W	3Q4W		Shorter / McMurchie. Apparently repl -19.
COO13/5 14/5	EH-S	2U1S		Bogged in sand MIL. Did not take-off.

Around mid-May, it was apparently fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks, the work presumably having been undertaken by 31SQN.¹⁹⁰

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/4 17/5	EH-S	7G9S		Did not take-off.
COO17/2 19/5	EH-S	2X8S		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO19/3 21/5	EH-S	9B7S		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO22/6 22/5	EH-S	1L7S		McCord / Childs.
COO26/6 29/5	EH-S	2X8S		McCord / Childs.
COO30/4 31/5	EH-S	1F9S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO34/6 01/6				Operation cancelled.
COO35/6 02/6	EH-S	9C3S		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO37/2 04/6	EH-S	1D8S		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO41/9 12/6	EH-S	1D8S		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO4/8 22/6	EH-S	8L4S		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO6/3 24/6	EH-S	7OWS		Gardiner / Lyne.
COO8/3 26/6	EH-S	8A9S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO11/2 30/6	EH-S	N9GS		Taylor / Taylor.
COO15/8 03/7	EH-S	8O2S		McCord / Childs.
COO16/3 05/7	EH-S	8G1S		Taylor / Taylor.
COO23/2 10/7	EH-S	3WB5		Henry / Hooke.
COO27/3 14/7	EH-S	9B7S	[name] Putty	Apparently replaced by A19-21.
COO29/6 16/7	EH-S	9G2S		F/O Taylor / Hocking. RTB.
COO33/7 23/7	EH-S	7O4S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO34/5 24/7	EH-S	1D9S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO38/5 29/7	EH-M	8G1M		F/L Taylor / Taylor. Apparently repl -51.
COO45/9 11/8	EH-S	7O1S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO2/2 15/8	EH-S	8V1S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO5/5 17/8	EH-S	9M1S		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO12/4 19/8	EH-S	8A1S	Olive	Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO16/8 21/8	EH-S	5W3S		Leithhead / Graves. Failed to Return.

During operation Coomalie 16 of 21st August, 1943, whilst both attacking the same Japanese aircraft, A19-63 collided with A19-47 and both aircraft crashed in flames.¹⁹¹ See also entry for A19-47.

The crew of A19-63 were:

Pilot Flying Officer Ivan Charles Leithhead, and
Navigator Flying Officer Robert Stanley Graves.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ MIL/B1/21 Aug in AWM66, 15/1/57.

¹⁹² 2BPSO signal M290 of 21/8 (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Lyne Lewis John 13986; NAA: A705, 166/25/65.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-65
Ex T5094¹⁹³

On October 10th, 1942, this aircraft was recorded as having been received by 31SQN.¹⁹⁴

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO5/8 22/11	T	5JHT		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO9/4 28/11	T	3Q8T		Apparently replaced by A19-51.

According to its aircraft status card, A19-65 was extensively damaged at Coomalie Creek, due, it was suspected, to the starboard airscrew having been in coarse pitch (during take-off) on November 30th. On December 2nd, it was officially received by 1RSU and, in anticipation of the expected approval, had been reduced to spare parts by the 21st. Official approval for its conversion into components wasn't received until the third week of January, 1943, though. Then, on June 3rd, 1943, that approval was rescinded and the aircraft was ordered to be rebuilt! Since there was obviously fat chance of that happening, approval for the aircraft to be parted out (again) was given on October 28th, 1943.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

¹⁹⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-65 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Beaufighter Ic
A19-66
Ex T5093¹⁹⁶

31SQN received this aircraft on September 8th.¹⁹⁷

1942/1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/3 19/11	U	1J3U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO11/10 30/11	U	1H2U		Apparently replaced by A19-67.
COO12/12 30/11	U	1H2U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO13/2 01/12	N	5N8N		Entwistle/Agnew. Apparently replaced -57.
COO16/4 02/12	U	2R5U		McDonald / Magee.
COO17/10 02/12	U	2R5U		McDonald / Magee.
COO18/3 06/12	U	RY6U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO19/2 07/12	U	2F4U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO23/3 11/12	U	1M3U		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO27/2 18/12	U	4T2U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO29/4 19/12	U	B1RU		Savage / Studt.
COO30/6 20/12	U	3K2U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO49/3 03/1	U	7M3U		Apparently replaced by A19-21.
COO2/6 04/1	U	7BAU		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO7/2 11/1	U	6SXU		Apparently replaced by A19-63.
COO8/4 12/1	E	1FMF		Barnett / Lennon. Apparently replaced -21
COO10/4 14/1		6P7W		Delaporte / Patterson. See text below table.
COO13/4 17/1	U	6C3U		Madden / Cormie.
COO15/7 19/1	U	3Q7U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO24/2 31/1	U	1P3U		Barnett / Lennon.
COO31/3 09/2	U	9A7U		Apparently replaced by A19-62.
COO36/5 15/2	U	7H7U		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO44/3 25/2	U	9ZFU		Kilpatrick / Horton. Crashed on landing.

Regarding the COO10 entry of 14th January, aircraft "W" was A19-70. That airframe had suffered a forced landing on January 2nd and was in the hands of 1RSU; 31SQN didn't get it back until August 10th. Reference to "W" might have been a simple error intended to read either "V" (A19-67) or "U" (A19-66). Whichever aircraft it was supposed to be, A19-66 ("U") was recorded as having flown the operation and has, accordingly, been listed here.

On February 25th, 1943, the aircraft swung whilst landing in a light to moderate cross wind, left the runway and then overturned and broke in two.¹⁹⁸ The crew escaped with minor injuries.¹⁹⁹ The wreck was issued to 4RSU who assessed the damage before it was then received by 5AD in who's charge authority was received to convert the remains into components.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

¹⁹⁷ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 8.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

¹⁹⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum – Aircraft Accident for Beaufighter A19-66 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4; NAA: A9845, 14.

¹⁹⁹ RAAF Form P.T.81 Preliminary Report (Internal) of Flying Accident or Forced Landing serial number 742 for period 1942/43, *ibid*.

²⁰⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-66 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-67
Ex T5095²⁰¹

This aircraft was recorded by 31SQN as being received by them on September 8th, 1942.²⁰²

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/5 22/11	V	YP1V		Cohen / Richards.
COO8/2 26/11	V	3G7V		Cohen / Richards.
COO11/10 30/11		1H2U		Cohen / Richards. Apparently replaced -66
COO13/7 01/12	V	5N8V		Cohan / Richards.
COO16/6 02/12	V	2R5V		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO17/12 02/12	V	2R5V		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO26/1 16/12	V	XW8V		Cohen / Richards. RTB due weather.
COO26/9 16/12		XW8B		Thomas / Van Nooten. Replaced A19-17.
COO38/7 25/12	V	4B9V		Cohen / Richards. Landed Batchelor.
COO39/13 26/12	V	5C9V		Cohen / Richards.
COO42/2 28/12	V	7UCV		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO1/1 04/1		7BAY		Cohen / Richards. Apparently replaced -72
COO4/1 07/1	V	9SAV		Cohen / Richards.
COO6/5 10/1	V	HV2V		Cancelled due WX.
COO15/6 19/1	V	3Q7V		Thomas / Van Nooten. Failed to Return.

A19-67 failed to return from Coomalie 15 of 19th January, 1943, which was a “sweep” over land from the south coast to the north coast of eastern Timor along the road from Beaco to Baucau and back again with particular attention to be paid to Ossu, a village about half way along. Vehicles, troops and huts were to be strafed. Take off was to be at 2300Z (9:30 am Darwin daylight savings time).²⁰³

Around 6 to 7/10ths cumulus at 1,500 feet was forecast over the Timor Sea increasing to 8 to 10/10ths at a trough line with associated showers of rain and between 7 and 8/10ths altostratus at 15,000 feet. Over Timor, between 6 and 8/10ths cumulus was expected, building in the afternoon. Visibility 6 to 8 miles. Light north-easterlies south of the trough, then winds 300 at 15 at all levels.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁰² RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 8.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

²⁰³ DA/G7/18 Jan in AWM66, 15/1/24.

²⁰⁴ Summary Sheet Weather Forecast for Coomalie 15 of 19th January (1943), *ibid.*

A19-67 (continued)

TIME . 0055/19/Z to 0132/19/Z

VISIBILITY. 5 Miles (At times nil when in clouds in hills)

REPORT . COO 154-155-156-157 flying at 50 feet height and in starboard echelon arrived off the coast of Timor at Beaco at 0055/19/Z. COO 155 finding his I/C and boost control were U/S turned back to base. COO 154-156 and 157 then proceeded to attack in that order.
[...]
COO 156 was third on the first run north along the road and on return run (South) moved up to second place. At 0113/19/Z, at Ossu COO 156 was observed by both COO 154 and COO 157. COO 154 observing COO 156 going in south east direction. This was the last seen of this aircraft. It is noted that at this time cloud was low down to roof top level and visibility very bad – the country is mountainous in this area.²⁰⁵

The crew of A19-67 comprised:

Pilot	Pilot Officer Norman Leslie Thomas and
Wireless Air Observer	Donald Laurie Van Nooten. ²⁰⁶

According to a witness interviewed post-war, an aircraft, likely to have been Beaufighter A19-67 approached the village of Vinilale from the direction of Ossu between the 18th and 20th of January, 1943 and crashed a few hundred yards from the witnesses house, near the Baucau to Vinilale road. The crash was shortly followed by the witness sighting a Japanese fighter circling the spot and then departing, although he was unable to say whether the Beaufighter had been shot down by the fighter or not due to the poor weather and visibility at that time. The two-man crew had been killed in the crash.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ No. 31 Squadron Air Attack Report No. 25, dated 19th January, 1943, ibid.

²⁰⁶ 2BPSO signal M818 of 19th Jan (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Van Nooten Donald Laurie 13981; NAA: A705, 166/42/4.

²⁰⁷ Enclosure 20A, Extract of Report dated 13/1/46 from F/Lt Hamer, ibid.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-69
Ex T5099²⁰⁸

This machine was taken on charge by 1AD at Laverton from the UK on August 14th, 1942, it's date of receipt by 31SQN wasn't recorded, although it was allotted and issued to 31SQN on September 9th.²⁰⁹

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/3 25/11	W	8J9W		Smith / Coburn.
COO8/3 26/11	W	3G7W		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO10/7 30/11	W	1H2W		Smith / Coburn. RTB ASI U/S.
COO12/13 30/11	J	1H2J		Morrison / Forrest. Failed to Return. Apparently replaced A19-45.

Three Beaufighter's from 31SQN were ordered, as Coomalie 12 of 30th November, 1942, to proceed to position BDXK2536 at 0332Z (10°35'S 127°36'E at 2:02 pm Darwin daylight savings time) and provide air cover for HMAS *CASTLEMAINE* and HMAS *ARMIDALE*.²¹⁰

[...] Coo. 12-11, 12-12, & 12-13 in loose V formation and flying at 3,000 feet at 0715/30Z at position 1050 S – 12750 E (approx) sighted three enemy aircraft (BETTYS) 2 miles off in 2 O'clock position BETTYS in tight V formation were flying at 4,000 (Approx) on 120 degree course. Coo. 12-11, 12-12, & 12-13 then commenced to climb in order to attack BETTYS who also climbed and it was noted BETTYS climb was rapid – Whilst Beaufighter formation climbed they observed 4 ZEKES above the BETTYS at about 10,000 feet. Coo. 12-11, 12-12, & 12-13 then made attacks on BETTYS as follows;

Coo.12-11 after climbing to approx. 7,000 feet made port beam attack on BETTYS who were flying in tight V formation – Coo.12-11 dived from 500 feet above BETTYS to 50 feet below firing Cannon and Machine Gun – No results observed – then made similar attack from Starboard side firing M.G. only (Cannon U/S) and observed tracer passing through tail plane of furthest BETTY – during this attack Coo.12-11 received fire from BETTYS from either Turret or side blister gun. When attacked BETTY formation appeared to roll on side to enable turret guns to fire down. Damage to Coo.12-11 as follows:-
 Cupola was shot off; wings, tail-plane and wireless were holed, probably by 7.7mm fire – no cannon was observed.

Coo.12-11 then left BETTYS flying on 180 degree course for next five minutes just above the sea – then turning climbed into the sun on a 360 degree course and after 5 mins again intercepted 3 BETTYS who were flying on a 320 degree course at 2,000 feet making for cloud cover (Time now 0742Z). Then Coo. 12-11 made port beam attack from slightly above and definitely observed tracer enter tail plane of furthest BETTY – no fire from BETTYS observed. One minute later 1 ZEKE attacked from 5 O'clock position diving from above – Coo.12-11 opened throttle and left ZEKE behind (No fire from Coo.12-11 or ZEKE) Coo. 12-11 then made back to base following Coo.12-12.

²⁰⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁰⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-69 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²¹⁰ DA/G5/30 Nov in AWM66, 15/1/20.

A19-69 (continued)

Coo.12-12 commenced his attack on BETTYS by climbing up and when approx 500 feet above turned to make starboard quarter astern attack – at this moment observed 1 ZEKE climbing on Starboard side of BETTY formation – immediately dived on ZEKE making starboard quarter to astern attack and firing long burst Cannon and Machine Gun – some object appeared to fall off starboard of ZEKE which immediately made tight left hand climbing turn. At the same time Coo.12-12 observed a second ZEKE diving down from 10,000 feet (Coo.12-12 at 7,000 feet) Coo.12-12 immediately broke into spiral dive and observed tracer going past – went down to 1,000 feet, then noticed 3 BETTYS still in tight V formation flying at 7,000 feet. Coo.12-12 commenced a climb for attack but was chased by 1 ZEKE behind and underneath – then dived and made off just above sea with the ZEKE following and soon outdistanced ZEKE.

Commenced climbing again for attack and observed a ZEKE behind and below and at same time saw two only BETTYS disappear into cloud cover (Cloud base 2,000 feet) Altered course to Port to intercept BETTYS but did not see them come out of other side of cloud bank. At this time no more ZEKES or BETTYS being observed altered course to 305 degrees and observed Coo. 12-11 at low altitude on course of 120 degrees. Then made back to base with Coo. 12-11 following. Coo.12-12 was not able to establish R/T communication endeavouring to do so from a few miles out on outward flight. The 2 ships were not sighted as interception was made with enemy 16 minutes before E.T.A. at ships' position.

Coo. 12-13. This aircraft did not return to base and was last observed by Coo.12-11 just before his first attack diving steeply from 7,000 feet and being followed by 4 ZEKES.

NOTE: Near end of engagement 2 only BETTYS were observed to go into cloud bank – possibly suggesting that 3rd BETTY was disabled or shot down as up to this time 3 BETTYS kept tight V formation.

OBSERVATIONS:

BETTYS Definately [sic] BETTY type – dark brown or green color. Rising Sun (Red on Yellow) on centre of fuselage on both sides. Red circle on top of mainplane.

ZEKES Green/Brown color much lighter than BETTYS possibly light bronze. Bright red circle prominent on upper wings and side of aircraft ...²¹¹

Both Morrison and Forrest were listed as missing believed killed.²¹²

²¹¹ No. 31 Squadron Air Combat Report No.3, dated 1st December, 1942, in AWM66, 15/1/20.

²¹² Casualty – 407723, F/SGT. MORRISON, M.J. 31095, SGT. FORREST, A.F. for aircraft A19-69 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4, NAA: A9845, 14.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-70
Ex T5098²¹³

This aircraft was received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek from 1AD on December 11th, 1942.²¹⁴

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/3 16/12	W	XW8W		Smith / Hand. RTB due weather.
COO26/14 16/12	W	XW8W		Duty not required. Did not fly.
COO29/7 19/12	W	B1RW		Replaced by A19-17.
COO36/7 23/12	W	9A4W		Only A51 record. Dennett / Meers.
COO39/10 26/12	W	5C9W		Greenwood / Thompson. RTB U/S.
COO43/1 29/12	W	5X1W		Greenwood / Thompson.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/2 02/1	W	B7GW		Blundell / Hatfield. Forced Landed.

For particulars regarding mission Coomalie 42 of 17th September, 1943, see entry for A19-30.

A19-70 was to depart Coomalie Creek at 2245Z (9:15 am Darwin daylight savings time) and join the convoy at 2359Z (10:29 am) in position 10°50'S 132°53'E, providing cover until 0200Z (12:30 pm), 10°51'S 133°08'E, when it would be relieved by another Beaufighter.²¹⁵

When over the Coburg Peninsular on the way to commence this detail, the number 1 (port) engine lost oil pressure and the pilot decided to return to base. The engine then failed and, unable to maintain height, the pilot executed a successful forced landing at Point Stuart.²¹⁶ 1RSU took charge of the machine on January 13th and they handed it on to 4RSU on March 22nd; 31SQN got it back again on August 10th.²¹⁷

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO12/3 19/8	EH-X	8A1X	Olive	Willard / Butler. Apparently repl -98.
COO19/1 23/8	EH-Y	7P1Y		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO24/1 26/8	EH-Y	7D2Y		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO27/4 30/8	EH-Y	4D9Y		McKinnon / Wright.
COO30/4 04/9	EH-Y	1A5Y		Mann / Harber.
COO58/1 06/9	EH-Y	7BAY		Mann / Harber.
COO38/6 12/9	EH-Y	7R9Y		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO40/7 14/9	EH-Y	ZD1Y		Cancelled.
COO42/1 17/9	EH-Y	3R3Y		Mann / Harber. Forced Landed.

²¹³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²¹⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-70 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²¹⁵ COO/MC2/1 Jan in AWM66, 15/1/23.

²¹⁶ Confirmatory Memorandum – Aircraft A19-70 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4; NAA: A9845, 14.

²¹⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-70 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-70 (continued)

North Western Area ordered nine Beaufighter's from 31SQN, as mission Coomalie 42 of 17th September, 1943, to attack Japanese float planes at Taberfane with the time on target to be at 162044Z (6:14 am Darwin time on the 17th) – first light at Taberfane was noted as being 162034Z and sunrise at 162054Z (6:04 am and 6:24 am Darwin time). The route was stipulated as being from Coomalie Creek to 06°11'S 133°37'E to Taberfane and thence Millingimbi. Some of the nine Beaufighter's were to be assigned as top cover for the final run in and it was ordered that Beaufighter's were not to stay and attempt to dogfight with the Rufes. Hudson's from 2SQN would be bombing Taberfane between 161430Z and 161930Z (midnight and 5 am Darwin local time on the 17th).²¹⁸ (This was Hughes 34 – five Hudson's making individual harassing attacks at roughly 60-minute intervals.)

31SQN was able to provide seven Beaufighter's. COO42 duties 1, 2, 3 and 4 were the strike force with duties 5, 6 and 7 providing top cover. The formation descended to sea-level with 100 miles to run and identified Cape Lelar from about 8 to 10 miles at 162035Z (6:05 am Darwin time). Having fixed their position, the formation turned north and followed the coast at that distance off shore until reaching Serwatoe Inlet which was subjected to a quick visual search as they crossed it and here, Wing Commander Mann flying A19-70 as duty 1, strafed a landing barge, setting it on fire. Flying then over land, the Maikoor River was intercepted about 10 miles south east of Taberfane with the final run in being along the river to the north west. When within one mile of Taberfane, an intense vertical barrage of light calibre Anti-Aircraft fire was sent up in the path of the Beaufighter's. At about this point, Mann saw that two float-planes were airborne and, having lost contact with the top cover in the darkness pulled up with duty 2 and engaged them, while duties 3 and 4 strafed and bombed the beach area. The time now being 162042Z (6:12 am Darwin time). Both duties 1 and 2 engaged a A6M2-N Rufe in head on attacks, but without any observed result. During this attack, A19-70 was hit by Anti-Aircraft fire in the starboard wing and Wing Commander Mann was forced to jettison his two bombs into the bay. The Rufe then broke off by rolling over and diving on to duty 4 while it was strafing and bombing. Anti-Aircraft fire was described as being light calibre, but intense and accurate coming from the whole beach area.²¹⁹

Apparently A19-70's port engine failed when about 45 nautical miles east of Millingimbi and, finding Millingimbi to be covered in fog, Mann continued on until the starboard engine also failed. This obviously left the crew with no option but to force land the aircraft which was successfully done about 18 miles south west of Millingimbi. On inspection, the aircraft was found to have an eighteen-inch hole in the top of the starboard wing and a fifteen foot by four foot section of the bottom of that wing blown away. The starboard fuselage aft of the pilot's cockpit, the elevator and rudder were also badly holed.²²⁰

A19-70 was considered to be repairable, but beyond unit capacity so it was loaded onto the *ALAGNA* during November for shipment to a southern aircraft depot. 5AD received it on March 7th, 1944, but after a thorough inspection, it was deemed to be not even suitable as an instructional airframe and accordingly was broken up for spares.²²¹

²¹⁸ DA/G3/15 Sep in AWM66, 15/1/63.

²¹⁹ COO/B1/17 Sep, *ibid*.

²²⁰ Confirmatory Memorandum, Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft No. A19-70 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 4; NAA: A9845, 14.

²²¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-70 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-71
Ex T5086²²²

Beaufighter A19-71 was issued to 31SQN from 1AD on September 14th, 1942.²²³

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/1 17/11	X	ZH9X 3BOX		Read / Marr.
COO4/1 22/11	X	YP1X		Read / Marr. Failed to take-off.
COO6/1 23/11	X	2R2X		Read / Marr.
COO82 24/11	X	NF3X		Read / Marr, pax Hely (SASO NWA).
COO82 25/11	X	8J9X		Read / Marr. {Not flown ?}
COO82 26/11	X	3G7X		Read / Marr.
COO9/2 28/11	X	3Q8X		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO15/13 01/12	X	5N8X		Read / Marr.
COO18/2 06/12	X	RY6X		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO19/3 07/12	X	2F4X		Wilkins / Brynes.
COO21/5 09/12	X	2H2X		Read / Marr. Returned to Base, U/S.
COO26/5 16/12	X	XW8X		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO27/1 18/12	X	4T2X		Savage / Studt.
COO29/5 19/12	X	B1RX		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO37/6 24/12	X	[2]M6X		Apparently replaced by A19-31.
COO38/5 25/12	X	4B9X		Wilkins / Byrnes. RTB Electrics U/S.
COO39/2 26/12	X	5C9X		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO40/4 27/12	X	7H7X		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO42/1 28/12	X	7UCX		Madden / Cormie.
COO43/3 29/12	X	5X1X		Wilkins / Byrnes. Failed to Return.

It was abandoned by its crew over Bathurst Island just near Cape Helvetius, crashed and exploded on December 29th, 1942.²²⁴

As related in the entry for Beaufighter A19-20, mission Coomalie 43 of December 29th, 1942, was ordered as a strafing attack of Betano, Timor, by four Beaufighter's.²²⁵ One aircraft returned to base due to electrical unserviceability's before reaching the target and two others failed to return.²²⁶

²²² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²²³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-71 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²²⁴ Appendix "A" to Supplementary Report to Air Attack Report No. 19 Narrative by pilot Flight Sergeant Wilkins in Attack Reports No. 31 Squadron; NAA: A11312, 4/1/INT/C.

²²⁵ DA/G4/28 Dec in AWM66, 15/1/23.

²²⁶ COO/MS4/29 Dec, *ibid.*

A19-71 (continued)

Operation: COO. 433. 29th December, 1942.

Crew: Captain. Observer.
F/S. WILKINS. SGT. BYRNES.

Object: Strafing at Betano.

Report: COO. 433 was member of formation of four aircraft to attack BETANO COO. 43 on 29th December, 1942. In attack report No. 19 COO. 433 was reported to have crashed on Bathurst Island and the crew had bailed out – the following is the subsequent report by COO. 433.

At 0220/29/Z COO 433 followed COO. 431 to attack native huts at BETANO COO. 431 fired burst at native huts on point on coast at Betano on northerly run and after having fired the burst the port elevator became U/S which in turn locked the elevator controls. The pilot then called the Observer to come to the pilots cockpit to assist to trim the aircraft – this necessary action meant that the W/T could not be used. COO. 433 then turned back to base and crossing the Timor Sea using throttle to control the elevation of the aircraft. The first half of the journey was made at about 1000 feet, then cloud and bad weather was encountered but the pilot maintained height and came out of clouds at about 5000 feet.

COO. 433 managed to reach FOURCROY (Bathurst Island) and then decided that the only thing to do was to bail out. This was done; the observer going first through the forward hatch followed by the pilot. Whilst floating down the pilot and the observer saw the aircraft crash on Bathurst Island. The narrative of the Pilot and Observer are attached and it is felt that their experiences will prove of value to other Pilots and Observers, particularly of Beaufighters.

The Pilot is to be commended for resourcefulness and tenacity in the flying back of this aircraft across the Timor sea and the subsequent saving of the crew.

SPECIAL MENTION is made of CPL. A.E. WOODNUTT of Fighter Sector who swam out some miles to bring in the Observer. – Full details in Observers narrative.

APPENDIX "A"

To Supplementary Report to Air Attack Report No.19.

Narrative by Observer Sergeant Byrnes.

We had just commenced our first run on the target and the Pilot had fired a short burst into several native huts, when I heard him say something about "cannons". My first impression was that the cannons had ceased firing but he informed me that the controls were locked and he thought that a cannon shell may have fouled the cables. I had a look around and noticed that the Port Elevator was damaged. I reported this to the Pilot, who had regained control by this time, and he told me to come up into the front cockpit to help maintain the balance of the aircraft. We then set course for Cape Fourcroy. Owing to the instability of the aircraft I was unable to reach the W/T equipment to send a message to base. On the way home we decided to bail out over Bathurst Island. AFTER flying for about an hour and a half, we sighted the Island and thought at this time that we may be able to reach the mainland.

A19-71 (continued)

When almost over the island the aircraft began to behave more erratically than previously, and after a short discussion we decided to bail out immediately. I Opened the Forward Hatch and shortly after crossing the coast jumped from the plane. There is no difficulty whatsoever in getting out of the aircraft. After what I considered a reasonable time, I pulled the ripcord and the chute opened immediately. I began to drift towards the sea and after a short time I saw the Pilot leave the plane and his chut [sic] open. I appeared to be drifting at the same height at which I had bailed out, and wondered when I was going to lose height. I could see the Pilot coming down and judged that he would land near the beach. This proved to be correct. Shortly after this whilst still under the impression that I was still several thousand feet up, I saw the water only a few feet below me I tried to release the harness but hit the water before doing so. I was then approximately one and a half miles out to sea. I tried to reach the beach but currents and the tide were against me. At one time I was almost able to catch hold of the wreck but a big wave washed me back. A few hours later I saw a number of figures on the beach and know that I had been seen. I continued to float and drift until I was picked up by Corporal A.E. Woodnutt of Fighter Sector who was at that time stationed on the Island. Corporal Woodnutt had been more than an hour in reaching me in a rubber dinghy borrowed from the Pilot of the aircraft. He then placed me in the boat and commenced to swim ashore towing the dinghy. After reaching the beach they placed me in the dinghy and I was carried for five miles by six natives to the point where Corporal Woodnutt had left his own boat and then rowed across the creek to his camp. Corporal Woodnutt carried out this job at great personal risk knowing that the waters in this area were infested with Alligators [sic] and sharks.

APPENDIX "A"

To Supplementary Report to Air Attack Report No.19 Narrative by Pilot Flight Sergeant Wilkins.

At 1249 on 29/12/42 I made a run in a northerly direction on a few native huts on the beach at Betano, and when pulling out from the attck [sic] found the elevators had jammed causing the aircraft to climb steeply. Until this time all controls had been working normally.

As the aircraft was almost vertical left rudder brought the nose down and turned the aircraft onto course 180. I reported trouble to the Observer, and asked him to look around and see if he could locate the cause. After trying the trimming tabs to no effect, I found the position of the nose would respond to the use of throttle and managed to recover from the resultant dive. About this time the Observer reported that the port elevator had pulled away and was sticking up at an angle of 45° to the tail plane. I then told him to bring parachute and come up to the front in an endeavour to assist trimming the aircraft. Height at the time varied between five hundred feet and one thousand feet. The elevators appeared to be jammed in a position which held the aircraft nearly level and it was decided to try and reach Australia. I turned on to course 120°, and flew this as accurately as possible, although at times we were as much as 40° off course. We left the Timor coast at 1255 Hours, and Approximately thirty minutes later ran into cloud. Height still averaged five hundred feet. The cloud thinned out to a slight drizzle thirty minutes later and by this time we had gained height and were now at five thousand feet. I found that the aircraft would maintain height at an average

A19-71 (continued)

speed of 130 knots. The diving and climbing necessary for flight took a variation in height of five hundred to a thousand feet. At 1430 we sighted Bathurst Island and thirty minutes later we were over Point Fourcroy. The revs. throughout the trip were 2200 and the boost about 2½ lbs; although at times full throttle was necessary to prevent the aircraft from diving and visa versa. Knowing the approximate position of the wireless station on the island and realising that a landing was impossible we decided to bail out. I didn't think the risk of coming further could achieve any purpose and the island seemed a good place to let her go without doing any damage. Also a ship, later found to be the "Patricia Cann" [sic] was standing off Cape Helvetius. Wishing to land on the beach we flew straight inland and then opened the front hatch. The Observer dropped out and about one minute later I followed him opening the chute almost immediately. The jump was done from five thousand feet at 1500 hours, and I landed in Bathurst I. about one mile from the beach. Fearing the Observer had landed in the water, I undid my dinghy and walked to the beach arriving there about half an hour later. I was near the wreck of the "Don Isidre" [sic]. Seeing no sign of Sergeant Byrnes I walked along the beach towards Fourcroy and at 1615 hours was met by a party of natives under Corporal Woodnutt from the Island Spotting Post. We then commenced a search for Sergeant Byrnes and at 1900 hours. saw him in the water about one mile from the shore. Coporal [sic] Woodnutt immediately grabbed the rubber dinghy and paddled out to the rescue. At 2030 Hours the party reached the shore. Sergeant Byrnes was sitting in the dinghy and Corporal Woodnutt was swimming along towing it, in spite of the crocodiles seen there earlier in the afternoon.

We then walked up the beach to the camp and returned to Darwin five days later on the "Patricia Cann" [sic]. No wireless message was sent on the way back because it was deemed inadvisable to send the Observer to the back of the aircraft, thus upsetting the trim. No code books were removed from the aircraft for the same reason, but they must have been destroyed as the plane burst into flame on hitting the ground and exploded a few minutes later.

No anti-aircraft fire was observed on the island.²²⁷

Corporal Alfred Edward Woodnutt was later awarded the British Empire Medal for his rescue of Sergeant Byrnes.²²⁸

²²⁷ No. 31 Squadron Supplementary Report to Air Attack Report No. 19, dated 4th January, 1943, *ibid*.

²²⁸ Newspaper article, Honours for Airmen, R.A.A.F. Exploits in Pacific, The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 24 April, 1943, p9 via National Library of Australia nla.gov.au/nla.news-article-17845744.

Beaufighter Ic
A19-72
Ex T5092²²⁹

The last of the RAAF's Mk Ic's, 31SQN's A50 recorded that Beaufighter A19-72 was received on September 25th, 1942.²³⁰ It forced landed at Katherine on October 28th and was allotted to 1RSU for an engine change that same day. It was received by 31SQN again on December 10th, 1942.²³¹

1942:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/4 16/12	Y	XW8Y		Read / Marr.
COO27/7 18/12	Y	4T2Y		Replaced by A19-63.
COO28/10 18/12	Y	4T2Y		Read / Marr.
COO31/1 22/12	Y	4Q1Y		Read / Marr.
COO36/5 23/12	Y	9A4Y		Only A51 record. Read / Marr.
COO38/3 25/12		4B9C		Stanley / Thorncraft. Apparently repl -19.
COO38/11 25/12	Y	4B9Y		Read / Marr. Didn't take-off.
COO39/9 26/12	Y	5C9Y		Read / Marr.
COO41/5 27/12	Y	7H7Y		Cook / Cotter. RTB oil PX gauge U/S.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/1 04/1	Y	7BAY		Apparently replaced by A19-67.
COO4/3 07/1	Y	9SAY		Dennett / Meers. Didn't take-off, U/S.
COO15/4 19/1	Y	3Q7Y		Read / Marr.
COO19/5 24/1	Y	1Z3Y		Dennett / Meers.
COO22/2 28/1	Y	3J2Y		Dennett / Meers.
COO28/2 04/2	Y	8X9Y		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO31/1 09/2	Y	9A7Y		Read / Marr.
COO37/1 18/2	Y	8X9Y		Read / Marr.
COO41/8 21/2	Y	2Y9Y		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO43/3 24/2	Y	8N1Y		Read / Marr.
COO46/1 28/2	Y	3Z7Y		Apparently replaced by A19-57.
COO2/1 12/3	Y	1P3Y		Cohen / Richards. Didn't reach target; WX.
COO5/3 16/3	Y	1P8Y		Dennett / Meers.
COO9/4 21/3	Y	7TNY		Cohen / Richards.
COO17/4 03/4	Y	YG8Y		Read / Marr.
COO23/3 10/4		3Q8L		White / Webb. Apparently replaced -47.
COO25/3 11/4	Y	9C3Y		Delaporte / Hatfield. Cancelled due WX.
COO49/5 02/5	EH-Y	1F9Y		Read / Marr.
COO7/4 10/5	EH-Y	9B7Y		Biven / Newton. Destroyed on ground MIL on return.

²²⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²³⁰ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of No. 31 Squadron entry of 25.9.42 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

²³¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-72 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-72 (continued)

Coomalie 7 was ordered as a six Beaufighter strafing attacking on a suspected Japanese float plane alighting area opposite the village of Alardjar [sic – Alardjir] at the mouth of the Serwatoe River on the western side of Trangan Island in the Aru Islands. The previous day, an American B-24 had reported sighting two “Rufes” beached on the south bank of the river opposite the village, three others were reported seen taking-off in that near vicinity and another one was said to be beached on the seaward side of Cape Derehi (which forms the southern side of the mouth of the river). Time on target for the Beaufighters was set at 7 am local time with the possibility noted that the Japanese aircraft may have been moved further up the Serwatoe during the day so, commencing up the river at Doka (there were two “Doka’s” – Doka Barat and Doka Timoer – which one of them was being referred to wasn’t specified) to follow the Serwatoe to the mouth, paying particular attention to the south bank of the river opposite Wardja Island, and then, if necessary, proceed up the western coast and search in the vicinity of Taberfane which was located very near the north-western mouth of the Maikoor River, which ran roughly parallel to the Serwatoe, but about 15 miles to the north. The Japanese aircraft could be moored or beached and likely to be well camouflaged.²³²

The plan was for the six Beaufighters, Coomalie 7 duties 4 to 9 inclusive, to depart Coomalie at 091835Z (4:05 am), track direct to the Aru’s with a time on target of 092130Z (7 am) and then back to Millingimbi with an estimate there of 092350Z (9:20 am). After refuelling at Millingimbi, the aircraft were then to proceed direct to Coomalie.²³³

As it turned out, duties 5 and 7 both went U/S prior to departure and duties 8 and 9 were forced to return owing to bad weather; duty 8 made it back to Coomalie at 092240Z (8:10 am) and duty 9 managed to land at Bathurst Island at 100130Z (11 am !) and wait for several hours before being able to get home, finally landing at Coomalie at 100542Z (3:12 pm). That left duties 4 and 6, aircraft A19-16 and A19-72, to get the job done. They only found a couple of boats on the Serwatoe River and either because of the weather or because the Beaufighter’s were now operating as a pair, they elected to return to Millingimbi without heading up to Taberfane.²³⁴ The two motor-boats had been strafed and left burning, with 300 rounds of 20mm cannon and 2,500 rounds of .303 machine gun ammunition being expended. After landing at Millingimbi, the aircraft were parked out in the open along the east-west runway and were still there when three Japanese fighters (described as either Zekes or Haps) appeared and strafed them. A19-72 was destroyed by fire and A19-16 was damaged but considered repairable. No one was reported injured.²³⁵

²³² DA/G1/9 May in AWM66, 15/1/39.

²³³ COO/MS1/9 May, *ibid.*

²³⁴ COO/MS3/10 May, *ibid.*

²³⁵ COO/B1/10 May, *ibid.*

Beaufighter VIc
A19-78
Ex T5204²³⁶

This machine was initially allotted to 30SQN, but whilst still in the hands of 1AD, suffered a forced landing on December 14th, 1942, damaging the aircraft and consequently cancelling its impending move to 30SQN. After repairs, it was received by 31SQN on January 17th, 1943.²³⁷

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO21/1 28/1	X	3J2X		Read / Marr.
COO27/1 03/2	X	1S3X		Cohen / Richards.
COO32/1 10/2	X	8N1X		McDonald / Magee.
COO35/1 15/2	X	7H7X		Dennett / Meers.
COO1/2 09/3	X	8W4X		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO3/2 14/3	X	2D3X		Armstrong / Robertson.
COO6/2 17/3	X	A8NX		Greenwood / Thompson. Forced landed.

During a two Beaufighter strafing attack on Fuloro aerodrome and having lost formation with the other aircraft on the way to the target due to engine trouble, A19-78 eventually ran out of fuel and was force landed successfully about 15 miles south west of Darwin²³⁸ near Tumbling Waters. It was accordingly issued to 4RSU for recovery during the dry season. The aircraft was found to be undamaged and was handed back to 31SQN on June 7th.²³⁹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO41/10 12/6	EH-V	1D8V		Whyte. A51: Delaporte / Patterson.
COO3/2 22/6	EH-V	8L4V		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO8/2 26/6	EH-V	8A9V		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO13/2 02/7	EH-V	9G2V		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO15/4 03/7	EH-V	8O2V		Apparently replaced by A19-40.
COO18/10 05/7	EH-V	8G1V		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO18/18 05/7	EH-V	8G1V		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO89/5 11/7	EH-V	3J2V		Forbes / Erwin.
COO32/1 23/7	EH-V	7O4V		Warren / Doyle.
COO32/4 23/7	EH-V	7O4V		Warren / Doyle.
COO40/2 03/8	EH-V	1N5V		Whyte / Powell.
COO47/2 12/8	EH-V	2D3V		Willard / Butler.
COO1/5 15/8	EH-V	8V1V		Entwistle / Webb.
COO3/1 16/8	EH-V	5N2V	Lakey	Gardiner / Lyne.
COO14/1 20/8	EH-V	1UMV		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO15/1 21/8	EH-V	5W3V		Apparently replaced by A19-84.
COO17/1 22/8	EH-V	9ZfV		Whyte / Powell.

Continued →

²³⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²³⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-78 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²³⁸ COO/MS1/18 Mar in AWM66, 15/1/32.

²³⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-78 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-78 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO29/1 04/9	EH-V	1A5V		Warren / Doyle.
COO31/3 06/9	EH-V	7BAV		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO33/1 08/9	EH-D	9SAD		F/L Taylor / Taylor. Apparently repl -83.
COO34/1 09/9	EH-V	9M7V		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO36/12 11/9	EH-V	SO8V		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO37/1 12/9	EH-V	7R9V		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO37/4 12/9	EH-V	7R9V		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO41/1 15/9	EH-V	7O4V		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO41/4 15/9	EH-V	7O4V		Unserviceable.
COO45/1 19/9	EH-V	9JAV		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO45/4 19/9	EH-V	9JAV		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO46/2 21/9	EH-V	7S3V		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO46/5 21/9	EH-V	7S3V		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO47/2 23/9	EH-V	U3OV		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO47/5 23/9	EH-V	U3OV		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO49/1 26/9	EH-V	Q5PV		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO49/4 26/9	EH-V	Q5PV		F/L Gordon / Spencer.

4RSU took change of the aircraft again on October 1st and kept it until December 7th, when it was handed back to 31SQN.²⁴⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML25/1 11/1	EH-K	JG4K	Bebark	Garnham / Delaney. Apparently repl -162.
CML26/1 12/1	EH-V	4DHV	Disown	Mitchell / Smith.

The aircraft suffered yet another forced landing, this time about 3 miles south of Adelaide River on February 11th, 1944. On this occasion, significant damage was sustained which was beyond the capacity of 31SQN to repair in-house, so it was issued to 4RSU for repair. It was too much of a burden on their resources also so, on April 15th, it was received by 14ARD at Gorrie. Eventually the aircraft was dismantled for spare parts.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-79
Ex EL243²⁴²

This machine had a very short RAAF career. After being received for assembly by 2AD at RAAF Richmond, north-west of Sydney, from the United Kingdom on December 2nd, 1942, it went to Number 2 Aircraft Park (2AP) for temporary storage and then on to 5AD at Wagga Wagga. It was received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek on February 24th, 1943.²⁴³

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/4 15/3	W	1P8W		Longoni / Dale. Failed to Return.

Four long range Beaufighter's were ordered to attack Dobo as Coomalie 4 of 15th March, 1943. The priority of targets was given as being ship transports, seaplanes at moorings and any troop movements ashore at Dobo.²⁴⁴

At 0753Z (6:23 pm Darwin daylight savings time) in position 05°22'S 134°05'E, three vessels, each estimated to have been of about 500 tons and packed with troops, were sighted travelling in line astern at 6 knots. They were strafed at mast height but A19-79 was hit by Anti-Aircraft fire.²⁴⁵ The aircraft flew on for several seconds, burning fiercely, after being hit in the left engine but then rolled several times to the left and dived into the sea.²⁴⁶

The crew of Beaufighter A19-79 at the time of its loss were:

Pilot	Flying Officer Albert Edward Longoni and,
WAG	Sergeant Arthur Robert Dale. ²⁴⁷

²⁴² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁴³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-79 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁴⁴ DA/G4/14 Mar in AWM66, 15/1/31.

²⁴⁵ COO/B1/15 Mar, *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Confirmatory Memorandum, 400094 F/O A.E. Longoni & 40706 Sgt Dale, A.R. in Casualty Repatriation File Dale Arthur Robert 40706; NAA: A705, 166/9/47.

²⁴⁷ 2BPSO signal M2 of 17 March (1943), *ibid.*

Beaufighter VIc
A19-80
Ex EL245²⁴⁸

This aircraft was received at 5AD from 2AP on January 11th, 1943 and was then received by 31SQN on February 23rd.²⁴⁹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/1 04/3	Q	9N9Q		Frith / McLennan.
COO49/3 08/3	Q	8Z6Q		Frith / McLennan.
COO3/3 14/3	Q	2D3Q		Biven / Newton.
COO4/2 15/3	Q	1P8Q		Frith / McLennan.
COO9/5 21/3	Q	7TNQ		Barnett / Lennon.
COO11/1 25/3		5P3H		Savage / Studt. Replaced A19-31.
COO18/3 04/4	Q	6M3Q		Barnett / Lennon.
COO22/1 09/4	Q	8ZDQ		McCord / Childs.
COO25/2 11/4	Q	9C3Q		Barnett / Lennon. Cancelled due WX.
COO28/1 15/4	EH-Q	7F1Q		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO42/5 25/4	EH-Q	9C3Q		Wilkins / Agnew.
COO8/10 10/5	EH-Q	9B7Q		McCord / Childs.
COO12/3 13/5	EH-Q	9M7Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO14/7 14/5	EH-Q	2U1Q		Apparently replaced by A19-84.

The aircraft's E/E88 recorded the fitting of auxiliary fuel tanks on May 15th.²⁵⁰

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO18/8 19/5	EH-Q	2X8Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO19/1 21/5	EH-Q	9B7Q		Whyte / Powell.
COO22/5 22/5	EH-Q	1L7Q		Terry / Doyle.
COO31/3 01/6	EH-Q	1Z3Q		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO33/3 02/6	EH-X	9C3X		McCord / Childs. Apparently repl -98.
COO38/2 06/6	EH-Q	3Y8Q		McCord / Childs.
COO38/5 06/6	EH-Q	3Y8Q		McCord / Childs.
COO41/11 12/6	EH-Q	1D8Q		Delaporte. A51: Whyte / Powell.
COO43/1 13/6	EH-Q	9M1Q		Warren / Hamilton.
COO43/1 13/6	EH-Q	9M1Q		Unserviceable.
COO47/2 15/6	EH-Q	1Z3Q		Henry / Hooke.
COO11/1 30/6	EH-Q	N9GQ		Ferguson / Blades.

Continued →

²⁴⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁴⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-80 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

A19-80 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO15/6 03/7	EH-Q	8O2Q		Taylor / Taylor.
COO17/7 05/7	EH-Q	8G1Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO17/17 05/7	EH-Q	8G1Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO20/1 06/7	EH-Q	2R2Q		Ellis / McVinish.
COO90/6 11/7	EH-Q	3J2Q		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO27/1 14/7	EH-Q	9B7Q	[Don] Putty	Ferguson / Blades.
COO27/4 14/7	EH-Q	9B7Q	[Don] Putty	Ferguson / Blades.
COO30/8 16/7	EH-Q	9G2Q		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO32/2 23/7	EH-Q	7O4Q		F/O Taylor / Hocking.

The aircraft was sent to 4RSU, who received it on July 30th, for a double engine change. It was handed back to 31SQN on September 21st.²⁵¹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO48/8 23/9	EH-U	U3OU		Ogden / West. Apparently repl -43.
COO2/3 30/9	EH-Q	5Y1Q		Whyte / Powell.
COO4/1 02/10	EH-Q	CN5Q	Scuttling	Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO4/4 02/10	EH-Q	CN5Q	Scuttling	Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO5/1 03/10	EH-Q	QY3Q		Cridland / de Pierres.
COO5/4 03/10	EH-Q	QY3Q		Cridland / de Pierres.
COO6/1 06/10	EH-Q	FU6Q	Croker	Garnham / Delaney.
COO6/4 06/10	EH-Q	FU6Q	Croker	Garnham / Delaney.
COO8/7 09/10	EH-Q	DV6Q		Gaunt / Jones.
COO13/1 19/10	EH-Q	DV6Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO13/4 19/10	EH-Q	DV6Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO15/3 20/10	EH-Q	FM7Q	Cleaner	Mitchell / Smith.
COO17/3 23/10	EH-Q	GA9Q		Quance / Taylor.
COO28/3 11/11	EH-Q	CP9Q		Ogden / West.
COO30/2 13/11	EH-Q	WK6Q		Ellis / McVinish.
COO32/2 15/11	EH-Q	MJ9Q	Planless	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO35/1 17/11	EH-Q	3YAQ		Gerdes / McMillan.
COO35/4 17/11	EH-Q	3YAQ		Gerdes / McMillan.
COO38/1 19/11	EH-F	PR7F		Wickins / Staines. Apparently repl -82.
COO38/2 19/11	EH-Q	PR7Q		Apparently replaced by A19-140.
COO38/4 19/11	EH-F	PR7F		Wickins / Staines. Apparently repl -82.
COO41/9 21/11	EH-Q	PQ1Q		Ogden / West. A51: duty 8.
COO44/2 25/11	EH-Q	FK8Q		Stubbs / Taylor.
COO46/2 30/11	EH-Q	SC9Q		Ferguson / Blades.
COO49/4 03/12	EH-A	DY2A	Badgirl	Wickens / Staines. Apparently repl -16. Crashed on landing.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

A19-80 (continued)

Coomalie 49 of 3rd December, 1943, was a convoy escort for Force GL, a convoy approaching Darwin from Thursday Island, to be provided continuously from 022330Z to 030650Z (10 am to 5:20 pm Darwin daylight savings time) by a single Beaufighter from 31SQN, relieved as necessary.²⁵² The convoy consisted of HMAS *COOTAMUNDRA* escorting the *WANAKA*.²⁵³

Five sorties were planned with four aircraft assigned (as duties 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 – duties 1 and 5 were to be flown by the same aircraft). Duty 4 was supposed to have been flown by EH-A (A19-16). Details for that duty were: aircraft captain, Flying Officer Wickens; wheels up from Coomalie Creek, 030230Z (1 pm Darwin daylight savings time on the 3rd); time and position joining convoy, 030345Z (2:15 pm) in position 11°14'S 134°09'E; wheels down at Coomalie, 030630Z (5 pm) and call signs DY2A and Badgirl-(A). Time of origin for this Mauve was 020427Z (2:57 pm Darwin daylight savings time on the 2nd).²⁵⁴

The return report noted that Coomalie 49 duty 4, EH-A, landed back at Coomalie Creek at 030631Z (5:01 pm) and that it, Coomalie Creek 494, EH-A, had crashed on landing badly damaging the aircraft but that no casualties were suffered.²⁵⁵

A19-16's aircraft status card has no record of any incident or damage during this period; the last record prior to December 3rd was on October 5th, with the aircraft returning to the squadron from 4RSU and the next is on January 19th, 1944, with the aircraft being allotted to 14ARD for installation of auxiliary fuel tanks and re-camouflaging.²⁵⁶

The squadrons A51 records A19-16 flying COO49/4 with pilot Flying Officer Wickens and navigator Flight Sergeant Staines, which is in accordance with the Form Mauve (COO/MC1/2 Dec), with a wheels up of 1207 hours local and wheels down at 1601 hours.²⁵⁷

31 Squadron's A50 records that – with regard to the convoy escort task – that the task was completed and that all aeroplanes returned safely. It then goes on to record that another Beaufighter, A19-80, swung on take-off and was extensively damaged;²⁵⁸ it does not associate that aircraft and incident with the aircraft that took part in the convoy escort.

The aircraft status card for A19-80 does record that, on December 3rd, 1943, it was involved in a "Crash on landing ..."²⁵⁹

That is supported by a Confirmatory Memorandum reporting the accident to A19-80 which also reported that:

²⁵² DA/G5/2 Dec in AWM66, 15/1/79.

²⁵³ RAAF Form A51 Unit History Sheet Detail of Operations by No. 31 Squadron entry for COO49 of (3rd December, 1943) in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 – Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

²⁵⁴ COO/MC1/2 Dec in AWM66, 15/1/79.

²⁵⁵ COO/MC1/3 Dec, *ibid*.

²⁵⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-16 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁵⁷ RAAF Form A51 Unit History Sheet Detail of Operations entry for COO494 of 3rd December, 1943 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug42 – Aug45; NAA: A9186, 61.

²⁵⁸ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book entry for COO49 of 3.12.43, *ibid*.

²⁵⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-80 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-80 (continued)

On 3 Dec 43 at 1300hours Local Time, F/O I.T. WICKENS, was detailed to take off from COOMALIE in Beaufighter A19-80 for Convoy Duty. He had with him F/Sgt STAINES N.G. as Navigator (W). On completion of his convoy duty, Flying Officer WICKENS set course for base which he reached at approximately 1655 hrs Local Time. After circling the strip twice, the Pilot, prepared for a landing and after touching down, the aircraft swung to Starboard. The Pilot applied correction, full opposite rudder and brake and starboard throttle. But the swing could not be controlled and became greater, the aircraft crashed into a bank of earth at the starboard side of the strip. Both members of the crew were uninjured.²⁶⁰

The confusion is that the crew that were tasked to fly COO49/4 in a certain aircraft have been recorded as flying that detail as tasked in the correct aircraft, but that the same crew, is reported as flying a different aircraft, crashing it taking off – or landing at the completion of the task that two other primary sources suggest the aircraft wasn't involved in.

Aircraft obviously are complicated contraptions and unserviceability's occur, especially when those complicated contraptions are parked in, operated from and maintained out in open, tropical, "bush" environments. That a particular aircraft having been tasked to perform a certain detail is replaced shortly, or even immediately prior to that duty for some reason is understandably not particularly uncommon. But confusion at squadron level about which aircraft flew what duty, and which aircraft ended up bent and twisted and in a cloud of dust and dirt at the side of that squadrons only runway, is.

But having suggested that confusion in a squadron's recording of its daily activities is uncommon, it should be recognised that it does occur from time to time and some squadrons seem to have been more prone to factual variations than others. 31 Squadron, however, was typically not one of those squadrons.

Typed A51's and A50's were most likely prepared at the end of the month from a variety of other sources of a contemporaneous nature and the A50's that included operational information took that operational information directly from the relevant A51 and then whatever domestic material as was thought necessary was added.

The A51 page that this mission is recorded on also has details of two other missions; so, it records three missions – one each on the 3rd, 5th and 9th of December – a period of 7 days. The page has been typed. The lines of text are all parallel over the entire page – suggesting that the whole page was typed at one time (that is: the page has not been removed and re-inserted on the typewriter's drum) and the imprint of the numbers and letters is uniform and of the same intensity over the whole page – suggesting that the ribbon was the same age.

The A51 records A19-16 as flying the mission and records its take-off and landing times and makes no mention of crashing on return – which any reasonable person would acknowledge as being a noteworthy event even in war-time. The associated entry in the A50 records that all aircraft returned safely (apparently not) and that another aircraft crashed on take-off (again – apparently not).

²⁶⁰ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A19-80 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

A19-80 (continued)

A19-16 (EH-A) was tasked to fly duty 4 of mission Coomalie 49 of December 3rd, 1943. It would seem that, for some reason, the aircraft had been rejected and replaced by A19-80 (EH-Q); as acknowledged above – not a big deal and certainly not unusual. But the error – and one that would have gone unnoticed had the other aircraft not been bent – seems to be that information for this mission, from which the A51 was later typed, was written pre-flight and had not been updated with changes to the aircraft taking part – with the take-off and landing times extracted from a source and entered later without heed to any amplifying comments about noteworthy arrivals. Seems simple enough, but produces very misleading records.



A19-80/EH-Q. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P961192 via Mike Mirkovic].

The aircraft was sent down to 14ARD at Gorrie and it was broken up for spares.²⁶¹

²⁶¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-80 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-81
Ex EL246²⁶²

After going direct to 2AP after arrival from the United Kingdom, it was received by 5AD on January 21st, 1943 and then received by 31SQN on March 5th.²⁶³ Five weeks AFTER someone had tried to send it off on an operation.

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO25/3 30/1	T	1P3T		"T" believed to have been future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-81. Flown by A19-31.

On March 17th and with a grand total of 30 hours and 30 minutes on the airframe,²⁶⁴ it swung on take-off from Coomalie Creek for a non-operational flight and crashed into trees. The crew, Pilot Officer E.J. Frith and Pilot Officer Hugh McLennan weren't seriously hurt.²⁶⁵

The aircraft was taken over by 4RSU and turned into spare parts.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁶³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-81 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁶⁴ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-81 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

²⁶⁵ RAAF Form P/T81 Preliminary Report (Internal) of Flying Accident or Forced Landing Serial No. 838 for Period 1942/43, *ibid*.

²⁶⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-81 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-82
Ex EL260²⁶⁷

5AD took over this machine from 2AP on January 27th, 1943. The aircraft went to 5OTU on February 22nd and after a student had bent it, it went back to 5AD early in March for repairs. It was then sent to 31SQN who received it on November 3rd.²⁶⁸

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/7 06/11	EH-F	4G1F		Apparently replaced by A19-98.
COO27/1 08/11	EH-F	LX7F		Apparently replaced by A19-145.
COO27/4 08/11	EH-F	LX7F		Apparently replaced by A19-145.
COO28/4 11/11	EH-F	CP9F		Mitchell / Smith.
COO30/1 13/11	EH-F	WK6F		Archer / Holland.
COO30/4 13/11	EH-F	WK6F		Archer / Holland.
COO32/1 15/11	EH-F	MJ9F	Planless	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO32/4 15/11	EH-F	MJ9F	Planless	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO38/1 19/11	EH-F	PR7F		Apparently replaced by A19-80.
COO38/4 19/11	EH-F	PR7F		Apparently replaced by A19-80.
COO41/11 21/11	EH-F	PQ1F		Kilpatrick / Horton. Crashed on TKOF.

Coomalie 41 of 21st November, 1943, was a short notice shipping strike to be performed by three “fighter” Beaufighter’s, two “bomber” configured Beaufighter’s and a B-25. They were to attack Japanese ships reportedly in position 06°15’S 134°07’E. If Japanese aircraft were in the vicinity of the ships, the three fighter Beaufighter’s were to act as top cover while the B-25 and the two bomber Beaufighter’s carried out mast-head height attacks on the ships with the Beaufighter’s to bomb before the B-25. If no Japanese aircraft seen, the top cover Beaufighter’s were to strafe the ships before the bombers commenced their attacks. The aircraft were ordered to launch immediately.²⁶⁹ (The B-25 was to be a Dutch machine, operating as NEI39).²⁷⁰

Beaufighter A19-82 was detailed as the second of the two bomber configured aircraft.²⁷¹ During its take-off run, the aircraft began to swing to the left. The pilot immediately corrected with full power on the left engine and full right rudder but the deviation increased so the pilot cut the switches and retracted the undercarriage. The machine slid off the side of the runway into an earthen bank. The crew suffered only minor injuries.²⁷²

The aircraft was sent to 14ARD at Gorrie, being received there on December 2nd. Eventually, during March, 1944, the conversion of the aircraft into components was approved.²⁷³

²⁶⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF’s Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁶⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-82 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁶⁹ DA/G5/21 Nov in AWM66, 15/1/76.

²⁷⁰ NEI/MS1/21 Nov, *ibid.*

²⁷¹ COO/MS1/21 Nov, *ibid.*

²⁷² Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-82 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

²⁷³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-82 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-83
Ex EL261²⁷⁴

Received at 2AD from the UK for assembly on December 14th, 1942, it was sent to 5AD at Wagga Wagga towards the end of January, 1943 and received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek, Northern Territory, on February 20th.²⁷⁵

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO25/1 30/1	D	1P3D		"D" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-83. Flown by A19-51.
COO47/3 04/3	D	9N9D		Madden / Cormie. Cancelled.
COO49/2 08/3	D	8Z6D		Madden / Cormie. Bogged, cancelled.
COO2/5 12/3	D	1P3D		Madden / Cormie. Didn't reach target; WX.
COO5/1 16/3	D	1P8D		Madden / Cormie.
COO11/3 25/3	D	5P3D		McDavitt / Cotter.
COO15/1 01/4	D	N9GD		Crew not identified. Did not TKOF.
COO16/1 03/4	D	YG8D		Madden / Cormie.
COO19/1 05/4	D	X3ND		Read / Marr.
COO21/1 08/4	D	1J3D		Biven / Newton.
COO22/6 09/4	D	8ZDD		Wilkins / Agnew.
COO36/1 21/4	EH-D	1T3D		Biven / Newton.
COO65/6 03/5	EH-D	8M2D		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO1/1 04/5	EH-D	3MFD		Barnett / Lennon.
COO10/1 11/5	EH-D	1FWD		Madden / Cormie. Shot down 1 F/P
COO10/4 11/5	EH-D	1FWD		Madden / Cormie.
COO14/10 14/5	EH-D	2U1D		Cancelled, not required.

The aircraft's E/E88 recorded the fitting of auxiliary fuel tanks on May 15th.²⁷⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO18/9 19/5	EH-D	2X8D		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO22/3 22/5	EH-D	1L7D		McDavitt / McNamara.
COO27/8 29/5	EH-D	2X8D		Ogden / West.
COO27/10 29/5	EH-D	2X8D		Cancelled.
COO43/2 13/6	EH-D	9M1D		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO45/1 14/6	EH-D	3JQD		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO47/3 15/6	EH-D	1Z3D		Wilkins / Byrnes.
COO1/1 20/6	EH-D	7C1D		Ogden / West.

Landing back at Coomalie Creek, the port undercarriage folded at the end of the aircraft's roll out.²⁷⁷ Damage was relatively minor and it was within the capabilities and resources of the Squadron to repair.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁷⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-83 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-83 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

²⁷⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-83 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-83 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO40/4 03/8	EH-D	1N5D		Ferguson / Blades [A51: Powell, incorrect]
COO42/3 06/8	EH-D	HT2D		Ferguson / Blades.
COO47/3 12/8	EH-D	2D3D		Ferguson / Blades.
COO2/1 15/8	EH-D	8V1D		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO2/4 15/8	EH-D	8V1D		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO8/1 18/8	EH-D	1M3D		McCord / Childs.
COO11/1 19/8		8A1D	Olive	Ellis / McVinish.
COO25/3 27/8	EH-D	3T8D	Homer	McKinnon / Wright.
COO26/1 28/8	EH-D	2H5D		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO32/5 06/9	EH-D	7BAD		Mitchell / Smith.
COO33/1 08/9	EH-D	9SAD		Apparently replaced by A19-78.
COO36/11 11/9	EH-D	SO8D		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO36/13 11/9	EH-D	SO8D		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO37/2 12/9	EH-D	7R9D		Gaunt / Jones.

A double engine change was necessary and a 240-hourly became due so, on September 14th, the aircraft was received by 4RSU at Pell.²⁷⁹



A19-83/EH-D at Pell during late October, 1943. Although cropped from this image, the aircraft parked immediately to the right of A19-83 was Hudson A16-180, a former 10TU machine which had been received by 2SQN on the 12th but almost immediately pranged during a test flight. It was at 4RSU, Pell, only between October 25th and 29th, when it was sent further south to 14ARD at Gorrie. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P980529 via Mike Mirkovic].

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

A19-83 (continued)

4RSU handed the aircraft back to 31SQN on November 27th, 1943.²⁸⁰

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/1 09/12	EH-D	QS5D	Banquet	Garnham / Delaney. RTB U/S. Crew then took A19-156.
COO3/5 09/12	EH-D	QS5D	Banquet	Garnham / Delaney.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML18/1 01/1	EH-D	DQ4D	Unearth	Ferguson / Blades.
CML23/5 07/1	EH-D	VN2D	Hoodlam D	Apparently replaced by A19-16.
CML22/1 08/1	EH-D	WQ4D	Darning D	Ferguson / Blades.
CML37/1 20/1	EH-D	YM9D	Bebark	Apparently replaced by A19-16.

Although it seems to have finished flying operations during January, 1944, it remained with 31SQN until May 7th, when it was recorded as being received at 5AD who eventually passed it on to 5OTU later in the year.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-84
Ex EL259²⁸²

On January 10th, 1943, this aircraft was received at 5AD from 2AP and 31SQN received it on February 20th.²⁸³

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO31/2 09/2	F	9A7F		"F" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-84. Was to have been flown by A19-63, but duty cancelled.
COO1/3 09/3		8W4J		Greenwood / Thompson. App repl -45.
COO2/6 12/3	F	1P3F		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO3/1 14/3	F	2D3F		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO4/1 15/3	F	1P8F		Savage / Studt.

4RSU received the aircraft on 19th March, but the reason wasn't noted on it's E/E88. 31SQN took the aircraft back again on April 1st.²⁸⁴

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/3 03/4	F	YG8F		Barnett / Lennon. Did not TKOF, U/S.
COO22/5 09/4	F	8ZDF		McDonald / Magee.
COO29/1 16/4	EH-F	8G3F		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO30/1 17/4	EH-F	8Q2F		Read / Marr.
COO34/4 19/4	EH-F	2Y9F		Barnett / Lennon.
COO36/2 21/4	EH-F	1T3F		McCord / Childs.
COO42/4 25/4	EH-F	9C3F		Cohen / Richards.
COO8/11 10/5	EH-F	9B7F		Brannelly / McGrath.
COO10/2 11/5	EH-F	1FWF		Taylor / Cobern.
COO10/5 11/5	EH-F	1FWF		Taylor / Cobern.
COO12/4 13/5	EH-F	9M7F		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO14/7 14/5	EH-Q	2U1Q		Barnett / Lennon. Apparently repl -80.
COO14/9 14/5	EH-F	2U1F		Replaced by A19-29.

The aircraft's E/E88 recorded the fitting of auxiliary fuel tanks on May 15th.²⁸⁵

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO27/7 29/5	EH-F	2X8F		Ferguson / Blades.
COO27/9 29/5	EH-F	2X8F		Ferguson / Blades.

Continued →

²⁸² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁸³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-84 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

A19-84 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO31/1 01/6	EH-F	1Z3F		Henry / Hooke.
COO31/4 01/6	EH-F	1Z3F		Henry / Hooke.
COO43/3 13/6	EH-F	9M1F		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO45/2 14/6	EH-F	3JQF		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO47/1 15/6	EH-F	1Z3F		Ferguson / Blades.
COO47/4 15/6	EH-F	1Z3F		Ferguson / Blades.
COO3/3 22/6	EH-F	8L4F		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO11/3 30/6	EH-F	N9GF		Apparently replaced by A19-116.
COO17/8 05/7	EH-F	8G1F		Ellis / McVinish.
COO23/3 10/7	EH-F	3WBF		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO27/2 14/7	EH-F	9B7F	[Frank] Putty	Gardiner / Lyne.
COO30/9 16/7	EH-F	9G2F		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO32/3 23/7	EH-F	7O4F		Ogden / West.
COO40/5 03/8	EH-F	1N5F		Ellis / McVinish.
COO41/3 05/8	EH-F	8A1F		Mitchell / Smith.
COO43/7 06/8	EH-F	4T2F		Mitchell / Smith.
COO7/12 17/8	EH-F	9M1F		Apparently replaced by A19-43.
COO15/1 21/8	EH-V	5W3V		F/O Taylor / Hocking. Apparently repl -78
COO18/1 24/8	EH-F	8H1F		Ferguson / Blades.
COO22/7 25/8	EH-F	2H2F		McCutcheon / Shaw. RTB, U/S.
COO25/1 27/8	EH-F	3T8F	Homer	F/O Taylor / Hocking. RTB, U/S.
COO25/4 27/8	EH-F	3T8F	Homer	Unserviceable.
COO12/1 15/10	EH-F	GP8F		Hansen. A51: Stubbs / Taylor.
COO12/4 15/10	EH-F	GP8F		A51: Stubbs / Taylor.

On October 18th, A19-84 was one of five Beaufighter's engaged on a training exercise at RAAF Darwin, which was to include simulated strafing attacks on RAAF Darwin which was to be defended by Spitfire's from Number 54 Squadron RAF, followed then by live gunnery on sea markers off Darwin. It was for this portion of the exercise that armourers were being carried in each of the participating Beaufighter's. After taking off from Darwin and forming up, three simulated attacks were completed, each time being intercepted by the defending Spitfires. The fourth run approached from the south side of the airfield in a north north-easterly direction with A19-84 in the number 2 position who dived within about 15 feet off the ground during its run. It then appeared to attempt to pull up sharply but hit the top of a tree, apparently damaging the starboard wing and empennage. The aircraft rolled to the left, rotating a full 360°, before crashing into the ground about 300 yards from the tree it struck.²⁸⁶

Those onboard, who were all killed instantly, were:

Pilot	Flight Sergeant Rowland Valentine Ellis,
Navigator	Sergeant William Bertram Carton and,
Passenger	Leading Aircraftsman Alan James Pitts (Armourer). ²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-84 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

²⁸⁷ 2BPSO signal M173 of 18 Oct (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Carton William Bertram 425425; NAA: A705, 166/7/231.

A19-84 (continued)



Beaufighter A19-84 about to land at, presumably, Coomalie Creek. [*Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria image H98.104/3850*].

Beaufighter VIc
A19-86
Ex T5254²⁸⁸

After being assembled by 2AD, this aircraft was received by 5AD on January 24th, 1943. 31SQN received it on February 20th.²⁸⁹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO25/2 30/1	K	1P3K		"K" future allocation of allotted but not yet delivered A19-86. Flown by A19-19.
COO1/1 09/3	K	8W4K		Longoni / Dale.
COO4/3 15/3	K	1P8K		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO6/1 17/3	K	A8NK		Cohen / Richards.
COO13/3 27/3	K	2U1K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO14/1 30/3	K	5T5K		Armstrong / Robertson. A51: duty 2.
COO15/2 01/4	K	N9GK		Crew not identified.
COO16/2 03/4	K	YG8K		McDonald / Magee.
COO22/2 09/4	K	8ZDK		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO23/2 10/4	K	3Q8K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO24/1 11/4	K	9C3K		Greenwood / Thompson. Cancelled WX.
COO26/1 12/4	EH-K	3Z7K		Greenwood / Thompson. Cancelled WX.
COO27/2 12/4	EH-K	3Z7K		Greenwood / Thompson. Recalled WX.
COO32/1 18/4	EH-K	8GPK		Greenwood / Thompson.
COO36/3 21/4	EH-K	1T3K		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO42/6 25/4	EH-K	9C3K		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO65/7 03/5	EH-K	8M2K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO10/3 11/5	EH-K	1FWK		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO12/5 13/5	EH-K	9M7K		McKinnon / Wright.

The aircraft's E/E88 recorded the fitting of auxiliary fuel tanks on May 15th and also a forced landing at Coomalie Creek due to failure of the starboard engine on May 22nd – but no further details are known.²⁹⁰

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO29/2 30/5	EH-K	1P3K		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO29/4 30/5	EH-K	1P3K		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO31/2 01/6	EH-K	1Z3K		Forbes / Erwin.
COO33/1 02/6	EH-K	9C3K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO33/4 02/6	EH-K	9C3K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO40/2 12/6	EH-K	1D8K		McKinnon / Wright.
COO6/4 24/6	EH-J	7OWJ		McCutcheon / Shaw. Apparently repl -117

Continued →

²⁸⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁸⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-86 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

A19-86 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO13/1 02/7	EH-K	9G2K		Leithhead / Graves.
COO15/3 03/7	EH-K	8O2K		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO17/9 05/7	EH-K	8G1K		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO20/4 06/7	EH-K	2R2K		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO33/5 23/7	EH-K	7O4K		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO33/8 23/7	EH-K	7O4K		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO36/1 25/7	EH-K	2T2K		Apparently replaced by A19-18.
COO36/4 25/7	EH-K	2T2K		Apparently replaced by A19-18.
COO40/3 03/8	EH-K	1N5K		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO40/14 04/8	EH-K	1R2K		Forbes / Erwin.
COO41/1 05/8	EH-K	8A1K		Leithhead / Graves.
COO41/4 05/8	EH-K	8A1K		Leithhead / Graves.
COO43/5 06/8	EH-K	4T2K		Leithhead / Graves.
COO44/8 06/8	EH-K	4T2K		Leithhead / Graves.
COO2/3 15/8	EH-K	8V1K		Warren / Doyle.

On August 17th, it was recorded as having been received by 4RSU but the reason wasn't noted. It was issued back to 31SQN on September 25th, but it's date of receipt wasn't recorded.²⁹¹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/3 01/10	EH-K	YS4K	Toady	Taylor. A51: Hansen / Quinlan.

An entry in the aircraft's E/E88 dated October 6th, recorded that A19-86 caught fire during an engine start which caused significant damage to the starboard wing, the damage was repairable at unit level.²⁹²

On December 6th, 1943, A19-86 was one of a pair of Beaufighter's that departed Coomalie Creek at 4:30 pm so as to participate in a live gunnery shoot in Anson Bay. With A19-86 seen to be in trail, a flame float target was dropped into the sea by the other Beaufighter. That aircraft then completed a circuit and had just conducted its first gunnery pass on the target and was turning off and to the left when the pilot looked back expecting to see A19-86 but could not. He then heard the pilot of A19-86 on the radio report that he was in trouble and making for the coast. This, the other Beaufighter also did, but still unable to see A19-86, requested his position. The pilot of A19-86 replied that he was south of the Perron Islands, heading for the coast. After making another turn, the crew of the other Beaufighter saw a column of black smoke coming from the water, the surface of which was on fire. About 20 yards away from the flames, a sole survivor was clinging to a semi-inflated life raft. Extra survival equipment was dropped from the circling Beaufighter who then attempted unsuccessfully to contact both Coomalie Creek and Darwin by radio to report the accident; he was able to raise the alarm in person after landing back at Coomalie Creek. This aircraft then returned to the scene so as to guide a Seagull amphibian aircraft from 6CU to rescue the survivor in the water. This was done and the survivor, LAC Henry, was admitted to Number 1 Medical Receiving Station (1MRS) at 8:10 pm. Sadly, he died of his injuries about 2 and a half hours later.²⁹³

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A.19-86 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

A19-86 (continued)

The aircraft crashed into the sea 8 miles west south-west of Perron Island at 5:10 pm. Those onboard A19-86 at the time of its crash were:

Pilot	Flying Officer Kenneth Albert Gerdes,
Navigator	Flight Sergeant Andrew Kenneth McMillan and,
Passenger	Leading Aircraftsman Henry Keith Braybrook (Flight Rigger). ²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ 2BPSO signal M106 of 6 Dec (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File McMillan Andrew Kenneth 413320; NAA: A705, 166/26/308.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-88
Ex T5255²⁹⁵

After being assembled at 2AD, A19-88 was handed over to 5AD on January 24th, 1943. Due to being damaged whilst with 5AD, 31SQN didn't receive it until October 25th.²⁹⁶

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/3 06/11	EH-B	4G1B		Mitchell / Smith.
COO27/3 08/11	EH-B	LX7B		Gerdes / McMillan.
COO30/3 13/11	EH-B	WK6B		Hansen. A51: Wickens / Staines.
COO32/3 15/11	EH-B	MJ9B	Planless	Kilpatrick / Horton. RTB.
COO41/10 21/11	EH-B	PQ1B		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO42/5 23/11	EH-B	3ZGB		Apparently replaced by A19-143.
COO42/9 23/11	EH-B	3ZGB		Apparently replaced by A19-143.
COO44/1 25/11	EH-B	FK8B		Archer / Holland.
COO44/4 25/11	EH-B	FK8B		Archer / Holland.
COO46/4 30/11	EH-B	SC9B		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO3/2 09/12	EH-B	QS5B	Banquet	Archer. A51: Wickens / Staines.
COO5/2 10/12	EH-B	FO5B	Petrol	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO5/6 10/12	EH-B	FO5B	Petrol	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO12/4 22/12	EH-R	4RCR	Putty R	Hansen / Quinlan. Apparently repl -156.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML22/2 08/1	EH-B	WQ4B	Darning B	Garnham / Delaney.
COO7/4 17/2	EH-B	Y26B	Bricking	Bullen / Sparke.
COO8/1 18/2	EH-B	FM7B	Cleaner	Strachan / Brassil.
COO11/3 21/2	EH-B	2LCB	Typist	Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO12/8 22/2	EH-B	CV1B	Cobar	Bullen / Sparke.
COO14/5 25/2	EH-B	GM8B		Bullen / Sparke. Forced landed nr DRY.

Coomalie 14 of February 25th, 1944, was ordered as a harassing attack by no less than six Beaufighter's from 31SQN on activity in the vicinity of the Mina River bridge on the south coast of Timor, with activity in the vicinity of Soe Village nominated as an alternate.²⁹⁷

31SQN tasked nine Beaufighter's for the job.²⁹⁸

Despite failing to reach their assigned primary or alternate targets due to a navigation error – the Benain River was mistaken for the Mina River – a building and a well spaced string of nine Japanese Observation Posts were strafed between the junction of the Benain River with the Moeti River and Namfaloes at which place the nine Beaufighter's departed Timor at 250230Z (1pm Darwin daylight savings time) and headed for Drysdale River Mission.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 110.

²⁹⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-88 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

²⁹⁷ DA/G1/24 Feb in AWM66, 15/1/97.

²⁹⁸ COO/M1/24 Feb, *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ COO/B1/25 Feb, *ibid.*

A19-88 (continued)

Whilst strafing one of these Observation Posts, A19-88 struck a tree which ripped open a portion of the aircraft's belly and caused the pilots entrance hatch to open. Due to the damage caused, the hatch could not be closed and remained stuck out in the slipstream causing extra drag. This in turn required higher power settings which lead to the aircraft exhausting its fuel supply.³⁰⁰

A successful wheels up forced landing was made on the northern shore of Ian Bay, about 16 miles east north-east of Drysdale River Mission.³⁰¹

4RSU officially took charge of the machine on February 28th, 1944 and they handed responsibility for it over to 14ARD on May 11th after it was thrown on a boat and sent back to Darwin and then transported by road to Gorrie to be reduced to spare parts.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-88 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 5; NAA: A9845, 15.

³⁰¹ COO/B1/25 Feb in AWM66, 15/1/97.

³⁰² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-88 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-98
Ex T5295³⁰³

This aircraft was assembled at 1AD and then, on May 22nd, 1943, received by 31SQN.³⁰⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/3 29/5	EH-X	2X8X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO34/7 01/6				Operation cancelled.
COO33/3 02/6	EH-X	9C3X		Apparently replaced by A19-80.
COO35/8 02/6	EH-X	9C3X		Terry / Doyle.
COO37/3 04/6	EH-X	1D8X		Ferguson / Blades.
COO40/3 12/6	EH-X	1D8X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO48/3 18/6	EH-X	2B1X		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO49/2 19/6	EH-X	3S2X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO4/11 22/6	EH-X	8L4X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO12/6 01/7	EH-X	8B8X		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO13/3 02/7	EH-X	9G2X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO22/3 09/7	EH-X	1Q2X		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO23/1 10/7	EH-X	3WBX		Forbes / Erwin.
COO23/4 10/7	EH-B	3WB B		Kilpatrick / Horton. Apparently repl -17.
COO24/2 11/7	EH-X	3J2X		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO29/3 16/7	EH-X	9G2X		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO34/8 24/7	EH-X	1D9X		Forbes / Erwin.
COO40/16 04/8	EH-W	1R2W		Whyte / Powell. Apparently repl -119.
COO45/2 11/8	EH-X	7O1X		Leithhead / Graves.
COO5/3 17/8	EH-X	9M1X		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO10/7 18/8	EH-X	1M3X		Leithhead / Graves.
COO12/3 19/8	EH-X	8A1X	Olive	Apparently replaced by A19-70.
COO21/4 25/8	EH-X	2H2X		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO24/2 26/8	EH-X	7D2X		Kilpatrick / Horton.

At 9 pm on September 8th, 1943, A19-98 was engaged on Searchlight Co-operation. The aircraft was caught in the beam of one of the lights and whilst attempting to break away, the pilot temporarily lost control of the aircraft which attained a very high speed before control was regained.³⁰⁵ Both wings of the aircraft were damaged and the aircraft was assessed as being unflyable. Repairs were undertaken by 31SQN.³⁰⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/3 09/10	EH-X	GN4X		Stubbs / Taylor.
COO9/2 11/10	EH-X	LU6X	Camplike	McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO10/1 12/10	EH-X	FM7X	Fearless	Whyte / Powell.
COO10/4 12/10	EH-X	FM7X	Fearless	Whyte / Powell.

Continued →

³⁰³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³⁰⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-98 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁰⁵ Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-98 dated 8/9/43 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 6; NAA: A9845, 16.

³⁰⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-98 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-98 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO12/3 15/10	EH-X	GP8X		Stubbs. A51: Garnham / Delaney.
COO13/3 19/10	EH-X	DV6X		Quance / Taylor.
COO16/3 21/10	EH-X	LU6X		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO17/1 23/10	EH-X	GA9X		Garnham / Delaney.
COO17/4 23/10	EH-X	GA9X		Garnham / Delaney.
COO26/7 06/11	EH-F	4G1F		Ellis / McVinish. Apparently repl -82.
COO27/2 08/11	EH-X	LX7X		Wickens / Staines.

With a 240-hourly due, the aircraft was received by 4RSU on November 12th. 31SQN picked it up again on February 25th, 1944.³⁰⁷

1944:

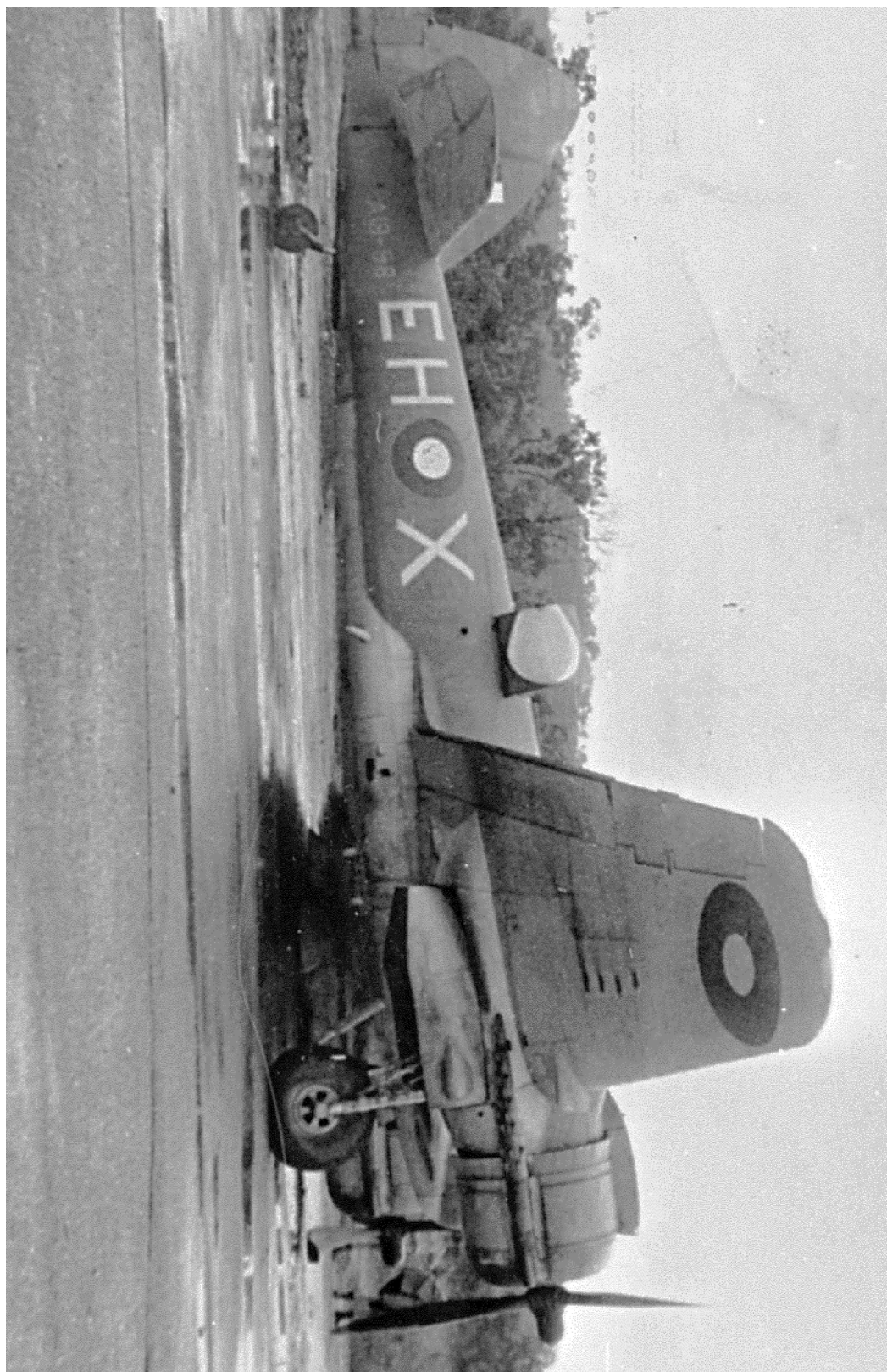
Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO23/1 08/3	EH-X	GC8X	Station	Bullen / Sparke.
COO23/3 08/3	EH-X	GC8X	Station	Unserviceable.

During its take-off run, the pilot noticed low boost being indicated for the left engine. He aborted the take-off, cut the power on both engines and applied the brakes. However, with the boggy overrun at the end of the runway approaching, the pilot retracted the undercarriage with the result being only the port undercarriage leg folding and the aircraft consequently ground looping.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-98 dated 10.3.44 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 6; NAA: A9845, 16.

A19-98 (continued)



Hot and humid at Coomalie Creek. The pilot rejected the take-off due to low boost on the number one engine and after closing both throttles, he applied brakes. Unfortunately, the port undercarriage collapsed and the aircraft ground-looped ending up, as seen here, facing back from whence it came. [*Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P921030 via Mike Mirkovic*].

Beaufighter VIc
A19-103
Ex JL430³⁰⁹

After being received from the United Kingdom on March 1st, 1943, this machine was assembled at 1AD and was received by 31SQN on May 8th. The aircraft's E/E88 recorded the fitting of auxiliary fuel tanks on May 15th.³¹⁰

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/8 17/5	EH-P	7G9P		Delaporte / Patterson.
COO18/10 19/5	EH-P	2X8P		Terry / Doyle.
COO19/2 21/5	EH-P	9B7P		Dennett / Agnew.
COO22/4 22/5	EH-P	1L7P		McDonald / Magee.
COO26/1 29/5	EH-P	2X8P		Dennett / Meers.
COO30/2 31/5	EH-P	1F9P		McCutcheon / Shaw.

Coomalie 30 of 31st May, 1943, was to have been an attack on floatplanes at Taberfane by between four and six Beaufighter's from 31SQN,³¹¹ but it was changed at short notice to an attack on grounded aircraft at Langgoer by five of the Squadron's Beaufighter's. Time on target was stipulated as 310530Z (3 pm Darwin time).³¹²

After staging through Darwin,³¹³ the Beaufighter's arrived at Langgoer at 310524Z (2:54 pm Darwin time) finding six A6M2 Zeke's airborne over the airstrip plus two Zeke's and three twin-engine bombers on the ground. After making one run over the target,³¹⁴ the Beaufighter's were chased by the Japanese fighters for the next 100 miles with A19-103 receiving most of their fire.³¹⁵ All five Beaufighter's returned safely without any casualties; A19-103 landing at Darwin at 0751Z (5:21 pm Darwin time).³¹⁶ The machine was riddled with bullet holes and was received by 4RSU on June 2nd for repairs. 4RSU passed it on to 14ARD on June 14th and 31SQN got it back again on August 20th.³¹⁷

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO19/4 23/8	EH-Z	7P1Z		Willard / Butler.
COO21/5 25/8	EH-A	2H2A		Muggleton / Hunt. Apparently repl -16.
COO58/2 06/9	EH-U	7BAU		F/L Gordon / Spencer. Apparently repl -43.
COO35/5 11/9	EH-Z	SO8Z		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO40/6 14/9	EH-Z	ZD1Z		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO41/2 15/9	EH-Z	7O4Z		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO41/5 15/9	EH-Z	7O4Z		Muggleton / Hunt. RTB.
COO45/3 19/9	EH-Z	9JAZ		Cridland / de Pierres.
COO46/1 21/9	EH-Z	7S3Z		F/L Taylor / Taylor.

Continued →

³⁰⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³¹⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-103 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³¹¹ DA/G1/31 May in AWM66, 15/1/43.

³¹² DA/G3/31 May, *ibid*.

³¹³ COO/MS2/31 May, *ibid*.

³¹⁴ COO/B1/31 May, *ibid*.

³¹⁵ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty Beaufighter No. A19-103 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 6; NAA: A9845, 16.

³¹⁶ COO/MS4/31 May in AWM66, 15/1/43.

³¹⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-103 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-103 (continued)

1943 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO46/4 21/9	EH-Z	7S3Z		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO3/1 01/10	EH-Z	YS4Z	Toady	Hanson. A51: Ellis / McVinish.
COO3/4 01/10	EH-Z	YS4Z	Toady	Ellis / McVinish.
COO4/2 02/10	EH-Z	CN5Z	Scuttling	Ogden / West.
COO5/3 03/10	EH-Z	QY3Z		Gaunt. A51: Ferguson / Blades.
COO9/1 11/10	EH-Z	LU6Z	Camplike	Warren / Doyle.
COO9/4 11/10	EH-Z	LU6Z	Camplike	Warren / Doyle.
COO10/2 12/10	EH-Z	FM7Z	Fearless	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO11/6 14/10	EH-Z	4RCZ		Whyte / Powell.
COO13/2 19/10	EH-Z	DV6Z		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO15/1 20/10	EH-Z	FM7Z	Cleaner	Muggleton / Hunt.
COO15/4 20/10	EH-Z	FM7Z	Cleaner	Muggleton / Hunt.
COO16/2 21/10	EH-Z	LU6Z		Apparently replaced by A19-36.
COO16/3 21/10	EH-X	LU6X		Gaunt / Jones. Apparently replaced -98.
COO17/2 23/10	EH-Z	GA9Z		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO18/5 24/10	EH-W	HN2W		Hansen / Quinlan. Apparently repl -140.
COO19/4 26/10	EH-N	DM5N		Henry / Hooke. Apparently repl -145.
COO21/6 29/10	EH-Z	CS3Z		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO23/4 02/11	EH-O	JK7O		F/L Gordon / Spencer. Apparently repl -36
COO26/4 06/11	EH-Z	4G1Z		Gerdes / McMillan.
COO28/5 11/11	EH-Z	CP9Z		Whyte / Powell.
COO36/6 17/11	EH-H	1MQH		Ellis / McVinish. Apparently repl -149.
COO41/8 21/11	EH-Z	PQ1Z		Stubbs / Taylor. A51: duty 9.

With a 240-hourly due, it was sent off to 4RSU on November 28th. They kept it until handing it back over to 31SQN on March 25th, 1944. However, the aircraft was assessed as being no longer suitable for operations and was to have been sent down to 5AD for an inspection but, on April 18th, 1944, it was noted on the aircraft's E/E88 that it was required temporarily for further operational duty.³¹⁸

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/1 11/4	EH-Z	KX6Z	Uproar	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO4/3 16/4	EH-Z	3VYZ	Crimper	Cobb / Green. (LO5Z / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO9/8 19/4	EH-Z	YJ9Z	Beldam	Cruikshank / Weste.
COO16/9 27/4	EH-Z	UA9Z	Dawdle	Rinkin / Mayne. RTB (MIL), U/S.
COO21/3 04/5	EH-Z	OP4Z	Armada	Doughton / Demaine.
COO24/3 07/5	EH-Z	WE9Z	Affirm	Rutherford / Crosby.
COO25/7 09/5	EH-Z	DV6Z	Kestrel	Ritchie / Warner. RTB, U/S.
COO30/9 20/5	EH-Z	KP7Z		Ritchie / Warner.
COO30/19 21/5	EH-A	JC9A		Rutherford / Crosby. Apparently repl -176
COO30/20 21/5	EH-Z	JC9Z		Apparently replaced by A19-161.

On June 25th, 1944, the aircraft was received by 5AD for a double engine change and from there, it was received by 5OTU on September 28th, 1944.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-112
Ex T5330³²⁰

This aircraft had a very brief operational career. It was received by 1AD from the United Kingdom for assembly on May 11th, 1943 and was then received by 31SQN on May 24th.³²¹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO37/4 04/6	EH-G	1D8G		Entwistle / Agnew.

On 7th June, with a grand total of 30 hours on the airframe, it was destroyed in a take-off accident.³²²

At 1:51 pm, the aircraft was taking off from Coomalie Creek with the view to participating in a live gunnery exercise over Anson Bay when, about half way down the runway, the aircraft swung violently to the right. The pilot hauled the aircraft into the air but, at a height of about 20 feet, it hit trees off to the right-hand side of the runway strip and crashed. There were three people on board. The navigator and their passenger were rescued from the wreckage with relatively minor injuries; the pilot was seriously injured.³²³ Those on board were:

Pilot Sergeant D.M. Terry,
Navigator Sergeant T.J. Doyle and,
Passenger Warrant Officer D.O. McDonald (Warrant Officer Disciplinary).³²⁴

³²⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³²¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-112 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³²² Aircraft Accident Data card for Beaufighter A19-112 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

³²³ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty, Bristol Beaufighter A19-112, *ibid*.

³²⁴ RAAF Form PT81 Preliminary Report (Internal) of Flying Accident or Forced Landing Serial No. 1071 for period 1942/43, *ibid*.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-113
Ex JL584³²⁵

This aircraft arrived at 1AD on April 17th, 1943, from the UK for assembly. It was then received by 31SQN on June 1st.³²⁶

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO38/4 06/6	EH-H	3Y8H		Savage / Studt.
COO40/5 12/6	EH-H	1D8H		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO48/6 18/6	EH-H	2B1H		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO1/2 20/6	EH-H	7C1H		Barnett / Lennon.
COO4/12 22/6	EH-H	8L4H		Ferguson / Blades. Crashed on landing.

North Western Area ordered 31SQN to provide as many of their Beaufighter's as possible for Coomalie 4 of 22nd June, 1943; an attack on floatplanes at Taberfane with a time on target of 220730Z (5 pm Darwin time).³²⁷

A19-113 received damage to its electrical system and instruments³²⁸ due to Bofors and 50 calibre anti-aircraft fire³²⁹ and crashed on landing at Coomalie Creek upon its return at 221010Z (7:40 pm)³³⁰ inflicting moderate damage to the fuselage and minor engine damage. On July 1st, 1943, the aircraft was received at 14ARD for repairs.³³¹

On January 24th, 1944, a pilot from 31SQN was sent to 14ARD at Gorrie to test fly A19-113 after they had finally completed the repairs. The next afternoon, the pilot and three ground staff took off in - 113 to conduct said test during which:

[a]t 1200 feet a report sounded from the starboard motor and immediately dense volumes of bluey white smoke and oil issued from apparently all points of the motor. [The pilot] immediately throttled starboard motor back to idling, after pressing fire extinguisher. The cockpit had completely filled up with smoke, which was very hot. [...] The pilot found he could not turn into main GORRIE strip in time so landed wheels down on GORRIE emergency strip ... [t]here were five trucks which he had to land over, consequently using up a lot of strip, before touch down. He applied brakes shortly after to reduce speed, while still at 40 knots he saw a road bend to left so tried to follow it ... the aircraft ran off the road and hit large heaps of dirt, and [the pilot] saw then that he was heading for trees so applied hard, right rudder to either clear them or ground loop. Port mainplane hit one tree, the undercarriage collapsed and the aircraft came to rest. Visibility was restricted at all times due to rain which commenced shortly after take off. The pilot and passengers were uninjured.³³²

³²⁵ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³²⁶ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-113 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³²⁷ DA/G4/21 Jun in AWM66, 15/1/47.

³²⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum Casualty – Bristol Beaufighter No. A19-113 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

³²⁹ COO/B1/22 Jun in AWM66, 15/1/47.

³³⁰ COO/MS5/22 Jun, *ibid.*

³³¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-113 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³³² Confirmatory Memorandum Casualty – Bristol Beaufighter No. A19-113 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

A19-113 (continued)

The aircraft was initially assessed as being repairable at the unit, but within three days it was recorded as being beyond economic repair and was to have been converted to components. This was rescinded and on May 18th it was reportedly serviceable and awaiting allotment to a southern unit. It was issued to 5AD on May 22nd and the next and only other entry on its aircraft status card is dated 27 October 1944 in which RAAF Headquarters approval was given to write off the aircraft as a result of a crash and destruction by fire.³³³ Evidence of this event from primary source material is lacking at this time.

³³³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport and Marine Craft for A19-113 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-116
Ex JL582³³⁴

Delivered to 1AD from the UK on April 17th, 1943, this machine was received by 31SQN on May 27th.³³⁵

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO30/3 31/5	EH-M	1F9M		McDavitt / McNamara. App repl -51.
COO37/6 04/6	EH-O	1D8O		Henry / Hooke.
COO4/5 22/6	EH-O	8L4O		Kearney / Ramsay.
COO6/1 24/6	EH-O	7OWO		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO11/3 30/6	EH-F	N9GF		Gardiner / Lyne. Apparently replaced -84.
COO12/5 01/7	EH-O	8B8O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO18/11 05/7	EH-O	8G1O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO20/6 06/7	EH-O	2R2O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO21/3 08/7	EH-O	7R9O		Apparently replaced by A19-21.
COO34/4 24/7	EH-O	1D9O		Ferguson / Blades.
COO38/4 29/7	EH-O	8G1O		F/O Taylor / Hocking. RTB then re-launched.
COO40/6 03/8	EH-O	1N5O		Shorter / McMurchie.
COO40/11 04/8	EH-O	1R2O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO42/2 06/8	EH-O	HT2O		Henry / Hooke.
COO45/5 11/8	EH-O	7O1O		F/O Taylor / Hocking. RTB.
COO13/8 19/8	EH-O	8A1O	Olive	F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO16/7 21/8	EH-O	5W3O		Ellis / McVinish. Shot down 1 "Rufe".
COO19/2 23/8	EH-O	7P1O		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO20/2 25/8	EH-O	2H2O		McCord / Childs.
COO24/7 26/8	EH-O	7D2O		F/L Taylor / Taylor.
COO27/6 30/8	EH-O	4D9O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO30/3 04/9	EH-O	1A5O		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO35/1 11/9	EH-O	SO8O		Mann / Harber.
COO37/3 12/9	EH-O	7R9O		Cridland / de Pierres.
COO39/1 13/9	EH-O	8G1O		Mitchell / Smith.
COO39/4 13/9	EH-O	8G1O		Mitchell / Smith.
COO40/2 14/9	EH-O	ZD1O		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO41/3 15/9	EH-G	7O4G		Entwistle / Webb. Apparently repl -40.
COO45/2 19/9	EH-O	9JAO		Gaunt / Jones.
COO45/5 19/9	EH-O	9JAO		Gaunt / Jones.
COO48/7 23/9	EH-O	U3OO		F/O Taylor / Hocking.
COO48/10 23/9	EH-O	U3OO		Unserviceable.

³³⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³³⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-116 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-116 (continued)

Engine repairs had been performed on the aircraft after it went unserviceable on the 23rd and at about 2:26 pm Darwin time on September 25th, A19-116 departed Millingimbi with its crew and two fitters as passengers, bound for Coomalie Creek. Six minutes after departure, the aircraft was seen approaching Millingimbi again as if to land. It was apparently in some difficulty as only one of the landing gear legs was extended. During the approach the aircraft turned 90° off heading and flew slowly on for an estimated quarter of a mile or so in a tail low attitude. The aircraft then crashed and burst into flames. It is believed that the aircraft stalled and spun in from an altitude of about 100 feet. There were no survivors.³³⁶

Onboard A19-116 at the time of the accident were:

Pilot	Flying Officer D.G. Taylor,
Navigator	Flying Officer R.A. Hocking,
Passenger	Corporal J.R. Gordon (Fitter IIE) and,
Passenger	Leading Aircraftsman N.R. Beggs (Fitter IIE). ³³⁷

³³⁶ A16/116 25/9/43 Confirmatory Memorandum in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

³³⁷ RAAF Form PT81 Preliminary Report (Internal) of Flying Accident or Forced Landing Serial No. 240 for Period 1943/44, *ibid.*

Beaufighter VIc
A19-117
Ex JL841³³⁸

Arriving from the UK on April 17th, 1943, this aircraft was delivered to 1AD for assembly. It was then received by 31SQN on May 24th.³³⁹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO35/7 02/6	EH-J	9C3J		Ogden / West.
COO37/1 04/6	EH-J	1D8J		Read / Marr.
COO40/4 12/6	EH-J	1D8J		McDonald / Magee.
COO48/2 18/6	EH-J	2B1J		Apparently replaced by A19-119.
COO4/6 22/6	EH-J	8L4J		Warren / Hamilton.
COO6/4 24/6	EH-J	7OWJ		Apparently replaced by A19-86.
COO12/3 01/7	EH-J	8B8J		Gillespie / Cameron.
COO15/1 03/7	EH-J	8O2J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO15/10 03/7	EH-J	8O2J		Warren / McMurchie.
COO16/4 05/7	EH-J	8G1J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO18/13 05/7	EH-J	8G1J		Entwistle / Webb.
COO20/8 06/7	EH-J	2R2J		Warren. A51: Gillespie / Cameron.
COO30/7 16/7	EH-J	9G2J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO30/10 16/7	EH-J	9G2J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO34/7 24/7	EH-J	1D9J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO38/2 29/7	EH-J	8G1J		Gordon / Jordon.
COO40/9 03/8	EH-J	1N5J		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO40/18 04/8	EH-J	1R2J		Apparently replaced by A19-16.

On or about August 10th, the aircraft caught fire whilst on the ground causing damage to the port wing and rendering the aircraft unflyable. It was received by 4RSU on August 16th and they passed it on to 14ARD on August 22nd. On November 28th, 1943, 31SQN got it back again.³⁴⁰

At about midday on December 4th, in company with another of the Squadron's Beaufighter's, it had departed Coomalie Creek with the view of conducting formation flying and some one versus one air combat manoeuvring training over Anson Bay followed by live gunnery on a sea marker to be dropped by the lead aircraft. By 12:40 pm, as the attacking aircraft, A19-117 had completed seven practice engagements against the lead aircraft at a height of 1,500 feet when, after breaking off to port it was momentarily lost to view. Shortly after, the lead aircraft then saw two patches of flame on the water and black smoke about 1 mile south of Perron Island.³⁴¹

Those onboard were:

Pilot Pilot Officer Neville Thomas Stubbs,
Navigator Pilot Officer Malcolm John Taylor and,
Passenger Leading Aircraftsman Horace Stanley Coghlan (Flight Rigger).³⁴²

³³⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³³⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-117 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter A19-117 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

³⁴² 2BPSO signal M97 of 4 Dec (1943) in Casualty Repatriation File Coghlan Horace Stanley 59741; NAA: A705, 166/8/320.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-118
Ex JL826³⁴³

Received at 1AD for assembly on April 17th, 1943, from the UK, it was then received by 31SQN on May 24th.³⁴⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO40/1 12/6	EH-Y	1D8Y		Apparently replaced by A19-21.
COO48/1 18/6	EH-Y	2B1Y		Read / Marr.
COO4/7 22/6	EH-Y	8L4Y		Entwistle / Agnew.
COO15/9 03/7	EH-Y	8O2Y		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO16/6 05/7	EH-Y	8G1Y		Warren / McMurchie.
COO34/12 24/7	EH-Y	1D9Y		Gillespie / Cameron. Failed to Return.

North Western Area ordered a minimum of eight short range Beaufighter's from 31SQN to attack floatplanes at Taberfane at 240630Z (4 pm Darwin time) as Coomalie 34 of 24th July, 1943. One third of the aircraft were to act as top cover on the final run in and those aircraft could, if circumstances permitted, carry out an attack after the main attack.³⁴⁵

31SQN was able to provide twelve Beaufighter's for the job³⁴⁶ with half of the aircraft to act as the strike force and half as top cover.³⁴⁷ The weather forecast for the target area was for 7/10ths cumulus at 2,000 feet with tops to 8,000 feet.³⁴⁸

Time on target was 240640Z (4:10 pm Darwin time). Two camouflaged float-planes were sighted in a creek south of the target, five Petes and four Rufes were on the water at Taberfane and at least one Jake, one Pete and two Rufes were airborne. Anti-Aircraft fire was reported to have been of moderate intensity, medium and light calibre and accurate. It was encountered over and south of the target and from the east side of the river. Visibility was reportedly very bad³⁴⁹ with rain and low cloud preventing effective strafing.³⁵⁰ A19-118 was last seen over the target area and was presumed to have been hit by Anti-Aircraft fire.³⁵¹ Both crewmembers were listed as missing in action.

³⁴³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³⁴⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-118 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁴⁵ DA/G1/23 Jul in AWM66, 15/1/53.

³⁴⁶ COO/MS1/23 Jul, *ibid*.

³⁴⁷ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A19-118 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

³⁴⁸ Summary Sheet Weather Forecast for Coomalie 34 of 24th July (1943) in AWM66, 15/1/53.

³⁴⁹ MIL/B1/24 Jul as amended by COO/W1/25 Jul, *ibid*.

³⁵⁰ MIL/MS5/24 Jul, *ibid*.

³⁵¹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A19-118 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

Beaufighter VIc
A19-119
Ex T5336³⁵²

Received by 1AD from the UK on April 17th, 1943, this aircraft was received by 31SQN on May 22nd.³⁵³

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/4 29/5	EH-W	2X8W		McDonald / Magee.
COO33/2 02/6	EH-W	9C3W		Warren / Hamilton.
COO37/5 04/6	EH-W	1D8W		Kilpatrick / Horton. RTB.
COO40/6 12/6	EH-W	1D8W		Stanley / Thorncraft.
COO48/2 18/6	EH-J	2B1J		McCutcheon / Shaw. Apparently repl -119
COO49/3 19/6	EH-W	3S2W		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO4/9 22/6	EH-W	8L4W		Whyte / Powell.
COO6/6 24/6	EH-W	7OWW		Leithhead / Graves.
COO12/2 01/7	EH-W	8B8W		Whyte / Powell.
COO15/2 03/7	EH-W	8O2W		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO16/5 05/7	EH-W	8G1W		Leithhead / Graves.
COO24/1 11/7	EH-W	3J2W		Leithhead / Graves.
COO24/4 11/7	EH-W	3J2W		Leithhead / Graves.
COO34/10 24/7	EH-W	1D9W		Kilpatrick / Horton.
COO40/7 03/8	EH-W	1N5W		Leithhead / Graves.
COO40/16 04/8	EH-W	1R2W		Apparently replaced by A19-98.
COO5/8 17/8	EH-W	9M1W		Willard / Butler.
COO9/3 18/8	EH-W	1M3W		Whyte / Powell.
COO12/2 19/8	EH-W	8A1W	Olive	Warren / Doyle.
COO12/5 19/8	EH-W	8A1W	Olive	Warren / Doyle.
COO16/4 21/8	EH-W	5W3W		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO24/4 26/8	EH-W	7D2W		Apparently replaced by A19-8.
COO27/2 30/8	EH-W	4D9W		Willard / Butler. Failed to Return.

Five or Six Beaufighter's from 31SQN were ordered to attack floatplanes at Taberfane at 300700Z (4:30 pm Darwin time) as Coomalie 27 of 30th August, 1943. The Squadron was to ensure that top cover was to be provided on the final run in. Aircraft were permitted to operate from Coomalie, Bathurst Island or Millingimbi as decided by the Squadron Commander.³⁵⁴

Six Beaufighter's were assigned by 31SQN and it was decided to conduct the operation from Millingimbi, with the six ferrying there to refuel. The first trio were scheduled to depart Coomalie Creek for Millingimbi at 292345Z (9:15 am Darwin time on the 30th) and the second trio at 300030Z (10 am), each arriving at Millingimbi 45 minutes later.³⁵⁵ Departure from Millingimbi for the op was planned for 300435Z (2:05 pm Darwin time).³⁵⁶

³⁵² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 111.

³⁵³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-119 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁵⁴ DA/G1/28 Aug as amended by DA/G6/28 Aug both in AWM66, 15/1/59.

³⁵⁵ COO/MT1/29 Aug, *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ COO/MS1/29 Aug, *ibid.*

A19-119 (continued)

The formation made landfall at Enoe Island, a small low-lying island, surrounded by coral reef, 20 nautical miles or so south east of Trangan, at zero height. The strike force, which included A19-119, continued on to the Maikoor River at sea level while the top cover climbed to 1,500 feet, staying some 500 yards behind the strike force. Time on target was recorded as being 300627Z (3:57 pm Darwin time) and the Beaufighter's found that a A6M2-N Rufe and a F1M2 Pete were already airborne with a further three Rufe's taking off from the southern end of the floatplane beach, and a fourth taxiing out for take off plus an additional Pete taking off from the ocean beach.³⁵⁷

Beaufighter A19-119 was last seen 4 miles west of Erersin Village on Trangan Island [approximately 06°30'S 134°23'E] at tree top height with two A6M2-N Rufe's about 150 yards behind. Lost with A19-119 were:

Pilot	Flight Lieutenant W.E. Willard and
Navigator	Sergeant P.N. Butler. ³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ MIL/B1/30 Aug, *ibid*.

³⁵⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter Aircraft A19-119 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 7; NAA: A9845, 17.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-140
Ex JM184³⁵⁹

After being received at 1AD, RAAF Laverton, Victoria, from the United Kingdom on July 6th, 1943, this aircraft went to 31SQN, Coomalie Creek and was received there on September 18th, 1943.³⁶⁰

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO4/3 02/10	EH-W	CN5W	Scuttling	S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO6/2 06/10	EH-W	FU6W	Croker	Mann / Harber.
COO11/4 14/10	EH-W	4RCW		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO14/5 19/10	EH-W	OX6W		Mann / Harber.
COO18/5 24/10	EH-W	HN2W		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO19/1 26/10	EH-W	DM5W		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO20/1 28/10	EH-W	CN5W		Mann / Harber.
COO21/4 29/10	EH-W	CS3W		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO23/1 02/11	EH-W	JK7W		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO26/1 06/11	EH-W	4G1W		Mann / Harber.
COO28/1 11/11	EH-W	CP9W		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO31/5 13/11	EH-W	WT7W		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO35/2 17/11	EH-W	3YAW		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO38/2 19/11	EH-Q	PR7Q		Mann / Harbar. Apparently replaced -80.
COO40/1 21/11	EH-W	4GJW		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO46/1 30/11	EH-W	SC9W		S/L Gordon / Jordan.
COO46/5 30/11	EH-W	SC9W		S/L Gordon / Jordan. A51: A19-143 in error.
COO49/2 03/12	EH-W	DY2W	Badgirl	Mann / Harber.
COO1/1 05/12	EH-W	1NBW		Mann / Harber.
COO8/1 16/12	EH-W	VJ4W	Bewbang	Mann / Harber.
COO10/4 21/12	EH-W	XD6W	Cookie	Mann / Harber.
COO15/1 30/12	EH-W	3AGW	Keeplow	S/L Gordon / Shaw.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML19/8 04/1	EH-W	LF1W	Paddock	Rinkin / Mayne.
CML20/12 04/1	EH-W	Q53W	Modest W	Quance / Taylor.
CML23/6 07/1	EH-W	VN2W	Hoodlam W	Archer / Holland.
CML27/1 14/1	EH-W	GV3W	Seaward	S/L Gordon / Smith.
CML31/5 17/1	EH-W	WG3W	Grotto	S/L Gordon / Jordan.
CML38/13 20/1	EH-W	JG4W	Undock	S/L Gordon / Jordan. A51: duty 1.
CML44/3 29/1	EH-W	VG8W	Ourgoal	Mann / Harber.
CML44/10 29/1	EH-W	VG8W	Ourgoal	Burlace / James. A51: duty 9.
CML45/5 30/1	EH-W	4MCW	Downhand	Mann / Harber.

Continued →

³⁵⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁶⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-140 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-140 (continued)

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML46/1 05/2	EH-W	3AGW	Wander	Mann / Harber.
CML2/1 13/2	EH-W	4SAW	Civic	Mann / Harber.
COO4/1 16/2	EH-W	MV3W	Cashier	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO9/1 19/2	EH-W	CW1W	Sailor	Mann / Harber.
COO12/1 22/2	EH-W	CV1W	Cobar	Mann / Harber.

On February 29th, 1944, 4RSU, Pell, received it for a 240-hourly, handing it back to 31SQN on April 21st.³⁶¹

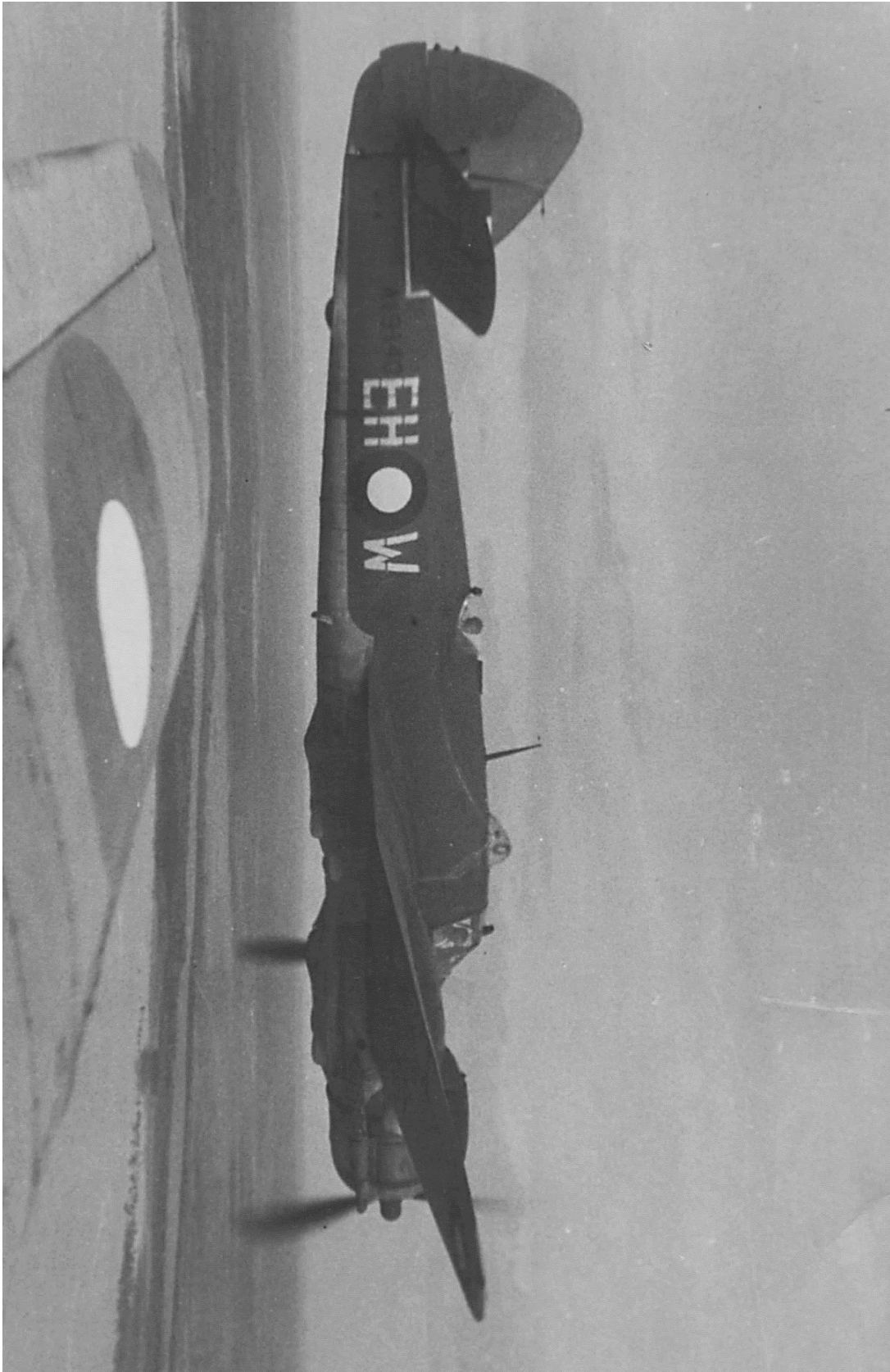
Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO18/4 01/5	EH-W	LF1W	Baggo	Forrester / McLean.
COO21/5 04/5	EH-W	OP4W	Armada	Bullen / Sparke.
COO25/6 09/5	EH-W	DV6W	Kestrel	Bullen / Sparke.
COO30/5 20/5	EH-W	KP7W		Bullen / Sparke.
COO30/13 20/5	EH-W	KP7W		Unserviceable.
COO30/18 21/5	EH-W	JC9W		Bullen. A51: Forrester / McLean.
COO37/3 03/6	EH-W	LU6W		Wickens / Staines.
COO41/4 08/6	EH-W	2SBW		Bullen / Sparke.
COO9/1 29/6	EH-W	SC9W		Thompson / Hickson.
COO11/4 02/7	EH-W	4ENW	Ragdog	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO15/7 05/7	EH-W	3YOW	Censor	Bullen / Sparke.
COO16/4 11/7	EH-B	UV1B	Darkpast	Sippe / McKenzie. Apparently repl -169.
COO32/2 01/8	EH-W	Q87W	Waggy	Detail cancelled.
COO35/5 01/8	EH-W	Q87W	Waggy	Boyd / Anderson.
COO49/13 21/8	EH-W	4JWW		Bullen / Sparkes.
COO6/8 24/8	EH-W	MX6W	Poison	Bolton / Hodge.
COO13/3 02/9	EH-W	2JRW	Billow	Apparently replaced by A19-180.
COO42/1 04/10	EH-W	LD6W	Outbreak	Klug / Jones.

On October 17th, 1944, 14ARD, Gorrie, took charge of it with the view of placing it in short term storage, but that was changed and it was sent off to 26RSU, on Noemfoor Island, for onward allotment instead.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

A19-140 (continued)



A19-140 coasting in near Point Stuart. [Image courtesy No. 31 Squadron Association].

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-143
Ex JM134³⁶³

After arrival from the United Kingdom and assembly at 2AP it was sent to 5AD who received it on September 28th, 1943. 31SQN received it on November 5th.³⁶⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO40/4 21/11	EH-G	4GJG		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO42/5 23/11	EH-B	3ZGB		Quance / Taylor. Apparently repl -88.
COO42/9 23/11	EH-B	3ZGB		Quance / Taylor. Apparently repl -88.
COO46/3 30/11	EH-G	SC9G		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO1/9 05/12	EH-G	1NBG		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO6/7 10/12	EH-G	UA9G	Dawdle	Warren / McMurchie.
COO6/10 10/12	EH-G	UA9G	Dawdle	Warren / McMurchie.
COO8/3 16/12	EH-G	VJ4G	Bewbang	Ferguson / Blades.
COO10/3 21/12	EH-G	XD6G	Cookie	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO13/2 24/12	EH-G	MQ8G	Basin	Rinkin / Mayne.

An entry in the aircraft's E/E88 dated 25th December recorded that A19-143 ground looped causing enough damage to warrant it to be sent to 4RSU for repair. Whilst there is no record of the accident, the aircraft returning from Coomalie 13 on December 24th landed at Darwin before continuing on to Coomalie and it is quite probable that A19-143 came to grief on its return to Coomalie Creek. 4RSU received the aircraft on December 28th and handed it back to 31SQN on January 11th, 1944.³⁶⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML27/8 14/1	EH-G	GV3G	Seaward	Rinkin / Mayne.
CML30/3 17/1	EH-G	3HAG	Becjol	Wickens / Staines.
CML38/16 20/1	EH-G	JG4G	Undock	Wentworth / Miller. A51: duty 3.
CML43/1 27/1	EH-G	MC2G	Lovelock	Mitchell. A51: Wickens / Staines, duty 2.
CML44/2 29/1	EH-F	VG8F	Ourgoal	Wentworth / Miller. Apparently repl -160.
CML44/11 29/1	EH-G	VG8G	Ourgoal	Ellis. Not in A51, possibly cancelled.
CML45/2 30/1	EH-G	4MCG	Downhand	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML45/9 30/1	EH-G	4MCG	Downhand	U/S, apparently replaced by A19-162.
CML46/4 05/2	EH-G	3AGG	Wander	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML49/2 10/2	EH-G	PK8G	Fearless	Rinkin / Mayne.
CML3/2 13/2	EH-G	1RBG	Civic	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO5/1 15/2	EH-G	KG1G	Addult	Garnham / Delaney.
COO4/2 16/2	EH-G	MV3G	Cashier	Wickens / Staines.
COO9/2 19/2	EH-G	CW1G	Sailor	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO11/2 21/2	EH-G	2LCG	Typist	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO14/6 25/2	EH-G	GM8G		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO17/2 27/2	EH-G	4KJG	Earwig	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO20/7 29/2	EH-G	PN7G	Defer	Rinkin / Mayne. In AWM66, 15/1/103.

Continued →

³⁶³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁶⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-143 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

A19-143 (continued)

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/6 27/3	EH-U	FK8U	Bicker	Rinkin / Mayne. Apparently repl -175.
COO41/2 06/4	EH-G	4SAG	Civic	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO45/4 09/4	EH-G	4PJG	Perspire	Cobb / Green. (FM7G / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO49/5 11/4	EH-G	3ZGG	Classdash	Hansen / Quinlan. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO3/3 15/4	EH-G	M13G	Placing	Ritchie / Warner.
COO9/11 19/4	EH-G	YJ9G	Beldam	Ritchie / Warner.
COO13/6 22/4	EH-G	4SAG	Civic	Ritchie / Warner.
COO15/6 25/4	EH-G	3ZGG	Classdash	Wickens / Staines.

4RSU received A19-143 again for an inspection on 27th April, 1944. It was issued back to 31SQN on 21st July³⁶⁶ and was to be delivered to Coomalie Creek that afternoon but, at about 4:25 pm on that day, it suffered an engine failure on take-off from Pell and crashed.³⁶⁷

After pre-take off checks, the aircraft turned onto the runway at Pell and commenced its take-off run to the south. Everything appeared normal except that the starboard engine was indicating 3,000 rpm at full power – a figure well beyond the normal max power reading. Immediately after lift-off, the pilot lent forward to retract the undercarriage and at that moment the starboard engine back-fired twice and then failed. The aircraft was held straight momentarily but, despite full left aileron and full left rudder then entered a sharp right-hand climbing turn and very quickly crashed into trees on the western side of the Stuart Highway, cartwheeled twice and disintegrated. Apparently, the pilot didn't pull power on the good engine when the other engine failed and it was thought that this was influenced by a number of potential obstructions including several vehicles that were stationary on the highway (Pell, like the fighter strips of Sattler, Strauss and Livingstone had its single runway located hard up against the verge of the Stuart Highway), a B-25 which had just landed and whilst not obstructing the runway, was parked on the taxiway at the southern end within the flight strip and a number of personnel scattered at various locations, also within the flight strip. Those onboard at the time of the accident were:

Pilot	Flight Lieutenant A.C. Thompson (killed instantly),
Navigator	Flight Sergeant I. Hickson (seriously injured) and,
Passenger	Flying Officer D.B.F. Strachan (pilot – slight injuries). ³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ RAAF Form P.T.81 Preliminary Report External of Flying Accident or Forced Landing Serial No. 123 for Period 1944/45 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

³⁶⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty Beaufighter A19-143, *ibid*.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-144
Ex JM135³⁶⁹

On July 2nd, 1943, this aircraft was received by 1AD from the UK. It was received by 31SQN on September 11th.³⁷⁰

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO42/7 17/9	EH-S	3R3S		Whyte / Powell.
COO46/3 21/9	EH-S	7S3S		Henry / Hooke.
COO48/6 23/9	EH-S	U3OS		McCord / Childs.
COO48/9 23/9	EH-S	U3OS		McCord / Childs.
COO49/2 26/9	EH-S	Q5PS		Apparently replaced by A19-148.
COO5/2 03/10	EH-S	QY3S		McCord / Childs. Crash landed.

Coomalie 5 of 3rd October, 1943, was a Convoy Escort for Force GK,³⁷¹ a westbound convoy³⁷² which comprised HMAS COOTAMUNDRA escorting the Merchant Vessel ULOOLOO.³⁷³ At 3:26 pm, whilst rolling out after landing, first the left and then the right main gear legs collapsed, leaving the aircraft to come to rest on its belly. The crew of two and their passenger, a navigator under instruction, were uninjured.³⁷⁴ A19-144 was sent off to 14ARD and they received it on the 10th. It was returned to 31SQN on December 11th.³⁷⁵

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/1 15/12	EH-J	1RVJ	Putty	S/L Gordon / Smith.
COO8/2 16/12	EH-J	VJ4J	Bewbang	S/L Gordon / Smith.
COO10/2 21/12	EH-J	XD6J	Cookie	S/L Gordon / Shaw.
COO15/8 30/12	EH-J	3AGJ	Keeplow	Garnham / Delaney.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/2 02/1	EH-J	PX4J	Pressure	Garnham / Delaney.
CML19/7 04/1	EH-J	LF1J	Paddock	Apparently replaced by A19-163.

On the afternoon of January 3rd, 1944, A19-144 was one of a formation of eight Beaufighter's ferrying from Coomalie Creek to Drysdale River Mission so as to reposition for an operation the next day (Coomalie 19 of 4th January). Six of the Beaufighter's had already landed and were parked on the side of the runway. When A19-144 landed, the tailwheel collapsed causing the aircraft to swing so, the pilot deliberately retracted the undercarriage so as to avoid crashing into the other machines.³⁷⁶ It was later broken up for spares by 4RSU.³⁷⁷

³⁶⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁷⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-144 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁷¹ DA/G3/2 Oct in AWM66, 15/1/66.

³⁷² MIL/MC2/3 Oct, *ibid*.

³⁷³ RAAF Form A51 Unit History Sheet Detail of Operations by No. 31 Squadron entry for COO5 of 3rd October 1943 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 – Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

³⁷⁴ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Beaufighter Aircraft No. A19-144 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

³⁷⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-144 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁷⁶ 580BU signal A143 of 3rd January (1944) in AWM66, 15/1/86.

³⁷⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-144 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-145
Ex JM185³⁷⁸

This aircraft was received at 2AP, Bankstown, from the United Kingdom on July 11th, 1943. It went to 5AD at Wagga Wagga on August 9th and was received by 31SQN at Coomalie Creek on October 6th, 1943.³⁷⁹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO11/3 14/10	EH-N	4RCN		Gaunt / Jones.
COO12/2 15/10	EH-N	GP8N		Garnham. A51: Hansen / Quinlan.
COO18/1 24/10	EH-N	HN2N		Henry / Hooke.
COO19/4 26/10	EH-N	DM5N		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO20/3 28/10	EH-N	CN5N		Whyte / Powell.
COO21/1 29/10	EH-N	CS3N		Henry / Hooke.
COO23/3 02/11	EH-N	JK7N		Whyte / Powell.
COO26/8 06/11	EH-N	4G1N		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO27/1 08/11	EH-F	LX7F		Stubbs / Taylor. Apparently repl -82.
COO27/4 08/11	EH-F	LX7F		Stubbs / Taylor. Apparently repl -82.
COO28/2 11/11	EH-N	CP9N		Gaunt / Jones.
COO31/6 13/11	EH-N	WT7N		Mitchell / Smith.
COO35/3 17/11	EH-N	3YAN		Ferguson / Blades.
COO40/2 21/11	EH-N	4GJN		Gaunt / Jones.

Coomalie 40 of 21st November, 1943, was ordered as a fighter cover mission by six Beaufighter's from 31SQN to cover six Dutch B-25's (NEI38 of 21st November) which were to attack Japanese shipping thought to be located either at Maikoor or between Maikoor and Noehoe Tjoet. The B-25's were to pick up the Beaufighter's over Coomalie Creek at first light and every effort was to be made to reach the target before 202300Z (9:30 am Darwin daylight savings time on the 21st). If the ships were not at Maikoor, a search was to be carried out for a distance of 20 miles on a bearing of 290° True from Maikoor before returning to base. The ships, if located, were to be sunk by masthead bombing preceded by strafing runs by the Beaufighter's if they were not otherwise engaged. The result of the attack was to be signalled before leaving the target area. The B-25's would each be carrying eight 300-lb Demolition bombs with a nose plug and an 11 second delay tail fuse. The Beaufighter's would be carrying guns only. Aircraft from both formations were to approach sufficiently close to Maikoor to see if the ships are anchored in the mouth of the river. All participants were permitted to land at Millingimbi or Bathurst Island if necessary for fuel.³⁸⁰

A19-145, as duty two, successfully completed its part in the operation and, with the other Beaufighter's, landed at Millingimbi for fuel. It and duty four were the first pair to depart for the ferry back to Coomalie Creek, followed then by duties one and five and lastly by duties three and six; however, duty two failed to arrive.³⁸¹

The crew of A19-145 were:

Pilot Flight Sergeant H.H. Gaunt and,
 Navigator Pilot Officer T.J. Jones.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁷⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-145 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁸⁰ DA/G7/20 Nov in AWM66, 15/1/76.

³⁸¹ COO/MT1/21 Nov, *ibid*.

³⁸² Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Bristol Beaufighter A19-145 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-148
Ex JL946³⁸³

This aircraft was received at 2AP from the UK on July 11th, 1943. 5AD received it on August 8th and they passed it on to 31SQN on September 18th.³⁸⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/1 23/9	EH-L	U3OL		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO47/4 23/9	EH-L	U3OL		Muggleton / Hunt.
COO49/2 26/9	EH-S	Q5PS		Cridland / de Pierres. Apparently repl -144
COO1/2 29/9	EH-L	7TXL		Mann / Harber.
COO6/3 06/10	EH-L	FU6L	Croker	Stubbs / Taylor.
COO7/4 09/10	EH-L	GN4L		McCord / Childs. Shot down 1 "Sally".
COO14/7 19/10	EH-L	OX6L		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO18/2 24/10	EH-L	HN2L		Ogden / West.
COO19/3 26/10	EH-L	DM5L		Ogden / West.
COO20/2 28/10	EH-L	CN5L		F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO21/3 29/10	EH-L	CS3L		Warren / McMurchie.
COO34/2 16/11	EH-L	3BNL		Mann / Harber.
COO6/8 10/12	EH-L	UA9L	Dawdle	S/L Gordon / Harber.
COO10/5 21/12	EH-L	XD6L	Cookie	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO12/3 22/12	EH-L	4RCL	Putty L	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO14/4 26/12	EH-L	M13L	Placing L	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO15/3 30/12	EH-L	3AGL	Keeplow	Cruickshank / Weste.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/3 02/1	EH-L	PX4L	Pressure	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML19/6 04/1	EH-L	LF1L	Paddock	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML24/1 10/1	EH-L	VP4L	Blandish	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML38/15 20/1	EH-L	JG4L	Undock	Cruickshank / Weste. A51: duty 8.
CML39/2 21/1	EH-L	WI8L	Pressure	Rinkin / Mayne. RTB WX.
CML41/10 22/1	EH-L	SA9L	Outbreak	Rinkin / Mayne.

North Western Area ordered two Beaufighter's to conduct a photographic reconnaissance and harassing attack along the road between Soe and Oesoeseo on Timor as Coomalie 41 of 22nd January, 1944. Operating from Darwin, the Beaufighter's were to depart at 212200Z (8:30 am Darwin daylight savings time on the 22nd), take photographs only of the bridge over the Mina River and then strafe vehicles or any other activity along the previously mentioned road. Recovery was to be either Darwin or Drysdale River Mission.³⁸⁵ The bridge of interest was presumably the bridge at about 09°58'S 124°07'E which, if one travelled about 10 nautical miles along that road to the north east, one would come to Soe, a large village at about 09°52'S 124°17'E. I've not identified a place with the spelling "Oesoeseo", but it is probably reasonable to assume that it was between the bridge and Soe. Whilst pulling away after its photographic run on the bridge, the starboard wing of A19-148 hit a tree, tearing

³⁸³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁸⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-148 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁸⁵ DA/G3/21 Jan in AWM66, 15/1/91.

A19-148 (continued)

a large hole in the leading edge. Returning to Drysdale River Mission at the conclusion of the sortie and whilst at a height of 10 to 15 feet, only a few seconds from touching down, the right wing dropped. Application of full left rudder and full left aileron failed to restore a wings level attitude and the aircraft struck the ground right wing first which also tore off the undercarriage. The crew were:

Pilot	Flight Sergeant W.S. Rinkin and,
Navigator	Flight Sergeant A.R. Mayne. ³⁸⁶

Drysdale reported that the crew had been slightly injured and were under observation.³⁸⁷

On January 27th, A19-148 was received by 4RSU. Permission to convert it into components was granted on March 28th, 1944.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-148 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

³⁸⁷ DRY/M4/22 Jan in AWM66, 15/1/91.

³⁸⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-148 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter X
A19-149
Ex JM285³⁸⁹

This aircraft, was received from the United Kingdom during August, 1943 and was sent to 5AD at Wagga Wagga towards the end of September. From there it was issued to 31SQN who, according to the aircrafts status card, received it on November 17th, 1943.³⁹⁰

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO36/6 17/11	EH-H	1MQH		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO41/7 21/11	EH-H	PQ1H		Whyte / Powell.
COO42/7 23/11	EH-H	3ZGH		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO44/3 25/11	EH-H	FK8H		Warren / McMurchie.
COO1/7 05/12	EH-H	1NBH		McCutcheon / Shaw.
COO7/6 15/12	EH-H	1RVH	Putty	Quance / Taylor.
COO8/4 16/12	EH-H	VJ4H	Bewbang	Archer / Holland.
COO10/7 21/12	EH-S	XD6S	Cookie	Ferguson / Blades. Apparently repl -163.
COO15/7 30/12	EH-H	3AGH	Keeplow	Wickens / Staines.
COO16/2 31/12	EH-H	HP4H	Banquet	S/L Gordon / Shaw.
COO16/5 31/12	EH-H	HP4H	Banquet	S/L Gordon / Shaw.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/1 02/1	EH-H	PX4H	Pressure	S/L Gordon / Smith.
CML19/1 04/1	EH-H	LF1H	Paddock	S/L Gordon / Smith.
CML20/9 04/1	EH-H	Q53H	Modest H	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML23/3 07/1	EH-H	VN2H	Hoodlam H	Wickens / Staines.
CML27/4 14/1	EH-H	GV3H	Seaward	Burlace / James.
CML30/2 17/1	EH-H	3HAH	Becjol	Burlace / James.
CML35/1 19/1	EH-H	RX6H	Bonox	Burlace / James.
CML38/18 20/1	EH-H	JG4H	Undock	Hanson. A51: Burlace / James, duty 6.
CML39/1 21/1	EH-H	WI8H	Pressure	Mitchell / Smith. RTB WX.
CML41/9 22/1	EH-H	SA9H	Outbreak	Mitchell / Smith.
CML43/2 27/1	EH-H	MC2H	Lovelock	Burlace / James. A51: duty 1.
CML49/4 10/2	EH-H	PK8H	Fearless	Burlace / James.
COO4/4 16/2	EH-H	MV3H	Cashier	Burlace / James.
COO9/8 19/2	EH-H	CW1H	Sailor	Ellis / McVinish. RTB U/S.
COO12/4 22/2	EH-H	CV1H	Cobar	Wickens / Staines.
COO14/8 25/2	EH-H	GM8H		Ellis / McVinish.
COO20/2 29/2	EH-H	PN7H	Defer	Burlace / James. In AWM66, 15/1/103.
COO24/5 08/3	EH-H	J12H	Cajole	Strachan / Brassil.
COO34/1 31/3	EH-H	3BKH	Darkpast	Archer / Holland.

Continued →

³⁸⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁹⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-149 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-149 (continued)

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO37/3 03/4	EH-O	4OXO	Hoodlum	Garnham / Delaney. Apparently repl -172.
COO39/2 04/4	EH-H	SA9H	Cable	Ashbolt. A51: Cobb / Green.
COO41/4 06/4	EH-H	4SAH	Civic	Wickens / Staines.
COO49/2 11/4	EH-H	3ZGH	Classdash	Burlace / James. In AWM66, 15/1/106.

4RSU received the aircraft on April 16th, 1944, for a 240-hourly and handed it back to 31SQN on June 14th.³⁹¹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/4 17/6	EH-H	WZ6H	Crumpet	Not required, cancelled.
COO4/12 21/6	EH-H	SR7H	Bicker	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO8/2 26/6	EH-H	LW4H	Torsal	Boyd / Anderson.
COO9/2 29/6	EH-H	SC9H		Coote / Dillon.
COO10/2 01/7	EH-H	GL4S	Cusher	Rutherford / Crosbie. A51: A19-140 in error.
COO14/3 05/7	EH-H	GV3H	Bepmonk	Rutherford / Crosbie. RTB, hatch open, relaunched but RTB again due unable to locate formation.
COO16/2 11/7	EH-H	UV1H	Darkpast	Thompson / Hickson.
COO40/3 08/8	EH-H	HR3H	Picksome	Rutherford / Crosby.
COO49/2 21/8	EH-H	4JWH		Provost / McGuire.
COO49/9 22/8	EH-H	VV1H		Rutherford / Crosby. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO14/3 03/9	EH-H	4SAH	Civic	Rutherford / Crosby.

On October 17th, 14ARD Reserve Park took charge of this aircraft and they sent it on to 22RSU on Noemfoor Island about a month later for installation of VHF communications equipment. Just before Christmas, 1944, it was handed over to 30SQN.³⁹²



A19-149/EH-H receiving some contrived TLC for the camera. [Image courtesy 31 Squadron Association].

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-152
Ex JM120³⁹³

Received at 2AP, Bankstown, from the UK on August 1st, 1943, it went to 5AD on September 27th and on November 7th, it was issued to 14ARD at Gorrie. 31SQN received the machine at Coomalie Creek on December 2nd.³⁹⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/4 15/12	EH-Y	1RVY	Putty	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO10/6 21/12	EH-Y	XD6Y	Cookie	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO15/4 30/12	EH-Y	3AGY	Keeplow	Archer / Holland.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/7 02/1	EH-Y	PX4Y	Pressure	Wickens / Staines.
CML19/4 04/1	EH-Y	LF1Y	Paddock	Mitchell / Smith.
CML21/1 06/1	EH-Y	KE3Y	Chirrupy	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML23/7 07/1	EH-Y	VN2Y	Hoodlam Y	Ferguson / Blades.
CML27/7 14/1	EH-Y	GV3Y	Seaward	Bullen / Sparke.
CML29/1 15/1	EH-Y	3VYY	Crimper	Apparently replaced by A19-156.
CML31/6 17/1	EH-Y	WG3Y	Grotto	Wentworth / Miller.
CML33/1 18/1	EH-Y	RX6Y	Censor	Wentworth / Miller.
CML38/19 20/1	EH-Y	JG4Y	Undock	Burlace. A51: Hanson / Quinlan, duty 5.
CML40/8 22/1	EH-Y	3CAY	Cable Y	Hansen / Quinlan.
CML44/7 29/1	EH-Y	VG8Y	Ourgoal	Hansen / Quinlan.
CML45/4 30/1	EH-Y	4MCY	Downhand	Hansen / Quinlan.
CML45/11 30/1	EH-Y	4MCY	Downhand	Wickens. A51: Burlace / James.
CML46/3 05/2	EH-Y	3AGY	Wander	Forrester / McLean.
CML49/5 10/2	EH-Y	PK8Y	Fearless	Hansen / Quinlan.
CML3/3 13/2	EH-Y	1RBY	Civic	Forrester / McLean.
COO12/3 22/2	EH-Y	CV1Y	Cobar	Forrester / McLean.
COO19/1 29/2	EH-Y	2QEY	Defer	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO24/6 08/3	EH-Y	J12Y	Cajole	Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO34/7 31/3	EH-A	3BKA	Darkpast	Quance / Taylor. Apparently repl -176.
COO8/2 18/4	EH-Y	VN2Y		Hansen (/ Quinlan). A51: no record.
COO21/6 04/5	EH-Y	OP4Y	Armada	Garnham / Delaney.
COO24/6 07/5	EH-Y	WE9Y	Affirm	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO36/8 02/6	EH-Y	Y35Y	Mourner	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO49/2 17/6	EH-Y	WZ6Y	Crumpet	Sippe / McKenzie.

On June 20th, 1944, it was received by 4RSU for a 240-hourly and they sent it off to 5AD during July. From there, it became a 5OTU machine.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 112.

³⁹⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-152 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-155
Ex JM284³⁹⁶

This aircraft was assembled at 2AP after arrival from the UK and then was sent to 5AD at Wagga Wagga, being received there on September 23rd, 1943. It suffered a fire during engine start and this delayed its despatch to 31SQN. They finally received it on February 13th, 1944.³⁹⁷

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO9/4 19/2	EH-P	CW1P	Sailor	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO17/4 27/2	EH-P	4KJP	Earwig	Forrester / McLean.
COO20/6 29/2	EH-P	PN7P	Defer	Unserviceable. In AWM66, 15/1/103.
COO21/1 02/3	EH-P	GT4P	Progress	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO23/2 08/3	EH-P	GC8P	Station	Unserviceable.
COO16/6 27/4	EH-P	UA9P	Dawdle	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO17/9 29/4	EH-P	HR3P	Picksome	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO18/2 01/5	EH-P	LF1P	Baggo	Tritton / Leckie.
COO25/5 09/5	EH-P	DV6P	Kestrel	Klug / Jones.

Whilst on detachment to Broome, A19-155 suffered a landing accident on June 21st.³⁹⁸ The damage was repairable using unit resources and the aircraft flown back to Coomalie Creek.³⁹⁹

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/4 21/8	EH-P	4JWP		Cockroft / Davis.
COO49/13 22/8	EH-P	VV1P		Cockroft / Davis. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO4/2 24/8	EH-P	JE3P	Bestlike	Provost / McGuire. A51: Cockroft / Davis as duty 4.
COO21/10 17/9	EH-P	VT7P	Bantum	Cockroft / Davis.
COO23/10 20/9	EH-P	FR2P	Sunbeam	Cockroft / Davis.

On October 19th, the aircraft was received at 14ARD, Gorrie. They performed a double engine change and the aircraft was to be sent down to 1AD at Laverton.⁴⁰⁰ On November 4th, during the ferry flight south, the starboard engine of A19-155 failed and the aircraft forced landed on the Stuart Highway near Wauchope, about 70 miles south of Tennant Creek.⁴⁰¹ The aircraft was moved to Tennant Creek where 14ARD organised for an engine change and A19-155, in due course, made its way to 1AD. It later saw service with 1APU and then 5OTU.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

³⁹⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-155 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

³⁹⁸ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of 31 Squadron entry for 21.6.44 in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 to Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

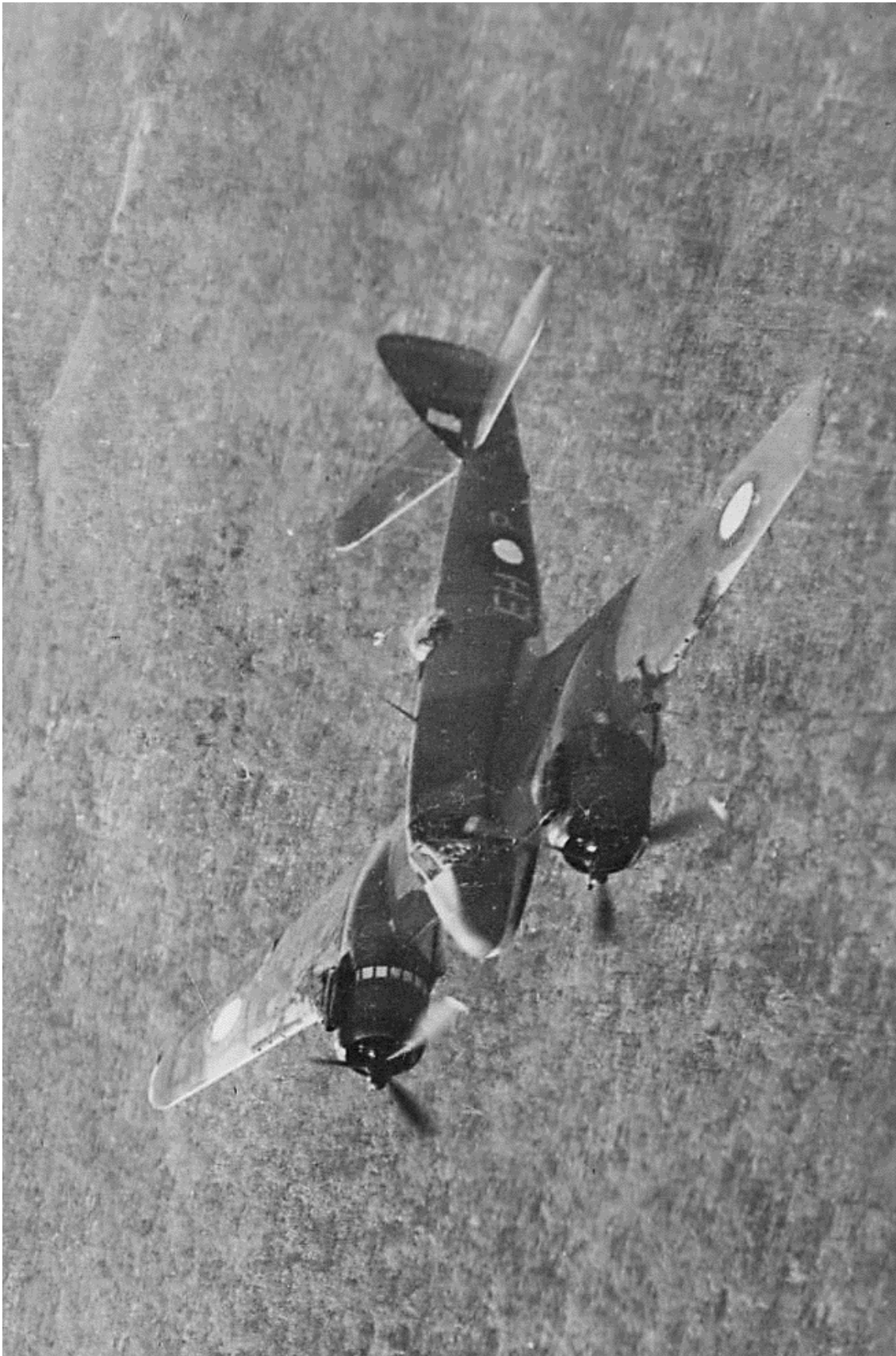
³⁹⁹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-155 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-155 of 4.11.44 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

⁴⁰² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-155 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-155 (continued)



A19-155/EH-P. [*Image courtesy No. 31 Squadron Association*].

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-156
Ex JM170⁴⁰³

This aircraft was assembled by 2AP after being received from the UK on August 1st, 1943. It was received by 5AD on September 30th and they passed it on to 31SQN who took charge of it on November 23rd.⁴⁰⁴

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/3 03/12	EH-R	DY2R	Badgirl	Gerdes / McMillan.
COO1/3 05/12	EH-R	1NBR		Hansen / Quinlan.
COO3/1 09/12		QS5x	Banquet	Garnham / Delaney. Crew had RTB'd in -83.
COO10/1 21/12	EH-R	XD6R	Cookie	Mitchell / Smith.
COO10/8 21/12	EH-R	XD6R	Cookie	Mitchell / Smith.
COO12/4 22/12	EH-R	4RCR	Putty R	Apparently replaced by A19-88.
COO13/3 24/12	EH-R	MQ8R	Basin	Mitchell / Smith.
COO15/6 30/12	EH-N	3AGN	Keeplow	Mitchell / Smith. Apparently repl -158.
COO16/4 31/12	EH-R	HP4R	Banquet	Garnham / Delaney.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/5 02/1	EH-R	PX4R	Pressure	Mitchell / Spencer.
CML20/10 04/1	EH-R	Q53R	Modest R	Apparently replaced by A19-158.
CML23/1 07/1	EH-R	VN2R	Hoodlam R	S/L Gordon / Jordan.
CML27/6 14/1	EH-R	GV3R	Seaward	Mitchell / Smith.
CML29/1 15/1	EH-Y	3VYY	Crimper	Bullen / Sparke. Apparently repl -152.
CML38/11 20/1	EH-R	JG4R	Undock	Unserviceable.
CML40/2 22/1	EH-R	3CAR	Cable R	Burlace / James.
CML44/6 29/1	EH-R	VG8R	Ourgoal	Mitchell / Smith.
CML45/3 30/1	EH-R	4MCR	Downhand	Mitchell / Smith.
CML45/10 30/1	EH-R	4MCR	Downhand	Unserviceable.
CML46/5 05/2	EH-R	3AGR	Wander	Mitchell / Smith.
CML1/7 10/2	EH-R	YW3R	Bloty R	Forrester / McLean.
CML3/7 14/2	EH-R	GM8R	Brazen	Mitchell / Smith.
COO9/3 19/2	EH-R	CW1R	Sailor	Mitchell / Smith.
COO14/7 25/2	EH-R	GM8R		Mitchell / Smith.
COO24/7 08/3	EH-R	J12R	Cajole	Garnham / Delaney.
COO34/5 31/3	EH-R	3BKR	Darkpast	Mitchell / Woods.
COO41/8 06/4	EH-R	4SAR	Civic	Strachan / Brassil.

Eight Beaufighter's were detailed to carry out Coomalie 41, a harassing attack on Semaole Island. Operating from Drysdale River Mission, they were to fly to Cape Oisina, Hansisi, Kobalai, Oeasa, Pelikan Bay and then back to Drysdale. The operation was initially planned for April 5th, 1944,⁴⁰⁵ but was deferred by 24 hours due to a lack of available aircraft.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁰⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-156 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁰⁵ DA/G8/4 Apr in AWM66, 15/1/104.

⁴⁰⁶ DA/G12/4 Apr, *ibid*.

A19-156 (continued)

Coomalie 41 duty 8 made a strafing run on a 40-foot powered barge that was beached in Oeasa Bay and whilst strafing, aimed their two bombs at it. One of the bombs made a direct hit and the other fell within about 10 feet of the barge. Explosions were seen by the pilot of duty 3 and the navigator of duty 1 and the barge caught fire and sank. At Hala, the crew of A19-156 then strafed a square shaped building situated under some over-hanging trees and, at Pelican Bay, made a strafing run on the forward end of a camouflaged oil tanker that duty 1 and just done over.⁴⁰⁷ It was after this last attack, that A19-156 evidently flew through a barrage of 20mm anti-aircraft fire.⁴⁰⁸

Shortly after leaving SEMAOE ISLAND the starboard engine commenced to run roughly, but did not lose power. About one minute later the engine cut out, but the propeller continued to windmill. The aeroplane climbed to 700' but lost height again for fear of being plotted by the enemy radar on outward track. COO41/8 escorted by 5 other Beaufighters then turned onto course for HIBERNIA reef. All ammunition was expended to lessen the load. When out of enemy radar range COO41/8, who was flying at sea level, climbed to 1,000' and proceeded past HIBERNIA reef to CARTIER ISLAND – 33 miles further south.

At 060415Z a successful crash landing was made on CARTIER ISLAND, which at high tide is a strip of sand 350yds long by 150yds. wide rising about 4 feet out of the water. The crew escaped injury – COO41/7 remained and circled overhead for two hours, before proceeding to DRYSDALE.

A CATALINA escorted by 2 Beaufighters reached the island at 060915Z, and landed outside the reef about one mile from the sand strip.

The pilot and navigator had used their waiting hours in dismantling the K25 nose camera, (which had recorded the success of the mission) and other valuable equipment. The crew carrying as much of the equipment as possible walked through shallow water over the coral for about a mile and then paddled in their dinghies to the rescue plane, which took off at 061030Z, landing at DARWIN at 061445Z.

Confidential documents were burnt by the crew, and the secret radar equipment blown up by operating the emergency button installed [IFF]. One of the escorting Beaufighters signalled that he would strafe the aeroplane, when the crew was at a safe distance. This was done and soon the crashed aeroplane was a mass of flames, resulting in its complete destruction.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Report on Operation COO 41 of 6th April, 1944, Report No. 124 dated 8th April, 1944 in No 31 Squadron Operation Reports; NAA: A11312, 2/5/INTEL PART 2.

⁴⁰⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-156 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

⁴⁰⁹ Report on Crash Landing by COO41/8 – Beaufighter A19-156 in No 31 Squadron Operation Reports; NAA: A11312, 2/5/INTEL PART 2.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-158
Ex JM131⁴¹⁰

Received on September 11th, 1943, at 2AP from the UK for assembly, this machine was then sent to 5AD who received it on October 27th. 31SQN received it on November 29th.⁴¹¹

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/2 05/12	EH-M	1NBM		Ellis / McVinish. Apparently repl -51.
COO5/4 10/12	EH-N	FO5N	Petrol	Archer / Holland.
COO7/2 15/12	EH-N	1RVN	Putty	Archer / Holland.
COO9/1 20/12	EH-N	VV1N	Leather N	Archer / Holland.
COO11/10 21/12	EH-N	QC9N	Hornpipe	Archer / Holland. RTB.
COO13/1 24/12	EH-N	MQ8N	Basin	Apparently replaced by A19-51.
COO13/4 24/12	EH-A	MQ8A	Basin	Wickens / Staines. Apparently repl -16.
COO14/1 26/12	EH-N	M13N	Placing N	Archer / Holland.
COO14/5 26/12	EH-N	M13N	Placing N	Archer / Holland.
COO15/6 30/12	EH-N	3AGN	Keeplow	Apparently replaced by A19-156.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/6 02/1	EH-N	PX4N	Pressure	Archer / Holland.
CML19/2 04/1	EH-N	LF1N	Paddock	Archer / Holland.
CML20/10 04/1	EH-R	Q53R	Modest R	Wickens / Staines. Apparently repl -156.
CML27/5 14/1	EH-N	GV3N	Seaward	Archer / Holland.
CML31/7 17/1	EH-N	WG3N	Grotto	Archer / Holland.
CML40/4 22/1	EH-N	3CAN	Cable N	Archer / Holland.
CML44/1 29/1	EH-N	VG8N	Ourgoal	Burlace / James.
CML44/9 29/1	EH-N	VG8N	Ourgoal	Bullen. Not in A51, possibly cancelled.
CML45/7 30/1	EH-N	4MCN	Downhand	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML48/1 08/2	EH-N	VR3N	Sailor	Ashbolt / Hiskins. A51: as COO47/7 Feb.
CML49/1 10/2	EH-N	PK8N	Fearless	Wentworth / Miller.
CML3/4 13/2	EH-N	1RBN	Civic	Wentworth / Miller.
COO4/5 16/2	EH-N	MV3N	Cashier	Archer / Holland.
COO12/2 22/2	EH-N	CV1N	Cobar	Archer / Holland.
COO14/3 25/2	EH-N	GM8N		Cruickshank / Weste.
COO18/1 28/2	EH-N	RP4N	Becul	Archer / Holland.
COO24/8 08/3	EH-N	J12N	Cajole	Forrester / McLean.
COO45/3 09/4	EH-N	4PJN	Perspire	Mitchell / Woods. (FM7N / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO49/3 11/4	EH-N	3ZGN	Clasdash	Archer / Holland. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO3/4 15/4	EH-N	M13N	Placing	Archer / Holland.
COO9/6 19/4	EH-N	YJ9N	Beldam	Archer / Holland.
COO13/4 22/4	EH-N	4SAN	Civic	Archer / Holland.
COO15/8 25/4	EH-N	3ZGN	Clasdash	Quance / Taylor.

⁴¹⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴¹¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-158 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-158 (continued)

On April 27th, 1944, A19-158 was received by 14ARD at Gorrie for a 240-hourly and they returned it to 31SQN on May 25th.⁴¹²

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO37/8 04/6	EH-N	FK8N		Terdich / Jones.
COO41/2 08/6	EH-N	2SBN		Doughton / Demaine.

By late July, it had been decided that this machine was in need of a complete airframe overhaul and a double engine change so, on August 1st, it was received at 5AD for that work. It went on to serve with 5OTU.⁴¹³

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-159
Ex JM272⁴¹⁴

This aircraft arrived at 2AP from the UK on September 29th, 1944, for assembly. On December 20th it was received by 5AD and it was eventually received by 31SQN on February 11th, 1944.⁴¹⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO9/5 19/2	EH-M	CW1M	Sailor	Wentworth / Miller.
COO14/1 25/2	EH-M	GM8M		Wentworth / Miller.
COO20/4 29/2	EH-M	PN7M	Defer	Forrester / McLean. RTB COO, U/S. In AWM66, 15/1/103.
COO24/4 08/3	EH-M	J12M	Cajole	Wentworth / Miller.
COO43/1 05/4	EH-M	JU6M	Stemless	Cobb / Green.
COO6/5 18/4	EH-M	4OXM	Hoodlum	Wickens / Staines.
COO18/1 01/5	EH-M	LF1M	Baggo	Wentworth / Miller.
COO25/1 09/5	EH-M	DV6M	Kestrel	Wentworth / Miller.
COO30/6 20/5	EH-L	KP7L		Boyd / Anderson. Apparently repl -181.
COO30/12 20/5	EH-M	KP7M		Apparently replaced by A19-176.
COO30/14 21/5	EH-M	JC9M		Boyd / Anderson.
COO22/10 22/7	EH-M	DY2M	Nutsail	Archer / Brassil
COO44/10 16/8	EH-M	ZQ8M		Operation cancelled.
COO49/11 21/8	EH-M	4JWM		Sippe / McKenzie.
COO49/10 22/8	EH-M	VV1M		Sippe / McKenzie. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO6/7 24/8	EH-M	MX6M	Poison	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO14/5 03/9	EH-M	4SAM	Civic	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO21/6 17/9	EH-M	VT7M	Bantum	Terdich / Jones.
COO22/13 17/9	EH-M	WK6M	Kindred	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO42/2 04/10	EH-M	LD6M	Outbreak	Bowman / White.

14ARD received this machine on October 19th for a 240-hourly and general repairs and, after a brief period in their Reserve Park, they handed it over to 1AD on November 7th. 5OTU received it on February 25th, 1945.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴¹⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-159 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

A19-159 (continued)



Over Coomalie Creek Airstrip, looking roughly south. Only two British built Beaufighter's carried the letters "EH-M", A19-51 – a Mk Ic and A19-159 – a Mk X. The dihedral tailplane means that this can only be A19-159. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P023805 via Mike Mirkovic].

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-160
Ex JM166⁴¹⁷

This machine was received at 2AP on September 11th, 1943, from the UK for assembly. They passed it on to 5AD around mid-October and it was issued to 31SQN on November 21st, although it's actual date of receipt wasn't recorded.⁴¹⁸

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/5 05/12	EH-F	1NBF		Quance / Taylor.
COO3/3 09/12	EH-F	QS5F	Banquet	Quance / Taylor.
COO8/6 16/12	EH-F	VJ4F	Bewbang	Quance / Taylor.
COO11/9 21/12	EH-F	QC9F	Hornpipe	Wickens / Staines.
COO12/1 22/12	EH-F	4RCF	Putty F	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO12/5 22/12	EH-F	4RCF	Putty F	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO14/2 26/12	EH-F	M13F	Placing F	Quance / Taylor.
COO15/5 30/12	EH-F	3AGF	Keeplow	Quance / Taylor.
COO16/3 31/12	EH-F	HP4F	Banquet	Quance / Taylor.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/4 02/1	EH-F	PX4F	Pressure	Quance / Taylor.
CML23/2 07/1	EH-F	VN2F	Hoodlam F	Quance / Taylor.
CML27/2 14/1	EH-F	GV3F	Seaward	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML30/4 17/1	EH-F	3HAF	Becjol	Bullen / Sparke.
CML38/14 20/1	EH-F	JG4F	Undock	Archer / Holland. A51: duty 7.
CML40/1 22/1	EH-F	3CAF	Cable F	S/L Gordon / Jordan.
CML42/1 26/1	EH-F	G53F	Paddock	Forrester / McLean.
CML43/4 27/1	EH-F	MC2F	Lovelock	Hansen / Quinlan.
CML44/2 29/1	EH-F	VG8F	Ourgoal	Apparently replaced by A19-143.
CML45/1 30/1	EH-F	4MCF	Downhand	Ellis / McVinish.
CML49/6 10/2	EH-F	PK8F	Fearless	Bullen / Sparke.
CML3/6 14/2	EH-F	GM8F	Brazen	Burlace / James.
COO4/6 16/2	EH-F	MV3F	Cashier	Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO7/3 17/2	EH-F	Y26F	Bricking	Quance / Taylor.
COO9/7 19/2	EH-F	CW1F	Sailor	Quance / Taylor.
COO11/4 21/2	EH-F	2LCF	Typist	Quance / Taylor.
COO12/7 22/2	EH-F	CV1F	Cobar	Quance. A51: Rinkin / Mayne as duty 6.
COO14/4 25/2	EH-F	GM8F		Quance / Taylor.
COO20/5 29/2	EH-F	PN7F	Defer	Unserviceable. In AWM66, 15/1/103.
COO22/1 05/3	EH-F	UN2F	Cycle	Quance / Taylor.
COO24/9 08/3	EH-F	J12F	Cajole	Cruikshank / Weste.

⁴¹⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴¹⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-160 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-160 (continued)

On March 21st, whilst on deployment to Pot Shot in Western Australia (present day RAAF Base Learmonth), the tail wheel of A19-160 collapsed on landing resulting in substantial damage to the aircraft.⁴¹⁹ It was received by 17RSU on March 27th for repairs and returned to 31SQN on June 26th.⁴²⁰

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO15/8 05/7	EH-F	3YOF	Censor	Terdich / Jones.
COO13/11 05/7	EH-F	RX6F	Seaward	Replaced by A19-191.

With a 240-hourly due, it was received by 4RSU on July 26th and they, in due course, handed it over to 26RSU on Noemfoor Island, who took charge of it on December 19th, the aircraft having proceeded via 15ARD at Port Moresby; it then went on to serve with 30SQN.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-160 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 9; NAA: A9845, 19.

⁴²⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-160 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-161
Ex JM165⁴²²

On September 11th, 1943, this aircraft was received by 2AP from the UK for assembly. 5AD received it on November 2nd and it was issued to 31SQN on December 26th, although it's actual date of receipt wasn't recorded.⁴²³

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML19/5 04/1	EH-AA	LF1AA	Paddock	F/L Gordon / Jordan.
CML30/1 17/1	EH-J	3HAJ	Becjol	F/L Gordon (/ Spencer). A51: S/L Gordon / Jordan in error.
CML40/3 22/1	EH-J	3CAJ	Cable J	Wentworth / Miller.
CML43/3 27/1	EH-S	MC2S	Lovelock	Wickens. A51: Mitchell / Smith, duty 3. Apparently replaced A19-163.
CML44/4 29/1	EH-J	VG8J	Ourgoal	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
CML44/12 29/1	EH-J	VG8J	Ourgoal	Wentworth. Not in A51, poss cancelled.
CML46/6 05/2	EH-J	3AGJ	Wander	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML47/1 07/2	EH-J	2SBJ	Ermine	Strachan / Brassil. A51: as COO48/8 Feb.
COO4/3 16/2	EH-J	MV3J	Cashier	Strachan / Brassil.
COO7/2 17/2	EH-J	Y26J	Bricking	Strachan / Brassil.
COO9/6 19/2	EH-J	CW1J	Sailor	Garnham / Delaney.
COO12/6 22/2	EH-J	CV1J	Cobar	Strachan / Brassil. A51: as duty 7.
COO14/2 25/2	EH-J	GM8J		Strachan / Brassil.
COO17/3 27/2	EH-J	4KJJ	Earwig	Strachan / Brassil.
COO20/3 29/2	EH-J	PN7J	Defer	Garnham / Delaney. RTB DAR, U/S. In AWM66, 15/1/103.
COO32/3 27/3	EH-J	FK8J	Bicker	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO34/6 31/3	EH-J	3BKJ	Darkpast	Strachan / Brassil
COO37/7 04/4	EH-J	LD6J	Outbreak	Strachan / Brassil.
COO4/2 16/4	EH-J	3VYJ	Crimper	Hansen / Quinlan. (LO5J / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO9/9 19/4	EH-J	Y9J	Beldam	Strachan / Brassil.
COO13/5 22/4	EH-J	4SAJ	Civic	Strachan / Brassil. RTB, U/S.
COO16/5 27/4	EH-J	UA9J	Dawdle	Strachan / Brassil.
COO17/6 29/4	EH-J	HR3J	Picksome	Bullen / Sparke.
COO18/8 01/5	EH-J	LF1J	Baggo	Strachan / Brassil.
COO24/4 07/5	EH-Q	WE9Q	Affirm	Strachan / Brassil. Apparently repl -180.
COO25/2 09/5	EH-J	DV6J	Kestrel	Rutherford / Crosby.
COO30/7 20/5	EH-J	KP7J		Rutherford / Crosby.
COO30/20 21/5	EH-Z	JC9Z		Ritchie / Warner. Apparently repl -103.
COO30/21 21/5	EH-J	JC9J		Apparently replaced by A19-184.
COO37/7 04/6	EH-J	FK8J		Strachan / Brassil.
COO45/3 13/6	EH-J	4OXJ	Hoodlum	Rutherford / Crosbie.
COO49/3 17/6	EH-J	WZ6J	Crumpet	Not required, cancelled.
COO4/11 21/6	EH-J	SR7J	Bicker	Terdich / Jones.

14ARD received A19-161 on June 23rd and they handed it back to 31SQN on August 25th.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴²³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-161 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

A19-161 (continued)

Evidently re-coded "Y", it was used on one more operation.

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO13/6 02/9	EH-Y	XG7Y	Plastic	Bowman / White.

It was then received by 14ARDRP for storage on October 17th. Later, it went to 26RSU via 15ARD and then on to 30SQN.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-162
Ex JM273⁴²⁶

After arrival from the UK at the end of September, 1943, this aircraft was received by 5AD on November 4th and was then issued to 31SQN on December 8th.⁴²⁷

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO15/2 30/12	EH-K	3AGK	Keeplow	Ferguson / Blades.



Applying motion lotion to a very fresh looking A19-162. The next image proves identification. The aircraft is looking so clean in this shot that it could not have flown many hours at all. Perhaps this image was taken during December, 1943, shortly after arrival from 5AD and before it had been used operationally. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P004446 via Mike Mirkovic].

⁴²⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴²⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-162 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

A19-162 (continued)

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML20/11 04/1	EH-K	Q53K	Modest K	Ferguson / Blades.
CML25/1 11/1	EH-K	JG4K	Bebark	Apparently replaced by A19-78.
CML27/3 14/1	EH-K	GV3K	Seaward	Wentworth / Miller.
CML31/8 17/1	EH-K	WG3K	Grotto	Forrester / McLean.
CML38/17 20/1	EH-K	JG4K	Undock	Bullen / Sparke. A51: duty 4.
CML40/7 22/1	EH-K	3CAK	Cable K	Bullen / Sparke.
CML44/5 29/1	EH-K	VG8K	Ourgoal	Forrester / McLean.
CML44/13 29/1	EH-K	VG8K	Ourgoal	Cruikshank. Not in A51, poss cancelled.
CML45/8 30/1	EH-K	4MCK	Downhand	Burlace. Duty cancelled.
CML45/9 30/1	EH-G	4MCG	Downhand	Wentworth / Miller. Apparently repl -143.



This is another view of A19-162, no doubt taken shortly after the refuelling activity depicted in the previous shot; now about to be dragged out of a revetted dispersal insert at Coomalie Creek. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P004483 via Mike Mirkovic].

This aircraft had significant rigging issues so, on February 21st, 1944, it was received by 14ARD at Gorrie, so they could attempt to rectify this aeroplanes tendance to fly right wing low. On March 9th, they handed it back to 31SQN.⁴²⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/3 31/3	EH-K	3BKK	Darkpast	Garnham / Delaney.
COO49/4 11/4	EH-K	3ZGK	Classdash	Cruikshank / Weste. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO4/5 16/4	EH-K	3VYK	Crimper	Garnham / Delaney. (LO5K / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO8/3 18/4	EH-K	VN2K		Garnham (/ Delaney). A51: no record.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

A19-162 (continued)

On April 29th, the aircraft suffered a landing accident at Coomalie Creek, causing significant damage. A19-162 was one of three Beaufighter's returning to Coomalie Creek from Derby and was the last to land at 1:12 pm. On approach, the brake pressure was noted (due to previous trouble and recent repair) and found to be normal. A standard cross wind landing was made on the centre line but, when the brakes were applied, there was no response and a glance at the brake pressure showed a reading of zero. Continuing to roll out down the centre of the runway but now with 600 yards remaining the pilot decided to cut both engines and retract the undercarriage; however, the undercarriage did not come up and the aircraft rolled off the far end of the runway and into a deep ditch. The crew and their two passengers escaped injury.⁴²⁹

A19-162 was taken over by 4RSU on May 2nd, 1944, was later sent off to 14ARD and apparently was brought back to life and ended up at 5OTU.⁴³⁰



A19-162 in a ditch. [Image courtesy No. 31 Squadron Association].

⁴²⁹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty Beaufighter A19-162 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20. Whilst it doesn't add much additional information, it should be noted that an Aircraft Accident Data card was raised for this event however, it was incorrectly filled out with the serial number "A19-192" and accordingly ended up in the file now known as Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

⁴³⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-162 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter Xlc
A19-163
Ex JM164⁴³¹

A19-163 arrived at 2AP from the UK for assembly on September 11th, 1943. They passed it on to 5AD and they, in turn, passed in on to 31SQN who received it on November 23rd.⁴³²

1943:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/8 05/12	EH-S	1NBS		Warren / McMurchie.
COO3/4 09/12	EH-S	QS5S	Banquet	Warren / McMurchie.
COO7/8 15/12	EH-S	1RVS	Putty	Warren / McMurchie.
COO9/2 20/12	EH-S	VV1S	Leather S	Warren / McMurchie.
COO10/7 21/12	EH-S	XD6S	Cookie	Apparently replaced by A19-149.
COO11/11 21/12	EH-S	XD6S	Chappy S	Warren / McMurchie. Replaced A19-158.
COO14/3 26/12	EH-S	M13S	Placing S	Ellis / McVinish.

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
CML17/8 02/1	EH-S	PX4S	Pressure	Rinkin / Mayne.
CML19/7 04/1	EH-J	LF1J	Paddock	Garnham / Delaney. Apparently repl -144.
CML38/12 20/1	EH-S	JG4S	Undock	Wickens / Staines. A51: duty 2.
CML40/6 22/1	EH-S	3CAS	Cable S	Cruickshank / Weste.
CML43/3 27/1	EH-S	MC2S	Lovelock	Apparently replaced by A19-161.
CML44/8 29/1	EH-S	VG8S	Ourgoal	Wickens / Staines.
CML45/6 30/1	EH-S	4MCS	Downhand	Forrester / McLean.
CML46/2 05/2	EH-S	3AGS	Wander	Wickens / Staines.
CML49/3 10/2	EH-S	PK8S	Fearless	Ellis / McVinish.
CML3/5 13/2	EH-S	1RBS	Civic	Wickens / Staines.
COO14/9 25/2	EH-S	GM8S		Garnham / Delaney.
COO15/1 26/2	EH-S	4NCS	Atwig	Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO32/4 27/3	EH-S	FK8S	Bicker	Wickens / Staines.
COO38/1 03/4	EH-S	4OXS	Hoodlum	Apparently replaced by A19-181.
COO37/5 03/4	EH-S	4OXS	Hoodlum	Apparently replaced by A19-169.
COO39/1 04/4	EH-S	SA9S	Cable	Quance / Taylor.
COO49/9 11/4	EH-S	3ZGS	Classdash	Cobb / Green. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO9/10 19/4	EH-S	YJ9S	Beldam	Bullen / Sparke.
COO16/8 27/4	EH-S	UA9S	Dawdle	Wickens / Staines.
COO17/5 29/4	EH-S	HR3S	Picksome	Tritton / Leckie.
COO18/7 01/5	EH-S	LF1S	Baggo	Unserviceable.
COO21/8 04/5	EH-S	OP4S	Armada	Unserviceable.

With a 240-hourly due, it was received by 4RSU on May 12th and they handed it back to 31SQN on August 23rd.⁴³³

⁴³¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴³² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-163 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴³³ Ibid.

A19-163 (continued)

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO13/2 02/9	EH-N	2JRN	Billow	Bowman / White. RTB, U/S.
COO14/4 03/9	EH-N	4SAN	Civic	Lasscock / Broderick.

Whilst on deployment to Broome, A19-163, in company with A19-140, was to conduct an operation on September 18th. At 4:30 am, A19-163 took off. The second aircraft was compelled to wait until the dust thrown up by that departure had settled so as he could see the runway flares and, having done so, commenced his take-off. Shortly after the second aircraft commenced his take-off roll, what was described as a bright glare followed by a flash of flame was seen just to the left of the runway centre line and at a distance estimated to have been one and a half miles. The second aircraft aborted his take-off and an ambulance and ground staff were dispatched. A19-163 had evidently crashed into the sea after take-off killing the crew.⁴³⁴

They were:

Pilot Flight Sergeant Ronald Steven Kerrigan and,
Navigator Sergeant Ronald George Smith.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty – Beaufighter A19-163 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20.

⁴³⁵ 2BPSO signal BC118 of 19 Sep (1944) in Casualty Repatriation File Kerrigan Ronald Stephen 427244; NAA: A705, 166/22/321.

Beaufighter X
A19-165
Ex LX989⁴³⁶

On October 10th, 1943, this machine was received at 2AD from the UK.⁴³⁷ When unpacked for assembly, it was found that this aircraft was in “Coastal Whitex”, that is, it’s fuselage was camouflaged white and the wings in white and blue.⁴³⁸ RAAF Headquarters ordered the aircraft be re-camouflaged in accordance with the RAAF scheme⁴³⁹ (which was a disruptive pattern of Foliage Green and Earth Brown, above, over Sky Blue, below). It was received by 5AD on December 22nd and issued to 31SQN on February 9th, 1944, although it’s actual date of receipt wasn’t recorded.⁴⁴⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO12/5 22/2	EH-E	CV1E	Cobar	F/L Gordon / Spencer.

On February 27th, it was being flown by Squadron Leader R.L. Gordon and Flight Sergeant K.A. Smith on a test flight.⁴⁴¹ The aircraft had departed Coomalie Creek at 5:21 pm and had circled the airfield twice at low altitude and then disappeared from view behind nearby hills flying at about 200 feet but with the starboard propeller feathered and the port propeller apparently windmilling slowly. According to the confirmatory memorandum, the port engine had failed, followed by the starboard engine and, at 5:30 pm, the aircraft was force landed, wheels up, into timbered, rocky country about 1 mile west of the Stuart Highway and 1 mile north of the Batchelor road and caught fire. Squadron Leader Gordon was found about 50 yards from the wreckage in a badly burned state and died of his injuries after being admitted to 1MRS. The navigator, Flight Sergeant Smith was found deceased in the wreckage.⁴⁴²



The aircraft on the left is A19-165/EH-E. [Photo Keith Fitton via 31 Squadron Association].

⁴³⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF’s Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴³⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-165 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴³⁸ SMG signal T241 of 20 Oct (1943) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴³⁹ RAAF HQ signal T122 of 9 Nov (1943), *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-165 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁴¹ Aircraft Accident Data card for A19-165 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20.

⁴⁴² Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Beaufighter Aircraft A19-165, *ibid.*

Beaufighter X
A19-169
Ex LX993⁴⁴³

This aircraft was received by 1AD from the UK for assembly on October 25th, 1943. It was received by 1APU for rocket projectile tests on February 22nd, 1944, went back to 1AD a week later and then was received by 31SQN on March 16th.⁴⁴⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/2 31/3	EH-B	3BKB	Darkpast	Forrester / McLean.
COO37/5 03/4	EH-S	4OXS	Hoodlum	Forrester / McLean. Apparently repl -163.
COO41/3 06/4	EH-B	4SAB	Civic	Hansen / Quinlan.
COO45/5 09/4	EH-B	4PJB	Perspire	Forrester / McLean. (FM7B / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO3/6 15/4	EH-B	M13B	Placing	Cruikshank / Weste.
COO4/6 16/4	EH-B	3VYB	Crimper	Forrester / McLean. (LO5B / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO9/12 19/4	EH-B	YJ9B	Beldam	Forrester / McLean. (A51 recorded -159 in error)
COO13/8 22/4	EH-B	4SAB	Civic	Bullen / Sparkes.
COO16/7 27/4	EH-B	UA9B	Dawdle	Forrester / McLean. RTB (MIL), U/S.

An engine change was necessary so, it was received by 4RSU on May 3rd and handed back to 31SQN on June 8th.⁴⁴⁵

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO10/3 01/7	EH-B	GL4B	Cusher	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO13/9 05/7	EH-B	RX6B	Seaward	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO16/4 11/7	EH-B	UV1B	Darkpast	Apparently replaced by A19-140.
COO25/6 27/7	EH-B	YZ1B	Checkmate	Linney / Finlay.
COO28/2 28/7	EH-B	GA9B	Niceguy	Rinkin / Mayne.
COO37/2 02/8	EH-B	DY2B	Nutsail	Forrester / McLean.
COO49/14 21/8	EH-B	4JWB		Kerrigan / Smith.

On August 25th, it was received by 14ARD for a 240-hourly and then handed over to 5OTU on November 29th.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁴⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-169 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-172
Ex LZ195⁴⁴⁷

On November 30th, 1943, this aircraft was received at 2AD from the UK for assembly. They passed it on to 5AD on January 16th, 1944 and 31SQN received it on March 8th.⁴⁴⁸ It had arrived from the UK equipped with four 20mm cannon but no dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre or wing guns.⁴⁴⁹

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/1 27/3	EH-R	FK8R	Bicker	Burlace / James. Apparently repl – 184.
COO37/3 03/4	EH-O	4OXO	Hoodlum	Apparently replaced by A19-149.
COO45/2 09/4	EH-O	4PJO	Perspire	F/L Gordon / Spencer. (FM70 / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO4/1 16/4	EH-O	3VYO	Crimper	Wentworth / Miller. (LO50 / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO8/1 18/4	EH-O	VN2O		F/L Gordon (/ Spencer). A51: no record.
COO21/2 04/5	EH-O	OP4O	Armada	F/L Gordon / Spencer.
COO30/10 20/5	EH-O	KP7O		Tritton / Leckie.
COO30/16 21/5	EH-O	JC9O		Tritton / Leckie.
COO37/1 03/6	EH-O	LU6O		Tritton / Leckie.
COO14/2 05/7	EH-O	GV3O	Bepmonk	Tritton / Leckie.
COO49/1 21/8	EH-O	4JWO		Tritton / Leckie.
COO49/6 22/8	EH-O	VV1O		Tritton / Leckie. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO4/3 24/8	EH-O	JE3O	Bestlike	Terdich / Jones. A51: Provost / McGuire as duty 2.
COO7/2 24/8	EH-O	1NBO	Canticle	Linney / Finlay. Crashed on take-off.

Four Beaufighter's were to conduct Coomalie 7 of 24th August which was ordered as a road sweep from Dilli to Kefannanoe.⁴⁵⁰

A19-172, being duty 2, commenced its take-off run immediately after duty 1 however, after nearly 400 yards and due to the sluggish performance of the aircraft at rated power, the pilot applied full power which caused the aircraft to instantly swing violently to the right. The pilot chopped the throttles and applied full left rudder but the aircraft struck a drainage ditch off the right-hand side of the runway which snapped off the undercarriage and the aircraft slid to a halt on its belly. The crew escaped injury.⁴⁵¹

The wreck was handed over to 8CRD for conversion into components.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁴⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-172 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁴⁹ SMG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁵⁰ DA/G7/23 Aug in AWM66, 15/1/128.

⁴⁵¹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty, Beaufighter A19-172 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20.

⁴⁵² RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-172 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter X
A19-175
Ex LZ198⁴⁵³

Equipped with four 20mm cannon but no dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre or wing guns,⁴⁵⁴ this aircraft was received by 2AD from the UK on December 17th, 1943. It was issued direct to 31SQN on March 11th, but its actual date of receipt wasn't recorded.⁴⁵⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/6 27/3	EH-U	FK8U	Bicker	Apparently replaced by A19-143.
COO37/2 03/4	EH-U	4OXU	Hoodlum	Wentworth / Miller.
COO37/6 04/4	EH-U	LD6U	Outbreak	Burlace / James.
COO39/3 04/4	EH-U	SA9U	Cable	Cobb. A51: Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO41/6 06/4	EH-U	4SAU	Civic	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO3/2 15/4	EH-U	M13U	Placing	Strachan / Brassil.

It was received by 4RSU on April 18th to repair slight anti-aircraft damage received during the course of Coomalie 3 of 15th April and was handed back to 31SQN on the 26th.⁴⁵⁶

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO16/11 27/4	EH-U	UA9U	Dawdle	Cobb / Green.
COO17/8 29/4	EH-U	HR3U	Picksome	Ritchie / Warner.
COO18/6 01/5	EH-U	LF1U	Baggo	Ritchie / Warner.
COO24/5 07/5	EH-U	WE9U	Affirm	Cobb / Green.
COO25/3 09/5	EH-U	DV6U	Kestrel	Forrester / McLean.
COO30/11 20/5	EH-U	KP7U		Cobb / Green.
COO30/17 21/5	EH-U	JC9U		Apparently replaced by A19-176.
COO37/4 03/6	EH-U	LU6U		Cobb / Green.

On 30th June, it was received again by 4RSU, this time for general repairs and an engine change. 4RSU gave it back to 31SQN on July 25th.⁴⁵⁷

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO26/9 27/7	EH-U	3AYU	Walrus	Rutherford / Crosby.
COO32/1 01/8	EH-U	Q87U	Waggy	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO40/4 08/8	EH-U	HR3U	Picksome	Kerrigan / Smith.
COO44/11 16/8	EH-U	ZQ8U		Operation cancelled.
COO49/6 21/8	EH-U	4JWU		Apparently replaced by A19-192.
COO49/11 22/8	EH-U	VV1U		Kerrigan / Smith. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO5/12 24/8	EH-U	JE3U	Bestlike	Rutherford / Crosby.

Continued →

⁴⁵³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁵⁴ 5MG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁵⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-175 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

A19-175 (continued)

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO22/12 17/9	EH-U	WK6U	Kindred	Provost / McGuire.
COO23/6 19/9	EH-U	2SPU	Benquick	Linney / Finlay.

It was allotted to 14ARDRP on September 24th and received by them on October 17th. The machine later went on to serve with 30SQN.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-176
Ex LZ199⁴⁵⁹

This aircraft was found to be equipped with four 20mm cannon but no dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre or wing guns⁴⁶⁰ when it was received by 2AD from the UK on 30th November, 1943. It was sent to 5AD during January, 1944 and was received by 31SQN on March 6th.⁴⁶¹

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/7 31/3	EH-A	3BKA	Darkpast	Apparently replaced by A19-152.
COO36/1 01/4	EH-A	HR3A	Picksome	Wickens / Staines.
COO41/1 06/4	EH-A	4SAA	Civic	Wentworth / Miller.
COO45/1 09/4	EH-A	4PJA	Perspire	Apparently replaced by A19-177. (FM7A / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO49/6 11/4	EH-A	3ZGA	Classdash	Forrester / McLean. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO6/4 18/4	EH-A	4OXA	Hoodlum	Mann / Harber.
COO13/9 22/4	EH-A	4SAA	Civic	Cobb / Green. A51: A19-178 in error.
COO21/7 04/5	EH-A	OP4A	Armada	Klug / Jones.
COO24/7 07/5	EH-A	WE9A	Affirm	Tritton / Leckie.
COO30/4 20/5	EH-A	KP7A		Wickens / Staines.
COO30/12 20/5	EH-M	KP7M		Strachan / Brassil. Apparently repl -159.
COO30/17 21/5	EH-U	JC9U		Doughton / de Maine. Apparently repl -175.
COO30/19 21/5	EH-A	JC9A		Apparently replaced by A19-103.
COO13/10 05/7	EH-A	RX6A	Seaward	Thompson / Hickson.
COO34/3 01/8	EH-A	MX7A	Began	Bullen / Sparkes.
COO42/2 09/8	EH-A	3ZGA	Classdash	Terdich / Jones.
COO49/10 21/8	EH-A	4JWA		Gibbins / Moo.
COO4/4 24/8	EH-A	JE3A	Bestlike	Cockroft / Davis. Unserviceable. A51: Terdich / Jones as duty 3.

It served with 31SQN unit falling due for a 240-hourly and was allotted to 4RSU, Pell, on September 6th, 1944, but it wasn't until October 6th, that it was received by that unit. 4RSU sent the aircraft off to 14ARD on November 11th and from there it was sent to 1AD and then 5OTU, who received it on March 21st, 1945.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁶⁰ SMG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁶¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-176 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-177
Ex LZ200⁴⁶³

This machine was equipped with four 20mm cannon but no dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre or wing guns⁴⁶⁴ when it was received from the UK on November 30th, 1943, at 2AD. After assembly, 2AD sent it on to 5AD during January, 1944 and 31SQN received it on March 20th.⁴⁶⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/4 31/3	EH-C	3BKC	Darkpast	Bullen / Sparke.
COO41/7 06/4	EH-L	4SAL	Civic	Boyd / Anderson. Apparently repl -181.
COO45/1 09/4	EH-A	4PJA	Perspire	Mann / Harber. Apparently repl -176. (FM7C / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th as spare).
COO49/7 11/4	EH-C	3ZGC	Clasdash	Bullen / Sparke. In AWM66, 15/1/106.

Coomalie 49 of 11th April, 1944, was ordered as a harassing attack along the north west coast of Timor between Manatuto and Cape Hero by eight Beaufighter's of 31SQN focusing on shipping or any other Japanese activity.⁴⁶⁶

Wheels up was planned for 110020Z (9:50 am Darwin time)⁴⁶⁷ but weather forced the formation to return to Coomalie Creek about 4 hours later without having reached the target area. Initially they encountered 4 to 6/10ths cumulus at 3,000 feet with tops to 9,000 feet but from about 10°00'S the weather deteriorated considerably with overcast cumulonimbus at 500 feet and visibility down to a mile, this persisted to at least 08°00'S, so the formation leader turned back.⁴⁶⁸

Back over Australia, at 2,000 feet with about 20 miles to run, A19-177 suffered a bird strike with an eagle becoming imbedded in the leading edge of the starboard wing. A normal landing approach was made and at 1:49 pm, a few feet from touch-down, the starboard wing dropped and, despite full left rudder and full power on the starboard engine, the aircraft continued to deviate off to the right and the wing tip hit the ground. The aircraft came to rest at right angles to the runway, on its belly, the undercarriage having been ripped off. The crew wasn't injured.⁴⁶⁹

4RSU took charge of the aircraft on April 14th and they handed responsibility for it over to 14ARD the next day. The aircraft was reduced to spare parts.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁶⁴ SMG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁶⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-177 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁶⁶ DA/G5/9 Apr in AWM66, 15/1/106.

⁴⁶⁷ COO/M3/10 Apr, *ibid*.

⁴⁶⁸ COO/M1/11 Apr, *ibid*.

⁴⁶⁹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty, Beaufighter A19-177, in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20.

⁴⁷⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-177 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter X
A19-178
Ex LZ201⁴⁷¹

Delivered, equipped with four 20mm cannon but no dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre or wing guns,⁴⁷² to 2AD from the UK on November 30th, 1943, it was passed on to 5AD during January, 1944. 31SQN received it on March 16th.⁴⁷³

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO34/8 31/3	EH-T	3BKT	Darkpast	Cruickshank / Weste.
COO41/5 06/4	EH-T	4SAT	Civic	Bullen / Sparke.
COO45/6 09/4	EH-T	4PJT	Perspire	Quance / Taylor. (FM7T / Fearless for transit COO – DRY on 8 th).
COO49/8 11/4	EH-T	3ZGT	Clasdash	Ashbolt / Hiskins. In AWM66, 15/1/106.
COO3/5 15/4	EH-T	M13T	Placing	Ashbolt / Hiskins. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 3 of 15th April, 1944, was a harassing attack on Soe in Timor by six Beaufighter's; originally planned for the 13th.⁴⁷⁴ It was deferred for 24 hours, to the 14th,⁴⁷⁵ and then for a further 24 hours to the 15th.⁴⁷⁶

Operating from Drysdale River Mission, the six aircraft were to depart on the operation at 142230Z (8 am Darwin time on the 15th) and recover to Coomalie Creek.⁴⁷⁷ Landfall was made two miles west of Cape Ela at 150012Z (9:42 am Darwin time) and the formation reached the village of Soe eight minutes later. The first three details bombed and strafed the village and the remaining details, including A19-178, bombed and strafed a camp and stores area about a mile north west of Soe. Both sections experienced anti-aircraft fire which was described as being light calibre, but intense and accurate. A19-178 was hit (as were four other Beaufighter's) but, with the rest of the formation, egressed via Kolbano at 150040Z (10:10 am Darwin time) at zero feet. At 150057Z (10:27 am Darwin time), in position 10°42'S 124°52'E, A19-178 crashed into the Timor Sea. The other Beaufighter's circled the area for 7 minutes, but no survivors were seen.⁴⁷⁸

Apparently, one minute after coming off the target the pilot of A19-178 made a radio call stating that his starboard engine was leaking oil. The formation slowed down and the flight leader instructed the pilot to shut the engine down. As the formation crossed the coast, oil was seen to be streaming from A19-178's starboard engine, so course was altered from Coomalie Creek to Drysdale. At 10:23 am Darwin time, with the formation cruising at 500 feet, the pilot reported that the starboard engine was intermittently seizing and that there were bullet holes in the right-hand oil cooler, he was then seen to feather the propeller. Shortly after feathering the propeller, A19-178 was seen to lose airspeed and enter a slow descending turn to the right. This continued until the aircraft struck the water and disintegrated.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷¹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁷² SMG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁷³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-178 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁷⁴ DA/G4/12 Apr in AWM66, 15/1/105.

⁴⁷⁵ DA/G7/12 Apr, *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ DA/G2/13 Apr, *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁷ COO/M2/14 Apr, *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁸ COO/B1/15 Apr, *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty, Beaufighter Aircraft A19-178 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 10; NAA: A9845, 20.

A19-178 (continued)

The crew of A19-178 were:

Pilot	Flight Sergeant Harry Shepherdson Ashbolt ⁴⁸⁰ and,
Navigator	Flight Sergeant Ernest Joseph Hiskins. ⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ RAAF Form P/P76 RAAF Airman's Record Sheet (Active Service – Overseas) in Personal File Ashbolt Harry Sheperdson [sic] 415064; NAA: A9301, 415064.

⁴⁸¹ RAAF Form P/P75 RAAF Airman's Record Sheet (Active Service – Overseas) in Personal File Hiskins Ernest Joseph 410058; NAA: A9301, 410058.

Beaufighter X
A19-180
Ex LZ321⁴⁸²

This aircraft arrived from the UK on February 2nd, 1944, and was assembled at 2AD. They sent it on to 14ARDRP who took charge of it on April 3rd. 31SQN received this machine on April 14th.⁴⁸³

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO9/5 19/4	EH-Q	YJ9Q	Beldam	Burlace / James.
COO13/7 22/4	EH-Q	4SAQ	Civic	Quance / Taylor.
COO15/5 25/4	EH-Q	3ZGQ	Classdash	Mann / Harber.
COO16/4 27/4	EH-Q	UA9Q	Dawdle	Wentworth / Miller. RTB (MIL), U/S.
COO17/4 29/4	EH-Q	HR3Q	Picksome	Archer / Holland.
COO18/3 01/5	EH-Q	LF1Q	Baggo	Archer / Holland.
COO24/4 07/5	EH-Q	WE9Q	Affirm	Unserviceable, apparently repl by -161.
COO37/6 04/6	EH-Q	FK8Q		Cruickshank / Weste. RTB, U/S.
COO41/3 08/6	EH-Q	2SBQ		Archer / Holland.
COO45/2 13/6	EH-Q	4OXQ	Hoodlum	Archer / Holland.
COO49/1 17/6	EH-Q	WZ6Q	Crumpet	Wentworth / Miller.
COO8/3 26/6	EH-Q	LW4Q	Torsal	Archer / Holland.
COO9/3 29/6	EH-Q	SC9Q		Rinkin / Mayne.
COO10/1 01/7	EH-Q	GL4Q	Cusher	Archer / Holland.
COO11/2 02/7	EH-X	4ENX	Ragdog	Coote / Dillon. Apparently repl A19-203.
COO15/5 05/7	EH-Q	3YOQ	Censor	Archer / Holland.
COO16/1 11/7	EH-Q	UV1Q	Darkpast	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO21/9 16/7	EH-Q	3BKQ	Puffdump	Bullen / Sparke.
COO26/8 27/7	EH-Q	3AYQ	Walrus	Tritton / Leckie.
COO31/3 31/7	EH-Q	4ENQ	Ragdog	Taylor / Packham. (Was originally VJ4Q / Bewang).
COO35/6 01/8	EH-R	Q87R	Waggy	Lasscock / Broderich. Apparently repl -184.
COO36/1 02/8	EH-Q	H64Q		Apparently replaced by A19-184.
COO38/2 03/8	EH-Q	RV1Q	Betridge	Operation cancelled.
COO42/1 09/8	EH-Q	3ZGQ	Classdash	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO44/7 16/8	EH-Q	ZQ8Q		Operation cancelled.
COO49/9 21/8	EH-Q	4JWQ		Doughton / DeMaine.
COO49/8 22/8	EH-Q	VV1Q		Doughton / DeMaine. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO7/1 24/8	EH-Q	1NBQ	Canticle	Doughton / DeMaine. RTB.
COO7/5 24/8	EH-Q	1NBQ	Canticle	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO13/3 02/9	EH-W	2JRW	Billow	Bullen / Sparke. RTB. Apparently repl -140.

On September 12th it arrived at 14ARD for a 240-hourly and from there it went to 5OTU.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁸³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-180 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

A19-180 (continued)



A nice in-flight shot of A19-180. [Image courtesy No. 31 Squadron Association].

Beaufighter X
A19-181
"L's A POPPIN"
Ex LZ322⁴⁸⁵

Delivered equipped with four 20mm cannon and one dorsal mounted Browning 30 calibre, but no wing guns,⁴⁸⁶ this machine was received by 2AD on December 8th, 1943. They sent it to 31SQN who took charge of it on March 16th, 1944.⁴⁸⁷

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/5 27/3	EH-L	FK8L	Bicker	Boyd / Anderson.
COO38/1 03/4	EH-S	4OXS	Hoodlum	Mitchell / Woods. Apparently repl -163.
COO37/4 03/4	EH-L	4OXL	Hoodlum	Boyd / Anderson.
COO41/7 06/4	EH-L	4SAL	Civic	Apparently replaced by A19-177.
COO47/8 09/4	EH-L	2SPL	Benquick	Ashbolt / Hiskins.
COO3/1 15/4	EH-L	M13L	Placing.	Boyd / Anderson.
COO4/4 16/4	EH-L	3VYL	Crimper	Rinkin / Mayne. (LO5L / Befwing for transit COO – DRY on 15 th).
COO9/7 19/4	EH-L	YJ9L	Beldam	Boyd / Anderson. (A51 recorded -169 in error)
COO15/7 25/4	EH-L	3ZGL	Classdash	Boyd / Anderson.
COO16/10 27/4	EH-L	UA9L	Dawdle	Boyd / Anderson.
COO17/7 29/4	EH-L	HR3L	Picksome	Quance / Taylor.
COO18/5 01/5	EH-L	LF1L	Baggo	Boyd / Anderson.
COO21/4 04/5	EH-L	OP4L	Armada	Boyd / Anderson.
COO24/2 07/5	EH-L	WE9L	Affirm	Garnham / Delaney.
COO25/4 09/5	EH-L	DV6L	Kestrel	Quance / Taylor.
COO30/6 20/5	EH-L	KP7L		Apparently replaced by A19-159.
COO36/6 02/6	EH-L	Y35L	Mourner	Wentworth / Miller.
COO37/5 04/6	EH-L	FK8L		Boyd / Anderson.

An engine change became necessary so, A19-181 was sent to 4RSU on July 25th. They handed it back to 31SQN on August 12th.⁴⁸⁸

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO49/12 21/8	EH-L	4JWL		Lasscock / Broderick.
COO49/15 22/8	EH-L	VV1L		Lasscock / Broderick. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.

A19-181 landed safely from the last detail of Coomalie 49 of 22nd August, a two-day operation providing fighter cover for Operation Adder (Force S),⁴⁸⁹ and was taxiing to its revetment. That part of the taxiway sloped downhill and, due to a sudden drop in brake pressure, the brakes failed and the aircraft rolled out of control until the starboard wing hit a pole, swing the aircraft around until its main

⁴⁸⁵ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁸⁶ SMG signal T541 of 18 Jan (1944) in Directorate of Technical Services Beaufighter Aircraft General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁴⁸⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-181 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ 79WG/G5/20 Aug in AWM66, 15/1/127.

A19-181 (continued)

wheels came up against a ditch.⁴⁹⁰ On the 25th, 4RSU received the aircraft for repairs and they handed it back to 31SQN on September 4th.⁴⁹¹

1944 (continued):

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO21/8 17/9	EH-L	VT7L	Bantum	Lasscock / Broderick. RTB.
COO22/15 17/9	EH-L	WK6L	Kindred	Gibbings / Moo.
COO29/15 25/9	EH-L	1SDL	Bidgot	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO31/13 26/9	EH-L	HY5L	Viscount	Lasscock / Broderick.
COO37/7 29/9	EH-L	XG7L	Plastic	Lasscock / Broderick.
COO42/4 04/10	EH-S	LD6S	Outbreak	Taylor / Packham. Apparently replaced unknown "S", or -181 re-coded "EH-S"?

14ARD received the machine on October 19th and they sent it off to 1AD who received it on November 6th, 1944. It then became a 5OTU machine.⁴⁹²



"L's a Poppin" at Coomalie Creek. [AWM image NWA0572].

⁴⁹⁰ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty, Beaufighter A19-181 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

⁴⁹¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-181 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-182
Ex LZ323⁴⁹³

This aircraft was received from the UK at 2AD on January 23rd, 1944. After assembly, it was sent to 31SQN who received it on March 20th.⁴⁹⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/2 28/3	EH-Q	FK8Q	Bicker	Fitton / Foyle. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 32 of March 28th, 1944, was ordered as a harassing attack on shipping and other Japanese activity on Roti Island by six Beaufighter's, departing at first light. Targets were Pepela Bay, Oenggae Bay, Baa, Kodi Island, Noese Island, Nembrala and Dana Island. The aircraft were to recover to Drysdale River Mission.⁴⁹⁵ A formation of fourteen B-24's from the US Army's 380th Bombardment Group would be departing their base at first light to strike the Japanese airfield at Penfoei (FEN7), just under 30 nautical miles to the north east of Pepela Bay.⁴⁹⁶

Operating from Drysdale River Mission, the formation planned to depart at 272130Z (7 am Darwin time on the 28th) and expected to be back at Drysdale at 280130Z (11 am).⁴⁹⁷

The six Beaufighter's had all taken off from Drysdale by 7:10 am⁴⁹⁸ and made landfall at the head of Pepela Bay at 272339Z (9:09 am Darwin time).⁴⁹⁹

While COO32/2 was making his second strafing run on a beached prahu with a tall single mast, at the head of PEPELA BAY, he was seen to hit the mast with his port wing about five feet from the wing tip. The aeroplane went into a steep climb (60 degrees) to 200 feet when it turned over on its back, stalled and went into a vertical dive.⁵⁰⁰

The nose and port wing hit the ground simultaneously and all the time, three of the aircrafts four cannons were firing. A19-182 exploded on impact with the ground about 150 yards inland from the target and burst into flame.⁵⁰¹

The crew were:

Pilot Flight Lieutenant K.A. Fitton and,
Navigator Flight Sergeant R.C. Foyle.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁴⁹⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-182 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁴⁹⁵ DA/G4/27 Mar in AWM66, 15/1/103.

⁴⁹⁶ FEN/M2/27 Mar, *ibid*.

⁴⁹⁷ COO/M3/27 Mar, *ibid*.

⁴⁹⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-182 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

⁴⁹⁹ COO/B1/28 Mar in AWM66, 15/1/103.

⁵⁰⁰ Report on Operation COO 32 of 27/28th March, 1944, 31 Squadron Report No. 122 dated 27/28th Mar (1944) in No. 31 Squadron Operation Reports; NAA: A11312, 2/5/INTEL PART 2.

⁵⁰¹ Preliminary Report, COO32 (undated) in AWM66, 15/1/103.

⁵⁰² Confirmatory Memorandum, Casualty Beaufighter Aircraft A19-182 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

Beaufighter X
A19-184
Ex LZ325⁵⁰³

This aircraft was received at 2AD from the UK on January 23rd, 1944. It was then received by 14ARDRP on 12th May and they handed it over to 31SQN on May 15th.⁵⁰⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO32/1 27/3	EH-R	FK8R	Bicker	Apparently replaced by A19-172.
COO30/8 20/5	EH-R	KP7R		Garnham / Delaney.
COO30/15 21/5	EH-R	JC9R		Klug / Jones.
COO30/21 21/5	EH-J	JC9J		Strachan / Brassil. Apparently repl -161.
COO36/7 02/6	EH-R	Y35R	Mourner	Thompson / Hickson.
COO37/2 03/6	EH-R	LU6R		Coote / Dillon.
COO41/1 08/6	EH-R	2SBR		Forrester / McLean.
COO10/4 01/7	EH-R	GL4R	Cusher	Terdich / Jones.
COO11/3 02/7	EH-R	4ENR	Ragdog	Klug / Jones.
COO14/4 05/7	EH-R	GV3R	Bepmonk	Klug / Jones.
COO16/3 11/7	EH-R	UV1R	Darkpast	Cobb / Green.
COO21/11 16/7	EH-R	3BKR	Puffdump	Klug / Jones.
COO22/9 22/7	EH-R	DY2R	Nutsail	Bullen / Sparke.
COO25/2 27/7	EH-R	YZ1R	Checkmate	Klug / Jones.
COO29/5 28/7	EH-R	JM1R	Dispute	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO35/6 01/8	EH-R	Q87R	Waggy	Apparently replaced by A19-180.
COO36/1 02/8	EH-Q	H64Q		Klug / Jones. Apparently repl -180.
COO40/2 08/8	EH-R	HR3R	Picksome	Lasscock / Broderich.
COO44/9 16/8	EH-R	ZQ8R		Operation cancelled.
COO46/9 17/8	EH-R	4QAR	Assist	Klug / Jones.
COO49/3 21/8	EH-R	4JWR		Klug / Jones.
COO49/14 22/8	EH-R	VV1R		Forrester / McLean. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO7/3 24/8	EH-R	1NBR	Canticle	Cobb / Green. A51 only.
COO5/11 24/8	EH-R	JE3R	Bestlike	Klug / Jones.
COO11/2 30/8	EH-R	PF5R	Abed	Klug / Jones.
COO14/2 03/9	EH-R	4SAR	Civic	Provost / McGuire.
COO22/11 17/9	EH-R	WK6R	Kindred	Tritton / Leckie.
COO23/7 19/9	EH-R	2SPR	Benquick	Tritton / Leckie.
COO25/6 23/9	EH-R	MD5R	Issue	Ritchie / Warner.
COO29/16 25/9	EH-R	1SDR	Bidgot	Terdich / Jones.
COO31/10 26/9	EH-R	HY5R	Viscount	Tritton / Leckie.
COO37/6 29/9	EH-R	XG7R	Plastic	Doughton / De Maine.

On October 19th, it was received again by 14ARD and they handed it on to 1AD on November 6th, who later sent it off to serve with 50TU.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 113.

⁵⁰⁴ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-184 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-189
Ex NE229⁵⁰⁶

2AD received this aircraft from the UK on February 17th, 1944 and it was then received by 31SQN on June 19th.⁵⁰⁷

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO8/1 26/6	EH-V	LW4V	Torsal	Wentworth / Miller.
COO9/4 29/6	EH-C	SC9C		Sippe / McKenzie. Apparently repl -191.
COO14/1 05/7	EH-V	GV3V	Bepmonk	Wentworth / Miller.
COO21/8 16/7	EH-V	3BKV	Puffdump	Boyd / Anderson.
COO22/8 22/7	EH-V	DY2V	Nutsail	Boyd / Anderson.
COO25/1 27/7	EH-V	YZ1V	Checkmate	Wentworth / Miller.
COO29/4 28/7	EH-V	JM1V	Dispute	Wentworth / Miller.
COO44/8 16/8	EH-V	ZQ8V		Operation cancelled.
COO49/5 21/8	EH-V	4JWV		Wentworth / Miller.
COO49/2 22/8	EH-V	VV1V		Wentworth / Miller. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO5/9 24/8	EH-V	JE3V	Bestlike	Wentworth / Miller.
COO9/1 27/8	EH-V	Q87V	Darcy	Wentworth / Miller. Pilot name R/T C/S.
COO9/2 28/8	EH-V	3ZGV	Norm	Tritton / Leckie. Second evolution. Pilot name R/T C/S.
COO13/1 02/9	EH-V	2JRV	Billow	Forrester / McLean. RTB.
COO13/5 02/9	EH-V	XG7V	Plastic	Forrester / McLean.
COO21/9 17/9	EH-V	VT7V	Bantum	Wackett / Noble.
COO23/11 20/9	EH-V	FR2V	Sunbeam	Wackett / Noble.
COO25/5 23/9	EH-V	MD5V	Issue	Gibbings / Moo.
COO27/10 24/9	EH-V	XM8V	Befog	Apparently replaced by A19-208.
COO29/13 25/9	EH-V	1SDV	Bidgot	Gibbings / Moo.

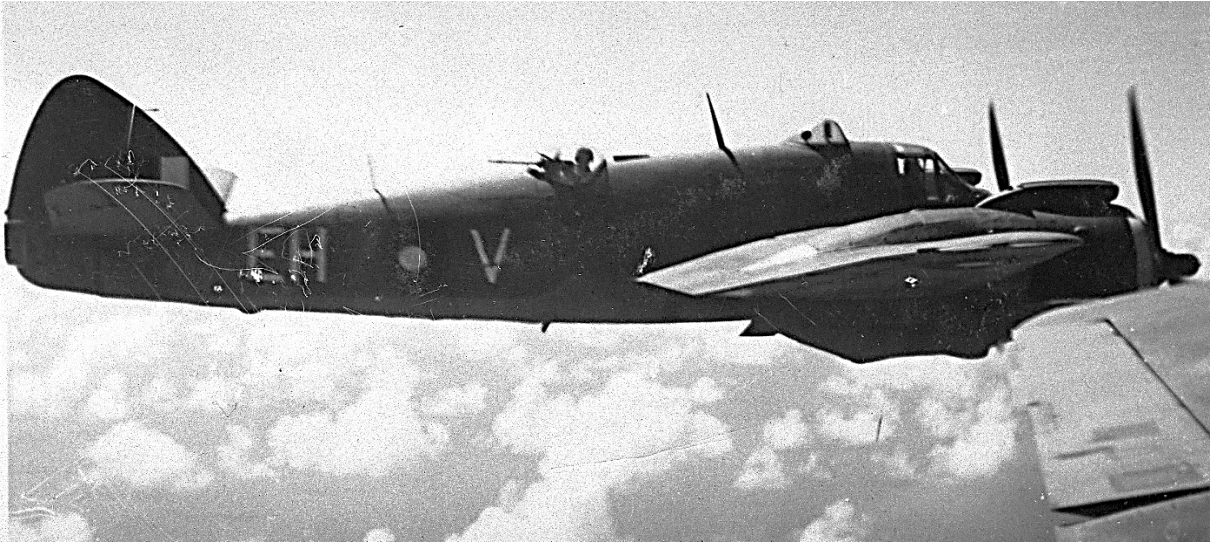
On October 19th, it was received by 14ARDRP and towards the end of November, it was received by 26RSU on Noemfoor Island before becoming a 30SQN machine. It later went to 5OTU.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114.

⁵⁰⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-189 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

A19-189 (continued)



Not the best quality, nevertheless it is an image of Beaufighter Mk X, A19-189/EH-V. Whilst the serial number isn't visible, this is a British built Beaufighter (no Sperry autopilot bulge) and there were only three of those which wore the letters "EH-V", A19-67 – a Mk Ic, A19-78 – a Mk VIc with the 0° dihedral tailplane and A19-189. [Image C. Wentworth via Neville Parnell].



Another shot of A19-189 – the censor has attempted to obliterate the serial, but it is still (just) readable. [Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria image H98.104/4041].

Beaufighter X
A19-191
Ex NE231⁵⁰⁹

Received at 2AD on February 17th, 1944, from the UK, A19-191 was then received by 31SQN on June 26th.⁵¹⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO9/4 29/6	EH-C	SC9C		Apparently replaced by A19-189.
COO11/1 02/7	EH-C	4ENC	Ragdog	Boyd / Anderson.
COO15/6 05/7	EH-C	3YOC	Censor	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO13/11 05/7	EH-C	RX6C	Seaward	Cruikshank / Weste. Replaced A19-160. EH-C confirmed by DRY/M9/5 Jul.
COO25/4 27/7	EH-C	YZ1C	Checkmate	Gibbins / Moo.
COO38/1 03/8	EH-C	RV1C	Betridge	Operation cancelled.
COO42/4 09/8	EH-C	3ZGC	Classdash	Taylor / Packham.
COO44/13 16/8	EH-C	ZQ8C		Operation cancelled.
COO46/11 17/8	EH-C	4QAC	Assist	Linney / Finlay.
COO49/3 22/8	EH-C	VV1C		Taylor / Packham. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO7/4 24/8	EH-C	1NBC	Canticle	Gibbons / Moo. RTB, U/S.
COO6/6 24/8	EH-C	MX6C	Poison	Taylor / Packham.
COO13/4 02/9	EH-C	2JRC	Billow	Read / Leach. RTB.
COO14/6 03/9	EH-C	4SAC	Civic	Read / Leach.
COO22/16 17/9	EH-C	WK6C	Kindred	Read / Leach.
COO23/5 19/9	EH-C	2SPC	Benquick	Strachan / Brassil.
COO25/7 23/9	EH-C	MD5C	Issue	Provost / McGuire.
COO25/10 23/9	EH-C	XM8C	Befog	Cancelled.
COO28/7 24/9	EH-C	XM8C	Befog	Read / Leach.
COO27/8 24/9	EH-C	XM8C	Befog	Strahan / Brassil.
COO31/12 26/9	EH-C	HY5C	Viscount	Cobb / Green.

On October 21st, it was sent down to 14ARDRP for temporary storage and was subsequently received by 26RSU at Noemfoor Island on December 6th. It served then with 30SQN and later, after returning to Australia, with 5OTU.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114.

⁵¹⁰ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-191 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

Beaufighter X
A19-192
Ex NE232⁵¹²

This aircraft was received at 2AD from the UK on February 17th, 1944. 31SQN received it on June 30th.⁵¹³

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO21/10 16/7	EH-T	3BKT	Puffdump	Cobb / Green.
COO25/5 27/7	EH-T	YZ1T	Checkmate	Cockroft / Davis.
COO28/3 28/7	EH-T	GA9T	Niceguy	Terdich / Jones.
COO31/2 31/7	EH-T	4ENT	Ragdog	Cobb / Green. (Was originally VJ4T / Bewang).
COO40/1 08/8	EH-T	HR3T	Picksome	Tritton / Leckie.
COO44/12 16/8	EH-T	ZQ8T		Operation cancelled.
COO46/10 17/8	EH-T	4QAT	Assist	Cobb / Green. RTB.
COO49/6 21/8	EH-U	4JWU		Wackett / Noble. Apparently repl -175.
COO49/12 22/8	EH-T	VV1T		Cobb / Green. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO13/7 02/9	EH-T	XG7T	Plastic	Bullen / Sparke.
COO21/7 17/9	EH-T	VT7T	Bantum	Strachan / Brassil.
COO23/9 20/9	EH-T	FR2T	Sunbeam	Cobb / Green.
COO25/8 23/9	EH-T	MD5T	Issue	Linney / Finlay.
COO27/11 24/9	EH-T	XM8T	Befog	Ritchie / Warner. Failed to Return.

Coomalie 27 of 24th September, 1944, was a continuation of Coomalie 25 from the previous day. Coomalie 27 required two Beaufighter's, relieved as necessary to rendezvous with a Catalina, leaving Darwin at 240515Z (2:45 pm Darwin time on the 24th) with a flight planned ground speed of 110 knots, at position 09°00'S 130°10'E. From there, one of the Beaufighter's was to then conduct a reconnaissance to and of Seroea and the other Beaufighter was to escort the Catalina there. The two Beaufighter's were then to remain, providing top cover over Seroea, until last light. At first light the next morning another two Beaufighter's were to be overhead Seroea so as to escort the Catalina back to Darwin unless an estimated time of arrival for Darwin had been received from the Catalina during the night, in which case that escort would be cancelled. Call signs between the Catalina "Us" and the Beaufighter's "You" would be on 3885 Kcs and visual signals would consist of green very meaning "no further cover required" and red very meaning "attack and destroy all vessels in sight". Any power-driven vessel or vessels with one or no Dutch flag to be attacked and destroyed.⁵¹⁴ The time of departure of the Catalina was amended to 240500Z (2:30 pm Darwin time) and the destination changed from Seroea to Nila. The cover from first light on the 25th would still be required if no ETA was received from the Catalina.⁵¹⁵

A19-192, in company with A19-208 – Coomalie 27 duties 11 and 10 – were the second pair assigned for this mission, taking over the top cover responsibilities from the first pair who had conducted the reconnaissance and the escort of the Catalina to Nila Island. Wheels up from Coomalie Creek was planned for 240600Z (3:30 pm Darwin time) and they expected to be overhead Nila Island at 240825Z (5:55 pm). They would be off task at 240920Z (6:50 pm) which would get them home by 241155Z

⁵¹² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114.

⁵¹³ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-192 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵¹⁴ 79WG/G4/23 Sep in AWM64, 6/5C.

⁵¹⁵ 79WG/G5/24 Sep, *ibid.*

A19-192 (continued)

(9:25 pm). A landing at Darwin was permitted if their fuel state required it.⁵¹⁶ Neither A19-192 or A19-208 returned to base.⁵¹⁷

Having successfully carried out their assigned task,

... the aircraft were returning to base together, A19-192 was flying No. 2 to A19-208. The coast was not sighted by the Navigator of A19-192 owing to haze, but it is understood that the Radar plotted the aircraft as having crossed the coast at 1958 hours [7:58 pm], 21 miles EAST of CAPE HOTHAM. The aircraft continued on together until approximately 2205 hours [10:05 pm], when the Pilot instructed the Navigator he was going to take over the lead, as he believed he was then lost. He then flew in front of A19-208 and waggled his wings, and the Navigator of A19-192 signalled A19-208 by Aldis Lamp, "Follow me". No reply was received. A19-192 then homed on Fenton Beacon. After a space of approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes, lights were sighted, which turned out to be a bright fire, and beyond that a circle of bright electric lights. The aircraft flew past these for a period of from two to three minutes where the Minima was lost on the D.F. Loop. The Navigator then informed the Pilot that he considered the aircraft was near FENTON, and that the crew should have been able to see the FENTON searchlight. No searchlight was sighted, and the aircraft circled to make sure none was visible. The Pilot then informed the Navigator that their [sic] was very little petrol left, and he had decided to fly towards the bright lights previously mentioned, gain altitude, and bale out. He circled over the lights at least once in a climbing turn, and [the] Pilot called the Navigator to the front of the aircraft where the Navigator tightened the Pilots parachute straps, removed his ear-phones and the Pilot undid his Safety Belt. The fuel gauges were then noted by the Navigator to be reading "zero". The pilot instructed the Navigator to open the bottom hatch, which he did, five or ten seconds later the Pilot gave the order to jump. The Navigator jumped and reached the ground safely, but whilst floating in the air, believes the aircraft passed him some 200 yards away definitely out of control. The Navigator was picked up next morning at approximately 0820 hours on the railway-line, approximately One Mile from HOWLEY STATION, by a South bound train, and was later returned to the Squadron by Service Ambulance. The aircraft was discovered by Air Search next day, approximately three miles due North of BROCKS CREEK, and when a ground party reached the aircraft later in the day, there was no sign of P/O. RITCHIE in or near it. W/O. WARNER's parachute harness was found approximately Four Hundred Yards from the scene of the crash. A ground and Air Search continued for four full days, but there [was] still no sign of the missing Pilot.⁵¹⁸

The crew of A19-192 were:

Pilot	Pilot Officer Lloyd Francis Ritchie and,
Navigator	Warrant Officer George Robert Warner. ⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ COO/M3/24 Sep, *ibid*.

⁵¹⁷ COO/M4/24 Sep, *ibid*.

⁵¹⁸ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty – Beaufighter A19-192 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

⁵¹⁹ 2BPSO signal BC121 of 24 Sep (1944) in Casualty Repatriation File Ritchie Lloyd Francis 426287; NAA: A705, 166/35/364.

A19-192 (continued)

We know that A19-192 was coded EH-T. This aircraft has frequently been quoted as also carrying the name "*Pistol Packin Momma*". But were they the same machine?



Publicity shot of 31SQN's A19-192/EH-T at Coomalie Creek. [Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria image H98.104/3858].



31SQN's "*Pistol Packin Momma*", but how do we know if it really was A19-192/EH-T? [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P004485 via Mike Mirkovic].

Beaufighter X
A19-193
Ex NE245⁵²⁰

Received at 2AD from the UK on February 17th, 1944, this machine was received by 31SQN on June 29th.⁵²¹

At about 3:30 pm on 3rd July, 1944, A19-193 departed Coomalie Creek to conduct a local training flight involving air to ground gunnery followed by some general air tests. During the course of the flight the intercom became unserviceable so, the pilot was forced to pass written messages to the navigator via their passenger who was being carried to assist with airborne activities. Propeller feathering/unfeathering tests were carried out first on the starboard engine and then the port engine. After unfeathering the propeller on the port engine, it was realised that whilst engine RPM seemed normal, the engine didn't seem to be developing any power. The aircraft had slowed to 120 knots, was losing height and yawing to port. An emergency landing was attempted about 5 miles west of the fifty-mile peg on the Stuart Highway. The left wing struck the trunk of a large tree about six feet from the ground and this ruptured a fuel tank. As soon as the aircraft came to rest, fire broke out. The navigator's seat had broken free during the crash, but he was able to then release his safety harness and escape the aircraft through the navigator's cupola. The pilot also escaped the wreck but with his clothing alight and both he and the navigator were able to move away from the aircraft which was now well alight with ammunition exploding. Almost straight away however, the pilot died. The passenger didn't escape the wreckage and was thought to have been killed instantly. The navigator, suffering from burns and seriously injured, survived.⁵²²

Those on board were:

Pilot	Flight Lieutenant William John Francis Coote,
Navigator	Flight Sergeant Thoms John Dillon and,
Passenger	Corporal Kevin Harold Crouch (Fitter IIE). ⁵²³

⁵²⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114.

⁵²¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-193 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵²² Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty, Beaufighter A19-193 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 11; NAA: A9845, 21.

⁵²³ 2BPSO signal BC71 of 3 Jul (1944) in Casualty Repatriation File Crouch Kevin Harold 17110; NAA: A705, 166/8/534.

Beaufighter X
A19-197
Ex NE230⁵²⁴

This aircraft was received from the UK by 2AD on April 16th, 1944. 2AD passed it on to 14ARDRP on July 20th and 31SQN received it on August 12th.⁵²⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO44/15 16/8	EH-J	ZQ8J		Operation cancelled.
COO49/8 21/8	EH-J	4JWJ		Terdich / Jones.
COO49/5 22/8	EH-J	VV1J		Linney / Finlay. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO4/1 24/8	EH-J	JE3J	Bestlike	Tritton / Leckie.
COO13/8 02/9	EH-J	XG7J	Plastic	Kerrigan / Smith.
COO22/14 17/9	EH-J	WK6J	Kindred	Cobb / Green.

On September 27th, it was allotted to 5OTU, but then re-allotted to 30SQN who received it on October 3rd.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114. Parnell notes this serial with a question mark.

⁵²⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-197 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*

Beaufighter X
A19-198
Ex NE356⁵²⁷

Received by 2AD on March 16th, 1944, from the UK, this Beaufighter was then received by 31SQN on July 14th.⁵²⁸

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO25/3 27/7	EH-D	YZ1D	Checkmate	Ritchie / Warner.
COO34/4 01/8	EH-D	MX7D	Began	Kerrigan / Smith.
COO37/3 02/8	EH-D	DY2D	Nutsail	Ritchie / Warner.
COO42/3 09/8	EH-D	3ZGD	Classdash	Ritchie / Warner.
COO49/7 22/8	EH-D	VV1D		Ritchie / Warner. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO7/3 24/8	EH-D	1NBD	Canticle	Cobb / Green. RTB, U/S.
COO5/10 24/8	EH-D	JE3D	Bestlike	Wackett / Noble.
COO11/3 30/8	EH-D	PF5D	Abed	Ritchie / Warner.
COO21/5 17/9	EH-D	VT7D	Bantum	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO23/8 19/9	EH-D	2SPD	Benquick	Lasscock / Broderick.
COO23/12 20/9	EH-D	FR2D	Sunbeam	Bowman / White.
COO25/9 23/9	EH-D	XM8D	Befog	Cancelled.
COO28/6 24/9	EH-D	XM8D	Befog	Terdich / Jones.
COO27/9 24/9	EH-D	XM8D	Befog	Cockroft / Davis.
COO29/14 25/9	EH-D	1SDD	Bidgot	Read / Leach.
COO31/11 26/9	EH-D	HY5D	Viscount	Linney / Finlay.

It was issued to 14ARD on October 18th and ended up with 30SQN.⁵²⁹



Only three British built Beaufighter's carried the letters "EH-D" and this is most likely the last of them, A19-198. [Aviation Heritage Museum of WA image P004484 via Mike Mirkovic].

⁵²⁷ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114. Parnell notes this serial with a question mark.

⁵²⁸ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-198 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

Beaufighter X
A19-203
Ex NE487⁵³⁰

This aircraft was received at 2AD from the UK on April 19th, 1944 and was received by 31SQN on July 31st.⁵³¹

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO11/2 02/7	EH-X	4ENX	Ragdog	Apparently replaced by A19-180.
COO44/14 16/8	EH-X	ZQ8X		Operation cancelled.
COO46/8 17/8	EH-X	4QAX	Assist	Boyd / Anderson.
COO49/7 21/8	EH-X	4JWX		Boyd / Anderson.
COO49/4 22/8	EH-X	VV1X		Boyd / Anderson. Second evolution. Ignore A51 duty numbers.
COO7/4 24/8	EH-X	1NBX	Canticle	Gibbins / Moo. A51 only.
COO6/5 24/8	EH-X	MX6X	Poison	Boyd / Anderson.
COO9/2 27/8	EH-X	Q87X	Boyd	Boyd / Anderson. Pilot name R/T C/S.
COO9/1 28/8	EH-X	3ZGX	Dave	Doughton / DeMaine. Second evolution. Pilot name R/T C/S.
COO14/1 03/9	EH-X	4SAX	Civic	Boyd / Anderson.
COO36/8 29/9	EH-X	XG7X	Plastic	Tritton / Leckie.
COO42/3 04/10	EH-X	LD6X	Outbreak	Rutherford / Crosby.

On October 6th, A19-203 was engaged in Rocket Projectile training on "J" Range, about 10 miles south east of Coomalie Creek. After being cleared onto the range shortly before 5 pm, the aircraft commenced its firing runs, firing a single rocket on each pass. Three passes had been successfully completed and the aircraft was conducting its fourth pass, at about 50 feet, and had apparently just fired another rocket when the starboard wing dropped and the aircraft entered a 60° bank. Almost immediately, the wing hit the ground and the aircraft disintegrated with the wreckage bursting into flames. The crew was killed instantly.⁵³²

The crewmembers were:

Pilot Flying Officer I.J. Ingle and,
Navigator Pilot Officer A.S. Way.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114. Parnell notes this serial with a question mark.

⁵³¹ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-203 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵³² Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty – Beaufighter A19-203 in Beaufighter A19 Accidents Part 12; NAA: A9845, 22.

⁵³³ RAAF Form P.T.81 Preliminary Report (External) of Flying Accident or Forced Landing, Serial No. 275 for Period 1944/45, *ibid*.

Beaufighter X
A19-204
Ex NE584⁵³⁴

On April 19th, 1944, this aircraft was recorded as having been received from the United Kingdom at 2AD, RAAF Richmond, NSW. It was sent north to 14ARDRP, Gorrie, for short term storage pending allotment to 31SQN, arriving there on August 12th. It was received by 31SQN on August 25th, but the next day apparently caught fire in its dispersal insert during its acceptance inspection. It was recorded as being repairable at the unit, but no further entries were recorded on its aircraft status card until its issue to and reception by 30SQN on December 28th.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114.

⁵³⁵ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-204 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

Beaufighter X
A19-208
Ex NE576⁵³⁶

This aircraft was received by 1AD on June 13th, 1944, from the UK and was received by 50TU on August 10th, 1944. It was then issued to 31SQN on September 4th, although its actual date of arrival wasn't recorded.⁵³⁷

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO27/10 24/9		XM8	Befog	Wackett / Noble. Apparently repl -189. Failed to Return.

See entry for A19-192.

A19-208 was later found to have crashed approximately 6 nautical miles north of Goodparla homestead.⁵³⁸

The crew of A19-208 were:

Pilot Squadron Leader Wilbur Lawrence Wackett and,
Navigator Pilot Officer Keith Eric William Noble.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶ Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 114. Parnell notes this serial with a question mark.

⁵³⁷ RAAF Form E/E.88 Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines, Mechanical Transport & Marine Craft for A19-208 in Aircraft Status Cards Beaufighter A19-1 to A19-218; NAA: A10297, BLOCK 106.

⁵³⁸ Leon Kane-Maguire, *Lost Without Trace* (2011) 199.

⁵³⁹ 2BPSO signal BC122 of 24 Sep (1944) in Casualty Repatriation File Ritchie Lloyd Francis 426287; NAA: A705, 166/35/364.

Beaufighter 21
A8-2

Delivered to 1AD on July 2nd, 1944, this machine was received by 31SQN on September 28th.⁵⁴⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/4 25/10	EH-Z	LF1Z	Baggo	Terdich / Jones.

It was still with 31SQN when that unit left 79WG and joined 77WG overseas.⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴⁰ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-2 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-5

DAP delivered this aircraft to 1AD on July 29th, 1944 and it was handed over to 31SQN on September 8th.⁵⁴²

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/1 13/10	EH-N	1MQN	Jocko	Strachan / Brassil.
COO1/3 20/10	EH-N	3BNN	Skating	Sounness / Gant.
COO7/3 27/10	EH-N	JY5N	Acock	Gibbings / Moo.
COO29/3 17/11	EH-N	JU5N	Stemless	Sippe / McKenzie. RTB, U/S.



This is A8-5/EH-N (not A8-6 as captioned on the adf-serials website gallery). It would have been delivered to 31SQN in overall Foliage Green but has received a local disruptive pattern. It would make sense for the darker of the upper colours to be Foliage Green but whether it is or not, grey has also now been applied and a third, much lighter shade has been applied to the undersides – evidently in keeping with NWA's stated desire for Beaufighters to be Foliage Green and Medium Sea Grey over "Sea Grey". [ADF-Serials Gallery via Mike Mirkovic].

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴² Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-5 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-6
"Winston"

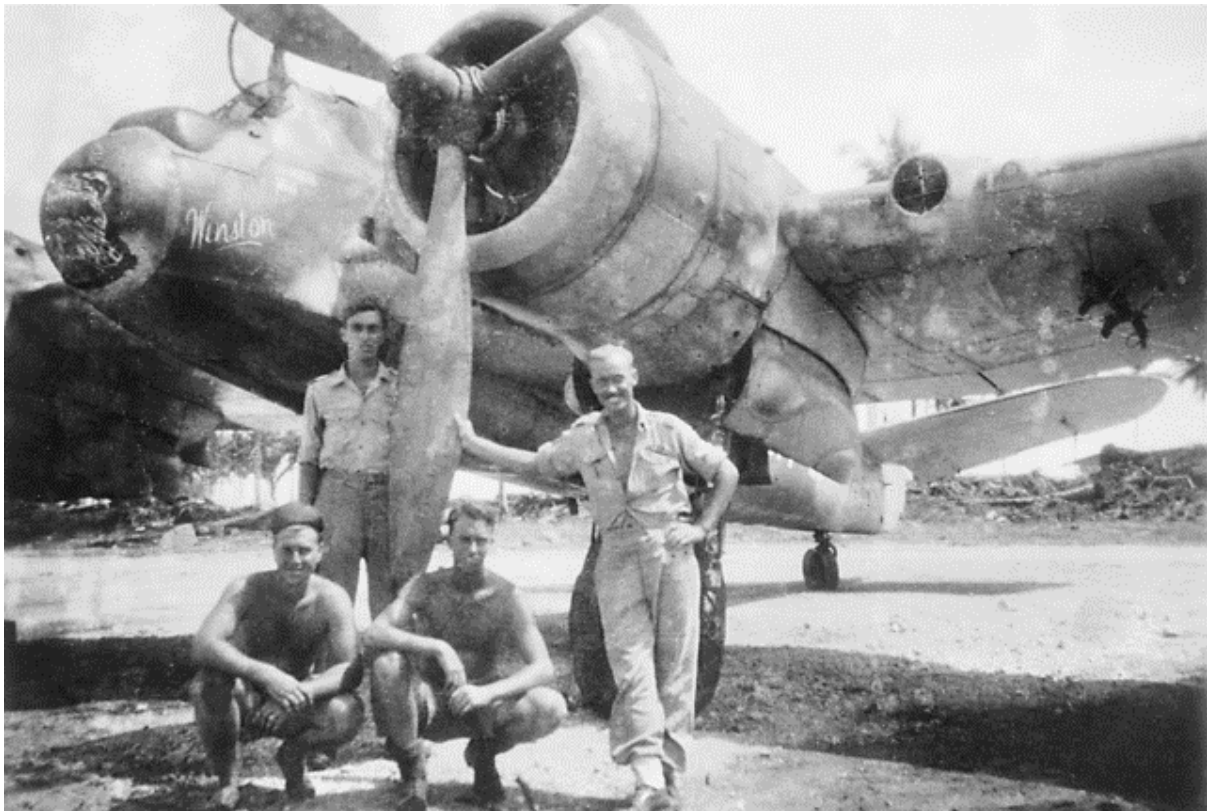
DAP handed this aircraft over to 1AD on July 23rd, 1944 and 31SQN received it on September 20th.⁵⁴⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO36/9 29/9	EH-G	XG7G	Plastic	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO1/5 20/10	EH-G	3BNG	Skating	Apparently replaced by A8-8.
COO3/6 23/10	EH-C	YX7C	Minute	McGuigan / Lewis. Apparently repl -24.
COO29/6 17/11	EH-Y	JU5Y	Stemless	Lasscock / Broderick. Apparently repl -23.
COO38/7 22/11	EH-G	FP8G	Dingo	Doughton / DeMaine.

It participated in the first operation flown by an Australian made Beaufighter Mark 21 by Number 31 Squadron.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁴⁵



31 Squadron's A8-6/EH-G "Winston" after moving overseas. [AWM image P01157.009].

⁵⁴⁴ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-6 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

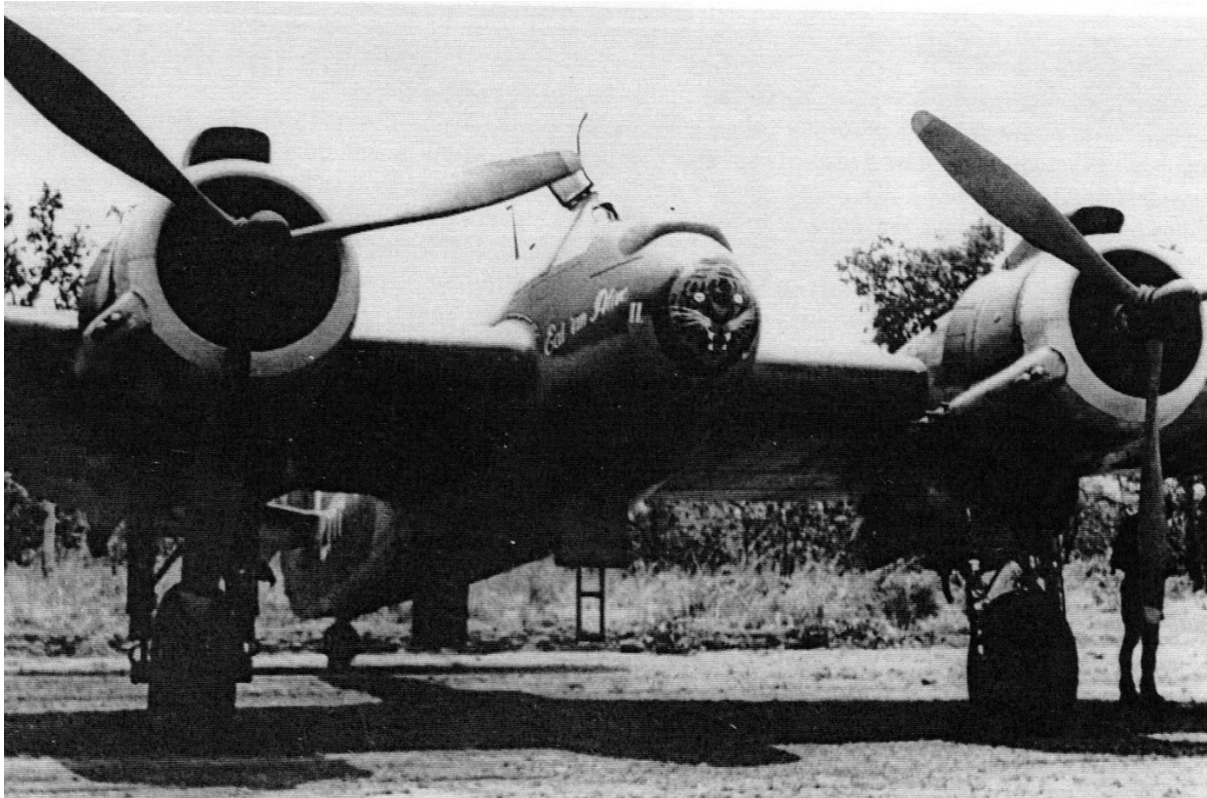
Beaufighter 21
A8-7
"Eat 'em Alive II"

On July 24th, 1944, this Beaufighter was handed over to 1AD from DAP. Its date of receipt by 31SQN wasn't noted on ADF-Serials.⁵⁴⁶

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/2 25/10	EH-F	LF1F	Baggo	Apparently replaced by A8-21.
COO29/1 17/11	EH-F	JU5F	Stemless	Apparently replaced by A8-10.
COO33/5 19/11	EH-F	LS5F	Beyoll	Klug / Jones.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁴⁷



I believe this is A8-7/EH-F "Eat 'em Alive II". This also appears to have a three-colour (two top, one bottom) non-standard disruptive camouflage finish. [Image via Mark Harbour].

⁵⁴⁶ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-7 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-8

Received at 1AD from DAP on July 28th, 1944, they handed it over to 31SQN on October 2nd.⁵⁴⁸

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO47/2 13/10	EH-A	1MQA	Jocko	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO1/5 20/10	EH-G	3BNG	Skating	McGuigan / Lewis. Apparently repl A8-6.
COO28/2 15/11	EH-A	FY5A	Pedkill	Doughton / DeMaine.
COO37/3 21/11	EH-A	FY5A	Pedkill	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO38/3 22/11	EH-D	FP8D	Dingo	Klug / Jones. Apparently repl A8-11.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁸ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-8 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-9

This aircraft was also received at 1AD on July 28th, 1944, from DAP and was likewise handed over to 31SQN on October 2nd.⁵⁵⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/4 23/10	EH-B	YX7B	Minute	Ellis / Coleman.
COO7/7 27/10	EH-B	JY5B	Acock	Rutherford / Crosby.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-9 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-10

Received at 1AD from DAP on August 1st, 1944. It was received by 31SQN on September 28th.⁵⁵²

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/2 20/10	EH-T	3BNT	Skating	Boyd / Anderson.
COO3/1 23/10	EH-T	YX7T	Minute	Tritton / Leckie.
COO7/1 27/10	EH-T	JY5T	Acock	Boyd / Anderson.
COO29/1 17/11	EH-F	JU5F	Stemless	Boyd / Anderson. Apparently repl A8-7.
COO33/7 19/11	EH-O	LS5O	Beyoll	Gibbins / Moo. Apparently repl A8-16.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-10 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-11

1AD received this aircraft from DAP on August 5th, 1944. They handed it over to 31SQN on October 16th.⁵⁵⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/2 23/10	EH-U	YX7U	Minute	Careedy / Jenkins. Apparently repl unk "U".
COO7/6 27/10	EH-Y	JY5Y	Acock	Careedy / Jenkins. Apparently repl -23.
COO32/2 19/11	EH-D	LS5D	Beyoll	Careedy / Jenkins.
COO38/3 22/11	EH-D	FP8D	Dingo	Apparently replaced by A8-8.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-11 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-12

DAP handed this machine over to 1AD on August 1st, 1944. 1AD, in turn, passed it on to 31SQN who received it on October 10th.⁵⁵⁶

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO37/6 21/11	EH-I	FY5I	Pedkill	Read / Leach.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-12 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-13

This Beaufighter was received by 1AD from DAP on August 16th, 1944. 31SQN received it on September 20th.⁵⁵⁸

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/3 25/10	EH-K	LF1K	Baggo	Thorpe / Brodie.
COO7/8 27/10	EH-K	JY5K	Acock	Sounness / Gant.

A8-13 suffered a heavy landing at Coomalie Creek on November 26th, which burst both main tyres and collapsed the tail strut.⁵⁵⁹

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁸ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-13 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁵⁹ Aircraft Accident Data card for A8-13 dated 26.11.44 in Beaufighter A8 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 51.

⁵⁶⁰ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-13 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

Beaufighter 21
A8-14

This aircraft was received by 31SQN on September 29th, 1944.⁵⁶¹

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/5 23/10	EH-J	YX7J	Minute	Gibbings / Moo.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶¹ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-14 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-15

DAP handed this machine over to 1AD on August 15th, 1944. 1AD passed it on to 31SQN on October 7th.⁵⁶³

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/6 25/10	EH-P	LF1P	Baggo	Cockroft / Davis.
COO7/5 27/10	EH-P	JY5P	Acock	Sippe / McKenzie.
COO32/3 19/11	EH-P	LS5P	Beyoll	Cockroft / Davis.
COO38/4 22/11	EH-P	FP8P	Dingo	Cockroft / Davis.



Beaufighter 21, A8-15/EH-P at Coomalie Creek. [Image R.C. Cockroft via Neville Parnell].

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶³ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-15 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-16

Received at 1AD from DAP on August 16th, it was handed over to 31SQN on September 29th, 1944.⁵⁶⁵

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/4 20/10	EH-O	3BNO	Skating	Taylor / Packham.
COO7/2 27/10	EH-O	JY50	Acock	McGuigan / Lewis.
COO28/3 15/11	EH-O	FY50	Pedkill	Terdich / Jones.
COO33/7 19/11	EH-O	LS50	Beyoll	Apparently replaced by A8-10.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-16 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-17
"Macksville"

DAP delivered this aircraft to 1AD on August 17th, 1944. It was received by 31SQN on October 10th.⁵⁶⁷

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO38/2 22/11	EH-X	FP8X	Dingo	Linney / Finlay.

On November 25th, it was taking off for a test flight when it swung off the side of the runway and collided with an embankment.⁵⁶⁸ Evidently, the take-off was proceeding in a normal fashion until the pilot advanced the throttles from the cruising gate to the rated gate. At that point, the starboard engine lost power and a violent swing developed. Despite attempted corrective action, the aircraft left the runway and hit a drainage ditch which collapsed the undercarriage. The crew of two and a member of ground staff riding as a passenger weren't injured.⁵⁶⁹



After the dust had settled, Beaufighter A8-17/EH-X "Macksville" in a ditch at Coomalie Creek. [Image via adf-gallery.com.au].

⁵⁶⁷ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-17 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁶⁸ Aircraft Accident Data card for A8-17 dated 25.11.44 in Beaufighter A8 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 51.

⁵⁶⁹ Confirmatory Memorandum, Aircraft Casualty – Beaufighter A19-17 [sic] in Beaufighter A8 Accidents Part 1; NAA: A9845, 51.

Beaufighter 21
A8-18

1AD received this aircraft from DAP on August 17th, 1944. They handed it over to 31SQN on October 7th.⁵⁷⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/7 20/10	EH-L	3BNL	Skating	Ellis / Coleman. RTB, U/S.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-18 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-19

1AD received this machine on August 21st, 1944, from DAP. It was then received by 31SQN on October 12th.⁵⁷²

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/3 23/10	EH-E	YX7E	Minute	Bowman / White.
COO28/4 15/11	EH-E	FY5E	Pedkill	Bowman / White.
COO29/4 17/11	EH-E	JU5E	Stemless	Rutherford / Crosby.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷² Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-19 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

**Beaufighter 21
A8-20**

Received on August 28th, 1944, at 1AD from DAP. 31SQN received it on October 9th.⁵⁷⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/5 25/10	EH-M	LF1M	Baggo	Linney / Finlay.
COO7/4 27/10	EH-M	JY5M	Acock	Ellis / Coleman.
COO37/4 21/11	EH-M	FY5M	Pedkill	Sounness / Cant.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁷⁵



31SQN's A8-20/EH-M. [AWM image OG3396].

⁵⁷⁴ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-20 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-21

DAP delivered this aircraft to 1AD on August 26th, 1944 and it was then received by 31SQN on October 7th.⁵⁷⁶

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/2 25/10	EH-F	LF1F	Baggo	Doughton / DeMaine. Apparently repl -7.
COO33/8 19/11	EH-R	LS5R	Beyoll	Linney / Finlay.
COO37/5 21/11	EH-R	FY5R	Pedkill	Rutherford / Crosby.
COO38/1 22/11	EH-R	FP8R	Dingo	Boyd / Beasley. A51: Boyd / Anderson.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁶ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-21 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-22

Received at 1AD from DAP on August 28th, 1944, it was handed over to 31SQN on October 6th.⁵⁷⁸

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO1/6 20/10	EH-Q	3BNQ	Skating	Provost / McGuire.
COO28/5 15/11	EH-Q	FY5Q	Pedkill	Read / Leach.
COO29/5 17/11	EH-Q	JU5Q	Stemless	Provost / McGuire.
COO36/2 20/11	EH-Q	TH32Q		Cancelled.
COO38/6 22/11	EH-Q	FP8Q	Dingo	Terdich / Jones.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-22 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-23

This Beaufighter was received at 1AD from DAP on August 28th, 1944. 31SQN took charge of it on October 16th.⁵⁸⁰

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO7/6 27/10	EH-Y	JY5Y	Acock	Apparently replaced by A8-11.
COO29/6 17/11	EH-Y	JU5Y	Stemless	Apparently replaced by A8-6.
COO32/1 19/11	EH-Y	LS5Y	Beyoll	Tritton / Leckie.
COO38/5 22/11	EH-Y	FP8Y	Dingo	Tritton / Leckie.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-23 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-24

1AD took delivery of this aircraft from DAP on September 5th, 1944. 31SQN received it on October 16th.⁵⁸²

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/6 23/10	EH-C	YX7C	Minute	Apparently replaced by A8-6.
COO29/2 17/11	EH-C	JU5C	Stemless	Taylor / Packham.
COO33/6 19/11	EH-C	LS5C	Beyoll	Ellis / Coleman.
COO38/8 22/11	EH-C	FP8C	Dingo	Bowman / White.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸² Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-24 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-25

DAP delivered this aircraft to 1AD on September 9th, 1944 and it was handed over to 31SQN on October 16th.⁵⁸⁴

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO6/7 25/10	EH-V	LF1V	Baggo	Read / Leach.
COO32/4 19/11	EH-V	LS5V	Beyoll	McGuigan / Lewis.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-25 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

Beaufighter 21
A8-26

DAP delivered this aircraft to 1AD on September 9th, 1944 and it was handed over to 31SQN on October 20th.⁵⁸⁶ It didn't fly on operations from Australia; might it have been EH-U?

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letters	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/2 23/10	EH-U	YX7U	Minute	Apparently replaced by A8-11.

It moved overseas with 31SQN.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁶ Entry for DAP Beaufighter A8-26 via <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a8.htm> at 04NOV17.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

Unknown Beaufighter's

The following entries are occurrences for which a serial number hasn't been confirmed.

This first entry may have been either a British built Beaufighter or an Australian built Beaufighter 21:

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO42/4 04/10	EH-S	LD6S	Outbreak	Apparently replaced by A19-181. Parnell (1980) [116] claims A8-44 was coded EH-S but doesn't provide any evidence; at any rate, that source notes that A8-44 was not taken on charge by RAAF until 06OCT and not by 31SQN until 26DEC).

The second entry is for an Australian built Beaufighter 21 and, like the two above, its serial number hasn't been identified yet:

1944:

Mission/Duty Date	Aircraft Letter	W/T Call sign	R/T Call sign	Remarks
COO3/2 23/10	EH-U	YX7U	Minute	Apparently replaced by A8-11.

Notes Regarding No. 31 Squadron Beaufacters Whilst Based at Coomalie Creek

General

31SQN's first two operations were flown on 17th November, 1942. The last operation flown by their British built Beaufacters was COO42 of 4th October, 1944 (A19-140, -159, -181 and -203). The first operation flown by an Australian built Beaufacters of 31SQN was as part of COO36 of 29th September (A8-6). Beaufacters of 31SQN were the first RAAF aircraft to use rocket projectiles on operations in the Pacific Theatre (Coomalie 29 of 17th November); they had carried them on operations for the first time on 29th September (Coomalie 36 and 37), but no suitable targets presented themselves and the rockets were discharged at sea on the way back to Coomalie Creek. 31SQN's last operation as part of 79WG and North Western Area was Coomalie 38 of 22nd November, 1944. On 26th November, 1944, the Squadron commenced its move from Coomalie Creek to Noemfoor Island and this was completed on 2nd December.⁵⁸⁸

Colour Schemes

All of the RAAF's first 54 Beaufacters were Mark Ic's built by Fairey Aviation. There is conjecture as to whether they would have been factory finished in the RAF's Temperate Land Scheme (TLS – Dark Green and Dark Earth over Sky Type S) because Fairey's had previously built Beaufacters for Fighter Command or, because these were Coastal Command equipped aircraft, in the RAF's Temperate Sea Scheme (TSS – Dark Slate Grey and Extra Dark Sea Grey over Sky Type S). There is also conjecture that, if the aircraft left the factory in TSS, that they were repainted at a RAF Maintenance Unit for RAAF acceptance prior to being dismantled, packed into boxes, and shipped to Australia. The RAAF requirement at the time was for operational land planes to be finished in the RAAF colours of Foliage Green and Earth Brown over Sky Blue.⁵⁸⁹ Because these 54 aircraft had been ordered by the RAAF, it is plausible that they would have received a surface finish in accordance with the ordering customers' requirements (either at the factory or MU) and as the required colours would not have existed in Britain, local equivalent colours would have been used. Those local equivalents were: Dark Green and Dark Earth over Sky (TLS). After arrival in Australia, and aside from touching up minor damage, they weren't repainted until more significant re-painting became necessary after a period of service,⁵⁹⁰ which was reportedly happening in some circumstances after as little as 40 flying hours.⁵⁹¹

Later aircraft are believed to have arrived in Australia wearing the RAF's contemporary TSS appropriate to the period of manufacture.

⁵⁸⁸ RAAF Form A50 Operations Record Book of 31 Squadron, Commanding Officer's Operational Summary for the Month of November, 1944, in RAAF Unit History Sheets Number 31 Squadron Aug 42 to Aug 45; NAA: A9186, 61.

⁵⁸⁹ Air Force Headquarters Technical Order, Aircraft General Instruction C11 (Issue 4), Standard Aircraft Finishes and Markings, Part I [1 a i and ii] in AMOE Technical – Aircraft General Instruction C11 Issue 3 Standard Aircraft Finishes Markings and Markings of Unit Equipment; NAA: A705, 150/4/852.

⁵⁹⁰ Air Force Headquarters Technical Order, Beaufacters Instruction No. 22 [5] in DTS – Beaufacters Aircraft – General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

⁵⁹¹ Enclosure 72A, Extracts from Miscellaneous Notes by the Director of Aircraft Maintenance – Serial No. 2, Port Moresby 23rd June, 1943, *ibid*.

Horizontal Stabilizers

RAAF Beaufighters from A19-1 to A19-72 inclusive, were all Mark Ic's built by Fairey Aviation Company in the United Kingdom.⁵⁹² Aircraft from A19-73 to -78, -85 to -90, -97 to -99, -110 to -112 and aircraft A19-114, -115, -119, -120, -125 to -129, -135 and -136 were Mark VIc machines, also built by Fairey Aviation.⁵⁹³ Externally, these Mk VI's were virtually indistinguishable from the earlier Mk I's including having flat (0° dihedral) horizontal stabilizers. All of these aircraft had former RAF serial numbers in the "Tnnnn" range.

RAAF Beaufighters from A19-79 to A19-84 and A19-91 to -96 were Mk VIc's built by Bristol Aircraft Company, they also had the flat tail plane like the Fairey Aviation built machines. These aircraft had former RAF serial numbers in the "ELnnn" block. Aircraft with the serial numbers A19-100 to -109 (except -105 which wasn't delivered to Australia), -113, -116 to -118, -121 to -124 and -130 to -134 were also Mk VIc's built by Bristol's⁵⁹⁴ but were equipped with the 12° dihedral horizontal stabilizers. These aircraft had former serials in the "JLnnn" range.

All of the subsequent A19 serialled Beaufighters were either Mk X's or XIc's and all were built by Bristols⁵⁹⁵ with the 12° dihedral tail plane.

In so far as 31SQN aircraft were concerned, the dihedral horizontal stabilizer would have been factory fitted to A19-103, -113, -116, -117, -118 and on serial number A19-140 and up. Serial numbers A19-119, -112 and from A19-98 and below, had the flat tail plane.

In a postgram dated 9th May, 1943, the Commanding Officer of Number 31 Squadron discussed the relative merits of aircraft with which his Squadron was equipped citing aircraft from A19-16 to -19 inclusive, A19-57 to -72 inclusive and from A19-80 to -86 inclusive. The document dealt mainly with the various combinations of engine and armament installations pertinent to those aircraft and the various typical speed and range figures that those combinations produced. He concluded his remarks with the observation that "this Squadron has Beaufighter aircraft with marked dihedral tail-planes. This modification was carried out ... to increase fore and aft stability."⁵⁹⁶ This statement seems to have generated the belief amongst some that RAAF examples of British built Beaufighters manufactured with flat (0° dihedral) horizontal stabilizers were modified in Australia to incorporate 12° dihedral horizontal stabilizers.

The issue of longitudinal stability had been raised by CO 31SQN only a month earlier on April 10th, when he noted that, at airspeeds over 200 knots, the aircraft was (just) stable in pitch but, at lower speeds, such as at the aircrafts economical cruise of 160 knots, the aircraft was unstable in pitch and it was not possible to fly "hands off" which, in turn, caused "considerable physical fatigue to pilots". He recommended either "a major modification in design and/or ... [the installation] of [an] automatic pilot."⁵⁹⁷ It seems clear that, at that time, none of his Squadron's Beaufighters was equipped with the 12° dihedral horizontal stabilizer.

As recognised by the CO 31SQN, the change from 0° to 12° dihedral tail planes would have required a major re-design and consequently would not have been a locally applied field modification – at least not without an engineered and service authorised replacement empennage kit. If a modification of

⁵⁹² Neville Parnell, *Whispering Death – A History of the RAAF's Beaufighter Squadrons* (1980) 106.

⁵⁹³ Ibid 107.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Postgram titled "Beaufighter Aircraft" from CO 31SQN to the Area Engineering Officer, NWA, dated 9th May, 1943, in RAAF Command Headquarters – Beaufighter Aircraft – A19; NAA: A11093, 452/A19 PART 1.

⁵⁹⁷ Postgram titled "Beaufighter Aircraft, Manufacture in Australia" from CO 31SQN to AOC, NWA, dated 10th April, 1943, *ibid*.

that complexity existed, it would have to have been devised, scratch built, tested, authorised, manufactured, issued to maintenance units (in sufficient quantities) and then implemented. Also, a Technical Instruction or some similar official document would have had to be raised to ensure the uniformity of the installation of such a modification so as to maintain integrity throughout the services fleet of Beaufighters.

From a Squadron CO's recommendation on April 10th for a major structural design modification to enhance longitudinal stability, to his statement 28-days later on May 9th that his unit now had aircraft with that new design could not mean that any, let alone all, of his aircraft had been modified. It simply could not have been possible. But, what is possible is that the CO 31SQN was simply referring to the most recent delivery to his Squadron of an aircraft (A19-103 – the first of several others that were due for delivery later in the month) which was factory made with the 12° dihedral horizontal stabilizers and which, being at that time an orphan in his Squadron, was not included in the three distinct blocks of aircraft to which the postgram was primarily concerned.

The first official mention of factory fitted dihedral tailplanes was during April, 1943, (the same month during which CO 31SQN had raised the issue of longitudinal stability) when the Commanding Officer of Number 1 Aircraft Depot noted them for the first time, amongst other items, on five new Mark VI Beaufighters, which number included A19-103, referred to above.⁵⁹⁸

Of course, several Beaufighter Instructions were issued relating to dihedral tail planes, but they were for issues relating to existing dihedral tail planes – such as adjustment of elevators, or the installation of additional drainage holes, etc. No mention of a Technical Order, Service or Technical Instruction or the existence of any type of retrofit kit for the post-manufacture installation of a 12° dihedral tail plane to replace a 0° unit on RAAF aircraft has been found.

The ONLY exception to this was A19-2. After service with 30SQN, A19-2 was handed over to the Department of Aircraft Production (DAP) to be used as a test bed. It received a pair of Wright Twin Cyclone engines and, in time, received a 12° dihedral tail plane.



A19-2 seen here at Fishermans Bend, Victoria, with the 12° dihedral horizontal stabilisers and Wright R-2600 Twin Cyclone engines. [ADF-Serials Gallery].

⁵⁹⁸ Postgram titled "Changes Noted During Erection of New Aircraft Beaufighter Mark VI" from CO 1AD to 4MG HQ, undated but forwarded to the Air Board by 4MG on 13th April, 1943, DTS – Beaufighter Aircraft – General Technical File; NAA: A705, 9/32/11.

Aircraft Code Letter Allocations

Letter	Pre AFCO A3/43 Allocations		Post AFCO A3/43 Allocations "EH-"			
	Nov - Dec 1942	Jan - Apr 1943	Apr - Jun 1943	Jul - Dec 1943	Jan - Jun 1944	Jul - Nov 1944
A	16	16	16	16	176	176
B	17	17	17	17 / 88	88 / 169	169
C	19	19	-	-	177 / 191	191
D	20	83	83	83	83	198
E	21	21	21	21	165	-
F	22	84	84	84 / 82 / 160	160	160
G	29	29	29 / 112 / 40	40 / 143	143	-
H	31	31	113	30 / 149	149	149
I	-	-	-	-	-	-
J	45	45	45 / 117	117 / 144	144 / 161	161 / 197
K	46	86	86	86 / 162	162	-
L	47	47	47	47 / 148	148 / 181	181
M	51	51	51	51	51 / 159	159
N	57	57	57	145 / 158	158	-
O	58	58	58	116 / 36	172	172
P	59	59	59 / 103	8	155	155
Q	60	80	80	80	182 / 180	180
R	62	62	62	156	156 / 184	184
S	63	63	63	144 / 163	163	163
T	65		60	18	178	192
U	66	66	-	43	175	175
V	67	67	78	78	78 / 189	189
W	69 / 70	70 / 79	19 / 119	119 / 140	140	140
X	71	78	98	98	98	203
Y	72	72	72 / 118	118 / 70 / 152	152	-
Z	-	-	-	103	103	-
AA	-	-	-	-	161/	-
Unknown	-	81	-	-	193	193 / 204 / 208

The individual identification letter for three of 31SQN's British built Beaufighters hasn't been determined.

A19-193 didn't fly operationally before being destroyed during an attempted emergency landing on July 3rd, 1944. As the primary identification source used has been Forms Mauve acknowledging operational orders, the absence of same means that an alphabetic association for this aircraft isn't yet known and may not have existed.

Similarly, A19-204 which was damaged to such an extent by fire the day after it arrived at the Squadron that it wasn't used by 31SQN, means that it may never have had a letter allocated.

A19-208 was used operationally on one occasion but, it seems, was a replacement and so the operational documentation available only referred to the originally tasked machine, not the replacement.

There might be one example of available operational documentation referring to a British built 31SQN Beaufighter for which a serial number hasn't yet been ascertained.

The Form Mauve for mission Coomalie 42 of 4th October, 1944, referred to duty 4 as EH-S with the W/T callsign LD6S. 31SQN's A51 recorded that duty being undertaken by A19-181, with the crew as nominated in the Form Mauve. A19-181 had been "EH-L" since joining the Squadron in March, 1944. So, either A19-181 replaced the unknown aircraft "EH-S" or, A19-181 had been re-coded.

There doesn't seem any obvious reason why it would have been re-coded. This mission was the last operation it flew pending withdrawal from operational service as new Australian built machines were being delivered. The individual re-coding of an existing squadron aircraft usually occurred when a machine returned after an absence during which time a new arrival had been allocated its old letter. A19-181 hadn't been away from the Squadron and the only new deliveries that had arrived prior to October 4th – Australian built Mark 21's – have all had their individual letter allocations already identified. It is plausible, given that it was due to depart the unit within a few weeks, that it was re-coded so as to make the letter "L" available for a future delivery. It's plausible, but I have doubts. The trouble is, if A19-181 hadn't been re-coded, who was "EH-S"?

The latest known British built aircraft to be allocated the individual identification letter "S" with 31SQN was A19-163, but that machine was re-coded "N" after returning to the Squadron towards the end of August, 1944 and was then lost in a fatal accident shortly after take-off from Broome on September 18th. It couldn't have been any of the three aircraft mentioned earlier (A19-193, -204, or -208) because none of them were still with 31SQN by October 4th and, as mentioned above, the individual letter identities of the new Mark 21 deliveries up to that point are known.

Perhaps the reference to "EH-S" was an error. If there was a mis-match between the aircraft identification letter and the corresponding W/T callsign suffix letter in a case such as this, then yes, because at least one of the letters must be incorrect. Since they're both the same doesn't mean that they can't still be wrong, but it is far less likely to be so. There doesn't appear to be any reason to doubt the accuracy of the Form Mauve.

Despite my disinclination to believe that A19-181 had been re-coded from "EH-L" to "EH-S", I suppose that, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote, "when you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth".

Code Letter Re-Assignments

The widespread change of individual aircraft identities within 13SQN and later, 2SQN, seems to have coincided with the *actual* application of full code letter markings in those units and, for those units, suggest that single-letter identification was probably *not* previously marked on their aircraft. Such a change didn't occur at 31SQN which might support the notion that single-letter individual codes were actually carried by its aircraft, although photographic evidence of this is conspicuous by its absence. As mentioned above, whether marked or not, the tables show that the allocations were real.

Of the aircraft that had a single-letter allocation and had survived until the introduction of full three-letter codes, only four received an identification letter that varied from that with which it was associated before the change. Specifically, that is to say that, thirty-one aircraft had single letter allocations (with an additional machine probably having one). Of those, ten were lost prior to the introduction of three-letter codes and so, obviously, didn't receive a three-letter allocation. However, twenty-one aircraft transitioned from having an individual letter allocation to having a full three-letter allocation. Of those, only four differed.

A19-60/Q was damaged and sent off to the local RSU and was replaced by A19-80 which received the now vacant letter "Q", this allocation was carried over when full three-letter codes were applied during April, 1943. By the time A19-60 returned to 31SQN (in May, 1943), the letter "Q" was taken so, it received the letter "T" therefore becoming "EH-T".

A19-70/W was damaged and also sent off to the local RSU and was replaced by A19-79 which received the freshly vacated letter "W". Unfortunately, -79 was lost on its first operation so the letter was, in turn taken up by A19-19 which was recoded and became "EH-W". This aircraft was lost a month later so the letter was then taken up by a newly delivered machine, A19-119. By the time that A19-70 finally returned to 31SQN after repairs, the letter "W" was in use by A19-119 and A19-70 was allocated a new letter, "Y", and thusly became "EH-Y".

A19-78/X was successfully force landed "in the field" but due to conditions had to remain pretty much abandoned for several months until it could be recovered so, accordingly, was handed over to the local RSU for that period. In between times, it had been replaced on the squadron by a new machine which took up its letter and became "EH-X". So, when A19-78 was recovered – undamaged – its letter was no longer available and it had to be recoded, becoming "EH-V".

A19-19/C has already been briefly mentioned as having been recoded to become "EH-W". Of these four re-coded machines, it is unusual in that it was not allotted away from the squadron during the period of it having its identification letter changed. However, the new formal system of code letters prohibited the use of the letter "C" as an individual identifier and that, I believe, accounts for this machine being recoded.

After 31SQN adopted full three-letter codes, another four machines, out of all of the others, received more than one identity.

A19-103 started off as EH-P, but after a period at 14ARD returned and was re-coded EH-Z. A19-144 was EH-S, but after a spell at 14ARD returned to become EH-J. A19-161 started off, temporarily as EH-AA, becoming EH-J and then, EH-Y. A19-163 was EH-S, but after a period at RSU was re-coded EH-N.

Here is a tabular analysis of the accuracy of the identification letter to serial number association for each of 31SQN's Beaufighters in NWA for which an identification has been made during the research from which this article has been drawn.

Accuracy equals "Tasked and Recorded" divided by the sum of "Tasked and Recorded", "Tasked but Not Recorded" and "Not Tasked but Recorded", multiplied by 100.

Serial	Letter(s)	Tasked	Known Cancellations	Tasked and Recorded in A51 as Flying	Tasked but Not Recorded (Apparently replaced by...)	Not Tasked but Recorded (Apparently replaced...)	Accuracy (%)
A19-8	EH-P	15	0	14	1	1	87.5
A19-16	A	22	2	19	1	0	95.0
	EH-A	27	0	27	4	5	75.0
A19-17	B	24	1	20	3	3	76.9
	EH-B	33	0	29	4	1	85.2
A19-18	EH-T	13	0	12	1	2	80.0
A19-19	C	14	0	12	2	4	66.6
	EH-W	6	0	5	1	0	83.3
A19-20	D	8	1	7	1	0	87.5
A19-21	E	10	0	9	1	1	81.8
	EH-E	20	0	20	0	3	86.9
A19-22	F	13	2	9	3	1	69.2
A19-29	G	30	0	25	5	1	80.6
	EH-G	8	0	7	1	1	77.7
A19-30	EH-H	21	1	20	0	2	90.9
A19-31	H	18	3	13	2	4	68.4
A19-36	EH-O	5	0	4	1	2	57.1
A19-40	EH-G	17	0	15	2	2	78.9
A19-43	EH-U	34	1	30	3	2	85.7
A19-45	J	18	0	15	3	2	75.0
	EH-J	7	2	5	1	0	83.3
A19-46	K	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-47	L	24	2	21	1	2	87.5
	EH-L	14	1	13	0	0	100
A19-51	M	16	1	14	1	4	73.6
	EH-M	49	2	43	4	3	86.0
A19-57	N	22	0	20	2	5	74.0
	EH-N	9	0	9	0	0	100
A19-58	O	21	1	20	0	2	90.9
	EH-O	8	0	8	0	0	100
A19-59	P	23	4	18	1	0	94.7
	EH-P	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-60	Q	4	0	4	0	0	100
	EH-T	4	0	4	0	0	100
A19-62	R	24	2	20	2	5	74.0
	EH-R	7	0	7	0	0	100
A19-63	S	26	2	22	2	3	81.4
	EH-S	27	2	24	1	3	85.7

Serial	Letter(s)	Tasked	Known Cancellations	Tasked and Recorded in A51 as Flying	Tasked but Not Recorded (Apparently replaced by...)	Not Tasked but Recorded (Apparently replaced...)	Accuracy (%)
A19-65	T	2	0	1	1	0	50.0
A19-66	U	20	0	16	4	2	72.7
A19-67	V	12	1	11	0	3	78.5
A19-69	W	3	0	3	0	1	75.0
A19-70	W	7	2	5	0	0	100
	EH-Y	8	1	7	0	1	87.5
A19-71	X	20	2	17	1	0	94.4
A19-72	Y	24	4	18	2	2	81.8
	EH-Y	2	0	2	0	0	100
A19-78	X	7	0	7	0	0	100
	EH-V	34	1	31	2	2	88.5
A19-79	W	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-80	Q	8	1	7	0	1	87.5
	EH-Q	46	1	41	4	4	83.6
A19-81	T	1	0	0	1	0	0
A19-82	EH-F	11	0	6	5	0	54.5
A19-83	D	11	3	7	1	0	87.5
	EH-D	34	2	29	3	0	90.6
A19-84	F	6	1	4	1	1	66.6
	EH-F	35	2	31	2	2	88.5
A19-86	K	11	1	9	1	0	90.0
	EH-K	30	1	27	2	1	90.0
A19-88	EH-B	19	0	17	2	1	85.0
A19-98	EH-X	33	1	29	3	3	82.8
A19-103	EH-P	6	0	6	0	0	100
	EH-Z	34	0	32	2	8	76.1
A19-112	EH-G	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-113	EH-H	5	0	5	0	0	100
A19-116	EH-O	29	1	27	1	3	87.0
A19-117	EH-J	18	0	15	3	0	83.3
A19-118	EH-Y	6	0	5	1	0	83.3
A19-119	EH-W	22	0	20	2	1	86.9
A19-140	EH-W	52	2	48	2	2	92.3
A19-143	EH-G	32	0	30	2	4	83.3
A19-144	EH-S	6	0	5	1	0	83.3
	EH-J	6	0	5	1	0	83.3
A19-145	EH-N	12	0	11	1	2	78.5
A19-148	EH-L	22	0	22	0	1	95.6
A19-149	EH-H	43	1	41	1	2	93.1
A19-152	EH-Y	27	0	26	1	1	92.8
A19-155	EH-P	14	2	12	0	0	100
A19-156	EH-R	24	2	20	2	2	83.3
A19-158	EH-N	32	0	27	3	3	81.8
A19-159	EH-M	19	1	17	1	1	87.5

Serial	Letter(s)	Tasked	Known Cancellations	Tasked and Recorded in A51 as Flying	Tasked but Not Recorded (Apparently replaced by...)	Not Tasked but Recorded (Apparently replaced...)	Accuracy (%)
A19-160	EH-F	32	2	29	1	0	96.6
A19-161	EH-AA	1	0	1	0	0	100
	EH-J	29	1	26	2	3	83.8
	EH-Y	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-162	EH-K	14	1	11	2	1	78.5
A19-163	EH-S	28	2	22	4	1	81.4
	EH-N	2	0	2	0	0	100
A19-165	EH-E	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-169	EH-B	15	0	14	1	1	87.5
A19-172	EH-O	13	0	12	1	1	85.7
A19-175	EH-U	23	1	19	3	0	86.3
A19-176	EH-A	16	1	12	3	2	70.5
A19-177	EH-C	2	0	2	0	2	50.0
A19-178	EH-T	5	0	5	0	0	100
A19-180	EH-Q	27	3	23	1	3	85.1
A19-181	EH-L	24	0	22	2	2	84.6
A19-182	EH-Q	1	0	1	0	0	100
A19-184	EH-R	30	1	27	2	2	87.0
A19-189	EH-V	19	1	17	1	1	89.4
A19-191	EH-C	21	3	17	1	0	94.4
A19-192	EH-T	13	1	12	0	1	92.3
A19-197	EH-J	6	1	5	0	0	100
A19-198	EH-D	16	1	15	0	0	100
A19-203	EH-X	12	1	10	1	0	90.9
A19-208		0	0	0	0	1	0

The highest accuracy figure recorded was 100% on 24 occasions. The lowest accuracy figure recorded was 0% on two occasions (A19-81 and A19-208). Despite these and a couple of 50%ers, the vast majority of the individual accuracy figures (103 out of 107) don't come close to being low enough to attribute to chance.

As mentioned in the previous "Notes Regarding" instalment, the mission tables that I had prepared during this research and, accordingly, that this accuracy table displays an analysis of, were derived from surviving and available records. There may have been contemporaneous documents that have since either been lost, destroyed or not yet re-discovered, that may have provided further proof of an aircraft having been replaced, or replacing, another on a flight. The accuracy of an aircraft's individual identification letter to serial number association will be adversely affected if that aircraft was available for use as a replacement (especially in the apparent absence of additional, now perhaps lost, evidence). One of the main points of my research method was to ignore photographs as a source of evidence to prove an identification letter to serial number association (due to the relative lack of suitable surviving photographs and the wide dispersal of those that have survived). You may have noticed that the images of the two 31SQN machines that preceded this table were of A19-18/EH-T and A19-180/EH-Q, that both of those images clearly showed both the aircraft's serial number and its individual identification letter (not at all common) and that both of these aircraft, according to the

analysis, returned an accuracy figure of less than 100% (80% and 85.1% respectively). I believe that that reinforces the relative “weight” of those percentage figures.



This image shows (left to right), A19-165/EH-E, A19-152/EH-Y and A19-140/EH-W. Interestingly, these three machines flew together on Coomalie 12 of 22nd February, 1944, which was A19-165's only operation. Could this photograph have been taken prior to their departure on that job? [Photo Keith Fitton via 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].



A19-80/EH-Q after its incident of 3rd December, 1943. [Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association]



A19-140/EH-W at Coomalie Creek. See also *ADF-Serials Telegraph*, Volume 10, Issue 4, pages 111 to 114 for further information. *[Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].*



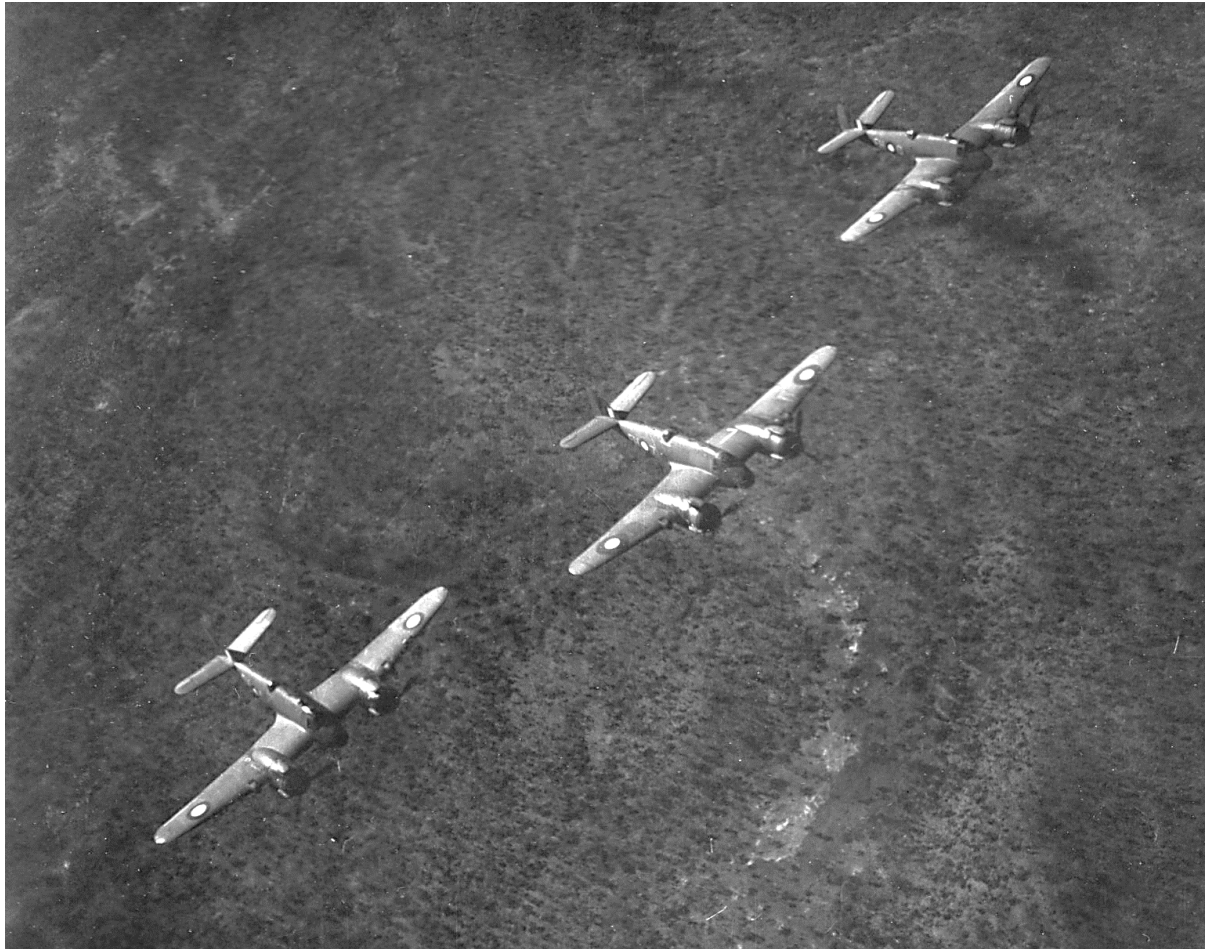
A19-184/EH-R "Eat 'Em Alive". Unfortunately, the two troops have had their heads cropped from the picture. *[Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].*



I reckon this is A19-169/EH-B. Of the three British built Beaufighters operated by 31SQN with the individual identification letter "B", only A19-169 had the 12° dihedral horizontal stabilizer. The positioning of the demarcation between the upper camouflage (original British Temperate Sea Scheme or perhaps Foliage Green and Dark Earth?) and the lower camouflage (RAAF Sky Blue) is unusual and seems superficially similar to the scheme originally intended for RAAF Mosquito's. *[Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].*



The caption for this image, as it appears in the 31SQN Album, says "[a]t Millingimbi [sic]. After attack on Doka Barat 7-5-44. Norm Tritton Cyril Hensen Dave Strachan Ron Leckie F/O Quinlan Alan Cobb Sid Green". The attack referred to was COO24/7 May with six aircraft participating. Post-strike, two returned to Coomalie Creek and four landed at Millingimbi – three of them damaged. The most significantly damaged was A19-176/EH-A flown by Tritton and Leckie. It is probably reasonable to assume that this is a picture of that aircraft and seven of the eight aircrew that landed at Millingimbi – Flight Sergeant Brassil isn't in the picture, was he the photographer? Regardless of which aircraft it is, the lower camouflage colour seems unusually dark and seems too dark to be the original British Sky type S – was it Medium Sea Grey or perhaps even PRU Blue? *[Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].*



A nice over-head view of A19-103/EH-Z leading A19-181/EH-L (lower) and A19-180/EH-Q (upper). [Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].



Another aspect of the same three aircraft. [Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].



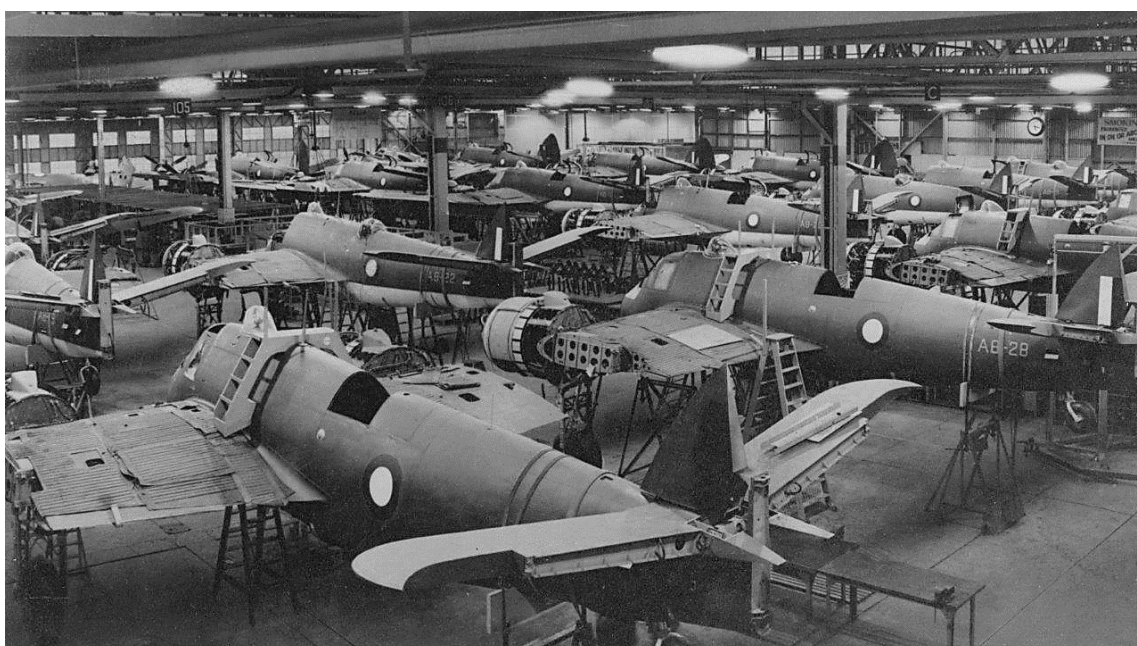
An unusual shot although not so good for identifying specific airframes. The Beaufighter at top left of the image, that is, in echelon starboard to the leader of the second vic (assuming the photo-ship is leading the first vic) is sporting a large piece of nose art and the upper camouflage colours seem very light – indeed it seems to be wearing a uniform, wrap-around, light colour scheme – I suspect that it is actually A19-156/EH-R – but that’s only a suspicion. The lead aircraft of the third vic – the machine immediately above the photo-ships fin – has a Tiger’s face on its nose and the aircraft flying echelon starboard to it appears to have a camouflage scheme very similar to that displayed on A19-169/EH-B. The positioning of visible under wing roundels varies from aircraft to aircraft. *[Image courtesy of 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association].*

Summary, Australian Built Beaufighters

Between 20th September and 1st November, 1944, Number 31 Squadron received 24 Australian built Beaufighter Mk21's at Coomalie Creek. They were A8-2, A8-5 to A8-26 inclusive and A8-35.

Colour Schemes

Deliveries of Australian built Beaufighters to 31SQN would have been in factory applied overall Foliage Green which was in accordance with AGI Part 3, Section C, Instruction 1 of 26th May, 1944. In a letter to DTS dated 28th June, 1944, North Western Area stated a requirement for its Beaufighters to instead have their "... upper surfaces to be irregular areas of foliage green and medium sea-grey; under surfaces, sea-grey".⁵⁹⁹



A view of the Beaufighter assembly line. Of interest are the two colour schemes on the floor – the aircraft in the line closest to the camera are finished in overall Foliage Green, however those in the other four rows are Foliage Green over a pale colour which looks like it might be Sky Blue, although Azure Blue was the specified under-surface colour for a short time, the under-surface colour here is surely too pale to be that. Identifiable in overall Foliage Green is A8-28 (nearest row, right hand side of image). Identifiable in the next row (in Foliage Green over possibly Sky Blue) are from left: A8-19, A8-22, A8-20, A8-unk, A8-21 and A8-16. In the third row, the serial number of the aircraft at centre top of this image looks like A8-17. All of those identifiable serial numbers (except A8-28) were delivered to 31SQN; incidentally, those visible serial numbers appear to have been applied in Medium Sea Grey. [*Beaufort and Beaufighter Production in Australia, NAA: M3908, 2*].



This is a heavily cropped portion of an image of two of 31SQN's A8 serialled Beaufighters. A8-21/EH-R is seen here in overall Foliage Green, however the previous factory floor image showed A8-21 as wearing Foliage Green over (possibly) Sky Blue. Was the paint scheme amended by DAP prior to delivery? [*AHM of WA image P028663*].

⁵⁹⁹ Letter titled, "Camouflage Schemes and Identification Markings of Aircraft" dated June 28th, '44; 1/501/329 (174A).

Aircraft Code Letter Allocations

Due to the impending departure of 31SQN and the consequent meagre utilisation of Australian built Beaufighters by North Western Area during the second half of 1944, very little operational documentation was raised.

EH-	Serial
A	8
B	9
C	24
D	11
E	19
F	7
G	6
H	
I	12
J	14
K	13
L	18
M	20
N	5
O	16
P	15
Q	22
R	21
S	
T	10
U	26
V	25
W	
X	17
Y	23
Z	2
none	
unk	35

Serial numbers for the letters H, S, and W, prior to 31SQN's departure from North Western Area, are not currently known. Two early deliveries of Mk21's to the Squadron *after* it left Australia, specifically A8-37 and A8-44, received the letters "W" and "S" respectively. Perhaps that therefore means that A8-35 was coded "H".

For additional information on Beaufighter colours and camouflage, see John Bennett's excellent article, *RAAF WWII in Colour, No.1 – RAAF Beaufighters*, in Volume 9, Issue 3, Spring 2019 of the ADF Serials Telegraph.⁶⁰⁰

⁶⁰⁰ There are a few small corrections in the following issue, Volume 9, Issue 4, Summer 2019.

Here is another tabular analysis, this time showing the accuracy of the identification letter to serial number association for each of 31SQN's Australian built Beaufighters in NWA for which an identification has been made during my research.

Serial	Letter(s)	Tasked	Known Cancellations	Tasked and Recorded in A51 as Flying	Tasked but Not Recorded (Apparently replaced by...)	Not Tasked but Recorded (Apparently replaced...)	Accuracy (%)
A8-2	EH-Z	1	0	1	0	0	100
A8-5	EH-N	4	0	4	0	0	100
A8-6	EH-G	3	0	2	1	2	40.0
A8-7	EH-F	3	0	1	2	0	33.3
A8-8	EH-A	3	0	3	0	2	60.0
A8-9	EH-B	2	0	2	0	0	100
A8-10	EH-T	3	0	3	0	2	60.0
A8-11	EH-D	2	0	1	1	2	25.0
A8-12	EH-I	1	0	1	0	0	100
A8-13	EH-K	2	0	2	0	0	100
A8-14	EH-J	1	0	1	0	0	100
A8-15	EH-P	4	0	4	0	0	100
A8-16	EH-O	4	0	3	1	0	75.0
A8-17	EH-X	1	0	1	0	0	100
A8-18	EH-L	1	0	1	0	0	100
A8-19	EH-E	3	0	3	0	0	100
A8-20	EH-M	3	0	3	0	0	100
A8-21	EH-R	3	0	3	0	1	75.0
A8-22	EH-Q	5	1	4	0	0	100
A8-23	EH-Y	4	0	2	2	0	50.0
A8-24	EH-C	4	0	3	1	0	75.0
A8-25	EH-V	2	0	2	0	0	100
A8-26	EH-U	1	0	0	1	0	0
A8-35		0	0	0	0	0	0

The highest accuracy figure recorded was 100% on 13 occasions. There were two returns at 60% and three at 75%. The lowest accuracy figure recorded was 0%, being recorded twice. A return of 25% was recorded for one machine, 33½% for another, then a 40% and a 50%. These figures are not as conclusive as one would hope however, the very low operational utilization of these machines whilst with 79WG precludes a more definitive result. Despite that, there is still a high level of certainty for many of the serial number to code letter associations that have been made and there is no evidence to doubt the others. Be aware also, that any aircraft that has an entry in the "Not Tasked but Recorded" column will have its accuracy percentage adversely affected for apparently flying when it wasn't tasked (i.e. flying as a replacement).

Thanks to Ian Madden, 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association, for permission to reproduce the 31 Squadron Beaufighter Association images.

Abbreviations

1AD	Number 1 Aircraft Depot, RAAF Laverton, Victoria (Vic).
1MRS	Number 1 Medical Receiving Station, Coomalie Creek, Northern Territory (NT).
1MWS	Number 1 Mobile Works Squadron
2AD	Number 2 Aircraft Depot, RAAF Richmond, New South Wales (NSW).
2AP	Number 2 Aircraft Park, Bankstown, NSW.
4RSU	Number 4 Repair and Salvage Unit, Pell, NT.
5AD	Number 5 Aircraft Depot, Wagga Wagga, NSW.
5OTU	Number 5 Operational Training Unit, Williamstown, NSW.
8CRD	Number 8 Central Recovery Depot,
14ARD	Number 14 Aircraft Repair Depot, Gorrie, NT.
14ARDRP	Number 14 Aircraft Repair Depot Reserve Park, Gorrie, NT.
15ARD	Number 15 Aircraft Repair Depot, Port Moresby.
17RSU	Number 17 Repair and Salvage Unit, Cunderdin, Western Australia (WA).
26RSU	Number 26 Repair and Salvage Unit, Noemfoor Island.
30SQN	Number 30 Squadron.
31SQN	Number 31 Squadron, Coomalie Creek, NT.
CML	Coomalie Creek Airstrip, NT, abbreviation in use between Jan and Feb '44.
COO	Coomalie Creek Airstrip, NT.
DAR	RAAF Station Darwin, NT.
DRY	Drysdale River Mission Airstrip, WA.
MIL	Millingimbi Airstrip, NT.
MMI	Millingimbi Airstrip, NT, abbreviation in use between Jan and Feb '44.
TRS	Truscott Airstrip, WA.

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