

John Alderson RADGE

John Alderson Radge was born at St Anne's, 19 Lawley Crescent, Mt Lawley, Perth on 9 April 1939 to Arthur Seymour Radge and Doris Clara Olden.

John's dad, Arthur Seymour Radge, was a Yorkshireman who had emigrated to Western Australia in 1929 where he took a job on a farm and later married the farmer's sister.

John was conceived at Lynton, Devon during a trip back to England by Arthur and Doris. There was a suggestion that Arthur and Doris would live in South Bank but Doris wanted to return to Australia. They departed stopping at Colombo on 21 January 1939 and arriving in Fremantle, Western Australia on 31 January 1939. John was born a little over 2 months later.

At the time of John's birth Arthur was working in the gold mines at Leonora in remote Western Australia. Shortly after the family moved to Gwalia just a few kilometers from Leonora where Arthur worked at the Sons of Gwalia Mine. Gwalia, now a ghost town, was once the second largest gold mining town in Western Australia and located 828 kilometers east of Perth. Arthur and Doris had another son, Allan. John and his younger brother Allan attended the local primary school in Gwalia. When it was time for John to go to high school the family moved to Kalgoorlie, 233 kilometers south of Gwalia. Every day John rode his pushbike four kilometers to and from school.

During his high school years the planes that flew into and out of Kalgoorlie fascinated John. Almost daily he climbed a tall peppertree tree in his backyard and from that vantage point watched them take off and land. As he did so his desire to become a pilot grew.

After completing the Intermediate Certificate, John, aged 15, took a job as a draftsman with the mining company. He was paid the princely sum of £5 a week. Keen to become a flyer, he was not daunted by the cost of flying lessons at £2.5 per hour (half of his weekly wage). He diligently saved this amount each week while waiting for the monthly visit of the Perth Aero Club, which would fly into Kalgoorlie to conduct lessons. Once again his pushbike came into its own as he rode from home to the airfield for a magic day of lessons. At 17 he made his first solo flight in a De Havilland Chipmunk and was hooked.

While working as a draftsman for the mine, John was studying engineering part-time. However, when he'd been there for 2 years, he was ordered to work outdoors as a rigger's mate, a job that entailed greasing winding machinery. As John's thoughts were always on flying, he abandoned his engineering course so that he could study for his private and commercial pilot's licences. Always a serious student, John and his fellow trainees were careful to avoid breaking the rules but there was some low flying done in order to chase kangaroos through the bush. In 1957, after doing his course by correspondence for fifteen months, John got both his private and commercial licences. One of his first exploits, at his own expense, was to take his parents, his brother, girlfriend and all his friends up for joy flights.



John went to Perth when he was 19 and applied to join the Royal Australian Air Force. Accepted, he proceeded to Point Cook in Victoria to begin his basic flying course. The initial training was in the 2-seater Winjeel trainer. Thirty-two cadets joined that course but only 15 completed it and passed. John was one of them.



His next base was Pearce, north of Perth, and it was there that he had his first taste of jet planes as he trained on the side-by-side dual-seater Vampires at No 1 AFTS. At his graduation ceremony as RAAF Pilot Officer, attended by his parents, he was presented with his wings by Air Chief Marshall Basil Embry. Those wings were one of John's most precious possessions.

When John's mother Doris learned that he was going to 76 Squadron at Williamstown, near Newcastle, to fly Vampire fighters, she was petrified because there had recently been four crashes causing four deaths. Not an auspicious start in any mother's mind. But, still undaunted, John continued with the RAAF and at 22 years of age he broke the sound barrier.

Early in his Air Force career John flew at a public air show at Richmond Airforce base in Sydney. The event was a race with a staggered start where John flew the Vampire against the Canberra, Meteor, Sabre and DC3.

John moved to Amberley Airforce base north of Brisbane for conversion training course on the Canberra bomber.

He then joined Number 3 Squadron and was based at Butterworth in Malaya flying the F-86 Sabre. It was an exciting time. A confrontation between Malaya and Indonesia put Butterworth on standby to protect the base and there were numerous patrol flights carried out.

While on assignment in Malaya, John went on a blind date one evening and met the Commanding Officer's daughter, Beverley Vercoe. They were married on 18 January 1964 at Penang Island.

Their first son, John Jnr, was conceived in Penang and Bev flew to Sydney for the birth. At that time John received a posting to Edinburgh Airforce base in South Australia. The new family moved into Defence housing off the main north road out of Elizabeth.

John was part of the Elizabeth 1 Air Trials unit providing flying support on Canberra and DC3 to the RAAF Woomera Rocket Range Complex which was 2 hours away

After three years at this posting John, and four of his friends, left the Air Force and joined Qantas. John and family moved to Sydney initially living at 121 Kiara Rd, Miranda then ultimately buying a house at 71 Spencer Road, Killara.

During the next 31 years John flew uneventfully across many routes to and from Australia first as Second Officer, then as First Officer and lastly as Captain. Singapore, Bahrain, Istanbul, Tehran, Damascus, Mexico City,



London, San Francisco and Hong Kong were among the many destinations on John's scheduled flights.

His Qantas career initially started on Lockheed Electra flying from Sydney to all major cities in New Zealand. These flights originated out of Melbourne's Essendon airport as there was no Tullamarine International airport in those days. From there John moved to jets flying the Boeing 707 as a second officer. His main role was to replace the engineer on long haul flights. John was promoted to First Officer on the 707 with most flights being to Africa via Mauritius.

John took a secondment to Air New Guinea as a First Officer for 18 months flying Australia to PNG routes and onto Kagoshima in Japan.

John's career progressed and he moved onto the 747 Classic as a First Officer and then promoted to Captain. From there John moved over to Captain the newest addition in the Qantas fleet, the 747-400. John assumed senior roles in Qantas including Promotional Training Captain where he would train Second Officers to First Officers positions and perform check and training functions.

John took a short-term secondment to Japan Airlines flying a Qantas owned aircraft painted in Japan Airlines livery with a JAL cabin crew between Australian and Japan.

John volunteered for a Terrorist reenactment exercise at Sydney airport where all services went through a 2-day exercise to test preparedness for a terrorist attack. John was the Captain of a 747 that was parked at the end of runway 34 at Sydney Airport. Across the exercise negotiation was carried out and eventually the aircraft was stormed by the military. John arrived home at the end of the exercise extremely tired, uniform torn and bruises were the "terrorists" had prodded the butt of gun into John during negotiations.

Just a few days after the Air New Zealand Mount Erebus tragedy in Antarctica John flew a Qantas charter flight down over Antarctica with a lot of media onboard. John was busy flying and that month flew Antarctica, Amsterdam and to the US all in one month.

Among the first-class passengers flying Qantas, John met Prime Ministers, business magnates, celebrities and many others. A well-known Victorian businessman arrived on board with his own pies. During an unavoidable delay at an airport this same gentleman sent the Chief Steward to tell the Captain, John, that he wanted to smoke. His request was denied. Another first-class passenger's luggage was thrown off the plane when Captain John learned that the said passenger had been lingering in an airport restaurant thus delaying the flight.



Wife Bev accompanied John on many overseas trips, particularly to Los Angeles, where they both enjoyed the sights as well as the shopping.

John retired from Qantas on 9th April 1999 on his 60th birthday.

During his retirement John and Bev alternated between their over 55's residence in Sydney at the "Landings" in Turramurra and their seaside holiday house at Hawks Nest.



John was an avid fisherman and with his boat explored the lakes near Hawks Nest.

Bev passed away prematurely in 2005 from lung cancer which impacted John considerably. Within a few years John was unable to support himself and moved into Wesley Aged Care at Belrose in Sydney in February 2010.

John passed away on 7 October 2017 at Royal North Shore Hospital. John lays to rest alongside Bev at Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium.



L-R: Beverley Radge holding John Anthony Radge, John Alderson Radge, Doris Radge nee Olden, Allan Radge and Arthur Radge



John undergoing initial Airforce Training on the Winjeel aircraft





Graduation ceremony as RAAF Pilot Officer



John based at Butterworth Airforce Base in Malaya with Number 3 Squadron



John airborne in a F86 Sabre.

C.A. 1007/23

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Department of Civil Aviation
FLIGHT CREW LICENCES
issued to
John Alderson RADES
Photograph of Holder
Signature of holder J. Lodge

THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
John Alderson RADES
CERTIFIES that the holder of this licence
No. 019508 who was
born on 9 Apr 1939
at Mt. Lawley Western Australia
is a
citizen of Australia and may, at all times, re-enter
Australia upon production of this licence.
Valid for use, in so far as travel is concerned, only
in connection with service as a flight crew member
on Australian registered aircraft.
Certified on 3 Aug 1971
at Sydney
Signature of Christina
COMMONWEALTH DIRECTOR
OF IMMIGRATION

D10
types
to
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John and Beverley married on 18 January 1964 at Penang Island



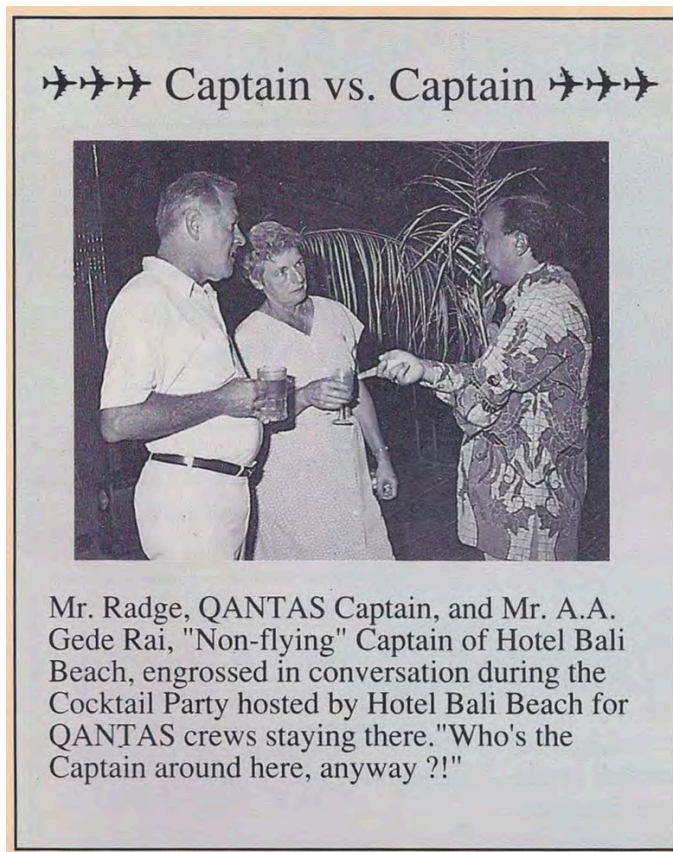
John and his daughter Sarah heading to London



John and Beverley playing golf in Arizona



John kept busy with carpentry in his retirement shown here at The Landings residence.



Article from the Bali Beach Times, April 1989, showing John and Bev Radge.

John's Campaign Medals



055737 Flight Lieutenant (R.A.A.F.)

John Alderson Radge

Awarded Australian Defence Service Medals for operational service in Thailand, Malaysia and SE Asia and also holds the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) medals and ribbons to commemorate those Australian Defence Force personnel who served to uphold the sovereignty of Malaysia during the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation between 31 August 1957 and 31 December 1966.



Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 – awarded for service in, or in connection with prescribed warlike operations from 3 September 1945 until 13 February 1975



Australian Service Medal 1945-1975 with SE Asia and Malaysia Clasps - awarded for service in, or in connection with prescribed non-warlike operations during the period commencing on 3 September 1945 and ending on 16 September 1975.



The Australian Defence Medal - recognises Australian Defence Force personnel who have efficiently completed an initial enlistment period after 3 September 1945.



Air Force 40th Anniversary Ubon Medal with Thailand Clasp – in recognition of Royal Australian Air Force personnel based at RAAF Base Ubon between 31st May 1962 to 1968. This medal is to honour Australia's commitment to the SEATO, the RAAF committed a contingent of 250 personnel, and provided a support squadron of eight CAC Sabre aircraft to be sent to Ubon, Thailand to patrol the Thai/Laos border area, assisting Thailand in defending against communist insurgents and terrorists from neighbouring countries to the east.



Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) (English: Malaysian Service Medal) is a medal given by the King and Government of Malaysia and is awarded to the peacekeeping groups amongst the communion countries for distinguished chivalry, gallantry, sacrifice and loyalty, in upholding of Malaya or Malaysian Sovereignty during the period of emergency and confrontation. Awarded for those who served in Malaysia for at least 90 days, between 31 August 1957 and 31 December 1966.