

Commodore Norman Lee, RAN (Retd)

1948, Selected to Join the new RAN Fleet Air Arm as a recruit rating pilot, number two course Point Cook.

1950. Completed Fleet Air Arm training with Royal Navy, gained deck landing qualification aboard HMS Illustrious in the Irish Sea

Promoted Sub Lieutenant

1951. Joined 817 squadron flying ASW Mk 6 Fireflies, warned out for operations in Korea, flying 20mm-equipped Mk 5 aircraft.

Completed 45 operations in Korea, mainly interdiction of roads, railways and tunnels, armed with two 500-pound bombs, and on several occasions two 1000-pound bombs.

1953. Gained watch keeping qualification in the ASW Frigate HMAS Murchison.

1955. Joined advance party for Gannets in the UK and undertook Air Warfare Instructors course with RN.

Spoke to future wife whilst airborne on a bombing range detail in Northern Ireland, a Wren manning the radio. Met on blind date next day, lightning romance followed.

1956. Joined 816 squadron and returned to Australia in HMAS Melbourne on her delivery voyage.

1957. Pulled off squadron to become the conversion instructor in the Gannet Trainer as result of the death of the QFI in a Vampire accident. Subsequently nominated for Number 17 QFI course, East Sale, a little late!

1958. Nominated for two years exchange with RN at RNAS Lossiemouth, Scotland, in the Day Fighter Training Squadron, converted to the Hawker Sea Hawk and subsequently to the Hunter and Vickers Supermarine Scimitar.

Promoted Lieutenant Commander

1960. Posted in command 724 squadron, formed a Sea Venom aerobatic team for Navy's contribution to the air display for the opening of Avalon.

Posted as Executive Officer HMAS Queenborough; had short period of sea command in absence of Captain.

1962. Helicopter conversion course, Bristol Sycamore.

1963. Number one Wessex course.

Promoted Commander, course with USMC then to Williamtown for Air Support Unit. Kept sanity by scrounging occasional trips in T35 Vampire Trainer.

1965. UK for JSSC then staff Australia House

1968. Commander Air NAS Nowra, checked out in Skyhawk and Tracker,

1961. Executive Officer NAS Nowra

1970 Acting Captain, DNI

1971-1974 Director Naval Aviation Policy, selected Sea King to replace Wessex.

1975. Captain of Port of Sydney

1977-78. Captain HMAS Vampire

1978, Promoted Commodore and posted as Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, Exercise Kangaroo Three.

1960. CO HMAS Albatross, checked out in Iroquois and also flew Macchi.

1981. Stupidly resigned.

Only claim to fame, 254 Firefly accident-free axial deck landings.

Acknowledged petrol head, spent fortune restoring cars at great loss.