
Fairy Firefly Aircraft

Location

FRANKSTON CITY, Frankston City

Municipality

FRANKSTON CITY

Level of significance

-

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7921-0047

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 125379

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Refer History

Veterans Description for Public

This Fairey Firefly was lost on 20 July 1947 in an accident. As the British aircraft carriers HMS Theseus and HMS Glory were departing on Sunday 20th 1947 after their visit to Melbourne, two squadrons of Firefly and Seafire aircraft from the HMS Theseus took off for an exercise over the bay out from Frankston. As they climbed to 1500

feet and moved into formation, two Fireflys collided. The Argus newspaper recorded the following the next day: "In a flash the two planes were one. Locked together they turned slowly and fell. Near the water they dropped like stones and disappeared. The destroyer Cockade steamed at full speed to the scene and lowered a boat. The body of one of the four crew was recovered. When the Theseus arrived the only sign was a patch of oil."

There are two aircraft, some 150 metres apart, and possibly a third Firefly somewhere in the Bay if a story of an additional one from Point Cook ditching in the 1950s is correct.

The Firefly was designed as a fleet reconnaissance aircraft for the UK's Royal Navy, and was derived from the Fairey Fulmar. First flown on 22 December 1941, the first versions were delivered in March 1943 to RNAS Yeovilton. The main version of the aircraft used during WWII was the Mk.1, which was used in all theaters of operation. Throughout its operational career, it took on increasingly more demanding roles, from fighter to anti-submarine warfare.

After WWII, the Firefly remained in service in both the UK and Australia, flying anti-ship missions off various aircraft carriers in the Korean War and serving in the ground-attack role in Malaya. In 1956, the Firefly's frontline career ended with the introduction of the Fairey Gannet.

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