

RAAF Speak Revisited

Peter S. Wilkins

Abstract: This paper is concerned to address the matter of the emerging distinctiveness of idiom and semantic change in the vocabulary of the Royal Australian Air Force since 1945, and more particularly, under the influence of its more recent and much closer alignment with the United States and so with US Air Force speech elements. Consideration is given here to 'situation' effects, location — specific usages and consciously-maintained traditions. There follow: (a) some possibly unique senses; and (b) 'A Lexicon of Some Verbal Usages in the Royal Australian Air Force 1945-1999.

The vagaries and peculiarities of Australian spoken English since the end of World War II have provoked the interest of both scholars and popular authors.¹ Verbal usages of some occupations have been scrutinised, including the idiosyncratic and ephemeral patois of a single class of cadets from Australia's Royal Military College.² However, apart from a brief 1998 piece by this author, there appears to have been no serious attempt to record particulars of the common speech used within the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) since the *floruit* of Eric Partridge.³ Therefore, this paper presents some specific linguistic usages of the RAAF since World War II and identifies examples of both transient and enduring forms.

Even today, such close ties link the RAAF to the RAF (and the Commonwealth's other air services of Canada, South Africa and New Zealand), that Partridge's assertion concerning essentially identical verbal usages in all the British Commonwealth's Air Forces before and during World War II seems

1 For early serious discussion of Australian spoken English since 1945, *vide* Eric Partridge, *Slang Today and Yesterday: with a Short Historical Sketch, and Vocabulary of English, American and Australian Slang* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), *passim*. Accessible examples of the many popular treatments include: Afferback Lauder, *Let Stalk Strine: A Lexicon of Modern Strine Usage* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1965); John O'Grady, *Aussie English: An Explanation of the Australian Idiom* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1965); and John Blackman, *Aussie Slang: Great Australian Slang and Phrases Explained in Basic English* (Sydney: Pan, [1995, 1996], 1998).

2 Bruce Moore, *A Lexicon of Cadet Language, Royal Military College Duntroon in the Period 1983 to 1985* (Canberra: Australian National Dictionary Centre, 1993), *passim*.

3 For a very brief account of some peculiarly RAAF verbal usages, *vide* Peter S. Wilkins, 'If you ain't a pilot...', *Australian Folklore* 13 (1998), pp. 239-44. Eric Partridge (1894 - 1979) made numerous earlier contributions to the field, including: (as Ed.) *A Dictionary of Forces' Slang 1939-1945* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1948) (hereafter abbreviated *DFS*); *Words At War: Words At Peace* (London: Frederick Muller, 1948) (hereafter abbreviated *WWWP*); *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, Ed. 5 (London: Routledge and Paul, 1961).

justified⁴ Then-fresh coinages included expressions still current, such as *ace*, *cockpit* and *taxi*, as well as others now obsolete, such as *'bus*, *conk out*, *zoom* and *pancake*⁵

Major changes have occurred in the RAAF's political dependency, demography and overall social fabric since 1945, as in the remainder of Australian society. As Britain's geopolitical influence contracted, first from empire in India and eventually from maintenance of any credible military presence east of Suez, the United States simultaneously sought to project and maintain a *pax Americana* throughout and beyond the abandoned former British dependencies, to prevent them from falling under communist dominion. One result has been the RAAF's realignments of doctrines, policies and procedures to harmonise with models employed by the United States Air Force (USAF). This paper considers the influences of several USAF speech elements on the RAAF's vocabulary since 1945.

The background lexis (concerning non-RAAF matters) possessed or utilised by a RAAF member is very like that of a same-aged non-member of similar education and nurture. However, three RAAF-specific vocabularies are superimposed on each member's background speech patterns. The first involves acquisition of the (RAAF modified) occupational jargon associated with the member's profession or trade. These technical terms are fixed by wider usage (professional, military and non-military) and by formal definition within Service manuals or official publications. RAAF medical examples of "professional" vocabulary include *casualty* and *aeromedical evacuation*. Further consideration of such terms is beyond the scope of this paper. The second RAAF-required vocabulary component provides for recognition of the large number of fixed abbreviations and acronyms regularly used throughout the Service, altered only as its formations, (sub)units and positions / titles are changed, usually over extended periods. RAAF medical examples of such terms include *BMF* (Base Medical Flight), and *PMO* (Principal Medical Officer [of a Command]). Such items are not further considered here. The third variety of vocabulary peculiar to the RAAF contains those many terms used to describe or define the more protean aspects of daily Service life. Terms of this type are the principal concern of this paper.

At any period, the RAAF's vernacular is significantly modified by many influences, including: social changes; situation effects; temporal effects; location-specific usages; and consciously-maintained traditions. In order to document some of the quantitative and qualitative influences of such factors on the RAAF's post World War II vernacular, the author interviewed a small sample of serving and former RAAF members who had ten or more years of total RAAF service and who had undertaken at least one overseas tour of duty. All were Australian-born commissioned officers, comprising eight males and two

4 Partridge, *DFS*, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

5 Partridge (1961), *op. cit.*, pp. 259-60.

females. Ages ranged from 35 to 73 years and length of full-time service from 13 to 33 years. Seven were medical officers, two pilots and one an engineering officer.

To limit data collection to a scale consistent with the modest purpose of this paper, information was sought concerning only descriptive terms which informants had used while serving in the RAAF, at home and abroad, to denote: personnel; places; aircraft and associated equipment; food and alcohol; money and entertainment. Informants were assumed to be familiar with indigenous Australian or RAAF expressions for these, so were expected to recognise variations encountered overseas. Some exotic expressions nominated by informants have been absorbed into the canon of common RAAF English, while others proved nonce imports whose use did not survive members' departure from theatres where they had been acquired and had proved useful.

The linguistic referents collected during this study, both Australian and exotic, were recorded in the accompanying 'Lexicon of Some Verbal Usages in the Royal Australian Air Force 1945 - 1999'. Terms which remain in common use are therein marked *. The remainder of this paper examines the provenance and fate of terms from the 'Lexicon' which are of interest because they demonstrate the effects of one or more of the earlier-identified influences on the RAAF's secular vocabulary.

WRAAF (pronounced with its 'R' silent, the acronym for Women's Royal Australian Air Force) and RAAFNS (the acronym for Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service) are notable omissions from the 'Lexicon'. Both would have been included in any similar listing produced from 1949 until the late 1970s. The RAAF underwent significant restructuring from 1976 - 1982, with all continuing members of the smaller, previously separate women's services eventually incorporated into the RAAF. This profound organisational change also removed the need for recognition of many other expressions which had been used to refer to the women of the RAAF, and thus permanently modified the content of the second RAAF-specific vocabulary mentioned earlier. All terms associated with the previously separate women's branches appear to be unknown to members who entered the RAAF after 1980.

Some long superseded expressions have remained in current RAAF usage throughout more than 50 years since they became officially obsolete. Self-evidently, they fill perceived needs which are unmet by later, sanctioned alternatives. These conscious anachronisms provide enduring linguistic links for present RAAF members with their predecessors of the World War II era, and whimsically differentiate the RAAF from other organisations by their retention as simple but arcane elements of the Service's specialised vocabulary. Thus previously official 1940s classifications of materiel, equipment and supplies as *A-class* (accountable; issued on a loan-only basis; valuable and attractive, etc.) and *C-class* (non-accountable; disposable; divertible for unofficial use; etc.) are used daily throughout the RAAF. In the same way, every Base clothing store retains the equally historical sobriquet of *L-Group* and any RAAF explosive

ordnance store is still referred to as *K-Group*. Apart from members' clear preferences and other possible reasons sketched earlier in this paper, there is no rational cause for such lexical survivals, particularly as all of the RAAF's other historically alphabetised referents (e.g. to paint, fuel and food stores) are now forgotten.

Situational influences on the RAAF's vocabulary principally affect individual members in specific circumstances. For example, a RAAF member on exchange duty with the USAF may be the only Australian working among hundreds or even thousands of US officers and airmen. In order to be understood or to avoid giving offence, he will be forced to adopt local usages in place of some of his usual informal expressions. The synecdochal *butt* is a conventional US substitute for cigarette which a RAAF member on exchange may come to use instead of the equivalent Australian terms of *fag* (which, in the US, imports a male homosexual) or *smoke* (which simply will not be understood). Similarly, the US *suds* (beer) may replace the Australian term *piss* in his informal speech, and the local terms *bird* ~ and *bottlecap* ~ will likely be used to distinguish the USAF's two grades of colonels. (This is not a dilemma in the RAAF, where the equivalent ranks are distinctively titled group captain and wing commander). For practical purposes, situational vocabulary items are required only within the circumstances which originally demanded their use, although they may be recalled later in appropriate circumstances (such as a member's further posting to or deployment with US forces, etc.).

Other expressions with demonstrated US origins are so deeply embedded within standard RAAF speech as to seem naturalised Australianisms. *Knuckle head*, the common, irreverent RAAF referent for fighter pilots, has been used with this meaning since the Korean War period. This places its earliest known RAAF use close to the first citation for the term in 1948 as meaning *a slow witted or stupid person*.⁶ Use of this seemingly deprecatory term to denote the most elite members of Australia's premier military organisation, while typical of Australian forces' humour and irreverence towards authority, appears to be an exclusively RAAF phenomenon. There is no evidence that the term was ever so used by or concerning fighter pilots from the USAF or other US forces. *The Macquarie Dictionary* glosses the term as *a fool*, failing to recognise its specific RAAF usage.⁷ Neither *The Oxford Dictionary* nor *The Macquarie Dictionary* refers to *knuck*, the usual diminutive form in common RAAF speech. Despite a strictly US lexical origin, *knuck* / *knuckle head* has acquired a meaning within the RAAF which is entirely different from the term's original import. Therefore, it may fairly be considered an authentic RAAF creation.

TDY has been used by the USAF since the 1970s as an abbreviation for a period of temporary duty (usually at a location distant from one's home base).

6 J.A.Simpson and E.S.C.Weiner (Eds.), *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Ed. 2, Vol. VIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 520. (The 1949 citation is from *American Speech*, XXIII, p. 249/1).
7 A.Delbridge, J.R.L.Bernard, D. Blair, et al. (Eds.), *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Ed. 3 (Sydney: Macquarie Library, 1997), p. 520.

It has also been in regular albeit unofficial use in this sense within the RAAF from the early 1980s. Its clear attractiveness when compared with equivalent official Australian terms such as *attachment* or *category C posting* arises from its brevity, clarity and almost onomatopoeic form. This useful and well accepted abbreviation has effectively ousted the official terms it replaces from all but formal, written RAAF communications.

*

Maintenance of its RAF-derived traditions is important to the RAAF's self image, morale and *esprit de corps*. This influence of tradition is reflected in a linguistic content which celebrates and preserves usages which predate World War II or derive from the years of or immediately following that war. Partridge cites *erk* (dismissive general term for an airman) as of pre-War vintage, placing it among the earliest terms in the 'Lexicon', so its retention of this sense and regular use in both the RAF and RAAF appears noteworthy.⁸ *Mae west* (an inflatable life preserver) was used informally from 1939 and adopted by the RAAF as an official name in 1942. This equally early sobriquet is still used by RAAF members to denote the modern survival equipment item.⁹

All ejection seats fitted to the RAAF's current aircraft, other than the obsolescent Macchi airtrainer, are rocket boosted rather than older technology ballistic type. Despite this, from the earliest days of this lifesaving item's installation in RAAF Meteors and Vampires, it has been known as a *bang seat*. The RAF originated this term, in recognition that ejection seats were originally propelled by discharge of a 75 mm. artillery shell.

*

Location has a major role both in the introduction of new terms into military lexis and in their elimination once their relevance is lost. The 'Lexicon' contains numerous examples of usages which were no longer apposite when the RAAF quit the specific locations where they had been in vogue. Except among former users, they enjoy no recognition within the RAAF's common speech in 1999. Several factors are involved in the loss of these often colourful expressions. Japan's euphonious and euphemistic *musa mai* (prostitute) was superfluous as a referent for returning Australians, who had less need to purchase sex at home, where numerous synonyms for prostitute already existed. The familiar diminutive *Vungers* (for Vung Tau) denotes a city unlikely to be revisited by the majority of RAAF Viet Nam veterans, so there is rarely any reason to refer to it. *Bami bami*, the local beer favoured by Australians serving in Viet Nam when the Australian product was unavailable, is not exported. Only members who served in Viet Nam will understand references to it, and there is little reason for returnees to mention it.

Some terms in the 'Lexicon' have no evident antecedents, but appear to have

⁸ Partridge, *DFS, op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.
⁹ Partridge, *WWWP, op. cit.*, p.133.

originated entirely within the RAAF and to be used exclusively by present and past members. A laconic, irreverent Australian humour and directness permeate much common RAAF speech: anyone familiar with local vernacular will immediately recognise the "Australianness" of many constructions common in the RAAF's vocabulary. With few exceptions, as is typical of general Australian speech, even overtly derogatory terms are capable of affectionate use (cp. standard Australian *bastard*). A number of terms refer directly or indirectly to Australian fauna or to indigenous manufactured objects, so local origin is probable.

*

Some expressions used in senses specified in the 'Lexicon' which appear to be unique to the RAAF are now examined closely:

BLUNT(IE)

During the 1970s, a popular recruiting poster proclaimed 'The mission of the US Air Force is to fly and to fight'. This sentiment is purportedly shared by the RAAF, whose self idealisation is as an elite, professional and capable organisation, ready to deliver immediate devastation to an enemy, while doing everything possible to protect its members and Australia from harm. The RAAF's ultimate capacity to prosecute its warlike mission depends on those few aircrew who operate its aircraft. This group is referred to and rightly considers itself as "the sharp end" of the RAAF. Fewer than ten percent of RAAF personnel are rated or trainee aircrew, and only half of that small number will be posted at any time to positions involving flying duties. However, all of the RAAF's endeavours are nominally focussed on initial or continuation training for its aircrew and on ensuring their maintained, maximal operational capabilities. Anyone in the RAAF who is not currently employed in the active aircrew group ("the sharp end") may therefore be considered as part of its support structure.

Semantically, *blunt* is diametrically opposite to sharp. Normal RAAF usage stresses this oppositeness, such that *blunt* imports more than the obvious "not a part of the sharp end", but also suggests deliberate opposition to the RAAF's mission, even attempts to frustrate it. That a majority of the RAAF's *blunties* are employed on tasks remote from operations is merely serendipitous. Any member of the Service, even a clerk, can (and ideally should) aggressively support the RAAF's primary roles, while it is also possible for an aircrew member to fail in such support. In common RAAF parlance, *blunt* implies betrayal of comrades and dereliction of duty, actions not to be contemplated in a fighting service. *Blunt* is thus an extreme pejorative in RAAF use, and not used jocularly. *Blunt* and its derivatives in RAAF use are absent from standard reference works, although *The Oxford Dictionary* cites *blunty* or *bluntie* from 1768, glossed as 'a stupid fellow; one not of sharp wits'.¹⁰ This would be only a

¹⁰ Simpson and Weiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.333.

weak, secondary meaning for the term within the RAAF.

*

BOGRAT (or BOGGY)

All informants recalled this term as current throughout their RAAF service, so it must date from World War II or even earlier. Its primary sense denotes a new pilot officer, the lowest RAAF commissioned rank. Its implication is of belittlement, comparing the person so addressed or spoken about by a superior to a detested, vicious animal denizen of the most noisome part of any establishment. *The Oxford Dictionary* details many usages of *bog* to denote a privy, dating from the mediaeval period, and even lists *boggy*, although only as a synonym for 'swampy'.¹¹ No standard reference work consulted cites the term or its derivatives in commonly used RAAF senses.

As an adjective, *boggy* conveys also the senses of inexperienced and naïve, and so may be applied to a person of any rank, particularly to account for his improvident actions. (e.g. "What can you expect? He is only a *boggy* young squadron leader!"). This use tends to be exculpatory rather than critical, and often jovial, reflecting that a majority of RAAF officers were themselves pilot officers once, so equally inexperienced and mistake-prone.

BOWYANGS

The Oxford Dictionary cites *bowyang* as an Australian and New Zealand term, dating from 1893, for 'a band or strap worn about the trousers below the knee [...]', while *The Macquarie Dictionary* notes a second sense, in the plural, which accords with RAAF usage (although erring in describing fitment of the devices).¹² For the RAAF, *bowyangs* denote the webbing harness straps, attached below a pilot's knees, which retract his lower limbs to a safer position when his ejection seat is fired from his aircraft. The antipodean term is more accurate and should be preferred to the RAF's analogous *gaiters*. As *The Oxford Dictionary* explains, *gaiters* are 'covering(s) [...] for the ankle or ankle and lower leg'.¹³ These safety equipment items would be cumbersome and even dangerous if worn lower on the leg, as *gaiters* suggests, rather than immediately below the knee, the designed area for attachment.

NUMBER 1 and NUMBER 10

These expressions appear to be unique to the RAAF's vocabulary, where *number one* denotes excellence and *number ten* its antithesis. A plausible provenance for both suggests that local civilian clerks employed by the RAAF in Japan during the presence there of the British Commonwealth Occupation

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 358-9.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 461.; Delbridge, Bernard, Blair, *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

13 Simpson and Weiner, Vol. VI, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

Forces were graded according to their ability to communicate with their employers in spoken English. *Number one* described speakers who were fluent and unaccented; *number two* described speakers who were only marginally less fluent; and so on through intervening grades, until *number ten*, used for speakers who were unintelligible. According to this hypothesis, through generalisation and expansion, the terms came to possess their current meanings. They have since been so used by RAAF members stationed throughout the Asian and Pacific areas in dealings with the local populace and have reportedly been universally understood as intended. This factor of repeated or continuing usefulness might reasonably account for their long retention in the RAAF's secular vocabulary.

The RAAF's linguistically obvious use of *number one* and *number ten* may be supposed to have arisen independently of similar constructions from earlier periods. Although *The Oxford Dictionary* accords *number one* the colloquial meanings 'of the finest quality, the best obtainable' in 1839, the same source contains no semantically equivalent entry concerning *number ten*.¹⁴ In RAAF usage, *number one* plus *number ten* constitute an indivisible dyad whose semantic resonances are absent from the occasional related uses of either or both of these terms cited in standard reference works. On the balance of probabilities, they merit consideration as RAAF-specific, RAAF-originated expressions.

*

This paper has been able only to record and assess a fraction of the RAAF's common vocabularies. Clearly, this is a rewarding field for further investigation, which should be undertaken urgently, before death or infirmity overtake remaining informants who saw service in World War II or in the immediately succeeding years.

A Lexicon of Some Verbal Usages in the Royal Australian Air Force, 1945 - 1999

Putative origins

The provenance of many of the expressions contained in this lexicon is uncertain. Bracketed abbreviations immediately following entries cite first locations of usages recorded by informants, but should not be interpreted as definitive. The relevant abbreviations and their meanings are as follows:

14 Simpson and Weiner, Vol. X, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

the Mason-Dixon line)	
AME	(acronym) <u>A</u> eromedical <u>e</u> vacuation
arigato (Jap)	thank you
avmed, (AvMed)	1. (abbr.) the discipline of aviation medicine; 2. (caps., abbr) the RAAF Institute of Aviation Medicine
bad show (UK)	a poor performance; more generally, an expression of deprecation
baft (Jap)	occupation period Yen (currency)
banjo boy (Jap)	cleaner (from Jap <i>benjo</i> = toilet)
bang seat (UK) *	aircraft ejection seat
(beer- descriptions)	
ale (UK)	lighter style brew
bami bami (SVN)	(lit. 33) from label, a brand
bami bar (SVN)	beer in general
Black duck	Swan lager (WA)
Bud (US)	Budweiser (brand)
Colorado Cool Aid (US)	Coors (brand)
Ruddles (UK)	specific brand
suds (US)	beer in general
bird (US) *	an aircraft
bird colonel (US)	full colonel; O6; rank equivalent to group captain (cp. <i>bottlecap colonel</i>)
blacky (murky) run (Jap)	illegal night-time expedition for the purpose of obtaining (or disposing of) black market goods
blasted (US)	severely drunk
blunt/, -ie *	extremely pejorative term for a non operational member (cp. RAF WW II-era <i>shinybum</i> , US <i>REMF</i>)
bog/rat, -gy *	1. RAAF pilot officer (the lowest commissioned rank), conveying implication of a little-valued life form. 2. inexperienced, new to a role
BOHICA (Gulf) *	(acronym) <u>B</u> end <u>o</u> ver, <u>h</u> ere <u>i</u> t <u>c</u> omes <u>a</u> gain (an expression of resignation at life's manifest injustice)
bone dome (UK) *	protective aircrew helmet
bookends (SVN, Mal) *	two prostitutes, hired simultaneously
boozer (UK) *	officers' (or other) mess
bottlecap colonel (US)	lieutenant colonel; O5; rank equivalent to wing commander (cp. <i>bird colonel</i>)

bowyangs *	harness leg restraints which minimise limb flailing during ejection from an aircraft (cp. RAF <i>gaiters</i>)
boys with tits (US)	aggressive women, particularly female aircrew members
brekk/er, -y (UK)	breakfast
bumi (putra) (Mal)	a local Malaysian (lit. <i>son of the soil</i>)
butt (US)	cigarette
butterbar (US)	a USAF second lieutenant (so called because of appearance of the worn rank insignia)
Canberra whackers (SVN)	RAAF staff in Department of Defence Headquarters
chicken plate (SVN)	flak jacket, armoured vest
chief (SVN, US)	a senior non-commissioned airman (orig. USAF Chief Master Sergeant, E9, the senior enlisted rank)
choongum (Jap)	chewing gum
cigaretto (Jap)	cigarette
C-class *	unaccountable (of materiel or goods, thus available for diversion for unauthorised personal use (cp. <i>gash</i>) US forces (pun)
coke suckers (Jap)	general RAAF officers' introductory training course at Officers' Training School q.v. (cp. <i>knife and fork course</i>)
couth and culture course *	to sign a document or report (e.g. of an aircraft accident investigation) acknowledging having read, understood and agreed with the contents
coordinate off on, to (US)	inflatable life raft (element of aircrew survival equipment)
dinghy (UK) *	of poor quality; little valued
dogshit (US) *	a black African American
doodah (US)	worthless, false
duff (UK) *	unreliable or false intelligence, advice or information (cp. <i>no duff</i>)
duff gen (UK) *	aeromedical evacuation mission
dust-off *	

eat the worm (US)	performed by helicopter
ebi (Jap)	to drink (swill) tequila seafood, esp. prawns
(enemy forces [actual and potential] - terms used for)	
bandit (Kor) *	(North Korean / PRC MiG-15) / enemy fighter aircraft *
bogey (Kor)	North Korean / PRC MiG-15
charlie (SVN)	North Vietnamese regular forces, NLA and guerillas (catch-all), but esp. Viet Cong
Cong (SVN)	Viet Cong
raghead (US) *	generic pejorative for Iranian, Iraqi and other mid-Eastern nationals
Russkie (US)	Russian or other (former) eastern bloc military forces
slope/head (SVN)	abusive term for Vietnamese
enlisted swine (US)	(joc.) airmen
fastburner (US)	a high achiever who achieves or anticipates rapid / early promotion
figjam (SVN) *	pilot prone to overestimate his professional skills (acronym: <u>f</u> uck <u>I</u> 'm good, just <u>a</u> sk <u>m</u> e)
FIGMO (US)	expression of extreme lack of concern, particularly over new or emerging problems (acronym: <u>f</u> uck, <u>I</u> got <u>m</u> y <u>o</u> rders [for a posting]. cp. <i>short</i>)
flight jacket, suit etc. (US) *	flying jacket, suit etc.
flyboy (Jap, Kor, UK) *	1. pilot
FOLT *	2. (joc.) aircrew member (irrev.) aircrew brevet (wings - acronym: <u>f</u> eathers <u>o</u> n <u>l</u> eft <u>t</u> it)
foreigner *	any work performed unofficially by another for the benefit of an individual member. The traditional compensation for such work is one or more slabs of beer. Because of the consumption of work time and RAAF material in their completion, foreigners are officially discountenanced (even though senior officers are often their major beneficiaries.
GAFA *	(acronym) <u>G</u> reat <u>A</u> ustralian <u>F</u> uck <u>A</u> ll; the continental interior, which is

gash *	overflowed at 30,000 ft. but never visited spare; unaccountable; divertible for personal use or benefit (cp. <i>C-class</i>)
gecko watcher (Mal) *	a reserved person; non-participant in mess or crew room activities; probable self-abuser
(getting) short (US)	imminently due for posting
general (US)	traditional form of address for all USAF general officers (ranks O-7 to O-10); joc. so used in RAAF Medical Branch when informally speaking to or of DGAFHS (AVM; O-8) or DDGAFHS (Air Cdre; O-7)
GIB (US)	(acronym) <u>g</u> uy in <u>b</u> ack, a navigator or WSO (q.v.) in F-4 aircraft
gibson girl *	a hand-cranked emergency locator beacon (item of survival equipment carried in transport aircraft, so named because of its 'hourglass' shape which facilitates holding between operator's knees while cranking)
glory hunter (SVN)	contemptuous term for an overly eager pilot, particularly one who unnecessarily exposes others to danger through his own bravado (cp. <i>figjam</i>)
grunt *	(joc. and dismissive usage) any member of the Australian Army (cp. <i>matelot</i>)
gohan (Jap)	rice
gohan eater (Jap)	a Japanese person
gook (Kor, SVN)	an Asian person
goshu (Jap)	Australia
hash (Mal, UK) *	an extended run in company (fr. Hash House Harriers, the club which originated this custom)
hooting and roaring *	uninhibited, raucous behaviour, esp. in company of a group of peers; bowdlerised version of its obvious metathesis
hurry-scurry *	Base-wide, winner-take-all lottery, usu. conducted on each RAAF fortnightly pay day
jack shack (Jap)	isolated treatment facility for Australian personnel suffering from

jock (Kor, US) *	sexually transmitted diseases
K-Group *	fighter pilot
knife and fork course *	Base explosive ordnance store
	general RAAF officers' introductory training at Officers' Training School q.v. (cp. <i>couth and culture course</i>)
knuck/le head (Kor) *	fighter pilot (see <i>aircrew</i>)
kodaks (Jap)	officers prone to making hasty, ill-considered decisions (instant snaps)
land of morning calm (Kor)	Korea
legend in his own mind (SVN)	pilot who overestimates his professional ability (pun., cp. <i>figjam</i>)
L-Group *	Base clothing store
lik-lik (PNG pidgin)	resembling, in the style of, usu. pej. (e.g. "That nurse behaves as a lik-lik medical officer".)
mae west (UK) *	inflatable life preserver (worn by fighter pilots as an element of personal survival equipment)
makin cart (Mal)	mobile roadside device from which vendors dispense hot food
matelot *	any member of the RAN (joc. and dismissive usage, cp. <i>grunt</i>)
MBOITC (pron. my boy tek)	(acronym) <u>M</u> edical <u>B</u> ranch <u>O</u> fficers' <u>I</u> nitial <u>T</u> raining <u>C</u> ourse, also individual courses, e.g. 7 MBOITC, which the author attended
medevac (SVN) *	an aircraft mission undertaken to transport wounded /injured / sick persons to facilities where they can receive better medical care than is locally available
monny (~drain) (Mal) *	deep roadside ditches designed to carry away torrential (monsoonal) rains before they flood roadways, tarmac, etc. Feature of tropical bases in Australia and Malaysia
mornos (UK)	morning tea; elevenses (joc. anach. <i>pukka sahib</i> usage)
musa mai (Jap)	prostitute (lit. <i>daughter</i>)
Nip (Jap)	Japanese (fr. Nippon/ese)
no duff *	actual; genuine; real ("This is not an exercise, this is a no duff dust-off".)
noggy (Mal, SVN) *	a local indigene (cp. <i>bumi</i>)
nookie (UK, SVN)	purchased sexual intercourse

nuck mahm (SVN)	type of sauce made from raw fish (cp. Roman <i>garum</i> of antiquity)
number one (Jap) *	excellent; first rate; best of kind. (cp. <i>number ten</i>)
number ten (Jap) *	inferior; highly unsatisfactory; worst example (cp. <i>number one</i>)
O Club (US) *	officers' mess or club
oxygen thief (SVN)	pejorative term for a lazy or uncooperative member (cp. <i>bludger</i>)
PCS (US)	a posting or transfer (acronym: permanent change of station)
pig *	officer (so called by airmen)
pig pen *	officers' mess (so called by airmen)
plonko (Jap)	abuser of sweet Japanese fortified wine
pom pom (Jap)	prostitute
poofter and dunce *	a person of little consequence (pej., cp. <i>blunt</i>)
punji sticks (SVN)	lethal booby trap widely used by Viet Cong (q.v.)
Q (US)	bachelor officers' quarters (more generally, any basic transient accommodation)
quokka soccer	informal sporting activity of trainee pilots undertaking survival training on Rottneest Island, WA (habitat of the quokka, a rat-like marsupial)
rat pack *	ration pack; emergency rations carried in aircraft survival equipment
rat's arse *	an item of proverbially minimal value (e.g. "I don't give a ~"; cp. <i>tinker's curse</i>)
ROAD (US)	lazy person, non-contributor (acronym: retired on active duty)
redang (Mal)	type of curry
ringitt (Mal)	Malaysian dollar; more generally used to refer to any currency
Ronny *	the Royal Australian Air Force (fr. Ronny Raaf)
scum (US)	non-operational members (cp. <i>blunt</i>)
shit hot (US) *	excellent; memorable; highly desirable
shithouse *	of poor quality; unsatisfactory; extremely disagreeable
short (US)	due for imminent posting (cp. <i>FIGMO</i>)
silkworm *	any member of aircrew who has

	survived a bail-out or ejection because of the correct function of a parachute (symbolised by an exclusive tie, with Silkworm motif, presented to ejectees by the manufacturer of the ejection seat [Martin Baker Limited, UK])
slant (Jap)	an Asian person, esp. Japanese
slick (SVN)	UH-1 Huey helicopter configured for passenger transport (rather than for gunship or AME use, q.v.)
smoko *	short break, esp. morning tea
snake pit *	sergeants' mess (so titled esp. by officers)
snap *	1. precipitate decision, made without access to all relevant facts (cp. <i>kodak</i>) 2. any immediate decision
SOS (US)	popular breakfast repast served in BOQ (q.v.) and elsewhere; savoury mince on toast (acronym: <u>sh</u> it <u>o</u> n a <u>sh</u> ingle)
steamboat (Mal)	popular dish where pieces of meat, fish and vegetables are communally but individually steeped in a boiling broth which is itself subsequently consumed
Stud Book, The *	<i>The Air Force List</i> , so referred to because of the supposed use made of it by mothers anxious to secure a suitable partner for their eligible daughters
swept up (UK) *	superior; stylish; desirable
TDY (US) *	temporary duty, usu. at a location remote from current duty station
Ten (10) Sewerage Unit (SVN)	1 Operational Support Unit, RAAF (a dismissive reference, cp. <i>blunt</i>)
thalidomide wing	RAAF Navigator's brevet of pre-1999 pattern; other monoalar aircrew badge
troop *	airman
uki (Jap)	snow
uki san (Jap)	a very blonde person (hence <i>Snowy</i> , q.v.)
Uk da loi (SVN)	Australia (lit. <i>land across the ocean</i>)
Vungers (SVN)	Vung Tau
Vung Tau ferry (SVN)	H.M.A.S. Sydney, the converted

Wallaby air/lines (SVN)	aircraft carrier used by the RAN to transport material and some troops from Australia to South Viet Nam
wallaby (SVN)	35 Squadron RAAF, which operated Caribou tactical transport aircraft in South Viet Nam
whore (SVN, US)	member of 35 Squadron RAAF, esp. a Caribou pilot
wish on a star, to (US)	prostitute (often joc., esp. when pron. <i>boo-er</i>)
wokka (-wokka)	to display immoderate desire for promotion to star rank (O-7 - plus)
WSO (US)	a helicopter (onomatopoeic)
(pron. <i>wizzo</i>)	(acronym) <u>w</u> eapons <u>s</u> ystem <u>o</u> perator, esp in F-4 (cp. <i>GIB</i>)

* * *