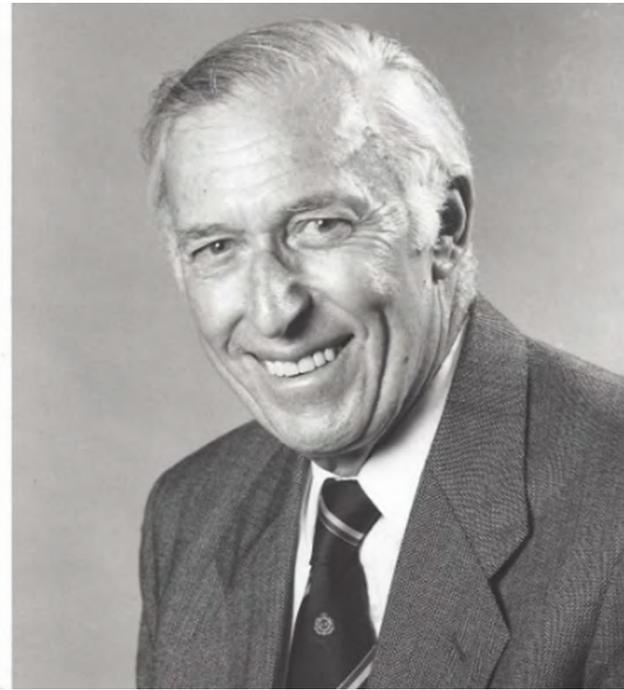




## Flying Officer A. OVERETT OAM

[1924 – 2014]



### Flying Officer Overett was President of the Club 1988 – 89

Alexander Overett was born at Kogarah, NSW on 12 October 1924, son of James Hugh Overett [1896 – 1965] (a jeweller, born in Essex, UK) and Grace Christina (née Hansen) [1899 – 1973] of Tamworth, NSW. James Overett was a Staff Sergeant in Australia during World War 2. The family lived at 40 Chapel Street, Kogarah, Sydney.

Alex had four siblings:

- |                      |               |  |
|----------------------|---------------|--|
| Arthur George Mackay | [1921 – 1958] | NX2501 Pte A.G.M Overett, 2/30 Infantry Battalion, taken PoW in Malaya April 1942. Returned to Australia November 1945.                        |
| Hugh Henry           | [1922 – 1943] | NX45101 Pte H.H. Overett 2/12 Field Ambulance died 14 May 1943 in the sinking of AHS Centaur by a Japanese submarine off the Queensland coast. |
| Herbert John         | [1928 – 1998] |  |
| Margaret Jeanette    | [b. 1934]     |  |

*We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.*

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Alex married Enid Melrose (née Windrum) [1925 – 2016] in Brisbane on 5 April 1947. They had three children:

- Ian David [b.1948] a Naval Reserve Sub-Lieutenant and one-time Club member
- Jillian Margaret [b1950] married Noel Beston
- Aileen Melrose [b1952] married Graham Osborne

The family lived at Ashgrove and Hamilton.

Alex and Enid separated in 1967, and Alex subsequently married Gwendoline Ida (née Graham) [1938 – 2011]. Alex then adopted Gwen's only son Mark Victor [b.1960] - a film producer.

They subsequently lived at Carina.

Alex served as a Royal Australian Air Force pilot during World War II. On enlistment for war service, his occupation was listed as junior clerk, with the Apple and Pear Board.

His military career is summarized below. Alex had operational service in Beauforts in the Pacific.



22/5/1942	Air Training Corps Cadet 22 Squadron (Sydney)
5/12/1942	enlisted Citizen Air Force 2 Flight Training School (Point Cook, Vic)
27/2/1943	5 Elementary Flying Training School (Narromine, NSW) as an LAC student on No 35 Pilot Course
23/9/1943	6 Service Flying Training School (Malalla, SA) as an Airman Pilot T/Sgt
12/10/1943	3 Wireless Air Gunners' School (Maryborough, Qld) as a Staff Pilot T/ FltSgt Flying Wakett, Anson, DH82 (Tiger Moth) and DH84 (Dragon) aircraft
11/4/1944	2 Initial Training School (Bradfield Park, NSW) High Altitude Course student
1/7/1944	commissioned as Pilot Officer
11/8/1944	General Reconnaissance School (Bairnsdale, Vic) No 14 GR Pilot Course student
1/1/1945	promoted Flying Officer
11/2/1945	3 Personnel Depot (Sandgate, Qld)
2/3/1945	1 Reserve Personnel Pool (Townsville, Qld)
8/3/1945	8 Communications Unit (New Guinea) Flying duties
6/4/45	9 Local Air Supply Unit (Pell, NT) Flying Duties
14/7/1945	3 RPP (Townsville Qld) Flying Duties
6/10/45	5 Medical Receiving Station (North Qld)
16/10/1945	84 Operational Base Unit (Labuan, Borneo) Flying Duties
6/11/1945	3 Hospital (Bradfield Park, NSW)
18/1/1946	2 Personnel Depot (Sydney, NSW)
19/3/1946	Discharged

Following the war, he came to Brisbane and joined Cyril Windrum and Co., where he trained as an auctioneer and valuer under his father-in-law Cyril Windrum. In 1952 he qualified in the Real Estate Institute examinations. In 1968, he established the company "Alex Overett Pty Ltd" – auctioneers and valuers - which later became "Fowles Overett" after a merger with Fowles Auction Group Queensland Pty Ltd in 1983. Alex continued to work in that business until 2009.

He had focused for many years on plant and equipment and specialised property valuation and auctions, and with the Fowles Group the company became a significant auction house for motor vehicles. Alex was always proud of the Overett Group's 1983 *en globo* auction of the Mary Kathleen uranium mine and township near Mt Isa – one of the largest auctions ever conducted in Australia.

In the REIQ he held the positions of Treasurer [1974-1980] and Vice-President and was President for two years from 1970. He was also Treasurer of the REIA for four years [1977-1980]. He spent 25 years on the Department of Justice's Auctioneers and Agents Committee [1971-1994] - the last nine years as Chairman. He was made a Life Member of the REIQ in 1991.

Alex was a dedicated member of the RAAF Beaufort Squadrons Association, Queensland. As their membership dwindled, the last few men decided to establish a scholarship to benefit a young pilot doing undergraduate study. Alex was instrumental in creating this lasting memorial to the Australian Beaufort squadrons and units, and to those who built the Australian Beaufort bombers. Over 700 Beauforts were manufactured in Australia for RAAF service as reconnaissance, torpedo strike and bombers in the South Pacific. In training and operations 450 crewmen lost their lives in these aircraft during the war.

He was also very involved with his church - St Paul's Anglican Church at East Brisbane. At their annual fete, Alex would don his auctioneer's cap to auction donations for the church. When the church came under threat of demolition, Alex worked tirelessly to save it. It is now a Heritage-listed church.

Alex was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for "service to business and commerce, particularly through the Auctioneers and Agents Committee" in the 1996 Australia Day Honours.

Flying Officer Overett joined the Club in 1960. He served on the Committee in 1984 – 85; was Vice President 1986 – 87; President 1988-89, and Immediate Past President 1990 – 91. As President he commenced the major refurbishments / rebuilding of the late 1980s after the *Expo 88* boom in Brisbane. His advice on property and related matters was always sought by successive committees.

Alex was always a family man. Until his last days he spoke fondly of his parents and siblings, and his grandchildren and great grandchildren held a special place in his life.

Flying Officer Overett passed away on 16 March 2014 in Brisbane, aged 89 years.



Alex and Gwen Overett

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents
  - Contribution from Flying Officer Overett's daughter Jillian Beston, September 2020.