

Trevor W. Boughton,
P.O. Box 231,
NELSON BAY. NSW. 2315.

19 November 1991

Bob Wills,
102 Rose Street
FITZROY. Victoria. 3065.

Dear Bob,

Regarding the vexed question of delivery dates that Neville's comments triggered. Denis Baker's points in Vol. 7 No. 2 appear to be very relevant in that they highlight the problem of how these dates are perceived by those who actually generated them (by filling in the various documents).

The question that follows is whether delivery dates generated by other manufacturers in this country followed the same concepts that were observed at CAC. In addition these other manufacturers do not appear to have made the delivery dates readily available, as Denis has for CAC, and as a result we are faced with various incomplete items of information.

My reading of the point Neville was making, that he was adopting the RAAF "on charge date" as his version of the "delivery date" for consistency sake appears perfectly reasonable when you are able to recognise the point Denis has made on how various people at CAC saw what "delivery date" meant and the lack of similar data for other manufacturers.

Providing Neville states his dates are from the RAAF Status Cards then there is no difficulty for somebody else to come along and re-check his work.

If Neville were to make up his own set of "delivery dates" from a collection of different sources, without specifying in detail where they came from, then I would suggest he would be creating the proverbial "dogs breakfast" and he could then be rightly criticised.

Why then are we so sensitive to these military dates when in many cases they are nothing more than a "clerical record"? I have yet to see anybody question the dates for civil aircraft which are frequently quoted as "on the register" and "struck off the register" and yet they are presented as though they are perfectly correct. An examination of the Aircraft Registration Files in Australian Archives demonstrates that these are clearly "clerical records" also and they have the same degree of accuracy as the RAAF "on charge date".

Concerning the on going debate over Stewart Wilson's books. In any work of that size it is possible to identify missing points that one might expect to have been included but does such an omission make the work good or bad? Leigh Edmunds' comment re his young friend enjoying the **Beaufort, Beaufighter and Mosquito** work would appear to be a better guide as to the value of these works. For those who know little of our aviation history these are quite reasonable works and they are widely available at a reasonable price. The unfortunate aspect is that these works claim to be something that they are not. Read the "Features" list on the back cover and you will soon see that the work does not, as a result of the author's judgement, cover various features that it claims to do.

The latest offering, **Wirraway, Boomerang & CA-15 in Australian Service**, represents an excellent example of the problem inherent in these works. The book is divided into three equal parts to cover production of some 750, some 250 and one aircraft. The CA-15 story is probably the best yet published but in devoting such space to this machine, it is possible to see that the question of development work for the other two types has been largely ignored.

Despite these critical views I do buy Stewart Wilson's efforts and I find them of use, often for reasons that he has not intended. For example the test pilot reports on the CA-15 are of great interest and similar reports on the Wirraway and the Boomerang would also tell much about the industry and people involved.

Yours,

Trevor