

# Preserving Amberley's Heritage



RUN BY RESERVISTS AND VOLUNTEERS, THE RAAF AMBERLEY AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE SHINES A LIGHT ON THE HISTORY OF AVIATION IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND.

The RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre was opened in June 2011 to showcase the history of the RAAF and the role of RAAF Base Amberley in providing air power to the nation.

The centre displays a growing range of static historical aircraft, including a World War II Boston Bomber (courtesy of the Papua New Guinea Government), a Vietnam-era Canberra bomber, Caribou, Douglas DC-3 and Lockheed Electra L-10 transport aircraft, a Sopwith Camel replica, Boomerang and replica Spitfire fighters, Sabre and F-111 jets, Winjeel, Pilatus Porter, Sioux, Iroquois and Blackhawk helicopters.

Occupying four Bellman Hangars, which were part of a group of 14 identical hangars built in 1942, the centre endeavours to add to the collection as more aircraft and artefacts are restored, loaned or donated to illustrate the breadth of military aviation in South East Queensland.



Visitors can see up close the F-111 crew module that could be ejected from the fighter/bomber during an in-flight emergency.

There are two aircraft refuelling tankers and a range of historic vehicles, including two World War II jeeps, on display.

A special display highlights the history of Australian Hospital Ship *Centaur* which was attacked and sunk by a Japanese submarine off the coast of Queensland on 14 May 1943. Of the 332 medical personnel and civilian crew aboard, 268 were killed. Survivors were discovered by the crew of an Avon Anson from 71 (CAF) Squadron that launched from the airfield at Lowood, 31km north of Ipswich.

Planning is underway for a display recognising the contribution of women in the defence of Australia. With the assistance of retired and current female members of the WRAAF and RAAF, the centre is collecting significant stories, memorabilia and objects for permanent display.

The Aviation Heritage Centre is run by a team of Air Force Reservists supported by dedicated volunteers from the Ipswich and Brisbane communities, all with a keen interest in military aviation history. Members of the team are usually on hand to explain each display and relate the story behind it with the hope those stories will be passed on from generation to generation.

Admission to the Aviation Heritage Centre is free, however, donations are gratefully accepted. As the centre is located inside the secure zone of RAAF Base Amberley, access is tightly controlled.

Visit the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre website ([raafamberleyheritage.gov.au](http://raafamberleyheritage.gov.au)) for opening hours and call 1800 623 306 or email [RAAF.AAHC@defence.gov.au](mailto:RAAF.AAHC@defence.gov.au) to confirm visit details.