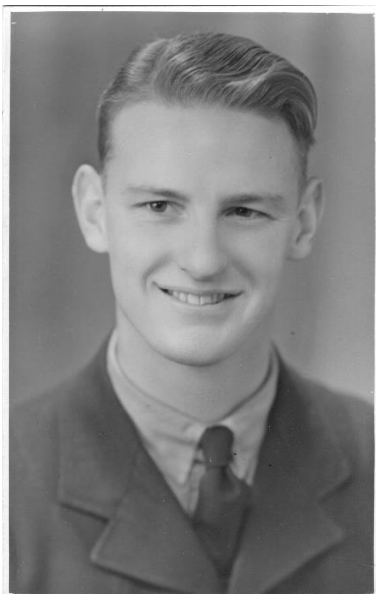


ALAN GEORGE KILLMIER OAM



*Alan Killmier in RAAF uniform
c1944/45 [Frances Killmier]*

Alan George Killmier was born in the Adelaide suburb of St Peters on 17 August 1926, followed shortly afterwards by his twin Raymond Elmo Killmier. A third son, Peter, followed several years later. Their parents were Nora Mary (nee Hughes) Killmier and Edgar Raymond Killmier.

Alan died aged 91 in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on 17 October 2017. Throughout that long life, he demonstrated outstanding achievement in every field in which he was involved.

The brothers were brought up in Broadview until their father's early death aged 39. Thereafter they and their mother lived with their maternal grandparents in Gilberton until they went their separate ways in life.

Alan's secondary schooling was at Adelaide High School, which he left aged 15 after achieving his Intermediate Certificate in 1941. He undertook night school accountancy training at Muirden College, had a short stint as a clerk with a company in the city, then joined J.M. Jones's accountancy firm as a trainee.

During this time he had also joined the RAAF's Air Training Corps No. 4 Wing 69 Sqn as a cadet on 14 April 1942, training at night and on weekends while continuing his accountancy training during the day. 69 Sqn rated him as *good aircrew material* and he was enrolled in the RAAF at No. 5 Recruitment Centre in Adelaide on 29 December 1944. He was posted to Point Cook as an Aircraftsman 2 for flight training and started at No. 1 Initial Training School Course 63 on 10 February 1945. He did well and his 'Personal Particulars of Recruit' stated that *He is confident, has good bearing and appearance, and average manner of command. He works hard when required and applied his knowledge well without showing enthusiasm.* The last, from my knowledge of him, I would put down to his laconic nature rather than any real lack of enthusiasm!

With the end of the war approaching, the RAAF's priorities changed as it became clear that the need for new pilots was tapering off. So Alan was re-posted after only 4 months first to No. 14 Stores Unit on 12 June 1945, then a month later on 14 July 1945 to No. 3 School of Technical Training at Ultimo, Sydney, for a meteorology course. He was promoted to Leading Aircraftsman on 16 July then, on 2 August 1945, posted to No. 1 Engineering School back at Point Cook before finally being discharged at No. 4 Personnel Depot in Adelaide at Springbank as "Aircrew U/T" (under training) on 16 September 1945.

When Alan was still in Point Cook between postings after termination of his initial training, with the expectation of a Japanese occupation looming, he was selected for training as an interpreter. He left early in the course finding it insufferably boring, and the only blot on his record before being discharged as a Leading Aircraftsman, was a 5-day confinement to barracks on 26 May 1945 for being *absent from place of parade*. Alan's daughter Frances explained that after leaving the course he had joined an administrative section instead, where he worked on the "registration of inwards signals", whereupon his superiors lost track of him and assumed he had been absent without leave! Notwithstanding this, his character throughout his brief RAAF career was assessed as "V.G" (very good).



*Another of Alan in RAAF uniform
c1944/45 [Frances Killmier]*

Alan married Sybil soon after his RAAF discharge when he was aged 23. They went on to have three daughters before separating. Alan later married Rose, who brought her three children to the marriage, and lived with Alan until his death.

Alan became a successful businessman. He qualified as an accountant with the Federal Institute of Accountants and in 1949 J.M Jones made him a partner at age 21 and the company became J.M. Jones & Killmier. By the time he retired he was senior partner in the South Australian company Killmier, Caulfield & Co Chartered Accountants and chairman of national companies C.W. Stirling & Co and Berg White Chartered Accountants. He was made an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries in 1951 and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1970.

He was appointed a Justice of the peace in 1962 and served the community in that capacity for 42 years.

He was a long-time member of the Sporting Car Club of South Australia and served a term as its president from 1979. He was a collector of vintage cars, at one time owning some nine cars.

His greatest love, however, remained flying. He was a co-founder of the Gliding and Soaring Club of South Australia (later the Adelaide Soaring Club) with his twin brother Raymond and Clarrie Moir in 1944, which must have been sometime before he went to Point Cook at the end of December 1944. He became its first secretary (presumably after he was discharged from the RAAF in September 1945) and later treasurer and president. His greatest early contribution to the club may have been his ability to draft its constitution and first business systems. The twins' younger brother Peter later also joined the club.

The club's first couple of years were taken up with the construction of gliders in a workshop in Prospect, with which Alan and his brother Ray were heavily involved, and the development of a basic natural surface airstrip at Virginia. Alan first identified Gawler aerodrome as a suitable location for the club and was responsible for securing approval for the club's use of it in 1950. The club remains there today.



Alan Killmier with SA5 at the ASC workshop at Wilson St Prospect in 1946. Alan was club secretary at the time [ASC via Rob Moore]



Buick tourer as a tow car, converted to buckboard. Sat five abreast, including one on the outside of the driver. (L-R) Brian Creer, Ted Deicmanis, Ray Killmier, Alan Killmier & Ray Duke c1949 at Wilson Street. [ASC via Rob Moore]

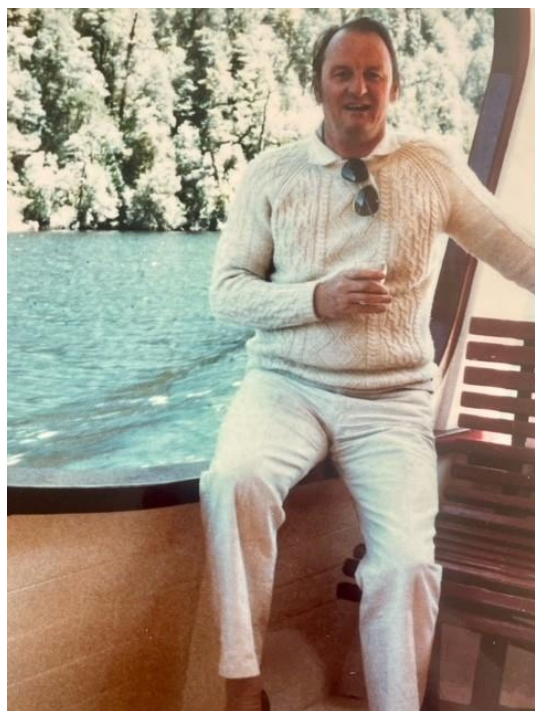
The club's first flying day was 14 April 1946 when members flew a 'Fledgling' Primary glider at O'Halloran Hill that they had built at Prospect. Alan's first flight was a 3-minute circuit, dual in Grunau II SA4, which the club had also built, at One Tree Hill 31 August 1947. Thirty-six more dual flights of 3 to 7 minutes followed, mostly at Virginia but several at Gawler, Kadina and Waikerie. His first two were tow launched using the Buick Tourer the club had acquired and converted to a buckboard, and the remainder all being winch launched. His first solo was on 15 May 1949, in Grunau II SA5, also built by the club.

His gliding career then spanned 29 years until his last flight on 29 August 1976. During that time he accumulated 536 flight hours, made up of 37 dual, 235 solo and 264 as instructor in some 26 glider types and marks. In 1968 he became joint holder of the Australian 2-seater gliding distance record with Harry Schneider, whose glider design and construction company Alan had

helped establish at Parafield. The record flight, on 31 January, was of 692 kilometres over nearly 8 hours from Gawler to Strathmerton in Victoria.

In 1973 he was awarded the Helmut Appiz Memorial Medal for outstanding services to the Club, and life membership in 1974.

Alan was appointed secretary to the Royal Aero Club of South Australia in 1949. He was a stalwart of the Club throughout its difficult post-war years and served it until 1976. The fact that he served in the role for 27 years is an achievement in itself, but he was also heavily involved in the wider issues of the Australian



*Alan looking prosperous - undated but probably at the height of his business career in the mid '80s
[Frances Killmier]*

aero club movement and the general aviation industry and, in 1971, he received the Federation Award from the Aero Club Federation of Australia. He strongly fostered relations between the club and the Adelaide Soaring Club, which led to the first aircraft tow of a glider in South Australia, at Gawler, and later at Parafield.

He joined the RAAF Association in 1945 following his wartime RAAF service. In 2006 he joined the Mitcham Branch of the Association and in 2013 he was presented with a Distinguished Service Award *"in recognition of his service on the Branch Committee from 2009-2013, Branch Vice-President from 2009-2012, Programmes Officer and Committee Minute Secretary 2009-2013 and his extensive involvement in arranging, categorising etc of the Branch Library."*

He joined the South Australian Aviation Museum as a volunteer member in 1998 and quickly became heavily involved in its activities. He established the museum's library the following year with the gift of several hundred aviation books from his personal collection and was responsible for the acquisition of several significant aircraft in its collection. He was instrumental in gaining

a grant of \$26,000 from the RAAF Association, which was used in the acquisition of tools and materials for the restoration of SAAM's Fairey Battle. He was elected to the museum's executive committee in 2001 and served as secretary from 2003-2007 and as assistant curator and newsletter editor.

It was during this period that Alan's lifetime interest in aviation history was given practical effect. In 2005 he was instrumental in the establishment of the museum's History Group, a group of likeminded members with a shared passion for aviation history research and writing. One of the group's primary outputs is the writing of "Significant Aviator Profiles" such as this one, and Alan's profile of his friend Harry Schneider is available on the Museum's website at <https://www.saam.org.au/aviatorprofiles.html>. He also cajoled me to write a two-volume history of the Royal Aero Club of South Australia, the first volume of which was published in 2011, His long involvement



Alan (L) and Ray Killmier with the ASC built Grunau Baby at Waikerie in Dec 1999, on the occasion of the Club's 50th anniversary. They originated the construction of the machine using drawings obtained from Victorian Norm Hyde. It was subsequently taken over and completed as a Club project. It made its first flight on 12 Dec 1949. [ASC via Rob Moore]

with the club and detailed knowledge of its history was invaluable to me during my writing of the books, both of which are dedicated to him.



Alan outside his Kensington home in 2014, wearing his SA Aviation Museum membership badge [Frances Killmier]

In 2011, Alan joined the Civil Aviation Society of South Australia, whose primary role was the operation of the West Torrens Railway, Signals, Telegraph and Aviation Museum, set up by the City of West Torrens as a State Sesquicentury project. The council decided to resume the its premises in 2005 and gave the Society notice to leave. After six years of trying to locate new premises, it became apparent that the Society's existing aging membership was ill-equipped for the task and several members of the South Australian Aviation Museum, including Alan, joined the Society to assist. Alan, already then in failing health, took on the job of secretary of the Society with Paul DAW, SAAM's curator, as its new president, to steer it through the difficult statutory process of winding it up and seeing to the proper disposal of its collection. This immensely important task was effectively completed in February 2012.

Alan was awarded life membership of the South Australian Aviation Museum in 2014 for his contribution to it.

In recognition of his services to aviation, and gliding in particular, and to the community, Alan was made Member of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's 2016 Birthday Honours. By then

Alan was 90 years old and, sadly, with his health being in severe decline, he was unable to attend an investiture at Government House. The medal was instead presented to him in the Royal Adelaide Hospital by the Governor, His Excellency Hieu Van Le, who later also attended his funeral.

Sources & Acknowledgements

Transcript of RAAF Personal Record of Service , AC2 Killmier A.G. Service No 443206

Australian Gliding May 1968, pp22-23 A 395 Mile Picnic

My thanks to Alan's second wife, Rose Killmier; his daughter, Frances Killmier; and Robert Moore, SA Aviation Museum and Adelaide Soaring Club member, for their help as detailed below:

Rose Killmier, for various documentation of Alan's business career and his gliding logbook.

Frances Killmier, for various biographical information and photographs.

Robert Moore, photographs sourced from the Adelaide Soaring Club of Alan's involvement in the early days of the club.

**Mike Milln
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