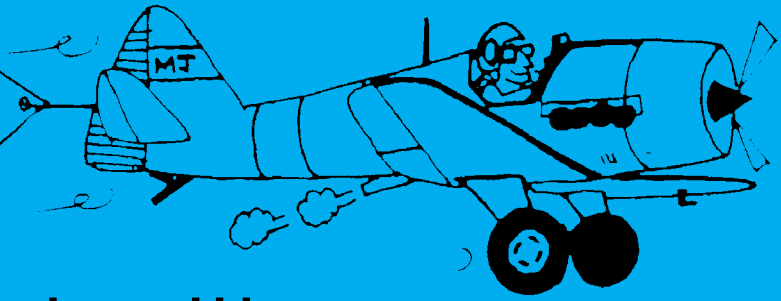


Ancient Aviator Anecdotes



Air Vice Marshal (R) Cecil Parker and his.....

NO 58 PILOTS COURSE @71



flying on Prentice, HT-2, Iskra, Kiran and Harvard. No 58 PC was created at the formative stage of the IAF and went on to serve from the early 1950s to the late 1980s.

Members of the course participated actively in both 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. It lost 7 pilots in peace time operations. From this course came 14 QFIs, 11 commanding officers, two test pilots, one Air Attache, four air officers, one gallantry awardee of the MVC and the youngest Indian member of the Caterpillar Club. The last pilot retired in 1988. Till date, 17 more have passed on due to natural causes. 71 years after commissioning, of the original 30, six nonagenarians are active and dispersed in the NCR, Hyderabad and Australia as under:-

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|------|
| (a) AVM DE Satur, AVSM VM | (4339) | Noida | (93) |
| (b) Gp Capt SL Tandon | (4334) | New Delhi | (94) |
| (c) Wg Cdr RL Badhwar | (4341) | Gurugram | (92) |
| (d) AVM CV Parker MVC VM | (4346) | Vayupuri | (91) |
| (e) AVM MK Rudra | (4358) | Sainikpuri | (91) |
| (f) Wg Cdr MW Tilak | (4331) | Perth | (91) |

To mark its 71st Anniversary, the Hyderabad based families of No 58 Pilots course got-together for lunch on 30 August 2023; see pictures. A slice of history from the last century. ➡

On 30 August 1952, at No. 1 AFA Begumpet, (then) AVM Subroto Mukherjee awarded wings to and commissioned 30 young Pilot Officers after their successful completion of 18 months training on Tiger Moth and Harvard aircraft. 13 of them (along with one naval aviator) proceeded to nearby Hakimpet for their fighter conversion on Spitfire and Tempest at CTU. 17 went to TTW in Agra for twin-engine conversion on Dakota.

Post conversion these pilots joined squadrons. The fighter stream flew Vampire, Toofani, Mystere, Hunter, Gnat and MiG-21 aircraft. The transport pilots moved on to Liberators, Il-14, Avro, An-12, Packet, Chetak helicopters and Canberra bombers. The QFIs in the course taught basic and advance

