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2329 Saving the World (or Would He Lie to Me?)

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Saving the World (or Would He Lie to Me?)

You all know who was strategic in winning World War Two (WWII), don't you? The Big Four: Churchill, de Gaulle, Eisenhower and Moore. What was that? Who was Moore? Geoffrey Moore of course!

Geoffrey Moore was born on 23 December 1925 in Salford, Lancashire, to Marcus and Violet Moore.¹ He chose to leave school at age 14, starting work at Ward and Goldstone, in Pendleton, as an apprentice electrician in 1940.² Whether leaving school was related to the start of WWII is unknown, but the two events coincided. Geoffrey remained with Ward and Goldstone until he joined the Fleet Air Arm on 14 January 1944: he would have turned 18 just three weeks earlier.³ What prompted Geoffrey's decision to join the forces is not known for certain, but his grandmother, Ellen Moore (née Dixon), was killed on his fifteenth birthday in the 1940 Salford Blitz.⁴ There was a direct hit on 23 Strawberry Hill, where Ellen, who lived at 1 Strawberry Hill, appears to have visited that night: no-one else was killed there. This event could have been the trigger for his enlistment as soon as he was old enough.

After enlisting, Geoffrey started navy life as an Air Mechanic, Level 2. His first year of service was spent at home, probably training, as the records of overseas service do not commence until 1945.⁵ On 23 January 1945 he commenced his first deployment in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) at *HMS Bherunda*.⁶ Despite the HMS tag, this was a shore base, in keeping with the naming of all shore bases of the Royal Navy.⁷ In fact, although Geoffrey was part of the navy, he never served on ships, but rather on several shore bases designed to assist in the maintenance of the aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm.⁸ The bases where Geoffrey was deployed were primarily in Ceylon, but there was also a

¹ Registrar of Births and Deaths, *Certificate of Registry of Birth*, Register Book 146, Entry 201, District Salford, Sub District Broughton, Issued 1 February 1926. Original Certificate for Geoffrey Moore, born 23 December 1925. Personal possession of the family.

² Reference letter from Ward and Goldstone to Geoffrey Moore, 13 October 1965. Personal possession of the family.

³ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, to Geoffrey Moore, 14 January 1980, outlining enlistment demobilisation. Personal possession of the family.

⁴ Ancestry.com, *UK, World War II Civilian Deaths, 1939-1945* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: 2013. Original data: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, *Civilian War Dead in the United Kingdom, 1939-1945*. 7 volumes. 1954-1957. London, United Kingdom: Peter Singlehurst. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/5177/>.

⁵ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, to Geoffrey Moore, 14 January 1980.

⁶ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, to Geoffrey Moore, 6 May 1980, outlining overseas service. Personal possession of the family.

⁷ Imperial War Museum, <https://www.iwm.org.uk>, *Tracing Your Royal Navy Family History*, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/research/tracing-your-family-history/tracing-your-royal-naval-history>.

⁸ Fleet Air Arm Naval Officers Association, Naval Air Stations, <https://www.fleetairarmoa.org/fleet-air-arm-naval-air-stations>.

four-month stint at *HMS Valleru*, in Madras, India.⁹ His final deployment was with the 827 Squadron, once more in Ceylon, at *HMS Ukussa*.¹⁰ The 827 Squadron was a front-line squadron which commenced duty as a reconnaissance squadron and later became a torpedo spotter and bomber reconnaissance squadron.¹¹ Geoffrey would have been involved with the maintenance of the planes, and at this stage he rose to the rank of Acting Lead Mechanic.¹²

Released from the Fleet Air Arm in December 1946, Geoffrey returned to Ward and Goldstone until the end of 1947.¹³ It is not known where he went from there until 1949 when he became a policeman for a couple of years, then the trail again becomes lost until he commenced work at Ferranti in 1959 in the Electronics Department.¹⁴ His work with Ferranti, as well as his study for the Higher Grade National Certificate in Electrical Engineering, would stand him in good stead for his work with Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) after his move to Australia in 1965.¹⁵

Geoffrey started work with Hawker Siddeley, based in WRE, Salisbury, in 1966.¹⁶ His letter of appointment made it clear that, as an Electronic Technician, he could be expected to travel to Woomera at times, although this never eventuated.¹⁷ With his start of work at WRE, Geoffrey once again became involved with, although not a serving member of, the armed forces.

WRE had been formed in 1955 from an amalgamation of the Long Range Weapons Establishment, responsible for rocket testing at Woomera, and several other defence research facilities.

There were also several contractors on the site working for British electronics and aeronautics firms. By the 1960s they included the British Aircraft Corporation, EMI Electronics, Hawker de Havilland, Fairey,

⁹ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, 6 May 1980.

¹⁰ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, 6 May 1980.

¹¹ Royal Naval Air Squadrons: 1938 to Present Day, *Fleet Air Arm Front Line, Second Line, Training, Support & Reserve Units*, <https://www.royalnavyresearcharchive.org.uk>.

¹² Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, to Geoffrey Moore, 14 January 1980.

¹³ Letter from Director General of Defence Accounts, *HMS Cerberus*, to Geoffrey Moore, 14 January 1980; Reference letter from Ward and Goldstone

¹⁴ Salford City Police, *Parchment Certificate of Character*, Chief Constable's Office, Salford, 7 October 1950. Certificate provided on leaving police. Personal possession of the family; Letter from Staff manager, Ferranti Ltd. To Geoffrey Moore, 30 August 1965. Personal possession of the family.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education, Higher Grade National Certificate in Electrical Engineering, Awarded 1 September 1960. Personal possession of the family.

¹⁶ Letter from Administration Manager, Hawker Siddeley Dynamics Australia, to Geoffrey Moore, 13 September 1966. Personal possession of the family.

¹⁷ Letter from Administration Manager, Hawker Siddeley Dynamics Australia.

Ferranti, Saunders-Roe, Avro, English Electric, Hunting Engineering, Rolls Royce, Sperry Rand, Bristol and Armstrong Whitworth. These firms had generally been given contracts to develop weapons or components. ... The virtual co-location of scientists and contractors established a tradition of close collaboration that was to become increasingly significant.¹⁸

This collaboration was important in the development and testing of a range of defence initiatives, including the IKARA missile.¹⁹ It was the IKARA which was to be the focus of Geoffrey's work until his retirement.

The IKARA missile was built on the experience and technology of the much earlier MALKARA anti-tank missile.²⁰ The development occurred jointly at Salisbury and Port Melbourne and many of the engineers were employed by EMI Electronics Australia based at WRE.²¹ Geoffrey was recruited from Hawker Siddeley by EMI as a Technical Author in 1967 and he has been acknowledged for his contribution to a 'set of equipment for effective training' in his writing of handbooks.²² Geoffrey also completed instructor training at the Royal Australian Navy IKARA Training Establishment (RANITE) in 1980.²³ His RANITE report stated that he

has a strong presence in front of a class and a pleasing style of delivery that is effective in getting the message across. His only difficulty on course was judging the amount of subject matter that could be absorbed by a class in a given amount of time. This would not be a problem in IKARA training as instruction time can be modified to suit individual needs.²⁴

Now that he was training navy personnel in the use of the IKARA missile, Geoffrey was again actively involved in helping to 'save the world'!

Geoffrey showed me several photos taken throughout his service with the Fleet Air Arm and also one photo with the IKARA missile. During these 'show-and-tell' sessions, he invariably mentioned that he was one of the Big Four, and that he won the war with

¹⁸ Peter Donovan, *Anticipating Tomorrow's Defence Needs: A Century of Australian Defence Science* (Canberra, ACT: Defence Science & Technology Organisation, 2007), 48. <https://www.dst.defence.gov.au>.

¹⁹ *Anticipating Tomorrow's Defence Needs*, 68. <https://www.dst.defence.gov.au>.

²⁰ *Anticipating Tomorrow's Defence Needs*, 68.

²¹ James W. Crompton, *The Making of a Missile Guidance System: The Complementary Roles of the Department of Supply and EMI Electronics Australia in the Development of the IKARA* (Thorn EMI Electronics Pty. Ltd., 1985), Preface.

²² Letter from General Manager, EMI Electronics (Australia) Pty. Ltd. To Geoffrey Moore, 7 March 1967. Personal possession of the family; James W. Crompton, *The Making of a Missile Guidance System*, 59.

²³ Report of Instructor Course Officer, RAN School of Training Technology, *HMAS Cerberus*. Completion of Instructor Course, RANITE SA, 5 January 1981. Personal possession of the family.

²⁴ Report of Instructor Course Officer

Churchill, de Gaulle and Eisenhower. He told the same story until he died in 1991.²⁵ In his later years, the tale was told with a broad grin and a twinkle in his eye: the same larrikin look that he had in his 1944 formal navy class photo, with non-regulation jaunty tilt to the cap and cheeky smile (see below). Winning the war: fact or myth? Geoffrey was my father: would he lie to me?



Navy Class Photo 1944 (Geoffrey Moore circled in red)
Personal possession of the family.

²⁵ Births Deaths and Marriages Registration Office, Adelaide, South Australia, South Australia Registration of Death, Geoffrey Moore, No. 944A/04015, Registered 21 May 1991. Date of death 17 May 1991. Personal possession of the family.