

WWII Catalina pilot and cricketing legend 403605 Squadron Leader Stanley George Sismey, OAM passed away on 19 June 2009 aged 92.

Born at Junee, New South Wales on 15 July 1915, Stan Sismey was a useful lower middle order right hand batsman, and a fine wicket keeper, one of the last to stand up to all but the fastest bowlers.

His keeping in first grade cricket for the Western Suburbs club in Sydney, gained him selection for New South Wales in 1938/39, but after holding his place for two seasons, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force and was speedily promoted through the ranks.

In 1944, a Squadron Leader, he was piloting a Catalina flying boat off the Algerian Coast when he was shot down, and spent eight hours in the Mediterranean, before being rescued, unconscious, by the Royal Navy. He spent the remainder of the war as a test pilot in Scotland, claiming that there was so much shrapnel in his back, that the compasses of the aircraft he flew were affected. At this time he also met and married Elma McLachlan.

In 1945, he was the main wicket keeper for the Australian Services side, which toured England under the captaincy of his best man, the Western Australian batsman Keith Carmody. Stan kept wicket in all five of the unofficial Victory Tests against England that summer, under Carmody's captaincy, catching eight batsmen and stumping two. He also led the RAF side in several matches that season, and played for the Services on their long homeward journey with more unofficial Tests in India and matches in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). During this part of the tour he had frequently to leave the field as pieces of shrapnel worked their way to his skin.

On returning to Sydney he found his place in the state side taken by Ron Siggers, Australia's reserve gloveman, but was back in the side in the 1949/50 season when his keeping earned him selection, for what was effectively an Australian Second XI, touring New Zealand under the captaincy of his state team-mate, former Test batsman, Bill Brown.

A banker by profession, Stan did not play for New South Wales after the 1951/52 season, but spent the following summer in Scotland. Here he played for Clydesdale CC, having a highest score of 51, and made one appearance for Scotland, in a first class match v Yorkshire at Hamilton Crescent. He held two catches in a match which was drawn in the hosts' favour.

Returning home, Stan was a NSW selector from 1958/59 to 1978/79, being Chairman for the last ten years. He was then President of the NSW Cricket Association for 10 years, being made a Life Member on his final retirement.

In his 32 first class matches he scored 725 runs at 17.68, with a highest score of 78 for the Australian Services v HDG Leveson-Gower's XI at Scarborough in 1948. He dismissed 106 batsmen with 88 catches and 18 stumpings.

Stan Sismey is survived by his wife, Elma, and their daughters, Pam and Carol.