



SITREP

Air Force Association NSW News and Views

Lieut. Hudson Fysh's DFC

from 444059 LAC Fysh J H (John), 49 Course 1944-5, son of Lieut Hudson Fysh

(From the diary of Lieut. Clive Conrick, No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps, Palestine 1918)

As published in Pat Conrick's The Flying Carpet Men.

Friday 30th, 1918

Today, by shooting down two Hun fighters, Lt Hudson Fysh (an Observer and Gunner in Bristol Fighters) celebrated his DFC in a very unusual way, which I feel will never be equalled again. The facts of the matter are that Dowling and Mumford with McGinness and Fysh went out on the afternoon patrol along the coast and north towards Haifa.

Two Hun L.V.G. two-seaters, also on patrol, were sighted flying a little to the west of Mulebbis and were attacked immediately.

McGinness positioned his Bristol Fighter below and a little to the port

side of the first L.V.G. thus giving Fysh a good field of fire, whilst Dowling attacked the other L.V.G. from above and head on.

Hudson Fysh poured a blast of concentrated fire into the first Hun and he rolled over and spun away and crashed near Kalkilieh.

Dowling was unable to engage the second L.V.G. from head on as he found it difficult to maintain his position with the Hun dodging all over the sky, so he decided to attack from below. When he did get into position to attack from below



Bristol F.2B

his engine cut out and he was lucky to be able to glide back over the front, where he landed. McGinness immediately attacked the second Hun in the same way as he had the first and Fysh put such a concentrated burst of machine gun fire into the L.V.G. that one wing fell off and it went into a grotesque spin and crashed about one and a half miles from Diar Alla.

Billy Weir and I spent the afternoon with Gordon at the A.A. Battery at Diar Alla and saw the Hun come down. There was great cheering from all of the A.A. Battery blokes. A number of our chaps went over to the 4th Lighthorse Brigade and I heard there was great merrymaking with joint celebrations for our Squadron's successes of the last few weeks.



L.V.G. C VI





Meritorious Unit Citation – Rwanda

Sunday, July 28, 2019

Australian Service Contingents 1 and 2 who served in Rwanda on Operation Tamar were today recognised with the award of a Meritorious Unit Citation.

Operation Tamar was Australia's contribution to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, which consisted of sending approximately 700 Australian Defence Force personnel in two contingents to provide medical support and security for the medics. Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, Darren Chester, said that from 1994 to 1996 it was estimated that more than 800,000 innocent civilians were killed in Rwanda by armed



**Members of the Australian Contingent 1994-1995 in Rwanda.
Photographer unknown.**

militias and trained military forces, attracting world-wide attention and condemnation.

"The men and women of Australian Service Contingents 1 and 2 demonstrated extraordinary courage, discipline and compassion in the performance of their duties and on behalf of their country we recognise their meritorious service," Mr Chester said.

General David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia, gazetted the award of the Meritorious Unit Citation today, on the 25th Anniversary of Australian Service Contingent 1 arriving in Rwanda.

To be eligible to wear the citation insignia with the Federation Star, members must have completed 30 days service on Operation Tamar between 25 July 1994 and 8 March 1996.

Veterans who believe they are eligible are encouraged to apply directly to the Department of Defence, through the Defence Medals Online Application form.



75SQN Deploys to Malaya

from Pete Scully

75 SQN's first deployment of Mirages to Malaya (as it was then) in May 1968 was from WLM via TVL, DAR, 'That Place' (we were not permitted to use the name – Djuanda actually), BUT. It did involve a lot of planning – the boss (Jim Flemming) and I even visited Nazab to find it covered with head-high grass. I was the SQN Ops Officer.



**75SQN Mirages over Sydney Harbour (note the unfinished
Opera House)**

One could write a book about 'that place' if memory allowed; but one matter remains vivid. The local Base Commander was uncertain how much to charge for landing fees for the Mirages; the support Hercs presented no such problem of course as they had been regular visitors. So our Air Attache arrived from Jakarta with a briefcase stacked full of \$US. After much consultation the case was handed over the Base Commander who promptly handed it back with a long shopping list. So, one our support Hercs returning from Butterworth to collect our servicing party arrived stacked to the gunwales with



goodies from Penang, thus everyone was happy. I must add that the Indonesian Air Force could not have been more friendly and helpful; all our early concerns were found to be unnecessary.

The other anecdote which sticks in my memory involved some radio aspects. One of our biggest concerns was weather. While in Darwin we'd set up a radio link between one of our Hercs at Darwin and one of the support Hercs already at Djuanda. The boss and I donned headphones on the flight deck of our Herc and had a long and detailed discussion with the Djuanda Herc (Captain, WGCDR McKimm)



WGCDR Flemming has a beer and shares a joke with AIRCDRE Hyland-Smith, AIRCDRE Ford, WGCDR Knudsen and GPCAPT Glassop

about the weather prospects the following day. However, the Base Radio officer insisted that he listen in to our conversation. The next morning, at about 3am I was woken and advised I had an Ops Immediate message. The message turned out to be a word for word copy of the conversation we'd had that afternoon...so I had a sleep-deprived trip the next day – a long one with two legs and uncertain weather. As it turned out, when we passed Singapore – our alternate airfield – all their airfields were 'black' due to weather. I never had the opportunity to catch up with that radio officer...he's lucky!



T-Birds, Geese and Pheasants

from Dave Bowden

In 1970 I was fortunate to be posted to an exchange position with the USAF Aerospace Defence Command, based initially at Perrin Air Force Base in northern Texas. While my primary responsibility involved instructing USAF pilots on the F-102 Delta Dagger, I was also required to fly the Lockheed T-33. It was used as an intercept target carrying chaff and ECM pods under the wings as well as a general cross-country communications aircraft. They were first produced in 1948 and over 6500 were eventually built. Many air forces flew this aircraft and there are reportedly still examples flying today.



With the extended cockpit to accommodate a second pilot, there was not a lot of space to carry bulky items. The solution was the addition of a travel pod mounted under the fuselage on the JATO attachment brackets. The pod was constructed of fibreglass over an aluminium frame. I flew with these pods

numerous times, but two trips were a bit more memorable. The first was to Fort Worth where there was a RAAF contingent working on the F-111 project.

I had to sit a promotion exam to qualify for the next rank (Squadron Leader). This required supervision by an approved external RAAF person of whom there were several at Fort Worth. I loaded my uniform, study notes and items required to sit the exam in the travel pod of a T-33 and headed off through a low overcast to Fort Worth less than an hour away. Breaking out on top of this cloud layer at



about 3000 feet there was a slight bump which I assumed was the result of a bit of turbulence. In due course we landed, taxied in and went to open the travel pod - which was no longer there. The upper attaching surface was there but the rest of the pod was torn off.

I sat the exam in my flying suit with no chance for a final review of my study notes. A call back to my home base resulted in a search and recovery mission by the SAR helicopter, which found my uniform and a few items in a field a few miles out below where I estimated we had topped the cloud.

My study notes were nowhere to be found - not that it mattered as I passed the exam.

So what caused the travel pod to break off? We think that some migrating birds (geese etc) may have been flying just above the clouds and our trusty T Bird collided with one of them as we broke out of the cloud.



The second memorable pod experience occurred when, together with our daughter's godfather, Captain Tom Alison, we flew to Foss Field in South Dakota for a weekend of pheasant shooting. Tom was an instructor at the equivalent of our Central Flying School and later flew the RF-4C before becoming the Deputy Commander of the SR-71 Wing. Later Tom took the first ever journalist for a back-seat ride in the SR-71 as reported in Reader's Digest. Tom's relations had corn farms and it was traditional that during the harvest they left a couple of narrow rows of uncut corn which became favourite places for pheasants to gather and feed. These farmers were highly organised in how they hunted these beautiful birds. With the shooters waiting at the end of a row of corn, a few beaters would move along the row with pheasants being driven towards the waiting guns. At the end of the row the birds would get airborne with a characteristic noise straight into the firing line. The end result was a lot of dead pheasants. These were dutifully hung ready for plucking and cooking. Our return flight now required us to load our clothes in every cockpit space so the travel pod could be loaded with pheasants. I think we fitted over a dozen in the pod and this time it remained securely attached so that we had pheasants for dinner for weeks to follow.



Where did the Country Go Wrong

from Pieter La'Brooy

H

e was getting old and paunchy
And his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion,
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies;
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours
His tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened quietly
For they knew whereof he spoke.



But we'll hear his tales no longer,
For ol' Joe has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer
For a Veteran died today.

He won't be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary,
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,
Going quietly on his way;
And the world won't note his passing,
'Tho a Veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth,
Their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing,
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories
From the time that they were young,
But the passing of a Veteran
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land,
Some jerk who breaks his promise
And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow
Who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country
And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend
And the style in which he lives,
Are often disproportionate,
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Veteran,
Who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal
And perhaps a pension, small.

It is not the politicians
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,
With your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out,
With his ever-waffling stand?



Or would you want a Veteran
His home, his country, his kin,
Just a common Veteran,
Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common Veteran,
And his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us
We may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,
We find the Veteran's part,
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honour
While he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage
At the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline
In the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
A VETERAN DIED TODAY."



Medics to Pakistan after Earthquake

11 Nov 05

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

On this day, a 140-member Army and RAAF medical team left for Pakistan to provide vital health care assistance following a devastating earthquake on 8 October. The quake, centred in the remote North-West Province and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, killed an estimated 79,000 people, injured over 100,000 and left 3.3 million homeless. With the approach of winter, survivors were in desperate need of medical attention, food, clean water and shelter. The ADF team arrived at Islamabad in a RAAF B-707 and a C-



130J Hercules from No 37 Squadron on 12 November and moved to Dhanni, 20 kilometres north-east of Muzaffarabad, where it established Camp Bradman. In later months, personnel deployed to more remote areas, such as the Neelum Valley of Kashmir, to assist villagers unable to reach the primary medical facility at Dhanni. ADF personnel performed thousands of immunisations and medical treatments before withdrawing in April 2006.





From The Flightline: National President's Message

from Carl Schiller, OAM CSM, National President

The Air Force Association celebrates its centenary next year. A Centennial Celebration Dinner is being organised for February 26th, 2020. The function will be held in Canberra and Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, AO, DSC, Chief of Air Force will be the guest of honour and keynote speaker. Invitations are open to all members and their partners. Details will be advised when arrangements are finalised. Given our Army origins, the Association is older than Air Force. We should be very proud our custodianship of this wonderful association and do what is necessary to ensure its longevity for its next century of operation.

Several years ago, the national organisation that restructured as a Company Limited by Guarantee changed its name to Air Force Association to align with Air Force's branding. Several other countries air force associations use a similar title. Consequently, to distinguish our Association from theirs, we sought and were granted the use of the RAAF roundel as part of our branding. The red kangaroo 'in motion' can be placed within the first letter 'o' in the word Association in our title. This unique and protected symbol clearly identifies us as Australian and with the RAAF. We should be very grateful for the privilege.

Between 1957 and 1986, 746 ADF Fire Fighters were trained at RAAF Base Point Cook and another 141 at RAAF Base Amberley during the following five-year period. Many have suffered serious illnesses through what they believe was caused from exposure to toxic chemicals. There is growing evidence to confirm this belief. The Firefighter Action Group has been campaigning for a decade to have their members' plight acknowledged so that they can receive appropriate support. Despite the Group's stoic efforts, progress has been extremely slow. Moreover, the veterans support legislation has been difficult to navigate and has limitations that thwart acceptance of some health conditions caused by well known contaminants. Many of these Firefighters have passed away and others are suffering serious health conditions. This is not a 'cash grab'; they need our support. I have advised DVA that if the case cannot be resolved within existing veterans support legislation, an alternate approach may be required.

I have alerted members about the need to modernise our Association to ensure its survival, which depends on its ability to attract and retain membership. The Association needs to become a 'learning organisation' and adapt to the current environment. Many traditional ex-service organisations are under pressure to survive because they have lost their capacity to learn and their thinking has become rigid. The AFA Ltd Board recently agreed to establish a Joint Boards Steering Group comprising representatives from each Division and chaired by an independent facilitator. Its inaugural meeting was held over November 28-29th 2019. The Group will identify initiatives and make recommendations to the National Board. The process will be transparent and require wide consultation. I stress this initiative is about maximising our potential by modernising our business processes, including better ways to communicate. There can be no threat to divisions' autonomy because they are separately incorporated entities.

2019 has been a strategic year for the Association. The monthly National Board meetings have involved vigorous discussions about strategies to progress the Association. Although there have been differences of opinion regarding the strategic options, Board Members have been undivided in the need to modernise the Association, improve its appeal to the younger veteran generation, and achieve its National Vision and Strategy as a veteran support entity. The Air Force Association will work to become a 5th Generation, contemporary association as it enters its centennial year.

I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and New Year.





'Just as it Happened'

from Anne Pike-Flaherty

This is an excerpt from Anne's father's book, 'Just As It Happened' which details an historical Air Force 'incident' which occurred when Dad, as a Flight Lieutenant, was sent from RAAF 461 Sunderland Squadron in Pembroke Dock, Wales to RAF Alness in Scotland to do the Captain's Course in November, 1944 and return to Pembroke Dock with his own crew. My parents had married in July, 1944 and therefore had to find lodgings near to RAF Alness which they found in Bisset's Temperance Hotel, Invergordon. According to Dad, the following incident 'just about shattered my faith in the boys from the Met. Office forever.

Every morning for almost a week in the pre-dawn darkness, I travelled from Invergordon to Alness by push bike along a road covered with about twelve inches of snow. This was only possible by placing the bike's wheels in the tracks left by the milk cart which had been along before me. Upon reaching Alness, I was told each morning that flying was scrubbed due to the gale force winds that were blowing but finally the message came from the Met. Room that if I thought I could get off, it would be ok because the winds would ease off by the time we were due back late that night.



Cyclepath

Such a loss of time and probably a bit of frustration prompted me to give it a go, so I rounded up the boys and told them we were going. Maybe my hearing was bad in those days because I didn't hear any cheers of delight! The difficulty in take-off in these conditions of gale force winds and accompanying rough seas is that it takes just about full bore on one of the outer engines to get the aircraft to turn from travelling downwind to facing into wind for take-off and there would have to be a danger or damage to a float when turning in such conditions. However, we managed to get off without any major difficulties and duly performed whatever duties that had been assigned to us until it was time to get back. When we arrived back in the circuit area that night we discovered that the gale hadn't eased off – it had increased. They only let two flying boats off and then discovered their mistake. The other plane arrived back at the same time as we did and as we both circled we were further informed that we had the choice of two flare paths – both 45 degrees out of wind! I doubt if you could think up any worse conditions – at night, a raging gale and having to come in pointing 45 degrees away from the line of the flare path and in a large aircraft that would be jumping all over the sky!

The other Flying Boat was being flown by an instructor so I let him take his choice of flare paths and go in first while I circled and watched. I wasn't too impressed with what I saw, so I told the wireless operator to tell them to change to the other flare path, while I continued to circle. They probably had the best one on, but I was cranky and maybe a little pig-headed at having to make such a dangerous landing at night. It didn't take them long, so it was no big deal. I ordered all of the crew onto the top deck, reduced the airspeed to 90 knots and started the descent. It was all I had anticipated – and more! Just after I made the final turn into wind at 500 feet we hit an air pocket and dropped like a stone and in a split second our airspeed dropped from 90 knots to 45 knots! You don't stay in the air at that airspeed. I used the rest of that split second to jam all power on and regain our 90 knots, and then be ready to ease them back to reduce speed for touchdown. All this time we were pointed 45 degrees to port and yet we were travelling straight towards the line of the flare path.



Sunderland Crew

So there was still one vital decision to make – the time to kick the aircraft around straight. Again it had to be almost split second timing right at the point of touch down. Too early or too late for different reasons in these conditions could have been disastrous. My timing must have been correct because suddenly we were not going anywhere. In normal landings, you get a little bit of thud, thud, thud on the hull in the run on but this time, with the wind force as it was and practically no run on, I had to convince myself that we were

down. Those few words would have successfully got me into the “line shoot” book that we kept on the squadron, but they’re all perfectly true! I remember I just tore my helmet off to escape the noises of the radio waves and just sat there for what seemed minutes but could have only been seconds because the job wasn’t finished yet. We still had to get the flying boat securely tied up on this wild night. This was accomplished without mishap and we were left to come ashore and reflect on our good fortune to walk away from this nasty situation.’



Wartime Photo Reconnaissance

from Maurice Kissane, FSB RAAFA WA

The RAAF Coomalie Creek airfield was attacked by Japanese Zeros on 2 March 1943. Six zeros made strafing runs along the strip and RAAF Beaufighter A19-31 was destroyed. Included here are some photos of the wartime photo reconnaissance personnel at Coomalie Creek.

Attack on Coomalie Creek airfield

At approximately 2:34pm on 2 March 1943, six Japanese Zeros attacked Coomalie Creek airfield in the Northern Territory. Earlier in the day a report was received at Coomalie Creek of a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft being sighted off Cape Fourcroy on Bathurst Island. This often meant that an air raid may follow later.

At about 2:30 pm, a “yellow alert” was raised at Coomalie Creek airfield warning of a possible air raid. A short while later cannon fire and Ack Ack fire could be heard.

The six Zeros made strafing runs along the strip. The air raid only lasted a few seconds. Beaufighter, A19-31, of 31 Squadron RAAF, was left at the end of the runway in the open and was totally destroyed. All the other aircraft were in their pens and only one was slightly damaged. Three men were wounded, but none seriously.

Beaufighter, A19-17, flown by “Bluey” Armstrong, was returning to

Coomalie Creek airfield, from a cross country exercise at the time of the raid, and was attacked by three Zeros. He opened his throttles wide and headed south.

Three of the Zeros were shot down by Spitfires over the sea. They also damaged three other Zeros.

Beaufighter, A19-31, was the pride and joy of pilot Ken McDonald. Ken and his navigator Frank Magee had taken delivery of A19-31 back in Wagga Wagga, when it was brand new. On 2 March 1943, the aircraft was lent to pilot Albert Longoni for a familiarisation flight. Unfortunately, Longoni parked the aircraft at the end of the strip instead of taxiing to the dispersal bay where it would be protected against enemy action by sandbags and camouflage. When Ken McDonald heard the “yellow alert” he decided he would have just enough time to have a haircut with barber, Trevor Ley, before any possible “red alert”. After his haircut he was walking into the mess

building when he heard the cannon and AA fire. Ken flattened out behind a tree, as there were no trenches nearby.

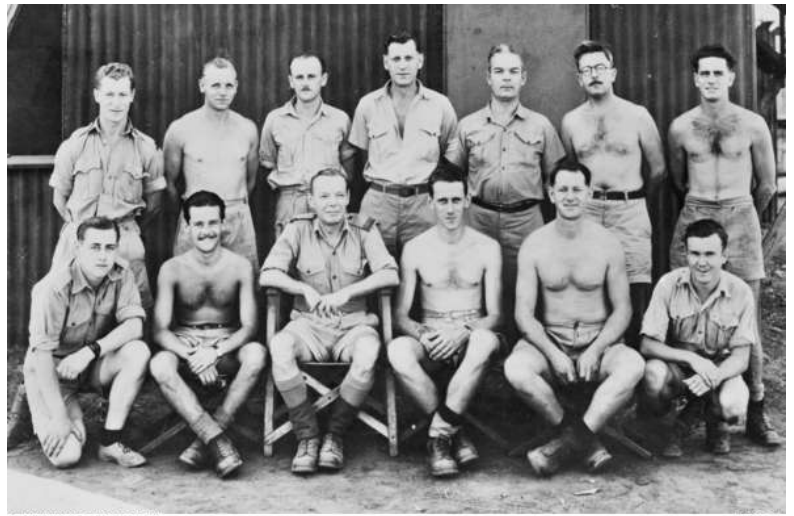
His navigator Frank Magee, joined him after sounding the “red alert”. As they lay watching the action, they saw six of the orderly room staff rush out of their building clutching their tin hats. They ran across the roadway and jumped into the nearest slit trench which happened to be full of water. There were six great splashes, then six tin hats could be seen, just bobbing above the top of the water.

The smiles were wiped from their faces when they investigated the smoke coming from the end of the strip. They jumped into a utility and drove towards the smoke. They saw the smouldering remains of their beloved A91-31, completely destroyed. After it cooled, McDonald took a little pool of molten metal as a souvenir.

This article taken from the Coomalie Creek website.



While it might look like a PT session in full swing, the photo below left actually shows members of the Photographic section of No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) attached to 31 (Beaufighter) Squadron, RAAF, drying a strip of film from a F24 camera at Coomalie Creek airfield in the Northern Territory. Thankfully, the 5th Generation RAAF no longer has to use man-power to dry WWII F24 film strips...or any other of its Photo Reconnaissance products!



Group portrait of the photographic personnel of No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (IPRU) at Coomalie Creek in the Northern Territory. Identified are, back row: H Taylor; 67013 Leading Aircraftman (LAC) James Montague of Sydney; 417252 LAC Errol Ward of Adelaide; 122591 LAC Eric Brownett; 65410 Acting Sergeant Stanley Murgatroyd of Sydney; 80703 Corporal (Cpl) Sydney Stuart Gore of Perth; 66508 LAC Sydney Milton Hambly of Sydney. front row: 142756 LAC Maxwell Walley of Melbourne; 17983 Sergeant Noel Webb of Perth; 03495 Flight Lieutenant William Ryan of Melbourne; 3588 Warrant Officer Wallace Fitness



Qantas Flight Operations - Return to Blocks

from John Clarkson

This memorable event happened in late 2001, a month or two after the terrible events of 11th September in New York, while I was employed within Flight Operations. As one might imagine, Qantas upgraded its flight deck security on all its flights, domestic and international, within weeks of that disaster. Access to the flight deck was forbidden, which was sad, as many of our Flight Crew saw the invitations to the flight deck as a very positive way of improving customer interaction and satisfaction. Also, the types of items which passengers could bring into the cabin of an aircraft were considerably restricted.

However, on a sunny day in late November 2001, a Boeing B767-300 was departing Sydney for Adelaide, a regular domestic flight. The aircraft had just left the terminal; an on-time departure, and was being pushed back by the tug. During this time, the cabin crew were inspecting overhead lockers and closing the locker doors, preparing for takeoff. As the cabin crew lady approached the rear of the aircraft, she looked into this overhead locker and saw a very large khaki duffle bag. Also, she thought there was a strange smell coming from the bag. She looked straight down and saw a man dressed in khaki overalls and asked him, "Is this your bag?" "Yes", the man said, "Do you want me to open it?" "Yes", our cabin crew lady answered. The man promptly lifted the bag down from the locker and opened the bag. To the astonishment of the cabin crew lady, there in the bag was a chain saw, fully fueled and ready to go!



Normally, cabin crew are not permitted to call the flight deck during push back until the seat belt light has been turned off after takeoff; unless they thought there was an emergency. Now, the cabin crew lady went straight to her intercom and called the Captain, who by this time was taxiing down towards the end of the runway. She said, "Captain, I have something important to tell you. There is a man here with a chain saw!"

The Captain's reaction was immediate! He notified the tower that he was returning to blocks as there was a passenger with some dangerous items. On return to the terminal, the man in khaki was escorted off the aircraft with his duffle bag, and the subject of 'Dangerous Goods' was explained to him!

However, although the aircraft then departed on its way to Adelaide, there was plenty of discussion between Flight Operations and the Terminal with questions including, "How did a man bring a fully-fueled chain saw though the x-rays into the main terminal without being questioned?" The topic remained a hot issue for some weeks. However, on the funny side, they say that when told, There's a man here with a chain saw!, the look on the Captain's face was priceless!



23 F-111s Buried in Queensland

21 Nov 11

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

On this day the burial of 23 of the surviving F-111C and G aircraft not allocated for preservation commenced at the Swanbank Landfill site near Ipswich, Queensland. The former coal mine - one of the largest landfill sites in Australia, taking 500,000 tonnes of waste each year - is operated by Thiess Services, which was contracted to undertake the F-111 project, one of its most unusual waste disposal contracts. By 24 November burial of the final aircraft had been completed. To ensure the site is marked as off-limits for future excavation, the precise GPS co-ordinates of each aircraft have been recorded and eventually the F-111s will rest deep under the ground beneath the mountain of landfill that will rise above them.



When landfill was complete, soil was placed over the top of the site, which will then be rehabilitated back to bushland. The Australian Government called for expressions of interest to display seven remaining aircraft; on 4 October 2012, the Government announced that the following six Australian



organisations were successful (the seventh, A8-130, was gifted to the Pacific Aviation Museum in Hawaii as a token of the close ties between Australia and America through a long period of coalition operations):

- Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory - A8-113
- Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Association - A8-147
- Fighter World, Williamtown, NSW - A8-148
- Historical Aircraft Restoration Society - A8-109
- Queensland Air Museum - A8-129
- South Australian Aviation Museum (SAAM) - A8-134. (A8-134 was transferred to the AWM in Canberra and replaced with A8-132);

More here: <http://www.saam.org.au/our-collection/our-aircraft/general-dynamics-f-111/>

A Thiess video of the disposal is here: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/86663113?title=0>



Preso's Prattle December 2019

from Ron Glew, State President, NSW Division

This year it's congratulations to 77 squadron on their 77th anniversary milestone.

With the upcoming festive season, I extend to all our Air Force members and their families, on behalf of your State Council and myself, all the very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year

This year has been a very rewarding year for our Association. The NSW Division and Soldier On initiative for an Australia wide Crisis Centre

for all ADF members and families has gathered momentum, and with support from the ESO community and also with the pro-bono contributions of Councillor Andy Schollum (Partner), Andrew Court (Senior Partner), and Tim Sanders (Senior Partner) of KPMG, and particularly the support of the DVA Repatriation Commissioner, Don Spinks, we are excited and looking forward to progress early in the New Year. We envisage extending these services to first responders once we are operational.

John Prowse, who was elected VP at the AGM has stepped down for personal reasons and Peter Gustafson has taken up the vacancy, while Wing Commander Mike Stuart-Watt, who is currently serving at 22 Squadron, has been elected as a councillor. We now have two serving members on our State Council, with Mike and Richmond Base WOFF Ivan Petrovic, joining us. Our Admin Assistant, Carol Moreau, has retired from the position and we have appointed Ron Haack as our Business Manager to expand on our initiatives to bring the Association into the modern-day serving members' awareness, and assist with National ventures on behalf of NSW. Thank you Carol, for your many years of service to us. Ron Haack stepped down as a State Councillor upon his appointment, and Geoff





Sheppard has once again joined SC where he is collating and setting up processes to improve efficiency in what we do.



With a magnificent effort by Greg Read SC, of Cumberland RSL Sub Branch, the Air Training Corp (now AAFC) Cenotaph in the church yard of St John's Ashfield has been renovated and NSW AFA were proud to be involved in the process, contributing in part to this upgrade of an historic AAFC memorial. Thank you so much Greg for your great effort. Greg has now embarked on applying for a Community War Memorial Fund Grant through Cumberland Council for a Memorial at

Regents Park. It is anticipated that AFA NSW will be contributing half of the remainder of costs in company with Cumberland RSL. Also, we continue to support the HARS Caribous with an annual contribution.

On a different note, I have been elected Vice President of the Sydney Anzac Day Dawn Service Trust, which again indicates the increased awareness of our AFA in the ESO community.

Sadly, we have lost many of our WWII members over the past year and we can only grieve that these magnificent Australians to whom we owe so much, have taken their last flight. *Clear skies ladies and gentlemen.*

My sincere thanks to our State councillors, who are making my job so much easier through their dedication, support and valued discussions which help point me in the right direction to lead our revitalization. Stay safe all.



Disbandment of RAAF Under Consideration

20 Nov 29

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

While attending the opening of Parliament on this day, the Chief of the Air Staff (Air Commodore Richard Williams) was shocked to hear the Governor-General announce that the new Labor Government led by James Scullin had under consideration the ‘question of maintaining a separate organisation for the Air Force’, this having been ‘brought under the notice of ... Ministers by officers of the Defence



Governor-General Lord Stonehaven departs after opening 16th Parliament. CAS Williams at top of steps (right)



Department'. This was news to the RAAF chief, as was the further information in the vice-regal speech that the matter had already been before the Council of Defence, but since that body had been unable to reach a decision the issue had been 'postponed pending a comprehensive review of the position of the Air Force'. This public statement ushered in a period of uncertainty which was not finally resolved until September 1932, when the then Minister for Defence declared amalgamation to be undesirable.



An Interesting Synopsis of WWI

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Germany, Austria and Italy are standing together in the middle of a bar when Serbia bumps into Austria and spills Austria's pint. Austria demands Serbia buy it a complete new suit because there are splashes on its trouser leg. Germany expresses its support for Austria's point of view.

Britain recommends that everyone calm down a bit.

Serbia points out that it can't afford a whole suit, but offers to pay for cleaning Austria's trousers.

Russia and Serbia look at Austria. Austria asks Serbia who it's looking at. Russia suggests that Austria should leave its little brother alone. Austria inquires as to whose army will assist Russia in compelling it to do so. Germany appeals to Britain that France has been looking at it, and that this is sufficiently out of order that Britain should not intervene.

Britain replies that France can look at who it wants to, that Britain is looking at Germany too, and what is Germany going to do about it? Germany tells Russia to stop looking at Austria, or Germany will render Russia incapable of such action. Britain and France ask Germany whether it's looking at Belgium.

Turkey and Germany go off into a corner and whisper. When they come back, Turkey makes a show of not looking at anyone. Germany rolls up its sleeves, looks at France - and punches Belgium.

France and Britain punch Germany. Austria punches Russia. Germany punches Britain and France with one hand and Russia with the other. Russia throws a punch at Germany, but misses and nearly falls over. Japan calls over from the other side of the room that it's on Britain's side, but stays there. Italy surprises everyone by punching Austria. Australia punches Turkey and gets punched back. There are no hard feelings, because Britain made Australia do it.

France gets thrown through a plate glass window, but gets back up and carries on fighting. Russia gets thrown through another one, gets knocked out, suffers brain damage, and wakes up with a complete personality change.

Italy throws a punch at Austria and misses - but Austria falls over anyway. Italy raises both fists in the air and runs round the room chanting.

America waits till Germany is about to fall over, then walks over, waves a fist at Germany while Britain knocks it out - then pretends it won the fight all by itself.

By now all the chairs are broken, and the big mirror over the bar is shattered. Britain, France and America agree that Germany threw the first punch, so the whole thing is Germany's fault. While Germany is still unconscious, they go through its pockets, steal its wallet, and buy drinks for all their friends.



Scientists Fly Aeroplane Using The Power Of Ionic Wind

from ABC Science

Ever since the Wright brothers flew their machine over the fields of Kitty Hawk more than 100 years ago, aircraft have been propelled using moving surfaces such as propellers and turbines. Now, for the first time, a team of US-based engineers has designed and successfully test flown a small aircraft using technology that isn't propelled by moving parts or fossil fuels, they report in the journal Nature. The team, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, say the innovation could pave the way for quieter, cleaner fixed-wing drones and aeroplanes in the future.

Despite some early hiccups - their first flight crashed into a wall - the plane successfully completed 10 test flights of 60 metres, with an average altitude of 0.47 metres. That's comparable in distance to the first Wright flight of 36.6 metres in 12 seconds in 1903. "But [ours was] hugely easier in the sense we only had to carry a control unit and not a pilot," said Steven Barrett, who has been working on the project for the past nine years. And while it's a huge step forward, it will take a lot more work for this technology to fly from the lab to the real world.

How it works. In traditional aircraft, thrust is created by propellers or turbines which push fast moving air backwards, and in turn pushes the aircraft forward. Weighing just 2.45 kilograms with a wing span of five metres, the prototype plane uses a technology called ionic wind, an electrical gradient from a positive to negative charge, to push the craft forward. The technology was first proposed in the 1960s, but it was thought that it would be impossible to produce ionic winds that would be efficient enough to fly an aeroplane, Professor Barrett said. "This is the first time we've achieved level flight with an aeroplane - which is a heavier-than-air flying vehicle," he said. The new prototype uses positively charged wires under the wings to strip electrons from nitrogen atoms in the air leaving behind positively charged ions. These ionised particles flow to the back of the plane, which is negatively charged. "As they flow they collide with air molecules transferring momentum to them. This is how the thrust is generated," Professor Barrett explained.



The prototype plane has positively charged wires under its wings that strip electrons off nitrogen atoms



The Wright Flyer was one of the original flying machines

The rate of energy consumption (provided by the 500W battery) required to generate the thrust - known as the power to thrust ratio - was comparable to commercial aircraft. But those efficiencies may well be lost as the small craft is scaled up to commercial sizes and payload capacities. Professor Barrett said it was unclear how much the technology could be scaled up - or down - but it could have applications for aircraft where stealth is an advantage. "The nearest term application would be for fixed-wing drones that have wing spans of a few metres to perhaps 20 metres," Professor Barrett said.



Aeronautics expert Andrew Neely, of UNSW Canberra, said the work was a "nice first step". "They've achieved something that people have talked about but no-one else seems to have achieved before," Professor Neely, who was not involved in the research, said. He said the main advantage such a craft would be noise reduction. "If you get away with moving air slowly, that helps to reduce noise and of course they've also removed any noise from any moving parts," he said. But while there may be some niche applications for the technology, Professor Neely said it still has a long way to go to be competitive with existing traditional and electrically powered aircraft. "It's not clear whether this would be any more efficient than some of the other ways we propel an aircraft. "And they admit themselves that it will be a struggle to scale to be able to carry significant payloads." Like all electrically propelled devices, it will be a slave to limitations in batteries, he adds. "The less efficient the propulsion system, the more battery power you have to carry," Professor Neely said.

Professor Barrett and his team will continue to tweak the craft to make it more efficient and quieter. But there's bad news if you are hoping for an end to the noisy multi-rotor drones. "It's less clear if [this technology] could be used for vertical lift," Professor Barrett said.



Don't Write Off the Young Generation

from Peter Ring

Joshua Dyer (aged 14) was tasked at school to write a poem for Remembrance Day. An hour later (without any help) he produced this.

One Thousand Men Are Walking

One thousand men are walking
Walking side by side
Singing songs from home
The spirit as their guide
they walk toward the light milord
they walk towards the sun
they smoke and laugh and smile together
no foes to outrun
these men live on forever
in the hearts of those they saved
a nation truly grateful
for the path of peace they paved
they march as friends and comrades
but they do not march for war
step closer to salvation
a tranquil steady corps
the meadows lit with golden beams
a beacon for the brave
the emerald grass untrampled
a reward for what they gave
they dream of those they left behind
and know they dream of them
forever in those poppy fields
there walks one thousand men.

Joshua Dyer 2019 (aged 14).





Why a Red Poppy?

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On and around 11 November each year, the Returned and Services League Australia (RSL) sells millions of red cloth poppies for Australians to pin on their lapels. Proceeds go to RSL welfare work.

Colonel John McCrae, who was Professor of Medicine at McGill University in Canada before WW1, first described the red poppy, the Flanders poppy, as the flower of remembrance. He had been a doctor for years and served in the Boer War as a gunner. He also went to France in WWI as a medical officer with the first Canadian contingent. As a surgeon attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, Major (MAJ) McCrae, had spent seventeen days treating injured men - Canadians, British, Indians, French, and Germans - in the Ypres salient. It had been an ordeal that he had hardly thought possible. MAJ McCrae later wrote of it:

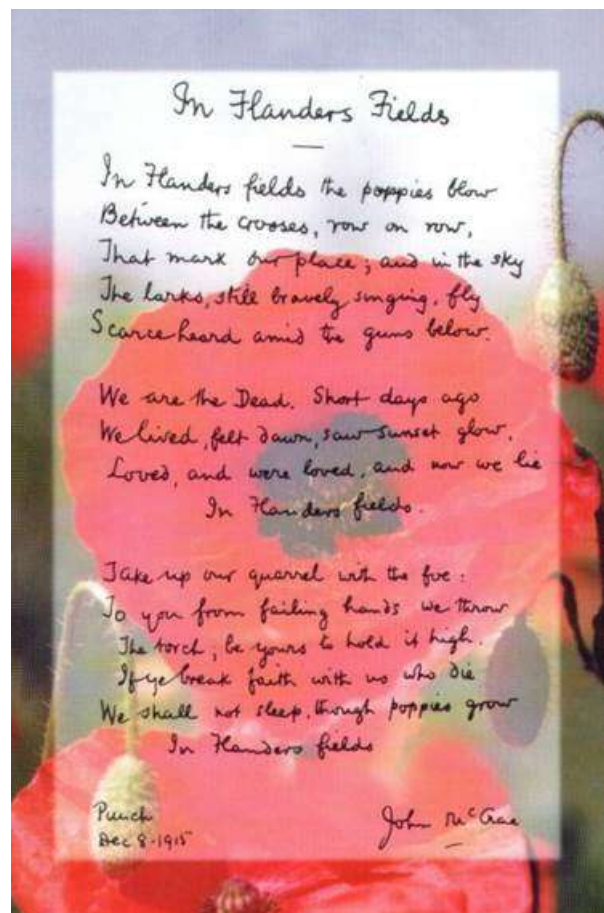


"I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of that seventeen days ... seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done".

One death particularly affected MAJ McCrae. A young friend and former student, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer of Ottawa, had been killed by a shell burst on 2 May, 1915. Lt Helmer was buried later that day in the little cemetery outside McCrae's dressing station, and McCrae had performed the funeral ceremony in the absence of the chaplain. The next day, sitting

on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station beside the Canal de l'Yser, just a few hundred yards north of Ypres, McCrae vented his anguish by composing a poem. The major was no stranger to writing, having authored several medical texts besides dabbling in poetry.

The poem, known as 'In Flanders Fields', describes the poppies that marked the graves of soldiers killed fighting for their country. From where he sat, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches in that part of Europe, and he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time scribbling fifteen lines of verse in a notebook. A young soldier watched him write it (on May 3, 1915 after the battle at Ypres). Cyril Allinson, a twenty-two year old sergeant major, was delivering mail that day. The major looked up as





Allinson approached, then went on writing while the sergeant major stood there quietly. "His face was very tired but calm as he wrote," Allinson recalled. "He looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave." When he finished five minutes later, he took his mail from Allinson and, without saying a word, handed him his pad.

Allinson was moved by what he read: "The poem was an exact description of the scene in front of us both. The word blow was not used in the first line though it was used later when the poem later appeared in Punch. But it was used in the second last line. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at that time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene". In fact, it was very nearly not published. Dissatisfied with it, McCrae tossed the poem away. But a fellow officer - either LTCOL Edward Morrison, the former Ottawa newspaper editor who commanded the 1st Brigade of artillery, or LTCOL J.M. Elder, depending on which source is consulted - retrieved it and sent it to newspapers in England. It was rejected by 'The Spectator' in London, but published by 'Punch' on 8 December 1915.

In the summer of 1917, John McCrae suffered attacks of asthma and bronchitis, almost certainly as a consequence of inhaling chlorine gas during the Second Battle of Ypres. On 23 January 1918, McCrae fell ill with pneumonia and was admitted to hospital. He died five days later at only 46 years of age. McCrae is buried in Wimereux, north of Boulogne (France).

Each Remembrance Day the British Legion lays a wreath on his grave - a tribute to a great man whose thoughts were always for others. McCrae's 'In Flanders Fields' remains one of the most memorable war poems ever written. It is a lasting legacy of the terrible battle in the Ypres salient in the spring of 1915.



In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

John McCrae





Ode to Flanders Fields – 100 Years On

Bob Walter

*We've kept the faith since Flanders fields
Despite the foe, we did not yield
When tyrants rose with plans to scorch
We've taken up that Flanders torch*

*Fought despots who would dominate
By trampling freedom and peddling hate
But freedom comes at such a cost
So many sons and daughters lost*

*The lark's still bravely sing on high
While lethal weapons fill the sky
And reap grim tolls on warriors' lives
Aloof from death and grieving wives*

*Brave soldiers, sailors, airmen too
Gave all to bear our point of view
They've served on many distant shores
Since that war we had – to end all wars*

*Though proudly trained and highly skilled
Too many wounded; worse still - killed Leaving their families quite bereft:
These innocent victims of violent theft*

*While those who managed to survive
Bear scars that last throughout their lives
With hidden wounds that no one sees -
Traumatic mental injuries*

*These heroes fought to support our nation
And in turn we have an obligation
To care for those who dared to fight
Not forget them, once they're out of sight*

*But history lessons often show
Humanity's learning can be slow
And of one grim fact you can be sure - We have not learnt when it comes to war*

*A hundred years of devastation
Involving almost every nation
Each conflict ends with one refrain:
More casualties; more family pain*

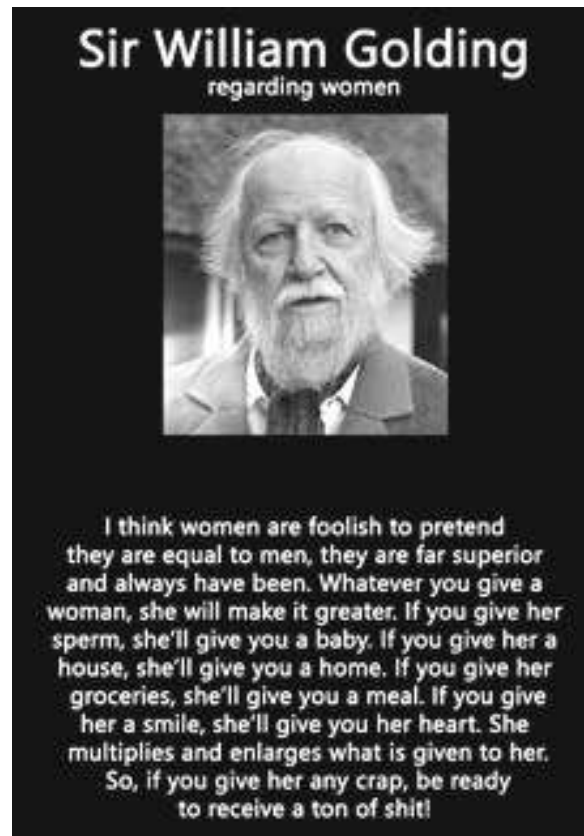
*And so the poppies sadly blow
Between new crosses row on row
For younger heroes, who did not yield
Just like those lying in Flanders fields.*

No further information available on the author.





Regarding Women



The Pie Cart

from Ken (Swampy) Marsh

Fifty years ago, in June 1969, 21 Apprentice Intake graduated from the RAAF School of Technical Training. A memory from 1967.

Our introduction to the theory and practice of sumpology was on the Gypsy Major, a power plant that had been in use from the early 1930s. It was mainly used in the Tiger Moth. Here we learnt the theory of the four stroke engine and all about fuel-air ratios, the Bernoulli principle, ignition timing and spark plug gaps. We were told about the importance of the tension wrench, using the right tool for the job, and the evils of the shifting spanner. That ex-thick I remember from 38 SQN in the mid-seventies who always went for the largest shifter he could find had obviously never been properly trained.

Engine section was just over the railway line that ran through the base and it meant we were closer to the mess and living quarters than some of the other trades. Memories of engine section include:

- The engine display in the front of the hanger, neatly arranged on polished floor boards.
- The offices on the left as we entered and the stairs leading to the upper level. I think the WOE (Warrant Officer Engineer) resided in the lower office and the Engineering Officer upstairs. Twice I stood in front of the Engineering Officer, hat removed, to have judgement passed on me for sins I had committed.
- The tool store on the ground floor behind the office.
- Smokos in winter. Four of us would lay on the grass arranged in a square, each with our head placed on the stomach of another. It was common to hear 'That sunlight has come 93 million miles just to get to me, and now you're stopping it making the last two feet' as someone's shadow would



pass over one of us. And then there was the struggle to get to our feet if an officer approached, only to hear 'As you were' - or was it, 'Carry on'?

- Flight Sergeant Charlie Goodchild, who took us through the workings of the Gypsy Major and had lost his teeth as a result of a collision with a hockey stick.
- Sergeant Killer Courtney, the Pom who took us through the workings of propellers and governors. In the period after lunch some of us had a tendency to nod off. Killer had the remedy. A propeller blade stood on its base on the wooden floor. He would wait until enough of us had dozed off and then knock the blade over. While the sound that reverberated around the room may not have been enough to wake the dead it certainly aroused sleeping 'appys' and the associated rush of adrenalin made certain we were alert for the rest of the afternoon.
- Most, if not all, of our theory exams were multi-guess (multiple choice). A flight would learn one engine type, B flight another and then swap around. We had this arrangement where each of us would remember three or four specified questions (1 to 4, 4 to 8 etc) and swap these between us. And there was this other rule for multi-guess - if in doubt, try C.

John Carpenter had decided by the time that we commenced our specific trade training that he and the RAAF were incompatible. By this time the only way out was to fail. Our first exam was multiple choice. John finished this in about 10 minutes but to his dismay, and everyone else's amazement, he passed (rather well from memory). But he almost had his wish to leave granted quicker than he could have imagined. Part of the curriculum for the Gypsy Major was a requirement for each of us to start it by swinging the propeller. To facilitate this an engine was set up in a specially designed stand, known as the Pie Cart. I remember this as looking something like a cross between a phone box with one side removed and a horse float. The engine was set up in a frame that protruded from the front, the stand pivoted on two wheels, and the whole arrangement was secured by either chains or ropes to anchor points behind. The operator stood in the box. We were shown how to stand with our left hand behind our back and to pull the propeller down and our arm out of the way to make sure that we did not fall into the propeller's arc. On his first attempt, John's head moved forward into the propellers path. Fortunately for him, and us, the Gypsy Major always seemed to start on the second attempt. John departed shortly after that. As far as I can remember the rest of us graduated. At least one of our number, Pete Smith, returned to RSTT to impart knowledge to another generation of apprentices. And while those days are now in the distant past and the memories hazy, friendships were formed and cemented, and we learnt skills that were to carry us through our service careers and beyond.



Australia's New F-35 Fighter Progress

from Robert Richardson, published in the Weekend Australian 26 Oct

Australia's F-35 program remains on track to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in December 2020, after almost 12 months of local operations from RAAF Base Williamtown, near Newcastle. Australia is acquiring at least 72 5th-generation Lockheed Martin F-35 A Lightnings and there are now six aircraft flying from Williamtown. A further two will arrive before the end of the year and in addition, 10 Australian aircraft are currently serving with the F-35 International Pilot Training Centre in Arizona, supporting RAAF and international pilot training.



The first two F-35A pilots to be trained in Australia have recently completed their conversion training and by the beginning of October, a total of 10 RAAF pilots and 70 maintenance personnel had been trained and the 16 Australian aircraft had accumulated almost 4500 flight hours. The first two local



trainees were already qualified fighter pilots and formed part of a small-scale training package conducted at the new integrated training centre at Williamtown, as the RAAF builds a sovereign training capability in time for IOC declaration. Maintenance personnel training is also being undertaken locally.

The first two aircraft arrived in Australia in December last year and the RAAF is now almost one year into a two-year Verification and Validation trial, designed to ensure the F-35 is effective in the Australian operating environment.

From a cost perspective, Australian aircraft coming off the production line in Texas continue to reduce in price, as the volume of aircraft in production and associated efficiency measures take effect. “F-35-unit costs have declined by about 70 per cent since the first production lot. Lockheed Martin and the Pentagon have reached a handshake agreement for the F-35 Lot 12 production contract, with options for Lots 13 and 14,” says Scott Thompson, Deputy Country Executive, Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand. “In that handshake agreement, the price of an F-35 is now less than US\$80 million by Lot 13 (2019), which is equal to or less than legacy fighters and achieves our goal of delivering a less than \$80 million aircraft one year earlier than planned.”

From a sustainment point of view, Lockheed Martin signed a strategic deed, together with an Integration, Maintenance and Administration Services contract, with the Commonwealth in August to support a sovereign F-35 capability in Australia. Under the deed, the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) will lead a team of local industry partners that have won contracts for the ongoing sustainment of the capability.

As the OEM, Lockheed Martin has also been providing specialised training to the initial cadre of BAE Systems Australia’s technical workforce, as the latter establishes an F-35 airframe Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul and Upgrade (MRO&U) facility at Williamtown. The facility will receive its first aircraft in 2021 and may potentially conduct work on behalf of other F-35 partner nations in the future. “We’ll ramp up through the course of the early 2020s as the RAAF’s fleet increases in numbers and it reaches the point where they need to undergo major block upgrades and system enhancements,” says Andy Doyle, Lockheed Martin Australia F-35 in-country lead. “The forecast is to have the MRO&U capability to conduct work on six to eight F-35 s by the mid-2020 s.”

According to Australian Government figures, more than 50 Australian companies have now won work in the global F-35 production program, which it says is currently worth \$1.69 billion and predicts will rise to more than \$2 billion by 2023.





Veil of Silence on Korean War fighters' fate

from Robert Richardson, abridged from the Weekend Australian, 27 July 19

The Australian government has known for nearly 66 years that missing soldiers and RAAF pilots presumed killed in the Korean War were believed to be alive in communist captivity when the conflict ended in 1953, declassified records show. One of the nine missing men, fighter pilot Don Armit, is the subject of disputed claims that he was mentioned in secret Soviet communications about captured Allied flyers and taken to Russia for interrogation after being shot down over North Korea.

Despite the emergence of the new material, the RAAF is adamant there is no evidence to support a finding that any of the Australian MIAs survived the war as prisoners. The official record stands that they are missing in action, presumed dead. And it rejects outright the possibility that Armit, 25 at the time he was lost in 1951, was handed over to the Soviets, insisting the “most probable conclusion” was he died when his warplane crashed. “In the absence of further evidence, Air Force concurs with the US that the list of nine Australians ‘believed to be POW’ is not supported by any evidence,” the family of one of the missing men was informed this month, deeply angering them.

Philip Norrie, the Sydney GP heading the Armit family’s push for answers, said they were frustrated that the government had done “bugger all” to get to the bottom of what happened to the missing pilot. “It’s still a mystery,” Dr Norrie said. “People contacted Don’s mother, Frances, for years telling her he was still alive, being tortured, and it drove her up the wall. Like anybody, we want closure.” His wife, Belinda, who is Armit’s second cousin, said: “She never went out of the house. I think she really thought he would come home.”

Bit by bit, British and US archives have given up the secrets of what was known about the missing nine and the lack of effort by a supine Australian government to establish their fate at the end of the Korean War.

In late 1953, the British military command in Japan, Britcom, advised Defence in Melbourne that the names of the Australians “still in enemy hands” had been provided to North Korean and Chinese representatives involved in the negotiations to return POWs on both sides. The cable said the information had been exchanged on September 9, 1953 — 10 weeks after the armistice. It named the nine Australians with their unit, rank and service numbers alongside British, Canadian and South African MIAs “believed” to be prisoners of war.

This was done under the auspices of the UN Command Military Armistice Commission. The list mirrors one that was prepared by US military intelligence and reported by the US Department of the Army Staff Communications Office in a secret document dated September 2, 1953. It is not known whether this was shared with Australian officials, though some details were later reported in the Australian press.

The Britcom cable, however, is the first direct evidence that Canberra was formally made aware of the possibility that Australians could have been left behind in North Korea after the ceasefire came into effect on July 27, 1953. Robert Menzies’s government evidently failed to act — either by taking up the case of the missing men or demanding that the Americans do so, given they called the shots during and after the Korean War, where the US-led coalition supporting the South Koreans fought under a UN mandate.

No effort seems to have been made at the time by Australia to establish the veracity of the intelligence used to put the lists together, which is now contested. Instead, the running was left to the British, who concluded that the lists were “grossly inflated” and there were in fact only two pilots — one Canadian, the other British — whose plight was accurately depicted.

On March 31, 1954, the secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department under Menzies wrote to the British high commissioner in Canberra accepting the UK’s offer to make representations to the



Chinese on the missing POWs. The official, Allen Brown, also suggested the embassies of both Australia and Britain in Moscow approach the Soviets to secure any information about the missing men and that the Indian government be asked to play an intermediary role with the Chinese. Australia at the time did not have diplomatic relations with China. "It is considered that no reference should be made to the medical condition or circumstances in which the persons were last seen, as such details might provide the communists with material to cover any wrongful act such as the killing of prisoners of war," Sir Allen cautioned in the confidential letter.

In addition to Armit, whose Meteor jet fighter was shot down by Russian-made MiG-15s on December 1, 1951, RAAF pilots Bruce Thomson Gillan, 22, and decorated World War II veteran Mark Browne-Gaylord, 30, were listed as missing, presumed dead, after being lost on the same day in January 1952 air battles.

The quiet, determined courage of Armit and his fellow pilots is conveyed in a letter home to his cousin, Ted Chambers, in November 1951, eight weeks before he was shot down northeast of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang. He recounted how the MiGs outperformed and outgunned the first-generation Gloster Meteor jets flown by the Australians, though "inferior pilots" were at the controls of the enemy planes. "Their 37mm cannon is grimly fascinating to watch ... when firing, it throws out a gout of flame about three feet in front of the nose of the aircraft whilst their 23mm's give off a seemingly harmless twinkle," the young man wrote.

Armit, an admired flight leader, was lost with two other Australian pilots after the squadron was bounced by a swarm of MiGs. What they didn't know was that they were probably up against crack Russian pilots who had been secretly deployed to bolster the North Koreans and their Chinese allies. Flying officer Bruce Thompson and pilot officer Vance Drummond safely ejected and were picked up by the North Koreans, but Armit was never seen again.

Speculation that he survived the crash and ended up with the Russians has been kicked along by the emergence of a secret Soviet combat report sourced by the US Defence POW/MIA Accounting Agency, describing how the "flyer of a downed enemy Meteor was taken prisoner" on December 1, 1951, the day Armit and his squadron mates came to grief. This document, known as the Soviet #381 action summary, was forwarded to RAAF investigators and recently made available to the families. It suggests the pilot was interviewed by Russians soon after he was captured. Innisfail lawyer Bruce Gillan, the nephew of Bruce Thomson Gillan, of 77 Squadron, who was shot down eight weeks later on January 2, 1952, is convinced the man could only have been Armit.

Mr Gillan says this is because neither Drummond nor Thompson reported encountering Russian personnel after they were eventually freed and, further, the Soviets had been at pains to keep secret the presence of their pilots in Korea. If they did question an Australian pilot, it was unlikely they would have allowed him to go, such were Cold War tensions.

"There was only one pilot interviewed by the Russians of the three shot down, so it has to be Armit," Mr Gillan, 62, said. His theory is rejected by retired RAAF wing commander Grant Kelly, who works with the air force's Historic Unrecovered War Casualties section and liaises with the families. In a July 10 email, he advised Ian Saunders, the son of a missing Korean War soldier not on the suspected POW lists, that the pilot described in the #381 action summary was more likely to have been Drummond, who had reported that he was "corkscrewing around" Armit's plane prior to ejecting. "There is nothing to counter the 1955 Presumption of Death decision that Armit died in the combat action on 1 December, 1951," Mr Kelly said.

Citing a 1994 study by the Rand organisation, a think tank entrenched in US defence and strategic decision-making, Mr Kelly quoted the author, researcher Paul Cole, as concluding that Soviet intelligence services such as the then KGB did not take UN personnel on "one-way trips" to the USSR. As for the other eight missing Australians named as possible unreturned POWs in North Korea, Mr Kelly said: "The 1994 Cole Rand report concluded the evidence of why personnel were placed on the



1953 UNCMAC list of 'believed to be POW' has not been located and may not exist." Away on a recovery mission for the military, Mr Kelly did not reply to questions from The Weekend Australian.

Mr Gillan is demanding that the Australian government, through Foreign Minister Marise Payne, approach the Americans to access the crucial intelligence. "You have to go to the top of the tree," he said. "There has to be documentation with some information on why my uncle and the other men went on that list. Now that information could have been erroneous. Fine. Show it to us and let us see for ourselves." Speaking on behalf of the Armit family, Dr Norrie, 66, said: "We would like to believe he died on site and wasn't tortured. But unfortunately, anything is possible."

In a statement, Defence said it was not known how the nine Australian names were added to the list of presumed POWs at the end of the Korean War and "extensive archival research has not yet confirmed" that process. "What is known is that it was no secret to the Australian government at the time, as formal advice was provided to Defence at the time the names were on the list," it said. "It was no secret to the Australian public, as the names of all nine men, classified as "missing, believed prisoner" were published as such in newspapers at the time."

Senator Payne said: "The unknown fate of those missing in the Korean War continues to be a source of pain and frustration for their families. "Australia continues to work closely with both the US and South Korea to uncover the fate of those missing in action to recover remains from the Demilitarised Zone and in North Korea."



Battle of Britain - 15 September 1940

from David Robson

*They etched their names onto the vast blue canvas
of the English summer sky
and on that momentous day,
wrote their names into history.*

*They flew their painted machines
on curving paths
to intercept intruders
who sought to change our way of life.*

*But despite the panoramic beauty
and romantic imagery of Spitfire skies,
this was no aerial ballet,
no sport, no operatic tragedy.*

*This was one-on-one gladiatorial combat
as ruthless as that of the coliseum,
merciless, kill or be killed, unforgiving.*

*Their orchestra was
the scream of their Merlin engines,
their oratorio the quaint lyrics
of 'able', 'baker', 'roger', 'wilco',
'bandits' and 'bogey',
the final crescendo was the sound
of cannon and machine-gun fire and
the final curtain was
the fiery death of a pilot or crew.*



*These young men
were rushed into combat
before being fully prepared
sometimes hot,
sometimes freezing
in cramped cockpits
filled with the smells
of sweat, of pain and of fear.*

*Their bodies were crushed by the
forces of tumultuous flight.
Bravely they flew day after day;
they and their plotters and ground crews
worked to the point of collapse.*

*Churchill named them, 'the few'
But we who live
must ask and continue to ask,
'why so few'?*

*The legacy we bear
is to never again
allow our country
to be so ill-equipped
and ill-prepared to defend our values
nor to risk the freedoms
and democracies we enjoy
and which by their sacrifice,
fighter pilots had to defend
against all odds - often to their death.*

**This day, 15 September, is their memorial day.
Let us never forget them.**



RADAR Branch Commemorates Battle of Britain

from Ian Gibson

The RADAR Branch attended the BoB commemoration service held at Newcastle, which was very well organised by Fighter Squadrons Branch.

RADAR Branch members were privileged to be represented at the service by RAF Exchange Officer, SQNLDR Nathaniel Christopher, from No 3 Control and Reporting Unit at RAAF Base Williamtown. SQNLDR Christopher laid the wreath on behalf of RADAR Branch members.

SQNLDR Christopher is completing the third year of his exchange duties this year, prior to returning to the UK.



SQNLDR Christopher laying the wreath.



Two Words Veterans Should Stop Using

By David Lee, Military Programs Leader at CVS Health and 2018 Stand-To Veteran Leadership Scholar at the George W. Bush Institute.

Published on August 19, 2019

from Pieter La'Brooy

Last week I attended #BourBiz at the MGM National Harbor with a couple of colleagues from CVS Health. I had the opportunity to speak with several veterans, non-veterans, and some people still in service. Each time I met a veteran we did the typical what branch were you in and when did you serve introductions. On more than one occasion I heard the two words that no veteran should ever say. This included veterans who had been out less than a year to a veteran who had left service almost five years ago. But it wasn't limited to this event.

As I was heading out at the end of the evening, I had to pass through security to cut across the casino to the lobby to catch an uber. As I opened the ACU backpack I was carrying for the security guard to check he made a joke that he had to carry one that was much bigger when he was in service. Another guard was checking people, so I paused to ask him the same questions and he too said the two words that make me cringe when said by a veteran, "I only..."

When some veterans hear that I served for over 20 years they may respond "I only served for X years." I have had other veterans say "I only was a specialist" or some other rank when they hear I was a colonel. Many that I meet that say "I only" joined after 9/11. They knew we were at war and joined anyways often committing to wear a uniform for four years or more.

I entered West Point in 1981 and became a lieutenant in 1985. My class saw a few recent grads go into Grenada in 1983 but I don't think many of us ever anticipated we would see a real war during our career. At that time our biggest enemy was the USSR and no one seriously believed we would face them in armed conflict. Neither of my parents had a college degree and West Point was a chance for a free education plus a guaranteed job after graduation. It was not the ideal reason to join the military, but I had no intention of making the Army a career and figured my time in uniform would give me a chance to travel to places I had never been. The possibility of going to war was never given any serious consideration during the process. This is why I have the utmost respect for those who knew we were at war and joined anyways. I respect them because I don't know if my 18-year-old self would have made the same decision.

Between 2003-2005 I was a battalion commander, and I told unit leaders that I would not tolerate anyone belittling someone who decided not to re-enlist. It didn't matter if they served one tour in uniform, it was more than 99% of their peers. I did not want someone to feel that their service was not special - because it is. Any man or woman who wore a uniform for any period of time took an oath that the majority of our country has not. Since 1 July 1973 our military has relied on volunteers to fill our ranks and if you meet someone who is a veteran and under the age of 35, they made a decision to join our military while we are at war (yes, present tense, we are still at war).

"I only" is not relevant, we have all earned the same title - veteran. And to be clear, I don't care how the government defines it, anyone who raised their hand, took the oath and put on a uniform is my brother or sister. Rank means nothing after service, we are all veterans who shared a common set of experiences. No veteran should sound like they are making an excuse for their service.

If you have never served, please do more than thank someone for their service, ask them what branch of the military they served in and what they did. Your sincere interest and showing you care can have a huge impact on a veteran who does not feel their service was special. I never cease to be amazed by the humility that exists among the military community, so don't expect people to brag about their experience if you don't ask.





A Memory from WWII Pilot, Doug Sandow

from Janet Collingwood, Doug's daughter

The Second World War had just ended and as yet the effect was still well in my mind even though all the shooting and killing was over. But it was not over yet for many brave men as a result of outstanding occurrences with the enemies of our country.

In preparation for discharge I was suddenly called on to remain active as a bomber pilot to continue my services and commence the return of the badly war-wounded of Australia to their beloved country and home towns. This was underway as soon as possible at wars end in our heavy duty aircraft, the B-25. This aircraft enabled us to move large numbers of injured personnel quickly.

On commencement I experienced extreme dismay at the conditions of these severely wounded Australians requiring serious and urgent medical attention. To this day I can never forget the faces of the badly wounded personnel we were returning home. Their faces showed the pain they were experiencing, made even more painful with flights of 10 hours in our practical but not so comfortable aircraft. Our daily flying included so many hours from Darwin to most Aussie capitals. On landing and completion of these flights what great joys and satisfaction our crews experienced getting these wounded men to the hospital treatment they so badly needed.

This memory has been brought forward in my mind as we focus on the challenges faced by wounded returned service men and women helped so much through such events as the recent Invictus Games, with special thanks to the support provided by the Royal Family and others who assisted this project.



AFC PoWs

Source: Australian War Memorial historian, Aaron Pegram

A total of 563 aircrew (410 pilots and 153 observers) flew operations with the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) of whom 110 died from combat-related causes. Of the 35 Australian pilots and observers of the AFC taken prisoner during WW I, 14 were captured by Ottoman forces in the Middle East, and 21 on the Western Front in the war against Germany. Airmen were treated relatively well by the Germans or Turks upon capture, more so if they were wounded. The Germans probably had less sympathy for an Allied airman who wasn't wounded, because ground troops were often strafed and bombed by them. There are instances where airmen were kicked, slapped, beaten and verbally abused. But the treatment of airmen who fell into the hands of the Arab tribesmen in the desert could be a lot worse: one of the four Australian pilots with the Mesopotamian Half Flight was killed by Arab tribesmen after landing in Ottoman territory; two others were assaulted with clubs, rifles, axes, and hammers before the Turks arrived and took the Australians prisoner.

The German Air Service conducted all interrogations. Allied airmen were considered a great source of intelligence to the enemy because they were flying some of the most advanced technology of the period, they had a good sense of geography, great technical capabilities, and they knew the nature of operations. Pilots were well informed of the techniques enemy intelligence staff used to extract information from prisoners, and "to prevent their machines from being captured, studied, salvaged or pressed into service by enemy forces, Australian pilots flew with a flare pistol in their cockpits so that a disabled aircraft and any maps, letters or operations documents could be set alight after a forced landing".

The captured airmen were detained in a prison camp in the homeland of their captors. Conditions for prisoners in Turkey were primitive: their quarters were cramped, rations were basic and Red Cross food parcels would go missing or be delayed for several months. One Australian pilot, Thomas White, managed to escape. In June 1918, White stowed away on a Russian merchant ship in Constantinople harbour bound for Odessa in the Ukraine. He eventually made his way back to London.



Airmen captured in Germany were treated much better, and some were even given parole on the understanding that they would not attempt to escape. But, overall, the imprisonment of AFC pilots and observers – all officers – was tolerable, and when the war ended on 11 November 1918, all 35 Australian airmen captured in Mesopotamia, Palestine and on the Western Front were alive. Pegram said “... the experiences of the AFC’s captured airmen reminds us of the harsh realities of aerial combat when aviation was in its infancy, and of the certainty that not all who took to the skies became the stuff of legends.”



Ed May, 'The Last Man Standing'

RAAF 1939-1945, mainly 75 SQN

from Patricia Jackson, Daughter of John F. Jackson and Life Member of 75 Squadron Association

I first met Ed May about 15 years ago at a 75 Squadron Association reunion and then few times up to 2017 when we (members of the Association) gathered at Tindal at the invitation of the then CO, WGCDR Mick Grant, to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the founding of 75 Squadron. Ed was born in Toowong, Brisbane in May 1920. He lived there with his family in Morley Street until he joined the RAAF as an Aircraft Fitter in November 1939. He was 19 years old. After successfully passing a trade test, Ed travelled by train with other recruits to RAAF Base Richmond, NSW. Ed had enlisted for “the duration of the war and 12 months thereafter”. He rose to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

A couple of years ago, when he was 97, Ed wrote a memoir of his time in the RAAF and 75 Squadron. It is a well written, interesting read. I was the lucky recipient of one of the books. There is also a copy at Tindal. After the war, when teaching at a technical college, he wrote a text book titled '*Automotive Mechanics*'. A number of editions have been published over the last 40 years and now, with a co-author, it is still current.

At 99 years young, Ed is as sharp as a tack and a joy to visit, which I have done as often as possible. He spends lots of time on his computer and learned to play the ukulele at 95. I thought that the present CO 75 SQN, WGCDR Pete Robinson, might like to meet Ed, so I organised a date with Ed and Pete. Pete came down from Townsville (where the Squadron was conducting exercises) with WOFF Graham Docking for the day on Tuesday, 24th September 2019. We met Ed and five of his family at the Moreton Bay Boat Club for lunch. Ed could not believe that Pete and Graham had come all that way to meet him, though Ed had probably served longer in 75 Squadron than most, and he had been at the decisive Battle of Milne Bay.

After lunch, Pete and Graham presented Ed with two large framed photographs, one featuring a Kittyhawk and the other an F/A-18A Hornet. The inscription on the Kittyhawk print read '*Presented to Ed May with sincere gratitude for your service to 75 Squadron at Milne Bay, New Guinea and your broader service to Air Force over the period 06 Nov 39 – 01 Nov 45*'; and on the Hornet print, '*The aircraft technology has changed since 75 Squadron was formed in 1942. However, the spirit of the Squadron remains inspired by the original members who worked, fought and died in atrocious*



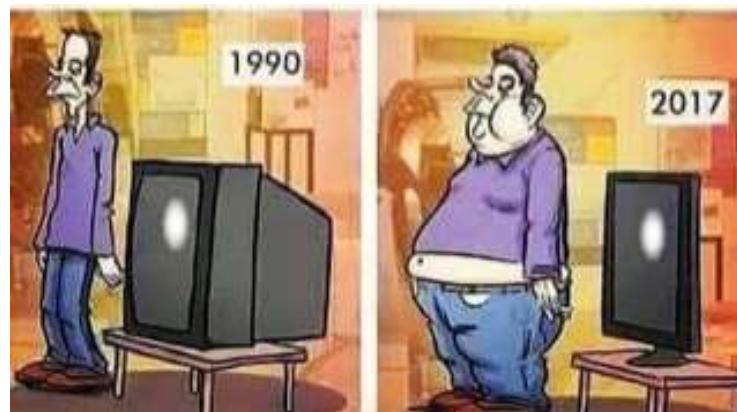


conditions throughout the South West Pacific to help turn the tide against the Japanese advance in World War II'; and on both, 'Presented to Ed May on behalf of the current members of 75 Squadron by Wing Commander Pete Robertson, CO 75SQN and Warrant Officer Graham Docking, WO 75SQN on this day 24 September 2019'.

Ed was never lost for words and made us all feel at home when we went back to his retirement villa for a cup of tea and cake afterwards. He found two places on the wall for the photographs. I am so glad we were able to get together. It was a special time for all of us.



Then and Now



9SQN Flew Last Mission in Vietnam

19 Nov 71

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

No 9 Squadron flew its last sortie in Vietnam - a 'sniffer' mission - on this day. The following month, the squadron's 16 Iroquois took off from Vung Tau for the last time and landed on the deck of HMAS Sydney for the return trip back to Australia. By then, the squadron had flown over 237,000 sorties; carried 414,000 passengers; conducted 4,000 casualty evacuations (CASEVACS) and medical evacuations (MEDEVACS); and transported almost 12,000 tons of freight. Seven aircraft were destroyed or written off; 37 damaged – 23 by ground fire. Four members of the squadron were killed, and two others had been killed while attached to the squadron. Eight aircrew were wounded in action. **More 9SQN Vietnam War history here:** <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U53557>





The Puppy and the Pilot

from Wing Commander Martin Susans

In March 1945, Wing Commander Ron Susans was CO 79 Squadron, flying Spitfires at Morotai in the West Pacific area of operations. He had previously completed a tour with 3 Squadron in North Africa and Italy.



Ron Susans on ops in the SW Pacific circa 1945

The war was coming to an end, and Ron was visiting Oakey when he got word that his second son, Martin, had been born in Sydney. There were plenty of aircraft available, so Ron asked the ground crew to fill up a Spit for a flyaway. Whilst preparing for the flight, a scruffy young airman appeared at the aircraft, and asked the pilot if he could take a parcel to Sydney for him...it was his son's birthday the next day, and he hadn't seen him for a while. 'Sure, bring it out and I'll drop it off at Mascot'.

The young airman reappeared carrying a beer carton which when opened, revealed a young puppy curled up inside. 'Oh...uh, ok, put him up behind the seat, and make sure someone meets the aircraft in Sydney'. So off they went, the puppy and the pilot. Soon after top of climb, the puppy appeared on the pilot's lap, trying to keep warm. Unfortunately, the puppy didn't have the endurance of a MK9 Spit.

By the time they landed at Mascot, the puppy was ready to play, and the pilot needed a change of clothes.

Nevertheless, by the end of the day, a young Sydney boy was playing with his new puppy, a father was holding his baby, and a beaming mother was a new fan of the Supermarine Spitfire.

Ron Susans went on to become an Air Vice Marshal, retiring as Commander IADS in 1975.



RUOK?

from John Clarkson

An Army veteran mate recently sent this around via his Facebook media.

How many of you have had a night out planned, or arranged coffee with friends and suddenly the four walls you inhabit seem the only safe haven because it's the only place you don't have to pretend you are ok, so you cancel. Or when you are invited out you tell them how terribly sorry you are but you're already booked up that weekend, when you are actually just really busy trying to hold it together in your safe box. And so the first problem starts, all by itself. People stop asking you and the isolation that at first wasn't true becomes your only truth.





Please don't give up on your friends. Ring them, go round, even when they don't want you to. Because they really do, they just don't know how to say it. Yes, there is a message in there. Have you been there?



Wanderers Branch Goes Bush For Birthday Bash

from Gordon Pert, President

The Wanderers Branch celebrates the ATTU/1CCS birthday in September each year. At one of our earlier social gatherings, members were discussing how best to celebrate this year's 54th birthday. As the beer and wine flowed an idea started to form that we should hold a weekend-long event and why not go camping? After all, everyone who has been to ATTU/1CCS has been camping at some time, haven't they?

Ed Darke is also a member of the Scout movement and he suggested we try the Mountain Trails campsite at Wee Jasper. On confirmation the site was available we advertised the weekend to the members. Over the weekend of 20th – 22nd September some 20 members and their families appeared at the camp site. It was a great weekend with a variety of accommodation options seen. The camp site is also known as 'Tin Huts' because - you've guessed it - there are some tin huts on site. These four buildings are shaped like tents and several people used these to rest their heads at the end of the day.



Central dining hall and camp fire area. Some of the tin huts can be seen in the background.

We also had Mal Baker in his 1CCS Mozzie Dome, Shaun 'Max' Moran showing off his brand-new swag, Gordon Pert with his little dome tent and Mick Reidy with his Jeep awning. The plushiest accommodation was easily Karon and Paul Millett's ruggedized, heated caravan. Chuck and Gabi Wallace weren't far behind with their off-road camper trailer. The camp site had a central cooking cum dining hall with solar-powered lighting, but without doubt the centrepiece was the large, covered fire pit. Not surprisingly, this was the hub around which the whole weekend revolved.

Friday night we raised a toast to celebrate the official birthday of the Unit (and Chuck Wallace as he keeps reminding us). We all enjoyed catching up with old friends and making a few new ones. The stories, as you might expect, centred around the times and personalities we each remembered from our respective tours at the Unit. Throughout Saturday more members and their families arrived. There was no official program of events, so while some folks went bush-walking, some of us just preferred to relax around the fire and chat.

The big feast on Saturday night was provided by Masterchef Gabi Wallace. Ably assisted by husband Chuck, she produced two magnificent dishes of chicken and lamb using a couple of camp ovens. This fed all the gathered throng and was washed down with beer, wine and another round of port. John Gill led the musical entertainment with his amazing guitar skills; most of us recognised the tunes but the pesky words didn't always come to mind. Thank goodness for la, la, la...!

Sunday dawned clear and bright if not a little chilly. After a Mal Baker-inspired breakfast of bacon and egg rolls, people started to pack up and head home. The photo shows some of the members who attended the Birthday Bush Bash.



Back Row (L-R): Gabi and Chuck Wallace (holding Murray Darke); Ed Darke (and 2-month old daughter Matilda); Paul Millett; Gordon Pert; John Gill; Mal Baker; Shaun 'Max' Moran, Front Row (L-R): Karon Millett; Daniel Smith (and daughter Charlotte); Mick Reidy; Danny Howarth. Thanks to Rachel Darke for taking the photo.

This was a most enjoyable weekend and a fitting way to celebrate the Unit's birthday with everyone keen to repeat the activity next year. We have provisionally booked the camp site for the weekend 18 - 20 September 2020 and anyone with a connection to ATTU/ICCS is most welcome to join us. Further details will be sent out nearer the time. If you are not on our contact list then please email the Wanderers Branch Secretary, Mal Baker on rekab62@bigpond.com with your details.



Memories of No 79 SQN: Guns, Camera, 'ON' – OOPS!

from John Clarkson

When 79SQN were flying Sabres in Ubon, in the north-east of Thailand, all eight aircraft were always loaded with 150 rounds of 30mm HE ammunition - per gun. Each and every day, two aircraft would be on a five minute alert at the ORP pad at the end of the runway. From 0600 to 1800 hrs. The remaining six aircraft were on a decreasing alert structure. Having all aircraft fully armed with HE ammunition helped when an aircraft was allocated to ORP without much warning.

As a safety measure, an earth socket was installed in each gun bay so when the aircraft was not on alert, the armourers would remove the gun plugs from the live sockets and connect them with the earth sockets. For some considerable time, this system worked exceedingly well. However, there is always 'Murphy's Law'.

On one occasion, one of the Sabres had been pre-flighted to operate a reconnaissance flight around the local area. This would also help the young pilot to familiarize himself with the local area. The aircraft in question had been one of the ORP aircraft the previous day. As per Local Standard Operating Procedures, all that was required from the armourer on completion of the ORP, was to remove the live Sidewinder missiles and to disconnect the gun plugs from their live sockets and plug them into the earthing sockets. However, it seems that the armourer had other nocturnal things on his mind during his 'After Flight' inspection.

The aircraft then began its recce flight, and during the flight the pilot decided to do some 'air-to-ground' camera shots for practice. Believing the guns were unplugged, the pilot simply selected: Master ARM, Guns/Camera and pointed. His first target was the USAF fuel depot, but thought he



shouldn't as this area was classified, and it was right next door to the Airmen's sleeping quarters. The pilot then flew out to the nearby country side, and chose a very prominent large tree as a suitable practice target. Once in a suitable attack dive, and pressing the trigger, several rounds of 30mm HE ammunition were fired from each gun, until he released the trigger in shock. It was just as well he didn't continue with his photographic exercise of the fuel depot.

Oh yes, the armourer in question was given a significant number of extra duties and also received a fair amount of flak at his expense.



Scanning the Future of Radar: Next-Gen Uses for a Classic Technology

By Patrick J Bell, PhD, MIT Lincoln Laboratory June 5, 2019

from Terry Delahunty

The word “radar” may conjure up images of black-and-white war movies, but radar technology is alive and well - so much so that the demand for talent in the radar field is driving more professionals to invest in ongoing training and development.

Originally developed to detect enemy aircraft during World War II, a radar system sends out high frequency radio waves. When these signals hit an object, they bounce back to the antenna and can be processed. Useless reflections (or “noise”) from buildings, the ground, etc. are filtered out, and the meaningful reflections are displayed on a screen, enabling users to identify the location and velocity of certain objects of interest.



That kind of fundamental application still has value. But today, radar technology is also being integrated with other more sophisticated detection systems currently in use or under development. For example, radar technology can expand the capabilities of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), making them more suitable for a variety of different tasks, ranging from disaster relief to border security. UAVs equipped only with cameras aren't able to navigate through clouds or fog. But add radar, and UAVs can become much more versatile. In addition to enhanced navigation abilities, radar also allows UAVs greater situational awareness of their surrounding airspace to avoid collisions with other aircraft. Granted, radar does have some limitations—it's not going to be able to offer the same resolution as a camera; however, installing radar technology into the nose of a UAV can significantly improve certain navigational functions and allow it to be sent into situations that are too dangerous or too remote for humans.

Radar can also complement other existing technologies. For instance, integrated automotive radar is now an essential component of adaptive cruise control and advanced driver assistance systems. Similarly, the Multifunction Phased Array Radar (MPAR) prototype is a way to combine air traffic control and weather radars into a single aperture, reducing the cost of maintaining independent systems that are often co-located at airports. In healthcare, the Doppler Effect is being used to monitor heart rates and aid in the search for survivors in collapsed buildings or after other natural disasters. And imaging radar is being eyed to enhance a wide array of current systems, including those used for



inspecting bags at security checkpoints, identifying maritime vessels in shipping routes, and keeping track of sea ice thickness in the Arctic.

In some cases, the problem is that older, legacy radar systems have simply reached the end of their useful lives, and have the potential to be replaced with more modern and capable phased array radars.

Put all of this together, and it's no wonder there is growing demand for training in radar systems and synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) imaging. After all, as surveillance and detection systems become

more and more complex, it's important to understand where radar technology can, or perhaps already does, fit in. Many professionals in this field have experience with radar in some way, shape, or form but usually, they have worked on only one, very specific aspect of it. Engineers involved with the radio frequency hardware, for example, typically don't do much with signal processing or software. Conversely, those who specialize in software and signal processing, generally don't handle much radar hardware.

But these days, it is critical to take a more holistic approach. Understanding how all of these pieces fit together makes it easier to follow how any given system functions end-to-end and what role each individual component plays. Forward-looking organizations are starting to realize the benefits of this broader perspective and are investing in training for those who want to learn "the basics," such as how to build a radar, components, or sub-systems. Of course, these concepts are not new; they are the same ones that have guided the use and development of radar since the 1930s. It's when you put these concepts in the context of today's security, business, and environmental challenges that you begin to appreciate radar's true potential.

Even though radar is usually thought of primarily in the context of military and government-sponsored intelligence systems, it is becoming increasingly used for a variety of commercial and scientific purposes. As more researchers and industry professionals gain expertise in radar technology, we will see even greater innovation, enabling an exciting next generation of radar with new and advanced applications.



Life at the RAAF Academy

from Dave Bowden

There was a tradition at the RAAF Academy at Point Cook called 'Ponding'. This involved, among other things such as addition of some bodily decorations, being dumped in a small square pond of water which unfortunately had a central structure with some concrete figure extending from this base. This created a problem when trying to fit a struggling young male into the rather shallow water without causing major physical harm. Nevertheless this was generally achieved with much pushing and heaving and generally no long term bodily damage. Now ponding was one of the activities associated with achieving your majority, which in those days was 21 years of age.

It generally fell to first year cadets to conduct this ceremonial ponding. However most 21 year old cadets were in second or third year and were in possession of a car (some cars in those days were most unlikely to pass a road safety check but hey, it was a car and obtained at a very low price). So on that significant day, the 21 year old cadet was almost certainly going to be in Melbourne celebrating the event in some way. The result was a late evening arrival back at the quarters. Not to be denied the



opportunity of handing a senior cadet a bit of payback for earlier bastardisation, the first year cadets lay in wait for the return.

One night the target was quite elusive and managed to reach his wind tunnel hut hoping to avoid being caught. Being quite imaginative, he climbed into the ceiling space through the access hole and lay low. Not to be denied a water bath, the first year cadets proceeded to throw bucket loads of water up the access hole, hoping to deliver some sort of remote water ponding treatment. As each load of water was shot up the hole, the target moved back to avoid the deluge.



Now several things resulted from the volume of water being delivered into the roof cavity. The first is that the rather ancient electrical wiring of the WWII building started to short out various circuits. This problem was fixed by pulling a few fuses. Secondly, the target did get doused but the third and more critical outcome was that in stepping back to avoid an incoming bucket load, he missed his footing on the roof beams and stepped on the canite ceiling. This space was already carrying a load of water and the extra weight caused the ceiling to cave in and dumped many gallons of water into his room. It was fortuitous it was the ponding target's room which was flooded, but now had a gaping hole in the ceiling and a flooded room. This was time for the first year cadets to call 'enough', having achieved their primary objective and they retired from the field of play.

The challenge for the 21 year old, was how to have his room in inspection order for the regular Tuesday morning inspection now that it had a large hole in the ceiling. While cadets are a handy lot, replacing, painting etc an old canite ceiling in a few days was beyond their capability; however the crime scene remained undetected for years. The solution was to acquire a very large photo of a Winjeel cockpit panel and staple it to cover the hole. When questioned why this decoration was installed the reply was simply: "Well to help learn my cockpit drills, I lie on my bed and look at this photo".



Aircrew Behaving Badly - An Occasional Series

The Parachute - Kev O'Brien, 454SQN

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch—Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch—Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch—Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

One day while I was sitting in the turret happily shooting down ME 109s, FW 190s, JU 88s (in my imagination), Harold 'Blue' Munce was watching bombs dropping on target through the bottom hatch when something flew past his head and disappeared below.

He called me on the intercom - "Hey Kev, your parachute has just fallen out!"

"No Blue, that was your chute".

"No Kev, I've still got mine."

And so the conversation continued till, "You be nice to me Kev, you know you need me to jerk the quick release catch for you to get out of the turret!"

"OK Blue, it was my chute!"

From up the front; "You two shut up back there, we're here on serious business!"



Of course I knew that if the worst happened, Blue would hand me the chute; "Here Kev, you take it, I'll stay with the aircraft"

"No Blue, I can't let you sacrifice your life for me!"

"Yes Kev, you're a better bloke than I am - the world can ill afford to lose you!"

He was right of course. "OK Blue, I'll see you get a posthumous VC for this!"

From up the front again "Will you two shut-up!! If you're going to go on like this whenever we go out, I'll leave you at home next trip!" In response to that terrible threat, all we could do was make rude signs with our fingers towards the front; who would like to miss a chance to get shot down? As it happened of course, nothing bad happened till we got home when the parachute section refused to believe that we could let a chute fall out:

"You buggers have pinched the thing and are going to flog it to the tailor in the village!"

Sometimes the truth just can't be believable!



RAAF Officer Commanded Joint Task Force in Iraq

26 Nov 04

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On this day, Air Commodore Greg Evans assumed command of Australian Defence Force personnel serving in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO; now MER [Middle East Region]) – the second time that this post had gone to other than an Army officer. Based in Baghdad, his command included about 920 ADF members deployed in support of coalition efforts to stabilise and reconstruct Iraq following the 2003 invasion to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein. After a difficult six months in the job, during which Iraq held its first democratic elections in decades amid a heightened spate of insurgent attacks, Evans was succeeded by a naval Commodore and returned to Australia to an appointment in Air Force Headquarters. Subsequently promoted to Air Vice-Marshal, he was the second RAAF commander of Joint Task Force 633 in Iraq following Air Commodore Graham Bentley who held the command between May and November 2003.

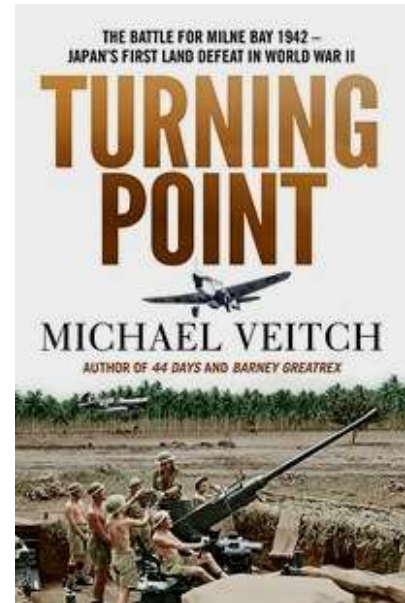




"Turning Point" by Michael Veitch

the RAAF and the Aust. Army in the Battle of Milne Bay, with a special focus on 75 and 76 Squadrons

September 1942 marked the high-point of Axis conquest in World War II. In the Pacific, Japan's soldiers had seemed unstoppable. However, the tide was about to turn. On Sunday, 6 September 1942, Japanese land forces suffered their first conclusive defeat at the hands of the Allies. At Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea, a predominantly Australian force - including 75 Squadron (fresh from their action in 44 DAYS) - fought for two weeks to successfully defend a vital airstrip against a determined Japanese invasion. The victorious Australian army units were crucially supported by two locally-based squadrons of RAAF Kittyhawks. The Battle for Milne Bay and victory for the Allies was a significant turning point in the Pacific War, but while it received worldwide publicity at the time, it has since been largely forgotten. It deserves to be remembered. Michael Veitch, actor, presenter and critically acclaimed author, brings to life the incredible exploits and tragic sacrifices of these Australian heroes in another fast-paced and thrilling tale.



<https://www.dymocks.com.au/book/turning-point-by-michael-veitch-9780733640551>



Presentation to President RAAFA CH & D Branch

from Jenny Kelloway

On the 13th September 2019 in Urunga, Peter Bennetts, President RAAFA Coffs Harbour and District Branch, was presented with the NSW Government Community Service Award by the Member for Oxley, the Honourable Melinda Pavey MP, following his nomination by RAAFA CH & D Branch. Peter was recognised for his unstinting involvement in a large number of community groups and activities in the Oxley electorate. These are:

Urunga Wetlands community member: Peter was inextricably involved over 2-3 years in the Urunga antimony mine processing plant remediation, progressing from a toxic dump to an extraordinary wetland habitat and community space.

Urunga/Mylestrom Chamber of Commerce: Peter was a member for over 10 years, also secretary and web manager. The tidal swimming pool renewal at Urunga, the stunning Urunga boardwalk and the Urunga wetlands walkway are the result of the chamber's efforts that have led to direct benefits for the local and tourist community.

Bellingen Rotary: Peter has been a member since 2006 and president 2008-2009. Peter was involved in local fundraisers, raffle ticket sales, and promoted and sold Rotary bowel cancer kits. Internationally, Peter was involved with the building of a new school and hospital on Tanna island, Vanuatu.

National Seniors Coffs Coast Branch: Peter became president in 2006 responding to community concerns the branch was about to close. Peter's energy and enthusiasm raised the branch profile and the membership grew from 15 to 117 (45-90 attending regularly).

RAAF Association CH & D Branch: Peter has been a member for 10 years and president since 2015. Peter works tirelessly to ensure branch members are supported, providing a space for social interaction of veterans and their spouses, as well as ensuring the executive maintains exemplary governance standards.

Probus: Peter has been a member, encouraged others to participate, and has been a guest speaker.



Peter has been awarded two presidential citations: from the RAAF Association, in recognition of outstanding service, and Rotary International in recognition of oversight of well-grounded programs in priority areas of service. Of note, Peter became president of both the RAAF Association CH&D Branch and National Seniors Coffs Coast Branch when both these entities were about to dissolve due to poor membership and/or lack of volunteers to take on the administrative activities. Both these entities have flourished and continue to flourish under his leadership.

His nomination was supported by Rotary International Bellingen, National Seniors Association Coffs Harbour Branch, Urunga/Myelstrom Chamber of Commerce and the Urunga Wetlands Community Group.

Of interest, Peter has, at the behest of RAAF 2021 organisers, just organised and chaired a meeting of relevant community groups (Bunker Gallery due to its RAAF history, CWA, Lions, Rotary, Air Force Cadets etc) for a presentation of their 2021 “road trip” celebrations. They had already met with Council and were meeting with the airport management to ensure a RAAF C-17 could be parked there. Coffs Harbour is potentially one of the country centres for their 2021 “road trip” celebrations.



Hon Melinda Pavey, MP, Member for Oxley and Peter Bennetts



Then and Now





Who Needs Enemies with Friends Like This?

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

Formed at Townsville on 20 October 1942, No 306 Radar Station arrived at Port Moresby shortly thereafter. The unit then moved to the deserted gold mining town of Bulolo, northwest of Wau, and the radar station was erected on a small plateau about a quarter of a mile from the Bulolo airstrip. Commencing operations on 7 March 1943, the Station spent its entire operational life at Bulolo. The following is a story from a day (or two) in the life of the radar station...

At 306 Radar Station (RS) we were luckier than most stations in that we were close to the airstrip and so there was no supply problem. Our mail was delivered by Wirraway and, needless to say, it was always welcome. One morning as a late comer arrived at the mess for breakfast, a lone single-engined aircraft approached at tree height and circled the 'doover' (radar antenna to the uninitiated). Jack Bryce, a guard just coming off duty, called out, "You beauty ! Here's the old Wirraway. Mail today!!" Len Ralph spotted the red roundels beneath the wings and promptly dashed behind a tree yelling, "Take cover! Jap!" Meanwhile the Jap flew up the valley, wheeled and commenced a diving attack on the doover. Jack Bryce left the mess like a rocket, realised that he could not make the slit trenches, smartly altered course and launched himself into the grease trap near the mess where he landed with an oozy squelch. Fortunately the Ack Ack boys were alert and opened fire causing the Zero to disappear in the direction of Lae. As Jack emerged, a dripping greasy mess, to be hosed down by the cook, some wag remarked, "Funny place to have a swim".



Next day everyone, including the Ack Ack boys across the valley, was on the alert waiting for a return visit by the Zero. Down the valley came the Wirraway with our mail. The very anxious Americans on the Bofors in their gun pit opened fire. One of the RAAF guards ran towards the Americans yelling, "Stop firing you bastards! It's one of ours!" Now the gunner in question was unable to hear as the tracers were homing in onto the Wirraway - action had to be taken. The RAAF guard swooped onto a nearby piece of timber and clobbered the gunner over the head. Fortunately the American's steel helmet reduced the blow to a rude shock. The chatter of the machine gun was changed to a verbal exchange indicating some rather strained international relations.

Len Ralph in 'Radar Yarns', edited by Ed Simmonds and Norm Smith, August 1991



Establishment of RAAF Base Edinburgh

from Arthur Redwin

The establishment of RAAF Edinburgh South Australia commenced in 1954 as a support base for weapons development by the joint operations of the UK (Ministry Of Supply) and the Australian Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) of Department of Supply at Salisbury and Woomera, South





Australia. The staffing of RAAF Edinburgh commenced in October 1954 and became effective on the 5 October 1954 when five officers, namely Flight Lieutenant Sid Peak (Special Duties Branch), Flying Officer Ian Charlton (Equipment Branch), Flying Officer Arthur Redwin (Accounts Branch), Flying Officer Sep Gibson (Aerodrome Control Branch), Pilot Officer Bert Foster (Aerodrome Control Branch) and some thirty odd RAAF other ranks personnel were posted to RAAF Edinburgh by the Department of Air to establish the base.



Most of the personnel assembled at RAAF Mallala, South Australia on Monday 4 October 1954 and moved to Salisbury on Tuesday 5 October 1954 to commence the formation of RAAF Edinburgh. Flying Officer Gibson and Pilot Officer Foster were already operational in controlling the airfield. Some short time later Wing Commander George Moodie (Special Duties Branch) and Nursing Sister Timothy (Nursing Branch) took up duties at the base. The Officer Commanding the base was Group Captain Peter Jeffrey, DSO, DFC (General Duties Branch) who was also seconded to the Weapons Research Establishment.

The base was located on a World War II disused munitions factory site and used some of the converted existing infrastructure. The runway, control tower and hangar buildings had been constructed on open fields between the then country villages of Salisbury (to the south) and Smithfield (to the north). By October 1954 the airfield, control tower and hangar facilities were already complete and operational. The base

was to be a support operation associated with Department of Supply Weapons Research at Salisbury and Woomera South Australia together with No 6 Joint Services Trials Unit of the RAF, and the UK Ministry of Supply also located at Salisbury and Woomera. In October 1954 there were two RAF Washington B-1 bombers (the RAF designation for US Boeing B-29 Super fortress) stationed at RAAF Edinburgh.

The operational completion of RAAF Edinburgh enabled missile trials from RAAF Edinburgh by loading the test missile onto an RAF Washington bomber to fly to Woomera and carry out the airborne missile testing on the Woomera range. The base was operational within weeks and the first trial originating from RAAF Edinburgh was conducted in November 1954.



Old and Newest on Display at Edinburgh Air Show

from Group Captain Lara Gunn, Director Strategic Issues Management – Air Force

The skies over RAAF Base Edinburgh were filled with the sounds of piston and high-powered turbine engines as old and new aircraft combined to take part in the 2019 Edinburgh Air Show. The two-day air show in Adelaide's northern suburbs showcased advances in aviation technology in the 100 years since Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith made their epic flight from England to Australia in a converted former Royal Air Force Vickers Vimy bomber.

Head of Air Shows, Air Commodore 'Noddy' Sawade, said the air show, the first in Edinburgh in 12 years, attracted more than 60,000 people over the weekend of November 9-10. "There has been a great deal of change to RAAF Edinburgh and Air Force's aviation capabilities since the last air show in 2007," AIRCDRE Sawade said. "This air show gave people an opportunity to see aircraft that have been introduced to the Air Force fleet since 2007, in addition to viewing Defence's state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

Visitors to the base saw some of the Australian Defence Force's most advanced military aircraft, including the latest fifth-generation fighter aircraft, the F-35A Lightning II, EA-18G Growler, F/A-18F



Super Hornet and E-7A Wedgetail. “A highlight for the crowds was the F-35A Lightning II public handling display. The C-17A Globemaster, C-130J Hercules and C-27J Spartan were also huge hits with the public, with long queues to walk through and see the inside of the aircraft,” Air Commodore Sawade said. “The Roulettes flew their first ‘high show’ in South Australia in their new Pilatus PC-21 aircraft, which replaced the PC-9A earlier this year.

“The P-8A Poseidon aircraft, based at Edinburgh, are a familiar sight in the South Australian skies and they also had a static display and performed a flying display as part of the air show.” More than 60 military and historic aircraft were either on static display or performed flying displays. Spectators were lucky enough to see a unique flying formation with a Lockheed Hudson Bomber and two Boomerang aircraft conducting a combined handling display - the Hudson and the Boomerangs are the only flying examples of their type in the world.



Spectator's line up to view the C-17A Globemaster static aircraft display during the RAAF Base Edinburgh Air Show.

The Fleet Air Arm demonstrated the capabilities of the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter while Army showed off their armoured capability with an array of vehicles and equipment from 1st and 9th Brigades, as well as the 16th Air Land Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery's ground-based air defence capability. The air show also featured a commercial trade hall where more than 60 exhibitors showcased the most advanced Defence technology and equipment to the public, as well as additions to extensive STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) interactive displays.



Jim Whalley's Boomerang A4-63

RAAF's Temora Aviation Museum is home to the Hudson and one of the Boomerangs, while the other Boomerang, with original RAAF Serial Number A46-63, is owned and was flown by former RAAF pilot Jim Whalley, whose father, then Flight Lieutenant Alan Whalley, regularly flew A46-63 as part of No. 84 Squadron stationed on Horn Island, Queensland, in 1943. Other

historic aircraft that performed flying displays included a De Havilland DHC-4 and AP-3C Orion from the HARS Aviation Museum, a Hawker Hurricane, DH-84 Dragon, A-37 Dragon, Moth Minor and a Spitfire Mark VIII.





No 1 Signals School Disbanded at Pt Cook

20 Nov 45

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The RAAF's Signals School at Pt Cook was renamed *No 1 Signals School Point Cook* in June 1940 and for several months it operated in parallel with Melbourne Technical College for the training of wireless mechanics. In late 1941 the school was given the task of training pigeons for release from aircraft or small boats. In the early experimental stages, the birds were purchased from local pigeon breeders; however even after a period of living in a new location a few birds returned to the lofts of their original owners. A local breeding program was then established at the school. In July 1942 the project was handed over to Army signals; there is no record of the pigeons being used by the RAAF in operations. By October 1942, the strength of the School had increased to 524 trainees, comprising 15 Wireless Telephony (W/T) operators, 19 US Army radio mechanics, 12 US Army radio operators, 439 telegraphists, 31 signals clerks, and RAAF and WAAAF Direction Finding operators. By the end of the war the total number of graduates of RAAF and WAAAF exceeded 7,000, which included 1,515 W/T operators, 2,690 telegraphists, 465 signals clerks, 120 cypher assistants, several hundred wireless mechanics (including US Army radio mechanics), 630 electricians, 220 electrical fitters, 37 signals officers and graduates of numerous refresher courses. Following the cessation of hostilities in the SW Pacific, the School was disbanded on this day.



Follow up to Story in SITREP Issue 8

Request from Jennifer Ballard

In issue 8 of this great publication (December 2018), an article entitled '*RAAF Medical Evacuation Airlifts: A WWII Nurse's Memoir*' was published which described the wartime career of Joan Loutit. Joan's daughter, Jennifer Ballard has submitted the following request:

I'm looking for anyone who may be still with us who knew my mother, Joan Loutit. Joan served as a nurse in the RAAF in Morotai New Guinea during WWII, 1944-46. She was a 'flying sister' evacuating wounded to Darwin then post-war till mid-1946 bringing back POWs and troops. If you have any information, please contact me as follows:

Email: jj.ballard@hotmail.com or
Phone: 0408 542873





*NSW Division wishes all
our loyal
readers, a very
happy, restful and healthy
festive season!*



The Aussie spirit of Christmas.

