SITREP

Air Force Association NSW News and Views

RAAF 97th Birthday Commemoration Service
Address by Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston

Thursday 29 March 2018, Sydney cenotaph

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land. I pay my respects to their elders past and present. Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir. Wing Commander David Glasson, representing the Governor of NSW, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley. Senator Jim Molan, representing the Prime Minister. Amanda Rishworth, Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, representing the Leader of the Opposition. Carl Schiller, President of the Air Force Association. Veterans, Members of Parliament, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

On 31 March 1921 the Royal Australian Air Force was formed with 151 people and 164 largely obsolescent aircraft. The people were an impressive group with considerable achievement in war. The inaugural Chief of Air Staff, Dickie Williams, the innovative Lawrence Wackett and the heroic Frank McNamara, VC had all excelled in combat flying with No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps in the Middle East. Several others had extensive experience on the Western Front. Harry Cobby stood out. He emerged from the war as Australia's most successful Ace with 29 aircraft kills.
Eighteen years later with the outbreak of World War II, with only 3500 people, 16 flying instructors and 246 obsolescent aircraft, the Air Force was under resourced and ill prepared for war. To meet the requirements of the Empire Air Training Scheme, the Air Force had to increase its pilot training rate from 50 graduates a year to over 10,000 a year. The rapid training build up, inexperience and aircraft with many vices provided a dangerous flying training environment.

Many aircrew were killed and more aircraft were lost in training in Australia than to enemy action in the South West Pacific. The Australians who flew with Bomber Command from England comprised only 2 per cent of those who enlisted in World War II, yet they sustained 20 per cent of all Australian combat deaths. 3486 men were killed in action. One Australian squadron, 460 Squadron, lost 1018 aircrew effectively losing the fighting strength of the unit five times over. In late 1942 Pilot Officer Rawdon Middleton, a jackeroo from the Dubbo area, was on his 29th mission to bomb a factory at Turin in Italy. Approaching the target his Stirling Bomber was struck by anti-aircraft fire. One shell exploded in the cockpit destroying Middleton's right eye, lacerating his right leg and rendering him unconscious. The aircraft went into a dive and was recovered just in time by the co-pilot who was also wounded. Regaining consciousness, Middleton persisted with the low level attack before commencing the four hour flight to return to England.
With fuel almost exhausted the badly damaged Stirling reached the English coast and Middleton ordered five crew to parachute to safety. Turning back to the Channel to avoid a crash into a populated area, the two remaining crew bailed out. Middleton went down with his aircraft. For his valour he was awarded the Victoria Cross. The citation read: *'His devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds is unsurpassed in the annals of the Royal Air Force'*.
The 13,000 courageous Australians who fought with Bomber Command were part of a force that opened a second front four years before D Day. By late 1944 they had severely damaged Germany's war economy. Consequently Germany was close to collapse. The bombing campaign contributed substantially to the Allied victory in Europe. Following the bombing of Darwin in early 1942 the Air Force was quick to bounce back.

With new Kittyhawk fighters and under the inspirational leadership of John Jackson, No 75 Squadron mounted a successful but costly air defence of Port Moresby which contained the enemy advance. Later, aircrew from two Kittyhawk squadrons provided interdiction and close air support to the Australian infantry engaged in the Battle of Milne Bay. The Japanese were defeated on land for the first time and Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell said the Air Force air support *'was probably the decisive factor'*.

The Air Force also played a major role in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea which removed the last major Japanese threat to New Guinea in 1943. Indeed, 75 years ago this month, a combined force of US and Australian aircraft destroyed the large, escorted reinforcement convoy carrying over 6000 troops. In the words of General McArthur the battle of the Bismarck Sea was the *'decisive aerial engagement of the war in the south-west Pacific'*. In 1950 No 77 Squadron deployed to the Korean War for three years and excelled in ground attack operations but at great cost: 37 pilots were killed and 59 Mustangs and Meteors were lost.

L-R: Ron Glew, President RAAFA NSW; Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston; Carl Schiller, RAAFA National President

After participation in the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation, the Air Force began a long, distinguished and highly effective commitment to the Vietnam War with Canberra bombers, Caribou transports and Iroquois helicopters.

Since 1990 the Air Force has provided professional and reliable airlift support to many operations including the first Gulf War, Somalia, Rwanda, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan, Iraq and many humanitarian and disaster relief operations in our region and beyond. F18s and P3s were also deployed to Iraq in 2002. F18s supported by Wedgetail AEWC and KB30 tankers, were deployed for almost 4 years as part of the coalition to defeat Islamic State in Iraq. C17s and C130 also played a key airdrop humanitarian role at the start of the conflict.

As we commemorate our Air Force's 97th Birthday we have much to be grateful for. Today we celebrate our values based 'People First' leadership culture. We celebrate our professional and safe flying and technical air worthiness culture which has resulted in 19 years without a fatal accident. We celebrate our skilled and talented people who use our 5th generation capability systems to establish and maintain the best small medium Air Force in the world. Finally, we must never forget the service and sacrifice of the airmen and airwomen who created, developed and delivered the Royal Australia Air Force's great tradition and record of achievement over 97 years that we commemorate today.

Lest we forget.

From The National President's Desk

June 16th, 2018

The Air Force Association is committed to the legacy from the Australian Flying Corps Association of assisting veterans, supporting Air Force, and remembering our comrades who have sacrificed serving this great nation. Unlike other associations that have a life-of-type, the Air Force Association should continue indefinitely because it is closely associated to Air Force, an ongoing element of our Defence Force. However, its effectiveness is highly dependent on how it conducts business and fulfils its Objects. A new company titled, 'Air Force Association Ltd' was created on January 1st, 2018. The new structure was created as part of a modernisation program and to better conform with legislation on

business structures. A company director's course for directors to ensure all directors have a comprehensive understanding of their duties and responsibilities is being considered by the Board. The National Board at its May 2018 meeting agreed the role of the new company was to:

- promote the Association
- manage Air Force Association National programs
- represent the Association at Government-based forums
- represent the Association as a member of the Ex-Service Organisation community
- develop an environment that fosters collaboration among Divisions
- develop policies and procedures that facilitate effective administration and maintain the Association's reputation

The National Board agreed to establish Board committees to undertake various tasks. The first two: Advocacy & Entitlements, and Communications & Media are in place. Advocacy & Entitlements Committee will report to the Vice-President. The committee will develop and maintain National policies dealing with advocacy training and registration, and manage or assist in the management of 'mass tort litigation' type matters. The Communications & Media Committee, to be assigned to a National Director, will manage all media and public relations matters at the National level. Other committees will include: Strategy & Governance; Finance, Risk & Audit; Major Events; and Special Projects.

The Advocacy & Entitlements Committee is currently case managing submissions and supporting the RAAF Firefighters Group relating to members' exposure to toxic vapours and materials. This advocacy project is being undertaken by about a half dozen advocates, which has drawn my attention to need for the Association to develop a robust advocacy capability to enable us to provide first-class advocacy support to any veteran who seeks our assistance. I appreciate the professionalization of advocacy services with the advent of the Advocacy Development Training Program (ADTP) presents a significant learning curve for many members. However, we should not forget many of us have benefited from advocate support and now it is our turn to aid our comrades. Helping others is a rewarding experience. The National Board has agreed to consider a promotion campaign to encourage members to become Advocates. I am consulting a marketing company on this matter and would like to commence the campaign within the next two months.

Veteran unemployment is a serious issue. National's Project Team has completed a Scoping Study that was presented to the National Board in May. The Board endorsed a recommendation by the Team to develop a business case based on the proposition to provide a range of transition employment assistance packages for veterans and their partners. If approved, the program will be incrementally implemented initially focusing on providing transition employment services to veterans separating after less than 12 years-service, noting that longer serving veterans are eligible to receive a greater level of transition assistance packages provided by the ADF. The Project Team will be developing the business case throughout July/August 2018.

The starting point of our National Vision and Strategy is to explore the needs of serving members, particularly those of the younger generation. Each Division will be asked to conduct focus groups at their state-based Air Force establishments and provide feedback to the Project Team. Shortly, I will be sending a list of questions to facilitate the focus group activity to Divisions for their feedback. I will need to seek ADF approval for the Association to conduct a survey of Service personnel before we can commence the focus group sessions. The outcome I'm sure will provide certainty for the development of further support programs and other activities to benefit members.

It's important the Association projects a contemporary image if we wish to engage and attract younger veterans and their families. Today we live in a diverse society that aims to be free of prejudices. Consequently, it is important that diversity and inclusion is a fundamental value of our Association. The ADF is 17% female who hold positions from the ACW equivalent to two-Star rank. Airmen and airwomen are an integral part of our fighting force. In our Association we are all equal, comrades who have shared experiences. There should be no reason why our members regardless of gender or rank

should not take up leadership positions within our Association. By creating this environment of diversity and inclusion we will enhance the ability to attract members from the broadest possible pool of talent, solve the toughest challenges, and engage the full intellect and energy of our organisation. I have asked all Division Presidents to encourage diversity in their Divisions. I've always believed in the quote 'the best person for the job'.

Promoting the Association is necessary to ensure current and potential members know of its existence and its raison d'être. I have asked the National Board to consider appointing several Air Force Association Ambassadors to help raise awareness of our organisation and its activities, especially the veteran and family assistance programs we will be developing. An ambassador role description is being developed.

Northern Territory has about 1,100 Air Force and 5,500 ADF personnel. Our Association is not represented in the Territory. The National Board has agreed that I investigate the possibility of raising a Division to be headquartered in Darwin.

I recently responded to a 'call for assistance' from veterans who reside in the former RAAFA NSW Division owned 'The Landings' Retirement Homes. The current owner/operator has applied to amend the Development Consent that included the requirement to provide certain personal services on a 'user pays' basis be removed. I wrote to the Mayor of the Ku-ring-gai Council expressing concern the apparent lack of personal and support services at 'The Landings' is creating unnecessary distress as is the attempt by the owner/operator to modify the conditions to avoid its responsibilities under the original Development Consent. I further advised that, although the Air Force Association has no fiduciary or monetary interest in 'The Landings', it is concerned with the well-being of all veterans and their families.

I am concerned about homeless veterans, but I remain ignorant of the degree of homelessness given there appears to be no accurate information available. I've advised the National Board I will be reaching out to relevant organisations to determine if our Association might be able to initiate a formal study into the problem. My view is that we need to accurately determine the extent and means to identify homeless veterans so we can provide care and facilitate possible re-entry into the mainstream community. Homelessness is essentially a mental health issue.
I am very pleased to advise the National Board comprises enthusiastic members who are united in ensuring the Air Force Association endures as a robust and influential organisation that has veterans and their families' well-being at the core of its purpose.

Warmest regards,
Carl Schiller, OAM CSM
National President

ANZAC Day in Tumbarumba

from Howard Campbell

The RADAR Branch's Howard Campbell travelled to Tumbarumba this year to commemorate ANZAC Day and sent in some photos of his day. The first shows Howie stepping out in the march; in the second photo, Howie is pointing to the names of his two uncles, Horace and Doug Peel (both deceased) who served in New Guinea in WWII.

Commentary

by George Mansford AM, April 2018

George Mansford enlisted in the Australian Army in 1951. He served 40 years as an infantryman; most of that time in the Royal Australian Regiment. His service included Korea, the Malayan Emergency, Thai Border, Vietnam, New Guinea and Singapore. He was commissioned from the ranks in 1964. He raised and commanded the Army's Battle School (which is now used by foreign military units including USA, and UK); 11 Infantry Brigade; and the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Force in Far North Queensland. George was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1975 for outstanding services and retired in 1990 as a Brigadier. He is the author of two books; "Junior Leadership on the Battlefield" and the best-selling novel, "The Mad Galahs".

ANZAC Day is reaching out and is a day when our nation stretches even taller. Its main streets crowded with young and old amid a sea of waving flags. It is such a precious day which shouts to the world of our national unity and spirit. It is a time when we seek the past to reflect on who we were, are now and what we must strive to be. It is a stark reminder of those we honour who have defended a fortunate life now enjoyed by us. Our sacred duty, today, tomorrow and beyond is to keep it so.

Today, we are living in what is rapidly becoming a fool's paradise fertilised by political correctness and growing public apathy. Above all, with few exceptions, are the inept politicians at all levels of government who react far too readily to the demands of a noisy blustering minority within our society. The consequence of our apathy is that our values of life are slowly but surely being eroded. Health, education and social disciplines are such examples, not forgetting our judicial system where the scales of justice have been tampered with to favour the guilty at the expense of the victims.

There are many contradictions in this frantic space age. Our politicians talk of unity yet all we hear is 'Them and Us'. Once upon a time there was a beating of chests to claim one people, one flag, one nation, and yet now we are running out of flagpoles for at least three flags which are to be seen in most government infrastructure. Is that national unity? In parliament, so much squabbling and chest beating spent on trivial issues, as opposed to unified efforts to pursue national matters, desperately in need of urgent repair.

Once, free speech was a sacred right and yet now you cannot say what you want to say, without fear of being mocked, accused of racism or even worse. We cannot sustain our chosen way of life unless we're prepared to respect and protect it. You know it; I know it; the soldiers marching know it and those men and women from all those past generations who created and defended our nation with their own sweat, blood and tears would have known it. It's time to roll up the sleeves and tell our elected political leaders to remove the blinkers and ear muffs. It's time to tell all of them that enough is enough and take us forward, not as diverse groups, but as one with a positive sense of purpose. The first step is for them to shove that political correctness where the sun never shines!

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, 'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?'
To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?' He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

Tic-Toc-Tic-Toc

George Mansford, March 2018

If you listen carefully as precious time ticks by
You will hear the spirits of our fallen in high pitched cry
Wailing with echoes bouncing to and fro of "Why, oh, why?"
As on wet park benches and gloomy dark streets; the homeless sleep
Gold coins for foreign aid are sent while our poor have none to keep
Such irony that our past gave all to defend our nation with might
Yet today, apathy abounds as values are slowly stolen without fight
Sneaking closer are two legged jackals to steal, tear and bite

Read with awe of Kokoda where outnumbered youth stood fast
Sick, starved, wet and weary; defended our way of life to the last
Hear ghostly groans of despair as they study our space- age forts
Carjacks, home invasion, terrorists, deadly ice and political rorts
No longer walking the streets at night unless with whistle and mace
In homes, security cameras, alarms and locks are always in place
Forget free speech; "the thought police" tell us what we can say
Behind smoke screens, chameleons brainwash our young, day by day

Today, recreational drugs and joy riding in stolen cars are part of life
Fearing to be mocked if what you say is distorted as racist strife
The meek knock and wait; for others, red carpet and open door
How can you pay with empty wallets when tax men demand more?
In this maddening, changing place, just remember who's in charge
Stricken circus clowns tumbling with visions from shimmering mirage
That noise you hear isn't a Jumbo Jet or Tsunami in full roar
Its bitterness and anger of common folk, growing more and more

Past generations' sacrifices were for a way of life to follow
Today, many a Judas takes pieces of silver to betray our tomorrow
Blood, sweat and tears is the call and no more national debts to seed
We must unite; regather past dreams and elect True Blues' to lead
Only then, will we find happiness and pride, not despair and sorrow
Meanwhile, if you listen carefully as precious time ticks by
You will hear spirits of our fallen once more in high pitched cry
Wailing echoes still bouncing to and fro of "Why, oh, why?"

New payment to cover Veterans while their claim is being processed

DVA E-news April 2018

From 1 May 2018 the 'Veteran Payment' will be available to provide interim income support to eligible veterans who have lodged a claim for a mental health condition.

The goal of this new payment is to reduce the stress on veterans and their families in what can be a difficult time, and is part of the government's ongoing commitment to improving the support available to veterans and their families.

The Veteran Payment will be available for those submitting claims under the Military, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004or the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 who are incapable of working more than eight hours per week. Partners will also be eligible to receive this new payment.

From 1 May 2018, new sections will be added to the appropriate forms allowing veterans to indicate that they wish to receive the Veteran Payment. Veterans who have already submitted a claim for a mental health condition may be contacted by DVA to determine whether they wish to receive the payment.

Profile:RADAR Branch

At the end of WWII, a Radar Association was formed in 1946 by a group of ex RAAF members, as a means of keeping contact with as many trained radar people as possible pending the inevitable development of the post-war RAAF radar capabilities. The Radar Branch of the RAAF Association (NSW Division) was formed on 23 August 1960.

The Branch name was changed to The Radar Air Defence Branch in the early 1990s, however following the reformation of No 44 and No 42 Wings to administer the RAAFs Air Traffic Control and Airborne Early Warning capabilties respectively, the Committee decided to revert to the original name of The Radar Branch. Today the Branch has approximately 50 members, with losses of WWII veterans being offset somewhat by post WWII veterans of the RAAF Control and Reporting Units, Air Traffic Control members and technical personnel. There are also a few currently serving RAAF men and women (hopefully the thin end of the wedge!).

RADAR Branch Banner, Newcastle, ANZAC Day 2018

In the Branch we have veterans of WWII, Vietnam, The Malaya Emergency and Konfrontasi, and the more recent Middle East conflicts.

The Branch maintains an excellent relationship with current RAAF RADAR organisations, counting the incumbent Officer Commanding 41 Wing as the Branch Senior Serving Member, and the incumbent Officer Commanding 44 Wing and the Chief of Staff HQ Surveillance and Response Group among our members. Also promoting the relationship, the Branch sponsors three awards each year for current serving personnel: the Joe Ulett Memorial Trophy and the Pither Award for 41WG personnel; and the GES Stuchbury Memorial Award for 44WG. **See the article on page 28 for this years winners!**

The current Branch executives are: President: Bruce Niblett; Vice President: Ray O'Donoghue; Treasurer: Tony Rogers; and Secretary: Ian Gibson. In addition to an active committee, the Branch also boasts one former Officer Commanding 44 Wing and four former Officers Commanding 41 Wing, three of whom are Branch Patrons.

Have Your Say On The Future Of Veterans' Services In Australia

The Productivity Commission is holding an independent inquiry into whether the compensation and rehabilitation system that is currently available for veterans in Australia is fit for purpose now, and whether the system is likely to effectively and efficiently support veterans and their families in the future. The Commission will also review the governance arrangements, administrative processes and service delivery of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio. The inquiry was jointly announced by the Treasurer, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Darren Chester MP, on 28 March 2018.

If you would like to have your say on this important matter, the Commission is now accepting written submissions from interested individuals and organisations.

The cut-off for submissions will be in late June 2018, but this will not be the only option for those wanting to have their say, with additional submissions likely to be requested following the release of the draft Inquiry report in December 2018. The Commission will provide its final report to Government by 27 June 2019. For more information and instructions on how to make a submission to the Inquiry, visit the Productivity Commission's website.

Fighter Pilots 1

Once upon a time, after the Big War, there was this young fighter pilot caught by nightfall's rapid approach with commensurately dwindling visibility, and he thought he had better find a place to land fast. Our intrepid aviator at the last minute gets a glimpse of a field of newly mowed hay through a hole in the clouds.

Relieved at his good fortune, he lands and taxis up to the nearby farmhouse.

The farmer comes out onto the front porch and says, "You can spend the night in the barn, but stay away from my daughter."

Just before the fighter pilot was getting ready to lay down, said daughter brought him a plate of supper. The conversation between the daughter and the fighter pilot led to romance and the farmer's number one rule was broken.

As dawn broke our hero got up and was off in his airplane. Some seven years later, the pilot passed over the same farm and decided to land and pay a visit. After landing and as he approached the house, he saw a six-year-old boy standing in the front yard along with the object of his former passion.

The daughter, sensing his question said, "Yes, this is your son."

"Why didn't you let me know, I would've done the right thing," he said.

The daughter then replied, "We discussed it, even prayed about it, but in the end we thought it was better to have a bastard in the family than a fighter pilot."

F-35 Makes Combat Debut

The Israeli variant F-35 (similar to Australia's soon to arrive Joint Strike Fighter) has made it's combat debut. The Israel Defence Force says it has used its F-35I 'Adir' fighters in recent combat operations, marking the combat debut for the long-awaited fifth-generation fighter. See the attached link for the story.

http://australianaviation.com.au/f-35-makes-combat-debut/

RAF Pilot with No. 450 Squadron RAAF

from Sandi Nipperess, Secretary, 450 Squadron RAAF Association Inc

1653039 Sergeant Evan Walter James (Jimmy)

How lucky are we that we can lift a glass with Jimmy James, a Welshman residing in Buckinghamshire, UK on his 95th birthday, on this day 27th April 2018. To this day Jimmy tells everyone how proud he is to have served on an Australian Squadron. I have just had the privilege of speaking with Jimmy over the telephone and I have to say if I sound that good at his age, I will be over the moon, and bragging rights will definitely be mine.

Jimmy & Betty James – July 2017

Jimmy has proven that physical exercise and his beliefs have kept him going, he still sings in his local church choir after 25 years, and maintains that mowing the lawn and gardening has kept him young. Naturally his lovely wife Betty has had a bit of a say in that as well.

We take this opportunity to thank Jimmy for being one of ours and wish him the very, very best on his 95th birthday and sincerely trust that we will be repeating this message on his next birthday in 2019.

Cannonball Kid!

from Howard Campbell

A husband and wife who worked for the circus went to an adoption agency.

Social workers there raised doubts about their suitability.

The couple produced photos of their 45-foot motor home, which was clean, well maintained and equipped with a beautiful bedroom for the child.

The social workers raised concerns about the education a child would receive while in the couple's care.

"We've arranged for a full-time tutor who will teach the child all the usual subjects along with French, Mandarin and computer skills."

The social workers expressed concern about a child being raised in a circus environment.

"Our nanny is a certified expert in paediatric care, welfare, and diet. In addition, there are 17 other children who travel with their circus parents."

The social workers were finally satisfied.

They asked, "What age child are you hoping to adopt?"

"It doesn't really matter, as long as it fits into the cannon."

Systems Are Go for F-35A

Development of wholly-Australian air system for strike fighter is a 'fantastic achievement'
Alisha Welch RAAF News

Our first two F-35A aircraft to be permanently based at RAAF Base Williamtown are on schedule to arrive in December and a substantial body of work is happening behind the scenes to make sure the aircraft can successfully operate in Australia. The "backbone" of the F-35A air system is the

Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS). ALIS provides the essential off-board information system infrastructure – hardware, software and data – that performs maintenance management, fault diagnostics, supply support, mission planning and training management across the F-35 weapon system. ALIS was first housed in the F-35A Off-Board Information Systems Centre (OBISC) in July 2017. The OBISC facility provides the sovereign ability to independently verify and test ALIS and its sub-components to establish their impact on the Australian F-35A capability. It also provides a facility in which Air Force can develop and test new processes in an isolated environment without impacting operations. Project Director Support Systems GPCAPT Guy Adams, of the Joint Strike Fighter Division, said the installation of Australia's first operational ALIS presence was completed at No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit (2OCU) at RAAF Base Williamtown in April. "ALIS is a key enabler and prerequisite for the Australian F-35A arrival and sustainment of the aircraft in-country," GPCAPT Adams said. "The ALIS hardware will progressively be installed at the new No. 3 and 77 Squadron buildings at Williamtown and at RAAF Base Tindal for No. 75 Squadron." The Chief Information Officer Group (CIOG) has authorised the connection of ALIS to the broader F-35 enterprise, which enables Australia to share F-35 sustainment information with the global program. "This is an important step in establishing Australia's sustainment solution for the F-35A because it enables receipt of the latest technical information for our aircraft, while providing access to the globally distributed network of F-35 support capabilities," GPCAPT Adams said.

The installation of ALIS at 2OCU taught the project team valuable lessons that will be used to improve efficiency in future ALIS installations at No. 3, 77 and 75 Squadrons, according to GPCAPT Adams. "The recent install of ALIS into the 2OCU building is a fantastic achievement that will enable our first two aircraft to be delivered to No. 3 Squadron in December onto a wholly Australian system," he said. It's all about teamwork As one of the most technologically sophisticated fast jets in the world, a collaborative acquisition and sustainment effort for the F-35A is essential. GPCAPT Adams said the successful installation of ALIS in 2OCU was a combined effort. "In addition to the information systems team within the JSF Division, which was responsible for the coordination, integration and management of the ALIS install, members of the OBISC provided expertise and manpower for all technical issues during the install and testing," he said. "The information systems and OBISC teams worked closely with the US F-35 Joint Program Office, as well as members of the US Department of Defense and other partner nations to understand the challenges and opportunities in the integration of ALIS into sovereign infrastructure." GPCAPT Adams' Support Systems team also worked with members of Estate and Infrastructure Group to ensure the 2OCU building was fit for purpose; the JSF Division security team for ongoing cyber security management and facility accreditation; and members of CIOG. "CIOG plays a core role in assisting to maximise ALIS functionality in Australia and the JSF Division has been fortunate to have an embedded CIOG Military Platform Integration team to assist the project," he said. "CIOG's involvement has achieved financial saving and a significantly assisted with the integration of F-35 Off-Board Information Systems with existing Defence infrastructure. This relationship would be a model for future projects to follow." He said other agencies, including the Australian Signals Directorate, No. 462 Squadron and Telstra, continued to directly contribute to the project. "We have also worked closely with the JPO, Lockheed Martin Aero and RMS (Rotary & Mission Systems) to collaborate on improving Australia's understanding of ALIS and its sub components.

75SQN Cannon

by Daryl Pudney

There is a cannon at 75 Squadron Headquarters and I was asked several years ago to record my knowledge of its history prior to the true story being lost and then subsequently embellished. This is the truth as I know it.

75 Squadron did not have a cannon until the mid 1990s. 3 Squadron had a cannon from the Crimean war and it lived in their crewroom. They were very proud of it. They fired it on occasion to celebrate their long history. Many at 3 Squadron were so enamoured by their long history that they reckoned their squadron had provided close air support during the Charge of Light Brigade and that was why they had a cannon from the mid 19th century...

77 Squadron occasionally 'borrowed' the cannon from 3 Squadron but the 'weaker sisters' were not very bright and 3 Squadron always got their cannon back. One day there was a dining-in at Williamtown and 75 Squadron were invited down from Tindal. 3 Squadron fired their cannon during the dining-in to the delight of all the members of 3 Squadron. The following day the aircrew of 75 Squadron were returning to Tindal by Lear jet. 'Bomber' Brown must have been struggling with the weight and balance calculations so the 3 Squadron cannon was needed to keep the Lear jet level for the long trip back.

Anyway the cannon seemed much happier in the Northern Territory for well over a year and was fired regularly.

Subsequently 3 Squadron came to Tindal for Exercise ARNHEM THUNDER and somehow the 75 Squadron SENGO's 4WD got stuck on the taxiway blocking the arrival of the 3 Squadron Hornets. A grand speech was made on ground frequency explaining that '75 Squadron, the oldest fighter squadron in Australia ... with a cannon ... warmly welcomes 3 Squadron to Tindal with a firing of the '75 Squadron cannon'. At that point the gunnies fired the cannon from the back of a ute along the line of the taxiway so that it could be seen by the pilots of all ten 3 Squadron jets waiting to get to their OLAs after a long flight from Williamtown. WGCDR Geoff Brown, CO 3SQN, who later became CAF, was in the lead aircraft sitting on the taxiway. Nobody from 3 Squadron mentioned their auspicious welcome at the bar that night and 75 Squadron departed the next day for 5 Nation IADS (Integrated Air Defence System) exercise. The cannon was returned to its usual position in the headquarters building where it was chained to the cement on a specially made trolley. However, the cannon must have missed Williamtown and several weeks later while 3 Squadron remained at Tindal and the Magpies were sipping gin and tonic in Singapore, the cannon somehow returned to the 3 Squadron crewroom. There were rumours at the time that FLTLT Philip Arms, a very proud 3 Squadron man, was involved. He later became the CO of 75 Squadron so surely this was not the case!

So, that left a lonely trolley and chain in the 75 Squadron headquarters building and some very sad gunnies who were quite addicted now to the smell of burnt black powder. At this point I was called away to the 'House of the Fluro Green Carpet', which was what 2OCU was known as at the time, but by the time I returned, we had a cannon of our own!! It made me proud. I discussed the origin of the cannon with many senior section heads - black hander, framie, queeries and supply and they all had exactly the same story which I believe to this day. Apparently there had been a great storm during the buildup to the wet season of the previous year and a massive lightning strike had lit a great fire behind the South Annex where pieces of old Sabre, Kittyhawk, Mirage and Hornet were safely stored. From this pit of molten steel, titanium and carbon fibre the cannon was forged in the shell of a great boab

tree and then allowed to cool in the great Katherine river before returning to Tindal for its first firing. Maybe the story is more auspicious than this but no matter where it came from I am sure it is far stronger and far more accurate than 3 Squadrons cannon.

Boggies, Top Hats and Canes

from Murray Raynes

In 1958, as a recently winged sergeant, I was at 75 Squadron; at the time 78 Wing's Sabre Conversion Unit, under the command of Major Harry Sealy, on exchange from the USAF. The Wing was in the throes of 'Sabre Ferry', to relocate to Butterworth, leaving 75 Squadron behind as a squadron in its own right. This status upgrade saw Wing Commander J. I. (Bay) Adams posted in as CO, with Sealy to be A Flight commander, a very successful blend, as the two men were as chalk and cheese. Harry a lovable bear of a man always had a giraffe of martini in his freezer and Bay Adams, a rip shit and bust type, with a total disregard for bullshit in any form. Together, a great pair of people to work for.

Of the squadron pilots who had come off the OTU course, I was the most recently winged and by the time we'd made it to the 75 Squadron crew room, they'd all been commissioned except me and for the best part of that year, I was the only pilot in a Sergeant's Mess that had historically, been knee deep in them. There was a small plaque over the bar, reading, "Raynes, the last of his tribe."

Just a few days after Adams' arrival, as I was trying to instil a sense of discipline in these young bograts, he came into the crew room declaring, 'Lads, we need an emblem. Get off your bums, grab a piece of chalk and get to work on the blackboard with your best ideas'. This prompted a flurry of activity, a cloud of chalk dust, and a couple of ridiculous, and one or two not so ridiculous, contenders on the blackboard.

He came back the following day, pointed at my hat and cane, said, that's it. 'Raynes, get down to equipment section, go straight to the SEO, we don't deal with boys, and pick up tins of black and white paint, and a couple of brushes. There's a bird in the back of the hanger doing maintenance and just waiting for a hat and cane. Go to it'. Two hours later, the hat and cane had come alive, on just a white background. The diamond pattern surrounding it came some time later. Not sure what happened to the cane, but the sneaky bastards dropped it sometime later, when I was out of the country. Clearly, my art, exceeded my disciplinary skills. I still get a warm feeling every time I see, sixty years on, this beautiful aeroplane flying around wearing my colours.

No, there's still some blank spaces on this Sabre...
...if you'd like to affix more decals or apply another stencil.

A KNUCKS' GRACE

By Air Commodore (Ret'd) Dave Leach, AM, AFC

For the occasion of the Fighter Squadrons' Branch luncheon 25 April 2018

Lord of lightning and thunder loud
You challenge us to soar the clouds,
You gave us wings, and noisy things,
With which we make your heavens sing.

You gave us mighty, complex steeds,
With afterburners for all speeds,
As we take off, so cool and proud
There's noise to thrill the admiring crowd.

But that's not all - we take command,
Of your vast sky and all around,
To operate as Knucks will do,
And claim the right to go Mach two.

Then we come back, down to earth,
And sit with friends to share the mirth,
We talk of skill and speed and daring,
Tho' many think it's lies we're sharing.

So thank you for the gift of flight,
The memories, the friendships that delight,
And ask your blessing on all us here,
And on the food we now will share.

Amen

Winjeel Warry

We were all involved in a stream Winjeel navex of 10 aircraft, I think, with students, Point Cook-Terang-Portland-Balmoral-Nhill, spaced some 10 mins apart. The Winjeel had this valve-powered, steam-driven ex-WW2 radio, the TR1936 (how's that for memory?), the only radio on board, and it had a nasty habit of occasionally going on to constant transmit, thus jamming everybody else; civvies, airliners and all, without the crew being aware of it.

Point Cook Instructors Staff Visit to Mildura 1972
L-R: Sandy Main, Ron Buddell, Wally Walters, Ted Bach

One of the instructors who must remain nameless was a notoriously grumpy and ill-tempered individual and at Terang, gave his position report and then unknowingly stayed on constant transmit, thus unwittingly giving most of Victoria a running diatribe directed at his hapless student. On arrival at Portland for his next report, the instructor twigged to the fact that he hadn't heard

anybody else except squeals over the radio for some time, as dozens of other aircraft were being jammed by his own. So he transmitted his report, followed up by the statement that he suspected he was on constant transmit and would turn his radio off and turn it on again for the next report at Balmoral.

Several dozen thumbs went up in cockpits all over Victoria and all seemed normal again. Then came his Balmoral report, following which he forgot to turn his radio off again for maybe 10 mins. The squealing had started again but stopped after that 10 mins. This was followed up by yet another flood of overdue position reports and then the droll voice of another Winjeel QFI transmitting "Ah, Melbourne, ya want us to shoot him down?"

8 Dec 08 - First RAAF Flight With All-Female Crew

On this day, a C-17A Globemaster transport from No 36 Squadron took off from RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, with all crew positions filled by females – the first time in RAAF history that a multi-crew aircraft had been flown solely by women. At the controls was Wing Commander Linda Corbould, who in late November had handed over command of No 36 uadron after filling the position as the first female Commanding Officer of an operational Air Force flying squadron for the previous two years. On board were a female copilot and three female loadmasters, and also other female personnel of the squadron. The flight was a routine training sortie from Amberley to Ballina in northern New South Wales, returning north along the coastline to the Gold Coast before heading back to Amberley.

The Saga of OV-10 67-14639

by Graham Neil

The following synopsis attempts to outline the prolonged and extensive efforts to obtain a USAF aircraft flown by RAAF Forward Air Controllers (FACs) in Vietnam for display at the Australian War Memorial. Without doubt, the success so far is a product of Ken Semmler's stubborn perseverance against all odds including officialdom. I personally thought the mission near impossible but with the assistance of other team members and the AWM, Ken's dream is becoming a reality.

The search for a suitable OV-10 was always in Ken's mind but the chain of events really started with extensive research conducted by a volunteer at the AWM, Alan Storr (ex RAAF) who was tasked by John White the Senior Curator Military Technology at the AWM. Alan started the ball rolling in March 1998 with a letter to all RAAF FACs who had served in Vietnam seeking log book details of all missions flown. Unfortunately the response was patchy but a repeated request provided sufficient tail number and pilot details to find an O-1, O-2 or OV-10 with the provenance of having been flown by RAAF FACs. Given that O-1 and O-2 aircraft were flying in Australia and that an OV-10 had never visited our shores Ken and I would claim some influence over the AWM's decision to search for an OV-10 for eventual display with the AWM.

In all, twenty RAAF FACs had flown 77 different OV-10s. The tail numbers were listed in priority order but the first three had suffered combat losses and the fourth choice was 639 flown for a total 129 missions by eight RAAF FACs. Searches were carried out worldwide with the valued assistance of the OV-10 Bronco Association (OBA) at Fort Worth Texas. The tail numbers were traced by researching

documentation associated with the provision of spare parts to the various air forces flying OV-10s. In June 2001, 639 was detected as being in storage in the Philippines and miraculously in November that year, contact was made through the OBA with CAPT Glinoga ('Big Mac') who was a member of the Philippines chapter of the OBA. That discovery, complete with photographs provided by Big Mac, was to assist us greatly in fostering support in Australia – a picture is worth a thousand words. The aircraft was indeed in storage at Sangley Point, Cavite City, within a few hundred metres of a large wharf previously used by USN carriers. What could be easier, we would just drive it on board our ship! But that was not to be.

The first hurdle was gaining ownership of an American aircraft that had been provided to the Philippines Air Force under their Foreign Military Finance (FMF) scheme where the United States provided the finance for the Philippines to purchase the aircraft subject to US restrictions on disposal. So we had to operate "outside the tent" as it were, to arrange the transfer. The support was grandly provided by numerous officers within our Defence Department as well as serving RAAF officers and Doug Riding who was a member of the AWM Council. So the lobbying began in earnest with Doug and I signing a letter to the AWM seeking their interest and support as well as gaining permission from the Defence Department to deal directly with the Defence Attache Manila, GPCAPT Greg Sutton, and later as time progressed with his successor, COL Chris Burns. The DA officers succeeded in arranging the transfer of 639 from the Philippines Air Force via the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) to the US State Department and to the RAAF FAC Association, subject to it being held by the Australian Government. Seemingly air-tight arrangements that were still to be tested.

On 5 September 2003 the US Embassy in Canberra provided a diplomatic note regarding an end-user agreement on weaponry and use of 639. That provided, we concentrated on transportation of 639 and its eventual home in Australia. Approaches were made to the RAAF and RAN and the AWM with the most encouraging transport support being from the RAN. The navy tasked HMAS WESTRALIA to pick up 639 in October 2004 but we were subjected to a seriously steep learning curve as we learnt of all the quarantine and stevedoring requirements and the inaccessibility to Sangley Point, necessitating road or barge transportation to our ship in Manila. As it turned out that shore to ship move was never to be carried out because the Philippines Finance Department vetoed the transfer over a dispute over ownership of 639 at the last minute. But we had learnt all the requirements for our next attempt the hard way.

The RAN forecast some difficulty in tasking another ship for a while so efforts were made to lobby CDF, the USN and the RNZN all to no avail despite their cooperative attitude. Back in the Philippines, the interdepartmental disagreement as to who owned 639 was still proceeding until the new DA Manila, COL Chris Burns, had the brilliant idea of arranging the handover of 639 to then CAF AM Angus Houston at a formal parade on 21 Feb 2005 during his official visit to the Philippines. So that settled the matter, the RAAF were presented the aircraft and log books.

In June 2006 HMAS TOBRUK was tasked to pick up 639 but that task had to be cancelled because of Australia's support to the Solomon Islands after a severe cyclone there. Our navy made another attempt to assist with joint visits by HMAS DARWIN and HMAS NEWCASTLE (each carrying one container) but that task was thwarted by typhoon Milyeno and the inability of the Philippine Defence Force to assist our little exercise because of post typhoon tasking. Also, the ships and ourselves had been provided only eight days notice whereas two weeks were needed for the disassembling and preparation of the aircraft.

L-R: Ray Butler, Graham Neil, Dick Gregory, Bruce Searle

We took a long hard look at the financial realities of civil shipping along with stevedoring and road transport costs and they were prohibitive for us. The AWM was kept apprised of all efforts and they too had examined what it would cost to have the aircraft prepared and transported to Manila; they budgeted $50,000 for the task. Additionally, an AWM technician, Lee Davies, was attached to Sangley Point to supervise the disassembly of the aircraft and its preparation to meet Australian quarantine requirements. The RAN came to the party once again (fourth attempt) and HMAS TOBRUK successfully carried 639 to Sydney in March 2007 and the AWM transported her to their Mitchell Annex in Canberra by road transport – after some nine years "the eagle had landed".

The immediate following years provided more frustrations; although the AWM was about as keen as we were to start refurbishment they were severely hampered by the Government's austerity program which prevented any recruitment by the AWM. During that lull our members were canvassed to provide additional log book and sortie details to Darrel Whitcomb (Nail 25) who carefully drafted a nine- page booklet covering the history of 639 in Vietnam, Thailand, Germany, USA, South Korea and the Philippines. In April 2008 our FAC Association held a very successful reunion, organised by Mac Cottrell, which included the dedication of a bronze plaque commemorating FAC service in Vietnam and the presentation of Darrell Whitcomb's historical account to the AWM. The AWM completed a survey on the aircraft to assess its spares requirements but no real progress had been made in advancing 639's refurbishment ahead of other exhibits in the queue such as a V2 rocket, a Beaufighter and Hudson, along with additional aircraft being donated to the AWM for posterity such as C-130, Caribou, Sabre and additional UH-1 aircraft. The hiatus was described by one AWM official as "paper warfare" to decide upon priorities. The AWM's John White visited the USA for official museum-to-museum matters in January 2011 and managed to include a side trip to visit Jim Hodgson at the OBA. The search for current spare part providers continued with very knowledgeable assistance from Jim Hodgson, Chuck Burin and other OBA members and this was managed by Ken Semmler who had picked up many useful contacts during his visits to the USA.

In July 2013 Doug Riding and I had a very productive meeting with Dr Brendan Nelson, the Director of the AWM, with Tim Sullivan the Assistant Director, Branch Head National Collection and Rebecca Britt, Head Military Heraldry and Technology. We left that meeting optimistically and Tim Sullivan's industry was later to warrant that, although the recruiting freeze was still preventing progress it appeared to us, at the time, that the closest the AWM had come to recognising that 639 was a valuable historic aircraft was their publication of Michael Nelmes book "*A Unique Flight- The historic aircraft*

collection of the AWM". During this imposed delay Ken Semmler spent a lot of time pursuing contacts with the DA Jakarta and the TNI-AU in our quest for spares.
In March 2016 Tim Sullivan had a breakthrough in arranging sponsorship by QINETIQ, an aerospace company doing work with the ADF, to advance the V2 and Bronco projects – but the V2 task was to be completed first because it was more easily defined and would be completed within six months. Once QINETIQ completed the scope of works for 639 things started rolling with a donation of $50,000 from Dick Smith which the AWM allocated to the 639 refurbishment project. In May 2017 Laura Kennedy and Kim Wood visited likely sources of information regarding refurbishment with Tony De Bruyn who runs the Bronco demonstration team in Belgium and the OBA, CALFIRE and Marsh Aviation in the USA. All of these contacts had been refined over the years between the OBA and Ken Semmler.
Tim Sullivan has moved on from the AWM but the project is progressing very well, Laura Kennedy is leading development of the project and Kim Wood, with his expertise and mechanical skills is making a significant impression on 639. FAC Association members have been invited by the AWM to a private visit in July to view 639's progress to date. The AWM has set up a webpage with an informative article written by Shane Casey detailing restoration progress and citing some of 639's history; readers can view this at:
< https://www.awm.gov.au/about/our-work/projects/asteedreborn >.
From time to time the webpage is updated and will show the current situation as the restoration progresses.

Fighter Pilots 2

A fighter pilot goes in to see his doctor, with a frog growing on his nose. The doc is horrified and asks the guy how this situation started. And the frog replies "Well, he started out as a wart on my bum."

The Value of a Medal

by Ken Marsh (Swampy)

Andrew Sharp, my late father-in-law, was an ordinary sort of bloke. He immigrated to New Zealand from Scotland with his family when he was about knee high to a grass hopper. His father, a veteran of both the Boer War and World War I, worked in pubs around Auckland.
When WWII broke out Andrew, like many young Kiwis and Aussies, reported for duty. He was shipped out to Egypt leaving his family and fiancée behind. While training in Egypt he was stabbed by a Nazi sympathiser when swimming during a recreation period. The perpetrator was never caught. Andrew took part in the Italian campaign as a transport driver. One night this landed him and his mate in the shit. Their camp came under attack and the ammunition dump blew up. They dived into the first trench they came to and, you guessed it, it was the latrine. After the war he returned to Auckland, married his fiancé Myrla, and fathered two daughters. He worked as a carpenter to provide for his family. Myrla died young while the younger of the two girls was still at school. He later remarried a widow and became father to her son. Like most of us, he achieved neither fame nor fortune. He was an ordinary bloke who lived an ordinary life. An honest, hardworking bloke who provided for his family and contributed to the community he lived in. A real handy man, in retirement he did what he could to help those around him. Today we see the end of the 2014 Winter Olympics. While Australia has won a few medals it has missed the valued gold for the first time in a while. Those medals cost the Australian public $10 million, which is considerably less than we paid for the medals won at the Summer Olympics. An Olympic medal, especially gold, or success at the elite level in any sport, can open the door to fame and fortune.

Long after they retire successful Olympians and other elite level athletes continue to be feted, looked up to. They have, after all done their nation proud. They did it for Australia - didn't they?

I disagree. An athlete, in whatever sport, Olympic or otherwise, does it for the challenge, the enjoyment, for self. At best, they do it for the team. It may be the pursuit of excellence, but it is not service to the greater community. What do they contribute to other than to the coffers of advertisers and sponsors. Now I admit there are some, such as former Australian cricket captain Steve Waugh, who use their status as champion sports persons to support worthwhile causes. But, I suspect, they are in the minority.

Andrew's 'old army mug', the beret of the Scottish Regiment, and a reminder of his Scottish heritage

Until it got too much for him Andrew marched on ANZAC day with other ordinary blokes, all wearing their service medals. And when he got too old to march he continued to attend ANZAC services in the local RSA - the Kiwi equivalent to our RSL. There was nothing 'special' about his medals - no VC, MC or other award for bravery. Sleeping on top of a truck load of four gallon (20 litre) drums of petrol in a war zone and driving that truck to the front line was nothing outstanding. It was just the sort of thing that ordinary soldiers did.

Andrew saw action at the Battle of Monte Cassino. The last time he visited us in Sydney coincided with an ANZAC Day. A night or two before the day the ABC screened a documentary on the battle. Andrew asked if he could watch it, a request I was happy to agree to. In fact, I looked forward to watching it with him. Sometime into the program Andrew made another request, 'Would you mind turning it off?' Obviously it had triggered painful memories. I didn't pry.

Old athletes bask in the glory of their past achievements. Too many old soldiers live with the wounds, physical and psychological, of their past. It is not only the soldiers, for families often share the cost of their loved one's service. There are many Andrews - ordinary men and women who have answered their nation's call, who have simply done their duty. There always have been and always will be.

Andrew's Service Medals

Today's young warriors have seen service in Iraq, Afghanistan, as Peace Keepers, in disaster response and on Border Security, to name a few. And, like those who have come before, too many of them carry the scars of service - visible and invisible. Too many struggle to find the support they should receive because Governments have to manage budgets, and one way they do this is make cuts in the area of veterans' affairs. Veterans frequently have to jump through hoops to get the benefits and entitlements they were promised. There aren't too many votes in the veteran community, and what politician wants to be seen to cut funding to elite level sport. Such is the value of a medal.

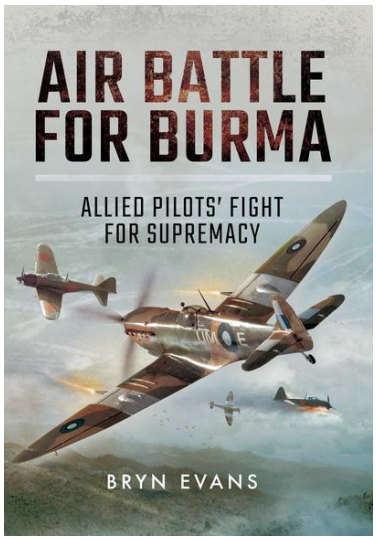
BOOK REVIEW

*from AVM (Ret'd) Bob Treloar**

Air battle For Burma: Allied Pilots' Fight for Supremacy

by Bryn Evans

Pen and Sword: Barnsley, UK; 2016; 251 pp.; ISBN 9781473858923 (hardcover); RRP $75.00;



The *Air Battle for Burma* is an excellent account of the history of the Allied efforts to defend Burma in World War II from a seemingly invincible foe, the Japanese Army Air Force.

While the air battles that raged over Burma are the main focus of the book, the author has blended the strategic context of the battle for Burma with descriptions of individual dogfights – from the frantic and desperate early dogfights between Hurricane fighters and the overwhelming and better equipped Japanese Zeros; to the introduction by Britain of the Spitfire into the air campaign and the resultant reversal of fortune in the fight for air superiority.

The reader is led to the Burma campaign through the defeats suffered by the British forces in Malaya and the United States at Pearl Harbour, and recognition of the vital need to support Chiang Kai-shek's forces battling the Japanese across China. The strategic context is updated throughout the book. Bryn Evan, a member of the RAAF NSW Association, brings alive the epic aerial battles through the inclusion of numerous personal accounts of fighter pilots engaged in desperate dogfights that took an enormous toll of pilots and aircraft. The result is an excitement, seldom found in historical accounts, that is gripping. It is provided in a way that enables an understanding not only by those experienced in military air operations, but also by those who are much less familiar with the intricacies, fear, exultation and sacrifice experienced in aerial combat.

It is a wonderful blend of first hand accounts of the air battle from the men in the cockpit who desperately fought and died; and of the challenges faced by the Armies below who fought grinding battles in the jungles across Burma. The *Air Battle for Burma* reinforces an axiom oft forgotten regarding the vital need to attain air superiority over the battlefield so that land forces can survive and fight – as acknowledged by General Slim, Commander of Britain's 14th Army, "… *there could have been no victory without the constant support of the Allied Air Forces* …".

But the book is much more than a battle history, as exciting as that is. The reader is able to relate to the men who flew the Spitfires, Hurricanes, and Thunderbolts in the dogfights; the transport force of Dakotas and the Curtiss Commandos tasked with the enormously challenging requirement of the air supply of large armies over remote and featureless jungles; fighter-bombers, Hudsons and B-17 bombers who blunted the Japanese land forces; and Catalina reconnaissance aircraft who enhanced the early safety of outnumbered naval forces at sea.

The main air forces engaged in the air battle for Burma were Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF), the American Volunteer Group and the United States Air Transport Command. Within the RAF was a mix of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand aircrew who fought alongside their RAF counterparts. Among them was Wing Commander Noel Constantine, a Royal Australian Air Force pilot born in Moama, New South Wales. He was unsung and largely unrecognised. He flew Hurricanes in the early desperate dogfights and survived to lead the most successful Spitfire squadron in Burma. His exploits and insights, along with those of many other pilots, are blended into the history of the battle as it unfolds.

This book is a well-written and researched history of the air war over Burma. An engaging and informative read, it is also an unexpectedly exciting account of the air battle and of the men who fought it.

**Bob Treloar is a former RAAF fighter pilot who retired as an Air Vice-Marshal.*

Preso's Prattle June 2018

Thank you to all the members who attended our AGM in May. It was a great meeting and function with a lot of information and discussion generated as to our future path for relevance within the RAAF and ADF community. AIRCDRE Craig Heap and Mrs Heap were a pleasure to host and Craig gave a really good update on his corner of the RAAF.

Neil Smith, Dave Leach and Dick Wills stepped down from Council and it gave me great pleasure to present each of them with the National President's Commendation Award, which they so rightly deserved. Neil is still the Managing Director of RAAFA NSW Publishing Ltd and even now is back in harness along with the Board to progress an outcome of the last National Directors Meeting held at the end of the month.

The new State Council elected members were:

Ron Glew	President
Ian Getley	Vice President
John Prowse	Vice President
Peter Ring	Secretary
Philip Speet	Treasurer
Geoff Sheppard	IT and Website
Peter Gustafson	Membership
Andy Schollum	
Ian Wheatley	
Bob Redman	

Ian is our first serving member on the council and is currently the Base WO for Richmond, Glenbrook and Orchard Hills (Kingswood). Now, all we need is a recently retired or serving lady to assist us and bring another perspective to balance the team. Unfortunately, Geoff Sheppard has had to step down due to extenuating family issues and it is anticipated that Ron Haack will be voted in as the casual vacancy to fill the position, as he has expressed his desire to be involved. Geoff has unselfishly volunteered to continue in assisting Peter Ring to update the website, social media and other IT issues as he is able, and we extend our thanks to Geoff and also our support.

The Anzac Day March in Sydney was disrupted very late in the planning by decisions made unilaterally by the NSW RSL President and it caused major changes being made on the run, but it generally worked out reasonably albeit with a fair amount of stress. I sent the RSL President my thoughts on his interference and the poor communication. The result was that serving members could not march with their veteran brothers and sisters, and reunions were heavily disrupted and fragmented. The RAAF Band did us proud in ceremonies and was very well received by the participants and the public. HARS Branch did their flyover at 1100hrs just as we were stepping off, but could only get the Goonie and the Cat airborne as both 'bous were U/S.

The RAAF Birthday and Bomber Command functions at the Cenotaph were a great success and our Guest of Honour and speaker was Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AC, AFC for both events but, unfortunately, the Governor of NSW and Mrs Hurley could only attend the Bomber Command ceremony. Rev Geoffrey Usher, our Events and Commemorations organiser, very capably assisted by our Admin Officer Carol Moreau, had the events running like clockwork. Our next scheduled ceremony will be the Battle of Britain in September, once again at the Cenotaph.

National

The Sustainable Funding programme business plan we have been developing and basically adopted by the National Strategic Planning Group meeting in April, resulted in the Vteas initiative being adopted by the Board at the face to face meeting held late May, and is in the process of being implemented. Also, as a result of the WINGS publishing agreement coming to a close next March, the possibility of

RAAFA NSW Pubs taking over its production was discussed, with the National Board resolving to enter into mutual discussions with a view to achieving this result. Accordingly, the board of RAAFA NSW Pubs is progressing this initiative.

Prior to the Board meeting we travelled to Point Cook for the launch of the Clifford – Halvorson book, "The AFC in the Great War 1914-1918". It is a very detailed account which Lance Halvorsen says barely scratches the surface of the information he received from Norm Clifford and typically, Lance has started on book two. A great effort Lance and very well done. Lance has indicated that he will finally step down in June next year, but has unselfishly volunteered to become a sub-editor for RAAFA NSW Pubs should they be successful in publishing Wings. He will leave large boots to fill.

World War I

Rabaul and the Half Flight

The start of WW I in August 1914 coincided with the birth of military aviation in Australia. Australian pilots and mechanics from Point Cook were soon required to take part in the campaign against German colonial forces in New Guinea. The rapid capture of Rabaul in November 1914 by Australian naval and land forces left the small Australian Flying Corps (AFC) contingent with little to do and it returned to Melbourne with two aircraft still packed in crates.

On 20 April 1915, four officers and 41 airmen commanded by Captain Henry Petre sailed from Melbourne for Mesopotamia (now Iraq). Known as the Half Flight, the Australians were to operate with British forces against the Turkish Army with aircraft supplied from India.

Flying primitive aircraft in a harsh climate, the Half Flight fought until almost all of the original aircraft were destroyed and three of the four pilots were dead or captured.

Australian Airmen In the Middle East

Formed at Point Cook in January 1916, No 1 Squadron AFC arrived in Egypt in April 1916 to support British Army and Australian Light Horse formations fighting Turkish and German forces in Palestine. Flying a mixture of aircraft types, the squadron took on tasks including reconnaissance, photography, bombing and air fighting. It was now possible to see and strike beyond the enemy's front line and Australian airmen in the Middle East took a leading role in the development of air power. Unlike the Western Front, fighting in the Middle East was highly mobile, allowing aircraft to find and attack the enemy across vast distances.

By September 1918, Turkish defences in Palestine were collapsing and No 1 Squadron AFC, along with British squadrons, bombed and destroyed most of the Turkish Seventh Army of 7000 men that had been trapped in a valley. Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Williams, who planned the attack, was one of the first four pilots trained at Point Cook in 1914 and now commanded a Wing of three squadrons, including No 1 Squadron AFC. No 1 Squadron AFC also supported Colonel T.E. Lawrence's Arab Army with Bristol fighter aircraft and a giant Handley Page bomber.

Over the Western Front

Fighting the first war in the air required all new tactics, training and equipment. As part of the army, the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) operated in support of Allied ground forces in Belgium and France but developed a distinct Australian identity.

Three AFC squadrons served on the Western Front between 1917 and 1918, integrated with the British Royal Flying Corps. Nos 2 and 4 Squadrons were equipped with single-seat SE5a, Sopwith Camel and Snipe 'fighting scout' aircraft and No 3 Squadron with RE8 two-seat reconnaissance machines.

Flying and fighting the Germans over the Western Front in open cockpits was as uncomfortable as it was dangerous. Pilots and observers did not wear parachutes. Captain George Jones, a Sopwith Camel pilot with No 4 Squadron, later wrote: *We all wore knee-length leather coats, fur-lined leather flying helmets, goggles, fleecy-lined thigh boots and silk gloves beneath our leather gauntlets, but even with all that we suffered and found it very difficult to concentrate at times because of the cold.*

When the war ended on 11 November 1918, 178 Australian airmen had been killed.
Several hundred Australians also served with the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. These elements combined to become the Royal Air Force in April 1918.

Training For War

Point Cook remained the home of the Central Flying School, where many pilots received their initial training before being sent overseas. Australian Flying Corps mechanics were initially recruited from skilled civilian tradesmen. The New South Wales Government also sponsored training courses for pilots, observers and mechanics at a State Aviation School located at the site of the present-day RAAF Base Richmond, near Sydney. Many of these trainees joined the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service.

Four Australian Flying Corps training squadrons were based in Gloucestershire, England, between 1917 and 1918. Nos 5 and 6 Squadrons were located at Minchinhampton and Nos 7 and 8 Squadrons at Leighterton. Pupils received basic flying instruction and had to complete twenty hours solo flying and pass a series of tests before gaining their 'wings'. Mechanics were trained at Halton Camp in England. Flying training was dangerous. Twenty-five Australians who were killed during their training are buried at Leighterton cemetery in England.

Embarkation Of Australian Imperial Force By Arms

Unit	Total Strength
Infantry	210,981
Machine Guns	4,476
Tunnellers	3,970
Artillery	23,387
Australian Army Medical Corps	12,945
Australian Army Service Corps	9,735
Engineers	9,950
Light Horse	30,365
Veterinary	378
Australian Flying Corps	2,275
Wireless	434
Cyclists	570
Trench Mortars	1,218
Chaplains	386
Transport Officers	531
Australian Army Nursing Service	2,054
General Reinforcements	15,071
Miscellaneous ARMS returned to Australia	2,555
Total Forces Overseas all theatres	**331,781**

Total Casualties Of The Australian Imperial Force

Killed in Action		**Died of Wounds**	
Officers	1,907	Officers	679
Other Ranks	37,832	Other Ranks	12,661
Died of Disease		**Died of Gas Poisoning**	
Officers	128	Officers	17
Other Ranks	3,791	Other Ranks	308
Died of Other Causes		**Total Deaths**	
Officers	95	Officers	2,826
Other Ranks	714	Other Ranks	55,306
Casualties that Survived			
Wounded In Action		**Gassed**	
Officers	5,721	Officers	583
Other Ranks	129,963	Other Ranks	15,904

Prisoners Of War

Officers	170
Other Ranks	3,887

Total Battle Casualties including Deaths

Officers	9,300
Other Ranks	205,060
Total	**214,360**

Vale: Milt Cottee

Some readers will recall that *SITREP* did an article on Milt Cottee's memoirs from the Korean War in edition 3; sadly we now have a vale for Milt from AM Ret'd Ray Funnell (former CAS).

Milt Cottee had a long career in the RAAF and, as Bob Richardson has described, it was one on which he could always look back with both satisfaction and pride. He was an exceptional pilot with a flying career that was richly varied. He was trained on Tiger Moths and Wirraways; a combat fighter pilot in Korea; a qualified flying instructor; an instructor at the Central Flying School on aircraft as varied as the Tiger Moth and the Lincoln; flew the prototype Sabre; a test pilot highly regarded by both the RAF and the RAAF; and the commander of a C-130 squadron.

My career and Milt's did not cross until we were both in the USA in 1973 on the F-111 project. He was the Project Officer based in Washington DC and I was the Commanding Officer of No 6 Squadron. I had come to the USA to check out on the aircraft and, together with other aircrew, fly them back to Australia.

I was immediately impressed with Milt. His knowledge of the aircraft together with his knowledge of our program, of USAF systems and processes; and those of the manufacturer, General Dynamics, was encyclopaedic. It seemed that there was nothing in the history of the design, development and operations of the aircraft of which he was unaware, both in its detail and, most importantly, in its significance. The RAAF operated the F-111 aircraft for more than 30 years. Its characteristics put us into a position of operational capability beyond anything else in the region. Just as significant is that it moved us as an air force into an area of technology beyond where we had previously been. Milt Cottee was at the very core of those whose abilities and talents were needed for that transition.

When next I met up with Milt, we were near neighbours in Flynn. We often spent time together at weekends. It was there that I got to see another side of Milt. I learned that there was an element of genius to Milt. He had a depth of knowledge of mathematics, science, and technology that he seemed to have acquired not through academic endeavour but more by self-help and sheer instinct. He coupled this with manual skills and a love of tinkering.

Let me offer an example of how these talents were utilised.

Ella and Milt's home in Crawford Crescent had a double garage with a large, heavy door. Milt decided it needed to be motorised. He had in the garage an electric motor from a Gloster Meteor 8. It was the motor to open and close the canopy. Yes, I know. I'm with you. How does one happen to have a Meteor canopy motor stowed away in a back cupboard? But they were just the sorts of odd things that Milt would have. Milt designed the fix for the door and installed the motor. Job done.

I would have to say, however, that the motor was seldom used. You see that garage did not house cars. They were all parked in the driveway or at the side of the house. If the door was opened, you would be peering into something resembling Aladdin's Cave. It was just full of "stuff".

After I moved from Flynn, I saw less of Milt. In more recent times, I learned of his deteriorating health through our mutual friend Bob Richardson. As with all of you, I was greatly saddened by his death.

I will conclude with an anecdote from our time together on the F-111 project in 1973. It shows another side to and another talent of Milt's.

Jake Newham, Trevor Owen and I joined with Milt for a visit to the General Dynamics production line in Fort Worth. Our aircraft were being put though a strip-down/re-build process to bring them back to as-new condition. Milt had a hire car and after work on a Friday we went to a local restaurant for

dinner and then, as you do, decided to take in the Friday night festivities at the Officers' Club at Carswell Air Force Base.
Once on the base, we somehow missed a turn and ended up driving towards a guarded gate. Milt stopped, did a u-turn and then exclaimed "Uh-Uh, that was probably not smart. Doing a u-turn as you approach a guarded gate on a SAC base will bring a response." He was right for soon thereafter an Air Police vehicle appeared in our 6 o'clock, lights flashing and sirens blazing. We pulled over and Milt got out. He said. "Stay here. I'll handle this."
Over the next two minutes, Jake, Trevor and I witnessed with awe and wonderment as an astonishing mixture of bullshit and soft soap was applied to two huge air policemen. Then one of them opened the driver's door, put his head inside and barked: "Hey Aussies. SAC welcomes you to Carswell Air Force Base. We hope you enjoy your time at the O Club." Milt rejoined us with a grin that was splitting his face. Good times. Fond memories.
Goodbye Milt. Thank you for all of that. Now rest in peace.
Ray Funnell

Indonesia's Aussie in Disguise!

Former RAAF CAC CA-27 Sabre jet fighter A94-370 in Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU) markings at the Indonesian Air Force Museum, May 2018.

There is an Aussie in disguise at the Indonesian Air Force Museum (Museum Dirgantara Mandala) in Yogyakarta, Java and it's not me! Within the main museum building hangar you will find a well-preserved former RAAF CAC CA-27 Sabre jet fighter in Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU) markings, (TS-8618, formerly RAAF A94-370). The CA-27 was a modified North American F-86 Sabre fitted with a more powerful Rolls Royce Avon turbojet engine, producing a top speed of 1,167km/h (700mph), rather than the original General Electric J-47 engine which had a top speed of 1,106 km/h (687 mph). Other modifications included an increased fuel capacity, lightened airframe, revised cockpit layout and a Plessey isopropyl nitrate liquid fuel combustion starter to start the engine without an external power source. Armament was 2 x 30mm ADEN cannons and by 1960, AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles. Initially dubbed the Avon Sabre by CAC, it was said to be one of the finest variants of the Sabre jet. The only prototype first flew on August 3rd, 1953 and 111 production model CA-27 Sabre jets were produced from 1953 to 1961, with the first

Indonesian Air Force CAC Sabre jets in the 1970's.

entering RAAF service in 1954. The last was retired by the RAAF in 1971. In 1969, with the gradual retirement of Sabre jets as RAAF pilots converted to Dassault Mirage IIIO supersonic fighter aircraft, the Australian government donated 18 refurbished Sabres to Malaysia and then in 1973 did likewise for Indonesia, also donating 18 refurbished aircraft. In 1976 Indonesia received 5 more ex-RAAF Sabres from Malaysia. They received the serial number range F-8601 to F-8623 (later redesignated TS-8601 to TS-8623 with "TS" meaning "Tempur Sergap" ie "Combat Assault" – information sourced from ADF-Serials) and were operated by the Indonesian Air Force until 1981 with No. 11 Squadron of No. 300 Operational Wing of the National Air Defence Command.
Five Indonesian CAC Sabre jets crashed during their operational life (A94-352 was returned to Australia and is there today as a flying warbird). 10 of the retired aircraft were purchased by Kermit Weeks in 1989 and shipped to the United States. The remaining aircraft are on display around Indonesia.

77 SQN Change of Command

77 SQN had a change of Commanding Officers on 18 Jun 18. Wing Commander Grant Burr DSM retired after he led the Squadron through a very busy period with the Squadron deployed to the Middle East and then absorbing 3 SQN troops and F18s as Williamtown gets ready for the F35. Assuming command of the squadron is WGCDR Jason Easthope CSM.

L_R: **AIRCDRE Mike Kitcher AM DSM, Commander Air Combat Group; WGCDR Jason Easthope CSM, incoming CO; WGCDR Grant Burr DSM, outgoing CO**

77 SQN is a great supporter of RAAFA NSW and Fighter Squadrons Branch (FSB). Many 77 members have joined FSB and we get huge support from 77 on ANZAC Day and at FSB lunches. 77 SQN, PCO (more commonly known as the Admino), Flying Officer Millie Bass is the prime mover of keeping RAAFA NSW/FSB relationships alive. Additionally, RAAF Williamtown has endorsed Warrant Officer Rudi Vitasz attending FSB Committee Meetings and acting as our mentor for FSB Base Liaison and Recruiting campaign.

Minister Addresses RSL Queensland State Congress

23rd June 2018

Improving transition for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) living in Queensland was a key focus for Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester speaking at the annual RSL Queensland State Congress in Cairns today. Mr Chester, who hosted a veteran employment roundtable in Brisbane this week, said it's important that all businesses understand the benefits of employing veterans. "Transitioning from the ADF into civilian life can be challenging and we want to ensure that there is a clear pathway for our ex-service men and women to find meaningful employment," Mr Chester said. "We are investing $4 million to further develop, promote and implement the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program and to support veterans transition to

civilian life by working with some of Australia's best business leaders and organisations to make this a reality."

Mr Chester said that further funding of $4.3 million would provide additional services to help support veterans enter the workforce. "The Budget funding will help deliver essential services to help veterans find employment by providing additional support with résumé and interview preparation, translating ADF skills into civilian competencies, as well as tailored mentoring and coaching services," Mr Chester said. "I've seen up close the professionalism, the dedication, the leadership, the patriotism, and the pride in our nation, what employer wouldn't want those skills in their workplace."

Mr Chester also discussed the upcoming Invictus Games to be held in Sydney from 20 to 27 October, following the recent announcement of the 72-member Australian team. "The Games will be a great event that will see wounded, injured and ill veterans from around the globe give their all in the sporting arena. 500 participants from 18 nations will compete in 10 different adaptive sports," Mr Chester said. "I'm sure Cairns (and the rest of our country) will get behind local Matthew Payne who will represent Australia in wheelchair basketball, with Queensland having a strong representation in the team.

"These games also recognise the significant contribution that family and friends make in supporting our veterans. We should never forget the sacrifice that has been made for us by our serving men and women."
MEDIA CONTACTS: Whil Prendergast: 02 6277 7820 DVA Media: 02 6289 6466 Office of the Hon. Darren Chester MP, Canberra.

Back When Knucks Went Fast

from Pete Fairbrother

In response to your request for contributions, I recalled a photo taken at one of the popular curry lunches held here on the Gold Coast every few months. This one was about three years ago. It was observed that all the ex RAAF pilots present had flown in excess of Mach 2, and in fact 5 of them had flown at Mach 2.5. So a photo was organised. As can be seen, there are few visible signs of aging, so they should be easily recognised by other aircrew from that era. All are still soldiering on, which probably is attributable to regular doses of the medicine which most of them were taking at the time of the photo.

Rear L - R**: Pete Spurgin, Frank Atkins, Laurie Evans, Jack Lynch, Peter Fairbrother, Col Patching, Al Taylor, Lindsay Boyd;**
Front L - R**: Jorge Washington, Peter Condon, Huck Ennis**

and from the editor...Who remembers one of these?

from Ian Gibson

The article above reminded me of the time I managed to fly with one of those 'knucks who went fast'. My chauffeur at the time was FLGOFF Greg 'Lasha' Mahoney, and the feat was achieved during a transit from Darwin to Pearce in 1986. I've never seen another certificate like this - are there others out there? Perhaps we could do a section in an upcoming *SITREP* on unusual certificates that members have obtained over the years. Send photos of yours in with a brief explanation and caption.

NO. 75 SQUADRON
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
MIRAGE MACHBUSTERS
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
FLGOFF IAN GIBSON
DID THIS DAY EXCEED MACH 1 IN
MIRAGE A3-108 AND QUALIFIED FOR THE
SUPREME ORDER OF MIRAGE MACHBUSTERS
DATED: 17 October 1986
PILOT
CHIEF MACHBUSTER

Korean War MIA

Craving to know what happened all those years ago to his dashing uncle over North Korea, Bruce Gillan and his family are hopeful they at last might get an answer.

Flying Officer Bruce Thomson Gillan (Mr Gillan was named after him) was reported missing in action after his RAAF Meteor was shot down in January 1952 near the port of Haeju, north of what's now the demilitarised zone between the two Koreas. The family were told the young pilot ejected from his smoking jet fighter, but Gillan's parents and his only brother, Jim, Mr Gillan's father, went to their graves not knowing whether he survived to be taken prisoner by the North Koreans and, if so, how long he had lived in captivity.

Bruce Gillan, with a photo of his uncle Bruce Gillan, listed as MIA in the Korean War

The families of the 42 other Australian servicemen listed as MIA in the Korean War endured the same torment and now, finally, there's the promise of emotional closure in the deal between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un to roll the repatriation of the remains of US war dead into their historic peace plan.

Mr Gillan, 61, is hoping that Australia can piggyback on the tentative denuclearisation agreement reached by the US President and the North Korean leader in Singapore to end the uncertainty that has haunted the family for two generations. Former Veterans' Affairs minister Stuart Robert, who has taken up the campaign by the families of the Korean War MIAs for answers, said the wheels were already turning for Australia to join the US and get boots on the ground in the communist North to find our war dead.

PLTOFF Bruce Gillan

Flying Officer Gillan, 22 at the time he went missing, was one of 18 Australian pilots who disappeared over North Korea or over the sea off the hermit kingdom during the bloody 1950-53 war that claimed 339 Australian lives.
On the day Gillan went missing in 1952, Mr Gillan's father had an experience that would stay with him for the rest of his life. "Dad was at home with his mother, my grandmother, and he thought he heard someone call out, 'Jim, I need you'," the Innisfail solicitor recalled.
"He went around and asked her, "Mum, did you want me?' And she said, no.
"Then, two weeks later they got the communiqué that Bruce had gone missing in action at that precise moment.
His uncle's war record was impressive. He had flown 63 missions before taking off on the fateful January 27, 1952, sortie from Kimpo airfield near Seoul. He and his wingman strafed the North Korean air base at Chujin and were following the railway line towards Haeju when the anti-aircraft fire opened up, hitting his plane. Smoke was seen billowing from the stricken jet as it lost height, with the young pilot radioing that he would try to make it back to base. When his wingman drew alongside, the cockpit was empty; Gillan had evidently ejected. A subsequent aerial search of the snowy landscape failed to find any trace of him.

RADAR Branch Awards

Each year the RADAR Branch sponsors awards to 41 Wing and 44 Wing personnel who have made an exceptional contribution to their units. The awards are the Joe Ulett Memorial Trophy and the Pither Award for 41 WG; and the GES Stuchbury Award for 44WG.
The Stuchbury Award is to be presented to the officer of any category within 44 Wing who clearly stands out from her/his peers by demonstrating professional mastery above and beyond core duties. The award is presented by Branch member, GPCAPT Patrick Cooper, Officer Commanding 44 Wing. The following is an excerpt from his presentation address:

FLTLT Lauren Blignaut with the GES Stuchbury award and ACAUST Commendation

I am pleased to announce that the recipient of the GES Stuchbury award for achievements during 2017 is FLTLT Lauren Blignaut of 452SQN Amberley Flight, for her contribution to 452SQN Darwin Flight. Lauren joined the Air Force in 2011, graduated dux of 162ATCC in 2012, achieved all endorsements at DAR, including Tower and Approach Supervisor Training Officer, and was appointed as Senior Training Officer (STO) for DAR barely four years after arriving, which included one year off for maternity leave! From May 2017, as a 1-year FLTLT, Lauren was appointed to Training Commander DAR, a SQNLDR position, and filled that role in addition to her extant role as STO, and being the sole Operational Assessor for DAR Approach. Lauren's adaptability and agility, and extraordinary productivity, were

critical to sustaining capability at DAR FLT, which is critical to our whole workforce's reputation and capability. Such is the magnitude of Lauren's contribution to our wing in 2017, she is also receiving an Air Force Silver Commendation, signed off by ACAUST.
In accepting the award, Lauren was extremely appreciative and made special mention of the generosity of the RAAF Association Radar Branch for sponsoring the award.

No.1 Remote Sensor Unit (1RSU), operating from RAAF Edinburgh in Adelaide, has excelled over the last 12 months as demonstrated by what may be a first, both RADAR Branch awards for 41WG personnel, the Joe Ulett Memorial Trophy and the Pither Award, being won by personnel from this unit. The award recipients are chosen from nominations submitted by the Commanding Officers' of 41WG's individual units - No. 3 Control & Reporting Unit, No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit, 114 Mobile Control & Reporting Unit and Surveillance and Control Training Unit.
SGT Dan Hickey received the Pither Trophy, for providing the most positive contribution in the support of 41WG's Persistent Air and Space Defence mission. Humbled by his achievement, SGT Hickey stated "I'm fortunate to be a part of the rapidly expanding Space Operations capability within the RAAF".

Pither Award winner, SGT Daniel Hickey and CO 1RSU, WGCDR Julien Greening

CPL Benjamin Byrne was awarded the Joe Ulett Memorial Trophy for providing the most positive contribution to 41WG's operational performance. CPL Byrne was commended for his mentorship, commitment, effective communication and his professional mastery within the Space Operations section.

Joe Ulett Memorial Trophy winner CPL Benjamin Byrne and CO 1RSU, WGCDR Julien Greening

In a clean sweep, CPL Rosanna Moffitt, also from 1RSU, was the proud recipient of the CPL Lisa Roche Memorial Instructor of the Year Award. Although not a RADAR Branch award, CPL Moffitt is serving at a RADAR unit. CPL Moffitt was recognised for her exceptional work ethic, leadership and innovative qualities she demonstrated as a valued instructor. Established in 2011, this award is named in memory of CPL Lisa Beverly Roche, an Air Surveillance Operator who passed away in 1997 after battling a serious illness. Commanding Officer 1RSU, WGCDR Julien Greening, was delighted with the results. "I am extremely proud of the quality of 1RSU's people. The Unit's personnel believe in 41WG's mission to deliver Persistent Air and Space Defence effects and take every opportunity to innovate and extend 1RSU's capabilities".

Each of the RADAR Branch award recipients demonstrated a strong commitment to the principals of air power and the pursuit of professional mastery. Their efforts epitomised Air Force values and directly enhanced the operational capability of their respective units, 41 and 44 Wings and the wider ADF.

Copper Wire

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, British scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 200 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 150 years ago.
Not to be outdone by the British, in the weeks that followed, an American archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story published in the New York Times: "American archaeologists, finding traces of 250-year-old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network 50 years earlier than the British".
One week later, Australia's Northern Territory Times reported the following:
"After digging as deep as 30 feet in his backyard in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, aboriginal Billi Bunji, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing at all.
Billi has therefore concluded that 250 years ago, Australia had already gone wireless..."
Makes me feel bloody proud to be Australian!

Operation (QANTAS Longreach) Catalina

from Peter Peter Marosszeky

Nearly 5 years ago a dedicated group of HARS members went to Spain along with some QANTAS Museum staff led by Peter Elliott at the behest of the QANTAS Founders Museum to recover and restore a Catalina PBY6 to flying condition, then flew the aircraft back to Australia and onto Longreach. It was a difficult and complex task, and demonstrated the capabilities of some extraordinary individuals.
There were benefits to HARS from this project not to mention a cementing of a special relationship with the QANTAS Founders Museum at Longreach, the exchange of propellers for our Catalina (Felix) and some other parts including an engine were seen by HARS as an opportunity that both HARS and QANTAS management could see the benefits.

You have another inch to go

However, there was to be a quid pro quo, QANTAS wanted the aircraft restored to a WWII configuration, that meant a need for acquiring blisters and a nose turret and fitting them. Needless to say these items were not readily available, to make the enterprise a success HARS offered to manufacture from drawings and produce the rather complex components which involved many hours of creative and highly technical processes. Gordon Glynn with the help of; Bob Morrison, Dick Simpson and John Meares completed the fabrication process. These were then to be transported to Longreach and fitted to the aircraft along with two out of time

propellers being exchanged for two propellers with low hours.
This work was planned for May 9th. Through to May 17th. Just in time for the celebration and unveiling of the Catalina by the Museum on the 23rd. this was accomplished in record time and completed bar a couple of minor tasks on May 13th. The work was complex and quite delicate however the result was successfully achieved. The crew included; Gordon Glynn, Peter Costigan, Ross Kelly, John Daley and Peter Marosszeky.

The (Motley) Crew minus one!

The logistics of this exercise were quite demanding, Gordon had to construct a special stand for road shipment of the propellers and the blisters on a specially modified trailer, it took almost 3 days (22 hours) to drive to Longreach from Sydney and the return journey was also just as long. Needless to say the this bought to a conclusion a chapter in this historic exercise that provided HARS a great deal of satisfaction as well as providing QANTAS Founders Museum with a long held wish. This campaign reminds us of the exceptional talents and dedication of members and it will not be forgotten.

Obituary: Flying Officer John Francis Gleeson Pilot 33400

The obituary for Jack Gleeson was written for Annette Guterres, Bomber Command Assn, and has been forwarded by her to the University of Lincoln, UK for their records.
Submitted by Dave Leach

Ninety-eight year old Flying Officer John Francis Gleeson, known to his mates as Jack, joined the RAAF as a twenty-one year old in August 1940. After a year as a storeman at RAAF Base Amberley he and two of his mates, also storemen, decided to apply for aircrew. As Jack said, “We just became bored and decided to apply to become aircrew which seemed more adventurous”. They were accepted and after a year of pilot training in Australia between November 1941 and November 1942, Jack and his two mates were sent to England for operational training. He sailed on the SS NESTOR, an old coal burner, a relic of a bygone age that had also transported Australian troops to Europe in 1914 - 1918.

Jack (third from right) in 1944 with other 464 Sqn aircrew

Jack often commented that the WW I diggers had carved their names into the teak handrails of the ship which were still there. Enroute Jack got his baptism of fire when a U-Boat pack attacked the convoy two days out of Liverpool. Jack stated that Hollywood could not have put on a better spectacle - the sky from horizon to horizon was pink with the flares being fired so that the submarines, sitting low in the water, could be seen. Sadly several ships were sunk with the ship alongside and the one behind Nestor also being

torpedoed. Notwithstanding, the NESTOR arrived safely at Liverpool and in due course Jack was attached to an Operational Training Unit.

Jack commented he had done well at night flying and was near the top of his class so he was selected for posting to Mosquitos. In April 1944 he arrived at the Australian Mosquito squadron, No 464 Squadron, at Gravesend, in Kent east of London. His third operational flight with 464 Squadron was a single aircraft night attack against the large and heavily defended Luftwaffe fighter base at St Trond (Sint Truiden) in Belgium, not far from the German border and the Dutch city of Maastricht. As Jack's aircraft rolled in for a low level attack on the dispersal area he was blinded by the sudden illumination of many searchlights, preventing any accurate aiming, so the bombs were dropped indiscriminately on the airfield before a hasty retreat. The searchlights and anti-aircraft fire were so intense Jack said he was very lucky to survive and at that time gave himself little chance of getting through the war unscathed.

Later he was sent for operational training on the latest Mosquito, the radar equipped Mk XXX and in January 1945 was transferred to No 239 Squadron, RAF. No 239 Squadron was part of the secretive No 100 Group within Bomber Command and was tasked to employ counter measures against German ground radars and foil the Luftwaffe night fighter attacks on the vulnerable Lancasters.

Bomber Command operations were largely conducted at night because the casualty rate was too high when flying over enemy territory in daylight. Jack and his fellow Mosquito crews would fly along with the bombers and attempt to intercept the Luftwaffe intruders before they could get close enough to do any harm. Identification of enemy intruders was extremely difficult and dangerous because all aircraft were blacked out and it was necessary to close to within thirty metres of the target to carry out a visual identification against the night sky, confirming it as an enemy before attacking.

And that was the nature of Jack's last 18 ops until hostilities in Europe ended on 8th May 1945. While Jack had flown all of his ops as a non-commissioned officer, because he preferred to remain with his mates who were also non-commissioned, it was on 7th June 1945 that the RAAF decided to commission him as a pilot officer.

Jack presenting his mounted and framed medals to Pres Phil Winney of Merewether-Hamilton-Adamstown RSL sub-Branch

Promotion to flying officer followed six months later and he was discharged on demobilisation on 20th December 1945. Jack was awarded the usual bevy of medals for aircrew who flew in Europe such as the 1939-1945 Star, Aircrew Europe Star with France and Germany Clasp, Australian Service Medal 39-45, War Medal 39-45, Defence Medal and Returned From Active Service Badge, but it was not until 2012 that a clasp was introduced for those aircrew who flew in Bomber Command, to be attached to the 1939-1945 Star. Later, on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of France, the French Republic decided to honour the still surviving veterans who fought for France by awarding them the rank of Chevalier in the Legion of Honour.

When Jack spoke about the war he was quite modest about his contribution. He stated that many others did a lot more than him and of course many paid with their lives. But Jack and all the others who conducted very dangerous strategic operations against the German war machine made a contribution to the free world, the significance of which is often underestimated. We owe a great vote of gratitude to those airmen who put their lives on the line to hold back the war machine of the Third Reich.

Jack passed away on the morning of 20th March. He leaves behind his three children, several grand-children and great grand-children. His final gesture to his mates was to donate his war medals, appropriately mounted and framed, to the Merewether-Hamilton-Adamstown RSL sub-Branch of which he was a member. The medals will be displayed in the ANZAC Room of the sub-Branch at Souths Leagues Club in Merewether.

The Tattooed Lady

from Patricia Jackson

Patricia Jackson is truely the matriarch of 75 Squadron RAAF. She has been involved in the squadron since its early years and has provided an invaluable link between the squadrons early days and the present operational squadron. She was the only Life Member of 75 Squadron Association Incorporated and remains an active and valued part of the continued relationship between the active squadron and its past members through the Fighter Squadrons Branch of RAAFA. Patricia's father SQNLDR John F Jackson, DFC was the original wartime CO of the squadron who was killed in Papua New Guinea during the famous 44 Days. Her uncle, Les Jackson, DFC & Bar, subsequently took command. I am happy to see the pride in which she has announced her magpie tattoo and feel that it perfectly fits the fusion of both pride and irreverence that has characterised the squadrons long history.

To the other proud members of 75 Squadron past and present, there is no pressure...

Daryl Pudney, Past President, 75 Sqn Assn.

I walked into the True Love Tattoo Parlour last week to "make enquiries" about having a magpie tattooed on my arm. I had been at a gathering of 75 Squadron personnel and friends at ANZAC time in Sydney where two of them (who shall remain forever nameless) revealed their magpie tatts. I couldn't wait to get home and have one myself. With no bikies in sight, I talked to Sean. He looked about 15 and had tatts all over his arms. We discussed magpies on the 75 Squadron site and Collingwood FC (it has its head turned the other way and is a very scrawny beast). I was able to remove the hanky stuffed into my mouth as I felt no pain. Sean crafted a most beautiful bird on my upper left arm. It looks as if it is about to fly away. I was so pleased I wanted to show it to everyone. Mistake! Some of my stuffier family members and friends would have disowned me if they dared. The Boys in Blue have given me the thumbs up so that is all that matters to me. I feel very proud to carry this symbol of 75 on my arm as a mark of my great affection and respect for those who served and now serve in 75 to make it the great squadron it is. I may have the Top Hat and Cane across my back next. The True Love Tattoo Parlour is on the direct route between my place and Amberley.

And The Last Word...