

R.A.A.F Association – Victorian Division
Sunderland Branch



A.C.N. 004250 248

Incorporating 10 Squadron RAAF, the first RAAF Squadron in action in W.W.II;
461 Squadron RAAF, The Anzac Squadron; and 13 RAF Squadrons

31 January 2020

SUMMER 2020

Sunderlanders and friends.

Happy 2020 to all the Sunderlanders and friends. Unfortunately, the year commenced with the continuing bushfires and various unusual and catastrophic natural events. Let us hope that the situation improves soon. The response has been a testament to the Australian volunteer spirit that our Sunderland ancestors showed 70 or so years ago.

I haven't any news yet regarding Anzac Day commemorations however there will be a Newsletter pre Anzac Day detailing the arrangement for the march. I don't expect there to be significant changes for last year.

In this Newsletter I have included some information about activities at the Shrine which will be of interest to all, an invitation to celebrate the 100th Birthday of the Victorian Branch of the Air Force Association together with a brief Sunderland article.

For those Sunderlanders in Melbourne please note that there has been a change relating to the day of our Monthly Luncheon catch-ups.

SHRINE OF REMBERANCE – RAF COASTAL COMMAND EXHIBITION – August 2019 to July 2020

This great exhibition that will continue for 12 months.

I would recommend that you visit the exhibition especially as "The Cinderella Service" receives minimal publicity for the important role they played in keeping the sea lanes clear for the transportation of the vital supplies required for the war effort.



Secretary/Treasurer: Rick Hattam. Please address all correspondence to Secretary: Rick Hattam,
5 Waurn Park Court, BELMONT VIC 3216, Phone 0418 994 759; rickyh461@gmail.com

SHRINE OF REMBERANCE LAST POST CEREMONY

The Last Post Service initiative was announced by the Premier of Victoria The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP on Remembrance Day 2018.

The service takes place on the Shrine Forecourt every Sunday at approximately 4.45pm. The final part of the service, the lowering of the flags, will be at 5pm.

At the week's close we pause to remember those who have served and sacrificed. Veteran representatives will attending from across conflicts, from the Second World War onwards. We remember them as we have always remembered them - now and forever.



The Last Post Service is supported by the Victorian Government.

How to be involved

If you are a current serving member of the Defence Force or a Veteran this service seeks to honour service people and veterans and it is important to us that they not only attend, but also take part. We are inviting current service men and women and veterans to participate in the wreath laying and recite the Ode as a representative of the collective service of all who have served. If you would like to take part please contact us at ceremonies@shrine.org.au or on 03 9661 8100 to register your interest.

If you would like to lay a wreath

Wreaths and floral tributes are encouraged. If you would like to lay a wreath during a service please contact us at ceremonies@shrine.org.au or on 03 9661 8100.

Air Force Association – Victoria, Centenary Function, Saturday, 14 March 2020

The Centenary function is to be held at Saturday 14 March at the Association's Camberwell Road premises in Hawthorn East commencing 1400hrs.

An invitation from our President is presented below. Please note the RSVP details. It would be great to see a good turn up of Sunderlanders in attendance.

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Dear Colleagues,

It's our birthday!!

Our Association originated in Melbourne on February 26, 1920. Former members of No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps gathered at Scott's Hotel in Collins Street Melbourne, to welcome and fete Ross and Keith Smith and their crew, following their epic London to Australia flight.

From that meeting a decision was taken to form an Australian Flying Corps Association. Originally based in Melbourne, the Association grew to become a national organisation by 1930.

On ANZAC Day 1940, recognising that membership of the Association was restricted to those who had served in WW1, a decision was taken to change the Constitution to allow those serving during WW2 to join, and to adopt the name "Air Force Association". The aims and objectives of the Australian Flying Corps Association are just as relevant today as they were 100 years ago.

AFA-Vic is celebrating this historic occasion with an afternoon function on Saturday 14 March at our Camberwell Road premises in Hawthorn East. We have chosen a Saturday afternoon to ensure that parking underneath our premises will be available for members and guests. Speeches will be kept to a minimum, with finger food served throughout the afternoon and the bar will be open with beer, wine and fruit juice available. This function will be the first for our new carpet, and I acknowledge and thank the Victorian Government for their assistance and support of all veterans organisations.

RSVP : Office Manager, Barb Stallard, "office@afavic.org.au" or telephone (03) 9813 4600 by **28 February 2020**.

Looking forward to seeing as many as possible for this historic occasion.

Regards

Max McGregor
President
AFA-Vic
6 February 2020

AN INTERESTING SUNDERLAND STORY

NOT JUST ANY PIGEON

Plymouth, England. 1945-01-18. Aussie - No. 4112, a blue checker cock pigeon which returned to RAF Station Mount Batten with an SOS message from a ditched Sunderland aircraft of No. 10 Squadron RAAF on 16 September 1944.



Further to the Aussie story, when fossicking through some memorabilia at home I came across a small container that contained the message carried by the pigeons when they were released by a crew.



The photos below are of the message slip RAF Form 1326 - S.O.S. that was inside in the container.

Front page of RAF Form 1326 SOS

The details on the partly filled out (in ink) form indicate that it was prepared for a trip on 19 February 1943 by Sunderland DV961, "I" India of 461 Squadron.

Some details were obviously completed prior to the trip in order to expedite a quick completion of the message and dispatch of the pigeon when required.

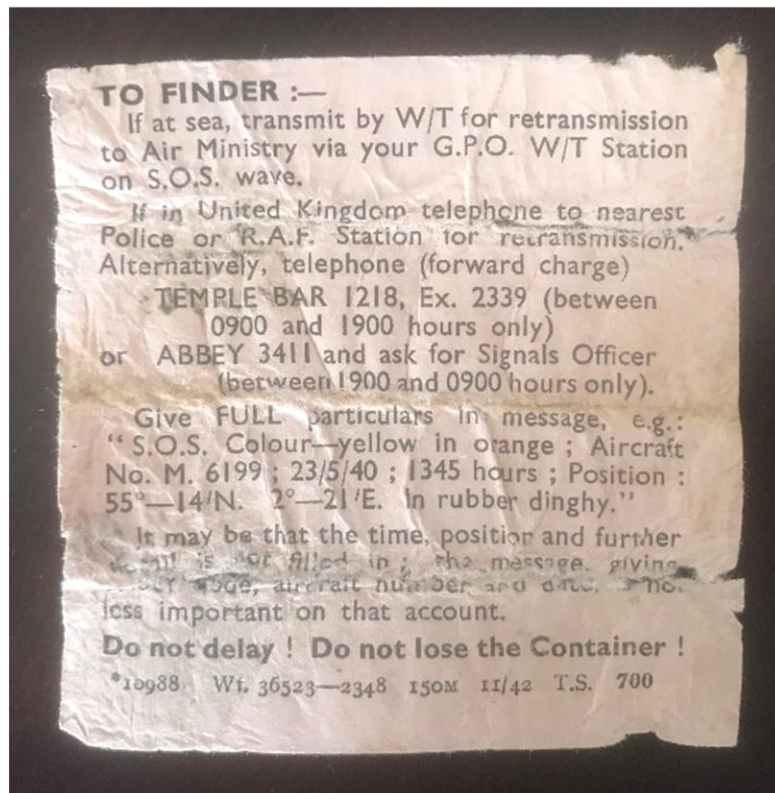
The form is 70 mm (2 5/8 inch) square on quite flimsy paper.

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Back page of SOS Form

I apologise for the condition of the document as I haven't been able to restore it properly. Still it is not in bad condition for being rolled up in the container for some 77 years.



Most animals employed in war did not survive their service.
The purple poppy represents the memorial to the animals who sadly lost their lives during the war efforts.

Secretary/Treasurer: Rick Hattam. Please address all, correspondence to Secretary: Rick Hattam,
5 Waurin Park Court, BELMONT VIC 3216, Phone 0418 994 759; rickyh461@gmail.com

COMING EVENTS

AFA Victoria, 100th Birthday Celebrations, Saturday 14 March 2020.

See details above. Don't forget the RSVP to Barbara at AFA by 28 February.

NOTE CHANGE OF DAYS. Thank you Pam Gibson for the update.

Monthly Luncheons are held on the first Thursday of each month at the East Malvern RSL, Stanley Grose Drive, East Malvern, off Winton Road. See Melways Map 60 A12.

SHOPPING SECTION

“MARITIME is NUMBER 10” Book – Currently out of stock

“ANZAC SQUADRON”

This book relating the story of 461 Squadron the “ANZAC SQUADRON” by Norman Ashworth is also from the Secretary at a cost of \$55.00 per copy, postage and handling.

Sunderland Lapel Badges – “Sunderland” lapel badges are available from the Secretary at \$8.00 ea. packaging and postage paid.

10 and 461 Squadron Plaques

We now have both 10 and 461 Squadron Plaques in stock. The cost is \$70.00 including GST, postage and packaging.



Pembroke Dock, Wales. 1944 Sunderland MKIII ML741, Aircraft “P” Peter 461 Squadron touching down after and anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay.

Note the aircraft was fitted with fixed firing 20mm cannon in the nose.

This modification was developed by 10 Squadron members including Cpl. Noel Dunn one of our Victorian Branch members.