

Air Force Association

The official newsletter of the Air Force Association – Victoria ABN: 96 091 342 304

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AIR FORCE 2021

THEN • NOW • ALWAYS

The Air Force Centenary year is an occasion to reflect on the achievements of the past 100 years, to remember those who have contributed and to contemplate the future direction of Air Force.

31 March is recognised as the official 'birthday of the Royal Australian Air Force and the day heralded the beginning of a series of national events and initiatives that will occur over the course of this year to honour the sacrifices and service of the last 100 years.

Commencing with a Flag Raising Ceremony, the Queen's Colour Parade saw the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) present the service with a new regimental flag, or Colour, to mark the special anniversary on behalf of the Queen.

The new Colour was given a royal salute and a flyover as it was slow marched into position

Past and present members and veterans of the Air Force were honoured with a flypast of more than 60 vintage and modern aircraft over Canberra, including a Super Hornet, Black Hawk helicopter, C-130 Hercules, MH-60R

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ABOUT THE QUEEN'S COLOURS

Although they are no longer carried into battle, Colours are symbolic, constituting a unit or Service's honour and representing its devotion to duty.

Seahawk, Boomerang, Spitfire and a Canberra bomber and culminating in a perfect flying display by the Roulettes team. The official celebrations concluded with a Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.

When Air Force was established, the fledgling service had just 149 people – aviation pioneers who had flown with the Australian Flying Corps.

Since that time more than 350,000 Australians have served in Air Force since 1921, and more than 11,000 have died in service.

Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said it was important to reflect on the service and sacrifice of all generations of Australians who have proudly worn the Air Force uniform.

“To our Air Force veterans and today’s members – thank you for your service. You can be proud of what has been achieved in the first 100 years.”

Go to pages 8 – 9 to see images from the Air Force 2021 events on 31 March.



The retiring Royal Australian Air Force Queens's Colour is marched off the parade ground. (source: Australian Department of Defence)



Forming the number 100, gathered personnel represent the specialisations and musterings and all aircraft currently in the RAAF. (source: Australian Department of Defence).



Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE CB DSO, the father of the Royal Australian Air Force, with a Deperdussin (source AWM, 1969)

THE BRIAN & NORA O'CONNOR AWARD AND THE GEOFF MICHAEL AWARD For Outstanding or Exceptional Service to the Air Force Association

Nominations from organisations and individuals for the 2021 Awards are now open.

Applications forms available from the Air Force Association National Secretary
at natsec@raafa.org.au or (03) 9813 4600.

Nominations close 5pm, Friday 10 September 2021

Full details: afavic.org.au

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Coming out of the COVID lockdown has certainly created additional and different problems. In many ways the lockdown conditions were easier in that they were well known and consistent for long periods of time. However, there was a degree of uncertainty and inconsistency and this was certainly represented by this year's Melbourne Anzac Day March.

ANZAC Day once again was a different experience from previous years and we can only hope that next year we will be able to gather and commemorate our veterans in our traditional manner. I was invited to deliver the ANZAC Day address at the Shrine of Remembrance – a true honour which I undertook on behalf of all our veterans. Chris Hudnott, AFA Victoria's Communications Director and President of the RAAF Vietnam

Veterans Branch provided exceptional ANZAC Day March commentary for ABC TV, as he has done for a number of years.

Air Force centenary events in Canberra on 31 March were certainly well covered by TV and print media. A well planned and executed event. I look forward to working with the Air Force 21 Planning Group for Remembrance Day at Point Cook on 11 November.

Closer to home, AFA Victoria had our first social event for a long time at our headquarters in Hawthorn East on 28 March. This function celebrated two events - the formation of the Air Force Association (which had been planned for 2020 but postponed due to COVID-19) and the Centenary of the Air Force. Held on a Sunday, there was ample street and undercover parking and we were also able to use the atrium area, allowing a quieter area for discussions. Over 80 people attended, and it was great to get together socially once again. Feedback after the event was extremely positive, and I was particularly impressed with the way people mingled and met members that they had not met previously.

Another piece of positive news is that AFA Victoria has secured a signature on a Heads of Agreement for the lease of half of our vacant property. We now move to the signing of a contract, which is great news. Having commercial property on the market during a recession and then a lockdown was difficult, and while the contract is yet to be signed this is a positive step forward. Coupled with our earlier decision to buy a Defence Housing property we should be well placed to have a constant income stream for the coming years. If we can lease the remaining vacant property in Camberwell Road, and business confidence is certainly on the increase, then AFA-Vic will be in a very satisfactory financial position.

There are also several initiatives from AFA National that are about to become a reality that will further strengthen our ability to serve the needs of all veterans. I hope to be able to announce these initiatives at our AGM, scheduled for 27 May at our headquarters in Hawthorn East.

Max McGregor

President

ANZAC DAY 2021 – LEADING THE MARCH



Commemorative activities for ANZAC Day 2021 in Melbourne returned after a torrid year of COVID-19 and people around Australia commemorating “ANZAC Day At Home” in 2020.

In recognition of the Air Force centenary, members of the RAAF led the Melbourne CBD commemorative march.

While participation numbers were lower at the Melbourne march, many people still chose to commemorate ANZAC Day locally.

Air Force Association Victoria President Max McGregor played a key role this year – delivering an ANZAC Day

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(image courtesy The Australian)

address at the Shrine of Remembrance as well as joining Air Force colleagues at the head of the March. The lower numbers than usual didn't change the meaning of the day for him.

"I'll still have the same feeling when I'm marching – it's an incredibly special day," Max said.

"I'm marching because there's people that didn't come home, there were people who came home wounded, physically and mentally. That's our embodiment, that's what we do."

AFA Victoria and the Air Force was well represented on ANZAC Day, with Chris Hudnott, AFA Victoria Director and President of the RAAF Vietnam Veterans' Branch, providing commentary for the ABC during the March.



Max McGregor with fellow 9SQN colleague Andy Lapins



EXCERPT FROM THE ANZAC DAY ADDRESS BY AFA VICTORIA PRESIDENT, MAX MCGREGOR

(courtesy The Australian)

AFA Victoria President and Vietnam veteran, Max McGregor spoke of the longstanding legacy of the RAAF, noting it had served in every major Australian conflict since its formation over a century ago, including the Korean War, often referred to as the "forgotten war".

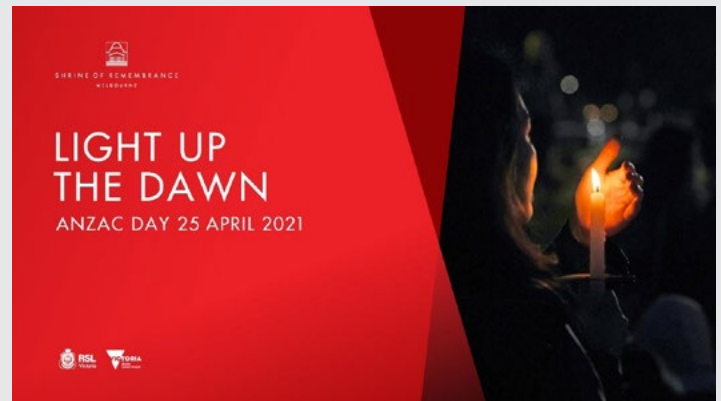
"Today's air force is a formidable world class force and something we can all be proud of,"

Mr McGregor said he hoped serving defence personnel would never be subjected to the horrors that soldiers faced in the past, adding Anzac Day should not be viewed as a "celebration" of war.

"I sincerely hope that no future generation of Australians will have to defend our country from an attack nor be involved in overseas military action," he said.

"My hope is just that, a hope. However, I know that if called upon, the members of the Australian Defence Force will commit themselves with great courage and commitment as they did in the past."

The full address can be found on the [AFA Victoria website](#).



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

The ANZAC Day 2021 Dawn Service is available on the Shrine of Remembrance YouTube channel here: <https://youtu.be/NRpy5apViPQ>

Specific references by MC Peter Meehan to the RAAF in its centenary year start at 21:06 minutes into the video counter.

WOFF JOHN 'SNOW' COUGHLAN

At 22:11 minutes into the Dawn Service, Peter offers special and poignant recognition to the late WOFF John "Snow" Coughlan, who was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM) - the second highest decoration for gallantry in action after the Victoria Cross - for his gallantry, skill and devotion to duty, while serving as a RAAF Iroquois crewman with 9SQN in Vietnam.

ROYAL COMMISSION

into Defence and Veteran Suicide

The Royal Commission into Defence & Veteran Suicide will consult with veteran support organisations on its draft Terms of Reference.

On the 19 April, the Morrison Government announced it would request the Governor-General to establish a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel, Darren Chester made it clear that it was vital the Australian community, especially those involved in the Defence and the veteran support system had input to the Royal Commission. The themes for consultation are described at <https://www.dva.gov.au/royal-commission-defence-and-veteran-suicide-themes-consultation>.

Input to the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission will be collated by Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA). Minister Chester will lead the public consultation process on the draft Terms of Reference. The Prime Minister will write to First Ministers inviting their contributions to the draft Terms of Reference with the view of a joint Commonwealth-State Royal Commission. It is important to note that DVA does not own the Terms of Reference and is compelled to provide comments received to the Attorney-General.

The Government intends that the Royal Commission and the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention will be established together and operate in a complementary way to achieve long-term change. The Royal Commission will look at past deaths by suicide (including suspected suicides and lived experience of suicide risks) from a systemic point of view, while the National Commissioner

will have a forward-looking role, including overseeing the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations. The Government envisages that three Commissioners will be needed to lead the Inquiry. Consultation is underway to appoint these candidates.

The Air Force Association supports the Government's decision to hold a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and is committed to the process. The Association will provide input to the draft Terms of Reference.

Those who wish to provide written feedback can now do so either directly to the Department of Veterans' Affairs website or alternatively, through the Attorney General's website.

1. The direct link to the Attorney-General's website page to provide feedback is: Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission – Public Consultation | Attorney-General's Department (ag.gov.au)
2. The link to the DVA website: www.dva.gov.au/public-consultation-inform-terms-reference-royal-commission-defence-and-veteran-suicide
3. Members may prefer to provide their comments direct to DVA by emailing royalcommission@dva.gov.au or to their State/Territory AFA Division for consideration towards the Association's submission.

Division and member inputs are to reach natpres@raafa.org.au by no later than May 14th, 2021.

(Please note, submissions are to reach DVA by May 21st, 2021. Response dates are set by the Attorney-General.)



Thank you to the Royal Australian Air Force for 100 years of service to Australia

The Air Force Association honours the heritage and traditions of the Air Force and proudly supports all Air Force veterans and their families.

Air Force Association

Supporting veterans | Fostering friendships | Honouring our legacy

Join Us
www.raafa.org.au

Divisions in
ACT | NSW | Queensland | South Australia | Tasmania | Victoria | Western Australia

Images courtesy the Australian War Memorial and Royal Australian Air Force.

B24 LIBERATOR MEMORIAL SERVICE HONOURS THOSE WHO SERVED

On 23 March 2021, the inaugural B24 Liberator Commemoration Service was held in the Sanctuary at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.

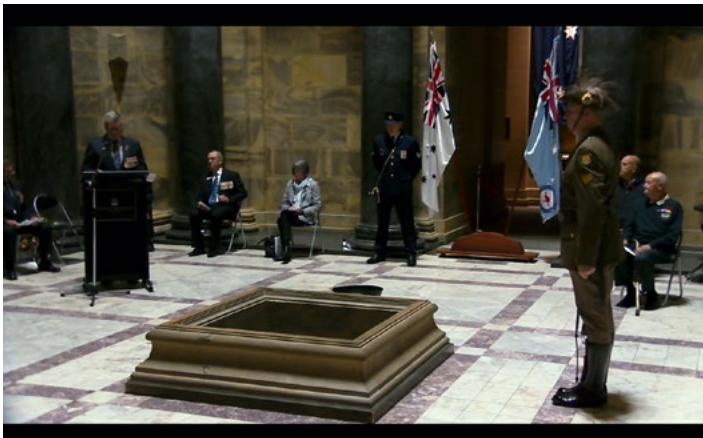
The service, commencing at 1100 hours, honoured all RAAF airmen who served with B-24 Liberators in Europe and the South West Pacific Area during World War II and those who gave the lives in service. The commemoration was originally planned to take place in March 2020 but due to the COVID pandemic, was postponed for 12 months.

Members of the B-24 Liberator Branch of the Air Force Association Victoria were welcomed to the service by Shrine Governor, SQNLDR Steve Campbell-Wright and a Shrine Guard acted as the Catafalque Party.

Ms Lyn Gorman, President of the B-24 Liberator Memorial Australia also welcomed those attending and presented

the opening address. Mr Chris Hudnott acted as Master of Ceremonies for the service and Chaplain Keith Lanyon offered a prayer for the Nation and a prayer of Thanksgiving. National President Group Captain Carl Schiller, who is patron of the B-24 Liberator Memorial Australia gave the Commemorative address. Wreaths were laid by Ms Lanyon and Group Captain Carl Schiller. Mr Vern Roberts recited the Ode of Remembrance and this was followed by the Last Post and the Rouse played by SGT Brenton Burley, a trumpeter/bugler from the Air Force Band.

This inaugural service was a moving and fitting tribute to those RAAF aircrew and ground crew who served with the B24-Liberator aircraft. The service was recorded and is available on the Shrine of Remembrance website and on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/OciePtIs0So>.



GPCAPT Carl Schiller OAM, CSM, President Air Force Association, presenting the Commemorative Address.



Ms Lyn Gorman, President of the B-24 Liberator Memorial Australia and GPCAPT Carl Schiller lay wreaths at the memorial

2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A reminder that the 2021 AGM will be held on Thursday 27th May 2021 commencing at 11.30am, at the Air Association Victoria offices, 24-36 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn East.

The independent auditor's report to the members of Air Force Association (Victoria) will be presented at the AGM.

A copy of the full audited report is available on our website: http://afavic.org.au/1454/images/AFAV_-_Audited_accts_for_circulation.pdf or please contact our Hawthorn office on 9813 4600.

The AGM will be followed by a light lunch. Please contact Barbara Stallard on 9813 4600 or office@afavic.org.au if you wish to attend.

'SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EAGLES' - BOOK HONOURS SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S AIR FORCE LEGACY

A book honouring the proud history and service of South Australians in the Air Force was launched by His Excellency The Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia on 31 March 2021.

GPCAPT Greg Weller, Director of Community Engagement, RAAF Edinburgh and the author of 'South Australian Eagles', has been researching and promoting South Australia's Air Force heritage to help South Australians understand the Air Force story in their State.

"The centenary of the Air Force in 2021 has provided an opportunity for our community to rediscover the legacy of those South Australians who contributed so much to the Air Force over the last 100 years." said GPCAPT Weller.

South Australian Eagles is available as a flipbook on the Air Force Association website by clicking [here](#) or visit raafa.org.au.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Joy Boucher is searching for a RAAF member - CPL Mark Wyllie - who may have some stories to recount about her late father.

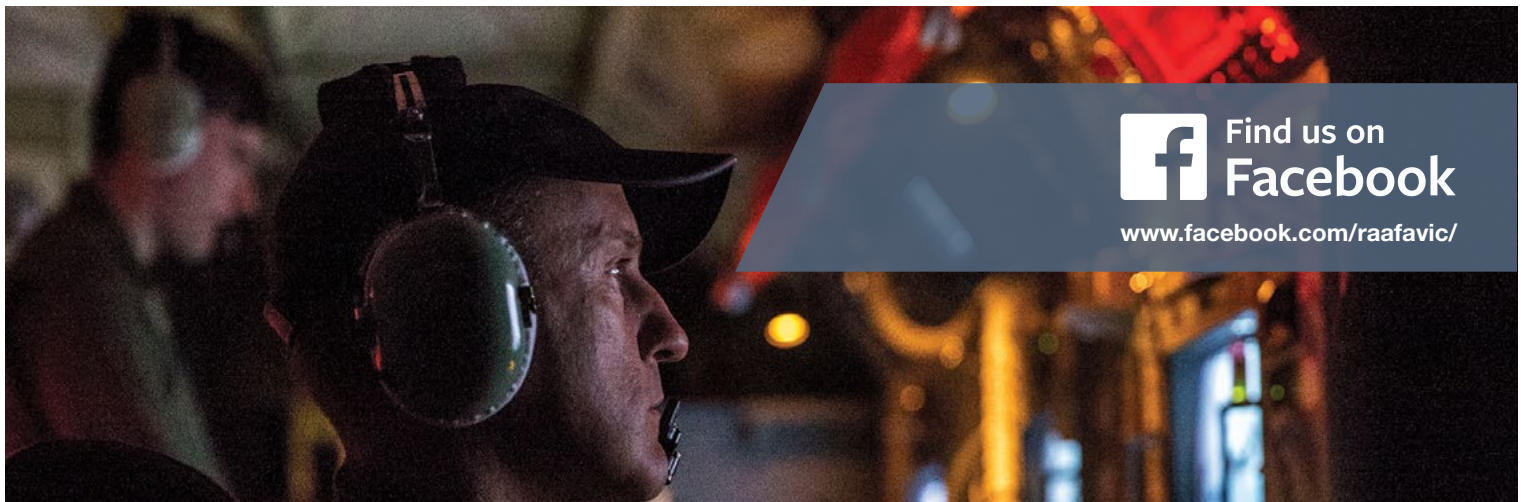
"I have just found a letter from CPL Mark Wyllie, (dated 5/2/91 to my father J Milner), as he was doing research on Infantry Battalions in WW2, in which my father served.

He asked my father whether he would be interested in relating any stories. My father was passed in 1997 so if he did relate any stories, I would like to hear/read about them.

Mark was an RAAF member at the time of his letter and worked with the RAAF at 70 Albert Rd, South Melbourne and lived in Sunshine.

I would appreciate any assistance or information on how I can contact CPL Mark. White - I have had no luck with numbers he previously provided or social media. I would be grateful for any help."

If you can help, please contact: Joy Boucher 0419172548



AIR FORCE CENTENARY

THANK YOU TO THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE FOR 100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AUSTRALIA – IN BOTH CONFLICT AND PEACE.

The Air Force Association honours the heritage and traditions of the Air Force and proudly supports all Air Force veterans and their families.



Air Force Association National President, Carl Schiller and Vice President, Sharon Bown, lay a wreath at the Australian War Memorial's Last Post Ceremony, on the occasion of the Air Force's Centenary, in the presence of the Minister of Defence, Senator Marise Payne, and the Deputy Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Steve Meredith AM DSM.



The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC, DSC, (Retd), returns the newly consecrated Queen's Colour to the Queen's Colour bearer, during the Queen's Colour Parade held at Government House, Canberra.



Three P-8A Poseidon aircraft from No11 Squadron fly in formation with an AP-3C Orion from No 10 Squadron formation over Sydney to mark the Air Force Centenary.



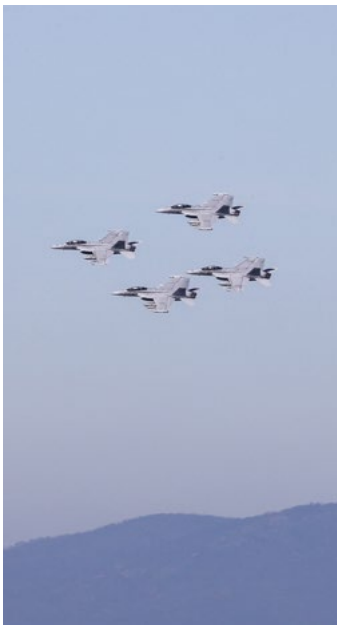
A P-8A Poseidon aircraft from No. 11 Squadron



RAAF C-130J Hercules aircraft conduct a formation flypast over Canberra



No 4 Squadron Pilatus PC-21A aircraft based at RAAF Williamtown fly in formation over Sydney to mark the Air Force Centenary.



F/A-18F Super Hornet aircraft conduct a formation flypast over Canberra,



An RAN MH-60R "Romeo" displays the RAAF Ensign over Canberra, to mark 100 years of Royal Australian Air Force service to Australia.



A Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk leads a Centenary Formation with two Spitfires and a F-35A during the Temora Air Force Centenary Showcase.



Colour escorts parade Queen's Colours at Government House



A Catalina aircraft conducts a flypast over Canberra



Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

The Air Force Association has welcomed the opportunity to provide input to the government Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal on the notion of recognising members and families of Australian Defence Force members who are injured, wounded or killed in or because of service.

On 21 January 2021, Government announced that the Inquiry following preliminary consultation and advice from the Council of Women and Families United by Defence Service.

Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said, "The Tribunal will undertake a broader consideration to acknowledge those who have been injured, wounded, or killed as a result of their ADF service, and the impact on their families."

"The Tribunal is the independent, expert body established to consider Defence honours and awards and is the most appropriate body to consider recognition for ADF members and their families.

You can read the full Air force Association submission on our website: afavic.org.au.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

SPRING 2021

Contributions by 9 July 2021
Publication: 27 August 2021

SUMMER 2021

Contributions by 19 November 2021
Publication: 10 December 2021

AUTUMN 2022

Contributions by 25 February 2022
Publication: 11 March 2022

WINTER 2022

Contributions by 20 May 2022
Publication: 3 June 2022

AFA VICTORIA BRANCH CONTACTS

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B24 Liberator	Tony Muller	03 97414635
Ballarat	Noel Hutchins	0439 929 322
Bendigo	Glenis Gordon	03 54369293
Catalina	Ronald Kirk	03 98193527
Engineer	David Graham	0407 248 874
Fighter SQN	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Geelong	John Delia	0408 054 122
Gippsland	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Melbourne WAAAF	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
RAAF Radar	Chris Harnath	0425 770 011
RAF	Val Boyd	0428 174 070
Sunderland SQNs	Ricky Hattam	03 52413431
Vietnam Veterans	Gill Coughlan gilly4346@gmail.com	
WAAF	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Williams	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600



AROUND THE BRANCHES

ATC/AAFC

Greetings all.

The Branch celebrated its long-anticipated Friday luncheon at the Box Hill RSL on the 5th of February with an attendance of no less than 22 members.

After such an extended period of non-social activity such as everyone has gone through, it was evident that there was a lot to catch up on and the members made the most of this long-awaited opportunity.

VALE: It is with sadness that we acknowledge the recent passing of three of our esteemed members, Susan Cohn, John Gracie and John Tribe.

Susan, better known within our Branch as "Susie", was the much-loved wife of Ian who was the Editor of our newsletter for quite a number of years. John Gracie and John Tribe were both well-known and highly regarded members of the ATC and AAFC for many

years. We offer our deepest sympathy to their respective families.

Our AGM and luncheon were held on 7 May and given timing of the publication of CONTACT, we will provide an AGM update in the next edition.

Best wishes for good health to everyone.

Best wishes

Laurie Bell
President

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE ATC/AAFC
BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

YOUR LATEST EDITION OF WINGS IS OUT NOW!

[Click here to access the online version](#)

WINGS magazine will
be distributed by post
in the coming weeks.



Wings is the official publication of the Air Force Association

Well done to the Ballarat RSL for persisting, under difficulties, with Anzac Day arrangements which subsequently enabled full Anzac Day Services in Ballarat for 2021 including the Dawn Service,

the March and Morning Service, followed by camaraderie at the Midland-Ballarot RSL Sports & Services Club.



Rob Petty, Peter Dowling, Noel Hutchins and Peter Schoutens leading the Ballarat Branch on ANZAC Day.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA/AIRFORCE100” WEEKEND 28-29 AUGUST 2021.

The Ballarat Branch will be holding a “Battle for Australia/Air Force 100 Gala Ball” on Saturday 28 August 2021 and a “Battle for Australia/Air Force 100 Full Commemorative Service” at the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial at Lake Wendouree, Ballarat on Sunday Morning 29th August 2021.

All members of Air Force Association Victoria have the opportunity to express their interest to attend either or both of these events.

The Gala Ball will have a definite military/RAAF flavour, and ex-service guests will be encouraged to wear miniatures of their service medals with appropriate dress.

For the Commemorative Service we need the names of any Air Force Association member and their partners interested in receiving an invitation, which will provide allocated seats under cover at the service. Please notify your interest ASAP to Branch President Noel Hutchins – noelhutch@bigpond.com or 0439 929 322.

Noel Hutchins
President

Want to know more about the Ballarat Branch?

Visit our branch page on the air force association Victoria website

Recently we received a call from the Geelong RSL requesting a loan of a RAAF Ensign (which I borrowed from the local AAFC) for a local aged care home here in Geelong where 100 year old Basil Smith was celebrating his centenary - the same year as the Air

Force’s own centenary. AIRCDRE Frisina from RAAF Laverton attended the birthday celebration and presented Mr Smith with an Air Force Centenary commemorative plaque. Attached is the story in the local paper.



Mr Basil Smith celebrates his 100th birthday (source Geelong Advertiser)



Geelong Branch President, John Delia and Mr Allan Day, KJSJ FAIM at the Shrine of Remembrance.

While visiting the Shrine for the Darwin Defenders Commemoration in February, I ran into a wonderful man, Alan Day KJSJ FAIM – an original Darwin Defender – who turned 99 in February. Alan is the Melbourne Branch

President of the Darwin Defenders Association. We got to chatting and he noted my Air Force Association tie that I was wearing and asked how he could get one. I understand that an Association tie is now being organised.

Continued on page 13

Last but not least - our long serving member, Laurie Price was presented with his 60 year Loyal Membership Recognition Certificate, forwarded and signed by the

National President and National Secretary of the Air Force Association. Congratulations and thank you Laurie.

John Delia
President

Want to know more about the Geelong Branch?
Visit our branch page on the air force association Victoria website

RAAF RADAR BRANCH

DEDICATION CEREMONY – 13RS CAPE OTWAY INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION

Contact Summer 2020 Edition included an article covering the opening of the Radar Station 13RS Cape Otway Interpretive Exhibition in the Lightstation precinct in mid-June 2020.

The significance of this Interpretive Exhibition lies in the fact that other than the Australian War Memorial's static display of WWII RAAF Ground Radar equipment in Canberra, the Cape Otway Interpretive Exhibition, is the only exhibition recording WWII RAAF Radar history and those that served. The inclusion of audio recollections of our Veteran Radar Operators, Beryl Mainon and George Runting (George served on 13RS), covering Radar Station activities, is also significant in providing a personal balance to that "secret" and historic WWII RAAF Radar story.

Due to the 2020 COVID19 restrictions, planning for a Dedication Ceremony for the Interpretive Exhibition was deferred at that time. With the easing of COVID19 restrictions, planning for the dedication ceremony is again underway. However, some details have not been

finalised at Contact press time.

Dedication Ceremony details so far include:

- Ceremony date is Saturday, 19 June 2021 at approximately 12.30 pm. June is the month that 13RS became operational in 1942, but the Dedication Ceremony 79 years later will be the first formal celebration of its existence.
- Location is in the vicinity of the 13RS Doover building on the Cape Otway Lightstation tourist trail.
- A guided tour of that trail will also be available, including climbing the 1850s Lightstation, viewing 1859 telegraph station and the Indigenous heritage features.
- Complimentary entrance to the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct for all attending the Interpretive Exhibition Dedication Ceremony on 19 June, (Note: an entrance fee concession rate of \$10 is available for all AFA Members, on proof of membership, on all other days).



Radar Station Cape Otway



Audio Panel – RS Cape Otway

Any Association members who may be interested in joining our RAAF Radar Branch members at the 13RS Cape Otway Interpretive Exhibition Dedication Ceremony should register their interest with RAAF Radar Branch President, Chris Harnath, at harnathc@bigpond.com. Further details of the Dedication Ceremony arrangements will be available through Chris when finalised.

Chris Harnath
President

Want to know more about the RAAF Radar branch Branch?
Visit the air force association Victoria website

Our AGM was held on Sunday 14 February 2021 and although we had planned for the meeting to be held at the AFA Headquarters in Hawthorn, a sudden COVID lockdown required an amendment to that idea and Max McGregor kindly arranged a virtual alternative using the "BlueJeans" video conferencing platform. This enabled the AGM to proceed but not without one or two technical issues to add some interest to the proceedings.

Educational bursaries were presented to Jessica Bialobrzkeski (granddaughter

of Carl Schiller) and Declan Douglas (grandson of Ron Douglas) and both awardees are to start tertiary education this year.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting and the President's Report are both available in our latest Newsletter which can be viewed via the Vietnam Veterans Branch section of the AFA (Vic) website. Our Newsletter editor, Geoff Rose has demonstrated his skill at taking virtual photographs of a virtual meeting which have added some colour and interest to these extracts from our AGM.

Our monthly luncheons have re-commenced at the Mail Exchange Hotel (western end of Bourke Street just opposite Southern Cross station) and we are planning to use this venue for our lunch after the Anzac Day March on 25 April. In previous years we have gathered in one of the function rooms at the Seasons Botanic Gardens hotel but catering at this venue was proving problematic as the adjoining restaurant had been impacted by the extended COVID lockdown. Secretary Gill Coughlan will be asking those planning to

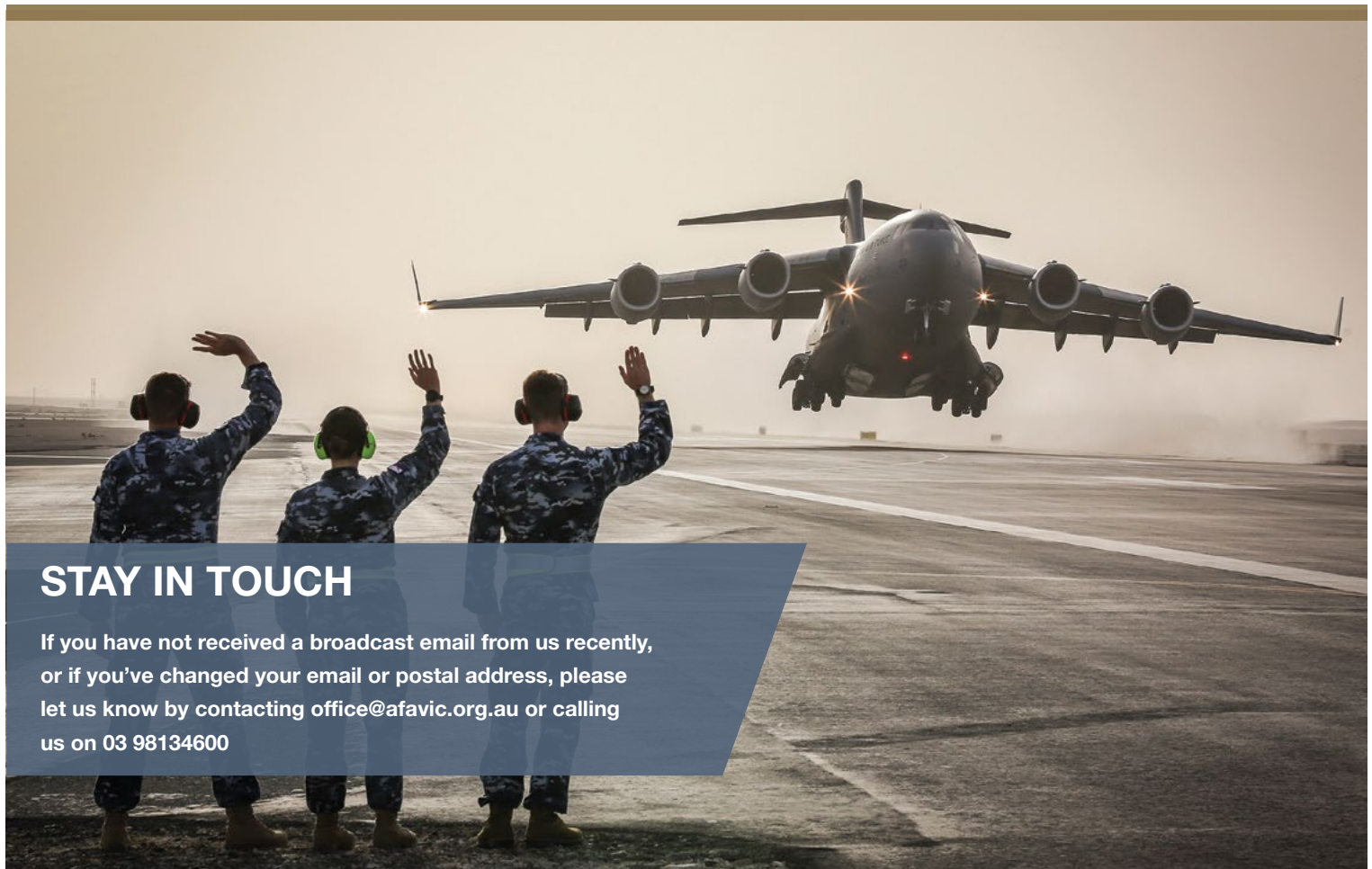
attend the Anzac Day lunch to let her know in advance so that the appropriate booking can be made.

Chris Hudnott

President

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE VIETNAM
VETERANS' BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE



STAY IN TOUCH

If you have not received a broadcast email from us recently, or if you've changed your email or postal address, please let us know by contacting office@afavic.org.au or calling us on 03 98134600

LEST WE FORGET



WREN veteran and long-time Air Force Association member, Margaret Wood

VALE – MARGARET WOOD

The Air Force Association mourns the passing of WREN veteran and long-time Air Force Association and Ballarat Branch member, Margaret Wood passed away on 1 March.

Margaret's World War II service as a British Navy WREN and her personal contribution to the preparation and involvement in the D Day landings on 6th June 1944 is known to some but not all.

Following her conscription call-up from the RAF, Margaret became part of the Birdham Girls of the Women's Royal Naval Service, in what would become a 2 ½ year top-secret operation from the beginning of 1942 until D-Day, 6th June 1944.

It was at HMS Sea Serpent, where Margaret and the other girls were involved in the assembly of, and training with LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) that were to be used in the allied forces D-Day operation. They also had to learn helmsmanship and navigation to be able to do their part in operating the craft.

The Normandy landings on Tuesday, 6 June 1944 were the largest seaborne invasion in history. Margaret and her fellow Birdham Girls worked tirelessly, taking trips out into the channel in LCVP's delivering mail, cigarettes, food and other supplies to the ships and of course bringing back any injured men, and then taking them back out again.

Margaret and the Birdham Girls' story is not widely known, but now thanks to Noel Hutchins (Ballarat Branch President), we can honour and remember a remarkable and brave woman.

Vale Margaret Wood.

(with thanks to Noel Hutchins for sharing Margaret's story)



LCVP No 1002 being cleaned by Margaret and two other Birdham Girls.

VALE

It is with the greatest respect and fond memories, we remember our colleagues who have passed on before us.

The following members have passed away since our last publication. May they rest in peace.

Mrs Alwyn Hocking Ballarat	31/12/2020
Mr John Gilbert B24 Liberator Branch	07/01/2021
Mr Geoff Fraser Catalina Branch.....	23/10/2020
Mr Raymond Rees Catalina Branch.....	17/01/2021
Mr John Gracie ATC/AAFC Branch.....	24/02/2021
Mrs Jean Kaye RAF Branch	22/01/2021
Mrs Jean Smith RAF Branch	18/12/2020
Mrs Margaret Wood Ballarat Branch.....	02/03/2021
Mr John Tribe ATC/AAFC Branch	01/04/2021

Lest We Forget

Air Force Association

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Lee Stanway – Director, Member Services

Peter Finkelstein – Honorary Solicitor

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