

# Air Force Association

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*The arrival of the 13th P-8A Poseidon aircraft at RAAF Base Edinburgh on 29th September expands Australia's maritime surveillance, patrol and response capability and directly supports the reformation of No. 12 Squadron, which will operate alongside No. 11 Squadron.*

## NO.12 SQUADRON RE-ESTABLISHED WITH P-8A POSEIDON AIRCRAFT

**The RAAF has re-established its No12 Squadron at RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia as a second operational squadron for Australia's growing fleet of P-8A Poseidon aircraft.**

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC, CSC, OAM, made the announcement following the arrival of the newest P-8A Poseidon aircraft, bringing the fleet to 13.

Operating alongside 11 Squadron, 12 Squadron will contribute to Australia's anti-submarine warfare, maritime strike and maritime intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and response capabilities.

"I'm proud to announce the re-establishment of Number 12 Squadron alongside the arrival of Australia's 13th P-8A Poseidon aircraft.

"No12 Squadron has played an important role in the history of our Air Force and the

Continued on page 2



defence of our nation; a role that it will proudly and skilfully continue from today,” said Air Marshal Chappell.

Commander Surveillance and Response Group, Air Commodore Louise desJardines CSC, reinforced the significance of the re-establishment of Number 12 Squadron for Air Force.

“The arrival of the 13th aircraft and the re-establishment of 12 Squadron is the culmination of many years of hard work. We’ve now built the capability to the point we need a second operational squadron.

“Our aviators are the key to our capability. With their dedication, commitment and resolve, they are what make the P-8A Poseidon deliver,” said Air Commodore desJardines.

(Image and story courtesy of Department of Defence)

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT



John Clarkson – President, AFA Victoria.

### **Welcome to the Summer edition of Contact, your AFA Victoria newsletter.**

As another year draws to an end, and membership renewals become due, I can report that our membership holds reasonably steady though sadly is slowly diminished by the passing of loved colleagues.

Two of our main events for the year occur in this quarter. On Remembrance Day, for the second year, we worked with Air Force in presenting a memorable and respectful service to honour those lost in war and in peace in the service to their nation. This year the weather was somewhat inclement. But it failed to dampen the spirit of the occasion which was very much enhanced by the thoughtful words of Wing Commander Matthew Shelley in his address emphasising the Air Force centenary theme of “Then, Now, Always”. It was also pleasing that many current serving members and foreign military offices participated with us. The service was followed by a pleasant luncheon and discussions in the officers mess. My thanks to Daryll Topp and WOFF Neil Crawley for making it all happen, and to those members who helped assemble the “poppy wall”.

Of course, the other event was our Christmas Open Day in early December. This year we had very good numbers in good spirits, perhaps boosted by my appeal to members to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting to debate our proposed new constitution. I am pleased to report that, apart from a couple of glitches that I claim were caused by auto formatting after the fact, the proposed constitution was unanimously agreed. For this outcome I express my appreciation for the conscientious work that your board did, in particular Chris Potter, and to some wise counsel from national board member Jim Campbell.

As I have done previously, I again express my appreciation for the work that Jacqui Rudd and John Delia do in producing a quality newsletter full of interest to our membership. And, of course, the great work that Barb Stallard does in the office to keep us all airborne.

In closing, I would like to offer my best wishes to members and families for a very merry Christmas and a happy New year. Stay well, and please stay connected.

**John Clarkson**

*President AFA Victoria*

## FORMER RAAF OFFICERS REVISIT HISTORIC RAF BOND



From left, retired RAAF Squadron Leader Mike Dance, Royal Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Jo Lincoln, Royal Air Force Wing Commander Stephen Fry and retired RAAF Squadron Leader Bob Schouten.

**Two retired Royal Australian Air Force squadron leaders renewed a near-90-year bond between Australia and the United Kingdom during a private visit to Royal Air Force (RAF) Northolt on October 10.**

Retired Squadron Leader Bob Schouten (AFA Victoria's Geelong Branch) and retired Squadron Leader Mike Dance, both former members of 21 (City of Melbourne) Squadron, toured 600 (City of London) Squadron's new headquarters and the restored Sir Keith Park Building. The iconic Building 27 now houses a full-scale Battle of Britain plotting table, recreating the nerve centre that directed Fighter Command in 1940.

The visit coincided with 600 Squadron's centenary celebrations. Wing Commander Stephen Fry, the unit's new Officer Commanding, hosted the Australians before inviting them to the formal dining-in at Butchers' Hall. Air Vice-Marshal Jo Lincoln, Commandant General Royal Auxiliary Air Force, was the guest of honour.

Officially twinned in 1938 under the patronage of their respective Honorary Air Commodores and with royal approval from King George VI, reciprocal visits have sustained the link between 21 Squadron and 600 Squadron across eight decades and through many conflicts.

*"Walking into the Sir Keith Park Building felt like stepping back to 1940," Mr Schouten said.*

*"The plotting table, the telephones, the WAAF aircraft markers – it's all there."*

The evening's only disappointment was the absence of 600 Squadron's Honorary Air Commodore Hugh Trenchard – third Viscount Trenchard and grandson of RAF founder Lord Hugh Trenchard, first Viscount Trenchard – owing to a prior commitment.

After the 1938 twinning, 600 Squadron pilots trained in Australia in 1948, and 21 Squadron officers toured RAF Northolt in the 1950s and 1960s.

As 600 Squadron begins its second century, the twin-squadron tradition remains strong, proving King George VI's 1938 decree – "Two squadrons, one spirit" – endures.

(Story courtesy: Department of Defence)



The Battle of Britain plotting room at Royal Air Force Northolt. (Photo courtesy Bob Schouten).

## MORE THAN JUST PAINT – NOSE ART



Lincolnshire, England 1943-0908. "N for Nuts" – a Lancaster aircraft of RAAF No. 460 Bomber command, based at RAF Station Binbrook, bears as its emblem, a kangaroo wearing a tartan kilt and carrying a shillelagh, representing Australian, Scottish or Irish crew members. The bombs depict raids on enemy territory, the ice-cream cones showing Italian targets, and the parachute represents mine-laying in enemy waters. (image source: AWM)



Crest of "F for Freddie" - Ventura aircraft from No 464 RAAF Bomber Command, based at RAF Station Methwold (image source: AWM UK0448).



England 1944-07-03. Australian aircrew of a Boston aircraft (RAF No. 88 SQN) in front of the aircraft emblem 'XXX Beer is Best'.

L to R: FSGT R M Brockhurst (Nambour, QLD); FLOFF Thomas McCauley Hood (Forbes, NSW) – sadly lost in operations over France, 5 August 1944; Pilot Officer Thomas Henry Simpson, DFC (Morpeth, NSW) – sadly lost in operations over France, 5 August 1944; WOFF F D Murphy (Bondi, NSW). (image source: AWM, Accession number UK1677).



February 1944. An Australian Mosquito from No. 465 Squadron at RAF Station Middle Wallop, flown by SQNLDR Peter Panitz. The nose art features enemy trains, ships, radio installations, ammunition transports and aircraft that had been destroyed. (image source: AWM)

For over a century, Australian air and ground crews have used nose art to personalise aircraft, boost morale, and express identity—turning metal and code numbers into symbols of pride, humour, and connection.

Much more than just paint, nose art has for over a hundred years helped generations of Australian air and ground crew, deployed in war fighting or peacekeeping operations, to deal with the extraordinary and dangerous situations to which they have been exposed.

Nose art has enabled aircrew to express their individuality and pride by making their mass-produced aircraft distinct from others with the same provenance in their squadron. Different types of nose art would reflect individuality and character and provide a bond for an aircrew by giving their aircraft an "identity". The nose art can be patriotic or reflect the place of origin of crew members. It can be (tongue-in-cheek) humorous or refer to the pop culture of the era. It can serve as a record of the missions the aircraft has undertaken, or of the identities of the crews.

The images, words and names that were either temporarily or permanently drawn on or applied to their aircraft often represented the crews' families, friends, and the lives and communities to which they were attached back home in Australia. Here are some examples of RAAF aircraft nose art from WWII.

(Source: Australian War Memorial)

Are you interested in more stories like this? Visit [WM - the official magazine of the Australian War Memorial](#).



For all national Air Force Association news visit our website!

[www.raafa.org.au](http://www.raafa.org.au)



# ROULETTES GATHER FOR 55<sup>TH</sup> REUNION



Max McGregor (centre) with the current Roulettes team (from L to R) Flt Lt Brodie Sweeney R3, Flt Lt David Bernard R5, Me, Flt Lt Alex Christison R2 and Flt Lt Rich Taylor R4.

**The Roulettes, the RAAF's aerobatic display team were established in 1970, and on 7th November, Roulettes past and present gathered for their 55th reunion. Former Roulette, and AFA Victoria Immediate Past President, Max McGregor, was in attendance.**

The reunion included a private display by the current Roulette team and a dinner that night. It was a great day and night. I was not the oldest Roulette by years attending, but I was the longest serving Roulette having flown in the 2nd display team in 1971/72.



*The Roulettes in action*

One further point relates to the Roulette Symbol in the background which has changed over the years but the first Roulette shoulder patch that was used in 1971/72 featuring the "stylised R" was designed by my wife Rosemary. It took a couple of years before the R was painted onto the fin of the Macchi, but it is a part of history now.

The Roulettes had their first public display at RAAF Base Point Cook in 1970. The team flew a Macchi MB-326 aircraft, which was replaced by the Pilatus PC-9/A (the Air Force's new pilot training aircraft) in 1989. The Pilatus PC-9/A was retired from Roulettes operations in March 2019 and was replaced by Pilatus PC-21 – one of the most advanced training aircraft in the world.

**Did You Know?** Roulette displays are flown all around Australia and consist of several manoeuvres flown in various formations at low level. They are an extension of formation, aerobatics, low level flying, and airmanship skills, taught to Air Force pilots and developed throughout their career.

The Roulettes fly as low as 250 feet (80m) at speeds of up to 370 knots (685km/h) and pilots can experience up to 6 'G', or 6 times, the force of gravity during a display. Flying as close as three metres apart, the team showcases the level of visual judgement and hand-eye coordination that pilots in the Air Force can achieve.

Roulette pilots are Qualified Flying Instructors who work at the Central Flying School, based at RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria. Between displays, they teach other Air Force pilots to become instructors.

By Max McGregor



*The current Roulettes team put on a display for the 55<sup>th</sup> Reunion gathering.*

## STORIES FROM THE SKIES

On October 16 at the Shrine of Remembrance the launch of “Resolute”, the first detailed history of Australia’s air war in Burma, took place.

Drawing from years of research by military historian and AFA Victoria member, Dr Andrew Kilsby and writer and historian, Dr Daryl Moran—both sons of RAAF veterans - the book journeys into a little-known chapter of Australia’s wartime history as the courage and sacrifice of Royal Australian Air Force aircrew in the Burma Campaign are brought to life for the first time.

The book is one of a number of recent publications centred around RAAF service in both war and peacetime, including others from the RAAF History and Heritage campaign Series. A last-minute Christmas gift or a worthwhile addition to your library, these can be found on Big Sky Publishing: <https://www.bigskypublishing.com.au/>



**RESOLUTE**  
*The Australian Air War in Burma, 1942-1945*  
Authors: Dr Andrew Kilsby, Dr Daryl Moran  
Release Date: 06/Oct/2025



**THE AIR MOBILITY WORKHORSE**  
*C-130 Hercules Aircraft in Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) service*  
Release Date: 01/Sep/2025



**FROM THE SKIES**  
*Australian air power in humanitarian aid and disaster relief since the Second World War*  
Authors: Flight Lieutenant Karyn Markwell  
Release Date: 01/Sep/2025

## CONNECTING MARITIME SQUADRONS MEMBERS

Maritime Squadrons Association (MSA) is a social grouping of ex-maritime members with informal organisations in every state.

The main activity of the various MSA chapters is to organise lunch / dinner get-togethers on at least an annual basis.

MSA (Vic) is attempting to build a list of ex-maritime members who would receive notifications of events as they arise. They are looking to inform all ex-members of 10SQN, 11SQN, 292SQN, 492SQN and 92 Wing of upcoming functions.

If interested, please contact  
Graham Wade: [grahamwade@optusnet.com.au](mailto:grahamwade@optusnet.com.au) or Vern Gallagher: [verngallagher@icloud.com](mailto:verngallagher@icloud.com).

# RAAF RADAR VETERANS SHOWCASED IN WINGS

**Our RAAF Radar veterans have been recognised in a story in the latest edition of Wings magazine.**

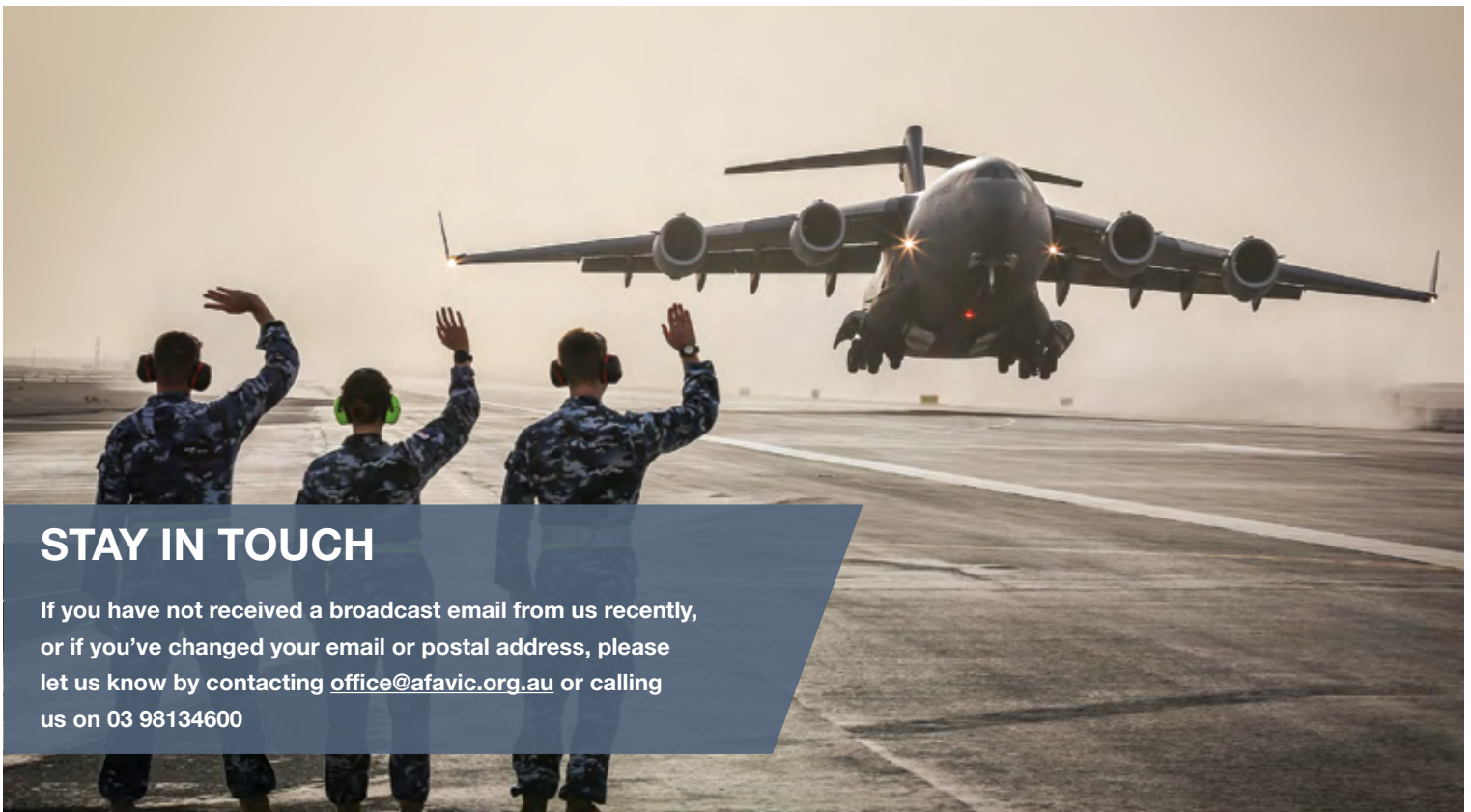
The remarkable - and relatively little known - experiences of WWII RAAF Radar veterans and centenarians David Westwood, Beryl Mainon, George Runting and Terry McMahon were highlighted in the article, along with Mr Westwood's special invitation to a special Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 15 August to mark Victory in the Pacific Day and the 80th Anniversary of the ending of WWII.



Our RAAF Radar veteran and centenarians with left, back: AFA Victoria President John Clarkson, CO 21SQN WgCDR Nikki Clements, WOFF Brad Parmenter (21SQN) and Colonel Jason Cooke. Front: David Westwood, George Runting and Beryl Mainon.

You can read this article and much more in the Summer edition of Wings magazine: <https://wingsmagazine.org/>.

Learn more about RAAF Radar and its critical role during WWII [here](#).



## 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](mailto:office@afavic.org.au) or calling us on 03 98134600

## “AN ENDURING LEGACY – THE EMPIRE AIR TRAINING SCHEME”

**Air Force has officially released the documentary *An Enduring Legacy: The Empire Air Training Scheme* at a premiere screening in historical Hangar 84, RAAF Base Wagga, on October 17.**

Produced by the Living History Program team from History and Heritage – Air Force (HH-AF), along with 464 Squadron, *An Enduring Legacy* is a 30-minute film on the history of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS), with a focus on its people and activities in the Riverina region of NSW.

The EATS was a major World War 2-era initiative by the United Kingdom and selected Commonwealth nations (including Australia, Canada and New Zealand) to rapidly train aircrew across common systems and aircraft.

Director-General HH-AF Air Commodore Robert Lawson said the EATS “was incredibly successful in supporting the ability of Britain and its key Commonwealth partners to project air power and go on the offensive against the Axis powers during the Second World War”.

“It was so successful that the scheme was stopped in 1944, a year before the war ended,” he added.



An Enduring Legacy: The Empire Air Training Scheme is available to view on HH-AF's Facebook page and the RAAF website. Or click on the image above to watch on Vimeo:

“It is incredibly important for all Australians to understand our rich wartime history, and videos such as this can easily be shared with a wider audience.”

The documentary focuses on the history of the EATS in the communities of Temora, Cootamundra, Uranquinty, Wagga Wagga (Forest Hill), Narrandera and Coolamon, and connects the past to the present via ongoing Air Force training in Wagga Wagga.

The premiere screening was attended by many who have an historical family connection with the EATS – along with RAAF Base Wagga personnel and trainees.

One honoured guest was 101-year-old Wagga Wagga resident Herbert Adams, who trained as a navigator at Cootamundra and later served with distinction in Bomber Command, for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The release of the documentary coincided with the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2 in 1945.



*101-year-old Wagga Wagga veteran, Herbert Adams watches the premiere screening of the documentary, *An Enduring Legacy: The Empire Air Training Scheme*, at RAAF Base Wagga, NSW. (Image source: Department of Defence).*

# 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS & MOTIONS

**Members are advised that the 2026 Presidents' Meeting, followed by the AGM will be held on 28th May 2026 at AFA-Vic office, Suite 3, 24-36 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn East.**

Nominations for the office of State President, State Treasurer and Board members are to be sent in writing to the AFA-Vic Office no later than 1st February 2026 and must be signed by the candidate and proposer.

- The President's and Treasurer's tenures will expire at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for these positions are invited. Current incumbents are:
  - State President - Mr John Clarkson.
  - State Treasurer - Mr Andrew Blyth

Board Nominations are invited. Mr John Clarkson, Mr Daryll Topp, Mr James Allen, Mr Rowan Story and Mr Reinhard Goschiniak tenures will expire at the Annual General Meeting. All other Board members have another year's tenure to serve.

Nomination forms may be obtained from the Office Manager, AFA-Vic Divisional office.

### MOTIONS FOR 2026 AGM

- All proposed motions must be forwarded by Branch Secretaries to the State Secretary 28 days prior to the meeting.
- Copies of all motions must be forwarded to all Branch Secretaries, 14 days prior to the meeting.
- Financial Reports must be sent to all members 21 days prior to the meeting.

### CLAUSE 31: PURPOSE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:

- Receive the Report of the Board;
- Receive the Statement of Accounts;
- Elect the President, Treasurer and members of the Board;
- Transact any other business of which 28 days' notice in writing specifying the motion to be moved has been received at the registered office of the Division.

All business transacted at the Annual General Meeting pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed special.

# 11 NOVEMBER 2025, REMEMBRANCE DAY – AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS MEMORIAL, RAAF WILLIAMS, POINT COOK BASE

Air Force Association – Victoria was once again invited to commemorate Remembrance Day in conjunction with Air Force at RAAF Williams, Point Cook Base on Tuesday 11 November.



*Defence International Training Centre (DITC) students in attendance*



*Piper Les Kenfield*



*Flypast by 100 Squadron Winjeel historical training aircraft.*



*Air Force Catalaques Party preparing to mount.*

# 11 NOVEMBER 2025, REMEMBRANCE DAY – AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS MEMORIAL, RAAF WILLIAMS, POINT COOK BASE



AFA-Vic State President, AIRCDRE John Clarkson (Retd) CSC laying the AFA Roundel Wreath



L - R, Charlie Downes - Vietnam Veterans Branch, former State President John McCrystal, Paul Rourke, President B24 Liberator Branch, Chris Hudnott - Vietnam Veterans Branch.



WGCDR Matthew Shelley, CO Air Force Training Group, as keynote speaker.



AFA-Vic State President, AIRCDRE John Clarkson (Retd) CSC, addressing the service

(Images courtesy of AFA Vic Communications Director, John Delia)

## 'G FOR GEORGE' RETURNS TO THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MUSEUM.



*G for George passing in front of AWM (photo courtesy AWM)*



**THE MEMORIAL TEAM (L-R) GARTH O'CONNELL, LACHLAN GRANT, EMILY HYLES AND SHANE CASEY  
(© AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL)**



*'G for George' Warming up in Presswick Scotland before departing for Australia, 11 October 1944  
(Image courtesy AWM)*

**G for George serves as a memorial to all Australians who flew with Bomber Command operated by the crews of 460 Squadron (RAAF).**

Lachlan Grant - Senior Historian at the Australian War Memorial – writes about the return of 'G for George' to its home at the Australian War Memorial and shares his insights into the 'Australians in Bomber Command Exhibition'.

On a sunny Canberra winter's day on 31 July 2025, Avro Lancaster 'G for George' returned to the Australian War Memorial where it will take pride of place as the centrepiece of a brand-new permanent Australians in Bomber Command exhibition inside the new Anzac Hall. The iconic Lancaster bomber had been stored at the Memorial's warehouse facility since 2020, awaiting the construction of the Memorial's new galleries.

George's return was a crucial milestone for the Memorial curatorial team – consisting of myself and Shane Casey (as concept developers), and Emily Hyles and Garth O'Connell (as curators) – who have been working on the new displays since October 2019. George's arrival at Anzac Hall marked the commencement of the final stages of the project – the first of hundreds of objects to arrive for installation in the gallery ahead of the long-anticipated public opening in the first quarter of 2026.

The Australians in Bomber Command exhibition is by far the largest on the ground floor of Anzac Hall. Rather than simply returning the previous display from the old Anzac Hall, it has been newly created, interpreted and curated, with substantial enhancements. While 'G for George' remains the centrepiece of the exhibition, it includes more than 330 objects that tell the stories of more than 240 veterans and their families, as representative of all who served in Bomber Command.

While we renewed and modernised the exhibition, we also recognised the importance of returning some of the stories and objects that resonated with visitors in the past, such as the final letter home and uniform of Flying Officer Colin Flockhart. Stella Bowen's Bomber Crew painting also features, as does an updated version of the 'G for George' film. Longtime visitors will find familiar touchstones, as well as lots of new stories to discover.

The development provided a once in a generation opportunity to survey the large collection of objects donated to the Memorial in the 80 years since the Second World War. What is most exciting is that an estimated two thirds of the objects going on display have never been publicly displayed. These provide an opportunity to tell stories of diversity, of women serving in the WAAF, and stories such as that of a Bomber Command airmen who was incarcerated in Buchenwald concentration camp. A



G GEORGE BOMB TALLY

major highlight is the display of the full uniform, kit and equipment of a tail gunner, which contains an incredible 48 objects.

The new exhibition follows the journeys of Australian airmen from enlistment, through training, to joining operational squadrons. This process typically took two years and is a significant part of the story of those who served in Bomber Command.

The exhibition includes new interactive multimedia displays. A 'G for George' missions database, for example, allows visitors to take a deep dive and find information about every single mission of the famous Lancaster.

Visitors can learn about the people who flew George, the target, how many bombers were lost, and what happened on the ground during each mission. Another interactive multimedia display provides information about the individual Bomber Command aircrew represented on German flying ace Heinz Wolfgang Schnauer's Messerschmitt 110 tail fin, which is stencilled with 121 aircraft – representing over 830 lost British and Commonwealth aircrew.

We hope this approach will humanise the object, connecting it to the experiences of Bomber Command aircrew in a way that the story of a German flying ace did not.

We want visitors to recognise that we are telling real stories about real people. It's our job to keep telling and interpreting the stories of the Australians who served in the Second World War for current and future generations who will visit our galleries, to provide greater understanding of the experiences of some 4,100 Australians who died serving in Bomber Command, and whose names are cast in bronze on the Memorial's Roll of Honour.

From all the members of our team, it has been a great honour to have worked on this project. We would like to thank all the veterans, their families, and friends of the association, who have donated personal objects and shared their stories with the Australian War Memorial over the years to make this exhibition possible.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Dr Lachlan Grant is a Senior Historian at the Australian War Memorial. He is the author of four books on Australian experiences of the Second World War. His next book is about Australians and the battle of Normandy. His team recently presented a public talk previewing the new displays, which can be viewed online ([https://www.youtube.com/live/P6vGj8\\_9c78](https://www.youtube.com/live/P6vGj8_9c78)).

(Acknowledgement: With thanks to the Bomber Command Association in Australia Inc for this article.)

**Air Force Association**

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**  
from the Air Force Association – Victoria to all our  
members and their families, with special mention to our  
service men and women who are overseas at this time.

The office will be closed from  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026

# 2026 BURSARY APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

**Since 2010, educational bursaries have assisted over 40 young students of RAAF Vietnam veterans with their education or training endeavours.**

More recently, eligibility has been expanded to children/ grandchildren of any Victorian RAAF veterans.

President of the RAAF Vietnam Veterans Branch which administers the Bursaries, Chris Hudnott explained, "Originally the Bursaries were conceived as support for children and grandchildren for students undertaking tertiary studies.

"However, eligibility for the Bursaries has been expanded over the years and they are now available for children or grandchildren (living in Victoria) of any RAAF veteran with operational service or 3+ years' continuous service."

Educational study has also been expanded to include any recognised educational or training courses. Eligibility for Encouragement Awards is currently limited to children and grandchildren of RAAF Vietnam Veterans.

## ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS



**'The John 'Snow' Coughlan CGM Encouragement Award'.**



**'The Lee and Ellen Scully Encouragement Award'.**

These two awards, sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Branch and named in honour of highly esteemed past members, will provide an amount of \$500 to applicants deemed most worthy of such assistance.

## Applications for the 2026 Bursary and Encouragement Awards close on Friday 23 January 2026.

The President of the Vietnam Veterans Branch of AFA (Vic) will advise the successful applicant(s) during the first week of February with successful applicant(s) invited to the Branch AGM on 15 February 2026 for presentation of their award.

## Apply Now

Download the 2026 Bursary Application Form here: <https://afavic.org.au/1454/images/Bursary-fm-2026a.pdf>

Find out more about our Bursaries here, or visit our website: <https://afavic.org.au/content/1128/bursaries>.

**ASTRA AVIATOR  
PODCASTS**

**LISTEN TO THE RECOLLECTIONS  
AND EXPERIENCES OF RETIRED AND  
SERVING AIR FORCE PERSONNEL.**

Gareth McCray OAM interviews former and current Australian aviators share their stories of life in the Air Force.

**VISIT**  
<https://raafa.org.au/media/#videos>

AN INITIATIVE BY AFA AND AFA NSW

## 9 SQUADRON FLIES AGAIN

### 9 Squadron has officially reformed, marking its proud return to Air Force service with a ceremony at Torrens Parade Ground in South Australia.

The event honoured the squadron's Vietnam War veterans and celebrated the arrival of a restored Bell UH-1 Iroquois 'Huey' helicopter, a symbol of the unit's enduring legacy and the connection between past and present generations of aviators.

The reformation also marked 100 years since the squadron's birth in 1925, when it began as 101 Fleet Co-operation Flight at Bowen, Queensland.

Commanding Officer 9 Squadron Wing Commander Lawry Benier said the day was a moment to reflect on the courage and mateship that defined the squadron's Vietnam service and to recognise those who shaped its history.

"The proud legacy of 9 Squadron lives once again," Wing Commander Benier said. "To the Vietnam veterans of 9 Squadron, welcome back. This squadron is yours, and today we honour your legacy."

"From the moment 9 Squadron deployed to Vung Tau in

1966, its members set the standard for how an Air Force unit should operate in war. You showed what it means to serve with courage, mateship and quiet determination."

By the end of its Vietnam deployment, 9 Squadron had flown more than 237,000 missions – a testament to the skill, endurance and sacrifice of its members who served under constant threat in some of the most challenging conditions of modern warfare.

From seaplanes to helicopters, and now the cutting-edge MQ-4C Triton, Air Commander Australia Air Vice-Marshal Glen Braz said the squadron's reformation signified both renewal and remembrance, bridging a century of service between the aviators of the past and those serving today.

"With the arrival of the MQ-4C Triton, the squadron now delivers an unprecedented long-range, persistent and networked intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability."

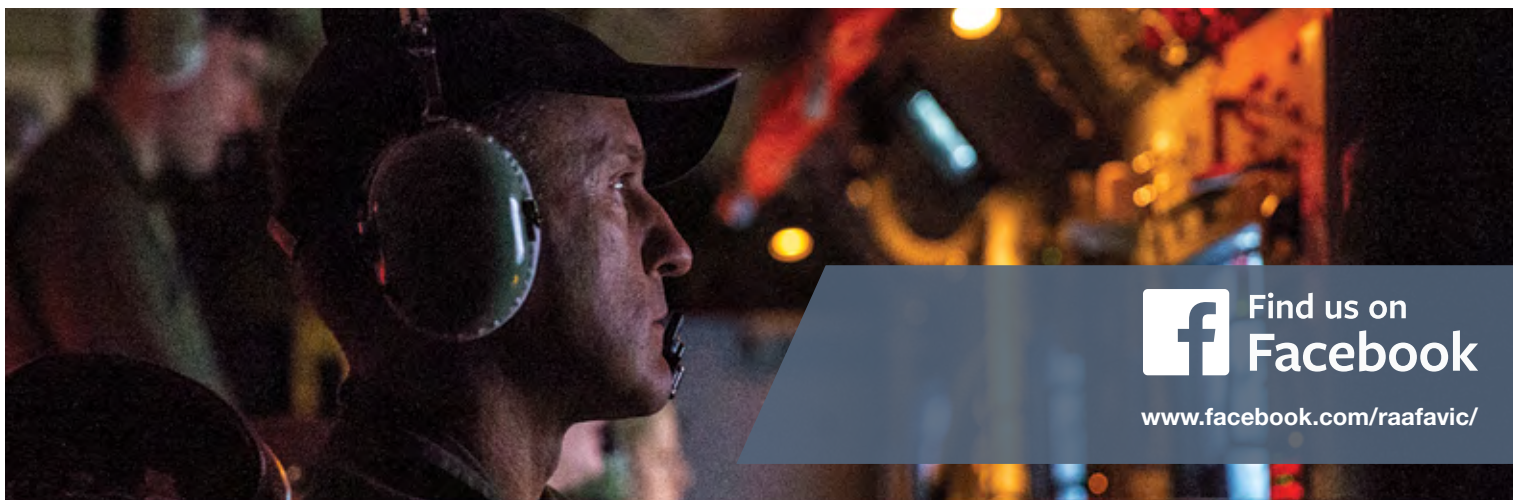
(Story & images courtesy Department of Defence)



Members of 9 Squadron stand at attention during the official reformation parade at Torrens Parade Ground. Photo: Aircraftman Jamie Kohlmann



The Colour Party presents the 9 Squadron Standard at the Torrens Parade Ground's Vietnam War Memorial during the final stages of the squadron's reformation parade, recognising its legacy of distinguished conduct. Photo: Flight Sergeant Rob Hack



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## World War Two Service



SQUADRON LEADER  
CHARLES ARBUTHNOT  
CROMBIE DSO, DFC  
404099

SERVICE  
DATE OF BIRTH  
PLACE OF BIRTH  
DATE OF ENLISTMENT  
PLACE OF ENLISTMENT  
NEXT OF KIN  
DATE OF DEATH  
POSTING ON DEATH  
WW2 HONOURS AND  
GALLANTRY

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
16 MARCH 1915  
BRISBANE, QLD  
24 MAY 1940  
BRISBANE, QLD  
CROMBIE, BETTY  
26 AUGUST 1945  
5 OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT  
COMPANION OF THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER  
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

## VETERAN SEARCH

Seeking any relatives of SQN LDR Charles Arbuthnot Crombie DSO DFC (ex 5OTU), died 26<sup>th</sup> August 1945.

Please contact AFA Victoria on 9813 4600 or [afavic.org.au](http://afavic.org.au)

## YOUR LATEST EDITION OF WINGS IS OUT NOW



The latest edition of Wings – the AFA's flagship magazine – is available online now. Click here to access the online version or go to <https://wingsmagazine.org/view-wings>

WINGS will be distributed by post in the coming weeks.

# AIR FORCE 'GUNNIES' MEMORIAL UNVEILED

**More than a century after Australian aircrew first dropped bombs over the Middle East, a memorial has been dedicated to the aviators who carried the weight of Air Force's explosive edge: The Gunnies.**

The Australian Armourers Association plaque was unveiled at the RAAF Memorial Grove in Canberra on December 4, St Barbara's Day, the patron saint of the armament trade.

The plaque honours every armourer who supported Australian aircraft and was unveiled by Chief of Staff Joint Capabilities Group Air Commodore Adam Spinks and Australian Armourers Association Patron Air Commodore Bill Hayden, both armament officers.

"This plaque stands as a testament to the extraordinary contribution of the armament trade across more than a century of Australian air power," Air Commodore Spinks said.

"Once a gunnie, always a gunnie. That sense of identity never leaves you."

The memorial was set beside the 1 Squadron plaque to symbolise the gunnies' role dating back to the Mesopotamian Half Flight in 1915.

Armament trade responsibilities include preparing ordnance, loading weapons, maintaining guns and ejection seats, and ensuring explosive ordnance safety.

A restructure in the 1990s dissolved the armament trade, but its value was reaffirmed during Operation Falconer, when more than 40 gunnies deployed to support Australia Classic Hornets in the 2003 Iraq War. Dedicated armament technicians were formally re-established in 2008, with the decision proving its worth during further operations.

"This memorial ensures that the legacy of generations of gunnies, those still with us and those no longer by our side, will never be forgotten," Air Commodore Spinks said.



Members of the Australian Armourers Association stand with the newly unveiled memorial plaque at the RAAF Memorial Grove.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### AFA VICTORIA BRANCH CONTACTS

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ATC/AAFC	Hugh Tank	03 98773424
B24 Liberator	Tony Muller	03 97414635
Ballarat	Peter Dowling	0418 281 775
Bendigo	Reinhard Goschiniak	0419 375 160
Technical	David Graham	0407 248 874
Geelong	John Price	0415 077 805
RAAF Radar	Chris Harnath	0425 770 011
RAF	Val Boyd	0428 174 070
Sunderland SQNs	Ricky Hattam	0418 994 759
Vietnam Veterans	Chris Hudnott	0438 331 215
Williams	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600

### CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

#### AUTUMN 2026

Contributions by 2 March 2026

Publication: 20 March 2026

#### WINTER 2026

Contributions by 27 May 2026

Publication: 20 June 2026

#### SPRING 2026

Contributions by: 1 September 2026

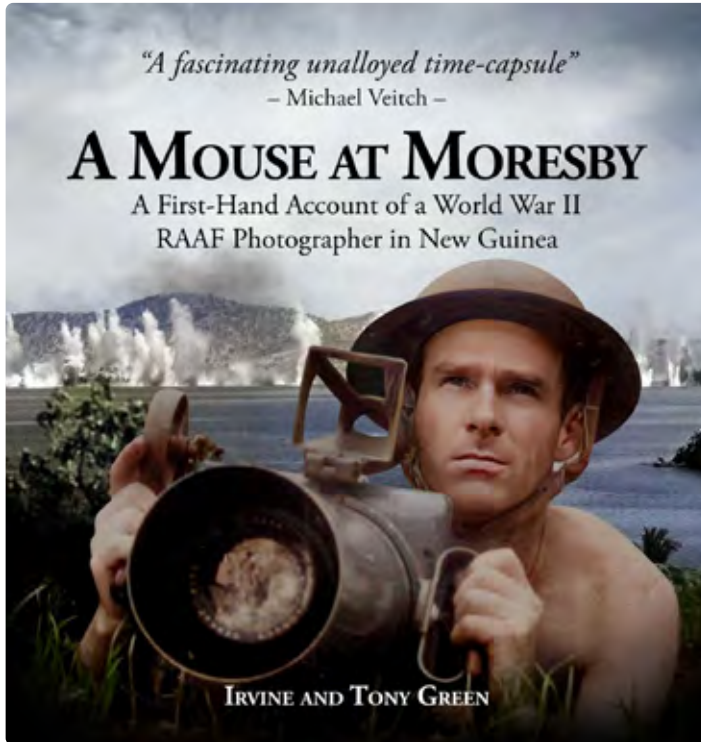
Publication: 19 September 2026

#### SUMMER 2026

Contributions by: 27 November 2026

Publication: 18 December 2026

# 'A MOUSE AT MORESBY' – A WWII RAAF PHOTOGRAPHER'S ACCOUNT



'A Mouse at Moresby' by Irvine and Tony Green gives a firsthand account of World War II in New Guinea and beyond through the eyes of RAAF photographer.

Irvine Green's collection of diaries, letters offer a firsthand view of World War II in New Guinea from 1941–1943 and rare images of the hardships of Australian servicemen facing Japan's advance, capturing moments of courage, sacrifice, and endurance.

As an RAAF photographer, literally in the trenches, he captures the critical time when Port Moresby stood between the invading Japanese and the Australian mainland.

Irvine Green travelled on and photographed clandestine missions to drop coast watchers near enemy positions along the north coast of New Guinea as well as missions to recover crashed Japanese aircraft for intelligence assessment back at Eagle Farm in Brisbane Australia. Compiled by his son, Dr Tony Green, this book honours Irvine's remarkable archive.

'A Mouse at Moresby' ISBN: 9781923300941 is available from Big Sky Publishing. It will be available at bookstores, libraries, and online at Amazon and Booktopia.



## BURSARY AND ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS 2026

# APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

[Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

Administered by the Vietnam Veterans Branch of AFA Victoria, the Educational Bursary (and Encouragement Awards) represent another facet of the assistance both Associations are delivering to former and serving RAAF members and their families.

# VETERANS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION LEGISLATION REFORM

In preparation for the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) becoming the single ongoing Act covering veterans' compensation and rehabilitation from 1 July 2026, the Department of Veterans Affairs has announced a suite of 14 legislation reform information videos now available on the [Advocacy website](#).

The topics are:

- The Single Review Pathway
- Overview of the single ongoing Act
- GARP M enhancements
- Compensation Offsetting and Third Party Recoveries
- Standardisation of Transport Compensation Rates
- Introduction of Additional Disablement Amount and comparison with EDA
- SRDP under MRCA vs TPI under VEA

- Rehabilitation, Household Services and Attendant Care
- Compensation following death
- Family and dependant related benefits
- Liability
- Expanded presumptive liability
- Transfer from DRCA to MRCA incapacity
- Commonwealth Superannuation

These presentations constitute the first stage of advocate training and will be supported by structured training early next year.



# SUNDERLANDERS' LEGACY HONOURED AT DUDLEY MARROWS TROPHY ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner, now jointly hosted by 10 Squadron in South Australia rather than Sydney, recognises outstanding service while paying tribute to the ageing veterans of Coastal Command's 10 and 461 Squadrons who flew the Short Sunderland flying boats during World War II.



*The late Dudley Marrows DSO DFC with his Legion de Honor medal - France's highest decoration.*

**Renamed the Dudley Marrows Trophy in 2019 in honour of the late Flight Lieutenant Dudley Marrows DSO DFC, a decorated 461 Squadron pilot, the award recognises Dudley Marrows' values of Courage, Integrity, Compassion and Leadership.**



*The annual Dudley Marrows Trophy Dinner recognises outstanding service while paying tribute to our Sunderlander veterans. (image courtesy Air Force Association)*

A Distinguished Flying Cross and Distinguished Service Order recipient, Mr Marrows was also presented with the French Chevalier (Knight) of the Legion of Honour- France's highest decoration - in 2015 for his role in liberating the country during the war.

This year's recipient was Flight Sergeant Anthony French of

Continued on page 20

10 Squadron, recognised for his exemplary leadership and dedication to maritime patrol operations.

2025 marked the 56th year of the annual event and once again brought together descendants of the original Sunderlanders.

Among those present were Marilyn Marrows Voullaire (daughter of Dudley Marrows), John MacKellar and Pamela Urquhart (son and daughter of Wireless Air Gunner Ron MacKellar, 461 Squadron), Tim Jensen (son of WAG Peter Jensen, 461 Squadron), Rick Hattam (son of WAG

Rick Hattam, 461 Squadron), and Peter Dowling (son of WAG Ken Dowling, 10 Squadron, and nephew of pilot Bill Dowling, 461 Squadron). Also attending was Dennis Smith, nephew of 10 Squadron veteran Uncle Percy.

You can read more about Dudley Marrows on the AFA Victoria website: <https://afavic.org.au/news/34332/vale-dudley-marrows-dso-dfc-legion-de-honor>

And also on the ANZAC Portal: <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/stories/oral-histories/dudley-marrows-story>



## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### BALLARAT BRANCH

We have nearly reached the end of another successful year, with our Christmas lunch just around the corner.

During the year we participated in two very successful functions in the May Heritage Weekend at the Airport and the Aviators Ball marking the Battle for Australia at the end of August.

Our membership has seen growth in 2025, and we have over 40 members,

more than half regularly attending our lunches.

We have accumulated sufficient funds from our monthly raffle to fund replacement audiovisual equipment for Hut 48, being a larger television monitor. As almost all lunches feature an audiovisual presentation, this larger monitor will allow easier viewing for several members. The current AV equipment was purchased 5 years ago using a grant acquired through Catherine

King's office.

We know that those who attend the monthly lunches look forward very much to the social outing and opportunity to mix and enjoy. The support of Victoria AFA in holding these lunches is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to a successful program of lunches and events in 2026 and hope you all enjoy the Christmas/New Year period with your families and loved ones.

**Peter Dowling**

*President*

You can read the latest Ballarat Branch Newsletter [here](#), or visit the Ballarat Branch page on our website: <https://afavic.org.au/>

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BALLARAT BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

### BENDIGO BRANCH

This quarter has been a very quiet period for the Bendigo Branch, although there have been several

notable events that were observed and appropriately commemorated. Although some of the event were not

strictly RAAF related they are certainly worthy of mention.

We cannot seem to fathom

that it's almost the end of the year, with Christmas almost upon us! The

Bendigo Branch is awaiting  
Continued on page 21

the imminent arrival of Scootaville's bursting into town. We had the Mayor of Bendigo ready to hitch a ride into town on one of the scooters, but sadly she was toppled in the recent elections, and things have gone very quiet on the Mayoral front. We'll report the event in the next issue of Contact.

In August we observed the sinking of the RAN's heavy Cruiser HMAS Canberra. The Canberra was damaged in the darkness of the early hours of the morning of the 9th August 1942 off Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands) in a surprise attack by a powerful Japanese naval force commander by Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa

in an action that became known as the Battle of Savo Island. A Japanese force of seven cruisers and one destroyer sailed down New Georgia Sound, known as "the Slot" to attack the allied fleet. HMAS Canberra lost 84 men killed or died of wounds including Captain Frank Getting and had to be sunk next day by the USS Ellet and USS Selfridge when unable to sail with the fleet.

On the 15th August some of the members attended VP Day around various locations around Greater Bendigo, including the Kangaroo Flat's Solders Memorial, and the Bendigo and District RSL.

On September 30th we

farewelled our dear friend and long-time member Clem "Dingle" Bell. Dingle was a National Serviceman and served his time with No.21 Squadron Laverton. A sign of how Dingle was revered in the community was demonstrated by the very large attendance at his funeral. Goodbye old friend – It's said that Dingle's gone Fishing!

The Bendigo Branch members and I would like to wish all Air Force Association members at very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and safe new year.

**Reinhard Goschiniak**

*Branch Secretary*



*Vale long-time Bendigo Branch member, Clem "Dingle" Bell.*

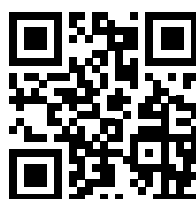
WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BENDIGO BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE



**For all Air Force Association Victoria news visit our website!**

[afavic.org.au](http://afavic.org.au)



The Geelong Branch continues to meet on the first Thursday of each month (except January) at 1100 hrs at the Geelong RSL, followed by a bistro lunch. In recent months we have welcomed new Branch members Simon Hudson (from VIC HQ), Rick Hattam (from Sunderland Branch), Tony Wheal, Phil Barnes (ex-RAF) and Geoff Goss. Mike Johnstone has moved interstate and therefore has left Geelong Branch

In late October it was with great sadness that the Geelong Branch President informed the membership of the passing of our comrade Keith Donaldson at the age of 99. Keith served in the RAAF from April 1944 until May 1946, training in Melbourne and qualifying as a Wireless Maintenance Mechanic. He was awarded the Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45, the War Medal 1939 - 45 and the

General Service Badge. He went on to have a long and prosperous business career in hotel and hospitality management both in Australia and overseas. Keith will be sorely missed at our monthly Branch meetings. Vale Keith Donaldson.

Among the many contributions to our meetings in recent months:

- Phil Royce regaled us with tales from a lengthy caravan tour over Winter enjoyed by Phil and his wife – through Western NSW, and West, Central, Gulf and Tropical QLD. Aviation Museums featured along the way (of course), including at Karumba, Caloundra and Longreach. So many WWII vintage Catalinas!
- Tony de Brabander spoke glowingly of touring Western Victoria around the Hamilton and Mt Eccles areas.
- Laurie Price is never without an entertaining (or sobering) anecdote from his time in Korea as a Gunnie.
- As part of a wider trip, Bob Brackin visited Svalbard Archipelago, north of Oslo, Norway. Apart from a polar bear count of one dozen, Bob remarked on a German Observation Post from WWII that was one of the last to surrender after peace was declared, due to its isolated location.
- Bob Schouten presented a slide show of his recent visits to the Thai-Burma Railway, WWI battlefields around Verdun and to 600 (City of London) SQN. That RAF SQN is twinned with 21 (City of Melbourne) SQN and is marking its Centenary. Bob (as a former CO of 21SQN) and Mike Dance (of 21SQN Association) attended

their commemorative Dining-In Night – see the full story and pictures elsewhere in this edition of CONTACT.

- Garry Jarvis contributed a diorama (on loan) to the display cabinets in the foyer of the Geelong RSL. It is of a RAAF UH-1B Iroquois helicopter on a landing pad in Vietnam. This contribution serves to redress (somewhat) the relative abundance of Army memorabilia on display at the RSL.
- Kevin Wilkinson (a former Gunnie) brought in to show us a diorama he had made himself of a RAAF Lincoln Bomber on the tarmac at Laverton, accompanied by a hair-raising anecdote about loading of bombs on the aircraft there for disposal: not for the faint of heart!

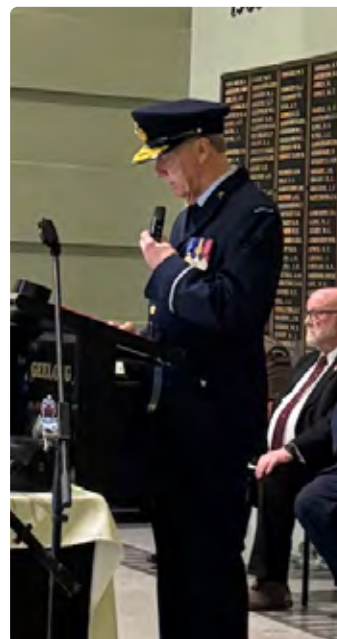
The Branch held its AGM as part of the November gathering. The current Branch Executive (John Price – President, Phil Royce – Secretary and Darrell Robinson – Treasurer) were re-elected unopposed. The Branch will hold its traditional Christmas Lunch at the RSL on 4 December.

### John Price OAM

*President, Geelong Branch*



AFA Victoria Board Member and Communications Director, John Delia, represented AFA Victoria at the Geelong West Remembrance Day service on 11 November.



On Remembrance Day 11 November, AFA Victoria Board member AIRCDRE Rowan Story (Retd) AM RFD, delivered the keynote address at the Geelong Peace Memorial, representing AFA Victoria.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE GEELONG BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

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

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

---

Mr David Miller B24 Liberator Branch.....	7/10/2025
Mr Basil Cocks ATC/AAFC Branch.....	16/08/2025
Mr Graham Thompson RAF Branch.....	10/10/2025
Mr Kevin Murray Ballarat Branch.....	09/09/2025
Mr Keith Donaldson Geelong Branch.....	10/2025
Mr George Greig 2 SQN/Headquarters Branch.....	19/11/2025



*Lest We Forget*

# Air Force Association

## OFFICE BEARERS

### AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – VICTORIA

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Max McGregor – Immediate Past President

Daryll Topp – Vice President, Administration

Andrew Blyth – Treasurer

John Delia – Director, Communications

James Allen – Board Member

Reinhard Goschiniak – Board Member

Chris Potter – Board Member

Sandy Riley – Board Member

Rowan Story – Board Member

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