

# Air Force Association

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## CONTACT

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 THE DARWIN DEFENDERS
- 3 ACES AND INNOVATORS – SIR LAWRENCE WACKETT
- 4 THE REMARKABLE STORY OF FLTLT LIEUTENANT RICHARD CAREW REYNELL.
- 5 TWO STUDENTS RECEIVE BURSARIES AND ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS
- 6 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 7 AFA NATIONAL UPDATE
- 8 RAAF VIETNAM VETERAN MAC COTTRELL AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SILVER STAR BY USA
- 9 DVA TV IS HERE!
- 10 WWII RAAF RADAR INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION – DEDICATION CEREMONY
- 12 'RECOGNISING THEIR SACRIFICE' – REPORT DELIVERED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS MINISTER
- 13 AFA REMEMBERS FALLEN AT LAST POST CEREMONY
- 15 AROUND THE BRANCHES
- 18 CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
- 19 VALE



*Wreaths were laid by representatives from Government, consulates, schools and the ex-service community.*

## THE DARWIN DEFENDERS

### THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOMBING OF DARWIN

**Saturday 19th February 2022 marked the 80th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin. With bright clear blue skies and the lifting of some COVID-19 restrictions, the Melbourne Branch of the Darwin Defenders 1942-45 was able to hold the service on the forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance.**

The service honours those who served and those who died during the attacks on Darwin during 1942-1945. It is an opportunity for veterans, their families, dignitaries and school students to participate in a respectful service that aims to remind us of the cost of preserving peace and democracy in Australia.

This part of our history is often overlooked, but the service at the Shrine provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the events that were tragically significant in Australia's History.

This was highlighted by the keynote given by Rear Admiral John Lord AM (Retired) 80 Years and Learning from History ... marking key events in our history, taking the time to stop and remember, and ensuring they are commemorated into the future, reminds us of our history, our development, and how we have become the country we are.

Continued on page 2

With many schools imposing excursion restrictions due to COVID-19, it was wonderful to have students from Ashwood High School, Christ Church Grammar School and Puckapunyal Primary School attend the service. Student Gemma Koch from Puckapunyal PS commented ... "We read out the Darwin Defenders Day Memorial poem written by Darwin Defenders President, Alan Day and laid a wreath with many others alongside the eternal flame. It was a very special day."

MC for the service, Mr Tim Gurry OAM acknowledged and thanked the inestimable number of indigenous people who served Australia during both WW1 and WW2 and continue to serve today. Many First Nations people joined military units, others became auxiliary workers to the Defence Force - becoming guides in the outback and providing material support. Some joined semi-uniformed units such as the coast watchers, Naval and Marine sections.

The music for the service was provided by the Australian Army Band Melbourne and the Catafalque party attended from HMAS Cerberus. The Ode was recited by Dr Robert Webster OAM, President of RSL Victoria and Reverend Si on Gough Hughes from the Wesley Church in Melbourne led the prayers.



Puckapunyal Primary School students attended the Commemoration.



The HMAS Cerberus Catafalque Party

Wreaths were laid by representatives from State Government, City of Melbourne, Navy, Air Force, Army, The Consular Corps including Consulate General of Japan, United States of America, Great Britain and New Zealand. The ex-service community was represented including the Air Force Association (Mr Max McGregor), Legacy, The Victorian RSL, American Ex-Servicemen's Association & Department of Veterans Affairs Victoria.

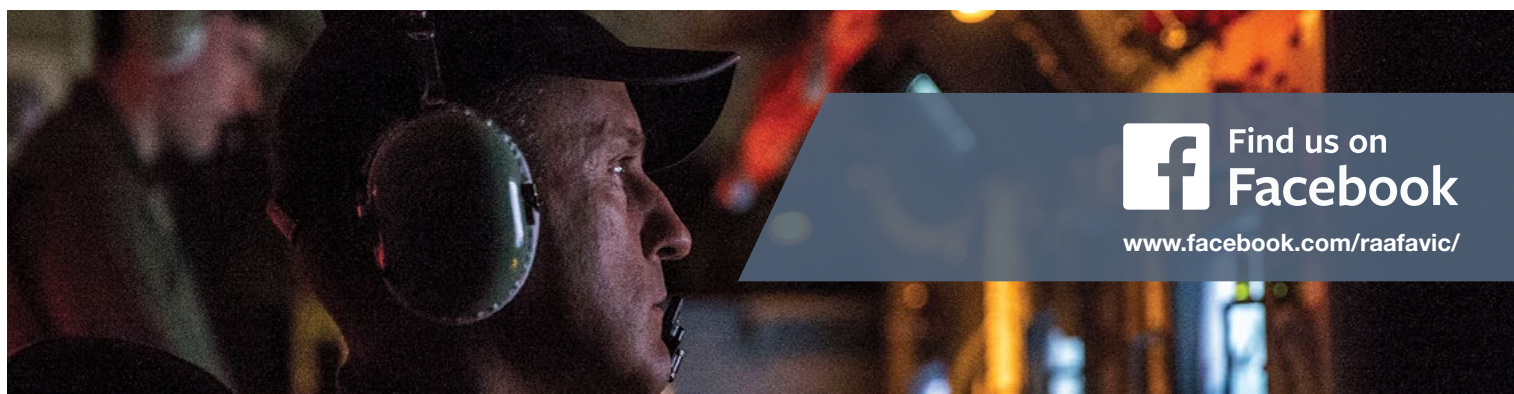
The concluding song by Gary Luck - "Blood on the Frangipani" was a beautiful musical tribute to his father and all those that had served during WWII.


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwjNmT5kj60>

The 80th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin commemoration was supported by the Victorian Government and the Victorian Veterans Council, and we are so grateful that they have continued to acknowledge the importance of this day in the commemoration calendar for Victorians.

**NOTE: A video - 'Firsthand: The Bombing of Darwin' - is also available on DVA TV, which also features an interview with Brian Winspear. Link: <https://youtu.be/TWeZkeiRxV4>.**

Story by Bernadette Lightfoot - Secretary, Darwin Defenders 1942-45



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Sir Lawrence Wackett



C flight No. 1 Squadron, Egypt (1917) in front of a Martinsyde aircraft: Lawrence Wackett is pictured far right with Captain Richard (Dickie) Williams (later Air Marshal Sir Richard) the OC, in the centre.

## In our continuing series on Aces & Innovators, AFA Victoria Communications Director Chris Hudnott looks at the life of “father of the Australian aircraft industry”, Sir Lawrence Wackett.

Sir Lawrence James Wackett KBE, DFC, AFC (2 January 1896 – 18 March 1982) is widely regarded as “father of the Australian aircraft industry”. He has been described as “one of the towering figures in the history of Australian aviation covering, as he did, virtually all aspects of activities: pilot, designer of airframes and engines, entrepreneur and manager”.

Wackett served with distinction as a pilot with the Australian Flying Corps in the first World War and was a close personal friend of Richard Williams. On his return to Australia, he was among 21 officers appointed to the RAAF when it was formed on 31 March 1921. He qualified as an aeronautical engineer and headed the RAAF Experimental Section that was established at Randwick, Sydney.

Although Wackett designed and built several experimental aircraft, none went into production and when the facility closed in 1930, Wackett resigned with the rank of wing commander.

When the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) was formed in 1936 with the aim of establishing an aircraft industry, then Chief of the Air Staff, Richard Williams nominated Wackett to set up and manage the operation at Fishermen’s Bend, Melbourne.

Throughout World War II, the production and maintenance capabilities provided by CAC were essential to the operations of the Australian and American air forces in the Pacific as well as the Empire Air Training Scheme.

In the early 1950s his influence was crucial in the selection of the American Sabre, over less suitable alternatives, to replace the RAAF’s Meteor fighter. The Australian variant (re-engined with a Roll Royce engine) and named the Avon Sabre, was built by CAC and provided excellent service for the RAAF.

Wackett was knighted for his services to aviation and was a winner of the Oswald Watt Gold Medal. He was also a keen angler and wrote two books on the subject. Lawrence Wackett was President of AFA -Victoria in 1943 and 1944 and his name is perpetuated at RMIT in the Sir Lawrence Wackett Defence and Aerospace Centre.

**The full story of Sir Lawrence Wackett’s life and career, researched and written by Chris Hudnott, is on the AFA Victoria website: <https://afavic.org.au/content/753/memorials>.**



For all national Air Force Association news visit our website!

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



# THE REMARKABLE STORY OF FLTLT LIEUTENANT RICHARD CAREW REYNELL

**In 2015 when AFA Victoria and Technical Branch member, Carl Dillon visited a memorial in Greenwich UK to an Aussie pilot killed in action in the Battle of Britain in 1940, he was immediately struck by the name of the pilot – “Richard Carew Reynell”.**

His curiosity piqued, Carl’s subsequent research into Richard (“Dickie”) Reynell RAF 32091 re-vealed quite a unique story of a remarkable individual and his family that shaped his early years, to become one of the very few of “The Few” that were both test pilots and fighter pilots.

Richard Carew Reynell was born on 12th August 1912 into the well-established vigneron family of Reynella Wines, at Reynella (present day Old Reynella), some 20 kms south of Adelaide,

Richard’s family-owned winery was established about 100 years earlier (hence the village Reynella so-named), Oddly enough, in June 1940, the Italian merchant ship Remo was captured in Freemantle, and re-named Reynella.

Richard’s father Carew was a LTCOL in the Australian Light Horse, KIA in Gallipoli. As manager of the winery before WW1 he developed the famous “Reynella Hospital Brandy”.

Richard was slated to take over the winery and in 1929 (at age 17) was sent over to Balliol College Oxford to read viticulture (where his father had studied successfully, two half blues boxing and tennis).

Richard joined the Oxford University Air Squadron (OUAS) (no record of any viticulture qualifications) and on 24th March 1931 he was gazetted as a Pilot Officer in the RAF Reserve of Officers, kicking off his professional flying career, which included aerobatic displays in Hawker Furies.



*FLTLT Richard (Dickie) Reynell, seated 2nd from the right of picture, with other 43SQN aircrew relaxing at the Officers Mess Tangmere on September 7th, only hours before his doomed aerial engagement.*



*Richard Reynell’s memorial at Point Hill Park overlooking Greenwich, UK*

Hawker Aircraft Co observed his aerobatic skills (Brussels Air Show 1933), and he joined them in 1937 (on secondment from the RAF) as a test pilot on the Hurricane.

On 6th September, while on wartime operations with 43 Squadron, Reynell was ordered back to Hawker on the 7th September to replace a pilot who had just been killed. Instead, Richard decided to complete the next day’s flying operations before returning to Hawker.

Late that day, he was shot down over Greenwich. Dickie Reynell did not bail out but was blown out of his Hurricane. He did not survive the fall.

In June 2013, at the ceremony and unveiling of the Point Hill Park Memorial by the Shoreham (Kent) Aircraft Museum curator Geoff Nutkins said: “Dickie (Richard) Reynell was not just another of the brave “Few” - he was a real person, undoubtedly brave, with an interesting past,

who died doing the job he loved and who perished helping to defend my city and furthermore, defending my local neighbour-hood.”

The full story of Dickie Reynell as by AFA Victoria and Technical Branch member, Carl Dillon is available on the AFA Victoria website. <https://afavic.org.au/content/753/memorials>

**Story by Carl Dillon, AFA Victoria, Technical Branch**



*Richard (Dickie) Reynell – a typical Aussie pilot.*

# TWO STUDENTS RECEIVE BURSARIES AND ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS

**The 2022 Annual Bursary and encouragement Awards were announced and presented at the combined Annual General Meetings of the Air Force Association Victoria Vietnam Veterans Branch and the RAAF Sub-Branch Vietnam Veterans Association (Vic) on Sunday 20 February 2022.**

The bursaries are sponsored by the Victorian Branch of the Air Force Association (AFA), with two separate Encouragement Awards, named in honour of past members of the RAAFVVA: John 'Snow' Coughlan CGM and former President, Lee Scully and his wife Ellen.

A Bursary and an Encouragement Award were presented to Charlotte Manikhot, the granddaughter of 2 SQN Branch

President, Walter Sherman. Charlotte will be undertaking a Bachelor of Psychological Science at the Australian Catholic University. Max McGregor, President AFA Victoria presented the Bursary and Gill Coughlan, 'Snow's' widow, presented the Encouragement Award honouring her late husband.

A Bursary and an Encouragement Award were also presented to Jessica Bialobrzkeski, the granddaughter of GPCAPT Carl Schiller OAM, CSM (Retd). Jessica will be continuing her Bachelor of Criminology & Psychology studies at RMIT University.

Max McGregor presented the Bursary on behalf of AFA Victoria and Chris Hudnott, President of the AFA Victoria Vietnam Veterans Branch, presented the 'Lee and Ellen Scully' Encouragement Award, on behalf of RAAFVVA.



*Gill Coughlan, 'Snow's' widow, presenting the Encouragement Award honouring her late husband, John 'Snow' Coughlan CGM to Charlotte Manikhot*



*Caption: Max McGregor, President AFA (Vic) presenting the Bursary to Charlotte Manikhot*



*Chris Hudnott, AFA Victoria Vietnam Veterans Branch President, presented the 'Lee and Ellen Scully' Encouragement Award to Jessica Bialobrzkeski on behalf of RAAFVVA.*



*Max McGregor, President AFA Victoria presents the Bursary to Jessica Bialobrzkeski*



**With the RAAF's 100th birthday celebrations ending on 30th March, it is interesting to reflect on the difficulties that COVID has impacted on the planning for scheduled events. Some events (with changes to the original plan) were able to be carried out on schedule, but some events had to be delayed.**

The final event is the Dedication of the Royal Australian Air Force Centenary Memorial which will occur at Point Cook on 30 March. At the AFA Victoria Board meeting in early February our information was that up to 1,000 people would be able to attend. The AFA-Vic Board was quietly confident that all AFA-Vic members and partners who wished to attend would be able to attend.

It came as a significant shock when three days after our February Board meeting, we were formally advised that the attendance numbers at this event were to be limited to 250 people. With AFA Victoria numbers capped at 30, it has been a very difficult task to select only thirty from our membership base. We have tried to recognise the elderly and those who have made a significant contribution to AFA Victoria, both currently and in the past.

Some may not know that AVM (ret) Peter Scully and former RAAFA Victoria President Bill Belton formed a company in an effort to have Point Cook continue as a RAAF base and not be sold. I am pleased to say that Bill will be attending, but due to the difficulties in travelling from Tasmania Peter is unable to attend. For their efforts in the long fight to keep Point Cook as an operating military base I

say, "thank you".

A representative from each Branch will receive an invitation so that Branch newsletters will be able to publish photos from the day. There is much secrecy as to what the Air Force Centenary Memorial will look like, so it will be something to look forward to. The RAAF planning group has advised that the ceremony will be live-streamed on the day, and access information will be circulated as soon as it is known.

Living with the new COVID normal is not easy. Following the March Board meeting one of the attendees advised late in the day of a positive COVID test. In accordance with our COVID plan, all those who attended in person were advised and the Rapid Antigen Test kits used with everyone else returning a negative result. A reminder that it is important for us all to take precautions and test when required. I am happy to report that our COVID infected member has now recovered fully.

ANZAC Day rapidly approaches and the theme this year will be Vietnam, being 60 years since Australia became involved, and 50 years since Australian participation ended.

The March will be led by three Vietnam Veterans, one from each service.

Geoff Rose of the RAAF Vietnam Veterans Branch of AFA Victoria has been selected as the RAAF veteran representative.

It is interesting to note that Geoff was involved with the humanitarian relief effort and the evacuation of Saigon in 1975. He was also responsible for having this service in 1975 accepted by the Government as "war-like", with all participants subsequently included on the nominal roll for Vietnam and awarded the Australian Active Service Medal (with Clasp Vietnam 1975), the Returned from Active Service Badge, and full coverage under the Veterans Entitlement Act 1986. A fitting recognition for Geoff's efforts.

There will be some changes to the ANZAC Day March this year, the most significant being that will start one hour earlier at 0800. If you can remember back to 2019, it will be very similar with only minor administrative issues to be complied with. The complete details of the order of the March are being worked through and will be available around 13th April, or earlier if possible. All Vietnam Veterans are strongly encouraged to mark this significant year.

**Max McGregor**

*AFA Victoria President*



**I have become increasingly aware that for a variety of reasons some Association members do not hear about what is occurring at the national level and the direction their Association is heading. Consequently, I have been invited by your President, Max McGregor to provide updates on Association-wide issues and activities for this and subsequent issues of your well-read Contact magazine.**

A good starting point is ensuring members appreciate the pivotal role of AFA Ltd (the national organisation) in advocating the needs of all veterans at the federal government level.

The Air Force Association, through its national body, has acquired a credible reputation with the Federal Government, Air Force and DVA for supporting veterans. One of the Association's biggest achievements in recent years was persuading the Government to recognise the exposure to contaminated materials during 'hot fire' sessions conducted by ADF Firefighters trained at the former RAAF Point Cook Fire School and provide health support and opportunity for compensation. The Government created the ADF Firefighter Scheme in last year's Federal Budget. It was a long, tedious battle but indicative of what the Association can achieve.

The Association is a member, along with other major ESOs, at DVA's ESO Roundtable that examines and advises on a myriad of veteran and family support issues. It is a highly respected and influential body at the forum. AFA Ltd also contributes to major inquiries into

veteran related issues, such as the current Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, the recent Productivity Commission in the Veteran Support System, and the Robert Cornall Report on Advocacy.

Over the last few years, the Association has strengthened its relationship with Air Force. Today, I countersigned with Chief of Air Force a Memorandum of Understanding between Air Force and the Air Force Association Ltd. The document describes the relationship between the two entities and the intention to provide mutual support, especially for veterans. It is a powerful document that will help foster our relationship.

Also this week, Air Force Association was invited by Air Force to participate in a five-year program of events that will ensure a continued focus on Air Force's history and heritage. The program will have two events each year, one major and one minor. This year, the minor theme event will be around Air Force technical training, linked to 80 years since the first technical training course commenced in 1942. The major theme event will reflect on Air Force operations in the Vietnam War, being

50 years since the last hostile operations in that war. I have assured Air Force of the Association's participation and support in promoting these special occasions.

In 2018, the Air Force Association Trophy was reactivated with new criteria. I will present the Award to this year's winner at the Air Marshals' Dinner to be held at the Officers' Mess, RAAF Point Cook on March 29th, 2022. The award presentation reflects the increasing bond between Air Force and the Association and is another tremendous opportunity to promote our organisation.

At times, I get the impression some members view AFA Ltd as an overarching entity that has a hierarchical relationship with State/Territory Divisions. This isn't the case. AFA Ltd sits alongside Divisions and acts as an interface with outside organisations. It is a point of contact for Association-wide matters and a division support and coordinating organisation. The AFA Ltd Board and company comprises 11 directors, seven of who are Division Presidents or their representatives. Consequently, it is through your President, Max McGregor that your voice

Continued on page 12

# RAAF VIETNAM VETERAN MAC COTTRELL AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SILVER STAR BY USA



*GPCAPT Macaulay (Mac) Cottrell (Retd) receives the Silver Star at the US Consulate.*

**The United States of America has presented two Australians with Silver Stars, one of its most prestigious combat awards, for heroism in Vietnam. One of these men was Group Captain Macaulay ‘Mac the FAC’ Cottrell (ret’d).**

The US Charge d’Affaires Michael Goldman presented the medals to GPCAPT Cottrell and the family of the late Warrant Officer Kevin Wheatley in a closed-door ceremony in Canberra on 14 December, also attended by Governor-General David Hurley.

Mr Goldman said the medal highlighted the strong democratic values at the heart of the US-Australia alliance.

“The service and sacrifice of our Australian counterparts is not lost on us, nor is the camaraderie and mateship we have long found in you”, he said.

“The US-Australia Alliance is an anchor for peace and stability in the region (and) it will continue to deliver ... because of men and women like Group Captain Cottrell and Warrant Officer Wheatley.”

About 23,000 Silver Stars have been awarded by the US, but only six have been given to Australian Defence Force members.

Group Captain Macaulay Cottrell was born and educated

## THE CITATION:

“The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress

July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting

the Silver Star (Air Force Award) to Flying Officer Macaulay Cottrell, Royal

Australian Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as Forward Air Controller directing fighter aircraft near Lai Khe, Republic of Vietnam on 10 June 1968.

On that date, Flying Officer Cottrell disregarded an environment of intense hostile ground fire and adverse weather conditions to successfully pinpoint the unfriendly positions for combat support missions. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Flying Officer Cottrell has reflected great credit upon himself and the Royal Australian Air Force.”

in Launceston, Tasmania. After a ten-month period in the Department of Civil Aviation at Launceston Airport, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force in October 1963 to undergo No. 52 Pilots Course at No. 1 Basic Flying Training School, RAAF Base Point Cook.

On graduation from No. 1 Applied Flying Training School, RAAF Base Pearce in March 1965, he was posted to RAAF Base Williamtown for conversion to Sabre fighter aircraft at No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit.

For the next six years he flew Sabres in No's 76, 3, 79 and 77 Squadrons and Mirages in No's 76 and 75 Squadrons, operating from RAAF Bases at Williamtown, Darwin and Butterworth and the Royal Thai Air Force Base Ubon in Thailand.

During the period 9 April to 24 October 1968, Group Captain Cottrell was assigned to the United States 7th Air Force in the Republic of South Vietnam as a Forward Air Controller serving in III Corps with the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron.

He was the recipient of an immediate award of the Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition of his gallantry and professional skill in operations.

Air Force Association President, Carl Schiller said, "The Air Force Association congratulates GPCAPT Mac Cottrell DFC (retd) on receiving the Silver Star. This is a long-

awaited and well-deserved honour that truly reflects the gallantry shown by Mac during his time in Vietnam."

Mac Cottrell was President of AFA Victoria from 1992-93.



*In Vietnam, 1968.*

(Images courtesy AAP, Australian Department of Defence, ABC News)

## DVA TV IS HERE!

**The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) has launched its newest communication channel to provide updated information, support and recognition to the Defence and veteran community.**

DVA TV will publish a wide variety of video content to a YouTube Channel dedicated to veterans and their families, about DVA's services and the support that is available to them.

Content on DVA TV will range from guides to accessing support, such as how to use MyService, to capturing and sharing commemorative services, showcasing individual stories of service and posting important announcements from the department.

DVA TV will provide overviews and insights into the services available to the veteran community, including support for families, mental health programs, financial

assistance and claims support, transition stories and messages of hope such as the positive impact programs such as the Psychiatric Assistance Dogs Program is having on veterans' lives.

DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson AM CSC said "We hope DVA TV will have a positive impact and help to empower veterans and their families to be the best they can be."

**Don't forget to subscribe to the channel to be notified of new content!**

Subscribe here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7WQ9eFKHzf5lCMUm0RpUyQ>

# WWII RAAF RADAR INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION – DEDICATION CEREMONY

**After three postponed attempts due to the COVID pandemic, the Dedication Ceremony for the WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition at 13RS Cape Otway was successfully celebrated on 19 February 2022.**

The WWII 13RS Doover building now houses the only existing Interpretive Exhibition of WWII RAAF Radar in in the remote and isolated Cape Otway Lightstation precinct.

Under clear blue skies, the long-awaited Dedication Ceremony took place in excellent weather conditions, with around 30 participants witnessing the significant celebration of what has been the 'secret story' of WWII RAAF Radar and those who served.

The small but dedicated audience comprised three WWII veterans (Radar Operators George Runting – who served at 13RS – and Terry McMahon, and Radar Mechanic, David Westwood) and their family members; RAAF Radar



WWII veteran and Radar Operator, George Runting, who served with 13RS for 6 months., pays tribute to the Exhibition.



WWII veteran and Radar Operator, Terry McMahon delivers his tribute to the WWII veterans of RAAF Radar via the Exhibition.

Branch Members; as well as members of AFA Victoria's Ballarat Branch, led by Branch President, Noel Hutchins.

RAAF Radar Branch President, Chris Harnath, hosted the Dedication Ceremony, with contributions from our three Vet RAAF Radar Branch members; Alex Parry, Cape Otway Lightstation Operations Coordinator and Branch Secretary, Kathy Cooney.

AFA Ballarat Branch President, Noel Hutchins, representing AFA National President, Carl Schiller, delivered the following words of dedication:

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*"This RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition is dedicated to*

*Those who died during World War II while serving in RAAF Radar and*

*Those who have subsequently died because of their service in Radar*

*and*

*Those members of both RAAF and WAAFA who served on Radar establishments."*

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**(Adapted from: Radar Yarns Aug / Sept 91,  
More Radar Yarns Nov 92**

**– Ed Simmonds and Norm Smith)**

At the close of proceedings, WWII veteran and Radar Operator Terry McMahon, together with Eric Penfold,



Ballarat President, Noel Hutchins delivered the Exhibition's Dedication as RAAF Radar Branch President, Chris Harnath looks on.

# WWII RAAF RADAR INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION – DEDICATION CEREMONY

performed 'Song of the RDF Boys' which was composed by A.C.1. Les Phillips in May 1943 on R.D.F Course 72 at Richmond RAAF Base.

This Interpretive Exhibition preserves the WWII story of RAAF Radar in the context of its isolation. It is hoped that a video of the Dedication Ceremony will be available online in due course.

AFA members and their families have access to the Cape Otway precinct including the RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition at a 50% entrance fee discount. We encourage you to visit this special, if little understood, story now contained in this Exhibition at 13RS Cape Otway.

For further information: Chris Harnath on 0425 770 011.

Story by Chris Harnath, President RAAF Radar Branch



Sandy Caust, daughter of WWII veteran WAAAF Radar Operator, Beryl Mainon, whose audio recollections are included in the Exhibition.



RAAF Radar Branch President, Chris Harnath, hosted the WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition Dedication Ceremony.



WWII veteran and Radar Mechanic, David Westwood pays tribute to those who served in WWII RAAF Radar.



Presentation to Alex Parry, Cape Otway Lightstation Co-Ordinator, and Manager of the Interpretive Exhibition Project for over 6 years by RAAF Radar Branch Secretary, Kathy Cooney.



RAAF Radar Exhibition-12RS Cape Otway (Current status)



Inside - Radar Operator with radar receiving equipment and original Radar Arial or Array Turning Gear.



Inside - Radar Mechanic with radar W/T equipment

# 'RECOGNISING THEIR SACRIFICE' – REPORT DELIVERED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS MINISTER



**In January 2021 former Veterans' Affairs Minister, the Hon Darren Chester MP, directed the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal to inquire into and report on recognition for members and families of members of the Australian Defence Force who are injured, wounded or killed in or as a result of service.**

The Tribunal has delivered its report to the current Minister, the Hon Andrew Gee MP, concluding that:

- None of the existing forms of recognition for death, wounding or injury in service provide an adequate personalised expression of the gratitude of the nation for the sacrifice that a veteran has made through their service, or that their family has endured as a result.
- Australia lacks but should have, an emblematic recognition of that sacrifice in a form that can be publicly worn in commemoration and with pride.

The Tribunal also submitted its proposal for a principled scheme for providing that recognition for service-related death and serious wounding, injury or disease under a set of guiding principles.

"We believe it would provide a tangible and readily

recognisable expression of national gratitude for the sacrifice of ADF members killed or suffering a serious wound, injury or disease in or as a result of their service and, quite separately, that of their families, and would do so in a way that allows existing defence honours and awards to better "tell the story" of that service." – excerpt from the Letter of Transmission accompanying the Report.

The Air Force Association was among a number of Ex-Service Organisations (ESO's) invited to provide a submission to the Inquiry. AFA President, Carl Schiller also provided evidence at the Tribunal Hearing.

In its written submission, "the Air Force Association supported medallic recognition of injuries incurred as a result of service in warlike and prescribed non-warlike operations, with recognition to begin from the outset of Australia's commitment to the Vietnam War."

In its written and oral submission, the Association stated that "there was a case for recognition of service in higher risk operations, but that injury incurred in peacetime activities such as playing ADF sponsored sport, or in aircraft accidents during training, could be considered to be workplace accidents, no different to those incurred in a civilian workplace. The Association urged that any new form of recognition be subject to carefully prescribed eligibility, linked to severity, in order to avoid devaluing such recognition."

The full Report by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal can be found on our AFA national website: <https://raafa.org.au/veterans/>

## *AFA National Update (cont.)*

can be heard at the National Board. This year, the Board will examine the national structure to ensure it remains effective to take the Association into its next century.

During the last 12 months, the National Board endorsed the creation of an AFA Foundation for the purpose of supporting veterans and families. The intention is to distribute funds from fundraising activities to Divisions with veteran well-being projects. This year, the major veteran support project is the AFA National Veteran and Family Homeless Recovery Program. Identifying financial contributors has commenced. AFA WA, AFA VIC, AFA NSW and AFA QLD have opted-in on the program. It will be a long haul but a worthy commitment that will hopefully establish an enduring Association footprint in Australia.

**Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM**

*National President and Chair of the AFA Ltd Board of Directors*

## AFA REMEMBERS FALLEN AT LAST POST CEREMONY

**The life and service of Flying Officer Edward Rowell was commemorated when Air Force Association (AFA) National Vice President Peter McDermott AM CSC attended the Last Post Ceremony on 30 January.**

Stories of bravery, service and sacrifice are told when the Last Post Ceremony is held at the end of each day at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra.

Each evening, the AWM shares the story of an individual on the Roll of Honour which commemorates members of the Australian armed forces who died while serving. Each of the 364 Last Post stories told each year is researched by AWM historians.

At the ceremony last week, Peter had the opportunity to meet Elizabeth Rowell, the niece of Flying Officer Rowell, and hear her family's story of sorrow at their loss.

Flying Officer Rowell was lost over the North Sea on return from a bombing mission over Germany in 1944. He is listed on the Runnymede memorial which commemorates more than 20,000 airmen and women who lost their lives during World War Two in operations from bases in the United Kingdom, and north and western Europe, who have no known grave.

The ceremony heard that Edward, or Teddy, was born in Sydney in November 1921 and he attended high school in Lismore, Newcastle, and North Sydney before going on to work at the Bank of New South Wales in Cootamundra.

He was part of the Empire Air Training Scheme where he was one of 27,500 RAAF pilots, navigators, wireless operator/gunners, and engineers to join RAAF squadrons. He did his elementary flight training in Australia then later in Ontario and in 1944 he joined a training unit at RAF Silverstone where he trained as a night bomber pilot.

In September 1944 he was posted to Number 467 Squadron, an Australian squadron under the command



AFA National Vice President Peter McDermott with Elizabeth Rowell, the niece of Flying Officer Rowell

of the RAF which consisted of a mix of personnel from various Commonwealth nations.

On 23 October 1944, he was a pilot of a Lancaster four-engine heavy bomber tasked to carry out a bombing attack on enemy targets in south-west Netherlands.

Historians say that in the face of bad weather, and reinforced anti-aircraft defences, the RAAF squadrons involved lost three aircraft, had five more badly damaged and thought that many of their bombs had overshot the target.

Rowell's aircraft never returned and Teddy, aged 22, was presumed to have died that day.

## PLAY A PART IN THE LAST POST CEREMONY

**Throughout 2021, Air Force Association members have supported AWM Last Post Ceremonies that commemorated the life, service and sacrifice of an AFC/RAAF member or ADF aviator by laying a wreath on behalf of the Air Force Association.**

Thanks to the support of a few members, we have ensured that every relevant Last Post Ceremony was attended by the Air Force Association. This was a first since the commencement of the Last Post Ceremony on 17 April 2013.

AFA Director of Communica-

tions Deanna Nott said every Last Post Ceremony was exceptionally special and moving for the descendants, families and AWM visitors who are able to lay wreaths and pay tribute to those on the Roll of Honour.

"Most importantly, the Ceremony is also the sharing of

a unique and personal story, a reminder to us that every individual who served was part of a family, a community and had their own hopes and dreams," she said

You can register for a ticket via the Australian War Memorial's website <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit>.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### AFA VICTORIA BRANCH CONTACTS

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21SQN	Mike Dance	0438764629
ATC/AAFC	Hugh Tank	03 98773424
B24 Liberator	Tony Muller	03 97414635
Ballarat	Noel Hutchins	0439 929 322
Bendigo	Glenis Gordon	03 54369293
Catalina	Ronald Kirk	03 98193527
Technical	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

### CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

#### WINTER 2022

Contributions by 20 May 2022

Publication: 3 June 2022

#### SPRING 2022

Contributions by 19 August 2022

Publication: 2 September 2022

#### SUMMER 2022

Contributions by 14 November 2022

Publication: 10 December 2022

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



Wings is the official publication of the Air Force Association



## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### NO 2 SQN BRANCH

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON – SAT 23 APRIL 2022.**

Subject to any COVID-19 restrictions, the No 2 Squadron Branch 2022 Annual General Meeting and Fellowship Luncheon is scheduled to be held at the Mail Exchange Hotel on Saturday, 23 April 2022. The Mail Exchange Hotel is located at 688 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The Annual General Meeting will commence at 1230 hrs with the luncheon following at approximately 1315 hrs. Members and guests should arrive at 1200 hrs for pre-meeting refreshments. The Fellowship Luncheon is funded by the Air Force Association Victoria to promote the welfare of its No 2 Squadron Branch members.

To assist with catering arrangements, please email

[jaellio@gmail.com](mailto:jaellio@gmail.com) if you wish to attend.

#### **MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHS**

John Elliott is currently working on preserving the Squadron's photograph history – personal photographs taken by individual airmen during their service with the Squadron. It does not matter whether it was on active service or not. It is our history; if we do not

record it now, we might lose it forever. The link for the No 2 Squadron Branch page on the Air Force Association Victoria website is: <https://afavic.org.au/content/762/branch-2-squadron>

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE NO2 SQN BRANCH?  
VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

### ATC/AAFC

#### **Greetings to everyone as we look forward to the possibility of a gradual return to some normal activities with the easing of some Covid restrictions.**

We welcome new member Bruce Thompson into our Branch. Bruce's service included RAAF/CAF and AirTC. We look forward to meeting Bruce

personally, perhaps at one of our luncheons in the near future.

On Saturday the 15 January it was my pleasure to be an invited guest at the No. 2 Flight (402 SQN) 80th Anniversary Reunion which was held at the Watsonia RSL.

The highly informal event, was organised by FLTLT (AAFC) Jennie Brady and provided a most enjoyable

evening with the relating of many amusing anecdotes from previous members of years gone by.

The evening also attested to the long-lasting friendships of the squadron members with quite a number from days of yore still being active with the AAFC.

This is admirable in itself and just goes to show the dedication to their service. My sincere thanks to Jennie

and the members and Staff of the squadron for having me there to celebrate with them and for making me feel so welcome.

On Saturday the 22 January, I was invited to attend the AAFC Promotion Course Parade at Laverton and I thank our branch member SQNLDR (AAFC) Samantha O'Sullivan for the invitation to attend.

Continued on page 16

The parade was, as we have come to expect, outstanding and as a special treat this year it featured the Air Force Band. Congratulations to all involved.

The advice received from the Box Hill RSL that we would be able to have our first Friday of the month

luncheon on the 4th of February was welcome news, as it had been 6 months since our branch's last gathering.

The membership was duly advised and it was good to be able to see some familiar faces again over lunch and do some catching up, even though the number

of attendees was well below what we would have expected after such an extended period.

Take care, stay well and hope to see you soon.

Best wishes to all,

**Laurie Bell**

*President*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ATC/AAFC BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

## BENDIGO BRANCH

### Welcome to 2022 - the year hopefully of health & togetherness.

VALE: Mr. John Edward Fay-Widdison (known to all as Jack Fay). Jack was a Life Member of the Air Force Association, having been an inaugural member of the Bendigo Branch. He passed away on 28th January 2022 aged 98. He was a true gentleman and will be missed by us all.

Our AGM was held on 3rd February with some changes to the executive. Due to health issues at home, Roy Gaffee has decided not to continue as President. Accordingly, Peter Simmons, PSM JP, is our new President with Richard Henson as Senior Vice & John McCosker as Vice President. I have the dubious honour to still be Secretary/Treasurer. Our delegates are John McCosker & Reinhard Goschiniak. I have also agreed to take on the role

of Welfare Officer, having received my National Police Check.

Members visited the Bendigo Military Museum having received permission from Bendigo District RSL (BDRSL) to have a private visit as the museum only opens on Saturdays to the general public. The guides were exceptionally informative answering most questions. There was a special area set aside for RAAF personnel who served with RAF in Coastal Command & Bomber Command. I found this extremely interesting as one of our members served in Coastal Command.

Our members attended the Darwin Defenders Memorial Service held at the BDRSL on Saturday 19th February, which commenced at 0930 hours with the sounding of an air raid siren. This sound is really eerie. Our member, Bill Hosking, a Darwin Defender, sadly was not able to be in Darwin for

the 80th celebrations but had been there for the 75th celebrations.

Some of us will be attending the Sandakan Memorial Service on 6th March. Unfortunately, this service will be held at BDRSL's Memorial Gardens owing to City of Greater Bendigo's Covid restrictions which makes the costs far too great. The Memorial statue - which we believe is one of only three in Australia - is where the service was held prior to COVID. Hopefully next year!

We have a number of sickies in our Branch at this time, including Judy Gaffee, Clem (Dingle) Bell & Jill Steen. We wish them & all those others a very speedy recovery.

That's all for now except to wish everyone a very healthy & safe 2022. May this year be much better than previous ones.

**Glenis Gordon**

*Secretary*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BENDIGO BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

### **DEDICATION CEREMONY – WWII RAAF RADAR INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION - 13RS CAPE OTWAY**

Finally, after three postponed attempts since June 2020 due to COVID pandemic restrictions, the Dedication Ceremony for the WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition at 13RS Cape Otway was successfully celebrated on 19 February 2022 in beautiful weather conditions.

The Ceremony was hosted by me, in my role as Branch President, with contributions from our three Vet RAAF Radar Members and Ballarat Branch President Noel Hutchins, who stood in for AFA National President Carl Schiller.

You can read the full story of the Dedication Ceremony together with some excellent photographs on pages 10 - 11 of this edition of Contact.

### **ANZAC REUNION**

The RAAF Radar Branch/

Vic RAAF Radar Association Anzac Reunion will be held at the Bentleigh RSL on 21 April 2022, commencing with lunch at own cost at 12 noon, followed by a meeting, including a presentation. Members, together with anyone having an interest in RAAF Radar, are most welcome. Please contact our Branch Secretary, Kathy Cooney regarding attendance at [kathcooney21@gmail.com](mailto:kathcooney21@gmail.com).

**Chris Harnath**

*President*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE RAAF RADAR BRANCH BRANCH?

VISIT THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

## VIETNAM VETERANS

### **The Branch held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday 20 February 2022 and unlike 2021, we were able to hold the meeting at the AFA Headquarters.**

Just prior to the formal meeting the Branch was privileged to present Educational Bursaries and Encouragement Awards to the granddaughters of two Air Force Association - Victoria members. The bursaries are donated by AFA Victoria and the

Encouragement Awards are funded by individual members of our Committee and I again would like to thank them for their generosity.

The Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia – Victorian Branch attended the meeting and highlighted some of the issues that the Association is handling this year, particularly the 50th anniversary of the withdrawal of Australian combat forces in December 1972. Planning is already underway to make

commemorative activities this year, particularly Vietnam Veterans Day (18 August 2022) the last big commemorative activity conducted by the VVAA Victorian Branch.

Our full Branch Report for the last twelve months, photographs of our Bursary awardees and many other features will be published in our Branch Newsletter which is available on the Vietnam Veterans Branch page of the AFA Victoria website. I encourage other Branch members to visit the site and see the good

work that our Newsletter publisher produces every three months.

**Chris Hudnott**

*Branch President*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE VIETNAM VETERANS' BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

## AFA VICTORIA'S NORMA MULLINS PRESENTED WITH CENTENARY CERTIFICATE

As part of its Centenary celebrations, Air Force awarded memorial certificates to those veterans who celebrated their 100th birthday during the centenary year.

After a few delays thanks to COVID, AFA Victoria President, Max McGregor, was finally on hand to present long time AFA Victoria member, Mrs Norma Mullins – who turned 100 in July 2021 - with her memorial certificate.



Mrs Norma Mullins with her Centenary memorial certificate



AFA Victoria President Max McGregor presents Mrs Norma Mullins with her memorial certificate.

## DARWIN DEFENDER REACHES ANOTHER MILESTONE

Mr Alan Day - a No 2 Squadron Branch member and current President of the Darwin Defenders Association - celebrated his 100th birthday in February this year.

Serving in the RAAF from 1942 to 1946, as a young medical orderly, Alan was drafted up to Darwin where he experienced and survived the persistent air raids by a Japanese air force at the peak of its power.

Since then, Alan has worked tirelessly to create greater awareness of the brave men and women who protected our northern most city, most recently as President of the Darwin Defenders Association.

Alan has recalled one of his most important memorial services involved him laying a wreath from the HMAS Adelaide, which was anchored over the sea water above the USA Warship 'Peary'. The sad grave of over 20 brave seamen who kept firing their guns at the Japanese planes as their ship went down.



Media interview with Mr Alan Day on the 75th anniversary of the Darwin bombing.



: Mr Alan Day on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

In February 2017 Alan also represented the Darwin Defenders at the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin and was instrumental in creating a Darwin Defenders Plaque in the Memorial Garden at HMAS Cerberus Training Base.

## VALE

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

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

Jack Fay (-Widdison), Life Member Bendigo Branch .....	28/01/2022
Brian Graf AO, Technical Branch.....	9/02/2022
Moira Fulton WAAAF Branch.....	08/02/2022
Keith Meggs, Fighter Squadrons Branch.....	13/03/2022

*Lest We Forget*

# Air Force Association

## OFFICE BEARERS

### AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – VICTORIA

#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Max McGregor – President

Carl Schiller OAM CSM – Immediate Past President

John Clarkson CSC – Vice President, JBSG Representative.

Daryll Topp – Vice President, Administration

Peter Colliver OAM – Treasurer; Chairman, Welfare Patriotic Fund

Chris Hudnott – Director, Communications

Dianne Hoopert – Director, Welfare

Lee Stanway – Director, Member Services

James Allen – Board Member

Rowan Story – Board Member

Peter Finkelstein – Honorary Solicitor

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