

# Air Force Association

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

VOLUME 80 ISSUE 3 // AUTUMN 2025

## CONTACT

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Crowds gather at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne to celebrate Victory in the Pacific, August 1945 (source: AWM).

### EIGHT DECADES ON FROM WWII

*“Fellow citizens, the war is over,”*

Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley announced via a radio broadcast to the nation at 9.30am on 15 August 1945. The Second World War was over.

*“Let us remember those whose lives were given that we may enjoy this glorious moment and may look forward to a peace which they have won for us.”*

For Australians, this meant the end of World War 2, as Germany had surrendered to the Allies three months earlier. The day was gazetted as VP Day, or Victory in the Pacific Day, and spontaneous celebrations took place across Australia.

Eight decades on, the impact and significance of this conflict is still felt in Australia and around the world.

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Miss Lois Anne Martin made this vest in anticipation of the Allied Victory, and with her face painted with the letters 'V.P.' in lipstick, wore the vest to VP Day celebrations in Melbourne on 15 August 1945 (source: AWM).



Members of the RAAF listen to radio broadcasts announcing the surrender of Japan – Labuan, North Borneo, 15 August 1945 (source: AWM).

## HUMAN IMPACT

The Second World War was the deadliest military conflict in history, resulting in the deaths of over 60 million people.

From a nation of around 7 million, almost one million Australians served in our armed forces and merchant navy in the Second World War. Some 40,000 didn't return home and tens of thousands more were wounded or became prisoners of war.

## AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Rationing, air raid precautions, and the mobilisation of women into the workforce changed how Australians lived and worked. Women took on roles in factories, farms, and the armed services. The war also accelerated urbanisation and the development of industries, laying the groundwork for post-war economic growth. Post-war migration also contributed to the multicultural country we live in today.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Second World War reshaped global power structures and international alliances. The devastation led to the formation of the United Nations and a renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, setting the stage for the Cold War. For Australia, the war marked a pivot from traditional ties with Britain toward deeper engagement with the United States and the Asia-Pacific region.

**(Story and fact sources Australian War Memorial)**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



John Clarkson – President, AFA Victoria.

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

Over the past few months there have been a number of commemorations of significance which recognise Australia's military history and honour the service and sacrifice of veterans for over a century. Some are covered in this edition.

There was a commemoration in Canberra on 15th August to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific and the end of WWII. This was a special occasion because twelve WWII veterans were present at the Australian War Memorial, including Victorian Radar Branch member and centenarian David Westwood. David shares his experience of the day later in this edition.

The year also marked the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain which saw a fierce battle in the skies over Britain, being the first military campaign fought entirely by air forces. And it is the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. In this respect, we were very fortunate to have a presentation by Jack Fanderlinden at our premises in Camberwell Rd on 21st July. Jack flew the last C-130 evacuation flight out of Saigon on 25th April 1975 before the war ended on 30th April. There are also articles on the Malayan Emergency,

Continued on page 3

the Battle for Australia and Australia's role in peacekeeping since 1947.

Looking ahead, we have two significant events on our calendar. The first is the traditional Pilgrimage to Point Cook on Tuesday 11th November. Like last year, we are planning with Air Force for this to be a jointly hosted event. The second is our annual Christmas get together and open day. Please pencil in Sunday 7th December for this. Further details on both events will be issued in due course.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank, particularly, our editor of Contact, Jacqui Rudd, for her continuing efforts in pulling together a high quality newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading the variety of articles.

Stay well.

John Clarkson

President AFA Victoria

## 50 YEARS SINCE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR



Geoff Rose (Vietnam Veterans Branch) with AIRCDRE Jack Fanderlinden at the AFA Victoria event on 21 July.

**On 21 July, AFA Victoria was fortunate to host Air Commodore (ret'd) and general manager of RAAF Base Williamtown's Fighterworld, Jack Fanderlinden who spoke about the events marking the end of the Vietnam War and the environment around the evacuation of Saigon – particularly on 25 April 1975.**

After nearly 13 years of Australian involvement in the decades-long Vietnam War, in which more than 60,000 Defence personnel had served, 523 were killed and about 2400 wounded, only three RAAF aircraft were in Vietnam on Anzac Day 1975, just days before the Fall of Saigon.

Australia's combat role had ended three years earlier, and the RAAF planes were assigned to United Nations evacuations, but AIRCDRE Fanderlinden, his crew and passengers were the last Australian Defence Force members to leave. Saigon fell five days later.

The RAAF played a significant role in humanitarian efforts during the final days of the Vietnam War in 1975, despite facing significant risks to personnel.

While the focus was on the evacuation of orphans, the operation also included flying in supplies and evacuating Vietnamese civilians south as the communist forces advanced towards Saigon.

In our [Autumn edition of Contact](#) we published a detailed account of Operation Baby Lift, based on Vietnam Veterans Branch member Geoff Rose's involvement in the operation as one of the 200 personnel deployed to Vietnam during final month of the war. You can also read a further detailed account on the [AFA Victoria website](#).



A Vietnamese Air Force Lockheed C-130A Hercules burns at Tan Son Nhut air base, Vietnam, after a North Vietnamese rocket attack on 29 April 1975. This attack forced the U.S. to cancel further evacuations by fixed-wing aircraft.

Below is an excerpt from the Vietnam Veterans Day 2025 address by Mr Bob Elworthy AM, President of the VVAA Victorian Branch (published here with thanks to Geoff Rose, Vietnam Veterans Branch Secretary).

*“This year is 50th anniversary of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War, Operation Babylift, conducted by the RAAF in South Vietnam in April 1975, as communist forces closed in on Saigon*

*Despite Governor General Sir Paul Hasluck declaring that Australia’s involvement ended on 11 January 1973, the humanitarian efforts of the RAAF in 1975 have been rightfully recognised. A special plaque commemorating Operation Babylift will be placed in the Remembrance Garden at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum Phillip Island.*

*While the focus was on the evacuation of orphans, the operation also included flying in supplies and evacuating Vietnamese civilians south as the communist forces advanced towards Saigon.*

*The situation was chaotic and in one incident, as*

*Vietnamese civilians swarmed an aircraft, shots fired by a panicked Vietnamese guard pierced the tail section.*

*Saigon Embassy staff and Embassy staffs from Cambodia and Laos were also evacuated, and a return flight to Saigon picked up four RAAF Embassy Security Guards who had accidentally been left behind.*

*With infants in cardboard boxes on the floor of the aircraft, and other children on litters, the last C130 taking off from Tan Son Nhut was the last sight of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.*

*At a recent reunion of the former orphans, RAAF and QANTAS crews in Canberra to mark the 50th anniversary, Air Commodore Ian Scott (Ret’d), a Navigator during Operation Babylift, said it was the most well-known RAAF operation of the Vietnam War.”*

## 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.



**The 14 September marked National Peacekeepers' Day, where we recognise the dedication and sacrifice over almost eight decades of our peacekeepers and peace-keeping operations.**

Some 65,000 Australians, including ADF members, civilians and police, have participated in peacekeeping operations across the globe since the first deployment in 1947 with a deployment of military observers in modern-day Indonesia.

Tragically, 17 Australians – 12 ADF personnel and 5 police – have died while serving over the course of these operations.

Australia continues to contribute to several peace missions across the world to this day - from clearing landmines, delivering humanitarian aid, restoring infrastructure, providing medical care, to enabling elections and disarming former combatants.

There are up to 20 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel deployed on Operation Aslan assisting the

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Australians fill key positions such as military liaison officers, and operations, aviation and logistics support roles.

In the Middle East, there are:

- Up to 30 ADF personnel deployed on Operation Mazurka contributing to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula monitoring the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.
- Up to 12 ADF personnel deployed on Operation Paladin supporting the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNSTO) monitor ceasefires and supporting peace agreements in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
- Up to 2 ADF personnel deployed on Operation Fortitude supporting the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

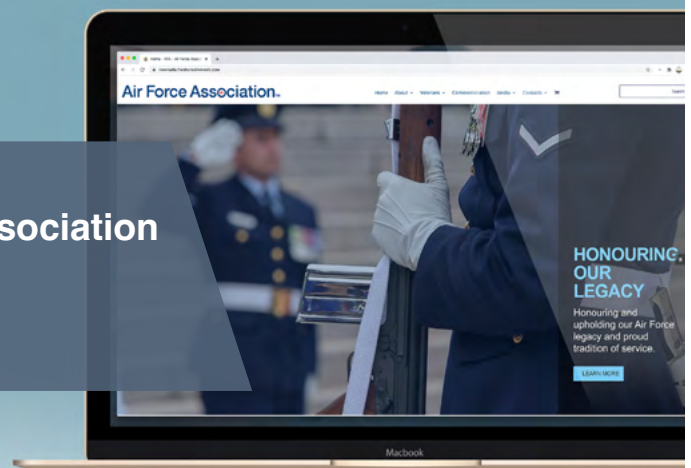


*The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra commemorates the significant contribution made 'in the service of peace' by more than 80,000 Australian peacekeepers – military, police and civilian – to more than 60 United Nations and other international peacekeeping missions since 1947.*



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

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



## NEW VETERAN FAMILY ADVOCATE COMMISSIONER



**Ms Annabelle Wilson has been appointed as Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner from 6 August 2025 for the next five years.**

The role of the Commissioner is to support veterans and their families, providing strategic policy advice to government and fostering cooperation between government agencies and the veteran community. Ms Wilson is also a member of the Repatriation Commission and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

Ms Wilson has held roles with Melbourne Legacy, the Institute of Veteran Advocacy as well as voluntary work across ESO's, including during the work of the Royal Commission. Ms Wilson maintains a strong personal connection to the RAAF as the widow of RAAF veteran Josh Chalmers.

Read more about Ms Chalmers' work [here](#).

Contact the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner:  
[VFA@dva.gov.au](mailto:VFA@dva.gov.au).

## B-24 LIBERATOR RESTORATION – HANGAR HAPPENINGS



*(L- R) Lyn Gorman President, B-24 Liberator Memorial Australia, Mervyn Schneider and Vern Roberts at the BBQ lunch at the WWII hangar at Werribee airfield.*

**The B-24 Liberator Restoration group held a very well attended barbeque lunch at their WWII hangar at Werribee airfield on 12 August to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the Liberator Restoration project and the 25th anniversary of the dedication service held at the hangar in the year 2000.**

Two of the group's WWII veterans, Merv Schneider (100) and Vern Roberts (100) were able to attend. Vern was present at the Japanese surrender on Morotai Island in September 1945 to Australian Forces.

Last month, Channel 7 interviewed Lyn Gorman (President, B-24 Liberator Memorial Australia), Vern Roberts and Merv Schneider at the Werribee hangar for a story about the



**Click on the image above to view the Ch7 interview at the Werribee hangar.**

restoration activities. [Watch here](#) or click on the Ch7 image above.

Work is officially underway with the relocation and restoration of Hangar 1 near the B-24 Liberator Museum in Werribee.

Melbourne Water is undertaking a project to dismantle the larger World War II hangar at the far end of the Werribee airfield (Hangar 1), relocate it adjacent to the B-24 restoration hangar (Hangar 2) and refurbish Hangar 1 to contemporary building standards.

It is likely that the refurbished hangar will be handed back to the B-24 Liberator restoration group in late 2026 or early 2027. Once this has occurred, we shall relocate the B-24 Liberator in Hangar 1, where it will be showcased with much more space. Work on other aircraft – currently the Airspeed Oxford and Avro Anson – will continue in Hangar 2.

# 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIAN SERVICE IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

The 75th anniversary of Australian service in the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) and Indonesian Confrontation (1962–1966) was marked with a National Commemorative Service in Canberra on 31 August, to acknowledge those who served and to remember the 61 Australians who lost their lives in these conflicts.



The Malayan Emergency Commemoration was held on the foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra on 31 August.



An RAAF Dakota aircraft dropping supplies by parachute over a police post in a clearing in the Malayan jungle. No 38 Squadron RAAF provided transport and support operations for British Commonwealth forces during the Malayan Emergency. The reliability and relatively slow speed of the Dakota meant that it was an ideal aircraft for these operations. During World War II, RAAF and United States Dakotas had carried out similar operations in support of Australian soldiers in New Guinea. (Image source: AWM FEA0114)



No. 1 Squadron RAAF flying crew leaving their Avro Lincoln bomber after a mission over Malaya, Singapore, c. 1955. Left to right: Pilot Officer Len Hilton, Pilot Officer Terry Meagher, Flight Sergeant Jim Glover, Sergeant Kim Hunt, Sergeant Bill Smyth, Sergeant Erik Sunstrup and Captain Peter Heardon. Six Lincoln bombers operated in the Malayan Emergency from July 1950 to 1958 when they were replaced by No. 2 Squadron RAAF's Canberra bombers. (Image source: AWM FEA01030).

More than 7,000 Australian Defence Force personnel served in these challenging post-World War II conflicts, some of the longest and most strategically significant deployments in Australia's military history.

During the Malayan Emergency, Australian forces joined British Commonwealth allies in fighting a communist insurgency. The operation was part of broader efforts to ensure post-war stability and support the sovereignty of Malaya, which would later become part of Malaysia.

The RAAF's service in Malaya was the foundation of Australia's contribution to the conflict. It was also a significant part of the wider Commonwealth effort.

RAAF involvement began with the arrival of RAAF transport and bomber squadrons in Singapore in 1950. Eight Dakotas from No. 38 Transport Squadron were deployed on cargo runs, troop movements, and paratroopers and leaflet drops in Malaya, while six Lincoln bombers from No.1 Squadron provided the backbone of aerial operations in Malaya until 1958, when they were replaced by Canberra bombers of No. 2 Squadron RAAF.

At first, the RAAF units served in Malaya as part of Britain's Far East Air Force (FEAF). The Australian squadrons then got to have some autonomy under the command of RAAF Headquarters in Singapore.

By the late 1950s, RAAF squadrons operated from the recently rebuilt Butterworth airbase in northern Malaya. This was part of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR). No. 3 Squadron RAAF and No. 77 Squadron RAAF were also based at Butterworth. Both squadrons flew Sabre jet fighters.

The RAAF continued with anti-insurgency operations along the Thai-Malay border until 1966.

The RAAF's role in the FESR meant that even after the end of the Malayan Emergency in 1960, squadrons continued to operate out of the Butterworth air base. Butterworth became the RAAF's most forward operational airbase until control of the base was handed to Malaysia in 1988.

In the Indonesian Confrontation, from 1962 to 1966, Australian troops carried out border security, reconnaissance, and counter-insurgency operations in difficult jungle terrain, particularly in Borneo's remote regions.

Read more about RAAF operations during the Malayan Emergency [here](#).

# WWII VETERANS HONOURED ON VP DAY



The Governor General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn and the Minister for Veterans Affairs, The Hon. Matt Keogh MP joined 12 WWII veterans at the special Last Post Ceremony, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. RAAF Radar veteran and centenarian, Mr David Westwood is fourth from the right.

## The 15 August 2025 marked both the 80th Anniversary of WWII Victory in the Pacific Day (the Japanese surrender) and the 80th Anniversary of the ending of WWII.

To commemorate this occasion 12 World War II veterans were invited by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to attend a special Last Post ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on VP Day.

Prior to the Last Post ceremony, the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, presented special Governor-General's Commander-in-Chief Medallions to the other 11 World War II veterans in attendance. The Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Honourable Matt Keogh, was also on hand to greet and acknowledge the VIP guests.

Speaking on VP Day, Minister for Veterans Affairs, Matt Keogh said, "This year, as we mark 80 years since that historic day, we honour the triumph as much as the toll. We remember the courage of not only those who fought in the Second World War, but those who served on the home front, and the families whose lives were changed forever."

"This special commemorative year I acknowledge all those proud veterans who will join us to commemorate this anniversary, many who have reached their century – who will stand tall in services across the nation as we say thank you."

RAAF Radar veteran and centenarian, David Westwood was one of the 12 WWII veterans invited by DVA to attend the commemoration service at the Australian War Memorial, accompanied by his wife Edith and his son Ken as carer. WWII veteran and centenarian, Joyce Daymon from Kyneton RSL also attended the commemorative service and was accompanied to Canberra by her carer, Diane Dobson.

David has shared his experience at the commemoration service below (you can also read his account on the [AFA Victoria website](#)).



RAAF Radar veteran and centenarian, Mr David Westwood (far right) joins other WWII veterans at the special Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.



WWII veterans join the Governor General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn and the Minister for Veterans Affairs, The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, to observe the flypast commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII.

MIDLAND EXPRESS News

## Local veteran honoured

Kyneton WWII veteran Joyce Daymon is headed to Canberra this month to attend the Last Post ceremony conducted at the Australian War Memorial.

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently invited nominations for veterans to attend the ceremony, which is conducted each evening and honours the memory of a fallen veteran.

This year is particularly significant signifying the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII in the Pacific, known as Victory in the Pacific Day.

The Kyneton RSL jumped at the opportunity to nominate much-beloved WWII veteran and service member of the Kyneton RSL, 100-year-old Joyce, to be invited to this very special occasion. On Tuesday last week the RSL received word from DVA that her nomination had been successful.

Joyce and her carer will be treated to an all-expenses-paid trip to Canberra to attend the ceremony leaving Melbourne on August 14 and returning on August 16. On the evening of their arrival, there will be a performance by the RAAF Band for the veterans in attendance.

Joyce joined the then Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, the forerunner to the Women's Royal Australian Air Force, in October 1943, much against her father's wishes. She was very much a pioneer for women in her day, being trained as a flight mechanic. She continued her service until discharge in June 1946.

Joyce regularly attends commemorative events conducted by the Kyneton RSL as well as RSL Active events, a program aimed at the health and wellbeing of veterans. Most recent of these being small-bore rifle shooting at the local club in Kyneton.

The Kyneton RSL is proud to have assisted Joyce with the opportunity to participate in this special occasion.



WWII veteran Joyce Daymon.

## RAAF Radar veteran, David Westwood shares his experience at the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on VP Day.

At the strong invitation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, I was encouraged to take up the offer of travel to Canberra to attend the commemoration event to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Before adding further comments, I wish to express my grateful thanks to the DVA and, particularly, to Sarah Kennedy, Assistant Secretary Commemorations, and her team for their fantastic contribution towards making this experience so worthwhile and enjoyable.

Only 12 veterans were able and willing to participate in this event, and each had a carer who travelled with them and attended to their personal needs. Our GP denied Edith the right to care for me and so our son, Ken stepped in to fill that role.

The DVA was extremely generous, providing the costs of all travel, accommodation and meals, such that no veteran or carer was out of pocket in any way. Each veteran travelled Business Class, the carers, Economy, but the difference was barely recognisable.

Prior to boarding the aircraft in Melbourne on Thursday 14 August, I was interviewed by a reporter from the ABC, the interview being aired on the PM program that evening. At each change of mode of travel we were met by DVA staffers who saw us to the next stage of the journey.

In Canberra we were driven to the Hyatt Hotel where the accommodation was first class. The meals were excellent, and Sarah was always at the end of her mobile phone ready to attend to any request we might make. The Hotel provided a wheelchair to enable me to cover the distances from place to place.

Because my legs could not handle the distance between steps on the bus, we were provided with a taxi. Following

a rest and a meal, we needed to decide whether to attend the RAAF band concert and we were so glad that we did. The theatre was packed out and the performance was excellent. The massive screen behind the band changed constantly with images from the war.

Next morning the group met at the hotel to discuss arrangements for the Last Post and the Australian War Memorial. We decided that our wreath would be laid by three veterans representing each of the Services. At around 3 PM we met again at the Australian War Memorial and, in the new entrance (out of the strong wind), met personally the Governor General (who presented each veteran with the Governor General's own medal), the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and a host of photographers.

We then added poppies to our wreath and moved to the commemorative area for the most impressive Last Post ceremony. The DVA staff provided blankets to cover our knees.

The entire surrounds of the Memorial Pool were covered with wreaths laid by foreign diplomats, school representatives and many others. The ceremony over, we moved to the parade ground to await the fly-over of a modern fighter plane and were then taken back to the Hyatt, where a special menu offering was available.

Next morning we enjoyed a hearty breakfast and met with a friend before leaving for the airport and once again being cared for by DVA staffers until we reached our home.

We express our warmest thanks to DVA, Sarah Kennedy and the DVA staff for such a memorable experience as this has been.

**David Westwood**

*RAAF Radar Branch*



WWII veterans representing each of the services lay a wreath at the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. WAAAF veteran, Mrs Joyce Daymon is far left (in red).



RAAF Radar veteran and centenarian, Mr David Westwood chats with Minister for defence, the Hon Matt Keogh MP.



WWII veterans are honoured at the special Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII.

# HISTORIC AIRCRAFT FIND NEW HOME IN PNG HERITAGE CENTRE

Papua New Guinea's aviation heritage and the PNG/Australia defence relationship is now proudly displayed following the opening of the purpose-built Aviation Heritage Centre at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby.

Built as a collaboration between the RAAF and the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery, the Aviation Heritage Centre provides a permanent home for the museum's World War 2-era Douglas A-20 Havoc bomber, along with other historic Papua New Guinean aircraft and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Wirraway aircraft.

The centre, opened by PNG's Minister for Finance, Thomas Opa, and Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, was established to preserve aircraft of mutual significance to both nations for years to come.

"The Aviation Heritage Centre and the World War 2-era Douglas A-20 Havoc bomber stand as a permanent

reminder of an enduring defence relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea, forged through shared tenacity and sacrifice during World War 2," Air Marshal Chappell said.

Air Marshal Chappell also presented pictorial history books and photographs to PNG Defence Force Air Transport Wing Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Vavar and Director of Air Operations Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Wii.

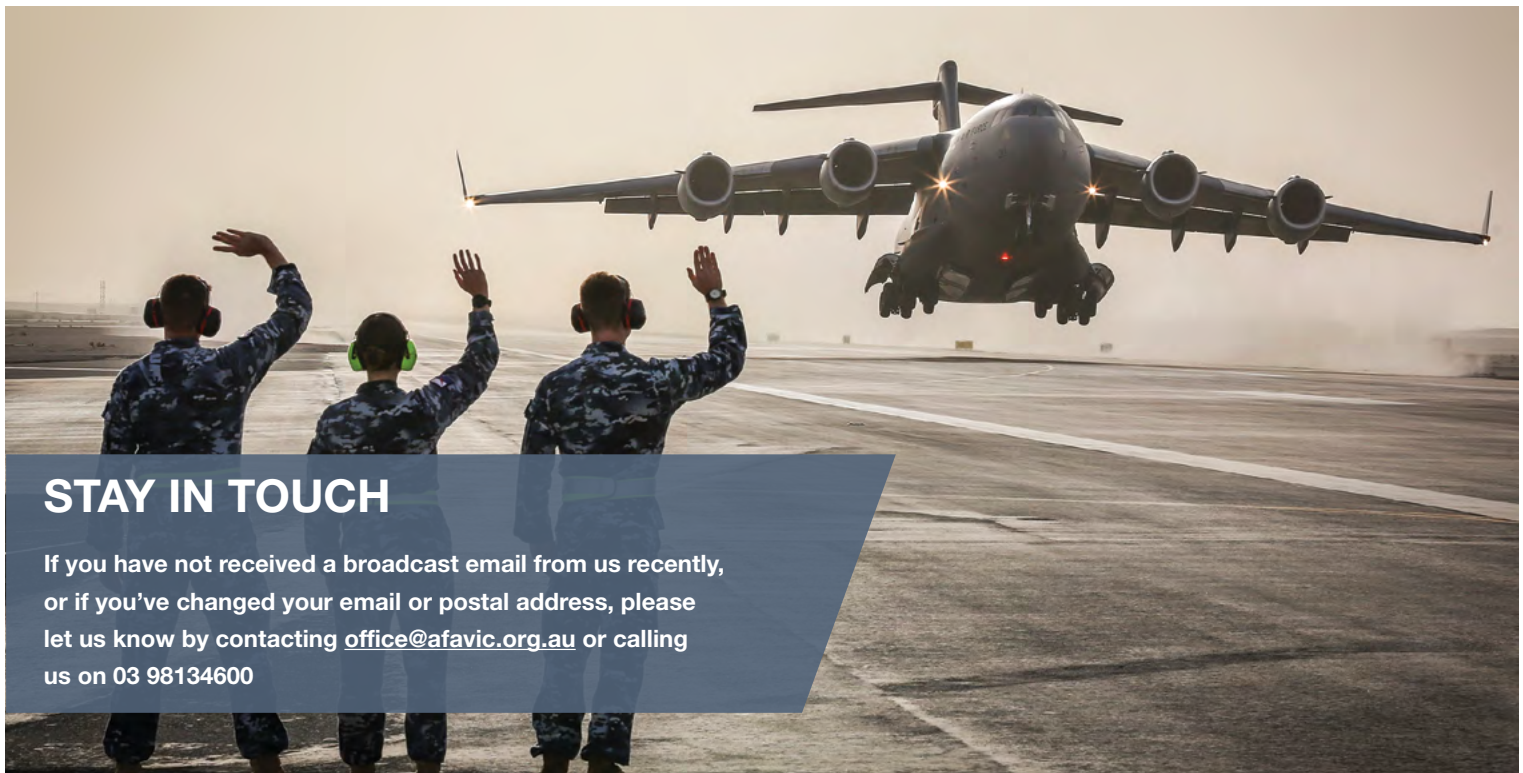
(Story and images courtesy Department of Defence)



PNG Minister for Finance Thomas Opa and a Royal Australian Air Force officer unveil the new sign at the opening of the Aviation Heritage Centre at the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, PNG.



From left, Warrant Officer of the Air Force Ralph Clifton, Australia's Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, PNG Defence Force Air Transport Wing Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Vavar, and PNG Defence Force Director of Air Operations Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Wii.



## 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

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## AFA VICTORIA BRANCH CONTACTS

21SQN	Mike Dance	0438764629
ATC/AAFC	Hugh Tank	03 98773424
B24 Liberator	Tony Muller	03 97414635
Ballarat	Peter Dowling	0418 281 775
Bendigo	Reinhard Goschiniak	0419 375 160
Catalina	Ronald Kirk	03 98193527
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



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AN INITIATIVE BY AFA AND AFA NSW

# BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA



Brigadier John-Paul Ouvrier AM with Battle for Australia Foundation Patron Mr Steve Moneghetti AM (R).



Students and invited guest laid wreaths at the Eternal Flame in honour of the service and sacrifice of Australians and their allies.

## The first Wednesday on September each year is recognised as Battle for Australia Day.

The day reminds us of the sacrifices of those who served on Australia's home front and in crucial battles to the north during World War II and we honour the courage of all people who served at sea, on the mainland and islands, and in the skies to protect our nation and its territories.

This year the annual Battle for Australia Commemoration was held at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance on 3 September, with the additional recognition of being the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. Brigadier John-Paul Ouvrier AM was in attendance as the principal guest along with Battle for Australia Foundation Patron Mr Steve Moneghetti AM and members of the Battle for Australia Foundation Board. The Hon Ted Baillieu AO gave the keynote address.

Four students representing Glen Waverley Secondary College, Goonawarra Primary School, Holy Cross Primary School and Craigieburn South Primary School gave



poignant readings based on actual experiences during the war:

‘Women at the WWII Home-Front’ – presented by Prاتي Sarker, Glen Waverley Secondary College

‘Soldier on the Kokoda Track New Guinea’ – presented by Leela McMahon, Goonawarra Primary School

‘Sailor aboard HMAS Canberra’ – presented by Vitale Van Der Merwe, Holy Cross Primary School

‘RAAF 76 Squadron Pilot, New Guinea’ – presented by Nicholas Georgiou, Craigieburn South Primary School

Guests and students from the four schools also laid wreathes in honour of the service and sacrifice of Australians and their allies.

Visit the [Battle for Australia](#) Foundation’s website to learn more about this critical period in Australia’s history.

## WWII VETERAN CENTENARIAN HONOURED



*A very young Cliff Dunstone with his wings.*

**WWII RAAF veteran, Clifford ‘Cliff’ Dunstone has been presented with a Chief of Air Force certificate and RAAF commemorative coin in honour and recognition of his service after celebrating his milestone 100th birthday.**

Born in Shepparton, Victoria, in 1925, Cliff enlisted in September 1943 just after he turned 18. He had been working as a telegraph messenger at the Fitzroy Post Office. Cliff was accepted into the Empire Air Training Scheme and undertook recruit training at Somers, Victoria, where he was selected to train as a pilot.

He was sent to No. 7 Elementary Flying Training School at Western Junction, Tasmania, to learn to fly in Tiger Moths. In July 1944, Cliff travelled to Canada to continue training as a bomber pilot, stationed firstly at Dafoe in Saskatchewan and then Claresholm in Alberta. He was awarded his Wings and promoted to Sergeant in March 1945.

Five weeks later, the war was over in Europe. Cliff’s view was ‘as soon as Hitler learnt that I had gained my Wings, he called the whole bloody thing off!’ Cliff was returned to Australia where he was transferred to the Air Force Reserve because the war in the Pacific was ending. He was rated “Very Good” as a pilot and had the highest standard of proficiency.

Cliff loved that he was able to fly a plane. He chose the RAAF as he had a keen interest in flying from a young age. He also enjoyed using Morse code, a skill he learnt at the Post Office. Cliff said he relished the many friendships he made during his service, particularly with ‘Snowy’ Hyde, Bob Eastoe, Peter Hayes, Jack Edwards and Max Crawford.

In March 1947, Cliff was discharged from the RAAF. He then requested to start a building apprenticeship but was told by the discharge board that, at age 20, he was too old. He instead returned to the Post Office.

Cliff married Carmel in 1959, and the couple has four daughters and 10 grandchildren. In his spare time, Cliff played football, cricket and golf. Now, Cliff is a keen supporter of AFL team Richmond and enjoys visits from his family.

Cliff credits his long life to good genes. His mother lived to 98 years of age.

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Cliff holding his certificate, with L to R: WOFF Neil Crawley (Base WOFF PCK), John Price (President Geelong Branch – AFA Victoria), Cliff's wife Carmel, Daryll Topp (Vice President, AFA Victoria), SQNLDR Phil Martin and John Delia (AFA Victoria Board Member)



SQNLDR Phil Martin presents Cliff with the Chief of Air Force letter and coin on behalf of CAF.

## 85 YEARS ON – BATTLE OF BRITAIN TRIBUTE

Veterans, serving Air Force personnel and families of 'The Few' gathered in Hobart on 12–14 September to mark the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the pivotal World War II air campaign that halted Nazi Germany's invasion plans for the United Kingdom.



Members of the Australian Defence Force, RAAF Association, guests and representatives from Allied and Axis powers prepare for the wreath laying ceremony at the cenotaph in Hobart (source: Department of Defence)



This year marks 85 years since the Battle of Britain changed the course of history. From 10 July to 31 October 1940, the skies over Britain became a fierce battleground for the first military campaign fought entirely by air forces. More than 30 Australians flew combat operations during the campaign, 10 of whom were killed in air-to-air combat.

The weekend's events

included a Remembrance Service at St David's Cathedral, a wreath-laying ceremony at the Hobart Cenotaph and a formal dining-in night marking the anniversary where Head of Air Force Capability AVM Nicholas Hogan CSC gave an address and a toast to 'The Few'.

AVM Hogan spoke of the bravery of 'The Few', the large and diverse team that supported them, and

the parallels with today's modern Air Force.

"Pilots can't take to the sky without a tremendous team supporting them – and that's exactly what 'The Few' had," AVM Hogan said.

The weekend culminated in an occasional address by Air Force Association National President, AVM Joe Iervasi AM CSC at the Hobart Cenotaph and a

RAAF C-17A Globemaster III flypast.

In his address, AVM Joe Iervasi reflected on the courage of 'The Few' and the strategic foresight that underpinned Britain's defence.

"The Battle of Britain was not won by heroism alone," AVM Iervasi said. "It was secured by an integrated system of radar, command, industrial output and logistics, all guided by foresight and unity of purpose."

"Among those few stood Australian aces, British factory workers, rescue crews on Channel waters, and pilots saved by silk, by sea, or by sheer determination."

Australia's role shone through 32 pilots in Fighter Command, 14 of whom perished. No.10 Squadron

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RAAF also conducted vital air-sea rescues with Sunderland flying boats, aiding 322 of 537 ditched aircrew to return to duty swiftly.

The commemorative weekend also included a remembrance service at St David's Cathedral on September 13, with ceremonial support from 29 Squadron (City of Hobart), the Air Force Band and Australian Air Force Cadets from Tasmania and Victoria.

**(Information source: Department of Defence)**



Attending the formal dining-in night marking the 85th anniversary, L-R: AFA Victoria Vice President, Daryll Topp with his wife Gillian, AFA Victoria Board member John Delia and Rhonda Delia, Norma and Clive Robartson. (source: John Delia)



Air Force Association National President, AVM Joe Iervasi AM CSC delivers his occasional address as a RAAF C-17A Globemaster III approaches for its flypast (source: AFA National)



## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### RAAF RADAR BRANCH

In recognition of four of our WWII RAAF Radar veterans David Westwood, Terry McMahon, Beryl Mainon and George Runting, celebrating their 100th birthdays, the RSL honoured them in the Melbourne Shrine ANZAC Day March by positioning them in the formal party, leading the RAAF March contingent in their RACV chauffeured vehicles.

Although this meant our four vets did not march behind the Association banner, their RACV chauffeurs ensured they were able to join those family, friends and supporters who marched with our banner, over what has become

the traditional Salvation Army refreshments after the March. The Banner bearers for 2025 were Fraser Bryans, Asher Bryans, (grand-nephew/niece of Douglas Bowe (Radar Mechanic) and Sarah Cooney, Alix Curtin (granddaughter/grand son-in-law of Len Ralph (Radar Mechanic).

The 15 August 2025 marked both the 80th Anniversary of WWII VP Day (the Japanese surrender) and the 80th Anniversary of the ending of WWII. This report covers the involvement of several of our WWII Centenarian Veterans in events on that special day of commemoration.

The principal event was a Last Post ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and David Westwood, RAAF

Radar Mechanic, was one of 12 WWII vets invited by the Department of Veteran Affairs to attend the commemoration service at



RAAF Radar members and family gather for ANZAC Day.

the Australian War Memorial (see separate story on page 8 – ed.)

Toorak RSL Sub-Branch held a 15 August 2025



L to R, RSL Marshall Bruce (Stretch) Jarvis, Stuart McKellar, AFA Victoria President John Clarkson, RAAF Radar Branch President Chris Harnath and Colonel Jason Cooke who was the MC at the Shrine of Remembrance for the 80th anniversary commemorating VP Day.

commemorative service and lunch with some 16 WWII veterans in attendance. Terry McMahon, RAAF Radar Operator, accepted their

invitation to join that event and described it as a special day.

President Chris Harnath, with Stuart McKellar, (son of Association Historian Ian McKellar), carried our RAAF Radar banner at the Melbourne Shrine Last Post and Wreath Laying Ceremony on 15 August. The crocheted AFA wreath represents all Air Force Units.

WWII veteran George Runting, RAAF Radar Operator, was interviewed by both Channel 7 and RSL Victoria, particularly regarding his memories of

the celebrations of VP Day in 1945. George's Channel 7 interview was featured in their VP Day eve news bulletin.

You can watch George's RSL interview on the RSL Victoria website [here](#).

**Kathy Cooney**  
*Secretary*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE RAAF RADAR BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

## BENDIGO BRANCH

### Winter Celebrations for Two Centenarians at the Kyneton RSL

It would appear that 2025 – or better still 1925 – was a good year for future RAF and RAAF ex-service personnel.

Notwithstanding the RAAF Radar Branches' four 100 year-old ex-service personnel, the northwest part of our state also wanted a piece of the action, so we also celebrated two wonderful people's 100th birthdays at the Kyneton RSL.

John Wyke volunteered for service in the RAF and was accepted as a tail gunner in No. 626 Squadron RAF, in July 1944.

John qualified as a tail gunner on Vickers Wellington medium bombers. He was later posted to a heavy conversion unit, on Handley

Page Halifax four engine heavy bombers.

John took part in 12 operations over Germany, including a raid on Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden.

He also took part in operation 'Manna' that were humanitarian drops over occupied Holland, operation 'Dodge' over Italy, operation 'Tibbenham and Pomilliano'. Later the Squadron was tasked with the repatriation of Prisoners of War.

John was a £10 Pom and thrived in Australia, winning many awards and accolades.

Although a member of the Romsey Lancefield Sub-branch, it appears that the Kyneton RSL has adopted John, as he resided in Aged Care in the Kyneton area.

The Kyneton RSL also hosted Joyce Daymon 100th birthday celebration,

together with family and friends. RSL State President, Des Callaghan, was also on hand to present certificates Joyce. Joyce served with the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force during World War II as a flight mechanic. Whilst Joyce turned 100 on the 7th May, it was not possible to celebrate on the day as she was gallivanting around Fiji.



Mike Gretton (President) Kyneton RSL; John Wyke; Reinhard Goschiniak; and Action RSL State President Des Callaghan presenting John with his RSL certificate and letter from Dr Rob Webster State RSL President.

Joyce was also an invited guest at a special Last Post ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on Victory in the Pacific Day, commemorating the end of WWII (see also separate story on WWII Veterans Honoured on VP Day).

Postscript: Vale John Wilfred Wyke

It was with great sadness



Mrs Joyce Daymon being presented with her framed certificate from Des and Mike. Joyce was so excited that she wanted to thank our President John Clarkson. A quick phone call was arranged.

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that we were informed that John passed away on the 22nd July. John was surrounded by his family. The funeral was held at JT Scott in Kyneton. The Kyneton & Romsey Lancefield RSL's gave John a fitting 'Poppy Service'.

**Other Branch News**

The Bendigo Branch held our general monthly meeting at the Toolleen Hotel/Pub before we sat down to a sumptuous lunch. It was a lovely day, although our numbers were down on previous outings due to members not being well. Our best wishes go to President Peter Simmons, Dingle, Ann and Noel. We wish everyone a speedy recovery.

We attended the 72nd Anniversary of the Korean Armistice, at the Shrine of Remembrance, hosted by the Consul General, Melbourne His Excellency Mr. Changghoon Yi.

We marked the 50th anniversary of the last Australian and especially the last involvement of No.37 Squadron Lockheed C-130 operation, "Operation

Baby Lift" out of Saigon's Ton Son Nhut in 1975. It was a solemn occasion. The RAAF Vietnam Veterans Group hosted a lovely lunch at the Mail Exchange Hotel.

The Branch has finally ordered our RAAFA Polo Shirts and Jackets. They look great and members' orders have been placed.

With this year's Scootaville passing through Bendigo,

the branch is starting to get people and organisation interested in civic participation. John McCosker and I have already contacted the Greater City of Bendigo Mayor, and several of the larger sports club and the Bendigo and district RSL to gauge their interest.

**Reinhard Goschiniak**

*Branch Secretary*



*John and Lois Ham, John McCosker, Ken Arnold, Blair Michael, Reinhard Goschiniak, Aileen Reid and Brenda Friswell.*

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

**VIETNAM VETERANS**



*Geoff Rose recites "The Ode" at the Vietnam Veterans' Day Commemoration Service.*



*Vietnam Veterans Branch Vice President, Max McGregor places the AFA Victoria wreath.*



*VVA A (Vic) Vice President, Brendan Kincade OAM, placed the wreath at the Vietnam Plaque*

**Honouring the Bravery and Sacrifice of our Vietnam Veterans**

Another most successful Vietnam Veterans Day. VVA A (Vic) was keen this year to specifically commemorate the 50th anniversary of the RAAF humanitarian deployment to Vietnam (HQRIC Det 'S' – which included Operation Babylift) in April 1975.

Prior to the service, short simultaneous wreath laying ceremonies were held at the RAAF Vietnam Veterans and the Victorian Vietnam Veterans plaques.

This year some 200 people attended this year's Commemoration Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. Three years ago, VVA A (Vic Branch)

President Bob Elsworth accepted the Shrine, and annual event was changed by discontinuing the Unit march, banner display and shortening the Service at the Forecourt.

In the absence of Vietnam Veterans President Chris Hudnott, Vice President Max McGregor, was charged with leading the AFA Victoria Vietnam Veterans' traditional 'Tree Service adjacent to the Shrine.

**In Other News...**

The Branch is planning to visit the National Vietnam Veterans Museum in the next month or so – travelling by bus and enjoying the hospitality of the Phillip Island RSL for a Branch sponsored lunch.

*Continued on page 17*



L-R: Army Rep, Charlie Downes, Max McGregor, Carl Schiller, Mike Lewino, Geoff and Noela Rose, John Vansetten, Ron Douglas, RAN Rep, Reinhard Goschiniak (proudly displaying his 2nd Advanced Ordnance Depot Banner) and George Skell, representing VVAA (Vic) (Note: Reinhard served in Vietnam with the Army, but has been a member of our Bendigo branch, and is currently a Director of AFA-Vic).



Gathering at the Mail Exchange Hotel for the traditional VV Day luncheon - L-R: Noela Rose, Gill Coughlan, Allison Connellan, Stephen Young, Peter Raymant, Pieter Jongkryg Charlie Downes, Geoff Rose, Rick Holmes, Ron Douglas, Leon Douglas (Ron's son), John Vansetten, Terry Ferrell, Mike Lewino, Dave Gierson, Max McGregor, Carl Schiller, and Reinhard Goschiniak. (Apologies: Graeme and Telay Dodd, Neil and Faye Boulton, Maree Jongkryg, Bob Brackin, Peter Clemmens, Russ Hately, and Alan White)

And finally, some news about a new plaque for the Branch, recognising our membership of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia. The Victorian Branch of VVAA has taken the initiative of arranging (and funding) a plaque for each Sub-branch as

it closes. Our action in ceasing membership of the VVAA last year has triggered the presentation of such a plaque and on behalf of all our members, I have thanked the VVAA (Vic) for its initiative and generosity in arranging for its production.

I will be talking with the AFA Board of Management at its next meeting about an appropriate position for the plaque in the Hawthorn office and will let everyone know when it is on display.

**Chris Hudnott**

*Branch President*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE VIETNAM VETERANS' BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

## BALLARAT BRANCH

As presaged in our last Newsletter, the weekend of May 17 and 18 saw the Ballarat Heritage Week headline event at the airport: "Entertainment of the Air".

The event was as successful as was hoped and ran smoothly, notwithstanding the blast of wintery weather that visited for the weekend.

I'd like to particularly acknowledge a small but incredibly dedicated group of people who are working as a sub-committee of the Ballarat Branch AFA – Steve Carter, Mark Pilkington, Sharon Carpenter and Leigh Edmonds. This group has a strong interest in the Ballarat Airport and air history. With

a view to creating ongoing interest in our heritage aspects of the airport, this year's "Entertainment of the Air" is hoped to showcase possible annual events leading to the 100th anniversary of the airport. This year's event could not have been achieved without them.

I'd also like to acknowledge Louise Humble and Bob Brown from the Aviation Museum, who provided space for the 1WAGS exhibit in the museum.

I'd also particularly like to acknowledge the huge support Ballarat branch receives from John Clarkson, Barb Stallard and the Board of AFA Victoria, which allows us to support



*Congratulations to the Ballarat Branch and the 1WAGS website team for reaching an incredible 1,400,000 individual browsers to the 1WAGS website. If you haven't yet paid a visit to this remarkable and informative website, you can do so here.*

activities of benefit to our members.

**Peter Dowling**

*President*

(Editor's note: You can Peter's full story on Ballarat Heritage Week on Page 18)

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BALLARAT BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

**“Entertainment of the Air”** was the headline event on **17-18 May of Ballarat Heritage Week**, and with the **“Gooney Bird” DC-3** front and centre, aviation enthusiasts descended on **Ballarat’s airport precinct** from far and wide. **Ballarat Branch President, Peter Dowling**, tells us more.



*The “Gooney Bird” DC-3 was a popular attraction at Ballarat Heritage Week.*

With a tight timeline leading up to the event, Ballarat Council, the Air Force Association Ballarat and the Commercial Manager of the aerodrome worked to provide an event at the airport celebrating its history. It was determined that the headline act would be the chartering of the “Gooney Bird” DC-3 bringing aviation enthusiasts out of Essendon Airport.

The event was promoted by Ballarat Council with a huge billboard in Victoria Street displaying the DC-3 to traffic approaching Ballarat from the east prior to the event.

There was tireless activity and organisation by Air Force Association members Steve Carter, Mark Pilkington, Sharon Carpenter, Leigh Edmonds and Peter Dowling, in conjunction with Jonnie Wilshire, the Commercial Manager of the airport.

Following an almost unprecedented period of warm, dry weather in Ballarat, the weekend of the event was cold, wet and windy. With a nail-biting wait in Essendon for icy conditions to clear, the Gooney Bird was finally in the air and on its way to Ballarat, nearly an hour late.

Joy flights on the DC-3 were sold out for both Saturday and Sunday afternoon. A Tiger Moth and trainer arrived from Lethbridge Airfield to complement the flying excitement.

For this inaugural event, it was estimated there was more than 4000 attendees over the two days.

As well as Council-organised events, entertainment and food/drink stations, most of the tenants at the airport took the opportunity to showcase their interest groups and associations.

The Air Force Association Ballarat rents space in Hut 48 and provided a continuous loop video of the history of the airport as a Wireless Air Gunner Training School (1WAGS).



*Neil Leckie provided a service in the Air Force rooms to assist people to find the military history of their friends and relatives.*



*Peter Dowling, Sue Alexander aboard the DC-3.*

Continued on page 19

A theatre group, Legends of the Sky, provided two performances of the great 1934 air race on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon in Hut 48 while the museum also experienced great interest from the Ballarat public, both at the weekend of the airport display and the following weekend marking the end of Heritage week.

One of the most impressive details was the determination of some to experience the DC-3 flight. Two nonagenarian members of the Air Force Association Ballarat experience flights. A friend of an Association member was so enthusiastic, she managed to board the plane even with substantial mobility issues. She later reported that it was an amazing highlight of her life, and she would not have missed it for anything.

There are more great photos of the Entertainment of the Skies event in the latest Ballarat Branch newsletter. [Click here to read.](#)



In the hangars, feature posters of historical 1WAGS personnel, including a tribute to Frederick Spafford "Dam Busters" fame and a banner were provided to the Airport Aviation Museum for display in that space, presaging the opportunity for greater co-ordination of the history of the airport.

## VALE

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

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

- Mr Ron Kirk Catalina Branch ..... 24/6/2025
- Mr. Clem Bell Bendigo Branch ..... 21/9/2025



# Air Force Association

## OFFICE BEARERS

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VOLUME 80 ISSUE 3 // SPRING 2025

The official newsletter of the Air Force Association – Victoria