

Air Force Association

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25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIAN SERVICE IN TIMOR-LESTE

On Friday 20 September 2024, a National commemorative service marking the 25th anniversary of Australian service in Timor-Leste was held in Canberra.

When East Timor experienced a humanitarian and security crisis in 1999, Australia led a multinational peacekeeping force - International Force East Timor (INTERFET) - in response.

Australian service in Timor-Leste spanned 1999 to 2013 and included personnel from the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police, as well as civilians. Several Australians continued to serve after 2013, with ongoing efforts still in effect to this day.

The commemorative service was held at the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra, providing the opportunity to honour and remember the the service of all Australian men and women who served in Timor-Leste, and the sacrifice of their families. Tragically, six Australians lost their lives whilst deployed, or as a result of their service, in Timor-Leste.

A comprehensive history of Australian service in Timor-Leste and INTERFET is included in the Order of Service booklet published for the commemorative service. [Click here](#) to read. (link: <https://afavic.org.au/content/753/memorials>)

The commemorative service was nationally broadcast on the ABC. You can view the service by clicking on the link below:

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/australians-in-timor-leste-25th-anniversary>



John Clarkson – President, AFA Victoria.

Welcome to this Spring edition of Contact. There is a range of excellent articles that should be of interest to many.

The Association continues on a steady course. Of particular note recently was the handing down of the report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide.

The government is yet to provide acceptance or otherwise on the commission's recommendations, however, the need for better engagement between the three Armed Services (Air Force) and Ex-Service Organisations (AFA) to enhance the management of personal issues as they arise is evident. To this end, I am hopeful of more engagement with Air Force which should also assist us in meeting our objectives and purposes more broadly.

While I have the stage, it is appropriate for me to forecast two major events on our calendar.

The first is a notice on our annual pilgrimage to Point Cook.

Traditionally, the Association has held a commemorative service on the Sunday prior to Remembrance Day at the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) memorial on the parade ground at Point Cook.

This year we have been invited to join the Air Force in jointly hosting a service on the actual day, Monday 11th November 2024. The service will be at the traditional site of the AFC Memorial. Your Board has discussed this break in tradition but agreed overwhelmingly that better engagement with Air Force presented many lasting benefits for us. You can expect a formal notice in due course with the details. For the time being, please pencil it in your diary.

The second event will be our annual Christmas get together. We are planning an open day on Sunday 8th December at our Camberwell Rd premises. I would like to encourage you all to come down and appreciate the many stories that will be shared. Again, more detail will be issued in due course.

Please stay well and continue your good work.

John Clarkson



STAY IN TOUCH

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

2024 BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATION HELD AT THE SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE



Air Force Cadets, Group Captain Corbet & Deputy Chair of Foundation, WGCDCR Peter Colliver OAM (Retd).

This year's Battle for Australia Day Commemoration Service was held at the Shrine of Remembrance on 4th September in honour of the men and women who drove back the Japanese advance in the Second World War.

On the 19 February, war reached Australia's shores with the bombing of Darwin, killing 278 Australians, Allied service personnel and civilians and wounding 429. By the end of the war, northern Australia had endured 97 air raids, 64 of which targeted Darwin, during which time 53 merchant ships and three warships were sunk in Australian waters, by German and Japanese submarines and surface raiders, with the loss of 1,751 Australian and Allied Service personnel and civilians.

Each year we commemorate the Battle for Australia on the first Wednesday in September. This day represents the defeat of Japanese forces on land during the Battle of Milne Bay.

In Victoria, the annual commemoration is organised by the Battle for Australia Foundation, with veterans, students and members of the public coming to lay wreaths to honour the service and sacrifice of Australians and their allies.

The service commenced with a fly past by two PC-21s from the Central Flying School at East Sale. Principal Guest was CAPT Ben Favelle CSC RAN who was accompanied by Battle for Australia Patron Mr Steve Moneghetti AM, and Battle for Australia President, LTCOL David Arden RFD.

Students from Glen Waverley Secondary College, Parkdale Secondary College, Kyneton High School and Christchurch Grammar gave presentation readings from 'Brave Australian Sailors in Action' authored by SQNLDR Peter Meehan OAM (Ret'd).

Former anti-submarine warfare Specialist Officer, CAPT Andrew Mackinnon CSC RAN (Rtd) gave the keynote address, after which the commemoration service began. Following the wreath-laying, CAPT Ben Favelle CSC RAN recited The Ode.

The Battle for Australia signifies a series of critical events and conflicts fought primarily in the Pacific theatre during World War II, as Allied forces, predominantly Australian, faced threats from advancing Japanese forces.

To learn more about this critical period in Australia's wartime history, please visit the [Battle for Australia Foundation's website](#).



The Shrine of Remembrance Catafalque party

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE FINAL REPORT HANDED DOWN



On 9 September 2024, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide handed down its Final Report

The Final Report of the Royal Commission is the culmination of three years of inquiry into the suicide crisis in Australia's Defence and veteran population. It comprises more than 3,000 pages of evidence, commentary and

findings seven volumes and nine parts – and contains the Commission's analysis of complex cultural and systemic issues relevant to suicide and suicidality among serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members.

The Report is available on the [Royal Commission's website](#) (along with resources to help people understand and read the document) and also on the [Australian Parliament House website](#).

A total of 122 recommendations have been made to address identified systemic risk factors and overarching drivers of suicide and suicidality in serving and ex-serving ADF members, with the recommendations are largely directed to Defence and DVA; as well as other agencies separately or in combination with Defence and DVA.

The Government has advised it will take some time to consider the recommendations and provide the whole-of-Government response.

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 2025 AVCAT SCHOLARSHIPS



2025 Scholarships APPLICATIONS OPEN 18 AUGUST

Tertiary scholarships for the children & grandchildren of ex-serving veterans

Applications Close 31 October

avcat.org.au

Applications for the 2025 AVCAT Scholarships on 18 August 2024, coinciding with Vietnam Veterans' Day.

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) was established in 1985 to support Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

Today, AVCAT continues to support veteran families through tertiary scholarships for children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans, providing financial

support ranging from \$4000 to \$6000 per year, for up to three years.

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolled, or planning to enrol, in a full-time course for at least one academic year at a university, TAFE or RTO in 2025.
- The child, stepchild, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran.
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident.
- In receipt of, or eligible to receive in 2025, a means-tested Commonwealth educational payment such as Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy, the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS).

The Long Tan Bursary, sponsored by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, is one of the many scholarships available through AVCAT.

For a complete list of sponsors and more scholarship details, visit AVCAT's website.

Applications close at midnight AEDT on 31 October 2024. For information on scholarships, the application process, or eligibility, please visit avcat.org.au.

TASMANIA HOSTS COMMEMORATION OF BATTLE OF BRITAIN



Image courtesy of BRIG Jim Campbell (Ret)
Article courtesy of AFA national website.

Hobart's defence community has paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of those who served during the Battle of Britain.

This annual event, held over the weekend of 13-15 September 2024 and organised by the Tasmania Division of the RAAF Association, marks 35 years of honouring the pivotal aerial battles of September 1940.

The commemorations were led by Wing Commander Jenny Robertson, RAAFA Tasmania State President, alongside National Air Force Association Board Member Air Commodore Doug Chipman (Ret), chair of the Project Committee.

Special guests included Her Excellency the Hon. Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, and Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, Chief of Air Force, who delivered a heartfelt address at the Wreath Laying Ceremony on Sunday. Air Force Association National Board Member Air Commodore James Badgery, alongside other National Board Members, were also in attendance.

Key events included a Memorial Church Service at St David's Cathedral and a formal Dining-In Night at Elwick Function Centre, where Air Commodore James Badgery proposed a toast to "The Few". The weekend concluded with a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Hobart Cenotaph, followed by a BBQ luncheon at the RAAF Memorial Centre, providing a fitting close to the commemorations.

The event also welcomed 105-year-old FLTLT Brian Winspear AM, a distinguished World War II veteran, adding a living connection to the history being remembered.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR DIGITAL VETERANS CARD?



Eligible members of the Victoria veteran community can apply through either the Service Victoria website or the Service Victoria app on their smart phone and receive a range of benefits and discounts.

For more information or to apply visit: <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/veterans-card-victoria>

THE DOUBLE SUNRISE FLIGHT: CONNECTING CONTINENTS DURING WWII

In the realm of aviation history, few feats rival the extraordinary achievement of the Double Sunrise flights, which connected Australia and England during World War II. This remarkable operation is a testament to the endurance and ingenuity of the era's aviators and their ability to overcome the limitations of their time.

By Wing Commander Nalin Jayetileke (SLAF)(Retd) psc



Back in 1943 this epic journey connected Perth, Australia and Sri Lanka.

CATALINAS WERE USED FOR THE HISTORIC FLIGHT

During World War II, as the conflict raged globally, the necessity to re-establish a reliable air route between England and Australia became critical due to the fall of Singapore in 1943, which was till then the mail route to England. Amid the turmoil, both governments recognised the need for a secure and efficient transport link for passengers, mail, and essential goods and it was decided that a new, long-haul route was essential.

To address this need, a special division was formed, comprising Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel seconded to operate flights. These flights were operated using Consolidated PB4Y Catalina flying boats, under the banner of Qantas. The route spanned from Perth Australia to Lake Koggala, an RAF base in southern Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), covering a staggering distance of over 3,500 nautical miles (approximately 6,480 km) across the Indian Ocean.

The Double Sunrise flight earned its name due to the unique experience of passengers and crew witnessing two sunrises on each journey. This was a result of the flights' exceptional long duration, which ranged between 27 and

33 hours. The operation was marked by its pioneering spirit and the challenges faced by its crews, who navigated vast expanses of ocean with rudimentary tools.

THE OPERATION'S LOGISTICS AND LEGACY

Initially, flights operated from Crawley, near Perth, Western Australia, to the RAF base at Lake Koggala. The Catalina aircraft were specially adapted for these ultra-long flights, stripped of non-essential equipment to maximise fuel capacity. With a maximum take-off weight of approximately 35,400 lbs (16,100 kg) and a fuel load of 1,988 imperial gallons (9,040 liters), these aircraft had a range of about 3,600 nautical miles (6,700 km). Due to the high fuel requirements, payloads were limited to just three passengers and essential mail.

Navigating without modern radios or advanced navigation equipment, crews relied on celestial navigation and maps. Five Catalinas, each named after stars used for navigation, undertook these daring missions. The aircraft were named Rigel Star, Spica Star, Altair Star, Vega Star, and Antares Star.

The service began on July 17, 1943, and operated weekly, with meticulous planning ensuring flights avoided Japanese-occupied territories during daylight. This remarkable achievement was further enhanced when it was eventually paired with British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) services, extending the route to Karachi in British India (now Pakistan), thereby completing a crucial air link between London and Australia.

In the intriguing narrative surrounding RAF Base Koggala, Sri Lanka, and its lagoon, the strategic importance of the location during the war is underscored by the diligent management of its surrounding area. The responsibility for



Koggala Sri Lanka Airstrip and the Lagoon that was used for the Operation Double sunrise as seen now (picture courtesy the Island).

THE DOUBLE SUNRISE FLIGHT: CONNECTING CONTINENTS DURING WWII



A hand crafted replica of a Catalina Flying Boat presented to AFA Victoria by WGCDR Nalin Jayetileke (SLAF)(Retd) psc,

ensuring the security of a 5-kilometer radius around the base, which was crucial for the operations of Catalina flying boats, was entrusted to a local individual of significant importance. This individual's son, Mr Justin, plays a central role in revealing the story, which has been highlighted in research conducted by the well-known retired Airline Captain, Captain Elmo Jayawardene.

Mr Justin's father, who held the esteemed position of Mudaliya (the highest local rank) in the British Administration for the Koggala area during the war, was instrumental in maintaining the area's security. His efforts were critical in ensuring that the lagoon and the landing strip remained free of civilian interference, allowing for the smooth operation of the Catalina flying boats. These boats were essential for various wartime operations, and the conditions of the lagoon played a pivotal role in their effectiveness.

Remarkably, Mr Justin continues to reside in the same house which is known as "Ahangama Katuluwa Walauwa" on the southern coast of Sri Lanka where his father once managed operations. This house, situated near the lagoon and landing strip, stands as a testament to the family's dedication to safeguarding this strategically vital location from 1943 to 1954.

Koggala Lake, the body of water associated with the base, is described as a large expanse of shallow water. While this depth was generally sufficient for the Catalina flying boats, the surface of the lake was often so flat and the wind so light that additional measures were required to ensure successful take-offs. Specifically, a speedboat was employed to break the surface and assist in unsticking the aircraft's hull, facilitating their departure.

This story paints a vivid picture of the intersection between local dedication and strategic military operations, highlighting the critical role played by individuals like Mr.

Justin's father in maintaining the effectiveness of wartime logistics and operations.

RECOGNITION AND MODERN ECHOES

The legacy of the Double Sunrise flights is celebrated through various commemorations. Passengers on these historic flights received a certificate proclaiming them members of the 'Secret Order of the Double Sunrise,' a nod to their unique experience of extended airborne time. This tradition of recognition was later mirrored by Qantas when they launched a replica certificate for passengers on their non-stop flight between Sydney and London in 2019.

In a fitting tribute to its historical roots, Qantas' upcoming non-stop flights from Australia to London, known as 'Project Sunrise,' reflect the spirit of these pioneering flights. Scheduled to commence in 2025, this service will utilise the Airbus A350-1000, a state-of-the-art aircraft designed for long-haul journeys. This modern venture will continue the legacy of endurance flying, bridging continents with the latest aviation technology.

HONOURING THE LEGACY

A recent ceremony in Melbourne highlighted the ongoing appreciation for the Double Sunrise flights.

Wing Commander Nalin Jayetileke psc, a retired Sri Lankan Air Force officer (the author), on being inducted as a member of the Air Force Association - Victoria, presented a memento in honour of the pilots and crews who participated in the historic flights. This gesture was acknowledged by the President of AFA Victoria, Air Commodore (Retd) John Clarkson CSC, emphasising the enduring bonds and shared history between Air Force veterans of Australia and Sri Lanka.



The author, Sri Lankan Air Force officer WGCDR (Retd) Nalin Jayetileke psc, was inducted as a member of the Air Force Association - Victoria, presenting a memento to AIRCDRE (Ret'd) John Clarkson CSC in honour of the pilots and crews who participated in the historic flights.

1. Sources: Google Sources: Various online resources and articles provided foundational details, Qantas.com, Captain Elmo Jayawardene, Air Vice Marshal Andrew Wijesooriya (SLAF Retd. Mr. Mohan Meegolle and Sri Lanka Air Force Craft Lab: Crafting the Replica.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION: MRS MARGARET BROWNE (NEE OWEN), WWII WAAAF (SERVICE NO: 103210)

Congratulations to Mrs Margaret Browne (nee Owen), a WWII WAAAF veteran, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 27 July.

Margaret applied to join the WAAAF two weeks before her 18th birthday and enlisted three weeks after on 19 August 1942. She enlisted in Perth, WA, and served as a teleprinter operator first in WA, then in Gawler SA, before later transferring the Victorian W/T HQ Office located at RAAF Frognall in Canterbury, VIC.

She married John Austin Browne, who also served in the RAAF (Service No: 158388) at Vic Teleprinter HQ Unit. It was at the Vic W/T office where they met in 1945, later marrying in 1947.

The Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) was formed in March 1941 after considerable lobbying by women keen to serve and by the Chief of the Air Staff who wanted to release male personnel serving in Australia for service overseas. The WAAAF was the largest of the Second World War women's services. It was disbanded in December 1947.

A new Australian women's air force was formed in July 1950 and became the Women's Royal Australian Air Force

(WRAAF). The WRAAF was disbanded in the early 1980s and female personnel were absorbed into the mainstream RAAF. Australia's first female air force pilots graduated in 1988 and today, every role in the Air Force is open to women.

We acknowledge and celebrate Margaret as one of our WAAAF trailblazers – forging the path for future women in the Air Force.

Thank you to Margaret's son, Mark Browne for providing us with Margaret's story and photos.



WWII WAAAF Margaret Owen in 1945



RAAF Frognall circa 1945



Margaret Owen with John Browne, whom she later married in 1947.



Margaret and WAAAF colleagues at a train siding (perhaps Gawler, SA)

FOOTNOTE: A BIT ABOUT RAAF FROGNALL

Approval was granted in about November 1942 for Melbourne W/T Shadow Signal Station (Wireless Telegraphy) to be established at "Frognall", at 54 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury, VIC. At that time Frognall was being leased to Australian Estates Company Ltd., William Street, Melbourne as emergency accommodation for their city business. The Secretary of Australian Estates Co., Mr W.L. Taylor was also Adjutant of No.3 Squadron ATC which was using one room in Frognall for accommodation.

Action was initiated to secure Frognall for Air Force purposes under National Security (General) Regulations, where it was to provide less vulnerable signals facilities and living accommodation for 450 personnel. Frognall was estimated to have a fair value of £18, 400 and the property was eventually purchased by the Commonwealth Government on 29 September 1943.

During WW2, the property was surrounded by a double fence, topped with barbed wire and a guard box was erected to prevent unauthorised access to the site.

Many women of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) carried out signals duties at Frognall during WW2.

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Frognall continued to be used by the RAAF Telecommunication Unit after WW2. From the early 1960s, it also accommodated the RAAF Diploma Cadet Squadron.

This unit became the Engineer Cadet Squadron in 1974 and was subsequently absorbed by the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in the mid-1980s.

'IN MEMORY OF ALL VICTORIAN VIETNAM VETERANS' - MEMORIAL PLAQUE UNVEILED ON VIETNAM VETERANS DAY.



: 'In Memory of all Victorian Vietnam Veterans' – the memorial Plaque is unveiled on Vietnam Veterans Day, 18 August 2024.

Vietnam Veterans Day on 18 August was expected to be a little different this year, with the unveiling and dedication of a new plaque in memory of all Vietnam Veterans. Geoff Rose from the Vietnam Veterans Branch shares this special experience.

This year's Vietnam Veterans Day Service at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance was very special. Not only was it the sunniest, warmest and calmest VV Day in living memory, but it was the day of unveiling and dedication of a very special plaque in memory of all Vietnam Veterans.

This was an initiative of VVAA (Vic) and the short ceremony, conducted by Peter Meehan, was attended by The Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria, and Minister for Veterans, The Hon. Natalie Suleyman MP.

The plaque 'In Memory of all Victorian Vietnam Veterans' and the newly acquired Vietnam Veterans' Tree, located opposite the Post-1945 Memorial, on west side of the Shrine, will exist for future generations, as a legacy and reminder of Vietnam Veterans and their achievements.

To Bob Elworthy President VVAA (Vic Branch) and all those involved, thank you for your initiative and co-operation in enabling the development and existence of this significant memorial to Victorian Vietnam Veterans. An estimated 100 attendees gathered around the tree and plaque, enjoying the warm morning sunlight, as they waited patiently for 1045 hrs and commencement of the Unveiling Ceremony.

The Service commenced on time, with MC Peter Meehan inviting Bob Elworthy to provide the introductory speech. At the end of his speech, Bob then invited the Premier Jacinta Allen and the state minister for Veterans to unveil the Plaque.

The Shrine Chaplain then blessed the Plaque and conducted prayers for all our current and past service personnel. Bob Elworthy was then called to lay the first wreath.

After placing the wreath at base of the Plaque, Bob then lent further forward to be the first to touch the 'solid' outcome of his ambitious project.

To complete the Service, all were invited to place a Remembrance Poppy in the silver urn, positioned beside the plaque, and then asked to proceed 'carefully' down to the Shrine forecourt for the 2024 Vietnam Veterans Day Commemorative Service.

Please [click here](#) to go to the Vietnam Veterans Branch newsletter (from page 6), for further information and pictures on this important event.



Vietnam Veterans Branch President, Chris Hudnott places his poppy in the urn.



The Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria, and Minister for Veterans, The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP unveil the memorial Plaque.



Bob Elworthy, President VVAA (Vic Branch) speaking at the dedication and unveiling of the memorial Plaque.



Bob Elworthy, President VVAA (Vic Branch) placed the first wreath at base of the Plaque.

VALE DR RONALD CHARLES CREFFIELD HOUGHTON DFC L'DH – BOMBER COMMAND



Dr Ronald Charles Creffield Houghton DFC L'dh

We remember the life of Dr Ronald Charles Creffield Houghton DFC L'dh, President of the Bomber Command Association of Australia, who passed away on 21 April 2024 at the age of 99.

The son of English immigrants, Ronald Charles Creffield Houghton was born on 8th May 1924 in Fairfield NSW.

Ron was the youngest of 3 children.

Ron joined the RAAF Reserve in 1941 and enlisted in May 1942, signing up in Martin Place. His initial Air Force training was at Bradfield Park, Lindfield, and after flight training at Temora under the Empire Air Training Scheme, he was posted to an Advanced Flying Unit (AFU) in the UK.

He recalled: "I was 17 years old when I enlisted in early 1942. They were looking for anyone really, I told them I was 18 but it was quickly picked up later that I was 17, but it was too late and we were off.

"I wanted to be part of the Commonwealth efforts and wanted to help England battle against Germany. My parents were born in England, so I was keen to visit and defend their homeland."

Ron flew Tiger Moths, Wirraways, Airspeed Oxford, Wellington Bombers, Halifax Hurricanes and Spitfires.

In 181 hours of flying time, he participated in 31 sorties

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Ron Houghton, pictured centre, with his Halifax aircrew in 1944.

(13 in daylight and the rest at night over enemy territory – France, Holland. The Halifax bomber missions were mainly raids over targets in the Ruhr Valley in Germany, chiefly munition factories and fuel dumps.

Ron received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for a mission over Germany to take out a key target.

He recalled, “We had some technical issues releasing the bombs, so we had to release them manually over a series of circuits without any protective fighter cover, as the rest of the aircraft in that raid had already turned back. We managed to complete the mission and returned safely back to base.”

The citation stated: “This Officer has completed in numerous operations against the enemy during which he has displayed the upmost courage, fortitude and devotion to duty.”

According to Ron, “Spitfires were the best fighter plane. Halifaxes and Lancasters were both good and there is always a good argument to be had between crews as to which is best. But Halifax VII had better speed and height than any other bombers.”

He later transferred to flying Spitfires, piloting them in the style of German fighters to teach new bomber crews how to defend themselves.

After the war ended in 1945, Ron spent time at General Eisenhower’s Operation Centre at RN Portsmouth.

On discharge in November 1945, he joined the RAAF Reserve, and soon was employed by Qantas, rising to executive level. After working with several Asian airlines, he completed a PhD in aeronautical engineering at Sydney University, eventually becoming an Honorary Associate.

Ron was further honoured in 2014 when he flew to France as one of seven Australian veterans to receive a retrospective Legion d’Honneur from French President Francois Holland.

Two years ago, Ron flew with Matt Hall (former RAAF combat instructor and World Champion Air Racer) and aerobatics pilot Emma McDonald, describing it as the time of his life and becoming Hall’s oldest aerobatic flight participant.

Ron Houghton served to the end as president of the Bomber Command Association of Australia and still had his original log book, leather gloves and RAAF wings.

Vale Ron.

This article includes excerpt of the Eulogy given by Lynley Houghton on 3rd May 2024 at Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium. You can read the full eulogy for Dr Ronald Charles Creffield Houghton DFC L'dh on our website [here](#)



Aloft two years ago, Ron became ex-RAAF combat instructor Matt Hall’s oldest aerobatic flight participant.

1975 HQ RICHMOND “S” DETACHMENT AND TRANSPORT FLIGHT - SEEKING INFORMATION



As we approach the 50th anniversary of the humanitarian operations by HQ Richmond Detachment “S” and Transport Support Flight in 1975, the Air Force Association of Victoria is seeking information and personal reflections from anyone who participated in these operations.

If you would like to participate, please contact Max McGregor at office@afavic.org.au or call 03 9813 4600.

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

CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

SUMMER 2024

Contributions by: 29 November 2024

Publication: 19 December 2024

AUTUMN 2025

Contributions by 28 February 2025

Publication: 14 March 2025

WINTER 2025

Contributions by 27 May 2025

Publication: 14 June 2025

SPRING 2025

Contributions by: 1 September 2025

Publication: 15 September 2025



AROUND THE BRANCHES

ATC/AAFC BRANCH

Greetings everyone

In opening, and on behalf of all of our branch members, hearty congratulations to our esteemed senior member Basil Cocks on attaining his 99th birthday on the 26th July.

Well done Basil. Best Wishes from all of us

and we look forward to seeing you at lunch again soon..... perhaps when the weather is a little warmer than it is at present.

A warm welcome back to the AFA and our branch to SQNLDR (AAFC) Jon Hillis of 431 Flight which Jon so informs me, caters for and instructs all of the Victorian (4 Wing) Squadrons in

Field-craft.

Jon originally joined our branch back in the vicinity of 2015 and remained a member for a number of years until, due to other commitments, we lost touch. Good to have you back with us Jon and we look forward to catching up again at some time in the not too far distant future.

On Friday the 5th July our Branch had the pleasure of receiving a pre-arranged visit from AFA President, John Clarkson at the Box Hill RSL.

John met with our committee prior to lunch, which is our normal monthly "strictly informal" arrangement and, since there were no impending

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matters to be discussed, anything under the title of general discussion ensued prior to our retiring upstairs to the Bistro area for lunch and to meet up with any other members who may have arrived.

Thanks for your visit, John. It was a most enjoyable day and perhaps we'll have the pleasure of your company again at some time in the not-too-distant future.

Our numbers at lunch have understandably been

down over the last couple of months, largely due to the cold weather, but we have no doubt that they'll be back when that sun shines.

Best regards 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

BALLARAT BRANCH



The 1WAGS memorial plinth

Recently we have been covering the journey of the 1WAGS memorial plinth from its site at the Ballarat Showgrounds to the front of Hut 48 at the airport.

This is of course a very fitting new home as the heritage buildings including Hut 48 survive from the aeon of 1WAGS in WWII. It is therefore even more fitting that the plinth has now been joined by the recreated 1WAGS banner, to form a more permanent reminder of the history of 1WAGS on the airport site.

I'd like to particularly thank

Signarama for the provision of the banner at cost and to Ballarat Council for the effort in placing the plinth into its new surroundings and the recent work on the carpark area around the Hut.

Our 1WAGS Co-ordinator and tireless historian Janet Bates created a banner to commemorate the activities of 1WAGS and its location at Ballarat Airport. The Air Force Association Ballarat Branch recently erected a permanent banner at Hut 48 Ballarat Airport in recognition of the vital

role 1 WAGS played in training airmen during WW2. The sign aims to give greater awareness to the community as to the heritage of the base.

Peter Dowling
President

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BALLARAT BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

BENDIGO BRANCH

The Bendigo Branch is currently in good shape with membership standing at 26 financial members of which 17 are ex-service (ordinary) members.

Although our members are racing 'Old Father Time' (Father Time partially originated from agricultural society and mythology in ancient Greece) we are still very active at our Branch.

In May we travelled to Axedale, approximately a 15 minute drive from

Bendigo for our monthly meeting, followed by an excellent lunch, a cold beverage and with loads of great atmosphere. Every member enjoyed the day out, so much so that

they requested a repeat performance in the not too distant future

Our monthly meeting that are held at the Kangaroo Flat RSL are well attended

and sometimes with spirited conversation and debate. At the July meeting the members decided that holding monthly meetings were unnecessary and it was decided that every second meeting would be a "Social Meeting" only, whereby the members would bring a plate and chew the fat, so to say. The first such meeting was held in August. Again well attended, and plenty of sumptuous food.

Our Guest speaker for



Branch members Frank Holland, Ann Dole and Lillian Holland.

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the occasion was our Vice President John McCosker, who recounted his experience at a Load Master on Lockheed C-130E Hercules in the lead-up to the Gulf War. A very informative and well researched speech.

Well Done John. July 27th was Korean Veterans Day. We remembered the day at the Lancefield Cenotaph by laying a wreath of remembers and raising the Australian New Zealand

and Korean National flags. They called the Korean war the Forgotten War, well unfortunately the community has also forgotten the occasion.

Reinhard Goschiniak
Secretary



Reinhard Goschiniak Secretary RAAFA Bendigo Branch & President Romsey Lancefield RSL and John McCosker OAM Vice President laying the wreath at the Lancefield Cenotaph.



Berris Simmons and Lillian Holland enjoying our lunch outing at the Axedale Tavern.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BENDIGO BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

RAAF RADAR BRANCH

Over the next twelve months, several of our WWII RAAF Radar Veterans will be celebrating their 100th Birthdays.

At this stage, we are considering making our 2025 annual ANZAC Day Reunion on Sunday 13 April 2025 to be a collective celebration of this memorable event for our Centenarian Members.

The possible venue for this Reunion would be the

offices of the Air Force Association (AFA), in Hawthorn. Please make a note of this tentative date of Sunday, 13 April 2025 in your calendar now. Further advice will be provided as our planning for this Special Event is finalised.

The first of our WWII RAAF Radar Members to celebrate their 100th Birthday was David Westwood, during October 2024, and on the 3 October David's local Doncaster



WWII RAAF Radar member, David Westwood celebrated his 100th birthday in October.

RSL Sub-Branch held a Special Celebration in recognition of his important milestone. Happy Centenary Birthday, David!

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE RAAF RADAR BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

VIETNAM VETERANS

Following last year's national commemoration of the '50th Anniversary of the end of hostilities by Australia's forces in Vietnam', VVAA Vic Branch

has declared it would be more beneficial for Sub-Branched to conduct their own Vietnam Veterans Day services on 18 August.

As we (sadly) accept that 'the years are beginning to take their toll', local services should attract more local attendees, who no longer could or would need to face

the distances to attend a service at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.

The Service began with a Vietnam Veterans Day

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Vietnam Veterans Branch members, Neil Boulton and Graeme Dodd with RAAF VVA banner.

speech by the Victorian Premier, Jacinta Allen, followed by a speech by Bob Elworthy, President VVAA (Vic Branch).

Following the speeches, MC Peter Meehan requested wreaths be laid at the Eternal Flame, The Last Post, Reveille and

National Anthem brought an end to the Service. It was a short service, around 30 minutes, but it wasn't time that mattered, it was the atmosphere and sincerity that counted.

On completion of the Shrine Commemoration Service, RAAF Vietnam Veterans returned to the 'western side', to gather for our own VV Day Service. This was followed by our annual lunch at the Mail Exchange Hotel.

Prior to the Service, around 100 people, including the Premier and state minister for Veterans attended the unveiling and dedication of

a new plaque in memory of all Vietnam Veterans beside a newly acquired 'Vietnam Veterans' Tree'

Chris Hudnott
President

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE VIETNAM VETERANS' BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

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 David Taffe Vietnam Vets.....	10/06/2024
AIRCDRE Ron Tayles (Ret'd) Headquarters.....	24/07/2024
Mr Francis Sims Headquarters.....	25/05/2024
Mrs Jan Henry Vietnam Veterans	14/09/2024

Let Us Not Forget

Air Force Association

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