

# Air Force Association

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Over 40,000 people attended the 2024 ANZAC day Dawn Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. (image courtesy RSL Victoria)



John Clarkson – President, AFA Victoria.

Our AGM was held on Thursday 30th May 2024. Unfortunately, due to COVID isolation protocols, neither the Treasurer nor I was able to attend. Perhaps our absence is the reason we were both re-elected to those roles!

I am also pleased to welcome Reinhard Goschiniak, Secretary of our Bendigo Branch, as a new Director to the Board.

On our Board, we have nine directors with an appropriate spread of skills. Earlier this year, one of our directors, Lee Stanway submitted her resignation due to work commitments and personal circumstances. We are very appreciative of the valuable contribution that Lee made to AFA Victoria.

Notwithstanding the healthy board, Division activities are seriously limited by the relatively few members who are prepared to volunteer their time for the benefit of all.

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At our recent AGM, I report the following President's Report to members:

The Air Force Association Victorian Division remains reasonably stable

The Division is financially sound with the majority of income generated by commercial property leases and a Victorian government grant for limited welfare activities. However, property expenses are worryingly increasing. Last financial year, a small surplus was generated. There is moderate scope for more welfare assistance, although fortunately, demand is low. Most members are well organised and independent.

Membership took a dip over the COVID period but now holds steady at 500+. Of concern looking forward, an estimated 30% are 84 years or older and we are not seeing later generations too interested in joining. The Division attends all Victorian-based transition seminars and while many good conversations occur, few new members result. The main line we take is for them to stay connected and their small membership contribution assists others more needy. The sense we get is that

many are just keen to move on.

That said, we are aware of several groups of veterans who meet regularly in fellowship but do not want to become more formally attached to the Association. So be it.

However, AFA Victoria continues to retain good relationships with many other ESOs based in Victoria.

One other limitation for AFA Victoria is the location of the office. Over time, the demographic of veterans has moved from the eastern suburbs to the west, roughly initiated when the majority of Air Force work moved from St Kilda Rd to Laverton in the 1990's.

On a final note, most will be aware of the recent decision taken by Defence to demolish 19 structures at Point Cook. Given the significant heritage value of Point Cook and the concerns that arose from this decision, we have successfully engaged with History and Heritage Branch of Air Force to be more closely involved with government decision making in future.

**John Clarkson**

*President*

## ANZAC DAY 2024

**On the 109th anniversary of the ANZAC landing in Gallipoli, 40,000 Victorians brave a cold Melbourne morning to gather at the Shrine of Remembrance to honour and remember past and current servicemen and servicewomen.**



AFA Victoria members John Delia and Bob Schouten getting ready to march with the Peacekeepers who led this year's ANZAC Day March in Melbourne.

Following the official Dawn Service, veterans and families gathered for the traditional ANZAC Day March, with AFA Victoria and Branches were well represented in the March.

This year's theme of 'Peacekeeping' recognised the more than 70,000 Australians who served (and serve) in critical peace-keeping roles across the country and overseas. Since 1947, the Australian Defence Force has been involved in over 60 United Nations and other peacekeeping missions.

AFA Victoria Vice President (and former Peacekeeper), Wing Commander Daryll Topp (Retd) was invited to deliver the keynote speech and his address was focused on this theme. WGCdr Topp was deployed to Sinai Peninsula as a peacekeeper with the ANZAC contingent in 1983 as part of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO).

You can read his speech in full on the AFA Victoria website [here](#).

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AFA banner in readiness for the Melbourne march.



Geelong Branch members (with family members) at the Geelong ANZAC Day March - Les Crowe, Stretch Contelj, Tony De Brabander, John Price, Errol Fisk and Phil Royce.



WGCdr Daryll Topp (Retd) pictured with his wife Gill, delivered a keynote address on his experience as a peacekeeper on the Sinai Peninsula.

## AFA NATIONAL BODY ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT

**The Air Force Association is pleased to announce the election of new leadership following its Annual General Meeting held in Melbourne yesterday - 24 May 2024.**

Air Vice-Marshal Joe Iervasi AM, CSC (Retd) has been elected as President, while current board member and Director of Communications Wing Commander Deanna Nott has been elected as Vice President.

These appointments follow productive discussions with the Federation Council, highlighting a shared commitment to advancing the Association's objectives and supporting the broader Air Force community.

Most recently, Air Vice-Marshal Iervasi held the position of Air Force's Air Commander Australia, a role responsible for the provision of operational support to the Chief of Air Force and the joint force.

"We look forward to an exciting future and I am confident that our combined dedication will drive continued growth and success for the Association," said Air Vice-Marshal Iervasi.

"I would like to thank outgoing President Carl Schiller and Vice President Peter McDermott for their stellar contribution over many years."

## VALE: RECOGNITION FOR CPL BERTIE WHICKER

A group known as the Brighton (Vic) Cemeterians has instituted a program to recognise the service of deceased Australian veterans by placing national flags at their graves for the weeks preceding ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.



Cpl Herbert Walter (Bertie) Whicker.

In keeping with this tradition, Air Force Association - Victoria President, John Clarkson, placed an Australian flag on the grave of Cpl Herbert Walter (Bertie) Whicker at the cemetery on 19th April 2024.

Who is Bertie Whicker? Tragically, Bertie was the first fatality for the newly formed Australian Air Force. He died in an aircraft accident at Point Cook on 6th April 1921, just six days after the Air Force was formed. Bertie was just 22 years old. The aircraft was an Avro 504k which was on a training mission and the pilot fortunately survived the accident.

Bertie had joined the first AIF in October 1917 and served in the Australian Flying Corps as an engine fitter on No 5 (Training) Squadron in England. He returned to Australia in April 1919 and discharged in August that year. He subsequently re-joined the, by then, Australian Air Corps in July 1920.

If you have a relative who is a veteran buried in Brighton Cemetery and you would like them to be honoured as part of the Brighton Cemeterians program, please contact the AFA Victoria office on (03) 9813 4600.



AFA Victoria President, John Clarkson (centre) with Vice President Waverley RSL Sub-Branch, Geoff Dare (right) and Chair of the Brighton Cemeterians (left).

## 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>

## B24 LIBERATOR COMMEMORATION (AT THE SHRINE)



Attendees at the B-24 commemoration service at the Shrine of Remembrance (from left): 21 SQN, FSGT Tapp; President, AFA Victoria B-24 Liberator Branch, Paul Rourke; B-24 Liberator Memorial Restoration Patron, Carl Schiller; President, B24 Liberator Restoration Group, Lyn Gorman; former CO 21SQN, Bob Schouten; CO 21 SQN, WGCDR Rob Gill CSC; RAAF Williams Base Warrant Officer, WOFF Brad Parmenter; and 21 SQN, SGT Whitley.



Carl Schiller, Past President, Air Force Association and Patron of the B-24 Liberator Memorial Fund gave the B-24 Liberator commemorative address.

On 22 March, a wreath-laying service was held at the Shrine of Remembrance for the B-24 Liberator aircraft and to commemorate all air and ground crew who served with B-24 Liberator in the Pacific.

The service was held close to the date when A72-176 was sold by the RAAF, on 23 March 1948.

Group Captain Carl Schiller OAM CSM (Retd), patron of the B24 Liberator Museum and past President of Air Force Association gave the B-24 Liberator commemorative address. Carl Schiller and AFA Victoria President, John Clarkson also laid wreaths.

The B-24 Liberator was an American heavy bomber with high cruise speed and long range capabilities. There were 287 B-24s flown by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) during the Second World War, and they were an integral part of the air war in the Pacific. The RAAF discontinued use of B-24s in 1948 and in due course, they were decommissioned and sold off.

In 1988, the B-24 Liberator Memorial Restoration Fund was formed to buy and restore a B-24 Liberator as a memorial to all allied airmen who had served with them. The restored aircraft is made up of parts from two original B-24s, including A72-176.

Watch the B-24 Commemorative Service [here](#)

Find out more about B-24 Liberator Australia [here](#)



## STAY IN TOUCH

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

## THE CAPE OTWAY WWII 13RS 'DOOVER' BUNKER IS DETERIORATING

The WWII 13RS Doover bunker at Cape Otway, built in early 1942 and now housing the WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive/Interactive Exhibition, is currently seriously degrading with “concrete cancer”. RAAF Radar Branch’s Chris Harnath explains.



RAAF Radar Veterans and Members at the Dedication Ceremony for the WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive Exhibition at 13RS Cape Otway 19 February 2022 (Photo: A. Runtin).

The WWII 13RS (Radar Station) Doover stands in the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct and is the responsibility of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCPA). It is thought that the 13RS Doover maybe the only complete radar station structure from WWII remaining in Australia.

In 2023 GORCPA applied to the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for a Heritage Grant of \$150,000 to fund the required rectification work on the structure of the 13RS Doover.

The rectification work is critical for the futures of both the historical Doover structure containing its original radar aerial turning equipment, as well as the WWII RAAF Radar Exhibition that it now also houses.

The Victorian RAAF Radar Association/Air Force Association Victoria RAAF Radar Branch formally

supported the GORCPA Grant application and was also able to have similar letters of support provided by then Air Force Association President, Carl Schiller, and the RAAF Director General History and Heritage – Air Commodore Lawson, OAM.

In supporting the Heritage Grant for 13RS Doover, Air Commodore Lawson said, “13RS ... remains an important reminder to current and future generations of a period when the Australian mainland came under direct threat from an adversary and of Australia’s ability to adapt and apply world-leading technologies to help counter that threat”.

The decision on the grant application remains pending at time of publication.

Air Force Association members are encouraged to visit the 13RS Doover WWII RAAF Radar Interpretive/Interactive Exhibition situated within the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct of the Great Ocean Road National Park. AFA members and their guests are entitled to a 50% discount on the entrance fee for the entire Cape Otway Lightstation precinct (upon presenting their AFA badge).

### DID YOU KNOW?

It is possible the term ‘Doover’ may have come from WWII radar personnel who were sworn to maintain secrecy around WWII radar, and referred to a radar station as the ‘Doover’ – possibly derived from the old Aussie slang ‘Dooverlackey’.



For all national Air Force Association news visit our website!

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

## 9SQN CELEBRATES A NEW CHAPTER



9 Squadron Association patron and former Commanding Officer, Air Chief Marshal (ret'd) Angus Houston is shown the Squadron Standard following the 9 Squadron reactivation ceremony at RAAF Base Point Cook, Victoria. (Photo: Department of Defence)

**As No. 9 Squadron gears up to introduce the MQ-4C Triton this year, the Squadron’s Standard was ceremoniously reactivated on 28 March at RAAF Base Point Cook in Victoria.**

This ceremony not only heralded the squadron’s revival but also signified a new chapter of its heritage and identity.

Also known as Squadron Colours, a Squadron Standard is a ceremonial flag awarded by order of the Sovereign for 25 years of service by operational, combat support, intelligence or battlespace control squadrons and units. Squadron Standards have always been important for military units as an outward sign of unity, loyalty and achievement.

Commanding Officer 9 Squadron Wing Commander Lawry Benier said “This ceremony is a key step in the reactivation of our squadron, recognising its heritage and inspiring us toward our own unique mission as part of today’s integrated force,” he said.

The reactivation involved the 9 Squadron Standard ceremoniously transferred from the RAAF Museum, laid at the Holy Trinity Chapel at Point Cook, to the custody of the newly reformed unit.

Boasting a storied history of valour and service, 9 Squadron was established amidst World War 2 and the Vietnam War. Originally formed in 1939 as a maritime reconnaissance squadron, it now prepares to reintegrate into active duty.

In recognising the transformative potential of the MQ-4C Triton in safeguarding Australia’s maritime interests, 9 Squadron Association Patron and former Commanding Officer of 9 Squadron, Air Chief Marshal (ret'd) Sir Angus Houston, expressed his pride in the squadron’s re-establishment.

“This represents an impressive advancement for Australia and its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability. The fleet will support a broad range of activities, integrated into our force structure,” he said.

The reactivation ceremony serves as a reminder of 9 Squadron’s enduring legacy and dedication to service.

“The aviators of 9 Squadron will now proudly take our Squadron Standard to its new home at RAAF Base Edinburgh,” Wing Commander Benier said.

(Story and images courtesy Department of Defence)



9 Squadron Association patron and former Commanding Officer, Air Chief Marshal (ret'd) Angus Houston is shown the Squadron Standard following the 9 Squadron reactivation ceremony at RAAF Base Point Cook, Victoria. (Photo: Department of Defence)

Air Force Association President - Victoria, John Clarkson attended a Department of Veterans Affairs briefing on the measures for veterans contained in the recent Federal Budget.



**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

**RICHARD MARLES MP**  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

and

**THE HON MATT KEOGH MP**  
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

**SUPPORTING AUSTRALIA'S VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

The Albanese Labor Government is investing an additional \$477 million to increase our support to the more than 340,000 veterans and dependents accessing services through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

The Government is delivering on its commitment to implement and deliver simplified and harmonised veteran compensation legislation, which was the first recommendation of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The 2024-25 Budget includes \$222 million additional funding for veteran and family entitlements and supports to be made available through the new simplified veteran compensation legislation, ensuring veterans and their families can better understand, and access the support they are entitled to faster.

The Albanese Government recognises the important role that the Australian Public Service plays in delivering services for Australians, and in the 2022-23 October Budget we invested more than \$233.9 million to engage 500 new frontline staff at DVA to eliminate the veteran compensation claims backlog.

Thanks to the hard work of those additional staff, that backlog has now been cleared, delivering on our commitment and ahead of the deadline recommended by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

Now we're investing further, with \$186 million towards the employment of an additional 141 staff, to ensure backlogs don't re-emerge and to process claims faster.

This Budget will boost Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing Programs, with an additional \$48.4 million funding to ensure there are no gaps in service delivery. These investments ensure funding for DVA remains at a record high, now better funded than it has been in three decades. The Albanese Government is committed to delivering a better future for Defence personnel, veterans and families, by ensuring they can access the services and supports they need and deserve.

The provisions for veterans in this year's Federal Budget are not big but continue with recent investments in veterans' services. Some items to note include:

- The harmonised veterans' legislation is due to be tabled in the middle of this year for commencement in July 2026.
- The declaration that the claims backlog has been eliminated does not mean that all claims have been decided. Rather that all claims have been assigned a case officer.
- The increased staffing reflects increasing claims. 75,000 claims are apparently in process.
- 45,000 veterans and spouses are receiving benefits supporting the care-in-home program.
- The focus for the time being of the Veterans' Crisis and Transition Housing program is policy development.

A summary of the DVA ministerial statement is to the left. Please click on the image for the full transcript.

For the first time since its inception, the same Wing claimed both National Cadet of the Year and National Instructor of the Year Awards at the Air Force Cadets National Awards Night.



AFC National Award winners & 4WG representatives

Held on 4th May at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra, the Air Force Association was represented by then Air Force Association President Carl Schiller OAM, CSM and Honorary Treasurer/Secretary Peter Colliver OAM.

Every year, each Wing around Australia selects their Cadet and Instructors of the Year who have displayed the values of the AAFC and demonstrated an exceptional contribution to their Squadron, Wing and community. A national level selection board then selects the National Award winners.

Cadet Warrant Officer Claudia Pollard of 402 Squadron - Watsonia, from 4 Wing, was named the AAFC National Cadet of the Year and CPL (AAFC) Kyle Charles of 401 Squadron - Surrey Hills also from 4 Wing, was awarded the AAFC National Instructor of the Year for 2024.

CWOFF Claudia Pollard also accepted the trophy for winning the National Fieldcraft Competition last month, as captain of the 4 Wing Team.

CWOFF Pollard then joined the Chief of Air Force and the Warrant Officer – Air Force in the presentation of acknowledgements to sponsors of the Air Force Cadets Foundation, which included the Air Force Association and was accepted by Carl Schiller.

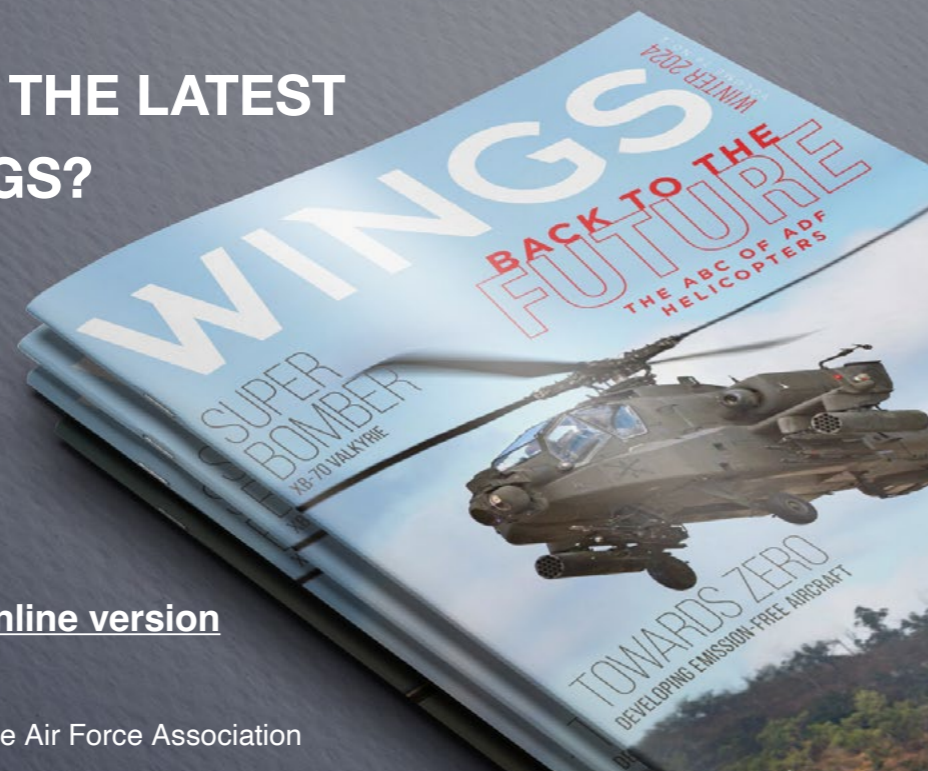


AFA President, Carl Schiller was presented with a sponsor acknowledgement from CWOFF Pollard.



Air Force Association's Peter Colliver OAM (L) and Carl Schiller OAM CSM at the AFC National Awards dinner in Canberra on 4 May.

## HAVE YOU READ THE LATEST EDITION OF WINGS?



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On 24 March 1944 during WWII, one of the most audacious prison breaks in history was carried out with the mass escape of Allied soldiers from the German prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft III.

Although the German Luftwaffe designed the Stalag Luft III camp to be escape-proof, the audacious, real-life prison break immortalised in the 1963 movie 'The Great Escape' proved otherwise.

Stalag Luft III was a maximum-security camp built 160km southeast of Berlin near what is now Zagan, Poland. It was built to house captured Allied airmen, mostly officers, many of whom had made previous escapes. Elaborate measures were taken to prevent tunnelling, such as raising huts off the ground and burying microphones along the camp's perimeter fencing.

The audacious break-out was masterminded by RAF pilot Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, who had been shot down over France while assisting with the evacuation of Dunkirk. It was the largest of its kind during World War II and involved the construction of not one but three tunnels.

Bushell appointed F/L Wally Flood RCAF to design and oversee the construction of the tunnels and in the spring of 1943, over 600 prisoners of war began building three tunnels with the code names of 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry'. The plan called for each tunnel to stretch for more than 350 feet to the protective cover of the forest outside the camp's perimeter fence.

On the night of 24th/25th March 1944, the daring escape took place with the original plan to get at least two hundred prisoners out at 30-second intervals. Each man would head to Block 109, where they would then be directed to Room 17, which was the final check out station before crossing to Block 104. However, on the night of the escape only 76 men, dressed in makeshift civilian clothes and carrying forged identification documents, managed to get away before the alarm was raised. Unfortunately, the prisoners found that 'Harry' had not been dug far enough and came up a little short of the tree line beyond the camp's perimeter fence, slowing the extraction of men considerably.

460 Squadron had 204 aircrew taken prisoner during WWII with many ending up in Stalag Luft III, one notable officer was 460 Sqn Commanding Officer, W/C Robert Norman who, after only a few weeks in command, was shot down on the 8th October 1943, whilst on the second operation of his second tour. W/C Norman's job was to sit with a list of the 200 escapers and 20 reserves, ticking each name off as they entered. The list was quickly destroyed once the Germans became aware of the mass escape in progress.

Following the escape, the Germans made an inventory of the camp and uncovered how extensive the operation had been.

Four thousand bed boards had gone missing, as well as 90 complete double bunk beds, 635 mattresses, 192 bed covers, 161 pillowcases, 52 twenty-man tables, 10 single tables, 34 chairs, 76 benches, 1,212 bed bolsters, 1,370 beading battens, 1,219 knives, 478 spoons, 582 forks, 69 lamps, 246 water cans, 30 shovels, 300 m (1,000 ft) of electric wire, 180 m (600 ft) of rope, and 3,424 towels. 1,700 blankets had been used, along with more than 1,400 Klim cans.

Electric cable had been stolen after being left unattended by German workers and because they had not reported the theft, they were executed by the Gestapo. Thereafter each bed was supplied with only nine bed boards, which were counted regularly by the guards.

Oberst Friedrich Wilhelm Von Lindeiner was Commandant of Stalag Luft III from its opening in April 1942 until he was relieved of command after the Great Escape in February 1945. He was later wounded by Russian troops advancing towards Berlin while acting as second in command of an infantry unit and then surrendered to advancing British forces as the war ended. Von Lindeiner donated material and a stone for the memorial to the murdered 50 escapees down the road toward Sagan.

Von Lindeiner was imprisoned for two years at the British prisoner of war camp known as the "London Cage". He willingly testified during the British investigation concerning the Stalag Luft III murders and Allied former prisoners at Stalag Luft III testified that he had followed the Geneva Conventions concerning the treatment of POWs and had won the respect of the senior prisoners. He was repatriated in 1947 and died in 1963 at the age of 82.

A furious Adolf Hitler personally ordered the execution of 50 of the 73 re-captured escapees as a warning to other prisoners. In violation of the Geneva Convention, Gestapo agents drove the airmen to various remote locations near their capture points and executed them.

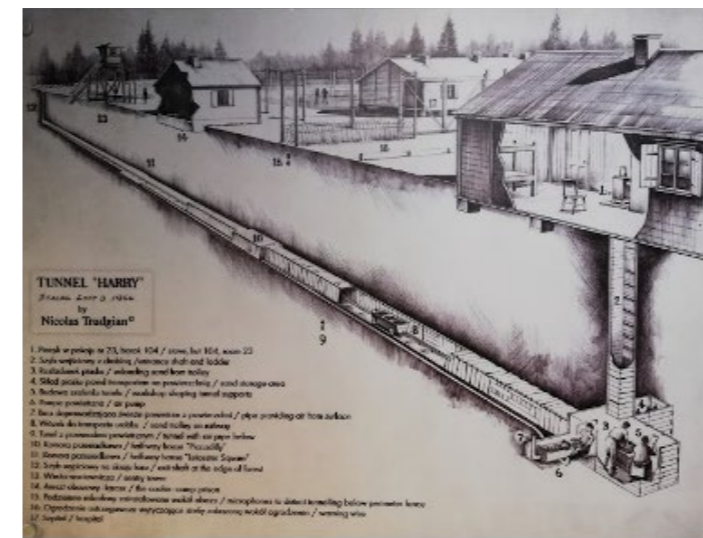
Following the war, British investigators brought the Gestapo killers to justice. In 1947, a military tribunal found 18 Nazis guilty of war crimes for shooting the recaptured prisoners of war, and 13 of them were executed. Only three of the 76 escapees got away successfully and eventually made it back to England, Sgt Per Bergsland (NOR) 332 Sqn RAF, 2nd Lt Jens E. Muller (NOR) 331 Sqn RAF and F/L Bram van der Stok (NED) 41Sqn RAF.

**MORE:** [Read about S/L John E. A. Williams Audacious Escape](#) (Source: abc.net.au)

On this 80th Anniversary, we remember the 50 allied airmen, named below, executed by the Gestapo between the 29th and 31st March 1944.



Australian Paul Royle (d 2015), a former RAF pilot was one of 76 prisoners who carried out the Great Escape. Of 73 airmen who were recaptured, Royle was among just 23 who were spared execution.



Artist, Nicolas Trudgian's, impression of tunnel "Harry".



Markings in the forest today show the route of "Harry". Also shows the perimeter fence and the exit point, just short of the tree line.

**LEST WE FORGET.**

- F/O Henry J. Birkland (CAN) 72 Sqn RAF
- F/L Patrick W. Langford (CAN) 16 OTU RAF
- F/t Gordon E. Brettell (GBR) 133 Sqn RAF
- F/L Thomas B. Leigh (AUS) 76 Sqn RAF**
- S/L Leslie G. "Johnny" Bull (GBR) 109 Sqn RAF
- F/L James L. Long (GBR) 9 Sqn RAF
- S/L Roger J. Bushell (GBR) 92 Sqn RAF
- F/L Marcinkus Romas (LTU) 1 Sqn RAF
- F/L Michael J. Casey (GBR) 57 Sqn RAF
- Lt Clement A. N. McGarr (ZAF) 2 Sqn SAAF
- S/L James Catanach (AUS) 455 Sqn RAAF**
- F/L George E. McGill (CAN) 103 Sqn RAF
- P/O Arnold G. Christensen (NZL) 26 Sqn RAF
- F/L Harold J. Milford (GBR) 226 Sqn RAF
- P/O Dennis H. Cochran (GBR) 10 OTU RAF
- F/O Jerzy Mondschein (POL) 304 Sqn RAF
- S/L Ian E. K. Cross (GBR) 103 Sqn
- F/O Kazimierz Pawluk (POL) 305 Sqn RAF
- Lt Halldor Espelid (NOR) 331 Sqn RAF
- F/L Henri Picard (BEL) 350 Sqn RAF
- F/L Brian H. Evans (GBR) 49 Sqn RAF
- F/O John Pohe (NZL) 51 Sqn RAF
- Lt Nils Jorgen Fuglesang (NOR) 332 Sqn RAF
- Lt Bernard W. M. Scheidhauer (FRA) 131 Sqn RAF
- Lt Johannes S. Gouws (ZAF) 40 Sqn SAAF
- P/O Sotiris Skanzikas (GRC) 336 Sqn RAF
- F/L William J. Grisman (GBR) 109 Sqn RAF
- Lt Rupert J. Stevens (ZAF) 12 Sqn SAAF
- F/L Alastair D. Gunn (GBR) 1 PRU RAF
- F/O Robert C. Stewart (GBR) 77 Sqn RAF
- F/L Albert H. Hake (AUS) 72 RAF**
- F/O John Gifford Slower (ARG) 142 Sqn RAF
- F/L Charles P. Hall (GBR) 1 PRU RAF
- F/O Denys O. Street (GBR) 207 Sqn RAF
- F/L Anthony R. H. Hayter (GBR) 148 Sqn RAF
- F/L Cyril D. Swain (GBR) 105 Sqn RAF
- F/L Edgar S. Humphreys (GBR) 107 Sqn RAF
- F/O Pawel Tobolski (POL) 301 Sqn RAF
- F/O Gordon A. Kidder (CAN) 156 Sqn RAF
- F/L Amost Valenta (CZE) 311 Sqn RAF
- F/L Reginald V. "Rusty" Kierath (AUS) 450 Sqn RAAF**
- F/L Gilbert W. Walenn (GBR) 25 OTU RAF
- F/L Antoni Kiewnarski (POL) 305 Sqn RAF
- F/L James C. Wernham (CAN) 405 Sqn RCAF
- S/L Thomas G. Kirby-Green (GBR) 40 Sqn RAF
- F/L George W. Wiley (CAN) 112 Sqn RAF
- F/O Wlodzimierz A. Kolanowski (POL) 301 Sqn RAF
- S/L John E. A. Williams DFC (AUS) 450 Sqn RAAF**
- F/O Stanislaw Z. Krol (POL) 64 Sqn RAF
- F/L Marcinkus Romas (LTU) 1 Sqn RAF

## D-DAY – 80 YEARS AGO

**This year we marked the 80th anniversary of one of the most important events of World War II, D-Day.**

The morning of 6 June 1944 saw nearly 160,000 Allied troops cross the English Channel as part of the largest amphibious invasion in military history - the first step in the war's liberation of France, and the rest of Europe.

Approximately 3,200 Australians participated in the D-Day landings on 6 June. Thousands more would serve during the Normandy campaign and beyond.

Throughout the course of that historic day, nearly 160,000 Allied troops crossed the English Channel for the Battle of Normandy. Known as Operation Overlord, it involved almost 7,000 sea-going vessels, a naval armada that stretched as far as the eye could see.

Our nation's main contribution came in the air, where approximately 1,000 Australian airmen flew with Royal Australian Air Force squadrons, and a further 1,800 operated on attachment to the Royal Air Force. Australian pilots flew alongside their Allied counterparts, conducting bombing raids, reconnaissance missions, and aerial support operations crucial to the success of the landings.

In the fleet some 500 members of the Royal Australian Navy served on attachment with the Royal Navy. A small number of Australian soldiers also served on

the ground with the British Army. On top of this, 10,000 Australians waited in training and reserve pools, ready to join operational squadrons as the campaign's casualties mounted.

Thirteen Australians were killed on 6 June in Operation Overlord, and hundreds more were killed over the course of the campaign while flying in support of the ground forces in Normandy.

In the days and weeks that followed D-Day, bitter fighting ensued as the Allies attempted to break out of the beachheads. Tens of thousands of casualties were incurred by both sides. In fact, in terms of total casualties June 1944 was the worst month in the history of the RAAF.

It is estimated 555,000 Australians served overseas in the World War II, with more than 39,000 losing their lives.

Eighty years after D-Day, we remember all those who served in the Second World War and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Stories of D-Day: Spitfires on the Continent by Dr Karl James <https://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/66/spitfires>



A Spitfire of No. 453 Squadron, RAAF, being prepared for take-off from Ford, England, on D-Day, 6 June 1944. The black and white invasion stripes were applied for "the big show" two days earlier. AWM UK1426 (Image source: Australian War Memorial)



One of the most famous images of WWII, depicting the landing of troops of E Company, 16th Infantry Regiment of the United States 1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One) at Omaha Beach in the early hours of 6 June 1944. (Image source: Australian War Memorial)

## OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE VICTORIAN VETERANS COUNCIL



**The Victorian Government is seeking expressions of interest for two board positions with the Victorian Veterans Council.**

Please note that to be eligible, an applicant must be a member of the ex-service community and their nomination must be supported by an ex-service organisation other than Melbourne Legacy and RSL Victoria.

### Opportunity to join the Victorian Veterans Council (Cont.)

If any AFA-Vic member wishes to apply, please contact the office at least a couple of business days prior to the application closing date of 4th July 2024.

#### ABOUT THE VICTORIAN VETERANS COUNCIL

The Victorian Veterans Council (VVC) is an independent statutory body that provides advice to the Victorian Government about issues impacting the Victorian veteran community, and plays an important role in promoting the wellbeing of the Victorian ex-service community.

The VVC also supports the welfare activities of ex-service organisations and commemoration and educative projects under its two grant programs.

Two positions on the VVC's board are available for application to members of the Victorian ex-service community nominated by an ex-service organisation.

To be eligible, you must be a member of the ex-service community and provide a letter from an office bearer of a Victorian ex-service organisation recommending you for a position on the VVC.

Members of the ex-service community may be nominated by ex-service organisations other than Melbourne Legacy or RSL Victoria.

#### HOW TO APPLY

Applications close Thursday, 4 July 2024. Visit the [Join a public board](#) website to apply.

Applicants are encouraged to review the position description and requirements before applying. Applicants may be considered for additional vacancies arising.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please contact the Office for Veterans at [veterans@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:veterans@dffh.vic.gov.au)

## 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 Delia	0408 054 122
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

#### SPRING 2024

Contributions by: 30 August 2024  
Publication: 13 September 2024

#### 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

## FALLEN WWII PILOT REMEMBERED IN THE NETHERLANDS

A memorial service was recently held for World War 2 RAAF pilot Flight Sergeant Charles Carr Atkin, who was killed in action when his Royal Air Force (RAF) Wellington aircraft (Z1109) crashed in The Netherlands after being hit by anti-aircraft fire on 4 March, 1943.



Flight Sergeant Charles Carr Atkin, left, and his war grave at Flushing (Vlissingen) Northern Cemetery in The Netherlands.

The 2nd May ceremony at Flushing (Vlissingen) Northern Cemetery in The Netherlands was attended by members of Flight Sergeant Atkin's family who travelled from Australia, along with Australian Government representatives and members of the local community.

On the night of 4 March 1943, FLTSGT Atkin and the crew of Wellington Z1109 were tasked to drop leaflets over Breskens in The Netherlands. In addition to FLTSGT Atkin, the crew consisted of four RAF personnel: SGTs CE Gunning, RH Roskell, GS Loveday and JA Molloy. During their mission, Wellington Z1109 was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed into a field.

SGT Molloy bailed out over the sea and remains missing, while SGTs Gunning, Roskell and Loveday safely bailed out over land and were taken as prisoners of war. FLTSGT Atkin was the sole occupant of the aircraft when it crashed, and his remains were buried at Flushing (Vlissingen) Northern Cemetery.

However, in 2013, a civilian contractor mistakenly excavated the crash site, unearthing aircraft components and additional human remains. After a meticulous investigation, a Defence Identification Board confirmed the remains were additional remains of FLTSGT Atkin.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission reunified FLTSGT Atkin's remains on October 3, 2023, prior to the memorial service on May 2.

The family expressed their gratitude to the Australian Government and the ADF for organising the service, as well as to local volunteers who care for the graves.

FLTSGT Atkin's niece, Caroline Storch, said the service for her uncle was very moving.

*"Now he will never be forgotten. We, his family, thank you all."*

Director General RAAF History and Heritage Branch Air Commodore Rob Lawson said memorials and commemorations of war dead were important to the member's surviving family as well as the ADF.

"I am delighted we were able to organise the memorial service in coordination with the family," Air Commodore Lawson said.

"We will continue to honour those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom."

(With thanks to defence.gov.au for this story)

Full story: <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2024-06-03/fallen-pilot-remembered>



Family members stand with Deputy Head of Mission and Post Security Officer, The Netherlands, James Buttigieg, Reverend Cannon Stephen Murray, and Air Vice-Marshal Dianne Turton. Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Carney Elias.

### DVA 2024 CLIENT INSIGHTS SURVEY

The Department of Veterans' Affairs' 2024 Client Insights Survey is now open.

Share feedback on your experiences with DVA and any ideas for improvement.

Survey closes Monday, 8 July 2024.

Click here to access the survey: [Department of Veterans Affairs \(prima.com.au\)](https://prima.com.au)

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF KALAMATA

The 83rd Anniversary of the Battle of Kalamata was marked with a commemoration service at the Australian Hellenic Memorial in Melbourne's Domain Gardens on 23 April 2024.

Hosted by the Society of Kalamata 23 March Melbourne, John Delia AFA Victoria's Communications Director) was invited to represent the AFA at the wreath laying ceremony, held to honour those who fought and died in the defence of Greece.

On 6th of April 1941, German forces invaded mainland Greece through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and quickly moved south to overrun the country.

The Battle of Kalamata, named for a small city on the southern coast of the Peloponnese peninsula in southern Greece, took place on 29 April 1941. It pitted the 2nd New Zealand Division and British units against elements of the German 5th Panzer Division and some SS units and was fought as a delaying action to assist the evacuation of some 58,000 Imperial and Commonwealth personnel from Greece by Royal Navy and other Allied ships.

RAAF No.3 Squadron was stationed in Egypt under RAF command and control flying Gloster Gauntlets and Gloster Gladiators which would have been involved in the battle.



AFA Victoria Communications director, John Delia, lays a wreath at the Battle of Kalamata commemoration service.



JAN WAR MEMORIAL 063885

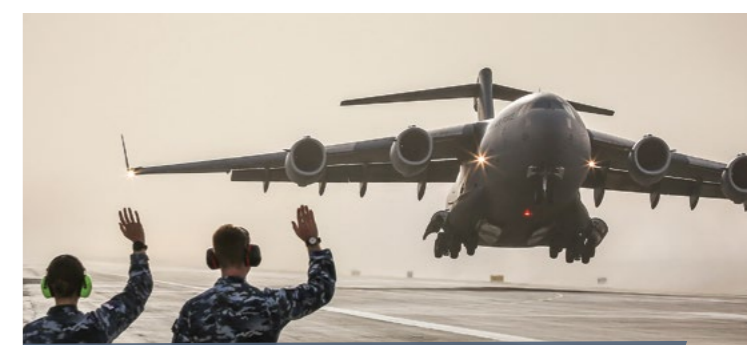
British and Australian troops marching through Kalamata to the embarkation point during the withdrawal of Allied forces.

The battle to save Kalamata by the Allied forces was quite significant in stopping the advances of the Axis powers, however the strength and numbers of the Axis powers meant that the Allied forces were forced to withdraw and civilian population to leave their homes.

"Tell them we were here!" was the call that went out across Kalamata, as the last embarkation boats rowed away, leaving eight thousand allies, Australians, New Zealanders, British, Indians, Cypriots, Palestinians (Muslims and Jews), Yugoslavs & Greeks, on the beaches of Kalamata to make their own way home.

Approximately 50,000 evacuees were able to escape; 8,000 others were captured.

The action at Kalamata marked the end of the larger Battle of Greece.



### 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



## AROUND THE BRANCHES

### BALLARAT BRANCH

Although accompanied by a much smaller representation than in previous years, I was honoured once again to March in the ANZAC Day service on behalf of the Ballarat Branch of the Air Force Association.

It is humbling to experience the appreciation of the crowds of Ballarat residents who lined the streets to honour those who have represented this country in times of conflict.

At the request of the RSL, this year - as in previous years - a book was laid rather than the traditional floral wreath. This ensures the event will live on over the years in the minds of the recipients of the book, who will be students at one of the local schools.

During our May social luncheon meeting, we took the opportunity to acknowledge our long time AFA member Keith Pitman for his dedication and volunteerism, in particular for the sale of Anzac badges. Keith has been selling badges for over 30 years and for 2024, Keith

made sales of over \$18,000 on behalf of the RSL.

Janet presented Keith with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Air Force Association, as well as a gift donated by 1WAGS sponsor APCO.

**Peter Dowling**  
*President*



Ballarat Branch President Peter Dowling and 1Wags Co-ordinator Janet Bates presenting Keith Pitman with his Certificate of Appreciation.



Ballarat Branch President, Peter Dowling at the Anzac Day march in Ballarat.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BALLARAT BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

### BENDIGO BRANCH

At our April meeting we invited our AFA Victoria President John Clarkson CSC to join us in commemorating the 103rd anniversary of the establishment of the RAAF.

A lovely, decorated cake, complete with the RAAF insignia was cut by John and our branch President Peter Simmons PSM. The Ladies of the Kangaroo Flat RSL provide a sumptuous lunch, which was enjoyed by all.

Our May meeting was held at the Axedale Tavern (Central Victoria) and was attended by around 20 members and partners. The Bendigo Branch would also like to welcome the following members to the Air Force Association family:

- Ken Arnold
- Neil Backman
- Walter Crompton
- Sonia Sguario
- Sharron Stemmer

Our long-time member and Darwin Defender, Mr Bill Hosking celebrated his 100th birthday on 26th April this year. Congratulations Bill, and I hope that King Charles paid for the stamp on your milestone birthday greeting!

Bendigo Branch also respectfully acknowledges the passing of Judith (Judy) Mary Gaffee. Vale.

### Bendigo Branch (Cont.)

#### CATALINA'S AND LAKE BOGA

While returning from an RSL funeral in Swan Hill, John McCosker and I happened upon this Catalina Silo Art near Lake Boga and stopped to investigate.

The art is a depiction of Catalina A24-30, a replica of which can be found at the Lake Boga Catalina Museum.

A little about the link between Catalina's and Lake Boga...Catalina A24-30 & Commanding Officer George "Scotty" Allan George Urquhart (Scotty) Allan served in the RAF on the Western Front during the First World War.

In 1929 he was recruited by Charles Ulm as a pilot

with Australian National Airways where he flew on the first airmail flights from Sydney to Brisbane with Charles Kingsford Smith. In 1933 he flew with Ulm and P. G. Taylor on the record-breaking flight from England to Australia in 'Faith in Australia'.

During Second World War he was seconded to the RAAF as a trainer and after the war was a senior executive with Qantas. In 1941 Allan was a member of the Qantas crew which brought flying boats from San Diego to Sydney for the RAAF. During 1941 Allan was seconded to the RAAF as Wing-Commander and was C.O. of various stations including Rathmines on Lake Macquarie, where he trained Catalina crews, and

No. 1 Flying Boat Repair Depot at Lake Boga.

Allan was married to the artist Ailsa Allan (1899-1943) who studied with Thea Proctor, Adelaide Perry, and William Dobell at the Julian Ashton School. Dobell spent time at both Rathmines and Lake Boga, which is where he possibly met Allan as well as being introduced through Allan's wife, Ailsa.

**Reinhard Goschiniak**  
*Secretary*



AFA Victoria President John Clarkson and Bendigo Branch President Peter Simmons cutting the RAAF anniversary cake

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



Catalina Silo Art near lake Boga



Members of Bendigo Branch celebrating RAAF's 103 Birthday



#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS IN THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

To assist veterans to access pathways to future employment, the Victorian Government will host Veteran Employment Workshops and deliver the Veteran Employment Network and Mentor Program, pairing current and former Australian Defence Force members with mentors to assist in job applications and career advancement.

If you would like to learn more or get involved, please visit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/job-opportunities-veterans-victorian-public-sector>

Hello everyone

In opening, it's my pleasure to formally welcome new member Wayne Urmston into our Branch.

Wayne did service with the AirTC between June 1970 – June 1975 and we look forward to meeting up with him personally at one of our monthly luncheons, perhaps at some stage in the near future or as time allows.

The Branch held its AGM as notified at the Box Hill RSL on Friday the 3 May. The meeting was a little late in getting underway due to the lack of numbers but we finally got there and were able to proceed with the agenda as planned.

I would take this opportunity to specially thank those members who supported

the meeting and trust that they enjoyed the lunch which followed.

The previously existing committee for 2024 remains as:

**BRANCH OFFICERS APPOINTED POSITIONS**

- President**  
Laurie Bell
- Vice President**  
Peter Wilson
- Secretary**  
Hugh Tank
- Treasurer**  
Tony Synhur
- Delegate**  
John MacDonald
- Welfare**  
(1) Hugh Tank  
(2) Peter Wilson
- Returning Officer**  
Graeme Smith

**Archives**  
Laurie Bell  
**Newsletter Editor**  
Ian Cohn

Congratulations to WCDR (AAFC) Troy Ashton on his appointment as Officer Commanding 4 Wing.

Troy takes up the reins from predecessor Kylie Walker, who did a remarkable job during her tenure as 4 Wing's O.C. We wish him well in his new position with the Wing.

The Dawn Service at Point Cook on Anzac Day was attended by what I could only describe as being one of the largest gatherings I have seen in recent years. The Service itself was extremely moving and the 2 minutes silence was just that. (Due to another commitment I had to leave

and so wasn't able to attend the Gunfire Breakfast which followed).

Committee members Hugh Tank and John MacDonald, representing our RAAF recognised group of the Box Hill RSL, attended the Dawn Service in the gardens below the RSL and laid a wreath at the Memorial during the Service.

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

The Vietnam Veterans Branch has settled down to a new routine with a reduced number of committee meetings during the year and pleasingly, all committee members have volunteered to maintain their valued contribution to the Branch.

Anzac Day saw our banner paraded to the Shrine of Remembrance with

President Chris able to join those marching (having retired from his position of the ABC Anzac Day TV commentary team). Chris was accompanied by his daughter and grandchildren who have been learning about the meaning and traditions of Anzac Day.

The years are taking their toll on those able to March to the Shrine (and,

of course, the return walk to the city), but over 30 attended our lunch and refreshments (and the obligatory raffle) at our usual city hotel.

Branch membership remains healthy at 80 financial members.

**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 Michael Dunn Vietnam Veterans .....	01/05/2024
Dr Ernest Francis Headquarters.....	09/05/2024
Mrs Judy Gaffee Bendigo .....	16/04/2024
Mr Ronald Leggett RAF.....	26/05/2024
Dr Peter Jupp Technical .....	28/05/2024



**An initiative by AFA and AFA NSW to capture the recollections and experiences of both retired and serving Air Force personnel.**

**Listen to former and current Australian aviators share their stories of life in the Air Force with interviewer Gareth McCray OAM.**

Click on the link below to listen.

**AD ASTRA PODCASTS** or visit <https://raafa.org.au/media/#videos>

# Air Force Association

## OFFICE BEARERS

### AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – VICTORIA

#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

John Clarkson – President

Max McGregor – Immediate Past President

Daryll Topp – Vice President, Administration

Andrew Blyth – Treasurer

John Delia – Director, Communications

Rowan Story – Board Member

Chris Potter – Board Member

Reinhard Goschiniak – Board Member

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