

R.A.A.F Association – Victorian Division
Sunderland Branch



A.C.N. 004250 248

Incorporating 10 Squadron RAAF, the first RAAF Squadron in action in W.W.II;
461 Squadron RAAF, The Anzac Squadron; and 13 RAF Squadrons

20 October 2020

WINTER/SPRING 2020

Sunderlanders and friends.

Well we continue to endure these unusual and challenging times albeit in different ways depending where we reside.

Although it now seems like a long time ago, Anzac Day commemorations are behind us., I know many of our Sunderlanders remembered our brave Sunderlanders and servicemen and women in different ways. I know many of us “stood to” at the front gate or attended small informal gatherings within the constraints of the various jurisdictions. In Geelong, I was able to attend, socially distanced Court Service listening to the ABC Service. Following soon after the service I privately laid a wreath at the Geelong Boer War Memorial on behalf of our Rotary Club. By the end of the day there were several wreaths in place obviously laid independently by others who normally do so at our Dawn Service.

Just a reminder to all that the Shrine of Remembrance – RAF Coastal Command Exhibition is closed due to the Covid19 Virus restrictions. The exhibition was due to finish in August; hopefully post Corona it might be extended for a short time to allow those who were planning to visit around Anzac Day can still make a visit. I will provide updates once we know anything further.

As you can see from the details below, I have received another request for information regarding Sunderlanders from WWII. I hope that someone can assist the enquirers.

Sorry for a very short Newsletter this time. Please stay safe and I am sure we will come out of this global disaster stronger for the experience.

SEEKING INFORMATION – Basil Thornton – 10 Sqn.

Email; form Owen Zupp

Hello,

A friend of mine is in receipt of a letter from Basil Thornton who served on Sunderlands with 10 Squadron RAAF in WW2. He would like to forward the letter to his family and I was wondering if you have any contact details that may facilitate this, please?

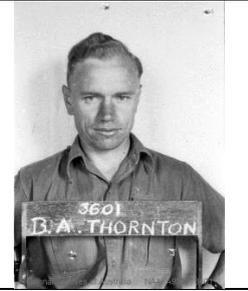
Many thanks.

Owen Zupp

0409-616-703, Owenzupp@gmail.com

Editor –

3601 Possibly Basil Adrian Thornton, DOB 4 March 1911, Born Annandale, NSW. Enlisted Laverton (From NAA and AWM records with pictures)



SEEKING INFORMATION – 414594 Flt Lt John Park – 461 Sqn.

John Williams has sent me a request below. Can anyone help John.

Dear Rick,

I'm trying to locate any relatives of the above airman who served with 461 Sqn as a pilot in 1943. I have a number of photos of him during his training in Canada in 1942 and hope to include his story in a book I'm writing.

Any assistance would be gratefully accepted.

Best regards,
John Williams.

Email Harley.158@bigpond.com

I HOPE YOU FIND THIS ARTICLE OF INTEREST

As some of our Sunderlanders may know, many of our original Sunderlanders are members of the Gold Fish Club, so I thought I would post this article for the members' information.

Information from Wikipedia and Gold Fish Club Website.



The **Goldfish Club** is a worldwide association of people who have escaped an aircraft by parachuting into the water, or whose aircraft crashed in the water, and whose lives were saved by a life jacket, inflatable dinghy, or similar device. The Goldfish Club badge shows a white-winged goldfish flying over two symbolic blue waves. The main aim of the club is 'to keep alive the spirit of comradeship arising from the mutual experience of members surviving, "coming down in the drink".

This is the embroidered badge for the Goldfish Club, which commemorates the evacuation of a disabled craft over or on water, and the use of life preservers such as inflatable life jackets and crafts.

<https://www.thegoldfishclub.co.uk/>

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The Goldfish Club was formed in November 1942 by C. A. Robertson, the Chief Draftsman at the United Kingdom's PB Cow & Co., one of the world's largest manufacturers of air-sea rescue equipment. After hearing of the experiences of airmen who had survived a ditching at sea, Robertson decided to form an exclusive club for airmen who owed their lives to their life jacket, dinghy, etc., enabling members to meet and exchange experiences.

With the company's backing, the club was named The Goldfish Club: Each member was presented with a heat-sealed waterproof membership card and an embroidered badge. News of the club spread rapidly, and in January 1943 the BBC broadcast an interview by Wynford Vaughan-Thomas with Robertson and two members who had qualified on their first operational flight.

Due to wartime regulations, production of metallic-embroidered badges was prohibited and all cloth was severely rationed. These problems were overcome with silk embroidery substituted for wire upon black cloth cut from old evening dress suits that were sent by readers of the *London Daily Express* after an appeal by columnist William Hickey. Uniform dress regulations prohibited the wearing of the Goldfish Club badge on British and American uniforms. The badge was generally worn by Naval aircrews upon their Mae Wests. Many RAF & USAAF aircrewmembers placed their badge under the flap of their left hand uniform pocket.

By the end of World War II, the club had 9,000 members from all branches of the Allied forces. The club attempted to end the granting of memberships, but applications continued to arrive. When Robertson left PB Cow in 1947, he retained the club records and continued operating it at his own expense.

An article in the RAFA journal *Airmail* in January, 1951, renewed interest in the club, and a reunion dinner was held. It was a great success, and the club was reorganized on a formal basis in March, 1953. Reunions have been held annually ever since at various venues with many distinguished guests. In response to a message of greetings sent to her, Mae West made it clear that she took great pride in the fact that members of the RAF had adopted her name for their life-jackets.

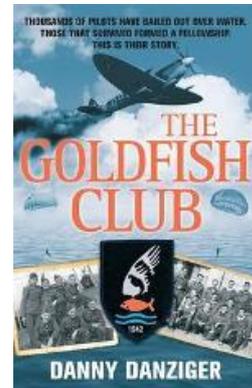
Members of the club have included airmen who qualified in World War I, more than twenty years before the club was begun. Many of the older members have passed on, but new members still arrive. Many of those who joined during the war rejoin on learning of the club's continued existence. One member nominated as a special member the Italian airman who offered him a seat in his dinghy when they met in the Mediterranean in 1942. The only German member qualified when he ejected from his F104G, part of the NATO forces in 1971. Helicopter crews predominate recently, since ditchings are rare among combat aircraft. Richard Branson escaped from his trans-Atlantic balloon but declined becoming the first lighter-than-air Goldfish.

Today, with over five hundred members around the world, the annual subscription is £5 and they keep in touch with a regular newsletter and annual get togethers.

The first female Goldfish

Gloria Pullen ditched a 1911 vintage Bleriot monoplane on an attempt to fly across the Channel and became our first Lady Goldfish, and presently have two female members.

I managed to find this book on the Internet for anyone who might be interested



The book cover of *The Goldfish Club*, written by Danny Danziger

SHOPPING SECTION

“MARITIME is NUMBER 10” Book – Currently out of stock

“ANZAC SQUADRON”

This book relating the story of 461 Squadron the “ANZAC SQUADRON” by Norman Ashworth is also from the Secretary at a cost of \$55.00 per copy, postage and handling.

Sunderland Lapel Badges – “Sunderland” lapel badges are available from the Secretary at \$8.00 ea. packaging and postage paid.

10 and 461 Squadron Plaques

We now have both 10 and 461 Squadron Plaques in stock. The cost is \$70.00 including GST, postage and packaging.

LEST WE FORGET

VALE: Norm Barkell, 10 Sqn; Daphne Thompson, widow of Les Thompson, 10 Sqn.

