

*RAAF 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

31 October 2021

## SPRING 2021

Sunderlanders and friends.

Greetings to all Sunderlanders and friends. We are gradually emerging from covid restrictions and approaching some degree of normality. I am sure we will all have to assimilate to a new norm as time progresses.

I am advised by AFA – Vic President Max McGregor that unfortunately the traditional Remembrance Day Commemoration Service at Point Cook on the Sunday before Remembrance Day will again not be held this year. However the Service at The Shrine will go ahead with restrictions. See Coming Events below.

Since my last Newsletter I have become aware of the passing last year of another of our illustrious Sunderlanders. See below for a memoriam to Doug Nance from Canberra.

The NSW Branch members will be holding a picnic get-together at the Rathmines Sunderlanders Memorial on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November, from 11 am, when they will be able to pay their own personal respects to those who fought so bravely in Coastal Command. There is a barbecue and some tables in the park on the point surrounding the memorial, and near to the wall of plaques for our Sunderlanders. The area is surrounded on three sides by Lake Macquarie, which was perfect for flying boats! The Bowling Club (formerly the RAAF Officers Mess) is close, and will be open for drinks and lunch if you choose not to bring your own. Attendees will be able to share some good stories from the old days, and catch up for the first time in several years. See coming events for more details.

Hopefully all will be back to a situation where we can participate in the Melbourne Anzac Day March in April. More information prior to Anzac Day.

In this Newsletter I have also included a copy of the application form for a plaque at the Rathmines Memorial Walls. If you have any queries regarding obtaining a plaque for your Sunderlander ancestor, please contact Peter Dowling. See the form for details.

### SUNDERLANDER - IN MEMORIAM

#### **432855 Warrant Officer Douglas (Doug) NANCE - 10 Sqn RAAF**

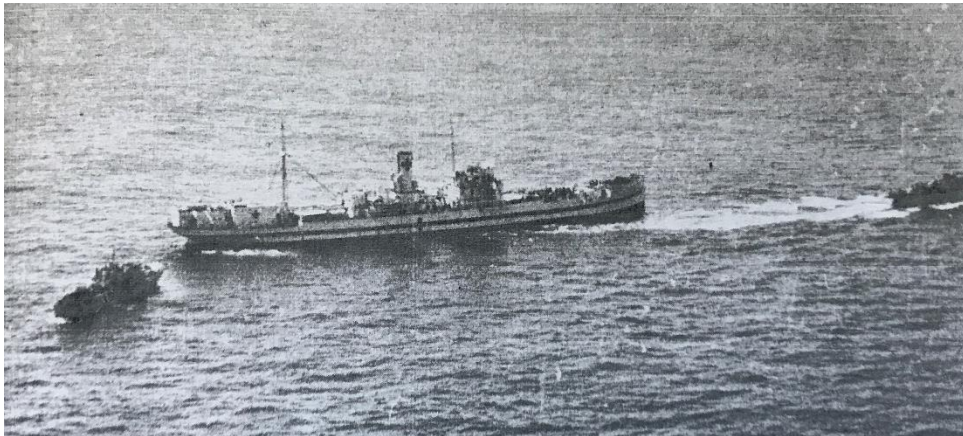
Doug Nance was born on 9 March 1923 in Sydney. He enlisted on 30 January 1943 at the age of 19 and was discharged on 17 December 1945. Doug served as a rear gunner and finished his service as a Warrant Officer.

After initial training, Doug trained at the Wireless and Gunnery School and then the Bomb and Gunnery School at Evans Head. He left Sydney on 27 January 1944 and served throughout with 10 Squadron at Mount Batten station Plymouth UK. Doug completed 50 missions as a rear gunner.

Late crew member Allan (Blue) Bagshaw told Doug's daughter Deborah years later how much his crew admired Doug's determination, skill and courage in loading and unloading crates and crates of ammunition, as well as guns, on and off the boat, given his small frame. It was also Doug's task to collect the pigeon for each mission. He said he always asked for 'the hungriest pigeon you've got.'

Doug was a member of the crew of JM 721/W on 16 September 1944 when, after five hours on patrol in the Bay of Biscay, the crew sighted a vessel bearing the markings of a German hospital ship at 11.22 am. This event and its aftermath, together with the names of the crew, is recorded in Flight Lieutenant K.C Baff's book *Maritime is Number 10* at pages 373-374. The captain, Flight Lieutenant Jack Mabbett, and the crew 'investigated, flashed "Halten" and circled overhead.' The vessel proved to be the MV *Rostock* (2542 tons). It claimed to be a hospital ship bound for a Spanish port. Mabbett and the crew were suspicious and transmitted a full sighting report to base. They were ordered to remain in contact with the vessel and requested to contact a naval striking force known to be in the vicinity.

The crew maintained contact at maximum visual range until 12.45 when two Royal Navy motor torpedo boats closed with the ship. The Sunderland swept in low over the decks showing its armaments. An armed guard boarded the ship which ultimately ended up, under escort, in Plymouth Sound. Mabbett and his crew finally returned to Mount Batten at 19.00 hours.



MV *Rostock* about to be boarded by crewmen from one of pair of Royal Navy motor torpedo boats despatched as a result of the crew's sighting report on 16 November 1944. (Photo R.M. Johnson)

Photo courtesy of book *Maritime is Number 10*, The Sunderland Era, FLT K.C. Baff

The *Rostock* was examined in Plymouth. The examination revealed that, not only had its conversion to a hospital ship been hasty, but it could be re-converted to a minesweeper in a matter of days. The *Rostock* was also found to be carrying secret material inconsistent with the status of a hospital ship.

The crew, including Flight Sergeant Doug Nance, was credited with capture of the *Rostock*. As noted in *Maritime is Number 10* (at page 374), the capture of the *Rostock* was the only known capture of an enemy vessel on the high seas by an aircraft of the RAAF during World War II.

The story of the capture of the MV *Rostock* did not end with the war. The story of the crew's claim for 'Prize Money' is detailed in *Maritime is Number 10* at pages 373-374.

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Doug and his wife Helen were regular attendees at Sunderland Squadron reunions throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Doug helped organise one of the reunions in Sydney, travelling up from Canberra to do so. Doug remained friends with members of his crew and other members of 10 Squadron for the rest of his life. 'I loved the Squadron,' he would often say.

In 2009 Doug and the late Frank Francis travelled to RAAF Edinburgh to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the formation of 10 Squadron. He remained connected to the Squadron and very proud of his association and service with it to the end.

The family were fortunate to be able to organise for his funeral to take place at 10.30am on Armistice Day 2020 with the RSL honours of flag, Ode and Last Post and poppies.



L to R - Doug Nance, Gp Capt. McDonald, Dudley Marrows, Frank Francis,  
at RAAF Edinburgh, to celebrate the 10 Sqn, 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2009.

Frank Francis was one of the original members of the Squadron who went over in the UK in 1939 to collect Sunderland flying boats for the RAAF when war was declared.

Several, years ago I was privileged to catch-up again with Doug in Canberra. We spend a full morning chatting, with Doug sharing his stories of his time on the Squadron over a brew.

## **PAST EVENTS**

### **History of RAAF Point Cook Presentation**

On Wednesday 13 October I dialled in to a presentation on the History of RAAF Point Cook delivered by Cultural Historian Dr. Steve Campbell-Wright. The presentation was very interesting and informative.

The recording is now available to view on line here:

[www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/libraries/adults/events-demand](http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/libraries/adults/events-demand)

Please note the recording will be available online until Thursday 2 December

If you would like to share your own stories about the Point Cook RAAF Base or have any questions, please email the Family and Local History Librarian of Wyndham City Council [FamilyHistory.Librarian@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:FamilyHistory.Librarian@wyndham.vic.gov.au).

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **REMEMBRANCE DAY 11 November - MELBOURNE SHRINE**

Remembrance Day service at the Shrine will go ahead, and be open to the public. Up to 3,800 fully vaccinated people can attend with bookings not required, just the requirement to check-in using the QR code. The service will also be live-streamed on the Shrine's website, Facebook and YouTube channels.

### **REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATION Sunday 13 November – RATHMINES**

The NSW Branch is holding a picnic get-together at Rathmines on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November, from 11 am. This is an opportunity for Sunderlanders and friends to get together and pay their personal respects to those the Sunderlanders who fought so bravely in 10 and 461 Squadrons at the Memorial Walls.

Please contact Prue Anthony Ph. 0418 931 410; [10.461sunderlander@gmail.com](mailto:10.461sunderlander@gmail.com) to obtain more details.

### **2021 NSW Branch - 10 Squadron Dudley Marrows Memorial Award Dinner**

A date has now been set for the 2021 Award Dinner. The Dinner will be held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at the naval and Military Club, Hutt Street, Adelaide. Cost is estimated at \$80.00 per head with drinks available a bar prices.

Further event details can be obtained from Peter Dowling, 2 Brawn Avenue, Lake Wendouree, VIC 3350; Tel 0418 281 775; [peterdowling@bigpond.com](mailto:peterdowling@bigpond.com)

Please advise Peter early if you wish to attend. Let's hope we can all make it this year.

## **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.

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**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.

**ELECTRONIC REFERENCES AND CONTACTS**

**Short Sunderland/Hythe, Sandringham & Seaforth/Solent. Face Book Group**

Facebook group that might be of interest to some Sunderlanders – Short Sunderland/Hythe, Sandringham & Seaforth/Solent. It's a Private Group, but often has Sunderland, RAAF 10 and 461 Sqn content. Worth following.

**VALE**

Doug Nance, 10 Sqn.

**LEST WE FORGET**



# Sunderland Branch RAAFA



## Application for plaque for Memorial Wall at Rathmines

Please provide the following information for the installation of a plaque:

Service Number	Initials	Surname	Rank on discharge
Date of demise	Age		Decorations

Name address and relationship of representative to deceased:

Name	Address	Relationship
Signature	Email	Phone number

### Charges

Casting, freight and fixing to wall.	\$ 290
A donation to the continuing maintenance of monument and wall would be appreciated.	\$
<b>TOTAL (\$ 290 plus donation)</b>	<b>\$</b>

When completed, please return form and fee. Cheque payable to Sunderland Branch.

Or direct deposit to Westpac BSB 032 097. Account 100804. Sunderland Branch

Secretary, Sunderland Branch (RAAFA)

Peter W Dowling RFD  
2 Brawn Ave,  
Lake Wendouree 3350.

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