

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

14 April 2022

AUTUMN 2022

Sunderlanders and friends.

I appreciate that this Newsletter follows close behind the previous Newsletter, but details of the Anzac Day Commemorations in Melbourne are only recently to hand. See Coming Events for details.

As Anzac Day is approaching we remember Sunderlanders and all Servicemen and Servicewomen who have served our country. Some paid the ultimate price at the time of conflict whilst now, many who have returned have passed on.

At this time of reflection we also need to remember those airmen and women who have lost their lives in training accidents and in this case in providing emergency service in peacetime. Recently I found an article (see below) about a 10 Squadron accident in 1955 that I wanted to share.

This peacetime service has continued to be undertaken by 10 Squadron supporting maritime search and rescue missions. The locating of lone yachtsman Tony Bullimore comes to mind.

This is also a time when Sunderland descendants might like to permanently recognise their ancestor by having their name inscribed on the Memorial Wall at Rathmines, NSW. I have include in this Newsletter the application form for a personal plaque to recognise returned Sunderlanders who served with 10 and/or 461 Squadrons and have now passed. It would be great to have the names of as many as possible Sunderlanders recognised on this memorial as it's the only one in Australia totally dedicated to the RAAF Sunderland Squadrons' members.

Combined RAAF Sunderland
Squadrons Banner



Secretary/Treasurer: Rick Hattam. Please address all, correspondence to Secretary: Rick Hattam,
5 Waurm Park Court, BELMONT VIC 3216, Phone 0418 994 759; rickyh461@gmail.com

9 April 1955 - AVRO LINCOLN BOMBER A73-64 CRASHED INTO MOUNT SUPERBUS IN SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Avro Lincoln bomber, A73-64 of 10 Squadron RAAF based in Townsville crashed into Mount Superbus near Emu Vale in the early hours of Easter Saturday morning on 9 April 1955 during a medical evacuation of a sick baby from Townsville to Eagle Farm airfield in Brisbane. The crew of four RAAF personnel and the two passengers were all killed in this tragic accident.



10 Squadron RAAF received a telephone call late on Good Friday night from the Townsville hospital seeking an emergency evacuation to Brisbane of a critically jaundiced 2 day old baby, Robyn Huxley.

As most of the Squadron's air crew were on leave or stand-down over Easter, the Commanding Officer of 10 Squadron, Wing Commander John Costello decided to pilot the Squadron's only serviceable aircraft, A73-64, for the evacuation flight.

The crew consisted of the new Commanding Officer Wing Commander Costello who had flown Sunderlands during the war against the German U Boats in the Atlantic, the Senior Navigation Officer, Squadron Leader Finlay, who was a wartime Pathfinder navigator, the squadron Chief Signaller, Flight Lieutenant Cater, and the squadron Senior Engineering Officer, Squadron Leader Mason.

The baby girl and nurse Mafalda Gray were positioned in the long-nosed section of the Lincoln bomber. The aircraft took off from Garbutt airfield at 00.30 am on Saturday 9 April 1955. The aircraft encountered some cloud and rain as it approached southern Queensland. The aircraft had to fly at a relatively low altitude to ensure the baby had a comfortable flight.

At 4.05 am the aircraft contacted Brisbane Air Traffic Control to advise that they were flying in cloud at 6,000 feet. They advised that they would arrive in Brisbane in about 10 minutes time and sought a clearance to reduce altitude to 5,000 feet. Brisbane Air Traffic Control advised that they were cleared to drop to 5,000 feet and if they wished they could drop to 4,000 feet for the approach to Eagle Farm airfield.

A short time later Brisbane Air Traffic Control contacted them with weather information and asked them to confirm when they had obtained a visual fix on the town of Caboolture. No further reports were heard from the Lincoln bomber. There were no low clouds in the Brisbane area at that time.

Sometime later, reports came in that an aircraft, later confirmed as a Lincoln, was heard to circle over the town of Bell at about 3.30 am. Bell is located about 18 miles north east of Dalby. Clearly A73-64 was well off course. The weather south of Bell was overcast with scattered rain.

At 4.14 am some members of the Brisbane Bushwalking Club heard a large aircraft fly overhead followed by the noise of an impact and some large explosions. By their estimation it had slammed into a nearby mountain in the Main Range region of the Border Ranges near Emu Vale. This was later confirmed to be Mount Superbus, the highest mountain (1,375 metres) in southern Queensland.

A small group from the Bushwalking club was despatched immediately to Emu Vale to notify the relevant authorities. Five hours later a Canberra bomber from Amberley airbase was able to confirm the location of the still burning wreckage of Lincoln, A73-64 just below the summit of Mount Superbus. Ground rescue crews were dispatched to the site. They quickly confirmed that there were no survivors.

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Those killed in this tragic accident were:-

Wing Commander John Peter Costello MID (pilot)
Squadron Leader Charles Surtees Mason MBE (co-pilot)
Squadron Leader John Watson Finlay (navigator)
Flight Lieutenant William George Stanley Cater (signaller)
Baby Robyn Huxley
Sister Mafalda Gray



Sqn/Ldr Charles Surtees Mason MBE



Sister Mafalda Gray, aged 26 years of Melton Hill, Townsville had resigned on the Friday to take up a nursing position in New South Wales. She volunteered to travel on the emergency flight when she heard the plight of the sick baby.

The four RAAF service personnel killed in this tragic crash were buried in the Services' section of the Lutwyche Cemetery in Brisbane with full Service honours. 60 RAAF officers and more than 200 other ranks attended the moving service. 26 of the dead airmen's friends formed part of a 50-man guard of honour outside of Holy Trinity Church of England and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Fortitude Valley.

To the 10 Squadron members and Sister Gray, thank you for your dedication to service. RIP.

Information about this event has been sourced from the website link provided below. There is further information available via Google and at this "Australian at War" site.

<https://www.ozatwar.com/ozcrashes/superbus.htm>

PAST EVENTS

30 March 2022 – Dedication of a new Royal Australian Air Force Memorial at Point Cook

To conclude the RAAF Centenary Program, the Dedication of a new Royal Australian Air Force Memorial at our birthplace, Point Cook was held on 30 March 2022. The Memorial honours the service of all Air Force men and women since 1921 and is located on the historic Point Cook Parade Ground.

The service included a commemorative flypast by a CA-18 Mustang and a display by the Roulettes aerobatic team flying PC-21 aircraft.



As part of the commemorations, a temporary search light shone skyward from the new memorial at Point Cook on the evening of Monday 28 March and Tuesday 29 March, honouring the 3,143 members of the Royal Australian Air Force who died in service during RAAF's first 100 years and have no known grave.

This commemoration is especially significant to the Sunderlanders as most of the airmen lost have no known grave.

The memorial inscription reads –

Then, Now, Always

COMING EVENTS

ANZAC DAY 2022 – 25 April 2022

Anzac March - Melbourne

The Chief Marshal of the ANZAC Day Melbourne March has advised that the start time for this year's March is now 0900 hrs for veterans and descendants with an 0830 hrs start for those veterans chauffeured in RACV vehicles.

The Sunderland Squadrons will form up in Collins Street East as per map below as part of Serial 41 RAAF Europe and Middle East.

We are listed to Form Up at 10:30 am and step off at 10:47 am.

Note that forming up in Collins Street has added an additional block to the distance we normally march.

Look for our Squadron banner. I look forward to catching up with our Sunderlanders.

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ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION MARCH ASSEMBLY PLAN 2022		City of Melbourne	Victoria	
Key	Group	Form Up Time	Time post Start Time	Form-up Area
1	Disabled Personnel RACV	0800		Flinders Street West/Princes Bridge
2	HQ Group - 56 RVR Band	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
3	New Zealand Veterans	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
4	Afghanistan	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
5	Iraq	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
6	Gulf War	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
7	Peacekeepers/Peacekeepers	0830	0900	Princes Bridge
8	RAR Battalions 1-9 2/4 5/7	0830	0900	Swanson Street Between Flinders & Collins
9	Commando Association / Special Air Service Regiment	0830	0905	Swanson Street Between Flinders & Collins
10	Victoria Police Band	0830	0910	Town Hall Swanson Street
11	VicPol Veterans	0845	0912	Town Hall Swanson Street
12	FRV	0845	0915	Town Hall Swanson Street
13	RAN Band & HMAS CERBERUS	0845	0918	Collins Street WEST
14	RAN Associations POST 1975	0845	0922	Flinders Street East(South Side)
15	RAN Associations Vietnam	0845	0924	Flinders Street East (South Side)
16	HMAS HOBART Crew	0845	0926	Flinders Street East (South Side)
17	RAN FSR/ANZUK	0900	0930	Flinders Street East(South Side)
18	RAN Associations Korea	0900	0933	Flinders Street East (South Side)
19	RAN WW2	0900	0936	Flinders Street East (South Side)
20	MERCHANT NAVY Association	0900	0940	Flinders Street East (South Side)
21	ARMY Uniformed Body Simpson & Puckonyal	0915	0945	Collins Street WEST
22	ARMY Vietnam	0915	0950	Collins St East (South Side)
23	ARMY Uniformed Body 56 RVR BAND - 4 BDF	0930	0955	Collins Street WEST
24	National Servicemen	0930	1000	Collins St East (North Side)
25	ARMY Malaysia / Borneo	0930	1005	Collins St East (North Side)
26	ARMY Korea	0930	1008	Collins St East (North Side)
27	RCAF	0945	1010	Collins St East (North Side)
28	ARMY 2AIF 1 Corps	0945	1013	Flinders St East (South Side)
29	ARMY 6 Division	0945	1017	Flinders St East (South Side)
30	ARMY 7 Division	0945	1020	Flinders St East (South Side)
31	ARMY 8 Division	0945	1024	Flinders St East (South Side)
32	ARMY 9 Division	1000	1028	Flinders St East (South Side)
33	ARMY 3 Division	1000	1032	Flinders St East (South Side)
34	ARMY 5/11 Division	1000	1036	Flinders St East (South Side)
35	ARMY 2AIF 2 Corps	1000	1040	Flinders St East (South Side)
36	Women & Ancillary Services	1015	1043	Swanson Street Between Flinders St & Flinders
37	RAAF Uniformed Body RAAF BAND - 21 SQUADRON	1000	1046	Town Hall Swanson Street
38	RAAF Operational Service since Vietnam	1030	1049	Collins Street East (South Side)
39	RAAF Vietnam	1030	1053	Collins Street East (South Side)
40	RAAF SL Asia	1030	1056	Collins Street East (South Side)
41	RAAF Europe and Middle East	1030	1059	Collins Street East (South Side)
42	RAAF SW Pacific	1030	1102	Collins Street East (South Side)
43	WW1 Descendants	1030	1105	Collins Street West (Middle)
44	Boer War Descendants	1030	1110	Collins Street West (Middle)
45	Commonwealth Veterans	1030	1115	Flinders Street (South Side)
46	Allies	1030	1120	Flinders Street (South Side)
47	ANF Group	1100	1126	Princes Bridge Service Lane
48	MARSHALS	1110	1130	Princes Bridge Service Lane

Anzac Day Commemoration – New South Wales Branch.

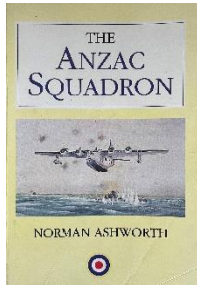
The NSW Branch will have a number Sunderland descendants and friends commemorate Anzac Day in both Sydney as part of that service and also at the Sunderslanders Memorial at Rathmines.

Anyone seeking information regarding these services should contact Anne Pike-Flaherty (Ph. 0408 478 779); flahertys51@bigpond.com or Prue Anthony (Ph. 0418 931 410); 10.461sunderlander@gmail.com

SHOPPING SECTION

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

“ANZAC SQUADRON”



This book which contains a wealth of information about Squadron members relates the story of 461 Squadron the “ANZAC SQUADRON” by Norman Ashworth. Copies are available 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.

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

Those killed in the tragic accident on 9 April 1955 Wing Commander John Peter Costello MID, Squadron Leader Charles Surtees Mason MBE, Squadron Leader John Watson Finlay, Flight Lieutenant William George Stanley Cater, Baby Robyn Huxley and Sister Mafalda Gray.

LEST WE FORGET



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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.	\$
TOTAL (\$ 290 plus donation)	\$

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.

Email: peterwdowling@bigpond.com Mobile: 0418281775

Secretary/Treasurer: Rick Hattam. Please address all, correspondence to Secretary: Rick Hattam,
5 Wearn Park Court, BELMONT VIC 3216, Phone 0418 994 759; rickyh461@gmail.com