

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



Sunderland Mk I - 230 Sq RAF



Sunderland P9602 RB-G 10 Squadron RAAF 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

21 February 2026

SUMMER 2026

Sunderlanders and friends.

The Christmas Season has passed and I trust that you all enjoyed a wonderful time with family and friends.

Since the last Newsletter we have enjoyed the Annual Dudley Marrows Memorial Awards dinner with 10 Squadron members and 13 Sunderlanders at the Naval, Military and Airforce Club in Adelaide. There is a report below.

In this Newsletter I have included some background about the formation of the Empire Air Training Scheme EATS as it has relevance to the other articles about No. 1 WAGS (Wireless and Gunnery School) in Ballarat and No 11 ETS in Benalla, Victoria where under the EATS some gunners and pilots of 10 and 461 Squadron trained before embarking for the European theatre. Thank you to the Website Masters for 1 WAGs and 11ETS Benalla for the information.

The Sunderlanders also send belated congratulations to Wing Commander Liam Colreavy on his appointment to CO of 10 Squadron.

I have also included blow a copy of the Christmas Email I received from the Pembroke Dock (PD) Heritage Centre.

Over the Christmas break I read an interesting book; "Flight to a Lady" by Arthur Butler.



Arthur Butler was one of Australia's aviation pioneers. The book relates the incredible story of his record-breaking flight in a single engine, high wing Comper Swift aircraft from England to Australia in 1931.

The incredible story of how one man risks his life, and how his extraordinary flying and navigation skills enabled him to return to his beautiful lady in Australia, breaking a world record along the way!

England to Australia in 9 days, 1 hour and 40 minutes.

It's amazing what a beautiful lady will make a man do!

I have included this item as it some connection to our Sunderlanders. Butler prepared his Comper Swift at Hooten Airfield in Cheshire County in England. During WWII, Hooten Park was a base for RAF units including Coastal Command. As such, many Sunderlanders including my father underwent training at 1447 Flight RAF, and operations from RAF Hooten Park.

It was a very enjoyable read.

PAST EVENTS

The 2025 Dudley Marrows Memorial Award (DMMA) Dinner was once again a great success. This was evident by the lively conversations that pervaded the evening. 13 Sunderlanders and 23 10 Squadron members and friends enjoyed a sumptuous meal in the Air Force Room at the Naval, Military and Airforce Club.

John Mackellar and Pam Urquhart delivered a presentation on the RAAF service of their father 411160 FTLT R C N (Ron) Mackellar with 461 Sqn during WWII,

As part of the evening, there were several Squadron awards presented. These awards were the Coronis Award to reward a worthy !0 Squadron maintenance or logistics member who has been instrumental in the success of the Squadron throughout the year; the Garuda Achievement Award that recognises a Squadron Aircrew member that inspires and embodies the essence of 10 Squadron; and the Board Head Cup which recognises members of the Squadron for their outstanding contribution throughout the year by performing well not only in their core roles but has also made significant contribution to the overall organisation, development, and operation of Electronic Warfare in the Australian Defence Force. Our congratulations go to the recipients of these awards.

The Dudley Marrows Memorial Award is for a member of 10 Squadron who by their devotion to duty has demonstrated the qualities of Courage, Integrity and Compassion by inspiring leadership and a determination to get the job done.

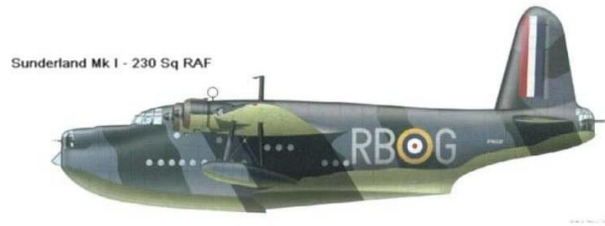
Wing Commander Colreavy introduced the three very worthy finalists, FLTLT Larni Coulson, FSGT Anthony French and CPL Gabriel Dean for the Dudley Marrows Memorial Award. The winner of the 2026 DMMA was FSGT Anthony French.

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Congratulations to FSGT Anthony French. This will no doubt cost him a slab for the team back at the Squadron,



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The Sunderlanders Contingent

L to R Denis Smith, John Mackekllar, Pam Urquhart, Tim Jensen (at rear) Marilyn Marrows-Voullaire, FSGT Anthony French, Peter Dowling, Ricky Hattam.

SQUADRON NEWS

During the DMMA dinner, CO WCOMD Liam Colreavy provided some insight into the preparations at the Squadron for the arrival of the new MC-55A Peregrine aircraft. The introduction of this new aircraft is a significant milestone for the Squadron.



The first MV-55 arrived at Edinburgh on 27 January 2026.

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

COMING EVENTS

Anzac Day 2026.

Details of the Melbourne Commemorations will be advised in my next Newsletter in April.

EMPIRE AIR TRAINING SCHEME

At the outbreak of the Second World War the British government realised it did not have adequate resources to maintain the Royal Air Force [RAF] in the impending air war in Europe. While British factories could rapidly increase their aircraft production, there was no guaranteed supply of trained aircrew. Pre-war plans had identified a need for 50,000 aircrew annually, but Britain could only supply 22,000.



To overcome this problem, the British government put forward a plan to its dominions to jointly establish a pool of trained aircrew who could then serve with the RAF. In Australia the proposal was accepted by the War Cabinet and a contingent was sent to a conference in Ottawa, Canada, to discuss the proposal. After several weeks of negotiations, an agreement was signed on 17 December 1939 which would last for three years. The scheme was known in Australia as The Empire Air Training Scheme [EATS].

Under the scheme 50,000 aircrew would be trained annually, each dominion would conduct its own elementary training; advanced training would be conducted in Canada because of its closeness to the British aircraft factories and the war zone. From November 1940, some training was also conducted in Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe].

Australia undertook to provide 28,000 aircrew over three years, which represented 36% of the total number of proposed aircrew. The first basic flying course started on 29 April 1940 when training began simultaneously in all participating countries. The first Australian contingent embarked for Canada on 14 November 1940. The following Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] schools were established across Australia to support EATS:

- Initial training
- Elementary flying Training
- Service Flying Training
- Air Navigation
- Air Observer
- Bombing and Gunnery
- Wireless Air Gunnery

Under Article XV of the agreement, it was proposed that each country's aircrew would serve in distinct national squadrons once they arrived in Britain. Eventually there were 17 Article XV RAAF squadrons, these being numbered 450-467 [but with no 465 formed]. Four of these units were in Fighter Command, seven in Bomber Command, and one in Coastal Command. Another five were also formed in the Middle East. However, despite article XV, the bulk of Australian aircrew served with RAF squadrons and not with a designated Australian squadron.

The agreement was renewed for an additional two years in March 1943, although by then it was evident that the RAF already had a large surplus of aircrew. Throughout 1944 Australia's contribution to the scheme was wound back, at Britain's instigation, and the scheme effectively ended in October 1944, although it was not formally suspended until 31 March 1945. By this time, over 37,000 Australian airmen had been trained as part of the scheme.

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No1. WAGS (Wireless and Gunner School)



No 1 Wireless Air Gunnery School [W.A.G.S] Ballarat was established on the 22nd April 1940 as part of the Empire Training Scheme. Its purpose was to train Wireless Operators and Air Gunners to form air crews for the RAF in their air war in Europe.

The 1 W.A.G.S. Memorial is unique as it is where a specific RAAF training school during WW2 is commemorated. The school was purpose built to train Wireless Operators, Air Gunners, and Navigators as part of the Empire Training Scheme. This scheme supplied RAF Bomber Command and Coastal Command with aircrew to support their fight against Germany. Other sites/sources list RAAF servicemen who have been killed in active service, however, this site has the common factor that all servicemen listed, as either killed or returned, trained at 1 W.A.G.S. Ballarat.

Research to identify these airmen and place them at 1 W.A.G.S. became the driving force behind creating a Memorial to honour those servicemen who paid the ultimate sacrifice in serving their country during WW2.

The 1 W.A.G.S. Memorial Roll now has to date 1,182 confirmed names out of over 6000 trainees. We are however aware that some names may have been omitted. With public assistance, the web site will enable further names to be added to the Courses and the Memorial Roll.

The website is also an opportunity to include all personnel who trained at 1 W.A.G.S. from the P.O.R Courses as well as to delve into the history of the school. As trainees came from all over Australia the web site enables world wide access to the records, photos and information provided.



Coinciding with this research was the task to restore the 1W.A.G.S. Officers Mess-Hut 48 at the Ballarat aerodrome. With the support of the Ballarat City Council, the building was restored and officially opened in 2019. It is now the headquarters of the AFA Ballarat Branch.

No 11 ETS (Elementary Training School) Benalla Victoria

No. 11 Elementary Flying Training School (No. 11 EFTS) was a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilot training unit that operated during World War II. It was one of twelve elementary flying training schools employed by the RAAF to provide introductory flight instruction to new pilots as part of Australia's contribution to the Empire Air Training Scheme EATS. No. 11 EFTS was established on 26 June 1941 at Benalla, Victoria, and operated Tiger Moths and Wackett Trainers during the war. It ceased training in July 1945 after almost 3,000 students had passed through, and was re-formed as Care and Maintenance Unit (CMU) Benalla in February 1946. CMU Benalla was disbanded in October 1948. A number of 461 and 10 Squadron pilots undertook elementary training at No. 11 ETS before embarking for further training before joining Coastal Command in the UK.

The EFTS provided a twelve-week introductory flying course to personnel who had graduated from one of the RAAF's initial training schools. Flying training was undertaken in two stages: the first involved four weeks of instruction (including ten hours of flying) to determine trainees' suitability to become pilots. Those that passed this grading process then received a further eight weeks of training (including sixty-five hours of flying) at the EFTS. Pilots who successfully completed this course were posted to an SFTS in either Australia or Canada for the next stage of their instruction as military aviators.



Instructors and students of No. 11 EFTS with their Tiger Moth training aircraft, c. 1944

Flying training at No. 11 EFTS had largely wound down by May 1945 by which time 2,953 trainees had attended the school. No. 11 EFTS's facilities were used to establish Care and Maintenance Unit (CMU) Benalla on 28 February 1946.^[4] It was one of many CMUs that the RAAF raised after the war for the storage and upkeep of surplus aircraft prior to their disposal.^[17] CMU Benalla was responsible for maintaining North American P-51 Mustangs.^[4] It transferred all its aircraft to CMU Tocumwal, New South Wales, on 15 October 1948, and disbanded the same day.

A memorial to No. 11 EFTS was dedicated at Benalla on 17 June 1995.

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BOOKS OF INTEREST

Call Sign N for Nuts
“Against Overwhelming Odds”
by George Edmunds

Read about how a lone Sunderland flying boat of EJ134, “N for Nuts” of 461 Squadron RAAF, of Coastal Command, on anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay in June 1943, survived an attack by eight fighter bombers of the Luftwaffe; incredibly, 5, maybe 6 of them, never made it home.

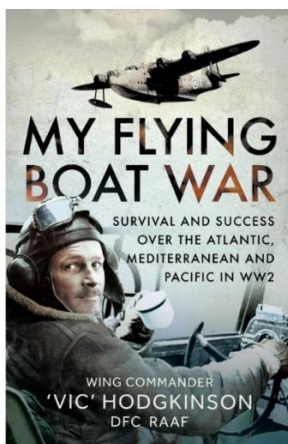
The full and complete story. A blow-by-blow account of the battle. See how they (just) made it home, ditching on a beach in Cornwall, with over 400 bullet and cannon holes, both pilots injured, one crew killed, one engine down, most of the crew suffered injuries.



Available from the publishers; Merlinuspublishers.co.uk
Or signed copies from the author: george.edmunds01@gmail.com
Cost per book; £22.99, P&P £4.60 UK only. (1st Class).

Editor's Note –

It is interesting to note that Sunderlanders, Peter Dowling's uncle, Wilbur (Bill) Dowling, Roger and Mick Amis' father Jim Amis and Rick Hattam's father Ricky Hattam all flew in Sunderland EJ134, N for Nuts.



My Flying Boat War Survival and Success
10 Squadron RAAF
\$34.00

My Flying Boat War Survival and Success over the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Pacific in WW2 by Wing Commander Vic Hodgkinson DFC.



<https://booksonwaraustralia.com>

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

Wing Commander Vic Hodgkinson DFC served as a pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force throughout WWII. Starting in 1939, he was a founding member of **10 Squadron RAAF**, operating Short Sunderland flying boats. In 1942, Vic returned to Australia, serving with **20 and 40 Squadrons RAAF**, flying various aircraft including the Catalina and Dornier Do 24. His missions ranged from supply drops and minelaying to bombing and reconnaissance. This is Vic's remarkable story, told in his own words for the first time

ELECTRONIC REFERENCES AND CONTACTS

RAAF Museum – Point Cook, Victoria

The museum is open on Thursdays and Sundays, 1000 to 1500. Bookings to attend are essential. You need to book via the website – <https://airforce.gov.au>

Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre – Pembroke Dock, Wales, UK

Pembroke Dock has an internationally significant heritage and is celebrated in the Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre, housed in the former Royal Dockyard Chapel. in the heart of Pembrokeshire.

Displays tell the story of the town from its origins as Wales' only Royal Dockyard where over 260 vessels were built, including five Royal Yachts. Later in the town's history, the Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force, 10 and 461 Squadrons of flying-boats were based in the natural harbour of the Cleddau Estuary and the town became the world's largest military flying boat station, playing a vital role in the Second World War Battle of the Atlantic.

Website - <http://www.pdht.org>

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 is a Private Group, but often has Sunderland, RAAF 10 and 461 Sqn content. Worth following.

Websites –

www.pooleflyingboats.com

www.ayemaam.com

Aviation Heritage Museum - Bull Creek, Western Australia

This is great Museum. In the past it had some Sunderland Squadrons displays. There is also a Facebook page for the Museum.

Website - <https://aviationmuseumwa.org.au>

RAF Coastal Command 1936-1969 Facebook site

This Facebook group is dedicated to RAF Coastal Command. As 10 and 461 Sqn's served in Coastal Command there are often articles about our Sunderland Squadrons. Worth having a look at the site.

Website - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MHTCommunity/>

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Short Sunderland “Flying Porcupine” - Facebook site.

This Facebook group is dedicated to the Short Sunderland. This site has recently posted a number of 10 Sqn photos from the album, of Bill Sykes, 10 Sqn RAAF. Also worth following.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1416154278706348/>

No. 1 RAAF Wireless and Air Gunners School - 1 WAGS

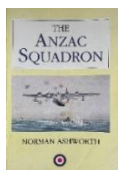
The 1 W.A.G.S. Memorial website is primarily about People - RAAF recruits who came from all over Australia, from all different walks of life to train as Wireless Operators, Air Gunners, and Navigators at the purpose-built Ballarat air base.

The site recognises the courage displayed and sacrifice made by these airmen while serving their country during WW2.

Website - <https://www.1wags.org.au/>

SHOPPING SECTION

“ANZAC SQUADRON”



This book contains a wealth of information about Squadron members and 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.

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

Sunderland Lapel Badges – “Sunderland” lapel badges are available from the Secretary at \$10.00 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.

Christmas Card from, Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre



Dear Ricky,

Seasonal Greetings from Wales from all the team at Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre. We send our very best wishes to all our Sunderlander friends.

We in PD have had an excellent year with many highlights, including a Royal Visitor (Princess Anne) and the long awaited return of the RAF Pembroke Dock Memorial Window (which includes the crest of 461 Squadron).

Attached is our 'Webfooter' Newsletter reflecting on our year. If you have difficulty in opening it please let me know.

Also attached is an image of the Memorial Window. We now have both the original 1945 window and the replica which was dedicated in 1995 (this has the crests of both 10 and 461).

Warmest regards to all,

John Evans
Patron, Pembroke Dock Heritage Trust
patron@pdht.org
17/12/25

PEMBROKE DOCK
HERITAGE
CENTRE

EXPLORE OVER 200 YEARS OF
MARITIME, MILITARY
& SOCIAL HISTORY

