



CONTACT

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*WWII Veteran and former British WREN Mrs Margaret Wood prepares to lay a wreath at the Ballarat D Day 75th Anniversary Commemoration, assisted by Reverend John Furness and Mrs Janet Bates.
(Image courtesy Edwina Williams of the Times News Group)*

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D DAY COMMEMORATION IN BALLARAT

The Ballarat Branch of the Air Force Association was privileged to hold a service at the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial at Ballarat to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D Day, remembering those who lost their lives on that day and to acknowledge the service of all Allied Service men and women who contributed to, or who took an active part in the D Day Operations Overlord and Neptune.

Despite the wet weather and the low cloud which stopped the intended vintage aircraft flyover by Branch member Stephen Carter in his WWII Vintage Ryan aircraft, "the commemoration went beautifully," said Ballarat Branch President, Noel Hutchins.

MC for the Day was Major Neil Leckie RFD (Ret'd), with guest speaker Group Captain Bob Bennett (Ret'd) and our Chaplain was Rev. Keith Lanyon.

Wreaths were laid by Dr Tom Roberts OAM (on behalf of the Ballarat Branch;) Guest of Honour Ex British WWII Wren, Mrs Margaret Wood; Catherine King MP, Federal Member

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for Ballarat; Kallista Kaval, representing State Member for Wendouree, Juliana Addison; Mr Alan Douglass, President Ballarat RSL sub-Branch; City of Ballarat Deputy Mayor Cr Jim Rinaldi and Cr Amy Johnson; Mr Peter Dowling RFD Secretary Sunderland Branch Air Force Association NSW; and Mr John Dooley representing the Ballarat Liberal Party.

For Guest of Honour, ex-British WWII Wren, Mrs Margaret Wood, the Ballarat commemoration was her first ever opportunity to lay a wreath on D Day.

"I have always wanted to lay a wreath on D Day," Mrs Wood told Noel Hutchins. "I thought that this anniversary was just going to pass like all the others."



Guest Speaker Group Captain (Retd) Bob Bennett addresses the Service

The D-Day Service was also covered by WIN News and went to all regional areas of Queensland and NSW as well as Victoria and into some Eastern areas of South Australia.

Guest speaker, WWII veteran Jack Bell, 101, who completed Course No. 2 at No.1 Wireless Air Gunners School at RAAF Base Ballarat in 1940, gave a memorable address to the gathered guests including Juliana Addison, MP and Ballarat Mayor, Cr Samantha McIntosh.

Among the invited guests were grandchildren of Wing Commander C. O. Fairbairn, the very first Commanding Officer of No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School, Catherine Calvert and Charles Fairbairn-Calvert. Jack Bell was as thrilled to be able to talk with them as they were with him. "He is just so much like his grandfather" said Jack about Charles.



Flag Orderlies L to R : Tom Nunn, Lynne Redman, Keith Pitman & Peter Dowling

Margaret Bennett, the daughter of Wing Commander Reynolds, a post-war Commanding Officer from 1948 to 1952, was also in attendance as was her son Trevor Bennett. Margaret is the widow of WWII RAF pilot John Bennett, President of the AFA Ballarat Branch in 2000 and 2001 who passed away in 2001.

The Air Force Association's occupancy of rooms in Airport Hut 48 harks back to the building's historic link to its WWII past.

Following the outbreak of WWII, a RAAF base was established in Ballarat in 1940. The No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School – commonly known as 1WAGS – was established under the Empire Air Training Scheme to train Wireless Air Gunners for the fight against the German Air Force in Europe.

After the end of WWII, the RAAF base became a radio training school and Hut 48 was turned into the Officers' Mess.

An important part of the Branch's plans for the restored site includes a memorial to all the Wireless Air Gunners who trained in Ballarat but never returned from the war.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to the Winter edition of CONTACT.

The big ticket item at the present time has been the recent release of the Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans. There have been some changes to the 700+ pages

contained in the draft report released just before Christmas. One significant change has been the incorporation of the Robert Cornell Report into Advocacy Services into the Productivity Commission Report. The final report now covers some 900+ pages - a comprehensive read. If anyone is interested you can read it via: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/veterans/report>.

While the report has been tabled in Parliament, at this stage there has been no indication of the intentions of the Government. It is possible that the Government may accept all the recommendations contained in the report and start

Continued on page 3.

to implement them. It is also possible that the Government may accept some and reject other recommendations (and this has certainly happened with other reviews of Veterans' Entitlements), and finally the Government could reject all the recommendations although this would be an extremely unlikely course of action. Until we know just what the Government decides it is impossible to provide any definitive outcomes. As soon as we know what recommendations the Government accepts, we will advise all members. The Productivity Commission strongly recommends no changes to the current benefits received by veterans.

DVA AND ALLIED HEALTH REFERRALS

Several reviews conducted over the last couple of years have been critical of DVA for being unable to verify that treatment provided to veterans has actually been of benefit. DVA proposed a trial for Allied Health services (physiotherapy, exercise programs etc) that a GP referral would only be valid for 12 months or 12 visits. After 12 months or 12 visits, the provider has to provide a written report that confirms the program has delivered an improvement in the veteran's health, and after reviewing the report the GP can then issue another referral for 12 months or 12 visits. During several meetings, followed up with written submissions, AFA-Vic supported the proposed changes in general, for there is clearly a need to ensure that the program is delivering an improvement of the veteran's health. The one aspect that AFA-Vic disagreed with was the 12-visit limit for exercise programs. In our written submission we put forward the argument that 12 visits was not sufficient to observe an improvement; that many veterans attend an exercise program 2 or 3 times per week; this results in having to visit a GP every 4 to 6 weeks; and that this is not only creating a strain on GP's but this additional requirement could mean

that veterans drop out of a very valuable program, to the detriment of their health. This change was due to come into effect on 1 July 2019, but the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel on 27 June 2019 put back the start date to 1 October 2019. During this time DVA will further consult with health providers and veterans, and AFA-Vic will continue to argue for a six-month review period for any exercise program.

AFA NATIONAL AMALGAMATION PROJECT

AFA National, with the support of all divisions has embarked on a program to standardise the way divisions are structured. Over time, each division has created their own constitutions and the way they do business. There are significant variations in membership categories, membership fees and the corporate structure of each division. At a recent meeting of Victorian branch Presidents and delegates, a matrix was circulated showing all the differences. To be able to speak and advocate for the AFA, it is essential that each division is structured and functions in the same way. There will be changes as a result of this program, but I assure all members that there will be no change in the role or functioning of branches. This program is purely to have AFA National advocate effectively for the benefit of all veterans.

NEW RADAR BRANCH

I am pleased to announce that after a significant period of negotiation, the RAAF Radar Association has joined AFA-Vic with 18 new members. I welcome the Radar Association into the AFA-Vic family and look forward to their attendance at future functions.

Max McGregor
President AFA-Victoria

VICTORIA'S FIRST DA40 SOLO PILOTS

On 16 April, at RAAF Point Cook, Cadet Sergeant Mark Hargreaves from No 402 Squadron (Watsonia) gained the honour of being the first Air Force Cadet to go solo on the new Diamond DA40 NG. The AAFC's Flying Officer Paul Rosenzweig OAM JP tells us more...

He was followed two days later by Leading Cadet Luke Gould from No 403 Squadron (Beaconsfield), Cadet Sergeant Lachlan Davis of No 428 Squadron (Newtown), and then Cadet Corporal Kiera Galan of No 429 Squadron (Queenscliff).

These Cadets from 4 Wing (Victoria) were among seven who achieved their first solo powered flight in the new DA40 aircraft on a flying training course run in the April school holidays by the Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) at RAAF Base Point Cook, Victoria.

The leasing of eight Diamond DA40 NG modern aircraft for exclusive use by the Australian Air Force Cadets is intended to inspire young Australians to pursue a career in aviation.

The Minister for Defence Personnel, the Honourable Darren Chester MP made the formal announcement of this initiative at the Australian International Airshow 2019 at Avalon.

The first airframe was delivered to Avalon via a RAAF C-17 Globemaster III from No 36 Squadron, which had been dispatched to Europe in January. The DA40 NG features modern avionics and a turbocharged jet-fuel piston engine, with contemporary navigation and flight control systems.

In April, the Elementary Flying Training School ran a Powered Flying Training Course following on from some preparatory theory training. The EFTS is a subordinate unit of Aviation Operations Wing (AOW), which has the aim of delivering flying pathways through gliding and powered flying experiences and training.

Course Coordinator, and Staff Officer Operations with Aviation Operations Wing, Squadron Leader (AAFC) Scott Wiggins, said, "We heartily congratulate each one of them on achieving this milestone in their career".

Other cadets who that didn't have the chance to go solo (mainly because of adverse weather) will have further

opportunities with continuation flying training, as they will remain part of the program for up to 12 months.

For further information, please contact Flying Officer (AAFC) Paul A Rosenzweig OAM JP at paul.rosenzweig@airforcecadets.gov.au.



CSGT Mark Hargreaves (402 Squadron), the first Air Force Cadet to fly solo in the new DA40 NG is congratulated by SqnLDR Gary Presneill, the EFTS Head of Operations and a Grade 1 Flying Instructor, at Point Cook on 16 April.



CSGT Lachlan Davis (428 Squadron) is congratulated by WgCDR (AAFC) Stephen Pepper, Officer Commanding Aviation Operations Wing, after completing his first solo powered flight in the DA40 at Point Cook on 18 April.



CCPL Kiera Galan (429 Squadron) is congratulated by SqnLDR Gary Presneill after completing her first solo powered flight in the DA40 at Point Cook on 18 April.



LCDT Luke Gould (403 Squadron) is congratulated by SqnLDR Gary Presneill, following his first solo powered flight in the DA40 at Point Cook on 18 April.

All images courtesy SqnLDR (AAFC) Scott Wiggins.

MEN'S HEALTH ADVOCATE, ALAN WHITE, RECEIVES VICTORIAN MINISTER OF HEALTH VOLUNTEER AWARD



L to R: Interim CEO of Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Nicole Tweddle; Project Manager Natalie Richards; Alan White; and Professor Penny Schofield.

Alan White, counsellor and men's health advocate (and AFA member) was recently recognised for his work around volunteering and promoting men's health.

Alan received the award for the Outstanding Achievement by a Volunteer - Improving Public Healthcare. Nominated by the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre's

Professor Penny Schofield, Natalie Richards from the Navigate Project, Alan's award was one of six categories in the Victorian Minister of Health 2019 Volunteer of the Year Awards.

With over 200 nominations, which were then shortlisted to three for each of the six categories, this is indeed well-deserved recognition for Alan's work.

Members may recall our article in the Spring edition of CONTACT about Alan, his involvement in the Peter Mac Navigate Project and his book on surviving prostate cancer "We've Lost My Prostate, Mate...and Life Goes On!", where he shares his own story and encourages men to make well-informed choices about prostate cancer treatment. Click here to revisit our 2018 Spring edition of CONTACT.

Congratulations to Alan on this Award for your ongoing service to the community.

AFA BALLARAT OPENS ROOMS TO THE PUBLIC

It was Ballarat Heritage Weekend on 25 & 26 May and the former WWII RAAF Ballarat precinct at the Ballarat aerodrome ‘came alive’ as our Ballarat Branch opened their new rooms in the restored Officers’ Mess building to the public.

Supporting the opening was a display of Vintage and Classic cars, military vehicles, sausage sizzle by the Military Brotherhood and, on the Sunday, 54 members of the “Sing Australia Choir”, situated in the former Dining Hall, entertained the crowd singing WWII/1940’s songs. Volunteer



The ‘Sing Australia Choir’ added to the heritage flavour of the weekend serenading visitors with WWII and 1940’s tunes.

ladies were kept busy serving tea/coffee and biscuits to the public for \$2.50 a pop.

Branch President Noel Hutchins said that the success of the weekend far exceeded his expectation for the first year. Noel said that it was very pleasing to see members of the public turn up to seek more information about ancestors who did training at the No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School Ballarat. This has resulted in two-way benefits with people providing information and photographs for the 1WAGS Memorial website which is currently under development under the guidance of Senior 1WAGS Researcher Peter Schoutens and Website Coordinator Janet Bates.



Ballarat Branch’s newly renovated rooms in the old RAAF Officers’ Mess were open to the public during Heritage Week.

RAAF FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS IN VIETNAM (PART 1)

The Forward Air Controller’s (FAC) job was one of the most dangerous flying occupations in Vietnam. 36 RAAF fighter pilots flew as FACs with the USAF between 1966 and 1971. In the first of our two part story, one of those pilots, retired WGCDR Peter Condon shares his story with us.

It involved flying slow light aircraft over enemy territory at low altitude for up to six hours in a day searching for the enemy and then directing pilots flying ground-attack aircraft onto those targets—the average FAC mission lasting just under three hours. Other FAC tasks included artillery adjustment, visual reconnaissance and assisting ground forces with navigation.

During the war, the USAF lost 223 FACs killed in action, which is about a 10% loss rate. 36 RAAF fighter pilots flew as FACs with the USAF in Vietnam between 1966 and 1971 and we had no losses. We flew either the Cessna O-1 ‘Bird Dog’, the Cessna O-2 or the new OV-10 ‘Bronco’ aircraft.

After seven days and 17 hours flying at the USAF FAC training school at Phan Rang, I was checked out as a Forward Air Controller in the Cessna O-1 ‘Bird Dog’, one



Ron Slater and me with OV-10 No. 639 at Di An in September 1969. This aircraft is currently being restored by staff at the Australian War memorial for display.

of the slowest aircraft in the world! It had a maximum level speed of 100 knots; but the usual cruise speed was around 70 knots. Its maximum ‘g’ limit was “pull until the door pops open.” It carried eight smoke marking rockets.

Continued on page 6.



A Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog' fitted with four marking rockets.
(Photo by USAF FAC Gary Dikkers).

I was assigned to the US 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta area south of Saigon. After a few rides in the back seat of the O-1 watching experienced FACs controlling some airstrikes I was placed in the front seat with an experienced FAC supervising me from the back seat as I controlled my first air strikes in anger.

...to be continued.

Part 2 of WGCdr Peter Condon's story will appear in the Spring edition of CONTACT and the full story will appear on our website.



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY TRANSITION STUDY

The Air Force Association has received a request from a researcher at Latrobe Rural Health School in Bendigo seeking participants in a study about adjustment to civilian life for ADF members.

To participate you must have completed service with the Australian Defence Force as a permanent member or reservist on full-time continuous service and have ended your service on or after January 1, 2004.

The project is being conducted by involves a short 10-minute on-line survey. If you would like to be involved and meet the 1 January 2004 timeline, please follow the link provided in the attached documents.

The survey is open to participants until the end of July 2019. For further information, you can also contact Kylie Cara LaTrobe Rural Health School on 0354489144, or email: k.cara@latrobe.edu.au



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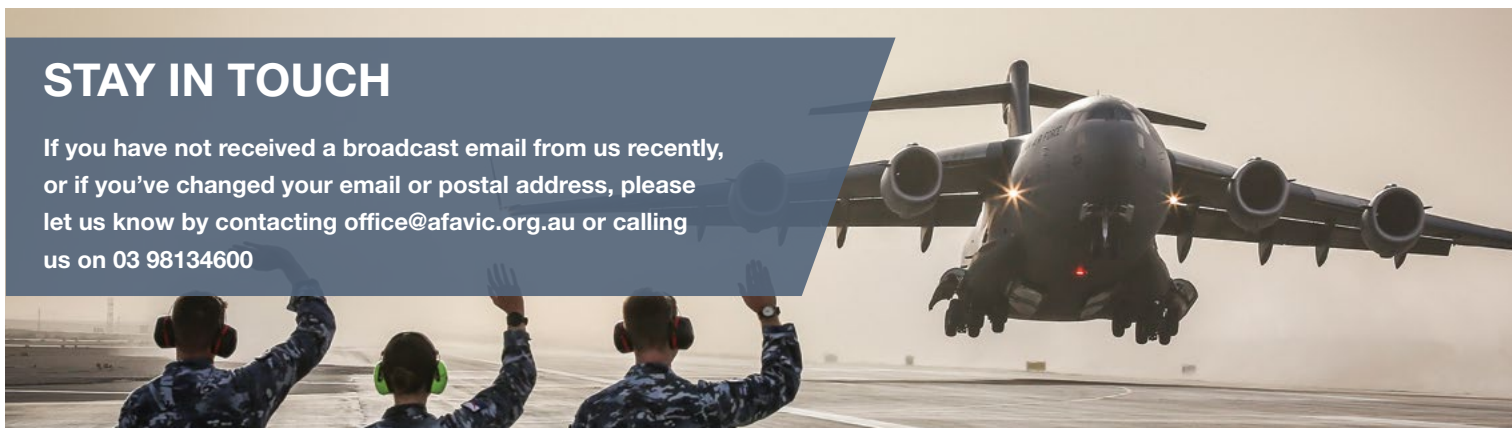
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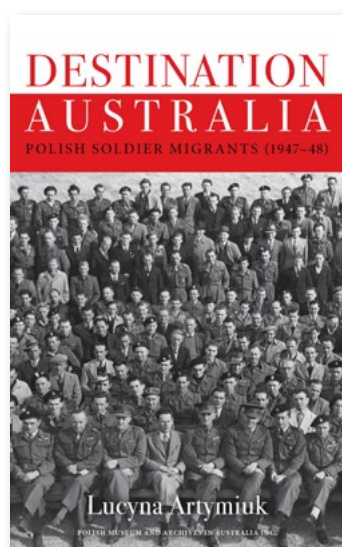




WHAT'S COMING UP

EXHIBITION LAUNCH OF DESTINATION AUSTRALIA

The Polish Museum and Archives in Australia and the Rats of Tobruk Association invites members of the Air Force Association to the opening of the "Destination Australia Post WWII Odysseys of Polish Soldiers" exhibition at Tobruk House at 2pm, Saturday 17 August 2019.



Destination Australia Book Cover

2019 from 11am to 3pm at Tobruk House, 44 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park. Please see poster right for further details.

During the opening the booklet "Destination Australia - Polish Soldier Migrants 1947-1948" will be launched and available for purchase.

The Polish airmen who arrived in 1947 and 1948 were welcomed aboard the SS Strathnaver in Sydney by the Australian Air Force Association and were recruited as members. Two Polish branches were formed – one in Sydney and the second in Melbourne.

The exhibition will also be open from 18- 25 August

Destination Australia Post WW II Odysseys of Polish Soldiers



An exhibition telling the little known story of comradeship and friendship forged in Tobruk in 1941 between Polish and Australian soldiers and which impacted on Australia's post-war migration.

OPEN FROM SUNDAY, 18 AUGUST 2019 TO 25 AUGUST 2019
11 am to 3 pm

At Tobruk House
44 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park, VIC 3206

Free entry

In 1947/48 Australia accepted 1,500 Polish military who were part of the Polish free forces in the UK and who decided not to return to Poland which was in the Soviet sphere of influence. Thanks to the lobbying and support of the Australian Rats of Tobruk on behalf of their comrades in arms in 1941, this special group of men were the prelude to the large post war migration of displaced Poles to Australia. This exhibition presents the little known story of Australian-Polish relations.

Polish Museum and Archives in Australia

Rats of Tobruk Association



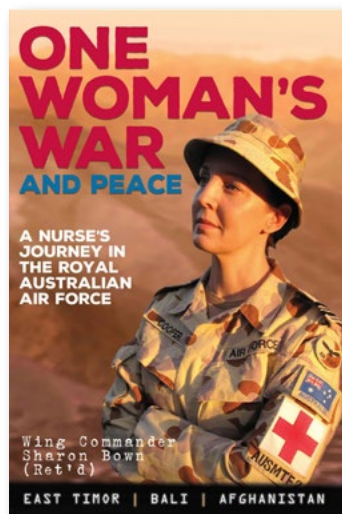
'THE MISSING NAVIGATORS' – 1WAGS WEBSITE TEAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Ballarat Branch team developing the 1WAGS Memorial website needs your help in finding some missing navigators!

1WAGS researchers at the Ballarat Branch have compiled a list of names on every Wireless Air Gunners course conducted at No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School at Ballarat and also 11 of the 12 Navigators Courses conducted there. But alas, the names on the copies of Personnel Occurrence Reports (PORs) for No 7 Navigators course – which is believed to have commenced on 17 July 1943 – are totally unreadable.

Out there somewhere, in some form or another, will be a list of names of the men who completed No 7 Navigators Course at RAAF Ballarat in 1943. If you can help, please contact 1WAGS Website Coordinator Mrs Janet Bates at pb51@bigpond.com.

Wing Commander (Retd) Sharon Bown will be the keynote speaker at the AFA Victoria's next Meet-A-Mate event on Friday 16th August at RAAF Base Point Cook



Sharon Bown's book.

Wing Commander (Retd) Sharon Bown will speak about her deployment experiences in Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.

Sharon served in the Royal Australian Air Force as a Nursing Officer. In 2004, when working as an aeromedical evacuation nurse she was seriously injured and narrowly escaped death in Timor-Leste when the UN helicopter she was travelling in crashed in a violent storm. Sharon survived a broken back, a shattered jaw, and aviation fuel burns. Not surprising, she was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A young woman of tremendous resilience, Sharon later served as a commander of a surgical team in Afghanistan in 2008.

Sharon is a highly regarded motivational military speaker who was appointed in 2016 for a three-year term to the Council of the Australian War Memorial. She is the author of the book, *One Woman's War and Peace...a nurse's journey through the Royal Australian Air Force*. Sharon is a member of the Air Force Association and its representative at the Female Veterans and Families' Forum.

Sharon's presentation will be followed by a light lunch, tea/coffee, and soft beverages. Air Force Band Wind Quartet will provide background music during lunch.

Air Force Association members and their partners, former serving members and their partners, serving uniformed members, and Defence APS staff are invited to attend. There is no charge for attendance.

RAAF Base Point Cook is a controlled entry facility. Therefore, for entry to the base and catering purposes you are required to advise Barb Stallard at office@afavic.org.au or 03 9813 4600 **no later than Wednesday July 24th, 2019** of your attendance and the name of any person accompanying you.

CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

SPRING 2019

Contributions by 2 September 2019

Publication: 11 October 2019

SUMMER 2019

Contributions by 6 December 2019

Publication: 20 December 2019

AUTUMN 2020

Contributions by 1 March 2019

Publication: 20 March 2020

WINTER 2020

Contributions by 10 June 2020

Publication: 26 June 2020

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Ballarat	Noel Hutchins	0439 929 322
Bendigo	Glenis Gordon	03 54369293
Catalina	Ronald Kirk	03 98193527
Engineer	David Graham	0407 248 874
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Geelong	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Gippsland	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
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North Metropolitan	Rod Garmaise	03 93093543
Vietnam Veterans	Gill Coughlan	gilly4346@gmail.com
RAF	Val Boyd	0417512177
Sunderland SQNs	Ricky Hattam	03 52413431
Williams	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600



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AROUND THE BRANCHES

In addition to the Presidents' Reports below, you can also find Newsletters and other information about our Branches on our [AFA Victoria website](#). Simply go to the Branches dropdown menu on the front page.

ATC/AAFC

Hello again everyone and I hope you're all coping with the rather sudden drop in temperatures as Winter approaches. We only have a fairly brief report on this occasion.

Firstly, on behalf of our Branch members, we thank the OC of 4 Wing AAFC, WGCDR (AAFC) Dee Smith for her appointment of our new ATC/AAFC Branch Liaison Officer, SQNLDR (AAFC) Bridget Hosking, who is the Wing's Staff Officer Development and Community Engagement. We extend a warm welcome to Bridget who will liaise with our Newsletter Editor, Ian Cohn from time to time advising of any items/events etc. which would be of interest to the Branch members.

Congratulations are in order to long standing member and former Branch President, Doug Williams who, in recognition of his valuable contribution to the RSL, by holding numerous positions with the organization over many years, has been awarded a Life Membership. Well-earned Doug!

The Branch's AGM was held at the Box Hill RSL on the 15th of April and so far as nominations for the open Executive Positions were concerned there were no surprises in store. As a consequence, the positions remain as previously, and I thank my group of stalwarts for their support

- President: "Yours truly"
- Treasurer: Tony Synhur
- Vice President: Peter Wilson
- Delegate: John MacDonald
- Secretary: Hugh Tank
- Returning Officer: Graeme Smith

At our monthly luncheon on the 5th of April we were pleased to have a special surprise visitor, Lloyd Knight, join us. Lloyd spent 19 years in the RAAF and has written and had published, a book titled "Diary of a Pilot. Above and Beyond" which is available in paperback, hardback or digital format through Amazon, Kindle etc. A paperback copy was signed by Lloyd on the day and it will be passed on in due course to our collection at Benalla Air Museum.

In the meantime, stay safe, stay warm, and perhaps curl up, hibernate and enjoy a good book.

Regards to all.

Laurie Bell



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ATC/AAFC BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

BALLARAT

Your management committee have been very busy over the past couple of months with the Heritage Weekend opening and the D Day Commemoration (see separate story).

The development of the **1WAGS Memorial Website**

is progressing with Janet Bates and Peter Schoutens working with the UBC Web Design people. We have sourced two excellent metal filing cabinets at bargain prices as we will need a lot of storage space for 1WAGS records. Senior librarian Stephen Brown has been

very active in formulating a Library Development Policy which the Committee will discuss and formalise at the July committee meeting.

It was **Ballarat Heritage Weekend** on 25 & 26 May and we opened our new rooms to the public.

Supporting the opening was a display of Vintage and Classic cars, military vehicles, sausage sizzle by the Military Brotherhood and, on the Sunday, 54 members of the "Sing Australia Choir", situated in the former Dining Hall, entertained the crowd singing WWII/1940's songs.

Volunteers were kept busy serving tea/coffee and biscuits to the public for \$2.50 a pop.

The success of the weekend far exceeded my expectations for the first year. It was very pleasing to see members of the public turn up to seek more information about ancestors who did training at No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School Ballarat and this has resulted in two-way benefits with people providing information and photographs for our 1WAGS Memorial Website.

Next year should be an even bigger and more successful event. Our Secretary Rob Petty, currently cruising and travelling the Northern hemisphere with wife Ann, laid a lot of the groundwork before he left but was not here to enjoy the results. Rob and Ann return to Ballarat on

31st July after a full 3 months away. They are getting some great photographs.

Social Trip to Nhill: On Saturday 2nd November Nhill will be holding its 100th Annual Air Show and it is planned to arrange an overnight stay trip there, leaving early Saturday morning (2nd), travel time approx 3 hours, spend Saturday at the Air Show and the Aviation Heritage Centre, stay overnight Saturday (night out at the local RSL or other), touring and travel home on Sunday 3rd.

Yes, November 2nd might be a while away yet, but if interested members do not make accommodation bookings very soon, everything for that weekend will be booked out. A lot more than an Air Show with lots of activity (our member Stephen Carter's vintage Ryan aircraft

will be on display at the show). More info very soon, but please advise me asap if interested.

Our **Social Luncheon** Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, (except January), with arrival time by 11.45 am for a 12 noon start. All meetings are held at our rooms at Airport Hut 48, Airport Drive, Mitchell Park (ie: Ballarat Aerodrome).

Our **Business Meetings** (open to all members), are held at 3 pm on the second Monday of each month. These meetings immediately follow a monthly Committee meeting enabling members to be promptly aware of decisions taken by the committee, enabling members to ratify, or otherwise, decisions taken.

Noel Hutchins
President



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT
THE BALLARAT BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

ENGINEER

MID-YEAR LUNCHEON

By the time of publishing the Winter "Contact", the Luncheon will have been held. The Guest Speaker, Dennis Kelly, is now in his 97th year. Dennis was a RAAF WW2 Wireless Air Gunner (WAG) who survived being shot down in his Lancaster and escaping from the Germans twice. On the occasion of the Luncheon, the format was more of an informal question & answer chat.

END-OF YEAR LUNCHEON

At the 3rd June Committee Meeting, the EOY Luncheon was proposed for Thursday 7th November (Oaks Day) but noting the lowered numbers for the Mid-Year

Luncheon, a change of venue may be required. Venue and cost will be advised later, but the event is definitely "on".

The Committee is planning that a Senior Scientist Guest Speaker from the CSIRO will talk about "The Square Kilometre Array" (the SKA). The SKA is another hugely significant radio-astronomy project proposed for Western Australia. For further reading, just Google "The Square Kilometre Array" – more details of the EOY will follow in the Spring edition of "Contact"

Next Meeting: Monday 5th August at the Mail Exchange Hotel (Bourke St near Spencer St) at 12 noon - visitors are most welcome.

DCS and ECS Plaques, and the "Big Frognall Reunion" (BFR19) - Canberra

The Plaque Commitment and Laying ceremony was held (in conjunction with the RAAF's 98th Birthday) on Thursday 28th March 2019 at the RAAF Memorial Grove, Federal Highway ACT, commemorating the contribution that various engineering training schemes made to RAAF engineering capability between 1954 and 1992.

From 1954 to 1988 and extending to 1992, a scheme to bolster the RAAF engineering strength and capability ran at RAAF Frognall and other locations. The main sequence was Diploma Cadet Squadron (DCS) from 1962 and then

Engineer Cadet Squadron (ECS) from 1977 at RAAF Frognall, but preceding DCS were several Engineering and Radio Apprentice intakes, and in the 1980s a detachment operated in WA. In the final years to 1992, the last courses completed their engineering studies at RMIT, while being accommodated and administered at RAAF Point Cook.

This ceremony recognised particularly the role RMIT/ RAAF Frognall played, successively through the Fellowship Diploma Courses (Radio), the Associate Diploma Courses (Mechanical, Electrical), the DCS and the ECS. Although most cadets were engineer cadets, in the early years there were some Business Studies

and other cadets placed within the administration of RAAF Frognall, including a radiographer. RMIT was the place of study for the majority, and additionally the WAIT in Perth, and other tertiary institutes/universities in Melbourne, featured in the scheme over the years.

Over 200 people attended this Commitment and

Laying Ceremony including AVM (Ret'd) Mac Weller and AIRCDRE (Ret'd) Col Bradford.

After the Ceremony, some 200 former Cadets and 100 partners attended the evening BFR19 Dinner held at the Ainslie Football Club, ACT. The BFR19 Reunion has been brilliantly highlighted in the

Radioschool Association Magazine (the "RAM") and is a highly recommended read – the link is <http://www.radschool.org.au/magazines/Vol65/Page17.htm>

We wish you all ongoing good health and happiness

Carl Dillon
On behalf of David Graham and the Committee



The quite brilliant setting for the Big Frognall Reunion of May 2019 at the Ainslie Club.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ENGINEERS BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

CATALINA

On a pleasant but cloudy Thursday morning, we were pleased to welcome in excess of 20 Air Force Association (Vic) Catalina Branch, members, family and friends to the ANZAC Day March for 2019.

Ten students from Wesley College St Kilda Road

Campus, accompanied by their International Baccalaureate (IB), Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), Co-ordinator Ms Amanda Stefancic, participated by carrying the banner, forming the first rank of six abreast, and afterwards in our wreath laying ceremony at the Catalina Tree.

Our earlier step off, from the new position in Flinders Street West, was led by our Patron, Group Captain Annette Holian and our President Mr Ken Scott. Mr Peter Marsh (see further story below), together with Wesley College students, Claudia McSwain and Paola Pedrinoni, laid a Wreath

in front of the Memorial Plaques at the Catalina Tree.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CATALINA BRANCH?

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Wesley College Students Claudia McSwain and Paola Pedrinoni holding the Wreath in front of the Catalina Banner, ANZAC Day 2019.



Peter Marsh with Wesley College Students Paola Pedrinoni and Claudia McSwain laid the Wreath in front of the Catalina Plaques at the Catalina Tree, ANZAC Day 2019.



Catalina Branch, members, family and friends gather at the Catalina Tree, ANZAC Day 2019.



Plaques in memory of Catalina Flying Boat Squadrons and Air Sea Rescue Flights.



L-R Ron Kirk (Secretary), John Ford (Committee), Patron and Group Captain Annette Holian, Jennifer Newton OAM (Treasurer) and Ken Scott (President), ANZAC Day 2019.

THE CATALINA BRANCH REMEMBERS FLTLT PETER MARSH, DFC (408191)

Peter Marsh's father, Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh (408191), enlisted in the RAAF in 1941. He survived two tours with 43 Squadron flying Catalinas in the Pacific Islands and 11 Squadron in the South West Pacific. He was later assigned as an instructor on Catalinas at No 3 Operational Training Unit, Rathmines, New South Wales.

During this time, Peter and 4 crew were assigned to ferry a new Catalina (serial number

IB279) from Consolidated Aircraft, San Diego, California, USA to Australia. It was while on the last leg of this flight, between Suva, Fiji and Rathmines, that the aircraft disappeared.

The date of the incident is recorded as 4 February 1944. Despite attempts by the RAAF to determine what had happened to the aircraft, the crew members were listed as being accidentally killed.

Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh

was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFC) on 30 May 1946 for his "exceptional skill, courage and resourcefulness". See Citation for details. He is also commemorated on Panel 9 of the Port Moresby Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Launceston Tasmania.

His son, Peter Marsh, received his father's DFC at Government House in 1950.

Ron Kirk – Catalina Branch Secretary



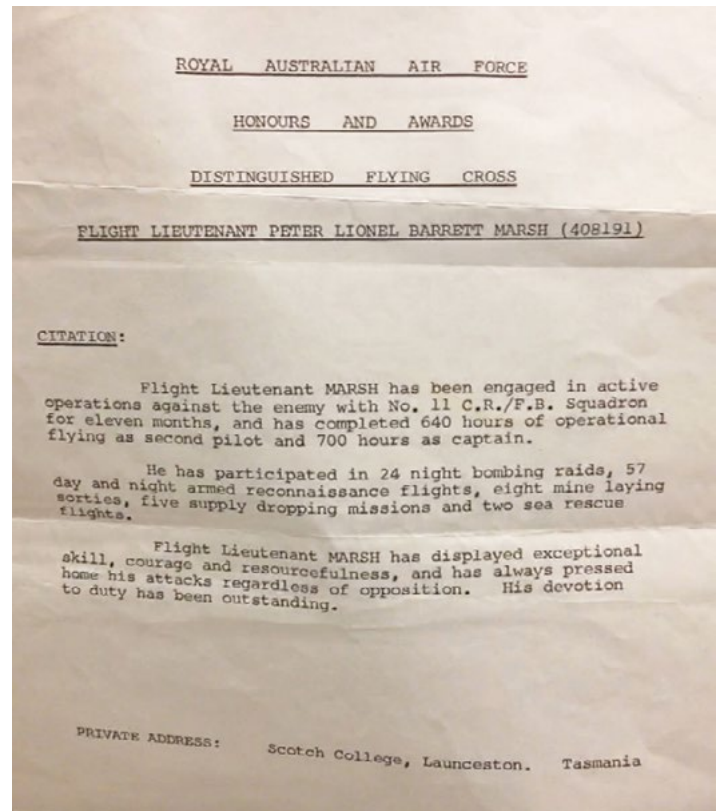
Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh (408191).



Consolidated PBY Catalina A24-40, 43 Squadron, up for repairs at Bowen Queensland Circ. 1940-1944.



A young Peter Marsh receiving his Father's DFC at Government House 1950.



Distinguished Flying Cross Citation - Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh



Skipper Peter Marsh on a Lake Macquarie training flight. Photo taken from the navigator's bombing run position, prone between the 2 pilots.



Back Row – Corporal Bert Clough (Fitter), Flight Sergeant Les Langdon (1st WAG), Corporal Leo Allen (Armourer), Flight Sergeant Dave Fisher (2nd WAG), Sergeant Harold "Blue" Butler (1st Engineer).

Front Row – Flying Officer Brian Holmes (Observer), Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh (1st Pilot and Skipper), Leading Aircraftman Frank Turner (2nd Engineer).



Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh on a service boat Lake Macquarie Rathmines.

DIARY DATES FOR 2019:

Sunday 25 August 2:00 pm – Wreath Laying & Pilgrimage at the Shrine.

Monday 11 November 11:00 am – Remembrance Day, at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

Thursday 28 November 12 noon – Christmas Lunch at Mail Exchange Hotel, Melbourne.

NO 2 SQUADRON

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM – CARL SCHILLER, OAM CSM

2019 was the last year of the two-year free membership of the Air Force Association. I am very pleased that the Branch membership has remained strong following the cessation of the period. The Air Force Association – Victoria wants to continue supporting its 2SQN Branch members and their families, especially knowing the value the members place on their Annual Luncheon that has largely been funded by the Association over the last two years. The Association has provided further support funding to the Branch for 2019. The Secretary/Treasurer's Report has these details.

Unfortunately, while there has been regular communication by phone and email among the Branch's Committee Members during the last 12 months, the Committee was unable to meet due

to health reasons of three of its members and my many absences as the Association's National President. I expect the Committee will be in a better situation during the next 12 months.

The Association held a twilight service at the AFC Memorial Point Cook to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice. It was a magnificent event, supported by the RAAF Museum, the AAFC, Shrine of Remembrance that provided a Shrine Guard, and the Werribee Concert Band. The Association will again commemorate Remembrance Day at the AFC Memorial and host a reception at the former Officers' Mess. At this stage, the service will be a twilight service similar to that held last year. Melbourne residing members can receive

assistance with travel to the venue if they have difficulty attending.

The Association will fund a new 2SQN Branch banner that will include an updated list of the Squadron's operations now that it's clear the Branch is likely to endure for some time. The Committee is keen to seek ideas for banner design from the members.

The Air Force Association is about to undergo a modernisation program designed to have all its Divisions to operate in sync. This means Divisions will endeavour to look like they all belong to the same organisation. The program will strive to achieve efficiency in the Association's administration and to ensure it improves its appeal to the younger veteran. The latter is a significant challenge,

but the Association must act now otherwise its future is grim. There is consensus at the National Board for the Association to undergo a 'harmonisation' program and consideration for the development of a national veterans' advocacy and family support service. The 'harmonisation' program will not impact on current members' services. Members will be consulted in the process.

I will not be nominating for re-election as your Branch President due to my commitment to my National President's post. I have supported Walter Sherman's nomination. I thank the Committee for its support during the last two years and I wish the Branch the very best for the future.

Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to thank Carl for his tenure as President, in particular his outstanding role in enabling our transition to a Branch of the Air Force Association Victoria ensuring our continued presence as we head towards the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Air Force on 31st March 2021.

I would also like to welcome the new Committee and I look forward to working with them in the coming year. I also look forward to your input as members of the Branch and encourage you to take the opportunity to engage and share your stories. As a group we have some interesting history and stories to tell, as evident in our earlier newsletters with the contribution by two of our older members Alex Greig and Brian Winspear. Their stories went on to appear in both the Contact Newsletter and Wings magazine respectively. Both articles are now available on the Air Force Association Victoria website at <http://raafavic.org.au/content/762/branch-2-squadron>.

Later this month it is my intention to get together with the Committee and work on an agenda for the coming year. We have a few ideas that we wish to explore and will advise these in our next newsletter. Please contact our Secretary



No2 SQN Branch Committee Members: Carl Schiller, Graham Henry, Bruce Hudgson, Molly Agius & Walter Sherman Images: No2 Sqn Branch Committee

(Bruce Hudgson) by email if you have any issues that you wish the Committee to discuss. Bruce's email address is brucehudgson@gmail.com.

Walter Sherman
President

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT
THE RAF BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

RAF BRANCH

The Royal Air Force Branch has recently recruited two valuable new members to our Branch. They are Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) Matt Little and Heather Little who migrated to Melbourne in August 2018 and joined the Melbourne branch of the RAFA.

Matt had a distinguished 26-year career in Royal Air Force Music Services only retiring in January 2019. Initially serving as a bass trombonist and lead vocalist with the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, Matt took up the commission in 2008 and became a Director of Music serving with all three bands of the Royal Air Force. Highlights of his

career include working with Brian May (Queen) for a Proms in the Park concert at RAF College Cranwell for which Matt received 2 AOC Commendations as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

In 2017 Matt was the Director of Music for the Dame Vera Lynn 100th Birthday Celebration at the London Palladium with a host of celebrities and in presence of Her Majesty the Queen. During his tenure in the RAF, Matt performed as a vocal soloist and was the Director of Music for many ceremonial, public and international events. In 2017 he received the Freedom

of the City of London in recognition of his contribution to music in the Royal Air Force.

Aside from his career in the RAF, Matt has had a highly successful career as a vocalist in the West End and worldwide, performing as a soloist at the Royal Albert Hall and Dubai Opera house to name just a few. He has also appeared as a vocal soloist on the Edinburgh Military Tattoo over 10 times in Scotland and on the 2016 tour of Australia and New Zealand.

Heather has been working in the not for profit sector for over 10 years, raising millions of pounds, and most recently headed up the fundraising team at a leading animal welfare charity in the UK. Heather has also been an active fundraiser and member of the Royal Air Forces Association UK and was appointed as a Trustee with particular expertise in fundraising and communications in 2018, sadly having to step down from this position due to her relocation to Australia.

Heather now works at Monash University in the Development team with a focus on raising philanthropic funds for the Faculty of Arts. In her spare time, she volunteers for Earthcare St Kilda, an organisation that helps to educate and preserve the penguin colony on St Kilda foreshore.

Matt and Heather met through music as Heather has also had a career as a vocalist performing at numerous high profile events across the UK, and has had the pleasure of performing with the Syd Lawrence Orchestra, all of the Bands of the Royal Air Force and most recently at the London Palladium and Royal Albert Hall.

Both Heather and Matt are enjoying their new lives in Australia and are very much looking forward to being active members of the RAF Branch.



Squadron Leader Matthew Little sings with the RAF Band.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE RAF BRANCH?

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THE PREMIER'S ANZAC DAY LUNCHEON

The Air Force Association was well represented at the Premier's ANZAC Day Luncheon earlier this year with Carl Schiller (National), Max McGregor and Peter Colliver (Victoria) all in attendance.

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.

Mrs Audrey Lehey.....	Bendigo Branch.....	14/02/2019
Mr Edwin Plenty.....	2 Sqd Branch.....	28/02/2019
Mr John Hill	Bendigo Branch.....	21/03/2019
Mr Victor Cahill	Bendigo Branch.....	13/04/2019
Rev. George Ashworth OAM.....	Vietnam Veterans Branch.....	29/04/2019
Mr Alex Culvenor	Bendigo Branch (Life Member).....	11/06/2019

Let Us Forget

IN MEMORY OF SIR ROSS SMITH



The South Australian community gathered to commemorate the 97th anniversary of the funeral of Sir Ross Smith at St Peter's Cathedral on 15 June.

"He was one of the great leaders and larrikins of the Australian Flying Corps. Post-war he was also one of the great aviation adventurers whose life was sadly cut short." - Les Sutherland, colleague and author of *Aces and Kings*.



In 1919, brothers Ross, Keith, and their mechanics, were the first to fly from England to Australia - 18,500km over 28 days. They became national heroes and were knighted for this daring and difficult feat. Ross had previously served with the Fighting First No. 1 Squadron (then part of the Air Flying Corp) during the First World War. He was one of our first aces, and a highly decorated airman.

You can read more about Sir Ross Smith at <https://epicflightcentenary.com.au/> and http://bit.ly/AirForce_News.

Image courtesy Australian War Memorial