



CONTACT

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HUNDREDS GATHER AT POINT COOK TO COMMEMORATE WWI ARMISTICE



On Sunday 4th November, almost 700 people made the journey to RAAF Base Point Cook to mark the centenary of the signing of the World War 1 Armistice on 11 November and honour the memory of those who served and paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Following a formal reception at the Officers' Mess, serving members past and present joined members of the public at the parade ground where the Australian Flying Corps Memorial stood proudly – surrounded by a stunning wall of red poppies, especially created for the event by the 5000 Poppies organisation.

Prior to the formal start of the Commemoration Service, a Harvard (AT-6) aircraft – courtesy of the RAAF Museum – dipped and rolled in a wonderful flying display above the audience, while cameras and phones captured every acrobatic manoeuvre.

MC Peter Meehan's welcome and opening remarks were perfectly timed with an official flypast by the Harvard, and this was immediately followed by Shrine of Remembrance Memorial Guard, Bob Roberts taking post next the AFC Memorial.

Continued on page 2.

Following welcome addresses by Max McGregor, AFA Victoria President and Carl Schiller, National President of the Air Force Association, four speakers – AAFC Cadet Under Officer Martin Whitehouse, Ms Marion Nunn, SQNLDR Lee Stanway and Mr Laurie Bell – shared the Story of the Armistice, with an audience, clearly moved by the scale and impact of the Great War and sacrifice of those who served.

SILENCE FALLS

(written by Pte Henry Weston Pryce, 16th Australian Infantry Battalion - 11 Nov 1918.)

*The echoes die, the smoke-clouds thin and pass,
The cannons are, like statues, dumb and cold.
Silent the crosses wait, and in the grass
The spent shells gleam like gold.
All spent he lay and dreamed till the moment came;
Now, waking with a cry, he looks, all wonder
To see the empty sky hurl down no flame;
To hear no crack of thunder.*

- Read by AAFC Cadet Under Officer,
Martin Whitehouse.

"Today – and next Sunday, the 11th day of the 11th month - we remember and honour the fallen, and we remember and give thanks to those brave men and women who returned to build the future of the Australia we are so privileged to live in today." – SQNLDR Lee Stanway, The Story of the Armistice.

After Chaplain Keith Lanyon led the assembled guests in the Prayer of Remembrance, GPCAPT Michael Que Hee laid a beautiful poppy wreath accompanied by a stunning rendition of the lament, "Flowers of the Forest" by Les Kenfield, Piper from the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums.

As the audience stood for the Ode of Remembrance read by WOFF Daryl Bessell, the mournful notes of the Last Post, played by bugler Sean Rankin, rang out across the silent parade ground.

At the conclusion of formalities, guests were invited to place a poppy in the artillery shell at the base of the Memorial, led by AIRCDRE Bruce Wood, Mrs Deborah Wood, and Ms Kate Cannon who placed handmade glass poppies in remembrance of three family members who are buried in Flanders Field. Harrison Sawyer, accompanied by the Werribee Concert Band sang the beautifully poignant "I Am Australian" as guests took their leave.

Special thanks must go to WGCDR James Rogers and staff of 21 SQN, the cadets of 4 Wing AAFC, under the

guidance of WOFF (AAFC) Matthew Cane, who supported our Commemoration event at RAAF Base Point Cook, the birthplace of Australian military aviation.

A lot of time and effort by the Organising Committee and many others went into the preparation for our Centenary of the Armistice Commemoration event. Here are a few lighter moments as the team set up the event...

Further Commemoration photos can be found on pages 8 and 9 and also on our [website](#).



Setting up the poppy wall



Setting up the day before



The critical task of chair alignment.



Double checking those chairs...

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Members

As we approach the end of 2018, we can reflect back on a most successful year for the Air Force Association. Changing our name created some heated discussion initially, but with the WA Division voting

overwhelmingly to change their name, and the NSW Division also adopting the title of Air Force Association, we are well on the way to having unified naming throughout all our Divisions.

CENTENARY OF ARMISTICE COMMEMORATION

After many months of hard work by the Organising Committee, our Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, held at Point Cook on November 4 was blessed by good weather allowing a truly spectacular event to unfold. The magnificent Poppy Wall looked great in the early evening light, but as darkness fell and the lights at the base illuminated the Poppy Wall it really was a spectacular sight. All of the participants - RAAF Museum, Master of Ceremonies, the Shrine Guard, Werribee Concert Band, Bugler, Piper and

the story tellers performed magnificently ensuring a night that will be remembered for a long time to come.

The Air Force has formed an organising team for the 100th Birthday of the RAAF, and one of this team attended our function and was certainly impressed with what he saw. This team has briefed the AFA National Board as to their initial thoughts for 2021, and while celebrations will go throughout the year, the plan at this stage is to join with AFA - Vic for a joint celebration at Point Cook in November 2021. Something to look forward to.

Advocacy

The National Board has agreed to investigate the best way that the Association can provide an advocacy service to Veterans. At this stage the investigation is limited to identifying better ways to deliver the Association's Aims and Objectives. We have not arrived at any decision on structure or administration, this will require input from a professional consultancy for us to consider.

The Board of Management of the AFA Victoria wishes all our members and their families a Merry Christmas, and a safe and prosperous 2019.

Best wishes

Max McGregor

President, Victoria Division

HISTORIC PAINTING PRESENTED TO THE ASSOCIATION

A stunning Norman Clifford painting of RAAF Base Point Cook as it was in 1914 has been presented to the Air Force Association – Victoria.

At our Members' Christmas Party on 29th November, AIRCDRE E J (Ted) Bushell AM (Retd) presented the Association with the magnificent painting that he had personally commissioned. A series of detailed aeronautical engineering volumes were also generously donated. AIRCDRE Bushell is a widely respected defence technical expert and author who has contributed significantly to Australia's reviews of its defence capabilities.



Accepting the generous gift on behalf of the Association, AFA Victoria President Max McGregor said, "We are honoured to receive such a superb painting, so vividly depicting the birthplace of Australian military aviation."

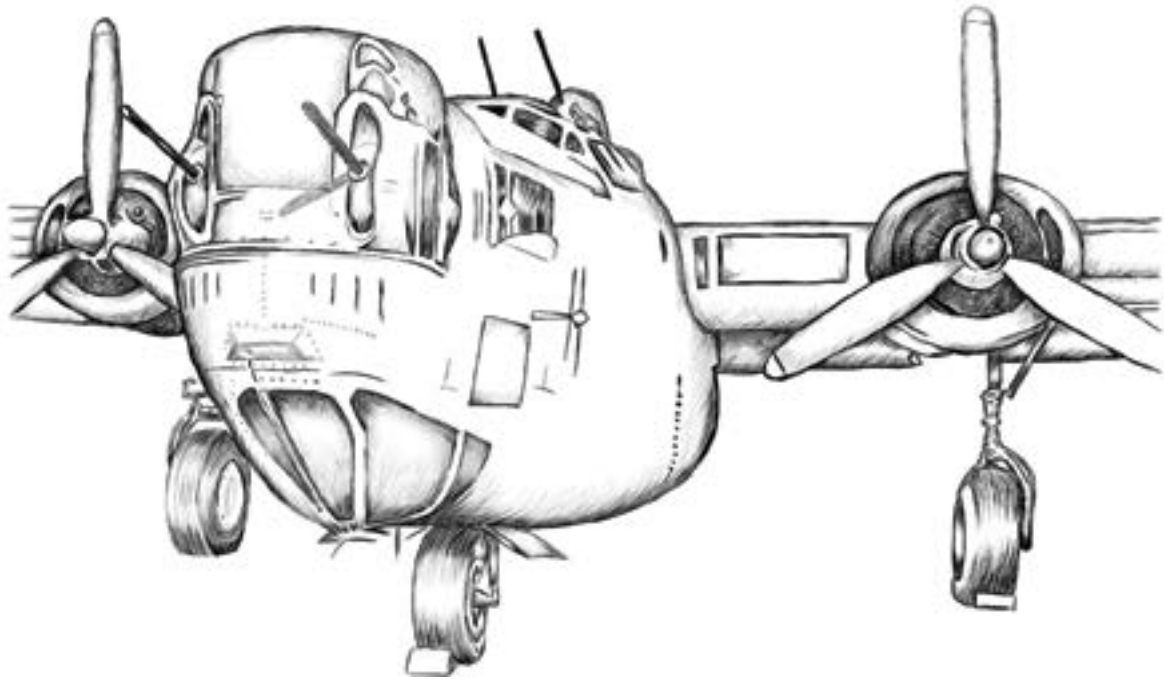
The painting is now hanging in the Association's VC Room.



AIRCDRE Ted Bushell AM (ret'd) second left, with Carl Schiller, Jack Bell and Max McGregor.



THE B24 LIBERATOR MEMORIAL AUSTRALIA GAINS MUSEUM ACCREDITATION



Artist's impression of the B24 Liberator. The artist, Simon is an AFA Victoria member who is helping B24 people with some art work, some of which is targeted at the younger people – as may be seen by the human features of this wonderful aircraft.

The B24 Liberator Memorial Australia team has worked hard to meet set criteria from the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries and joins the 75 Victorian collections accredited in Victoria.

Housed at the Werribee Satellite Aerodrome the B24 Liberator Memorial Australia was established in 1988 to support the restoration of an Australian service B-24 aircraft. A professional panel of museum experts made a final assessment and compiled a positive report on the museum's operations.

To become accredited, museums spend 3-4 years developing procedures and policies, and practice to meet recognised museum standards.

The B24 Liberator Memorial Australia undertakes aircraft restoration as part of a "working" museum structure and aims to reach international standards for static display. The museum also holds a collection of photographs, books and personal memorabilia dated from the late 1930's through to 1947 which provides insight and understanding of the crew

and pilots war services experiences.

The Accreditation Panel was particularly impressed with the museum's commitment to understanding visitation which has resulted in an overall visitor experience which is incredibly welcoming and friendly.

Simone Ewenson, from Museums Australia (Victoria), congratulated the B24 Liberator team said:

"Caring for our shared heritage is an important task and by becoming accredited the B24 Liberator Memorial Australia has proven to be a leading museum in Victoria."

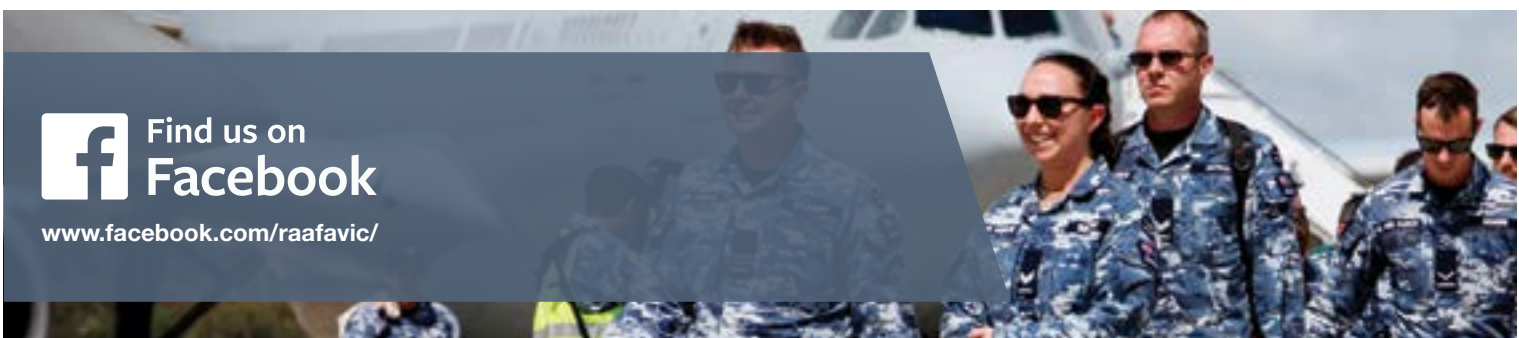
Congratulations to the B24 Liberator Restoration team – truly well-deserved!

You can read more about the B24 Liberator Restoration project on their website: <https://www.b24australia.org.au/home>. Or read our recent articles on the project [here](#).



Find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/raafavic/



MEMORIES OF 2 SQUADRON DURING WORLD WAR II (PART 1)

This wonderful piece on the memories of Mr Alex Greig (125672), was written by his wife, Mrs Deidre Greig. Mr Greig is 93 years old and lives in Sorrento.

Soon after leaving school and entering the workforce, Alex joined the RAAF cadets and enlisted at 18 years of age after training at Cressey, Nhill and Deniliquin and qualifying as a fitter-armourer. He then moved to the RAAF's No. 2 Squadron and was transferred to Darwin, which had been under siege by the Japanese.

It was 1943 and just a year previously on 19 February 1942, the city had suffered crippling surprise air attacks from the Japanese, making it increasingly evident that Australia needed to mount a strong defensive strategy to protect the islands to the north from further invasion and Japanese occupation. In this regard Darwin was a pivotal RAAF base.

For Alex, the journey from Adelaide on the ancient goods train aptly named Leaping Lena was a jerky and rough introduction to the 45 mile Hughes strip south of Darwin, that was established as the Squadron's base. Whilst there, he was seriously burned on the back and legs when a colleague used aircraft fuel in a pressure lamp in lieu of kerosene and tossed it outside the armament hut to disperse the explosion.

The explosion impacted on the passers-by, and both Alex and another airman suffered serious second and third degree burns and were rushed to the Darwin Hospital. Fortunately, newly introduced penicillin and careful nursing led to a rapid recovery. Being unable to resume normal duties immediately, he was invited to take over the welfare role of the Salvation Army while the officer in charge was leave.

This position involved responsibility for the field unit and the distribution of a range of those amenities much appreciated by serving personnel. It also included driving the fully equipped Salvos mobile van with its supply of cold drinks and other refreshments to the ground staff hard at work in the searing tropical heat on aircraft maintenance. The greeting was always the cry of 'Holy Joe!'. It was disquieting at first, but soon an accepted part of the twice daily ritual taken in good humour.

The tensions surrounding the Squadron's mission did not abate. By early August 1945, it was clear that the Japanese were facing defeat and 2 Squadron moved its bombers from the Hughes strip to Balikpapan in Borneo. Most of the fleet comprised Mitchell bombers and, very frequently, their effectiveness was diminished by the poor standard of communications that seriously hampered the sorties over New Britain, where further relocation had been planned for the Squadron.

Alex expected to be in the advance party to set up the new facility at Balikpapan but this did not eventuate and his friend, Les Campbell, was part of the first unit to fly out. To the dismay of all, their plane inexplicably lost contact whilst flying in formation and disappeared, with the crash evidence remaining undiscovered for many decades. Campbell was one of the 176 casualties suffered by 2 Squadron during its WWII operations.

This concludes Part 1 of 'Memories of 2 Squadron during WWII'. Part 2 will be published in the next edition of Contact. Or you can read the entire story on our [website](#).



Alex Greig, aged 93, at home in Sorrento



Alex Greig during his time in Darwin



Alex Greig during his time in Darwin



The "White Elephant" Beaufort crew from L to R: FSGT Max Mahoney, FSGT Al Greenhill, WGCDR 'Sam' Balmer and FSGT Stan Jaffer.

Some time ago, a builder who was demolishing an old suburban house in Melbourne, noticed an envelope with faded snapshots dumped in a rubbish bin. Little did he know he was unearthing some real RAAF history. Noel Hutchins from Ballarat Branch tells this story...

On recognising the photos as Air Force related, the builder passed them on to aviation historian Kevin O'Reilly, who passed them onto our Ballarat Branch for safe-keeping.

Kevin also emailed to me a copy of one of the photographs from that envelope saved from the rubbish bin, a picture of a crew taken in front of a Beaufort aircraft, their identity unknown,

However, a little bit of research reveals that this "White Elephant" Beaufort was flown by Wing Commander J.R. 'Sam' Balmer. Shown in the photograph, (left to right) are: F Sgt Max Mahoney, F Sgt Al Greenhill, Wg Cdr 'Sam' Balmer and F Sgt Stan Jaffer.

In 1942, at the time of Australia being under attack from Japan, a British RAF Squadron of Beaufort aircraft was stationed at the RAAF Station at Richmond NSW. An entry in the Operations Record Book at RAAF Station Richmond for 31st January 1942 shows:

"At 1842 hours [31st January 1942] No. 100 BEAUFORT SQUADRON, R.A.F. arrived at RICHMOND, coming under control of Southern Area from the date of arrival to carry out training as well as operational flying during its stay at RICHMOND. The squadron included eight aircraft, ten officers and sixty airmen."

Then, on 1 March 1942, following receipt of an official Air Force communiqué 24/42, the Richmond Operations Record Book stated:

"On the authority of AFCE 24/42 dated 28th February 1942, No. 100 Squadron R.A.F. which had been employed as an operational training unit on loan to the R.A.A.F., became, w.e.f. 25.2.42, No. 100 Squadron R.A.A.F. stationed at R.A.A.F. Station RICHMOND.and on 18 March 1942, Wing Commander J.R. 'Sam' Balmer was appointed Commanding Officer."

A search reveals that this "White Elephant" Beaufort aircraft was originally RAF aircraft T9598 to be later identified with RAAF numbering A9-46.

A close look at the aircraft in the photograph also reveals a "kill" recorded in the form of a bomb dropped on enemy shipping.

So, this important photograph of the Commanding Officer of 100 Beaufort Squadron RAAF with his crew that had been discarded into a rubbish bin was saved by a builder who was thoughtful enough to hand them to an appropriate person.

Author's Note: In the book, "Song of the Beauforts" there is an account of this aircraft piloted by WGCDR Balmer on the evening of 25th June 1942 bombing the Japanese ship Tenyo Maru, a 4,000 ton vessel heading towards Lae, laden with military supplies: "...Shortly before 2100 hours local time, the crews boarded their planes Balmer led the way in A9-46.WGCDR Balmer found the ship - a two-masted one funnel vessel of 4,000 tons."

[Click here to read the full story: "Song of the Beauforts".](#)

“THIS PLACE”

Song for veterans launched at the Shrine of Remembrance

Melbourne singer/songwriter Mike Brady (Up There Cazaly) launched his new song “This Place” on Saturday 27 October at the Shrine of Remembrance. Max McGregor was there...

“This Place” was written by Mike Brady to commemorate veterans and released in time for Remembrance Day. The event was organised by the RSL, and the AFA was asked to invite two WW2 veterans to attend the launch.

AFA Victoria was extremely well represented by Jack Bell, Norma Mullins and Jessie Reed. Everyone knows that Jack is 100 years, but I am not going to disclose the ladies' ages! It was a moving experience for all who attended. Channel 7 covered the event, and Nick McCallum conducted an interview with Jack that went to air that night.

Our veterans not only looked magnificent - they were magnificent and represented the AFA in an exemplary manner.

*“This place is their place
The memories and the times...”*

*“To reminisce and share a pain
That only they could know”*
- “This Place”, Mike Brady

You can see the Channel 7 news report [here](#) – or by visiting [the AFA Victoria Facebook page](#).



Singer Mike Brady sings “This Place” for a group of veterans at the Shrine.



Singer Mike Brady with WWII veteran and AFA member Norma Mullins.



Singer Mike Brady with WWII veteran and AFA member Jack Bell.

2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/ STATE CONFERENCE

Call for Nominations and Motions

Members are advised that the 2019 Annual General Meeting followed by the State Conference will be held on 30th of May 2019, venue to be announced.

Nominations for State President, Treasurer and Board Members

Nominations for the office of State President, State Treasurer and Board members are to be sent in writing to the Air Force Association Office no later than 1st February 2019 and must be signed by the candidate and proposer.

- The President's and Treasurer's tenures will expire at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for these positions are invited. Current incumbents are:
 - State President - Mr Maxwell McGregor
 - State Treasurer - Mr Peter Colliver
- Board members - Nominations for these positions are invited. Current Board members whose tenure will expire will be notified to members well prior to the AGM.
- Nomination forms may be obtained from the Branch Secretaries or the Office Manager, Air Force Association Divisional office.

Motions for 2019 Annual General Meeting and State Conference

- All proposed motions must be forwarded by Branch Secretaries to the State Secretary 28 days prior to Conference.
- Copies of all motions must be forwarded to all Branch Secretaries, 14 days prior to Conference.
- Financial Reports must be sent to all members 21 days prior to Conference. Clause 34: Purpose of Annual General Meeting

Clause 31: Purpose of Annual General Meeting

The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:

- Receive the report of the Board;
- Receive the statement of accounts;
- Elect the President, Treasurer and members of the Board;
- Transact any other business of which 28 days' notice in writing specifying the motion to be moved has been received at the registered office of the Division.

All business transacted at the Annual General Meeting, pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed special.







ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

AFA VICTORIA - SUPPORTING VETERANS IN NEED

Staying true to one of its key ideals, AFA Victoria quietly goes about its business of supporting veterans, writes Darrell Robinson, AFA Victoria Board member.

The purpose of the Air Force Association states quite clearly that 'The Air Force Association was established almost 100 years ago to foster the spirit of friendship formed on service, to perpetuate the honour and ideals of the Royal Australian Air Force and to provide support to members in need.'

To support that Purpose, four ideals are expressed namely, 'Fellowship, Advocacy, Commemoration and Support.'

The Victorian Division of the Association goes about its business of applying its purpose through those four ideals, sometimes in a very open manner (think the Centenary of Armistice Commemoration), and other times in a quiet and unassuming manner.

Earlier this year, AFA Victoria provided urgent assistance to a veteran who was homeless. This person had spent many months 'couch surfing' amongst his various friends but had no real place to call home and absolutely no belongings of his own.

This veteran was put in contact with the RAAF Veterans' Residences Trust to see if they could help with accommodation, when temporary accommodation was no longer available for this veteran. After a short wait, an apartment became available at the Residences Trust apartments in Sandringham. Through its welfare funds, AFA Victoria was able to furnish the newly-painted and partly renovated apartment which is available to the veteran for life at a reasonable fortnightly rental.

You can obtain further details of the RAAF Veterans, Residences Trust at the following website: <https://www.airforce.gov.au/our-community/veterans-residences-trust>.

If you, or any veteran you know, needs a helping hand or even just someone to talk to, please [contact us](#) or 03 9813 4600.



The RAAF Veterans' Residences Trust apartments located in Sandringham.

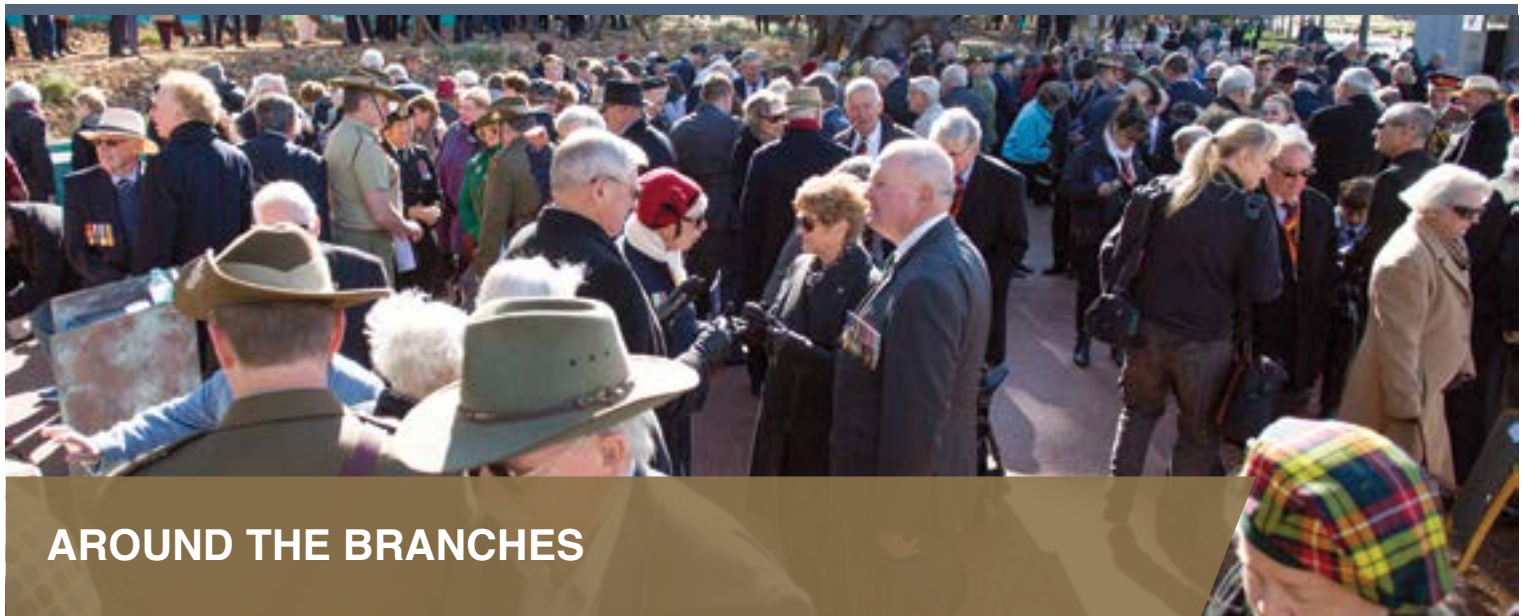
VETERANS' HOME CARE

If you are a Gold Card or White Card holder with low care needs, DVA's Veterans' Home Care (VHC) program can assist you to continue living in your home by providing you with a small amount of practical help. The VHC Program also assists carers in recognition of the vital role they play in the veteran and defence community.

For further information regarding available services and eligibility requirements see the DVA website and Factsheets below:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/home-and-care/veterans-home-care-vhc>
<https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hcs01-veterans-home-care>
<https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hsv06-respite-care-and-carer-support>
<https://www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hcs05-waiver-co-payments-veterans-home-care-services>

To arrange an assessment, please call a VHC Assessment Agency on 1300 550 450.



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

Vale: We open this report in acknowledgement of the sad news of the recent passing of one of our longstanding and respected members, Tony Pilli.

Tony was a regular attendee at our monthly luncheons and in the past had served as a member of the Board and most recently had been assisting with other projects.

The "Celebration of his Life" service which was hosted by the Association, was a most informative occasion and a fitting tribute to his many achievements, those of the past as well as those which he had in progress but unfortunately remain unfinished. Our sincere condolences to Tony's family.

The Association's WW1 Armistice Commemoration Service held at RAAF Base Point Cook on Sunday the 4th of November was a memorable occasion and the many comments

received both after the Service and since have all been complimentary to say the least.

Special thanks to the cadets of 4 Wing AAFC and WOFF (AAFC) Matthew Cane for their participation and further co-operation following the Service. (I wouldn't be surprised if some sort of new world record was set for the minimum time taken in the gathering up and stacking of 500 chairs.)

Thanks also to Elliott Sawyer, Musical Director of the Werribee Concert Band and the musicians who performed during the reception in the Officers' Mess and afterwards and vocalist, Harrison Sawyer for his excellent renditions during the Service.

Les Kenfield, Piper from the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums for the lament, "Flowers of the Forest" and also Sean

Cadets of the 4 Wing AAFC stand at the Centenary of the Armistice Service at RAAF Base Point Cook.



Rankin, Bugler, both of whom have assisted us on similar past occasions.

The 4 Wing AAFC Annual Parade held on the 7th of October was a great success and quite a spectacle with no fewer than 1000 cadets on parade. Congratulations to all. For anyone interested, the results and Awards made on the day can be found on the website in our ATC/AAFC Branch newsletter, Issue 73, December 2018.

On the evening of Saturday the 10th of November, I was afforded the pleasure of attending the Dining-In Night of 408 Squadron,

Official flags at the Armistice Commemoration Service.



Ringwood East at the Ringwood RSL and my thanks to PLTOFF (AAFC) Nicole Kelly and the cadets for their welcome and a most enjoyable night.

In closing, on behalf of our Branch, our very best wishes to everyone for a safe and very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Laurie Bell – President

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE ATC/AAFC
BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

BALLARAT

Our October and November meetings had a distinctly Dunkirk flavour. At the October meeting we learnt of the career of SQNLDR Roger Bushell, lawyer, sportsman, airman, leader, lover, and Big X of the Great Escape, and in November a film on the recovery of Spitfire I P9373, the aircraft of SGT Paul Klipsch, both airmen from 92 Squadron RAF, being shot down on 23 May 1940.

Members were well represented at the DVA-conducted Service commemorating the conclusion of the Thai-Burma Railway held at the Australian ex-Prisoners of War Memorial on 16th October.

November also saw the Branch well represented at the Point Cook Armistice 100th Anniversary Commemorative Service on November 4 and the Ballarat Service the following Sunday-Remembrance Day.

Sir Angus Houston AK, AC, AFC was the Guest Speaker at the Annual Sir Albert Coates Oration on Tuesday 13 November where he clearly expounded on the virtues of good leadership. The Lecture and following Dinner function was attended by some of our members.

We have lost two of our WW II stalwarts in ex-prisoner of war, Bill Wilkie and ex-Swedish internee, Bruce Clifton, over the last few months and our Branch was well represented at both funerals. However there have been a handful of most welcome new recruits whom we trust will continue to attend.

Leigh Harvey was awarded his well-deserved Life Membership at our November Meeting, an event covered in the local press.

Research continues to ascertain those trainees of No 1 Wireless Air Gunners

School who subsequently lost their lives in service. The intention is to recognise them with a local Memorial and on a website.

Progress continues in the restoration of the old Officers Mess at the School of Radio, which is being undertaken by the Ballarat City Council with Heritage funds. Our belief is that it will provide our Branch with a permanent Headquarters should a satisfactory agreement be negotiated.

Our Christmas meeting will be followed in January with the annual BBQ and then the Annual Meeting in February.

Our thanks to Darrell Robinson for his editorial Contact contribution and we wish him a happy retirement. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

Best wishes,
Tom Roberts
President

Note: You can also read the Ballarat Branch newsletters [here](#).

Leigh Harvey OAM, presented with Life Membership of the Air Force Association by Tom Roberts at the October Ballarat Branch meeting.



Ballarat Branch President Tom Roberts recites the Ode of Remembrance at the ex-POW Memorial in Ballarat.



WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE BALLARAT
BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

RAF



Members of the RAF Branch gather at the Shrine of Remembrance on Armistice Day.

We have some interesting key events to report since the last edition of Contact.

We held our annual Battle of Britain commemorations with a lunch at the Sofitel Hotel which was attended by 55 members and guests. As usual the meal and service was excellent and we all enjoyed getting together to remember this significant historical event.

On Battle of Britain Day itself we held a

service in the Shrine of Remembrance which was also well attended and was accompanied by a fly past by the Historic Flight of aircraft from Point Cook.

Events such as these have welcome side effects, since they attract non-members to attend and this year, we signed up two new members who were previously unaware of the presence of the Air Force Association in Melbourne. During the year we have

RAF

Vic Leigh talking to Channel Seven.



joined up six new members in total, two of whom are new arrivals to Australia from England.

Several of us attended the Meet-A-Mate visit to the Point Cook Aviation Museum which was, in keeping with the other Meet a Mate activities, well attended, well organised and generously catered. The RAAF Museum is a valuable asset for anyone interested in aviation, in particular Australia's military history. The exhibits are beautifully kept and presented and accompanied by comprehensive

background information.

On Armistice Day we decided that we would attend the ceremony at the Shrine as a Royal Air Force group and a dozen of our members were fortunate in being able to sit together. We were impressed once again by the interest and support of the Australian general public which is clearly of the mind that we should not forget the sacrifice of our comrades in arms and who are prepared to underline this by turning up in large numbers.

We decided that we should

wear our 'uniform', hats, berets, blazers, ties and medals, which caught the attention of the media. Both Vic Leigh and Frank Meech were interviewed and appeared briefly on national TV with Frank reciting the poem "You Gave Me Time".

Ted Hayes
President
RAF Branch

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE RAF BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

BENDIGO

I cannot believe that I am putting together the last report for 2018 for Contact. I would really like to know where this year has gone.

Our executive and members have been busy attending a number of events.

We attended the Battle for Australia commemoration service on 5th September held at the Melbourne Shrine. We made the journey by train. It was not as long a day as the students from Swan Hill, who left home at 0600 hrs and arrived back home @ 2000 hrs.

What a spectacular service, making the trip well worthwhile.

On 16th September a busload of members travelled to Ballarat to join with the Ballarat Branch of the Air Force Association for their Battle for Britain commemorative service. The weather was typical Ballarat, although the rain held off until the wreath laying was nearly completed.

A good group of members made the journey to RAAF Base Point Cook for the Memorial Service to commemorate the Centenary of Armistice. The organising committee is to be congratulated on an excellent function. The only complaint that I have is the way that the food is presented. There must be some way to solve this, so that everyone is able to get

to the table without having to push in.

The Bendigo District RSL held a commemoration service at the renovated Soldiers Memorial Hall on Sunday, 11th November, commencing with a march from Bendigo Town Hall to the SMI at which the Bendigo Air Force Association was represented together with the 410 SQN Air Force Cadet Unit.

On 15th November our Branch President was invited to attend the official opening of the Soldiers' War Memorial Institute and Military Museum.

On behalf of President, Roy and our members, I wish to thank the Board members,

together with Barb Stallard, for the assistance given to us throughout 2018. To all readers of Contact, my best wishes for a pleasant Christmas & a very healthy, safe & happy 2019.

Just remember not to eat too much and stay sober !!

Glenis Gordon
Secretary,
Bendigo Branch

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE BENDIGO
BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

ENGINEER

END-OF-YEAR LUNCHEON:

Possibly the best Luncheon enjoyed in recent memory was held on Thursday 8th of November at Batman's Hill on Collins Hotel (cnr Collins and Spencer). The Guest Speaker Laurie Burgess from British Aerospace Engineering (BAE) held the gathering of 46 enthralled. BAE has been contracted to upgrade the existing Phase 5 Jindalee high-frequency (HF) over-the horizon Operational Radar Network (JORN) to Phase 6 under Project JP 2025, valued at \$1.2 billion for completion in 10 years' time.

"Jindalee" is an indigenous word for a place the eye cannot see, or somewhere where the eye cannot see, like over the horizon – very apt.

PRESIDENTIAL CHANGING OF THE GUARD

President Kingsley McRae's two year-term has expired, seemingly quite quickly. Kingsley has done a

sterling job, with the past two years witnessing many successful occasions and initiatives; yet another "Exceptionally Well Done" on his OER. David Graham was elected at the last Committee meeting as our Incoming President. David is highly experienced in military aviation engineering and was a keynote Guest Speaker at our 2017 mid-year luncheon.

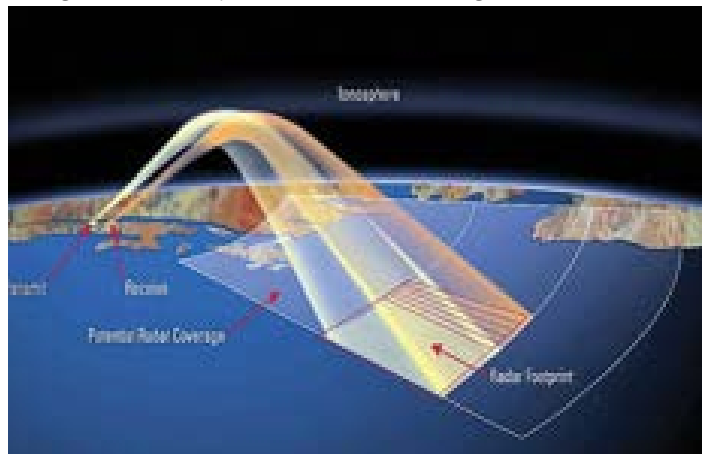
COMMITTEE MEMBER TO JOIN AFA BOARD

John Clarkson will be joining the Board of the Victorian Air Force Association, which has been bereft of Engineers in recent times. The Board will be indeed gaining a powerful presence.

DVA EQUIPMENT GRANT

Committeeman Ron Ledingham has successfully applied for an equipment grant (computer and audio-visual gear) from DVA, and this project has now been fully acquitted. This equipment was used to good effect at the end of year Luncheon - well done Ron.

Aiming the radars at a particular 'search box'. Image: RAAF



NEXT MEETING

The Committee's next meeting will be Monday 4th of February at the Mail Exchange Hotel (Bourke St near Spencer St) at 12 noon. The Committee will welcome any visitors, as we always have an enjoyable "working lunch", while plotting and planning the Branch's activities.

COMMEMORATION PLAQUE

As reported in the Spring "Contact" the Branch initiative to have an Air Force Engineer's Commemoration Plaque placed on the Donors' Wall in the RMIT-restored

Capitol Theatre in Swanston Street is still ongoing, and we anticipate a ceremonial unveiling next year. That will be an event to remember and record for posterity.

The full Branch Report can be found on the AFA Victoria website on the [Engineer Branch webpage](#).

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ENGINEER BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA WEBSITE

VIETNAM VETERANS

COMMITTEE CHANGES

After many years (10+) our Branch Treasurer (Maree Jongkryg) has announced that she will be relinquishing her post to spend more time with the family after our AGM next February. Former President and long serving Committee Member Gareth Davis

has agreed to assume the mantle as Treasurer. Our Secretary, Gill Coughlan will also be stepping aside (no pun intended) as she has an appointment with a foot surgeon the day after the AGM and will need to stay off her feet for a few months. We are keen, therefore, to hear from anyone in the Branch who

would like to keep the good work that Gill has carried out over the last year or so ticking over smoothly until she has recovered and is able to resume her position.

Our honorary Chaplain, the Reverend George Ashworth OAM RFD, has also announced his retirement from Branch activities.

Father George has contributed to our Branch Newsletter over many years and joined in our commemorative activities each Vietnam Veterans Day. Two members of our committee, Gareth Davis and Bob Brackin visited Father George at his home in Jan Juc to thank him for his support of our

Branch and to present him with his second Certificate of Appreciation. His first Certificate of Appreciation was presented by Branch Patron, AVM E M (Mac) Weller AM (Retd) on Vietnam Veterans Day 2008.

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM

The Branch has been speaking with the management of the NVVM recently on measures to enhance the presentation of exhibits in the Air Operations Gallery. The Associations of the operational squadrons in Vietnam (Nos 2, 9 and 35 SQNS) have each contributed a summary of their relevant operations in the Vietnam conflict and these will either be printed and displayed adjacent to the relevant to exhibits and/or converted to audio files for visitors to listen to as they view the Gallery.

A small team from the Branch committee is planning to

visit the NVVM early in 2019 to assist the curatorial staff in updating the Air Force section of the Museum.

BURSARIES

Each year our Branch, in conjunction with the AFA Foundation presents an educational bursary. This initiative aims to assist eligible students with educational expenses and is open for applications from any children or grandchildren of any member of a Branch of the AFA (Vic) who has operational service or three or more years of continuous service with the RAAF. Applicants need to be under the age of 25 when applying. Closing date for applications is 25 January 2019 and application forms may be downloaded from the Bursary page of our Branch website (www.raafvva.org.au).

Chris Hudnott
President



Reverend George Ashworth OAM RFD receives his second Certificate of Appreciation.



Gill Coughlan.



Maree Jongkryg.



Gareth Davis.

WANT TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE VIETNAM
VETERANS' BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON
THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA WEBSITE

WHO NEEDS SOCIAL MEDIA?

BY DR BARRY TURNER

"Social media? What is it, and who needs it anyway?" asks Barry Turner from Ballarat Branch.

That's what I used to think before I retired after 20 years in the RAAF and a few decades as an academic.

I realised what a large part the RAAF had played in educating me and giving

me countless opportunities for travel and adventure. Luckily, somebody suggested that I join Facebook to track down some old RAAF mates.

There were so many groups for ex-RAAF people, including pages for those who felt an affinity for particular aircraft types. I found the "Friends of the RAAF P3 Orion" page and was soon in contact with old friends from 92 Wing.

I then joined the "Ex-RAAFies Where Are They Now" group and realised that I was entitled to two

medals I didn't know about. I started to follow the RAAF Base Butterworth group and discovered people who recalled setting up the 92 Wing detachment there in 1981.


There are so many groups for all sorts of ex-RAAF interests with posts on a plethora of topics, including reunions, news about people who are ill, or funeral notices for those who have died.

Social media is the main means for younger ex-RAAF people to stay in touch and the Air Force

Association is boosting its presence there. We have increased our Facebook followers by more than one third in the last month and we now have a page called RAAF Reunions.

So, who needs social media? I wouldn't be without it.

There's no time like the present to visit our AFA Victoria Facebook page.

 **Find us on Facebook**
www.facebook.com/raafavic/

VALE

The following members have passed away since our last publication.
May they rest in peace.

*It is with the
greatest respect
and fond
memories, we
remember our
colleagues who
have passed on
before us.*

Mr Humphrey Campbell: Bendigo	06/09/2018
Mr Ken Wilkinson: Fighter Squadrons	23/09/2018
Mr Tony Pilli: ATC/AAFC Branch & AFA Vic Board Member	19/10/2018
Mr Keith O'Connell: Headquarters	30/10/2018
Mr Peter Hill: Headquarters	09/11/2018
Mr Bruce Clifton: Ballarat	17/11/2018



Lest We Forget

VALE TONY PILLI, ATC/AAFC BRANCH AND AFA VICTORIA BOARD MEMBER

Long-time member of AFA Victoria, Tony Pilli passed away peacefully at home on the 19th October 2018. As well as being a long-term member of our Association, Tony served on the Board of Management for over 18 years and his commitment to AFA Victoria was never in doubt.

For many years, Tony compiled and edited our newsletter Contact. For anyone with any knowledge of how hard it is to compile a newsletter over many years, producing something that members look forward to receiving, the scale of Tony's involvement becomes clear. Until I joined the Board, I had no idea of the workload involved, but Tony's commitment to producing a high-quality newsletter meant that I became aware of the time involved through the various iterations, to constantly deliver a newsletter eagerly read by members.

Tony also carried out the duties in relation to the History and Heritage functions of the Association, cataloguing the books in our library - again a task that took many hours

of his available time to complete. Paintings and photographs in our HQ were also replaced on a regular basis from a "stock" kept in a store room, again a time-consuming task

Tony requested that a function, a "Celebration of his Life" be held at our Association's HQ. This took place on the 9th November and was something that we as an Association were more than pleased to do. Numerous family and friends attended with the VC Room overflowing right back to the front door - it

was a memorable occasion.

We will miss him deeply.

Max McGregor
President Air Force
Association - Victoria

*Long time AFA Victoria Board
Member, Tony Pilli, who passed
away on 19th October 2018.*



VALE KEITH WATTS, WORLD WAR II VETERAN AND LIFE MEMBER OF THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

On the 20th September, WWII veteran and Air Force Association Life Member Keith Watts passed away peacefully, aged 103 years. His son, David Watts remembers him here.

Our father, Keith Watts, served with the RAAF during WW2 as a navigator in Beauforts. Initial operations were with 14 SQN in Pearce, flying anti-submarine patrols over the Indian Ocean. The crew were transferred to 100 SQN in Taji, New Guinea where, in Beaufort A9-659 (UGOTABKWIC), they flew bombing and strafing strikes in support of the Australian Army up to, and including, the day Japan surrendered. Although most of the squadron aircrew and aircraft returned to Australia almost immediately after the surrender, A9-659 and its crew remained until the end of February 1946.

Returning to Australia he flew with 37 SQN in C-47s until June 1946 and he was discharged as a Flying Officer a few months later.

Prior to his discharge, Dad joined the RAAF Association in what was to later evolve into the North Metropolitan Branch. From the earliest days he became a committee member and shortly thereafter an office bearer. From the age of thirty-three until he was past 102 years of age Dad remained an office bearer at either Branch or State level,

most of the time simultaneously.

As boys of ten and seven in 1946, my brother and I were frequent visitors to the Branch in the old Essendon Council steamroller shed next door to the Essendon Baths. We grew up with the Air Force Association and its goings on were an integral part of our family. We were, and still are, proud of Dad's contribution to the Association over many decades. We have marvelled at the way he and his many comrades progressed steadily from meeting in a tin shed built to house a steam roller (which, by the way, was once driven by Dad's father) into the elegant accommodation and sophisticated operation it is today.

Wartime service in the RAAF and then the Association moulded our father and influenced our family greatly. We are comfortable with the knowledge that his contribution to the Association was well balanced by the comradeship and wonderful experiences he (and sometimes we) enjoyed over more than 70 years.

We are very grateful to the Air Force Association for hosting Dad's centenary and more recently his wake in October.

David Watts



Keith Watts (left) standing his aircrew

The Task Board is for the last day of the war and Keith's aircraft is number 6, Pilot W/O Neilson.

WEDNESDAY TASK BOARD 15-AUGUST-45									
NO.	NAME	GRADE	CAPTAIN	REMARKS	ETD	TIME	TIME	TIME	TIME
1	W/O J. J. DENAR	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
2	W/O H. W. DUNN	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
3	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
4	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
5	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
6	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
7	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
8	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
9	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			
10	W/O W. J. LAWS	1st Lt.			1700	1700			

Photo from Keith Watt's log book for their last strike which was carried out after the surrender.



THE 1WAGS RAAF BALLARAT PROJECT TEAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

As Ballarat Branch will be shortly taking up rooms in a restored ex-1WAGS/former Officers' Mess building at the Ballarat aerodrome, the discovery of historical photos has been most valuable.

Some of the photographs saved from that rubbish bin by the friendly builder (see our previous story on page 6), related to 1WAGS trainees at No 1 Wireless Air Gunners' School at RAAF Ballarat during WWII, as well as to a particular 1WAGS course at RAAF Ballarat. So, we assumed that at least one of the men in the photos attended that course.

A check with the course's Personnel Occurrence Report showed that there were in fact four WAGs at this same time serving with 100 SQN: Geoffrey Brokenshire (SQNLDR Peter Parker's crew), Stanley John Mars (PLTOFF Nicholas' crew), Richard Whitford (FLGOFF Law-Smith's crew) and Jack Norman (FLT LT Dey's crew).

This discovery has whetted our appetite and we are looking for information/memorabilia on anyone who did their training at 1WAGS RAAF Ballarat so we can establish appropriate recognition of their service in our new Branch rooms.

Please contact Noel Hutchins: noelhutch@bigpond.com



Restoring Australia's only
surviving B-24 Liberator



HAVE YOU VISITED THE B24 LIBERATOR MEMORIAL?

Located at Farm Rd & Princess Highway,
Werribee, Victoria.

Open Tuesday, Thursdays, Sundays
from 9.30am – 3.30pm

Further info: www.b24australia.org.au

**OUR AFA (VICTORIA) OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED FROM 21 DEC 2018
TO 14 JAN 2019**

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members and their families,
with special mention to those men and women serving overseas at this time.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY TO REMEMBER!

At our Members' Christmas Party this year, it was an honour and privilege to welcome Mr Jack Bell (100 years young!), WW2 veteran and AFA member, who spoke of his experiences as a PoW and shared his profound message of compassion, respect and honour.

And to cap off a wonderful afternoon, AIRCDRE E J (Ted) Bushell AM (Retd) presented the Air Force Association with a stunning Norman Clifford painting he had commissioned of RAAF Base Point Cook as it was in 1914. A series of detailed engineering manuals were also generously donated.

This incredible painting is now hanging in the Association's VC Room.

You can also view the photos taken at the Christmas party on our [website photo gallery](#).



ASSOCIATION NEWS



OFFICE BEARERS

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – VICTORIA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Max McGregor – President

Carl Schiller OAM CSM – Immediate Past President

John Sedunary – Vice President

Daryll Topp – Vice President, Administration

Peter Colliver – Treasurer; Chairman,
Welfare Patriotic Fund

Darrell Robinson – Executive Secretary,
Director Communications

John McCrystal – Chairman, RAAFA Foundation,
Ceremonial

Di Hoopert – Director, Welfare Services

Chris Hudnott – Director

Peter Finkelstein – Honorary Solicitor

CONTACT: EDITORIAL DATES

SUMMER 2018

Contributions by 28 November 2018

Publication: 17 December 2018

AUTUMN 2019

Contributions by 25 February 2019

Publication: 11 March 2019

WINTER 2019

Contributions by 24 May 2019

Publication: 6 June 2019

SPRING 2019

Contributions by 23 August 2019

Publication: 6 September 2019

AFA VICTORIA BRANCH CONTACTS

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21SQN	Mike Dance	0438764629
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B24 Liberator	Tony Muller	03 97414635
Ballarat	Tom Roberts	03 53331653
Bendigo	Glenis Gordon	03 54369293
Catalina	Ronald Kirk	03 98193527
Engineer	Kingsley McRae	0419518303
Fighter SQN	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Geelong	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
Gippsland	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600
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North Metropolitan	Rod Garmaise	03 93093543
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RAF	Val Boyd	0417512177
Sunderland SQNs	Ricky Hattam	03 52413431
Williams	(contact AFA Vic)	03 98134600