

# AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA



## ATC/AAFC BRANCH ABN 96 091 342 304 OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER Issue No 78 October 2019

### President's Message



Hello once again everyone.

Congratulations are in order for John McCrystal who, at the last Presidents' / Delegates' Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, was awarded a well-deserved Life Membership of the Air Force Association (Vic. Div.)

Over many years John has served well with the Association in various positions i.e. as Vice President, President, and Chairman of the RAAFA Foundation. He has also been responsible for the organizing and carrying out of many other varied Association requirements. He was also a past Executive Officer of the Victorian Squadron AirTC and was the Commanding Officer during 1993 and 1995. Thanks John and a **Well Done** from the ATC/AAFC Branch.

We were sorry to hear of AFA's Office Manager, Barbara Stallard's recent accident whereby she broke her ankle whilst on holiday overseas and we wish her a speedy recovery. Moonboots are not the most stylish nor most comfortable items of footwear. Best wishes from all of us Barb.

The Association's "Meet a Mate" function in the old Officers' Mess at Point Cook on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August was a very interesting and informative occasion. Guest Speaker WGCdr (Ret'd) Sharon Bown kept her audience enthralled as she related her experiences as a Nursing Officer and later as a Surgical Team Commander during deployment in Timor-Leste and Afghanistan. It was, to me, a truly memorable address given by a remarkable lady who has literally "been through the mill". She is also the author of the book, "*One Woman's War and Peace.....a nurse's journey through the Royal Australian Air Force*".

Office	Holders
President	Laurie Bell
Vice President	Peter Wilson
Secretary	Hugh Tank
Treasurer	Tony Synhur
Delegate	John MacDonald
Returning Officer	Graeme Smith
Newsletter Editor	Ian Cohn

Please send your contributions to  
[scsiac@bigpond.com](mailto:scsiac@bigpond.com)

or  
Box 486, Mt Beauty, VIC, 3699

Deadline for next issue – 23SEP19

### Welfare

Branch Welfare Officers  
**Hugh Tank** on 03 9877 3424  
and **Peter Wilson**

If you are aware of any member who is unwell please contact Hugh or Peter.

## President's Message - continued

A short review on this can also be read on page 6 of the AFA's Spring Issue of "CONTACT" magazine.  
Annual Point Cook Commemorative Service.

At last we have an update on the above Service, the details of which I pass on below for your interest.

As you are most probably aware, the Air Force decided that they were going to organise and conduct a Commemoration Ceremony themselves on **Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November** which clashed with the intended Combined Service plans of the Air Force Association (Vic. Div.) and the RAAF Nashos Memorial Day.

It has taken some time for us to be advised on what is intended but now, we have the following information.

1. The Service, we are told, will also acknowledge the RAAF Nashos but the Service itself will be very brief i.e. Starting at 1045 hrs it will only run for approx. 20 minutes i.e. finishing around 1105 hrs. **This means that attendees will need to be seated by 1040 hrs at the latest.**
2. Following the Service a buffet lunch will be provided (courtesy of the AFA (Vic. Div.) in the old Officers' Mess as has been done at the last couple of these Commemorations. During lunch there is also to be the launch of a book written by SQNLDR Steve Campbell – Wright.
3. **PLEASE NOTE:** Security at the gate may require photo ID (Driver's Licence).

**N.B. IMPORTANT :** As on past occasions, Security requires the names of those who may be attending AND THESE MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NO LATER THAN 30<sup>th</sup> of OCTOBER PER EMAIL to [office@raafavic.org.au](mailto:office@raafavic.org.au)

Your cooperation in this regard will also be of great assistance with the catering for lunch. Laurie.

In closing, just a couple of reminders :

- (1) The AAFC Annual Parade and Expo at Point Cook on Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, and
- (2) That the Branch's Christmas Luncheon will be held again in the Upton Room (basement level) at the Box Hill RSL on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. More information re price, bookings, menu etc. will be available in the near future.

In the meantime, I leave you to peruse the included offerings of our hard working and enthusiastic Editor, Ian Cohn.

Regards to all, best wishes and take care.

Laurie.

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### Branch Events 2019

<i>Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL.</i>
<i>Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>4 Wing, AAFC Annual Parade, Point Cook,</i>
<i>Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL.</i>
<i>Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>AEA's Annual Pilgrimage &amp; RAAF Nashos' memorial Day, Point Cook,</i>
<i>Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL.</i>
<i>Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Branch Christmas Luncheon, Box Hill RSL</i>

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### **News from 4 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets**

// NATIONAL RIFLE COMPETITION 2019 //

Congratulations to our 4WG team who were runners up this year with 2103 points and by the narrowest of margins, just behind 2WG who scored 2114 points!!

Fantastic achievement overall - you should all be very proud.

For those budding cadets who aim one day to represent 4WG and compete in our team, please continue to check CEA for your local and 4WG practices to build your marksmanship skills and points up. It's all about skill, accuracy, self discipline, sportsmanship and healthy competition!



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS //

The ceremony at Sydney Town Hall formally recognised the outstanding achievements of 17 AAFC members which included 2 cadets and 4 staff members from 4 Wing who received their Gold Certificate.

One of the highlights for the 4WG cadets was having the honour of meeting and talking to HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO, CD, ADC(P). Prince Edward is the Chairman of the International Award Foundation and a Gold awardee himself.

The Gold Award is the final level of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and is open to young people aged 16 to 24. The Gold Award can be commenced by direct entry or after already achieving the Bronze and Silver Awards. It operates in more than 135 countries and territories, helping to inspire millions of young people and is not limited by the boundaries of one program or place. There are 1.3 million young people currently completing their own unique program, via hundreds of thousands of youth-focused partners and operators, including schools and youth organisations such as the AAFC.



4 Wing AAFC DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS

### 4 Wing liaison point

SQNLDR(AAFC) Bridget Hosking is the Staff Officer Development and Community Engagement. Bridget and her team's portfolio focuses on community liaison including connecting 4WG with the aviation and Defence industries, supporting squadron recruitment initiatives and promoting participation in community and RSL events. If you would like to connect with 4 Wing in one of the above ways, please get in touch via [sodce.4wg@airforcecadets.gov.au](mailto:sodce.4wg@airforcecadets.gov.au).

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### What Our Members Are Doing



Member John Mc Crystal receiving his Life Membership from AFA Victoria State President Max McGregor on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

Please send any member news that you come across to the editor at [scsiac@bigpond.com](mailto:scsiac@bigpond.com)

## Member Story

Another story from member Lloyd Knight's book "Above and Beyond"

### The Beach Looked Flat

The first flight of my fighter conversion was a dual check ride in a Wirraway. The instructor had me demonstrate how well I could throw the machine around with a few aerobatics. This included some hairy manoeuvres I had not experienced before. The most memorable of those was; while in normal cruising flight, he told me to apply full left rudder and pull the stick (control column) hard back in my gut. I told him I had never seen such an exercise and he just replied, 'Do it!' So I did. The aircraft entered what I could only describe as a rapid horizontal spin. I recovered, wings level after one 360-degree roll. I thought the machine would break up. He said, 'Well done, you just completed a flick roll, you'll do, go back to base.'

Back in the circuit I was asked to demonstrate my landing expertise with a glide approach (no power) with a flapless landing. A short field take-off and landing followed this. I was now considered ready for the Mustang. Hooray!

Now, many post World War 2 pilots, including some young guys today, would give their right arm to fly a Mustang. Figuratively speaking of course. You certainly would have great difficulty flying one with only a left arm. I've always considered myself very privileged to have been able to fly this magnificent machine in its latter days of service.



There were no two-place Mustangs, so after a short session of taxiing around with an instructor standing on the wing giving a bit of coaching, you launched on your first flight. Wow! What a boot in the back the big Merlin engine gave you on take-off. That first flight of about an hour was awe-inspiring.

The next day, I took-off on my second flight. That was the 21st of December. I climbed to about ten thousand feet out over the ocean and proceeded to complete some aerobatic practice. I had only been airborne about ten minutes when things suddenly got a little quieter. The engine had quit! I entered a glide and turned toward the land. Then I put out a Mayday call and went through the engine failure drills. I couldn't get it fired up again.

An instructor, who was airborne in a Vampire, started running through some extra checks with me and we established that the engine was not going to start again. So I was faced with deciding between three options. I could bail out, a very dangerous action in a 'Stang. I could ditch in the ocean, also not recommended, because the big air scoop under the belly would make the aircraft nose under very abruptly. Or, I could try to glide to the shore for a 'dead-stick' landing. I chose the latter course, with the concurrence of the instructor, who was now heading toward my position.

As I crossed the coast, I was down to about a thousand feet (300metres) and there was nothing but sand dunes within my glide range. I made a circling turn onto a final approach, and lined up with the water's edge where the sand is firmest. I jettisoned the canopy and completed my checks to make a wheels-up landing.

I straightened up at about four hundred feet and I saw that, because of the high tide, the beach at the water's edge was a high bank, angled at about 45 degrees. This was certainly no good for landing, so I moved left to land inshore about fifty yards.

It was around noon, so there were no shadows. The high, wavelike dunes did not show up until the aircraft was about one hundred feet up. As the aircraft lost speed I lifted over about two of these humps, and it slammed down on the next one. I hit my head on the gun-sight and was knocked out.

When I came to, I believe it was after about ten minutes; I looked out to see utter devastation. The engine and prop were, 'over there', the battery was lying all by itself, and both wings were bent up with fuel running out of the split tanks.

I couldn't see out of my right eye and there was blood running down the right side of my face. Apart from my heavy breathing, the only sound was the Vampire circling overhead. I learned later that the instructor had reported finding my aircraft, 'Extensively damaged with no signs of life.'

As I climbed out, I saw that the fuselage was broken nearly in half behind the cockpit, which was the only intact part left. Says a lot for North American's designers who built the strongest section around the pilot. A strong smell of gasoline pervaded the whole space around me, so I got well away in case she blew.

I took the signalling mirror from my May West and studied my eye. It looked as though it was gone, and there was this bloody eyelid hanging over the eye socket. That really frightened me. The bleeding had stopped.

Then I did what was probably a silly thing. I went to the water's edge, wet my handkerchief, and dabbed the blood away from my eye. Seawater would not be efficacious in the treatment of wounds. Anyway, with some of the gore removed, I could see. Great! My eye was intact, but the lid was practically torn off.

The instructor started buzzing low over me toward the inland. This is a signal meaning, 'Proceed in this direction.' I thought this unusual because I had always been taught to stay with the aircraft. So I set off across the dunes. In my condition and on a hot summer's midday, I was not feeling very happy. After I had gone a few hundred yards, he started to buzz the opposite way. 'Good grief!' I thought and headed back to the aircraft.

What had happened was this. The MO, who was on leave, was just going out the gate at the Base when the crash alarm sounded. He got on the phone at the guardhouse and called the control tower. They gave him all the details. He had his little black bag (and his young son) on board, so told them he would head off to help. I don't know how he managed to navigate to the vicinity, but he did, and the instructor was buzzing over me to show the doc' where I was. When he realised I was following his signal he reversed direction, buzzing over the MO. The Vampire returned to base after about an hour, probably low on fuel.

As I waited to be rescued, I saw this scruffy looking, and rather bedraggled by now person, stomping across the sand toward me. I thought it must have been a local farmer. I hadn't noticed his bag, so when he greeted me and tried to have a look at my eye, I pushed him away. He realised that, with his four-days five o'clock shadow, he didn't look much like an air force medico, so he introduced himself and proceeded to look after me. He was an RAF exchange officer who later in the day sewed my eyelid back on. He did a magnificent job, certainly as good as any plastic surgeon could do.

After about another hour, a jeep with my flight commander driving came along the beach and took me back to base. The doc' had decided to hike back across the dunes to where he'd left his son, who was probably getting a bit anxious by then. A memory that stands out about the trip back in the jeep was this. I'd always seen in those war movies where they recover a downed aviator, or rescue some poor wounded soldier, the first thing they did was light, and offer him, a cigarette. I felt most disappointed that I had to ask for one.

The investigation found that after I was knocked out by the initial impact on top of a dune, the left wing had dropped and the aircraft completed a cartwheel. That explained the extensive damage. The poor

old bird was later dragged up the beach to the Morna Point gunnery range and became just another target. It was a rather ignominious end for a fine flying machine.

I received no admonishment for the episode. In hindsight I can see that I was remiss in at least one thing. Part of the pre-aerobatic checks requires that the area used be within gliding distance of a suitable forced landing field. I was in the designated aerobatic training area, but I should have been closer to the coast.

Apart from the facial damage, my only other injury was the bruising from my shoulder harness. When I got back into an aircraft, with the straps pulled tight, as they had been when I pranged, I tried stretching my head toward the gun sight as hard as I could. I couldn't get within a foot of it. So that shows how much force had been applied to my neck and head, and the shoulder straps.

I went home to Sydney on sick leave for a week that included Christmas, and then I was back to finish my training. Naturally my Mum pampered me something stupid.

When the photo of my wreck was posted in the 'prang' gallery in the OTU Flight Hut, it was captioned: - 'The Beach Looked Flat'.

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## Internet Links of Interest

RAAFA ATC/AAFC Branch page [raafavic.org.au/content/758/branch-atc-aafc](http://raafavic.org.au/content/758/branch-atc-aafc)

National Servicemen's Association - [www.nashos.org.au/](http://www.nashos.org.au/)

Air Force News [www.defence.gov.au/Publications/NewsPapers/RAAF/Default.asp](http://www.defence.gov.au/Publications/NewsPapers/RAAF/Default.asp)

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## AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION VICTORIA



ATC/AAFC BRANCH

**ATTENTION - ALL ADULT MEMBERS  
of the  
AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE CADETS**

**The AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION (Victorian Division) would welcome you as a member of our Branch. As part of this proud Association with its long standing record of Service, the ATC/AAFC Branch membership consists of former ATC, AirTC and former and currently serving members of the AAFC. Associate memberships are available for partners.**

**For membership enquiries, please contact:**

**Laurie Bell – Branch President**

**Hugh Tank – Branch Secretary**

**General Enquiries**

**43 Stenhouse Av, Brooklyn, 3012 Vic. 11 Paulette Court, Blackburn South,  
3130, Victoria.**

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