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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last month I met with four former Air Force colleagues over lunch who worked in the same mustering as I during my initial years of service. Several hadn't seen one another for forty years but it was like the time in between had not existed. However, we do look a little older. Each of my friends had served six years in Air Force, yet the relationship among us was strong, woven by those formative years in service.

Continued page 2

5000 Poppies – A COMMUNITY TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND REMEMBRANCE

Lynn Berry and Margaret Knight set out to crochet a humble 120 poppies to “plant” at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne Australia for Remembrance Day in 2013 in honour of their fathers Wal Beasley (14/32nd Battalion – Australian Imperial Forces) and Stan Knight (Queen’s Own West Kent Regiment – British Army).

Over the past four years, 5000 Poppies has sparked a massive community outpouring with an estimated 50,000 plus contributors to the project and hundreds of smaller localised tributes throughout Australia, New Zealand and beyond.



Contributors include children as young as two, right through to people aged 102, and from many different backgrounds and cultures.

Continued page 2

You would think forty years would have diluted the bond. I cannot imagine there would be too many instances where this strength of relationship with past work colleagues occurs among people in civilian employment. I recently facilitated an Air Force Association National Workshop to develop its revised strategic pathway of providing a stronger support base for former and serving Air Force members and their families. Moreover, the Association needs to modify its image so that it becomes an association for all generations. This will be a challenge when traditional associations do not attract the younger generation. The outcome was unanimously accepted by the National Board and the Operational Plan is expected to be implemented by the end of April.

The Association has been very successful in being a strong voice for veterans' benefits at government level and a solid partner with other Ex-Service Organisations wanting to improve the wellbeing of all veterans. The Association will strive to have a 'hands on' approach in supporting our Service colleagues and their families. To assist the Division with this role, it has received funding grants from the ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund and the William Angliss Charitable Fund.

The Association's Vision is to be an Ex-Service Organisation of first choice. While it may not have all the resources to meet veterans' needs, it must be able to assist those in need to access services and other support requirements available from other agencies. This means we will work with other Ex-Service Organisations with established services. The Association will be relying on its members to assist our Air Force family members.

The Association's new National structure came into being earlier this year. At the National level, the Association title is now *Air Force Association Ltd*. Its registered office is located at the Victorian Division's premises in Hawthorn East.

I will be passing on the Division's presidency in April. As National President, it is not appropriate I continue to also hold a Division President's post for an extended period. However, the Victorian Division will remain my 'home base'. I have enjoyed being your president over the past three years and, of course, very much look forward to continuing in your company as a member of the Division's RAAF Vietnam Veterans' Branch and 2SQN Branch.

Carl Schiller, OAM CSM

5000 Poppies – A Community Tribute of Respect and Remembrance

Continued from page 1

The period 2014 - 2018 marks Australia's commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac, marking 100 years since Australia's involvement in the First World War.

Each year the 5000 Poppies Project has contributed a stunning display of poppies in various locations in Australia and overseas as a stunning visual tribute to Australian servicemen and women for more than a century of service in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

For Remembrance Day 2017, the 5000 Poppies installation made it way to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. Our own 21 SQN provided the team with much needed assistance in storing, loading and unloading of the 1000's of hand crafted poppies for the display.

The 5000 Poppies team is now working on two final projects for 2018 - a final spectacular installation, this time for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra for Remembrance Day 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI.

In addition, the team are also making 50,000 poppies for the RSL as part of the 2018 Poppy Appeal.

Both of these projects are well underway and over 50,000 handmade poppies have been received by the team. While this is enough to meet the current needs, if you are interested in contributing, please stay in touch with the 5000 Poppies blog 5000poppies.wordpress.com) to keep up to date with any new projects.



FEATURE STORIES

COMMEMORATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF HELL FIRE PASS – AN INVITATION TO VETERANS

The Australian Government is planning a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Australian work on Hellfire Pass and the completion of the Thai Burma Railway. There is an opportunity for Australian WWII veterans to attend the planned commemorations, which will be held on 16 October 2018 in Ballarat.

This commemoration is part of the Century of Service domestic commemorations program during the Anzac Centenary period 2014-2018, which honours and commemorates the service and sacrifice of all Australian service men and women who have defended our values and freedoms in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations from the Boer War to today.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is inviting nominations from Australian Second World War veterans - specifically from Hellfire Pass and the completion of the Thai Burma Railway - to attend the planned commemorations in Ballarat supported by DVA.

The nomination process involves assessment of military service and medical assessments to determine fitness to travel. If selected, the Veteran will travel to Ballarat with one nominated carer for the commemoration.

A travel program will be developed for veterans and their carers by DVA, with DVA providing ground transport, air travel, accommodation and some meals for each veteran and carer. It is likely veterans and carers will be away from their homes for approximately three days. Itinerary details will be provided once the nomination process has been completed.

Nomination forms are available on DVA's website at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/commemorations-and-anniversaries/domestic-commemorations>.

Nominations need to be received by DVA no later than 1700 AEST Friday 3 August 2018.

For further queries about the nomination process or completing the forms, please contact Domestic Commemorations on 02 6120 8078.



Pass – notorious for the brutal conditions in which prisoners were forced to work.

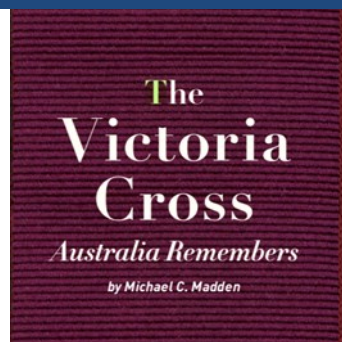
AUSTRALIAN VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENTS REMEMBERED IN A NEW BOOK

The remarkable personal stories of Australia's 100 Victoria Cross recipients have been brought together in a new book - "The Victoria Cross – Australia Remembers" - about to be released by award-winning author Michael C Madden in conjunction with TPI Victoria Inc.

The Totally & Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen & Women's Association of Victoria Incorporated in partnership with Award Winning Author, Michael C. Madden, are proud to announce the imminent release of 'The Victoria Cross, Australia Remembers' – a unique account of the 100 Australians who have been awarded The Victoria Cross – the highest award for valour this nation can bestow.

FEATURE STORIES

The Victoria Cross, Australia Remembers is dedicated to preserving the remarkable personal stories of Australia's 100 Victoria Cross Recipients and recognising the often untold stories of their families, peers and communities. The individual profiles have been written as a way for families and friends to give their perspective on how the Victoria Cross has affected them and their communities.



"...these stories go beyond the battle field action; they bring to life not just the award but also the broader story of where those servicemen came from and how families coped after the fighting had ended...."

Doug Baird, Father of Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG

Supported by Big Sky Publishing and taking in many thousands of volunteer hours, *'The Victoria Cross, Australia Remembers'* has been produced as a 'Not-for-Profit' joint venture where all proceeds from the sale of the book go to the association for the ongoing support and welfare of its Veteran Members, their families, dependants and the broader veteran community.



"...This book tells the stories of Australia's 100 Victoria Cross recipients in a uniquely intimate way: in most cases with insight from the men's families themselves. For me, it was a pleasure to work with the author on this project."

The gallantry and sacrifice of our Victoria Cross recipients should always be remembered, as should the service and sacrifice of all Australian service personnel, most of whom received no decorations. Each one of their stories is as unique, inspiring and worthy of remembrance as those featured in this book - Lest we forget..."

Keith Payne VC AM KSJ

The Victoria Cross, Australia Remembers will be officially launched at Bunjil Place, City of Casey, Narre Warren, Victoria on Saturday 21st April, 2018. The launch will be followed by special Book Signing & Presentation Events across the country.

14TH AUSTRALIAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR MEMORIAL

SERVICE HELD IN BALLARAT

Nine ex-POWs were among those who attended the Annual Anniversary Service to acknowledge the pain and suffering that all POWs endured, to commemorate the thousands of mates left behind and to acknowledge the sacrifice of families during wartime. Glenis Gordon, AFA Bendigo Branch Secretary was also there...

On February 4th, 2018, Bendigo Branch President, Roy Gaffee and I attended the 14th Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial Service held at The Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat – and what a wonderful & inspiring service it was.

There were nine ex-POWs at the service, two of whom were aged over 100, and one was ex-RAAF who was taken prisoner of the Germans. There are approximately 150 ex-POWs still alive.

Master of Ceremonies Bruce Roberts from WIN TV led the service and the Royal Australian Navy Band played throughout. The guest speaker was Andrew Corlette, son of



The Australian ex-POW Memorial in Ballarat.

FEATURE STORIES

Major/Doctor Ewan Corlette from the Australian Army Medical Corps, who was a doctor on the Thai-Burma Railway. Andrew reminisced about his father's time as a prisoner of the Japanese in Changi, working with Sir Weary Dunlop.

As has been the traditional practice, books (which are later given to local schools), were laid, in addition to a number of wreaths laid. This is such a great idea.

I feel very privileged to have been able to attend this emotional service and would recommend that if you are able to come. The Annual Anniversary Service is normally held on the Sunday closest to the 6th February.

For those who are interested, you can find out more about The Australian ex-Prisoner of War Memorial in Ballarat here: <http://www.powmemorialballarat.com.au>.

DUDLEY MARROWS DSO DFC LEGION D'HONNEUR CELEBRATES HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

On December 8th last year, distinguished Sunderland Dudley Marrows DSO DFC Legion d'Honneur celebrated his 100th Birthday in Mildura.

At an afternoon function on Saturday 9th December, Dudley accompanied by numerous friends and family celebrated his numerous significant achievements in both his military and civilian life.

Amongst the many distinguished guests was fellow Sunderland, Peter Jensen, President, NSW Sunderland Branch AFA who was on Dudley's crew during many of his extraordinary actions in the Bay of Biscay.

Group Captain Jason Begley, CO 10 Squadron accompanied by two members of the Squadron also attended the celebration.

Group Captain Begley presented Dudley with a pennant signed by Chief of Air Force from the Squadron.

Hearty congratulations to Dudley and to all our Centenarians.



To kick off proceedings for the afternoon there was a flyover by a 10 Squadron PC-3 Orion



Peter Jensen, President, NSW Sunderland Branch congratulates Dudley Marrows.

VIETNAMESE-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

COMMEMORATES 521 AUSTRALIANS LOST IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Members of the Vietnamese-Australian and members of the Vietnam Veterans Branch came together for a Dedication Ceremony for a memorial honouring Australians lost in the Vietnam War.

The Vietnamese-Australian community (led by the Vietnamese Community of Australia – Victoria Chapter (VCA-Vic), in a final gesture to mark forty years of settlement in Australia, are creating a memorial to honour the 521 Australians who died during the Vietnam war. (Cont. Page 6)



461 was an Article XV squadron raised under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Its operational history closely paralleled 10 Squadron. During WW2, 10 and 461 Squadrons served as part of the RAF's Coastal Command operating the enormous Short Sunderland long range patrol flying boat.

FEATURE STORIES

The memorial has been constructed in the Kevin Wheelahan Gardens, adjacent to the Sunshine RSL, Dickson St, Sunshine.

The initial 'Turning of the Sod' Ceremony saw 521 white crosses, bearing the name of each of the fallen veterans, an Australian Flag and a Poppy of Remembrance placed in tribute.

Each of the 521 fallen veterans has been 'adopted' by a Vietnamese community family, who specifically made donations to honour each veteran. After the ceremony, the families were presented with the cross for their fallen soldier and these crosses were taken home and placed on family altars, where they will be remembered and honoured as one of their own family.

The Memorial also includes a tribute to the five Vietnamese Generals, who sacrificed their lives rather than surrender to the enemy in April 1975.

There are also plans for a book to mark this special occasion to be launched at the first Commemorative Service on 30 April 2018, which also marks the fall of Saigon and South Vietnam to the communists.

A Dedication Ceremony for the new Memorial was held at 1100 on 16th December 2017, with members of the Vietnamese Australian community and members of the Vietnam Veterans Branch attending to pay their respects and commemorate the fallen.

Jacqui Rudd



The new Memorial to Vietnam Veterans in Sunshine



The new Memorial to Vietnam Veterans in Sunshine. 521 Australians who died during the Vietnam War are remembered by the Vietnamese-Australian community.



Fr Huy Hoang blesses the newly unveiled Memorial

Phong Nguyen performed the Vietnamese Ancestral Ceremony

MEMBER ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

FEDERAL OPPOSITION FORMALLY SUPPORTS ADSO/RSL

BANKING ROYAL COMMISSION ADVOCACY.

The Federal Opposition has thrown its support behind a joint ADSO/RSL submission to include the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation in the Royal Commission into the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industries.

The Air Force Association supports the call by the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO) to include the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation for examination in the Royal Commission into the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industries.



MEMBER ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

The ADSO and RSL issued a joint Media Statement calling on the Federal Government to amend the Royal Commission's Terms of Reference into Banking and Super to include an examination of the military superannuation funds administered by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation.

Earlier this month, the Defence Welfare Association (representing the ADSO), and the National President of the RSL were invited to meet with the Shadow Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Amanda Rishworth MP, to be briefed on the Federal Opposition's position on this issue.

In short, the Federal Opposition has decided to proactively support the joint advocacy of ADSO/RSL to include the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation in the Royal Commission's Terms of Reference.

The Shadow Minister has since formally written to both the Treasurer and to the Minister for Veterans Affairs in this regard.

We will keep our members informed of any developments as they come to hand.



There is strong push for the CSC to be included in Royal Commission into the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industries.

AFA SUPPORT FOR THE RIFLE COMPANY

BUTTERWORTH MALAYSIA CLAIM FOR WARLIKE SERVICE CLASSIFICATION SERVICE 1970 - 1989

The Air Force Association is supporting an independent review of the Rifle Company Butterworth Group's deployment classification between 1970-89.

As a national and State-based based organisation that supports the wellbeing of former and serving Air Force members and their families, the Air Force Association also provides support when needed to former and serving members of other Services.

The Rifle Company Butterworth Group has sought the Association's opinion and assistance with its request for a 'warlike' service classification to be afforded to the company's stated period of service in Malaysia from 1970-89.

Rifle Company Butterworth was deployed from Australia to protect RAAF and other Australian assets at Air Base Butterworth under its current 'peacetime' classification.

The Rifle Company Butterworth Group has made several unsuccessful submissions to Government to have the company's service classification upgraded to 'warlike'.

Based on the information available – and in the interests of those who served in the Rifle Company during this time - the Air Force Association supports an independent review of the deployment's classification between 1970-89. I have written to the Prime Minister in this regard.



DVA AUDIT UNDERWAY

The Air Force Association is participating in a joint ESO submission to the Australian National Audit Office as part of its audit of the 'Efficiency of Veterans Service by DVA'.

The ANAO is undertaking an audit of the DVA to assess whether DVA is efficiently delivering services to veterans and their dependents and will examine:

- ⇒ DVA's business systems and processes support the efficient delivery of services to veterans and their dependants; and
- ⇒ compensation, support and health services are delivered efficiently by DVA.

Last month the Air Force Association sought input from members and other stakeholders in order to contribute to a likely joint submission with other Ex-Service Organisation (ESOs). Submissions close 31 March and members will be kept up to date with developments as they occur.

You may find further information about the audit itself at:

<https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/efficiency-veterans-service-delivery-department-veterans-affairs>

AGRI VETERANS - HELPING VETERANS FIND MEANINGFUL Careers in the Australian Agricultural Industry

An Australian-first from Agri Labour (Australia (ALA), Agri Veterans launched in late 2015 to help veterans find meaningful careers and personal fulfilment in the field of agriculture.

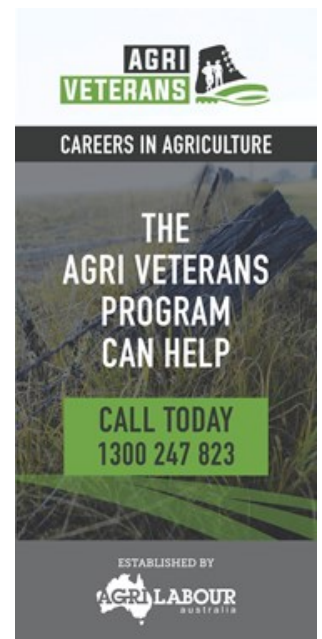
On average 5,500 personnel transition from the ADF each year and quite often, settling back into civilian life can be challenging - especially when looking for a new career. ‘

According to Agri Veterans Program Manager, Peter Thatcher, Agri Veterans has had great success in placing ex-Defence Force personnel in jobs in the Australian Agricultural Industry. The company has also developed a Certificate II in Rural Operations Course with the University of Queensland, which can also assist people in their transition to a career in the agricultural industry.

Peter himself is a 37-year Australian Army veteran, who remains active in the Army Reserve. Agri Veterans Program started as a small agricultural recruitment firm based in Goondiwindi and is now one of Australia's largest privately-owned recruiters and suppliers of permanent and contract agricultural labour, with offices across Australia and Taiwan.

The company also maintains strong veteran community links through its official partnership with Legacy in Brisbane.

You can find out more about the Agri Veterans Program by visiting the website <http://www.agriveterans.com.au>.



STRONG AFA PRESENCE ON NATIONAL VETERANS' FORUMS.

Wing Commander Sharon Bown (Retd) and Flight Lieutenant Dee Cherry are representing the Air Force Association on a number of national forums and committees.

Flight Lieutenant Dee Cherry, who is currently stationed in Melbourne, is the Air Force Association's representative on



Flight Lieutenant Dee Cherry

the Younger Veterans Contemporary Needs Forum. Dee is a veteran of a Middle East campaign and a Legacy with Melbourne Legacy.

Wing Commander Sharon Bown (Retd), a former RAAF Nurse, is representing the Air Force Association on the Female and Families Veterans Forum.



Wing Commander Sharon Bown (Retd)

Sharon is also representing the Association's National President on the 65th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice Consultative Committee. Among holding other ap-

pointments, she is a Member on the Australian War Memorial Council.

During her service career, Sharon served overseas in East Timor and Afghanistan, commanding a surgical team in Afghanistan.

Sharon is the author of the book, 'One Woman's War and Peace: A Nurse's Journey in the Royal Australian Air Force'. You can also go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uilZQvWicNI> to see more of Sharon's story.

SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE LATE WOFF DONALD GORDON TIGHE

Adam Tighe, grandson of the late WOFF Donald Gordon Tighe who passed away in 1978, is seeking any information (photos, etc) relating to his granddad.

Anyone with any information can contact Adam at tighehally@hotmail.com.

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/ STATE CONFERENCE

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS & MOTIONS

Members are advised that the 2018 AGM followed by the State Conference will be held on **17th of May 2018**, at the AFA VC room at 1100 Hrs..

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 RAAFA Office no later than **1st February 2018** 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 - M (Max) McGregor

State Treasurer - P (Peter) Colliver

One Board member - Nominations for these positions are invited. Current incumbent whose tenure will expire is:

T Anthony (Tony) Pilli

D (Daryll) Topp

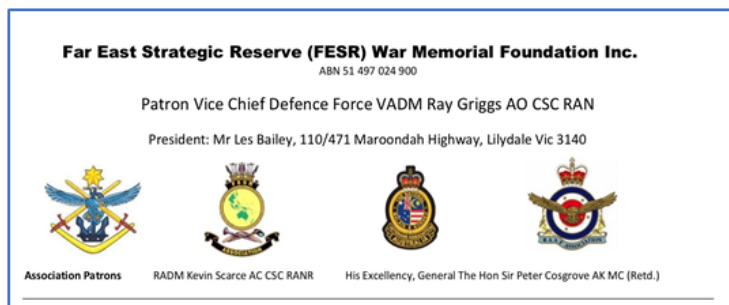
Nomination forms may be obtained from the Branch Secretaries or the Office Manager, RAAFA Divisional office.

Motions for 2018AGM and State Conference:

- ♦ All proposed motions must be forwarded by Branch Secretaries to the State Secretary 21 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

The business of an ordinary meeting shall be for the purpose of receiving the report of the Board, receiving the state of accounts and transacting any other business which under these presents ought to be transacted at any ordinary meeting. All other business transacted at an ordinary meeting and all business transacted at an extraordinary meeting shall be deemed special.



PROGRESSING TOWARDS THE FAR EAST STRATEGIC RESERVE (FESR) WAR MEMORIAL

some years a combined group of veteran associations, including the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) Navy Association, the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association Australia (NMBVAA) and the AFA, have been working towards the construction of an FESR War Memorial in the Sculpture Gardens of the Australian War Memorial.

The FESR is seeking donations to progress the proposed Memorial.

If you would like to make a donation you can do so via The FESR War Memorial Foundation, please contact either Les Bailey (President) at lephils@lvv.com.au, or Ian Davenport (Secretary) at maindav@bigpond.com

NEW VICTORIAN DEPUTY DVA COMMISSIONER AND FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

Ms Leonie Nowland has been appointed to the position of Deputy DVA Commissioner Victoria with effect January 31st, 2018.

Mr John Geary will assume the position of First Assistant Secretary, Claims and Operations Division. He will be nationally responsible for Compensation, Rehabilitation and Income Support processing and program management.

“John is a genuine and compassionate professional who I admire.” said AFA President, Carl Schiller. “On behalf of the Air Force Association, I congratulate him on his new appointment.”

AROUND THE BRANCHES

ATC/AAFC BRANCH

Hello once again everyone and although we are already well into 2018, Happy New Year and we hope you all had a restful and safe Christmas in good health.

Our branch's Christmas Luncheon went very well and with our numbers being down by just a few this year, an enjoyable time was had by all. It was good to catch up once again with those who had travelled long distances to attend and get together with “old friends” again for a few hours.

The January 2018 Annual Parade of the 4WG AAFC Promotion Detachment was conducted this year at the Puckapunyal Army Base.

Although I was not in attendance this year, the results, which are too extensive to provide here, may be found by those interested, by visiting the AFA (Vic) website.



4WG 2018 Promotion Graduation Parade at Puckapunyal

I had the opportunity to meet up with the Air Force Band which were present for the Annual National Servicemen's Day march and service at the Shrine of Remembrance on the 11th of February and confirmed that we will be duly informed of forthcoming concerts, which were well attended by AFA members last year, when dates etc. are made available.

Finally, congratulations are in order for our Branch members

Jan and Doug Williams who, due to their vast contributions and involvement in a variety of Community Services, were jointly recognised as being Benalla's Citizens of the Year. Doug was also separately recognised as being Baddaginnie's Citizen of the Year for his extra involvement in other Services in this area. Well done and well-deserved praise to both for their achievements.

Best wishes to all,

Laurie Bell.

BENDIGO BRANCH

The last report I wrote was just so long ago, that I can't believe another year has passed us by! Since that last report the Bendigo Branch held a 'Picnic-in-the Park' together with - Ballarat Branch on 19th February 2017 This was a great day with lovely weather, delicious food & good company. Hopefully we can continue to have these get-togethers with Ballarat in the years to come.

On 7th December, 2017 we held our Christmas function which was attended by 36 members, but unfortunately not State President, Carl, who was committed to State Branch's end of year function. We had a great time at the Windermere Hotel dining on delicious food and entertained by a group of vocalising ladies, called the Rustic Divas who sang songs from 50's & 60's finishing off with carols. It was so good with our toes tapping & also singing along which we were encouraged to do. The swindle organised by Richard & thanks to the members who donated many prizes went off well.

On 1st February 2018 we held our AGM - Executive remains the same, with Roy Gaffee as President, Ray Gray as Snr Vice, Richard Henson -Vice President & Glenis Gordon - Secretary/Treasurer. The members were obviously happy with our performance - either that or we just needed a bit more practice!

On a sad note, I have to report that another two members, Victor Cahill & John Hill have moved into aged care.

On 19th February, ten members attended a Commemorative Service for Darwin Defenders. This service was held at the Bendigo District RSL. When the siren rang out at 0930 hrs, it was quite eerie.

We wish all RAAF members & their families a very healthy & safe 2018. Take good care.

Glenis Gordon, Secretary

ENGINEERS BRANCH

On Monday 5 February 2018 the Engineer Branch held its regular bi-monthly committee meeting at the Mail Exchange Hotel in Bourke Street; our first meeting for the new year with eleven attendees.

We will be holding our annual mid year luncheon in Melbourne on Wednesday 13th June in the rooms of the Batman's Hill on Collins Melbourne. The facility is centrally placed being opposite the Southern Cross railway station and is well serviced with transport links, amenities and services.

Glen Gould volunteered to be our Master of Ceremonies (armed with his many jokes) and our guest speaker will be David Gardner Director of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook; John Clarkson, Richard Orr and Noel Hadfield as usual, supported by other members, will provide the essential "back room support".

The committee also discussed ways to positively encourage people to join the AFA Branch; this will be subject to separate correspondence but will concentrate on positive encouragement explaining the many advantages of joining.

Following a proposal from Richard Orr, the committee supported his proposal to recommend a change to the current RAAFA Victorian Division Articles of the Association to reflect the use of more modern communications medium with members such as email where this is preferred by the

member(s) rather than postal notifications which can be expensive. This has been forwarded to the RAAFA Vic board for consideration.

We have also arranged upgrading of our website. A first cut update has been completed and this will be presented at our next committee meeting which we agreed will be an AGM with an offer of a financial offset for attendees. Due to the impact of the Easter public holidays and the availability of the web site contractor, the AGM is planned for Tuesday 10 April 2018 at the Mail Exchange Hotel.

Kingsley McRae and Glen Gould also attended a meeting at RMIT on 8 February to discuss our involvement with Rebecca Booth and Leonie Boxel regarding an RMIT Alumni "plaque" initiative - "the donor wall". The RAAF has a very long history of association regarding technical training across a number of levels at RMIT and many of us did our initial radio technician training and/or engineering training at RMIT Melbourne. Already we have collected a total sum of \$725 from members towards being involved in this project.

Just to recap from the RMIT meeting:

The donor wall will occupy the right wall of the Capitol foyer and will comprise of interactive panels as well as a static design element made of tiles. The names of our donors will be etched onto the tiles and donor stories will be featured



Example of proposed donor wall at RMIT

through the interactive element.

Rebecca will forward details including drawings of the final design of the wall when they become available.

The Radio Apprentices, Cadet Engineers and Airmen will be able to have their insignia engraved onto the tiles as well as the names of their divisions.

Kingsley will collate information and photos regarding the three divisions detailing their experiences at RMIT. These will include a 'day in the life' of their RMIT experience, the experiences they had whilst in service and their connection now. The stories will be featured through the interactive element in the donor wall.

Leonie will forward a gift form through to Kingsley to aid in the collection process.

Due to the impact of ageing as well as the changes in the location and structure of the engineering members in the current RAAF, much discussion was held regarding the format the functions should take and what would best serve the members' needs for the future. Several options are available including reducing the number of "formal events" involving guest presenters versus less formal, more interactive fellowship luncheons. This is currently being actively investigated as to the most suitable format for the future.

2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bi-Monthly Committee Meeting for committee members at the Mail Exchange Hotel which is on the corner of Spencer and Bourke Streets. First Monday in the month commencing February 2018 unless we decide otherwise due to a conflict in dates/activities:

Monday 5 Feb 2018

Tuesday 10 April (date changed due to Easter holidays)

Monday 4 June



Monday 6 Aug

Monday 1 Oct

Monday 3 Dec

Mid-Year Lunch Batman's Hill on Collins 1200 Hrs
Wed 13 June

End of Year Lunch 1200 hours Thursday 8 Nov-venue and luncheon form to be determined.

Anzac Day - same as past years but to be finalised.

[Note: All dates subject to change and to be confirmed throughout the year].

Point of Contact (POC)

Noel Hadfield, Wing Commander (Retd)

E-mail: nhadfield@optusnet.com.au

Telephone: (03) 9511 7775

We wish you all ongoing good health and wellbeing in 2018.

Ron Ledingham

(For Kingsley McRae and the Committee Members)

CATALINA BRANCH

November 2016 at ANZAC House.

Please flag in your diaries the 75th Anniversary of No 1 Flying Boat Repair Depot from 17 to 19 March 2017.

Ron Kirk Catalina Branch Secretary

RAF BRANCH

1st Thursday at 11am Stella Maris Seafarers Centre

600 Lt Collins St Melb

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

THE YEAR THAT WAS 2017

Sunderlanders and friends.

I trust that you all enjoyed a joyous Festive Season, and apologise for the lack of Newsletters in 2017. Since I semi-retired in June, I have been trying to get my time management and new lifestyle sorted. Not sure I am there yet, but I am on the way. I trust that in 2018 I can get circulate more regular Sunderland communications.

2017 was a year of many significant events. Two members of our Sunderland family celebrated their 100th Birthday, the NSW Branch continued its Sunderland Awards Night for the 48th time, and for the First World War students, it was the Centenary of the Light Horse Charge at Beersheba as part of the 3rd Gaza Offensive in October 1917. I didn't make the pilgrimage to Palestine this time as I had commitments in Canberra for the Centenary commemorations.

2018 will obviously have many events to Commemorate the Centenary of the end of WWI, and for the Sunderlanders it will be 75 years since the major action involving N461. A number of descendants of the crew members involved will be making another pilgrimage to Praa Sands and I assume PD. Maybe more detail of this trip in later Newsletters.

To those people who have been patiently waiting to obtain Squadron Plaques and History Books, I now have in stock, 10 and 461 Squadron Plaques and Squadron history books, Maritime is No.10 and Anzac Squadron respectively. I also have some small Sunderland badges. See the Shopping Section below.

Just a reminder that any deceased post war Squadron member's descendants who wish to have their Sunderland fami-

ly member's name place on the Wall of Remembrance at Rathmines, please contact NSW Secretary, Peter Dowling (ph. 0418 281 775) for more information. I have attached a copy of the application form to this newsletter.

I recently made a flying visit to the RAAF Museum at Point Cook and was pleased to see that the Coastal Command display included a significant component relating to the Sunderland Squadrons. A much superior display to that presented at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The display although relatively small features Squadron

Leader Peter Jensen's tunic, a personal photo album and an explanation panel.

For anyone who has not visited

the Point Cook Museum it is well worth a visit.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE

SUNDERLAND BRANCH?

VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AFA VICTORIA WEBSITE:

<http://raafavic.org.au/content/768/branch-sunderland-squadrons>

VIETNAM VETERANS BRANCH

Our former long-serving Secretary and life-time Branch member Rick Holmes has decided to stand down from the committee. Rick has been a valued member of our team for many years and with all his experience, I'm glad that he has offered to stay in touch and be available to offer advice on the curly questions that arise from time to time.

As mentioned earlier in this edition of CONTACT, late last year, members of the Vietnamese-Australian community and our Branch came together for a Dedication Ceremony for a new Memorial to honour the 521 Australians who died in the Vietnam War.

As I reflect on the significant aspects of 2017, I am conscious of the passing of three members of our Association – Lee Scully, former President of our Branch, our Patron, Peter Issacson and most recently, Brent Espeland, National President of our Association. I'm sure we are all saddened by the passing of these three Association members but heartened by the example and contributions they each made.

Please remember that if you require transport for ANZAC Day and have not already advised us please do so ASAP. Otherwise we can't guarantee you a seat. Contact our Secretary Gill Coughlin, on 0408-503-986

Chris Hudnott, President Vietnam Veterans Branch

DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW.....YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THESE CONCESSIONS?

WITH A FREE AUSTRALIA POST CONCESSION ACCOUNT, YOU'LL PAY JUST 60C PER STAMP, INSTEAD OF \$1?

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Department of Veterans' Affairs Card

Veterans' Repatriation Health Card

Apply today at your local post office or visit the [Australia Post website](#)

Are You An ex-RAAFIE With Museum Curator experience?

The team at B24 Liberator Restoration Australia in Werribee is seeking ex-RAAFies with museum curator type experience who might like to assist the Restoration team work towards achieving museum accreditation.

The B24 Liberator housed at Werribee is the only remaining Liberator in the Southern Hemisphere and is one of only eight still existence in the world.

The intricate restoration work is proceeding in one of the impressive World War II hangars on the old Werribee airfield - just outside Melbourne.

Interested folk should contact Lyn Gorman, President B24 Liberator Restoration Australia on 03 9731 1263.

SKYBUS HAS CONFIRMED IT WILL PROVIDE COMPLIMENTARY TRANSFERS TO PASSENGERS WITH A WAR VETERAN FREE TRAVEL PASS.

This pass is available to veterans who reside in Victoria and have documentary evidence of their overseas war or/peace-making service by providing one of the following:

DVA Gold or White Card, or Evidence of ongoing compensation from DVA for an injury/illness related to this service, or

Evidence of lump sum compensation from DVA for an injury/illness related to this service, and

Have your treating doctor sign the application form confirming your condition is due to service and that mobility is significantly limited Apply today by contacting Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007 or visit a PTV Hub if you require assistance.

(If you already have a War Veteran Free Travel Pass, this pass will need to be shown at the ticket booth to receive a complimentary ticket.)



Do you want to find out more about the B24 Liberator Restoration Project?

Check out their website. It's a beauty!

<https://www.b24australia.org.au/home>



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 the last publication. May they rest in peace.

Lest we forget

Mr Mauro Folghera	21 Squadron	01/02/2018
Mr Ern French	Northern Metropolitan Branch	07/02/2018
Mr Neil McQualter	Catalina	21/01/2018
Mr Phelan	Headquarters	25/12/2018
Mr John Watson	Catalina	15/01/2018
Mr Gregor McGregor	Fighter Sqds.	13/03/2018

ASSOCIATION NEWS

STOP PRESS

We are endeavouring to send information to members via email more frequently than is possible with our newsletter Contact. However, we do not have a current email address for many members. If you have not received a broadcast email from us recently it means we do not have your email address.

Please take a moment to send Barb a brief email including your name so that we can update our database. The email should be sent to: office@raafavic.org.au

Your help to update our database is appreciated. Thank you.

HELP US STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU

If you have not received a broadcast email from us recently, it means we do not have your current email address. To help us provide you with timely communications in addition to our quarterly CONTACT newsletter, please take a moment to send Barb a brief email including your name so that we can update our database. The email should be sent to: office@raafavic.org.au. Thank you.



RAAFA

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

GPCAPT. C. F. (Carl) Schiller OAM CSM Ret State President

M (Max) McGregor : State President elect

Darrell Robinson: Executive Board Secretary

Robert (Bob) Brackin : Immediate Past President

D Topp (Daryll) Vice-President

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National Secretary

J (John) McCrystal: Chairman RAAFA Foundation

Directors: D (Di) Hooper; T. A. (Tony) Pilli;

P. (Peter) Finkelstein: Honorary Solicitor

BRANCH SECRETARIES

2 SQUADRON Walter Sherman (0407152479)

21 Squadron Mike Dance (0438764629)

B24 Liberator Tony Muller (97414635)

Catalina Ronald Kirk (98193527);

ATC/AAFC Hugh Tank (98773424);

Ballarat Tom Roberts (53331653);

Bendigo Glenis Gordon (54369293);

Engineers Kingsley McRae (0419518303)

Fighter Squadrons Contact RAAFA (98134600);

Geelong Contact RAAFA (98134600),

Gippsland Contact RAAFA (98134600);

Melbourne WAAAF Jessie Reed (98029073);

North Metropolitan Rod Garmaise (93093543);

Vietnam Veterans Gill Coughlan
gilly4346@gmail.com

Royal Air Force Ted Hayes (98418553)

Sunderland Squadrons Ricky Hattam (52413431);

Williams Contact RAAFA (98134600),



**RAAFA TIES AND SCARFS ARE
AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE. THIS
WOULD MAKE A BRILLIANT GIFT
THE TIES AND SCARFS ARE
AVAILABLE AT \$28.00 + POSTAGE;**

CONTACT EDITORIAL AND DISTRIBUTION DATES

Autumn 2018

Contributions close 28 February 2018

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Winter 2018

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SPRING 2018

Contributions close 29 August 2018

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SUMMER 2018

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