



# CONTACT

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### FEATURE STORIES

Rise of the Phoenix 2  
Eleanor and Margaret -

An incredible story of two women,  
two continents and a wedding 3

Reflections...ANZAC Day London  
2018 (An Excerpt) 4

AFA Vic's Meet-A-Mate Event  
Highlights the Gallipoli ANZAC  
Landings 6

The Australian Flying Corps in the  
Great War 1914-1918'

Book Launch 7

The National President of the Air  
Force Association, Carl Schiller,  
OAM CSM Announces Advocacy  
Support for RAAF Fire fighters. 8

AFA Foundation Presents Annual  
Bursaries to Students 9

*AROUND THE BRANCHES* 10

Meet A Mate – Air Force Trivia  
Quiz 14

*DID YOU KNOW?* 14

*VALE* 15

*ASSOCIATION NEWS* 16

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

I am honoured to accept the appointment of President of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

Since commencing as President on April 1 (a most auspicious date), it has been a very busy time as I undertake what this role entails. We, as the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association, have been extremely fortunate to have had Carl Schiller as our Past President. His drive and enthusiasm have given the Association a great basis on which

to move forward and continue the work that he initiated over his time as President. We have not lost Carl's expertise or friendship as he is still a Board member of our Division, as well as being the National President of the Air Force Association Ltd. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Carl for all he has accomplished for the benefit of the Association. (Cont .Page 2)

### Rise of the Phoenix\* – The Story of an Australian B24 Liberator Restoration (Part 1)

This is the story of the restoration of Australia's only surviving B-24 Liberator - one of only eight still in existence in the world - and a group of dedicated people who have banded together over the years in a common cause: to find and restore the glorious B24 Liberator.

When the Japanese brought America into the WWII it caused a great amount of panic to the Australian Government and the arrival of General MacArthur must have seemed like a gift from the gods. When he retreated from Bataan, he brought with him a large contingent of men and equipment.

Among the hardware that MacArthur managed to bring were planes that the American Army Air Force were equipped with at that time, most of which were far superior to anything Australia had. Among them were the much-vaunted Boeing B17 and the ubiquitous Consolidated B24 four engine bombers. The sleek B17 first flew in 1936 and the American press had christened it the Flying Fortress which captured everyone's imagination.

The B24 was to say the least a bit ungainly and its squat posture and bulbous body made it the butt of B17 pilot jokes, but they were silenced when it was pointed out to them it was the box their planes came in and could easily outperform theirs. Faced with the need to operate with heavy bombers, the Government needed to make a choice of three currently in use: the (Cont .Page 2) English Lancaster (ruled out since the British desperately needed every

The Board of Management of the Victorian Division is united in its endeavour to not only have a strong governance framework, but also to make it as simple as possible for all the branches to fulfil their obligations. This is an evolutionary process, and branches will be consulted as this work continues.

At the recent AGM the motion to change the name of the Association was passed. This change aligns us with the current branding of "Air Force" and as such, our relevance to current serving members will be enhanced. It is true to say that our Association is predominately made up from older members, but for our longevity it is essential that we can attract new and younger members. By changing our name to reflect current terminology used by the Air Force, we believe this will help us attract members from the younger generation. Nothing apart from the name of our Association has changed - our aims remain the same, and I recently signed a letter to the Governor of Victoria restating our Affirmation of Loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. As an Association, we collectively will be judged not by what we call ourselves, but by how effective we are as an Association which provides the services that our members want and need.

We have two large projects underway at present: the study into the possibility of the Victorian Division moving into providing aged care facilities, and the Armistice Commemoration to be held in November. These undertakings require member volunteers to give up some of their time in order to spread the workload. So far, we have not had any great success in having people come forward. The Aged Care study may appear daunting because of its complexity but it is possible to achieve. In the Victorian

Division of the Association we have a combined group of skilled members who have much expertise in many different fields. We need you to share your skills by volunteering to assist with these two important projects. If we do not have a large enough workforce then the tasks build up on the small but willing group that has come forward. I appeal to you all to make the effort to volunteer for these and other working groups.

By the time that this edition of Contact reaches you we will have completed another Care Parcel project for Air Force personnel serving overseas. This program, which was commenced in Victoria, is now financially supported by several other Divisions of the AFA. We are certainly very grateful for this financial support but the workload continues to be carried by Victorian members. The feedback we have received from Air Force members who have received a care parcel certainly reinforces the desire within the Victorian Division to continue with this program.

We as an Association must ensure that we promote our aim to offer assistance to former and serving members in whatever way we can, and to foster friendship and support to each other within our own group.

Best wishes.

Max McGregor

President Victorian Division

## Rise of the Phoenix – The Story of an Australian B24 Liberator Restoration (Part 1)

Continued from page 1



*The glorious B24 Liberator in its heyday*

plane it could produce) and the two American planes.

The Government settled on the B24 which better suited our needs, with nearly twice the range, carried twice the bombload, was faster and at that time could operate at higher altitude. The

B24 was also becoming known for its versatility and over time was used for 27 different tasks. It was produced in two versions, the twin stabiliser B24 (which was utilised) and the single tail derivative B24 Privateer.

When the first order was placed, the Americans offered 12 of their "war weary" planes for crew training purposes and pilots that trained in them agreed they were indeed 'weary'. Full of squeaks and groans they never the less served the purpose. Together, with the 288 that were eventually purchased, the RAAF flew 7 squadrons of the B-24 Liberator in long range strikes against Japanese military targets in South East Asia. As such they are an important part of Australia's military history.

After the war, the Government began selling off all types of planes at a huge discount. With the advent of the 'jet aeroplane', everything else was deemed useless. As far as the B24 went, the B29 and the B52 were hugely more effective - and so began the melting down on site of those still left. In the years after the war, many of the 20,000 personnel involved with the B24 were starting to regret that

# FEATURE STORIES

not one had been saved.

At ANZAC commemorations and reunions there was a sense of loss and a groundswell of remorse began which led to a group of former personnel agitating for action. Sadly, an offer by the Indian Air Force to donate a 'J' model B24 that had been used as a water bomber did not eventuate and the search continued.

Finally, in August 1988 a group of interested parties met at Wagga and as a result a committee was formed with a mission statement "to locate, restore and display a B24 Liberator in an appropriate Museum for the people of Australia". They put a B24 hub cap on the table and now 30 years later that statement is coming to fruition.

On the site of the Point Cook Satellite airfield in Werribee, the dream of those Veterans in a WW2 hangar - and like the legendary Phoenix - a B24 Liberator is rising.

You can read more about the B-24 Liberator



*The state of the fuselage when it arrived at the hangar. 90% of the airframe and 70% of its fittings were acquired from many parts of the world and from generous benefactors.*

Restoration on its website <http://www.b24australia.org.au/home>

Or visit the B-24 Liberator Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/B24Werribee>

*In the next edition of CONTACT, we will look at the location and restoration of the various parts of the B24 Liberator.*



*The last B-24 Liberator in the Southern Hemisphere is undergoing intricate restoration work in Werribee.*

## ELEANOR AND MARGARET - An INCREDIBLE STORY OF TWO WOMEN, TWO CONTINENTS AND A WEDDING

**What could two ladies for opposite ends of the world - one dominant in American society, the other a humble English woman – have in common? The answer? Generosity.**

Eleanor Roosevelt was the wife of Franklin D Roosevelt, America's President during WWII, and happened to be the niece of the 26<sup>th</sup> President (1901-1909) of the United States, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.

An activist, politician and diplomat born in 1884, Eleanor was a strong supporter of civil rights, political refugees and children. She was the longest serving US First Lady and following her husband's death in 1945, she was the US delegate to the United Nations General Assembly for almost a decade. In 1942 Eleanor visited Britain - which was subject to strict rationing, including food and clothing - and it was probably during this tour that the genesis of the idea which connects these two remarkable women developed.

On the other side of the world in Britain, Margaret Cook and her sister, Joan, were brought up in Sunbury close to the Ealing Film Studios. During the War, those at home were encouraged to write to servicemen who were overseas in the belief that this connection with home would remind them that they were not forgotten. Margaret began corresponding with Bill Wood, who was stationed in the Middle East. When Bill eventually returned home, they became engaged. During this time, Margaret also enlisted in the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) as a WREN and was involved in the assembly of barges for the "D Day" invasion of occupied Europe. ( Cont. Page 4)



*US First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt*



## FEATURE STORIES

Strict wartime rationing limited the couple's wedding plans. Whilst stories abound of the use of purloined parachute material for wedding dresses, bartering of materiel and pooling of coupons became common.

Meanwhile, Eleanor Roosevelt had not forgotten the plight of British women, that she had witnessed during her visit. She developed the idea of approaching American women who had stored their wedding dresses for years to loan them to British brides and develop a 'pool' of dresses which could be passed on to others.

The WRNS Commanding Officer of Margaret's unit became aware of this offer and suggested that Margaret make an application for a dress. This was clearly a much-preferred alternative to the pink brocade curtaining which Margaret had received in exchange for some pyjamas! The pink brocade did not go to waste and became a bridesmaid's dress for Margaret's sister, Joan.

A number of wedding gowns were forwarded to the Base in response to Margaret's application and many were quite elaborate, but Margaret chose a beautiful soft chiffon dress to wear on her wedding day. Incredibly, that dress was the very dress that Eleanor Roosevelt herself had worn on her own wedding day.

The day after the wedding the gown was returned to the US Embassy, while Margaret's family was left to wonder how

many other brides were to share her experience.

After a life of service both to her nation and indeed the world, Eleanor died in 1962 at the age of 78.

Margaret and her husband Bill were destined to follow their son to settle in Ballarat. Sadly, Bill passed away shortly after their move, but today 94-year old Margaret continues to flourish as a happy and generous member of the Air Force Association's Ballarat Branch. She remains a fountain of information and has endless interesting



*The wedding of Bill Wood and Margaret Brown: (L to R) Best Man, Len; LAC Bill Wood; Margaret in her First Lady wedding dress; Margaret's sister, Joan.*

## REFLECTIONS...ANZAC DAY LONDON 2018 (An Excerpt)

**Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Alan Reed AO has recently returned from London, where he marched with his son Gus from Whitehall to the Cenotaph in the London ANZAC Day March. Below is an excerpt of a story he wrote reflecting on the day and what it means to him and his family.**

I was sitting outside on my balcony on a beautiful Autumn evening in Melbourne with a nice single malt in my hand looking at Princes Pier which is in the front yard of our Port Melbourne apartment. My wife Aileen and her family arrived with eagerness and anticipation at Princes Pier from Scotland in 1956, so it has much significance for her.

Many of the soldiers who left Australia to fight in the awful First World War departed from there too, with songs in their heart and breaking ribbons in their hands from this very pier.

They were excited. They were off to fight the mighty fight; to do what was right on behalf of the Empire and the mother country which had called for our support. All 416,000 of them were volunteers who left from the mere five million population of our country to answer their country's and their Empire's call. More than 60,000 of them did not come back and 150,000 more were wounded and many traumatised by what they had endured.

Why am I writing this? Why do I feel this way? Well, I am just back from a visit to London where I marched on ANZAC Day this year from Whitehall to the Cenotaph. This year is the centenary of the 1918 Armistice.



HMAT Hororata departs Port Melbourne 1916

(image courtesy of [www.anzaccentenary.vic.go.au](http://www.anzaccentenary.vic.go.au))

# FEATURE STORIES

My Uncle Stanley, born in 1896 was the youngest child of my grandparents. He was listed as missing in action during a major battle at Polygon Wood in September 1917. His parents were told by telegram that he was “Missing” but there was no further news for several months.

Sadly, Stanley had actually been killed by shrapnel on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1917, the day that he had been listed as missing. My grandparents had held on in hope, for more than six months.

Wanting to show some respect to my long dead uncle, my son Gus and I decided last year, in the 100<sup>th</sup> year of his death to visit him and to retrospectively thank him for his sacrifice.

So, why did I march in London on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2018? It is a very good question. I had mentioned to our Port Melbourne Apartment Manager before leaving that I was going to be in London for ANZAC Day and Joe, a Special Forces Veteran, said to me: “Why don’t you march?”.

I marched for me of course. I was pleased to be there with a small number of other Aussies, some showing their Vietnam colours and some also wearing their National Service medals. But it was much more than that. I did recognise the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of that terrible war and I remembered my Uncle Stanley, Uncle Bert and my own Dad along with the many who share unknown graves or have none at all.

I was very pleased to have my own son, Gus, in London marching alongside me and representing his Uncle (and my brother) Ron who fought in WWII and whom he respects and admires, but it was even more than that.

What we all want from this history of horror and conflict is for our own families and our own communities and our own world to really live in peace.

Let us think about and remember the joy that my wife and her family arrived with, right here at Princes Pier in 1956, and let their dreams of happiness, peace, anticipation and their goals for their family be a measure of our future.

**You can read the full transcript of Alan Reed’s story on our website: [www.raafavic.org.au](http://www.raafavic.org.au).**



*AVM (Retd) Alan Reed, AO in London’s 2018 ANZAC Day*



*AVM (Retd) Alan Reed, AO and his ‘ADC’, son Gus Reed in London on ANZAC Day 2018*



[www.facebook.com/raafavic/](http://www.facebook.com/raafavic/)



## AFA VIC'S MEET-A-MATE\* EVENT HIGHLIGHTS THE GALLIPOLI ANZAC LANDINGS

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March, the 170 members of the Air Force Association and serving members from all three Services who attended an AFA Victoria 'Meet-A-Mate' function were treated to a dramatic and enlightening presentation on the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli by SQNLDR (Retd) Hugh Dolan.

In his presentation, which was held in the former Officer's Mess at Point Cook, Hugh focused on two main themes: to highlight the employment of airpower during the Gallipoli campaign, and to disprove the myths that the ANZAC landings were poorly planned and took place on the wrong beach.

The original concept of the Dardanelles campaign was to force the Straits using naval power alone and, having subdued the defences, to land troops to occupy Constantinople (now Istanbul).

Air operations in the Dardanelles campaign were first envisaged months before a decision to make landings at ANZAC Cove and Cape Helles. The use of aircraft was approved and the island of Tenedos selected as the base of operations in November 1914.

The world's first aircraft carrier, HMS *Ark Royal* was dispatched to the Dardanelles with six seaplanes and four land planes, arriving at Tenedos on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1915.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> February, her aircraft conducted the first reconnaissance flight, which identified gun emplacements and confirmed that the Dardanelles forts were manned.

The first flight over ANZAC was made on 19<sup>th</sup> February, over the stretch of beach between Gaba Tepe and Hell Spit, now known as Brighton Beach, although it was not selected as a potential landing place until 13 April.

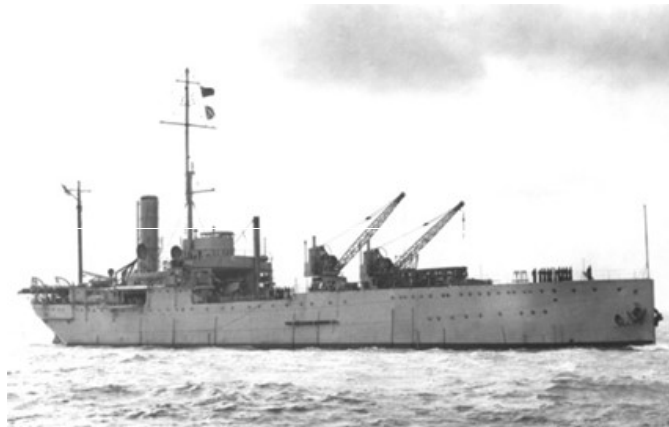
An *Ark Royal* aircraft reconnoitred the stretch of coast around what would become ANZAC Cove on 5<sup>th</sup> March. On 19 February, the area had been devoid of guns, but four miles off the coast, at 3,000 feet, the sortie was hit by rifle fire and crashed.

A second aircraft was also hit but returned to *Ark Royal*. The battleship *Queen Elizabeth* was hit by artillery from Gaba Tepe.

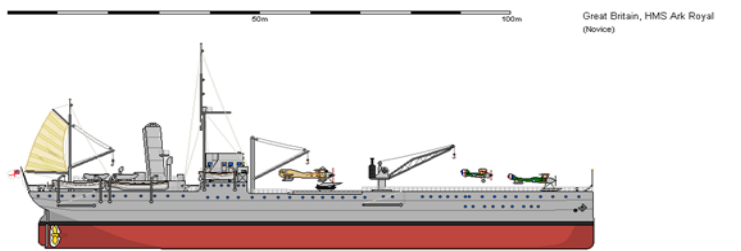
General Birdwood, commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) was tasked by Lord Kitchener to prepare a military appreciation of likely landing places. In his planning Birdwood argued for a tethered balloon to be used for spotting for the Navy.

HMS *Manica*, the first tethered balloon ship, was specifically designed for the Gallipoli operations.

On the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> March, Hamilton concluded that an amphibious assault was necessary and advised Kitchener.



Above and below: HMS *Ark Royal*—the world's first aircraft carrier



HMS *Manica* – the first tethered balloon ship.

No.3 Squadron arrived in Tenedos during March. The squadron's complement was 11 pilots and 22 aircraft. HMS *Manica* arrived in Mudros Harbour on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

On 12<sup>th</sup> April, during No.3 Squadron's 50<sup>th</sup> mission, many gun emplacements on the Gallipoli Peninsula were identified, inaccuracies in naval maps were noted and a new road was mapped. Gen Bridges, commander of the Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Division, and his aide Col Brudenell White, the first Australian commanders to plan a major military engagement, took full advantage of the intelligence gleaned from aerial reconnaissance.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, the ANZAC intelligence officer Major Charles Villiers Stuart, who had never before been in an aircraft, flew from Tenedos as an observer in a 3 Squadron aircraft to

overfly concealed Turkish positions, behind the proposed landing beaches. On his return he reported the presence of previously unknown artillery batteries covering the beaches.

Using information gleaned from 196 aerial missions, including 18 photographic reconnaissance missions, Bridges and White planned the Australian landings to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

Brighton Beach was rejected as a landing place, because of the Turkish defences behind the beach, and its exposure to shelling from the battery on Gaba Tepe. Contrary to later speculation that navigational errors or tides dictated where the landing occurred, ANZAC Cove was chosen as the landing place, because there were minimal Turkish defences there. The landings were to be made before dawn to avoid observation, there was no preliminary bombardment, and the troops' rifles were unloaded to avoid accidental discharge that might alert the enemy.

Consequently, casualties on the landing beach were minimal, compared with the British losses at Cape Helles.

## 'THE AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918' BOOK LAUNCH

**Wire, wood and fabric aircraft served as an appropriate backdrop to the book launch of the very recently published 'The Australian Flying Corps in the Great War 1914-1918', co-authored by Norman Clifford and Lance Halvorson.**

The book launch took place in the RAAF Museum on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May, followed by a light lunch at the former Officers' Mess at RAAF Williams Point Cook. Peter Meehan, OAM was Master of Ceremonies.

AIRCDRE Glen Braz, CSC DSM representing CAF, BRIG Stephen Jobson, CSC Commander 16<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade, AVM (Retd) Alan Reed, AO DFC (US), GPCAPT Dennis Tan Officer Commanding Air Training Wing, and WGCDR James Rogers Commanding Officer No 21 Squadron were among the VIP Guests.

Norman Clifford is an accomplished self-taught artist specialising in military aviation, who researched over many years the history of the AFC. His research involved examining AFC operational orders, interviews with several long-lived WW1 aviators, and log books.

Lance Halvorson is a retired RAAF Wing Commander navigator who served in No 2 Squadron during the Vietnam War. Both gentlemen have a passion for military aviation history.



*Lance Halvorson, co-author, addressing the audience.*

The book launch was a wonderful prelude to the Air Force Association's Annual General Meeting and face-to-face conference held at the Park Royal Hotel, Tullamarine over May 29-30<sup>th</sup>.

Copies of the book can be purchased by contacting Barbara Stallard at [office@raafavic.org.au](mailto:office@raafavic.org.au).

The first ANZAC troops were ashore by 4:30 a.m., and by 5 a.m. 5,500 men were ashore, with dawn still 20 minutes away.

Although no Australian aircraft participated in the Dardanelles air campaign, the last man killed in action on Gallipoli was an Australian serving with 3WG, RNAS. He was Sydney-born, 22-year old Flight Sub-Lieutenant Cecil Horace Brinsmead. Flying a Henri Farman, he was shot down, over Cape Helles (Sedd el Bahr), by a German aircraft on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1916, two days after the final evacuation. He is buried in Lancashire Landing Cemetery, which overlooks W Beach.



*Carl Schiller, National President AFA presenting a copy of the book to AIRCDRE Glen Braz*



*Norman Clifford explaining 'the theory of flight' to AIRCDRE Glen Braz.*

## The National President of the Air Force Association, Carl Schiller, OAM CSM Announces Advocacy Support for RAAF Fire fighters.

The President of the Air Force Association has announced that the AFA, working with DVA and the RAAF FIREFTR Group, will provide advocacy support in the form of case management to all ADF firefighters who believe they suffered exposure to toxic chemicals during their training and employment.

This tripartite relationship aims to ensure ADF firefighters will have their claims processed for all diagnosed health conditions so they can accurately be assessed for entitlements.

In the late 1990s, early deaths of former RAAF Firefighters who suffered unusual health conditions prompted investigations by concerned former members of the mustering. Soil testing at the Point Cook site revealed 132 toxic chemicals were present, which was a probable cause of the airmen's deteriorating health conditions.

At least nine formal investigations (six directed by DVA) into the relationship of the chemicals used and their health side effects have been conducted. However, at this point, there is no medical-scientific evidence of a correlation between these substances and the health conditions of these Firefighters.

The AFA recently became aware former Firefighters' claims for recognition of their health conditions based on their training and employment had been unsuccessful, and that some TIP trained Welfare and Compensation Officers were dissuading other former Firefighters from submitting claims because of previous unsuccessful attempts for recognition and acceptance.

The Association strongly encourages all ADF personnel (regardless of AFA membership) to register their interest in submitting a claim with Ted Mildren of the RAAF FIREFTR Group at [raafa.advocacy@gmail.com](mailto:raafa.advocacy@gmail.com).

The Air Force Association aims to ensure former and current serving members receive the best possible assistance in submitting claims for recognition of their Service related injuries and/or health conditions and navigating the DVA network and claims processes.

[You can read the full transcript of the Air Force Association's announcement on our website.](#)



## DVA Mefloquine Information Paper

### For the Information of Current and Former ADF Personnel

The Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) is aware there is concern among some current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members about the use of mefloquine in the ADF and potential health impacts.

DVA has developed an information paper on mefloquine to increase awareness of the information and support that is available, and how to access it.

The information paper is located the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au/mefloquine](http://www.dva.gov.au/mefloquine).

You can also visit the Defence Health web site for [more information about malaria, mefloquine and the ADF](#).



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**



# AFA Foundation Presents Annual Bursaries to Students

*By Chris Hudnott, President, Vietnam Veterans' Branch*

**At a special joint Air Force Association / RAAF Vietnam Veterans' Association ceremony earlier this year, young students were presented bursaries in support of their continuing academic studies and vocational training.**

In 2009, the Air Force Association Foundation, together with the RAAF Vietnam Veterans Association (Vic) and, the Vietnam and Associated Veterans Sub-Branch, instituted an annual bursary to provide financial assistance to direct relatives of Vietnam veterans. The qualifying criteria have recently been broadened to include children or grandchildren of Air Force members with operational service or three or more years of continuous service. The bursaries are granted to assist students in recognised educational or training courses.

The first AFA Foundation bursary was presented by Chairman of the RAAFA Foundation, John McCrystal to Madison, Jessica, Eva and Roman Bialobrzewski, watched proudly by their mum. The children and family were delighted with their Award which will be used for the purchase of school uniforms / text books and other educational costs.

Kaleb Elliott was the next bursary recipient, again presented by John McCrystal to both he and his mother. Kaleb's bursary will be used for school fees and music tuition.

Chris Hudnott, RAAF VVA President then presented two Lee & Ellen Scully Encouragement Awards to Aimee Reed for assistance with her final year of an Arts degree at Melbourne University, and to Jonathan Lynch to assist with the costs of text books and study material associated with a Masters of Teaching qualification at Deakin University.

The John 'Snow' Coughlan Encouragement Award was presented by Gill Coughlan, Snow's widow and Secretary of the RAAF VVA, to the four Bialobrezski children.

The Bursaries are presented at a joint AFA / RAAF VVA ceremony annually in February.

Are you interested in finding out more about the Air Force Association-Vietnam Veterans Bursary? Visit the [AFA Victoria website](#) or the [RAAF VVA website](#).



*Above: Gill Coughlan presents the John 'Snow' Coughlan Encouragement Award to Madison, Jessica, Eva and Roman Bialobrzewski and their proud mum*



*Above: John McCrystal presents Kaleb Elliot with Certificate and Bursary, watched by proud mum, current RAAF member, FLTSGT Emma Elliot.*



*Above: Chris Hudnott presents Jonathan Lynch with a Lee and Ellen Scully Encouragement Award*

## New AFA Victoria Website

***If you haven't yet visited our new website, now is the time to take a look...***

*Over the past few months, work on AFA Victoria's new website has been increasing and the amount and variety of information available on the site has grown.*

*Here is a little of what is available:*

*News stories on our front page*

*Latest and past editions of CONTACT (downloadable)*

*Branch updates and Newsletters*

**You can also view and [register for upcoming AFA Victoria events and functions](#) and [join the AFA](#).**

# AROUND THE BRANCHES

## ATC/AAFC BRANCH

Greetings everyone and with us heading into the colder weather, keep warm and may good health accompany you all through the next few months.

Our Branch's AGM was held at Box Hill RSL on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and it was no great surprise that the new Executive Positions for 2018-19 were filled by the following members:

President: Laurie Bell / Vice President: Peter Wilson / Secretary: Hugh Tank / Treasurer: Tony Synhur / Branch Delegate: John MacDonald.

Appointed positions filled were:

- Welfare Officers: Hugh Tank (Eastern Region) & Peter Wilson (Northern Region)
- Branch Newsletter Producer/Editor: Ian Cohn
- Branch Archives: Laurie Bell
- Returning Officer: Graeme Smith

Congratulations are in order for SQNLDR (AAFC) John Gibbs on his outstanding achievement of reaching 40 years of service with the ATC/AirTC/AAFC. Well done and best wishes for his continuing involvement with the AAFC.

The future of the past, free to the public performances of the Air Force Band at the Melbourne Town Hall seems to be in some doubt and if and when further information comes to hand regarding these, Branches will be notified.

Due to the continuing popularity of our 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month luncheons at Box Hill RSL and the continued poor attendances at the Branch's General Meetings (of which there are only 2 annually), the Committee will be conducting a survey of our membership with a view to dispensing with the General Meetings and only having an Annual General Meeting.

The adoption of this proposal will not affect, in any way, our Committee's regular, informal monthly meetings which we normally have on the first Fridays prior to going to lunch and members would be kept informed on matters of importance as usual via the Association's correspondence and our newsletters. Also unaffected will be our usual end of year Christmas Luncheon which is always a popular event.

Best wishes to all,

Laurie Bell, President

## BALLARAT BRANCH

Despite the lack of an Executive and therefore with limited powers of communication, the Branch is coping. Whilst the nominal roll is of about 40 members we are still managing to have about 24 attendees on average. Whilst some former regulars have dropped away, there has been an infusion of interested newcomers to replace them.

The Branch members are totally in support of retaining the title of the Royal Australian Air Force Association.

The new venue of the Lakers Football Club rooms has proved to be a great success, although the development of new basketball courts nearby has provided some varying challenges in access.

The meeting programme has provided significant interest with the guest at the Annual Meeting in February providing insight into the history of the Australian air League and also the Flight Training Academy at the Ballarat Airport.

The Woodwind Quintet of the Air Force Academy provided

magnificent entertainment in March at which we were also favoured by the presence of State and Federal President, Carl Schiller.

In April we learned how Ballarat

gained the title of Garden City from Lynette Powell who spoke of the development of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Later, we were involved in a visit to Bendigo for their Annual Meeting. Anzac Day was honoured on the preceding Sunday by a special Service at the Skipton Street Uniting Church where our Immediate Past President, Keith Lanyon, conducted the service and the Guest Speaker, Bruce Price OAM spoke of the development of the Arch of Victory and the Avenue of Honour.



*The old Officers' Mess at Ballarat airport – currently being redeveloped.*



On Anzac Day we were represented at the Dawn Service, the World War I service at the Arch of Victory, followed by the service at the Australian ex-Prisoners of War Memorial. and then the March and Service at the Cenotaph.

The May meeting featured a popular Trivia Quiz.

Finally, the redevelopment of the old Officer's Mess at the Ballarat Airport has commenced and will provide us with a permanent base for memorabilia, records and the Library. In conjunction with this development, research is

taking place to ascertain the aircrew who trained at the Wireless Air Gunners School and who subsequently perished, in order that they should be honoured by inscription on a memorial.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BALLARAT BRANCH?**

**VISIT OUR BRANCHPAGE ON THE AFA VICTORIA WEBSITE:**

<http://raafavic.org.au/content/769/branch-ballarat>

## BENDIGO BRANCH

On the 2nd March, 13 members travelled to Point Cook for the Meet-A-Mate gathering and what a wonderful time we had. The presentation by Hugh Dolan was so entertaining and informative. I actually tried to talk Hugh into coming to Bendigo, but his answer was NO.

On 11th March, approximately 14 members attended a Sandakan Memorial Service. Susan Moxham, whose father was one of the last surviving POW's of Sandakan. Susan was extremely interesting, speaking truthfully of her father's tormented mind after returning home. Of course, this was never recognised by the Repatriation Department until much later when it was of no use for any of these poor veterans or their families.

5th April - the Bendigo Branch celebrated the 97th Birthday of the RAAF. Air Commodore Jenny Lumsden was our guest speaker - topic RAAF nursing throughout the years. Jenny bought her 82 year old mother with her. Also in attendance was Max McGregor, the new State President & his wife Rosemary. This was their first official function.

Ballarat Branch President, Tom Roberts & his wife Penny were also our guests.

On 25th April, our branch was well represented at ANZAC services in and round Bendigo. Eaglehawk, Huntly, Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo saw members marching along with other services and cadet units.

Our May meeting was held at the Kangaroo Flat RSL premises. We were lucky enough to have the Air Force Band, Brass Quintet. What a wonderful recital. A number of our members have been travelling to Melbourne 3 times a year to be entertained by the Air Force Band, sadly there will be no Melbourne concerts this year, only at Sale. Bit far to go!! The Brass Quintet played music from WWI and WWII. There was a number of Glenn Miller songs. They really had me going.

VALE:- Maxwell John (Max) Trahair #118604 Radar passed away 9th March aged 93.

Keep warm & well.

Glenis Gordon, Bendigo Branch

## ENGINEER BRANCH

On Tuesday 10 April 2018 we held the regular bi-monthly committee meeting at the Mail Exchange Hotel in Bourke Street; our second meeting for this year with the main discussion points being presentation of the new updated web site and finalization of the midyear luncheon arrangements.

The annual midyear luncheon was held On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June in the rooms of the Batman's Hill on Collins Melbourne; our usual venue. The facility is centrally placed being opposite the Southern Cross railway station and is well serviced with transport links, amenities and services. This was also the first time we had the opportunity to try out our new updated office equipment which worked fine.

The luncheon MC was John Clarkson and the guest speaker was Mr David Gardner OAM Director of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook; Glen Gould and Noel Hadfield as usual, supported by other members, provided the essential "back room support".

David gave a very interesting and passionate presentation on the RAAF Museum and followed up with some updates on events planned for the future of the bases at Laverton and Point Cook all of which was very well received by the members.

Attendance for the luncheon was down slightly mainly due to a number of regular attendees having health issues needing attention but still we had some 35 total in attendance and the overall presentation and luncheon ran very well.

For the first time we had a video camera available with a tripod stand and with the assistance of Glen and Carol Gould, who turned camera operators for the event, the entire luncheon was captured on video and can be viewed via the link:

<https://www.reoa.org.au/gallery>

Enjoy.

## RAF BRANCH

Our UK contacts tell us that a range of activities are underway throughout the British Isles celebrating the formation of the RAF on 1 April 1918. We look forward to joining our AFA friends in celebrating their centenary in 2021.

At our Annual General Meeting on 1 March longstanding, tireless President/Chairman Ted Hayes OAM stood down from his role heading the branch.

The new appointee is Val Boyd, a retired senior nurse with a family association with the RAF stretching back to 1936 when her father joined the service. He retired at 55, worked for the MOD, then became very involved with RAFA in England. He served many years as treasurer with the Bridlington Branch. Val will be working hard to consolidate the role of the Branch under the Air Force Association umbrella.

In April a very enjoyable lunch was hosted at Moorabbin Airport by a group of ex-RAF members who first wore uniform at the age of 15 years as Boy Entrants. Many had travelled long distances to be present at this special gathering.

At the Branch Meeting in April, three speakers tracked the history of the RAF from the Royal Flying Corp during World War 1 through to recent times – Michael Tucker, Ian Bartholomew and Michael Boyd.

The May Meeting provided a unique opportunity to hear Jean Smith recount in remarkable detail her life as a member of the WAAF. Jean joined up in 1940 and served with bomber squadrons where, of course, she got to meet many young Australian air crews.

Our Veterans who marched on ANZAC Day looked really smart but had to endure chaotic marshalling before setting off. This was compounded by the puzzling order to march a six-abreast over multiple tram lines.

Upon conclusion of the march, a short dedication was held at the RAF plaque close to the shrine. Marchers and supporters caught up with each other for a light lunch at

the nearby Botanical Hotel.

Plans are now underway for two of this year's major RAFA events. First, a reception at Government House will be held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August to honour the Melbourne Branch members during the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of the RAF.

Second, the 'Battle of Britain' Luncheon on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September at the Sofitel Hotel in Collins Street, Melbourne. At \$50 a head it represents excellent value as it is significantly subsidised. The luncheon is open to all AFA members.



*Before the March (L-R): Charles Johnson, Michael White, Denis Whelan, Ian Bartholomew, Andrew Gilmour.*

A phone call to **Val Boyd** on **0428 174 070** now will ensure you receive a formal invitation in August. More details will follow closer to time.



*At the Shrine (L-R): Roger Rankcom, Sheila Rankcom, Vic Leigh, Val Boyd, David Leech-Hines, Ron Leggett, Ian Bartholomew.*

**WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE ROYAL  
AIR FORCES BRANCH?**

**VISIT OUR BRANCH PAGE ON THE AFA  
VICTORIA WEBSITE:**

<http://raafavic.org.au/content/759/branch-royal-air-force>



## Engineer Branch Continued from page 11

Our President Kingsley McRae reminded all about the benefits and opportunity to join the AFA Vic and encouraged all to do so who were not already members. Kingsley also reminded members about the 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.

Due to the impact of ageing as well as the changes in the location and structure of the engineering members in the current RAAF, attendees were asked what would best serve the members’ needs for the future and did they still wish to continue with the current format, ie, semi-formal luncheons with a guest speaker. The members were unanimous in their views to continue with the current format.

On another topic, many of us have spent time serving in Butterworth Malaysia and for those who were not aware, the week of 25 June 2018 was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence of the RAAF in Butterworth-how the time flies. I am sure there are many who having happy memories of their time serving in Malaysia or Malaya as it was known.

## 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 6 Aug

Monday 1 Oct

Monday 3 Dec

Mid year lunch at Batman's Hill on Collins 1200 Hrs

Wed 13 June-completed

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].

Noel Hadfield

Wing Commander (Ret)

E-mail: [nhadfield@optusnet.com.au](mailto:nhadfield@optusnet.com.au)

## VIETNAM VETERANS BRANCH

*By Geoff Rose, Vietnam Veterans' Branch*

**On ANZAC Day 2018, former WRAAF, Noela Rose decided she would march in support of the role of women in the Services. As her husband Geoff Rose explains, Noela got a little more more than she bargained for...**

One of the initiatives for the 2018 Anzac Day Commemoration March was to place “emphasis on the role of women in the Services”. This was achieved by offering current and ex-service women the opportunity to form ‘women only’ groups, to gain more public awareness and recognition as they marched proudly along St Kilda Rd on ANZAC Day.

Up until the early 1980s, separate women’s branches were a normal part of the Australian Defence Force – there was the Women’s Royal Australian Navy (WRAN), Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) and last, but not least, the Women’s Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF).

Air Force Vietnam Veterans Branch member Geoff Rose remembers in particular the experience of working professionally and mixing socially with the equally dedicated and service-minded members of the WRAAF. In fact, back in 1970, one particular ‘cute little WRAAFie’ caught his eye. Noela and Geoff became engaged and married in 1973.

On ANZAC Day this year, Noela woke up early and said cheerfully, “Seeing as it’s a special year for the women, I think I’ll go and march with the WRAAFs - my first time since leaving the Service”.



All dressed up, and well prepared for Melbourne’s changeable weather, she headed off purposely to the train station.

WRAAF form-up position was directly opposite Flinders St Station, so Noela immediately spotted the Girl Guide holding the appropriate board.

However, where were all the other expected participants?

0901: step-off time for Noela arrived and the WRAAF contingent proudly commenced its march down St Kilda Rd towards the Shrine.

It’s just as well Noela had turned up, otherwise there wouldn’t have been anyone there at all! As she said after the March, “At least I was always in step!”.

# PEOPLE & NETWORKING

## Meet A Mate – Air Force Trivia Quiz

On a cold wet Thursday, around 20 people caught up for AFA Victoria's regular Meet-A-Mate event at the AFA Victoria offices in Hawthorn.

Sadly, our planned guest speaker, veteran and ex-POW Jack Bell was unwell and unable to attend. However, instead we proceeded with an 'Air Force Trivia' afternoon, capably hosted by 'Grand Quizmaster' and our National AFA President, Carl Schiller.



L-R: AFA National President, Carl Schiller, Ron Tayles and AFA Victoria President Max McGregor

Four tables competed vigorously for the honour of being named quiz champions - to point where "hands up" was overtaken by calling out answers – a practice quickly discouraged by the Quizmaster.

After a few curly questions, debate and laughter, Table 3 of Clive Carmichael, Ron Tayles, Peter Colliver, Valentine Smith and Belinda Smith were declared champions. Followed by a light lunch.



Winners are gridders! (L-R): Clive Carmichael, Ron Tayles, Peter Colliver, Val Smith, Belinda Smith



L-R: Bob Woods, Noel Hutchins, Tom Roberts, Penny Roberts

*Footnote: Jack bell is recovering well from his accident and is very keen to come along to a future Meet-A-Mate event*

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Save The Date: Annual AFC Pilgrimage, Sunday 4 November 2018

**This year's Annual Pilgrimage to the AFC Memorial Point Cook will take the form of a WWI Armistice Commemoration.**

This year AFA Victoria will hold a signature commemoration in recognition and commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice.

Following a reception, there will be an Armistice 'timeline' to experience, followed by a torchlight service which will commence just prior to sunset to signify the ceasing of hostilities in 1918.

Please mark your diaries and stay tuned for further details on what will be a poignant and memorable commemorative event.







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 Burnie Rymer	ATC/AAFC Branch	25/02/2018
Mr Max Trahair	Bendigo	09/03/2018
Mr Bernard Pola	21 Squadron Branch	18/04/2018
Mrs Mavis Doherty	WAAAF Branch	29/05/2018
Mr Stanley Moss	Vietnam Veterans Branch	20/05/2018

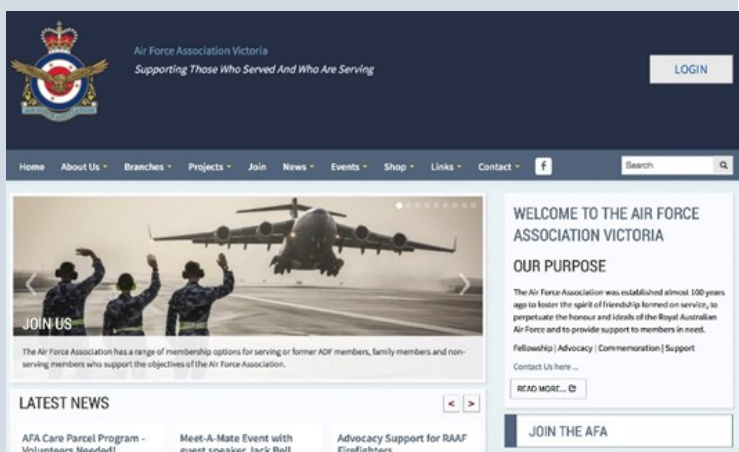
## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### STOP PRESS

#### *What's Coming?*

We are currently building our new Members' section and once this is completed, members will be able to login, view and update their details, receive special member announcements, among other tools. Stay tuned for further information once it's ready to go.

For further queries, please contact our AFA Victoria office at [office@afavic.org.au](mailto:office@afavic.org.au)



### 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](mailto:office@raafavic.org.au). Thank you.



## AFA

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Max McGregor : State President

Darrell Robinson : Executive Board Secretary

Carl Schiller OAM CSM : Past President

John Sedunary : Vice-President

Daryll Topp : Vice-President

Peter Colliver : Chairman Welfare Patriotic Fund &  
National Secretary

John McCrystal : Chairman RAAFA Foundation

Directors : Di Hoopert; Chris Hudnott;  
Tony Pilli

Peter Finkelstein : Honorary Solicitor

### BRANCH CONTACTS

**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)

**Engineer** 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** Val Boyd (0417512177)

**Sunderland Squadrons** Ricky Hattam (52413431)

**Williams** Contact RAAFA (98134600)



**AFA 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

#### Winter 2018

**Contributions close 30 May 2018**

**Publication June 17 2018**

#### SPRING 2018

**Contributions close 29 August 2018**

**Publication September 16 2018**

#### SUMMER 2018

**Contributions close 7 November 2018**

**Publication 25 November 2018**

#### Autumn 2019

**Contributions close 28 February 2019**

**Publication March 11 2019**