

## President's Report

Dear Colleagues

I am pleased to advise the Division's membership has reached 800, and I expect by early 2018 it will achieve 900. The B24 Liberator Branch will be established in mid-July. B24 Liberator Restoration Australia is anxious to become more closely engaged with the Air Force Association and the serving Air Force community following the very successful 'Meet a Mate' event at the B24 Hangar in Werribee. Incidentally, some of our aircraft weapon aficionados or anyone else who likes to hear and see things that go 'bang' may be interested in attending a Browning 50 calibre demonstration fire at the Little River Firing Range to be held later in the year. I've yet to weave this opportunity into our events program but I'll let you know when more details become available.

I recently presented long-standing membership certificates and I was particularly pleased to present 70-year membership certificates to Ian Clark, Stan White and Roy Bett. I am scheduled to present a 70-year certificate to Jack Fay at Bendigo in July. I am sure you would all applaud this level of membership commitment. I was stunned to learn Roy Bett drove solo from Hamilton to Ballarat to receive his certificate.

Tony Pilli, Director History & Heritage, accompanied me on a recent Branch visit to Ballarat when we were provided a tour of the heritage listed buildings that comprised the former RAAF's Wireless Air Gunners School at the local airfield. It appears the branch will have a permanent home in the former Officers' Mess after renovations have been completed. There'll be no excuse for not doubling the branch membership when this occurs.

I am expecting our new website to be operational in July but don't tie me to a date just yet. You can expect improved communication between members and the Division, online subscription payment, online ability to amend your membership details, opportunity to identify and contact other Association members (privacy guards installed), online ability to record your attendance at functions, etc. We'll be asking you to update your details when the system is operational.

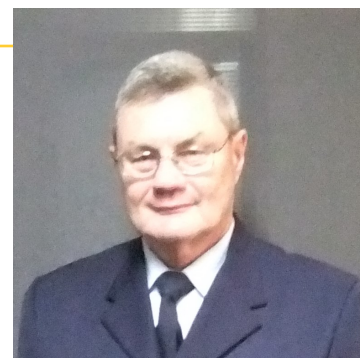
June is the month when the Division, on behalf of the Air Force Association National Council, assembles care parcels to be dispatched to Air Force deployed personnel. This program has been widely acclaimed as a morale enhancing initiative and I am very proud the Division was not only the originator of the program but continues to do the 'heavy lifting' and funding (hopefully we'll identify a corporate sponsor).

The Division arranged for the manufacture of the 1<sup>st</sup> Training Wing AFC Memorial Plaque to be presented to the Tetbury, UK community on Remembrance Day 2017. This was a Division initiative that was supported and funded by the National Council. You will recall the Division organised a memorial service at the AFC Memorial Point Cook in November last year. This year, at our Annual Pilgrimage to the memorial, we will unveil a bronze plaque that records the existence of the two scrolls containing the names of AFC and RAAF airmen and airwomen who have lost their lives on operational service.

Watch our website for the mid-year function details at which I am very much looking forward to catching up with as many of you who can attend.

God Bless

Carl Schiller



Volume 72, Issue 2

**WINTER 2017**

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Editor T.A Pilli

## Around the Branches

### Bendigo Branch

Hello there again,

On 18th March 14 of our members travelled to Lake Boga for the 75th Anniversary of No.1 Boat Repair Depot. It was a wonderful day, sunny weather with just a cool breeze. The event which had been organised by Lake Boga Lions Club was extremely well done. There was a huge selection of food & drinks available. There was only one disappointment, the Catalina didn't fly in from Sydney because the weather was so wet that it couldn't get off the ground. Bet you're thinking just what everyone was saying. So the high light of the day was the Roulettes who flew low in over the water, performing their tricks. SO GOOD.

On 6th April, Bendigo Branch celebrated the RAAF birthday with a luncheon. We were very pleased that Carl Schiller and his wife Christine were able to attend. Had a delicious lunch followed by our usual swindle, great fun.

Our executive members were extremely busy with ANZAC functions. President, Roy together with wife Judy attended the ANZAC Church parade at St. Patrick's Cathedral which they both enjoyed.

Peter Simmons & I received invitations to the State Premier's Anzac luncheon, food exceptional, glorious surroundings, and an amazing guest speaker, Corporal Daniel Keighran VC, What an amazing young man.

ANZAC Day saw our top brass doing the rounds of Huntly, Kangaroo Flat & Bendigo to represent our branch and lay wreaths at their Commemorative Services.

On 16th May 10 of our members travelled to Werribee for the 'Meet-a-Mate' fellowship event. All of those attending reported back that they had had a terrific time, especially the lovely food and drinks. Sadly I was unable to attend but live in hope of another one very soon.

Last Sunday 8 of us made the long train trip to Melbourne to hear the Air Force Band concert. How fantastic

they are! Makes me feel so proud, especially watching the crowd that stopped to listen to the drum corp playing on the corner of Swanston & Collins Streets. We can't wait until the next concert in July.

Our four welfare guys attended an information session at the CVVSC centre in Bendigo to learn about the changes that are being made to the Training Structure. I'm sure they walked away with their brains so full of information that they were wondering what the heck they would do!!

Just went through our membership list this morning and found that we have 15 members who are in their nineties. How wonderful is that?

That's all for this time,

Glenis Gordon, Secretary RAAF Association Bendigo

### ATC/AAFC Branch.

Hello to all members,

We open this report with our Branch's heartiest congratulations to two of our members who were recognised for their community service work this year:

(1) Don Bergman OAM was recognised for his conspicuous community service over many years.

and:-

(2) Jan Williams (wife of member Doug Williams) who was nominated as a "Local Hero" for her community work at the Australia Day function up at Baddaginnie in country Victoria.

Several of our members made the trip to Benalla on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March for the Dedication of the Australian Flying Corps Memorial which is situated in the Rose Garden area.

Key Note speaker was A.F.A. President Carl Schiller who addressed the gathering with the well informed beginnings of the A.F.C. and its subsequent history in Service during WW1.

Following the Service we retired to the Benalla R.S.L. where the ladies had prepared a nice light afternoon tea.

Congratulations to our member Doug Williams who organised the design and construction of the memorial and the Service. It must have been gratifying for him to finally see all of his hard work come to fruition after it being such a lengthy project.

The memorial is well worth a visit for anyone who may be passing by the Benalla Gardens at some time in their future travels.

Our Branch's A.G.M. was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April and there were no real surprises when it came to the Election of Office Bearers for 2017-2018.

There were only single nominations for each of the positions open and we thank Graeme Smith, our appointed Returning Officer for his assistance in receiving the nominations which are as follows:-

President: Laurie Bell Vice President: Peter Wilson .Secretary: Hugh Tank Treasurer: Tony Synhur .Delegate:

John MacDonald

AAFC Branch Liaison Officer:

WGCDR (AAFC) Shaun Young

Appointed Positions

Welfare Officers: Hugh Tank & Peter

Wilson. Newsletter Editor/Producer:

Ian Cohn. Archives: Laurie

Bell Returning Officer: Graeme Smith

I was both surprised and pleased to receive, on behalf of the Branch, the Fred Cowell Trophy for 2017 at the Air Force Association's AGM and State Conference held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May.



The trophy was presented by Fred's daughter, Frances Lester who, when asked later in the day, supplied me with the following brief on her father's Air Force career:-

FLTLT Fred (Alfred) M. Cowell joined the R.A.F. in the U.K. and served in Palestine and Egypt before

coming to Australia in the early 1920s and afterwards joining the R.A.A.F. as a carpenter / motor body builder.

The 4 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets' Annual Drill Parade was held at Point Cook's Memorial Parade Ground on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. The Reviewing Officer was A.F.A. Vic. President, GPCAPT Carl Schiller OAM. CSM Retd.

Congratulations to WGCDR (AAFC) Shaun Young, O.C. of 4WG, his staff and all of the cadets on a parade of which they can be justifiably proud.

Results and awards are as follows:-

Congratulations to the following Cadets, Staff and SQN Teams

1<sup>st</sup> Drill competition 401SQN Surrey Hills.

2<sup>nd</sup> Drill competition 402SQN Watsonia.

Best Cadet in charge of a drill team CCPL Eloise Lee 401SQN Surrey Hills.

Most Proficient Cadet in Aerial Activities LCDT Trent Buckner 405SQN Sunshine.

4 Wing Cadet of the Year 2017 is CWOFF Sam Chu 401SQN Surrey Hills.

Most Efficient Squadron in Cadet Activities 405SQN Sunshine.

1<sup>st</sup> Aviation – 401SQN Surrey Hills.

2<sup>nd</sup> Aviation – 406SQN Frankston.

1<sup>st</sup> Fieldcraft – 415SQN South Yarra.

2<sup>nd</sup> Fieldcraft – 403SQN Beaconsfield.

CCPL Nathan Martina 430 SQN Kyneton was awarded his Cadet Pilot Wings having qualified for his Recreational Pilots Licence.

CUO Dale Perkins 429 SQN Queenscliff was awarded his Cadet Pilot Wings having qualified as a "C" Certificate Glider Pilot.

The following cadets who have achieved first solo either in Powered or Glider flying received their First Solo Brevet;

CSGT Brett McBain 402 SQN Watsonia

CFSGT Jamie Lowden 403 SQN Beaconsfield

CCPL Edward Healy 403 SQN Beaconsfield

LCDT Trent Buckner 405 SQN Sunshine

CSGT Kyle Du Plessis 406 SQN

Frankston

LCDT Laura Roberts 412 SQN Albury  
CWOFF Simon Dale 425 SQN Ballarat  
Australian Honours and Awards - Staff  
The 2nd Clasp to the Australian Cadet Forces Service Medal for 25 years dedicated service was presented to FLTLT (AAFC) Danny Salmon OAM from 412SQN and HQ 4WG.

The Australian Cadet Forces Service Medal for 15 years dedicated service was presented to FLTLT (AAFC) Luke Meilak the Flight Commander of 4 Logistics Flight.

The Australian Cadet Forces Service Medal for 15 years dedicated service was presented to FSGT (AAFC) Viatcheslav (Vlad) Boiko from 404 SQN Point Cook.

The Air Commodore A. J. Pappin CVO AM - 4 Wing AAFC Patrons Award for selflessness and sustained effort to the benefit of our cadets was presented to;

SQNLDR (AAFC) John Gibbs HQ 4 Wing; and FLTLT (AAFC) Danny Salmon OAM HQ 4 Wing and 412SQN.

Officer Commanding Commendation to FLGOFF (AAFC) Sarah Gulam – 407/416SQN.

Regards to all members until next time,  
Laurie Bell

## **Engineers Branch**

Becoming part of the regular scene at the RMIT Alumni luncheon gatherings, the Air Force Engineer Branch, on March 6, once again filled two tables at the William Angliss Restaurant. RMIT is of course familiar with the majority of the Branch members, and the Alumni gatherings reinforce fond memories of those distant academic days. For those not familiar with the William Angliss, these Alumni luncheons are catered by the enrolled Catering School students, and is part of their training. The quality and service are of a very high standard, as is the general silver service décor. To celebrate RMIT's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary an Alumni Luncheon was held on Tuesday June 6, but this time at Storey Hall, hosted by the Vice-Chancellor Martin Bean CBE. The next Alumni Luncheon at

the William Angliss will be Monday December 4, and the cost, yet to be advised, will be around \$40, including table wines – highly recommended!

Of particular interest to our Engineer Branch, is a proposal to have as the Speaker at a future Alumni Luncheon, one of our own Air Force Engineer colleagues. This will be something of a departure from the normal Alumni practice of having a Speaker from, or very close to, the RMIT staff. This will further reinforce the links between ourselves and our *Alma Mater*, providing for interesting times ahead.

At our April 6 Committee Meeting – again for lunch, this time at the Batman on Collins, planning for the Branch June 14 Luncheon progressed to completion, and was held at the Batman on Collins. Speaker David Graham delivered a most fascinating address about aircraft structural integrity, and his role in DSTO in close liaison with the RAAF here and overseas.

## **The 9 November Luncheon:**

For planning purposes the committee also ratified that the end of year luncheon will be held on November 9 with the intended topic to be a presentation on the new F35 strike fighter which we are sure, given the controversies surrounding the F35, will be of immense interest to all attending. - The F35 has three main models: the F-35A conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) variant, the F-35B short take-off and vertical-landing (STOVL) variant, and the F-35C carrier-based Catapult Assisted Take-Off Barrier Arrested Recovery (CATOBAR) variant. One way to remember which is which, think of: "A" is for Air Force, "B" is for Beach, ie the US Marines, and "C" for Carrier.

Any enquiries about the Branch's activities and future plans, including the 9 November Luncheon may be directed to President Kingsley McCrae at [kingsleymcrae@yahoo.com](mailto:kingsleymcrae@yahoo.com) – also anyone wishing to attend a Committee meeting are always welcome to see at least how much we enjoy these gatherings.

Kingsley McCrae

Representative



# Our Patron

The late Peter Isaacson AM DFC AFC DFM

*The following is a retrospective of the man that for many years fulfilled the task of being our Patron . The roll that will be difficult to fill as the likes of Peter Isaacson don't grow on trees.*

*The late Peter Isaacson grew up in Melbourne and started working for a newspaper when he was sixteen. He joined the RAAF in 1940. Following his stint in Bomber Command, he became well known in Australia for his tours in the Avro Lancaster Q-for-Queenie to promote the sale of war loans and, in particular, for flying his plane under the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1943.*

*He transferred to the RAAF Reserve after the war, retiring as a wing commander in 1969.*

*Since 1956 he has served as a Trustee, Chairman, and finally Life Governor of the Victorian Shrine of Remembrance. In 1991 he*

*was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his publishing and community work.*

On 8 December 1940, nineteen-year-old Peter Isaacson enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and after completing his training in Australia and Canada, he was posted to the United Kingdom. There he joined No. 460 Squadron RAAF at RAAF Breighton, Yorkshire, as a Sergeant Pilot. Operating Wellington medium bombers, No. 460 Squadron was one of a number of Australian squadrons taking part in Bomber Command's strategic air campaign against Germany. The squadron commenced operations in March 1942 and participated in 1,000-bomber raids against Cologne, Essen and Bremen in May and June. It converted to Avro Lancaster heavy bombers in October.

Peter Isaacson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal on 6 November 1942 for "many successful night attacks on the enemy" with No. 460 Squadron. The following month his Lancaster was damaged by a Junkers Ju 88 night fighter after a raid on Munich.

Commissioned as a Pilot Officer, Isaacson was subsequently posted to No. 156 Squadron RAF of the Pathfinder Force,

based at RAF Warboys, Huntingdonshire. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 30 March 1943 for his

actions during a raid on Berlin. His citation, promulgated in the London Gazette, read: "One night in March 1943, this officer was detailed for an attack on Berlin. Following the attack and while still over the target area, his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and severely damaged. The mid-upper turret frame was twisted, the perspex and 2 engine cowlings blown off, the aileron controls damaged and the aircraft forced down to 4,000 feet. On the return journey the aircraft was driven off the

route and held in a cone of searchlights for 15 minutes; during this time a further loss of height down to 900 feet occurred. In the face of this perilous situation Pilot Officer Isaacson, showing coolness, resolution and skilful airmanship, succeeded in flying his aircraft back to base. This officer is an outstanding captain of aircraft who has a fine record of many successful operational sorties."

Peter completed forty-five sorties with Bomber Command, when the likelihood of surviving an operational tour of thirty missions was never more than 50% and, at times, much less. Promoted to acting Flight Lieutenant, he was chosen in May 1943 to captain Lancaster **Q-for-Queenie** on a landmark flight from England to Australia across the Pacific Ocean, and then from Melbourne to New Zealand and back – non-stop in both directions. He was awarded the Air Force Cross for this mission. The citation noted that it was "the first occasion on which an aircraft has flown to Australia by this route and the direct flights between Melbourne and New Zealand are the first of their kind."

On 22 October 1943, Peter flew Q-for-Queenie under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, flouting a 1931 regulation that



prohibited such activity! The Lancaster remains the largest aircraft to have been flown under the bridge. Isaacson gave his crew no warning of what he was about to do and when asked later why he did it, replied "Because it was there". It was, however, reported at the time that he undertook the stunt to support the war loan effort for which he and his crew were actively fundraising.

Notwithstanding the publicity the escapade generated for war loans, Isaacson recalled that when he landed at Mascot afterwards: *"I was threatened with a court martial. Two authorities wanted to court martial me: Eastern Area in which the crime was committed and Southern Command to which I was attached at the time. I was told later there was a great fight among the bureaucrats of each of these commands as to which would court martial me. Apparently they could not agree on which should be the prosecutor and the idea either lapsed – or maybe is still being pursued by the successors to each of these commands!"*

In December 1943, following his promotional tour with his crew in Q-for-Queenie, he settled down to instructional work at an operational training unit before undertaking a further tour in the Lancaster commencing in March 1944.

His wartime commission was terminated on 21 February 1946 and he transferred to the RAAF Reserve.

Peter was State Commandant of the Victorian Squadron of the Air Training Corps from 1950, and Commandant of No. 21 (City of Melbourne) Squadron from 1961, before retiring in 1969 with the rank of Wing Commander.

He also served as an honorary aide-de-camp to Queen Elizabeth II from 1963 to 1965.

#### **Post-war career**

Peter Isaacson stood as the Liberal candidate for Prahran in the November 1945 Victorian state election, but was defeated.

After working as the aviation correspondent for The Argus in Melbourne, Peter set up his first newspaper, the Advertiser, in 1947. He also established Peter

Isaacson Publications the same year. Peter went to enjoy a very successful career in media and publishing both as an editor and as a proprietor. On 10 June 1991, Isaacson was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia "for services to the print media and the community".

In May 2012, Peter was among a group of thirty-two veterans selected to attend the dedication of the RAF Bomber Command Memorial in London as part of the official Australian delegation. Peter Isaacson is a Life Governor of the Victorian Shrine of Remembrance, having previously served as a Trustee from 1956 to 2000, and Chairman from 1983 to 2000. He and his wife live in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak.

*Recently the Air Force Association has been gifted an image that had been commissioned by the family to commemorate the epic deed (Harbour bridge). Unfortunately Peter passed away before seeing the art work. In keeping with the fondness that existed between Peter and the Association the family has gifted the image to the association. It will be suitably mounted in the VC auditorium.*

#### **Royal Air Force Branch**

The Royal Air Force Branch attended two functions during May. The first of these was the AGM which was attended by the President and the Secretary. This was a very constructive meeting and was most useful for a newly constituted branch. We are looking forward to the proposed improvement of the web site and the discussion regarding welfare procedure to be addressed in July.

The second event was the "Meet a Mate" Werribee Liberator site visit. This ongoing restoration project is very impressive and the team of volunteers is to be congratulated on the job that they are doing. The aircraft is taking shape and though unfamiliar to most RAF personnel, since only a few Liberators were in use in WWII, shows the how workmanlike the design was. The re-assembly from parts from a number of sources pays tribute to the crews and the workers taking part in the rebirth of this majestic airplane. It was impressive to see the test run of an original Pratt and Whitney 18 cylinder radial, four of which produced an impressive performance of 290 mph with a service ceiling of 30,000 ft. The Liberator was used by the RAF and the USAAF in anti submarine patrols in the Atlantic and support of the Normandy landings. The morning tea was excellent and it was clear that everyone had a very enjoyable visit.

"Ted

## 2017 Air Force Association AGM—Presentation of Awards and Service Certificates



Carl Schiller presenting the Life Member Certificate to Bill Belton AM on left. Bill sighting his name been added to the Life Members Honour Board



From left to right : Allan White., Peter Wilson., John MacDonald on receipt of there 15 year, certificates



Don Bergman receipt of his 15 year, certificate



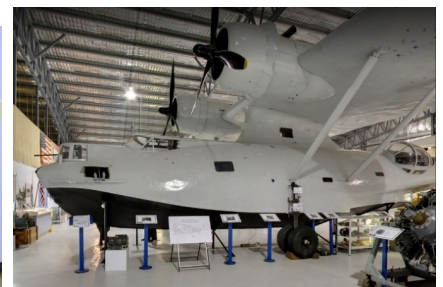
Gloria Welch Receiving her 35 year Certificate



Ian Clark receiving his 70 certificate

## CATALINA BRANCH

The weekend of March 17 - 19 saw the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Lake Boga No 1 Flying Boat Repair Depot (1941 - 1947). Member Jennifer Newton attended and presented this report.



*Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum with a static display of Catalina A24-30 inside.*

The event was conducted most admirably by the Lions Club of Lake Boga who have proudly taken this entire project as their responsibility. They are to be congratulated for their continued resolve towards creating what is now a complete visitor experience in their area, and to be highly recommended. It was a fully involved community event, with multiple food stalls provided by amongst others the local school, Rotary and CFA. Many other organisations were proudly representing their projects.

It was most unfortunate that the weather in the NSW area precluded the departure of our only flying Catalina to arrive at the event. The flying program for the day included a visit by the PC-3 Orion from Edinburgh SA, the Roulettes who did an amazing aerobatics display, a T-28 Trojan Grumman Avenger, Wolf Pitts and a local aerobatic display from a group of 3 Pitts specials, which was spectacular. Local boating groups also provided



displays on the water of speed, speed skiing and air chairs. The official programme included an address by Air Vice Marshall Davies and presentations by WW2 Ex-Servicemen. Entertainment was provided by the Pacific Belles (singing and dressed as WW2 wartime entertainers), and others (whom I did not see).

The evening programme at the Dinner was a theatre restaurant featuring "FLAK" by Michael Veitch. He portrayed a small collection of stories from interviews of WW2 veterans which he had conducted; including their accents in his presentation. There was hardly a dry eye in the audience! Amazingly, one story he told included one veteran who was present in the audience.

The highlight for me was meeting our Veteran Member Keith Farrell LAC, who had been taken there from Tasmania by his family. He informed me that not only was he one of our two members from Tasmania; but he was the only Indigenous Member of **all** the Catalina service.

In 2015 Mr Farrell was recognised for his Cultural Heritage together with his Service to Australia with a presentation by the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison in Canberra. The medallion shows the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags flying under the Rising Sun of the Defence Force.

ANZAC Day, although wet for the most part, cleared for our Catalina Branch Veterans, members, family and friends to march from Flinders Street to the Shrine. This year RAAFA managed the allocation, carrying and return of the banners. Step off was led by our Patron, Group Captain Annette Holian and our President Mr Ken Scott. Two Air Cadets presented the Catalina



banner followed by our party of students from Wesley College St Kilda Road Campus accompanied by Mr Rohan Chiu. It is pleasing to report that this year all our Veterans were allocated vehicles and that the convoy travelled with us to the Shrine. Veteran Mr Allan Arvidson, together with Wesley students Charlotte Howard and Christopher Rigopoulos laid a Wreath on the plaques at the Catalina Tree.

#### Diary Dates for 2017:

Sunday 27 August 2:00 pm – Wreath Laying & Pilgrimage at the Shrine.

Friday 6 October 10:30 am – Branch Get Together at RAAFA Camberwell Road

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

Thursday 23 November 12 noon – Christmas Lunch at ANZAC House Melbourne.

Ron Kirk Catalina Branch Secretary



## VALES

*The following members have passed away since the last publication.*

*May they rest in peace.*

*Lest we forget*

Mr John Wardlaw	Headquarters	12/03/2017
Miss Lois Dalziel	WAAAF Branch	26/03/2017
Mrs Margot Helder	2 Squadron Branch	30/03/2017
Mr Norman Pinney	Ballarat Branch	06/04/2017
Mr Peter Isaacson AM DFC AFC DFM		
	Headquarters	07/04/2017
Mr Lee Scully	Viet Vets Branch	20/04/2017
Mr Bill Woodburn	2 Squadron Branch	24/04/2017
Mr Robert (Bob) Buchanan	2 Squadron Branch	23/05/21017
Mrs Moyna Sands	Headquarters	30 /05/2017

## CONTACT EDITORIAL AND DISTRIBUTION DATES

### SPRING 2017

**Contributions close 29 August 2017**

**Publication September 16 2017**

### SUMMER 2017

**Contributions close 7 November 2017**

**Publication 25 November 2017**

### Autumn 2018

**Contributions close 28 February 2018**

**Publication March 11 2018**

### Winter 2018

**Contributions close 30 May 2018**

**Publication June 17 2018**

## REQUEST FOR HELP

I am a volunteer at the Air Museum, (at the Moorabbin Airport) specifically working in the Archives. We are desperate for more volunteers as there is a massive amount of stuff to be sorted out! Given the amount of technical data, people with a background in aviation would be perfect.

We meet on a Wednesday about 12 pm and have some lunch together and then get started, finishing at 4 pm.

Look forward to hearing from you. You can call me on 9584 8275 if you wish to discuss over the phone.

Thanks & regards, Colleen Reddin.

## VIETNAM VETERANS BRANCH

The past few months since our AGM seemed to have passed in a blur. However, your committee has been busy assisting where possible with the recent Air show, attending briefings for ANZAC Day and those who watched the ANZAC Day march would have heard the dulcet tones of our President assisting with commentary for the ABC TV coverage of the ANZAC Day Commemorative March.

We recommenced our luncheons at the Mail Exchange Hotel in March, enjoying a lovely meal and great camaraderie. It would be nice to see a few more come along on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month 12.30 for a 13.00 sit down – if possible letting the secretary know by the Monday of that week of your attendance.

It was great to see a good roll up on ANZAC Day for the March. It was unfortunately a little damp around the edges, but one of our members set a new standard for comfort and style during the March and took advantage of free transportation offered by the RACV. He was picked up from home and travelled along with the other Vets behind our banner in his vehicle not bothered at all by the rain showers. He has already put his hand up for a ride next year and maybe he will have some company in 2018!!

As has been our practice for some years, after the March most participants adjourned for lunch at the nearby restaurant where, judging by the noise, everyone had a good time. This was also the first year for our conduct of a raffle which was very well received – particularly for the winner!

As most of you will be aware by now, there was someone missing from our group on ANZAC Day and that was our Past President Lee Scully who had been on the trip of a lifetime, riding a motor bike down Route 66 in the USA where he sadly had an accident and died at the scene. He will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his family and friends at this time. There is to be a memorial service for Lee in Sydney on 18<sup>th</sup> June and President Chris and long time friend Alan White will represent our Branch at this service. “LEST WE FORGET”.

### ATA GIRL FLIES HER BELOVED

#### SPITFIRE AGAIN by Carl Schiller

Warlike and non-warlike operations highlight some extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. Mary Ellis is one of those, not just because she has just celebrated her 100th birthday but because she was a WWII First Officer flying with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) who single-handedly delivered 76 types of combat aircraft to the front line. They included about 400 Spitfires and other aircraft as large as Wellington bombers.



The ATA delivered 308,568 aircraft of which Mary's total was about 1,000. One in 10 ATA pilots did not survive, including 14 women.

Mary is one of last surviving ATA pilots but her age has not dimmed her passion for flying. To celebrate her 100th birthday she co-piloted a twin-seater Spitfire and flew alongside one of the Spitfires she ferried during the war. She needs no spectacles nor walking stick. We should be very thankful such people are born.



### RAAF ASSOCIATION VICTORIAN DIVISION

#### PATRON

Wing Commander **P. S. Isaacson** AM DFC AFC DFM

#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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

Darrell Robinson: Executive Board Secretary

R.J (Bob) Brackin : Immediate Past President

D (Darryl) Topp and M (Max) McGregor Vice-Presidents

P.W. ( Peter) Colliver Chairman Welfare Patriotic Fund & National Secretary

J. (John) McCrystal : Chairman RAAFA Foundation

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

P. (Peter) Finkelstein: Honorary Solicitor

#### BRANCH SECRETARIES

**Catalina** Ronald Kirk (98193527); **ATC/AAFC** Hugh Tank (98773424);

**Ballarat** Tom Jobling (53331653); **Bendigo** Glenis Gordon (54369293);

**Fighter Squadrons** Bill Taylor (98486778); **Engineers** Kingsley Porter

0411 803500, **21 Squadron** Mike Dance 5776 2106;

**RAF** Ted Hayes 9841 8553; **Melbourne WAAAF** Jessie Reed (98029073);

**North Metropolitan** Elayne Whatman (93021048); **Vietnam Veterans**

Gill Coughlan gilly4346@gmail.com ; **Sunderland Squadrons** Ricky Hattam (52413431); **2 Squadron** Walter Sherman 5282 8315.