



FLYBY

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Patron: RADM N. Ralph AO,
DSC, RAN Ret'd

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Above. A Hawker Sea Fury comes to grief aboard HMAS Sydney. Barrier landings, such as this one, were fairly common if the aircraft 'floated' over the wires or caught a late one. The lack of a visible airframe number on this aircraft makes it difficult to be absolutely certain, but the side number (103) suggests it was probably VW624, which was damaged when LEUT Brown caught No. 10 wire on 16 Jul 51. The aircraft was repaired but had an interesting year in 1953 when LEUT Knapstein made a successful glide approach following an engine failure (apparently to HMAS Sydney's flight deck), before it suffered another barrier arrest aboard HMAS Vengeance later that year. Side numbers were not aligned to a particular aircraft: '103K' had previously been allocated to VW646 which was destroyed when LCDR Bowles jumped out of it following an engine fire in 1950, and then to WE674 and VX728 which were both shot down in Korea in '51. One would think that superstition would dictate a different number be allocated to successive aircraft in cases such as this! ✈

HAWKER SEA HAWKS ON SYDNEY?

In the last edition we reported on an excerpt in a book by Francis K. Mason, circa 1966, which claimed that **Hawker Sea Hawks** were operated from the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney. We thought this was incorrect and asked for any views from our readers.

We didn't get any responses, but here's our take on the report.

HMAS Sydney was our first through-deck aircraft carrier and was unmodified from her original design of the mid 1940s, with a straight Flight Deck (rather than an angled one) and a hydraulic catapult rather than steam. She was designed to operate the aircraft of the time, which were of the propeller driven Sea Fury/Firefly types. There is no record that she ever operated jet powered aircraft such as the Sea Hawk.

Mr. Mason may have been confused by the fact that HMAS

Melbourne, which was extensively modified during her construction, did operate Sea Hawks during her Flight Trials off Portsmouth in 1955 (see photo below). These were RN aircraft (the RAN never bought the Hawker Sea Hawk) and a total of 35 landings and take-offs were achieved, including one where the ship was making stern way in 20 knots of natural wind to achieve a relative wind of 15 knots. I doubt there would be many instances where aircraft landed on whist the ship was steaming backwards!



Melbourne, to our knowledge, never operated Sea Hawks again nor can we find any reference to her delivering them as cargo, which makes the following photograph intriguing:



On first impression it looks like a cocooned Sea Hawk ready to be loaded aboard *Melbourne*. Our resident historian Kim Dunstan suggests that there may be other explanations, however. We'd be very interested to hear if any reader who served aboard *Melbourne* who might remember anything about Sea Hawks, either aboard or alongside on the dock, and what the circumstances were. ✪

Report on USMC Osprey Crash off QLD

By Shawn Snow – Marine Corps Times

Nine minutes is all it took for the MV-22 with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron, or VMM-265, to completely submerge in the ocean after striking the starboard side of the amphibious transport dock Green Bay during a training exercise in August 2017, leaving its passengers scrambling to exit an aircraft rapidly filling with water and bombarded by shifting unsecured equipment and pelican cases.

Unused breathing apparatuses, Marines unable to get out of

restraints, unsecured equipment, unused life preservers: this was the scene highlighted in the recently completed investigation of a tragic Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey crash that occurred Aug. 5, 2017, off the coast of Queensland, Australia, killing three.



An MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft prepares to land aboard the *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) June 10, 2017. (Lance Cpl. Amy Phan/Marines)

The investigation found that as the aircraft plunged into the water, Marines needed assistance removing aircrew endurance vest restraint systems, which harnessed them to the sinking Osprey.

On top of that, eight of the passengers hadn't even restrained themselves in the seat before the crash. Those passengers, along with a pile of unsecured gear, were flung forward, creating added obstacles for others while attempting to escape.

Some passengers had failed to properly inflate their life preservers.

Three Marines lost their lives. Twenty-three others onboard were eventually plucked from the water by a massive search and rescue mission that included Australian divers and U.S. search and rescue assets.

When divers finally reached the Osprey two days later, 180 feet at the bottom of the ocean, they found one passenger still attached to the aircraft near the cabin door. Dive and salvage operations spanned from Aug. 7-25, 2017.

Most of the passengers, members of Golf Battery with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, were ill-trained and unprepared for the events that unfolded that day.

Nearly all of Golf Battery's personnel were considered 'infrequent flyers,' an ambiguous term used to designate whether Marines need to complete helicopter emergency egress training like the helicopter dunker training and helicopter aircrew breathing device training, or HABD.

Furthermore, of the 21 passengers not including the aircrew that day, 20 were with Golf Battery. Seven of the 21 passengers had not received any type of emergency egress training, the investigation stated. In total, 384 Marines with 3/5 did not have HABD training or shallow water egress training, commonly called SWET.

The reason for the lack of the training?: "Lack of training resources, competing training requirements, rapid embarkation

upon arrival in Okinawa, Japan, and lost training days due to a contract expansion," the investigation states.

Two of the MV-22 passengers that day had attended emergency egress training but had failed the course.

In documents recovered by investigators, one of the passengers who failed said "panicking and forgetting the steps while underwater," was his reason for not successfully completing the training.

But he, along with the rest of the "infrequent flyer" passengers, were still allowed to fly. The problem was 3/5, or the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit they were assigned to, never considered Golf Battery's status as infrequent flyers in the risk management portion of the mission planning, according to the investigation report.

Many Marines cite the helicopter dunker training as some of the scariest training undertaken in the military, though that often varies depending on fear of swimming and comfort in the water.

The dunker trainer includes a mock-up of a helicopter in a large pool of water. Marines go through iterations of being restrained in the helicopter while it is submerged in the water and at times rolled around or inverted. Marines must learn where their nearest egress points are, how to remove their restraints and how to use HABD bottles.

The cause of the Aug. 5 accident was likely the result of recirculated downwash air reflecting off the hull of the Green Bay and back into the rotor blades, engineers claimed in the investigation.



Crew members of the USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) conduct flight operations with a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey, from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, during exercise Talisman Sabre 15, July 9. (Gunnery Sgt. Ricardo Morales/Marine Corps)

Downwash occurs when a helicopter hovering recirculates the same air into its rotor blades that it is using for lift, the fast-moving recirculated air is dispersed rapidly requiring the helicopter to increase thrust to maintain flight or hover.

The pilots flying the MV-22 noticed a rapid decent of 200-300 feet per minute when they approached the Green Bay that day.

The pilot attempted to correct using the thrust control lever.

But the MV-22 struck a catwalk on the starboard side of the Green Bay just below the flight deck. The Osprey pushed across the catwalk until slamming into a stair case with its blades striking the flight deck. The aircraft then plunged into the sea.

The MV-22 was totaled. Damage was also sustained to the Green Bay and a UH-1Y helicopter was damaged when debris from the Osprey's rotor blades struck the helicopter parked on the flight deck.



Marines with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine Expeditionary Force, conducted underwater egress survival training on Camp Pendleton, California, Feb 9. (Lance Cpl. Dylan Chagnon/Marine Corps)



Feature Article:
The Story of Martin-Baker

The name 'Martin Baker' is synonymous with ejection seats: indeed, Martin Baker has saved the lives of several of our own Fleet Air Arm pilots. It seems simple enough: if you are in deep trouble, pull the ejection blind and all will be well – but the story behind the early development is a fascinating one, and is presented here for your interest.

Sir James Martin started up as an aircraft manufacturer in 1929. It was during development of his first aircraft that he struck up a friendship with Captain Valentine Baker, and the 'Martin Baker Aircraft Factory' was established. In September 1942 Baker was tragically killed during a test flight of one of their aircraft: the engine had seized and the aircraft struck a tree stump during the subsequent emergency landing. His death greatly affected James Martin, who became obsessed with pilot safety.

Up until the mid 40's the only way to abandon an aircraft in flight was to ditch the canopy, undo your straps and climb out. Tests in a makeshift wind tunnel demonstrated that this was extremely difficult at any speed above 200 knots – and that was in level flight. If the aircraft was out of control it was almost impossible to overcome 'g' forces and the slipstream.

By 1944 aircraft were becoming increasingly sophisticated and the Ministry of Aircraft Production asked Martin to investigate the possibility of providing a means of assisted escape for aircrew. It didn't take him long to figure out that the most practical method would be by forced ejection of the seat with the occupant sitting in it, and the most effective way to do this was by explosive charge. The concept of the Martin-Baker ejection seat had been born.

But the effect of setting off an explosive charge under a human body was unknown. There was simply no information on what the body could withstand in the form of compressive thrust, so tests were necessary to determine the amount of upward g force the human frame could tolerate.

A 16-foot test rig was built in the form of a tripod, with one of the legs equipped with guide rails on which a seat was mounted. The seat was propelled up the rails by a gun consisting of two telescopic tubes energized by an explosive charge. The seat was loaded to represent the weight of the occupant and the accelerations and rates of rise of g were measured.

The first dummy shot was made on 20th January 1945 to a weight of 200 lb, and four days later one of the Company's experimental fitters, Mr. Bernard Lynch, undertook the first live



ride, being shot up the rig to a height of 4 foot 8 inches. Subsequent tests increased the cartridge power until a height of 10 feet was reached, at which point Lynch reported considerable physical discomfort.

To study the structure and physical limitations of the human spine, Sir James Martin arranged to see a number of spinal operations being performed, and later obtained a human spine for mechanical tests. From this study and from the records of further tests on the rig, he discovered that the damage was being caused by an excessively high rate of rise of g, being in the order of 600 to 800 g per second. Following further study, Sir James concluded that injury to the spine would not occur if the following conditions were fulfilled:

- the peak acceleration no greater than 21g for a period no longer than about 1/10th of a second, and
- during acceleration the body should be held in a position to ensure that adjacent spinal vertebrae were square to one another.

These factors are now generally accepted as design criteria for ejection seats.

Alterations were now made to the seat to meet the new conditions. To ensure the g came on relatively slowly and did not exceed the first two conditions, a two-cartridge gun was designed, in which the first cartridge started the seat rising smoothly and the second cartridge was fired by the flame when uncovered by the moving piston, building up the pressure gradually to the maximum required. To cater for the third condition, the sitting posture in the seat was altered by rearranging the footrests and by the adoption of the face screen method of firing the seat. In this method, the firing handle was



Sir James Martin studying the effects of the first shot

positioned above the occupant's head and attached to the handle was a screen which, when the handle was pulled forward and downward, completely covered the occupant's face

The advantage of the scheme was two-fold; in reaching for the handle, the occupant automatically assumed the correct attitude by straightening his back and squaring up his spinal vertebrae, and the screen afforded the necessary protection to the face from air blast as the seat left the aircraft. The first dummy test with the new design was made on 20th January 1945, and the g curve obtained of the shot to the maximum height of the rig showed the desired characteristics. However, as the seat was now overshooting the available travel, it was not possible to check the physiological effect by means of a live shot, so it was decided to design and construct a 65 foot test rig.

Engineering Problems

Simultaneously with the physiological research work, the engineering problems of ejection from aircraft were being investigated. The loan of a Defiant aircraft had been obtained from the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and after the necessary structural alterations had been made, an experimental ejection seat was installed in the space previously occupied by the gun turret. On the 10th May 1945, the seat, loaded with sand bags, was successfully ejected from the jacked-up aircraft into a specially erected catch net, and on the next day a successful dummy ejection in flight was made with Mr. Brian Greenstead piloting the aircraft. This was the first ejection from an aircraft in flight in Great Britain.

On 17th May 1945, six further dummy ejections from the Defiant were made at varying indicated air speeds up to 300 m.p.h. This was regarded by all concerned as an important step forward, the results obtained being encouraging. The technique employed consisted of ejection of the seat by an ejection gun consisting of two telescopic tubes, fired by an explosive cartridge. Once the seat was clear of the aircraft, a

drogue was deployed to stabilise the seat, after which a 24 foot parachute was deployed by a delay action release. This arrangement permitted recovery of the seat for further use.

With the completion of the new 65 foot test rig, investigations into the physiological problems were resumed. The first dummy shot on this rig was made on 17th August 1945, and the first live shot on the rig with the new two-cartridge gun was made by Bernard Lynch on 22nd August. The height reached was 26 feet 3 inches and Lynch described the ride as now very "soft" with no adverse physiological effects whatever. Considerable further development work was carried out on this rig covering all aspects of the eventual development programme.

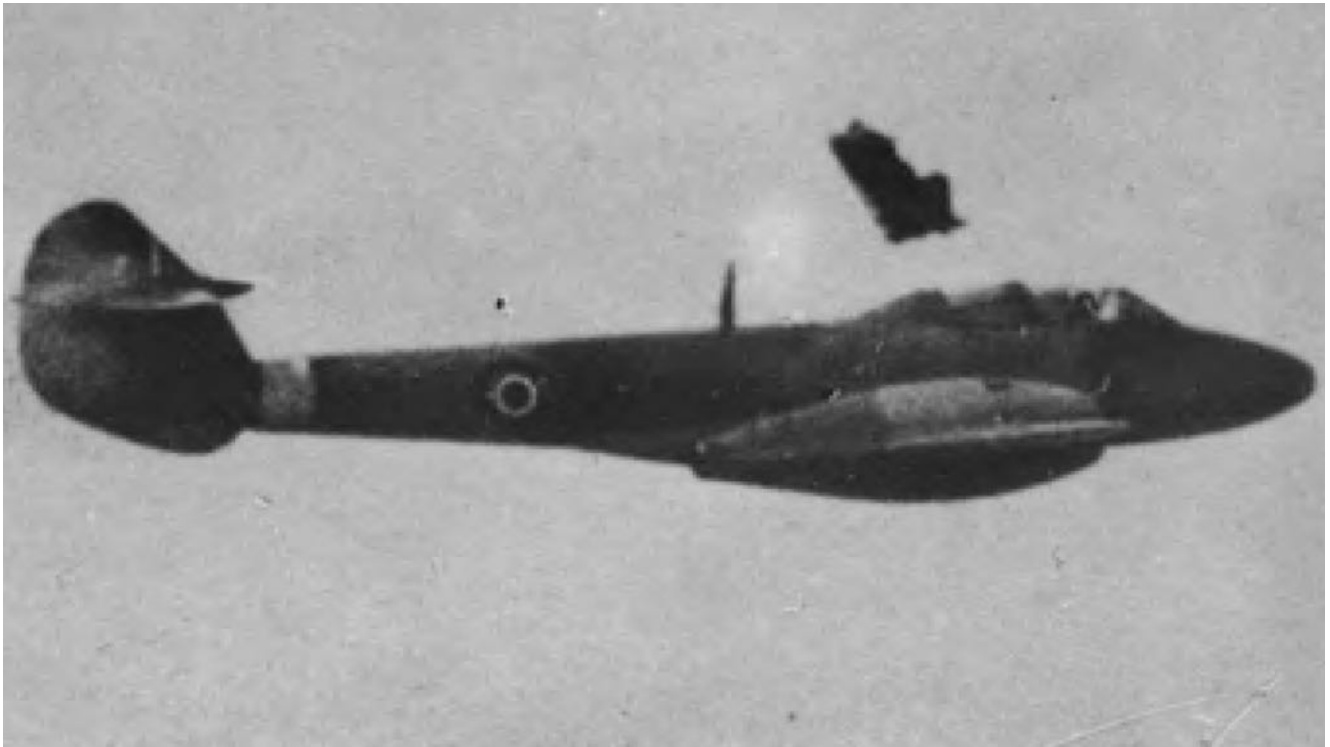
Meteor Installation

It was now necessary to consider ejection tests at higher speeds and on the 12th September 1945 a contract was received from the Ministry of Aircraft Production for the design, development and manufacture of two pilot's ejection seats and their installation in a high-speed aircraft. For this work a Meteor III was considerably modified to permit installation of the ejection apparatus in the ammunition bay behind the pilot's cockpit. On completion of the installation, a static dummy ejection from the jacked-up aircraft was made on 8th June 1946, into a net suspended at the top of a 45 feet high tower.

On 24th June 1946, a dummy ejection in flight was made at a speed of 415 m.p.h. IAS using the ejection technique as previously used on the Defiant. Due to the unsatisfactory action of a special type of delay action release used, the main parachute opened too early and burst with the loss of the seat. A subsequent test with a modified release gave the same result. A hydraulic type delay action release was then developed, but when it was first tested, the main parachute did not extract from its container. On examining a film of the test it was seen

Sir James Martin, C.B.E., D.Sc





The first live shot from a specially-modified Meteor by Bernard Lynch at 320knots, 8000 feet

that the drogue, which was spring-ejected, had been drawn into the wake of the seat and had become entangled with it. Further tests with springs of varying strengths for ejecting the drogue not being satisfactory, the idea was conceived of deploying the drogue by means of an explosive operated gun, which both delayed the release and fired the drogue clear of the seat. The idea proved successful and although subsequently modified in detail, the drogue gun has remained a basic feature of all Martin-Baker seats.

During further dummy ejections from the Meteor, it was discovered that the loads produced at high speed by the drogue were considerably above those anticipated, resulting in the continual snapping of drogue cables at speeds in excess of 35 m.p.h. IAS. Considerable research work resulted in the design of a two foot drogue of special shape manufactured from aircraft linen with a 7½ inch vent and 12 nylon lines which functioned perfectly at speeds up to 500 m.p.h. and over.

The First Live Ejection

At this stage it was decided to make a live ejection and on 24th July 1946, Bernard Lynch ejected himself from the Meteor at 320 m.p.h. IAS at 8000 feet. The main features of the seat used in this ejection were:

- Face screen firing control to ensure correct ejection posture by squaring up the spinal vertebrae and also to provide protection to the face from air blast.
- Two-cartridge 60 feet per second ejection gun, ensuring an acceptable rate of rise of g forces.
- Drogue gun fired by static line after seat had risen 24 feet and drogue gun deployed clear of seat vortex.
- Seat stabilised in horizontal position and slowed down by the action of a single two-foot diameter drogue.
- After a delay, controlled by the hydraulic release, the pull of the drogue was transferred from the seat to a 24 foot

supply dropping parachute attached to the seat. This parachute then developed and supported the seat and occupant.

- The occupant then unfastened his seat harness, pushed himself away from the seat and when clear, pulled the ripcord of his personal parachute and made a parachute descent, the seat meantime came down on its own 24 foot recovery parachute.

The whole system worked successfully and Lynch made a perfect landing; this was the first live ejection from an aircraft made in England. Lynch subsequently made over 30 live airborne test ejections, which earned him the respect of pilots all over the world.

But the job did not stop there. Ever more sophisticated aircraft demanded even better ejection seats. The Mk.2 offered a degree of automation. The Mk.3 improved on this, particularly with aircraft such as the Javelin and V-bombers with their high fin projections and higher speeds. This required a higher ejection trajectory, which also improved the chance of a successful ejection at low altitudes. This aspect was further improved upon and SQNLDR John Fifield successfully ejected from a Mk.7 Meteor during its take off run. He was on the ground just six seconds later, convincing the sceptics who were convinced a man could not survive such an ejection.

The later seats gave a survival rate of around 93%, but investigation of unsuccessful ejections showed that some 60% of them occurred at low altitude with the aircraft descending at a high rate of sink. In most cases the ejection sequence was developing satisfactorily, but the pilot struck the ground with the parachute streaming but not yet deployed.

The required increase in height could not be achieved by increasing the power of the explosive ejection gun. The early physiological lessons had been well understood, and it was considered the ultimate had been achieved in gun design. A

method of prolonging the seat thrust without subjecting the occupant to higher acceleration forces was sought, and this led to the development of the rocket motor.



The multi-tube rocket pack was therefore developed, which not only offered zero knots zero-feet capability, but which could easily be retrofitted to older cartridge-based seats as the rocket pack was in a module that could be bolted in place. Test vehicles used for testing were a launching stand for zero-zero ejections, a specially adapted motor vehicle for low speed runs, a Meteor Mk 7 for medium speed tests and a Hawker Hunter Mk.7 for high speed runs up to 600 knots. The tests covered a wide range of body weights likely to be encountered by different aircrew weights and stature, resulting in changes of position of the centre of gravity of the ejected mass.

These tests again cumulated in a live ejection, this time by WGCDR Peter Howard, a RAF doctor at the Institute of Aviation Medicine in the UK. On 13th March 1962 he ejected himself from a Meteor aircraft travelling at 250 knots at 250 feet, and he commented afterwards on how smooth the ride was. This was due to a significant reduction in acceleration, with the peak being 15g and the rate of rise about 160g per second.

Emergency Ejection

On 14th September 1964, an emergency ejection took place from a VJ-101C aircraft fitted with a Martin-Baker rocket seat in the most exacting conditions. Mr. George Bright, an American Test Pilot employed by EWR Germany, took off in this aircraft at Manching, Germany. A conventional take-off was begun but when the aircraft unstuck, control was lost and the aircraft began a vicious left-hand roll. After rolling 320°, in other words with a 40° bank, the pilot ejected by using the seat pan handle. At the time, the aircraft's nose was elevated 18°, it was yawing 17° and the starboard wing tip was at a height of 10 feet above the runway. This ejection was entirely satisfactory. The unusual behaviour and attitude of the aircraft during this very short flight of approximately 8 seconds were recorded by means of a cine-camera, which was operating to film the take-off. Regrettably, the actual ejection was not photo-

graphed because the camera operator understandably abandoned his post as the aircraft came hurtling towards him. In service the rocket seat has been remarkably reliable and efficient.

Since 1944, when the concept was first considered, Martin-Baker seats have been credited with saving the lives of over 7000 aircrew, a total which continues to increase at an average of 3 per week.

Development continues in an untiring effort to keep pace

with improvements in modern aircraft. Today, the ejection seat still appears to be the ultimate means of escape from aircraft of the foreseeable future and the name of Martin-Baker will remain in the forefront of design build and quality.

Readers who wish to have a more detailed history of the technology & build of Martin Baker ejection seats can get a fifty page document from the webmaster [here](#). ✈

Answer to Mystery Photo No. 42



Mystery photo No.42 was found in a file in the Fleet Air Arm Museum. It showed an oriental lady standing near a Sea Venom, and we wanted to know the significance of this event, and when it occurred.

In June 1960 HMAS *Melbourne* docked at Yokohama on a four-day good-will visit. Such was the significance of the occasion that the city council sent their loveliest ambassador, Miss Yokohama, to greet the ship's company. Dressed in a beautifully decorated traditional costume Miss Y took time to pose beside one of 'Melbourne's' De Havilland Sea Venom FAW 53s.

During the visit the crew of HMAS *Melbourne* [11] responded by entertaining a group of boys and girls from a Yokohama orphanage.



Despite the language barrier the children enjoyed themselves. And so did the sailors who took time to show them around the ship - then put on an afternoon tea party for them. Along with the party hats, ice-cream and other treats, loquats were placed on the table – a fruit considered a treat by the children.

As an aside Claude Tattersell tells us the venom in the photo was later involved in a minor onboard prang, when after a landing and moving to its forward parking the starboard wheel apparently seized, causing the plane to veer into the gun position in front of the island. ✈

The RAN and the Sharks by Trevor Rieck

The Royal Navy Sharks Formation Display Team flew the Aerospatiale Gazelle helicopter in the summer air show seasons in UK and Europe from 1975 until 1996 when the RN paid the Gazelle off.

The Gazelle was flown by 705 Squadron, RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall in the basic helicopter training role and proved to be a very versatile machine and a joy to fly which made it absolutely ideal for the public relations and recruiting programs for which it was used for 21 years by the Royal Navy.

The Gazelle was introduced into service in late 1974 and the first display team flew in six air shows in 1975 mainly at naval establishments. The Team started off with a six aircraft routine. Bomber Brown and Trevor Rieck, who were on exchange with 705 at the time, flew in the inaugural Team. Bomber flew the solo slot and Trevor Number 5. It has been officially recorded that Bomber coined the Team's name as he thought the tail of the Gazelle resembled that of a shark.

For volunteer team members it was a major commitment to give up their spare time by having to fly out of hours for all Shark's flying. Practice was held early mornings before the instructional day started and on weekends for the displays



A 1979 promotional poster of the Sharks Display Team. The Aerospatiale Gazelle Helicopter was the ideal display machine: sleek, fast and maneuverable

throughout UK and Europe. That system remained in practice for the life of the Sharks.

Many of the Australians who subsequently served on exchange with 705 were involved with the Sharks team. Bomber and Trevor were the first, followed by Mick Perrott in 1976.

In 1977 the team was cancelled due to a fatal mid-air collision during the six aircraft practice, in which three pilots were killed. The team was practicing their routine over water as more requests were being received to fly in regular air shows off popular beaches. Whatever happened two aircraft "touched" and shrapnel flew everywhere, with two aircraft ditching uncontrollably and the other four managing to recover to Culdrose. One of those killed was the Senior Pilot, Geoff Bailey, along for the ride. From then on the Team flew a four-aircraft routine.

In 1978 Jack Kinross was the Team's manager and air show commentator; an interesting duty considering his Aussie accent. By that stage the Team was gaining a reputation and more and more bookings were being accepted hence the need for a manager (who also flew the spare aircraft). The 1979 team, in which Jack flew, was the last of the unsponsored teams – smart in the air but no fancy kit in the ground, Jack's flying suit was a bit short!



The Sharks in 1979. L-R. Jack Kinross, Stu Pendrich, Bob Riley (CO), Graham Bell, Tony "Jan" Criddle, Graham Abraham and Doug Hale. This was the days before sponsorship so the team made do with what they had, as illustrated by the length of Jack's flying suit.

Vince de Pietro filled in and managed and commentated the 1982 Team when some team members were rushed off to the Falklands War. This team pioneered the "opposition break"; the aircraft diving head-on to the crowd in staggered box formation and, apparently, intermeshing rotors as they break across each other. This became the signature maneuver for future air shows.

As the years progressed the selection process became more formalised and gaining a slot on the team became very competitive. Usually the outgoing Team would fly with the "recruits" for the next year's team and the selections were made

before the end of that year. The Team was therefore ready to get under way when the season began the next year.

By this stage commercial organisations saw value in sponsorship but the RN was not at all comfortable with this. In any case the team was able to obtain a van and caravan which became the "shop" at the main air shows where a collection of Sharks memorabilia was sold for charitable causes.

In addition to the formal four aircraft Sharks teams the squadron fielded "pairs" for displays when the formal team was not available. These pairs flew in the last three years of the Shark's existence and were sponsored by the famous "Pusser's Rum."

Jeff Konemann flew in the 1991 Sharks team and by that stage over 30 displays were being flown in the air show season, which meant that serious family consideration had to be given in volunteering for the Team.

In 1992 the grim reaper struck and the Sharks display team flew its last year. For the next four years the squadron fielded two "pairs" teams that often came together "unofficially" in a four aircraft display during the season. These "pairs" were officially billed as the RN Helicopter Display Team.

Tim Leonard flew in a "pair" in 1993, he enjoyed the season immensely but was glad it was over as it was many, many weekends away from the family (and early morning starts).

Harry Butler was the last Aussie representative in the RN Helicopter Display Team and flew in the various combination display teams in 1995.

The RN paid off the Gazelle in 1996 and decommissioned 705 Squadron to move its helicopter training to a tri-service school at RAF Shawbury in the Midlands, where it remains to this day. Over the years over 100 pilots flew in the Sharks and the subsequent display teams.

It was on a visit to the new 705 Squadron at RAF Shawbury by Trevor Rieck in 2008, during research for the History of the RAN/RN helicopter instructor exchange program, that it became obvious that there was some enthusiasm for a reunion. The new 705 had a Sharks hall of fame with all the years' teams framed on

the walls of the main corridor.

The reunion was held at the Wardroom, RNAS Yeovilton on 7 August 2010 at which over 100 ex Sharks, their partners and ex 705 CO's and Training Officers attended a mess dinner to mark the 35th year since the Team was formed. The guest of honour was the previous Commodore FAA, RADM Simon Charlier.

VADM was kind enough to send a DVD with his well wishes, which was played during the dinner.



Above Left. Three Aussies who attended the reunion: L-R Wendy and Jeff Konemann; Judy & Trevor Rieck and John "Bomber" Brown and his wife Meryl. Right. A Gazelle HT-2 owned by a local farmer added colour to the reunion.

A local farmer, an aviation enthusiastic, flew in his ex RN Gazelle still in its 705 livery, and landed it at the Wardroom which provided a wonderful back-drop for the evening.

Three Australian couples attended the weekend: Bomber and Meryl Brown from Perth, Jeff and Wendy Konemann from Sydney and Trevor and Judy Rieck who had moved to London four years earlier. Trevor, with a great deal of help from three RNeers, organised the reunion, designed and had made all the posters and banners, and sourced all the sponsorship. RADM Chalier presenting to the reunion organizer.

A magazine was also produced for the dinner outlining the history of the Sharks, for which Prince Andrew wrote the foreword. ✈

Mystery Photo No 43

This month's Mystery Photo is courtesy of Kim Dunstan and is a bit different. It is a shot taken from the deck of HMAS Melbourne of a couple of vessels off her port beam.



Can you tell the webmaster:

- The name of the warship in the background.
- The name and purpose of the smaller vessel in the foreground;
- Where and when the photo was taken, and what Melbourne was doing there.

You can click [here](#) to see a bigger picture on our website, and find a place to give your answer. ✈

Bits of Trivia: Did You Know?

That in 1982 eighty-eight surplus A4 Skyhawks were contracted for purchase from the United States for use by the Tentera Udara Diraja Malaysia (TUDM, or Royal Malaysian Air

Force). The aircraft were designated A-4/TA-4PTM (Peculiar to Malaysia was a moniker attached in the United States. "PTM" does have a meaning in Malaysian).

Only 40 PTM Skyhawks (34 single seat versions and six two-seat trainers) were delivered. The six two-seat trainers were converted from single-seat versions and looked similar to TA-4F.

The remainder were kept in storage in the United States awaiting delivery. But It seems that when Malaysia came to claim the remainder of the Skyhawks they could not provide proof of ownership, and so the undelivered aircraft remained in the U.S.A. at a storage yard.

By 2011 many of the stored Skyhawks had gone to museums and to restorers who intended to fly them. A bonus to collectors but can you imagine how the TUDM felt about it?

See Dutchy Brauer's Facebook article on them [here](#). ✈

Wall of Service Update

Order 38 is now complete and was affixed to the Wall on 15th June. The 12 people involved have been advised separately.

Order 39 is currently open with the following names:

Cook, C.J	Edgecombe, G.S	Huntriss, W.D
Young, S.L	Duffey, K	Dennison, D
Tennant, D	Meers, W	+one other

We need at least ten names before the order can be sent to the Foundry, so don't be backward in putting your name forward. Full details of the purpose of the Wall of Service, eligibility criteria and cost can be found [here](#). ✈

Asbestos 1

When I was a young wet-behind-the-ears NAMAEE on 724 in 1963 to 1965 Sea Venom line sailors used to place an asbestos blanket on the tail plane to the Venoms to protect the tail plane in case of a wet start. When it was raining we would huddle under the blankets and at the completion of flying carry then to the hanger, if it was raining we would put one on our head, in the hanger we would hang them on the guard rails. No doubt we inhaled a bit of asbestos doing this. Do not recall if the Vampire crews used the blankets as the Venom guys did.

R 21 had the asbestos fire curtains separating the hangers and all the pipes lagged with it. So there are a lot of the old guys who were exposed to asbestos without any protective equipment.

John (Mitch) Miller POATA. 1962 to 1983. Idaho, USA. ✈

Asbestos 2

I have just read about asbestosis on ships [in the June FlyBy]. My husband successfully received a payout through the courts against the Navy for Asbestos aboard HMAS *Melbourne* and other ships including *Vengeance*, which also allowed me the benefit of the Gold Card as he died of a heart attack caused by the asbestosis.

His career dated from the 1950's. I don't know if the info will help others to follow up their cases.

Regards Jan Akeroyd. ✈

The Crashed Vampire

Re your letter and query about the crashed Vampire which appeared in the June 2018 edition of 'Flyby'.



The available records makes positive identification difficult, but my thoughts are this aircraft crash landed beyond the end of runway 21 at RANAS Nowra, circa 1959.

After attempting to take-off the pilot aborted and the aircraft skidded off the end of the runway ending near the old Bomb Dump where I was working. I saw the aircraft bumping across the land in a cloud of dust, which ended just a short distance beyond the tall barbed-wire fence of the Bomb Dump, preventing me from getting close to the aircraft. Sufficient to say the pilot was the only occupant who got out unhurt, and there was no fire and as emergency vehicles were quickly on the scene, I had no reason to hang around.

The closeness of the roadway and the proximity of the shrubbery in the background, which I am familiar with, gives me the feeling this was the aircraft I saw crash – although I did not see it from the angle depicted in the photograph.

If my memory serves me correctly the accident was in 1959 (possibly April/ May but could be other). I do not know the aircraft number or serial and don't remember the pilot's name,

† REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of Bob Christie, Bob Whitten, Jeff McIntyre, Gordon Hughes and Graham 'Squiz' Taylor. You can read a little more of these sad events on our Obituary pages [here](#). ✈

except he was not a trainee pilot as I recall. Also the under-carriage was torn-off as the ground was fairly rough and I fancy it would have passed over a drainage ditch as well.

I hope this helps to narrow down the possibilities – but keep an open mind until further details become available.

Cheers, Kim Dunstan. ✈

Tracker Ops

For what it's worth, I thought I'd share some memories of embarked tracker ops in Melbourne's last cruise Mar to Jul 1981.

I'd been lucky enough to get the last pilots appointment to VS816 (pier head jump) just before we embarked for a mother's last deployment "up top". A memorable Squadron environment famous for having, if memory serves, 14 Sub lieutenant aircrew, 4 lieutenants and only 3 Lieutenant Commanders under boss Terry Ford. Perhaps a bit low on experience you might imagine, but bags of enthusiasm and plenty of social. Just Trackers and Wessex Pedro on this cruise; the penultimate deployment for Melbourne.

Deck quals for all us new nuggets had taken place over the preceding 9 months, but still plenty of experience yet to be gained, most notably night quals. The older blokes told plenty of dits about the horrors of night deck ops, but as it turned out it was a doddle! Steady deck, prayers answered with a sweet night flyers moon providing all the horizon you could ask for, and the only distraction was the flare of the boss lighting a cigarette in the right hand seat as we turned base. So 2 trips with a grown up in in the RHS under benign conditions and I was night qualed. Easy work!

So come 26 Mar, I launched with SOBS (in 844 - will she ever fly again?) for 3 hours of low level manoeuvres with DLP on recovery. First thing I noticed was the deck motion as we manned up. Soon after the cloud cover extinguished the moon; as black as only embarked Navy pilots can know it, and so I found myself in an environment outside my experience.

Already fatigued, we commenced recovery, with Larry Mills intoning "decks pitching". I couldn't help but notice the other aircraft in the Charlie pattern consistently waving off or bolting.

Now my turn. First pass managed a decent touch and go. Second pass my first ever bolter. That was scary enough. Calls off "10° attitude and "power" ringing in my ears kept me out of the water.

Thanks Larry.

Third pass was a horror. Can't remember much other than the ball and all centreline lights abruptly disappeared and Larry called a wave off, backed up by a bright red glow from somewhere near the mirror. Time for some coaching from the LSO. "When I waved you off I was looking DOWN on you! Do that again and you're bingo." Great.

The Editor was going to use the following photograph as a 'Mystery Photo' - but didn't know enough about it to give a confident answer, so it's now an appeal for information. Can anybody supply any of the missing names here (each figure is numbered, from left to right); and what the occasion was?



We know Trevor Epis (1); Dave Beare (3) Sandy Wilson (holding the picture) (5); Ivan Waskiw (6); Geoff Ledger (11) and Bill Shurey (15) but could use a bit of jogging on the rest. Click [here](#) to help.

Confidence duly bolstered, I asked the tacco for any advice. With eyes larger than saucers he informed me he hadn't night flown for 5 years, and promptly ziplipped. Feeling quite alone now, as I rolled out in the groove, I started counting the children of my crewmembers, and felt so much better to know how many young lives depended on me.

This was a sweet approach now though. Rails pass. Got it nailed. In close, just had to pull the eye focus in to check the ASI for 95knots. On speed; fine, look out through the windscreen again - and the ship had disappeared! Some lights showed down under my left elbow through the bottom of the port bulging side window. To Wave off now would take out the island. So - idle, full left aileron, lots of rudder, close eyes and full backstick.

I think it was a taxi1 wire. We looked at the hook deck marks the next morning, and mine was 12 feet right of centreline, dragging left. Just as well, as we only had 8ft wingtip clearance on the island if on the centreline. I couldn't see the deck edge as we pulled up. Port prop was definitely over the 'oggin. Take a later wire and the port wheel would be over the edge.

Marshaller out immediately (how slick were those boys!), waving me forward to the cat for another launch. Just as I was having second thoughts, Flyco drawled, mercifully, "now we've got you, think we'll keep you. Shutdown, fold sh@t spot"

Toughest night I ever knew. Turns out mine wasn't the worst pass that night either! The great thing about a small ship with a tiny air group was that you could identify your hookmark the next day. That chip on the round-down 80' short of 1 wire definitely wasn't mine!

Well, I could go on about the cat failure on my 21st birthday, and bore you ad-infinitum, but that'll have to wait for another dit session.

Absolute privilege to have done it and lived to tell the tale. Thinking of mates and those brave colleagues who went before who weren't so lucky. RIP.

Andrew Davis

By Ed. Thanks to the folks who have sent me Tracker stories and photos. We will start working on a "Heritage Piece" on them later in the year, so please keep the material coming. ✪

Sycamore Photo Details



You asked for details on the photo of the Sycamore Mk51 on page 2 of the June 'Flyby', which was of a group of people next to the aircraft.

It was taken on the flight

deck of HMAS Sydney in September 1956. The picture includes a French journalist (centre of group) with two representatives (either side) from the Singapore office of the Australian Broadcasting Commission who were on the ship during 'Exercise Albatross 1956' in the South China Sea. The photo is included the HMAS Sydney ROP for September 1956.

Cheers, Kim Dunstan ✈

Maitland Flood Correction

In the June issue of your magazine some photos from the Maitland 1955 flood were used All were taken by the late **Jim Lucy** and recently digitalized by **David Sciffer**. Helicopter 908 did NOT touch any power lines. After two men dropped off the line and the helicopter lost full control the pilot Lt Commander **Gordon McPhee** realised he had to land somewhere. The overhead rail bridge had around a hundred people on it so he put down into the flood waters - as per picture. Inquest into flood deaths held 26 to 28 April 1955 where McPhee gave detailed evidence of what had happened. McPhee given award at Buckingham Palace. Naval Board of inquiry completely cleared McPhee. NB It is McPhee with a 'P' not an 'F'.

Peter Bogan ✈



Thank You from the Victorian Division

We have just finished our meeting down here (probably only about 20 ft AYRL (Above Yarra River Level)) at the Mission to Seafarers in Melbourne. There's a bit of an ongoing theme happening at our meetings down here in Victoria, and the issue is that your name often comes up, on a regular basis. It has occurred again today, and we unanimously decided we must pass on our thanks to you for this.

We would like to extend our most heartfelt appreciation to you for all the work you have done, and continue to do for the Fleet

Air Arm Association. Your work and efforts as webmaster are just outstanding. The timeliness and standard of this website is excellent, but even more so, the diversity and range of the material that you provide is a tribute to your great work. We have no doubt that this only happens because of your consistent and dedicated work in managing this, and all things associated with 'herding the cats'. We also know that these things don't just happen easily. They require a sense of devotion and innovative thinking; and it is this innovation and energy which is evident in both the web management and the newsletters that we are very grateful for. There aren't too many small clubs or associations that have such a useful and interesting website as you have managed, and that is clearly a testament to your quite amazing work and guidance. Thanks. Equally we would be most grateful if you would pass on our thanks to any others who may have assisted and supported you.

We, here in Victoria, really appreciate your contribution to our association. Not only does it make an important contribution to the administrative 'power plant' of the FAAAA, but it also makes a magnificent impact on the 'body and soul' of our association, its members and indeed the entire Naval Aviation family.

Some say Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy. We hope this short note of gratitude is much more than a simple message of courtesy, and we pass this to you from us, as an Exquisite Tribute to your fine work.

(Signed by the VIC DIV Committee)

By Ed. Not long after taking on the website, I resolved to make it a singular point of reference for historians and casual readers alike, rather than just a 'Blog'. There's a lot to do yet but we are getting there with the help of a few dedicated folk, and letters like the one above make it worthwhile. Thanks for the Thanks! ✈

Left or Right Hand?

In Ken Douglas' great article on flying the Sycamore, he notes some confusion on getting into the wrong seat and that the Right Seat was for helicopter pilots and the Left for all the rest!

As I understand it, the reason for the LHS for fixed wing and the RHS for helicopters is simple. In the olden days, the fixed wing aircraft did left hand circuits and to keep the helicopters from getting in their way, the helicopters did right hand circuits. Each could see the other reasonably easily from their respective seats anywhere in the circuit.

Additionally, with the collective on the LHS, it was easier entry/egress for the helicopter captain and devil take the hindmost for the co-pilot.

I recently (2016) queried this of a young helicopter pilot in his very flash chopper when he alighted from the LHS and he couldn't believe that it had ever been any different. With all these bigger helicopters and lots of room for central aisles to the kingdom of the cockpit, it probably doesn't matter whether LHS or RHS, and then they probably do circuits like the fixed wing jockeys anyway.

I trust this assists – it does make me feel old though!

Cheers, Max Speedy ✈

WANTED

The position of the Fleet Air Arm Association's Database Manager is to become vacant shortly, and we are seeking the help of a volunteer to take over this vital service.

The database captures the details of all Association Members and provides the basis for various mailing lists and statistical information.

The volunteer would be required to keep an accurate record of new members as they join (informed by each Division's secretary); update members' records to reflect their status at any time, and provide accurate information to the webmaster to assist him in his duties, and to the Divisions on request.

The database is built in Filemaker Pro which works on both PC and Apple platforms. It has a comprehensive instruction manual and transitional help would be available from the current manager. The service can be provided from any locality.

In the event no volunteer is forthcoming the facility will be shut down, which will have a significant impact on the effective running of the Association.

For further information please contact the webmaster [here](#).

COMFAA UPDATE

It seems only yesterday I was sitting in that Launceston café earlier this year writing to you and sharing my moment of nostalgia as I revelled in the wonderful celebrations of our FAA during 2017, the Navy deployments underway or recently completed, and our FAA re-capitalisation progress. The first half of 2018 has had no less activity and has been laced with success and challenge – we wouldn't have it any other way...

However, prior to speaking of the work underway for those of us caretaking the FAA at present, I would like to offer my deepest congratulations to our Helicopter Flight Vietnam team who have, at last, received due and appropriate recognition as a force element in their own right. The announcement that the Governor General has agreed to award of the Unit Citation for Gallantry to RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam, of 723 Squadron, is magnificent. I was struck by the stories of bravery, innovative engineering, dedication and mateship during our weekend last October at NAS when we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the first detachment to Vietnam. The recognition that will soon be formally awarded is a credit to the HFV members one and all, who have written such an extraordinary chapter of our FAA's history. The

numerous dedicated folks who fought so hard to see this recognition through the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal continue to serve, well done – it is a credit to your belief, esprit de corps, and dedication to your mates. To all our HFV veterans, thank you for your service then and now. Finally the nation will learn of your bravery, gallantry, and extraordinary contribution to the Vietnam War effort.

Allow me to return to the here and now. As I mentioned earlier, the year has pressed along with energy. In April and early May we deployed two MH60R Seahawks to Scotland to participate in a large multi-national Anti-submarine exer-



They found it! RAN Fleet Air Arm aircraft over Loch Ness, complete with surfaced monster.

cise. *Joint Warrior* is held twice a year, although only scheduled once this year, and is arguably the most complex dedicated ASW exercise run amongst our allies. With 25+ surface combatant and other smaller vessels of 12+ nations,



An RAN MH60-R and an RN Merlin over the water near Stornaway.

three submarines (one nuclear and two conventional) multiple Maritime Patrol Aircraft, embarked helicopters and a Maritime Patrol Helicopter (MPH) force (land based), this exercise tested our training, support, logistic and of course aircraft systems. It was enormously successful and a credit to everyone involved. No RAN ships were involved, and our team operated as a joint element of the MPH Force based from Stornaway regional airport embedded with the RN 820 Squadron. The deployment was made possible by our RAAF Strategic Air Lift assets. Two of the impressive C17 heavy lift aircraft were tasked to support the deployment of the 816 Sqn two aircraft detachment lead by **CMDR Anthony Savage** (CO 816) and made up from one of our formed Flights (Flight 4 – LCDR **Mark Flowerdue**) and supplemented by an 816 Sqn aircraft and personnel.

Our objectives were to operate alongside the Royal Navy's Merlin ASW helicopter and assess each other's strengths and weaknesses, to send the clear message to our allies and others that the RAN is serious about being expert in ASW, and to both test and demonstrate the expeditionary nature of Naval Aviation. I urge you to have a look where Stornaway is for those who do not know, there are few places on the planet further away from NAS!! Remote and foreboding conditions, the team withstood a seemingly endless list of road blocks to get there, but with the help of the High Commission (Naval Attache **CAPT Shane Craig**), RAF, RN, and our Joint Operations Command, they hurdled them all to not only tactically perform with excellence, but to also achieve a 100% serviceability – such outcomes don't just happen and this tells a story of the amazing work by the maintenance team reflective of all the professional

work done by our engineers and maintainers across the Force every day. The detachment flew around 112 hours in less than two weeks, achieved all objectives and sent the clear message that the FAA can deploy anywhere and deliver a formidable maritime warfare effect. A historic detachment and achievement by 816 Sqn and the many supporting agencies. It is our intent to continue to pursue these detachments annually to ensure our warfare edge is honed.

On the water today is our Indo-Pacific Endeavour 18 (IPE18) Task Group which has worked north east to Hawaii for RIMPAC 18 via numerous Western Pacific nation port visits. IPE18 is made up of HMASs *Adelaide*, *Toowoomba*, *Melbourne* and *Success* and we have two MRH90s embarked on *Canberra* and a MH60R on each of *Toowoomba* and *Melbourne*. IPE18, like IPE17, are

the TG deployments of times past. A big flat deck with escorts, many international engagement port visits, this time with a focal on the Pacific, and a major exercise in the middle full of high end warfighting training. Makes one want to be a boggie again! Our deployments to the Middle East continue unabated with a Surface Combatant and embarked MH60R consistently in the area – that's over 27 years we've been there now – an impressive operational statistic by any measure.

The 723 Sqn Helicopter Advanced Training System (HATS) is approaching its first graduates of both Army and Navy. 723 Sqn is currently running the first pilot, aviation warfare officer and aircrewman courses with the EC135 and associated training systems. The initial courses are Verification and Validation courses, and while we've had our challenges, particularly in terms of schedule, this is what a V&V course is all about. 723 Squadron is today creating the Joint Helicopter School that will serve the ADF for many decades and the training systems are, simply put, fantastic. Three full motion simulators, part task trainers, virtual reality systems, and 15 EC135 twin-engine helicopters makes up the hardware that does its magic at the hands of a joint Navy/Army/Boeing team of instructors.

I am very proud of the work that the men and women of the FAA continue to do. While our asset re-capitalisation complete, the growth and development of our people will never stop. They are impressive Australians, not that I need to tell you this, as we are of your legacy and we do our best to ensure those who have gone before us will look on in pride as we carry that legacy forward. I see innovative ways and behaviours across the Force and our team continues to do

tough jobs and tasks out there with deep Navy Values and civic virtue. You are, I trust, proud.

By the end of this year we will be at our full eleven formed fully mission capable Flights (eight MH60R and three MRH90); there is just the final MH60R Flight to stand up now in Dec 18. Our Maritime Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems (MTUAS) unit is making excellent ground now routinely operating the S100 Schiebel (rotary wing) and the ScanEagle (fixed wing) remotely piloted systems. They are shaping up for further deployments to sea later this year. The teaming of MTUAS and manned aircraft is our future and it is exciting.

In a final wrap up I'd like to, in this forum, congratulate CAPT **Peter 'Blue' Ashworth**, Deputy Commander FAA, on his recognition for his exemplary work in bringing the MH60R Seahawk capability. He was on the Queen's Birthday list made a member of the Order of Australia (OAM). A thoroughly well-deserved medallic award. BZ Blue.

I hope very much to see as many of you as possible in my travels and the various functions we may find ourselves at. Keep well, and should you be in Nowra, do take the time to visit the FAA Museum and gain a sense of the magnitude of change at NAS. Your FAA is pressing well and importantly it is on the water doing its job. It's just a great place to be.

C.J. Smallhorn
CDRE, RAN
Commander Fleet Air Arm ✈

Federal Council Meeting

The 2018 Annual Federal Council Meeting of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia will be held at the Fleet Air Arm Museum on **Saturday 27th October 2018** commencing at 0930 (Time to be confirmed) in accordance with the FAAAA Constitution.

Unless they have already done so, Divisions are requested to submit agenda items to the National Secretary before the close of business on Monday 10th September 2018. These may be forwarded by Postal or E-mail. (FAAAA Constitution paragraph 28.3 refers)

Initially, when submitting an agenda item, the Division responsible is only required to state the Title for the Executive meeting. However the sponsoring Division is required to forward to the Executive and all other Divisions an explanatory paper prior to **Thursday 27th September 2018** 30 days prior to the AGM. This will enable all Delegates to seek a Divisional position before the meeting convenes.

The Chair will not accept motions from the floor under the heading of "Any Other Business" unless it can be demonstrated that the matter was not known, or could not be developed for discussion, prior to Monday 10th **September 2018** deadline.



A reminder of the reunions coming up:

Vietnam Veteran's Reunion, Old Bar NSW

When: 17-21 August 2018

Where: Old Bar, NSW

Cost: Depends on the events you choose to attend.

Contact: John Macartney (02) 6557 4165

Open to all Vietnam Vets and their family and friends, and particularly 9 Squadron personnel. Full details can be found [here](#).

2018 General FAAA Reunion

When: Thursday 25 - Sunday 27 October 2018

Where: Nowra Locality

Cost: Depends on the events you choose to attend.

The big one! This reunion includes different events including an official 70th Anniversary Dinner. You need to register now, so click [here](#) to find all the details. ✈

If any individual member has an issue they wish to have raised, or a suggestion that they would like tabled at the meeting, they should contact their Division Secretary. If you are not sure who that is, the [webmaster](#) can advise you.