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# Slipstream

Established HMAS Albatross 1957



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## A GATHERING OF TINS

In the last few days of April 2002, the Shoalhaven hosted a gathering of EMUs. Not the Australian flightless bird, but former members of the 135<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company of the United States Army – the 'Experimental Military Unit'.

The EMUs, Australian Navy and United States Army veterans, were gathered in the Shoalhaven area to celebrate and commemorate the lives and deeds of former members of that unique formation. The over 100 strong contingent also participated in ANZAC Day activities at Bomaderry - which was a bit of an eye opener for some of the Americans.

Visits were arranged to the Australian Museum of Flight, an Air Day at the RAN Air Station, and to the Australian War Memorial and Vietnam Memorial in Canberra. This was interspersed with lots of lunches, barbecues, and a dinner dance.

The highlight for most was the dedication of a monument to the EMUs at Bomaderry's 'Walsh Memorial Park'. The monument's plaques were unveiled in a moving ceremony by the Chief of Defence Force, Admiral Chris Barrie, in the company of a number of VIPs, many veterans, families, friends and well wishers.



Officiating at the dedication were former EMUs (Ex- CPOATA) Salvation Army Major, Barry Grainger, (LEUT) Geoff Vidal, assisting former CPO Musician, now Catholic Chaplain, John Connelly.

Prior to the dedication, the US Ambassador, Tom Schieffer, presented a number of Australian EMUs with the US Army Air Medal. The recipients, awarded the medal for their deeds in the air during their tour with the 135<sup>th</sup> AHC so long ago were; (then LEUT) Brian G. Abrahams, (LEUT) Peter L. Clark, (NAM W) Andrew J. Curran, (LCDR) Winston James, (SBLT) Robert J. Kyle, (SBLT) Clive Mayo, (SBLT) Andrew Perry, (POEAW) Douglas Rasmussen, (LEUT) Ian Maxwell Speedy. Not able to be at the presentation to receive their awards were (SBLT) Rodger J. Cooper, (SBLT) Stuart Rawlinson, and (SBLT) Eric K. Wile.

Mrs Joanna Gash MP, representing the Minister for Veteran Affairs, congratulated all the recipients and said it was regrettable that it had taken so long for the presentations to be made. The presentations were only made possible because of the recent changes made by the Australian Government in allowing veterans

to accept and wear decorations awarded by other countries. Admiral Barrie said he was very pleased to observe the awards of the Air Medal to the Australian Veterans. "I understand that so many United States decorations to Australians at one time, is of itself a very unique event, and, as a Vietnam Veteran, it is pleasing for me to publicly recognise the exploits of the EMUs, albeit thirty years on."



L-R: Doug Rasmussen receiving the US Army Air Medal from the United States Ambassador, Tom Schieffer

For those who may not be aware, the EMUs were an unusual group. The nearly 50 strong group of Fleet Air Arm and support personnel was a detachment of 723 Squadron. Posted as the RAN Helicopter Flight – Vietnam (RANHFV), four flights spent a year long tour of duty integrated into the 135<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company of the US Army.

The Australian Navy personnel were involved in all areas of 135<sup>th</sup> activities. The unit, totalling some 300 personnel, was commanded by an American Army Lieutenant Colonel or Major, with an Australian Lieutenant Commander (P) (initially Neil Ralph) as its Executive Officer and Second in Command. Many Australians were in leadership positions throughout the Company.

The *raison d'être* of the 135<sup>th</sup> AHC was to provide helicopter transport and support for Free World troops in their operations against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese ground forces in the Republic of South Vietnam. The Company operated some 20 troop transport configured 'H' model Iroquois armed with light machine guns, and 10 ground attack 'C' model 'gun ships' armed with heavy machine guns, rockets and grenade launchers.

Helicopter insertion and recovery of troops, providing air to ground attack, re-supply of ammunition and equipment, and recovering casualties, in all weather conditions, night and day, under direct enemy fire was all part of the daily task of the multinational unit. Although accommodation in tents, eating meals out of tins, flying as helicopter door gunner, working in dusty or wet, humid conditions, and evading enemy mortar, bullets and booby traps was not what most Australian Naval men had foreseen as an integral part of a naval career. Still, they, like their American counterparts did well, and 'got the bloody job done.'

The dedication ceremony was also the venue for another unique presentation. A former EMU, Lieutenant Colonel Fred Dunaway USA (Rtd) presented Mrs Gash with a US National Flag, encased in a redwood shadow box. The accompanying citation states that the flag was flown, at half mast, over the United States Capitol on the occasion of Australian Remembrance Day, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2001, in honour of the members of the Royal Australian Navy who gave their lives in Vietnam whilst serving in the United

States Army's 135<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Experimental Military Unit (EMU) from 1967 to 1971. Mrs Gash accepted the flag on behalf of the Australian Government and said it would go on display at Parliament House in the near future.

How did all of this come about, you may well ask. Well, a few years ago, several Australian participants of a US Vietnam Helicopter Crewman's Association reunion suggested that the next reunion should be held in Australia. I don't know if their decision was caused by a rush of blood to the head, or other influences. These reunions are usually held in a large city with all the support and facilities which can then be resourced. So the decision to hold it in the Shoalhaven was, to say the least, a bit of a challenge for people silly enough to attempt to organise it.

Well, organise it they did, and I think it came off fairly well. The silly ones included Dave Bengue, Kevin Camm, Dave Farthing, JJ Martin, Ted Wynberg, John Waskiw, Kevin French, Peter Ruhl, the multi-talented Jim Hill, and myself, Frank Eyck.

The Committee have received many letters and telephone calls from many happy customers, as well as from those not so directly involved.

*From all of them, and from me, thank you to all involved.*



THE USA FLAG AND CITATION

PICTURES FROM A 'RAN HELICOPTER FLIGHT VIETNAM' VETERAN'S SCRAPBOOK

Courtesy Ray Godfrey



Above: CAMP BLACKHORSE 'Home Sweet Home'  
Left: USO Tour



'Awaiting Action'



'Troops moving off'



'Craig / Leaks' prang'



Top: Max Speedie and Ted Wynberg  
Left: Frank Eyck  
Right: Jim Hill and Admiral Barrie

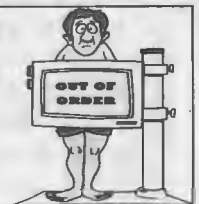
FRONT COVER:

'816 Squadron Seahawk on flight deck of HMAS Newcastle'  
Photographer AB Torrin Nelson - Photo courtesy RAN

**DEADLINE!**  
FOR NEXT EDITION  
**29 JULY 2002**

EDITOR'S CORNER

Be kind to each other.



**Dear Ed**

Could I, through you, ask if anyone has a good photograph of a MK V Firefly taken during Sydney's first tour in Korea.



I am presently engaged in a long running battle with the War Memorial to get them to replace the photograph of a MK I Firefly at the entrance to the Bradbury Hall, which houses the FAA Korean display. It is my guess that the aircraft depicted is one of *HMS Triumphs* MK I's. She was the first to commence operations after the North invaded the South.

Unfortunately there are no official photo's of a single RAN MK V Firefly wearing 'invasion stripes' from the first operational tour. The photograph has to be from that deployment, and ideally 'landing on' as in the case of the MK I Photo.

I would like to borrow the photograph to strengthen my case against the present photograph, which is a bit of an insult to the crews of 817 squadron.

Norman Lee

25 Rubbo Crescent, WESTON ACT 2611 - Phone: 02 62 882285  
[nlee@netspeed.com.au](mailto:nlee@netspeed.com.au)

**Dear Ed**

I am seeking information from *Slipstream* readers for my next book, which I hope will be quite comprehensive.

The info I'm seeking is confirmation of the names of the following please:

**1961:** Flight Deck Officer - Flight Deck Chief - Hangar Officer

**1963:** Flight Deck Officer - Flight Deck Chief -  
Mirror Control Officer

**1965:** Flight Deck Officer- Flight Deck Chief -  
Mirror Control Officer - Hangar Control Officer - FLYCO Officer

**1966:** Flight Deck Officer - Flight Deck Chief  
Mirror Control Officer

If any reader can help me out with these details please contact me on (03) 6424 6314 or Email: [tasarb@southcom.com.au](mailto:tasarb@southcom.com.au)

Tas Browning - 8 Addison St. Devonport Tas. 7310

**Dear Ed**

Your first hand story on the Wolfman was terrific and long over due. As a member of VS816 and as CAG Flight Safety Officer I had some involvement in the events. I was detailed by 'Cag' to investigate the possible effects on flight safety of the Wolfman's antics. 'Old timers disease' prevents total recall of the investigation but I do remember that some of the younger flight deck crew, in particular an armourer, did express some concern about being touched on the shoulder while loading ordnance. Wolfman? No! Supervisor? Yes! I'm still at a loss to understand how the armourer didn't drop the store on the super's foot.

This incident did cause the command some concern also and the word was put around for everyone to exercise caution when trying to attract someone's attention at night. The instigation of the Wolfman Patrol was, as far as the junior aircrews were concerned, the straw that broke the camel's back. Not only were they flying around the clock and keeping squadron duties but now they had to waste valuable rest time chasing the elusive Wolfman with the ever present XO hiding in dark corners.

On 816 we had a young sub of fairly large proportions, a mass of red hair and a bushy red beard. During one patrol 'Bucky

Beever' and the XO, coming from opposite directions, thought they had caught the Wolfman in the Starboard aft blackout curtains. Whereupon they both laid into the offender with the large 'pusser's' flashlight each carried only to discover that the wily Wolfman had vanished into thin air. I'm not sure who won but I remember that 'Bucky' was concerned about being court-martialled for assaulting a senior officer. I also think that that was the last Wolfman Patrol of the cruise. I wonder why?

'Beachball'

**Dear Ed**

A 'heads-up' to all of you out there in birdie land, that some of us are trying to carry on the tradition, albeit in the civilian world of aviation.

As many of you would already know, as a result of the demise of the Tracker aircraft and other political reasons, the coast watch contracts were awarded to civil aviation companies, of which Cairns based Reef Helicopters currently hold the rotary wing contract. The company operates 1 x Bell 206i4 helicopter [used for day surveillance operations] and 1 x Bell 412 EP helicopter [used for night surveillance and SAR operations] based at Horn Island airport. The area of operations includes the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula.

The airport itself is of historical significance, as the area started life as a WW2 base. Bunkers, gun pits, revetments etc can still be found, as well as aircraft wreckage sites including a P47Thunderbolt, P38Lightning and a P40 Kittyhawk.

Of the 25 crew that rotate through the base [2 weeks on, 2 off] 5 are ex-RAN, 4 are ex-RAAF and 3 are ex-Army, filling positions of pilots, observers and engineers. Of the ex-RAN personnel, there is Phil Peck, senior base engineer [ATA- RAN Vietnam helicopter flight #44], observers - Steve Ross [SE], John Bizjak [RP], Sean Cox [RP] and Guy Walker [UC]. The irony is not lost on us that the three 'dibbies' spent their naval careers hating 'birdies' and now 'they are one!' As one can imagine, 'warries' are spun thick and fast around the Horn Island hangar, with the navy dits being the most colourful.



Other ex-RAN members to work for the company in the past have been pilots, Neil Forbes [Sea King pilot] and Paul Cross [RP]. Neil is now with CASA and Paul flies in the Middle East. Another RAN connection is observer, Chris Fisher whose father is Bernie Fisher [ex-ATA EMU]. Another connection with the RAN is that of 'our boss' CDRE Mark Bonser, the director general of coast watch. [Sean served with CDRE Bonser on *HMAS Sydney* during the early nineties].

From time to time we conduct joint operations with ADF units. We also have secondary duties to perform; in my case I am the company SE looking after Switlik, RFD, Hoover and Gentex safety equipment. John is the chief observer, Sean is the computer 'guru' and Guy is the company 'stores basher', so we still practise some of the skills we learnt from the service.

Until the next reunion, farewell to all FAAA members.

Steve Ross

**Dear Ed**

A good friend recently loaned me a booklet outlining the drama associated with Typhoon Ruth, it certainly was a bit 'hairy'. At that time I certainly wasn't feeling much pain having celebrated my 21st birthday the night before.

There was a covering letter with the booklet, which suggested that during the incident the Captain had 'lost it' and was relieved of command by the navigator.

I used to have a beer or two with some of the best 'buzz merchants' in the Navy and I cant recall this 'suggestion' being spoken about. This is not to say that it wasn't mentioned, just that I can't for the life of me remember anything being said about it.

There will be some unkind types who will say that we paid too much attention to the drink rather than to any matters of substance.

You may think this subject too contentious to throw open but as it happened a half century ago I can't see that being valid.

Congratulations on a fine magazine, it seems to get better with each issue.

Bill Heaney

**Dear Ed**

The photograph in the last edition [See inset] shows the handing over of the reins of command of VC851 from Trevor Peck to Jeff Dalglish, the actual 'reins and collars' were provided by Alan Earle who, if my memory serves me correctly, owned Clydesdales.

While I can't remember all the heads in the photograph the following are identified.

Tony Caladine, Dale O'Meara, Mark(?) Jaeggi, Greg Tindall, Alan Earle, Larry Mills, Dick Scott, Trevor Peck, Jeff Dalglish, Dave Hicks, Mark Scott and the squadron AEO.

Unfortunately both Trevor Peck and Dave Hicks are no longer with us.

Jeff Dalglish



**Dear Ed**

Bravo Zulu on another fine edition of *Slipstream* - I look forward to its arrival each quarter. I have always enjoyed the photos but as a currently serving member, and therefore one of the 'new breed' of the FAA, they have usually been of some historical interest but nothing more. However, it is obviously a sign of the times when

you start to recognise many of the people and events in the pictures and so I suppose I am now one of the 'not-so-new breed'.

Anyway, I would like to add the following photo. The last couple of editions seem to have contained a few Tracker photos and so, even though I have been rotary wing all my Naval career, I will continue the theme. This was taken in the early afternoon of 16 March 1977 as we were leaving San Diego harbour having just picked up the newly acquired G models from NAS North Island.



The aircraft in the protective coverings were USN cabs (a Sea King, two Seasprites, a Sea Knight and a Tracker) that we delivered to Oahu, where we also recovered half of 817 Squadron who had been left behind at (I think) NAS Barbers Point to make room.

The photo was taken from Wessex 823 which, my logbook tells me, was piloted by LEUT Phil Pinniger, with myself (observer) and (if memory serves) PO 'Blue' Quinn (SAR diver) as the rest of the crew. It was an interesting trip back to Sydney, with access to the uppers restricted due to AVGAS leaking from some of the 'new' aircraft.

I hope the photo brings back memories for some of your readers, and keep up the good work.

Paul Folkes - Captain RAN

[I would be delighted if members of the current FAA would submit articles and photographs for *Slipstream*. Despite many attempts to achieve this aim, the results have not been forthcoming.

If any of the 'younger' readers would like to send in submissions, they would be most appreciated. They don't have to be members of the Association to do so. I feel sure that the 'old and bold' would like to read of their successors' activities. Ed.]

**Dear Ed**

Whilst travelling around on the Atherton Tableland, I called into the Aviation and Military Museum at Mareeba.

I spoke to the owner, Sid Beck, who has a Sea Venom on display (N4904 Side Number 868) and wishes to find out its history. He thinks it may have been used for the Ikara trials.

If any member does have any information about this aircraft, would they please write or call him. I believe that 'Sandy' Wilson may know this particular Venom.

Sid Beck's address is:

The Beck Museum, PO Box 947, Mareeba FNQ 4880

Phone: (07) 4092 3979 or Fax: (07) 4092 6946

Hughie Wells

**Dear Ed**

In the top left hand corner of 'Moments in Time' in the last edition, the pilot with the 'tubby subby', Frank Gardiner, is David Eckersley.

[See inset]



The photograph reminded me of a bad fright I gave myself on a night exercise on February 6th, 1962.

I had almost nine years on incident free flying at that time. As I was due to pay off in the following June, I intended to keep it that way.

At night flying briefing I raised the point that many crews were joining circuit at fairly random heights (an extra 100 feet for the wife and 200 feet or so for the kids) instead of the regulation 800 feet. Commander Air, John Goble, so ordered it and we went our merry way.

David and I were airborne in Sea Venom 865 at 1940 for a one hour 'area famil' after which we joined circuit with me watching the altimeter like a hawk.

On our first approach on runway 26 David said he wasn't lined up with the runway lights and elected to overshoot. We completed another circuit and landed without further trouble.

As we taxied back to dispersal I noticed that the altimeter was reading 690 feet and I realised that we had done two circuits at just a 100 feet or so above the terrain. This was confirmed by the refuellers on the line as we had passed over their heads to the right of the runway at low level. It was obvious that neither of us had checked the altimeter prior to take off (the aircraft had just come off a maincheck).

My safety first comments had almost brought us undone, however, more by good luck than good judgement, we survived to tell this story.

The last time I saw David he was flying with Bristow Helicopters. I hear by the grape vine that the 'tubby subby' is now a judge.

*Brian Farthing*

LCDR RANR Rtd

Email - [Quarterpenny@bigpond.com.au](mailto:Quarterpenny@bigpond.com.au)

**Dear Ed**

In the latter part of 1953, the area around Gympie was flooded and a helicopter was sent from *Albatross* to Amberley RAAF Station.

The length of the trip and availability of 100/103 fuel for the helicopter determined that only two flight crew could be carried. As a result I was flown in by Firefly the next day so that all inspections and fuelling could be carried out on the helo at Amberley.

After about three days the flooding had subsided and we packed up our equipment. The pilot, LT Ferguson, made sure that the RAAF knew that they had to pick me up and the helicopter headed back home.

I was eventually picked up by a DC3 that was on a 'milk-run', one of six aircraft delivering bits and pieces around Australia.

After a few stops along the way, the aircraft landed at

*Albatross* in pitch-black conditions. The co-pilot told me to get my gear together, dropped me off and taxied away for take-off.

A voice called out, 'Are you all there is, Robson?'

'Yes, Sir', I replied.

I then took a close look around, there was the whole Duty Watch, a Fire Tanker and Commander Air, who immediately hopped into his car and took off. The Duty Watch was dismissed after much discussion about my ancestry and why I hadn't just jumped from the aircraft whilst it was still airborne.

It has been a long time, but I reckon I am the only 'kellick' to have had such a welcoming committee. Any takers, you blokes?

*John Robson*

**Dear Ed**

I'm trying to track down an old shipmate of mine by the name of Warren 'Bluey' Knighton. He was a birdie Airframes/Engines and served on HMAS *Melbourne* in 1967.

If anyone knows of his whereabouts, please ask him to make contact on (02) 4284 7797

E-mail: [jacqflash2001@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jacqflash2001@yahoo.com.au)

*Greg M 'Nobby' Clark*

**Dear Ed**

With reference to the photograph, 'What's the Story?' on page 18 of the last edition. [See inset]



The photograph was taken at the Jervis Bay airfield on 12 July 1951. From Left to Right the subjects are:

SBLT N. Knapstein RAN

LT 'Spike' Williams RN

LTCDR G.F.Spencer - Brown RAN

LT 'Braz' Cooper RAN

A mixture of 805 and 808 Squadrons (Sea Fury), we were being indoctrinated to RATOG, also doing ADDL's on the airfield.

From what I can remember the exercise was 'hairy' and humorous. Sometimes the rockets ignited at different times instead of all together. A mere few seconds delay, but it did cause some fancy flying.

*Noel Knapstein*

**Dear Ed**

I have read with a great deal of interest letters of those who have contributed to *Slipstream*, here my interest is with the loss of Sea Venom 866 as mentioned in the last two editions.

In 1966 my main role was in the ACR during aircraft take off and landings; but on that day I was tasked to man the Mirror control platform assisting the Mirror Control Officer.

During the final approach of 866, my role was to check that flaps and hook were down in the right position and that nothing else was out of order, this was the case.

Here I still find it difficult to put much of this into words.

There may be some comment in regards to my statement but I

have asked myself many times that if I could have found a fault on the aircraft's final approach things may have been different.

I do recall that after the incident there was a call from the flight deck for permission to jump in and save the aircrewman, but permission was denied and considering all, that was the right decision.

Several years ago I had cause to request and receive a copy of the inquiry.

Yes, it was a very tragic accident.

Tas Browning

**Dear Ed**

I have just come back from a long trip through western and north western Russia with another ex-chief birdie (Phil Beck).

We went to Moscow, Tver, Saint Petersburg, Petrozavodsk and the northern port city of Murmansk. Even though the "Reds" have gone and Russia has been "opened up" they were still very touchy about photos being taken in Murmansk and in Ekaterinburg at the front of an Airforce College there is on display a huge 'Backfire' bomber for all and sundry to look at - BUT no photos!

Ian (Locko/Wolfman) Lockett



**Dear Ed**

I read somewhere that the 'Firefly on the Stick' at Griffith had been removed. During my trip to Dalmeny in January last, I went through Griffith to see for myself. I took a photo of the aircraft but the weather was pretty bad at the time.

A local said that he thought that the aircraft was taken down periodically for cleaning and repainting, and probably greasing of the propeller support mechanism as the prop does spin in the wind.

Best wishes to all.

Don Roberts

**Dear Ed**

The attached photo is of HT723 aircraft disembarking troops during a work-up training exercise for the first Helicopter Flight Vietnam (HFV) group. The exercise took place at Gospers' Training area to the west of RAAF Richmond.



Apart from the flying and maintenance training in the field we all had to rough it 'grunt' style which, on the first night, saw the aircrew rigging hoochies in the dark and eating ration packs as we got back too late for the good stuff.

We were awakened in the morning before dawn with the 'enemy' over-running the camp. It was then that we found out that we had pitched the hoochie only meters from the perimeter. Being typical 'non-grunts' we woke up scratching our arse wondering why the stewards were making so much noise delivering our morning 'cuppa'.

After we were rounded up by the 'enemy', the exercise directors called a halt and the head 'grunt' reamed 'ten bells of s...t' out of us for being slack bastards etc. By the way, one pilot slept through the whole thing. I can't remember who, however, the name Leak or Casadio rings a bell.

Even then we were still trying to work out what all fuss was about because in coming back late we had missed out on the briefing and really didn't know what was going on. After that the army reckoned we were better off being billeted in a safer place - for them I guess.

While all this was going on the maintainers were working on the helos on the airstrip at Glen Innes and fighting off the locals who were trying to ply them with all manner of terrible things like wine, women and song.

After five days the 'powers-to-be' must have been satisfied or gave up trying as we went back to NAS Nowra and a warm bed.

Anyway I'm sure things will be remembered differently by others so lets hope that further discussion will ensue.

Ray Godfrey



**Dear Ed**

Re post traumatic shock syndrome (PTSS), I was shot at in Korea, and both my flying course mates were shot down (fortunately both survived).

I was in the wardroom of *Vengeance* at about midday just after we had farewelled the *Gothic* at the end of the 1954 royal tour when it suddenly became dark accompanied by loud grinding noises. We rushed up onto the flight deck to see *Bataan* wiping off four feet of her bows as she scraped down our side, taking one of our boats and our gangway ladder with her. She had been refuelling and got too close.

Some years later one of my wingmen in our Sea Venom aerobatic team got too close and gave my left rudder bullet fairing some of the paint off his tip tank; we were upside down over the married quarters at the time!

Now I reckon that if I got me one of those fancy personal injury lawyers I could make a good case of having nightmares of crashing and burning in Korea, fear of drowning in the middle of the Indian Ocean, and finally of being locked in the tangle wreckage of a pair of Sea Venoms, unable to eject as we plummeted into my married quarters killing my wife and children.

Unfortunately I am fit and well and as happy as a pig in the proverbial. I gave up smoking over thirty years ago and have yet to drink myself to death. Oh, and I don't beat my wife. Pity, I could do with the going rate of half a million bucks that apparently you can screw out of the government for PTSS (for which read, you and me, the tax payers).

Norman Lee

### THE ATOMIC EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION A.C.T. Inc.

We cordially invite all the members of the FAA Association to attend a Commemorative Ceremony to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first Nuclear tests held in Australia at the Monte Bello Islands on the 3rd of October 1952. We believe that the men who served in the area of these tests played a significant role in Australia's history. We shall also be commemorating Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Emu Field, Maralinga and supporting bases around Australia.

The Ceremony will take place at The Royal Australian Naval College Jervis Bay on the 3rd October 2002 at 11:00 hrs. The HMAS *Huon* will take the wreaths out to sea to be laid.

Veterans will assemble at 10:00 hrs, on arrival they will be directed to the assembly point and march down to the Quarter Deck (Parade Ground) bearing their flags and banners.

Only VIP's cars and buses will be allowed to enter the Base. We are arranging for those travelling by car to park their cars at Vincentia High School, from there buses will take them to HMAS *Creswell*. Those travelling by train on the 3rd of October will need to get the 5:54am train from Central to Bomaderry (Nowra) railway station where a bus will be waiting to pick them up. Buses will also pick up at Shoalhaven Ex-Servicemen's Club. Morning tea and lunch will be available.

We have been given an invitation to arrange tours of HMAS *Albatross* and Australia's Museum of Flight, we are hoping people may stay a few days as the tours would need to be spread over a few days. Accommodation needs to be booked now or very soon.

Further details will be announced in June-July when we will be sending out information and further details. By then we shall also need to know your plans so we can book buses and for catering purposes.

Mrs O.M.Sallans - Phone (02) 4283 8066

All correspondence to the Public Relations Officer:

MRS Olive Sallans, C/- East Corrimal PO, CORRIMAL NSW 2518

### THE FULL CIRCLE

When I was a sailor back in the early fifties I had my runs ashore and sometimes finished up in the Kings Cross' area in the early hours of the morning. Often I would see homeless and alcoholic people wandering the streets in shabby clothes, looking for somewhere to bed down for the night. I was OK, I either had my ship to return to or I could go to Johnnies (Royal Naval House) in Grosvenor Street and get a bed.

Many years later after I left the Navy, I finished up in a managerial position at the Sydney Futures Exchange, which was situated (believe it or not) in Royal Naval House.

Most people have seen future traders in their colourful jackets bidding and selling contracts on the Trading Floor for the big broking firms and banks. This is very big business....



Futures traders earn big salaries and commissions, wear expensive clothing and have a great lifestyle while they are successful in their work.

They are very generous to charitable causes, but many of the young men are very careless / irresponsible with their personal belongings. So much so, in fact, that on a periodic basis, if they did not claim their gear, items needed to be collected for disposal. We are talking about label clothing (Boss, Armani, Lacoste suits/trousers, shirts, ties, footwear etc.)

When asked where this clothing should be sent I immediately thought of the Matthew Talbot Hostel in 'The Cross' which tries to feed and clothe the less fortunate. Why not? Some of these 'street people' used to be part of the 'Yuppy' lifestyle in their better days!

So... if you have been in Sydney in recent years and have seen some of the 'street people' in the Kings Cross area and think they are rather well dressed, **they are!** It was due to the 'generosity' of the traders of the Futures Exchange..... I'm smiling.

We can all do something for someone else in our lives, can't we? It's sort of like the 'full circle'.

Don McLaren - Commander RAN (Ret'd)

**Dear Ed**

I was re-reading the July 2001 issue of the *Slipstream* for the umpteenth time and reliving the experiences of the trip 'Up Top' in 1960 with the article by Mick Tattersell. I recalled the pictures in my mind of those aircraft in their various states of ignominy on the flight deck.

I remembered that incident with the Sea Venom [Vol. 12 No. 3 Pg 13] very well because my participation in getting it down into the hangar received both great acceptance and abject rejection from those people who stood around it and gave forth their ridiculous comments; but that started about 25 minutes before the photograph shown was taken.

We were still sailing off the NSW coast, Mech. 1 Len Atkins was the Squadron 'Snags' Chief, so he was on the flight deck to correct the problems on the aircraft ready for take off. I had finished all of my tasks so I took up a position on the 'After Goofer's Sponson' on top of the island to watch our pilots try to pick up No 3 wire as they came in to land.

The pilots weren't the only ones who would bet on who caught No 3 wire, we, the maintainers were just as proud of our aircrew's efforts as they were, and many a shilling changed hands at the end of a flight.



On this particular day, besides our normal flying programme, we had a replacement Sea Venom coming onboard. I can't recall the reason for the replacement aircraft from HMAS *Albatross*, but Bill Butler, our Chief Aircraft Artificer, had asked me to check it in when it arrived.

I watched Sea Venom 807 with wings wagging, coming in for a normal landing and I saw it pick up No 3 wire for a beautiful execution of the desired touch down. Two handlers raced out to the aircraft as the aircraft was towed backwards slightly by the stretched arrestor wire which they then grasped, cleared from the deck hook and threw bodily away from the aircraft. Next, another handler directed the pilot to raise the deck hook and taxi the aircraft forward towards Fly One.

As it disappeared from my sight behind the other 'goofers' on top of the island, I heard a loud BANG! Out of the corner of my eyes I saw something arcing high in the air away from the front of the island towards the port side of the flight deck. I didn't know what had caused either the bang or what had flown through the air, but almost immediately I was informed in part by an announcement over the Tannoy system. "Crash on deck. Crash on deck. Emergency parties to muster on the flight deck".

Almost immediately after that announcement, another was made, "Crash on deck. No smoking throughout the ship. Crash on deck. No smoking throughout the ship". My mind was racing. No more aircraft had come in to land after Sea Venom 807 so what could have crashed?

My curiosity, along with the curiosity of dozens of others, caused me to quickly evacuate the 'goofer's sponson' and make for the flight deck where there, in front of the island was the replacement aircraft sitting on the fence between the flight deck and the Bofors Gun.

SBLT Jim Lamb AEO, was there with the squadron 'Snags' Chief, the crash crews with their fire hoses deployed and dozens of onlookers. In a matter of seconds, the whole emergency organisation had been activated and was on standby in case a fire erupted from the aircraft. The crash crew inserted the safety pins into the ejection seats and the aircrew climbed out of the aircraft.

It is amazing how in times like this, orders come from the Gods, directly to those who have to obey them. Whether the orders are feasible or not, does not ever come into the equation, but I heard someone say to SBLT Lamb, "Lamb, get that aircraft off the flight deck immediately". "Yes Sir", said Jim Lamb and he just grabbed all of us who were there.

The wings were spread, the nose undercarriage strut, complete with nose wheel was missing from the aircraft. A great puddle of hydraulic oil had accumulated under the aircraft and some was still pouring out of the aircraft's ruptured pipelines. Rank and other titles suddenly disappeared and Jim Lamb used the names he had known us by for years to direct the work required to get the aircraft down into the hangar. "Len, send someone to get the 'banana link tools' and fold the main planes. Augie, do something to stop the hydraulic leaks", and other orders that he made up as he went along, whether they made any sense or not.

As he was giving these instructions, I noticed that the Admiral

and the Captain and many other senior officers were gathering around to see what had happened. Jim Lamb must have sounded very efficient, which he was, for he was at least getting something done instead of panicking as I have seen others do.

I sat in the cockpit with my mind mulling over how I could stop the flow of hydraulic oil from the broken pipelines. It came to me that if the selector's landed piston valve was positioned so that the lands were not over an entry or exit hole within the valve body, then the flow would stop. In this position the undercarriage hydraulic system would be in a 'hydraulic lock', thus locking the main undercarriage in its present position.

I moved the selector lever to what I considered the central position and asked one of the naval airmen standing around, if the flow had stopped. When the reply came in the affirmative I sent two naval airmen for replenishment hydraulic oilcans.

Len Atkins was underneath the port wing trying to undo some very tight slotted screws so that he could fit the banana link tool. The language coming from below was not very pleasant as the slots in the screws were already damaged and were not being at all co operative.

I saw SBLT Lamb talking to the Admiral, but I needed his attention so I called to him by rank and name. He climbed the ladder to the cockpit and asked what I wanted. I told him what I had done to stem the flow of leaking hydraulic oil and that it had worked. I then suggested that if the wings were selected to fold and all other selectors were positioned in a central or neutral position, maybe I could fold the wings from the cockpit in the normal manual fashion, using the hand pump. "Give it a go, Augie", he said, "If it works, we'll show 'em who knows all about aircraft'. I must have missed the point of his statement but I carried on with what I intended to do.

The naval airmen had refilled the hydraulic oil header tank and were standing by in case the oil level dropped. I had made the necessary selections and called to Jim Lamb who was again talking to the Admiral, "Sub Lieutenant Lamb, the mainplanes have been selected to fold, all other selectors are in the neutral position, I am ready to pump the mainplanes folded".

The reply shook me, for once again came my nickname, "Carry on Augie". However a loud voice from under the aircraft was heard by everyone around the aircraft, "What f..... idiot said that? There is no neutral position in the hydraulic selectors".

I was pumping as rapidly as I could in case some air had entered the power circuit of the hydraulic system and may have also entered the wingfold system. I hoped that my fast pumping would have tended to stop any sponginess and slow operation of the system, but all was well and another voice from under the aircraft called to Sub Lieutenant Lamb, "Wing fold lock pins are being extracted, Sir. The wings are being folded with the hydraulic hand pump".

Jim Lamb didn't miss a stroke, "Quick! Up on the aircraft with the jury struts just in case some air gets into the system", he said to two of the naval airmen. Then he turned to the Ship's Air Engineering Crash Team and directed them up onto the aircraft to fit the aircraft lifting gear so the aircraft could be lifted off the fence



(Continued on page 10)

and placed onto the crash trolley. I left the scene when the wings were folded and allowed Jim Lamb and Len Atkins to get the aircraft into the hangar, which they did with great haste.

In the first paragraph I said that my participation received great acceptance and abject rejection from those around the aircraft. The acceptance came from Jim Lamb who was not only under pressure from the Flight Deck Officer to clear the deck but also from the Ships Air Engineer Officer and the Ship's Engineers who had come on deck to gloat at our misfortune.

In the 1960s, there was a sustained campaign by the college educated Marine Engineer Officers against the Air Engineer Officers who had been promoted from the Lower Deck. This belligerence was not nasty but became rather overbearing when every little aircraft unserviceability was deliberately misconstrued as a major failure of the aircraft and the Fleet Air Arm.

It was a fact that the ship could still put to sea with many things not working or partially working, whereas an aircraft couldn't complete its sortie when unserviceable. Jim Lamb being only a Sub Lieutenant, suffered the taunts of the Marine Engineer Officers senior to him, nightly, in the Wardroom. He would escape to the Air Maintenance Control Office where he would seek solace among his friends among the squadron chiefs.

The abject rejection came from Len Atkins and those Ship's Engineer Officers. Len's rejection only lasted until the wings started to fold but those Engineers still didn't like anything that us birdies could do. Jim Lamb talked for weeks about how we had gone 'one up' on those 'snotty nosed college trained steam sniffers'. I suppose they knew that Jim himself was once an Engineerroom Artificer and from the Lower Deck, so he would know what short cuts they would take to keep the boilers and ship's engines operating, whereas we HAD to work to the book and were proud of our serviceability record.

Does your car have ABS brakes? What a wonderful modern invention. The ABS braking system stops one brake grabbing and causing that wheel to skid. It does this by releasing some of the brake pressure on the grabbing brake so that all the wheels decelerate at the same rate.

In the 1960s, on the Sea Venoms we had what was called a Maxaret unit on each wheel to do exactly the same thing. It stopped the brakes grabbing the brake disc and causing the wheel to skid, exactly the same principal as the ABS system. Before flying from HMAS *Albatross* to HMAS *Melbourne*, Sea Venom 807 had had its Maxaret Units changed. They functioned well on the taxi test but one failed when the aircraft taxied up towards Fly One, in fact it caused the brake pads to grab the brake disc and not let go at all.

Yes, that photograph certainly brought back some memories.

Alan G Spearpoint

#### Dear Ed

As I sit on the beautiful shore of Lake Macquarie, a 'tinnie' in one hand, the sun sparkling on the water, a freshly caught and cooked blue swimmer crab before me, my thoughts are filled with the exciting times one had with great mates.

Previous editions of *Slipstream* recorded the passing of mates no longer with us. These guys were definitely 'personalities' in their own way and those who did not have the pleasure of knowing them have missed something.

When the *Sydney* returned to the UK to collect the 21<sup>st</sup> Carrier Air Group (CAG) there were two chaps on board, both different in

their ways but personalities in their own right.

'Muscles' Vinen, who was always looking for someone to workout with him in the hangar gym each afternoon. The only trouble with 'Muscles' was that he used the Biggest and Heaviest medicine ball (who thought of this as a name?) possible. After a couple of throws you'd end up plastered to the bulkhead, which almost required the duty watch to scrape you off.

All these exercises paid off one night when the ship was in Malta. 'Muscles' and I were having a few quiet drinks in a bar when a fight started. We were outnumbered but common sense came to the fore. Up the steps we went, me first closely followed by 'Muscles'. Half way up the stairway we passed this HUGE cupboard, 'Muscles' stopped lifted the cupboard and threw it at the pursuing angry horde. It stopped them in their tracks. We then exited this fine establishment and casually found our way to another delightful place quite a distance away.

When the *Sydney* was alongside in Portsmouth we usually spent the evening ashore, but managed to be back on board at the correct time.

This particular day Darcy Egan had not made it back. We were sitting in the mess during stand easy when Darcy walked in; showing the after effects of a good run ashore and being the worse for it. He was asked why he was so late getting back onboard. Only Darcy could manage such an adventure and an explanation. Berthed near us was another carrier being refitted, Darcy had managed to find his way on board the other carrier, find a place to bunk down and enjoy a restful night. To his amazement there was no 'wakey wakey' call in the morning so he slept in. He finally found his way back to us the next day.

By the way, the crab was delicious, the beer went down ever so smoothly and it is still a glorious day in this part of the world.

Fred Wessel

#### Dear Ed

Where have all the women gone? Do you ever get correspondence from ex-naval women, mothers, sisters, wives or sweethearts? Do you choose not to include any such letters in *Slipstream*? Is it that the women believe that as this appears to be an outlet for 'gung ho warries' they have no place here? Are they right?

From the letters you publish you appear to have a high approval rating. Quite an accomplishment, or don't you publish the criticisms? As a Newsletter Editor myself I find that readers tend not to put their criticism in writing and my friends tend to tell me what a hell of an Editor I am. Very flattering but not productive.

Challenge tradition - give the women a go!

Mary Rayner

[In keeping with other correspondence I have received from you, the above appears to be couched around the same format, a degree of paranoia, a touch of the 'poisoned chalice' and lack of facts. Irrespective of your intentions in penning this letter to me I will answer the questions you have posed.

1. *Where have all the women gone?*

I'm not a statistician so I can't help you with that one.

2. *Do you ever get correspondence from ex-naval women, mothers, sisters, wives or sweethearts?*

Yes.

3. Do you choose not to include any such letters in Slipstream?

No. The letters I have received for general publication have been published. I should mention at this juncture that many of the letters and phone calls I receive from the ladies are asking for assistance in various matters and are not for publication.

4. Is it that women believe that as this appears to be an outlet for 'gung ho warries' they have no place here?

I don't know what other ladies believe and, I suspect, neither do you. I believe that such a comment, especially from a 'concrete warrior', is an insult to the correspondents who have done, and are doing, the 'hard yard'. Slipstream is the member's journal and they are encouraged to tell their stories.

5. Are they right?

See the answer above.

6. From the letters you publish you appear to have a high approval rating. Quite an accomplishment, or don't you publish the criticisms?

If I have a high approval rating it's for doing a job that takes up most of the days of the year. Where criticisms have been marked 'for publication' they have appeared on these pages, the most recent being in the last edition. Fortunately, the few I have received are corrections or of a constructive nature.

7. Your final comment - 'Challenge the tradition...' is basically a load of twaddle. It has never been a tradition to exclude the ladies from Slipstream; their contributions have always been welcome. In my experience, if one member of a family is Fleet Air Arm, the whole family becomes Fleet Air Arm by default. Ed]

*When we criticise another person, it says nothing about that person: it merely says something about our own need to be critical.*

Dear Ed

In answer to Doug Dewhirst's question as to who flew the Sea Fury when Sydney was in Milford Sound - it was LTCDR C J Cunningham DSC RN. At the time he was the CO of 805 Squadron.

J D Goble

Dear Ed

The following is from the ADF Medals Section and may be of interest to members

Clasps to the Defence Force Service Medal are awarded for each 5 years efficient service subsequent to the award of the medal.

A number of changes to the National Medal Regulations were gazetted on 6 August 1999, including the awarding of the National Medal to members of the Defence Force who held Imperial long service awards, for the same period of service.

For members of the Defence Force, a member must have completed 15 years efficient service and be serving on or after 14 February 1975.

Eligibility for the award of the medal to members of the Defence Force ceased on 19 April 1982.

Brian Carroll

Dear Ed

I enclose a photograph that might possibly be of interest to the FAA Association and the FAA Museum.

The photograph shows a silver plaque with engraved signatures of the commissioning officers of HMS VENGEANCE in 1944. Since this ship was on loan to the RAN it might be of interest to some of your members.

I saw the plaque when I was on exchange with the RN in 1983/4 and was working out of the Wallsend shipyard of Swan Hunter Shipbuilders. It sat on a windowsill in the Managers' dining room and I arranged this photograph in case it was of interest to the RAN. I do not know where the plaque would be now since Swan Hunters went into liquidation some time ago, although it has been resurrected in some form.

At the time I was there HMS ILLUSTRIOUS (the third carrier) was under construction, as well as a T23 destroyer and two T22s; also much work on vessels returning from the Falklands for repair, survey, rebuilding, etc in other yards on the Tyne.

T R de Voil CDR RAN

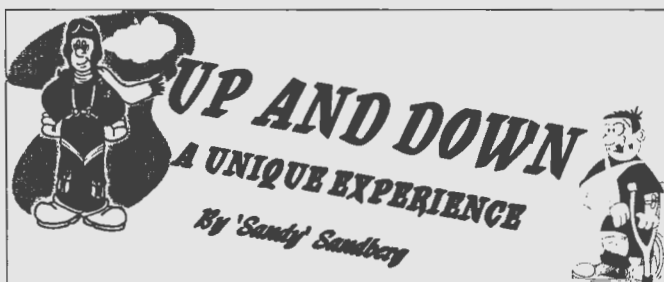


Shaved Head

My father had one I always liked from his Navy service during the Korean War. One ship in the squadron had a captain whose officers idolized him, and tried to emulate his every action. When he bought a particular brand of cologne, all the other officers began wearing the same cologne. When he started smoking a pipe so did the officers. One day, the captain returned from shore with his head shaved! Sure enough, that evening, all the officers in his crew crowded into the base barber shop to have their head shaved, too. The next morning, the captain appeared on the bridge, looked around at all the bald pates, and without a word, reached up and pulled off his skin-head wig.

Robert Lewis





Some time ago the Editor of SLIPSTREAM asked me to write the story of the first night ejection from an aircraft in Australia. That incident occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1960 at RAN Air Station Nowra, NSW when a Sea Venom FAW 53 of 724 Squadron struck a tree on the downwind leg of the landing pattern. The Pilot and Observer ejected safely.

As this happened over 41 years ago, I obtained a copy of the Board of Inquiry report to refresh my memory. I wrote to Navy Office, but as the documents were over 30 years old they had sent them to the Australian Archives. I obtained a copy from them.

During this era Naval pilots gained their wings with the RAAF and completed OFS at NAS NOWRA in either fighter or anti submarine specialisation. 724 Squadron was equipped with Sea Venom and Vampire aircraft to carry out night fighter pilot training.

The Sea Venom FAW 53 (FAW - Fighter All Weather) was a side by side two-seater aircraft built by De Havilland in the United Kingdom and shipped to Australia in HMAS MELBOURNE in 1956. The aircraft was fitted with a Ghost 104 engine and radar that enabled the Observer to locate a target passing in the front sector of his aircraft. The Observers job was to verbally guide the pilot into a position where the pilot could see the target under all weather conditions, day and night. Although, when all went well, the radar was magic in its day, I understand that it is pretty basic compared to todays equipment whereby pilots pop off a missile at a blip. We only had 20mm cannon thus the pilot had to actually see the target before shooting. The Sea Venom was a good aircraft.

The characters in the story are mostly confined to Sub Lieutenant Brian A. Dutch and Lieutenant E.D. (Sandy) Sandberg because some of the other players are no longer with us. I would like to begin by thanking all the old 724 Squadron ground crew, the NAS Nowra Air traffic Control staff and particularly all the Armourers and Safety Equipment Branch sailors, without whose skills, this tale would not be told by me.

Flying on the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1960 began with a twilight takeoff for Air Interception (AI) instruction. It was the 20<sup>th</sup> time I had flown with Brian, so we were pretty well used to one another. I had a lot of confidence in him and to my way of thinking in those days, he was the better pilot on this particular training course. As the Senior Observer of the squadron, I had the choice of pilots on a course and checked all their logbooks before selecting him. He was three years my junior in age; he had been flying for about 18 months and I for just on nine years. I have flown with a lot of pilots, in a lot of aircraft and I still rate Brian as a good pilot.

This particular AI course was programmed to finish that night, so there was pressure on us to get the appropriate number of exercises in – I don't recall how many, but something like three or four night interceptions would satisfy the syllabus. In fact we flew three sorties that night to get the required runs in.

A Naval Board of Inquiry was convened to determine the cause of the accident and several people on duty that night gave

their version of the event to the Board but it was the pilot who naturally underwent the most questioning and his version is the best account of what actually happened. He informed the Board that on returning from the first detail of the night the conditions in the circuit were slightly turbulent but didn't worry him at all. The detail as a whole was successful and the landing uneventful. After refueling we took off for the second detail in the same aircraft. But because the radar was unserviceable this time we returned to change aircraft. We experienced very severe wind gusts in the circuit area this time. On one occasion the weather sent us down 200 feet and then up 400 feet in a very short time. It was not a very nice night.

Within half an hour we had changed aircraft and were airborne again. Shortly after take off Brian had trouble with his oxygen equipment. We stayed low until he sorted out the problem. Fortunately this was not long and we were soon chasing our target (a Vampire flown by Lieutenant Roley Waddell-Wood) all over the sky for a successful mission. Now it was time to return to base and have a couple of beers to celebrate the completion of yet another night fighter course.

Below 3000 feet near NOWRA the turbulence started again. In the circuit area the pilot was doing those meaningful little things that a pilot does when coming into land. As I said earlier, I had considerable confidence in Brian's ability as a pilot and I was not concerned in the circuit – after all, there was nothing I could do; flying the aircraft was his part of ship!

On the run upwind at 900 feet the turbulence was again quite severe. In fact we gained 100 feet on the turn downwind and this was not caused by bad flying.. The airspeed at this time was around 250 knots decreasing to wheels down speed of 210 knots. I did my usual pre landing checks; there weren't many but because of the turbulence my navigation bag down by my right leg was bouncing around. I bent down to secure it. While I was doing that I felt the bang... I bolted upright! The windscreen was opaque. My radar was on my lap - I pushed it back. Fortunately it stuck in its cradle otherwise it ejected with me or I left my legs behind at the kneecaps. I switched on my microphone and shouted 'BIRDSTRIKE, EJECT, EJECT!!'

Naturally in a situation like this nothing works as it should. Of course the intercom was U/S. It says volumes for my power of command that the pilot heard me and responded in the only way possible - by ejecting the canopy. Normally it was the Observers job to do that little chore but these were not 'normal' times. I don't know where Brian got the extra hand from to release the canopy, but he did it. After all, at that time he had the control column back in his stomach getting height and the throttle full on getting power. I suppose it comes back to that old adage 'If you want something done in a hurry - ask a busy man.'

As soon as the canopy went, I went! No good hanging around at that time. In its normal flying position the Observers ejection seat is tilted slightly to the rear. When the canopy is ejected the seat springs forward to arm the ejection rocket. To fire the gun it is necessary to reach above the head and pull down the 'D' ring at the top of the ejection seat. Attached to the 'D' ring is a felt and canvas hood that covers the face to prevent injury to the head from wind blast, flames or other 'nasties' one may meet on the way out.

I felt nothing of the bang one would expect to feel in that portion of the anatomy one would expect to feel it. My first recollection was being clear of the aircraft and a recognisable moment when movement seemingly stops. I was hanging in the

air thinking, 'Is this automatic thing going to work automatically?' Then the straps holding me to the seat fell away. It felt an eternity until that jolt that stopped the fall and the parachute straps uncomfortably tightened on my body. I was hanging there. But I couldn't see anything – it's all so black!

Most people that have been in a life threatening situation will have experienced the adrenaline that races the mind. You think very fast indeed. I was thinking very fast indeed as I hung up there in the black but it wasn't black for long. WHOOMP! The aircraft hit the ground, seemingly in front of me and exploded. Flames shot into the air and again I realised that I was still airborne but this time without that comforting shell of the aircraft around me.

Night become day below me but in front things are still black. Hell I'm blind! I felt for my eyes and instead feel my helmet or more correctly, I feel the 'D' ring from the ejection seat is still over my head. I throw this off but it's still dark. The visor on my 'bone dome' is down and the cloth cover is on it. I push this back and low and behold there was light! Not any old light though. Light that shows my partner dangling like me but between me and the flames from our downed aircraft. "Get out of there you bloody mug," I yell to him. I don't think he heard me but right now I had more problems of my own.

I realise I must be getting close to the deck and I start to wonder about landing. Like a flash those periods of dummy parachute drill race out of my mind. I can't think of a bleeding thing to do. Do I put my feet to the left, to the right, cross them spread them or what? I look down again and see I'm going to land in a gully. What's more that gully has steep sides and tree stumps! Oh hell what the heck. I'll withdraw my feet altogether and stick them up around my neck somewhere out of the way. Thus I landed on my back somehow but at the time all I felt was the exit of some wind (from the mouth) and considerable jubilation at still seemingly being in one piece.

Now to find that stupid pilot. Like me he was approaching the deck fast but his immediate concern was his proximity to the burning aircraft. I need not have worried because he must have remembered his safety equipment drills for he was not hurt on landing. Before long we were reunited and became very happy indeed.

*We were alive!! We would fly again!*

Meanwhile, back at the station all hell was breaking loose. The Air Traffic Control Staff had watched the whole event, saw us eject and sounded the alarm. The Fire Tender boys responded and raced to the scene. An interesting side story here. I understand one of the drivers thought he was driving a tank and did all sorts of wonderful things on the way to the crash site but I'll leave that one to the crew to tell. We all know how dedicated these fellows were (and I'll bet, still are). The duty chopper was scrambled and the medics prepared for whatever remains they got. Generally everything worked as it should. As soon as the ambulance arrived they whipped us back to the Sick Bay (instead of the Wardroom!), checked we were still whole, put us in bed, shot us full of morphine and left. Meanwhile, up in the Wardroom a party was building up. We missed it but some kindly soul did slip us a 'little something' later on in the evening.

I am sure the reader will appreciate that most of the trees around NAS NOWRA are not very big for obvious reasons. The one we lopped was 33 feet at our point of impact. Relax 'Greenies', it was already dead before we hit it.

The Martin Baker ejection seats fitted to the Sea Venom were

the best available at the time for. The manual for the seats indicated that to work automatically the seat needed to be 200 feet from the ground and have a forward motion of 200 knots. That they worked in our situation I thank Mr. Martin and Mr. Baker and our squadron maintainers, especially the Armourers and Safety Equipment lads.

### The Board of Inquiry

Commander R.E. 'Digger' BOURKE RAN being the specialist aged aviator, was the main inquisitor and a bloody thorough job he made of it too. He threw questions at Brian at a great rate of knots. He asked about his airspeed, his altimeter, his artificial horizon and his turn and bank Indicator. He asked when he did this and when he did that. He asked about his power setting and his dive brakes.

He was quizzed on stalling speeds in certain configurations, what 'G' did he pull, how he was flying at the time- normal or pulling the aircraft in the turn, how the control surfaces were reacting.

Then came the point of impact questioning.

"What was your speed at the time the windshield shattered?"

"Around 210 Knots"

"At that time were you turning or had you straightened up?"

"I was taking off bank, still turning."

"You were straightening up?"

"Yes. Slightly port wing down, slightly nose down."

The crunch questions.

"Could you find the undercarriage lever without searching for it?"

"Yes sir."

"You were on instruments all the way (in the turn)?"

"Yes sir."

"But yet you saw no increase or loss of height either on the altimeter or the vertical speed indicator?" asked Digger.

"To me", said Brian, "everything was in order as I selected undercarriage down and it was almost at the same instant that we hit the gust and the windscreen shattered."

The score at this point was slightly in favour of the pilot. He had the answers. He answered truthfully.

The questioning returned to the instruments. Brian was asked about his instrument hours and then about the instruments performance at the time of the turn downwind.

"What was your height at this point (again)?"

"900 feet"

"Did you see any alteration of the altimeter reading during the turn?"

"No."

"Did the artificial horizon indicate the aircraft was descending.?"

"No"

"Was the altimeter reading steady or oscillating as the ASI was?"

"It was fairly steady."

"Was it steady during the turn?"

"Yes sir."

"Was the needle of the VSI steady during the turn?"

*(Continued on page 14)*

"No sir. Fluctuating quite a bit."

"Did you read the fall of speed pretty accurately between 250 and 210 knots?"

"It was impossible to get an accurate reading as it was fluctuating over 20 knots. It got to 210 and jumped to about 230 as I selected the undercarriage lever."

"What was the altimeter reading when you selected undercarriage down?"

"1000 feet."

"After the first impact you applied power. Did you get any response from the engine and did your controls respond satisfactorily to any movement?"

"The sensation I had was of driving a car in mud and suddenly coming out onto good road. The controls seemed to be operating correctly but I was getting a lot of control changes as I was getting a lot of buffet."

"She was handling satisfactorily?"

"Yes. I was getting into the climb with wings level."

The pressure eased - the questions were answered satisfactorily and the crew are alive. How come?

"Was it an 'exemplary' ejection because of the drill between pilot and observer?. Was it because of briefings between the two or was it squadron drills?"

The pilot answered. "We carry out drills. On this occasion I couldn't contact my observer on the intercom so I jettisoned the canopy to let him know I had heard him shouting."

...so ended the inquiry .

Now what did their 'Boardships' in Navy Office think of this little lot? You may well ask the question.

Firstly FOICEA (RADM George OLDHAM) was not very amused and had a few harsh words to threaten our future with, but DAWOT (Director of Air Warfare and Operational Training) in

Navy Office had a more moderate view and, fortunately for Brian and myself, his view prevailed. Naturally we both incurred the displeasure of the Naval Board.

Brian was informed that his actions were below the qualities expected and the Naval Board noted with concern the lack of knowledge in elementary parachute drill displayed by the observer. To that I say 'Amen'. I was required to carry out dog watch instruction in elementary parachute drill for one week.

We were informed of these findings by a somewhat bemused Captain of HMAS ALBATROSS, (Captain Tommy MORRISON.)

Hell's Bells! We were alive and our thanks still go to all those that made it possible. Brian learnt to fly better and I had dog watch instruction in elementary parachute drill. Fortunately I have not had to use those skills again.

What happened after a short spell of 'survivors leave'? Well, it was back to flying. Brian and I finished the course proper and we continued to fly together until the end of that month. I was posted (banished?) to 723 Squadron and Sycamore helicopters on 25 July 1960 then back to Venoms in 1961 while Brian went on to bigger and better things elsewhere.

But that, as they say, is another story for another day.

[Thank you, Sandy and Michael. Ed]

The author at RANAS NOWRA  
Photo courtesy Michael Sandberg



## MEDAL EXTENSION TO RECOGNISE DEFENCE SERVICE Media Release – 10 April 2002

Eligible Australian Defence Force personnel who served in Vietnam, the Middle East, South East Asia and Irian Jaya will receive greater recognition for their service and sacrifice through extended medal entitlements, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Danna Vale MP, announced today.

Minister Vale said the extension would see more service personnel receive this important, tangible mark of respect and thanks from a grateful nation.

"The extension of entitlements for the Australian Service Medal and Australian Active Service Medal will also help address some anomalies in the granting of these medals to our servicemen and women," Minister Vale said.

"In particular, the Government is pleased that anomalies in respect of the Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 for Vietnam have been removed.

"The extension of the AASM 1945-75 to personnel serving in South Vietnam from 31 July 1962 allows some land-based personnel who had previously not been eligible, and the crew of HMAS *Quiberon* and HMAS *Queenborough* to be awarded the

medal for their service in early 1963."

Minister Vale said personnel in approved third country deployments with the United States and United Kingdom forces in Iraq between 16 July 1991 and 1 October 2001 would be recognised by the awarding of the Australian Service Medal with Clasp 'IRAQ';

"Personnel involved with survey operations in South East Asia between 6 May 1975 and 22 August 1975 will be recognised by the awarding of the Australian Service Medal with Clasp 'SE ASIA'," Minister Vale said.

"Personnel involved with the CENDERAWASIH series of survey operations in Irian Jaya between 1976 and 1981 will be recognised by the awarding of the Australian Service Medal with Clasp 'IRIAN JAYA'."

The Minister said applications would be processed in order of date of receipt. Application forms are available from Federal Members and Senators, or on Defence Internet Site:

[http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe\\_site/honours\\_awards/resources/forms/ac694](http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/honours_awards/resources/forms/ac694)

**If men can run the world, why can't they stop wearing neckties? How intelligent is it to start the day by tying a noose around your neck?**

**Dear Ed**

I note with some trepidation that a plea has been made to contribute to the saving of the old warship *Vengeance*. All I can say is don't do it! It was a horrible ship that had murderous inclinations. I speak from bitter experience.

I was part of 808 Sea Fury Squadron that embarked on *Vengeance* in September 1953 and I hated that ship from the first moment I stepped on board.

The squadron mess was on 3 deck in the same position that the sick bay of *Melbourne* was located. It was dreadful accommodation; the only natural light came from the door leading from the cross passage just forward of 'A' hangar, it was dark, it was hot, it was overcrowded and it stank.

Catering was by central messing. That dreadful system whereby food was prepared by the 'mess deck dodger', collected from the galley in bulk and eaten in the messdeck.

This system meant that when the food arrived in the mess it was barely warm and if one were late there would be little or nothing left. It also meant that there was part filled containers of condiments etc and food scraps that supported cockroaches by the score

Finally it made a murderous unprovoked attack on my person that almost killed me; an attack that cannot be attributed to any negligence on my part.

It is said that every cloud has a silver lining and in my case the silver lining was a stay of about 8 weeks in Greenslopes Repat. Hospital in Queensland being repaired. I was ambulatory for the most of that time so generally had a great old time enjoying a beautiful Queensland spring in very congenial company.

J. Parsons

PS: The accompanying cartoon's location and event are self evident. Can anyone recall the year and the cartoonist? JP

**COMING SOON!** FOR 3 DAYS - OR MORE!



THE R.A.N. EPIC  
**"MELBOURNE WITH THE LID OFF"** (H)  
 "...YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS SHOW..." (FOCUS)

*A searching Drama ...*



*A revealing exposure ...*

**HUGE MALE CAST**



**SUPPORTING FEATURE :** ONE DAY ONLY (WE HOPE!)

**"ADMIRAL'S DIVISIONS"** (A)

*A tale of the tragedy which strikes those who left it too late!*



**THE SAMURAI**

Back in the time of the Samurai there was a powerful emperor who needed a new head Samurai. He sent a declaration throughout the country that he was searching for a new head Samurai. A year passed and only three people showed up to apply for the position: a Japanese Samurai, a Chinese Samurai and a Jewish Samurai.

The emperor asked the Japanese Samurai to come in and demonstrate why he should be the new head Samurai.

The Japanese Samurai opened a matchbox and out popped a little fly. Whoosh went his sword and the fly dropped dead on the ground in two pieces. The emperor exclaimed, 'that is very impressive!'

The emperor then asked the Chinese Samurai to come in and demonstrate why he should be the new head Samurai.

The Chinese Samurai also opened a matchbox and out popped a fly. Whoosh, whoosh went his sword. The fly dropped dead on the ground in four pieces. The emperor exclaimed, 'that is really very impressive!'

The emperor then had the Jewish Samurai demonstrate why he should be the new head Samurai.

The Jewish Samurai also opened a matchbox and out popped a fly. His flashing sword went whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. A gust of wind filled the room, but the fly was still alive and buzzing around.

The emperor, obviously disappointed, asked, 'After all of that, why is the fly not dead?'

The Jewish Samurai smiled and said, 'Circumcision is not intended to kill.'



**Dream of Flying from the Deep** - A British submarine (M2) was once converted to carry a seaplane in a hangar on its deck. The submarine could surface and keep afloat on its hydroplanes while the crew pulled the plane from its hangar and spread its wings ready for flight. The plane was launched along the deck by catapult to assist the submarine in any search or lookout role it was performing. When the plane returned to the submarine, it landed on the sea and was lifted aboard by a deck-mounted crane.

Unfortunately, what could go wrong did go wrong. Submarine M2 went into diving mode while the hangar doors weren't properly closed and she sank off Portland Bill on 26 January 1932. This is now a popular location for amateur divers where, fully intact, M2 stands upright with the entombed bodies of her 60 crew in just 110 feet of water

## A maladaptive memory trap

Research confirms that fear and stress is contagious, which is nothing new to those who have done flight deck time or seen action. Bravery is probably equally contagious but no worthwhile scientific study has ever proven this. Research also tells us that human memory is amazingly fallible. Many people have recurring intrusive bad thoughts, real or imagined, and they are particularly disabling in those with severe maladaptive behaviour disorders.

After scientific research in New York, London and Sydney, and successfully treating hundreds of people with phobias and memory problems, it is disturbing to see ex-shipmates reporting present day effects of years-old 'stress'. It is true that everyone, except for sociopaths and the like, experiences post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms at one time or another. However, nobody knows how or why a specific experience leads to debilitating psychological behaviour in one person and not another. Horrific experiences leave some people virtually untouched or even psychologically stronger. Others, regardless of so-called 'personality type', can be virtually crippled by a relatively minor or even totally imagined event.

Research proves that human memory can be faulty and real stress can be experienced from faulty memory alone. Given the right conditions, including sufficient rumination, even comparatively minor events assume unwarranted proportions. Maybe that was one good reason our 1950s war-hardened leaders made sure young aircrew got back into the air as soon as possible after any kind of accident, before rumination and contagion could work their damage.

It would be comforting to recommend psychological treatment as soon as a PTSD risk is suspected, but a recent worrying post-11 September finding in the USA suggests that some PTSD treatments appear to leave some clients worse off than if they had none. A host of other disorders, particularly depression and agoraphobia, can also coexist with PTSD and complicate the picture. Substance abuse, like heavy smoking and drinking, are also prominent in stubborn PTSD cases.

Another related condition, known since the 1950s, is what an American researcher (Eysenck) called 'compensation neurosis'. He applied that name to a group of maladaptive behaviours he first saw in Native Americans. Modern Australian Aboriginal leaders are well aware of the problem. I have seen the same behaviours when treating phobias and even chronic pain in the UK, USA and here. Paradoxically, instead of learning and applying

new skills to handle existing severe problems, some people funnel energy into exploring and re-exploring every possible compensation avenue. Instead of acknowledging objective measures of progress, they repeatedly remind themselves and others of their problems. Positive milestones become secondary to compensation and the 'tut-tutting' of friends.

Quite apart from compensation, some find relief from 'beating the bushes' for fellow sufferers. Agoraphobia clients, in particular, tend to seek out others and report relief in the presence of those who share their symptoms. Unfortunately, 'beating the bushes' stirs memories and feelings in others that might be best left dormant. With our less than perfect human recall process, I have seen bad experiences and thoughts in one person become easily exaggerated to assume unwarranted problematic 'me too' proportions in another.

What then should we do? Simply saying 'don't think of it (the bad experience)' is not only useless, but probably counterproductive. Instead, systematically thinking a pre-planned series of pleasant or distracting thoughts, or even indulging in a kind of mantra whenever bad thoughts intrude, is probably a good first start. If it works, follow it up with an 'attaboy' self-reward. If that doesn't work, or if the bad thoughts start intruding on important aspects of life, like work or social enjoyment, then seek psychological help without delay.

Who from? Anyone who has helped you in the past is a good place to start. If you have never seen a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist before, then it might be quicker and cheaper to try someone skilled in short term group cognitive-behavioural psychology before someone, say, from a one-on-one psychoanalytic discipline or one who prescribes medication as a first resort. Even so, there might well be underlying coexisting disorders that are best treated in a one-on-one setting or with medication. Only an experienced clinical psychologist or psychiatrist can tell which strategy is best for any particular disorder or set of disorders.

All this in no way should discourage anyone from seeking compensation for genuine distress, and genuine distress can be experienced by anyone, whether the blamed cause was objectively severe or not. Beware, however, of jumping into million-dollar compensation cases, or seeking fellow-sufferers, before you have made an honest treatment attempt. Beware of the 'compensation neurosis' factor, which can become just as disabling as PTSD itself. Finally, for the sake of your ex-shipmates, think twice about asking 'authorities' to 'do something' because in our system that invariably means 'beating the bushes' for fellow potential sufferers.

*Ex-birdie PhD*

*(Name supplied but suppressed for ethical reasons)*

**Positive milestones become secondary to compensation and the 'tut-tutting' of friends.**

**ONE:** Don't miss the boat.

**TWO:** Remember that we are all in the same boat.

**THREE:** Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

**FOUR:** Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

**FIVE:** Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

**SIX:** Build your future on high ground.

**SEVEN:** For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

**EIGHT:** Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

**NINE:** When you're stressed, float a while.

**TEN:** Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals!

**EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW, I LEARNED FROM NOAH'S ARK**





The following letter may be of interest to some of our members, the name has been changed to 'John Doe' to protect the addressee's privacy.

## NAVY HEAD QUARTERS

Staff Officer Navy Medals

For Information:

Staff Officer Navy Records

**'JOHN DOE' - APPLICATION FOR ASM (1945-75) WITH CLASP 'PNG'.**

## References:

A. Telecon D. Brightwell (Navy Medals Section) / B. Mitchell (Naval History Directorate) on 11 February 2002

B. HMAS ALBATROSS - Report of Proceedings - Quarter ended 30 September 1975

C. HMAS STALWART - Report of Proceedings - September 1975

D. Pay History Cards - 'John Doe' (copy attached)

1. Reference A requested assistance to corroborate Mr Doe's claim to the Australian Service Medal (1945-75) with Clasp "PNG". Your initial assessment calculated that he had completed 22 days qualifying service. Mr Doe has claimed additional days by virtue of service in HMAS MELBOURNE in October 1966 and HMAS STALWART in September 1975.

**HMAS MELBOURNE - Exercise SWORDHILT**

2. HMAS MELBOURNE sailed from Sydney on 10 October 1966 for Exercise SWORDHILT and returned on 28 October 1966. Exercise SWORDHILT was a multinational exercise, involving some 27 fleet units, and took place in the Solomon Sea, the Louisiade Archipelago and off the coast of Queensland.

3. HMAS MELBOURNE arrived off the Jomard Entrance in the Louisiade Archipelago at 1700 on 14 October 1966 and passaged through to the Solomon Sea and across to the southern extremity of New Ireland. HMAS MELBOURNE exited to Jomard Entrance on the return passage on 20 October 1966.

4. It is recommended that the service of HMAS MELBOURNE between 14 and 20 October 1966 (seven days) be recognised as qualifying service for the award of the Australian Service Medal (1945-75) with Clasp "PNG".

5. As a number of HMA Ships participated in Exercise SWORDHILT, their qualifying service will need to be re-assessed and updated. This office will re-examine their movements and if necessary, their Reports of Proceedings, and forward advice in due course.

**HMAS STALWART - Papua New Guinea Independence**

6. Mr Doe claims that he was embarked in HMAS STALWART for her voyage to Port Moresby for the Papua New Guinea Independence Celebrations. To date official records have been unable to identify his presence on board HMAS STALWART at that time. His service record shows that he was posted to HS 817 Squadron.

7. HMAS STALWART sailed from Sydney on 9 September 1975 and arrived at Port Moresby on 14 September. Papua New Guinea was granted Independence on 16 September, this also being the end date for the Australian Service Medal (1945-75) with Clasp "PNG". HMAS STALWART departed Port Moresby on 18 September and returned to Sydney on 23 September.

8. Reference B states that two Wessex 31B helicopters of HS 817 Squadron were detached to HMAS STALWART on 21 August 1975 in preparation for her programmed deployment to Papua New Guinea for the Independence Celebrations.

9. Reference C lists the names of five officers who embarked in HMAS STALWART for the period of 8 to 23 September 1975. They were:

a. Lieutenant M.D. Buckett RAN HS 817 Squadron Senior Pilot

b. A/Sub Lieutenant M.J. Wright RAN HS 817 Squadron Observer

c. Lieutenant G.R. Roach RAN HS 817 Squadron Aeronautical Engineer

d. Lieutenant J.W. Daley RAN HMAS ALBATROSS Air Traffic Control

e. Sub Lieutenant P. Knowles RAN HS 817 Squadron Pilot

10. Mr Doe's Pay History Cards (Reference D) record that he was paid \$16.00 Hard Lying Money (HLM) for the period of 8 to 23 September 1975, a period which coincides with the embarkation dates of the aforementioned officers.

11. Following inquiries with the Directorate of Naval Officers Postings (DNOP), it was discovered that the posting and movement records for the aforementioned officers gave no indication that they had been on detached duty with HMAS STALWART. For all intents and purposes their records show that they were at HS 817 Squadron and in the case of Lieutenant Daley, HMAS ALBATROSS.

12. That no formal posting action appears on the records of these officers, it is therefore reasonable to assume that no such action was taken for Mr Doe or any other squadron maintenance personnel who may have embarked. This aspect and that of the exact alignment of the period of payment of HLM to Mr Doe with the embarkation dates of squadron officers supports Mr Doe's contention that he served in HMAS STALWART in September 1975.

13. It should also be noted that in 1975, HMA Ships MELBOURNE and STALWART were the only RAN fleet units capable of embarking Wessex helicopters. HMAS MELBOURNE was in refit from April 1975 to June 1976.

**Summary**

14. In summary, it is recommended that the Mr Doe be credited with the following additional service in respect of the award of the Australian Service Medal (1945-75) with Clasp 'PNG':

a. HMAS MELBOURNE 14 - 20 October 1966 (7 days); and

b. HMAS STALWART 14 - 16 September 1975 (3 days).

*Brett Mitchell - for Senior Naval Historical Officer*

*Naval History Directorate - Sea Power Centre*

CP4-1-12 - Campbell Park Offices

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6266 3044

**Sam and the fisheries inspector...**

A fisheries inspector noticed how a particular fellow named Sam, consistently caught more fish than anyone else. Whereas other people would be catching only three or four a day, Sam would be coming in off the lake with a boat full. The inspector was very curious and asked Sam his secret, in reply Sam offered to take him out the next day and show him how it was done.

The next morning the two of them met at the dock and took off in Sam's boat. When they got to the middle of the lake, Sam stopped the boat and the inspector sat back to see how things were done. Sam's approach was simple. He took out a stick of gelignite, lit the fuse and tossed it over the side of the boat. The explosion rocked the lake with such force that dead fish immediately began to surface. Sam took out his net and started to scoop.

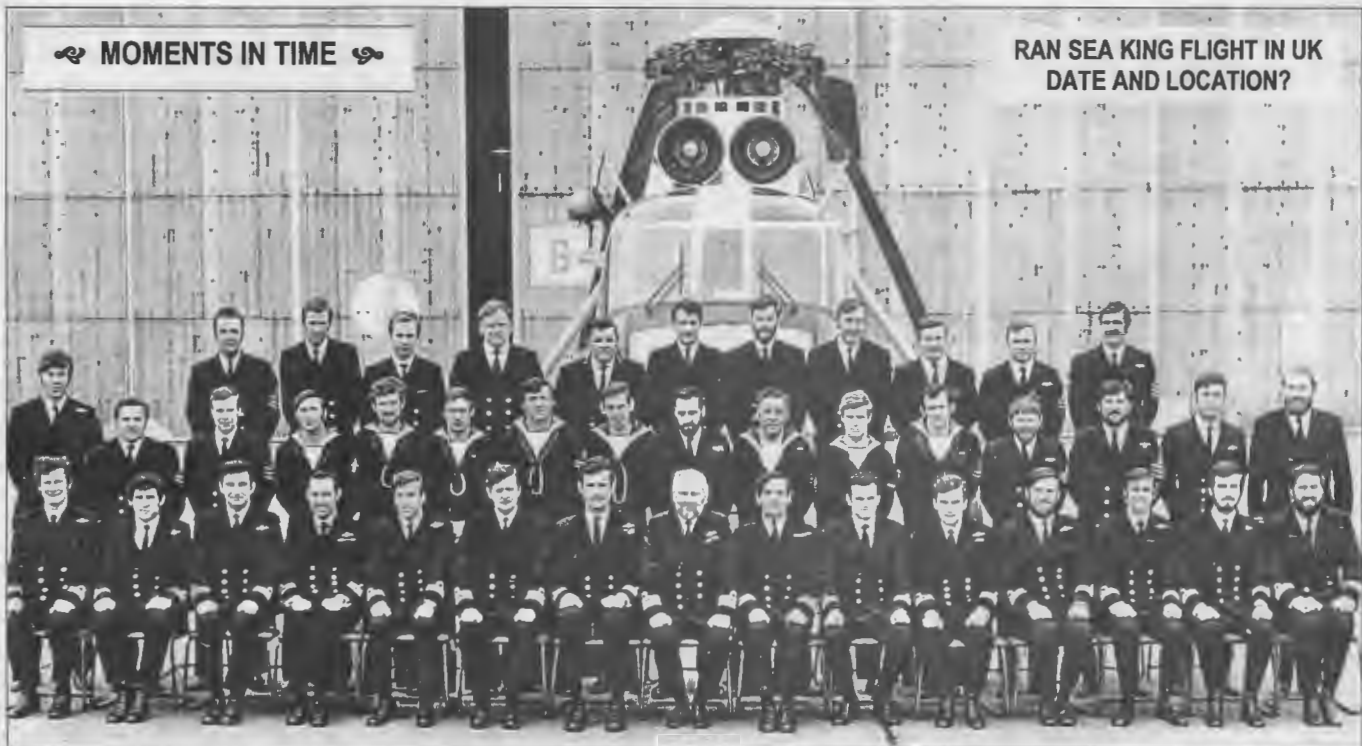
The fisheries inspector was so amazed at what Sam had done that he had trouble speaking. When he recovered he began yelling at Sam about fines, gaol, throwing the book at him and so on.

Sam set his net down and took out another stick of 'jelly', lit it and tossed it into the fisheries inspector's lap with these words, "Are you going to sit there all day complaining or are you going to fish?"



MOMENTS IN TIME

RAN SEA KING FLIGHT IN UK  
DATE AND LOCATION?



RANAS NOWRA - Details not known



LTs Batten and Fergus - Brisbane - August 1956



Les Bailey and Bob Geale at RANAS - Date?



817 Sqdn - The late SBLT Ward - Date ?



Aircraft Handlers' Reunion - CPOs' Mess RANAS Nowra 1981



Divisions at RANAS Nowra - Captain T K Morrison - 1961



HMAS MELBOURNE 14 NOV 1958  
816 Squadron Gannet take - off



724 Squadron Briefing Room - 1956  
'ONCE WERE WARRIORS'

Clockwise from top left: Ken Douglas- John Nestor - Toz Dadswell -  
Bob Simmonds - Frank Hillier and Bill Callan  
*Photograph courtesy Toz Dadswell*

*Unless stated otherwise all photographs on pages 18 and 19 are courtesy of the Australian Museum of Flight.*

## A QUIET LIFE IN THE FLEET AIR ARM

By Captain J A Gledhill DSC RAN (Rtd)



In 1940, as with a number of others, I joined up as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm. Ships to get us to UK were few and far apart, yet armadas of great liners never before seen in these waters, such as the AQUITANIA, arrived to ship New Zealand and Australian troops to the Middle East. Some training was started in New Zealand in 1940 but it was April 1941 before our FAA party joined HMNZS PHILOMEL and the TAMAROA.

The OIC our party was Lieutenant Bill Sykes RN who flew HMS ACHILLE'S Walrus aircraft and was a hero of the ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE battle. I met Lieutenant Commander Sykes again during the war in HMS VICTORIOUS as far as I remember.

In company with the cruiser LEANDER we departed immediately from Auckland but after three days LEANDER broke off and we proceeded alone. German surface raiders were in the area and had intercepted a previous FAA party who were made POW's. Mines had been laid and claimed several victims. To try to avoid raiders, TAMAROA took a great circle course well south in the Pacific towards the South America coast and then headed for the Panama Canal.

At Balboa we were warned that many of the local population were pro-Nazi. The US was not at war and uniforms could not be worn in the Canal Zone, nevertheless people seemed to know who we were. A US Marine Corps pilot from a US carrier showed us round Balboa. He was rather envious that we were going to the war.

Balboa night life was such as we had never seen. Clubs, Beer Gardens of enormous size with coloured lights, open air dance floors, big bands and pleasant places to relax, drink and watch the shows. This was the life.

Passing through the canal we proceeded through the Caribbean tailed by a modern Japanese ship, which although a non-belligerent, was probably relaying information for German U-boats. We called briefly at night, at Curacao, to refuel.

TAMAROA missed a convoy off Bermuda and proceeded alone. Off Newfoundland the ship plunged into a wet and bleak fog and stayed in it for several days despite quite a strong wind. This fog blanket no doubt gave us protection against U-boats since 1141 merchant ships were sunk in the Atlantic in 1941.

Passing just south of Greenland we eventually emerged from the fog but conditions were very cold and we were wearing woollen gloves, scarves and balaclavas.

Suddenly we were made aware that we were moving close to the fringe of a great naval battle. Close enough to have to keep a lookout for gun flashes. This was the engagement between the battle cruiser HMS HOOD, battleship PRINCE OF WALES and six destroyers and the battleship BISMARCK and cruiser PRINCE EUGEN. HOOD was blown up with only three survivors of 1419 complement. PRINCE OF WALES was damaged also PRINCE EUGEN. BISMARCK, seriously damaged, set course for Brest.

Had TAMAROA been detected our naval careers would have been brief. Our armament consisted of one 4" gun aft, several oerlikons in emplacements which we manned and a box kite for protection against dive bombers or low flyers. Apart from surface and underwater threats, Focke Wulfe Condors were a serious airborne threat.

Despite all these threats TAMAROA made a final dash through the Western Approaches to Greenock in safety.

An uncomfortable overnight train journey followed from Glasgow to London and Portsmouth, with enforced stops in the Midlands due to air raids.

The city of Portsmouth was a shambles, much of it demolished by air raids. There was also much damage around the dockyard and railway. Beaches were covered in barbed wire and oil against invasion.

We joined HMS ST VINCENT where we were to enjoy the spartan comforts of Nelson's day. Discipline was tight and food limited and dreadful. Air raids on Portsmouth and Lee-on-Solent area still occurred. A heavy raid developed one night on depots between ST VINCENT and the harbour. Bombers were flying over as low as 1500ft and the area was alight with bomb bursts and gun flashes. My post was on a machine gun on top of ST VINCENT and when a bomber passed low overhead I opened fire and thought I couldn't miss but he continued on to seaward.

Bigger targets would be available at sea, later on. In the meantime our next stage was flying.

### A brief biography of

### CAPTAIN J. A. GLEDHILL DSC RAN (Rtd)

Born in Wellington in 1921, Captain J.A.Gledhill DSC RAN was a Fleet Air Arm Pilot in the RNZNVR from 1941-46. He went to Australia in 1947 to join the new RAN FAA. Later in his career as Director of Air Warfare, Organisation and Training (DAWOT), he was responsible for all FAA policy in the RAN. Qualified on piston-engined, turbo-prop and jet aircraft and helicopters, he landed on 13 different aircraft carriers in his time.

He was one of a number of New Zealanders who sailed for UK in April 1941 for Naval and flying training.

A night flying course was completed in preparation for Malta operations. Instead, he joined 827 Squadron (Albacores) in which six NZ aircrew served. 827 were the first to convert to the new Barracuda Torpedo and Dive-bomber and suffered serious losses, including New Zealanders, before design faults were identified.

827 and 830 Barracuda Squadrons combined to form No.8 TBR Wing and with 801 and 880 Seafire Squadrons joined the aircraft carrier FURIOUS. In 1943-44 the Home Fleet including FURIOUS carried out flying operations in the North Atlantic and Arctic, in Norwegian waters and over Norway, against German ships, submarines and aircraft.

On 3rd April 1944, aircraft from FURIOUS and VICTORIOUS (which 827 joined) and fighters from four escort carriers attacked the German battleship TIRPITZ in Alten Fiord on the northern tip of Norway. Sub-Lieutenant Gledhill leading a Flight of Barracuda's hit the TIRPITZ with two bombs alongside the bridge (Admiralty records).

On D-Day he was appointed as a deck-landing instructor to RNAS EASTHAVEN. He was promoted Lieutenant RNZNVR and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for attacks on German ships. He married a WRNS officer at Easthaven. In 1946 he returned to NZ in the carrier HMS QUEEN and was discharged from the RNZN.

1947 - He moved with his wife to join the new Australian FAA.

After sea time in the cruiser AUSTRALIA and destroyer BATAAN, he went to UK for flying with the Royal Navy in Firefly, Seafire and Barracuda 111 (ASW) aircraft.

1950 - he joined 817 Squadron (Fireflies) in the 21st Carrier Air Group at St Merryn, returning to Australia in HMAS SYDNEY.

1951 - HMAS SYDNEY and Air Group deployed to relieve GLORY in the Korean War. Firefly and Sea Fury aircraft dropped bombs or rockets daily in North Korea, reaching over 100 sorties per day.

1952 - Gledhill was promoted Lieutenant Commander and formed the first Second Line Squadron (723 Sqdn) in the RAN at Nowra.

1954 - He was sent to the UK to fly in a Royal Navy Gannet Squadron in Ireland.

1955 - Formed 817 Gannet Squadron at CULDROSE and returned to Australia in HMAS MELBOURNE after her Commissioning, followed by SEATO exercises in SE Asian waters.

1956 - He was appointed COMMANDER (AIR) at RANAS Nowra and promoted Commander.

1958 - Appointed to Australia House, London, briefed to investigate new aircraft and a replacement carrier.

1960 - Underwent RN Staff College Course at Greenwich then returned to Canberra as Director of Air Warfare, Organisation and Training. Succeeded in reversing Government decision to disband all fixed-wing squadrons in RAN. Introduced new helicopters and planned re-equipment of FAA with new carrier and aircraft from the United States of America.

1964 - Promoted Captain, became NOIC Northern Australia, followed by Defence Planning Group, Canberra. Later Captain of HMAS PENGUIN.

1968/71 - Appointed to High Commission, Wellington, as Australian Defence Representative.

1972 - Returned to Canberra as Director of Naval Intelligence.

1975 - Retired from RAN.

[Captain Gledhill, now almost 81 years of age, served in the Fleet Air Arm before any of the original pilots in the RAN, including the handful of WWII FAA Officers.

The survivors of the early days of the FAA are cordially invited to send their stories to Slipstream. Ed]

\* \* \*

## Cyril John CUNNINGHAM

Born: India, July 1920 - Died: England, April 2002

**Captain 'Jock' Cunningham showed outstanding bravery and resourcefulness three times during World War II.**

On December 12, 1940, a fire started in a benzene lighter alongside a tanker in the Egyptian port of Alexandria and the battleship *Warspite* sent its fire fighting crew, which included midshipman Cunningham.

To remove boxes of explosives from the flames, he went straight in without protective clothing and passed out the smouldering ammunition.

He later put out another fire on the lighter leading his superiors to praise his courage and presence of mind *'that prevented serious damage and saved many lives'*.

A fortnight later he displayed outstanding bravery and leadership while commanding a patrol boat sheltering from bad weather. Hearing cries of help, he stripped off, dived in and saved two men - a merchant seaman who had fallen in and a naval rating who had plunged in to help despite not being able to swim.

His captain said he had shown bravery, initiative, coolness and sound judgement - but recommended against a Royal Humane Society award on the ground that Mr Cunningham had held a rope's end while in the water.

## Better English

Having chosen English as the preferred language in the EEC, the European Parliament has commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communications between Government departments.

European officials have often pointed out that English spelling is unnecessarily difficult; for example: cough, plough, rough, through and thorough. What is clearly needed is a phased programme of changes to iron out these anomalies. The programme would, of course, be administered by a committee staff at top level by participating nations.

In the first year, for example, the committee would suggest using 's' instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, civil servants in all cities would receive this news with joy. Then the hard 'c' could be replaced by 'k' since both letters are pronounced alike. Not only would this clear up confusion in the minds of clerical workers, but typewriters could be made with one less letter.

There would be growing enthusiasm when in the second year, it was announced that the troublesome 'ph' would henceforth be written 'f'. This would make words like 'fotograf' twenty percent shorter in print.

In the third year, public acceptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible. Governments would encourage the removal of double letters which have always been a deterrent to accurate spelling.

We would all agree that the horrible mess of silent 'e's in the language is disgraceful. Therefore we could drop them and continue to read and write as though nothing had happened. By this time it would be four years since the scheme began and people would be receptive to steps such as replacing 'th' by 'z'. Perhaps even the function of 'w' could be taken on by 'v', with 'is', after all, half a 'w'. Shortly after this, the unnecessary 'o' could be dropped from words containing 'ou'. Similar arguments would of course be applied to other combinations of letters.

Continuing this process year after year, we would eventually have a reliable sensible written style. After twenty years there would be no more troubles, difficulties and even more would find it easy to understand each other. The dreams of the Government would finally have come true.



He showed special qualities a third time in February 1942 aboard the cruiser *Cleopatra* while under bomb and torpedo attack near Malta. This time he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

He spent much of the war in the Mediterranean. As a lieutenant on the destroyer *Quillam* he took part in the landings at Salerno, Italy. Later he became a pilot flying Seafires.

Returning to Malta in peacetime, Mr Cunningham drove around in an old London taxi named Horton. He became a senior pilot and then commanding officer of 805 Naval Air Squadron that was loaned to the Royal Australian Navy and became its first front-line Sea Fury squadron in the Korean War.

He held key appointments including exchange service in the US Navy; on the royal yacht *Brittania*; as commander (Air) of the carrier *Ark Royal*; and several commands of frigates and frigate squadrons. He was naval adviser to the British High Commission in New Delhi and his last appointment was commodore and chief-of-staff to the Flag Officer Naval Air Command.

In retirement he took up house renovation, sailing, and cruising canals in his barge.

'Jock' Cunningham is survived by his wife Mary and two daughters.

[This article originally appeared in the *West Australian* and was forwarded by Ray Thomas]

## BOOK REVIEW

**'FLY BOY'**

By Geoff Litchfield



'Fly Boy' comprises the selective memoirs of an ordinary country boy who followed his 'yellow brick road' to a chosen career that exposed a personal natural ability, resulting in a working lifetime of high adventure and personal pleasure, more a hobby than a task, and being paid for it.

Born on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1930 in the New England tablelands town of Glen Innes, into a self-supportive, close family group largely influenced by the matriarchal supervision of a Victorian grandmother, Geoff Litchfield eventually defied all influential family inputs to pursue a path in life totally diverse from his ancestors.

Briefly following maternal recommendations to follow the then popular path into public service, a smouldering intense interest in aircraft, flight and the sea overcame his lack of self-confidence, leading him to risk all, in an attempt to emulate his heroes – pilots.

Gaining acceptance for direct entry into the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet Air Arm, and joining naval course NAC4, an intense 16-month period of training, mostly with 9 Course RAAF, resulted in his award of the coveted set of navy pilots' wings on the left sleeve of his uniform on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1953. Whilst air force pilots were assigned to various squadrons immediately following graduation, naval pilots were required to undergo an additional four months of operational training in the United Kingdom.

Graduating members of NAC4 Course were assigned for continuation training as fighter pilots, much to their personal delight, resulting in conversions to the famous Supermarine Seafire Mk XVII and Hawker Sea Fury MK 11. The latter aircraft was the RAN's front line fighter at the time and training in the United Kingdom included initial deck landings in this aircraft on HMS *Illustrious*.

The term 'Fly Boy' was intended as a somewhat derogatory reference to naval pilots by their fellow seaman officers, yet a denomination carried with pride by the recipients.

Subsequent experiences in the Fleet Air Arm embarked in HMAS *Sydney* include references to a number of near-catastrophic incidents, both embarked and ashore. Eventually, jet conversion led to further training in the United Kingdom with the RN, Airworks (UK) and the RAF on de Havilland Sea Venoms, Gloster Meteor T7's and NF11's, to graduate as night fighter crews, again exposed to a number of near misses.

Day and night operations were carried out embarked in HMAS *Melbourne*, followed by some test flying and formation aerobatic displays. Winning a Permanent Commission, a short period was endured aboard HMAS *Quiberon* for watch-keeping ticketing during which a dress rehearsal for the *Melbourne/Voyager* collision occurred off Jervis Bay.

After the Menzies' government announced the intention to disband the Fleet Air Arm in 1963, a mass exodus of experienced pilots to the Australian domestic and international airlines occurred. Litchfield enjoyed a variety of secondments during a readjusted career with Trans Australia Airlines (later Australian Airlines), including low level aero-magnetic surveys assigned to the Bureau of Mineral Resources (now Australian Geological Survey Organisation) for activities throughout Australia. Attaining command on DC-3's after five-and-a-half years in the airline, posting to New Guinea in 1966 to participate in the developmental air services initiated by Qantas, led to an eight-and-a-half year experience operating throughout the highlands and islands of New Guinea, Momote and The Solomons. This was an enthralling experience for an aviator in a country of such diverse natural attractions and operational challenges.

Returning to the mainland in 1974, Litchfield initially became involved in the Check and Training organisation of TAA, thence selected to participate in the company's 'Succession Plan', before returning to line flying. During this period, he flew the Fokker F-27, Douglas DC-9, Boeing B727, and Airbus A300-B4.

Ferrying a Boeing B727-25 from Miami to Australia, an unexpected encounter with a severe jetstream on the San Diego – Hilo leg almost resulted in a Pacific ditching. A period of secondment to Air Nuigini operating their international sectors, flying the A-300B4 followed.

A 37+ year career in aviation, including 29 years with TAA/Australian Airlines, came to a premature end as a result of the disastrous 1989 airline dispute, which is briefly covered in a report 'from the trenches'.

[This book is just about ready for sale - more details will appear in the next edition of Slipstream. In the meantime, the author can be contacted by Phone/Fax :(03) 9439 9736 Mobile: 0413 371 240 - or E-mail [geoff805@tpg.com.au](mailto:geoff805@tpg.com.au) Ed]]

## DEFINITIONS

Each year the Washington Post's Style Invitational asks readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing only one letter and supply a new definition.

Here are the 2001 winners:

**Intaxication**

Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

**Reintarnation**

Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

**Foreploit**

Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.

**Giraffiti**

Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.

**Sarchasm**

The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

**Inoculatte**

To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

**Hipatitis**

Terminal coolness.

**Osteopornosis**

A degenerate disease. (this one got extra credit)

**Karmageddon**

It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.

**Glibido**

All talk and no action.

**Dopeler Effect**

The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

**'THE VUNG TAU FERRY'**

Is now in its third edition with additional information added. It is available at a cost of \$33.00 (Inc. P & H) from:

N and M Payne

PO Box 131, NERANG QLD 4211

Phone: (07) 5596 3962

# AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT

by Mark Clayton – Museum Director

Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup> dawned, so it seemed to me, looking like so many other museum airshows in recent years....rainy, bleak and overcast. And so it remained throughout the day, the weather being so marginal as to even prevent the Army's determined Red Beret parachute team from jumping.

By early afternoon we were left with no choice other than to cancel the day's flying programme. None of the participating aircraft that made it through from Sydney early that morning were able to perform and even the Lockheed Constellation, flying IFR, elected to turn back at Kiama.

Thankfully 723 and 816 Squadrons did manage to put in brief flying performances during the morning without which we would have had a non-event. 723 had spent some time preparing beforehand practicing a three-helicopter 'V' formation flypast to mark their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. After months of planning and preparation the sense of disappointment felt by staff and volunteers was acute, especially as the museum's previous fundraiser airshow in October 2001 had also been cancelled (due to the security shut down following 'September 11').

The crowd numbers were good despite the weather but here again, this was something of a mixed blessing as we were left having to deal with a proportional increase in public complaints, compounded by a faulty public address system.

Perhaps we wouldn't have felt so disappointed, frustrated and victimized had the weather been consistently miserable but of course, as so often seems the case, it was absolutely glorious on April 27<sup>th</sup> and perfectly tolerable on April 29<sup>th</sup>. And just to add insult to injury the day ended with one of our stalwart volunteers suffering a fall which resulted in a broken collarbone.

Now that I've got all that off my chest let me say, again, just how grateful I am to all those volunteers, staff and service personnel who supported us on April 28<sup>th</sup> and perhaps, like me, you'll draw comfort from the certain knowledge that the weather for our next airshow (October 6<sup>th</sup>) can only be better.

The last week in April was particularly busy for the museum as we also hosted a reunion of former RANHFV personnel on Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, attended by more than a hundred local and overseas (i.e. North American) guests. As luck would have it there happened to also be a visiting UH-1H (from the Australian Army's 173<sup>rd</sup> Operational Support Squadron) parked on the adjoining northern hardstand which, right on cue, flew low past the RANHFV veterans as they were assembling for a bar-b-que.

The museum has farewelled several staff and volunteers in recent months, all of whom have had lengthy associations with our organization. Joy Kennedy retired last year as the museum's – ever cheerful – Cleaner while her partner, Murray McLean worked tirelessly as a voluntary Tour Guide (and yes, we are seeking a replacement Guide). Murray and Joy have both moved further down the coast while Helen Avenell, Our Museum Receptionist, has recently returned to Scotland to complete her tertiary Museum Studies course. We wish each of them well for the future.

Airframe movements are occurring now with increasing regularity as we prepare for the installation of our new displays which we hope to have in place before the year's end. Recent arrivals include the cockpit of a former RAAF Catalina, a former MacRobertson-Miller Airlines Piaggio P166, the prototype Skycraft

Scout, a deHavilland Heron and a 1939 Stinson HW-75. The Heron and Stinson types were operated by the Royal Navy and US Coast Guard, respectively, while the Skycraft Scout was the world's first commercially produced ultralight. By the time you're reading this we will have also taken delivery of a Wirraway trainer generously loaned to us by Museum Victoria, together with the prototype Victa Airtourer.



The 'de Havilland Heron Series 2' at Bankstown prior to disassembly and preparation for transportation to the AMoF.

L-R: Don Parkinson and volunteers Trevor Cullen and Neil Johnson

Photo courtesy Don Parkinson

By year's end we hope to have almost a dozen aircraft suspended from the ceiling trusses, the preliminary engineering for this huge task having already commenced. In keeping with our strategy of trying to maximize public access to our collections – particularly FAA collection items – we've also begun placing duplicate airframes on display in suitable collecting institutions around the country. To this end Wessex N7-210 was delivered to the Queensland Air Museum in April while a third Wessex (saved from the Bomb Dump) is destined soon to leave for the Vietnam Veterans Museum at San Remo in Victoria.

One of the more striking recent developments at the museum has been the erection of a huge, almost life-size, photographic mural depicting a RNAS Sopwith mounted atop HMAS Sydney's forward gun turret. The funding for this 9m x 7m enlargement was generously provided by the wardroom at HMAS Albatross while the high-resolution scan was prepared, on gratis terms, by the Australian War Memorial. The mural will eventually serve in our redeveloped displays as the backdrop for our replica Sopwith Pup.

Earlier this year the Sydney-based Historical Aircraft restoration Society Inc. (HARS) in conjunction with BHP and the Wollongong and Shellharbour Councils unveiled plans for an ambitious \$14.7 million aviation museum development to be sited at Wollongong's Albion Park airfield, halfway between Sydney and the Shoalhaven.

Predictably, the announcement did cause concern this end with several Foundation Directors perceiving the HARS initiative as a direct threat to our financially tenuous operation here at HMAS Albatross. With more than 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> of covered hangar space the HARS development – to be known as the 'BHP Australian Historical Flying Museum' – will be twice the size of our facility and of course, its proximity to Sydney and highway location give it a decided advantage (relative to our own situation).

(Continued on page 24)

In order to better understand the impact of this development we invited HARS President, Bob de LaHunty, to address our last Board meeting in February. We've always enjoyed a close, co-operative relationship with HARS and Bob was equally forthcoming on this occasion.

Although the location advantage may inevitably cause us to lose some custom it is now clear to us that the Albion Park development is actually a museum in name only, offering none of the professionally curated exhibition or collecting programmes that define mainstream museums and, unlike our own operation, there is no provision at Albion Park for salaried personnel or even a restaurant or shop.

HARS's aspirations at this stage are confined to just the construction of a very large shed in which they can house and maintain their flying fleet. Certainly the public will be encouraged to visit and look over these aircraft but of course, as an airworthy fleet at least some of the aircraft – the Constellation included – may often be away from Albion Park. Our institutions will offer very different visitor experiences and as such, should attract different markets. The perception is that, as a museum, the Museum of Flight could have the broader public appeal although we don't for a moment underestimate Albion Park's future growth potential. I happen to personally see this as a positive development that could eventually complement our own operation and enhance the south coast's stature as a tourist destination. We'll continue to closely monitor and report on this development.



The Motor Transport Section readies N7-217 for transfer to Caloundra's Queensland Air Museum in April. (AMoF)



This ancient side-valve Dodge was used for many years by the Royal New South Wales Aero Club to ground test overhauled aircraft engines. Recently donated by Flight Support International Pty Ltd it will now feature in the museum's redeveloped displays scheduled to open in late 2002. (AMoF)



Departing Bankstown for Nowra in April, this fifty-five years old DH Heron (VH-NJI) which will eventually be dramatically displayed suspended from the museum's roof trusses. (AMoF)

**A brief history of the recently acquired de Havilland Heron Series 2**

- 1955 - 1966 - Thy Airlines - Turkey
- 1966 - 1969 - Royal Air - Canada
- 1969 - 1971 - Fleet Air - USA
- 1971 - 1978 - Swift Air - USA
- 1977 - 1985 - Susquehanna Airlines - USA
- 1985 - 1991 - Fiji Air - Fiji
- 1991 - 2001 - Heron Airlines - Australia
- 2002 - Australian Museum of Flight



Italy's uniquely configure Piaggio P166 was used extensively by Australian regional airlines. VH-MMP, which arrived at the museum in May, was used for many years by MacRobertson - Miller airlines in West Australia. (AMoF)



**LIONAIR?** This photograph was NOT taken at the AMoF





## THE WINDOW

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service and where they had been on holidays.

Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it. In his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."



## THE OLD NAY

*Captain Marryat*

The Captain stood on the carronade - "First lieutenant," says he, "Send all my merry men aft here, for they must list to me; I haven't the gift of the gab, my sons - because I'm bred to the sea; That ship there is a Frenchman, who means to fight with we. And odds bobs hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea, I've fought 'gainst every odds - but I've gained the victory."

"That ship there is a Frenchman, and if we don't take she, 'Tis a thousand bullets to one, that she will capture we; I haven't the gift of the gab, my boys so each man to his gun; If she's not mine in half an hour, I'll flog each mothers' son. For odds bobs hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea, I've fought 'gainst every odds - and I've gained the victory!"

We fought for twenty minutes, when the Frenchman had enough; "I little thought," said he, "that your men were of such stuff," The Captain took the Frenchman's sword, a low bow made to he; "I haven't the gift of the gab, monsieur, but polite I wish to be. And odds bobs hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea, I've fought against every odds - and I've gained the victory!"

Our Captain sent for all of us; "My merry men" said he, "I haven't the gift of the gab, my lads, but yet I thankful be: You've done your duty handsomely, each man stood to his gun: If you hadn't you villains, as sure as day, I'd 've flogged each mothers' son.

For odds bobs hammer and tongs, as long as I'm at sea, I'll fight 'gainst every odds - and I'll gain the victory!"

*Forwarded by Jim Parsons*

## A Shaggy 'chook' story...

During World War II, a mechanic was making a routine test flight with a bomber that accidentally drifted off course and over enemy territory. The plane was shot down and the mechanic taken prisoner.

Not knowing his area of expertise, the prison camp leader placed him in charge of the chickens.

Every day the mechanic would collect scraps of metal and wood and, eventually, he constructed a certified engine and a pair of wings.

One morning when he didn't turn up for roll call, the officers discovered he had attached the wings and engine to the chicken shed and flown the coop.



## LIFE IN THE FAST LANE...

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the M4. Please be careful!"

"It's not just one car" said Herman. "It's hundreds of 'em".

**A WOMAN'S RANDOM THOUGHTS** - If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it will always be yours. If it doesn't come back, it was never yours to begin with. But, if it just sits in your living room, messes up your stuff, eats your food, uses your telephone, takes your money, and doesn't appear to realize that you had set it free..... You either married it or gave birth to it!

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



ANZAC DAY in Canberra this year was celebrated in superb sunshine, the parade was the largest ever and the FAAA was well represented. To me the only disappointment was the number of uniform personnel taking part. I find it hard to understand why so many of our men and women in uniform choose not to take part.

As reported in the previous SLIPSTREAM I have had a stint in sickbay and sincerely thank those who sent cards or phoned in their good wishes. I am now fit to fly!

The next National Reunion, which I mentioned last issue, has been postponed until October 2003. A number of Divisions voiced their concern at holding a reunion over the ANZAC DAY period. These were valid concerns as ANZAC DAY is the one day of the year when Divisions can bring the FAAA to the attention of the public in their State. The precise date will be advised after discussions with ALBATROSS and the AMoF.

All Divisions were advised that the Clarke Committee had issued invitations to the FAAA to make submissions on any "perceived anomalies in the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986." I hope any member who has an opinion on the current VEA has taken the opportunity to register his or her concern to the Committee.

I am still seeking help in the search to find sponsors for SLIPSTREAM. Can you help?

Work is continuing on the FAAA web-site and hopefully we cyber converts will be scanning its pages in the not too distant future. Once it is up and running I expect all Divisions to contribute so we get maximum coverage of all FAAA activities.

The appeal for paperback books is moving very slowly. Is there anyone out there who has a contact in the transport business so we can reduce the cost of getting the books to Nowra?

It is intended to run the Xmas Hamper Project again this year and any help in collecting goods for the hampers would be much appreciated.

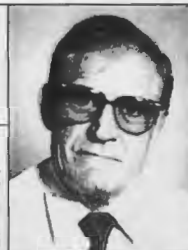
As you read the above you will note I am constantly asking for help. You have a hard working committee who put in a lot of time and effort into the job, but we do need the help and support on the members if we are to achieve our goals.

In conclusion I would like to reply to Don Robert's letter to the Editor in the last SLIPSTREAM in which he asks the National Executive to do something about the members who are suffering from stress problems caused by their service employment. Let me assure you Don that the members of the Executive are well aware of these problems and I have personally written a number of submissions in support of member's applications for pensions or compensation. But I make the point. We can, and will act, in support of a submission made by a member, but the initial move must come from the member. I urge members who believe they have a service related problem to contact an advocate or DVA. If you don't know how to contact an advocate or adviser, please contact your Divisional Executive and get a steer in the right direction. Help is out there but you must make the first move.

Best wishes to you all.

Toz Dadswell

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



The National Executive held its last meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2001, in conjunction with a Reunion meeting. Minutes of this meeting have been sent to Division Secretaries.

Division Secretaries will by now have their copies of the Amendments to the Constitution, which have been approved by the Department of Fair Trading. In accordance with the constitution I now list the two amendments, which have been made:

(1) **Item 16 of the National Constitution to read:**

"The Immediate Past President" shall be an Office Bearer of the National Executive for a period of 12 months.

(2) **Item 21 of the National Constitution to read:**

The Immediate Past President shall be an officer of the National Executive and will provide continuity to the Executive. He will support and assist the President in the execution of his duties for a period of 12 Months.

"OFFICER" is referred to in various paragraphs in the Constitution.

Page 3 under 2 INTERPRETATION

2.13 (New Paragraph) Officer where referred to Means Office Bearer.

The Constitution is now on computer and copies can be E-mailed to Divisions etc. if requested.

Mike Heneghan

## TASMANIAN DIVISION



News time again and not much to report as usual; but we are still here, alive and well.

Our Quarterly get-togethers are still ongoing and are mostly well attended. It's a good way to keep in touch with what's going on around the place.

*Slipstream*, of course, is our main source of information on 'what's what' and 'who's where'. Isn't it strange how the faces we see in the photographs don't seem to be as we remember them from our days so long ago? Old age I suppose!

On a sad note, I must mention the sudden passing of one of our social members, Karen Lowe, at the age of thirty-eight. Her father, Wes Lowe, is the brother of Bill. She was a fun-loving girl who attended all our functions and had a wonderful time at them all – especially on the poker machines where she had a habit of winning. We will miss her. Our sympathy goes to Wes and Bill.

Anzac Day has been and gone again. As our members are getting a bit thin on the ground, we parade with the Naval Association members in the city. It was the first wet Anzac Day for many years, but it didn't dampen the spirits though.

On 22 April, The Launceston RSL invited all members – Navy – Army – Air Force, to a special screening of the film, 'We were soldiers', at our local cinema at no cost to the members. It was very well received and there weren't many empty seats. It was a fine gesture from the RSL for which we thank them. Cheers,  
Matt 'Jake' Jacobs

## VICTORIAN DIVISION



### Attention on the flight deck!

Another AGM is behind us and some changes have been made to the Victorian Division – mostly just a re-arrangement of the deck chairs, as in most cases the same old names keep re-appearing. BUT, we do have two new faces in Chas. 'Hank' Fargher and Syd Mitchell who volunteered their services to the Committee prompting appropriate accolades.

That old familiar moustachioed or bewhiskered apparition that has decorated these pages for many years, the edifice of Ron Christie, has slipped across into the left-hand seat as President, whilst the unenviable task of trying to maintain the standard as Secretary has befallen me.

Les Jordan's demonstrated expertise in the past denies him the luxury of anonymity, being voted in as 'Mr. Vice', and 'The Banker', John Ikin, has proven his indispensability being unchallenged as Treasurer (is he about to pull a 'Christopher Skase?').

Someone was standing within hearing distance (about 12 inches for our group) in the past when, after one too many reds (about two) I apparently opened my mouth a touch too much when declaring a wish to help Ron out of his long-term predicament as Secretary. Not only did said person hear me, he also remembered the occasion long enough to 'dob me in' – so here I am. But do not expect the record-breaking run of my predecessor.

Our AGM attracted a satisfying number of interested members,



### VICTORIAN COMMITTEE FOR 2002

Rear L-R: Committee Members Ralph Mayer - John Champion (IPP) - Rob Earle - Alan Clark - Ian Stanfield  
 Front L-R: Geoff Litchfield (Sec.) - Ron Christie (Pres.) - John Ikin (Treas.) - Les Jordan (Vice Pres.)  
 Missing from the photograph: Chas. 'Hank' Fargher and Syd Mitchell.

noticeable amongst them our own Charles Morris and his shy companion for the day, John McAlister.

Sadly, the 'Reaper' continues to make inroads into our ranks while we struggle to encourage the participation of serving members to carry the traditions of our branch and its camaraderie into the future. Meanwhile, a predominant majority of past Fleet Air Arm members avoid an on-going association with former shipmates for reasons I am unable to comprehend. Perhaps if we shake a few trees hard enough, we may dislodge a few 'birdies' from their nests?

There is a perception 'out there' that Australia never had a Fleet Air Arm. 'What has the Fleet Air Arm got to do with carriers?' and 'Did we have carriers in the RAN?' Hard to believe? These statements from Australian ex-servicemen are an indictment of

those who fail to make any effort of numerical support or active input to preserve the memory of a truly elite force. United we stand.....!

Xmas hampers and a collection of paperbacks is indicative of the National Executive's concern for the enticement of serving members to join our ranks. We surely need the injection of youth and familiarisation with current embarked and disembarked activities to mend the 'break in the chain'.

It has been encouraging to welcome the return 'aboard' of Brian Levett (ex LEM (AC)) and Michael (ex Sub-Lieut. (P)) and Carmel Thorne (daughter of famous artist Leonard Long). A hearty welcome also to Arthur Roach (ex M(E) 1) a Korea veteran, enticed by the 'Peter Pan' persuasiveness of Ron Christie. We hope to see many more old chums return to the fold in the next twelve months.

Val Christie continues to hold the baton of 'Social Coordinator', performing so well in past years that it seems no one else is game to rise to the challenge.

Anzac Day in Melbourne tested the resolve of our membership. The weather forecast did not promise attractive conditions and rain did fall overnight on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Some (7,000 to 15,000 depending upon which TV station you watch) attended the dawn service in light rain, a break arriving just prior to 0900, lasting sufficiently long to see naval contingents complete the course before the heavens opened up, dowsing our Premier and retiring Victorian President of the RSL, Bruce Ruxton, the latter who was attending his final ceremony in that capacity.

Despite the threatening conditions, stalwart supporter Monsignor Frank 'Tiger' Lyons was present, dutifully propelled in style by Rob Jordan. Our numbers were down as some joined the FESR group in support of their first independent outing, whilst some of our regulars had clashing engagements or were disheartened by threatened conditions.

The traditional post-march re-union luncheon held at the Melbourne Naval Centre (ESU), shared with the submariners and other serving naval members proved 'cosy' due to the inclement conditions. Amongst the serving members, a nephew of our Patron, John Gobles, proved a popular attraction, as did a young female stoker!

It is with deep regret that I have to record the loss of two well-known pilots of Korea vintage. Joan Nicholas informed me that she attended the funeral of Peter Brassey Cooper around the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002, and no sooner had I arrived home than Val Henshaw rang to inform me that Gordon McPhee had passed away after a battle with lung cancer on 24<sup>th</sup> April. May the families of both Peter and Gordon gain some comfort from the expression of our deepest regrets for their loss of a loved one.

Carry on!

Geoff Litchfield

## A.C.T. DIVISION

Dear Shipmates, this is the last time that you will have to suffer news from me, as at long last I have been able to find someone to take on the duties of Secretary of this Division.

The new incumbent is Beryl Green, who, many years ago back in the early fifties, was the Captain's personal Secretary at NAS Nowra. Her Dad, I think, was the



(Continued on page 28)

Wardroom Mess Treasurer in those days so she has had a good grounding in all things on the aviation side of the RAN. I am sure that she will enjoy the support from you all.

We have managed to obtain a computer for her to help with this task and she has proved a very fast learner with this technology. our new committee is as follows;

- President: Brian Courtier
- Secretary: Beryl Green
- Treasurer: Les Powell
- Committee: Sandy Sandberg, Glen Dore and Brian Treloar

So far, we have held one function since the AGM and that of course, was Anzac Day. A good roll up turned up for the march including a couple from 816 Squadron who were very welcome. It was nice to see some birdies from *Albatross* were represented as well as a few in uniform from Navy Office. Also good to see a couple of old stalwarts for the first time in 'Weary' Weil and Jim Kelly. Now, there must be quite a few more who could dust off their medals and help swell our ranks on this day. As usual, Canberra was in its glittering best and the overall turnout seemed more than ever before,

Following the March some 30 odd repaired to HMAS *Harman* Junior Sailors Club for a barbecue to round off the day. Numerous prizes were on offer for the Raffle which was well supported and helped to swell our funds. Our sincere thanks to the President of the Junior Sailors Club and to the CO and XO of *Harman* for allowing us the use of these facilities. We even had the coach of the Navy Rugby Team join us for a short while before training for their match against Army the following day.

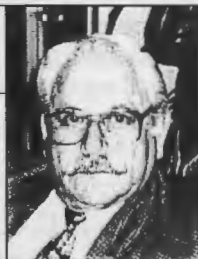
A number of our members will be attending the get together at Campbelltown where we hope to meet up with many of our interstate colleagues.

Just recently, while enjoying a tour of New Zealand, I took the opportunity to visit the Museum at Wanaka, just north of Queenstown. It is quite famous for its biennial Warbirds gathering. Of the Museum, I was disappointed as ours at Nowra leaves it for dead.

Well, bye for now my friends and give Beryl your support. We have a great association which will only get better the more we put into it.

Brian Treloar

## NSW DIVISION



The fires have all died down, the smoke dissipated and life is gradually returning to normal for those who were directly involved in the Xmas/New Year tragedy. Hopefully the lessons that were there to be learnt have been recognised and action instigated to achieve maximum results from them. Again we are reminded of the unselfish actions of those dedicated volunteers who so willingly give of their time and efforts to assist those who are unfortunate enough to be inconvenienced by whatever catastrophe which may be brought upon us.

The main highlight for the first half of this year will of course be the annual get together at Campbelltown RSL on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Deadlines for this edition don't allow for a report to be included at

this time. Closely following we have the HMAS MELBOURNE Association Reunion during the 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June.

I have been fortunate enough to have had a sneak preview of the soon to be released Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Web page. Although still in the development phase I have pleasure in commending it to those of you who have Internet capability.

The ongoing support for the present day FAA is alive and well. Several ideas to support the current 'Birdies' are being investigated. The Xmas Hamper concept proved so successful that it has been listed as an ongoing feature. The 'loan library', although slow to start is gradually building. Any light reading material, short range gunnery notes, J.E. Macdonald's, etc. which you may have, would be greatly appreciated. The intention being to have a collection available for Ships about to deploy to select from. Hopefully they will retain some control of their selection thus enabling a 'return for re-issue' at the completion of their deployment.

Membership continues to grow steadily, 7 new members were accepted at the April meeting. Are you able to identify anyone who has not joined? As previously mentioned the strength of any organisation can only be assessed by the growth of its membership.

Once again the Annual Raffle proved a success thanks to the continued support provided by the membership. Congratulations to the winners -

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ticket. No. 2190 B. Crawford
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ticket No. 1781 J. Selby
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ticket No. 193 J. Angus.

Neville Newbold

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



Hello again to all members. Having just re-read the last issue of *Slipstream* from cover to cover, I realise how lucky we are to be able to cast our eyes over it and let our minds run wild with all the information and photos, old and new. Often looking twice at some of the news item from friends' afar.

My favourites are the photos of various groups, that's when the mind gets into overdrive remembering funny and not so funny happenings over the passing decades. I reckon each one of us would like to relive some of those wonderful events once more. So, Mr Editor, more and more PLEASE, especially all the contributions from those who make time to send them to you.

By the way, one little drawback, your blunt 'whack in the face' funny deadline dates and cracks. It springs to mind, 'Good God! Not already!' When it seems it was only yesterday that we posted the last article. [I promise to be subtler. Ed]

Down to business...things are rather hectic over here with our pending MINI RENUNION November 1 to 4, 2002. The Committee is aiming to provide a great time for all. More details are at the end of this report.

It is good news that more ex-birdies are joining our branch, the latest in recent times are; Ian Stoney, Clive Mayo, John Clayton, Warren Jones, Bob Vernon, Weston Ferguson, George Mills, Alan Witchcombe, Maurice Maknkoph and Noel O'Leary. A big

welcome is extended from the President and all WA Members.

We salute those that appeared in our local paper, 'The West Australian', who, with other recipients, have been awarded a delayed (thirty years) recognition from the Australian Government in conjunction with the USA for their service in Vietnam. They are Commander Winston James, Lt. Commander Clive Mayo and Petty Officer Andy Curren.

We welcome the new Minister for Veteran Affairs, The Hon. Danna Dale MP. Her foreword in the last edition was very interesting.

Some of our Members are travelling to Sydney in June to partake in the reunion for the HMAS *Melbourne* Association. Our treasurer, 'Jo' Jost, and wife Elva, our social organiser are amongst those attending. Have a good one !!

**Bits and Pieces** - Seen in town, Sue Groverman, Keith Doncon, Gil Hodges, Keith Murdoch (get well Pat), Theo Bushe - Jones, who reckons there is not enough hours in one day to get things done as a Veterans' Advocate. Slow down, Theo, we do need you!. Lou Burns, who recently had his right lower leg amputated is now awaiting a prosthesis and will soon be dancing again. Believe it or not I even saw Hilton Devereux smile! Tom Fish and his wife and daughter were having an enjoyable time at the post ANZAC Day March. Peter Welsh (Secretary) talking 'left-handed' and being supported by President Bevan Daws. Gentleman Harry Webster seen talking to 'Snow' Hall, and another first time event, 'Snow' with no camera! Barry Dunbar getting, over surgery - we hope he gets well soon. Glad Gault, as usual, won the raffle. I know that there were more faces at our function and apologise if I missed you.

Past President, Jack Suriano, led us in the ANZAC day March. Bravo Zulu, Jack, and thank you.

I am delighted to have received calls from around the nation seeking information on members now living in the West. Some of those making enquiries were, Ken Staff (Qld), 'Snoopy' O'Donnell (Tas), John Richards (Qld), Glen Dore (ACT), Alan Stafford (ACT).

All good news, but some not for publication!

How about the group photo on page 13 of the last edition of Slipstream sent in by Don Roberts - WOW!

In conclusion, thank you for your news items and pray that all is well and smooth sailing. May your God be with you.

John Green

### Mini-Reunion Programme

#### Friday 01 November 2002

Registration commences at 1000 at the Rockingham Navalman's Club (Nibbles/drinks and BBQ packs will be available at the club.)

#### Saturday 02 November 2002

River Cruise

Tour of HMAS *Stirling* Naval Base

Bus tour of Fremantle / Perth and Kings Park

Bowls (Venue to be determined)

Golf (Venue to be determined)

[For the above, the times are to be determined dependant upon numbers]

Bullcreek Aviation Museum

Swan Valley vineyards

1900 - Pre-Dinner drinks

1930 - Formal Reunion Dinner (Minimum dress Lounge suit - Miniature medals may be worn)

#### Sunday 03 November 2002

Bullcreek Aviation Museum

Church Service at HMAS *Stirling* Chapel

1230 Banyan at Rockingham RSL Club

#### Monday 04 November 2002

Free day for individual group gatherings.

The contact list for the reunion is as follows:

#### President - Bevan Daws

46 Berry Drive, MAIDA VALE WA 6057

Phone: (08) 9454 7228

Mobile: 0411 831 609

#### Secretary - Peter Welsh

42 Saddleback Circle, MAIDA VALE WA 6057

Phone: (08) 9454 6045

Fax: (08) 9225 2097

Email: pwelsh@eftel.com.au

#### Treasurer - Brian 'Jo' Jost

11 Wade Square, STRATTON WA 6056

Phone: (08) 9250 7441

#### Committee - John Green

Unit 1/7 Prinsep Road, ATTADALE WA 6156

Phone: (08) 9330 7386

#### Committee - Jack Suriano

PO Box 26, MAYLANDS WA 6051

Phone: (08) 9335 3566

Mobile: 0414 699 626

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



The Anzac spirit is alive and well in S.A. The march through the city under reasonable weather was greeted with much enthusiasm and flag waving.

Our group marched with much pride. John Siebert led the parade (in a well fitting Commanders' uniform) followed by the banner party with the main body keeping step to the sounds of the Police Band which they followed.

CPO Jack Krieg said it was the best Anzac march he had attended. John Saywell said it was the close proximity to the band that caused a bracing of shoulders and more resolute step.

As the many colourful bands passed by, I reflected upon an article published in the Adelaide Advertiser on Sat. 20<sup>th</sup> of April describing the life of LTCDR George Hooker MBE. He died on March 3<sup>rd</sup> this year aged 89 years.

Most would remember him as RAN Director of music, but I remember him as Captain George Hooker when we served together in Sydney in the early fifties. In those days our musician officers looked like Royal Marines and took the same rank. He was a very good musician, but most of all a loyal navy man with much WW11 meritorious service.

Jack Krieg warmed up for the ANZAC occasion by attending

(Continued on page 30)

as our representative to the service commemorating the battle of Karyong in Korea on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Jack and Ron Richards are the only two members with us who served in Korea.

John Siebert attended the dawn Anzac Day service and laid a wreath as is our normal custom.

Dinsley Cooper had arranged for members to celebrate at the Adelaide International Hotel. It was an excellent luncheon and time of fellowship. With wives and family, the numbers reached about forty. Thank you Dinsley and Junice - once again. The day was made complete by Collingwood belting the 'Bombers'.

In March, the AGM was held at the Hackney Pub. It was a carbon copy of the previous year except that John Berry (an overworked member and ex-President) became a committee member to replace Graham Bailey. Graham is flat out as treasurer of the Blackwood RSL and needed the extra time (not to mention puzzling over MYOB computer accounting system).

So, once again John Siebert is President, John Saywell - Vice-President, Mike Cain - Treasurer, and myself Secretary. Other dependables are Ian Laidler, Roger Harrison and Jack Kreig. Dinsley and Junice are still looking after our social lives and keeping us all informed of current affairs with the newsletter.

We expect to continue meeting at the Hackney Pub but something has happened that may change things. Those who are familiar with Adelaide know of the 'Torrens Parade Ground'. It is a huge drill hall adjacent to a rather large parade ground. The Federal Government has decided to spend 3 million dollars refurbishing it to accommodate ex-service associations. It will be for their exclusive use so we might, in time, think about availing ourselves of some superior, richly decorated, boardroom style, meeting suite.

This project will be completed early 2003. I don't think we will be considered big enough to have sole office space. Maybe the Naval Association will score that one. Is it timed to have the National Executive in 'backwater Adelaide' to make use of such splendor?

Phones rang hot, emails got lost in cyber space, and I received a mountain of printed matter about the Clarke Report. We nearly went to panic stations for we had to come up with something intelligent about reviewing DVA entitlements in a matter of days. Our mole in DVA, Robin Pennock, calmed us down. Upon his recommendation we rubber stamped the RSL proposals and promptly sent a message to the National Executive agreeing to RSL strategy. This was done without a meeting so there is a good chance few know of this move.

The more senior of us warned to the recommendation that the funeral allowance be increased to \$2000. We await further developments to this review. Robin also emailed that there has been an extension to medal entitlements. I will forward this message onto *Slipstream* [See page 14. Ed]. Has anyone served in IRAQ between 16/7/91 and 1/10/2001?

By the time this is printed the web site should be up and running. Paul Shiels is wasting time holidaying in Cairns but has assured me that things are close. One good feature will be that each division and *Slipstream* will have a discreet access to include and update their own page. Secretaries will have a key to enter the site and play around (with the webmaster keeping a watchful eye on the content).

Paul marched in Cairns on ANZAC day with Graeme Winterflood and Larry Mills. Graeme was a Skyhawk 'driver' and Larry a Tracker man.

The web site address is being withheld until all is spot on. It is expected that the development of this site will cost less than \$1000 with a small ongoing fee. We can achieve this sort of project in Adelaide because of the 'Mediterranean' type climate. It has been scientifically proven that this climate naturally upgrades RAM in the brain. People living in sluggish tropical areas suffer decreased RAM. [ The site is now open at: [www.faaaa.asn.au](http://www.faaaa.asn.au) ]

On a rather sad note, Gordon Mcphee passed away in the early hours of ANZAC Day. Gordon had not been a well man for some time now and has finally succumbed. All members will be saddened by this news.

Finally, I have included a photo of Dinsley Cooper taken sometime in the early 50's. He has a pensive look. He still has that pensive look. I think that at the time he had a vision of being stuck with us lot, and deep down had regrets about joining because of his future. Dinsley, with his wife Junice, do devote much time to the SA Division and are our main engine room for creating finance. *Barry Lord - Secretary*





Des / Bev Reardon, Mike Stubbington and John Siebert



Rosemary / Roger Harrison and Derelee Laidler



John and Moira Saywell



Barry and Lee Lord

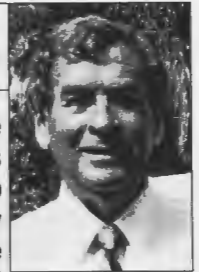


Jack Kreig



Anna Siebert

## QUEENSLAND DIVISION



Hello to everyone from us in the Sunshine State. The attendees at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) weren't too sure about the 'Sunshine' bit as it was cloudy and windy at that time. Some felt that the conditions suited the event - a lot of wind, hot air and not much else.

There was a lot of aerial activity going on - Black Hawk and Chinook choppers and two F18's in the air 24 hours a day as a terrorist deterrent whilst the Meeting was in session. Ray Murrell was a volunteer driver and had a brief slot on TV. Well done, Ray.

We held our AGM at Tewantin RSL on 16<sup>th</sup> March, we were based at Col Spence's Noosa Sound Holiday resort and we made a weekend of it. It was a great success and our thanks to Col Spence once again for looking after us so well.

The full committee was returned, except that Eric Cottrell stood down and Bevan Mewitt came onto the committee. We thank Eric for his strong support over the years and welcome Bevan. So the committee now stands as follows: President - Barry Lister, Vice President - Mick Blair, Secretary - Trevor Tite, Treasurer - Des Kelly. Committee Members: Bill Strahan, Gary Reid, Ray Murrell, Brian Simpson and Bevan Mewitt. We thank our members for their continuing support.

Eric was in hospital for some time but came to Anzac day and looks very well again. After the march, he reckoned he could go round again. We held him back!

Trevor Bolitho, Des Kelly, Max Gant, Ron Powell, Bill Bryant and their ladies started on the Wednesday, just to get a head start on us. Trevor tells me that about 35 bottles of red went down over the weekend, as well as some home made rum. Not bad going.

Bill Bryant has changed his rate from Butcher to Cook; he took charge of the BBQ each night, much to the annoyance of the others as they had to sit around sipping the vino and telling yarns whilst waiting for the food to be served. It's a tough life.

Brian Simpson, Captain of the Coolum Golf Club, arranged for some of us to play there on the Friday and the competition was fierce. Des Kelly got me on the last hole, but Brian was the winner (local knowledge). Bill Bryant set a course record for the highest score. He hadn't played for 5 years or so. Clive Podd came down from the Maryborough area to play and returned after the game. Good effort, Clive. Ray Guest and Dot kept them on their toes.

Others played Bowls and Mick Wright had his first go - he didn't crack any ankles, I hear, and enjoyed the game. Ten-pin bowlers had a go on Sunday and Ian (Junior) Henderson won the day with a pretty good handicap.

Max and Norma Wilson invited Sid Mitchell up for the weekend and he spoke at the AGM of his Navy days and his work after leaving the service in 1963. Apparently he spent a fair bit of time in the USA. We enjoyed meeting up with him once again.

Most of us went on a River Jazz Cruise on the Saturday evening and it was very enjoyable with lively music, beer and wine, good company and a fabulous sunset. Mick Wright sang 'Bill Bailey' with the band and made a good job of it - much to our surprise. Mick, Anne, Max, Norma, Sid and ourselves, went to Harbourside for dinner and the stories and wine flowed well accompanied with much laughter.

*(Continued on page 32)*

Anzac Day saw around 60 of us marching in Brisbane. It was hot and we had a long wait to step off, then we had a funny band in front and a pipe band behind us. The music and beat got a bit mixed up, but as I was out in front I was definitely in step.

We got a 'well done' from the Governor and Premier so it couldn't have been too bad. Afterwards we went to the Irish Club, which was a disaster. Trevor Tite had arranged tables and chairs for 80 of us, but because we were the last in, others had taken them and even management couldn't get them to move. On top of that, it was packed five deep at the bar and a pipe band was playing, so most of our people left in disgust. We'll be looking for a better venue next year. We've heard that the Army is still at Bulimba, so we'll try there again.

Dee and I were invited to sit with 460 RAAF Squadron in another room and Ian and Florence Henderson joined us for lunch. When I told the bloke next to me that we were ex-FAA, he asked if I knew Col Wheatley. I told him that I did. He then said that his name was also Col Wheatley and they were 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins. It's a small world. He'd been on Lancasters in UK during WW2.

It was good to catch up with Barry Crowe, Don Russell and Sandy Wilson again. I hadn't seen Don since '66 or so. Barry has the NGSMS, which surprised us. He said he hadn't applied for it and it came in the post - great stuff!

Roy Hathaway phoned to say that the Chelmer Bowls Club might be a good venue for our mid-year function. He's on the committee and tells me they are keen to have us there. The grounds are pleasant with a BBQ and we can eat in the club if the weather isn't too good. We'll check it out and advise in the newsletter. Thank you, Roy.

Warren and Maria Walters have had a major water leak in their house in Salinas, California, and the repair bill was \$29,000US. They were to have all meals out on the deal. The work is just about finished and they are now on a 32 day cruise from Tokyo to San Francisco. Warren says to say 'Hi' to all.

We were in Melbourne in March and I phoned Ron Christie to talk about the submission to the Government Review Committee, but due to my family commitments I didn't have time to meet up with him and the others. Our submission has gone to the Committee so let's hope some good news comes from it.

Whilst there we toured the old Melbourne Gaol. During the walk-around my mobile phone rang, it was a girl from a Printer Service in Maroochydore telling me that my printer was ready to collect. I told her I couldn't collect it immediately as I was in Melbourne Gaol. There was a pause, then she said she hoped it wasn't too serious and that I'd be out soon. When I called into their office a few days later, she said she'd thought about it afterwards and reckoned it couldn't be too bad if I was able to use the phone. Bit of a laugh.

We're delighted to see the Wessex helicopter at the Queensland Air Museum at Caloundra. There was a good picture in the local paper with Trevor Bolitho sitting on the engine bay hatch. There's some work to be done to get it ready for display and I hear that some volunteers might turn up there soon.

Some of our blokes have been a bit crook - 'Shorty' Neilsen is not well - Bob Withers has had major surgery - Rex Day has been in hospital with heart trouble once again - Kev Kassulke had a stroke and by sheer determination has fought his way back again. We wish all those on the sick list a speedy recovery.

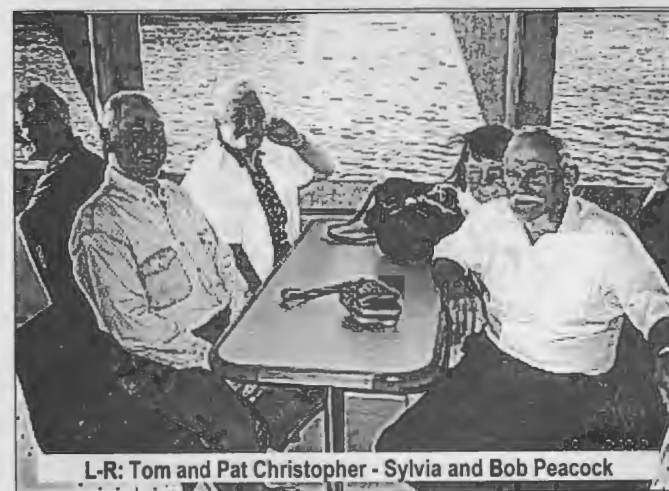
Best wishes to all from the Qld Division.

Barry Lister - President.



PHOTO'S FROM THE AGM RIVER BOAT CRUISE  
Photo's courtesy Mick Blair

L-R: Aida Melville - Anne Wright - Mick Wright - Ron Melville



L-R: Tom and Pat Christopher - Sylvia and Bob Peacock



Navis and Roy Hathaway



L-R: Max Gant and Trevor Bolitho



## QUEENSLAND MEMBER'S MINI-REUNION

Queensland member, Noel Fischer, spent nine months organising a family reunion for the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of his older brother, Ray. Although they had always remained in touch, this was the first time that he and his six siblings had been together in the one place.

Four of the family was in the services, Michael, Jack and Noel were in the Navy and Anne was in the Army.

Jack served for 21 years, Noel 20, Michael and Anne 9 years.



THE FISCHER CLAN - Ray, Noel, Anne, Michael, Jack, David and Rose

### *A personal profile of the late*

## Commander Gordon McPhee OBE RAN (Rtd) 1924 - 2002

I joined the RAAF in June 1942, and my flying training was carried out in Tiger Moths and Ansons, neither had radios fitted and the 'aerodromes' we flew from were paddocks.

In October 1943, I gained my wings and sailed for the United Kingdom in the following January.

Flying in the UK was a completely new ball game. The aircraft were fitted with radios and radar, the bigger ones with a fixer service called 'G'. Added to this was the fact that the ground was pock marked with airfields, and the sky cluttered up with hundreds, and at times a thousand or more aircraft, all of which may not be friendly.

After waiting to get onto courses, I finally completed Operational Training on Wellington Mk Xs, and then qualified as a Lancaster Captain shortly after VE Day.

I joined the RAN in January 1948, and spent the first six months at the Flinders Naval Depot carrying out seaman training. November saw me back in the UK, where I carried out flying training on Harvards at Yeovilton, Firefly Mk I's at Lossiemouth, and Firefly MK IVs at Eglington, this was concluded with deck landings on HMS *Illustrious*.

On 21<sup>st</sup> November 1949, I joined the 20th Carrier Air Group (CAG) at Nowra as a Firefly MK V pilot on 816 Squadron.

In the following January the CAG joined HMAS *Sydney* for a work up and a cruise. After the cruise *Sydney* sailed for the UK to pick up the 21<sup>st</sup> CAG, and more Sea Furies and Firefly MK VIs.

By mid -1950, all the Royal Navy personnel who had made up the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> CAG when it was formed in the UK had returned home. Jimmy Bowles had taken over as CO of 805 Squadron, and Nat Gould as CO of 816 Squadron.

In January 1951, the 20<sup>th</sup> CAG joined *Sydney* once again and we were relieved by the 21<sup>st</sup> CAG, but their cruise was cut short when they, plus 805 Squadron, were ordered to commence work-up for Korea.

We in 816 Squadron were not required in Korea and we remained at Nowra. In the later part of the year, we took six Fireflies, and using pilot maintenance, flew around Australia.

In early 1952, I returned to the UK and carried out a Dragonfly MK I helicopter conversion course at Westlands. This was followed by a Sycamore MK3 helicopter conversion course at Bristols. I then went to Boscombe Down to sit in on the Sycamore Mk 50 Service Acceptance Trials. Whilst there I was the first RAN pilot to fly a RAN helicopter, it was XA 219 which is now in the Australian Museum of Flight at Nowra.

1953 saw me return to Australia in *Vengeance* - as one of the three pilots for the first three Sycamores. On arrival we joined 723 Squadron.

During the next two years I spent my time between RANAS Nowra,

*Sydney* and *Vengeance*. During the 1954 Royal Tour in *Vengeance* I frequently flew both Fireflies and Sycamores off the deck, all on the same day.

Early in 1955 at RAAF Edinburgh, I test flew the RAAF Sycamore, destined for Woomera, and checked out their pilot. Shortly after returning to Nowra I was sent to the Maitland Floods to carry out rescue work. Whilst there, I unfortunately wrote off Sycamore XA 221 at the West Maitland Railway Station, with the tragic loss of two lives. [Civilians. Ed]

Mid -1955 I returned to the UK in *Vengeance*, and as Senior pilot joined 817 Squadron equipped with Gannets. After the work up it was back to Australia in *Melbourne*.

On arrival home, I was sent to Navy Office for my one and only stint in the 'Ivory Tower'.

I was posted in mid - 1957 to 723 Squadron for two years as CO, followed by the next two years as EX of *Harman* the naval radio station at Canberra.

My next posting was back to Nowra as Little 'F' for twelve months, followed by three years as Little 'F' in *Melbourne*. It was during this period that the *Voyager* disaster occurred; the Wessex embarked for the first time; and the trial arrest and catapult of an USN Skyhawk look place.

I then got a most unexpected posting in 1965 back to Nowra, where for the next four years I ended up as CO of 723 Squadron, which was by then equipped with Iroquois and Scout helicopters. It was during this period that the squadron took on the task of training the Helicopter Flights for Vietnam.

I spent my last 'year and a bit', as Staff Officer Air to FOCEA, before retiring to Adelaide in March 1971.

\* \* \*

### INTERNATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

German scientists dug 50 meters down in the underground and discovered small pieces of copper. After studying these pieces for a long time, Germany announced that the ancient Germans 25,000 years ago had a nation-wide telephone net.

Naturally, the Russian government was not that easily impressed. They ordered their own scientists to dig even deeper. 100 meters down they found small pieces of glass and they soon announced that the ancient Russians 35,000 years ago already had a nation-wide fibre net.

American scientists were outraged. They dug 200 meters down in the underground, but found absolutely nothing. They happily concluded that the ancient Americans 55,000 years ago had cellular telephones.



## OBITUARY

## Ron Salter

The family of the late Ron Salter wishes to inform his fellow shipmates of his death, following a short illness.

Ron joined the RAN Fleet Air Arm in 1952 with then fellow South Australian Air Cadet, Bobby Pfennig, as Naval Air Mechanics (Engines). Whilst at HMAS *Albatross*, he became a member of the Blue Jacket Band, complete with Cornet and Special Duties card.

Ron served on all three aircraft carriers, and paid off after the 1958 FESR tour, and commenced building his Civil Engineering reputation at Parafield, South Australia. He was instrumental in the establishment of maintenance facilities and the introduction of aircraft to a number of companies. They included Williams Aviation, Lloyds Aviation fixed wing operation and National Jet Systems.

He eventually retired from Virgin Blue Airlines in July 2001, with a collection of Engineering Licences unrivalled in Australia.

Dispersed within achievements, Ron spent many years contributing to Australian Aviation through service with the regulatory authority, namely Department of Civil Aviation, Department of Transport, and the Civil Aviation Authority. Ron has been a corner stone to modern aviation in Australia, as witnessed by the tributes and condolences from around the globe.

**DEDICATION OF A PLAQUE IN MEMORY OF  
LCDR BRIAN CHARLES McKEON RAN (Rtd)**

**27 JAN 30 – 01 NOV 2000**

On Friday, 28 March 2002, relatives and friends of the late Brian 'Soapy' McKeon attended the HMAS *Albatross* Chapel for the dedication of a plaque in his honour. The plaque was presented by the NSW Division of the Fleet Air Arm Association in recognition of his services to the FAAA

In his address, Chaplain Connelly had this to say: 'Friends, we meet here today to dedicate and bless a plaque in memory of LCDR Brian Charles McKeon. We shall give thanks for his devotion to duty. We shall pray for those who mourn his loss, and we shall ask God's help that we may continue in his ways, and walk worthily in the service of God and Country as have those who have gone before us into the unseen.'

We dedicate this plaque to Brian Charles McKeon who served his country with distinction and brought happiness to many.'



## A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

## Edward Henry Heinemann

Designer of the Douglas A-4 Skyhawk, (Heinemann's Hot-Rod) the Ferrari of airplanes.



Ed Heinemann was responsible for the design and development of a remarkably successful series of combat aircraft, from the Dauntless dive bomber to the A4 Skyhawk jet. During a career that extended over six decades, he designed more than 20 fighter, bomber, and rocket aircraft. He died on 26 November 1991 at the age of 83.

Heinemann was one of a kind, the leader of a design team, which time and time again gave the Navy, the finest aircraft available. Born in Saginaw, Michigan on 14 March 1908, he moved to California in 1914, where he began with the Douglas Aircraft Company in 1926 as a draftsman. He served as project engineer before becoming Chief Engineer in 1936 and Vice President for Military Aircraft in 1958. In 1960, he joined Guidance Technology as Executive Vice President and in 1961 became Corporate Vice President - Engineering for General Dynamics, a position from which he retired in 1973.

Heinemann was awarded the Collier Trophy in 1953 for the greatest achievement in aviation in America" - the F4D 'Skyray', as well as the Guggenheim Medal in 1978 in honour of his invaluable contribution to the nation. He was enshrined in the Aviation Hall of Fame in 1981 and received the National Medal of Science from President Reagan at the White House on 24 May 1983. He was designated Honorary Naval Aviator Number 18. He was a long time member of the Tailhook Association. Following are some key rules Ed said he tried to adhere to when dealing with people. They give you a measure of the man!

- Tell people what is expected of them.
- Tell them in advance about changes that will affect them.
- Let those working for you know how they are getting along.
- Give credit where credit is due, especially for extra effort or performance. Do it while it's hot. Don't wait.
- Make the best use of each person's ability.
- Strive to keep ahead of schedule.
- Don't waste time.
- If you're the boss, give guidance, direction, and most important, decisive answers to questions.
- Make sure people know where to go to get answers.
- Beware of office politicians.
- If you want to pick a man for a difficult job, pick one who has already thought out the problem or is capable of doing so quickly.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- A great many people think they are thinking when they are really rearranging their prejudices. Beware of these.
- Respect the specialists - those who are masters of a particular phase of an operation. But be wary of allowing them to make big decisions.
- Avoid lengthy committee meetings.
- Avoid paralysis by analysis.
- Plan ahead.

**MEMBERS' GET-TOGETHER AT THE CAMPBELLTOWN RSL -25 MAY 2002**

Photographs 'hot off the press' courtesy *Dr Fred Lane*. [More next edition]



**CAMPBELLTOWN RSL AUDITORIUM**  
View showing one section during the lunch break



L-R: Maggie and Stafford Lowe with Laurel McLaren Gordon Jervis can be seen in the background



L-R: 'Nobby' Clarke - Pauline Johns and Rolly Waddell-Wood

**The Vet**

A veterinary surgeon had had a hell of a day, but when he got home from tending to all the sick animals his wife was waiting with a long cool drink and a romantic candle-lit dinner, after which they had a few more drinks and went happily to bed.

At about 2:00 in the morning, the phone rang.

"Is this the vet?" asked an elderly lady's voice.

"Yes, it is", replied the vet, "Is this an emergency?"

"Well, sort of," said the elderly lady, "there's a whole bunch of cats on the roof outside making a terrible noise mating and I can't get to sleep. What can I do about it?"

There was a sharp intake of breath from the vet, who then patiently replied:

"Open the window and tell them they're wanted on the phone"

"Really?" said the elderly lady, "Will that stop them?"

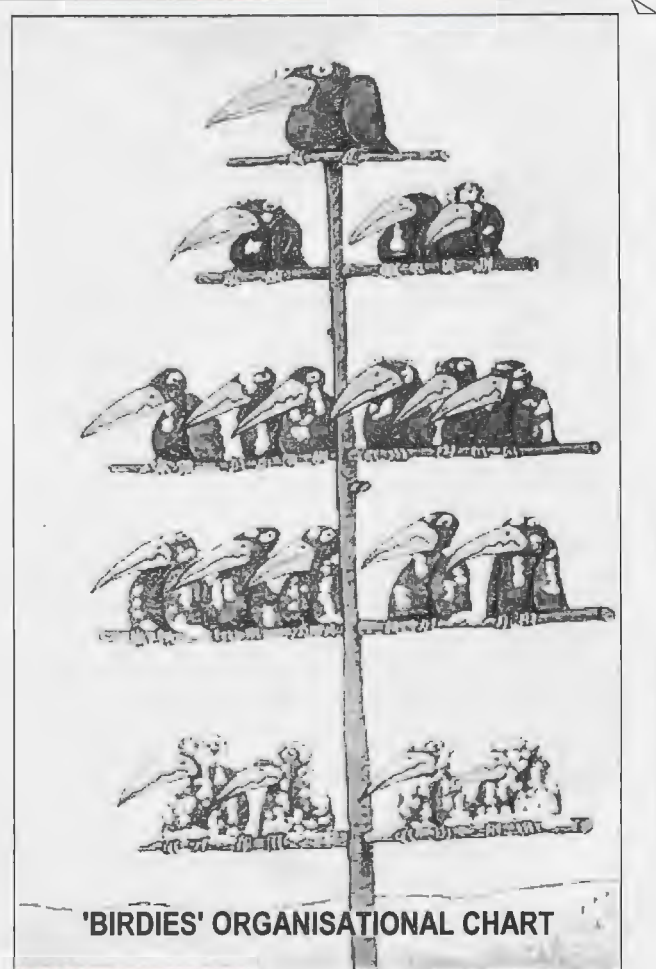
"Should do," said the vet, "IT STOPPED ME!"



**A NAVAL VIETNAM VETERANS' REUNION  
WILL BE HELD AT COFFS HARBOUR IN  
OCTOBER 2002**

For further details check out their website at:  
[www.naval-vietnam-reunion.conf.au](http://www.naval-vietnam-reunion.conf.au)

*Placed by John Gordon*



**'BIRDIES' ORGANISATIONAL CHART**

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## WORK or PRISON?

In prison, they spend the majority of their time in a 8-by-10 cell.  
At work, I spend most of my time in a 6-by-6 cubicle.

In prison, they get three free meals a day.  
At work, I only get a break for one meal, which I have to pay for.

In prison, they get rewarded with time off for good behaviour.  
At work, I get rewarded with more work for good behaviour.

At work, I must wear an ID badge at all times.

In prison, they are provided with clothing with the ID conveniently sewn on.

In prison, there is a dress standard, but they supply the clothes.  
At work, there is a dress standard, but I must buy my own clothes.

In prison, a guard locks and unlocks all the doors for them.  
At work, I must carry around a security card and lock and unlock all the doors myself.

In prison, they can watch TV and play games.

At work, I get fired for watching TV and playing games.

In prison, they will be encouraged to learn a new career.

At work, I must do any learning in my own time.

In prison, they have an exercise room that they can use almost anytime.  
At work, I can only use the exercise room in my own time.

In prison, they can fall asleep anytime and nothing happens.  
At work, if I fall asleep anytime I get fired.

In prison, they have full medical coverage with no deductibles.  
At work, I get partial coverage and pay all the deductibles.

In prison, all expenses are paid by the tax payer.  
At work, I get to pay all the expenses to go to work so I can pay taxes to pay for the prisoners.

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## NEW WEB SITE

The FAAA of Australia web site is now on line at <http://www.faaaa.asn.au>

The webmaster, Paul Shiels, has requested constructive input from the members regarding the site. He can be contacted at: [pshiels@bigpond.com](mailto:pshiels@bigpond.com) or through the SA Division Secretary.

## Member's E-mail Directory # 9

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## MEMORIAL SERVICE

A Memorial Service for the late Warrant Officer Robert Brown will be held on 14 June 2002 at the HMAS *Albatross* Chapel. Visitors are requested to be there by 1100 for an 1130 start to allow for security checks to be made at the RANAS Main Gate.

Prior to the service there will be a private scattering of the ashes at sea from HMAS *Creswell*.

## A LAST FAREWELL

*The Association records with regret the deaths of the following members, shipmates and friends:*

## Charlie O'Farrell

The family and friends of the late Petty Officer (AVN) Charles Christopher O'Farrell wish to advise his shipmates that Charlie passed away on 15 April 2002 at the age of 62.

\* \* \*


 CDR Gordon McPhee  
OBE RAN (Rtd)  
1924 - 2002


## Roy 'Chick' Manley

Ex- RN Fleet Air Arm Apprentice. Served 1940 - 1954, including secondment to the RAN and served in HMAS *Sydney* in Korea. Aged 76.

Ron Salter