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HMAS Albatross entrance 1968



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# FAAAA

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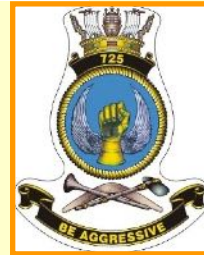
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## THE EDITOR'S PIECE

Welcome to this delayed September edition of Slipstream for 2023. I apologise to all our subscribers as I spent September in the USA and I did not adequately prepare before my departure. In mitigation, I must profess that July and August were very busy months for members, as quite a few events and commemorations occurred that kept me pre-occupied. These activities are reported on in this issue.

RANHFV veteran and FAA stalwart, Captain Robert Ray, MBE passed away earlier this year in Perth, and in compliance with his wishes, no funeral was held. Rob had requested that his ashes be spread over the coast off Jervis Bay Range, the scene of a 1968 Iroquois crash that took the lives of three of his 723 Squadron colleagues. Following a memorial service in the Fleet Air Arm Museum on 21st July, a 723 Squadron EC135 helicopter, accompanied by the HARS Navy Heritage Flight Iroquois 898, dispersed Rob's remains.

During August there was great attention focussed on recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Australia's forces withdrawal from South Vietnam. Commemorations were held across Australia on 3rd August at the gravesites of many of the 523 servicemen who were killed in action in Vietnam. Included amongst them were four of our own RANHFV members.

National Vietnam Veterans' Day on 18th August was commemorated at Old Bar, NSW in a march and ceremony coordinated by John Macartney, RANHFV2 veteran. Many RANHFV and US Army 135 AHC veterans attended with their wives. It was a great privilege for Colleen and I to represent the FAA Association National Executive. The relationships forged with the Old Bar community and in particular the local Public School are a great credit to John and Sue Macartney, and this annual event is one not to be missed.

Another highlight on September 1st in was the book launch for "The A-4 Skyhawk in Australian Service". The book was co-authored by former A-4 pilot Peter Greenfield and ex-CPOATA David Prest. Commodore John Da Costa was the guest of honour, as the first of many A-4 squadron Commanding Officers and he spoke candidly and generously of the mighty aircraft and all those who flew and fixed them. The book was edited by Avonmore Book's principal Peter Ingman, a

dedicated military historian and author. Royalties from the books' sales will go towards the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

No sooner had the book launch concluded than I was packing my cases for a memorable visit to the USA to fly with my friend Edward Kurdziel in an ex-RAN FAA Fairey 'Firefly' AS-6. I had previously flown in WB518 in 2002 at the famous Oshkosh AirVenture in Wisconsin; and as I anticipated that this would be my final USA trip to witness the last-ever Reno Air Races and the annual Miramar Marine Corps Air Station airshow, Edward generously invited me to join him at these two famous aviation events. Edward had purchased the partly-finished rebuild of WB518 from Bankstown in 1994 and the eight-year restoration culminated in the 'Best Post WW2 Warbird' trophy at Oshkosh in 2002.

While in Nevada I took the opportunity to inspect another ex-RAN 'Firefly' WD833 that has been on the market for over a year. Considering that this aircraft left Australia for the UK in the early 1970's as a complete airframe that was capable of being ground run and taxied, it is now in the category of what could genuinely be called the 'world's largest aviation jigsaw puzzle'. The HARS Aviation Museum at Shellharbour Airport have been in negotiation with the selling agent for quite a while and discussions are ongoing.

As FAAA members will know, the Federal Council Meeting is being held on 21st October, via ZOOM. This is the annual opportunity for all Divisions to meet to discuss the many matters of business that are so important to the Association's future viability.

Approximately 50% of Slipstream subscribers receive the magazine in digital format, and as the Federal Council meeting is imminent, I am planning to distribute this delayed edition to all members with registered email addresses. Those subscribers who opt for the 'had-copy' magazine will still receive this issue in the mail, but most likely after the Federal Council Meeting.

Readers' feedback is always welcome and I am open to any suggestions from members on what YOU wish to see in Slipstream. Better still, submissions covering any subjects relating to the Fleet Air Arm, defence matters or any appropriate topics will be given priority for publication.

In closing, I wish to thank this issue's writers, who answered the call that I put out for submissions.

Regards,

**Terry Hetherington—National Secretary / Editor.**



# THE EDITOR'S PIECE

## SIX TONS, TWO MEN AND A ROLLS-ROYCE 'GRIFFON'

This banner appeared in a 1974 edition of the UK's 'Flying' magazine. Here are some recent images in reinforcement of that.

*WB  
518*



*R-R  
Griffon  
Mk.74*

*The Guy in the Back*



*Relics of  
WD833*



*Firefly WB518 at Miramar Naval Air Station.  
The famous control tower from Top Gun,  
"Negative Ghost Rider, The Pattern is Full"*

# Anniversary 75 Celebration



The decision to build an airfield on the land now occupied by HMAS Albatross was declared soon after WWII in 1939 and the site was originally opened as a RAAF Base on 07 May 1942. In Oct 1944 the base was transferred to the RN, renamed HMS Nabbington and supported the

British Pacific Fleet until Mar 1946 when it reverted back to the RAAF.

In Jul 1947 the formation of the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) was sanctioned and in 1948 King George VI approved the name Albatross. On 31 Aug 1948 *Albatross* was commissioned, with Commander HJF Lane, OBE, RN as the first Commanding Officer. Home to the FAA and over 20 Resident Units, *Albatross* supports members of all three services, Australian Public Service & contracted staff as well as several Defence contractors and commercial entities. *Albatross's* role has changed dramatically since commissioning but continues, to be like its motto, "Ever Watchful" and support the FAA to meet its operational requirements. *Albatross* is the largest operational Navy establishment covering over 785 Hectares as well as the Jervis Bay Airfield and the Hydrographic Office in Wollongong and is the RAN's only Air Station.

The 31st of Aug 2023 marked the 75th Anniversary, a major milestone, supporting Naval Aviation. Defence personnel, APS, local government, and organisations gathered to celebrate with CAPT Scott Palmer, CO *Albatross*, to recognise and reflect on this occasion.



ALBATROSS HANGARS A to F circa 1960's



SEAHAWK 'ROMEO' HANGARS circa 2020



CAPT Scott Palmer and the youngest sailor aboard, Able Seaman Casey Merriman slice the birthday cake.



**816** Squadron commissioned on 28 August 1948, as a Royal Australian Navy (RAN) squadron at Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Eglinton, Northern Ireland. Equipped with the new Fairey Firefly AS-5 aircraft and commanded by Lieutenant Commander CRJ Coxon, RN. 816

Squadron formed part of the 20th Carrier Air Group (CAG) along with 805 Squadron.

Aircrew began training in the UK, working up on a variety of aircraft loaned from the RN, the final phase of which was deck landing qualification aboard HMS *Illustrious*. HMAS *Sydney* (III), the RAN's first aircraft carrier, was commissioned on 16 December 1948 at Devonport in the south of England.

With 816 Squadron embarked, *Sydney* participated in Operation Hurricane, British nuclear tests in the Monte Bello Islands in October 1952. A year later *Sydney* departed for her second tour in Korean waters, until May 1954, with 816 and 850 Squadrons onboard.

The Squadron reequipped with Fairey Gannet AS-2 and AS-5 in August 1955 and these were supplemented with de Havilland Sea Venom FAW53 fighters in 1964.

Aircraft subsequently serving with 816 Squadron were Grumman Tracker S-2E and S-2G, Westland Wessex Mk31B and Sikorsky Seahawk S-70B-2 and MH-60R models.

The Seahawk Introduction & Transition Unit (SITU) formed initially with the S-70B-2 in 1988 and with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 SITU, and later HS816 Squadron, embarked aircraft aboard RAN ships in the Gulf. These embarkations to the Middle East and the Horn of Africa continue with the MH-60R.

**805** Squadron formed as the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) first fighter squadron on 28 August 1948 at Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Eglinton in Northern Ireland. Flying Hawker Sea Fury FB IIs and commanded by Lieutenant Commander PEI Bailey, RN, the Squadron formed part of the 20th Carrier Air Group (CAG) along with 816 Squadron.



Aircrew worked up on a variety of aircraft loaned from the RN, the final phase of which was deck landing qualification aboard HMS *Illustrious*. HMAS *Sydney*, the RAN's first aircraft carrier, was commissioned on 16 December 1948 at Devonport in the south of England. 20th CAG performed a flypast to celebrate the event. The CAG embarked in *Sydney* on 15 February 1949 and spent the next few weeks working up at Moray Firth, north east of Inverness in Scotland. All of the pilots in the CAG had extensive wartime operational experience but many had little or no deck landing experience.

*Sydney* departed for Australia on 12 April 1949 and arrived at Jervis Bay on 25 May 1949. Fifty four aircraft were ferried ashore and then towed some 30km by road to HMAS *Albatross*. 805 Squadron, together with 808 and 817 Squadrons embarked in *Sydney* for operational service between October 1951 and January 1952 during the Korean War.

Aircraft subsequently serving with 805 Squadron were de Havilland Sea Venom FAW53, McDonnell-Douglas Skyhawk A-4G, Westland Wessex Mk31B and Kaman Super Seasprite SH-2G(A). The squadron was decommissioned in June 2008.

# Anniversary 75 Celebration



816 Sqn Firefly



805 Sqn Sea Fury



816 Squadron Gannett



805 Squadron Sea Venom



816 Squadron Tracker



805 Squadron Skyhawk

Anniversary **75** Celebration



816 Squadron Wessex 31B on counter-terrorism service in the Bass Strait



805 Squadron SH-2G(A) Super Seasprite



816 Squadron S-70B-2 Seahawk



816 Squadron MH-60R 'Romeo' Seahawk



# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

The main item of news coming from the NSW Division is that the former Division Secretary, Jeff Dalgliesh has stepped down from that position for personal reasons. Jeff, a resident of Sydney, travelled and stayed overnight in Nowra to attend general meeting and events. He has other commitments with ex-service organisations in Sydney and the constant travel became difficult for him. We thank Jeff for his dedication to the role as secretary and wish him well for the future.

In the interim, Dick 'Pincher' Martin, has stepped up to resume the Secretary's role until further notice.

Two long serving and highly-respected NSW Division members have 'crossed the bar' since our last report.

Alfred 'Rusty' Marquis, ex-WOATWL passed away at the age of 97 years in July. 'Rusty' enlisted in 1943 and trained as a Navy Commando during the war. He transferred from General Service to the Fleet Air Arm in 1951 and he was amongst the first FAA Warrant Officers promoted in 1971.

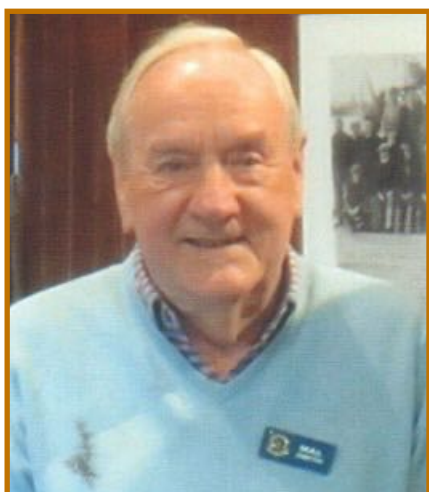


Frank Larter, ex-WOAVN, passed away on 19th September whilst in care at Johnathan Rogers House, Nowra. He enlisted in the FAA in 1953 and sailed to the UK in HMAS *Vengeance* in 1955 as part of the commissioning crew for HMAS *Melbourne*. Frank's subsequent service was at both *Albatross* and in *Melbourne* in aircraft handling and fire party roles, and he served in multiple shore establishments as a Motor Transport Driving instructor.

Frank's son David served as the Ship's Warrant Officer in HMAS *Albatross*.

Condolences are expressed to the families of both 'Rusty' and Frank and they will be missed by their FAA shipmates.

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS



## News from Victorian Division with Mal Smith

It has been quiet in this division as we have not had a meeting for some time other than some committee get togethers working out some proposed functions for the coming months. A lot of us in this part of the world tend to hibernate during these cold months. I try as best I can to keep members informed of anything important by email and snail mail.

Sad news since our last report was the passing of former pilot James (Jim) Davidson. Jim served from 1954-1962 flying a variety of aircraft including Firefly, Sea Fury, and Venoms before moving to helicopters. Upon leaving the service Jim had a long and distinguished career with TAA. Ill health prevented Jim from joining us very often in later years but he always maintained a keen interest in the FAANA. We send our thoughts and best wishes to his family.

Since our last report we have welcomed Max Speedy to the Division. A lot of you will know Max as he served for many years in various ships, establishments and squadrons. We look forward to officially welcoming Max whenever he is able to make it to Melbourne from his country home.

Long term member Brian Farthing has recently relocated to Hastings and hopefully we will see more of him in the future. Brian joined the service in 1953 and like most did his initial training at HMAS Cerberus. After seventy years he has come full circle and back living just a few kilometres from Crib Point.

I mentioned last issue that we had our Annual Dinner at Waverley RSL and Commemoration Service at HMAS Cerberus due to take place at the end of August. For a variety of reasons we have had to cancel these events. This is unfortunate as they have been part of our calendar for forty years. We are hopeful that they will be resurrected next year.



Our next social event is a weekend at the Navy Ski Lodge, Mt Buller in early November. This is still in the planning stage and will incorporate a Mess Dinner on the Saturday. We held this event for the last year as a one-night stay and it was a great success. We are hopeful of building on that success by encouraging members to stay two nights. The cost is quite reasonable and we are indebted to Jeremy (Harry) Butler for his assistance.

I am enclosing below a photo of a tee-shirt that I circularised to the Victoria Division members recently. This has created some interest and I thought it may be worthwhile see if members from other Divisions were interested. They come in Navy Blue or Black with White lettering. The cost is \$25.00 plus postage. I have purchased quite a few and as I mentioned to our members, they always get a reaction. Some even printable. If there is any interest, please contact me and I will forward the details.

Yours Aye

Mal Smith



# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS



## **News from WA Division by Sharron Spargo**

*A fortnight before the official national commemorative service on Vietnam Veterans' Day, the Vietnam Veterans' Vigil organised a series of low-key events that focussed on individual loss rather than national, collective loss. These events were also intended for those Vietnam veterans and next of kin who are too frail to attend the ceremony in Canberra but were able to visit their local cemetery, and by doing so, play an active part in this significant year of remembrance. A Service of Remembrance was planned at every grave or commemorative plaque site across the nation and overseas on 3 August 2023. While the focus was to visit the graves of all 523 servicemen KIA, a secondary aim was to visit the graves of any other Vietnam veterans who have died since their service in Vietnam and are buried in the same cemetery. The following WA Division report focuses on the commemoration held for PO O'Brian 'Darkie' Phillips on that day.*

### **VIETNAM VETERANS VIGIL COMMEMORATION SERVICE**

The WA Division held a Vietnam veterans vigil commemorative service at 11.00 on Thursday 03 August as part of the nationwide vigil services being held in remembrance of those who lost their lives during service in the Vietnam War.

Jim Bush, WA Division Secretary conducted the vigil with an opening address followed by tributes as set out in the Order of Service proceedings below.

#### **Opening Address**

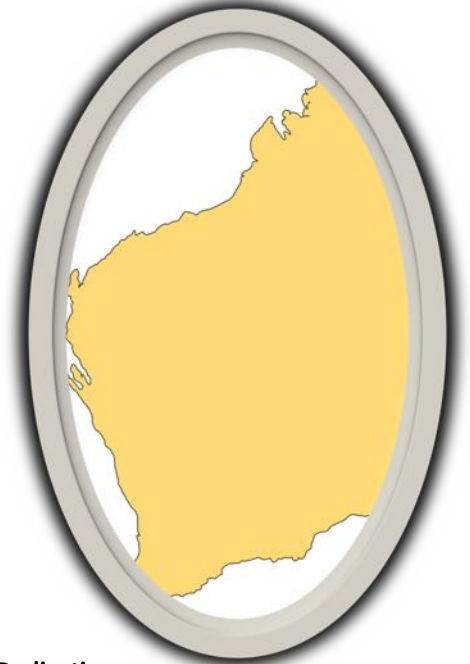
We are gathered here at the Karrakatta Cemetery grave site of O'Brian Cedric Phillips, affectionately known as 'Darkie' to his shipmates and pay a tribute of remembrance in recognition of his service to the nation in the Vietnam War and as part of vigil commemorative service being held nationwide.

Thank you for attending today and may I say a special thank you to Mrs Margaret Phillips, widow of O'Brian Phillips and his son Scott Phillips for joining with us on this special occasion of remembrance for 'Darkie'.

'Darkie' was a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> contingent RAN Helicopter Flight deployed to Vietnam for a tour of duty from 15 October 1967 to 16 October 1968 and lost his life on 21 August 1968 whilst operating as a door gunner in the lead helicopter of a light fire team of gunships operating at tree top height that crashed into a clearing during a flight from Black Horse to Hui Dat.

#### **Tribute Speech**

Alan Winchcombe and Keith Taylor served with Darkie on the RAN Helicopter Flight during their tour of duty in Vietnam and gave a heart rendering tribute for Darkie and told stories of their experience and comradeship with him and some of antics they got up to during their time together in a challenging working environment.



#### **Dedication**

We are standing here this morning at your grave to thank you for your service to your country and for giving up your life whilst doing what your country asked you to do.

I want you to know that today, at this hour, there are people like us all around Australia standing at the graves of your mates who were also were killed in action. All around Australia we are saying thank you for your service and for the service of your mates.

We want you to know that you are not forgotten, that your sacrifice was not in vain. The world is a better place for the actions of every sailor, soldier and airman from ANZAC times right through to today.

Some of us here may know you, others may not, but we all join together on this day, in remembrance, to say thank you, to pray for you, and to give thanks for your life that you laid down so many years ago.

We feel privileged to be here with you, and as we remember, and say a prayer, we hope you will be listening and hear us and see the gratitude in our hearts and in the hearts of your nation. We pray that you are resting in peace.

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

## **Bible Prayer Reading**

Barrie Yesberg JP PCHA RAN (Rtd) attended the vigil service and provided the prayer reading for Psalm 23, the Naval Prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

## **The Ode**

O'Brian Cedric 'Darkie' Phillips our time together is almost finished, We want to honour you by reciting the Ode to the Fallen, playing Last Post, observing one minute's silence and playing Reveille. Behind this tradition is the hope that those who have given their lives (Last Post) continue to live on, (Reveille) because of their willingness to give their lives in service of their country and in trying to win Peace for their mates, families and loved ones. Thank you for being part of the great ANZAC tradition.

*They have no grave but the cruel sea*

*No flowers lie at their head*

*A rusting hulk is their tombstone*

*A'fast on the ocean bed*

*They shall grow not old, as we that are*

*left grow old*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the*

*years condemn*

*At the going down of the sun and in*

*the morning*

*We will remember them.*

## **The Last Post**

## **One Minute's Silence**

## **Reveille**

## **Presentation of Floral Bouquet**

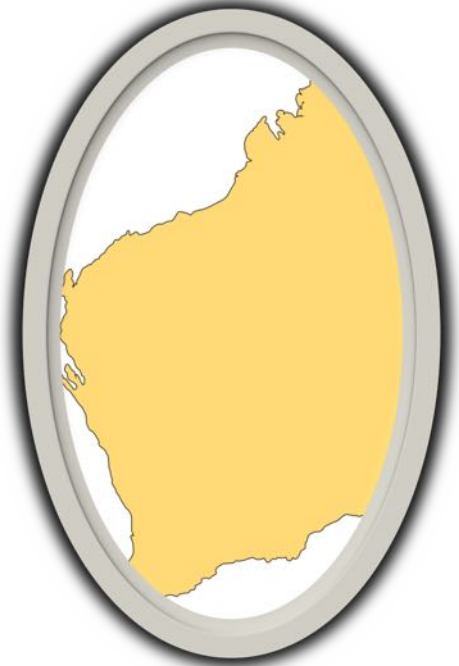
Keith Taylor and Alan Winchcombe presented Mrs Margaret Phillips and Scott Phillips with a floral bouquet of remembrance.

## **Farewell**

Thank you for your service to your country.

One day we might meet in the great beyond.

Till then, Rest In Peace.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NAVY16091

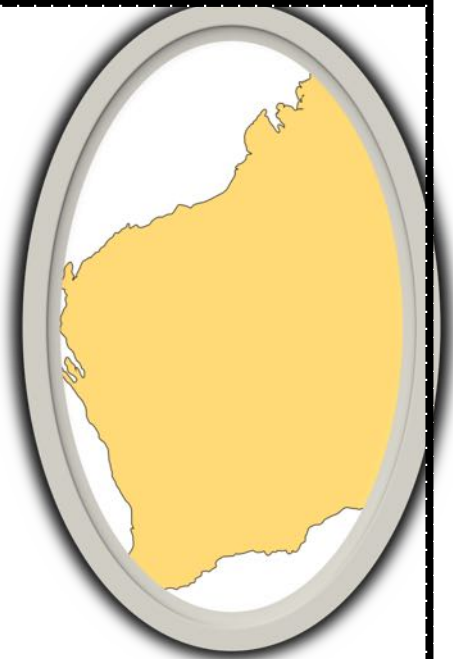
**Petty Officer Aircrewman O'Brian Cedric Phillips, of Bassendean, WA, and of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV), and an unidentified US Army serviceman building the Command Bunker, at Camp Black Horse, South Vietnam, February 1968.**

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

***Bruce (Blue) Frederick Lukey***

***Leading Seaman Safety Equipment***

***24 September 1944 – 16 July 2023***



Bruce joined the Royal Australian Navy on 08 February 1963 and completed 9 years service until 07 February 1972. On completion of his recruit training at HMAS Cerberus he was posted to HMAS Albatross and completed the Safety Equipment category branch course and served in the Fleet Air Arm.

During his period of service he completed 2 deployments to Vietnam on HMAS Melbourne from 31 May 1965 to 22 June 1965, and on HMAS Hobart involving patrols off the North Vietnamese Coast from 07 March 1967 to 27 September 1967.

Bruce was a member of the WA Division and will be fondly remembered.

Bruce passed away peacefully at home on the evening of Sunday 16 July 2023 surrounded by his loved ones. A much loved Larrikin, Mate, Dad, Brother, Pop and Great-Grandfather.

The funeral service for Bruce was held on Friday 28 July 2023 at Forest Lawn Memorial Park and was fondly remembered and farewelled by his family, friends and shipmates.

Yours in Sympathy

Jim Bush

Secretary WA Division

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS



## **News from SA Division with Roger Harrison**

A warm wintery welcome to each and every one of you who have managed to cling to the Family Tree without falling off. Sometimes it can become a slippery sucker to cling to.

A shout out to Gordon Gray, Brian Dutch, Tiny Warren, Dave Smillie, Mal Parrington and to all other Members Nationwide, we wish you all a speedy recovery back to alarmingly good health and a certain measure of elevated incoherence.

The King's Birthday weekend has come and gone, and no notification from the authorities that I received a mention in the King's Birthday Honours List. After all my anonymous letters posted in, too.

Delightful photo of the new King and Queen on the cover of the June Slipstream Magazine. I have a lot of faith in Charles being "Hands On" with running the Empire and not just an "Entitled plonker in Ermine."

"Prune in June" my aged father would keep reminding me as I look around my backyard at the apricot and nectarine trees. I'll get to them soon

enough, but it leads onto this Division having to prune some of the unfinancial Members, who have had several reminder notices, and still have not bothered to renew their Membership. We have traditionally carried the costs involved in funding the FAAA, such as Capitation Fees and Slipstream Fees out of the SA FAAA Treasurers coffers, but with rising costs and reduced support by a few, we as a Division, voted on cancelling unfinancial Members access to the Web Site as well as the ever-popular Slipstream magazine, but at this point, not Membership until we hear otherwise. Now is the time to Rally and renew your Membership for those faltering.

The May General Meeting) was held at the Keswick Military Barracks and was attended by Members J. Siebert, I. McBeath, M. Morris, M. Cain, J. Akeroyd, D. Smillie, and T. Grant, D. Ward, B. Thompson, M. Staff, G. Dowling, R. Harrison with apologies from B. Lord, M. Stubbington, B. Dutch, P. Shiels, I. Laidler, R. Morris, P. Coulson, V. Byers, and G. Gray. OK, so you can see familiar names here from your past, don't forget them and keep them close to your chest, whether they still owe you money or not.

Excellent collection of ANZAC Day photos from President John Siebert as well as his first hand editorial to cover the fact that the Secretary was 16,254 kilometres from home. Made my trip into London on ANZAC Day look very mediocre indeed. Also, amazing to see Paul Shiels taking up the Right-Hand Marker position in his 4WD nuclear powered scooter.



Full marks to our Flag Officer, Ian Laidler, who managed to get all of the flags and banners to the step-off point in a timely fashion. A bit of a scare when he couldn't locate the flag or banner which were hiding at the very bottom of the kitbag. Thank you to the Petty Officer in uniform to save the day. More character wrinkles for Ian Laidler.

The Division's Ancient Mariner, Henry Young, will be turning 100 years in September this year, and I feel the need for this Division to help him celebrate this wonderful milestone. I have alerted the Dancing Girls and Strippers. More details to follow.

Vietnam Veterans' Day on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August at 1100 will see our President lay a wreath on behalf of those FAA personnel who did not return safely to our shores. As many of us that can, will attend to offer support on this Special Commemoration. Torrens Parade Grounds in the City, possible parking on the Parade Grounds.

The communication gap between serving and non-serving personnel

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS



While I was on 723 Squadron, I took the opportunity to fly with Tony whenever I could. A true gentleman and he even let me touch a few dials.

The Naval Memorial for RAN seamen Todd and Danswan KIA at Beachport SA has been discussed at length by Paul Shiels and I believe things will move forward in the fullness of time. (Yes Minister)

With the re-naming of HMAS Encounter to HMAS Todd, a local hero, poo-pooed by the Minister concerned and no further sabre rattling from Paul Shiels, or this Division, will shift their decision. HMAS Encounter it remains.

HMAS Encounter Recommissioning 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday was successfully held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May.

Member Jan Akeroyd has asked, "why isn't there more Navy representation in country schools". President will rattle a few cages here in SA to see if recruiting trips could find their way north of Grand Junction Road and south of McLaren Vale. Apparently Year 12 students that Jan deals with often ask after career opportunities within the Navy and in particular the Fleet Air Arm which she is brilliantly representing.

The September (20<sup>th</sup>) GM will be held on the Keswick Military Barracks grounds and inside the Café. Reminder notices will be forwarded direct to your In-Box. Drive straight through the Main Gates and on the left. Park up anywhere. No one will shoot at you. Visiting Queensland Members collect a flak jacket at the Main Gate just in case I got that wrong.

The July 19<sup>th</sup> General Meeting at Kes



was never more obvious here in SA when 808 Squadron flew into their adopted city of Goolwa in April for Anzac Day and failed to notify the local FAAA Division of their intentions thus successfully isolating us from participating. Good effort by 808 Squadron all the same, regardless.

The Division's November Road trip to Mt Gambier is being plotted on the chart table and this will take shape over the Remembrance Day weekend. Local FAAA Member Peter Coulson and the delightful Sandy Coulson, have volunteered to keep an eye on us as we adjust to the distance and cooler weather blowing in from Antarctica. President John Siebert has invited COMFAA David Frost to attend and I believe he has accepted the invitation. More the merrier. Details will follow for the SA locals, but if anyone interstate wishes to attend 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> November, (Jeff Dalglish) then contact the SA Secretary for details re format and accommodation at Mt Gambier. We will be assisting the local RSL with a wreath laying as well as a small Memorial Service for Vietnam veteran, Tony Casadio RAN. KIA.

wick progressed successfully after a light lunch supplied by the staff in the Café. No alcohol available but I have not heard anyone grumble about that. The Secretary will step in to cover President John Siebert who is swanning around somewhere as well as the Vice President, Gerry Dowling who has called in sick. Secretary was a busy Boy as he Chaired the Meeting and took the Minutes at the same time. Did not think to delegate.

Time to ship this off to Terry Hetherington for the September Slipstream. Thank you once again Terry for the effort provided in keeping those of us not spending their day licking glass windows, up to date. Thank you.

## *Question:*

*When Scientists look for any intelligent life, why is it that their instruments are all pointing away from Earth?*

Roger Harrison

Hon. Whipping Boy. SA.

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

## COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIAN FORCES WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIETNAM

*A fortnight before the official national commemorative service on Vietnam Veterans' Day, the Vietnam Veterans' Vigil organised a series of low-key events that focussed on individual loss rather than national, collective loss.*

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*While the focus was to visit the graves of all 523 servicemen KIA, a secondary aim was to visit the graves of any other Vietnam veterans who have died since their service in Vietnam and are buried in the same cemetery*

*The following report from SA Division member Peter Coulson, focusses on the commemoration held for Lieutenant Anthony Casadio RAN and Sapper John Rogers on that day in Mount Gambier.*

14th August.

Currently in Cairns but forwarded from Mount Gambier RSL President is information on the Vigil held on 3 August for Tony Casadio and another Mount Gambier local as part of the National Vietnam Vigil.

We had laid the flowers on Tony's headstone before we headed north. Good to see they survived the weather.

Cheers, Peter Coulson.



## 'They're not forgotten': Veterans recognised

**CHARLOTTE VARCOE**  
charlotte.varcoe@citytoday.com.au

TWO Vietnam veterans from Mount Gambier/Berrin have been recognised with the local Returned Services League (RSL) commemorating Sapper John Rogers and Lieutenant Anthony Casadio in a service on Thursday.

The Vietnam War began in 1954 and formally ended in 1975.

Between 1963 and 1973, more than 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War as part of an allied force led by the United States. 523 Australian troops died as a result of the war with a further 2400 wounded.

The two local servicemen were 22 years old when they perished during the Vietnam war with both men attending what is now Tenslon Woods College during their younger years.

Anthony was a flier for the Australian Navy and in Vietnam he flew with the American 135th air group.

Unfortunately, Anthony was shot down on two occasions with the second time being his last.

Mount Gambier RSL president Bob Sandow said Anthony was also originally with the Air Cadets before "jumping over to the navy".

Mr Sandow said at the age of 19, Anthony was flying jets before transferring to helicopters in South Vietnam.

"Anthony's main role in the navy was as a helicopter pilot and he flew gunships," Mr Sandow said.

"He received the Distinguished Flying Cross on behalf of the American government and the story is the American Government wanted to promote him but the Australian Navy doesn't do that."

He said Anthony was commemorated everywhere and was considered a hero.

"He was just a guy flying for the 135th Airborne and had the attitude to get the job



LOCAL LEGEND: Lieutenant Anthony Casadio served in the Vietnam War.



ALWAYS REMEMBERED: Sapper John Rogers was remembered yesterday leading up to the anniversary of the Vietnam War.

done," Mr Sandow said.

"On the day, Anthony was flying at treetop height and it was believed to have come down with an enemy's rocket grenade."

Mr Sandow said Anthony was also honoured by local air cadets since 1969 and has an award at Tenslon Woods College that has been honoured since 1970.

He said the other veteran who was honoured, Sapper John Rogers, was also 22 years of age when he was killed in Bien Hoa in South Vietnam.

"John was called into national service so he would have been 20 years old when he

went to Vietnam," Mr Sandow.

"While in Vietnam he was a rifleman who was called up for service by the birthday ballot and served with the 2RAR."

Mr Sandow said it was important to acknowledge veterans who were killed in action.

"There were 523 Vietnam veterans that were killed in action and it is important they are not forgotten," he said.

"The RSL and their friends don't forget but it is important for the general public also don't forget."

"It has been 50 years since we first sent troops to Vietnam and 50 years since the end of the Vietnam War."

Both men are also honoured each Anzac Day with a local football match named after each of them.

The Rogers Medal is played between Kongorong and an opposing team with the Casadio Medal always played between North and South Gambier.

Alongside the significant milestone for Vietnam Veterans, a commemorative service will also be held on August 18 at the Mount Gambier War Memorial.



# NEWS, VIEWS AND REVIEWS FROM AROUND THE CORNER AND ACROSS THE GLOBE



## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE LATE CAPT(O) ROBERT RAY MBE RAN (RTD) FRIDAY 21ST JULY 2023 FLEET AIR ARM MUSEUM

*The following is an extract from the eulogy delivered at Rob Ray's memorial service. Over fifty people attended including Rob's immediate family and several members of the First Intake of Artificer Apprentices to HMAS Nirimba in July 1956.*



"Bob joined the Navy from Western Australia in June 1956. He was one of fifty youths, aged 15 to 17, chosen for initial intake into the Royal Australian Navy Apprentice Training Establishment, HMAS Nirimba, located at Quaker's Hill NSW.

Bob was one of only four Aircraft Artificers selected in the first intake, but a Government decision in 1959 to disband the Fleet Air Arm meant that Bob and his course-mates were to be offered a free discharge in 1960 to continue their apprenticeships with Qantas Airways.

A further change in Government policy reversed the 1959 decision, and in October 1962 Bob re-entered the Royal Australian Navy, not as an Aircraft

Artificer but as a midshipman on the Supplementary List, with aspirations to become a Naval Aviator. Bob and Beverley married on the day before Bob departed for HMAS Cerberus in Victoria to commence his officer training.

There followed three years of courses in seamanship and aviation at HMAS Cerberus, HMAS Albatross, the Royal Navy Observers' school in Malta, and in various RAN ships and squadrons.

At the conclusion of his Helicopter Operational Flying School with 725 Squadron, Bob was advanced to sub-lieutenant observer in August 1965. Now posted to 817 Squadron and flying the Mk.31A Wessex, Bob served in the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne on six occasions over the next two years.

A promotion to lieutenant in August 1967 saw Bob next serving in 723 Squadron at HMAS Albatross. When assigned to the Second Contingent of the RAN Helicopter Flight-Vietnam, Bob and fifty other aircrew, engineers and support staff underwent rigorous training in preparation for their 12-month deployment to South Vietnam, which occurred in September 1968.



For his service as the Staff Officer, Divisional Officer, Security and Intelligence Officer for the RAN personnel attached to the US Army's 135<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company, and as the Aviation Officer to 7th Division of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam, Bob was installed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire.

For the three years after Bob's return to Australia, he was on the instructional staff of the Officers' Training School at HMAS Cerberus and then at sea in the guided-missile destroyer HMAS Perth, qualifying for Bridge Watch-keeping and Ocean Navigation duties.

After a further year in Navy Headquarters Bob returned to the sphere of Naval Aviation, and on promotion to Lieutenant Commander, he joined other members of the RAN Sea King Flight UK in March 1974. That twelve months in the UK was an intensive period of learning and operational experience with the Navy's newest airborne anti-submarine warfare capability.

When 817 Squadron re-commissioned in January 1976 with the Sea King helicopter, Bob became the squadron's Senior Observer. At the end of that year Bob was appointed to be the Albatross Air Operations Officer.

With promotion to Commander in July 1978 Bob took on a series of operational, administrative and command postings in Australia, the UK and the USA, attaining the rank of Captain in January 1986.

After 16 months as the Director of Navy Reserves and Cadets in Navy Headquarters Bob retired in April 1987, concluding 31 years of service to the Commonwealth and the Royal Australian Navy. This was a grand achievement by any measure, and along that path Bob received numerous commendations and accolades in addition to his MBE award, and he made a multitude of life-long friendships.

It was on the shoulders of officers like Captain Robert Ray MBE, RAN, that today's Fleet Air Arm was formed. We salute him for his service, and we grieve, together with Bob's family and friends, for his passing."



*Mrs Beverley Ray, Mr Terry Hetherington with members of Rob's 1956 'Nirimba' apprentices entry*

# NEWS, VIEWS AND REVIEWS FROM AROUND THE CORNER AND ACROSS THE GLOBE



## MARLES CONFIRMS TAIPANS WON'T FLY AGAIN

Defence Minister Richard Marles has said Australia's fleet of Taipans will not fly again following a crash that killed four men in August.

The aircraft were already due to be withdrawn in December next year but will now remain grounded because an investigation into the incident will continue well into 2024. It comes after the helicopter ditched into the water south of Hamilton Island while participating in the Talisman Sabre "war game" involving 30,000 participants.



The aircraft type will be replaced by a new fleet of MH-60R Seahawks and UH-60M Black Hawks, three of which have already arrived in Australia.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles said advice to the government outlined that the ongoing investigations into the crash would likely continue well into 2024, and Defence will not fly the platform until investigations are complete.

"The MRH-90 has been an important capability for our country and Defence Force, and I recognise the hard work of the hundreds of people who dedicated themselves to acquiring, operating, and sustaining the aircraft," he said. "The first of the 40 Black Hawks that will replace the MRH-90 have arrived and are already flying in Australia. We are focused on seeing their introduction to service as quickly as possible.

"The government's highest priority is the safety and wellbeing of our people. "We continue to support the families of the four soldiers who lost their lives earlier this year and the broader Defence community."

The government is understood to be exploring options to accelerate the delivery of Black Hawks to Australia and for aircrew training with international partners.

From 2025, the new AH-64E Apache helicopters will also be introduced into service for the Australian Army. "The Australian government recognises the unique and highly valued contributions of skilled defence industry workers," said Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy. The Taipan fleet was grounded in 2019, 2021 and earlier this year after an aircraft ditched off the NSW South Coast.

Initially purchased for \$3.7 billion in 2005–06 to replace ageing Black Hawk and Sea King fleets, the locally-assembled Taipan has proven a headache for Defence, with statistics showing just 46 per cent of MRH-90 aircraft allocated to flying units were available to fly in 2021.

The incident in March saw 10 ADF personnel on a routine counter-terrorism training exercise rescued from the water near Jervis Bay, with two sustaining minor injuries.

# NEWS, VIEWS AND REVIEWS FROM AROUND THE CORNER AND ACROSS THE GLOBE



## **DEFENCE INDUSTRY MINISTER PAT CONROY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE AIRFIELD AT HMAS ALBATROSS WILL RECEIVE A MAJOR UPGRADE AS PART OF A \$124 MILLION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.**

The \$124 million project will provide a significant boost for local jobs and the economy in the Shoalhaven, delivering an average daily workforce of 75 workers, which will peak at a daily workforce of 120. The upgrade will include resurfacing runways, taxiways and aprons, concrete pathway reconstruction, airfield lighting upgrades and stormwater drain repairs.

Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy said, “This significant investment in HMAS Albatross demonstrates the government’s strong commitment to the Shoalhaven as a vital Defence aviation hub for the nation.”

Contractor BMD Construction Group is delivering the project and will source up to 90 per cent of supplies from the local area or wider region, with work due to start in September and finish in early 2025.

“This airfield upgrade will support the expansion of the Navy’s Romeo helicopter fleet, which will grow the region’s world-class defence industry, involved in helicopter maintenance, support and logistics,” Minister Conroy said.

Local federal member Fiona Phillips welcomed the government's announcement saying, “Nowra is a proud Navy town. This is an exciting project for Nowra and across our region, which will inject more than \$100 million into our regional economy. Importantly, this upgrade will support the increasing number of Seahawk Romeos based here, which is good for local jobs and training, as well as supporting our community.”

This will ensure the airfield continues to safely support Navy operations, including for the fleet of MH-60R Seahawk “Romeo” helicopters, which is being expanded from the current 23 to 36 aircraft from mid-2025.



# JUNE 25TH, 1946 - JACK NORTHROP'S FLYING WING TOOK TO THE SKIES FOR THE FIRST TIME



The B-35 was the brainchild of Jack Northrop, who made the flying wing the focus of his work during the 1930s. During



World War II, Northrop had been commissioned to develop a large wing-only, long-range bomber designated XB-35. Northrop advocated a "flying wing" as a means of reducing parasitic drag and eliminating structural weight not directly responsible for producing lift.

In theory, the B-35 could carry a greater payload faster, farther, and cheaper than a conventional bomber. On 11 April 1941, the United States Army Air Corps sent out a request for a bomber that could carry 10,000 lb of bombs to a round-trip mission of 16,000 mi. Requested performance was a maximum speed of 450 mph, and service ceiling of 45,000 ft. This aircraft would be able to bomb Nazi-occupied Europe in the event that Britain fell.

On 25 June 1946: Northrop Corporation experimental test pilot Max R. Stanley and flight engineer Dale Schroeder made the first flight of the Northrop XB-35 "Flying Wing", from the factory's airfield at Hawthorne, California, to Muroc Army Air Field (now, Edwards Air Force Base). The total time for this flight was 55 minutes.

The XB-35's engines and propellers were AAF property, and had not been tested for engine-propeller compatibility by either Pratt & Whitney, Hamilton Standard, or by the AAF which bought them at Wright Field without testing them or assuring reliability.

With the very efficient contra-rotating propellers began failing with frustrating frequency. Meetings were called by Northrop, of the AAF, Pratt & Whitney and Hamilton Standard where no one would take responsibility for correcting the AAF's engines and propellers. In addition, the AAF failed to supply the AC electrical alternator, insisting on Northrop using an onboard auxiliary power unit (APU) unit driven by an automotive engine which limited the high-altitude, high-speed XB-35 to test flights below 15,000 ft. The AAF also refused to allow Northrop proposed modification of the bomb bays to carry the standard Mk. 3 atomic bomb, while at the same time declaring the AF would not buy the bomb-

er unless it could carry the A-bomb. Northrop reluctantly agreed to try a single-rotation propeller, which slightly increased take-off distance and a reduced rate-of-climb and maximum speed.

Problems with the drive-line continued until finally Jack Northrop himself grounded the XB-35s until the government fixed their propulsion system. Concurrently, the AAF ordered Northrop to convert two of the YB-35 airframes to YB-49s, essentially substituting eight jet engines for four reciprocating engines. As a result, the airframe promptly flew to more than 40,000 ft and topped 520 mph in flight tests, verifying the XB-35 air frame's aerodynamics, but at the price of range. The prop-version had a design range capable of reaching targets 4,000 mi away, but the jet-engine version's range was cut nearly in half. The new version disqualified it for the Air Force's top-priority mission as a strategic bomber.

The program was cancelled, and the first and second XB-35s were scrapped on 23 and 19 August 1949, respectively. There are long-standing conspiracy theories about the cancellation of the Flying Wing program; specifically, an accusation from Jack Northrop that Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington attempted to coerce him to merge his company with the Atlas Corporation-controlled Convair.

In a 1979 taped interview, Jack Northrop claimed the Flying Wing contract was cancelled because he would not agree to a merger because Convair's merger demands were "grossly unfair to Northrop." When Northrop refused, Symington supposedly arranged to cancel the B-35 and B-49 program. Symington became president of Convair after he left government service a short time later.

Northrop dabbled in real estate and lost much of his personal fortune. In 1976, with his health failing, he felt compelled to communicate to NASA his belief in the low drag high lift concept inherent in the flying wing. NASA replied that the idea had technological merit comforting Northrop that his flying wing concepts hadn't been completely abandoned. By the late 1970s a variety of illnesses had left him unable to walk or speak.



Shortly before his death in 1981, he was given clearance to see designs and hold a scale model of the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit Flying

Wing which shared many of the design features of his YB-35 and YB-49 designs.

*Northrop was reported to have written on a sheet of paper "Now I know why God has kept me alive for 25 years".*

## THE DAY BOEING TEST PILOT ALVIN “TEX” JOHNSTON BARRELED THE PROTOTYPE OF THE BOEING 707



*Boeing Company President William Allen asked  
“Tex” Johnston:  
“What the hell were you doing?”*

*He replied “I was selling airplanes.”*

After World War II, the British paved the way for commercial jets with the de Havilland Comet. Tragically, structural problems that led to catastrophic accidents grounded the Comet — and enthusiasm for the commercial jet. Until the advent of the Boeing 707. The Boeing 367-80 was the prototype for the Boeing 707.

Boeing Company President William Allen and his management are said to have “bet the company” on a vision that the future of commercial aviation was jets. In 1952, the Boeing board gave the go-ahead to commit \$16 million of the company’s own money to building the pioneering 367-80, nicknamed the “Dash 80.” That then-huge amount represented nearly all the profit the company had made since the end of the World War II.

They set out to counter public nervousness. The Boeing strategy was to use the Dash 80 prototype for press and customer flights and an advertising campaign that was directed at the public, stressing the comfort and safety of jet air travel. As part of the Dash 80s demonstration program Boeing test pilot Alvin “Tex” Johnston performed a barrel roll to show off the Boeing 367-80, as the incredible video in this post filmed on Aug. 6, 1955 shows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaA7kPfc5Hk&t=98s>

According to the video description, Allen invited representatives of the Aircraft Industries Association and International Air Transport Association to the Seattle’s 1955 Seafair and Gold Cup Hydroplane Races held on Lake Washington on Aug. 6, 1955. Boeing’s 367-80 was scheduled to perform a simple flyover, but Tex Johnston instead performed a barnstormer style barrel roll to show off the jet airliner.

The next day, Allen summoned Johnston to his office and told him not to perform such a manoeuvre again, Johnston replied that doing so was completely safe. Allen asked him: “What the hell were you doing?” Johnston replied “I was selling airplanes.”

Tex kept his position as a test pilot and did not get into any legal trouble for his actions. His flying style and cowboy type dress (Johnston earned his nickname, “Tex” because he always wore his Stetson cowboy hat and cowboy boots while on the flight line) is said to be the inspiration for Dr. Strangelove character Maj. T. J. “King” Kong, who, in rodeo style, rode a balky nuclear weapon to its target.

The Dash 80 prototype led to the commercial Boeing 707 and the military KC-135 tanker.

Boeing Chief Test Pilot John Cashman stated that just before he piloted the maiden flight of the Boeing 777 on Jun. 12, 1994, his last instructions from then Boeing President Phil Condit were “No rolls”.

**THE GREATEST PILOT ANYONE  
HAD EVER SEEN  
COL. LEROY GORDON "GORDO"  
COOPER JR. USAF  
MARCH 6, 1927-OCTOBER 4, 2004**



While living in Hawaii with his parents, and attending the University of Hawaii, Cooper bought his own J-3 Cub airplane, and joined a local flying club. It was there that Cooper met his future wife, Trudy B. Olson, the only wife of a Mercury astronaut to have a private pilot license. They were married on August 29, 1947, in Honolulu.

While at AFIT, Cooper became friends with a fellow USAF officer. The two were later involved in an accident during take-off from Lowry Field on June 23rd, 1956, when their Lockheed T-33 that Cooper was piloting suddenly lost all power during the take off roll. Gordo attempted to abort the take-off, but the main gear collapsed sending the aircraft careening across the airfield for over 2,000 feet, crashing at the end of the runway, before finally bursting into flames. Thankfully, Cooper and his friend Virgil Grissom escaped completely unscathed from the burning wreckage.

April 9th, 1959: Gordo was introduced to the nation as part of the Mercury Seven Astronauts, along with Scott Carpenter, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Wally Schirra, Alan Shepard, and Deke Slayton.

Gordo's chance of reaching orbit was put into jeopardy by his own actions, when one fine day he took it upon himself to buzz Hangar S at Cape Canaveral in a Convair F-102 Delta Dagger with full afterburners selected - this was evidently frowned upon by the higher ups, and according to Cooper, Deke Slayton told him that President John F. Kennedy himself had intervened to prevent his removal from the program.



Fellow Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard, knowing that Cooper would have a new version of the urine containment device that Shepard lacked on his Mercury-Redstone 3 flight (forcing him to relieve himself during a long countdown hold -ie: he wet his spacesuit), had left behind a toilet plunger as a joke.

Instructions on the handle said, "Remove Before Launch". Carpenter's thoughtful gift did not make the trip that day, but neither did Cooper. Various problems with radar in Bermuda, and issues with the diesel engine that rolled back the



gantry, caused the entire launch to be cancelled until May 15th.

At 8:04:13 a.m. EST, May 15th, 1963, Faith 7 rocketed away from Launch Complex 14. At T+60 seconds, with Leroy Gordon "Gordo" Cooper Jr. American aerospace engineer, test pilot, and United States Air Force pilot at the controls. The Atlas rocket started its pitch program. Shortly afterward, passed through max Q. At T+2 minutes 14 seconds. Cooper felt Booster Engine Cutoff and staging. The two Atlas booster engines had been left behind. The Launch Escape Tower was then jettisoned. At T+3 minutes the cabin pressure sealed at 5.5 psi. Cooper reported "Faith 7 is all go".



# NEWS, VIEWS AND REVIEWS FROM AROUND THE CORNER AND ACROSS THE GLOBE



## Former Fleet Air Arm Commander joins AMSL as Chair

Former Fleet Air Arm Commander, Chris Smallhorn, has joined development company AMSL Aero as its first chairperson.



Smallhorn's main task will be to advise founders Andrew Moore and Siobhan Lyndon as they prepare AMSL's Vertia eVTOL for commercial launch in 2026.

Smallhorn, a retired navy Commodore, Commander of the Fleet Air

Arm and former CEO of Coulsen Aviation Australia, is also a qualified experimental test pilot and aerospace engineer.

"I knew I wanted to be part of this endeavour as I walked into the AMSL Aero hangar in Bankstown," he said. "I saw a group of truly brilliant young engineers from diverse backgrounds, all educated and trained in Australia, doing innovative work to create the first Australian-designed certified aircraft in many years.

"Sitting in the hangar was the advanced prototype of Vertia, which immediately impressed me with its efficient aerodynamic design, safety and redundancy-based configuration, and practical hybrid power plant design.

"This is a world beater."

AMSL Aero CEO and Vertia inventor Andrew Moore said Smallhorn's experience would be invaluable as the company moves the Vertia from the experimental stage to a full-developed eVTOL.

"Chris has the unique background that is well suited to steering the future of AMSL Aero in this key stage of growth and development," Moore said. "He is a highly astute leader and adviser and will provide significant strategic value and counsel to the company in this next phase of growth."

Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer Siobhan Lyndon believes that Smallhorn is key to the future of AMSL Aero and the Vertia.

"We are delighted to have Chris Smallhorn join our Board of Directors and be appointed Chairperson," she said.

"As a highly accomplished leader, aerospace engineer, test pilot, with experience spanning both the private and public sectors, Chris brings to the table a wealth of knowledge and counsel that is highly valuable to the long-term sustainability of AMSL Aero."

The prototype Vertia was first flown in February this year. Vertia produces zero carbon emissions and can carry four passengers and a pilot at a cruising speed of 162 KTAS.



**CEO Andrew Moore is a qualified aeronautical engineer, pilot and the inventor of Vertia. Andrew has over two decades experience in aerospace leadership roles across military and civil sectors.**

**COO Siobhan Lyndon holds degrees in law and business, and has extensive experience working with high profile brands in the technology, telecommunications and professional services sectors.**

**Andrew, Siobhan and Chris now strive to lead safety-based, sustainable and innovative excellence in the Australian aviation industry through the making of Vertia.**

# EVERYDAY SLANG WE DIDN'T KNOW ORIGINATED IN THE NAVY



Over the centuries, sailors have created a language all their own to describe objects, people, actions and places. Much of this slang has found itself being integrated into the English language, without the majority knowing it originated in the Navy. Interested in learning which phrases came about on the open seas? Keep on reading to find out.



When a vessel is returning to port for repairs, a sailor may say that the ship is returning to her husband. In this instance, the "husband" refers to the man in charge of the shipyard where the vessel will be returned to working order.



"In through the hawsepipe" is Navy slang used by seamen who become officers via non-traditional means – it's how they describe their ascent

through the ranks of a ship. In this context, it means to start from the very bottom. The hawsepipe itself, also called the hawsehole, is the hole in the bow through which the anchor cable passes.



Letting the cat out of the bag is Navy slang to describe the punishment of whipping. The "cat" refers to the cat o' nine tails, a formidable multi-tailed whip stored within a cloth bag. Sailors knew it was about to be used when the superior doling out the punishment pulled it out of its bag.



A knot is a unit used worldwide as a measurement of speed through water. The term originated from the way sailors measured a ship's speed. A vessel had a length of rope with coloured knots every 47.33 feet. At the end was a buoyant piece of wood that remained stationary in the water, unreeling the rope as the ship moved through the water. The number of knots that passed through a sailor's fingers over a 28-second period provided a measurement of the vessel's speed.



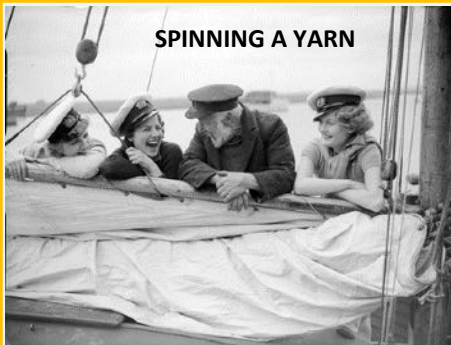
Scuttlebutt is Navy slang for a rumour. The word comes from "scuttle," which means to intentionally sink one's ship by opening holes in the side, and "butt," the water container men would group around and talk. Essentially, it describes the effect rumours have on morale.



This term, commonly used in the English language, was originally used to describe a novice sailor. It would be printed on their discharge papers and meant they knew the names and purpose of a ship's main ropes. Basically, it informed their superiors that they knew the very basics of seamanship.



# EVERYDAY SLANG WE DIDN'T KNOW ORIGINATED IN THE NAVY



Today, to spin a yarn means to tell a story, one that's perhaps slightly exaggerated. Its seagoing origins date back to naval officers who believed that, if seamen spent too much time telling stories, then no work would be done. At least once a week, a ship's crew would have to unravel old lines of rope. During this, the men could converse and tell stories as much as they pleased, and the time became known "spinning yarns." Eventually, telling a tall tale turned into spinning a yarn.



This expression is used today to describe that something unwanted is looming. However, some claim the term originates from the despised task of waterproofing a wooden ship's longest seam along the keel. This is sometimes disputed, but there are many who believe it. The seam was named the "devil" and would be "paid" or covered by tar. Paying the devil was an extremely unpleasant and difficult job, and the name was eventually used to describe any unwanted situation.



A sailor may say the word bokoo, meaning "many." This actually comes from the French word, beaucoup, which has the same meaning. The spelling was simplified over time and is an example of the many words from other languages that have been incorporated into Navy slang when traveling the world.



The fiddle was a raised lip around the edge of a sailor's plate. If food touched it, this meant he had too much and was described as being "on the fiddle." This could earn him a whipping.



The Navy took the helicopter down early on Friday, September 8, for a maintenance inspection and renovation at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at HMAS Albatross.

The helicopter was last inspected 10 years ago and was considered overdue for another review to determine what work needed to be done to return it to an appropriate condition, and ensure it could continue to be displayed.

The aircraft was craned off its mount on the southern side of the Nowra Bridge on the Princes Highway and transported by truck to the museum.

Navy representatives said the timeline for re-installation would not be known until technicians had an opportunity inspect the helicopter and see what repairs were needed.

# REMINISCENCES OF BARRY 'DOOLEY' LLOYD



*In 1951 Naval Aircrew Course Number 8 commenced training at Flinders Naval Depot. Twelve were recruited from civilian life and six from within the fleet. Thirteen were awarded wings, eight observers and five pilots.*



From the left back row standing is Max Glenn. He was a direct entry and never qualified. He was about to do Observer training but developed health problems that eliminated aviation prospects. He later in life became a schoolteacher.

Des Giles was a direct entry and qualified as an observer. He attained the rank of CPO. He was involved in a serious helicopter accident with Alex Ignatieff that led to an early discharge. Alex sadly was killed after discharge during a flight from Mt. Hagen in PNG. After discharge Des's occupation led him to PNG. He retired in Darwin and was last known to be struggling with extreme health issues.

Roy Edgar Prior was initially in the seaman branch qualified as an observer and received a four-year short service commission. He disappeared into the world and on the grapevine, it was believed he became an accountant. Are you still there Roy?

John Sutcliffe originally in the electrical branch qualified as a pilot and gathered many hours in Fireflies and Gannets. I crewed many hours with John mainly in 816 in both types. After discharge from a short service commission, he continued throughout life with significant commercial activity in PNG beginning with Gibbs in Wewak then Mandated that became Ansett Airways. His last employment was with East West Airlines in Australia. At the time of writing John is retired living in Sydney.

Peter Zafer commenced observer training, but this was terminated due to airsickness and confused navigation proficiency. Peter was last known teaching in Frankston Victoria.

Ivor Janz qualified as an observer and reached the rank of CPO. He did long service. Ivor is deceased.

Barry Thompson became a pilot with great potential. This was terminated abruptly when his Sea Venom crashed off the Melbourne catapult about 1956. The reason for this accident was never determined.

Rick Boughton qualified as an observer and initially was promoted to PO and shortly afterwards received a short service commission. This was never completed, and he was discharged early. For a period, he flew with a survey company called ADASTRA in WW2 Hudson aircraft. After this he worked as a civil air traffic controller. Rick had the unique ability to get into trouble. This was noted when he was the OIC of Mt Hagen. Rick finished up in WA, now deceased.

Spewy Richards was the first of us to depart from the troop. He was an ex sparky and during FND was the course leader. His dismissal was due to after an alcohol driven episode, he propelled a bike from an elevated mess hut that caused bones to be broken. I presume he went back to the communication branch.

John Cooke, a direct entry, was potential senior rank. He qualified as a pilot and impressed as such. He reached the rank of Lt. Commander. After discharge he became the personal pilot to King Ranch owners. John died after a period of illness.

Those sitting from the left! John Dudley is the gentle man of the group. He played golf. John was a direct entry. His destiny was to be an observer with a short service commission. The navy decided that he should learn Chinese. This he did. Maybe spending most of his youth in Shanghai helped. His father was the superintendent of police. After discharging this Mandarin knowledge was put to good use. He became the director of the ABC Far East Broadcasting. Dudders continued to serve the Reserve and attained the rank of commander. John is deceased.

Arthur Glenn Whitton, a lad recruited from Queensland, was the youngest of the assemblage and was the only one to make the navy his calling. He was an observer who at one stage became the CO of I think 817 helicopter squadron. He also had an unusual post in Singapore at the rank of acting commander. In think it had something to do with Vietnam. The rank was not confirmed. After discharge he brooded and rejoined to become the 'Jimmy' at Manus. Chipping paint off an old boat at Breakfast Creek was not enough. He should have been the SNO of Manus.

A precedent had been struck when another 'looker' Dickie Bird was given that appointment in the 1960's. During my day this was a punishment draft!

# REMINISCENCES OF BARRY 'DOOLEY' LLOYD



'Slug' died from a nasty cancer when living on the Sunshine Coast before age 70.

Next is Barry 'Dooley' Lord, another 'O.' Due to him writing about this saga he has long term knowledge of his life so this will be short. He started off navy life in Sep't 1948 and trained as a Met Observer then promoted to short term commission after award of wings. Upon discharge employed as a civil air traffic controller. This was analogous to still being in service with a difference.

My contemporaries are now ex-RAAF aircrew heroes of WW2 vintage and in the main air crew from Lancasters. Although I was Navy the aviation language was the same and this resolved into nearly another 30 years of exchange about the safety of aircraft and occupants.

I am writing knowing that John Sutcliffe is still alive, and we do have minimum FB contact.

Kevin Knowles was the man of excitement. As a pilot every manoeuvre had to be extreme. I can recall two occasions having experienced fear due to aerobatics in a Wirraway and a tailspin in a Firefly with him in control. Someone may know of his current situation.

Keith Charles Marly Potts was our "Walter Mitty". Every way of life had to be explored. Initially he was a Naval Airman (Engines) who eventually wore observer wings. Sadly, Keith was with Barry Thompson in the Sea Venom disaster. Both bodies were never recovered.

Munka Gleason did not qualify and went home wherever that was.

George Barron, initially a Met rating, somehow slipped through the standard medical net. He was an undetected asthmatic that became an issue when flying a Sea Fury in the Korea area. The resultant was being grounded and discharged. George did well in electrical retail. He had a fatal heart attack while on his yacht in Sydney Harbour.

Flossie Gully was a Sick Berth attendant and very early during initial training it became apparent he was not suitable for an aviation vocation. Our photograph is now over 72 years old and to the best of my knowledge only two are still alive.

Those being awarded Navy wings entered into a lifestyle seldom experienced. They were home in the air and on the sea. I am sure there are some Association members still on the go that have memory of these men with their own reflections.

I think off Neil Ralph, Lofty Lane and Norman Lee with others whose names sometimes are in print. This era lived together in the 'Casbah' with not much thought that in their midst some would rise to flag rank. How did our recreational hypnotist 'Shamus' become an admiral? His terrible twin Jim Ferguson decided to create a helicopter company.

I wish to make mention four special people.

During the initial training at Point Cook the senior naval officer Lt Cdr Nunn RN ordered a meeting. Navy Office urgently required six from the course to go to England for observer training. The group collectively made the decision of those it would be. It was Genn, Dudley, Lord, Potts, Prior and Zafer. From this group Glenn and Zafer were eliminated as described above. After a leisurely P&O liner trip to England the boys reported to Canberra House for further orders.

No one had heard of them, and the next Observers' course is scheduled in three months' time at St. Merryn. To keep us occupied we were drafted to a training ship in Plymouth messing with RN Upper Yardmen. This became a sore point, so Lt Coleman our Divisional Officer organised a way of disposing of this headache of putting up with disgruntled Aussies.

He shipped us off to the flagship Indomitable in the Mediterranean Fleet. For some months we became Aircraft Handlers (untrained), and this draft never found its way to our records. Lord and Potts had already been experienced in carrier service in the Sydney and were comfortable and also too Prior as a seaman but Dudley and Zafer who was still active not so.

The complaining ceased for this ship was constantly in action and we even had our first flight deck experience in a Barracuda, an aircraft that we later enjoyed during navigational training. They fly just fast enough to just catch up the carrier during landing. It was also my only free take off.

Thus Dudley, Lord, Potts and Prior have a special bonding being connected with many RN Midshipmen and Sub Lieutenants during Number Twelve observer's course at St. Merryn. We were still considered Able Rank but messed in the PO Mess. Potts and I even sported a good conduct badge that was for some reason forbidden to be worn.

# REMINISCENCES OF BARRY 'DOOLEY' LLOYD



This photo has on the left Potts and Dudley and on the right Prior and Lord. One of the course instructors was Lt. Jerry Molland, who served on loan to the RAN and did marry an Australian girl. I think he served in the 20<sup>th</sup> Carrier Air Group. Lt. Cdr Hallett RN was the CO.



I wish to further indulge showing a photo of Arthur Whitton proudly acting as the Officer of the Guard during some important occasion. Even to the end it was military discipline. His funeral was full regalia with sword displayed on the coffin during an RSL ceremony.



Another photo of the Met Office staff about 1951 shows it to be a breeding ground for aircrew. There is George Barron, Bernie Brennan (Bernie joined just before the end of WW2 and his first sea duty was to Hiroshima and received the usual radiation effect that manifested many years later and currently is struggling with chronic health at age 94); and I soon to be flung into being part of fixed wing aviation. It is a rare opportunity.



Also note the three badge PO sitting on the left. He appears a bit ordinary. Not so! He joined the Navy in 1938 as a boy seaman and was soon embroiled into many sea battles. On one occasion he was sunk when serving in HMAS Canberra.

After the war as a Leading Hand, he found his way into the newly commissioned FAA and was trained to be a Met Observer. My first contact with him was on my first sea draft to Sydney in 1950. He had just been promoted to PO. I maintained contact with Nobby until his death at 95 years. The



enclosed photo reveals his true worth. Lt Cdr. Henry Hall MBE OAM MID completed 43 years of uninterrupted service and is one of the most highly decorated naval personnel ever to serve.

His importance is such that during retirement he had a time in hospital and the Chief of Navy made a get-well visit. Just as a matter of interest the Lt. Commander sitting, Morrie Lloyd, gave me the

nick name "Dooley" that has stuck in naval circles.

My nostalgic journey presents the pioneer times of the Australian Fleet Air Arm and soon those memories will completely fade. Being influenced by so may has been an important growth of my life in aviation, currently ninety-three years of age.

## FIFTY YEARS SINCE AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR CONCLUDED



Approximately 60,000 Australians were part of what was the country's most extended involvement in a conflict in the 20th century. Tragically, 523 Australian lives were lost, and more than 3,000 were evacuated due to wounds, injury or illness.

The effects of the Vietnam War on the veterans and their families were not confined to the battlefield. The war had long-lasting psychological and emotional impacts, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which many veterans and their families grappled with long after the last shots were fired.

Australia's involvement began with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam touching down in South Vietnam in 1962. It expanded to include a battalion in 1965, and then to a task force in 1966, comprising two battalions and support services including a Royal Australian Air Force squadron of Iroquois helicopters, all stationed at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy province. The RAN Helicopter Flight, Clearance Diving Teams and fleet units all saw action during the war.

Australia's formal withdrawal occurred in 1973 when the Governor-General issued a proclamation in January of that year. Following this, the remaining combat troops were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon, which was withdrawn in June.

This anniversary is not merely about retrospection; it also envisages the future. It is about acknowledging the service and sacrifice of veterans, understanding our shared history, and valuing the contributions that Vietnam veterans and their families have made to Australian society. By commemorating, we keep the legacy alive, ensuring that the spirit of service and sacrifice remains an integral part of the Australian narrative.

Commemorations were held in cities and towns across the country to recognise this event on 18th August 2023.



*SA Division President John Siebert laid a floral tribute at the Torrens Park memorial site in Adelaide.*



*RANHFV and 135th AHC veterans assembled at the Old Bar Public School, NSW where a new memorial was unveiled.*



*The National Commemoration in Canberra was attended by ADF and foreign military dignitaries.*

# *The Skyhawk Years*

## *The A-4 Skyhawk in Australian Service*

### *1968 – 1984*

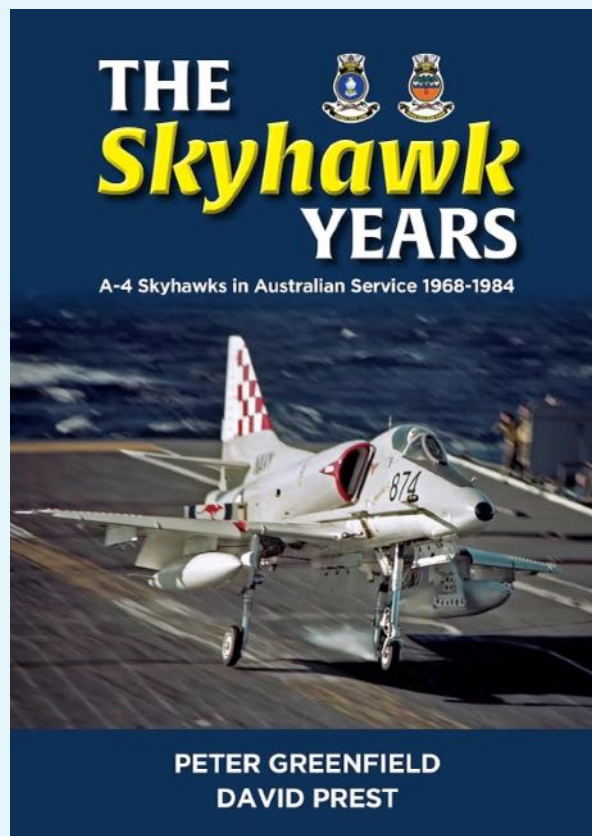
Peter Greenfield and David Prest, hardback with dustjacket, full colour, 250 x 176mm, 216 pages, Avonmore Books  
2023, 9780645700411 \$49.95 NOW AVAILABLE

The magnificent Douglas A-4 Skyhawk served with the Royal Australian Navy from 1968 until 1984 with two squadrons: VF805 and VC724. VF805 was the frontline fighter unit that served aboard the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne*, while VC724 was shore-based for training and support from Naval Air Station Nowra.

During that period the fixed wing aircraft on the *Melbourne* gave the RAN a unique capability that was central to Australian defence policy. The Skyhawk Years is a story of busy and varied deployments around Australia, South-east Asia and regularly to the multinational Rimpac exercises in Hawaii. A particular highlight was a long cruise to the UK in 1977 and participation in the Spithead Naval Review, part of the celebrations for Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee.

With first-hand stories from pilots and maintainers, the challenges of operations from the world's smallest aircraft carrier are well explained. Also told are thrilling stories of air combat manoeuvres against fighters from other countries, with the A-4 often surprising more well-credentialed adversaries.

A string of mishaps ended the embarkation of Skyhawks on the *Melbourne* in 1980, with a sad period following which saw the ultimate scrapping of RAN fixed wing aviation four years later. However, among the former pilots and maintainers many fond memories of A-4 operations remain alive.



# *The Skyhawk Years*

## *The A-4 Skyhawk in Australian Service*

The book was launched at the Fleet Air Arm Museum on Friday 1st September. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be directed to support ongoing developments at the Museum. Here are some images supplied by Joe Hattley, former Skyhawk maintainer and ATSB investigator.



*Authors Peter Greenfield and David Prest*



*Commodore John Da Costa, the first Skyhawk Squadron Commanding Officer giving his introduction to the book*



*Many former Skyhawk pilots, maintainers and families witnessed the book launch*



*The authors and the photographer, Joe Hattley*

# BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA DAY

Prime Minister John Curtin used the term 'Battle for Australia' after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

*Just as Dunkirk began the Battle for Britain, so does Singapore open the Battle for Australia. It is now work or fight as we have never worked or fought before. On what we do now depends everything we hope to do when this bloody test has been survived.*  
[Prime Minister John Curtin, as quoted by the Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Mr Chris Moraitis on 2 September 2009]

A few days later, the Australian mainland was attacked by Japanese aircraft during the [Bombing of Darwin](#).

In response, thousands of Australians were engaged in multi-ple actions against Japanese forces between 1942 and 1943. These battles aimed to defend Australia and stop the Japanese from advancing further south.

## Significance of the day

[The first Wednesday in September](#) is when we commemorate Battle for Australia Day. This day represents the first defeat of Japanese forces on land during the [Battle of Milne Bay](#). Japanese forces had evacuated Milne Bay by 7 September 1942. This commemorative day is a time for us to recognise all those who served in the defence of the Australian mainland, and in sea, land and air battles in the Coral Sea, Papua and New Guinea. Their efforts contributed substantially to the defeat of Japan.

## Australia at war

After Japan entered the war in December 1941, Australia's economy was fully mobilised towards defence.

The Australian population of more than 7 million was living with wartime controls on their daily lives, including rationing, restrictions on movement and with many directed to jobs supporting the war effort. The Australian economy was geared towards the [defence of Australia](#), and industry turned from peacetime production to wartime requirements. Women joined the paid workforce in their thousands, and children volunteered to help too.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

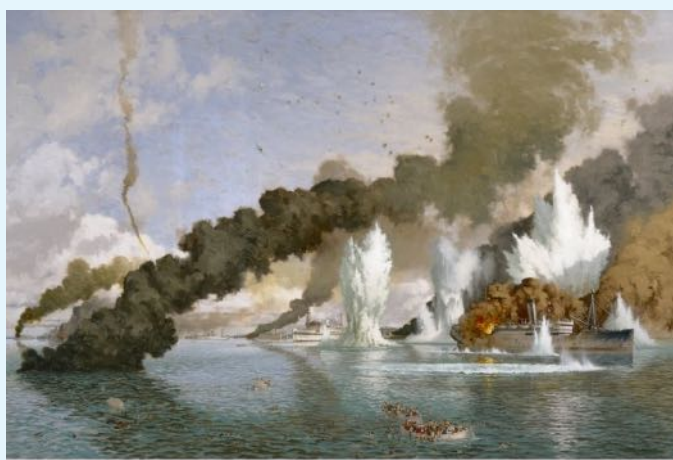
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Australia was being defended by more than half a million full-time Navy, Army and Air Force personnel and the women's services. The part-time Volunteer Defence Corps was also preparing for the defence of the Australian mainland. As well

as 10 Army divisions, the equivalent of one division each was deployed in the Northern Territory and Papua with support from the Navy and Air Force.

Between 1942 and 1943, Japanese aircraft [attacked Australia's mainland](#). Cities and towns were bombed and shelled. Vessels of the Royal Australian Navy and merchant ships were sunk in the waters around the mainland and off the islands to the north.

On 19 February 1942, Darwin, with a population of only 2000, was raided by 188 Japanese aircraft. Japan sought to destroy Darwin's airfields before it attacked Timor. Around 250 Australians and personnel of other nationalities died.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART 28520

*Darwin, 19 February 1942. Ray Honisett, 1984 [oil on canvas 122 x 182.8 cm].*

*HMAS Deloraine was berthed in Darwin Harbour during the first Japanese air raid on 19 February 1942. Fortunately the ship was undamaged in the bombing of Darwin and its crew helped with rescue operations.*



*In 1975 former RAN rating Keith Swain, himself a corvette sailor, painted a depiction of HMAS Katoomba under aerial attack on 19 February 1942. (AWM ART 28075)*



*THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA EXTENDS OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO THE FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ON THE RECENT PASSING OF THESE FORMER FAA MEMBERS.*

*MORE COMPREHENSIVE DETAILS OF THEIR LIVES MAY BE FOUND ON THE FAA ASSOCIATION WEBPAGE AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:*

*<https://www.faaaa.asn.au/heritage-general/obituaries-name/>*

Michael James BAYLISS of Sydney  
Lieutenant (O) RAN  
23 January 1948—23 June 2023

Ronald DEMPSTER of Queensland  
CPOATA4  
Passed away 17 May 2023

Frank Major MARKHAM of Huskisson  
CPOATWL4  
23 December 1935—18 May 2023

William Stanley CROWLEY of Sanctuary Point  
CPOATA4  
September 1949—March 2023

James Ernest John DAVIDSON of Melbourne  
Lieutenant (P) RAN  
7 December 1936—24 June 2023

Alfred James 'Rusty' MARQUIS of Nowra  
WOATWL  
26 October 1925—12 July 2023

Roger Phillip SCOVELL of Bribie Island QLD  
Commander GLEX (O) RAN  
11 January 1950—24 July 2023

Russell William BOYCE of Mt Magnet WA  
LAMAE  
11 February 1947—August 2022

Adrian John MONTY of Hobart  
POACM  
13 June 1942—30 July 2023

Tony 'Jan' CRIDDLE of Merimbula  
LCDR (P) RAN  
Passed away 29 July 2023

Allan McKENZIE of Perth  
LCDR (P)  
1948—20 August 2023

Bruce Frederick 'Blue' LUKEY of Perth  
POSE  
24 September 1944—16 July 2023

John Joseph MULHALL of Perth  
POAAH & NDP Constable  
10 November 1940—14 August 2023

Dennis Charles STONE OF Beaufort VIC  
POAAH  
14 April 1942—9 September 2023

Francis Clifford LARTER of Nowra  
WOAVN  
15 September 1935—19 September 2023

Samuel THOMPSON of Greenwell Point  
POATV  
1956—12 September 2023



**In November 2022 your Editor was invited to give the annual Arthur Butler Lecture to the Aviation Historical Society of Australia - NSW Branch. The lecture was titled THE TRIUMPHAL TRIO and it was an examination of the lives and exploits of three notable Australian Naval Aviators: Lieutenant Commander Palgrave Ebden CARR, DFC, RAN, Captain Fred Theophilus SHERBORNE, RAN and Flight Commander Robert Alexander LITTLE, DSO\*, DSC\*, C de G, RNAS.**

## ***This final biography looks at Flight Commander Robert Alexander LITTLE***



LITTLE, ROBERT ALEXANDER (1895-1918), World War I fighter ace, was born on 19 July 1895 at Hawthorn, Melbourne, son of James Little, bookseller and importer of medical and surgical works, and his Victorian wife Susan, formerly Smith, née Solomon. He was educated at Scotch College and later joined the family business as a commercial traveller, living with his parents at Windsor. Rejected with hundreds of others for the four vacancies at Point Cook Military Flying School, he sailed for England in July 1915, at his own expense. He paid for his flying training at Hendon where he gained his flying certificate (No.1958 Royal Aero Club) on 27 October. He entered the Royal Naval Air Service as a probationary temporary sub-lieutenant on 14 January 1916.

Posted to the relatively inactive war flight at Dover, Kent, Little suffered eye and stomach trouble in the air. He married Vera Gertrude Field at the Congregational Church, Dover, on 16 September 1916. Posting to No.1 Wing at Dunkirk, France, in June had brought action at last—against the submarine base at Zeebrugge, Belgium. His physical troubles disappeared with the change to aircraft which did not spray him with castor oil and he quickly established a favourable reputation. The Somme offensive of the second half of 1916 imposed such strain on the Royal Flying Corps that the Admiralty created new R.N.A.S. squadrons for service on the Western Front. In October Little was transferred to the new No.8 Squadron, 'Naval 8', equipped with Sopwith Pups. His plane, N5182, rebuilt, is now on display at the Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon. On 1 November he scored his first aerial victory and by March 1917 was credited with nine enemy aircraft shot down; he was promoted flight lieutenant in April.

In 'Bloody April' the R.F.C. suffered appalling casualties while the three naval squadrons (1,3 & 8), re-equipped with formidable new Sopwith Triplanes, were given a wide berth by the enemy. In April-July Flight Lieutenant Little really showed his mettle, mainly in N5493 'Blymp', streaming the cardinal, gold and

blue of Scotch College. 'Blymp' became the affectionate nickname of his infant son, while Little himself became 'Rikki' to the squadron, after Kipling's mongoose Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, the deadly cobra-killer. By early August 1917, when he was posted to Walmer on the Kent coast for a period of rest, he had destroyed thirty-seven enemy aircraft and damaged many more. He had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order, the Distinguished Service Cross and Bar and the Croix de Guerre; in September he received a Bar to the D.S.O.; in December he was mentioned in dispatches and he was promoted flight commander in January 1918.

Paradoxically, Little was a clumsy flyer with a record of crash landings, but in aerial combat his brilliance derived from a combination of fearless aggression, quite exceptional eyesight, superb marksmanship and close-range firing. His armourers calculated that he fired an average of forty-four rounds per aerial victory. The audacity with which he would, single-handed, attack large enemy formations brought the advantage of surprise. Twice he actually struck enemy aircraft in his eagerness to close the range. He was of average height, stocky and athletic in build. Likeable and friendly with a strong sense of fun, he was a great talker. He devoted much time on the ground to rifle and pistol practice at moving targets. In the air he was a brilliant loner rather than a leader.

## **Flight Commander Robert Alexander LITTLE, DSO\*, DSC\*, C de G, RNAS**

At Walmer Little was able to enjoy a settled period of family life but in March 1918 he declined a desk job and volunteered to return to France where as flight commander with 'Naval 3' he flew Sopwith Camel B6318. Soon afterwards the R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. amalgamated as the Royal Air Force and he became Captain Little of 203 Squadron. The end came on the night of 27 May when he went up alone from Ezil le Hamel to intercept enemy bombers in the dark. Fatally wounded in the groin, he crashed near Norviz where he was found next morning. He was buried in the village cemetery at Norviz and subsequently in Wavans British cemetery, France. He was 22. Conforming to his wish, his widow brought their infant son to grow up in Australia.

Little is officially credited with a tally of 47 enemy planes brought down. He is Australia's World War I ace of aces: the next officially recognized 'victories' of Australians were 39 by his friend Major R. S. Dallas and 29 by Captain A. H. Cobby. Little ranks eighth of all British Commonwealth aces, and fourteenth of all aces from both sides of the conflict. Major (Air Vice Marshal) R. R. Collishaw, his commanding officer in 'Naval 3', wrote of him: 'Little had an outstanding character. Bold, aggressive and courageous yet he was gentle and kindly ... his example was a tribute to the high standards of Australian manhood'.

Until very recently the achievements of Little and Dallas were neglected in their native Australia, only those who served in Australian forces being afforded official recognition, an anomaly now being rectified. Photographs, medals and mementoes of R. A. Little are held by the Australian War Memorial.

*In 2012 in a surprise discovery on a garbage tip in Texas, southern Queensland, a brown leather satchel containing flying kit and clothing belonging to Little came to light. Despite widespread notices on TV, radio, and in the press, no trace of the person who deposited those item was ever revealed. The entire collection was donated to the Fleet Air Arm Museum where they are on display with a full-size replica of Little's Sopwith 'Pup' in which he claimed his first aerial victories.*



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