



SITREP

Air Force Association NSW News and Views

WWII Vet Returns to RAAF East Sale After 75 years

from Robert French, ABC Gippsland

Seventy-five years ago Australia was in the middle of its World War II campaign. Near the small eastern Victorian town of Sale, the RAAF had just opened a new base, and among the first trainees was fresh-faced recruit Peter Ferry. He was an accomplished pilot, flying missions all over Australia and in South-East Asia as part of No. 21 Squadron until the end of the war. Now aged 96, Peter Ferry has finally had the chance to see it all again.



Peter Ferry (back row, 4th from right) with his South Australian training squadron in January 1942

Guided by the Commanding Officer of the Air Academy, Group Captain Dennis Tan, Peter got a firsthand look at how things had changed since his day. "I came here shortly after it had opened. They were flying [Bristol] Beauforts from Bairnsdale but I was posted here for the first of the Lockheed Hudsons," he said.

He spent a lot of time in the Hudsons learning formation flying and 'live bombing practice' on Pyramid Rock, just south of Phillip Island. In those early days, even training was hazardous. "Too often on our return from a patrol we would see a column of black smoke rising from the aerodrome area. We called this 'Beaufort smoke', signifying another Beaufort crash due to a design fault," he said. "In Peter's day they didn't have simulators like we have today," said Group Captain Tan. On entering one of the simulator training rooms, the Commanding Officer introduced Peter to about 10 trainees.

"This is Peter, he's a World War II pilot and used to train here at East Sale," he said. The room, with the usual murmurings of classrooms, fell silent in reverence.



Being 96, Peter wasn't 100 per cent convinced about sampling the latest generation of training aircraft, the Pilatus PC-21. Once he'd been assisted into the cockpit he looked right at home, quizzing the pilots about its capabilities. "I was just enthralled by the whole thing and to be actually talking to these people and looking into the aeroplanes and having things explained to me, it was absolutely amazing," he said.



Peter was also keen to know what the Air Force was doing to reduce the drop-out rates of new recruits, which have remained steady at about 40 per cent since his day. He seemed satisfied with the answer of improved candidate screening. "Some of the conversations I was having with Peter revealed some of those age-old lessons of airmanship really endure for all time and that's great to hear that and it's very validating for us," Group Captain Tan said.

Peter Ferry gets a rundown of the new Pilatus PC-21 from Group Captain Dennis Tan

the skies in one of the base's new simulators. "He stood on the wing of the aeroplane as we flew around Sale and came back to land on runway 09," Group Captain Tan recalled. "He was excited to see that and I was excited to see the look in his eyes."

The trip back to Gippsland was made all the more significant because it was where Peter met his future wife, Margaret Leishman. "She was a morse-code specialist, and a good one too," Peter said. "That's where she worked," he said pointing out an unassuming green bunker, just outside the front entrance to the base. "They were doing a lot of secret code work between Australia and London. "I finally met her out at a little hall at Longford," he said with a wry smile.

They were together from 1944 until Margaret's death from breast cancer in 1999.

It was clear that by the end of the day, Peter wasn't the only one enjoying himself. "What a fantastic experience for us," Group Captain Tan said. "It's easy for all of us to think we exist just in this moment. "It was only just earlier this year we celebrated the 75th anniversary of RAAF Base East Sale and Peter's one of the founding fathers of that," he said. "To see him driving around the base, to see what's new and what was old... it's nice to have that validation, it's nice to see that. "It makes us feel part of something bigger than just what's happening here and now, to realise maybe not that much has changed. "All those hard-fought traditions and ideals and the values of the Air Force today, they aren't so different from what people were doing 75 years ago or 100 years ago."



The Light Side

During training exercises, the Lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced Colonel at the wheel.

"Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the Lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

"Certainly not," replied the Colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, "but yours is."





35 SQN Honoured

from JM Hartigan

On 2 November 2018, No 35 Squadron was honoured with the award of the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation 1964-1972 at RAAF Base Richmond, NSW. The Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves in battle. The Governor-General has approved the awarding of the Citation to a number of Australian military units in recognition of their service during the Vietnam War. This award honours Air Force members who served in Vietnam as part of RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam/35 Squadron from August 1964 to February 1972.



Wallaby Airlines members Jock Cassels, Geoff Brand, Shane Scully (Lee's son), Ron Glew, John Sambrooks, John McDougall, Bob St John, Michael Eschback, Fred Romeyn, Richard Jones

The late Mr John 'Lee' Scully (RAAF Vietnam Veterans' Association President of the Victorian Branch) was the main driving force behind 35SQN receiving this citation. Lee was one of the early members to join the Association and without his efforts and determination, the awarding of the citation could not have been achieved. Members of Lee's family attended the parade for the presentation.

35SQN has had a distinguished history dating from the WWII when it was formed at RAAF Base Pearce on 11 March 1942, under the command of FLTLT Percival Burdeu, as a transport squadron. During the war, the squadron provided air transport to the Australian military throughout the South West Pacific area, operating out of Guildford, WA and Cape York. In the final years of the war, detachments operated out of Darwin, Townsville and later Moratai Island, Indonesia. Following the Japanese surrender in August 1945, 35SQN flew Australian soldiers and ex-prisoners of war home. In early 1946, it supported the movement of three RAAF fighter squadrons and various support units to Japan as part of the British Commonwealth Occupational Force. The squadron was disbanded at Townsville on the 10 June 1946.

18 years later, RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV), the antecedent of what was to become the new 35SQN, was raised in Butterworth on 21 July 1964 to support the



35SQN Colour Party



Australian contribution to the war in Vietnam. On 8 August, three Caribous took off from Butterworth for Vung Tau, Vietnam. Three more aircraft arrived in late August and a seventh in May 1965. Twelve Caribous would eventually serve in Vietnam. The Caribous were integrated into the Southeast Asia Airlift System, operated by the United States Air Force (USAF), and became part of the 315th Troop Carrier Group (Assault), which later became the 315th Air Commando Wing. RTFV flew its first operational mission on 14 August 1964. The unit transported personnel and equipment into some 115 airfields of varying surfaces and dimensions throughout the Republic of Vietnam. As the RTFV aircraft used the call-sign "Wallaby", the unit quickly became known as "Wallaby Airlines" and performed to higher standards than American squadrons with similar aircraft.

On 1st June 1966 RTFV was renamed 35 Squadron and operational control for the squadron passed to the 834th Air Division of the USAF Seventh Air Force. Although the work was routine, flying in a war zone was still dangerous. The weather was often poor and aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire, wounding aircrew. Two aircraft were destroyed in landing accidents, while a third was destroyed in March 1970 by mortar fire at That Son air base, near the Cambodian border. In June 1971, three Caribous returned to Australia as part of the Government's decision to decrease Australia's involvement in the war and flying ceased on 13 February 1972. Four Caribous took off six days later and arrived at Richmond RAAF base on 26 February. 35SQN was the last RAAF unit to leave Vietnam. In its seven and a half years in Vietnam, 35SQN flew nearly 80,000 sorties (totalling 47,000 hours of flying time) and carried 677,000 passengers, 36 million kilos of freight, and 5 million kilos of mail. For their involvement in operations in Vietnam, members of 35SQN received a number of honours and decorations, including two appointments to the Member of the Order of British Empire, eight Distinguished Flying Crosses, one Distinguished Flying Medal, one British Empire Medal, and 36 Mention In Dispatches.



A couple of 'wallabies' with current CO 35SQN

Following the end of our involvement in the Vietnam War, in 1974, No. 35 Squadron was relocated from RAAF Base Richmond to RAAF Base Townsville, where it operated in support of Army units based in Northern Australia. The Squadron provided tactical transport to Army units based in Northern Australia until 2000, when it was reduced to "paper only" status and its aircraft transferred to No 38 Squadron. As it had in the past, 35SQN would rise again: on 14 January 2013, 35SQN was re-raised under the command

of WGCdr Brad Clarke at RAAF Base Richmond, conducting duties in preparation for the employment of the Alenia C-27J Spartan, Battle Field Airlifter in 2015.

In April 2018, the unit received its final delivery to reach its full complement of 10 C27J Spartan aircraft. 35SQN has recently deployed aircraft and personnel to assist with Border Protection Command's Operation RESOLUTE. It has participated in various exercises including PITCH BLACK, HAMEL and CROIX DU SUD (in New Caledonia). Also, in March 2018, the unit participated in Exercise COPE NORTH on the island of Guam to test the aircraft's ability to respond to natural disaster and humanitarian relief operations. 35SQN is again on the move, with the unit re-locating to purpose-built facilities at RAAF Base Amberley in December 2018 to allow the Spartan to be more responsive when deploying across Asia and the Pacific.





Vale Wartime Bomber who Beat the Odds

from Gary Vial, edited from the Adelaide Advertiser

Allan Vial was one of the great survivors of World War Two's Bomber Command, returning from no less than 64 missions. He grew up in Hove. His father, William, a miner, had lost one leg and injured the other at Ploegsteert, Belgium in WWI, so was retrained as an upholsterer. Allan, keen to be a surveyor, chose technical courses at high school but could not afford university. He joined the Department of Lands as a clerk hoping to be trained there.



In 1941, he was old enough to sign up with the RAAF but his father refused to endorse him, saying "I don't want you to end up like me". But the bombing of Pearl Harbor changed his parents' minds, so after extensive training, and assembled in a gymnasium in Scotland, each bomber crew selected itself and a pilot, Allan going with a pilot from Victoria, Roy Roberts. Further training saw them selected for the Pathfinders 35 Squadron, with new Lancaster bombers that had the latest navigation aids for marking targets for bomb raids.

Allan achieved his aim of becoming a radar navigator and would rise to master bomber, in charge of whole raids. His DFC was awarded for his "complete disregard of personal safety" in his determination to hit targets. As the number of their tours passed 25 - well past the expected survival rate - Allan was not to know the officers of 35 Squadron were raising their bets; no Australian pilot had survived the normal tour of 30 sorties with 35 Squadron. Allan's

aircraft had its near misses; he saw his aimer, known as 'Pompy', hit by a blast of shrapnel and thrown 3 metres up and out of the nose cupola and back onto Allan's navigation table. Allan shut down a damaged engine and then cut off Pompy's clothes to apply field dressings. Pompy survived the war, marrying his nurse.

They set a record for returning on less than four engines 13 times, and also returned on two engines flying the English Channel badly shot up at 20 feet, and finally landing on one engine, stopping just short of a huge fuel tank. Allan navigated home by sight from the nose on that occasion, and had to have many shrapnel pieces removed from his buttocks. He would shed shrapnel as it worked its way out from his feet for years later. Allan survived 64 sorties. He said Roberts had a strategy of crossing the target in a dive, preferably with a tail wind, so that the Lancaster was flying well past its rated speed.

After the war, Allan returned to the Department of Lands and married Pat, but he could not settle and even tried to re-enlist. He convinced Premier Tom Playford to let him pioneer aerial surveying in SA's outback. His years of mapping the Far North, criss-crossing in an old Avro Anson laid the groundwork for SA's later oil finds. In 1960 he left the public service, broke up with Pat, and took up with his companion of the next 40 years, Gwenne Dunoon, who was also in the aviation business. He joined aerial survey group Aero Service

ALLAN JOHN VIAL, DFC

Pathfinder navigator

Born: June 10, 1923;

Torrensview

Died: November 3, 2018;

Adelaide

Education: Brighton Primary,

Adelaide Technical High

Achievements: Bomb master in Lancasters who survived 64 Pathfinder missions during World War II

Family: Survived by Alice, son Gary, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Corporation and then helicopter operator Airfast Services.

From 1973, he completely switched direction and spent years as a model and actor. TV roles included the butler in Number 96. His international air services work had enabled him to link into a network of airmen fighting for proper military recognition of bomber command personnel. He also befriended some of the most deadly of his former enemies such as General Adolf Galland and Wolfgang Falck and became a life member of the Night Fighter Association of Germany.

Allan retired to Queensland but, more recently, he and his partner of the past 20 years, Alice O'Reilly, moved back to Glenelg South, near where he grew up.



Groundcrew Behaving Badly - An Occasional Series

SKYLARKS - The Lighter Side Of Life In The RAAF in WORLD WAR II, edited by Eric Brown, Air Power Studies Centre, 1998

The scene is Richmond RAAF Base in the early 1940s. The narrator is Nobby Blundell.

'Mandrake', an LAC Fitter IIA, (airframes) got his nickname after a popular comic strip of the time. In every large group of men there are some misfits and Mandrake was a classic example. In barrack hut conversation he always said that in peacetime he was a professional sparring partner, and named a well-known Sydney gymnasium where he claimed to have worked. He looked and acted the part and nobody doubted him. On the Station he spent his spare time in the gym on skipping rope and punching bag and after the day's work would still run laps around the camp.

He was also inclined to push himself forward and claim more than his due. When fitters in charge had carried out any major work on an aircraft they were usually called on to go up in its initial test flight. Mandrake was always to the forefront to fly and boasted that he was never airsick. However given the right circumstances, not many are immune from airsickness. Mandrake and I had carried out a major inspection on one of the North American Harvards and had it ready for test. This is a two-seat aircraft from which the Australian Wirraway was developed and had separate sliding canopies over pilot and passenger.

When the pilot arrived to fly the aircraft my fitters quietly suggested to him that he give Mandrake the full treatment in the hope of taking him down a peg or two. With Mandrake aboard, the pilot took off and gained height over Richmond township and the Nepean River, staying in view of our dispersal area as planned by the pilot and fitters. Then it began. The Harvard was quite good for aerobatics and the pilot went through the full catalogue of stall turns, loops, side-slips and fishtails so it was not long before Mandrake had to slide the canopy back to vomit over the side. He also undid his safety harness to lean over enough to save himself having to clean the cockpit on return in front of our amused fitters, his workmates. But the pilot, sitting in the front cockpit, did not realise that Mandrake had unstrapped himself, and when his passenger settled back again, the pilot, not noticing that the canopy was still pushed back, thought he was ready for more and inverted the aircraft. Of course, the law of gravity automatically applied and Mandrake fell straight out. Fortunately his parachute worked well and he landed close to the bank of the Nepean River - all in one piece.

When the pilot discovered he was one passenger short he panicked and called control on the radio and the ambulance dashed out to look for the casualty. They soon found Mandrake under where the worried pilot was still circling; he had the rolled 'chute under his arm and was walking in circles looking intently in the grass. The ambulance men thought he had been knocked silly and went to help him, but he only protested, 'Don't stand around there doin' nuthin'; give us a hand to find me tobacco tin, it must have fallen out o' me overalls pocket on the way down'. That was all he was worried about!



Q: How do you know if there is a fighter pilot at your party?

A: He'll tell you.





A Typical Australian

from John Clarkson

Sometimes it is difficult to describe a typical Australian or Queensland character. We know it when we see it, but it's difficult to put into words. I have been reading a book by William McInnes, and he describes a scene a few years ago in a typical Queensland country town.

It is a few days before Christmas and it is a very hot evening. William is talking with an elderly man who, with his adult son, is organising a Christmas event in his town. A local photographer is there, probably from the local rag, William asked the old fellow how he was travelling.

"On a night like this – I am travelling first class". At this point, the man described the events and how he was guiding his son through the activities.

Then he said, "I love this country – look at this bloke here (pointing to an African-Australian man), he asked that bloke there, (pointing to a Vietnamese-Australian man) to move a bit so the photographer can film that bloke up there, (pointing to a Chinese-Australian man on stage), who was singing 'White Christmas' on a boiling hot night like this! Bloody Magnificent!" So there was a typical old Australian country gent, observing three different men from different parts of the world, yet all behaving like typical Australians.

I just thought this passage reflected a sense of this country that we don't often see in modern times. Yes, we have some wonderful people who have come from all different parts of the world to settle here; and some of them have settled so well that they have moulded into our psyche. Wonderful.



Century Old Footage of 'The Red Baron' in WWI

from Jake Newham

A patient who was in his mid-eighties (1970) needed a tooth replaced on his upper full denture. When the lab sent it back for his dentist to give it to him, the dentist asked when he'd received this plate. His answer was "Right after the war!" The dentist said "You're not talking '46 are you?" and the patient replied "heck no, I mean in 1919".

The dentist asked how it was that he had every one of his lower teeth in excellent condition but none on top. The patient asked if he had heard of the Red Baron, and then told him that he had the dubious distinction of having been the Baron's last victim and when he crashed, the control stick knocked out most of his upper teeth, thus the full upper denture.

Follow the link below: it is a very rare piece of film. If you're interested in history or aviation, you cannot miss this footage. It's from 1917, and it's an up-close and personal look at the most legendary combat pilot who ever lived, the infamous Red Baron, Manfred Von Richthofen. It shows Baron Von Richthofen doing an external prior to a mission, as well as his putting on a flying suit prior to flight in cold weather. If you look closely, you will also notice Hermann Goering.

<https://shar.es/12Ag7e>

The patient went on to tell the dentist what you all may have missed; if you watch it again you will see that the propeller AND the engine rotate together. He said there was no throttle, just a kill button to stop the engine as needed to descend, then it would start up again.





Recognising Women In Wartime Today

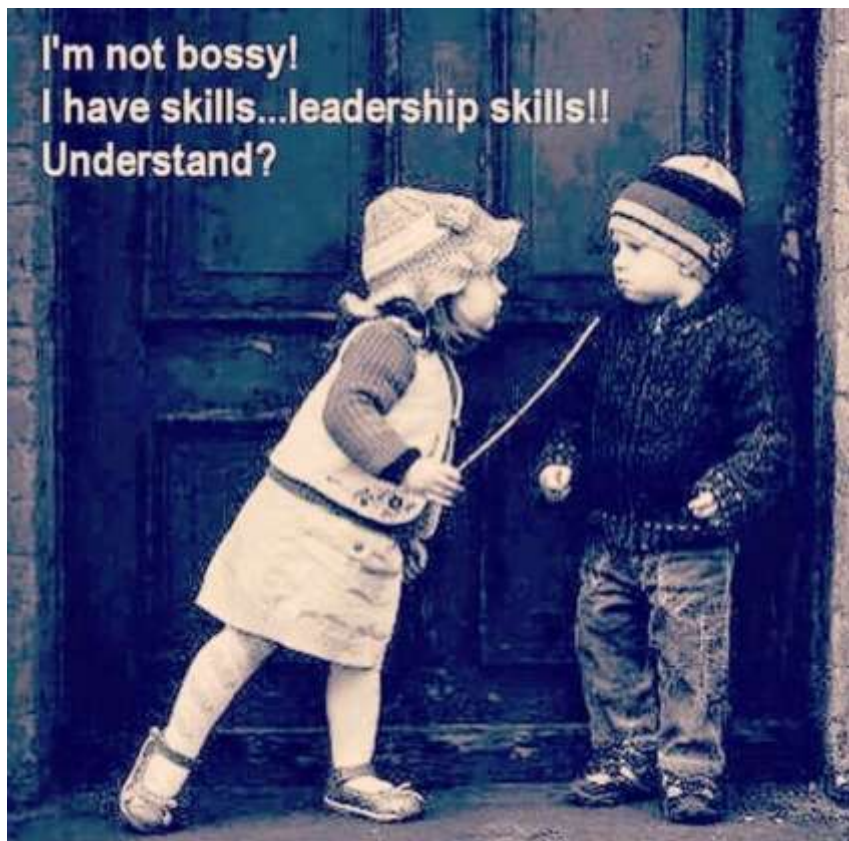
The Hon Darren Chester MP Minister for Veterans' Affairs Friday, 8 March 2019

As we celebrate International Women's Day and recognise the achievements of all women, we pay a special thanks to those who have supported and served our country abroad and on the home front. Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester acknowledged the women who have served and supported Australia in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations for more than a century. "In times of uncertainty during the First World War women stepped into roles to support those fighting on the front line by fundraising and producing packs to send to them, as well as providing medical and nursing support," Mr Chester said. "The Second World War saw the expansion of these roles so that women were no longer confined to nursing or voluntary positions and had the opportunity to enlist in the three service arms.

"By 1944, close to 50,000 women were serving in the military and thousands more had joined the war effort in a civilian capacity through organisations such as Australian Women's Land Army. "Since then the roles available to women have expanded further and women can now apply for every position in the Australian Defence Force. For those who have served Australia, past and present, thank you for your service."

In honour of their service and sacrifice, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has developed a radio series to highlight the enormous contribution that women have made. "I encourage all Australians to listen out for the Women in War series on radio networks across Australia, which tells the untold stories of the vital roles played by women during wartime," Mr Chester said. For those wanting to listen to the series, it can be accessed on the Anzac Portal.

Cedric Szigeti: 02 6277 7820 DVA Media: 02 6289 6466 Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.





Happy Birthday, 44 Wing

Edited from the RADAR Branch Summer 2019 Bulletin from Jim Stewart

On 14 December, 1942, 44 Radio Direction Finding (RDF) Wing was formed at Adelaide River, Northern Territory; however a Commanding Officer (FLTLT H.W. (Harry) Hannam) was not appointed until 4 January 1943. 44 Wing was formed to control all radar units within North-West area (Northern Territory and northern Western Australia), however formal control was not promulgated until 8 February 43 (faithful adherence to the tried and true RAAF principle of "Hurry up and wait"?). At its peak, 44 Wing controlled 21 radar stations, covering an area from Wessel Island (north of Nhulunbuy/Gove to Potshot/Learmonth (Exmouth Gulf). 44 Wing was initially the holding unit for aircrew involved in Radar Countermeasures (RCM) operations as 'Special Operator' flying with United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) Liberator Squadrons based at RAAF Fenton. Two members, Wireless Operator/Air Gunners Sergeant Joe Holohan and Sergeant John Graham were lost on RCM operations.



44 Wing disbanded on 22 August 1944, with personnel and equipment passing to 5 Radar Installation and Maintenance Unit (RIMU) at 58 Mile, Northern Territory, whilst operational control of the Radar Stations passed to 105 Fighter Control Unit (FCU) Berrimah, 35 Zone Filter Centre (ZFC) Learmonth, 39 ZFC Gove and 40 ZFC Broome. 44 Wing's service in the North-Western Area during World War 2 would qualify the Wing for the following Battle Honours:

Pacific 1942 to 1945
Darwin 1942 to 1944

44 Wing returned to the RAAF Order of Battle on 27 November 2000, under the command of GPCAPT T.C. Delahunty, in order to provide a higher headquarters for the RAAF Air Traffic Control organisation. At this point in time, the Wing directly commanded the ATC Flights established at all ADF flying bases. On 16 Feb 2011, the ATC Flights were aggregated into two squadrons, each perpetuating the "number -plate" of a distinguished WWII Spitfire squadron. 452 SQN, headquartered at RAAF Darwin, comprises the ATC flights at Darwin, Tindal, Townsville, Amberley, and Oakey. Headquartered at RAAF Williamtown, 453 SQN comprises the ATC flights at Williamtown, Richmond, Nowra, Edinburgh, East Sale and Pearce.



44WG is still making history; in January this year GPCAPT Ruth Elsley became the first female to command the Wing.



Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for \$10?"

Soldier: "Sure, mate."

Officer: "That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again!
Do you have change for \$10?"

Soldier: "No, SIR!"





Radar Men In Assault Landing On Pilelo

16 Dec 43



Arawe landing

During the American invasion of the Arawe Peninsula, New Britain, on this day a party of 28 members of No 335 Radar Station became the first RAAF radar men involved in a landing in the South-West Pacific Area. The Australians formed part of a 150-man force comprising mainly members of the US 112th Cavalry Regiment which was sent ashore in rubber boats from the Australian attack transport *Westralia* to capture Pilelo, a coral island dominating the eastern channel into Arawe Harbour. Landing under fire on the western side of Pilelo, the boat party was tasked with destroying an enemy radio station, the seven members of which had taken refuge in a cave near the beach. After this group was accounted for, a RAAF officer was placed in charge of a guard post while the main landing force (including the rest of 335 Radar Station) came ashore by barge the next day. Unloading of the radar and support equipment were conducted under frequent fire from the Japanese. Air defence operations over the next five months saw the unit suffer from unrelenting Japanese air raids (bombing and strafing), along with sneak night raids in rubber boats with phone lines being cut at regular intervals. Nevertheless, the unit still maintained a high plot output, which led to high level of compliments from the (US) 20 Fighter Sector.

More here (pp 173-175): <http://www.radarreturns.net.au/archive/EchoesRRWS.pdf>



A sergeant and a general were sitting in the barbers. They were both just getting to the end of their shaves, when the barbers reached for some after-shave to slap on their faces.

The general shouted, "Hey, don't put that smelly stuff on me! My wife will think I've been in a brothel!"

The sergeant turned to his barber and said, "Go ahead and put it on me. My wife doesn't know what the inside of a brothel smells like."





From The Flightline - National President's Message

from Carl Schiller OAM CSM, National President

The 2015 Aspen Foundation's study into Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) named five that stood out as iconic Australian institutions. The study included other ESOs that have voluntarily assisted and cared for veterans and their families, and provided invaluable service to the veteran community. The Air Force Association was not listed among them. The Association is also not featured on the ADF's *Engage* website along with other ESOs that provide a range of support services to veterans.

Late last year, I mentioned in my Open Letter to the membership the Association generally has focused on fellowship and commemoration and, over the years, let decline its practical support of veterans and their families. It has become 'club like', so it's not surprising it did not feature in the Aspen Foundation's study.

AFA Ltd (national) has become very influential at government level and among the more substantial ESOs. It has developed a reputation for providing well balanced arguments on proposed veteran and family support initiatives/programs, including well received submissions on the recent *Productivity Commission Inquiry into Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans* and the *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill*. It played a significant role in the development of the *Advocacy Training Development Program* and provided extensive input to the *Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study*. However, the Association needs to practise what it preaches and, that is, to provide 'hands-on' support to our veterans and their families.

The AFA Ltd Board is examining how the Association can manage and deliver a range of veteran and family support services that would provide consistent outcomes to veterans regardless of their place of residence. The Board endorsed a proposal to develop a National Advocacy Service that has aims consistent with the *Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study* recommendations. Clearly, there appears an opportunity for the Association to become a national provider, among other ESOs, of compensation and wellbeing advocacy services. The Board asked NSW Division to develop the policy and procedures for this service, and to further explore its proposal for an Air Force Association National Veteran and Family Crisis Centre. I have great confidence in NSW Division's ability to develop effective national veteran support programs.

Although some Divisions have significant assets, the penury of others means there is no equal opportunity for Air Force Association support of veterans and families across the country. Consequently, it seems important that these support services be national support programs managed and funded by AFA Ltd with the 'hands-on' support provided by volunteers and/or paid support staff. Identifying the funding source will be a challenge. Ideally, a contemporary structured Air Force Association with well-developed, managed veteran support programs is likely to have an improved chance of attracting corporate and other forms of sponsorship.

Our Association mainly comprises Air Force veterans or family members of Air Force veterans. About 5,500 veterans separate each year, a trend for almost 12 years, which means nearly 70,000 veterans have entered the civilian community during this time. It is likely about 18,000 families would need some form of support from an ESO.

I felt a real sense of pride when I attended the recent Avalon Air Show. I saw our young Air Force and other service personnel being very professional and keen. They exuded confidence and were proud to wear the uniform. Many of them would have served on one or more of the following:

- Operation Philippines Assist
- Operation Riverbank – Iraq
- Operational Anode – Solomon Islands
- Operation Astute – Timor-Leste
- Operation Okra – Iraq



Operation Slipper – Afghanistan and Middle East
Operation Highroad – Afghanistan
Operation Resolute – Border Protection
Operation Southern Indian Ocean
Operation Paladin – Israel/Lebanon
Operation Mazurka – Egypt
Operation Aslan – South Sudan
Operation Render Safe - South West Pacific Nations
Operation Solania – South West Pacific
Operation Augury – Philippines
Operation Gateway – South China Sea/Indian Ocean
Operation Accordion – Middle East Region
Operation Manitou – Middle East Region Maritime

We need to let them know we are here for them. Together, I am certain we can develop an Association to support our veterans.



Gorton Survived Hurricane Crash

From History and Heritage Branch–Air Force

When the Hurricane fighter flown by Pilot Officer John Gorton - an Australian serving in No 232 Squadron, RAF - was damaged by Japanese Zeros over Singapore on 30 Jan 42, he decided to put down on Bintan Island in the Rempang Archipelago. The landing went wrong when his aircraft hit a concealed obstacle and overturned, and he smashed his face on the instrument panel. Initially thought to have succumbed to his injuries, he was subsequently rescued by an RAF launch sent to retrieve another pilot downed in his vicinity.

They were both evacuated to Batavia (Jakarta), but their ship was sunk en-route. Reaching Australia, he underwent a period of recuperation before joining No 77 Squadron, RAAF, at Perth. The unit moved to Darwin, where Gorton survived another forced landing on Bathurst Island; he also escaped injury in a later mishap at Port Moresby. In 1968 he became Australia's 19th Prime Minister.



A political obituary of Sir John is here: <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/gorton-sir-john-grey-1552>



No Queue

Well, snarled the tough old Navy boss to the bewildered sailor, "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and pee on my grave."

"Not me, Sir!" the sailor replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in a queue again!"





UAV Fighter ‘wingmen’

from Robert Richardson

Boeing unveiled a surprise new aircraft yesterday, an uncrewed drone designed to fly alongside traditional aircraft in battle. The aircraft, known as the Loyal Wingman, is being developed in Australia as a rapidly configurable platform capable of a variety of tasks to support manned aircraft on dangerous missions. The aircraft was announced at the International Airshow at Avalon, Australia. Boeing Australia will develop three aircraft, officially known as “Loyal Wingman – Advanced



Development Program.” Loyal Wingman looks like a high wing, cockpitless, stealthy aircraft with two low-profile vertical stabilizers. Boeing says it will be 38 feet long, about two-thirds as long as a F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter, with a range of 2,000 nautical miles. Other details such as onboard propulsion, avionics, and sensors are unknown. Boeing claims the aircraft will be capable of “fighter-like” performance.

The new aircraft will have the primary mission set of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, and Boeing claims it can be rapidly reconfigured to suit itself to the mission at hand. It is unknown whether or not the aircraft could eventually carry weapons and if Boeing Australia is planning for such an eventuality. Loyal Wingman will be capable of flying semi-autonomously and also being controlled either from a nearby aircraft or a ground control station. The Loyal Wingman concept is designed to integrate uncrewed aircraft into the world of crewed aircraft. Uncrewed planes have the potential to act as force multipliers for crewed aircraft, performing tasks too dangerous for manned aircraft to do. Boeing describes Loyal Wingman as an aircraft to “protect and project airpower.” The first aircraft is under construction in Australia, with first flight set for 2020.

While Australia and Boeing made the big news last week with their plans to build a loyal wingman drone for the export market, the US Air Force Research Lab actually flew a working prototype, specifically designed for the US. The XQ-58A Valkyrie was built by Kratos, a mid-sized defense firm with big ambitions for the drone market. The plane is designed to be low cost so the US can buy them in large numbers and afford to lose a lot in lieu of expensive manned aircraft crewed by expensively trained human pilots. The goal is multiple loyal wingmen working with a single manned aircraft, like a huntsman with his hounds. The drones would carry and launch extra weapons, jam enemy radars, scout ahead into danger zones, and if need be deliberately decoy enemy weapons away from their human commander.

“XQ-58A is the first example of a class of UAV that is defined by low procurement and operating costs while providing game changing combat capability,” said Doug Szczublewski, AFRL’s XQ-58A program manager. It took only two-and-half years from contract award to get the first bird up in the air. It flew for 76 minutes. The plane is expected to fly four more times for test to evaluate system functionality, aerodynamic performance, and launch and recovery systems. It’s also designed to be runway independent, being launched with a rocket assist and recovered with a parachute.

The Australian Loyal Wingman Advanced Development Program is a four year development program, so it’s behind Valkyrie. But the Aussie aircraft is designed to be exportable and is chiefly designed to fly with the F-35, so it could compete with the Kratos plane.





50th Anniversary of 77 Squadron Leaving Malaysia

from John Clarkson

January 2019 was the 50th Anniversary of the departure of No 77 Squadron from RAAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia in January 1969. This occasion was not just a squadron leaving Butterworth, but it was the end of the Australian Sabre operations in Malaysia. It was the end of a magnificent era. Right up to mid-1968, the squadron provided two fully armed aircraft for the ORP seven days per week, as well as operating a high level ordnance flying programme every week of the year. The squadron provided an armed presence that was not asked of the Mirage squadrons. As my memory recalls, the physical work load for an Armourer in 77 SQN on a weekly basis was stronger and heavier than I experienced at any other squadron, including Vietnam, yet I enjoyed every week. After three years in Butterworth, I left in September 1968 with very fond memories of 77 Squadron.



Don't Become the Victim of a Scam

by Noel Whittaker, AM

Scamming is becoming rife in this high-tech age, but last week I saw it taken to a whole new level. I received an email from a friend in Melbourne - I'll call him Jack - who is prominent in the financial services industry. It displayed his correct email address, was headed "Cordial Invitation", and asked me to "click here" to respond.



The words "Cordial Invitation" were a warning sign because it didn't sound like his typical terminology.

Instead of replying, I sent a new email to his correct email address asking if it was genuine.

When there was no response, I rang his office, where a frazzled executive assistant told me they were having hell because their systems had been "hacked". I deleted the email and put the issue to one side.

The next day, I received another email purporting to be from Jack that said: "It's some wealth management documents for your review, containing some useful and research information. You need to log on to view. Jack."

In a state of confusion, I sent him a text asking what was happening and he responded by text, "I have been hacked - it's a nightmare."

The challenge for all of us is that many of our normal, day-to-day communications require something to be downloaded. Anybody who owns shares will be used to receiving regular emails from companies like Computershare, where you need to download the dividend statement from their website by clicking the highlighted icon. Our electricity and water bills have a PDF attached and, once again, they need to be opened to be actioned.



Look authentic

The problem is that most of these fake emails look authentic. Just this week, I got an email purporting to come from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission regarding “Invoice number 1-E9Y79UE” and asking me to click on a certain link to download the document. It had the ASIC logo on the top and their normal disclaimer stuff on the bottom but, knowing it was most unlikely ASIC would ever send me that type of communication, I simply hovered my mouse over the sender. This revealed the email had come from “chloe.francis@indianacyclegranite.com” and the link was sending to a foreign site, so it was obviously a scam.

I asked my IT guru to give us some tips on how we can avoid being caught by the scammers.

Don't click

First, I asked what was in it for anyone who would send me an email asking me to click on a link. He told me that once I clicked on the link, I would be giving the scammer access to my entire computer, which includes my contact list, emails and, quite possibly, passwords!

So his first rule is: **don't click on links unless you are 100 per cent certain they come from a trusted source.** One way to check is by hovering your mouse over the links to reveal the actual source. We discussed PDFs, which are the preferred means of communication with credit-card providers and utility institutions, and he said a normal PDF should be safe to open, as it should not open a link. However, companies like American Express and Mastercard, whose emailed credit card advices usually say “to access your statement click here,” he suggested that a much safer option is to log into their website directly to download your statement.

I understand there are now 30 billion connected devices around the world, so the field for scammers is a fertile and growing one.

Obviously, consumer education and awareness is going to be critical and I suggest a good place to start would be scamwatch.gov.au. It provides information on a wide range of creative scams and ways to avoid them. It's too late to take action when the damage is done.

Noel Whittaker, AM, is the author of 'Making Money Made Simple' and numerous other books on personal finance.



Darwin's Submarine - The Imperial Japanese Navy's I-124

By Dr Tom Lewis

Outside Darwin's harbour, an enormous Japanese submarine still lies with her 80-man crew on board. The 20th January is the anniversary of her sinking in 1942. She is part of the secret history of the assaults on northern Australia. The aircraft carriers of the famous February 1942 strike were not the first major attack on the Australian landmass. They were the second strike – the first attempt to close down the northern port was made a month earlier with a submarine squadron.

In January 1942, four giant vessels of the Sixth Submarine Squadron's Imperial Japanese Navy were deployed to northern Australian waters. Darwin was a harbour of considerable strategic importance. Sweeping south after the assault on Pearl Harbour, and carrying all before them, the Japanese knew the deployment of any Allied warships or aircraft from the northern port would be a dangerous attack on their right flank as they drove east to secure New Guinea. Built by Kawasaki Heavy Industries, the four submarines of the Sixth Submarine Squadron were armed with twelve torpedoes in four 21-inch bow tubes and a foredeck 5.5-inch gun. They carried 42 mines, launched through torpedo doors in the stern. Under the leadership of Commander Endo, they made their way south, and deployed quietly around Bathurst and Melville Island.

On the morning of 20 January one of the submarines attacked the US Navy fleet oiler USS Trinity with three torpedoes. The tanker was escorted by two destroyers. As the torpedoes were seen, the USS



Alden turned and launched depth charges. The response was unsuccessful, and the destroyer lost the contact and broke off the attack. But the alarm was given in Darwin.

Later the Australian corvette Deloraine was searching near the scene with sonar. The Bathurst-class vessel, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Desmond Menlove, was a newly launched ship, and her first action was nearly her last. Deloraine was ambushed by the I-124. Frank Marsh, a stoker on the vessel, remembered seeing "...the trail of the torpedo which missed our stern so closely that the wake thrown up by the propellers actually caused the torpedo to come out of the raised sea surface." The torpedo streaked towards the corvette. Deloraine turned right inside the torpedo's course. It missed the ship's stern by metres. Then she charged straight down the weapon's track. An attack commenced with patterns of depth charges exploding astern of the warship as she wheeled and swooped as directed by her sonar. Then a Deloraine bridge lookout reported the submarine was breaking the surface, and abruptly the conning tower was seen ahead.

Deloraine powered towards her enemy, and this time the depth charge explosion caught the submarine as it dived. Soon sonar confirmed it as motionless on the seabed. The boat's captain, Lieutenant Commander Koichi Kishigami, his division commander Endo, and 78 others were dead or trapped on board. Later the boom defence vessel HMAS Kookaburra was deployed to the site, and Australian divers attempted to find I-124. They were unsuccessful, and engaged the help of divers from the American submarine repair ship USS Holland.

The divers found the submarine, several nautical miles south of Bathurst Island, with hatch gaskets blown out, suggesting the stern sections were flooded. Some reports claim that divers from the American ship Blackhawk descended and heard the Japanese crew, still inside, tapping on the hull. The Allies were interested in recovery: taking the submarine's codebooks would be a great intelligence coup. Secretly the Navy began to make arrangements for recovery, moving personnel and equipment to Darwin in preparation.

But three weeks later Darwin was struck a shattering blow by the same carrier task force that had devastated Pearl Harbor. It was now too dangerous to attempt recovery. However, the submarine was not to quietly lie in her grave. Controversy was the I-124's companion for the next 50 years. Strange stories and theories surround the wreck. One sought to connect the I-124 with a supposed Japanese submarine working with the German armed raider Kormoran which sank HMAS Sydney in November 1941. Michael Montgomery, in *'Who Sank The Sydney'?* suggested a submarine was refuelling or re-arming Kormoran when the Sydney was sighted, dived to escape detection, and torpedoed the Australian cruiser, winning the battle for the raider. Other stories say that a seaplane was sighted in the vicinity of the battle: many Japanese boats did carry folding planes in hangars on the foredeck. Suggestions have been made that a second submarine wreck – which some claim lies nearby – could be that alleged helper of the Kormoran; other stories have the I-124 itself involved as the Japanese submarine. Other fanciful theories suggest inside the wrecked boat the captain's safe contained an answer. More than one source suggests codebooks were indeed recovered from the I-124, helping to win the Pacific war.

In the 1950s the daughter of the sub's commander, Atsuko Kishigami, began a campaign to have the submarine raised and its entombed bodies returned to Japan. The Japanese Fujita Salvage Company, then in Darwin salvaging the wrecks of ships still lying in the harbour, made a brief investigation into the proposal, before it was decided the costs were prohibitive. In 1972 local salvage operators Sid Hawks, Harry Baxter, George Tyers and John Chadderton began preliminary salvage work on the submarine with three vessels. But ownership disputes arose between Baxter and the remaining three, including shots fired, and after a split the potential salvors were denied rights by the Federal Government and warned off the site. In 1976 Harry Baxter tried new recovery attempts, claiming his salvage attempts had penetrated the hull. By this time he had probably removed items from the exterior. He was warned off again and in a fit of pique went out with explosives to destroy the submarine. In November 1984 Navy divers from HMAS Curlew carried out descents to the boat to



verify its condition: they reported the conning tower had been damaged, but the casing appeared undamaged and sealed.

In 1989 the research vessel Flamingo Bay, captained by David Tomlinson, sent down a Remote Operated Vehicle: an unmanned mini-submarine equipped with a TV camera. The ROV sent back pictures of the I-124's conning tower, still upright but with a list to one side. With personnel from NT and WA museums involved, the Flamingo Bay operation hoped to dive the submarine for research purposes, but the project was eventually cancelled due to political considerations. Stories about I-124 continued to re-appear. Claims that a valuable cargo of mercury was present on board appeared in the media. Baxter continued to make claims about the submarine, saying he had "been arrested by ASIO." His stories appeared in the popular magazine Australasian Post, stating that he had been visited by a Japanese ambassador from Washington, who was worried about the "ship's safe." Baxter died a little while later, taking any secrets to the grave.

In February 2017 the 80 men entombed in the submarine were commemorated in Darwin's Parliament House. The unveiling of a plaque, to be later installed on Casuarina Cliffs, was undertaken by the Japanese Ambassador to Australia, federal Senator Nigel Scullion, and the Chief Minister of the NT, together with the President of the Australian-Japanese Association (NT). Mr Takashi Ootaki, grandson of crew member Petty Officer Second Class Ryohei Ootaki, made a short speech. WWII RAAF veteran, Mr Brian Winspear AO, who experienced the first Darwin air raid, was present in his uniform to reconcile with the Japanese Ambassador. Those attending were gifted with a paper crane to take away, which carried the name of a submariner. At 7pm, at the end of the event, 80 balloons were released outside to free the souls of the dead. I-124 still lies outside Darwin today. Strangely, she is less known to Australians than the three midget submarines which attacked Sydney Harbour also in 1942. But I-124 remains one of the country's most interesting stories of the country at war: a tale of bravery on both sides, loss, and an insight into the secret war fought in Australia's north.

Dr Tom Lewis OAM is a military historian. One of his books is Darwin's Submarine I-124, published by Avonmore. He served in the Royal Australian Navy, retiring as a lieutenant-commander.



RAAF FAC Shot Down in Vietnam

8 Feb 70

On this day, Flight Lieutenant Chris Langton was shot down in Vietnam while serving as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) with the US Air Force near the Cambodian border. After a long-range reconnaissance patrol found itself in need of immediate extraction, Langton took off from Dau Tieng in an OV-10 Bronco accompanied by an Army colleague as observer. While directing artillery cover for the patrol and also coordinating lift helicopters and strike aircraft to make the extraction, he felt the Bronco's controls suddenly



US OV-10 Bronco

freeze forcing both him and his passenger to eject. An LOH6 helicopter arrived to lift Langton out of his predicament but it also was shot down. Another helicopter reached the scene and winched up Langton and the crew of the downed machine before taking them to safety. He thus survived being the first and only Australian FAC to lose his aircraft on operations in Vietnam.

More on FACs here: <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australia-and-vietnam-war/australia-and-vietnam-war/royal-australian-air-force-1>





Broken Neptune

from David Rogers



If your first reaction would be to ask: That must have been some landing! What happened to the pilots?" Sorry but you would be wrong.

The aircraft, a long nose Lincoln of No 10 SQN Townsville, was the victim of a hangar collapse after a storm!



Forty 737s Every Month

Boeing produces over *FORTY* B-737 aeroplanes a month! That's about one every 18 hours! How do they do it? A train arrives with the fuselage (main body section) in the morning. That starts a moving production line process that results in a completed aircraft, ready for flight testing, about 18 hours later. This three and a half minute video (yes, the motions of the humans and robots who build the plane are speeded up) that shows the entire process, is truly fascinating.



Click the link below to see the process:

[Really Amazing: A must watch for all aviation maintenance personnel - Boeing Assembly Line - YouTube](#)





Preso's Prattle March 2019

from State President, Ron Glew

For some considerable time, I have been flagging the in-depth reforms that your State Council identified some 18 months ago and our ongoing efforts to implement those reforms to ensure our relevance within the ESO and Veteran framework, and our continuing viability as well. We continue to hold discussions with RSL NSW, Defence Care, Legacy and allied groups to initiate affiliations with those organisations, as well as networking with them and the Veteran community, ex-service members and organisations, no matter how major or minor, and also becoming far more involved with RAAF bases Richmond, Glenbrook and Williamtown being strongly led by local Branches.

It is very satisfying that almost all of the issues we identified have been accepted for advancement by the National Board with your NSW Council doing the majority of the heavy lifting. We've had sterling support from some far-sighted FSB members getting heavily involved with input and support in fleshing out the concepts, while also taking into consideration recent Government independent reports on Veteran matters.

You will note the National President's comments about our Association's evolving lift of profile in the general community but this should not limit our influence to other ADF members and families. From a personal perspective, I am being approached by Navy, Army and Air Force members in advancing claims through DVA as an advocate, so we are building up our exposure and generating confidence across the whole ADF.

As a purely NSW State Council initiative, our Secretary, two senior partners of KPMG, John Bale - the founder of Soldier On, Richard Kelloway and I are continuing to meet regularly and analyse those reports and prepare for the recommendations arising from, and the possible implementation of those findings, and how it will impact on the initiatives we have set in motion.

Events

We are now well into the Events and Commemorations for this year and the RAAF Birthday Ceremony will have been held by the time this *SITREP* is distributed. No doubt our own Events and Commemorations Co-ordinator, Rev Geoff Usher will be having us observing clockwork precision. Planning for this coming ANZAC Day March in Sydney is not quite finalised, but I am advised that the Navy will have the majority of their fleet in Sydney and they are going to lead the march along with the Army up front as they did last year, so we can expect a significant delay in stepping off. I will keep members up to date as it becomes clearer.

The RAAF uniformed members will march with the veterans of the post-WWII contingent to ensure that we are a unified group with veterans and serving members marching as one, as it should be. This will also be the last year for WWII RAAF veterans setting off at about 0930hrs as our number of veterans marching in Sydney is now less than a handful, and we feel that by marching as a group next year we are unified but also able to provide more personal support during the event and hopefully, coax more into Sydney. HARS has supplied details of the flyover and it is expected that it will occur at about 1100hrs, just as we step off, with two passes by the Catalina, Dakota and Caribou in formation.

Wings Magazine

Wings magazine is now under the stewardship of RAAFANSW Publishing and the next issue is due to arrive in June under the AFA banner. Any person or group that wishes to contribute time or provide memoirs or literary contributions or even suggestions for additions or changes, Neil Smith and his crew will be very, very pleased to hear from you.

Clear Skies and Smooth Landings





Aerodrome Work in the AFC Squadron

The daily work at the aerodrome in the squadron repair-shops was enormous, and the effect of rapid and skilful work by mechanics in all branches was an important factor in the efficiency of a squadron for fighting.

Equipment Officer's Work

Accountancy of Stores. Stores are accounted for by means of Receipts and Issues Ledger. To save too much handling of ledger, an issue book is kept on stores counter, and every article issued during the day is entered in ledger after the day's issues have finished.

Replacement of Stores. Urgent stores are those required for immediate minor repairs upon unserviceable aeroplanes, engines or motor-transport. These are indented for on Aircraft Parks *via* Wing by telegram, and have priority over anything else. Crash reports are rendered to equipment officer by flight concerned, and all parts not in store are wired for to the Park immediately. Park advises when parts are ready and squadrons collect. Some parks deliver spares to make machines and motor-transport serviceable directly they are ready for issue. Ordinary stores and spare parts to complete squadron to mobilisation equipment are indented for fortnightly in triplicate, *via* Wing.

Organisation of Headquarters' Workshops. The engine-repairing and overhaul department consists of one engine-sergeant and one engine-fitter from headquarters. The remainder of the engine-fitters (six in number) are drawn from flights, and work on engines in pairs. All engines are received into workshops with their log-books correctly entered up. On arrival for repair or overhaul, the engine is dismantled and indent is placed at technical stores for spare parts necessary to make the engine serviceable. Apart from the log-book a report is kept of the history of each engine dealt with in workshops. In the event of cylinders being removed from the crank-case they are placed in a bath of caustic soda, which facilitates cleaning. In order to keep parts of a dismantled engine together, a tray is used, suitably divided.

"The maintenance of all magnetos and testing of spark plugs is carried out by the electrician."

Source: The Official History, *History and Heritage Branch—Air Force*



Competition in Australian Military Forces

A sailor, soldier and an airman got into an argument as to which branch of the Services was "The Best". The argument became so heated that the three servicemen failed to see an oncoming truck as they crossed the street. They were hit by the truck and all killed instantly. Soon, the three servicemen found themselves outside the Pearly Gates of Heaven.

There, they met Saint Peter and they decided that only he could be the ultimate source of truth and honesty. So, the three servicemen asked him: "Saint Peter, which branch of the Armed Forces is the best?"

Saint Peter replied, "I can't answer that. However, I will ask God what He thinks, the next time I see Him. Meanwhile, thank you all for your service on Earth, and welcome to Heaven".

Sometime later, the three servicemen see Saint Peter and remind him of the question they had asked when first entered Heaven. The three servicemen asked Saint Peter if he was able to find an answer to their question. Suddenly, a sparkling white dove lands on Saint Peter's shoulder. In the doves beak is a note, glistening with gold dust.

Saint Peter opens the note, trumpets blare, gold dust drifts in the air, harps play crescendos, and Saint Peter begins to read the note aloud to the three servicemen:



MEMORANDUM FROM THE DESK OF THE ALMIGHTY ONE.

TO: All former Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen.

SUBJECT: Which Military Service Is The Best.

1. All branches of the Armed Forces are honourable and noble.
2. Each serves their country well and with distinction.
3. Serving in the military represents a great honour, warranting special respect, tribute, and dedication from your fellow man.
4. Always be proud of that.

Warm regards,
GOD, (RAAF Retired).



War and Trauma: Learning the Lessons

This article was first published on Pursuit.

From a cup of tea behind the lines, to sophisticated psychological therapies, we are still working to improve treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

By Catriona May, University of Melbourne

Soldiers in the trenches of World War One who experienced ‘shellshock’, were simply rested just behind the frontline for a week or so, fed, exercised, and then returned directly to battle. At the time, the PIEs principle (proximity to the frontline; immediate treatment; and expectancy of a return to duties) was regarded as the best way to manage shell-shocked soldiers and quickly return them to the front to meet the war’s insatiable demand for manpower. Today, Australian soldiers who report psychological injury are removed from the battlefield altogether, only to return if and when they fully recover.

“If a uniformed soldier is experiencing significant posttraumatic stress disorder and they acknowledge it and ask for help, there is a fairly comprehensive system of medical and financial supports available to them,” says consultant psychiatrist Dr John Cooper from the University of Melbourne. “It’s not perfect, but there’s a high level of sophistication and intent by the Australian Defence Force to minimise their psychiatric casualties and to look after their personnel.” It was not always so. Dr Cooper, who has worked extensively with returned veterans experiencing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), says the Vietnam War was a turning point. “We learned important lessons after Vietnam,” he says. “The politics and cultural issues around that war meant returning veterans were treated quite badly. At times they were instructed to take off their uniforms and put on civilian clothes and to keep a low profile. They would disembark at night-time to avoid attention. “Whilst those terrible homecomings didn’t cause PTSD, they certainly didn’t help prevent it. We now know that poor social support is a risk factor for developing PTSD after exposure to trauma. Vietnam era veterans will often say they found that experience more distressing than combat.”

Posttraumatic stress disorder, with symptoms including distressing reexperiencing, avoidance and hyper-arousal in response to a traumatic event, isn’t unique to military personnel. But the nature of warfare means soldiers are vulnerable. “The more severe the trauma the more likely it is to cause PTSD,” explains Dr Cooper. “The trauma that has the highest rate of PTSD is generally interpersonal trauma like experiencing rape or torture. Some studies show there is up to 50 per cent rates of PTSD after those kinds of events.” Military personnel are screened for some of these risk factors during selection, particularly a history of serious mental health problems and any past history of PTSD. There is an improved level of awareness within the military of the importance of looking after personnel who have experienced trauma and keeping them connected with their communities.



Pioneering military psychologist Charles Myers was one of the first to coin the term ‘shellshock’ in 1915. Struggling to determine whether the symptoms he observed among soldiers in the trenches were physical – caused by concussion from explosions, or psychological – caused by stress, he ultimately came to the opinion that it was predominantly a psychological problem, and treated his patients accordingly. “During the First World War the psychoanalytical approach was fairly prominent and common therapies included hypnotherapy and talking therapies aimed at integrating traumatic memories,” says Dr Cooper. “Physical treatments using electricity and magnets were also used. These were early precursors to modern treatments of depression such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). “There was also a big emphasis on occupational therapy and keeping the injured soldiers active and busy.”

For today’s soldiers, there is now a range of research-informed treatments available for PTSD. “The first line of treatment is one of the evidence-based psychological therapies – trauma-focussed cognitive behavioural therapy, cognitive processing therapy, and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing,” says Dr Cooper. The aspects of these treatments that we believe are associated with effectiveness are that they assist the patient to confront distressing memories, reduce avoidance responses, address distorted thinking, and teach strategies to reduce distress and arousal. “A lot of people with significant PTSD will also be treated with medication, predominantly antidepressants. There is reasonable evidence for them being helpful, too.”

Early diagnosis and treatment is important – the longer someone experiences PTSD without treatment, the harder it can be for them to recover. But Dr Cooper says there can be barriers to early treatment in the military. Reporting psychological problems may lead to medical ratings that prevent personnel from deploying. Consequently, some personnel are reluctant to put their hands up for help, and that can make their problems worse. “If someone perseveres with the symptoms without seeking help, we worry that this delayed presentation leads to a more severe and hard to treat condition,” he explains. At that stage, the soldier with PTSD might start self-medicating with alcohol or other drugs, their relationships might start to suffer and they risk losing their social supports. “Once PTSD has become chronic then it’s usually also complicated by other mental health problems like depression and alcohol abuse. “Their work performance can be the last thing to deteriorate and at that point they’re likely to come to the concerned attention of their boss or colleagues.”

While the majority of people respond to evidence-based treatments, there remains a significant minority who don’t – around one third, says Dr Cooper. Researching how to help this group is part of the agenda at the Phoenix Australia Centre for Post-traumatic Mental Health, where Dr Cooper is based. The centre’s new federally funded Centenary of Anzac Centre is supporting clinicians and researching clinical approaches to help improve treatment. One of the new biological treatments the centre is investigating is transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), which stimulates the brain with a magnetic field generated by an electrical current, and is already an established treatment for severe depression. “We’re hoping that, as been seen in depression, not only will it improve the PTSD but also the cognitive problems with memory and concentration that many patients experience.”

Dr Cooper and his colleagues experience a similar challenge to the one that faced Dr Myers in WW1 – how to distinguish between soldiers experiencing brain injury and those with PTSD. “A number of our soldiers coming out of the Middle East have been exposed to improvised explosive devices, and have suffered concussions,” he says. “Trying to work out the difference in presentations between those with mild traumatic brain injuries and those with PTSD remains a challenge in modern day psychiatry. “What Myers was trying to disentangle in the First World War, we’re still trying to untangle now.”





1949 Character Assessment (Assassination)

History and Heritage Branch—Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn.

In terms of Air Force Order 8/G/14, the following members' characteristic assessment definitions were advised for inclusion in the Airman's annual efficiency report.

EXEMPLARY (Abbreviated "EX"). An airman who has consistently received a character assessment of "VG" or "EX" and in the former case has completed 5 years' service and again measures up to this standard.

VERY GOOD (Abbreviated "VG"). An honest, unselfish type of airman with sound principles and good moral outlook whose conduct has been irreproachable but from whom an "exemplary" cannot be recorded either by reason of the 5 years' service qualification or because he does not quite measure up to the highest standard.

GOOD (Written in full). An airman who occasionally gets into trouble, is normally amenable to discipline, of reasonably sound principles, has a certain amount of individuality, shows signs of improvement, a trier. Has not been awarded punishment in excess of 20 days detention in the aggregate during the period under review.

FAIR (Written in full). Just a middling type of individual, gets into trouble rather easily, but more from lack of moral strength than from intent. Somewhat of a drifter, easily led. Has not been awarded punishment in excess of 60 days detention in the aggregate during the period under review.

INDIFFERENT (Written in full). Neither particularly good nor very bad individual, a borderline between "Fair" and "Bad", lacking in most of the attributes that go to make up character, not particularly amenable to discipline - a problem type - (for consideration whether or not the Service would be better off without his services). Punishment awarded during the period under review has been in excess of 61 days detention in the aggregate.

BAD (Written in full). Incurable, unprincipled, undisciplined. A useless individual (has been recommended for discharge under A.F.O. 8/G/8 (b)).



Australians Buried at Arlington National Cemetery

On 16 November 1989, RAAF Pilot Officer Francis D Milne became the first Australian to be laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery Virginia, USA, adjoining Washington DC. During WW2 he was attached to No 6 Troop Carrier Sqn of the US Army Air Force, serving as a co-pilot in a C 47 Dakota transport, serial no 41-38601. On 26 November 1942 his aircraft was attacked over Popondetta New Guinea by a Japanese Zero and crashed into a swamp, in an area so rough that the crash site was never reached during the war.

After discovery of the wreckage in 1989 and recovery was undertaken, it was found that Milne's remains were 'individually unidentifiable' from those of Technical Sergeant Joseph Paul, the USAAF Flight Engineer on board, so they were laid to rest together in Arlington. Bankstown was Milne's home town; he was born on 9 February 1917, Service No 33516 and his grave site is



USAAF C-47 Dakota



Section 34, Collective Grave 4754. It is considered a great honour for a RAAF airman to be laid to rest in America's most hallowed ground.

Source and more information: Pacific Wrecks C 47 DL 'Swamp Rat' s/no 41-38601.

The second Australian is Ms Yvonne Kennedy, who was a passenger on American Airlines Flight 77 which crashed into the Pentagon during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001; one of 10 Australians killed that day. She was laid to rest on 22 September 2002, in Section 64. Some of her personal effects such as wallet, keys, and various identity and credit cards were recovered and returned to her family, and are now held at The National Museum of Australia. Yvonne was born in Punchbowl, attended Glenfield Public School, Liverpool Girls High School, and was a long time member of the Australian Red Cross.

A small park is situated at the rear of The Pentagon where the aircraft crashed into the Pentagon, and a cantilevered bench signifying an aircraft's main plane or wing, is an individually named memorial to those who lost their lives. Each bench has a small pool beneath it, with the names of each of the 85 passengers on the



aircraft, and 85 trees are planted around the Memorial. The

85 benches that face the Pentagon signify the aircraft passengers; and 125 benches facing outwards from the Pentagon represent the people who lost their lives inside the Pentagon.

Source and more information : National Museum of Australia website



Michelle and Terry Maher visited both Arlington and the Pentagon in May 2018, unaware of the two Australians at Arlington. Had they been aware, they would have placed Australian flags next to the graves.



3SQN Supported Sydney Harbour Bridge Opening

19 Mar 32

The Sydney Harbour Bridge was officially opened on this day in front of an estimated crowd of 750,000 people. It was a day of remarkable celebration, involving a parade of floats and marching bands, fireworks and carnivals, as well as a procession of passenger ships, a 21-gun salute and an aerial display and flypast by Richmond-based No 3 Squadron Wapiti aircraft. After the pageant, the public walked across the deck of the Bridge. The official opening was marred by a member of the New Guard, Captain Francis de Groot, upstaging NSW Premier Jack Lang by riding in on horseback and slashing the ribbon with his sword. Premier Lang then had to wait for the ribbon to be retied before he could ceremonially cut the ribbon with his golden scissors. Captain de Groot was rushed away by police and later fined £5 for offensive behaviour. The total financial cost of the bridge was £10,057,170/7/9 (for those younger readers: ten million, fifty seven thousand, one hundred and seventy pounds, seven shillings and nine pence); this was not paid off in full until 1988.

More on the Bridge here: <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/sydney-harbour-bridge-opens>

Sydney Morning Herald press reporting here: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/16838247>





Asleep In The Arms Of One Who Cares

from johnwc

This photo is probably about twelve or more years old now. But when it first appeared, many of the servicemen and women were receiving a lot of flak for their presence in the Middle East.

This fellow is Chief Master Sergeant John Gebhardt, USAF, serving in Afghanistan. A Chief Master Sergeant is as high as one can go in the enlisted ranks. He is known as an “E9”, equivalent to an Australian Warrant Officer.

John Gebhardt’s wife, Mindy, tells the story on John’s behalf. She said that this little girl’s entire family was executed. The insurgents intended to execute the little girl also, and shot her in the head – but they failed to kill her. She was cared for in John’s hospital and is slowly healing, but continues to cry and moan.

The nurses said John is the only one who seems to calm her down, so John has spent the last four nights holding her while they both slept in that chair. The girl is coming along with her healing.

He is a real star of the war, and represents what the combined services really try to do.



Clarity of Expression?

Source: Minutes of the War Cabinet Meeting, 25 January 1940

Clarity of expression is a highly valued cornerstone of Service writing...pity it didn't extend to the War Cabinet in 1940!

(133) AGENDUM No. 15/1940 - PROMOTION OF OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

Where a vacancy exists in the establishment for a higher rank and an officer is eligible for promotion thereto, but it is not in the interests of the Service to transfer him on promotion, it was approved that, where the inability to take this action results in undue delay in the promotion of other officers, the officer concerned may be promoted, provided that the establishment for the rank to which he is promoted is not exceeded. This course is to be followed with the approval of the Minister in special cases only, having regard to the interests of the Service and the individuals concerned.

