



# SITREP

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION NSW - NEWS AND VIEWS

## C-130H Hercules History

*From Trojan Tales, No 37 Squadron Antiquity, 2006 -2012*

No. 37 Squadron took over operational responsibility for the Air Force fleet of C-130H airframes in November 2006 when 36 SQN HQ relocated to RAAF Base Amberley in preparation for the squadron to undertake conversion training and delivery of their new Boeing C-17A Globemaster airframes. The H models initially remained in the tactical role while the J model crews commenced consolidation training to move from being a traditional airlift squadron to being a combat air mobility squadron.



**Original colour scheme upon delivery to 37SQN**

To consolidate that training, the H model airframes and crews alternated on rotations to the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) with J models and crews until 2008, when the J model airframes and crews took over with a permanent detachment in the MEAO on four month rotations.



The C-130H airframes were decommissioned in November 2012, with four airframes being “gifted” by the Australian Labor Government to the Indonesian Government with the view of them being used for humanitarian assistance within the region. By May 2016, only three of the airframes had been refurbished and flown to Indonesia.

Upon decommissioning, A97-003 was flown to the Pt Cook Air Force Museum in Victoria to join C-130A A97-214 and C-130E A97-160 on permanent display.



The last flight of RAAF C-130H aircraft took place on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012 when two airframes, A97-005 and A97-008 completed a multi-ship flypast at the C-130H End of Era hanger bash.



Final Flight Crews Left to Right  
Chris Sinfield(FE), Col Lubbock(LM), Michael Burns(ACO), Simon Mason(ACO), Rob Sokol(PLT),  
Glen Nelson(PLT) Sean Buckett(PLT), Andrew Petrusma(PLT), Anthony Charles(PLT), Neil Lewis(FE),  
Graham Clark(LM), Johnny Coram (LM)



## My time as a Cadet in the Air Training Corps

*From Geoff Raebel*

**I**t was about 2015 on a trip to Melbourne, that I arranged to meet Squadron Leader Peter Isaacson (retD). We chatted on many subjects, such as him flying his Lancaster out to Australia (he was only about the fourth pilot to make a trans-Pacific flight) and I told him that in 1963 I had joined No.1 Flight ATC at Spencer St Melbourne, to which he replied “Ah, I would have been your Commandant then.”

In 1964, I moved with my parents from Melbourne to Sydney and I joined 18 Flight Air Training Corps at the Qantas Jet Base Mascot, with the sound of real turbines out of overhaul being run-up. Pretty soon I found the Flight was to join a rifle shoot at Anzac Rifle Range. One day after a





morning shoot, I stayed on at the range and was invited to the Military Rifle Club Union shoot and I managed to squeeze my way in for the afternoon session. One of the officers was driving us back into the city in his Holden ute with a group of cadets sitting in the back, sharing the space with about 20 rifles on the floor. During the trip, the officer was pulled over by the constabulary - the copper gave our officer a mild dressing down about his speed then sent us on our way; he hadn't bothered looking in the back!

Late in 1964, my application to attend a Corporal's Course was approved, so after five weeks as a truck driver for an aircraft wrecker, I said my farewells and, armed with a rail warrant, joined a carriage full of other cadets on the train and bus to RAAF Base Fairbairn. Accommodation was in huts of about 12 bunks and we messed in the Airmen's Mess. The days were very full and there was even a cinema to go to. Elvis was showing of course, as he was a major propaganda influence for the Vietnam war.

On the parade ground, each of the cadets had a turn at giving orders to the rest of the flight. There was a bully amongst them who selected one lad and almost brought him to tears. I was sick of him so I fidgeted and was selected as his next victim, to march to his orders. He had me marching away from him while a Huey was running up its engine; the order came "About turn", but I feigned deafness due to the engine noise and marched on diagonally across the parade ground until the bully had to come running after me to turn me around. He didn't get any sympathy from the others on the course.

Then came the day for volunteers the sit in the back of a Huey while the pilot practiced auto-rotation landings with his check pilot. I think it was five of us that climbed onto the back bench seat of the Huey. Until it happened, I don't know whether we knew what we were in for! The Huey had a lot of forward speed on and hit the ground 'firmly' then slithered along to an eventual stop. I think we may have done three of those before it was time to change pilots and cadets. After that experience, firing 'Morris Tube' .303 rifles chambered down to .22 calibre was pretty tame!

We were given a relaxation afternoon and bussed into the Swimming Centre where I made the mistake of jumping feet first off the 10 metre board. I was pretty sore and uncomfortable for the rest of that day! It was a great camp, even having a Sikh lad from the Royal Malaysian Air Force with us; that was an education in how much hair can be stowed under a turban! After the Corporal's Course, I found that 'Air Tactical Commandos' was a good pick-up line for girls on the trains who wanted to know what ATC stood for; I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the ATC!



## **Performing Low Level Intercepts at Night in the Mirage**

*From Phil Frawley*

**A**s part of the continuous training and currency requirements of fighter aircraft there are many and varied missions that need to be practiced in order to remain an effective fighter pilot. With the Mirage there were a number of missions that were very difficult to master, and one was night low level intercepts. The Mirage instrumentation and cockpit lighting was a problem for pilots and there were some senior pilots who refused to fly the aircraft at night because of this. The main artificial horizon was an instrument that combined attitude information and magnetic heading in a spherical ball called the Bezu Ball.

The Bezu Ball was for the most part quite reliable, however it had no failure warning indications so if it did fail, and it sometimes did, there was no way for the pilot to tell unless he was really adept at limited instrument panel flying. There was a backup attitude indicator but if you were manoeuvring hard it was prone to giving false indications.



Part of your instrument scan when in 'blind flying' conditions required constant monitoring and cross referencing both instruments. So just flying around at night could be challenging, but when you combined difficult operational tasks as well, the workload could be almost overwhelming. The Mirage was a very high performance aircraft (naturally) and it could easily and quickly get away from you if you weren't paying attention, resulting in what pilots called unusual (uncommanded) attitudes that could require a lot of altitude to recover from. At low level there was no room for mistakes, particularly at night.

Low level intercepts in the Mirage were conducted over the sea with the target aircraft, in this case another Mirage, flying below 1000 feet, with the attacking fighter staying above 2000 feet until radar contact.

A side note here, this is not permitted these days, you must stay above the area safety

height which depending on your position could be above 3000 feet but never below 1500 feet. The target aircraft would be around fifty nautical miles away from the attacking aircraft and they would run at each other on reciprocal headings. The attacking fighter would manoeuvre to achieve an offset distance so that he could turn in behind the target aircraft to gain a missile solution and shot. The Mirage did not have forward (of the target) firing weapons, they did not come into service until the Hornet. At low level, over the sea, the Mirage radar suffered from 'clutter' or false returns from the sea surface; a problem over land as well. In order to combat this and find the target on radar you had to bounce the radar signal ahead of the target, prior to turning for the attack and behind the target on attack heading in order to have the target appear on your radar. The radar had to be constantly manipulated to achieve this using a side stick control on the left console of the cockpit. This control must have been designed by a person on drugs, because its operation was illogical and required a lot of practice to operate effectively.

On one particular mission, while I was a member of 77 Squadron, I was programmed to fly with a famous RAAF fighter pilot by the name of Dave Halloran whose nickname was 'Hooligan'. Despite his nickname, Dave was an exceptional fighter pilot and a great mentor to the junior pilots in the squadron. For this particular mission, Dave was to be the target and he would also monitor my progress and advise me of anything I could do to improve my techniques.

The first intercept went reasonably well with no comments from Dave, but I was working very hard to keep in front of the aircraft. The second intercept was not going well at all and I couldn't for the life of me find Dave on the radar despite using all the correct techniques, when suddenly over the radio Dave called "Fox 2" (which is code for a missile shot on me). Dave had manoeuvred around behind me while I was trying to get behind him; "DAMN"! I was angry with myself for not picking up his evasion manoeuvres. The next intercept was going quite well until I was almost behind Dave when suddenly I saw the afterburner (A/B) light up on Dave's aircraft and watched him climb abruptly and turn left whereupon the A/B went out. I attempted to follow him but lost sight of him when there was another "Fox 2" called on me. He had turned right after the A/B was deselected and come around behind me again.



**Mirage Cockpit**



I was seething now and determined to get my own back somehow. On the next intercept he lit the A/B just as I went into the turn to attack and again he climbed and turned left; I did the same but after I deselected A/B I turned right and caught a glimpse of him in the right turn. He clearly



My Mirage in 77 Squadron, A3-44

saw me and lit the A/B once again and went into another turn before again deselection A/B. This went on until we were out of fuel, but he never got another shot on me that night. After landing I was drained; a check of the 'G' meter showed that I had pulled the maximum 'G' for the aircraft of 6.7 G. The expected 'G' for this mission was around 3 'G'. What was supposed to be an intercept mission turned out to be a low level dogfight at night and all below 5000 feet, which nowadays is the lowest level you can go to in a dogfight; an altitude is called the 'hard deck'.

I was interested to hear what Dave would have to say about all of this in the debrief and to my surprise he was very happy with how I went, noting that I was determined to not fall for the same ruse each time. He also pointed out that to do what I had done required above average instrument flying skills. This had a marked effect on my confidence to fly the Mirage at night and complete difficult operational tasks at the same time. I am really grateful to Dave Halloran for the mentoring he provided to me and the other junior pilots in 77 Squadron; thanks to him I became a good dogfighter and a better fighter pilot all round. Onya Hooligan!



## Scotaville 2022

*From Neil Snudden, RADSCHOOL Association*

Back in 2019 the RAAF Radschool Association, an organisation that represents the men and women who were trained by the Air Force to maintain or operate its electronic equipment, decided to hold a fund raising event by riding small 50cc Mopeds from RAAF Amberley to RAAF Townsville. Some years previously a group of ex-RAAF people had ridden 50cc Mopeds across the Nullarbor, with funds being donated to Beyond Blue. We decided to do it again, though this time our charity of choice would be Legacy.

Extensive planning got underway, a route was selected which allowed for accommodation facilities an easy day's ride apart, meal and rest stops were planned, police and councils along the route were briefed and it was decided to head off early in 2020. COVID and Murphy had other ideas. With the on again, off again COVID threat, Scotaville had to be delayed three times, then when everything seemed fine. Murphy stood up.

First, our little Mopeds were held in Sydney by Customs, then the supplier decided not to make them available. We had no choice but to hire Honda 125 motor bikes, then we couldn't leave







from RAAF Amberley nor arrive at RAAF Townsville, but thankfully the Ipswich City Council came to the rescue and made available the Rosewood Showground for our departure, and the Army in Townsville welcomed us on arrival.

With most problems solved, on the 3rd September, 47 of us headed off from Rosewood, west of Ipswich for the 2200km, 14 day journey to Townsville. We travelled via and overnighed at Kilcoy, Kingaroy, Gayndah, Biloela, Emerald, Barcaldine, Ilfracombe, Winton, Hughenden, Charters Towers and Townsville. At most overnight stops, local councils or showground



operators gave us free entry to their pavilions where we bunked down on blow-up air beds. At other sites, RSL Sub-Branches and PCYC offered us their halls. In Townsville, the Army very kindly offered us accommodation at Lavarack Barracks. Mostly we provided our own breakfasts, en-route snacks and mid-day lunches, except where Sub-Branches or community clubs were kind enough to provide for us. We tried to inject some funds into the communities by buying our own dinners at night.

We visited five small primary schools on the way and as Metcash, Woolworths, the AWM and RAAF had given us lots of 'give-aways', we were able to hand these out to the kids and give them a ride on the bikes. As well as making the kids feel good, it did wonders for some of us too.

We were able to raise sufficient funds to be able to make a donation of \$25,000 to Legacy. When you consider that most of that money came from the general public in the form of \$10 and \$20 notes, it just goes to show how grateful people are of the wonderful work Legacy does for the families of missing or disturbed service men and women.



The Radschool Association plans to hold Scootaville 2023 and this time hopes to raise in excess of \$50,000 for Legacy.



## Vietnam Veterans Reminisce

*Reprinted with permission from CONTACT Magazine*

Story by Flight Lieutenant Karyn Markwell. Photo by Group Captain David Fredericks.

A retreat for 85 Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Vietnam veterans and their family members was recently held at the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre (AMB AHC). The special event, hosted by History and Heritage – Air Force (HH-AF), allowed veterans to mingle with friends new and old amid the aircraft in the AMB AHC, which opened especially for the two day retreat. Director of HH-AF Group Captain David Fredericks said he valued the whole experience. "It was a privilege to host these Vietnam veterans and their families at the retreat, and to hear their stories over coffee and cake," he said. "We honour them for their service to Australia."

Many veterans expressed their thanks to the HH-AF team for putting on the event, with one saying they were proud that what they did in the war all those years ago hasn't been forgotten. Another said it was great to be surrounded once again by the aircraft they flew. Personnel and



volunteers from the AMB AHC – many of whom are also veterans – were pleased to exchange stories with the veterans about the different aircraft and artefacts on display.

Officer in charge of AMB AHC, Wing Commander Kevin Kovic, said the centre was proud to open its doors to the veterans for the special event. “It was wonderful to see our guests’ enthusiasm for the artefacts and aircraft we have on display here, especially those from the Vietnam War,” he said.



Vietnam veterans catching up at the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.

HH-AF presented each veteran who attended the retreat with books to take home as souvenirs, including the double-book set *Aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force* and *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force*, along with Vietnam War-themed titles such as Air Vice Marshal Alan Reed’s *Invited to a War* and Bob Grandin’s *Answering the Call: Life of a Helicopter Pilot in Vietnam and Beyond*.



## The Value of Not Burning Bridges

*From Tony Ryan Warrant Officer (Ret’d) RAAF Feb1958-Mar1981*

Most of us will have heard the saying “Don’t burn your bridges”. Well for me it has a special meaning. I left the RAAF in 1981 after 23+ years of service. I was the Flight Engineer Leader on the B707 element and had what could arguably have been described as the best job for a F/E in the RAAF. I did not make my decision to leave lightly.

After leaving the RAAF I had no intention of seeking a flying position and, in fact, took a job as a technical representative with the SKF Bearing Company in Auburn. Several months into that job, I was advised that Qantas were seeking applicants for B747 Simulator Instructor F/Es. I applied and attended interviews which gave me optimism that I may be selected. I resigned my position with SKF so that I could have a break before commencing a new career. It was a classic case of “counting the chickens before they had hatched”. Several weeks after the interviews which had given me such optimism, I received a letter from Qantas advising that they had been very impressed but due to a change of company policy, no external appointments would now be made. It turned out that a couple of Qantas F/Es were approaching retirement from operational flying and had indicated a wish to remain employed as simulator instructors. Qantas asked if I would like to remain ‘on the books’ in the event they were to seek applicants at a later date.

With my hopes dashed, and unemployed, I took a job relief-managing a bus and coach company and driving. This turned out to be an enjoyable period for the next couple of years. I was then advised, by Bill de Boer, that Cathay Pacific Airways were going to hold interviews for F/Es and pilots and that despite being 43 years of age, I was still young enough to apply. Cathay had upped the age limit to 47 at that time.



With little confidence in my chances, I applied and was invited to attend interviews in Sydney. My chances of progressing did not seem improved when I looked around at the other applicants there for interviews. I knew many of them and they were all current in the role, whereas I had not operated as a F/E for about 30 months. To my surprise, my wife Helen and I were later invited to attend final interviews in Hong Kong. Again, my prospects seemed slight given that some of the applicants who had come from the UK were current on the Lockheed L1011 Tristar, the aircraft to which we would be assigned if successful.

Helen and I had a good time in Hong Kong and Cathay treated us very well. First class to Hong Kong and return to Sydney. I felt the interviews went well enough, but the competition seemed pretty strong. We returned home without any real expectations, and so it came as a real surprise to receive a phone call offering me a position as a L1011 F/E. The only condition was that I had to revalidate my civil F/E licence, which meant a proficiency check in an approved simulator. As my most recent aircraft had been the B707, I asked if I could do the proficiency check in Cathay Pacific's B707 simulator as there was no B707 simulator in Australia at that time. I indicated my willingness to meet the cost of flying the examiner to HK and return; "Sorry Mr Ryan, it has to be an Australian approved simulator". I thought that would be the end of that opportunity.

Next, the departmental man, Ron Huckstep, said "Don't lose hope. I believe the C-130E simulator at RAAF Richmond was approved, as CargoMasters used it, and I think it is still approved." (Thanks Ruff) Armed with that information, I called my CO at the time of discharge, WGCDR David Grierson, to see if he thought I might be able to buy sim time in the E model sim. He suggested I leave it with him and in what seemed no time at all, he called and advised me to speak to 37SQN who had agreed to provide me with an E model Dash 1 and access, after hours, to the E model sim.

The next three weeks or so was spent with evenings bumbling around in the sim trying to re-familiarise myself with an aeroplane I had last operated over five years previously, and then only for a short period in the lead up to the introduction of the H model. 37SQN generously allowed me to crew a couple of familiarisation sessions before I called Canberra and requested a proficiency check. On the appointed day, former C-130E Flight Engineer Departmental Examiner Ross Swanson, came to Richmond. Two 37SQN pilots were rostered into the sim along with me and I undertook the proficiency check which, thankfully, Ross determined was good enough to sign off on my renewal. I was in the Sydney office having my F/E licence renewed that very afternoon.

My next action was to call Cathay Pacific Airways Manager F/E Training, Gordon Smith, asking him which flight he wanted me to catch to Hong Kong. I began with Cathay in mid-September 1983 on the first conversion course they had run for over three years. I was checked to the line on 24 November 1983. The Lockheed L1011 Tristar was a joy to operate. Cathay Pacific Airways already knew a bit about me, as they had provided their B707 simulator for the RAAF to use in the early days of B707 operations, which meant regular visits to Hong Kong. Most important however, had I not been afforded access to the E model sim as a civvy and been given the opportunity to get back to some semblance of proficiency, I would likely have never worked as a Flight Engineer again after having left the RAAF. I am quite sure that had I "burnt my bridges" with the RAAF things would have been very different. I will always be grateful for the assistance given me to get back into a job I absolutely enjoyed.



The difference between fear and terror: fear is when your calculations show you may not have enough fuel to make it to your destination. Terror is when you realize you were right.



## Passionate advocate leads Pink Ribbon fundraiser

*By Corporal Melina Young, 31 October 2022*

*Reprinted from Defence News*



**Flight Sergeant Gail Blizzard is a breast cancer survivor who is passionate about raising funds for cancer research. She organised the Pink Ribbon drive-through breakfast event held at RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW. Photo: Corporal Melina Young**

**W**hen Flight Sergeant Gail Blizzard was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer in 2019, she was not ready to leave her nine-year-old son without a mother. After two removal surgeries, five weeks of radiation and three reconstructive surgeries, Flight Sergeant Blizzard has been in remission for three years, and is vocal about educating women that early detection is the key to survival. During an unrelated trip to medical, she asked for a mammogram and the next day was advised to make an appointment at the breast cancer clinic.

When cancer came crashing into her life, the first question everyone asked was 'Did you find a lump?'.

The answer was 'no'. Flight Sergeant Blizzard, who was 48 years old at the time, had no symptoms or family history of cancer.

"I knew about seven Air Force females that had been diagnosed, all younger than I was," she said. "A good friend at Williamtown had just been diagnosed for a second time, so I have her to thank for being diagnosed early."

Flight Sergeant Blizzard shared her survival story at a RAAF Williamtown breast cancer awareness seminar and encouraged women to have mammograms from age 40.

"It's free from 40 years old at the National Breast Cancer Foundation; don't wait until you're 50," she said.



**Sergeant Michelle Keune from 29 Squadron collects a breakfast bag from the Pink Ribbon drive through event held at RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW. Photo: Wing Commander Susan Yates**

Wanting to contribute to breast cancer research, Flight Sergeant Blizzard has run four Pink Ribbon events at RAAF Base Williamtown, and for the second time, organised a drive through breakfast on October 25.

"I want to support this fund raiser every year in the hope of finding a cure and I want to live long enough to see it," she said.

Volunteers donned pink fluoro vests as they exchanged breakfast bags filled with a bacon and egg roll, muffin, juice, and coffee, for donations.

Flight Sergeant Blizzard said the event could not happen without the support of our Defence partners.

About 140 bags were handed out raising \$1640 including funds raised from the RAAF Base Williamtown online fundraising page. The total so far is about \$3500.

"It is very sobering to be told that if I had waited until I turned 50 – 14 months after my diagnosis – to have a mammogram, I may not have been here to run the breakfast this year," Flight Sergeant Blizzard said.

"Please book your appointments ladies, and men, be aware of symptoms.

"I want to be here to watch my son grow up and have his own children, which will hopefully be in a breast cancer-free world."

Breast cancer affects one in seven Australian women and one in 600 men, with nine dying from the disease every day.

**To donate, go to:** <https://fundraise.nbcf.org.au/fundraisers/RAAFBaseWilliamtown/pink-ribbon-breakfast>







## Air Show Disaster

*From Pieter La'Brooy*

**A**ir show disaster at West Zwick's Island Park, Belleville, Ontario, Canada. Aircraft hits four buildings.

This is tough to see.

It just shows the dangers of attending these events.

Amazing photo shows great detail.

The pilot at low level had no control over his aircraft.

It narrowly misses a crowd gathered for the air show and slams into four buildings. One can only imagine the horror of the occupants inside those buildings.

No one was killed, but it probably scared the crap out of them.



## The Role of the Flight Engineer

*From Tony Ryan, RAAF Warrant Officer (Ret'd)*

**I** have been asked to explain, for those who have not shared an aircraft cockpit with a Flight Engineer, what functions the F/E performs. Firstly, I must explain that this is based entirely on my personal experience operating as an RAAF Flight Engineer on three models of the venerable Lockheed C-130 Hercules (A, E and H models), the RAAF B707, the civil Lockheed L1011 Tristar, and the Boeing B747-200, 300 and 200F.

After about 12 years as a RAAF Engine Mechanic/Engine Fitter, I began training as a C-130A Flight Engineer. By far the majority of RAAF Flight Engineers in those years were drawn from the ranks of the technical trades, predominately Engine, Airframe or Electrical tradesmen. The course took more than six months to complete and involved many weeks of theory training covering all aspects of the aircraft systems and their operation. This was followed by numerous simulator sessions covering normal, abnormal and emergency procedures as they applied to the aircraft and crew. Next came in-flight training, under the supervision of a training F/E, with the objective of the student F/E graduating with a thorough knowledge of the aircraft systems, how they worked and how to operate them. Upon graduation, the new F/E would be rostered to be the third of the minimum crew of three required to operate the C-130. In practice, the crew was almost always five, being the pilot in command, co-pilot, flight engineer, navigator and the loadmaster. We each had our role individually and, as a team, collectively.

The F/E's duties began with ensuring the appropriate one of three optional, 'Fly Away Spares Kit' was loaded. This depended on the nature and duration of the trip. Before flying, the F/E would conduct an independent pre-flight check of the aircraft, both externally and internally, as well as conduct required systems checks. When advised by the pilots/navigator of the fuel required, the F/E would ensure the correct quantity of fuel, and its distribution, was loaded.



Once ready for engine start, after all the appropriate checks had been conducted, the loadmaster would observe the engine starts from outside the aircraft. Engine starting was a team effort in the cockpit with the pilot occupying the left seat operating controls, as well as the F/E, who would monitor and call the various stages of the start sequence. When all engines were operating and stabilized, the F/E would ensure all generators were 'online', all fuel pumps were operating as required, hydraulic systems operating and the air conditioning and pressurisation system set correctly.

Taxi and take-off saw all crew complete the pre-take-off checks as applicable and, when ready and cleared for take-off, the F/E's role was to monitor that the engine parameters were all within limits and power was set as required. In flight, the F/E managed the aircraft systems constantly, ensuring that fuel was being supplied from the appropriate tanks to ensure no engine suffered fuel starvation, both wings were equally balanced as far as fuel load was concerned, monitored the pressurisation system and the air conditioning, hydraulic and electrical systems and maintained a log of all system readings on a regular basis, usually at least once per hour. The F/E was also an extra set of eyes in the cockpit, especially helpful in congested airspace. In addition to our flying duties, we had the responsibility of maintaining the aircraft when away from base. This sometimes involved having to remove and repair or replace components within the scope of available spares in our Fly Away Kit. In the C-130 world in the years up until the late 1970s, all F/Es were still held on strength as their original mustering. The Airman Aircrew category was established around 1977, I recall. Prior to that, we were all able to be removed from flying duties and returned to our basic mustering if required.

When the B707 was introduced into RAAF service in January 1979, I was trained by QANTAS, along with two other F/Es and six pilots. Our roles were pretty much identical to that in the C-130, just things happened much more quickly. One big difference was that we no longer had to conduct our own maintenance and instead of flying in regular flying suits, we wore our normal uniform; really gentlemanly flying! Another change for RAAF F/Es in the B707 was that we now had our cockpit station located on the starboard side of the cockpit, we had no navigator and, compared to the C-130, it was much more cramped.

My experience of civil flying as a F/E on the Lockheed L1011 and the B747 "Classic" was very much like it had been when operating the RAAF B707; our duties were the same. In the company I was employed by, the F/E kept the aircraft on schedule by adjusting engine power settings to maintain "most economical speed".



**'My office' - B747-200 Cockpit**

Essentially, the F/E was the 'nuts and bolts' bloke in the cockpit; often the eldest of the three occupants, and just as it was in the RAAF, we were an integral part of the crew. Today we have





become as rare as hens teeth; no aircraft of which I am aware, being built requiring a F/E. The computer age has caught up with us just as it did for navigators, and better communications systems leading to the demise of the signaller/radio operators of years past. I consider myself very privileged to have had the opportunity to be a Flight Engineer, a role which I enjoyed immensely.



## Bali Bombings 20th Anniversary: Resilience Meets Tragedy

*Reprinted with permission from CONTACT Magazine*

On October 13, 2002, a small team of Air Force personnel thought they were embarking on a standard aeromedical evacuation mission on a C-130 Hercules to collect five injured patients from Bali. That mission was to become part of the largest Australian aeromedical evacuations since the Vietnam War.

Operation Bali Assist was the ADF's contribution to the Australian Government's response to the Bali bombings on October 12, 2002. The terrorist attacks killed 202 people, including 88 Australians and 38 Indonesians, and injured many others. To mark the 20th anniversary of the Bali bombings, a memorial service was held in Canberra and Denpasar on October 12 to honour the memory of those killed and pay tribute to the strength and resilience shown by many directly affected by the attacks, including ADF personnel involved in Operation Bali Assist. Two of those members were Air Force medical officers Squadron Leader Steve Cook and Wing Commander Michelle Maundrell, who still clearly recall their experience 20 years on.



**Squadron Leader Steve Cook, back left, a paramedic, Leading Aircraftwoman Hayley Edwards, front left, and Flying Officer (now Wing Commander) Kim Davey carry a Bali bombing victim from a C-130 Hercules.**  
Story by Flight Lieutenant Suellen Heath and Corporal Jacob Joseph. Photo by Sergeant Troy Rodgers.

Squadron Leader Cook, an Air Force Reserve doctor, was on the first C-130 aeromedical evacuation flight into Bali. He is proud of how his team, and the Air Force as a whole, handled the confronting situation. "I vividly remember being called at 0700 and being told I was off to Denpasar Airport for a very standard mission, due to a gas cylinder explosion," Squadron Leader Cook said.



"It was the best information we had at the time, but by the time we went from RAAF Base Richmond to RAAF Base Darwin, the situation had evolved to 30 injured people, so we collected additional medical equipment and personnel. "Arriving at Denpasar Airport, I saw absolute chaos. It feels like just yesterday – the sight, the smell, the feeling. You don't forget a day like that."

The Aeromedical Evacuation Team swiftly established an Aeromedical Staging Facility in the fire hangar and started to organise and triage the patients over the next 48 hours. Squadron Leader Cook recalled seeing a stream of injured people arriving at the airport, most with untreated burns and shrapnel wounds, and realising the need to conduct combat surgery on the fire station floor, which is usually only done in war zones. "To ensure the badly wounded people could fly, my team and I performed combat surgery using ketamine sedation for life and limb saving surgery, which I learnt in East Timor," he said. "That opportunity in an exercise environment in East Timor ensured I felt confident I had the proper training to mentally and physically handle such a disaster."

Wing Commander Maundrell deployed on the third C-130 flight into Denpasar Airport on October 14, 2002, and was able to call on her experience as an emergency-room nurse to assist victims of the bombings. She was with the victims as they were repatriated to Australia on the C-130s, which allowed doctors and nurses to offer intensive care in the sky. "While we were on the flight, it was all about managing burns," Wing Commander Maundrell said. "Our military training does cover off on that, but in that situation my previous hospital experience helped a lot." She said it was the victims' selflessness, not their injuries, that made the greatest impression over those hours. "While there were a lot of patients with significant injuries, they were always pointing for me to help other people first, who they thought were worse off," she said. "That sort of attitude really stood out and it was consistent across the board with the patients."

Under Operation Bali Assist, five C-130 Hercules aircraft and associated aeromedical evacuation teams deployed to Bali from October 13 to 17, 2002, to treat and repatriate injured Australians, and also transport urgently needed medical stores and support equipment to Darwin and Denpasar Airport. Additional Defence support provided in Bali included pastoral care, disaster victim identification, and liaison, interpreter and consular support to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police and local authorities.

As the largest Australian aeromedical evacuation since the Vietnam War, there were many lessons drawn from the experience. Additionally, in the past 20 years, capabilities have been improved to better prepare for similar situations. In 2002, the C-130 Hercules was Air Force's only airframe able to be an intensive care unit in the sky. 20 years later, the C-17A Globemaster III and C-27J Spartan airframes are also used to conduct aeromedical evacuations. Since the Bali bombings, Air Force has improved its capability by implementing Military Critical Care Teams, which are trained internally and have dedicated critical care equipment. This improved capability was used extensively evacuating critically injured ADF personnel from Iraq and Afghanistan and, in 2019, burn victims from the White Island volcano disaster in New Zealand. It is now a world-class capability.

The 20th anniversary of the Bali bombings will be difficult for many people in the serving and ex-service community. Help is always available through the below specialised counselling services and resources:

Defence All Hours Support Line (1800 628 036)

Defence Family Helpline (1800 624 608)

Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling (1800 011 046)







## Survival Exercise: Darwin, Late 60s

*From Doug Riding ('peer reviewed' by Pete Scully, mission lead and Det Cdr)*

The 76 Squadron detachment commander (Pete Scully) was insistent that pilots should undertake tropical/NT survival training, given the relative softness of the aircrew he was leading. He directed that a 'pilot' event should be undertaken over a weekend, with him leading and Errol Walter and me as wingmen.

In those days RAAF Darwin had a hangar full of war stocks, so we drew the following:

Jeep - 1  
Trailer - 1  
Hot Boxes - 2  
SLRs - 1 each  
7.62 ammo - 50 each  
Jerry cans - 2

We also drew from RAAF Welfare:  
sleeping bags - 3  
stretchers - 3  
picnic table and chairs - 1 set  
cooking utensils and cutlery - enough  
gas bottle and camp stove - 1  
torches - 3

We drew from the Airmen's kitchen:  
breakfast supplies  
lunch supplies  
dinner supplies (steak, sausages)

From the Officers Mess bar:  
scotch whisky - 2 bottles  
red wine - 2 bottles  
beer - 2 cases VB  
ice



**SURVEX Adventurers**

With Pete at the helm, we departed RAAF Base Darwin about 1500 Friday and headed down 'The Track' towards Humpty Doo. The pilot found the trailer affected handling; this became most apparent when, passing Batchelor on our right, the trailer started a 'JC' (*see endnote*) that almost caused the jeep/trailer configuration to swap ends. The driver, well experienced in recovering from a Sabre JC, let the wheel go. That didn't help, so he backed off on the throttle. In retrospect we thought speed must have had something to do with it as the rig then realigned itself, with a bit of vocal help from the wingmen.

We left The Track just past Humpty Doo and headed east. After about half an hour we came to a creek and promptly got badly bogged. After about ten minutes of futile extraction activity, we decided to set up camp by the creek as it was late afternoon and time for a beer or two. The camp stove produced a good dinner, the red hit the mark and, with a fire blazing, we turned our minds to the question of survival in the NT and the wild animals that could be targeted for food. At this point Errol brewed a billy of tea that we shared, topped up with a shot or two of whisky. The 'Tea Royal' was thus created.

About 2300, Errol decided we had talked enough, grabbed his torch and his SLR and announced he was going to find a buffalo. He disappeared into the bush, Pete and I had another Tea Royal and chatted till about midnight when we started to wonder how Errol's hunting was going. We



had not heard any shots so figured the buffs were safe, but Errol's welfare was starting to concern us. We fired a couple of three shot volleys and on the second, a distant shot rang out. About 15 minutes later Errol wandered into camp, complaining about the lack of game in the area. Another round of Tea Royal and into the sack.

Next morning, we cast lots for who would walk out to the Manton Dam to find the manager who could pull our jeep and trailer out of its bog. I can't remember his name but he was a good friend to the Air Force who allowed us to undertake helicopter water winch training from the pristine waters of the dam, Darwin's drinking water source. He arrived with truck, winch and Errol, and had the jeep and trailer out of the creek in a flash. Wisely, we had him pull the rig out of the creek east then turned it and pulled it out west so the RTB would be unhindered next day. We decided to leave the camp in its strategically selected location and spent Saturday night reflecting on the survival skills we had learned over the previous 24 hours.

The return to RAAF Darwin on Sunday was sedate with no drama except for the encounter with the OC RAAF Darwin. He was not impressed with what he claimed was the misuse of his war stocks, which did look a bit worse for wear, being covered in mud and a bit bent.

**End Note:** *A JC was a flight condition in a Sabre at high speed typically above 500 knots at low level. At that speed or above, if you encountered turbulence causing a vertical divergence from level flight, the worst thing you could do was to try to counter the effect with the elevators. If you did, the powerful elevator control became asynchronous with the uncommanded divergence. If the pilot chased the divergence the amplitude got worse. The only cure was to 'hands off' the pitch control and the aircraft would sort the problem almost instantaneously. If the pilot persisted in chasing the divergence the consequences were fatal.*

From ADF Serials (<http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a94.htm>): Barry Wilson comments: *"The Sabre was a great aircraft but ... its really bad vice - the PIO (Pilot Induced Oscillation). This resulted from a lack of airspeed compensation in its power controls and a mismatch in its dynamic stability and control input phasing, that caused the pilot to aggravate rather than smooth out divergences. This PIO was also known as the JC manoeuvre, as reportedly the first pilot to encounter it could say nothing but "Jesus Christ!" for several hours after..."*



### **Veterans Bronze Medallion Course at North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club**

*From Scott Warr, Member of NASLSC Veterans Program Committee, Member of Terrigal Wamberal RSL sub-Branch*

I am writing to you as you have all expressed to me your willingness to help promote the Veterans' Bronze Medallion Course that is being run in partnership with the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club (NASLSC) and the Terrigal Wamberal RSL sub-Branch in January 2023.

The Course is scheduled to commence on Monday 16 January 2023. The NASLSC is putting on a 'Club Open Day' for veterans' and their families to meet and greet and be taken on a tour of the club and have questions answered about the course, the community and other initiatives and parts of the Club that they and their families could become involved with.

The aim of the course is to connect veterans and their families with the local community through our local NASLSC and become active members of the Club. It will also encourage veterans to join RSL NSW (Free membership) and engage with other veteran initiatives through the sub-Branch.





The attached flyer gives some details, but most importantly it has a QR code for Expressions of Interest in the course. This QR code takes them to a simple google docs form that registers their interest. The contact mobile for myself and the NASLSC Director of Education Chris (also a veteran) are also provided if interested veterans have any questions before the 11 December Open Day.

It would be greatly appreciated if all of you through your networks and through your social media channels, could actively promote this great veteran initiative, which is being conducted for only the second time in Australia and the first time outside of a capital city (only other course conducted by North Bondi Surf Club before COVID).

We hope to generate local support through the media, local politicians, Surf Life Saving Central Coast & NSW, RSL Central Coast District Council and through Social media.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

## NASLSC VETERANS BRONZE MEDALLION COURSE

Join the NASLSC intensive shortened Veterans Bronze Medallion Course commencing the 16th of January 2023. Come and meet our team and get more information at our Veteran's Family Open day North Avoca Surf life Saving Club 11th December 2022, 4pm Contact Chris 0419987157 or Scott 0428020446

**Scan the QR Code & Register your interest today**



## Australia's first MQ-4C Triton unveiled

*Reprinted with permission from CONTACT Magazine*



**Australia's first MQ-4C Triton.**  
Photo supplied by Northrop Grumman.

Northrop Grumman today unveiled Australia's first MQ-4C Triton autonomous aircraft with a ceremony at its high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) aircraft production site in California. Attended by Australian and US government and defence officials, the event highlighted the continued progress of the MQ-4C Triton program for both the Royal Australian Air Force and US Navy.

President of Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems Tom Jones said the event marked a significant milestone for Australia and the MQ-4C Triton program. "As we get ready for final system integration and flight test, we are one step closer to delivering this extraordinary maritime awareness capability to Australia," Mr Jones said. "Australia is a cooperative program partner in the Triton program and was critical in helping shape the requirements for the system. "As partners, US and Australian defence forces will be able to share data collected by their respective Tritons, a critical ability in one of the world's most strategically important regions."

Chief of the Royal Australian Air Force Air Marshal Robert Chipman said Triton would provide the RAAF with an unprecedented capability to monitor and protect Australian maritime approaches. "Triton will work alongside the P-8A Poseidon and this unmanned aircraft system will allow us to cover significant areas, at longer ranges and has the ability to stay airborne longer than a traditional aircraft," Air Force Air Marshal Chipman said.

Northrop Grumman initiated the build of the first Australian Triton in October 2020 at its production facility in Moss Point, Mississippi, and met another major production milestone in December 2021 when the fuselage and one-piece wing were mated in Palmdale, California. The aircraft is scheduled for production completion in 2023 and delivery to Australia in 2024.





## Defence and Veteran Family Support Strategy - survey open

*From Victoria Benz, Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT, Department of Veterans' Affairs*

The Australian Government, through the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence, is developing a *Defence and Veteran Family Support Strategy* to guide how the Government provides support to families of current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members.

We want to ensure families have a voice in the strategy's development, and we will be consulting widely. A key method of engagement is a survey open to all families. We want to hear from family members, aged 18 years or older, of current or former serving ADF members including those who have passed away. We also want to hear from current or former serving ADF members themselves, including those who are single parents or part of a dual serving couple.

A short survey asking questions about families' areas of importance to them and how they like to engage with DVA and Defence is now open. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete: [https://dva.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6SfSmyzNMWE5guq](https://dva.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6SfSmyzNMWE5guq). The survey is now open and **closes on Friday 6 January 2023**.

All responses are anonymous and data collected will be kept confidential and secure, and will be used in the development of the strategy which is planned for release in 2023.

There will be further opportunities to provide your feedback as the strategy is developed, including through engagements led by the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner. Keep your eye out for updates in the new year on our consultation process.

**Please provide this information and a link to the survey to your networks and encourage all current and former serving families to have their say through this survey and other consultation activities that will be available in the new year as we develop the strategy.**

Tel (02) 9213 7878 Ext 417878 Mobile 0417 654 347  
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[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)



## The Major Who Was A Flight Sergeant

*From John Campbell, the Shire Military History Club*

Major James 'Jim' Peryman was not an officer in the army – in fact he served in WW2 in the RAAF. His first name was Major but he was always called James or Jim. He was a member of the North Cronulla Surf Club before the war and, like many of his clubmates, at almost 18, he enlisted. Major Peryman served from December 1943 to October 1945 but little is known of his actual service. At discharge he was with 3 Air Observer School at Port Pirie with the rank of flight-sergeant.

After the war James worked in the Commonwealth Bank at Hurstville. He was single and lived with his parents in a flat above the Cronulla Commonwealth Bank. His weekends were spent back at North Cronulla Surf Club where, by 1950, he was the Captain. James was a strong swimmer and placed well in surf competitions especially the belt races.

On Sunday 19 January 1950 James was on patrol at the beach when 16-year old Daphne Knowles of Bexley got into trouble in heavy seas, about 400 yards from shore. Peryman took an old-style rescue belt, leaving a new Ross safety belt for less experienced lifesavers who might need to assist him.



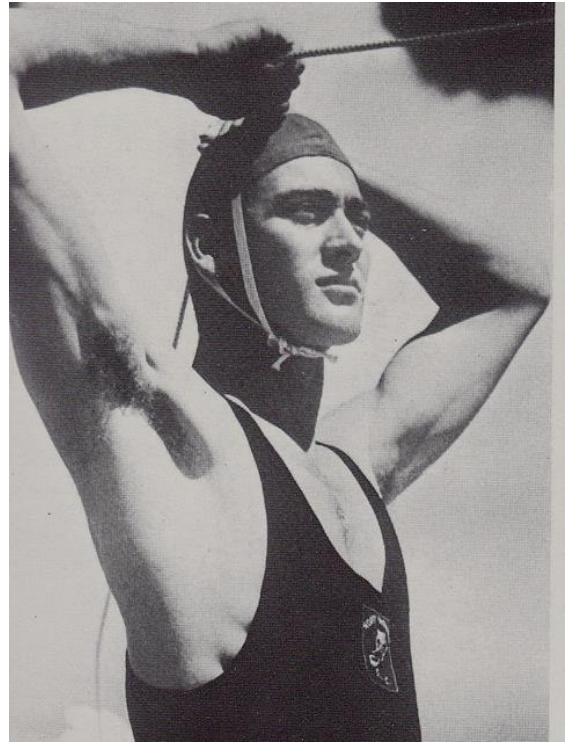


The girl was reached, but as the reelman tried to reel them back in, the rescue line became trapped in seaweed. Club Boat Captain, 'Ike' Smith, grabbed a surf ski and paddled out to the pair who were then in trouble. Rescuer and victim both went under but Ike grabbed Daphne by the hair and dragged her onto the ski. Seeing James in trouble, the reelman was signalled to pull James back to shore. Daphne later recalled hearing a lifesaver yell, "get out of the belt, Jim" but the old-style belt was hard to release. The new Ross style had a pin you could easily pull out.

When James was dragged to the beach he was unconscious. Attempts were made to resuscitate him until an ambulance arrived to convey him to St George Hospital, Kogarah. They had the nearest iron lung but Jim failed to respond and passed away.

Between 4,000 and 10,000 people attended his funeral depending on which newspaper you read.

The service was at St Andrews (Elephant House) Church at Cronulla and at the Woronora cemetery crematorium. Daphne Knowles was among the mourners. The four-mile-long funeral procession was led by a truck towing a surf boat containing the coffin. Lifesavers escorted the boat and some 1,000 vehicles were in the procession.



At North Cronulla the James Peryman Memorial Fund was started to build a new clubhouse with modern life saving equipment. It was felt that if the latest iron lung style equipment had been on hand James may have lived. Cronulla RSL gave £122 as well other donations from Shire businessmen and individuals from all over NSW. By June 1950, over £2,200 had been raised. On 18 November 1950 the new £18,000 "Most Modern Surf Club in Australia" was

opened by the Governor. It is unclear if any of the donations were used for the building.

The casualty room had an American resuscitation machine similar to an iron lung and was described as capable as an operating theatre. A new surfboat, purchased from the fund, was named James Peryman and launched the same day.

On 21 August 1950 the Surf Lifesaving Association (SLA) refused to award their highest honour to James – the Meritorious Award – saying he was only doing his duty. In 1951 the Royal Shipwreck and Humane Society awarded him a posthumous silver medal and merit certificate. It should be noted, the SLA had previously awarded him a Meritorious Medal in 1948 when he dived into the ocean fully clothed to rescue a girl swept off The Esplanade. The Club's pool was named the James Peryman Memorial Swimming Pool and the local community named the first Australian Surf Reserve along Bate Bay after James.

In 1999 the Shire Council redeveloped the end of the Kingsway to stop vehicle access and named it James Peryman Place. Belatedly, in 2009 the SLA awarded James a posthumous Meritorious Award.



## Black Hawk flies without pilots

*Reprinted with permission from CONTACT Magazine*



**A Sikorsky S-70 Black Hawk flies without pilots at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.**

*Sikorsky photo*

Sitting on the runway in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, one of Sikorsky's pilots in an S-70 Black Hawk helicopter flips the optionally piloted cockpit switch from two to zero, exits the aircraft and walks across the runway. Moments later, the Model A Black Hawk, identifiable by DARPA's logo and tail number N60-OPV, completes a pre-flight check list, starts its engines, spins up its rotors and takes off with no crew onboard. All of this happens fully autonomously.

On a clear and cold morning, the autonomous Black Hawk, equipped with ALIAS (Aircrew Labor In-Cockpit Automation System) begins executing a 30-minute mission. To demonstrate its ability to adapt to a variety of mission environments, the uninhabited Black Hawk navigates at typical speed and altitude through a simulated cityscape, avoiding imagined buildings while route re-planning in real time. All the while, on-board sensor simulation provides real-time obstacle data. The Black Hawk helicopter then autonomously executes a series of pedal turns, manoeuvres and straightaways before completing a perfect landing. Once it shuts itself down, the two pilots approach and re-enter the aircraft. The OPV (optionally piloted vehicle) switch is reversed from zero to two, and the pilots taxi back down the runway.

This historic Black Hawk flight marks the first time that a UH-60 has flown autonomously and builds on recent demonstrations at the US Army's Project Convergence 2021. It illustrates how ALIAS-enabled aircraft can help soldiers successfully execute complex missions with selectable levels of autonomy – and with increased safety and reliability.

Benjamin Williamson, lead test pilot for the Fort Campbell event, said, "This capability will allow pilots to confidently switch back and forth between autonomy and piloted modes at any point of their mission with the literal flip of a switch". "This will support autonomous flight during a wide range of missions such as flight in degraded visual environments and confined areas," Mr Williamson said. "Most critically, ALIAS will be capable of automatically detecting and preventing dangerous situations that lead to accidents, thereby saving lives."





Igor Cherepinsky, Director of Sikorsky Innovations at Lockheed Martin said, “ALIAS represents a leap ahead in autonomy for a range of systems”. “We began with the core architecture and software of Sikorsky’s MATRIX™ Technology to design extensible and flexible systems for ALIAS that have now flown on nine different military and commercial aircraft,” Mr Cherepinsky said. “We are confident that this next generation of enhanced flight controls will create new approaches for the battlefield of the future and enable reliable commercial scenarios such as urban air mobility”.

Jay Macklin, a retired US Army Black Hawk pilot who now leads business development for Sikorsky’s Army, Future Vertical Lift, and Innovations programs said, “This transformational technology equips crews to excel in difficult situations – or avoid them altogether”. “Sikorsky’s advancements in flight automation and autonomy will be game-changers for Army aviators and ground commanders, particularly as the Army looks to modernise its enduring helicopter fleet with Future Vertical Lift,” he said. “This transformational technology will provide commanders and aircrews with a strategic advantage in countering complex new threat environments.”

ALIAS technology and autonomy enable greater mission flexibility, increase safety and allow end users to reimagine how they can use air vehicles on current and future battlefields. The technology is not limited to Black Hawk and is currently being incorporated into commercial and military fixed-wing aircraft. ALIAS will continue to advance optionally piloted technology with two additional aircraft demonstrations in the coming months.

Stuart Young, DARPA’s ALIAS Program Manager, said, “The potential for ALIAS to transform warfare is unlimited, whether we are talking about unmanned or manned platforms”. “By reducing workload, increasing safety or enabling new missions, these demonstrations show what ALIAS has to offer for transition to our services,” Doctor Young said.



God does not subtract from man’s allotted time the hours spent while flying, but He exacts harsh penalties for those who do not learn to land properly.





## Team Effort for Remembrance Day Commemoration

*From Ian Gibson, RADAR Branch Secretary...although others did all the work!*

When GPCAPT Brett Risstrom, Officer Commanding 41WG, received a request from SQNLDR Richard Brougham, he was quick to respond. The request originated from Richard's parents who are part of The Schoolmasters House Inc Landcare group in Newcastle. One of the groups recent projects is the preservation of the remains of No 131 Radar Station from WWII on Ash Island at Hexham, near Newcastle. The group had planned to hold a Remembrance Day commemoration at the site and was seeking RAAF support for the service.

131RS had been a centre for training radar operators during the war, and as the Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU) is the contemporary training unit for radar operators, and part of 41WG, SACTU was the appropriate unit to be involved. Although his unit was heavily tasked, including with personnel assisting with flood relief operations, CO SACTU, WGCDR Steve Henry, offered his support and time to act as a guest speaker at the Remembrance Day service. GPCAPT Risstrom is also the senior serving member of the RADAR Branch and quickly involved the Branch in assisting with planning for the event. John King (VP RADAR Branch) took the lead and sourced information from the ANZAC Portal, including a new kitbag of resources which included a suggested order of service with flag protocols, music, sample speeches, the Ode of Remembrance, social media graphics and activities for groups and children.



**GPCAPT Risstrom chats with an organiser**

As well as the Remembrance Day activity, the event was the culmination of a project which focussed on the human history of the place - its social AND built environment. The Radar buildings on Ash Island are a big feature of that, as is The Schoolmasters House that the Landcare group occupies. The Friends of The Schoolmasters House won a grant from DVA to fund commemoration of the service given by volunteers who were born and worked on Ash Island and served in WWI and WWII. This year, the 131RS buildings formed part of that project. The grant submission read, in part:



**One of two 131RS 'Igloos' on Ash Island**

*"The Project is to conserve and preserve concrete igloo structures, part of what was No.131 Mobile Radar Station, Ash Island, during WWII, which had the important role in the coastal defence of Australia. Today, still relevant, the structures form a significant, tangible, accessible reminder of one of Fortress Newcastle's significant installations. The igloos are a major link in the circle of installations around the Hunter Region which are accessible by visitors on a self-guided walking trail which promotes understanding, knowledge & appreciation of Fortress Newcastle & the experience of Australians service in shaping our nation."*



*Delivery will ensure the structures remain celebrated and relevant for future generations who come to learn more about their RAAF and WAAAF family assistance to the war effort & the clandestine efforts which took place on the Island.*

*History having recorded that No. 131 Station is considered a place of pioneering & advanced radar technological research and implementation, they will remain a point of interest for generations to come."*

In the lead up to Remembrance Day, approval was sought and gained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, State and Federal MPs supplied standard size National, Torres Straight Islands, Indigenous and State flags and a booklet on flag protocol, a flag collector provided temporary flagpoles which slip over a star picket, and records of Ash Island residents who volunteered and the stories from the Ash Island school and the children who collected rubber (old tyres) and other materials for the war effort were gathered. In addition, the services of Dr Peter Hobbins (Head of Knowledge at Australian National Maritime Museum and an Honorary Affiliate in the Department of History at the University of Sydney) were gained as the MC for the ceremony.

Thankfully, la ninja retired for the day and the event was well attended with representation from 41WG, SACTU, and RADAR Branch members John King and Jim Stewart. WGCDR Henry gave an address which focussed on the link between 41WG/SACTU and the history of radar activities at Ash Island.



**CO SACTU, WGCDR Steve Henry, addresses the gathering**

This link has some of the history of the station on our website  
[www.ashisland.org.au](http://www.ashisland.org.au). <http://www.ashisland.org.au/radarashisland.html>



## 37SQN Anecdotes

*From Hugh Holt, former C-130E pilot*

Sometime after April 1977, I completed the Captain checkout for young, up and coming Mike Brophy. As a Category D Captain he was only cleared to carry out flights within Australian as approved by the "A" or "B" Flight Commanders. As the "B" Flt Commander, I arranged a training flight to Pearce WA (Perth) to consolidate his completion of training, and offered the flight to MOVCORDC (Air Movements) to move freight and passengers if required. I also booked myself and family on the flight to visit my sister Christine in Perth.

Between arranging the flight and the day prior to departure, MOVCORDC decided to load dangerous cargo, which precluded the carriage of passengers. A further change saw a compassionate case booked to fly, Dr. Nelson's wife, and approval was granted to carry passengers. A check the day before noted there were insufficient seats and as indulgence travel, I was the lowest priority and hence due to be off-loaded. Some fast talking saw seats available for my wife Bev and the two children in the cargo compartment and a seat for me on the flight deck. We duly departed on time with seats for all.

Enroute crossing the Great Australian Bight, Mike called me up to listen to a "phone patch" (telephone link) from HQOC (Operational Command). It appeared that the Chief of Defence



Force, General Arthur MacDonald's VIP aircraft had gone unserviceable in Forest, in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain, and a rescue aircraft was four plus hours away. It was requested Mike divert to Forest and collect the General and his party of five, and continue with them to Pearce. Problem, Mike was a brand new Cat D Captain, first command flight, and to carry the Chief of the Defence Force required a minimum Cat B Captain. No problem head of Transport Ops, WGCDR "Robbie" Robson, gave him approval on the phone and we diverted to Forest.

Doing an engine running offload/onload, five of us get off to make way for the General and his party. The General was shocked to see women and babies offloaded to make room for his group, and expressed this to me. So, there we are in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain with a broken down VIP jet and a replacement due in three to four hours. The VIP steward, Tony Carville, came to the fore, opening the bar on the VIP jet with gins and tonic and cold beer for the group. Not long after, a local vehicle arrived with an esky full of soft drinks and beer from the general store; friendly natives. Some three hours later the rescue aircraft arrived and the group, plus all the food and drinks, were transferred to the new Mystere jet and we took off for Pearce. Once airborne, Tony Carville warmed up the General's hors d'oeuvres, which we all enjoyed, together with several bottles of the General's Grange Hermitage.

The sequel to this story was 12 months later I was in Singapore on loan to the Singapore Air Force C-130B Squadron. At a cocktail party at the Australian Defence Attaché's house, General MacDonald was the guest of honour. When Bev and I were introduced to him, he remarked "I am sure I have met you both before haven't I, somewhere unusual?" I reminded him it was Forest, which he recalled and again expressed his concern on leaving women and children there. He was glad to hear we all got to Perth ok and were looked after by the crew, not concerned that I enjoyed his Grange Hermitage at taxpayer's expense.



Merry Christmas to all SITREP readers!

Keep the stories, articles and funnies coming in  
2023!

