

Media Release

June 2021

Sculpture commemorating RAAF Founding Father Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams nears completion.

The Air Force Association is proud to be supporting the establishment of a life size sculpture of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, the founding father of the RAAF and its most significant figure in its history, at Moonta, South Australia.

The initiative is a collaboration between like-minded organisations to recognise the remarkable achievements of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams who was born and raised in Moonta.

As the first ever Australian trained military pilot, Sir Richard Williams saw distinguished service in the Middle East with No 1 Squadron (AFC), serving as its Flight Commander and Commanding Officer and then as the Officer Commanding, No 40 Wing (RAF) before completing the war as the AFC's foremost operational commander.

Returning to Australia, Sir Richard was instrumental in the establishment and development of the RAAF between the wars showing immense political acumen fighting to not only preserve but actually expand the fledgling air force. As an aviation pioneer, he completed an endurance flight, the first international flight from Australia, when he flew to and back from the Solomon Islands in 1926 with another pilot and a mechanic.

The life size sculpture will be unveiled and positioned on a park bench in Queen Square, Moonta. The sculpture will be positioned on one side of the granite park bench allowing people to sit beside the founding father of the RAAF and draw inspiration from one of Moonta's greatest achievers. The sculpture is designed as if Sir Richard is in conversation with people recalling a story from his days serving with the Australian Flying Corps pointing to the sky over the Moonta township. Alongside the sculpture will be a large granite rock with a plaque detailing his impressive biography.

The sculpture has been largely funded through very successful fund-raising by the Moonta community, supported by the South Australian Government and Air Force Association. Through the direct support of the Air Force Association (South Australia) in the planning and the financial support of our State Divisions, the Air Force Association has been instrumental in working with the Moonta community in ensuring the great heritage importance of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams is appropriately captured in an enduring sculpture such as this.

Created by noted South Australian sculptor Tim Thomson, the sculpture is near completion as a clay sculpture which will then be used to produce a series of molds for the final bronze cast sculpture. The clay rendition shows incredible detail.

The finished sculpture will be unveiled on 29 August 2021 at a major celebration in Moonta as a keynote event of the Air Force Centenary year in South Australia.

Further information:

Robyn Knight - Chair, Sir Richard Williams RAAF Centenary Celebrations Committee: srwraafcc@adam.com.au
Greg Weller - Vice President Air Force Association (South Australia): raafaad@internode.on.net

Air Force Association



Above: Robert Black (President, Air Force Association - SA), Tim Thomson (Sculptor), Robyn Knight (Deputy Chair, Sir Richard Williams RAAF Centenary Celebrations Committee)



Above: The detailed clay sculpture (above) will be used to produce a series of molds for the final bronze cast sculpture.



Above: The sculpture is designed as if Sir Richard Williams is in conversation with people.