



# SITREP

Air Force Association NSW News and Views

---

## Message from the National President

*Carl Schiller, OAM CSM*

*National President, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

The Air Force Association's National Board recently approved the Association's Vision and Strategy for the foreseeable future. There is no change to its core objectives and values.

However, the Board recognises the Association must adapt to meet the needs of veterans of all ages, especially our post-'91 former and serving colleagues and their families. While veterans of all ages face common challenges, each generation has specific needs. The Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) support model for pre-'91 veterans has been reasonably successful. However, it seems we are lacking to meet the needs of younger veterans. This is evident by the growth of ESOs since the Vietnam War, particularly during the early 1990s, and the avoidance of traditional ESOs by young veterans.

We have been very successful with fellowship, advocacy and commemorations, and have acquired a reputation of being a strong voice within the Defence community and at government level arguing for veterans' benefits. But, we need to adopt a more 'hands-on' approach in providing welfare support and services.

About 5,200 ADF personnel move into civilian life each year. The average Service career is 7.5 years. This is a very different approach to a Service career to what most of us have experienced. The post-'91 veteran's focus is on civilian employment, settling the family, and mental health support. There is a lack of understanding among younger veterans of the available support services and service providers. The Association has been silent about its activities. It needs to have better communications, internally and externally. The Air Force Association, for example, is relatively unknown despite its existing longer than Air

Force itself. It can become an ESO of first-choice among Air Force veterans and their families for providing needs-based, veteran centric and meaningful services.

The Association needs to act now. An ageing and declining membership that impacts our funding and volunteer base will exacerbate our ability to make the changes to meet the needs of current and future veterans. To do nothing is not an option. I am pleased to say the National Board's Vision and Strategy Implementation Plan is being developed. It reflects the initiatives needed to enable the Association to meet many of our veterans' needs, which were recently identified in recent independent studies into ESO operations. The Association is about 'mates helping mates' regardless of their generation.

I expect the Plan to commence at the end of April 2018, and I look forward to all Divisions working collaboratively to achieve the objective of making a better place for veterans and their families. I am grateful for the support of Ron Glew and Peter Ring who are members of National's Strategic Direction Project Team.

---

## Remembrance Day - Cairns 2017

*from Slim Maconachie*

A bit hard to take up here in the "Deep North"; I think the girls were holding me up, but I don't remember!



**Slim Maconachie 'on life support'**



## Wing Commander Jack ‘Kongo’ Kinninmont, DSO, DFC and Bar honoured



On the 8th February, 2018 CAF Air Marshal Leo Davies officially opened the Kongo Room in the Australian Embassy, Bangkok Thailand. The room was named in honour of Wing Commander Jack ‘Kongo’ Kinninmont, DSO, DFC and Bar, who was the first Services Attaché to Thailand during the period 1955-1957.



**L-R: Group Captain Angkharn Indra (Defence & Air Attaché, Royal Thai Embassy Canberra), His Excellency Mr Paul Robilliard (Australian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand), Air Marshal Leo Davies, AO, CSC (RAAF Chief of Air Force) and Captain Chris Smith, RAN (25<sup>th</sup> Defence Attaché Bangkok)**

Jack Kinninmont was born on 13 November 1920 in North Sydney, son of Sydney born parents Roy Alex Kinninmont, railway surveyor, and his wife Claire Florence (nee Barnes). Jack was educated at Chatswood Junior High and North Sydney Boys’ High schools. In his last year (1938) he was a prefect; captain of both his school’s and the State combined high schools’ first XV rugby teams; and in swimming, State all schools’ backstroke champion. While not a brilliant student, he

matriculated, and had athletic qualities that would shortly endear him to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), as well as quick reactions that would make him an ideal fighter pilot. Having worked briefly as a bank clerk, he applied for a RAAF aircrew cadetship in February 1939 and began basic training at Point Cook, Victoria, on 4 September, one day after World War II began. Graduating as a pilot with a short service commission, he was posted to No. 21 Squadron at Laverton in July 1940. The unit embarked for Singapore in the following month.

Although life in the unit was relaxed and social, the Australians took every opportunity to fly, even when senior Royal Air Force officers were having their siestas. Nicknamed ‘Congo’ (‘Kongo’) because of his love of jazz harmonica music with an African beat, Kinninmont soon eased into the daily routine. On 8 December 1941 the Japanese invaded Malaya and life changed. Flying the obsolete American Brewster Buffalo, the squadron soon found it was outclassed. Mounting losses forced an amalgamation with No.453 Squadron, and Kinninmont, who had been promoted to Flight Lieutenant on 1 October 1941, immediately became one of the squadron’s flight commanders.

So slow were the Buffaloes that even the Japanese bombers outpaced them and the Australians faced inevitable defeat. Despite the odds, over the next few months, Kinninmont shot down two Japanese aircraft, claimed one probable, and damaged two more. Landing in poor weather at the end of one sortie, he was almost killed when his aircraft ran off the runway, crashed into a swamp, and overturned. Fortunately, he escaped unhurt.

After the fall of Singapore in February, Kinninmont returned to Australia, and then flew Kittyhawk fighters in New Guinea with various Squadrons. As an acting Squadron Leader, he commanded No. 75 Squadron between 1943 and 1944. For his almost continuous operational war service, in which he exhibited ‘leadership, exceptional courage and skill’, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in May 1944. Following further postings to fighter units, he was appointed Commander of No. 78 fighter wing in 1945. A Bar to his DFC soon followed,



for his display of 'outstanding leadership and keenness to destroy the enemy'.

Remaining in uniform after the war, Kinninmont found the peacetime air force overly bureaucratic. From February 1946 he served as an acting Wing Commander with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. While base commander at BOFU he was court-martialled in September on charges of failure to provide his particulars to the provost when requested, and 'improperly and without authority firing a pistol'. Found guilty on both charges, he was given a reprimand. He was repatriated in February 1947. On 13 November, at St John's Church of England, East Malvern, Victoria, he married Joan Mary Gatliff. Despite the BOFU misdemeanour and court-martial, both of which Kinninmont thought ridiculous, the RAAF granted him a permanent commission on 23 September 1948. He commanded No. 77 Squadron in action in Korea between July 1952 and January 1953. Flying the new Meteor jet fighter was much to his liking and the Squadron served with distinction. In 1952 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for 'his shrewd and aggressive leadership'. This was complemented by his award in 1955 of the U.S Air Medal.

Kinninmont returned to Australia and, already a substantive Wing Commander from 1 January 1953 and an acting Group Captain from 1962, he served in command and staff appointments before retiring on 14 November 1970 with the honorary rank of Group Captain. By the end of his RAAF service, he had flown twenty types of aircraft, from biplanes to jet fighters, and amassed nearly two thousand flying hours. Significant postings included honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General in 1948 and armed services attaché at the Australian Embassy in Thailand 1955.

Kinninmont was described by colleagues, friends and family as cheerful and devoted to duty. In retirement he and his wife moved to Maroochydore, Queensland and, although only fifty, he chose not to take up other work. Survived by one of his two sons, he died of a heart attack on 28 May 1992 at Alexandra Headland and was cremated.

Source: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kinninmont-jack-royston-16237>

## Patricia Jackson Awarded Life Membership of 75 SQN Association

*from Dr Daryl Pudney Past President 75 Squadron Association*

Patricia Jackson was awarded with Life Membership of the 75 Squadron Association at an event held at the residence of Dame Quentin and Michael Bryce in Brisbane on 17 January 2018. It was a great day for the gathered 75 Squadron Magpies which included two former COs - now both RAAF Air Vice Marshals - AVM Mel Hupfeld and AVM Steve Roberton; the current CO WGCdr Mick Grant and former patron of 75SQN Association, Michael Bryce.

The award was in appreciation of 'Patricia's dedication and selfless support to 75 Squadron Association members over many years'. Dr Daryl Pudney, (President 75SQN Assoc.) and AVM Steve Roberton (ACAUST) both made speeches explaining her excellent contribution to both the Squadron and the Association. Patricia is the daughter of 75SQNs first wartime CO, SQNLDR John Jackson DFC. Her efforts have been an integral part of maintaining the strong link that exists between the current and original squadron members and their families throughout the squadrons proud 75 year history. *"I am very proud to receive this award and also very humbled. I still can't believe that I deserve it. Everything I have done for the Association has been with great joy and reward. I have made many friends over the years with men who served with my father and others who were in the War, and ex and current men and women of 75 Squadron who are all upholding the tradition. I end with a quote from the last two sentences from "Seek and Strike", a history of 75 Squadron from 1942 to 2002 by David Wilson. It goes like this:*

*"But no matter their aspirations and personal achievements, the men and women who served with 75 Squadron were (and are) lovable reprobates with delightfully human attributes who never lost their sense of humour. This has given the Squadron its unique character and a sense of self-worth that bodes well for the future".*



*Who wouldn't want to be part of that? All I can claim is being an off-shoot of a lovable reprobate! Thank you once again for believing that I am worthy of this Award".*

The CO, Mick Grant brought with him from Tindal a magnificent Top Hat and a Cane (presented to him by the Stetson company). These were the first logo of 75 Squadron, thought to represent the fact that Winston Churchill tipped his hat when hearing of the squadrons brave efforts during the '44 Days' campaign to defend Port Moresby.

The 75 Squadron Association has now joined the RAAF Association as part of the Fighter Squadrons Branch RAAFA, and SQNLDR Mike Lavercombe (ret'd), President FSB, RAAFA presented Patricia with a letter of welcome to FSB on the day of the Life Membership ceremony.

Warmest thanks to Dame Quentin and Michael Bryce for hosting this wonderful event.



**AVM Steve Roberton, AVM Mel Hupfield, Michael Bryce, Patricia Jackson, WGCDR Mick Grant, Dr Daryl Pudney**

## Seeking Airmen's Amazing Survival Stories From WWII

Author and military historian Bryn Evans, is seeking first-hand accounts of airmen's amazing survival stories from the Second World War. The Second World War was the first ever major war, where an air war was fought that had a decisive influence on the battles on land and sea. And it was an air war largely unseen except by individual airmen. Death in the sky or in an aircraft crashing to the ground, came suddenly and in horrendous ways.

RAF Bomber Command alone lost 8,325 aircraft, and 55,573 aircrew died at a rate of over 60%. Over 4,000 RAAF aircrew died while serving with RAF Bomber Command. Allied forces' aircraft and their crews in all theatres were lost in innumerable encounters and circumstances, and in numbers never seen before or since. Miraculous survival from those air battles, often in unbelievable circumstances, was in the main witnessed only by those airmen who experienced it, and lived to tell the stories. Some survived, in countless situations, such as:

- Aircraft destruction through combat in the air
- Aircrew baling out of a crippled or destroyed aircraft
- Shot down by ground anti-aircraft fire – both enemy and 'friendly fire'
- Mid-air collisions with enemy or 'friendly' aircraft
- Aircraft engine or other mechanical failure
- Running out of fuel
- Accidents on take-off and landing
- Training flights, when inexperience could be unforgiving

An air war on the scale of the Second World War, with large numbers of airmen on all sides, is unlikely to be seen again. New technologies seen in UAVs, drones, missiles, stealth techniques etc, make air warfare very different. Surviving veterans are an ever diminishing number, and many first-hand accounts by airmen of WWII remain to be told and recorded. Australian author Bryn Evans, whose most recent books published by Pen & Sword (UK) have been *With the East Surreys in Tunisia, Sicily and Italy 1942-45* (Sept 2012), *The Decisive Campaigns of the Desert Air Force 1942-1945* (April 2014), and *Air Battle for Burma* (Nov 2016), is seeking personal stories of amazing survival by veteran airmen as part of his research for his next book.

Veterans, their families or friends who wish to contribute, should contact Bryn directly at email [bryn.evans@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bryn.evans@ozemail.com.au), postal address 32A Dunns Terrace, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Mobile No 0407 694 968. Also contact Bryn for signed copies of his recent books all in hardback, post free at a discounted price to RAAFA members of \$24.99 each.



## Operation Sabre Ferry Ends 18 Feb 59

On this day, Operation Sabre Ferry ended with the arrival of the last Sabre jets of No 78 Wing at Butterworth Air Base, Malaya. In 1958, Australia had pledged to send the two units of No 78 (Fighter) Wing, Nos 3 and 77 Squadrons, to join a new British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in the region. Getting the relatively short-ranged Sabres to their new base was a major undertaking. 3SQN set off first along the 9700 kilometre route, with 19 aircraft leaving Williamtown NSW, in groups of three to four on 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th November 1958. Their movement was supported by RAAF Canberras, Neptunes and Dakotas. From 5th February 1959, the first of 16 aircraft from 77SQN followed, this time with two of the RAAF's new C-130A Hercules transports taking the place of the Dakotas. By 16th February, 78 Wing was complete at its new location.



No 3 Squadron at Williamtown in late 1958

A short RAAF Directorate of Public Affairs newsreel item on Sabre Ferry is available here:  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/F03295/>

## F-35 Lightning: Video Link

*from Dafydd Phillips*

Follow the link below to see some breathtaking footage of an F-35 Lightning (the same as the RAAFs soon to be delivered Joint Strike Fighter) low flying in Death Valley.  
<https://www.facebook.com/officiallowflyingaircraft/videos/1081610458663938/>



## Attack On Senator (General) Jim Molan

*From John W. Clarkson, Narangba, QLD*

Following the Green's disgraceful attack on Senator (General ret'd) Jim Molan, I decided to write to Senator Richard Di Natale with copies to a few other Senators. I tried to be to the point without getting vindictive, however I still wanted to display my absolute dislike of his actions and statements. Here is the letter:

To: Leader of the Australian Greens – Senator Hon. Richard Di Natale;  
Senator for South Australia – Senator Sarah Hanson-Young.

*For Information:*

Minister for Defence – Senator Hon. Marise Payne;  
Senator for New South Wales – Hon. General James Molan, AO, DSC;  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## Your Criticism of Senator General Jim Molan.

Good Afternoon Senators,  
Since the televised release of your statement and Senator Hanson-Young's statement in the Senate (Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February), I have been very concerned about the validity of your criticisms of Senator General Molan. I write as a concerned Veteran, and one who has read and investigated a great deal about our Defence Forces over the years. I shall refer to a few of your criticisms one by one:

- General Molan was not just in charge of the Australian contingent in Iraq, rather he was appointed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command of the entire Task Force – no mean feat for an Australian Senior Officer;
- Concerning the Water restrictions on the civilian population, yes there were serious water



restrictions which affected a large percentage of the civilian population, mainly caused by Taliban insurgents. It became the task of several military units to supervise the distribution of this limited water supply to the wider civilian population. Therefore, this limited water supply was evenly distributed albeit a small amount for each member;

- Regarding other military activities during the Middle East campaigns which were criticised by other Greens members, may I remind you and your members that Operational Service – and Active Service is NEVER fair! However, in the numerous areas of Active Service in which Australian Defence Forces have participated since the 1950s, they have usually been outnumbered and ‘behind the eight ball’. Many things happen in Active Service, and many of these are not pretty and are not fair. Yet, in all cases, our Service personnel have accounted themselves with distinction.

I am not sure of the motive you may have had in your ‘attack’ or criticism of General Jim Molan, but perhaps it may have been that he has been a high profile identity within our Defence Forces. Perhaps if a very experienced Warrant Officer with considerable periods of Active Service in several theatres were to enter Parliament, you may or may not display such offensive criticism, simply as he would have not been a high profile identity. Yet, such a Warrant Officer would have had enormous responsibilities within his area of Active Service.

As a retired veteran, our local association has had the privilege on a few occasions to listen to experienced serving senior officers recount some of their experiences whilst on Active Service, some of which may not have been published in the media. Through all of these and from numerous personal accounts of many young veterans we meet, we are convinced that our Australian Defence Force personnel have served with distinction, many times against enormous odds and logistical difficulties.

Concerning your allegations that General Molan was a “White Supremacist”, it would be fair to consider that General Molan was responsible for the supervision of the first National Election Iraq had seen in more than fifty years. General Molan went out into the cities and towns to encourage local people to exercise their right and cast their vote in their nation’s government. He faced extreme opposition and attacks from the Taliban and their followers who disagreed

with the people having a vote. General Molan won the confidence of thousands of local Iraqis when a record 85% of the population turned out to vote.

Finally, I would ask that you consider ALL the facts of an operation prior to voicing a critical opinion about our senior officers.

Yours Sincerely,

John Clarkson

*(Sergeant – RAAF – Retired)*

*(Veteran of Service in Malaysia, Thailand, South Vietnam and many post Vietnam operations – some overseas)*

---

## Commonwealth Ombudsman

19 January 2018

The following is an abridged letter from the Commonwealth Ombudsman's office which has some useful information for members.

### Who we are

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, within its Defence Force Ombudsman jurisdiction, is a free, independent and impartial complaints mechanism for serving and former Defence members. We can investigate complaints about administrative matters which have not been resolved by Defence. In addition to investigating complaints, we can also facilitate the provision of details about your matter to the appropriate agency for it to consider further.

### Reporting abuse in Defence

We also receive historical and contemporary reports of serious abuse within Defence. This provides a confidential mechanism to report serious abuse for those who feel unable, for whatever reason, to access Defence's internal mechanisms. We operate with a trauma-informed service delivery approach, and each person's report is received by a dedicated liaison officer. The actions we may take in response to a report of abuse can include:

- Referral to counselling with VVCS - a Liaison Officer can facilitate a referral for counselling through the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS).
- Restorative Engagement program - a facilitated conference through which a



person can tell their account of abuse to a senior representative from Defence, to have this acknowledged and for Defence to respond through apology and other expressions of regret,

- **Reparation Payment** - for the most serious forms of abuse and sexual assault, the Ombudsman may recommend to Defence it make a reparation payment.

More information on each of the above is provided in Ombudsmans factsheets.

### **Working with Stakeholders**

We are interested to hear about any concerns you have or issues you are facing that affect service provision to the veteran and ex-service communities. We are also keen to receive feedback about how our office may better assist and inform organisations like yours and how we can work together to identify and address potential issues with Commonwealth government agencies.

### **Posters and Promotional Material**

If you would like promotional material such as posters and brochures, pens or other stationery, or to discuss any of the above matters, please contact our office at:

DefenceForce.Ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au  
or on 1300 395776.

*Paul Pfitzner, Senior Assistant Ombudsman  
Defence Branch*

*GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone 1300 362 072*

---

## **Media Release**

### **Bomber Command Update**

*21 February 2018*

Australians who took to the skies serving as part of Bomber Command have been given the chance to visit the United Kingdom for the official opening of the International Bomber Command Centre and Memorial Spire, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Michael McCormack said. "I have asked the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence to connect with Bomber Command veterans on how we can support their attendance to the official opening of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincolnshire," Mr McCormack said. "Known as Bomber County, Lincolnshire in the United Kingdom will be the permanent home to the centre which recognises the important and selfless role all members of Bomber Command

played in defeating the Axis Forces. "Australia contributed approximately 10,000 Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel to Bomber Command during the Second World War. Tragically, more than 3,400 RAAF members were killed during operations and a number were sadly killed during training exercises." Mr McCormack said the Government is committed to providing ongoing support, care and, above all, respect to all veterans and currently serving personnel. "The Government is determined to ensure veterans and serving defence personnel are always treated with the respect they are owed given their service and sacrifice to our nation," Mr McCormack said. "Part of this respect is to pause, acknowledge and reflect on their service in the knowledge they rose to the challenges set out before them, often in the face of harrowing odds, to achieve their missions. "I thank all members and veterans of our defence forces for their service, including the surviving members of Bomber Command. "I wish the Bomber Command veterans well for the future and hope through this experience they feel in some way a grateful country's thanks."

Media Contact: Whil Prendergast: 0427 672 815  
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

---

## **United States Army Air Force WWII Statistics**

Almost 1,000 Army planes disappeared en route from the US to foreign locations, but an eye-watering 43,581 aircraft were lost overseas including 22,948 on combat missions (18,418 against the Western Axis) and 20,633 attributed to non-combat causes. In a single 376 plane raid in August 1943, 60 B-17s were shot down. That was a 16% loss rate and meant 600 empty bunks in England. In 1942-43 it was statistically impossible for bomber crews to complete a 25 mission tour in Europe. Pacific theatre losses were far less (4,530 in combat) owing to smaller forces committed. The worst B-29 mission, against Tokyo on May 25, 1945, cost 26 Superfortresses, 5.6% of the 464 dispatched from the Marianas.

On average, 6,600 American servicemen died per month during WWII; about 220 a day. By the end of the war, over 40,000 airmen had been killed in combat theatres and another 18,000



wounded. Some 12,000 missing men were declared dead, including a number "liberated" by the Soviets but never returned. More than 41,000 were captured; half of the 5,400 held by the Japanese died in captivity, compared with one-tenth in German hands. Total combat casualties were pegged at 121,867. US manpower made up the deficit. The Army Air Force's (AAF) peak strength was reached in 1944 with 2,372,000 personnel, nearly twice the previous year's figure.

The losses were huge - but so were production totals. From 1941 through 1945, American industry delivered more than 276,000 military aircraft. That number was enough not only for US Army, Navy and Marine Corps, but for allies as diverse as Britain, Australia, China and Russia. In fact, from 1943 onward, America produced more planes than Britain and Russia combined and more than Germany and Japan together from 1941-45. However, our enemies took massive losses. Through much of 1944, the Luftwaffe sustained uncontrolled losses, reaching 25% of aircrews and 40 planes a month. And in late 1944 into 1945, nearly half the pilots in Japanese squadrons had flown fewer than 200 hours. The disparity of two years before had been completely reversed.

Uncle Sam sent many of his sons to war with absolute minimums of training. Some fighter pilots entered combat in 1942 with less than one hour in their assigned aircraft. The 357th Fighter Group (often known as The Yoxford Boys) went to England in late 1943 having trained on P-39s. The group never saw a Mustang until shortly before its first combat mission. A high-time P-51 pilot had 30 hours in type. Many had fewer than five hours; some had one hour.

With the arrival of new aircraft, many combat units transitioned in combat. The attitude was "They all have a stick and a throttle, go fly 'em." When the famed 4th Fighter Group converted from P-47s to P-51s in February 1944, there was no time to stand down for an orderly transition. The Group commander, Col. Donald Blakeslee, said "You can learn to fly '51s on the way to the target". Some fighter pilots tucked their wheels in the well on their first combat mission with one previous flight in the aircraft. Meanwhile, many bomber crews were still learning their trade: of Jimmy Doolittle's 15 pilots on the April 1942 Tokyo raid, only five had won their wings

before 1941. All but one of the 16 co-pilots were less than a year out of flight school. In WWII flying safety took a back seat to combat. The AAF's worst accident rate was recorded by the A-36 Invader version of the P-51: a staggering 274 accidents per 100,000 flying hours. Next was the P-39 at 245, the P-40 at 188, and the P-38 at 139 All were Allison powered. Bomber wrecks were fewer but more expensive. The B-17 and B-24 averaged 30 and 35 accidents per 100,000 hours respectively - a horrific figure considering that from 1980 to 2000 the Air Force's major mishap rate was less than two. The B-29 was even worse at 40; the world's most sophisticated, most capable and most expensive bomber was too urgently needed to stand down for mere safety reasons. The AAF set a reasonably high standard for B-29 pilots, but the desired figures were seldom attained. The original cadre of the 58th Bomb Wing was to have 400 hours of multi-engine time, but there were not enough experienced pilots to meet the criterion. Only 10% had overseas experience.

Conversely, when a \$2.1 billion B-2 crashed in 2008, the Air Force initiated a two-month "safety pause" rather than declare a "stand down"; let alone grounding. The B-29 was no better for maintenance. Though the R3350 was known as a complicated, troublesome powerplant, no more than half the mechanics had previous experience with the Duplex Cyclone, but they made it work. Perhaps the greatest unsung success story of AAF training was navigators. The Army graduated some 50,000 during the war and many had never flown out of sight of land before leaving for a war zone. Yet the huge majority found their way across oceans and continents without getting lost or running out of fuel; a stirring tribute to the AAF's educational establishments.

It was possible for a flying cadet at the time of Pearl Harbor to finish the war with eagles on his shoulders. That was the record of John D Landers, a 21 year old Texan, who was commissioned a second lieutenant on December 12, 1941. He joined his combat squadron with 209 hours total flight time, including 2 in P-40s. He finished the war as a full colonel, commanding an 8th Air Force Group at age 24. As the training pipeline filled up however, those low figures became exceptions.



By early 1944, the average AAF fighter pilot entering combat had logged at least 450 hours, usually including 250 hours in training. At the same time, many captains and first lieutenants claimed over 600 hours.

At its height in mid-1944, the Army Air Forces had 2.6 million people and nearly 80,000 aircraft of all types. Today the US Air Force employs 327,000 active personnel (plus 170,000 civilians) with 5,500+ manned, and perhaps 200 unmanned aircraft. These figures represent about 12% of the manpower and 7% of the airplanes of the WWII peak.

Whether there will ever be another war like that experienced in 1940-45 is doubtful, as fighters and bombers have given way to helicopters and remotely-controlled drones over Afghanistan and Iraq. But within living memory, men left the earth in 1,000-plane formations and fought major battles five miles high, leaving a legacy that remains timeless.

### 'Caring' Words From A Pilot

During a commercial airline flight an experienced Air Force pilot was seated next to a young mother with a babe in arms. When the baby began crying during the descent for landing, the mother began nursing the infant as discreetly as possible.

The pilot pretended not to notice, and, upon disembarking, he gallantly offered his assistance to help with the various baby-related items.

When the young mother expressed her gratitude, the pilot responded, "that's a good looking baby, and he sure was hungry!"

Somewhat embarrassed, the mother explained that her paediatrician said that the time spent on the breast would help alleviate the pressure in the baby's ears. The pilot sadly shook his head, and in true pilot fashion exclaimed, "And all these years, I've been chewing gum."

### Terrible Jokes

Q. What happens to your body as you age?

A. When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q. What is artificial insemination?

A. When the farmer does it to the bull instead of the cow.

## 9SQN's Last Mission In Vietnam 19 Nov 71

No 9 Squadron flew its last sortie in Vietnam; a 'sniffer' mission, on this day.



The following month, the squadron's 16 Iroquois took off from Vung Tau for the last time and landed on the deck of *HMAS Sydney* for the return trip to Australia. By then, the squadron had flown over 237,000 sorties; carried 414,000 passengers; conducted 4,000 CASEVACS and MEDEVACS; and transported almost 12,000 tons of freight. Seven aircraft had been destroyed or written off; 37 damaged; 23 by ground fire. Four members of the squadron had been killed, and two others had been killed while attached to the squadron. Eight aircrew were wounded in action.



More 9SQN Vietnam War history here:  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U53557>



## Veterans Affairs \$1 billion ANZAC Centenary Fund?

To: The Hon Michael McCormack MP,  
Minister for Veterans Affairs

Dear Minister McCormack,

I refer to the article in the 'Vetaffairs' summer 2017 news sheet under the title 'Myth Busters' relating to the amount which your department spends on commemorations. The figure for the four year period of the centenary of WW1 (ANZAC) is given in 'Vetaffairs' as \$62 million.

In the 2009 Commonwealth budget the then Rudd ALP government allocated a sum of \$780 million to the Centenary of ANZAC and since then both the ALP and Lib/Nat administrations have added significant additional millions of dollars and further encouraged private and corporations business to also contribute millions of dollars to the Centenary of ANZAC Fund. The initial allocation alone of \$780 million for Australia is noted for its excess when compared to other nations spending of their taxpayers funds on WW1 commemorations, eg. Britain and France respectively allocated the equivalent of \$90 million, while Canada has not spent above their normal annual on commemorations. The 2009 budget was also noteworthy for its exclusion of Veterans Disability Pensions from the otherwise universal structural increase to pensions. This on the grounds that the nation could not afford the increase for 28,000 Disabled Veterans, but could afford the increase for 3.3 million other pensions. You will perhaps understand the disquiet within the veteran community when such extravagant funding by your and other governments is spent on our dead of 100 years ago, while the families of our living disabled diggers are kept impoverished.

No matter how many millions Australia's governments spend on commemorations, not one dead digger will come back from the grave, yet granting the same structural increase to our living disabled diggers can prevent family breakdown and prevent suicide from robbing children of a father and a wife of a husband.

We disabled respect our dead colleagues. However, if we were able to ask them whether we should fund another ceremony or parade in

their honour or use those funds to help the families of their living comrades, I have no doubt their answer would be resoundingly, help the living.

Minister can you please justify the continuation of the Turnbull governments opposition to paying our 28,000 disabled diggers the structural increase denied to them by the Labor party?

Minister can you explain to the veteran community and the Australian taxpayer why your department can account for only \$62 million on Centenary of ANZAC, when the funding allocated and pledged is nearer \$1 billion?

Yours sincerely,

Mr Frank O'Neill for  
Disabled Veterans of Australia Network  
PO Box 698  
Applecross  
WA 6953  
[disabledveteransau@gmail.com](mailto:disabledveteransau@gmail.com)  
08 9364 2067

*Disabled Veterans of Australia Network  
Sacrificed much for Australians to live in  
freedom and prosper*

## Last Four Caribou Aircraft Returned From Vietnam



Following seven and a half years of service in Vietnam, the Caribou (Short Take Off/Landing) STOL aircraft of No 35 SQN ceased flying on 13 February 1972 and all personnel prepared for their return to Australia. The four Caribous took off six days later and



arrived at Richmond RAAF base on 26 Feb 1972; it was the last RAAF unit to leave Vietnam. In its Vietnam deployment, 35 SQN flew nearly 80,000 sorties (totalling 47,000 hours of flying time) and carried 677,000 passengers, 36 million kilograms of freight and five million kilograms of mail.



For some unofficial history of 35SQN in Vietnam:

<http://austradesecond.com/radschool/Vol33/Page12.htm>

### MyService

Posted: 23 Jan 2018



Did you know that if you have a PMKeyS number it is now easier to claim with DVA? With the new online system, MyService, claims for your service injuries can be lodged online in just a few minutes.

To register and find out how, start here: [www.dva.gov.au/myservice/](http://www.dva.gov.au/myservice/)

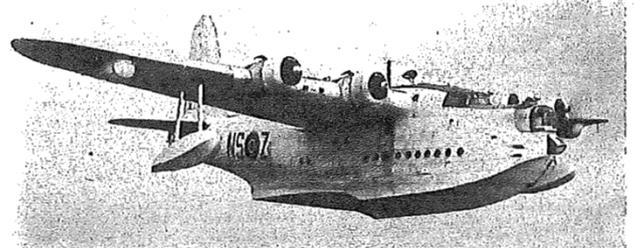
### Always Ask, Never Assume!!

His request approved, the Bulletin newspaper photographer quickly used his mobile phone to call the Townsville airport to charter a flight. He was told a twin-engine plane would be waiting for him at the airport. Arriving at the airfield, he spotted a plane warming up outside a hanger. He jumped in with his bag, slammed the door shut and shouted 'Let's go'. The pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind and took off. Once in the air, the photographer instructed the pilot, 'Fly over Mount Stuart and make low passes so I can take pictures of the fires on the hillsides.' 'Why?' asked the pilot. 'Because I'm a photographer for the Bulletin', he responded, 'and I need to get some close up shots.' The pilot was strangely silent for a moment, finally he stammered, 'So, what you're telling me is, ...you're NOT my flight instructor?'

### The Greatest Air/Sea U-boat Battle of World War II

*From Terry Maher*

This battle was unique, not only in its outcome, but the two central figures shared a common factor; the number U461! It was on July 30th, 1943, that Sunderland aircraft "U" of 461 Squadron RAAF, took off on a routine anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay.



The captain, Dudley Marrows, had no idea that he was destined to become one of the central figures in the greatest air-sea U boat battle fought in WWII. As the U-boat war intensified, larger formations of Luftwaffe aircraft would also patrol areas where Sunderlands flew, resulting in many losses. The German submarines, now more heavily armed would stay on the surface instead of submerging on the first approach of a Sunderland. Boasting a formidable array of anti-aircraft fire power, they



would stay and fight. The Luftwaffe, now in a position to provide long range air cover, would dispatch fighters to protect the U-boats. On this particular day, Dudley was diverted from his routine anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay to a position where a U-boat had been sighted. The Sunderland flew at an altitude of 2,000 feet, which was ideal that day for sighting submarines. Dudley was concerned that by the time he reached the position of the U-boat, he would be at the maximum range of his Sunderland.

This was Dudley's battle, so it is only fitting that he should tell it in his own words:  
*"We were first directed to a false position where there was no sighting of the enemy. We started on a search pattern, a further position was received, so off we set again. The navigator's chart had so many lines on it, it looked like a spiders web (those were the words of the navigator FltLt Jock Rolland, a first class navigator, as was needed particularly in this case as we were steadily using up fuel reserves). As the Sunderland neared the estimated position of the sighted U-boat, the wireless operator reported increased radio traffic from the Royal Navy vessels and other aircraft in the area. The co-pilot, Pilot Officer Jimmy Leigh, scanning the horizon with binoculars, grew excited; there was not one submarine, but three!! They were sailing on the surface in a tight formation. Initially I thought they might have been German destroyers because of the large size and the wash. I was later to learn that two of the U-boats, the U-461 and another, were large re-fuellers known as "milch cows" and their loss in the Bay of Biscay would be a significant one for the German Navy. As we flew towards the U-boats, in my mind I developed a plan of an attack, which paid off. I was not the only one with the same intention; the three U-boats had attracted RAF Coastal Command Lib-erators and a Catalina, two Halifaxes and a US Air Force Liberator. It was quite an air circus. As well there were five Royal Navy anti-submarine sloops some distance away homing in on the German submarines. Flying above at high altitude observing this scene was a sole German JU88. By the time we reached attack position, the Liberator and Catalina were diving onto the U-boats in feinting attacks. From height the*

*Halifaxes were dropping 600lb bombs on them, with near misses and little effect.*



**FltLt D. Marrows, DSO, DFC of 461 SQN RAAF, who sank U-461 on 30 July, 1943, flying Sunderland 'U' of 461 SQN**

*By way of answer to the airborne attacks, the U-boats-were manoeuvring in formation, keeping bows on to the attacking aircraft, maximising their combined fire power and putting up a formidable barrage of anti-aircraft fire. I took the Sunderland down to 1000 ft and flew in the face of the U-boats cannon and machine gun fire. I had now decided on my attack routine. I would avoid as much as possible the U-boats maximum fire power, as well as having to fly over the other two submarines when attacking the outer one of the formation. I was also aware that the Sunderland was consuming fuel to the extent we could be taken to the point of no return. As we flew in one feinting attack, the fire from the U-boats was so intense that the shrapnel pummelled the metal fuselage of the Sunderland like a heavy shower of hail. I could see that the high level attacks delivered by the RAF bombers were having no effect. The U-boats could out-turn the attacking aircraft, keeping them broadside and subject to maximum fire power. I decided the only thing to do was to go in as low as possible at sea level hoping to catch the U-boats when they were broadside to the swell, making an unsteady gun platform. At that critical close range we would be shielded from the inner submarines as they could not depress their guns sufficiently to hit us without hitting the outer sub, which I had decided to attack. I flew into the attack, violently zigzagging as we lost height to sea level. We initially copped the full impact of about 21 heavy calibre cannon and machine guns from each U-boat involved, some 81 guns in all. Our front and mid upper gunners returned a heavy rain of accurate machine gun fire which I believe made the difference between us being*



*shot down in the sea, and being here today to tell the story. At this stage I was concentrating on my alignment and the distance to drop the depth charges; we had no sights in those days, it all depended on the pilot's judgement. My plan was to straddle the submarine with a stick of depth charges. The Sunderland carried eight depth charges - I would drop seven and keep one in reserve. I flew as low as possible, just skimming the wave tops. Nearing the submarine, I had to fly straight and steady, waiting for the submarine to go out of view below the nose of the Sunderland, a most critical moment of time. From then on, as practiced many times I had to count a steady ten and then press the depth charge release button. I had to pull up violently after I dropped my depth charges to avoid hitting the submarine conning tower. My approach paid off, because as I had hoped, the two outer submarines could not depress their guns low enough to fire at me until we had passed over 'our' boat. As soon as we did, I dropped again to sea level making a sharp turn left to avoid the U-boats, with our gunners still firing at the U-boat as we flew away. When I was able to return, I flew over the attack scene to find that the other two U-boats had moved away. There was a great oil slick over the spot where U-boat U461 had sunk. Debris, survivors and dead bodies could be seen in the water. The survivors had nothing but their life jackets. I recall that it was not a pleasant sensation, seeing those Germans in the sea, obviously distressed. I made another run over them and dropped a dinghy, which accurately fell among them and inflated. I could see the U-boat men clambering into the dinghy and was about to make my low run to attack the other two submarines when I saw water spouts surrounding the U-boats. It was the RN sloops firing at the subs, and then we signalled to the sloops that there were survivors in the water, and set off for home."*

The aircraft was able to refuel at the Seilly Islands off the South West coast of England where the crew laboriously refuelled the aircraft by hand from four gallon drums, on a rocking naval whaler.

#### **Footnotes:**

Captain Walker of HMS *WOODPECKER*, the escort group of sloops, picked up the survivors including Captain Stiebler of U-461, who gave

him his lifejacket. Some six weeks later, Dudley was shot down, no injuries, and was picked up by Captain Walker, who gave him Captain Stiebler's life jacket. It is now in the Australian War Memorial. In 1988, Stiebler came out to Australia, met and stayed with Dudley and his wife Sylvia for a week or so, at his citrus orchard at Buronga near Mildura.

Wolf Stiebler died mid-1991, aged 84.

Dudley was awarded the DSO (one under a VC) and the DFC - he jokingly commented 'The DSO was for the sub, and the DFC for the battle.'

When Dudley dropped the dinghy, he was pulled over the coals. There were 15 survivors from U461's crew of 68.

Dudley is currently residing in Mildura and in December 2017 celebrated his 100th birthday.

#### **Bibliography:**

*Flying Porcupines*, Maureen Lakey  
*The Short Sunderland*, Chaz Bowyer

---

## **SITREP Survey Results**

Thanks to all those who responded to our Survey re SITREP. About 415 people responded - thank you. The results were: 84% of respondents were aware of SITREP. 75 % had read it to one degree or another. **80% would like to see SITREP continue.** Of the other 20%, 18.5% were neutral about SITREP's future.

---





## 44WG's 75th Anniversary

from GPCAPT Pat Cooper, CSC, OC 44WG

Number 44WG observed a significant milestone on 14 December 2017, by celebrating the 75th anniversary of its formation. Number 44WG was formed at Adelaide River in the Northern Territory on 14 December 1942 to provide oversight of six radar stations in the Darwin area that were installed as part of an early warning system for Japanese air raids. Over the next two years, 17 new stations were established and twelve homing beacons were installed. 44WG was disbanded on 22 August 1944 until it was reformed on 27 November 2000 under the command of (then) GPCAPT Terry 'TC' Delahunty, AM, and Defence's Air Base Air Traffic Services and Battlefield Airspace Control capabilities have been provided by 44WG ever since.



OCs 44WG – in order of service (R-L), AIRCDRE TC Delahunty, GPCAPT Krista Thompson representing the late GPCAPT Dave Thompson, GPCAPT Forster Breckenridge, AIRCDRE Steve Edgeley (the first ATCO/JBAC 1-star), and GPCAPT Pat Cooper.

To celebrate the significant occasion, OC44WG, GPCAPT Patrick Cooper, CSC hosted a formal dinner at the RAAF Base Williamtown Officers Mess on 08 December 2017. Over 100 people attended, including past and present members of the tight-knit 44WG community in addition to a special VIP guest, Mr Brian Hurley. Whilst never serving within 44WG, Mr Hurley served in the Air Force during WWII and was primarily stationed in Australia's north as a signaller. In April 1944 while stationed in Karumba, Mr Hurley transferred to Air Traffic Control and is believed to be one of Australia's first military Air Traffic Controllers. WGCDR David Shepherd, XO44WG and MC for the evening, reflected on Mr Hurley's attendance "It was a

special privilege to host Brian for this occasion and the guests enjoyed listening to his many stories from his time in Karumba, particularly one where an aircraft was having communication difficulties while trying to land at Rose Bay, Sydney. The ionosphere allowed the pilot, who was circling overhead Sydney Harbour, to 'talk' to Brian who was stationed in Karumba using Morse Code! Brian managed to relay the message to the harbour personnel and the aircraft landed safely".



WGCDR Dave Shepherd, with onlookers including AIRCDRE TC Delahunty, GPCAPT Sheryl Steele, AIRCDRE Dave Steele, AIRCDRE Craig Heap (CDRSRG) Mr Brian Hurley and GPCAPT 'Dubbo' Graham.

Mr Hurley also visited the local ATC facility where he was astounded by the technology in the modern ATC world. Of the visit, WGCDR Shepherd said the following "Brian was speechless when he saw the local ATC team in action. Things have come a long way since his time on Morse Code!". And things are set to change even more in the ATC world with the suite of new control towers and ATC equipment slated for delivery in the coming years under Project 5431, bringing 44WG to the forefront of contemporary ATC.



Cake made by Justine Mitchell, the spouse of SQNLDR Ross Mitchell, SATCO Darwin.



## Tribute to Bomber Command

*From Terry Maher*

When the surviving members of 617 SQN held a reunion in 1980, the former head of Bomber Command, Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, wrote a note to them. It began: 'To all my old lags of 617 Squadron and any other bombers. Ignore any sneers or smears and those who find them the only means of selling their wares, and buy the books written by Albert Speer and Doc. Goebbels. From those two at the very centre of things from 1938-1945, but on the wrong side, you will find irrefutable and ample first-class evidence that the strategic bombing won the three main victories in the war.

In the air. Because they forced the enemy on the defensive, building and training practically nothing but fighters, and fighter pilots in a despairing attempt, which failed, to defend their Fatherland.

On land. Because they gave the Allied armies absolute air supremacy and blasted out of their way any and every attempt by the enemy to make a successful stand or counter-attack.

At sea. Because the bombers sank or destroyed twice as many enemy capital ships as the Navy accounted for; sank, fatally damaged or destroyed before they were launched, at least a dozen submarines for every one the Navy scuppered; destroyed hundreds of small naval craft such as destroyers, torpedo and gun boats, minesweepers and trawlers etc. And finally annihilated the enemy merchant marine on which they depended for vital supplies for industry.

The Germans had, Harris added; 900,000 fit soldiers on air defence and half the army's anti-tanks guns, while Speer had 800,000 fit men trying, and failing, to keep the railways going, doubtless thousands more repairing urgent damage to war industry. If you know of any Allied army that took two million out of the enemy's fighting lines and half their anti-tank guns, I would be interested to hear about it. But that is all you old lags and loafers did for the pay you drew. No wonder authors and journalists find cause to smear you.'

Harris signed off his letter to the 617 SQN crews; 'Enjoy yourselves, and how well you deserve it'.

## Vetaffairs Summer Edition

The Summer edition of Vetaffairs is online now, featuring the By the Left campaign which aims to prevent the questioning of women veterans over the placement of their medals; an update on DVA's trial online claims application, MyService; a feature on widows working to raise awareness of issues around service-related suicide; and 2018 Young Queenslander of the Year Phillip Thompson on the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards.

## Republic of Korea War Service Medal approved for Korean War Veterans

Veterans of the Korean War have been approved to wear the Republic of Korea War Service Medal by the Governor-General, His Excellency, General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd). Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Michael McCormack said the approval to wear this medal after it was initially refused by the British Government in 1951 shows the Australian Honours and Awards system has evolved to become its own unique system of recognising our service men



and women.

'The Australian Council of Korea Veterans Associations has campaigned to have the decision reconsidered from an Australian perspective,' Mr McCormack said. 'The approval to wear the Republic of Korea War Service Medal demonstrates the Australian Defence Force's willingness to consider and accept change'.

'During the Korean War, in which more than 15,000 Australians served, Australia used the Imperial Honours and Awards system and was therefore subject to the award policies set by the United Kingdom.' Mr McCormack said the Republic of Korea War Service Medal was introduced by South Korea in 1951 to recognise the assistance provided by members of the United Nations forces in combating communist aggression in Korea. 'It has been policy to



accept only one foreign award for a particular service or campaign,' Mr McCormack said. 'In this case the United Nations Medal Korea had been accepted and therefore the offer of the Republic of Korea War Service Medal from the South Korean Government was refused.' As a foreign award, the Republic of Korea War Service Medal is not administered by Defence. Eligible veterans may purchase the replica medal from any reputable medal dealer. Find out more on Defence's website: <http://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Foreign/Republic-of-Korea-War-Service-Medal.asp>

---

## Aircrew (and sailors) Behaving Badly (An Occasional Series)

*Cooperation between the Services was officially encouraged, to improve morale and overall effectiveness. This was usually done in a quite friendly fashion which sometimes had unexpected results, as Ian Kirkby of Lismore relates.*

Our Liberator Bomber squadron at Foggia in southern Italy, not far from Naples, needed to lighten some Libs so we took out the 0.5 inch guns from the nose and ball turrets. These, together with all their spares were to go into indefinite storage, when our skipper had the bright idea of giving them to the Royal Navy Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB) boys at Manfredonia on the Adriatic coast, about an hours drive away. We were quite friendly with them. They were chuffed at adding the 0.5s to their MTBs. Over some refreshments, provided by the Navy, several asked how we performed evasive action on Liberators. Our skipper immediately replied, 'Come over tomorrow and we'll show you'. So we took six of them up in a Lib, having made a point of showing them in the 2 inch thick aircraft manual that the maximum allowable angle of bank was sixty degrees. But our skipper had other ideas. He really 'turned it on' for the Navy, including ninety degree banks with a dead engine down and all manner of other aerobatics. To say that the MTB crew was impressed was a vast understatement. Those who were not sick were deadly quiet. When we landed they seemed various shades of green and white but thanked us and went their way.

Next time we went to Manfredonia to drink at the MTB's ward room, they greeted us with, 'We've run out of grog, but Bill's got his submarine in, we'll go down and have a snort there'. So we all drove down to where the sub was moored, and after a few friendly drinks, we were invited on board and shown over the sub. None of us had ever been inside a submarine before and we were impressed with how cramped it seemed to be. While we were talking to the skipper down below the chief engineer came up and said, 'I think I've got that clutch fixed skipper, but I'd like to do a short run across the bay to check'. 'Do you chaps mind?' asked the skipper. 'It'll only be a short run'. 'No, we don't mind'. What else could we say? We sat and watched as engines were started, the crew took up their positions and from the deck above we heard 'Cast off bow, cast off stern; we're away'. Of course inside a sub you can't see a darned thing, except for the three operators, called planesmen, sitting at the diving panel with its instruments moving, operating switches and levers and passing cryptic instructions and replies to each other. It was all very exciting, we felt, having this unexpected sub ride. After we appeared to have been under way for about ten or fifteen minutes, the engineer reported back to the skipper who asked him, 'How's that clutch now?' 'Seems OK, but we really should do a short dive to be sure'. Again the skipper asked us, 'Are you sure you chaps won't mind?' 'No, go ahead, we're enjoying the trip - quite different to flying in a plane'. With that the skipper started shouting orders like 'Periscope down, conning tower closed,' and a loud klaxon warned everyone we were starting to dive. The engines took on a different note, and we could see on the control panel, some distance away, what appeared to be depth gauges, with the needles moving, while the sub seemed to go into a shallow diving attitude, then a few minutes later there was a bump. 'That'll be the bottom,' said the skipper. This was followed by many queer noises from the engines and men running along the narrow passageways. After a while he came up to us and said, 'It seems we're a bit stuck on the bottom, but don't worry, we'll get her out'. We weren't very impressed and were already



starting to feel disturbed by the claustrophobic atmosphere. Then someone called out, as near as I can remember it, 'Blow after ballast tanks,' and 'full astern both engines; all hands for'd to shift weight'. This was bad enough but when the skipper called, 'Test all watertight bulkheads and report any leaks,' some of our boys wore very long faces but said nothing. After much more noise from the engines, apparently manoeuvring, there was a cry from the diving panel crew, 'It's OK sir, she's coming free'. The skipper then said, 'Well that's a great relief. We'll take her straight up now'. 'Blow tanks 1 and 2,' called someone, and then 'blow tanks 5 and 6,' followed by more instructions and activity at the diving panel. Again we could see the hands moving around the dials, but we were not close enough to read what they measured. 'We'll be right now; soon be on the surface', said the skipper. 'I suppose you boys would be looking forward to a breath of fresh air?' 'Would we ever!' we replied. 'As soon as we break the surface, I'll open the hatch and you can go up the conning tower and have a look around as we cruise back to the quay'.



All the crew politely stood back to let us up first. We shot out of that hatch like corks from champagne bottles, to see, to our absolute amazement, that we were still very much tied up to the wharf where we had boarded the sub! *It had never left the wharf!* Were our faces red! All the dummy action and sound effects had been specially put on for our benefit by the Navy boys.

After these two episodes - the navy in the Liberator and us in the sub - each group had a much better appreciation of the other Service's job. And we all had a supply of 'line shoots' that would last us for years.

'SKYLARKS - The Lighter Side of Life in the RAAF in World War II' - Eric Brown, Air Power Studies Centre, 1998

## Changing of the Guard

(from Dave Leach Fighter Squadrons Branch)

The long association between Newcastle Branch and RAAF Base Williamtown for organising the Battle of Britain Ceremony in Newcastle has changed with the Fighter Squadrons Branch now the RAAF Association's coordinator for this event. The Newcastle Battle of Britain Ceremony is the only dedicated Air Force ceremony conducted in the city each year and is therefore a high priority public relations task, one in which they participate willingly and significantly, and wish to continue. In a presentation at Fighter World on January 15th, Mr Allan Tate, Newcastle Branch President, thanked Warrant Officer Lloyd Hamilton and Mrs Tanya Hamilton for their personal contributions towards the success of the ceremonies over many years. WOFF Hamilton coordinated the Williamtown involvement and performed as master of ceremonies over nine years until he was attached away during 2017. Now posted to Wagga, WOFF Hamilton has handed over the task of coordinating the Williamtown participation to WOFF John Markham, the new Base Warrant Officer; welcome John.



**WOFF Lloyd Hamilton being presented with a certificate of appreciation by Newcastle Branch President, Alan Tate**

Mrs Hamilton, proprietor of *Affordable First Aid Supplies* in Newcastle, has generously contributed to support the ceremony for several years, easing the financial burden carried by Newcastle Branch for the activity. RAAF Association is very grateful to Mrs Hamilton and her company for the support willingly given and an indication that her company will continue to contribute to the ceremony.



**Mrs Tanya Hamilton being presented with a certificate of appreciation by Newcastle Branch President, Alan Tate**

Corporal Tippett stood in as coordinator and master of ceremonies for 2017 but now has also been posted to RAAF Wagga. She is pictured receiving a certificate of appreciation from Mr Tate at an informal lunch before Christmas in recognition of her outstanding performance in that role.



**CPL Tippett being presented with a certificate of appreciation by Newcastle Branch President, Alan Tate**

The presentation was attended by Group Captain Pat Cooper, representing Air Commodore Heap, Senior ADF Officer at Williamtown; Wing Commander Amanda Cornell, Air Base Executive Officer and CO of 26 Squadron; Warrant Officer John Markham, Base WOD; Mike Lavercombe, President FSB; Geoff Peterkin, Hon Secretary; James Mackay and Dave Leach of the FSB, and Mr Gary Mullaley of the Newcastle Branch. The Fighter Squadrons Branch looks forward to continuing the close working relationship with RAAF Base Williamtown personnel.

## **BAE Systems Australia lands \$1B JORN Upgrade Contract**

**M**inister for Defence, Marise Payne and Minister for Defence Industry, Christopher Pyne confirmed today that BAE Systems Australia has been chosen as prime contractor for the Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN) upgrade, Project Air 2025 Phase 6.



**A JORN radar antenna array**

JORN is a world-class over-the-horizon radar (OTHR) that delivers visibility over Australia's northern approaches, with a pedigree dating back to the 1970s when DSTO (now DST Group) started researching the technology. The state-of-the-art system provides wide area surveillance at ranges of 1,000 to 3,000 kilometres and plays a vital role in supporting the Australian Defence Force's air and maritime operations, border protection, disaster relief and search and rescue operations.

Supported by a control centre at RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia, the three radars are located at Laverton (Western Australia), Alice Springs (Northern Territory) and Longreach (Queensland).

Lockheed Martin was the unsuccessful contending tenderer for Project Air 2025 Phase 6. The company has been involved with JORN for many years, servicing the Longreach and Laverton locations, with the co-ordination centre at RAAF Edinburgh being shared between BAE systems and Lockheed Martin. The upgrade project will require over 500 highly skilled technicians and engineers working for BAE Systems and in the company's supply chain. BAE Systems Australia chief executive Gabby Costigan said the company was proud to have been selected to deliver an important upgrade to Australia's most complex and critical



intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability. “Together with our partners, we are committed to ensuring a high level of Australian industry and academic participation in JORN,” she said. “Our collaborative approach will allow for the application of rapidly developing technology to ensure Australia maintains a capability edge and superior situational awareness to ensure our northern approaches are secure.”

Costigan said BAE Systems has worked closely with DST Group in the development of the technology that underpins JORN, and in securing an export market for high frequency radar. BAE Systems Australia will deliver the JORN upgrade together with defence systems integrator Raytheon Australia, South Australian subject matter expert (SME) Daronmont Technologies, and infrastructure specialist RCR Property Services.

More than 20 specialist Australian SMEs will also participate in the supply chain to ensure broader Australian industry participation and a strong focus on innovation to support the upgrade, Costigan said. The project will improve the performance of JORN and involves the replacement of most of the radar and frequency management system hardware, information and communication technology hardware, the upgrade of software architecture and processing, as well as other specialised optional enhancements. The project will support the operational life of JORN beyond 2042, with the upgrade project expected to span 10 years.

---

## **International Women’s Day - Honouring The Service And Sacrifice Of Women**

*Media Release 8 March 2018*

**T**oday the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs Darren Chester marked International Women’s Day by attending a morning tea with the War Widows Guild and their supporting organisations paying tribute to the contribution of women to the armed services throughout a Century of Service. “I encourage all Australians to recognise and respect the role women have played serving our nation in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations since the Boer War in South Africa from 1899-1902,” Mr Chester said.

“This is also an opportunity to acknowledge the important work undertaken by women on the home front during the First World War.

“Women dealt with the uncertainty and distance from war by immersing themselves in a range of patriotic funds and volunteer work. “Huge fund-raising concerts were organised where they sang and raised thousands of pounds in donations for the war effort. They also produced packs and gifts for soldiers, including knitted garments and food items, which brought some comfort to the horror soldiers faced. “When soldiers returned, many women’s lives were changed forever. There were thousands of widows, children without fathers, families who had lost sons, brothers and cousins. “As carers they experienced the war first hand, dealing with illnesses, physical and psychological scarring and permanent disfigurement. “These women epitomise the spirit of Anzacs and their service and sacrifice has contributed to the many freedoms we enjoy today. “In the Second World War the role of women in the workplace and the services expanded. “No longer confined to nursing, medical and voluntary roles, they were able to join a women’s arm of each of the services. “In the years since, roles available to servicewomen have broadened further providing opportunity for greater integration in the armed services on operational deployments both within Australia and around the world.” “Women now represent about 17 per cent of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) undertaking roles which were unheard of even 20 years ago. “Today we recognise and reflect with pride and gratitude the role women play in defending our country, past and present.”

Media Contacts: Whil Prendergast: 0427 672 815

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046

## The RAAF's Quiet Revolution in Pilot Training

*The following is an excerpt from a feature story in the November 2017 issue of Australian Aviation.*

**H**eralded in by the arrival of the new Pilatus PC-21, a change is coming in the way that future generations of Australian Defence Force pilots will earn their wings. The new process extends, literally, from the ground up, and exciting times are ahead.



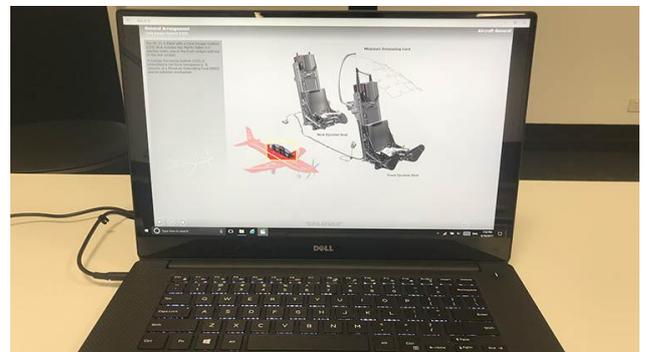
**A RAAF Pilatus PC-21**

Today the RAAF's Central Flying School (CFS) has its eyes firmly set on the future of pilot training. Its home at East Sale is undergoing a major facelift with new aircraft and new facilities emerging in preparation for the AIR 5428 Pilot Training System project, which is promising a step change in how future ADF pilots are trained.

AIR 5428 is an integrated system designed to train all future RAAF, RAN and Australian Army pilots. The project spans flight screening through all phases of pilot training from basic flying training at CFS through to the advanced flying training at No 2 Flying Training School (2FTS) at RAAF Base Pearce, WA. Lockheed Martin is the prime contractor responsible for delivering AIR 5428 and is providing the ground-based training environment, with Pilatus providing the PC-21 aircraft and Hawker Pacific providing maintenance support. Under AIR 5428, Basic Flying Training School and flight screening and basic flying training for all three services moves from Tamworth to East Sale. All future ADF pilots will undertake their first training sortie at the controls of a 370kt-capable, 1,600shp turboprop trainer with state-of-the-art digital avionics – a hugely different proposition to the current trainer; a 210hp, piston-powered CT-4B, with its fixed-gear and analogue dials.

In order to facilitate such a transition, much more than just a change of aircraft type must be addressed. Already, the ground training facility is taking shape on the East Sale site. Resembling a modern university campus, its design also represents a modern approach to educational philosophy. From a central foyer, a pair of two-storey wings branch off. Contained therein are modern classrooms, briefing rooms and offices for students, instructors and management. The classrooms will boast the latest technology and mission planning and de-briefing tools, while to the rear will be an open-plan space where students can work in groups or take a respite break as the situation dictates.

The facility is also home to the Lockheed Martin-operated PC-21 simulator, or flight training device (FTD). From the outset students will use the sim to develop both their aircraft handling and flight and system management skills before they take a seat in a real aeroplane. Change and challenge have always travelled together. At first glance, the concept of new pilots undertaking their first training flights in a PC-21 seems akin to a first-time athlete lining up at the Olympics. However, under the new training system a great deal will take place before any flight occurs, with the intelligent use of training aids and a graduated process key to reducing a leap to carefully measured steps. The first of those steps will take place on a laptop, or personal learning device (PLD). Pilatus software takes the student through an interactive PC-21 systems course, offering the ability to not only read a description but sight the operation of the system and the cause and effect of actioning a switch.



**A PLD or personal learning device (ie laptop)**

The next stage is the cockpit procedure trainer, or CPT. Procedural trainers are not new and in their most basic form are a reproduction of a cockpit's panels, printed out and set about a



chair, allowing the trainee to touch-drill sequences.



**A PC-21 cockpit procedure trainer, or CPT**

Building upon the foundations of the PLD, the cockpit procedure trainer allows the student to not only learn their procedural checks and sequences, but effectively fly a sortie from engine start to shut down. While the trainer is not a simulator – its elements are not to scale, nor is it designed to fully replicate motion – it is yet another smooth transitional step allowing the student to move towards the ultimate goal of flying the sequence in the air.

The final piece of hardware in the chain that precedes flight is the simulator. Unlike the procedural trainer, the sim is a PC-21 cockpit section, complete with HOTAS and three large colour liquid crystal displays (LCDs) and a simulated HUD with HUD projector.

Additionally, it has the ability to activate the student’s G-suit to accustom them to the feeling of the pressure upon their legs and abdomen as the suit’s bladders inflate.

The cockpit is surrounded by a substantial sphere on which a large detailed visual database can be projected, offering a substantial field of view. The visuals are supported by an advanced sound system, providing a realistic turboprop sound as well as those associated with any kind of weather. Consequently, the sim immerses the student in an environment that very closely resembles what they will see in their airborne sortie. Accordingly, they can make mistakes, pause and repeat in a way that a real flight will not permit.

The traditional training path has served the RAAF well for nearly a century, however the student of today is also potentially different to those of yesteryear. AIR 5428 is seeing significant change in the way that the RAAF trains its pilots. As CFS prepares for the next chapter in its proud history, it does so with new

systems, infrastructure and equipment that offer it the capability to meet the challenge. However, in the future as in the past, it will undoubtedly be the calibre of the people that determine the degree of success. On that count, the RAAF is in good hands.

---

## **HARS Meets the Prime Minister**

**M**onday 27 November was a busy day at Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) with our tarmac area turned into a jet base with the Jet Go arrival, our visiting Global Express Jet and the Prime Minister’s BBJ. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull had arrived for a meeting at BlueScope Steel and his BBJ was parked on the tarmac outside Hangar #1. Bob De La Hunty escorted the Prime Minister and his aides to their vehicles with an invitation to tour the museum on his return. Later in the day the PM returned and had a quick tour with Bob through the museum and was happy to have selfies taken with HARS members.



**PM Malcolm Turnbull with HARS members**





## Miracle From World War II

*The amazing story of the ten luckiest airmen  
who ever flew*

On Feb. 1, 1943, a mid-air collision between a B-17 Flying Fortress named *All American*, piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron, and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II.



When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through, connected only at two small parts of the frame, and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were also damaged.

There was also a hole in the top over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest; the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret. Although the tail bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned, and all the control cables were severed except a single elevator cable, the aircraft miraculously still flew!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart. While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It

took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it threatened to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be unusually slow to keep the tail from twisting off. The *All-American* covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the badly crippled B-17. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the *All American* as it crossed over the Channel and took pictures. They also radioed to the base describing that the appendage was waving like a fish tail, that the plane would not make it and to send boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.

When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until nine of the crew had exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.

---

## Hospital Parking Concessions

NSW Health recognises the burden that regular or long term hospitalisation or treatment places on patients and their carers. Concession rates are now available for the following eligible patients and their carers in all **public hospital car parks** in NSW where fees apply:



- holders of a RMS issued Mobility Parking Scheme permit
- holders of a Pensioner Concession Card
- holders of a **Gold Veterans Affairs Card**
- holders of a Health Care Card
- ongoing cancer treatment patients
- patients and their carers who are required to attend the hospital/facility for a course of treatment over a period of time greater than one week
- patients and their carers attending more frequently than twice weekly, including carers of long term patients who visit frequently
- cardiac rehabilitation education and exercise class attendees
- daily dressing outpatients
- health promotion education class attendees.

Patients and carers who are experiencing financial hardship but do not meet the eligibility categories are also entitled to concessional car parking.

For further information on concessional parking, hospital car park locations, opening times, prices and directions, visit [NSW Hospital Parking](#), or download the NSW Health hospital parking and directions app on Google play or iTunes.

[Hospitals/parking/Factsheets/concessional\\_parking.pdf](#)

---

## The RAAF and Parachutes

On an official tour of United States military establishments Richard Williams investigated the manufacture of parachutes in the United States.

“After visiting most of the Army Air Service establishments I wished to see - and I was given every facility for this - I went to Cleveland to see the factory where parachutes, now being issued to US Army and Navy Air Services, were being manufactured. The principles of parachute operation are simple enough, as is also their construction. The reason they were not issued to us during the 1914-18 war was that whilst positive opening could be assured in a parachute being pulled from its packing by a cord attached to something that did not come away with it when dropped, such as a balloon basket, its positive action could not be assured in the case of a free fall such as a pilot had to make when

leaving a damaged aircraft. It was thought to be bad policy to give a man something which could not be relied upon to work when it was his life that was being risked at the time. I am not sure that this was good policy - surely some lives would have been saved.”

“These parachutes were being made by the Irving Air Chute Company at Cleveland. Leslie Irvin, the designer, was quite a young man and had produced, as is often the case, a simple solution to the problem. He had used what might be likened to the metal framework of a small sunshade, the ribs of which were activated by springs and would not remain closed except under pressure when packed and when covered with fabric made a small pilot parachute which when released opened, caught the wind and positively pulled the main parachute from its container. At the time I visited the factory Irvin supplied me with facts relating to the saving of 11 lives and one or two of these were from low heights, indicating the rapidity of action of his parachute. I was impressed with the possibilities of these parachutes and sent a cable to the Air Board recommending the purchase of a sufficient number to equip the aircraft we had on our establishments - at that time about eighty.” However, on returning to Australia he found that his recommendation had not been implemented.

“Taking up duty again as Chief of the Air Staff I asked what action had been taken regarding my recommendation for the purchase of parachutes and was informed that nothing had been done but that the Minister wished to speak to me about it. The Minister for Defence was now Major General Sir Neville Howse, VC, whom I had met at AIF Headquarters in London when he was Director General of Medical Services there in the 1914-18 war. Later he entered Parliament. (He had been awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry during the Boer War.)

“Sir Neville was born in England but had been in Australia for many years and the first thing he asked me was why I was recommending the purchase of American equipment. I explained that no positive opening British parachute was available and he then asked whether the British were purchasing the Irving. To this I replied that I was not in a position to say for certain but that I had heard no suggestion of it and thought that I would certainly have been told at the time I



visited the factory. He said he was confident that if this were the best parachute available the British would have it; he would like to know this before considering our purchase. "I took the attitude that surely in a matter of this kind when the safety of men's lives was under consideration we could make a decision for ourselves in spite of the fact that our general policy was to use as far as appropriate the same equipment as the RAF. In any case I pointed out that parachutes were not in the class of equipment for which uniformity between our Service and the RAF was necessary. But General Howse refused to approve the purchase until he had been informed as to whether the Irving parachute was being adopted by the RAF. "I had no alternative but to signal our liaison officer in London and to my surprise and delight was informed in reply that the RAF had just placed an order for five hundred. I was then given approval for our order but the Irving factory was quite a small one and we had then to wait two years until the RAF order had been completed before we could get ours."

**Source:** Australian Parachute Federation - [https://www.apf.com.au/APF-Zone/APF-Information/History-of-the-APF/Draft-History-of-Parachuting-in-Australia/default.aspx#The\\_Introduction\\_Of\\_Emergency\\_Parachutes\\_Into\\_The\\_RAAF](https://www.apf.com.au/APF-Zone/APF-Information/History-of-the-APF/Draft-History-of-Parachuting-in-Australia/default.aspx#The_Introduction_Of_Emergency_Parachutes_Into_The_RAAF).

---

### Preso's Prattle (March 2018)

**A**NZAC Day march in Sydney is coming up fast. In 2018 the RAAF is the duty service for all commemorative events held in Sydney, and from now on we will be rotated as duty service every three years which works out perfectly for the Air Force Centenary in 2021. Also for the first time in many years the RAAF Band will participate in the ANZAC Day ceremonies and will be the band for the Cenotaph Dawn Service, then will lead the main march as well as the post WWII contingent. Our HARS Branch is holding discussions with ATC for their flyover, and I will post aircraft, timing details as they become available. With the lead up to ANZAC Day I have been very busy attending briefings, functions and ceremonies and we now have our own RAAF

Birthday function at the Cenotaph coming up on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March. Our Guest of Honour and speaker will be ACM (ret'd) Sir Angus Houston AK, AC, AFC and the Governor of NSW General David Hurley AC, DSC and Mrs Hurley will be among the VIPs. Members are requested to make every effort to attend. A huge vote of thanks goes to Geoffrey Usher, our Events and Commemorations organiser, very capably assisted by our Admin Officer, Carol Moreau, in organising this event. They are now working on Battle of Britain and Bomber Command commemorations in the upcoming months. The Sustainable Funding programme business plan is developing in conjunction with the National Strategic Planning Group and we will be meeting in Melbourne over the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> April to finalise. The new National President is a breath of fresh air and it is a pleasure working with him to advance our common ideals. The National CLG has been registered wef 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, but Fair Trading NSW has a few issues which are being addressed. The developing Business Plan and other local issues will be discussed and debated at our Information Session on the 9<sup>th</sup> May and the AGM on the 10<sup>th</sup> May which will be held at Wests Club, New Lambton, Newcastle. Please make every effort to attend as your committee needs your ideas and input to improve our Association. AGM details are on the website. I wish to express my gratitude to the outgoing committee members, especially VP Dick Wills for the sterling service and dedication he has contributed to us for so long. Also Neil Smith, who needs time to recuperate, and Dave Leach for their ongoing and proactive support of our Association. Thank you gentlemen for your service and may all your landings be smooth.

---

### Never Too Old to Remember

*From Annette Guterres, Honorary secretary Bomber Command Association in Australia Inc*

**I**n this 100 year Anniversary (both of the end of WW1 and the formation of the RAF) there are many commemorations to remember our fallen. However, one journey of remembrance by a group of WWII veterans stands out. Not many folk in their nineties would be prepared to cross the world to attend a commemoration, but a group of 17 Bomber Command veterans



accompanied by family and friends will do so next month when they travel to Lincoln in the U.K. They will attend the opening of the International Bomber Command Centre on April 12. Not only is it an impressive education centre, but it has a memorial spire ( the tallest in the UK) and Walls of Remembrance which will contain the names of the 58,471 lives lost from the air crews and ground crews of RAF Bomber Command. This will include the names of the over 4,000 Australians killed while serving with Bomber Command. In the 1940s these veterans were in their late teens or early twenties. They were young men and women who answered a call to serve. Those years of service saw them witness a huge loss of life of the crews around them. Some have said you only socialised with your own crew and did not speak to the other crews as they were unlikely to be there at breakfast the next day. All lost many of the crew they trained with, in the journey to serving on Bomber Command. Travelling with the veterans are family who have lost loved ones serving on Bomber Command. One lady is going in honour of her father F/O Kemble Russell Wood who was killed on 20th October 1943. Three sisters are travelling in honour of their uncle Flt/Sgt Edward Leake, who was killed on his eighteenth sortie along with five others from his crew on the 11th November 1944. Others are going to honour the service of their father who has since died but who served on Bomber Command. The expenses of the trip for the veterans and carers are largely being met by a government grant of \$200,000 and donations. Other donations are supporting the attendance of four Air Cadets. The group, accompanied by an RAAF medical team, will undertake a short tour of places that are part of the Bomber Command story including airfields, hotels and museums famous for their role in the life of Bomber Command personnel and who have preserved memorabilia. Through the Bomber command Family network donations were received for an Australian Garden at the Centre; a special tribute to those young Australians who served. The group of veterans includes two WAAF. They will be representing all the English girls who fell in love with our boys in blue and later married them and left their home country to live in Australia. Kathleen Mouritz met her husband Frank as he was the pilot of her brother's crew.



**Frank and Kathleen Mouritz wedding**

Margaret Hourigan married an Australian pilot, Lloyd Hourigan. Both women had vital roles in the war; Margaret Hourigan was a watchkeeper and served at Waddington and Skellingthorpe, saying "I wanted to fight for my country, I was aged 18. We believed we were going to be invaded by Germany. Many of my male friends joined and I did too." The Bomber Command Association of Australia is acting as facilitator for the trip. They are extremely grateful that the government finally agreed to financially support the trip with a grant despite their reservations that the veterans were 'too old'. The committee is appreciative of the support all the media have given to the trip; radio commentators, writers and television crews have not only petitioned for government support, but have followed up with stories about our heroes, the stories that should be known by every person who lives in the freedom brought by the tragic loss of life of our young men.



**Frank and Kathleen Mouritz 70th anniversary**



## The IBCC Experience

The IBCC provides a world-class facility acknowledging the efforts, sacrifices and commitment of the men and women, from 62 different nations, who came together in Bomber Command during WWII. The project also covers the stories of those who suffered as a result of the bombing campaigns and those whose survival was guaranteed by the humanitarian operations of Bomber Command. During WWII over a million men and women served or supported Bomber Command. They came from 62 nations across the world and were united in their efforts to protect the freedom we enjoy today. The service included aircrew, ground crew, Women’s Auxiliary Air Force, Auxiliary Air Transport, Auxiliary Transport Services, NAAFI and many others. Bomber Command suffered the highest losses of any unit during WWII but has struggled for recognition. Every member of Bomber Command aircrew was a volunteer. The average age at death was only 23.



### Our Aims:

- To remember the thousands of men and women from across the world who were part of Bomber Command’s efforts during WWII.
- To educate the generations of today and those who follow, about the individuals who served with Bomber Command and the sacrifices they made to preserve our freedom.
- To allow individuals across the world to discover more about Bomber Command and those who served it, through their experiences as told by letters, diaries and memories.
- To tell the stories of those affected by the bombing campaigns across Europe.

“Bomber County is the place from where many of us operated, so most veterans think that this is the place where we should be remembered. The magnificent Memorial, Digital Archive,

Exhibition and International Peace Gardens will ensure that memories of our sacrifices will live on.” **H. James Flowers, 50/44 Squadrons, rear gunner**

The project was launched in May 2013. The site covers just under 10 acres Over 500 volunteers, from 9 different countries, have been involved so far. The IBCC is the only place in the world where you can bear witness to all the sacrifices of this unit. Since inception IBCC has been working with veterans, recording their stories and preserving their documents and photos. Their support during the creation of the project has been outstanding.

---

## A Poem Worth Reading

*Author Unknown*

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For ol' Joe has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Veteran died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.



Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young,  
But the passing of a Veteran  
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise  
And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his country  
And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Veteran,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.

It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his ever-waffling stand?

Or would you want a Veteran  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Veteran,  
Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common Veteran,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Veteran's part,  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor  
While he's here to hear the praise,

Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say:  
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A VETERAN DIED TODAY."

---

## Propagandists Masquerading As Historians

*from Bob Alford*

by Terry Garlock

I was only one of many Vietnam veterans who wrote opinion columns criticizing the Vietnam War film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, opining their work seemed more like propaganda than history. In doing so I occasionally used "Burns" as shorthand for the pair, to which Ms. Novick emailed me her objection. She is correct, I should consistently include her name as co-producer because she is equally culpable in the hit piece they brazenly call a documentary. So, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, this is for you.

My back-handed compliment is that your wholly inaccurate film is a slick rationalization for aging Americans who, decades ago, loudly encouraged our enemy while we were killing each other in combat. For those harboring doubts about actively opposing us in their youth while we served our country in a war, your film may have supplied just the soothing salve they need. You bent the truth in your film too far, too consistently, too repetitively, and omitted too much to leave any room for me to believe those errors, omissions, distortions, half-truths and complete falsehoods were remotely accidental. Like a house of distorted mirrors, you portrayed the murderous and avowed Stalinist Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist driven by reunification of North and South Vietnam rather than his real commitment to Communist conquest of free South Vietnam. Your film repeatedly depicted the war as unwinnable, the North Vietnamese cause as just, war crimes between the two sides as morally equivalent, American troops as victims, South Vietnamese as mere bit players, all that and much more of your content completely opposite of the truth. You selected for dominant interviews from the tiny



percentage of American combat veterans with a grievance who joined the protestors when they returned home.

I cannot know the motivation in your hearts, but I have the stark impression that your plan from the very beginning was to delegitimize America's role in the war and justify the anti-war left by very selectively emphasizing negatives and minimizing positives to shape the film's message to your liking.

There is a tragic irony in protests by the anti-war left and your justification for them. The noble cause of the Vietnam War was trying to stop the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia, especially important given the hegemony of China in the region. Even so, while we answered our country's call and honorably performed our difficult duty, leadership in the White House and Pentagon created a patchwork of micromanagement and idiotic war-fighting limitations, obstacles that got thousands of us killed while preventing victory. Those egregious and very real failures alone would have been worthy of protest, but your buddies on the left either didn't notice or felt compelled to manufacture their own demons, **like John Kerry's fantastic lie** that we were raping, murdering and rampaging in Vietnam like Genghis Khan.

The outrage is our enemy's daily atrocities against their own people, juxtaposed against how we Americans defended and helped those civilians in a hundred ways, both ignored by the news media while American troops were maligned. Ms. Novick, you were just eleven years old when America withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, so you might have missed personally knowing the effects of false stereotypes about Vietnam and its veterans. Like so many others, I came away from that experience with my eyes opened, having learned by watching young Americans the true meaning of honor, courage and trust. Those men and women were then and still are the finest people of character I have ever known. I saw my fellow helicopter pilots fly into enemy fire routinely, taking mortal risks to protect civilians and their brothers, and I saw grunts do the same crazy things for each other. I flew gun cover for Dustoff crews braving enemy fire to pick up wounded, and I flew gun cover for LRP's sneaking in enemy turf, the bravest men I have

ever seen; if you have an open mind, read *Six Silent Men* by Gary Linderer to understand how bold our Rangers were.

I saw doctors, nurses and orderlies drive themselves to physical and emotional exhaustion every day as they struggled to send us home alive, and still we found time to send medical help to poor villages where medicine had never been seen. There was much to admire, and when I finally wrote a book my title tells my sentiments: *Strength and Honor: America's Best in Vietnam*. Anti-war voices were overwhelming, and America never knew what a fine job their youth had done in Vietnam, despite impediments imposed by our own government, despite collaboration with the enemy by our own fellow citizens.

When we came home, the country seemed to us to have turned principles upside down. Wearing the American uniform invited hostility while refusing to serve was somehow a virtue. These remarkable troops, young enough to be called boys but now battle-hardened men, never lost a single significant battle against a very tough enemy, but they didn't know how or want to engage in political argument. And so many like me kept their head down and went on with life. Nobody wanted to hear about our experience anyway, for two reasons.

First, everybody already knew all the answers about Vietnam, they had seen it on TV. Second, in those days the Vietnam War was a shunned topic, something dirty not discussed in polite company. Even some family members skirted the subject, wary of the rumors they heard about rampant war crimes, drug addiction and vets prone to snap into violence. During his first visit home, Tony Foster's mother asked him what kind of drugs he was on.

False stereotypes took root from repetition in a media leaning hard against the war. Movies reinforced the lies with absurd stories and unreal characters that indulged Hollywood's ridiculous fantasies of the war. Period fiction followed suit, and TV dramas occasionally created a Vietnam vet when they needed an unbalanced, unpredictable and dangerous character.

Spreading these attitudes has consequences. Not everyone thought the worst of us, but enough did to change the national mood. Even small slights left lasting impressions. Jay Standish escorted his date to their seats near the front of



an off-Broadway theater, proudly wearing his Marine Corps dress blues, prompting boos from many in the audience. A Sgt. named Chip went to see a Priest for pre-marital counseling wearing his Army dress greens, and the Priest told him to come back when he was wearing decent clothing. Vietnam vets learned to leave the war off their resume to avoid rejection in the first cull of job applicants. The uniform was not popular, as R.J. DeVecchio learned by hostility to his Marine Corps uniform at the University of Maryland and was advised not to wear it again on campus.

Drew Johnson, who ferried Navy aircraft to Vietnam over an extended period, returned through California airports at least two dozen times and saw the escalation of vitriol aimed at our returning troops by anti-war protestors who, by my measure, were unfit to shine a veteran's shoes. Officials and most in the public merely looked the other way while protestors yelled "babykiller" and worse at returning vets, threw nasty splatter packets at them and frequently used their own spit.

In 1971, my commanding officer told me to remind my men not to wear their uniform off-base, for their own personal safety. Some anti-war tactics were despicable. An F-105 fighter pilot I will leave nameless bet his life every time he flew into North Vietnam through the toughest air defenses in the world. When he was shot down, even before his wife received official notification, anti-war activists called to say her husband was a baby-killing a\*\*hole and deserved what he got.

There were many thousands of these uncouth episodes incited by fabrications from the anti-war left, and they were made worse that they were aimed at Americans who served honorably and sacrificed much. And yet every Vietnam vet I know is proud of their service, fiercely patriotic and doesn't want even a shred of sympathy. They do want one thing. They want the truth told about them, their enemy, their war. Now, after forty something years, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, along comes the misrepresentation you call a documentary, very pretty but with only fleeting intersections with the truth and reviving conflict long ago buried. It seems, to me at least, that you pre-planned your strategy to build up to your conclusion in

support of your friends on the left, "The Vietnam War was a tragedy, immeasurable and irredeemable." Even with 10 episodes over 18 hours, you left out vital pieces of the story. In 1974, in the aftermath of Watergate, Democrats were elected in a landslide and the new Congress violated America's promise by cutting off funding for South Vietnam's self-defense. Then when the Communists attacked South Vietnam in massive force, Congress refused to honor America's pledge to come to their aid. The left's view seems to be North Vietnam's conquest had the happy result of reunification. Senator J. William Fulbright, who provided the forum for that spectacular liar John Kerry, said about the fall of Saigon that he was "...no more depressed than I would be about Arkansas losing a football game to Texas."

Trivializing the human cost of Communist victory, you didn't mention tens of thousands of executions, the million or so sent to brutal re-education camps, the panicked populace fleeing in rickety overpacked boats and dying by the tens of thousands. You neglected North Vietnam's obscene practice of bulldozing South Vietnamese graves, and the influx of North Vietnamese to take over the best farms, businesses, homes and jobs in South Vietnam. And you swept under the rug America's shame, the betrayal of our ally, never mind the genocide by Communists as they murdered two million in Cambodia next door. All in all, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, kudos on the slick appearance mixing photos, film clips, tilted narration and sad music to set the mood for your biased content. I think you have succeeded in making your semi-factual slop believable to a naïve public, and students in schools you send it to will likely lap it up because they don't know better. That means we will need to redouble our efforts to tell the story true.

As I tell students when I speak to them about the Vietnam War, "Why does this ancient history matter to you? Because you need to know how a false history takes root, and you need to be smart enough to beware propaganda when you turn on TV news." Or watch a film labeled a "documentary."

*Terry Garlock lives in Peachtree City, GA. He was a Cobra helicopter gunship pilot in the Vietnam War*