



THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (INCORPORATED)

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

by Theo Bushe-Jones, Life Member & Inaugural President

IN THE 1960s AND 70s A GROUP OF EX-BIRDIES WOULD MEET ONCE A YEAR AT THE EMBASSY BALLROOM, PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA FOR THE NAVAL BALL.

A SUGGESTION WAS PUT FORWARD AT THE 1975 BALL THAT AS THERE WAS A LARGE GROUP OF EX-BIRDIES IN THE STATE WE SHOULD FORM OUR OWN ASSOCIATION AND BRING EVERYONE TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF EACH OTHER'S COMPANY.

IT FELL TO ME TO CONTACT AS MANY EX-BIRDIES AS WE COULD NAME AND FIND THEIR REACTION TO AN ASSOCIATION.

WE FOUND ENOUGH PEOPLE TO HOLD AN INFORMAL MEETING AND IT WAS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE FORMATION. A LIST OF THOSE WHO HAD SERVED AT NOWRA AND ABOARD SYDNEY, VENGEANCE AND MELBOURNE WAS PRODUCED.

I AGAIN WENT TO THE ELECTORAL ROLLS AND OBTAINED THE ADDRESSES OF ALL THE PERSONS PUT FORWARD AND A SEARCH OF THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES TURNED UP THE PHONE NUMBERS, SO A RING AROUND TO ALL WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE START.

A MEETING WAS CONDUCTED WITH A GOOD TURN OUT AND IT WAS DECIDED TO FORM OUR OWN ASSOCIATION WITH MEMBERSHIP TO THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION AS A SEPARATE SUB-BRANCH AND THE AIRFORCE ASSOCIATION AS A SEPARATE SUB-BRANCH, TO ENCOURAGE ALL NAVAL PERSONELL WHO HAD SERVED WITH THE

AIR BRANCH OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY, THE ROYAL NAVY AND ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY.

A COMMITTEE AND OFFICE BEARERS WERE SELECTED TO WORK ON GETTING A DIVISIONAL REUNION ORGANISED.

ADMIRAL SIR VICTOR SMITH AC, KBE, CB, DSC WAS TO BE APPROACHED TO SEE IF HE WOULD BE THE PATRON AND IT WAS AGREED THAT THE ASSOCIATION WAS TO BE CALLED THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, WITH THE VIEW THAT WE CONTACT THE OTHER STATES TO FORM THEIR OWN DIVISIONS AND IN THE FUTURE WHEN ALL STATES CAME INTO THE FOLD THAT THE FEDERAL BODY BE TRANSFERRED TO NOWRA AS THE AIR BRANCH STARTED THERE.

AN APPROACH TO THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION CLUB AT BULL CREEK TO HOLD THE REUNION DINNER AT THEIR PREMISES MET WITH THEIR FULL APPROVAL AND PLANS WERE SET AFOOT.

ADMIRAL VAT SMITH WAS CONTACTED AND ASKED IF HE WOULD BE OUR PATRON AND IF HE WOULD ATTEND OUR REUNION DINNER AS WE WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN AIR FARES AND ACCOMODATION.

ON ARRIVAL AT PERTH AIR PORT ADMIRAL SMITH WAS MET BY THE ELECTED MEMBERS AND AN INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY THE PRESS.

THE DINNER WAS A ROARING SUCCESS AND VAT SMITH'S SPEECH WENT OVER WELL. THE PLACE WAS PACKED TO THE RAFTERS AND THE AIRFORCE ASSOCIATION COULD NOT GET OVER THE AMOUNT OF BOOZE CONSUMED. I DOUBT THAT IT WAS EVER BEATEN.

OUR FIRST RECORDED GENERAL MEETING WAS FEBRUARY 17TH 1977.

MEETINGS WERE HELD AT BULL CREEK UNTIL THERE WAS A LOT OF INFIGHTING WITHIN THE AIRFORCE AND WE PARTED COMPANY.

HILTON DEVEREUX TOOK ON THE TASK OF HAVING THE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED AND DID AN EXCELLENT JOB WITH HIS CONNECTIONS AT CROWN LAW.

BY THIS TIME CONTACT HAD BEEN MADE WITH SIMILAR PERSONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES.

GEORGE SMITH WENT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA TO TALK WITH THEIR GROUP AND I SPOKE WITH CLEM CONLAN AND THE VICTORIAN GROUP. BOTH GROUPS FOUND THE IDEA OF A UNITED FAAA OF AUSTRALIA TO BE A GOOD ONE AND THE DIVISIONS WERE FORMED AND GIVEN THEIR CERTIFICATES.

ALONG WITH GEOFF VICKRIDGE, JOHN GREEN, GEORGE SMITH AND RON TATE WE WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN A FLIGHT COURTESY OF THE RAAF HERCULES TO WILLIAMSTOWN AND THENCE TO NOWRA BY CARIBOU. THERE WE MET UP WITH DUKE MATTERSON.

A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE OFFICER ASSOCIATION, BRIAN McKEON AND WARICK ROBINSON ALONG WITH MIKE THORN , GEOFF VICKRIDGE, JOHN GREEN, RON TATE, GEORGE SMITH, AND MYSELF FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA WHERE IT WAS DECIDED TO FORM A NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION INCORPORATING BOTH THE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION AND ALL RANKS; THIS WAS IN 1986.

WE ATTENDED A DINNER AT BOMADERRY RSL WITH VAT SMITH.

NEW SOUTH WALES WAS GRANTED THEIR CHARTER ON THE 11TH APRIL 1989.

AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY 1998 IT WAS DECIDED THAT AS WE HAD BECOME A NATIONAL ORGANISATION THAT THE NATIONAL BODY BE AT NOWRA WHERE WE ALL BEGAN.

ALL MONIES HELD IN THE NATIONAL NAME AND ALONG WITH ALL PAPER WORK, REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP CARDS WERE TRANSFERRED TO NOWRA.

FROM THIS THE ASSOCIATION HAS GROWN WITH THE ACT, TASMANIA AND QUEENSLAND FORMING THEIR OWN DIVISIONS.

THEO BUSHE-JONES (LIFE MEMBER)

ATTENDANCE BOOK 7th FEBRUARY 1977

THEO BUSHE-JONES
BILL (PAPPY) GAULT
BRYAN DUNNE
FRED WOODWARD
BOB PATTENDEN
TOM MITCHELL
TOM BENNET
RON TATE
ROSS HEWITT
ROD TURPIN
EDDIE SHACKELTON
KEITH W TAYLOR
DON MILLER
SYD SALT
LES KITSON

DES HARVEY
STAN BROWN
TED GRUSCOTT
ALEX JENKINS
PETER HILL
TED DAVIS
JACK SURIANO
KERRY SOJAN
JIM KING
BILL DUNLOP
SNOW HALL
TED BOYD
DARRELL EVANS
HILTON DEVERAUX
BOB STEWART

L PHILLIPS
JOHN SELSMARK
GREGOR McQUIE
BRIAN WORTHINGTON
RAY EDWARDS

BARRY WALDEN
RON (GABBY) HAYES
JIM HAWKINS
B CUSACK

NAVAL ASSOCIATION

JACK SKINNER
E GREEN
P JOHNSON
VIC GIBSON
PAT DINGHAM
BOB HOBBS
GEORGE V SMITH

AIRFORCE ASSOCIATION

GEOFF HARRIS
LES GORDON
MEG OLIVE
K McCAUL
TOM MANNING

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER SEPTEMBER 30th
1977 AIRFORCE ASSOCIATION BATEMAN

PATRON ADMIRAL SIR V.A.T.SMITH A.C; K.B.E.; C.B.; D.S.C.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

THEO BUSHE-JONES (PRESIDENT)
PAPPY GAULT (VICE PRESIDENT)
DES HARVEY (JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT)
TOM MITCHELL (TREASURER)
KEITH W TAYLOR (SECRETARY)
JACK SURIANO (PUBLICITY OFFICER)
JIM HAWKINS (COMMITTEE)
BOB PATTENDEN (COMMITTEE)
BILL DUNLOP (COMMITTEE)
COLIN BUSHE-JONES
TED BOYD
STAN BROWN
KEVIN BAXTER
TOM BENNETT
RON COLE
STAN CORBOY
JIM CALDWELL
TERRY COLEMAN
ARTHUR COOK
BRIAN DUNNE
TED DAVIS
JACK DUPEROUZAL
BARRIE DUNBAR
ALFIE DIVER
KEN DUNCAN
HILTON DEVEREAUX

ALAN HILL
SNOW HALL
LIONEL HARRIS
PETER HILL
KEITH HARRIS
ROSS HEWITT
DON HALL
LES HODGSON
BRIAN (JO) JOST
JIM KING
LES KITSON
BOB MANNERS
KEITH MURDOCH
MIKE PERKINS
GRAEME PRICE
TERRY RUMENS
HENRY RUSSELL
KERRY SOJAN
JOHN SELSMARK
EDDY SHACKELTON
ROD TURPIN
TED TRUSCOTT
RON TATE
KEITH T TAYLOR
EDDY TAYLOR
FRED WOODWARD

BRUCE DYER
KEVIN FOLEY
JOHN FLETCHER
KEN GAY
CHRIS GREEN
BRIAN WORTHINGTON
GABBY HAYES

ALAN WHITE
BON WOOD
DON MILLER
ERIC McKENZIE
BRUCE PROUD
DARYL EVANS

