



The Quarterly Journal  
of the  
Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia

Volume 5 Number 4

October 1994

# Slipstream



*...With these hands we will pray for you...*

Three of our 'batsmen' who were present at the opening of Stage 3 of the Naval Aviation Museum, demonstrate the styles that made them famous in front of the Bronze Batsman.

L-R: Fred Lane - John Roland - John Todman

Photo courtesy Naval Aviation Museum



Foreword  
by **Admiral A.L. Beaumont, AC, RAN**  
Chief of the Defence Force

As a FISH Head, and what is more one of those rare officers who never served in HMAS MELBOURNE, I am both surprised and honoured to have been invited to provide the foreword to this edition of *Slipstream*. On the other hand, perhaps the 'inducements' offered by Toz Dadswell were more persuasive; he made me an offer I could not refuse.

Having read *Slipstream* over the years I am not surprised to see this effective channel of communication going from strength to strength. Along with its nostalgic items from the 'glory days' of the past, the wealth of news about former shipmates, current Navy activities and of course, the latest developments at our superb Naval Aviation Museum, make *Slipstream* a most readable and informative magazine.

*Slipstream* enables the Naval family to keep in touch, thus keeping alive not only fond memories of days gone by, but also serving as an active link between today's defence force and the community. Increasingly our Navy, along with its sister Services, is reaching into that broader community for the support it needs to discharge its operational functions. This has been driven not only by economic imperatives, but also by the promise of stronger and broader community support for the defence of Australia should conflict arise.

Increasing numbers of those who have served in an active capacity in the past but no longer wear the dark blue uniform, are now able to continue their contribution to our defence forces through the myriad of defence-related activities now performed within Australian industry, and that contribution is invaluable. As well as providing immediate support in the day to day performance of their 'civilian' jobs, their experience in uniform allows them to better understand the Service perspective and provide an informal, but vital link between those who continue to serve our nation in uniform and those who serve in the broader community. We each benefit as a consequence.

By keeping a large part of the Defence and the former Defence community in touch with one another and with contemporary Defence activities, publications such as *Slipstream* play an important role in the process of linking the Australian Defence Force with the Australian people it serves. *Slipstream* succeeds admirably in this role. To the editorial team and all those who read and contribute to *Slipstream*, my thanks for your past efforts and my best wishes for all your future endeavours.

**Editorial**

My sincere apologies for the late production of this edition of Slipstream., but my work load has been quite considerable and the health has suffered accordingly.

The trouble with playing a one-man-band, is that when the white ants topple the music stand, everything stops.

I am indebted to the member from Queensland who rang wanting to know why he hadn't received his October issue, especially after his mate had received his.

Considering that Slipstream was still in the computer, if he had sent me a photocopy it would have saved me a lot of time

My thanks also extend to the anonymous person who faxed me the following

**DON'T QUIT**

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit -  
Rest if you must - BUT DON'T YOU QUIT!

Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
As every one of us sometimes learns,  
And many a person turns about  
When they might have won if they stuck it out  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow -  
You may succeed with another blow

Success is failure turned inside out -  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit  
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit

*Seasons Greetings to All*

**GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

The members of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia, offer their congratulations to Sir Victor and Lady Smith who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary this month.

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**National Secretary's Report**

Seems just like yesterday that I was writing for the first issue of the year, and already we are approaching the end of 1994. The years appear to become shorter as the hair gets thinner and greyer.

The opening of the third stage of the Museum has passed, there were plenty of old familiar faces about on the day. Had a visit from Len and June Zuch from Queensland, we spent a pleasant couple of hours reminiscing about life in Huskisson in the early sixties and taking the odd fish from Moona Creek. Also met up with an old mate from the west in Jo Jost he doesn't look a lot different from the last time I saw him in about 1959 or 60. Sad to hear another sailor in Ken "Snow" Nicholls has slipped his painter because of the big "C", seems to many sailors pass on in this way.

The Federal Council meeting for 1994 is being hosted by the ACT Division in the RSL National Headquarters in Canberra on the 29th October. The Federal Council is the governing body of the Association and consists of Three (3) delegates from each Division and the National Executive. The National Executive consists of the President (Chairman of the Council), Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. During business sessions of the Federal Council only the Delegates from each Division "vote", in the event of a tied vote then and only then the President casts a vote. No other member of the Executive can cast a vote. Despite this procedure there still appears to be some people who believe the National Executive attempts to direct the Divisions. It should also be noted that regardless of the number of delegates attending from a Division the number of votes from each Division shall be three (3). It is also permissible for Divisions to appoint proxies to represent them.

The last issue of Slipstream was posted with a lot less effort than the previous one, again there were a few minor hitches with incorrect addresses. It is pleasing to note that most members are advising changes of address promptly. Had a letter from Stan Brown in New South Wales asking that I forward a letter to an old shipmate, Cyril Carey in Queensland. Hope it was the right Cyril Carey Stan!

Following are the names of those people who have joined the Association or have transferred from the Officers Association since the last issue:  
NSW transfers: Richard "Digger" Bourke, Hugh Hearn, Stephen Smith, Bill Vallack, Ken Bailey, John Bolton, Jim Caldwell, and Fred Lane  
New Members: G.R.Fitzgerald, John Metherall, Peter Brown.  
Associates: Garry Callaby, and Terry Walker.  
VIC: John Simmons, and Alex Marr, Associate: Enid Champion  
QLD: Trevor Rieck, Arthur Whitton, Roger Scovell, and Ron Mossman  
ACT: Transfers R.C.O'Day, H.C.Findlay, and W E "Sailor Bill" Callan.  
Tas: Len Ackerly and Associate Ada Ackerly

I suspect that there are a few more new members from the West and Queensland but those above are all at the time of writing. As this will be the last report for 1994 I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families the best for the approaching festive season and a wonderful 1995, til next time

Ian Ferguson  
Hon. National Secretary

**A LAST FAREWELL**

- BINNINGTON, Lawrence William - 23/07/94 (Cdr RN ex-RAN Rtd)
- NICHOLLS, Ken (Snow) - 20/08/94
- LLOYD Stephen John - 15/09/94 (Surgeon Rear Admiral AO RAN Rtd)
- KLOSE, Robert James - 18/09/94
- GROOME, Robert Waldamar (Bobby) - 21/09/94
- FINCH, Jack Harold - 07/10/94
- ZIMMER, William Alfred - 23/10/94
- HOWARTH, Thomas (Wog) - October 1994
- REIDY, Bill - October 1994

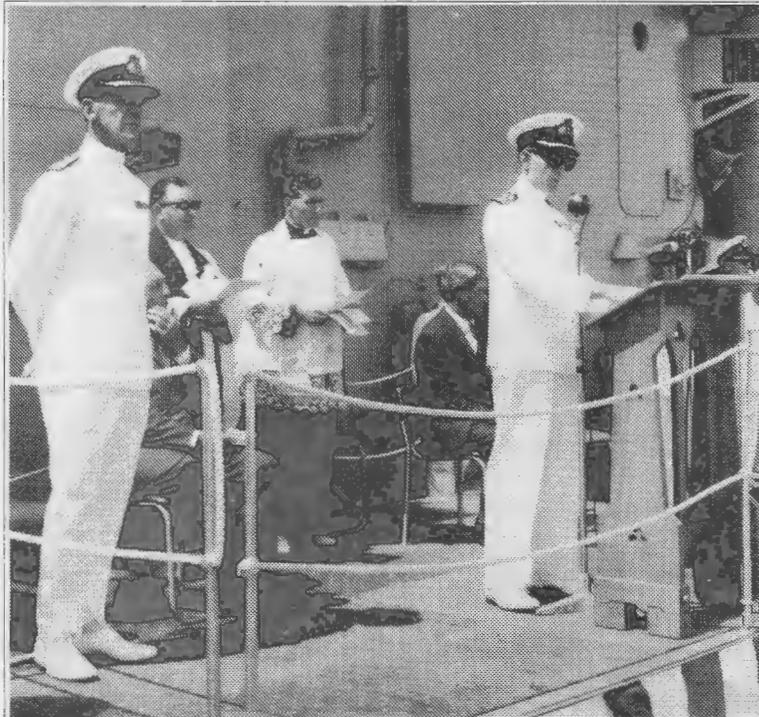
# FROM THE ARCHIVES



**1965**

**L-R: Mick Stubbington  
Brian Sargeson  
John Selby  
Vic Baugh  
Karl Fellenberg  
Peter Clark  
Frank Donnelly  
Frank Birtles  
John Duke  
'Tex' Cridge**  
Photo courtesy B.Sargeson

Preparing for a charity door-knock collection?



**1969**

**Church Service aboard HMAS Melbourne  
L-R: RAdm Crabbe - Chaplain Batt -  
Father Breslan - Captain Stevenson**



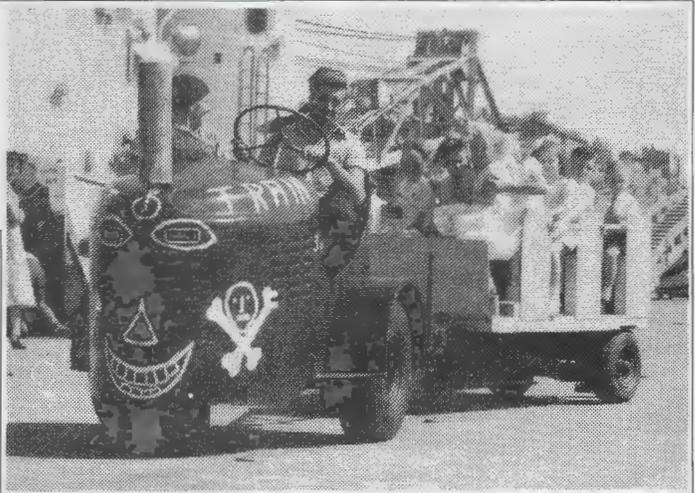
**1951 - Windmill Hotel, Arbroath  
L-R: Laurie Dickson - Noel Jolly - Ray Annand**

**1952**

**Kid's Xmas Party  
aboard  
HMAS SYDNEY  
Neil Keeble on duty as the  
'train driver'.  
Photo courtesy Neil Keeble**

**1960**

**Manila  
WELCOME TO  
THE  
'YELLOW BAR'  
Photo courtesy Neil Keeble**



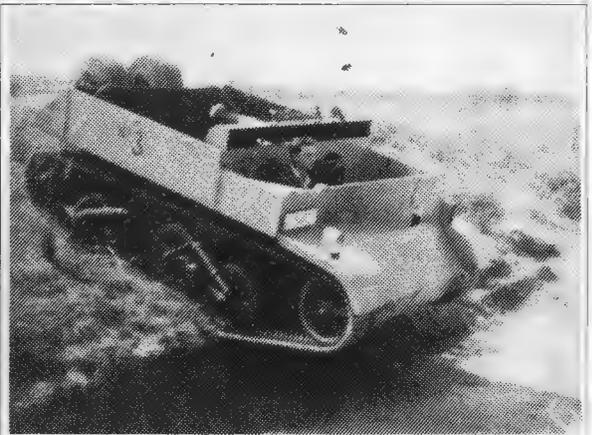
**NO BEER SERVICE  
BELOW MINOR  
DEPOSIT FIRE ARMS  
AT CASHIER**

**WE CLOSED  
AT 12:00 MIDNIGHT**

**THANK YOU**



**1953 - KURE**  
L-R: Syd Bull - 'Pincher' Martin - Harry Gibson -  
'Morrie' Green and two charming hostesses.  
Photo courtesy Bob Cronin



**1950s**  
Stan Brown goes cross country in the  
Salvage Section Bren Gun carrier.  
Photo courtesy Neil Keeble



**1950s**  
D6 Mess - HMAS ALBATROSS  
One of the 'wind tunnels'.  
Photo courtesy Neil Keeble



**1955**  
Cleaning the guns in the hangar after a  
shoot - and guess what?



**1956/7**  
HMAS MELBOURNE  
CAG Junior Sailor's Mess  
John Aherne wearing a shirt. Who are  
the others?  
Photo courtesy John Aherne

# PROSPECTING for the LOST SQUADRON

*This was the title of an article which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald, and, with their permission, reprinted in the January 1992 edition of Slipstream (when it was the NSW newsletter). At the conclusion of that article, I asked the readers to forward any further information they may find to update the story. Bob Cronin, has come up with the following article which appeared in the UK International Express. Ed.*

## LOST WARPLANE TO FLY AGAIN

Almost 260 feet down in an Arctic glacier, a fleet of warplanes lay entombed for 50 years, their fate a legend, their exact location a mystery. Like the Titanic, they were doomed to remain hidden, locked in the ice where they crash-landed.

Now one of those planes has been freed to fly again, thanks to two pilots from Atlanta who decided to look for the Lost Squadron. What began as casual curiosity became a 12 year, multi-million dollar quest.

David Hayes records the gripping tale of how perseverance triumphed over seemingly impossible odds.

Pat Epps, a stocky, clean-shaven aircraft dealer, and Richard Taylor, a tall bearded architect, first learned about the lost squadron in 1980.

They were in a bar in Sondre Stomjford on the west coast of Greenland when a group of Danes raised the subject.

Six P-38 Lightnings and two B-17 Flying Fortress bombers on their way to Britain had crash-landed in Greenland in an Arctic blizzard on 15 July 1942.

Miraculously, the pilots and their planes survived, but while the fliers were rescued, the aircraft were abandoned.

Epps, 46, and Taylor, 44, who had flown around the Caribbean and South America, through the Bermuda Triangle en route to a gold mine in Mexico, were riveted.

They were intrigued to learn that

the last time the planes had been spotted was in the early sixties.

They returned home to Atlanta and thought little more about the mysterious Lost Squadron.

Then one day in July, 1981, a wealthy businessman taxied into Epps hangar in a new Lear jet. Epps - who owned a tiny Beechcraft Bonanza - looked the machine over enviously. "That's a beautiful airplane," he said.

"Yeah," said the businessman. "But the one plane I've always wanted is a P-38." Epps couldn't believe his ears. "Well," he said "I know where there are six of them."

Later that day Epps excitedly phoned Taylor. "Hey, Richard," he said, "want to go north again?"

On August 1, 1981, the two men packed a twin engine Piper Aztec with camping gear, food, metal detectors, winter clothing and snow boots, and set out for the Arctic.

In retrospect their naivete was astounding. Said Taylor: "We didn't have any spare gas tanks or radio. We were just winging it and we were lucky we didn't get into serious trouble."

The expedition failed. Clearly, it was going to be a far more ambitious - and expensive - project than they anticipated.

But both men welcomed a challenge and set out on a second trip on October 18, 1981.

Five days later they again returned empty handed. But not empty hearted. They needed more time. Five years, as it turned out.

In July 1986, the adventurers, armed with a dozen men, a proton magnetometer and an electromagnetic induction meter, set out a third time.

They had given themselves two weeks to locate the P-38s. The weather conditions were perfect and they were confident their efforts would be rewarded. But it was not to be. The Lost squadron remained lost.

A fourth expedition in July 1988 proved equally futile.

In the six years that Epps and Taylor had attempted to turn what looked like fiction into fact, they were £195,000 out of pocket.

To find even one P-38 would require another £130,000. But what had they to offer potential investors

other than the fact that a refurbished P-38 had recently been sold for £520,000? And that a survivor from the legendary Lost Squadron could fetch £650,000.

"What we're selling," said Epps, "was a piece of a dream."

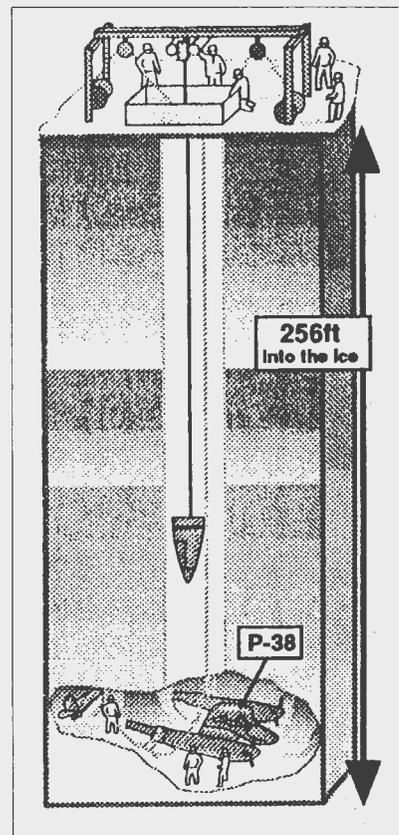
Among those who bought the dream were Don Brooks, who loved aviation history and whose father served as a B-17 tail-gunner, and Kentucky millionaire, Roy Shoffner, who agreed to lend £220,000.

The big breakthrough for Epps and Taylor came when subsurface radar located eight large objects beneath the ice. But the P-38s could be as deep down as 250 feet, the height of a 25 storey building.

Pivotal to the expedition was a thermal meltdown generator which resembled a torpedo with a giant stainless steel nose cone.

But possibly the most important piece of equipment was a simple device known as the Super Gopher.

It was like an oil drum around which copper tubing was placed. Two hoses were attached to it, one of which had boiling water pumped through. The Gopher then sank hundreds of feet, melting the ice on its downward path.



On June 6, 1990, the Super Gopher came to a halt at 256 feet. Blocking its progress was a B-17

Flying Fortress. Epps and Taylor were ecstatic.

*At last they were on the right path and on August 31, the two were lowered down the shaft.*

The bomber could be seen floating in a pool of glacial melt. After the first flush of excitement, however, Taylor's heart sank. Most of the B-17 was a jumble of mangled junk. Would the P-38s be in the same condition?

Epps and Taylor found the money for the seventh and final attempt. The date was May, 1992. It was make or break time.

And then came the miracle they had waited eleven years for. The Super Gopher came to rest on a P-38. Epps was the first to go down.

What he saw was part of a wing, the tip of a propeller, the cockpit and the nose of the plane all the way to the tips of the machine guns. The metal was dented in places but nothing appeared badly damaged.

The entire plane was exposed, cast in the strange glow of halogen lights. The cramped cockpit was in remarkable condition, its gauges and instruments intact.

Epps uncovered a set of keys found on the cockpit floor behind the throttle quadrant, the instrument panel, ammunition canisters, assorted tools, a sealed package of tobacco, a Lockheed manual and a checklist on which a pilot's handwriting was still legible.

The expedition, however, could not be considered a success until the 10-ton plane, with its 52 foot wingspan was dismantled and brought to the surface and reassembled.

In a hangar in Kentucky the detailed and laborious process began on 28 October, 1992.



20mm cannon and ammunition drum

For Epps and Taylor the magnificent dream had come true.

The price, in terms of time and money was high, and five of the P-38s still remain buried. Yet when the assembly work on the historic P-38, christened Glacier Girl, is finished, it promises to be one of the most perfect 'warbird' restorations ever. And for Epps and Taylor, the dream will be fulfilled when their fighter flies again.

*\* Adapted by Clive Hirschorn from David Hayes', 'The Lost Squadron', published on 22 October by Bloomsbury.*

## 'NICK' OFF?

One dark, stormy night, two nuns were driving along a country road.

There was a tremendous flash of lightning and a clap of thunder and the Devil appeared, spreadeagled on the bonnet of the car, leering through the windscreen.

The nun doing the driving screamed out to her passenger, "Show him your cross!"

The other nun promptly wound down her window and yelled, "GET OFF THE BLOODY BONNET!"

## Yesterday....

## Today....

## Tomorrow

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back YESTERDAY. We cannot undo a single act we performed, we cannot erase a single word we said...YESTERDAY is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its possible adversaries, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control.

TOMORROW'S sun will rise, either in splendour or behind a mask of clouds, but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in TOMORROW for it is as yet unborn.

This leaves one day...TODAY. Any man can fight the battle of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities...YESTERDAY and TOMORROW...that we break down. It is not the experience of TODAY that drives men mad - it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened YESTERDAY and the dread of what TOMORROW will bring.

Let us therefore live but one day at a time!

## RAN Radio Mechanic's Association

We are a voluntary group of ex-RAN Radio Mechanics (to use a generic term), endeavouring to identify and locate all such Radio Mechanics since the formation of the Wireless Mechanic Branch in 1943. Since that time there has been an Electrical Branch, and then Electronic Technical Branch in the RAN and possibly several other name changes by now.

'We', are following the trail and welcome this unique group of people to join us in our Association for mutual benefit and common interest.

We value the mateships formed during our service, and provide the means of re-establishing links lost for various reasons.

We also recognise, that due to the elapse of time, that some of our colleagues have passed on. We welcome widows and/or next-of-kin to be associated with us in the family of 'Ex-RAN Radio Mechanics'. Anyone who believes that they have an affinity to 'us', are welcome as part of the extended family.

We have been arranging reunions throughout Australia during the last three years and they have been most successful.

For more information, please contact: John Saywell, 5 Almond Court, Vale Park, SA 5081. Tel: (08) 344 1554.

## NEWS WITH A VENGEANCE

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing a bit of information that you may be able to use in *Slipstream*. It may be of interest to those members who served in the former *HMAS Vengeance* (now the Brazilian Navy's Flagship - '*Minas Gerais*').

Early in July I decided to find out what our old *Vengeance* was up to, so I wrote to Brazil, after ascertaining the correct address from the Brazilian Consul in Sydney. The reply is enclosed.

When I wrote to Brazil I stuck my neck out and told them that if any information was forthcoming on the *Vengeance*, that it may be published in *Slipstream*. I would ask you, as a centre of goodwill, that a copy be forwarded to Brazil.

Regards, Ron Baxter

MINISTÉRIO DA MARINA  
GABINETE DO MINISTRO DA MARINHA

Brasília, DF  
Em 20 de Setembro de 1994

Dear Sir,

In attention to your letter dated July, 25th, current year, we are sending you the information and photos listed in annex about the Aircraft Carrier "MINAS GERAIS".

Yours sincerely,

AIRTON TEIXEIRA PINHO FILHO  
Capitão-de-Fragata  
Assessor de Relações Públicas

### ENCLOSURE 1

General Information: The aircraft carrier "MINAS GERAIS" is the ex-*HMS Vengeance* of Colossus Class. It suffered a refitting in Rotterdam, Holland, and until commissioning in Brazilian Navy we have the following information -

16/11/1942 - Laid Down

23/02/1944 - Launched

15/12/1944 - Commissioned in Royal Navy

13/11/1952 - Loaned to the Royal Australian Navy

25/08/1955 - Returned to the Royal Navy

13/12/1956 - Purchased by the Brazilian Government

17/07/1957 - Beginning of the overhaul (VEROLME)

25/11/1960 - Ending of the overhaul

06/12/1960 - Commissioned into the Brazilian Navy

In its first overhaul, in Rotterdam, we can list the following modifications;

\* 8½ degrees angle deck, adding security and quickness to landing and take off aircraft operations;

\* a steam catapult;

\* mirror-light, deck landing system;

\* new island;

\* steam capacity was increased;

\* new radar equipment;

\* air conditioning in all inhabited rooms;

\* new accommodation to crew, new kitchens, sickroom, x-ray room, lab., barbery and other facilities.

In 1979, a second overhaul with the following alterations;

\* new boilers;

\* new radar equipment;

\* new communications equipment; and

\* new generators.

A third and complete overhaul, in 1991, to attend the claims of the modern naval warfare. We can quote the following alterations;

\* efficient search and aircraft approach and control radars;

\* advanced communications equipment;

\* a completely national conceived Tactical Control System (SICONTA), able to compile and show tactical data quickly and precisely (C31).

\* a propulsion plant that allows the ship to reach high speeds necessary to flight operations;

\* new IFF; and

\* comfort facilities to crew.

### ENCLOSURE 2

#### PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

Displacement 19,240 t

Length 214.10 m

FD Length 206 m

Beam 45.85 m

Aircraft 16 ASW Aircraft and Helicopters

Max. Speed 25 Kts

Crew 1300



NAeL "MINAS GERAIS"  
AIRCRAFT CARRIER "MINAS GERAIS"

## MORE - on the 'gong show'!

Prolific correspondent, Ron Baxter, from the Queensland Division, has more information to hand relating to Defence and Defence Related Awards.

Following a query relating to the possible recognition (posthumous) to his parents for their service in the ARP, and to his sister for her service in the Women's National Emergency Legion, he received a reply, published here, from the Awards and National Symbols Branch.

In addition to his initial query, he also asked Mr Gary Punch MP, why copies of the CIDA Report (Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards), were available to RSL Members at a discounted price and not other service related organisations. The reply is also covered in the following letter....

*Australian Department of  
Administrative Services  
Awards and National Symbols Branch  
GPO Box 1331  
Canberra ACT 2601*

Dear Mr Baxter,

I refer to your letter to the Minister for defence, Science and Personnel, the Hon Gary Punch MP concerning the Civilian Service Medal 1939-1945. The Minister for Administrative Services has portfolio responsibility for honours policy and your letter was forwarded to this office for reply in view of its administrative

responsibilities for honours and awards.

The purpose of the Civilian Service Medal 1929-1945 is to recognise the service of members of designated civilian groups not previously recognised by an existing World War II award including the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA), the Northern Australian Railways (NAR) and perhaps also members of the Civil Constructional Corps (CCC) and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD).

The prescribed organisations will be those in which members served in arduous circumstances subject to military-like arrangements and conditions of service in support of the war effort during the period 3 September 1939 to 2 September 1945. The Qualifying period is 180 days of service whether served in one or more prescribed organisations or any combination of them whether the service was continuous or aggregated and whether the individuals were volunteers or conscripted.

Research is currently underway to examine the claims of other groups seeking access to the Civilian Service Medal 1939-1945 to ascertain if they can meet the recommended criteria and the claims of the Air Raid Wardens and the Women's National Emergency Legion will also be given consideration in this context. I shall write to you again about the outcome of the Government's deliberations on

this matter.

With regard to your comments about the cost of the CIDA Report. I am pleased to advise that the discount on this Report published by the Australian Government Printing Service (AGPS) has been extended to members of all ex-service and veteran's associations.

I understand that AGPS will advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs of the extended discount on this publication and will seek that Department's assistance in drawing the reduced price of the Report to the attention of ex-service and veteran associations.

Normally priced at \$14.95, the CIDA Report is now available to members of all veterans associations at \$12.95 a copy through:

- \* Commonwealth Government bookshops nationwide;
- \* AGPS Mail Order Sales, GPO Box 84, Canberra ACT 2601;
- \* AGPS Telephone Sales on free call number (008) 020 049; and
- \* Canberra Customer Telephone Sales on (06) 295 4861.

I hope this information will be of assistance.

*Operations Manager  
Medals Validation Unit*

Ron suggests that if you just wish to 'scan' a copy, visit your local Federal MP's office and have a look through their copy.

Whilst there, you can request a free Australian Awards and National Symbols information kit - Branches can also request to be issued with an Australian Flag and a photograph of the Queen.

### A letter to a member which may be of interest to others....

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
(NAVY OFFICE)

.....1994

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your recent letter concerning your entitlement to a Long Service Medal with respect to your service in the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Naval Reserves.

There were three long service awards applicable to service; The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal awarded to members of the Permanent RAN, the Fleet Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal awarded for combined service in the Permanent RAN and the Fleet Reserve and the Volunteer Reserve

Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

**The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal** was awarded to sailors qualified by service and conduct. To be qualified by service and good conduct a sailor must fulfil the following criteria:

- a. have completed 15 years qualifying service over the age of 18 with continuous Very Good conduct and with conduct in service over the age of 18 not below Good.
- b. hold three good conduct badges; and
- c. be serving on an engagement to complete 20 years service over the age of 20.

**The Fleet Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal** was awarded to sailors who had completed 15 years combined service in the Permanent RAN and the Royal Australian Fleet Reserve and who did not qualify for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for service in the Permanent RAN. A member also required continuous Very Good conduct.

To be deemed efficient for medal entitlement purposes, a member of the Reserves must fulfil their annual training obligation. For members who do not have an annual training obligation (RANEM, RAFR and the Inactive RANR), a year shall be counted only if the member is called upon to render service by performing full time or part time duty during that year and in fact rendered that service.

continued over...

**The Volunteer Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal** was granted on the completion of 12 years service with a character assessment of at least Very Good and an efficiency assessment of at least Satisfactory.

The following may be counted as qualifying service:

\* All service with the Royal Australian Naval Reserve and Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

\* Service in the Senior Cadets

above the age of 15 years.

\* Members serving in the Citizen Naval Forces or a similar Commonwealth force on September 1939 may count mobilised service from this date, until dispersal, as double time.

Members who were not in the Citizen Naval Forces on September 1939 may only count their mobilised service as single time. Service in the Permanent Forces did not count as

qualifying service.

All of the above awards have been superseded by the introduction of the Defence Force Service Medal, the Reserve Force Decoration, and the Reserve Force Medal on 14 February 1975.

I hope I have been of assistance.

*Yours faithfully,  
K.R.Fremantle  
for Director of Naval Personal Services*



## WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

by I.G.(Chips) Gray  
Welfare Officer NSW Division

Some of the changes mentioned in the fine print of the last Federal Budget are now being published. Veteran Affairs publication, 'Vetlink', recently announced the following:

### Income Support Supplement

Under the current system, a war widow/widower cannot receive any income support pension from the Department of Veteran Affairs unless they qualify for the service pension in their own right.

They have to go to Social Security and apply for an age or disability support pension. If the Social Security requirements, including the means and assets tests are met, then an income support pension would be received.

The big change takes place from payday 20 March next year. From that day, the income support pension supplement will be available from

DVA. This means that widows and widowers will receive all benefits from the one source.

People will be contacted by DVA later this year and given the choice of retaining existing arrangements or transferring to the new system..

### Standard Rate of Service Pension

March 20 is also a very significant date for those veterans receiving service pensions.

Currently, when a service pensioner dies, or a couple receiving the pension separate, the non veteran partner can only be paid half the married rate of pension by the DVA.

For that reason, most people have elected to transfer to Social Security to get the higher standard (single) rate of income support pension.

Next year, those who became widowed or separated, will be eligible to receive the standard rate of service

pension from DVA.

Those widows who elected to remain with DVA although they could only receive the service pension at the partnered rate, will receive the higher standard rate from 20 March 1995.

Any person who is widowed or separated, and was receiving a partner service pension immediately prior to the death or separation from the eligible veteran will, in most cases, be able to transfer back to DVA from Social Security.

In a further announcement from the Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Con Sciacca, World War 2 veterans can apply for Nicotine Patches to help them overcome their smoking habit. Doctors would now be able to prescribe the nicotine patches under the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The Department of Veteran's Affairs general telephone number for NSW is (02) 213 7777.

The postal address is: Box 3994, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001.

From anywhere in Australia (except Sydney metropolitan area) phone 008 257 251.

## CRASH PILOT HONOURED

Friends and family of the late Errol (Klump) Kavanagh, gathered at the Narrabundah Oval in Canberra on Sunday 30 October, to hear the Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, name the playing field, 'The Errol Kavanagh Memorial Oval'.

A short service of dedication was conducted by Monsignor Frank Lyons, and David Ramsay, spoke about the life and naval career of our departed shipmate.

[ *Cmdr Kavanagh, lost his life when a MiG 15 he was piloting crashed at Narrabundah. He deliberately steered the aircraft away from the playing fields which were being used by a large number of people at the time. Ed*]



**'MELBOURNE - EVANS'  
Material sought for Journal**

In the early hours of 3 June 1969, *HMAS Melbourne* and *USS Frank E. Evans*, collided in the South China Sea; 74 American lives were lost.

A 25th Anniversary reunion was recently held in Canberra which was attended by members of *Melbourne's* ship's company, the Carrier Air Group, and two USN survivors who made the long trek to represent their former shipmates. Some former members of *Melbourne's* ships company, flew to the USA in October to attend a similar reunion in Las Vegas.

Greg Ellis and Bob Winston, have been active in marshalling memorabilia and collecting suitable material for presentation to the RAN Museum Repository at Spectacle Island.

In a recent letter, Bob Winston outlined their requirements as follows:

*We would like to hear from anyone serving on the Melbourne at the time of the collision. I have only 75 names from those who attended the reunion in Canberra, but at the service I estimated that there were 250-300 present. We need to know the names of the ship's company and CAG for our journal. We are also looking for newspaper cuttings or magazine stories from that period (1969/70)*

*relating to the incident. We are also seeking copies of letters that you were asked to write to your family to let them know that you were alright following the incident...*

If you can assist with names or memorabilia, please contact Bob Winston on (042) 611679 or write to: 11 Swain Crescent, Dapto NSW 2530 -or - contact Greg Ellis on (048) 839287 or write to: 120 Sunrise Road, Yerrinbool, NSW 2575.

The following memorabilia may be obtained by placing orders with Greg Ellis. Available for purchase are the following items:-

\* 25th Anniversary Commemorative videotape highlighting the memorial service, interviews with both RAN and USN survivors and a historical perspective (running time 1 hour). Cost including postage -\$55.00.

\* *Melbourne - Evans* Friendship plaque. \$50.00 including postage and handling.

\* *Melbourne - Evans* fleecy lined sweat shirt with screen printed logo. \$30.00 including postage and handling.

\* 'FAREWELL TO A LADY' - A videotape highlighting historical perspectives including *Melbourne* leaving Sydney Harbour for its ignominious end (14 minutes). \$23.00 including postage and handling.

\*Ron 'Nullarbor' Baker, reunion

*organiser, has been asked to work on a 30th Anniversary reunion (1999). There have been several suggested venues, Alice Springs, Bundaberg, Sydney etc.. If you have any suggestions, drop him a line to:*

501 WING

RAAF Base Amberley Qld. 4306  
or phone W (07) 280 3061

**THE SEA**

by Ron Baker

*The Sea! That vast, majestic plain  
Of foam-flecked wave and windswept  
rain*

*And howling gales that bend the brain  
And fill brave men with dread.*

*The Sea! That sparkling crystal pool  
Bedecked with phosphorescent jewel  
Where dolphins play the merry fool  
And Neptune makes his bed.*

*The Sea! That final resting place  
For sailing men of every race  
Where seaweed shrouds are  
commonplace  
Among the grateful dead.*

*No grave for me, nor crypt, nor tomb  
Nor roaring furnace in curtained room  
But nature's cool and watery womb  
Is where I'll lay my head*

[Ron Baker wrote this many years ago with the Evans' casualties in mind.Ed]

**NAVY MEDAL FOR VETERANS**

The Royal Australian Navy is looking for *Warrnambool* survivors who don't have the Navy General Service Medal.

On Thursday, 28 July, the medal with Minesweeping Clasp was presented to Mr Leo Evans [FAAA member - NSW], a survivor from the corvette *HMAS Warrnambool*. The ship sank on 12 September 1947, after striking a mine during post-war minesweeping operations off the North Queensland coast. Four sailors lost their lives.

Twenty-seven survivors, including Mr Evans, were deemed eligible for the medal under a short service clause, although they had not completed the 180 days on minesweeping operations normally required to qualify.

The Navy's Staff Officer Medals, Mr Keith Freemantle, said, "To date, the Navy has been unable to contact 23 of the survivors and wishes to hear from them."

Mr Freemantle can be contacted in Canberra on (06) 265 3321. Those crew members killed or injured were automatically awarded the medal.

Leo Evans was presented with his medal in a simple ceremony at *HMAS Waterhen*, Waverton, by the commander of Australia's Mine Warfare and Diving Force, Commander Russ Baker. Representatives from the current *HMAS Warrnambool*, a Fremantle Class patrol boat, and the minehunter *HMAS Rushcutter*, were in attendance.

oooooooo



## They were known as - 'The Dirty Dozen!'

Dear Ed,

You may like to include the enclosed anecdote in *Slipstream*.

I'm a new member who had the great pleasure of attending the 46th FAA Anniversary Dinner (NSW Ed.) and also receiving my first copy (Vol.5 No.3) of *Slipstream*.

I should have joined before, but it's not until one meets up with the 'survivors' as I did at the 46th, that one realised how much has been missed by the loss of contact. It won't happen again!

That Museum sure brought a big lump to the throat.

Lots of luck in your wonderful 'labour of love'.

Sincerely,  
Bill Walker - Lt RN Ret'd

.....It seemed like only yesterday. All those memories came flooding back during the FAA 46th Anniversary Dinner in that beautiful Function Centre at the Naval Aviation Museum at Nowra. What an achievement that Museum is!

Here's one that few of you will remember - it revolves around the happy ship *Sydney* and the 20th Carrier Air Group; well, not really the CAG, just the Poms who kept the workshops aboard tidy for Captain's Rounds and ready for the 20th CAG ground crews to plunder when they came aboard.

We'd been through the work-up period around the Irish Sea, with so many tales to tell that a book must be written one day by someone who kept a log-book. Danny Buchanan had made that first spectacular landing with the CAG AEO in the back seat of a Firefly, which the RN must have felt sorry they had loaned to us after what he did to it. 'Red' Merson had spread-eagled himself on the after bulkhead of the Wardroom trying to break through to the WRNS who were stranded aboard by the weather off Milford Haven.

And then we were at the Tail of the Bank, the CAG were ashore saying "Goodbye" to all their Pommy mates, the ship empty, waiting to embark

those lovely Fireflies and Furies and all the bits to keep 'em flying. Both watches were given five days leave - stand fast the FAA. The Commander wanted them aboard to stow all that new gear.

Now that was fine for the Ship's Company, mostly Aussies. One last fling in the Old Dart and then home to Oz, but the FAA was mostly (99.9%) ex-RN or RN Loan. I wasn't too worried because my wife and daughter were already on their way to Australia, but for the others; this was their last chance to see their home town friends and families for years, perhaps - they weren't too happy.

It took me a while to persuade the Commander that, given a sea-plane crane driver and a dozen lusty sailors, I could get all our goodies aboard and stowed while the Poms went home on ten days leave. I think that he might have agreed, just to get me out of his hair, and to have the pleasure of seeing this stropky RN Warrant Electrician fall flat on his face. I'd stood by the fitting out of Sydney in Plymouth and he knew me as a persistent bastard with little respect for authority other than my own.

Well, the rest of 'em dropped gleefully into the tender and steamed off to Blighty. The next morning the ship's company duty watch fell in as usual and were detailed for work. Here too the Commander must have been looking for revenge, from various divisions, in ones and twos, came the toughest looking dozen sailors the Navy ever had to cope with. They formed a ragged line in front of me and stood in various attitudes of boredom, it seemed to me that I was going to have my work cut out to get anything like a days work out of them.

"We've got to load about fifty planes and five lighter-loads of spare parts in the next ten days. The Commander thinks we can't do it! All I can promise is that you're mine for that period, and if there is any time left over you can go ashore 'til the ship sails." They perked up noticeably. "Where's the stuff you want us to load?" asked one of them. Down the river from the Store Depot came a loaded barge. "There's the first instalment", I told them.

The Torpedo Party had the crane manned, with an EA standing by to help the antique work. As soon as the barge secured alongside, the crane driver set his machine in motion and very soon the first crate was lowered to the flight deck. From then on, the 'dirty dozen' heaved, pulled, lifted and fork-lifted box after box onto the after

lift, from where it was moved to the hangar stowages, in the deck-head, hangar walls and in 'C' hangar. Engines, props, oleos, spare wings, tails, control surfaces, you name it. All of it disappeared into the hole in the flight deck, hour after hour. The second and third lighters came alongside and they in turn were emptied - the 'dirty dozen' never flagging, going below in twos and threes to eat when hungry - no one shouted orders or got his 'knickers in a twist'. The day ended at sunset with everything that had been brought aboard stowed away in its right place and lashed down for sea.

Next morning they took my "Well done, fellows", with a few grins and even called me "Sir" a couple of times, then.....we waited, and waited, and waited. I got on the blower to the depot and found out that they only had the three lighters and were still reloading No.1. I took a boat ashore and explained to the boss-man, as tactfully as I was able to, that we had dealt with three lighter loads on the day previous, and why were they taking so long? Maybe I could send my 'wharfies' ashore to give them a hand? Cries of horror! The Union would never agree to that!

My parting shot before I returned to the ship, was to tell them that if my 'dirty dozen' were kept waiting much longer, they might take matters into their own hands and come ashore on a raid and seize our property!

The fourth barge finally arrived alongside and was emptied so fast they barely had time to get the mooring lines secured. Another long wait and number five, the last, came down the river and received the same treatment. Hands secured early that day, for us at least, and the rested (and clean) 'dirty dozen' were on the flight deck next morning as the ship weighed anchor and eased up the river to the Store Depot wharf and moored alongside. The aircraft, cocooned and straight from the production lines, were towed under the sea-plane crane and hoisted aboard one by one, wheeled away, stowed, and lashed down ready for sea.

Next day, the same. Finally the flight deck, as well as the hangars were full of Fireflies and Furies. On day five the finishing touches were put to the stowing and lashing and I reported to a somewhat disbelieving Commander, that *Sydney* had its full load ready for the long sea-haul to home (as we call Australia, eh?) "Very good", was the reply. "Your hands can report back to part of ship tomorrow".

I remonstrated with him that the hands had been given to me for a full ten days and that I had already told them to clean up and carry on ashore if they wished to.

Well, to cut a long heated discussion short, the Commander and I finished up in front of the Skipper, Captain Dowling. He heard me out and gave judgement in my favour and the 'dirty dozen' went ashore for five days. The Commandeer never forgave me, nor even acknowledged my presence in the ship for my remaining year of Loan Service.

For the rest of my very happy time in the Sydney, odd sailors would grin and give me a, "G'day, Sir", as our paths crossed. Although the faces and names escaped me, I knew they were from the 'dirty dozen', or friends of the same. At any rate, they all wore RAN cap ribbons - when they wore cap ribbons at all.

The ship worked like that, you knew your job and did it, and you helped the other bloke if he needed help. We, the 'dirty dozen' and I, didn't do it all alone, there were a couple of RAN Mechs/Tiffs in the hangars who acted as guides and experts in the placing and stowage of the bits and pieces. BUT - the 'dirty dozen' worked like Titans to get that shore leave and prove the Commander wrong. They could do anything they wanted to do, but they had to be convinced it needed to be done.

## TRACKER TRIALS MELBOURNE

Dear Ed,

I recently had some thirty year old slides of the 'long cruises' of 1962-'63 made into prints, and discovered a couple which portray a small piece of the history of the FAA.

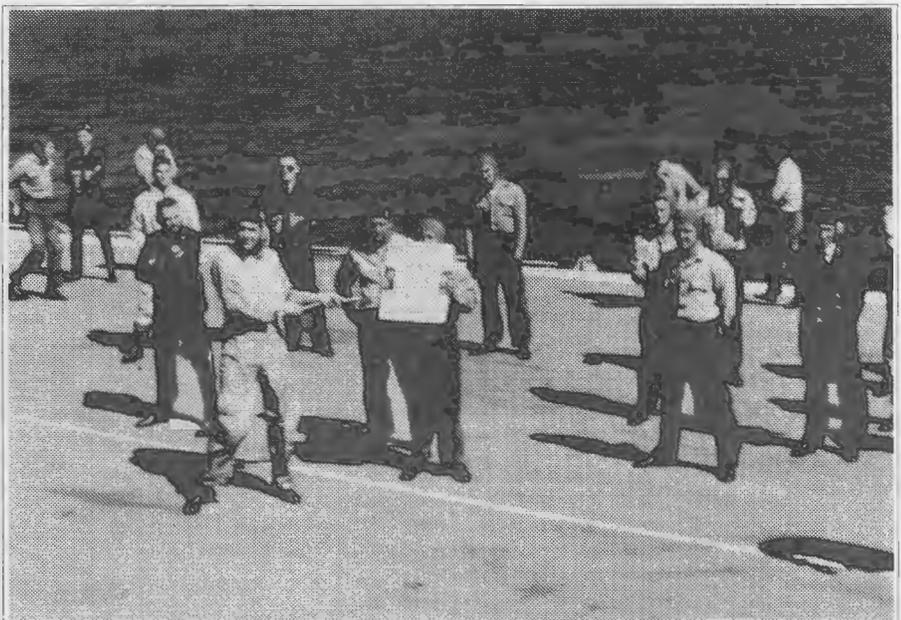
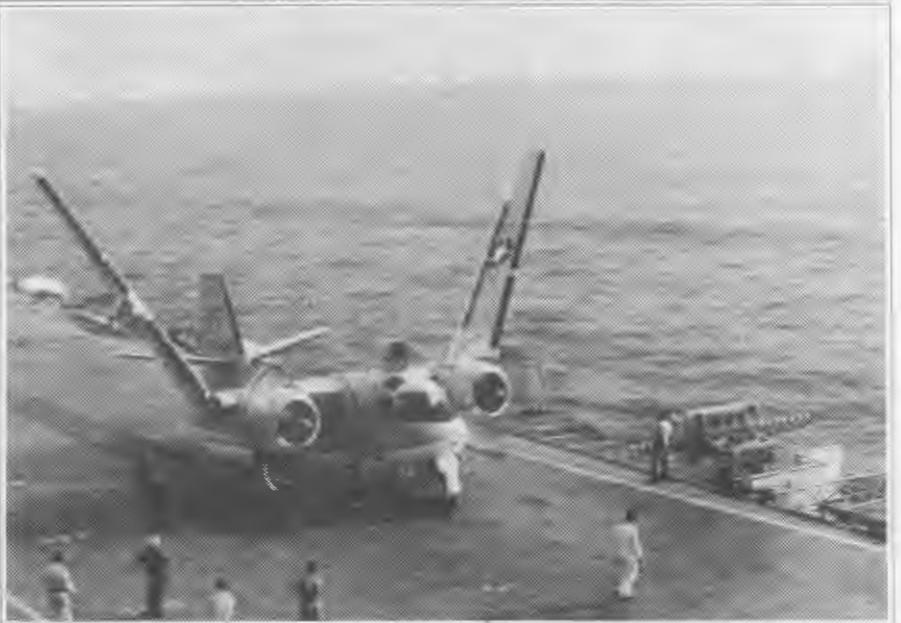
They show a United States Navy S2 making the first ever Tracker arrival and departure on Melbourne, this was six or seven years prior to the embarkation of our first S2 squadron.

The third photograph was taken from my observer seat in a Gannet and shows 'Fearless' Fred Lane, the FDO, and various other workers and goofers prior to seven tons of steam being released into the South China Sea.

I can recognise 'Soapy' McKeon and Barry Venamore, but although the faces of the rest of the flight deck crew are still familiar, the names have faded from memory.

Cheers,

Arthur Johnson



# Letters to the Editor



Dear Ed,

Each issue of *Slipstream* is better than its predecessor. Take the last issue for example, more names and faces coming out of the woodwork. Some names bring a face immediately, some take a little thinking about, but they eventually arrive. When you consider the time lapse, it's going on forty years for some of us.

What a massive circulation this magazine would have if we could round up all ex-FAA bods and get them on the register. If you know anyone out there, get on to them - some say they aren't interested, maybe so, but try anyway.

Some of those faces bring back memories of amusing incidents, some quite funny. It does seem that most occasions were taken on a comical note anyway, which just points to the temperament of FAA personnel in general. What about the time the driver's door fell of Harold Kent's old ute outside ARS, all the section roared laughing, even Harold saw the joke...eventually. He made some of us stay back late and put it back on again. 'Happy' Kirwin, as the PO, was put in charge of the work party. I do believe that it came undone again down near the golf course whilst Harold was on his way home - no more was ever said about it though.

Thinking of the magazine, I wonder what people who have never served in the FAA must think when they read an issue. The friendships kindled all those years ago (and not so long ago), and still as strong as ever. With a country as big as Australia and the people so far apart, it is very hard to keep track of them all. You can't get much further apart than Townsville and Tasmania, yet letters and phone calls pass quite regularly now - eh, Roger! All done initially through the pages of *Slipstream*.

An example - 2100 and my phone rings..."That you, Jake? Beau Bosanquet here". Well, bugger me - someone I haven't seen or heard of for thirty-seven years! There was a lot of reminiscing to do in the next hour and a half. No doubt others reading this have had similar experiences. Don't be shy, tell your yarns and your dits and your FAA mates will be so pleased to

hear from you.

There would be little doubt about the pride that the grand old man of the Fleet Air Arm, Sir Victor Smith, must feel when he reads his issue, knowing that he was instrumental in starting this branch of the service all those years ago. Knowing that the bonds of friendship are still as strong as ever. Sir Victor, we wish you well, and say thank you for bringing together a great group of young people to a friendship that will continue for the rest of their lives.

Best wishes,  
Matt (Jake) Jacobs

Dear Ed,

Just a short note to let you know that in the last edition of *Reveille*, in the Last Post Navy section, I noted the passing of B.N. West (L/PM). This would have to be Bruce West, or as everybody knew him, 'Muscles' West. His service time was probably from early 1948 to 1960, and he did two trips to Korea. Could you please check this out?

I don't know whether he ever joined the Fleet Air Arm Association, but he will be missed by a lot of the old members and a note of his passing would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,  
Ted Silsby

[Ted - there is no record of Bruce as a member of the association and no information has come along the grape vine, so I am unable to confirm that the person you knew is the one mentioned in *Reveille*. Ed.]

Dear Ed,

Just a note to thank you for the copy of the last edition of *Slipstream*, which I really enjoyed reading. Sorry I've been so slack in acknowledging same.

I was able to relate to a lot of the articles and photographs, in particular the photograph on Page 4 of No.7 Course showing A/SubLt Steve Smith. Steve and I went to school together in Wagga Wagga and both of us played in the School Band (Steve played the cornet).

Of particular interest was the report on related awards for peace time service - after 22 years service I couldn't even qualify for a housing

loan after I paid off!

I did time on *Australia*, *Sydney*, *Vengeance*, *Melbourne* and *Stalwart*. Three carriers and six years at *Albatross*, so I have always had a certain rapport with the Birdies.

I can't find mention of a membership fee but will enclose a cheque which if not enough/ or if ineligible for membership, please accept as a donation. Congratulations on a fine journal.

All the best,

Phil Hopkins - ex-Bandie.

[Welcome aboard, Phil. I'm looking for photos of the *Albatross* bands in action - not forgetting the 'blue jackets' and 'Bomber' Brunswick in his leopard skin. Actually, the photo of Alli Oop in the last edition made me think of him. Ed.]

Dear Ed,

In the last issue of *Slipstream* you printed my letter in which I asked for help in locating an old friend of mine whom I lost track of thirty-two years ago.

One has to marvel at the power of the printed word, because not only was the required information relayed to me in short order, but a couple of other 'long lost souls' took the trouble to call me and indulge in a little long distance reminiscing.

A sincere thank you to the ex-birdies that rang me, and also to *Slipstream* which made it possible.

John Ahern

Dear Ed,

I would like to point out an error in the caption of the photograph which appeared in 'FROM THE ARCHIVE' - MT Section 1959, in the last edition of *Slipstream*.

The PO on the right of Tom Dodds is not Ray Annand, but is TED SILSBY!

Yours sincerely,

Ted Silsby

[OK Ted, you win! Ed]

Dear Ed,

Thank you so much for your efforts in producing *Slipstream*. It is thirty-seven years since I left the Navy, with a medical discharge - and a lot of regrets - and your magazine helps keep the memories fresh.

I was a general service officer who served with the *Sydney* in 1952, and then commissioned the *Melbourne* in the UK and served with her during 1956.

My flying experience was limited to eight months of flying training in 1953

and experiences with the squadrons aboard ship and in the UK.

This brings me to the subject of the recent photo of 808 Squadron which was taken about June 1955. [Slipstream April 1994, Page 7. Ed] I attended Peter Wyatt's wedding - and just a few weeks later his funeral, after he and his CO crashed on take-off. So under that photograph with the 'Not Shown', you could have also added: Lieutenants (d) R.J.C (Dick) Nunn and P.S.(Tony) Gaynor.

We were 'little d's' - or fighter direction officers attached to the squadron which was then working up. Kind regards,

Tony Paul Gaynor - Lt. RAN Ret'd  
[ Thank you for the update, Tony. Another piece of our history is now locked in place.

The Museum curator's FAA chronology shows that on 05 January 1956, Sea Venom WM551, after take-off from RNAS Yeovilton, crashed into a caravan park killing the pilot, LtCdr (P) P.H.Wyatt RAN, and A/Cdr (P) G.F.S.Brown DFC, RAN and one civilian. Ed]

Dear Ed,

**I wish to advise you of the death of George Frank Diggerson, late of Armstrong Beach, Queensland. This news will be of special interest to those who commissioned Albatross and participated in its early days.**

George (RAN 1937-1951), served on the seaplane carrier, *Albatross*, on its return to the United Kingdom in 1938. His reminiscences of the early days at the Air Station included stories of his job as 'buffer' to the First Lieutenant, The Honourable D.W. Chubb, the commissioning ceremony, and the time when the Aircraft Handlers became MT Drivers and used to drive his son, Jim, and Master at Arms Edward's son to school.

Incidentally, Jim Diggerson, ex-CPO QMQ, also lives nearby at Slade Point.

Kind regards,

W.J. (Jack) McLoughlin - Qld.

Ps: I have put together a story and some photo's in case you have some spare space in one of the editions.

[Send them along, Jack. Articles and photos are our lifeblood. Ed.]

Dear Ed,

**I am enclosing a Canadian FAA newsletter in case you may find some items worth putting into Slipstream, the death of Group Captain Tom Gleave may be of**

**interest to ex-branch types.**

I have only been back for a short time from a trip to Canada where I visited my flying school EFTS at Goderich and No. 14 SFTS at Aylmer, both in Ontario. If my visit could be of interest to the Aussie branch types I would be happy to write an article and include photo's, but perhaps my adventures may only appeal to ex Poms and Kiwis, many Kiwis being trained at these flying schools.

Aylmer is now a police college and the runways are used for training police. An interesting episode occurred there when the college was opened with all the fanfare and dignitaries attending. One VIP was the former RCAF Commanding Officer of the flying school when it was operating. As a salute to the changeover after the speeches etc., a squadron of Harvards flew over, at this moment the ex CO died on the dais. A sad but perhaps fitting end to an airman.

I also have in my possession the Canadian Register of all FAA crew and the ships they served, or should I say carriers. I have found it most useful in ringing up these guys when in their vicinity and having interesting chats.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Conway (A. Conway-Jones)

Ps: I have a photo of my father taken in WWI when he was an RNAS mechanic and shows him servicing a Sopwith Pup or Camel (I am not sure), do you think that the Museum would be interested in a copy?

[I would be interested in the article and the photograph of your father in action with the RNAS - both would be forwarded to the Museum in due course. Ed]

.....**Group Captain Tom Gleave**, who died at the age of 84, was a gallant fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain, in which he was grievously burned..... When he was once again operationally fit, he was given brief command of the fighter station at Northolt before taking over Manston, the front line airfield on the Kent coast. From there, on 12 February 1942, he dispatched six Swordfish biplane torpedo-bombers of the Fleet Air Arm's 825 Squadron on their ill-fated attempt to sink the battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the cruiser *Prince Eugen*, as they made their 'Channel Dash'. All six Swordfish were shot down in the Channel.

Convinced that circumstances had obliged him to send his men on a suicide mission, Gleave stood alone at the end of the runway and saluted each Swordfish as it took off.....

**From the Nat.Sec's mailbag..**

Dear Ian,

**Among the list of new members published in the July '94 Slipstream, I notice one Cyril Carey in Queensland who may well be an old 'oppo' of mine from the days of wood and fabric aircraft. He owes me ten shillings from a run ashore in Wanchai!**

Would you please be good enough to forward the enclosed letter to him.

Those of us who live in the 'sticks' far distant from Nowra are unable to be very active in the association, but we do appreciate all the work that you folk do in holding the organisation together.

I suppose that you are not able to publish names and addresses because of the Privacy Act, but I can assure you that the enclosed letter to Cyril does not mention his privates!

Best wishes to everyone in the Nowra area.

Stan Brown

**From the NSW Div. mailbag..**

**On behalf of the Royal Australian Navy Historic Flight, please allow me to express my sincere thanks to the Association for the generous donations of an air drill and air sander.**

The Flight's restoration teams assure me that these items were in great need and will be well utilised on the various projects presently underway.

Once again, thank you for your assistance to the Flight.

T.B.Wynberg

Commander RAN

OIC Historic Flight

[Funding for the above items came from funds held in trust for the South Australian and New South Wales Divisions, and administered by NSW. This account is now depleted. Ed.]

Dear Ed,

**My name is Don (Woody) Herman, ex-Armourer 1963 -'72.**

I wish to draw your attention to the enclosed photograph of a Battle Honours Board. Was it discarded or lost?

It was found floating in the waters of Hervey Bay, covered in barnacles, and it was obvious that it had been in the water for a long time.

It came into the possession of a friend of mine, Mr Eric Rayner, who

restored it to its former glory, and has been trying to find out its origin for several months now.

I visited his home some time ago, and recognised it as belonging to 816 Squadron, having served with the squadron on Gannets and Trackers.

Eric is ex- Royal Navy, who, at the age of seventeen became a prisoner of war. He is a very good friend of mine and gave me permission to write to you in the hope that someone may know how it came to be floating around in Hervey Bay.

We are hoping that someone will be able to tell us why and when. (Maybe it should be in the Naval Aviation Museum?)

Don (Woody) Herman

[ It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Enquiries at the Museum have so far drawn a blank in the search for a specific answer. The loss of 816 Squadron's records in the 'big fire', have removed the only source of quick reference. There is no doubt whatsoever that they are the squadron's original Battle Honours, but how they came to be in Hervey Bay can only be resolved by one of our readers providing the necessary information. Two stories so far are as follows: The Wardroom Stewards had a 'beef' with some of the 816 aircrew

and tossed the Honour Board over the side in a fit of pique.

Story number two came from Jack Leisk who said that whilst a Wessex was doing some cargo net trials off the Melbourne in Hervey Bay, the net was loaded with boxes containing A700's, and possibly a box which contained 816 Squadron Battle Honours.

The pilot had the net release in 'auto' and whilst the aircraft was coming around to drop the net on the deck, all fell in the drink.

He remembers that Bill Warne spent many hours compiling new records for all the aircraft whose A700's 'splashed'.

Whatever the correct answer, I'll bet there is a squadron CO out there who has the event burnt into his brain with a brand of iron.

The only fact I can offer at this



stage, Woody, is that the Naval Aviation Museum would dearly like to have this piece of history to put on permanent display. I feel sure that in return, the Museum would be delighted to give Eric a suitable piece of documentation to acknowledge the part he has played in its recovery.

Please contact the Curator, Bob Geale, at the Museum, PO Box A15, Naval PO, Nowra NSW 2540.Ed.]

Dear Ed,

Many thanks for your last copy of Slipstream and all good wishes.

I was interested in the piece, 'Swampy's Trivia Corner', about the first German aircraft shot down. I am enclosing a copy of my August '91 issue [TAGS - The Journal of the Telegraphist Air Gunners Association, UK ], which has a front page picture portraying the incident, and the story by Dickie Rolph inside. It may be of interest to your readers.

Regards to all the FAAA lads from the TAGA.

Yours aye,  
Roy Gibbs  
Editor TAGS

### THE FIRST ONE by Dickie Rolph

About September 15, 1939, the Home Fleet was about its business in the North Sea. If I remember rightly, we had gone out to provide some kind of cover for a damaged British submarine that was struggling back to Scapa. Needless to say, all were on their toes since this was almost the first venture out to sea since the declaration of war.

The Ark Royal at that time, was carrying almost its full complement of

four Swordfish squadrons and two Skua Squadrons. The air defence side of affairs was a mixture of gunnery bods and FAA officers. Aircraft recognition had not been pursued as an important subject, so it was not surprising that on this and subsequent trips, there were some differences of opinion.

However, on this particular day, the German Air Force had sent out three Dornier Do 18 flying boats, these were of the push-pull type.

Skuas were sent off from the Ark Royal to deal with these, one of the Dorniers, separated from the others, was attacked. Much ammunition was expended by the pilot of the Skua but the thing still kept on flying. Finally, the pilot positioned the Skua in such a way as to allow the TAG, 'Horse' Seymour, to have a go with his VGO [Vickers Gas Operated] from the back seat.

At the time, 'Horse' was the Chief TAG of 803

Squadron, and, as a Bislely champion, it behove him to do a good job. This he proceeded to do and the Dornier descended on to the sea.

I'm not quite sure what the RN did about the German crew, but at that time, and almost throughout the war, the RN was always very careless about the lives of aircrew, irrespective of their nationality.

So here we have the very first German aircraft to be shot down during WW II, brought down by a TAG!

[Many thanks, Roy. Best wishes to you and your members. Ed.]



Dear Ed,

Having recently joined the Fleet Air Arm Association and having received my first copy of Slipstream, may I congratulate all who have assisted in the publication. It certainly is a professional publication and makes very good reading.

I was a Petty Officer Air Technical Communications at Nowra during the '60s and '70s and it is good to read about, and see photo's of old shipmates with whom I served. I noticed in that issue, that Greg 'Skinhead' Kelson has changed his right arm rate these days - from mechanic to photographer! Nice to see that you are still about, Greg, and active with the association.

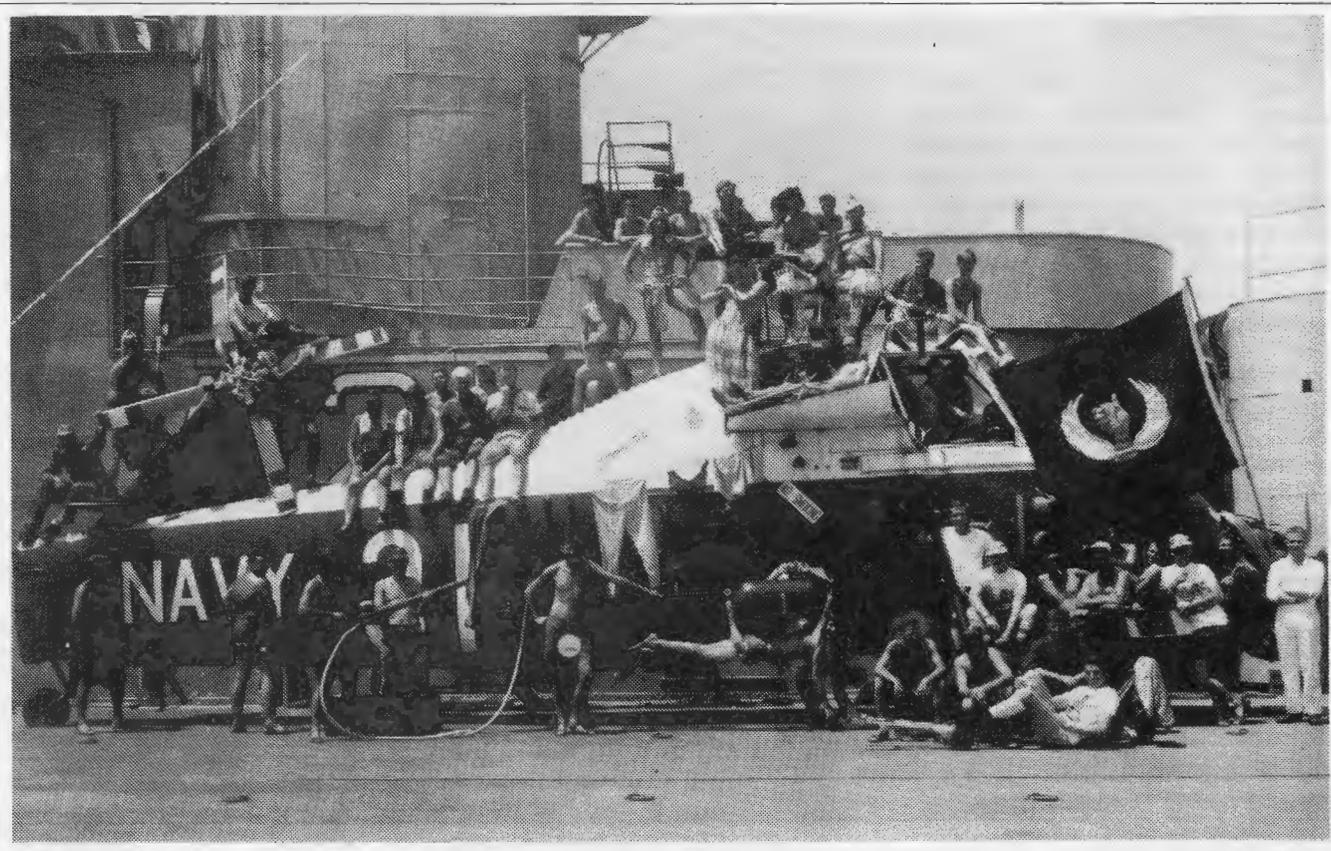
I have enclosed a photograph, which may be of interest to the readers, of a 'pirate crew' taken aboard *HMAS Sydney* in 1967. The photo shows personnel of 725 Squadron (Vietnam Flight), which was formed and embarked with four Wessex Helicopters for ASW operations on the Vung Tau ferry run.

The Wessex in the background is ex-817 Squadron, it had ditched in the South China Sea from *HMAS Melbourne*. *Melbourne* recovered the aircraft and dropped it off in Singapore. The aircraft was later picked up by *Sydney* and returned to Australia. Many hours of work and umpteen gallons WD40 was used to save the aircraft and its equipment. The aircraft subsequently returned to service.

Just to put a name to a couple of faces - Dennis Mulvihill, who I noticed as a new association member from NSW, is strapped as a depth charge to the aircraft. Yours truly is standing beside him near the pyjamas hanging off the HF aerial.

Looking forward to your next publication.

With kind regards,  
Ron Hobba



Dear Editor,

I write to you to introduce "*The Military Engineer*", the national newsletter of the Society of Military Engineering, a Technical Society of the Institution of Engineers, Australia.

I also enclose a media release relating to the Society's first national conference on military engineering to be held in Melbourne in March 1955, and ask you to mention it in your publication.

The Society of Military Engineering was formed in 1991 and initially attracted members of the Australian

Defence Forces, and former defence personnel working in industry, privatisation of government owned defence industries has widened the scope of potential members to any person interested, in defence force suppliers and their subsidiaries. The Society is interested in promoting membership to your readers.

The Society now has branches in all mainland States, other than the Northern Territory, and provides a forum for intellectual and fraternal exchange for people with an interest in defensive industry technology.

I ask you to consider promoting the

society and its conference in your publication.

Further information can be obtained from John Twyford, 21 Bedford Street, North Melbourne, Vic 3051. Phone: (03) 329 8188 or Fax: (03) 326 6515.

Peter G. Davidson - Editor, Military Engineering

#### DEFENCE AND AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY

The Society of Military Engineering will hold its first National Conference on Military Engineering on Wednesday 22 March 1955.

It will be held in conjunction with

the International Aerospace Congress 1995, The Second Pacific International Conference on Aerospace Science and Technology, and the Sixth Australian Aeronautical Conference to be held at the World Congress Centre, Melbourne, 23-24 March 1955.

Colonel John Pilbeam, who is chairing the organising committee said. "The day will have two major themes, 'Studies of Major Defence/Industrial Programmes' and 'Military Engineering at Sea, on Land and in the Air.'"

Each theme will be broken up into three sessions examining the role of each arm of the Defence Force in the theme.

For further information contact Colonel John Pilbeam AM ED psc (RL) (03) 282 4847.

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is our latest newsletter. The format is evolving with some difficulty, as we keep changing Editors frequently. New chaps require their own computers and this narrows the field a bit. Also, finding a navy pilot who can read and write has always been difficult. [ SIT! ....He's only joking. Ed]

The enclosed 'Silver Shackles' was reproduced from a 1944 issue of *Punch*. I don't know the author's name. It's not quite a 'dit', but thought you might find it useful. The last few lines tend to capture the pride/spirit of the thing.

Don't be surprised if our newsletter begins to look suspiciously like yours, at least the format. Our people tend to become hermits after retirement so will not have the same participation you enjoy.

Cheers,  
Tom Copeland  
The Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation - Canada

000 SILVER SHACKLES 000

The Navy knows a ripe and heady wine  
To overmaster thought and fill the veins

At every sip with racing loyalties;  
A wine distilled of words antique and rich,

That sets a spell around the hearts and mind

"The Captain's Galley", "Tampion",  
"Make-and-Mend"

And "Warrant Shipwright", "Tiller-flat",  
"Belay"

Who tastes these mellow draughts upon his tongue

And keeps his head? The words are round and strong

With poetry rubbed into them like spice

"Lash up and Stow", and "Liberty Boat",  
"Careen",

"Master-at-Arms", "Veer", "Reeve",  
"The Forenoon Watch",

What brave, wholly satisfying speech,  
Worn smooth as shingle by the rolling sea,

And shaped by centuries to fit the tongue!

"Mate of the Upper Deck", and "Master of the Fleet"

"Yeoman of Signals", "Captain of the Gun"

Heroic, drugging sounds! Did I say wine?

But wine, leaving a memory, is gone;  
May not endure to tie you in bond.

Rather are these links formed in a chain,

A Silver chain that keeps you prisoner  
And binds you to the Service, is become

Well-worn and loved. And as you live and move

Its silver jangling echoes in your head,  
Listen, and close your eyes. You hear the sound?

The silver shackles stir, and you are bound.

**A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE**

The retired Commodore entered the railway carriage, stowed his bag, sat down and proceeded to light his pipe. The other occupant of the carriage, a prune faced, elderly woman, immediately voiced her disapproval.

"I'll have you know," she said in vinegar tones, "that my husband is in his sixties and has never once put a pipe in his mouth."

The retired Commodore puffed placidly for a few moments, turned to her and replied, "Well madam, I'm nearly seventy and I've never put it anywhere else."

**'A' FOR INITIATIVE**

In exchange for certain considerations, a sailor agreed to smuggle a Sydney girl aboard his ship and look after her until it arrived in Auckland. Every day he brought her meals, books and other comforts, and kept reassuring her that soon she would be able to leave her cramped and gloomy stowaway position.

After many days the girl was discovered by the captain.

"Good grief," he cried, "what on earth's been going on here?"

The girl decided to confess. As she told her story the captain rubbed his chin and nodded gravely.

Finally he said, "I have to admire your fortitude - and the seaman's originality. But I feel I must inform you that this is the Manly Ferry."

Dear Ed,

I like the name of the band that was playing recently at the local Coorparoo RSL Club. The cutting was taken from the local suburban 'rag'.  
Regards, Ron Baxter

**FRIDAY 9th SEPT**  
and  
**SATURDAY 10th SEPT**  
**SLIPSTREAM**  
*Come Dancing Great Music*  
Friday Fun Raffle from 6pm  
Members free 8x6 pack drawn 6pm



**◆ WANTED ◆**

MATERIAL FOR  
SLIPSTREAM  
ARTICLES - DITS-  
PHOTOS  
COME ON, FELLAS!

# SPIN US A DIT



## 'WHEELS'- the Wonder Dog of Salvage

Many of us would remember with affection the antics of 'Wheels', the dog (of unknown breeding), who, in the early 1950s, made the Salvage Section at *Albatross* his home.

'Wheels' considered himself an integral part of the Salvage Crew and enjoyed riding on the recovery vehicles.

Whenever the crash alarm sounded, he was the first one onto the truck, or the Bren Gun carrier used for rescue work. Needless to say, he had the complete run of the Salvage Section and was treated as a VIP.

This status eventually proved to be his undoing. Just across the hard standing from Salvage, was the old Igloo Hangar which housed the Firefly squadrons (816 -817). One day, as a cartridge was fired to start a Firefly, 'Wheels' took umbrage at the noise and decided to vent his anger on the turning propeller. His capabilities unfortunately didn't match up with his ambitions, there was a sickening 'thud', and he crashed to the ground.

All and sundry rushed to his aid (forget about the aircraft), everyone expecting the worst.

Poor old 'Wheels' didn't look too good, as he lay there with the lower part of his jaw and the full length of his

mouth laid open.

He was rushed to Sick Bay where he was operated on, receiving the treatment his VIP status commanded. After the op, he was taken back to Salvage, placed tenderly in a corner, and given plenty of TLC and nursed back to health over the next few weeks.

Unfortunately, this latest exploit meant that he could no longer be trusted around aircraft in case he demanded a return bout. Orders were given to remove him from the Air Station.

Everyone agreed that a good home was what he deserved. One of the married members of the section lived in the Jervis Bay/ St. Georges Basin area, he decided to take him home as a family pet.

After he left, Salvage never seemed the same again, because whenever the crash alarm sounded, you didn't have to fight 'Wheels' for a place on the vehicles.

Sadly for 'Wheels', his run of bad luck continued and he died from a tick bite a short time later.

The enclosed photo shows him in his hey day, dressed up in Beau Bosanquet's singlet and underpants whilst perched on the Bren Gun carrier, all ready for action.

Mick Blair - Queensland Division

Photo: Beau Bosanquet

## The Riley

I have just re-read Eric Mañuel's 'dit' on *Nirimba* in the January '94 edition of *Slipstream*. In the article he mentions the old cars which were on the station at that time, this in turn reminded me of a certain 1928 Riley.

It was a 'racing model', complete with a four-speed gear box, 'rag' top and dickey seat. Dick Coates and myself purchased it for fifty quid from a L/A McCulloch, shortly after returning to *Albatross* from *Nirimba* in 1953.

When we bought the car its major unserviceability was that the generator would not charge the battery, and for some unknown reason we just never got around to fixing it. This meant that when we went ashore at weekends we had to conserve battery power. This entailed no driving at night time and the necessity to park on hills to ensure we could get it started. Dick had a mate who worked in the Battery Shop, so we always had it fully charged ready for the weekend runs.

Another problem was that the wheel nuts required tightening after every 20 odd miles.

One weekend we decided to camp out, just for a change of pace. We packed our bedding, fighting gear, sausages and other tucker into the old Riley, and spent the Friday night in the State Forest on the way into Nowra. It wasn't too successful with the 'snags' ending up in the embers of the fire. After that it was a standing joke between us and we had many a laugh over the 'Charka-Rolls'.

On the Saturday we ventured into town to a truck contractor's house in East Street. There were three daughters in the family, a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead, at that time, Dick was taking out the blonde. They were a very nice family and wonderful to us, I have never forgotten them.

Anyhow, it was decided to drive to Jervis Bay, Dick and his girlfriend, her girlfriend and myself.

Well, we got to JB alright but never kept track of the time and it was dusk before we left to head back for Nowra. Very soon the lights on the car started to fade and before we knew it they had gone altogether.

However, we did have a Naval mechanic's issue torch and Dick sat on the front mudguard to show the way. We continued like this for a few miles until we reached the hilly area and then the 'old girl' started to shake, in our haste to leave JB before dark we



had neglected to check the wheel nuts. I pulled over into a clear area under some trees. Dick checked the back wheels and announced that we had lost three wheel nuts and two studs and that we could travel no further. We would have to camp out and see what we could do in the morning.

This little announcement didn't go down too well with the girls, especially when we produced the bed rolls.

Fortunately, a bloke on a motor bike and sidecar came along and we flagged him down. After telling him how we would make him so much lighter if he didn't do as requested, he took the girls home safe and sound.

Next day, 'Dad' arrived with a drum of nuts and bolts, fixed the wheels, gave us a tow start and we were off.

Another weekend we went up

to Kiama on the Saturday, stayed overnight and returned the following day. It was low gear work up the ranges and then we were away. You had to keep going 'flat chat' because if you slowed down the tail shaft started to shudder - and I mean SHUDDER!

It was a bright sunny day, the hood was down and we were half way to Bomaderry. I was doing the driving and Dick was in the back seat - a glorious day. Suddenly a motor cycle came up alongside me - it was a cop! In due course I got a five quid speeding fine. When he had gone I asked Dick why he hadn't told me that there was a cop on our tail, Dick's reply was that he was too busy playing Cowboys and Indians with him to bother. Just great, mate!

We took the Riley on a run down to Kangaroo Valley to visit one of Dick's aunts, we got over the mountain OK but the car couldn't make it back up

again. Dick suggested that we drive the car up in reverse gear, we turned the car around and then the big debate started as to which side of the road we should be driving on. This ended up with us going up the mountain in reverse on the same side of the road that we came down on. I've still got the 'crick' in my neck to this very day!

The best part of this trip was the Devonshire Tea, scones, strawberry jam and whipped cream for 2/6 at the Cambewarra Lookout.

I finally bought out Dick's share in the car, although he always swore that I didn't pay him (he never could keep track of money).



This particular weekend I ventured as far as Goulburn, the gear box started to give trouble and I had to hitch hike back to Albatross. I returned later on to

pick up the car and try to get it back to Nowra. I was belting along the road and coming into Marulan when I noticed the 30MPH sign as I flashed past, with visions of another five quid fine I hit the brakes, the gear box mounting snapped and I came to a halt across the road from a garage.

The garage owner was later to give me 25 quid for it, someone from the Kitchener Soap people wanted it for a stock-car. What a waste! I should have railed it home to Queensland, it would have been priceless today.

Dick, Ron Baxter and myself were talking about the old car on Anzac Day and Dick asked the Sixty Dollar Question - "Why didn't we fix the generator?"..... Who knows! Roger R.

[It's because 'Bombheads' are used to demolishing things - not fixing 'em.Ed.]

## MEMORIES of the FLEET AIR ARM '50s Style

Living 48 to a hut...The Hasty Tasty...The Aussie Bar...Divisions (yuk)...Pontoon Schools (Double up!! Double yer back)...Standing rounds...Waking up in the hammock bin...Powdered egg...The eternal search for a HOT shower (keep clear of the Watch keepers and Recruits showers)...Those damn Security Patrols. 1-2 and 3 Airfield Patrols, MT compound, wet canteen, coffee in the Met Office, Captain's gate, middle watch - all alone and the bloody torch has gone flat...is this REALLY the NAVY???

The Snake Pit at Johnnies, an experience no young sailor should miss...Admiral's Inspection (Please, please God, don't let them pick me for a kit muster!) ... Skulking to miss a Church Parade, it would have been easier to go!... The 'requests' played over the PA system...Hitch hiking back from Sydney at 4am and wondering if you will make it in time...Commander's Report when you didn't...Men under punishment muster at the guardhouse...The terrible mattresses with lumps all through them...the thrill when the *Vengeance/Melbourne* trip was posted...Being violently ill in the guardhouse after kindly being given a ride back to base by the Shore Patrol. I didn't even have to ask...Words like 'scran', 'dhobeying', 'goffers', 'slops' etc. that I've hardly used since...The swy school...The young Nowra lady who was a friend to all...The homesickness after annual leave...Remember the thongs when they were called 'Getters'? They were a status symbol, it meant that the owner had really done some serious sailing because they were unavailable in Oz. Uckers...Mahjong..Carter Brown paperbacks..Slop Chits..Request Forms...CDA Mess (Rose Cottage)...Your turn to get the mess victuals on *Vengeance*, a real balancing act in any sort of swell...Good mates...Naval Airman xxx report to the Regulating Office - oh shit!...Lugging a gas mask and hammock around for years without actually using either...Off caps...Lights out...Pipe down.

Written by..... well, it could have been any one of us, couldn't it?  
\*First published in Vic.Div's 'Flight Deck News'.

### OVER AND OUT!

The aircraft was on its final approach and the intercom was still switched on when the passengers heard the captain's comment to the co-pilot.

"First thing after we land I'll have a couple of beers, then I intend to make love to that blonde stewardess."

The stewardess turned red with embarrassment and dashed down the aisle intending to alert the pilots that the intercom was still on. But in her haste she tripped over a piece of hand baggage in the aisle.

A little old lady passenger helped her to her feet. "It's alright miss," she said. "There's plenty of time. He said he was going to have a beer first."

## Swampy's Trivia Corner

by Ron Marsh



### NAVAL AVIATION TRIVIA

→ Richard John 'Dickie' Cork, was a leading FAA fighter pilot of WW II. On loan to the RAF during the Battle of Britain, he destroyed five enemy aircraft. Returning to the FAA, he served in *Indomitable* and *Illustrious*, adding a further eight to his score.

He was tragically killed whilst landing at China Bay, Trincomalee, in a head-on collision with another Corsair which was taking off in the opposite direction - 14/04/1944.

→ Wing Commander Stanley Goble, RAAF, who was recently featured on an Australian stamp issue, received the Britannia Trophy in 1924, for his epic Round Australia Flight. He was one of Australia's aces in the RNAS in WW I, with a score of ten.

He joined the RAAF in 1921, eventually reaching the rank of Air Vice-Marshal.

→ Canadian, Roy Brown, whose claim to have shot down Manfred von Richtofen was challenged by AIF machine gunners (and never satisfactorily settled), was a naval pilot with 11 and 9 Air Squadrons before they were absorbed into the new RAF in April 1918. He claimed seven victories during naval service, and a further three, including the controversial Richtofen claim, with the RAF.

→ The first Controller of Civil Aviation in Australia, Horace Brinsmead (served 1921 - 1931), was a pilot with the RNAS in WW I.

→ The first Australian warship to operate an aircraft was *HMAS Brisbane* in April, 1917. She carried a Sopwith 'Baby' seaplane during the search for the German raider, 'Wolf', in the Indian Ocean.

→ The greatest number of landings on an aircraft carrier in one day, was 602. This was achieved between 0800 and 1700 on 25 May, 1945, aboard the

training carrier *USS Mataniku*, which was working up Marine Air Group 6.

→ The third highest scoring British pilot of WW I was a naval pilot, Canadian Raymond Collishaw. His score was 62. After the war he assisted in setting up the RCAF and retired with the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. In addition to his official score, he took part in at least 100 'indecisive' fights having driven down more than 15 enemy aircraft.

### ACES, AWARDS AND OTHER TRIVIA

→ The first Air VC was awarded posthumously to Lt. William Rhodes-Moorhouse, 22/05/1915. He was buried in the grounds of the family home in England. His only son, William, was killed in the Battle of Britain, shot down on 06/09/1940. His ashes were interred alongside the father he never knew.

→ Albert Ball, was the first 'triple' DSO in the British Army. Before his 21st birthday, he was shot down and killed. He was posthumously awarded the VC with an official tally of 44 enemy aircraft.

→ Colonel Robin Olds was the USAF top-scorer over Vietnam until 1972. Nearly thirty years earlier he was top P38 ace over Germany with 9 victories, he converted to P51s and shot down another 3 Luftwaffe aircraft. He was credited with a further 11 aircraft which were destroyed on the ground.

→ Finland's top fighter ace was Eino Juutilainen, the highest scoring non-German ace of all time with 94 victories. At no time was any aircraft he flew hit by enemy fire.

→ The last WW II Luftwaffe General Der Jagdwaffe, was appointed in January 1945. He was an Austrian of Scottish descent and was credited with over 150 victories. As Gordon McGollob, he was ordered to change

his name to Gollob in 1938. (Political correctness?)

→ Probably the greatest loss of aircraft in one day in a non-combat situation, was the destruction of 88 B25s of the 340th Bomb Group of the USAAF in Italy. The loss occurred during an eruption of Mount Vesuvius on 22/03/1944.

→ Actor James Stewart, enlisted in the USAAC as a Private in March 1944. By March 1945, he was a Colonel, having flown 35 missions over Germany as Command Pilot, Wing Leader and later as Air Division Leader. Stewart remained in a reserve capacity in the USAF and by 1959 had reached the rank of Brigadier General.

→ Douglas Bader was the most famous of the two legless pilots of WW II. During WW I, at least two pilots who had lost a leg became aces. Lt. Frank Alberry, AIF, lost his right leg after being wounded in France. He successfully petitioned King George V, to be allowed to transfer to the RFC. He was posted to 2 Squadron AFC, and after training gained 7 victories.

→ Captain Sydney Carlin, Royal Engineers, lost a leg in action in 1916. Upon recovery he transferred to 74 Squadron, RFC, and was nicknamed 'timbertoes', he destroyed 10 enemy aircraft. In WW II, he again joined the Air Force, but could only muster as an Air-Gunner. He was killed during an air attack on his airfield on 09/05/41.

→ In 1943, the first Lancaster flown to Australia, a B III, ED930, captained by Flt.Lt. Peter Isaacson, DFC, DFM, RAAF, flew under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the largest aircraft ever to do so. (22/10/1943)

[ After reading the last article by 'Swampy', a reader has pointed out that Australian, Arthur Longmore, Commanding Officer of No.1 Squadron, RNAS, in 1917, eventually retired as Air Vice Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore after a distinguished career. Ed.]



## NEWS from the DIVISIONS

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

It's that time again to let people know what is happening around the traps and of coming events.

First up, the Annual Dinner to be held on Saturday 19 November at a cost of \$30 per head. Please contact 'Snow' Hall on (09) 3425317 and make your bookings. 'Snow' made such a great effort for last years dinner, that all agreed that he should be the one to get it going again. Last year it was a great success, but it was run at the same time as the Senior Sailor's Dinner at Stirling, the date has been checked and there should be no conflict, so there shouldn't be any excuses. Make this a great night, catching up with old mates and enjoy a good meal and a few drinks - bring a friend along, or two, and help 'Snow' make this a night to remember. There is a lot of work involved in organising these events, don't wait until the last minute to contact 'Snow'.

TO ALL YOU MEMBERS OUT THERE! We hold a large number of Association lapel badges, so all those who have not received theirs, please contact Geoff Vickridge at the meetings which are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Naval Association Headquarters, 71 West Parade, East Perth, commencing at 1930. For those country members who are unable to attend the meetings, please contact Geoff at his office on (09) 481338 or Fax (09) 481 3353, and he will arrange postage for your badge. Hoping to hear from you all.

Our membership is on the increase, apart from new members, some of the old members are joining up again. This is very encouraging. Our latest new member is Alf Diver. Welcome aboard, Alf!

We had the good fortune to receive a visit from Dick Prentice and his wife from the Victorian Division. I wasn't present at the get-together several Birdies put on for them in Perth, but I heard that it was a real good show with several sore heads the next day and one of the participants getting lost on the way home by bus. I'm not allowed

to mention his name, but I believe it was quite a turn. A mini-Armourer's reunion for Dick, was held at Lou Burns' place, with Keith Murdoch, Joe Jost, Brian Worthington and their wives. A great day was had by all and a delightful barbecue was arranged by Lou and Barbara. Many an old tale was told.

Keith Murdoch has his days, but is still looking life in the face and enjoying life as it unfolds, he sends his regards to all in the east.

I had a phone call from Bob Pattenden a while ago. After having his kidney removed as a primary source of cancer, he had to return to hospital to have other related surgery and medical attention. He is not letting things get him down, and he and Sadie are planning a caravan trip up north in the near future.. All the best to you, Bob. Anyone wishing to give him a phone call, his number is (09) 4571798, I'm sure that he would appreciate a call.

Rick Hammond advised us at the last meeting that his 'ticker' is not as good as it should be and may require further treatment. We hope that everything goes well for you, Rick.

I have been held to task about my way of reporting events to *Slipstream*. It appears that I am putting too much emphasis on fishing and other frivolous matters, so I have tried to keep this missive a little more to the point. I have repeatedly requested that members forward information to me for publication, so far, not a thing has come my way. Unfortunately I don't have a crystal ball, so I once again ask you to forward divisional news items to me. Thank you, in anticipation.

At the August meeting, it was voted that the Division would pay the sum of eight hundred dollars towards the air fares of the two delegates to the conference in Canberra. This will be a great help to the delegates who so far have had to foot the bills. Ron Tate and myself will be attending and will be travelling by bus, this will be a saving to the Division of one hundred and sixteen dollars.

Do something about the dinner NOW, and keep next Anzac Day in sight as the last one was an excellent day.

To all our friends in the other half of Australia and overseas, we send you greetings and wish you health and happiness. Should any of you be visiting this part of the country, please let us know so that we can organise a small get-together

Once again, don't forget that our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Naval Association Headquarters, 71 West Parade, East Perth, commencing at 1930. Please keep this in mind, we look forward to seeing more of you turn up.

All best wishes.

Theo Bushe-Jones

[Switch off to the critics, Theo. If they could do any better they would be doing it. Just remember what Lord Byron said about critics: A man must serve his time to every trade save censure - critics are already made. Ed.]

### VICTORIA

Greetings to one and all, unfortunately things have been a little disappointing from the 'Garden State'.

Firstly, we had to cancel our Annual RAN FAA Anniversary Dinner due to the lack of response by the majority of our members.

As reported in the last edition, it was to have been held at the RAAF Sergeant's Mess, the same venue as last year during the Federal Council Meeting weekend. I think that all who turned up for that function would agree that it was a pretty good turn-out. This year we no longer have an affiliation with the Mess, but the RAAF were very gracious and helpful to the Association by availing to us the facilities of the Mess to conduct our dinner.

It is a pretty sorry state of affairs when I had to go back to the RAAF Mess President and tell him that we had to cancel.

We even extended the official booking cut-off date by an extra week, living in the hope that the situation would improve - it didn't! I received the grand number of four acceptances, a total of seven people, plus members of the committee and their associates - unfortunately not enough to proceed with the dinner. **Most disappointing** - to put it mildly!

Sunday 28 August - the annual pilgrimage to the FAA Memorial at *Cerberus*. This was another disappointing situation, I had to contact the CO and Chaplain's Offices to explain that we did not have the

anticipated numbers and would therefore not be requiring the full-on ceremony that had been arranged.

In light of our predicament, RAN Chaplain, Peter Tinney, offered to incorporate a segment honouring the RAN FAA during his Chapel Service. At this juncture, on behalf of those members in attendance, I would like to convey a special, 'thank you', to Chaplain Tinney, for his thought provoking words on the FAA and the Association, and to Bernie Butler, for his reading of the Lesson, and finally to Alan Clark, for his address on the RAN FAA history.

The significance of these assignments to Bernie and Alan, is that they were given at very short notice, like, 'on the spot'. Well done, fellas!

I would like to add that we had twenty people in attendance, a far cry from the hundred and twenty at the Dedication Ceremony a year ago.

On completion of the Church service, a brief wreath laying service was conducted at the FAA Memorial in the Memorial Gardens.

A special 'thank you', also goes to the President of the Senior Sailor's Mess, WO 'Buck' Rogers, who gave us permission to use the facilities of the Mess.

All I can add at this point is: It is YOUR Association, and its future is entirely in YOUR hands. It can only survive with the INVOLVEMENT of YOU, the members. PARTICIPATION - is the operative word.

Members of the Victorian Division convey their best wishes to Geoff Strickland and Frank Cleland, two of our foundation members who have decided to move up to the Sunshine State and transfer to the Queensland Division.

I am sorry to report that we have received resignations from Ken Shepherd and Alan and Beryl Smith. We wish you all well, and hope that one day in the future you may return to our Association.

Our President, Les Jordan, has had another major operation since the last edition, this time it was a triple heart by-pass. I am happy to report that he is making very good progress.

Jock Lacy is another member who is not having a very good year with his health problems. After a serious operation earlier in the year, he has recently suffered a stroke, but, he too is making good progress.

Several of our members made the journey to Nowra for the official opening of the third stage of the Naval Aviation Museum. John and Sylvia

Ikin, and Bernie Butler attended as invited guests. Clem and Betty Conlan, and Ron and Val Christie also attended. I won't go into any details as I am sure there will be another report elsewhere in this edition.

The Museum is looking very good, it was great to meet up with so many old friends. I almost forgot my old mate, Geoff Litchfield, who flew in for the weekend. Sorry, Geoff. Just another bout of CRAFT. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Geoff on his excellent article in the last edition entitled, 'Just one of those days'.

Till we meet again, we wish all, good health and prosperity.  
Ron Christie - Hon Secretary

### Australian Capital Territory

Greetings to all our friends in other Divisions.

The winter has been cold and dry, but for the most part, the days have been clear and still. This year we recorded a record -9°C one morning and many minus 3-5°C. Now spring is upon us and the wattle and flowering shrubs are now providing some welcome colour to the district. Our hearts go out to those on the land in this area and throughout NSW and Queensland who are once again beset by drought. Let us hope that drought breaking rains soon come to the aid of struggling farmers.

We welcome three members of the recently disbanded FAAOA to our division in the persons of Gerry O'Day, Dave Findlay and Bill Callan. Its nice to have you back on board. There are a few others in this category who we have been chasing and who live in the Canberra environs. Our numbers have now passed 80.

Seeing that this will be the last edition to hit the stands before Xmas, we take this opportunity to wish all our shipmates in other Divisions a very Merry Xmas and every good wish for 1995.

Brian Treloar-Secretary

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Greetings to one and all from your shipmates in South Australia.

I'm taking an indecent amount of time to jot down all that has happened and not happened within the State Division so far this year. I will possibly flannel a bit to fill in a few paragraphs - would you notice?

The negative side is that we had to

cancel our popular Scottish Night due to, I believe, the non-availability of our regular three-piece band. I have heard whispers that the selected Haggis turned feral and escaped into the bush, and no one at that time had drunk enough whisky to go in after it. We will wait patiently for next September.

The positive side is that the launch of our major fund-raising raffle is well under way with the first prize being a Sharp portable a Cassette Radio, CD player, the second prize is a cordless telephone - that works - and the third prize is bottle of liqueur Port with two straws. The winner will be drawn on December 16, 1994. The bulk of the money has been ear-marked for the Naval Aviation Museum.

The Association Christmas Dinner on December 3, will be held at the Hampstead Hotel. This is usually a very good night, although crowded as you would expect. Dinsley Cooper says that the notification cut-off date remains at 31 October. If you have missed the cut-off - tuff! Wait for next year.

A big welcome to Don Townsend who has rejoined our Division. Dan was a founding member from all those years ago. Welcome back, Don.

Can any member tell me if Rod Venning is still alive? Where are you, Rod?

Had a few complaints from the 'great unwashed' over their inability to read the reverse side of our new National flag. I have told them to dunk their eye in fat as I believe there are moves afoot to screen print the flip-side.

This Division has reintroduced our yearly donation to the Cadet Scheme. Truly an excellent cause if ever there was one.

A short while ago, several bush-walkers joined me in a walk from Mypanga to Inman Valley, up over the Heysen Trail. A six hour walk over 22 kilometres. One of those walkers, I was surprised to learn, was the younger brother of Cmdr Errol Kavanagh RAN, who was tragically killed in a MiG-15 crash in the Canberra area last year. Leith Kavanagh is just as much fun and a good companion to walk with. My legs will be out of traction shortly.

For all those darlings on the sick call listing - take heart as winter is dead. Haven't had a lot of rain to grumble about, but most of the evenings have been bitter. The Division sends you all good cheer, and in particular our Patron, Sir Victor Smith.

continued over...

The scheduled visit to the Submarine Corporation had to be cancelled due to a technical glitch in planning at the Gilman site. Mary Raynor is tenacious and determined, so take warning, the naval officer involved! One of Mary's fixed stares has been known to blister the paint at 60 metres.

Whilst we are issuing warnings, let the other Divisions note that this State's Delegate remains - correct, Mary Raynor. She is preparing, along with our President, John Berry, to liven things up at the Federal Conference. Relax.....Only kidding!

Well, this is the 5th page of my one inch print - looks a lot but I bet that Editor will condense it down to a couple of mean looking paragraphs.

In conclusion, is there anyone out there who has the secret of receiving information from fellow members? .....Anyone!

Signing off and wishing you all good health.

Roger Harrison - Hon. Whipping Boy.

## TASMANIA

New time again and the Tasmanian Division is going well.

We held our Annual General Meeting at Orford on the east coast. Barry Simpson was elected President once again, and there were a few changes in the other positions.

I'm told that the evening went well, and by what I could see when I arrived on the Sunday morning for the meeting, it sure did.

Barry is going really well after his leg 'refit' and is back at work. Each work he says that he is getting better.

There doesn't seem to be much news from here this time, our next quarterly gathering is to be held at the 'All Ships Reunion' at Ulverstone on 4/5/6 of November. Our meeting will be held at 1000 on Sunday 6 November, with the barbecue at 1200. All enquiries should be directed to 'Simmo' on (004) 244413. See you all there.

Regards

Matt (Jake) Jacobs

## NEW SOUTH WALES

Greetings to all our readers.

Our membership continues to grow with some 53 ex-members of the old AFAAOA transferring to the NSW Division since 01 January. 31 new members joined in the same period.

However, the gains were offset by

transfers to the Queensland Division and losses to the 'Grim Reaper' etc..

The July edition of *Slipstream* included a 'Subs Overdue' reminder which resulted in most members, who suffer from CRAFT, becoming financial once again.

Unfortunately, about 30 members failed to respond to the reminder, hopefully they will remember when they do not receive this edition of *Slipstream*.

Members are reminded that they can utilise the services of the Secretary to try and contact old mates with whom they have lost contact; provided those old mates are also members and respond to the contact overtures.

Thanks to our innovative Social Secretary, Ben Link, and your support for the Murramarang Raffle, we are assured that the subs for 1995 can remain at \$15 ; and including *Slipstream*, if future fundraising ventures are as fruitful.

The 46th FAA Anniversary Dinner hosted by the Division was deemed a success, but did incur a small loss as fewer members and guests than expected attended.

Ben would welcome your suggestions for future functions which would gain your support.

The committee urges members residing in the local Nowra area to seriously consider joining the committee next year. We really need a couple of understudies right now to ensure a smooth transition.

Frank Birtles, our Treasurer, who sought to retire for health and personal reasons, was persuaded to stay until 31 December, the end of our financial year. He has a close liaison with our registered auditor and together they will ensure that there are no loose financial ends.

Jim Lee, long serving member on the committee will stand down at the AGM in March, he will take a break for at least a year. He is always available to provide any assistance or advice if requested.

If the HQ of the NSW Division is to remain in Nowra, close to the Naval Aviation Museum which is one of the prime objects of our existence, the active participation and support of local members in managing the Division, by nominating for committee positions and attending meetings is essential.

A suggested alternative is to move the HQ and committee of the NSW Division to Sydney, which is now a power base of active members.

It seems to us that a locally based,

fully complemented committee, with each individual contributing to the best of their ability, is the best alternative.

We urge local Nowra members to become more involved. Just one or two new faces could be the difference between our Association progressing to its full potential, or becoming moribund.

Be in it! Have a go for twelve months, you might even find that you like it

Jim Lee - President

George Goddard - Secretary

### Note: Murramarang Raffle result

The winning ticket for the all inclusive luxury holiday weekend for a family at the award winning resort, was ticket number 1498 - in the name of Belle Harder.

The ticket was drawn by Cdre Morton at the Aviation Museum Special Air Day on Sunday 11th September 1994.

## Spare me a minute....NSW!

Fifty-four years ago, in the skies over southern England, 'The Few' took on the might of the Luftwaffe and saved Britain from going down the 'plug-hole', notwithstanding the multitude of Barrage Balloons, which many believe kept the island afloat during the blitz. 'The Few's' success could not have been achieved without the dedication of their support echelons, from the ground crews all the way back to the factory workers supplying the aircraft and munitions.

In 1959, the 'giant steel war canoe' was able to provide 20 aircraft, 10 Sea venoms and 10 Gannets, for a mass fly-past over Brisbane, even though the squadrons had been embarked for nearly four months. This 100% turn-out was only achieved because of the dedication and effort of all concerned. Air crew, ground crew, ship's company (in alphabetical order) all played their part. Not exactly Battle of Britain stuff, I grant you, and you can probably cite dozens of other similar instances. Still and all, worthy of a 'Bravo Zulu' I believe, especially considering that the Air Force could muster less than half that number as their contribution.

It is disappointing therefore, that 'The Few' in our midst do not receive that dedicated support. Those members who run the NSW Division Committee - those who turn-to and push brooms and wield polishing cloths prior to each Museum Air Day - those who man the Hot Dog, Hot Beef Roll and the Souvenir stands - those

restoring aircraft and those who seek out and catalogue all those things that were part of our heritage. Always the same faces - and you don't need an abacus to count them.

The Naval Aviation Museum is not just a monument to the past: it is motivation for the present and inspiration for the future. So let's get moving! I have seen the membership list and know that there are over 200 members in the Shoalhaven area alone! Just one appearance a year from each of you would ease the burden. So let's hear from you!

Ideas, suggestions, those willing to organise social fund-raising events in their particular area and especially those willing to help out around the museum. Let's get off our collective 'butts' and show these politicians and the Air Force, that despite their efforts to destroy it, the spirit of the Fleet Air Arm is stronger than ever. I promise you, that you will find it not only rewarding, but great fun.

Barry Roberts

## QUEENSLAND

The year seems to have flown by - again! It's almost time for the Christmas festivities, which tend to be a bit hard on the system. I've just started at the Gym to try and reduce last season's influences!

I am looking forward to our visit to Canberra at the end of the month for the National Executive meeting. Marian, my wife, is not keen on flying and keeps suggesting that we travel by train. After phoning the travel agent she thought that you could leave Brisbane at 6pm and arrive in Sydney at 10:30pm. I reckoned that this 'fast' train was a well kept secret and told her that 30 years ago it took 16 hours - and today - it still takes 16 hours.

It appears that the flight to Canberra wins hands down! We will be staying with John (*It's about time he signed on the dotted line. Ed*) and Ros Crawley. JC and I used to terrorise the Gliding Club and other things many years ago.

Warren Walters has retired from Lysaghts (BHP) at Wollongong and I'm expecting him up here for a couple of days before we leave for Canberra.

Our BBQ on 25 September at Slaughter Falls, Mt. Cootha, Brisbane, was a great day and saw about 80 members turning up, including Eric and Hazel Bush from Sydney, and Max Gant from Coffs Harbour. Max had missed the bus from the Gold Coast after making arrangements to meet up

with Ray Torrens at a specified time and place. (Couldn't resist this bit of info, Max!)

I received a letter from Ron Forrest who lives at Bargara, near Bundaberg. He was recently visited by Ron and Gwen Powell, and they all went shopping together. With Ron Forrest driving and Ron Powell in the front passenger seat - both in deep conversation - they had travelled a few miles before they realised that Gwen was absent. They went back, faster than what they had travelled previously, and there she was, a bit irate! Good one, Rons!

We are holding a BBQ at Clark Park, Mooloolaba, on 6 November, so far the indications are that we will have a good turn up. I trust that the Sunshine Coast mob will give their support.

On Saturday, 3 December, we are having a Christmas Dinner at the Currumbin RSL on the Gold Coast. The management have promised to put on a 'good do' for us. The cost is \$20 per head - drinks are pay as you go. If you wish to attend, please send details of numbers AND the money to: Ian Henderson, PO Box 113, Cleveland, by Friday, 25 November.

Our next AGM will be in March 1995, we are proposing Caloundra for a relaxed weekend - there is plenty of accommodation available, restaurants, sun, surf and sand. A definite date will be advised later.

Sadly, two of our mates passed away recently, Ken 'Snow' Nicholls and Bobby Groome. Both funerals were attended by members of the Division.

Darryl Greer and Graham Quick have been recent visitors. Graham came to Slaughter Falls and had a good day meeting old friends. He's with the Flying Doctor Service flying a King Air (Beech C90) out of Charleville. Darryl was supposed to have come to the BBQ but couldn't make it. He's up at Emu Park, near Yeppoon, and holds some good real estate. He looks as fit as a fiddle.

Our membership is steadily increasing and for those who are thinking about joining, come in now for \$30 and you'll get next year's membership included. Two free months! WOW!

At our Executive Meeting on 30 September, we were delighted to welcome Eric Cottrell, Peter (Jaffa) Robinson and Mr and Mrs Rob Jelly. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings, the next one is 25 November at the Coorparoo RSL, commencing at 1830.

Bob Bryce, Al Smith and myself, had a meeting with the Secretary of Twin Towns Club, Banora Point, regarding the 1996 National Reunion. Subsequently, Bob met with the people at the tourist bureau and they have provided some information relating to accommodation, bus tours etc. which I will give to the State delegates in Canberra.

So far, we have the Anzac Room, with bar, at Twin Towns, this will be our base and general hub for the period. All sporting events can be catered for at Banora Point, and the club there will be the spot for the main event on the Saturday night. Once we have a definite date we can begin some serious business.

Whilst Marian and I were on the Gold Coast, we visited Darcy and Jenny Doyle. It was interesting to see some of his paintings in the workshop, and reminisce about childhood days in the country. Jenny is very involved in golf and keeps pretty busy. They both do a lot for cancer research with the proceeds from Darcy's paintings. It's nice to meet people who are willing to help others. They leave shortly for a seven week tour of Europe - I hope they both have a great time.

During the Bundaberg Reunion, Pastor David, said that we should set our sights on future goals, as well as being a vehicle for reuniting old friends. We discussed this 'future goals' aspect at a meeting a short time ago, and we thought that the Queensland Air Museum, which commenced operation at Caloundra in 1985, might appreciate our help. Ian Henderson, has contacted the operators, they have a Sea venom, Sea Vixen, Gannet and Tracker and would love to have us involved in restoration projects as there is no one there with any specialised knowledge of the aircraft. There is also a photographic display of some of our aircraft and we feel that this too can be improved upon. Ian is to have further discussions with the museum, it could prove to be very worthwhile in us getting together with them. I'll keep you posted on this project.

I know that quite a few of us have felt the desire to assist with restoration work at Nowra, but a top Naval Aviation display up here would be a real achievement.

I spoke to Bob Conellan on the phone the other day, he tells me that he is feeling pretty rough at present. Harry and Fay Harkness, Ted Winning and Don Daniels have been out to Gin Gin to see him and he really appreciates the visits. Keep at it, mate!

We're all thinking about you and Colleen.

John Bray met up with Paul Hamon a short time ago and both phoned me. John, who is living in Pomona, told me that he had organised the programme for the visit of HRH 'Phil the Greek', to Nowra in 1956, and was presented with a copy of the programme. He has now forwarded his copy to the archives of the Naval Aviation Museum. Another of John's accomplishments, was the design and manufacture of the moulds

for the two albatross on the main gates at RANAS. 'Blackie' Dowson then cast them in aluminium salvaged from wrecked aircraft parts. After paying - off in 1959, he worked for many years at the Lucas Heights atomic energy plant.

I recently participated in the Sunstate Air Race with a couple of colleagues. It was a NAVEX around the 'near' back blocks - dry as a sparrow's bum at mating time - finding reporting points was hard going because of the dry country. Peter

Ryan, owner of Main Street Realty, Caloundra, and myself did the flying. Steve Richardson, a Kiwi Aerobatic Instructor, did the back seat bit. We finished in 20th position out of 40 - we'll try and do better next year.

We haven't heard from Paul Woods up at the Mulgrove Sugar Mill. Paul, we miss you - give us a call. We all hope that the new job is going well and that you and Di are happy there.

Well, that's it for now. Best regards to all  
Barry Lister - President

## Sea Venom Restoration

I would like to start off by thanking Stan Corboy from W.A., Clem Conlan from Vic. and Ron Andrews also from Vic. for the photographs of Sea Venoms they have sent me. All sets have given me more information on the research I am doing into the life of our aeroplanes.

On behalf of the Historic Flight Restoration teams I would also like to thank the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia for the donation of a air driven drill and a air driven sander. Both of these tools will be very useful in the restoration of these aircraft.

We have at last been given approval by C.A.A. to restore the Venom to flight status. The only thing to stop us now, will be if we find a major fault which can't be repaired or a new part manufactured. Our next major hurdle to jump is the x-raying of the centre wing main spars and the cross tubes.

Jules Ducret and Gus Cummings have been busy having completely stripped the aircraft of old wiring. We are now waiting the arrival of about 2000ft of new cable so that the long and tedious job of rewiring can begin. Jules is also trying to track down part numbers for bearings and brushes for the generators. So far every A.P. we have looked in has the type 507 generator chapter missing. Can any one help out?

We have at last found someone to inspect the timber part of the fuselage and at a quick glance all seems O.K., but a more detailed inspection will be carried out over the coming weeks. Pieces of the fuselage that seemed to me to be very difficult to repair I'm assured are quite easily done.

We will start to rebuild the cockpit as soon as the final timber inspection is done, any faults rectified, and the interior is completely scrubbed out and repainted. Hopefully within five or six weeks. In the mean time all fittings that have to be replaced in the cockpit are being inspected, serviced and refurbished as necessary.

Tony Penno - Sea Venom Project Manager

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

On Sunday 11 September, the Museum celebrated the completion of the first three stages of its four stage construction. Some 500 supporters from Governors to Society Members converged on the Museum from near and far for a great and memorable day.

Official guests included the Chief of Naval Staff - Vice Admiral Rod Taylor, Mr Ray Williams - Chairman C.E.Heath Insurance, Mr Ric Charlton - Chairman of Shell Australia, Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson and the Mayor of Shoalhaven - Max Atkins.

There were three major highlights of the day, with the unveiling of the life size bronze Batsman statue, donated by Admiral Robertson, the opening of the Ray Williams Foyer, named in honour of the Museum's principal sponsor and the Official Opening of the new museum by Mayor Max Atkins.

The public Family Air Day was also a great success with visitor numbers of around 5,000. The weather was perfect and our first visit and performance by the MiG-21, flown by Squadron Leader Phil Frawley, put "the icing on the celebratory cake". Our thanks and congratulations to all concerned.



L - R: Sculptor, Dennis Adams with Andrew Robertson and 'The Batsman'. Photo NAVAVMus

# DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Dear Ed,

The articles by Geoff Litchfield and Bob Cocks in the July edition of Slipstream, and the photograph of 805 Squadron personnel (that's me second left front row), brought back memories of the day the Sea Fury demonstrated for me the its proclivity for biting anyone who handled it roughly, a bit like some women.

The year was 1957 and I was on OFS with 805 Squadron. We had reached the air-to-ground strafing phase and my initial sorties had been, to say the least, disappointing. The bloke counting the holes in my target didn't even have to take his shoes off, let alone use an adding machine.

As we headed for Beecroft range once more, I was fired with a determination to totally shred the target.

We were allowed an initial non-firing run to assess wind effect, get the trims set etcetera. My concentration on drift, speed, dive angle and trim as I plummeted earthwards was intense. So intense, in fact, that I failed to

notice that the 10' x10' white target was expanding. It actually reached 100' x 100', and more than filled the windscreen before I realised that something was amiss.

Quickly deciding that the pedants back at Nowra would not accept a 100% strike rate if the rounds had not been actually fired, I opted for the second course of action, **survival**, and sucked back hard on the stick.

The Fury reacted quite predictably. It flicked violently and I found myself, quite literally, upside down with nothing on the clock but the maker's name. All I could see through the canopy was dirt, shrubs, and some small stones moving very rapidly. As Geoffrey Litchfield said, "Not good - not good!"

Stick forward, full right aileron and a boot full of right rudder to help it on its way and whack! A perfect, albeit unintentional, inverted flick roll and the canopy was still full of dirt, shrubs and small stones. I upgraded the "not good" to "definitely not good" and tried again, somewhat more circumspectly.

Perseverance is indeed its own reward and I managed to catch it after 200 of roll.

Determined not to repeat the experience in my next dive, I started firing at 3,000' and managed to get rid of all the rounds at a very comfortable height.

On his return to Nowra, the Range Safety Officer was full of admiration for the low-level aerobatic display, but fortunately ignorant as to who had actually performed it - and I wasn't about to enlighten him!

The next day, Gill Campbell called the course together for a lecture on the handling characteristics of the Sea Fury and, in particular, high speed stalls. He concluded by saying that anyone who flicked a Sea Fury at low level and survived, was either very skilful or very lucky.

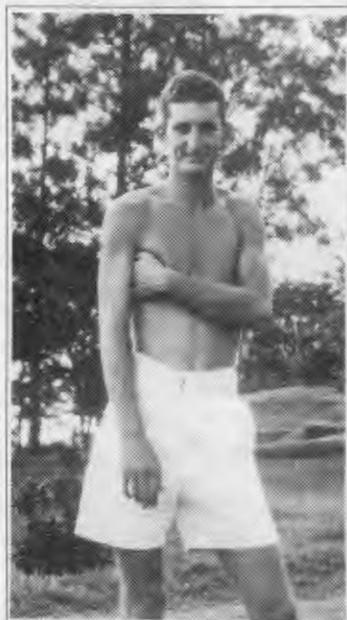
Being basically modest and wishing to preserve my anonymity, I didn't volunteer that I had performed the feat not once, but TWICE!

Besides, like Geoff, I prefer to attribute my survival to Divine intervention - a reward for clean living and believing in Jesus.

Regards, Barry Roberts

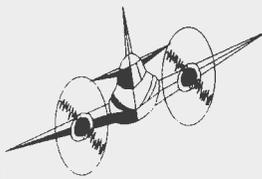
PS: I don't have any photographs of the event, but back in 1957, camera shutter speeds couldn't match the roll rate of the Fury when it flicked.

## HMAS MELBOURNE - FLIGHT DECK HANDLING PARTY



NSW member, John Purcell, a resident of the United States of America, has forwarded a number of photographs taken in his RAN days. Can you name the bods in the group photo on the right, and the cruise date? John Purcell is shown in the single shot on the left.

oooOOOooo



# The Australian Naval Aviation Museum

The Museum has been a height of activity, mainly preparing for the 11 September celebration and Family Air Day. After the contractors had finished cladding the hangar, the job of skirmishing the Museum site was tackled with vigour - all hands on deck. The hangar display was also rearranged to better suit the multi purpose needs of the hangar space. For three weeks we had a convoy of trucks going to the tip and to the scrap metal yards.

Administration for the event was all dealt with from the Museum, some 2400 were sent out to Society Members. Throughout all this, fund raising continued in earnest.

## 11 September Celebration

The day to celebrate the completion of the Museum structure and open Stage 3 of the project, name the foyer 'The Ray Williams Foyer', and unveil the 'Batsman' statue donated by Admiral Andrew Robertson - it was an outstanding success.

Our warmest thanks are extended to all the volunteers who assisted in this mammoth task. Without doubt, such an event could not have been performed without them. It is interesting to note and acknowledge the scope of that support - the Sydney aircraft polishers, the hangar sweepers, the sentries, operations staff, Air Traffic Controllers, food outlet operators, curatorial staff, PA Systems from Sight and Sound, Radio 2ST, WIN TV, TS Shoalhaven, caterers, guides, shop assistants, Bomaderry APEX, Aircrew, Squadrons, Line crews, 'Weathers' Refuellers, Saint John Ambulance, Parachute Training School, First Lieutenant's Party, the RAN Historic Flight, the Wardroom, TAFE students and staff, Naval Association, FAA Association, the Nowra Air Division RANR and last but not least, the Museum Board of Directors, staff and wives (it is not widely known that the museum staff are 'volunteers' for these events).

The Family Air Day attracted some 5,000 people, and 550 Society Members and their wives and partners as official guests. It was unfortunate that we had to be strict on the RSVP date and limit the number of guests,

we just did not have the room in the wardroom or the cash to expend. As it was, 600 turned up for lunch. I would like to point out that the Museum paid for the lunch and those 'additions' added to the cost.

It was also unfortunate that we could not get all our guests into the Foyer. We therefore made the decision to have Governors, aged and handicapped in the foyer with everyone else in the adjacent marquee. I do hope that this did not inconvenience too many people.

For those FAAA Members who could not attend, the day went off well, despite behind the scenes power failures, ATC Radio failures and fuel spills.

'The Batsman' is a credit to the sculptor, Mr Dennis Adams, and an inspiration by Admiral Robertson, who donated the full cost of the project to the Museum Foundation.

Mr Ray Williams, our principle benefactor (he and his company, C.E.Heath Insurance have donated and pledged just under \$1 million), said in his speech that he was proud and honoured to be associated with the Museum and to have the foyer named after him. The foyer, with its shiplike fittings, custom woven carpet with a repeating pattern of Museum crests on a royal blue background, is designed to introduce the visitor to a vibrant and progressive operation and create a 'value for money' environment when they pay their entry fee. It appears to be working! The new 'Sea Chest' for donations is also proving successful.

The Mayor of Shoalhaven, Alderman Max Atkins, did a great job opening Stage 3, and spoke of the continuing support from the Shoalhaven City Council to the 'NSW's South Coast No.1 tourist attraction'. (The Council have donated \$500,000 over ten years).

Financially, the day was our best ever. All money made on these occasions is used in our operating account to keep the Museum going.

## Shell Sponsorship

We were fortunate to obtain sponsorship from Shell Australia for the restoration of the Sycamore

Helicopter. They were so impressed at the standard of the restoration (well done - Don and the team) and with what we are attempting to do generally, that they have donated a specific project. The total donation from Shell Australia now stands at \$102,000.

## New display wall

On the museum side of the foyer partition wall, we have built in a display area which is to be used to tell the history of Naval Aviation - this is in preparation for when the 'old museum' building is dismantled. A professional has been commissioned to provide a design brief and costing. We need more old photographs and memorabilia.....

## Vietnam Memorial and Display

This has been moved from the 'old museum' into the main display hangar, and together with the UH1B main rotor blade commemoration, will make a fine memorial and display in honour of our veterans. Once again, we need more photographs and memorabilia.

## Night Flying Suppers

The second Night flying Supper will be held at the Museum on Thursday, 17 November 1994, commencing at 1800. We have asked all the squadrons to fly that night. Please book with Karen on (044) 211996.

## Tombola

Our first Tombola Night will be held on Friday, 9 December 1994, commencing at 1800. Please indicate to 'Tassie' Mason on (044) 211920, if you are interested.

Does anyone know of the history (nautical) of Tombola, or any stories, that could be used in a newspaper article to promote the event?

## Educational Tour Guide

Don McLean, we accept your offer of producing a Tour Guide for students as an educational project to be

completed as part of the visit to the Museum.

On the question of information, we need to create the stories of the Fleet Air Arm for public interest in the display hangar. Currently we have new display boards providing the information on the aircraft. We now need to enhance that basic information with some 'salty' but real life personal and human accounts and experiences. Our displays are too bland - OK for starters! Please come forward all you story tellers.

### Museum Calendar for 1995

- 26 January - Australia Day - Family Air Day (FAD)
- 15 April - Easter FAD
- 25 June - FAD
- 18 August - Vietnam Veteran's Day
- 27 August - 47th Anniversary HMAS Albatross FAD
- 29 October - Shoalhaven Spring Festival Wings and Wheels FAD
- 09 December - Museum Ball

We need to keep themes going to retain public interest. If you have any practical ideas would you please put them on paper and send them to me. (PO Box A15, Naval PO, Nowra NSW 2540)

### Function Centre

The Function Centre is progressing exceptionally well. Please give us a try to help celebrate your special event - business or pleasure, we aim to please.

Best Wishes to the National President and all FAA Association Members.  
Mike Lehan



Mr Ray Williams officially opens the Museum foyer named after him.

Photo courtesy Naval Aviation Museum



CDRE Morton addresses the assembled guests at the Stage 3 opening.

Photo courtesy Naval Aviation Museum



Mural painted by John 'Prof' Edward at the Naval Aviation Museum children's playground - Photo courtesy John Edward



# Spotted around the traps...



Don Maclean and the Rev. Walter Wheeldon



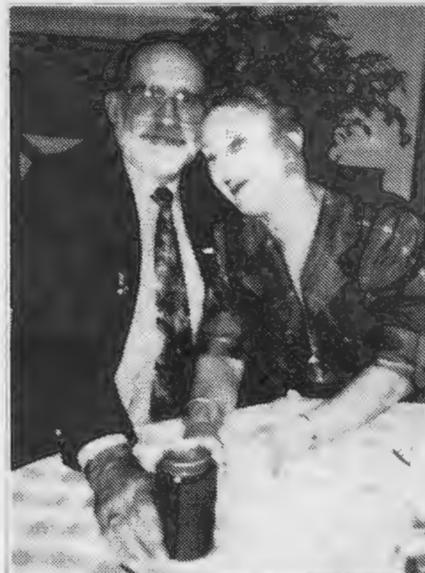
Gordon Walter - Geo. Beasley and Sandra Walter



Charles Grose and Ken Greenaway



Bill Walker and John Hunter



Mr & Mrs John Trood



Neville Newbold



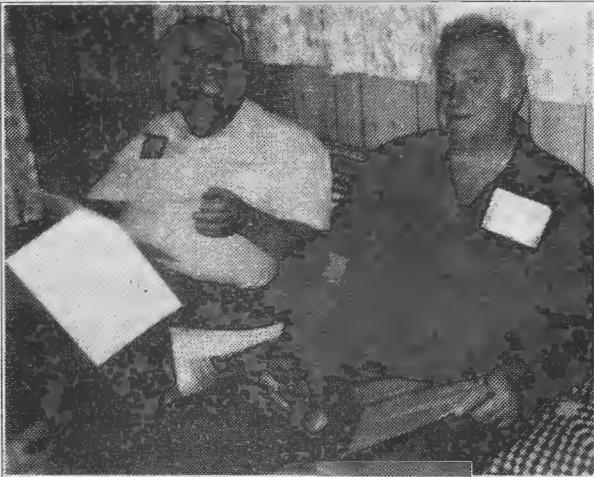
Ben Link and Bronwyn

**NSW Division's 46th FAA Dinner held at the  
Naval Aviation Museum Function Centre**

Photos Peregrine Publishing



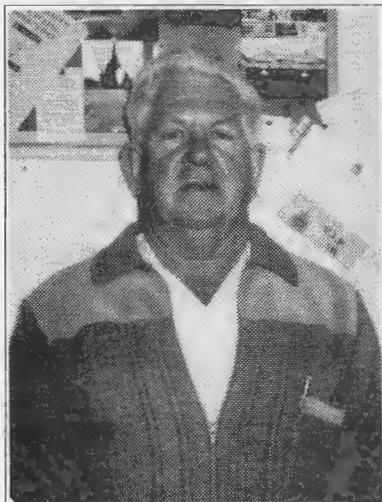
## Spotted around the traps...



Ron Tate - Theo Bushe-Jones at Slipstream office.



Jim Lee and Len Zuch at Slipstream office.



Joe Jost at Slipstream office.



Frank and Alison Crowe at the Canberra conference.



Gwen Dadswell, Mons 'Tiger' Lyons and John Berry meet up at the Canberra conference.



Clem Conlan and Ron Christie made the trip from Victoria for the Stage 3 opening of the Museum.

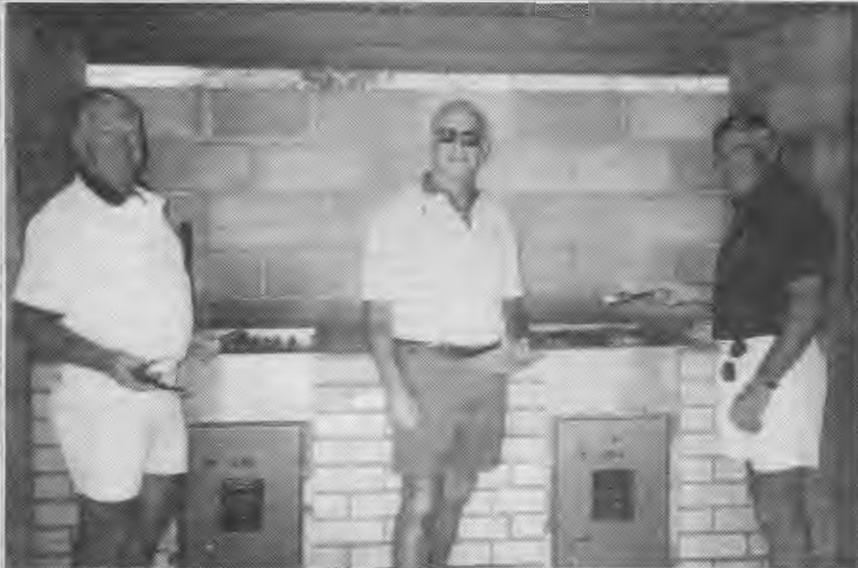


J.A.O'Farrell chats with Sir Victor Smith at the Canberra conference.

Photos Peregrine Publishing and Gordon Walter



Len and June Zuch - 'Knobby' and Mrs Clarke - Garry and Mrs Reid - at the Currumbin BBQ held by the Queensland Division.



Alec McMurtrie - Rex Day and Alan Barlow at the Currumbin BBQ - QLD DIV



Barry Lister - 'Nugget' Nugent and 'Junior' Henderson at the Currumbin BBQ - QLD DIV

### I AM A VOLUNTEER

Some say I am eccentric, others assume I am rich, I know I am free! My freedom lies in the choices I make, in the opportunities I can create and in the way I feel about myself.

I am a volunteer I can dream I can help to make that dream a reality I cannot always do it alone, I can search for others with that dream and we can together create a vision.

I am a volunteer Some say I am a fool doing unpaid work in an unappreciative society. I value the unpaid work I do and to others it can be untold wealth. I am free, and in my freedom I am rich in friendships, satisfaction and fulfilment.

I am a volunteer I need help and support, guidance and training I need protection, consideration and appreciation from myself and from others. I need to learn and to grow in my volunteering.

I need to know the feelings of others, to understand their expectations I need flexible, clear and understanding direction. The work I am doing is free but it does not come free of charge.

I am a volunteer I have responsibilities and stand up for myself, to listen and to learn, to be reliable, honest and understanding, to be considerate of others, to allow others to have an option, and to accept the agreed boundaries of my commitment.

I am a volunteer Some say I am cost-effective, others demand the service I deliver. I know that I am willing to help, I care, and it feels right I know that I am committed and that means I might be abused, taken for granted or forgotten I try to understand.

Responsibility works both ways!  
*by Sally Davies*