



SLIPSTREAM

The Quarterly Journal of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia,

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*Presidents of Fleet Air Arm Association Divisions lead their members in the RAN FAA Golden Jubilee Celebrations March through Nowra.
l to r: Max Altham NSW, Mike Astbury ACT, Roger Harrison SA, Theo Bushe-Jones WA, Barry Lister Qld., Geoff Singline Tas., missing Ralph Mayer Vic.
Photo courtesy South Coast Register 2.11.98*

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FLY NAVY

The Australian Naval Aviation Museum Foundation



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Message from Our Patron

Commodore John Goble RAN (Rtd.)

It is a great honour to have been invited, at the recent 50th Anniversary Reunion, to become Patron of the RAN Fleet Air Arm Association and I thank the Divisions for their confidence and trust.

The late Sir Victor Smith who was so well known to everyone is, as they say in the theatre, "A difficult act to follow" and I must therefore admit to a certain amount of hesitation before accepting the honour.

The Reunion was a great success. Even though there were one or two 'glitches' it seemed that everyone was so pleased to meet up with old friends that this did not detract from the pleasure of the occasion. I understand the absence of a band for the march was caused by the non-appearance of a bus, which goes to show once again, no matter how good the planning - Murphy's Law will always intervene.

I would like to congratulate everyone who played a part in the organisation of the Reunion, principally the Museum Director and all his staff together with our National President, Neil Ralph, the President of the NSW Division, Max Altham, and the many volunteers who put in so much time to help out in various capacities. In addition we all owe a debt to Neil and Max for the wonderful Memorial and rose garden adjacent to the Museum which was dedicated at the Ecumenical Service on Sunday 1 November and was made possible by a donation

from Hawker de Havilland and also Tenix Pty. Ltd.

On the matter of membership of the Association it was gratifying to see many 'younger' people (as opposed to my vintage) attending the Reunion and I hope that if they are not yet members they will seriously consider joining. I have heard there is a perception that the Association is directed only to those who served in the carriers. This is incorrect, and we must make welcome those who carry on the unique traditions and spirit of the FAA in the helicopter force. They are the future for the Association.

Carrier work may have been dramatic but I am full of admiration for the skill and determination with which the helicopter sea-going flights go about their task. The operating environment and the responsibilities resting on the aircrew and maintainers is completely different and far more exacting than anything which went before, and I hope that before too long the Museum can, with some guidance from the Squadrons, develop more displays portraying their work. Gulf operations and spectacular rescues over the past years would be excellent themes for displays.

Once again I thank the Association for the honour of inviting me to be Patron and I hope to see many of you in 1999. In the meantime all good wishes for the New Year.

BIOGRAPHY

John Goble was born at Brighton, Victoria, in 1923. He entered the RAN College in 1937. In December 1941 he was posted to HMAS CANBERRA and later served in HMAS AUSTRALIA in the Coral Sea and Solomon Islands actions.

In 1943 he completed courses in the UK to qualify for promotion to Lieutenant and was posted to a Landing Craft (Assault) Flotilla that took part in the initial Normandy landings on 6 June 1944. After that he served in HMS BATTLE (an escort carrier built in the USA). BATTLE was part of the Eastern Fleet based at Trincomalee in what is now known as Sri Lanka.

He was among the first group of RAN officers to qualify as pilots shortly after WW2. He served with the RN until 1948 which included a year in 827 Squadron, along with Dick Bourke, aboard HMS TRIUMPH, a light fleet carrier. He returned to Australia in 1949 as a member of 816 Squadron on board HMAS SYDNEY. In 1951, back to UK to attend the RAF Central Flying School, then service as a flying instructor until returning to become CO of 817 Squadron in August 1953.

Between 1955 and 1959 he served in various flying and executive posts, the last two years of this period as Commander (Air) in HMAS MELBOURNE.

J.D. GOBLE

In 1960 he attended the US Armed Services Staff College and on return became Commander (Air) at Nowra. From there, in an unexpected move he was posted as the first XO of HMAS SUPPLY. He then held the post of Director of Naval Air Policy from 1964 to 1967. It was during this period that the RAN acquired the Tracker and Skyhawk aircraft. This was followed by two years on the Joint Warfare Staff in the Department of Defence.

In 1969 he commanded HMAS VAMPIRE and in 1970 HMAS STALWART. Then to Nowra in command, followed by a year at the RAN Trials and Assessing Unit. After a six month period as CO of HMAS MELBOURNE in the latter half of 1973 he was Chief of Staff to the Fleet Commander for two years.

He retired at his own request in February 1976 to take up a career in law and quit that in 1992.

Since 1988 he has been a member of the team which raised funds for the construction and development of the Naval Aviation Museum and has also been part of the team which over the last three and a half years has constructed the full scale replica of a Sopwith Pup for the Museum.

In 1953 he married Annette Youl from Tasmania. They have a daughter Kate and live at Terrey Hills north of Sydney.

President's Report

This is being written with Christmas only a week away and because readers will be reading it after Christmas it is more appropriate to wish everyone a very happy 1999 from those of us at the National Headquarters.

The start of a new year is traditionally a time for individuals and families to take stock of their lives and set courses for changes deemed desirable, and so it can be for organisations. Are we happy with the way our organisation, The Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia, is being run? Are membership wishes and ambitions for the Association being achieved? Are you getting out of it what you would like? Would you like to play a more active role or have the opportunity for a greater input? It seems a good idea to think about these aspects especially after a big reunion which can prompt ideas for change. If you have any ideas then we would encourage you to take them up with your Division executive or write to the editor of Slipstream and air them to see whether others agree.

Before we leave 1998 and the events of October and November which featured our Annual General Meeting and the Reunion, I would like on your behalf to pay great tribute to Jim Lee who retired as Secretary of our Association at the AGM. Jim and his wife Norma have been tireless workers for our Association in a number of different roles for many years and we owe them both our sincerest thanks. Mike Lehan retired from the position of Vice President and served the Association very positively in that capacity and to exhaustion in the task of secretary to the 50th Anniversary Committee. He leaves the position of Museum Director in February and we thank him for his magnificent co-operation and service in that capacity also and wish him great success in his new life in Melbourne. Toz Dadswell retired from the position of Immediate Past President on the National Executive and words would not be sufficient to pay adequate tribute to his services to the Association over many years. I hope he will continue to be 'an elder' of our tribe and be a source of advice and counsel on the affairs of the Association.

Max Altham was elected Vice President and Gordon Edgcombe graciously volunteered and was elected Secretary. Terry Hetherington and I were re-elected as Treasurer and President. We look forward to serving the Association well.

The Federal Council resolved at the AGM to seek to appoint as our Patron Commodore John Goble RAN (Rtd). John subsequently agreed and I am sure all members will be very pleased with that appointment. This edition features a short biography of John and a message from him on his appointment. John served in the FAA with great distinction right from its inception, he had a distinguished career in the RAN, and in later years, has worked loyally for the Association and supported capital fund-raising for the Museum as well as co-ordinating the construction of the very valuable Sopwith Pup / Melbourne Gun display in the Museum. All of this has been summarised in a few words which do not do justice to his service, which has been outstanding and continues to be so. We are all very proud to have him as our patron. He has been most ably supported by his wife Annette in all of this and we look forward to both continuing to be closely involved in the Association.

A matter raised at the AGM during the 'Open Forum' will, I hope, attract your interest. A suggestion was put that members and other ex FAA personnel be invited to donate relics of their

service to the Association or the Museum, such things as uniforms, photographs, medals, log books, bits of aircraft and publications that might have been salvaged and other items that might not be of value to the family. It may be that personal accounts have been written of life in the Service or of some aspect of life in the FAA which might be relevant to a faithful record and presentation of its history. The aim here is to add to the collection of material from which researchers and others could trace events in the FAA's history or be used in ensuring the historical accuracy of anything written or presented. If you would like to support this collection please advise the Secretary of what you would like to donate or simply despatch it to him c/- PO Box A115, Naval Post Office, NOWRA, NSW 2540.

The Reunion has come and gone and it was very well supported by a wonderful attendance which allowed most of us to meet many old colleagues and friends. That was the most significant part of the occasion. I do not know precisely why meeting old mates again after many years brings so much pleasure and joy, nor why elaborating on past common events is such fun, but it did and was. The Golden Jubilee Monument which stands proudly near the Museum entry will attest to the great occasion which the Reunion was. We hope a consequence of the Reunion will be more members in the Association and a system which will assist us to keep in touch. The book, 'Flying Stations - A Story of Australian Naval Aviation' was launched to remind us of the events of the good old days. It sold well to a wide audience. There remains a good stock at the Museum for those wishing to secure a copy, which every family should have.

The Association bought a stock of polo shirts, caps and other memorabilia to have on hand during the Reunion for sale. These are good quality cotton, made in Australia and are attractively embroidered with our logo. These are available by mail order from the Museum shop.

As always we look to you to support 'Slipstream' either by articles or letters and photographs. We hope this year to have more accounts of the present FAA operations and people in it and to broaden its content generally. To do this we need reporters and any volunteers for this task would be most welcome. Our sincerest thanks go to Bob Perkins for his continued great work in editing our magazine.

All the very best for 1999,

Neil Ralph, National President

**PLEASE NOTE
CLOSING DATE FOR
COPY FOR
APRIL SLIPSTREAM
WILL BE
14TH MARCH, 1999**



FLY NAVY

A New Display for Museum

In about mid March 1999, a new model exhibit should be on view in the Museum. This is the work of Mike Crisp, who built the replica Vickers gun fitted to the Sopwith Pup.

Although not having any direct connection with the RAN the model portrays a unique event in early experiments to have fighter aircraft at sea. It records the occasion when a Sopwith Camel was launched from a lighter towed by a destroyer, HMS REDOUBT, which was part of a reconnaissance force in the Heligoland Bight, to intercept Zeppelin L53 which had been sighted and reported by a flying boat escort.

The pilot, Lieutenant Stuart Culley, pursued the Zeppelin for about an hour, then because he was almost at the aircraft's maximum height had to keep pulling the nose up to sight on the target. After a few rounds the left Lewis gun jammed but the right fired its full drum of ammunition, the Zeppelin caught fire and fell into the sea - there were no survivors.

Lieutenant Culley returned and almost out of fuel landed alongside REDOUBT. The aircraft was recovered and placed aboard its lighter. The aircraft is now displayed in the main hall of the Imperial War Museum in London.

The working model of the Zeppelin is built to 1/150th scale and measures 1.4m (4ft3in) in length. On that scale the Camel wingspan is about 2 inches. An idea of the actual size of the Zeppelin can be given by stating that it would not fit into the Museum - it would overlap by about 30m at each end!

Every aspect of the model has been completed in the greatest detail. The Camel is a masterpiece in micro modelling construction.

The model will have controls which will enable visitors to operate the Zeppelin's five engines, turn on the 'gondola' lights and fire the Camel's guns, showing the tracer striking the target, all accompanied by sound effects!

Museum News

Introduction

There is no doubt that the Fleet Air Arm Reunion stretched the small manpower resources of the Museum and as stated in my Jubilee article elsewhere in this issue we are gradually getting back to normal. I think from a Museum point of view the most interesting aspect of the reunion was working out the logistics when we did not know what the bottom line of attendance was going to be. This was particularly significant when dealing with the Army, attempting to loan seating, chairs, lighting, fridges and heating for an unknown quantity. We bit the bullet and ordered for 1,500 people, which turned out to be exactly right.

Displays

Sea Fury - We have a great deal to thank the RAN Historic Flight for putting together the Sea Fury in time for the Reunion. Time was at a premium but nevertheless the volunteers led by Oscar Harper turned to almost every day to ensure that the old and bolds of the Sea Fury era had an aircraft to ooh ahh in front of. Unfortunately, we have to give it back in the near future because it is going to be used as a model and spare parts for the flying Sea Fury. You may not have been aware that the static Sea Fury in the hangar was only put together by using parts from the flying machine - ie we do not hold all the parts for two aircraft to be completely fitted out. BZ RAN Historic Flight.

Firefly - Our visitors will have noticed that we do not have a rudder on our static Firefly and that the cockpit is incomplete. Don Parkinson will attend to the cockpit in due course, which will then be open to visitors. Regarding the rudder - the Historic Flight asked that we restore the rudder to a flying condition as a spare for their aircraft, which is shortly due to fly. It has therefore taken nearly two years to restore the rudder through the Airforce by

volunteer labour (at least it didn't cost us). It will be fitted in the near future.

Scout - The Scout is progressing extremely well by our volunteers under the guidance of Ray Larder. The main frame has been given its under coat and after the Christmas period we should see a quick improvement in the visual effect. We are hoping to negotiate with HMAS ALBATROSS to get the Scout resprayed on board to achieve the necessary professional finish. Once that is completed the engine goes on, and hopefully with a suitable diorama depicting the aircraft's role in the RAN we will enjoy a most professional display. We are extremely grateful to STN Atlas for their sponsorship of \$10,000 towards this display.

Sopwith Pup/Melbourne Gun Project - We are extremely grateful to Telstra for donating \$50,000 towards this project. This funding, coupled with the Work for the Dole programme providing manpower, has enabled us to produce a magnificent display of the early Fleet Air Arm. The majority of the display is now complete with the exception of photographic coverage of the period. We are seeking photographs covering the period 1916 - 1918 for this display. If you have any we would be delighted to hear from you.

Women in the RAN - Beth Allman has done a magnificent job of collecting together memorabilia for this display. Unfortunately, at the penultimate time she has been taken ill and can no longer carry out volunteer work at the Museum. All that needs doing now to complete this display is to fix the internal lighting and place permanent glass fittings. All ex RAN ladies should be proud of the work that has gone into depicting women's roles in the RAN. BZ Beth.

Memories of the old Museum - This display has been upgraded with carpet and a cover to stop the dust. We are extremely grateful to our most proficient volunteer Murray McLean for his superb carpentry and attention to detail. BZ Murray.

Bell 47 - The Bell 47 was completed prior to the reunion and mounted on a mobile exhibition platform by Ray Larder and his volunteer team of engineers. The aircraft is depicted in the Korean

'Mash' role. We require photographs to display beneath the aircraft and would be very interested to hear from any Korean veterans who would feel obliged to donate photographs of this era.

'Old Boys' reunion photographic display - This display was put together specifically for the reunion and created a great deal of interest. So much so that we intend to leave the photographs on display for some time in the future. Our grateful thanks are extended to Frank McPherson for putting it all together.

Aircraft Silhouette display - We are grateful to 'Prof' Edwards for putting together a most magnificent aircraft display in the form of silhouettes which has now taken prime position in the new art gallery that we have erected next to the Memories of the Old Museum display.

Vietnam Display - Visitors will have noticed that a great deal of work has been applied to the Vietnam display which has been extended with the inclusion of the 'Tony Cassadio Display'. We have a great deal to thank, once again, our resident volunteer carpenter Murray McLean for this professional work on this display.

Merlin Engine - The Merlin Engine has been returned fully restored by Peter Crosier. It is an extremely professional job and we are very grateful to his company for the hard work that has been applied to bring it up to this standard.

Cut away Wessex Gearbox - Two years ago we entered into an agreement with the Australian Defence Force Academy Technical Department to restore and cut away sections of a Wessex gearbox in order that all the gearing and internal mechanisms could be seen by the public. The gearbox has now arrived in the Museum and I can only say as a Wessex pilot of 25 years experience that I am amazed the aircraft flew at all - just joking! It makes a most interesting display and we are extremely grateful to ADFA.

Federation Grant

You may be aware that we have been granted \$1.6 million towards our development of 'Stage 4', \$500,000 of which is to be used for the restoration of six FAA aircraft and associated dioramas depicting their operational roles.

Sikorsky Donation

Sikorsky Aircraft Company donated \$30,000 to the Museum to be used as follows:

\$10,000 for the ALBATROSS book project.

\$10,000 for the development of the history of the Sikorsky helicopter company and

\$10,000 to help the museums operating account.

We are extremely grateful to Sikorsky for this donation and welcome the company as Governors of the Museum Society.

THE ALBATROSS book 'HMAS ALBATROSS - A Collection of Memories'

The book has been written and is now having its final edit before being launched at Easter 1999. Orders are being taken at \$15 per copy plus \$5 postage and packing. The book is the same size as Flying Stations, but because we have received sponsorship we are able to produce the book at a more economical price.

Stage 4 Development

The Board of Directors have decided to proceed with Stage 4 Development as soon as possible. We are extremely grateful to Mr Ray Williams, CEO of HIH Insurance and to the Federal Government for their donations. Mr Williams has pledged \$1 million over 5 years for this project.

Society Membership

Society Membership of the Museum at \$125 per year is sadly decreasing. Perhaps this is a sign of the times. We would welcome any suggestions that may improve and increase our membership and fundraising aspirations.

Museum Director

This is my last report as I depart from the Museum after 7 years in office. My final date is 11 February and I am moving to Melbourne. I wish you all the very best for the future and I particularly hope that the Museum continues to improve and goes from strength to strength as it should. The naval Aviation Museum is now the largest tourist attraction on the South Coast and we should keep it there. My relief is currently being chosen by the Board and we should have a smooth handover.

Thank you all for your fantastic support and I hope that you will continue to look on the Museum as your home.

All the very best

Mike Lehan, Museum Director

16 January, 1999

A New Naval Aviation Museum Director

The Chairman of the Board of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, Captain Geoff Cole AM RAN, has just announced that the Board has appointed Mr Mark Clayton as the next Director of the Museum following Cmdr Mike Lehan's imminent retirement from the position.

Mark is expected to take up the appointment on 1 March, 1999.

Mark is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Hawks Bay (NZ) Cultural Trust, which operates a large regional museum, an art gallery, a regional library and archives, an education centre, an exhibition centre and a science and technology centre. Additionally the CEO is responsible for the operation of the Trust's 2 museum shops, a 330 seat cinema and a museum cafe. A staff of 40 is employed in the operation of the Trust's activities.

Mark's museum career has covered appointments at the Australian War Memorial as curator of Aircraft and Relics, Assistant Director of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Collection, Assistant Conservator at the National Library of Australia, Site Curator at the Port Arthur Site Management Authority and Executive Director of the National Air and Space Museum of Australia. He has a BA, Diploma in Museum Studies and MA in Public History.

Mark was born and spent his early years at HMAS LOBRUM, Manus Island where his father was CPO. He has a comprehensive working knowledge of the RAN's aviation history and in 1996 was commissioned by Australia Post to write a hard cover illustrated history of Australian Military Aviation of which a large segment covered RAN aviation.

When Mark joins the Museum, an arrangement will be made to provide an opportunity for those members who could attend to meet him. More about the new Director and his ideas in the next issue of SLIPSTREAM.

Sopwith Pup's Final Move

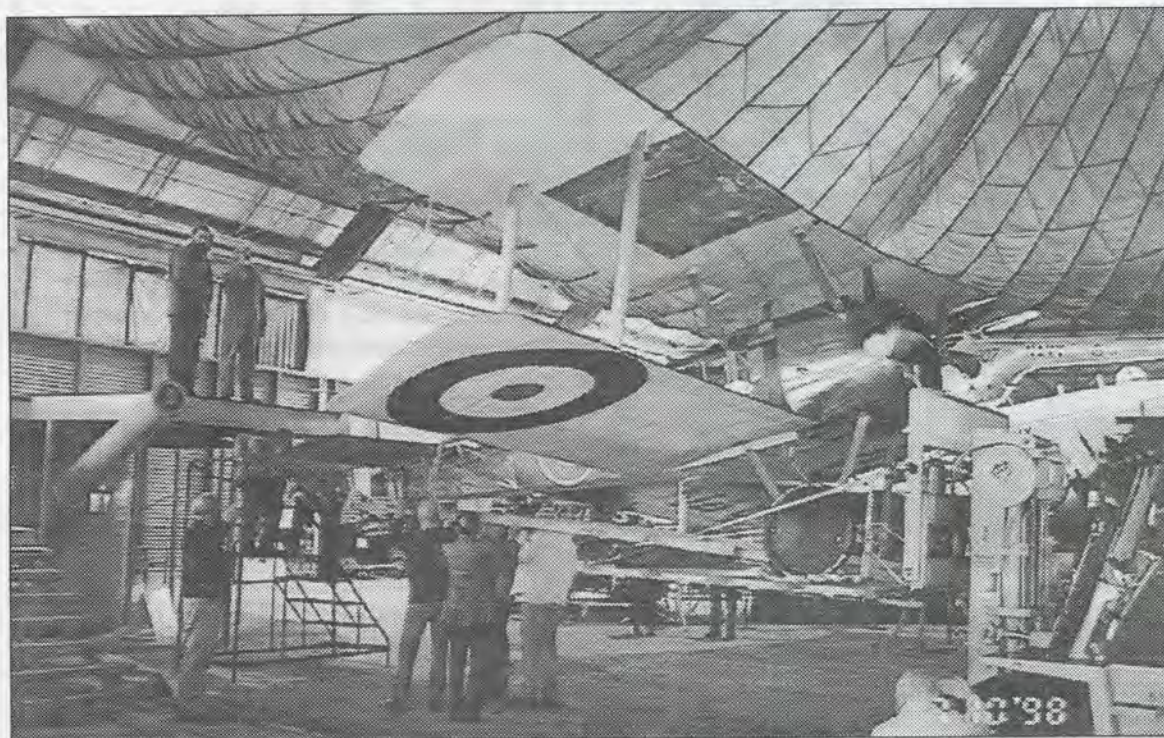
In the afternoon of Wednesday 7 October, 1998, following the official handover of the completed aircraft to Captain Geoff Cole AM, Chairman of the Museum Foundation, the aircraft 'took to the air' in a lift from the hangar deck to its display position on the platform built over the 'Melbourne Gun'.

For quite some time the team had discussed various means whereby this move might be made. Early photographs showed two methods of hoisting used in 1917/18, one being a four point wire sling attached to the upper wing centre section. This method was illustrated in a photo showing an aircraft being lowered down the lift well in HMS FURIOUS. The second was by means of a system of lifting beams under the fuselage with spreaders to keep the lifting wires away from the aircraft. Either system required a crane. One might say this had all the elements of a seamanship evolution complete with blocks and tackle, steadying lines, plenty

of manpower and the potential to go wrong. Needless to say it also looked very cumbersome.

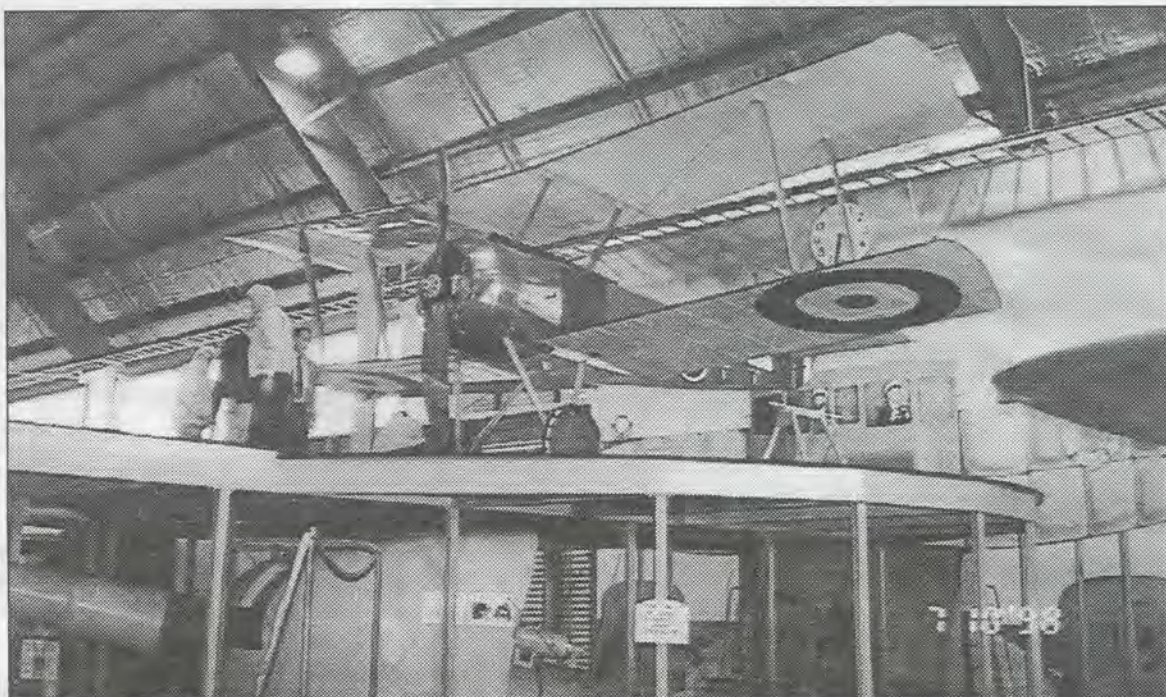
Obviously a forklift would be the most suitable, the weight to be lifted (about 272kg or 600lbs) would be no problem, although the aircraft size (wing span 8.08m and length 5.89m) or in old measurement 26ft6ins by 19ft4ins was a different matter. The ever helpful Don Parkinson located a large aluminium pallet on the Air Station and measurements showed it to be of sufficient size to lift under the aircraft wheels without the propeller fouling on the fork lift. To support the tail a timber 'A' frame was made up and clamped to the pallet.

With everything ready the forklift, kindly loaned by No.2 Squadron RNZAF and skilfully driven by Sgt. 'Possum' Chambers, accomplished the move in less than 10 minutes. The round of applause from the ladies present was much appreciated.



The aircraft clear of the deck and in the first stage of the lift. As an added precaution the tail was supported by a group of 'Handlers' throughout the lift. The clear panel on the underside of the upper wing can be seen.

The aircraft on the platform with the tail supported in the flying attitude as it was carried on HMA Ships SYDNEY, MELBOURNE AND BRISBANE in 1917/18.



WHAT DID THEY GIVE YOU FOR BREAKFAST TODAY?

How many times have you been in a position where you have had to take over the job of meal preparation (that means cooking too), for the family and started off with big plans for variations of meals just like you had in the Navy? Isn't it fun to be able to boil, bake and chip potatoes? Isn't it fun to have all of those barbecues of steaks and chops and sausages? Isn't it fun until someone asks for something just like Mum cooks? Isn't it terrible, when after spending all that time in food preparation, cooking and serving, they want you to buy a pizza or a McDonalds? Isn't it terrible that we don't have meals just like we did in the Navy?

Our meals were always on time, every time. No matter how many people were queued up to be fed, food of excellent quality would be sitting in the baine maries waiting for the cooks to serve you with a share. At breakfast time there were always the trays of up to fifty perfectly fried eggs and the trays of nice crisp bacon and a smiling cook with egg slice in hand, serving the starving throng. Not at my place . . . The toast doesn't want to cook, the bacon will burn before it crisps and the eggs have either runny tops or they look like thermal setting plastic. No matter how I try, they don't all come together at the same time.

How many ways can one cook an egg? Fry, boil, poach, scramble and in my case, a combination of some or all of the above. Someone wants fried so I get the small pan. Someone wants boiled, so I get the small pot. Someone wants poached, so I get the second smallest pan. Water in the pot, put the pot on the hot plate to boil. Some water in the second smallest pan and a few drops of oil into the small pan. It is easy, I have four hot plates and three containers so I turn three ON. Now all I have to do is put the eggs into the containers. I don't panic easily but by mistake I broke an egg into the pot of boiling water. Start from scratch with the pot again. Now the oil is getting too hot and is smoking at the same time as the water is boiling in the second smallest pan. I move the pan with the oil onto a cold hot plate and turn down the one with the water in it. BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, damn, the smoke alarm has gone off. Race over and poke the stick at the lever. Go back to the stove. Now, to be clever, I put an egg into the pot with the cold water and put it onto a hot hot plate. Now I break an egg into each of the pans and I wait for things to happen. "Where is the bacon?" I forgot to get it out of the refrigerator. Get out the bacon, unwrap it and lay it out on the grill. Turn on the grill. That's strange, the egg in the oil has not started to cook yet, and the one in the water is just going white at the edges. Turn up the hot plate under the pan of water and OH, no wonder the oil is still cold, I forgot to turn on the hot plate. Turn it on. Suddenly the water in the pot is boiling madly.

Turn down the hot plate. How long does one boil an egg from cold, is it two, three minutes or four minutes? It must be in the cook book. Where is the cook book kept? I don't know so I will just cook it for three minutes. Smoke coming from the grill . . . Quick pull out the tray and turn over the bacon. BOY, I just made it in time. Now the egg in the pan of water is starting to break up. Now the egg in the oil looks cooked. Take both pans off the hot plates and place them on the sink. Place the egg slice over the poached egg and empty out the water. Now try to ease the egg out of the pan. It's stuck so put down that pan and try to ease the fried egg out of its pan. Its stuck too. How many minutes have I boiled the egg in the pot? I had better take the pot off the hot plate and put it on the sink with the pans. Oh there is smoke coming from the grill again. Use the pot holder and remove the tray from under the grill and place it on the sink too. Now use the egg slice to gently remove the poached egg. By the time the egg is on the plate it looks like scrambled egg. So I gently try to remove the egg from the pan with the oil in it. Once again, scrambled egg. Using a desert spoon I remove the egg from the pot and place it in an egg cup. Next I divvy up the bacon. It is very crisp. Some would say burnt but I say very crisp. Where's the toast? Oh, I forgot to cook the toast. Then someone tries to cut the top off the boiled egg. Using a tea towel as insulation for my hand, I strike the top of the boiled egg with the knife and manage to slice through it. The shell comes away from the egg easily and reveals a well cooked egg inside. Too well cooked, it's hard boiled, it's very hard boiled. Probably inedible. Ah Well! I can't be good at everything. Anyhow I don't have all the fancy cooking equipment like the Navy cooks have.

Oh for a plate train smash on toast, or for you non sailors out there, "Tomato au Gratin".
What's that smell? Ye Gods, I forgot to turn off the hot plates, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.

THE EX-BIRDIE COOK

ANOTHER HISTORY OF THE FLEET AIR ARM

After a successful Reunion of the Fleet Air Arm Association and the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of HMAS ALBATROSS, I have decided that there is another history of the Fleet Air Arm.

Forget about the books already written, we have just had five days of meeting 'old' superiors and 'old' subordinates (in 'old' rank only, but really old friends) and we have had hundreds of memories rekindled. These, while they are still fresh in my mind, must be put down in writing so that they are not lost again.

To write a 'History', historians pick an event or a number of events that cover an era or period of time, they then refer to old books, journals, libraries, other historians and, for modern history, the participants and those with expert knowledge of the subject. So where do I, as an ordinary person, start . . . let me start with the Reunion and at the same time remind you that you may have a different recollection of the same events that I and others have, but that is the wonderful thing about how we remember. Something triggers a thought to make us remember.

We all had to make many apologies to the many old friends where the face was well remembered, but the name attached to that face had faded a little. Our name tags didn't help by turning and facing inwards and the face became anonymous. We were thrilled by the faces that shone like beacons with the names in place and the pictures and stories flooding back into prominence. We saw the revered men of gone by eras who again awakened the feelings we had for them long ago, when we saw them after so many years. We remembered the people we looked up to as 'father figures', as the cool calm and collected, no-panic figures, as the comedians who were always three laughs ahead of us and ready to pull our legs again, and as those totally reliable figures upon whom you could stake your reputation (or life if need be). Then again we saw those others, they were the shout and scream panic merchants, the despotic superiors, and the idiots who were all too willing to undermine our efforts in order to progress their own interests or ruin our good name. Finally there were the hundreds of others who filled the spaces to complete the picture of life in the navy, both afloat and ashore.

They were all at the Reunion for least five days doing the same as me, reliving the hardships, pleasures and regrets of the past. We may have all grown a little greyer and maybe a little wiser, but we all seemed to say the same thing when we met after so many years . . . "Do you remember so and so? Do you remember when . . . ?" and, of course, that led to other stories and now to "another history of the Fleet Air Arm" which will never appear in any official publication.

History covers a period of time, it consists of events, it features places, and has as its perpetrators, participants, actors, victims and people. Each is covered by a story. Maybe you played a part in what appears below.

"DO YOU REMEMBER . . . ?"

"YES, I REMEMBER . . ."

1950/1951 . . . when the whole of the accommodation area of HMAS ALBATROSS was built on a clay base and there were no concrete footpaths as there are now and in wet weather one had to walk through the mini lakes to enter the messes.

. . . in very dry and wet weather the clay would move, rupturing the asbestos cement water pipes around the air station causing water shortages. I remember after three weeks of rain in February 1951, the pipes ruptured and water restrictions were enforced. I know because I was caught doing my washing after work on Saturday . . . 7 days stoppage of leave.

. . . when we all had to fall in, be mustered and reported before marching to our places of work. This used to take place for colours in the morning and again after lunch. The numbers mustered filled the roads from the accommodation area, down past the 'ditching' pool to the powerhouse. Hundreds of us would march past and give the Commander an 'eyes left' while Lt Cdr Bill Sykes (Air Gunnery Officer) (RN) would try to instil a little bit of Whale Island discipline into us.

1950/1975 . . . all the names given to the organisations inside 'A' and 'B' hangars, apart from squadron usage, these hangars were at various times called ARS meaning airframe repair section, MRS meaning maintenance and repair section, MU meaning

maintenance unit, LTMU meaning long term maintenance unit and just plain old 'A' and 'B' hangars.

. . . in 'B' hangar, the hangar queen, a Firefly that was continually undergoing a minor ** inspection but was regarded as a 'Christmas tree' by 816 and 817 front line squadrons. Happy Kirwin, the Aircraft Artificer who had worked on this aircraft for over six months, would almost cry in despair when the job he had just completed would be dismantled over night and he would return in the morning to see his efforts needed to be repeated.

Ever since they were built

. . . those damned steel doors in 'A' and 'B' hangars that were opened and closed each day by manual effort. This always meant at least three men per door pushing, straining, groaning and swearing. I wonder if it has changed.

. . . cleaning up for Captain's rounds usually meant that the grates near the doors to 'A' and 'B' hangars had to be lifted so that the drains underneath could be cleaned out with a fire hose. The secret to getting a good comment from the captain was also being successful in hiding the fire hose until after rounds so that it could then be hung up to dry. Failure to do so ended up in a dressing down from the fire officer.

LATE 1950s/EARLY 1960s . . . when people with eastern European names joined our sections and squadrons. Those names now roll off our tongues with ease but in those days we used to stutter and stammer with the pronunciation and after several attempts, we would get somewhere near it. Mustering the men would be something like this: Jones, Sir; Brown, Sir; Keys, Sir; Cross, Sir; White, Sir; Bray, Sir; Brush, Sir; Kelly, Sir; Young, Sir; SSSS, Simmo, Simo, Schimm, Szymonocek, and a voice from the third row would call "what initial?"

SINCE DAY ONE . . . nicknames abounded throughout the Fleet Air Arm. Some had their origins in the name itself like Dicky Bird and Tiny Small and some would have a reference to the country of origin like Ned Kelly, Taff Fenn and Paddy Brown, others were comical like Scrubby Bush, Buncha Keys, Chalky White, Jumpa Cross, Moggy Catmull and Donkey Bray, but there were some that wouldn't fit into any category, like Tug Wilson, The Duke of Sydney and The Colonel . . . maybe some enlightenment from those of you who know would be appreciated. One could draw up a list of nick names that would fill a page of the Slipstream and all the old hands would be able to recognise and picture many of their friends from that list.

. . . the stories about security patrols around the aircraft preserved in sprayed envelopes. There we were, fitted out with belt, gaiters, axe handle and torch (with flat batteries), painted with citronella to keep the mosquitoes happy and, of course, the police whistle to blow if a breach of security occurred. It was never explained how the people in the guard house would hear a whistle blown in the vicinity of 'H' or 'J' hangars, but that was in our instructions. We would patrol for four hours without smoking, without having a brew and would always be visible to the regulating staff on their rounds but somehow be invisible to intruders. I must, after all these years, thank the considerate people who made it possible for us to have a brew and a smoke in a crewroom in the locked hangars near these aircraft. The urns were always switched on, milk, sugar, coffee, tea and clean cups were always available. In appreciation, we always cleaned up afterwards.

. . . it was instilled into us as the Duty Security Chief or the Duty Air Engineering Chief that your orders were to be followed at all times. Some of the checks to be made regarded the locks on gates. "Ensure the gate is closed and the padlock is in place and locked." The boundary fence along Braidwood Road had many gates which were checked during the middle watch and were always secure . . . how did we know? We leaned over the gate and shook the lock. One dark morning whilst doing middle watch rounds I was driven around the perimeter track to check the gates then down to the bomb dump where, to my horror, I saw 300 metres of chain wire fence was lying on the ground; posts and all. On returning to the guard house I reported the situation to the officer of the watch and entered in the rounds book the details of my find with the addition of "rounds not correct." Next day I was called before the commander to explain my actions. I received a blast because, 1: he knew all

about the 'fence repairs' and 2: I was only to check that the gate was locked. After that I always wondered about the purpose of security rounds.

... the buildings between 'B' and 'C' hangars that have served many purposes, spray painters shop, coffinman starter servicing shop, turbo starter shop, machine shop, propeller bay, engine repair section, mechanic training machine shop and welding shop and machine shop and sheet metal workshop again. Going around ALBATROSS by bus during the Reunion, we saw many new buildings but quite a few of the old ones are still there after fifty years. I wondered what they were being used for now.

... LEGENDS: These are not only made by names but also by events and sayings. Someone jokingly said: "You can't put me in cells, Sir" and the chorused reply was "watch your fingers lad, CLANG". Besides VAT Smith, who will remain THE LEGEND of the whole Fleet Air Arm, there are other legends belonging to specific branches. Someone used the words "37 years man and boy and I've never bent a split pin or broken a piece of locking wire", and the immediate reply was 'dad' Broodie, the air engineer officer who was once in charge of the salvage section. "I want two volunteers for the glider shop. You and you", ... Harold Kent, still living legends who made an indelible mark in our minds like Charlie Morris and Shamus O'Farrell and those too numerous to list who climbed almost from insignificance to the highest ranks. Yes, we remembered them all over the days of the Reunion. Maybe someone could write about some of these great men.

DURING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA. ... a moonless, starless pitch black night at sea onboard HMAS MELBOURNE. The ship blacked out: Deadlights lowered and secured, all external lighting turned off, curtains placed on all exits, no smoking on deck, no torches to be used in blacked out areas and absolutely no lights to be visible from outside the ship. A message over the tannoy that we (the ship) shall remain invisible as we passed through these waters. When the canvas blackout curtains were placed on all the exits from the ships interior, inside the ship the humidity became unbearable. To obtain relief, one would struggle through the mass of canvas, only to confront another mass of canvas within this darkened exit. One would then emerge into the pitch blackness of a boat space or weather deck or sponson and try to find one's way by feel. I and four mess mates went to cool off on the flight deck while we sailed through Sunda Strait and after fighting our way through the blacked out doorways, feeling our way along weather decks up to the sponson, bumping into others with the same idea, we arrived just forward of the island. Climbing onto the flight deck, we could not see the red or green navigation lights, no lights were emanating from the bridge, but we were amazed to see our shadows cast on the flight deck by the very bright white light at the masthead!

... **HMAS MELBOURNE** at anchor, mid stream opposite the dry dock in Singapore. The dockyard blacked out, all the ships around us blacked out, all the villages and towns all the way into Singapore blacked out, no moon, no stars, no glow in the sky from any reflected light anywhere. It was a complete, pitch black night and we were to line the boat spaces, weather decks and flight deck as part of an exercise. We were to look for anyone or anything trying to breach our security. Getting to our nominated position was through those same canvas curtains above and feel our way into position. BANG, I just hit my head on that reel of rope, OUCH, I just kicked my shin on that winch, BANG, I walked into the bulkhead, so with one hand out in front and the other waving from side to side, I felt my way forward. "WATCH IT MATE." "Sorry", "OUCH", "Sorry", "BLOODY PERVERT", "Sorry", "THAT WAS MY NOSE YOU HIT", "Sorry", "LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING", "Sorry", "SHHH", "Sorry", "Shhh, no talking". Finally I'm in position but it's still blacker than inside a bull's ... there is absolutely nothing to be seen. One cannot even sense the people one knows are around, then a whispered message comes from an officer somewhere nearby; we are to let our eyes get accustomed to the darkness and not look directly at anything (as if we could see it anyway), but let any movement at the periphery of our vision (I like that phrase), pick up that movement ... two hours later I still can't see anything but another whispered message is passed along the line to the officer in charge, "movement fifteen degrees to the left, approximately one hundred yards out from the ship", and we hear the officer immediately report this over the phone to the bridge. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the ship's searchlight comes on and illuminates a Malaysian fishing boat going about its work, in a brilliant

white glow that seems to light up the whole countryside. The searchlight goes out and blackness returns. Now I have less sight than I had before, when I couldn't see anything.

... ripple soled sandals. It was said that they were designed by a sailor so that when we trod on cockroaches to crush them, it gave them a 50-50 chance of survival. Everyone had a pair of these canteen sandals. Don't you miss them and the cockies?

1964. ... the old aircraft inspection schedules. We had daily inspections and daily starred inspections - one, two and three stars. Then there were the minor inspections and the minor starred inspections. Everything was on a set periodicity and had to be carried out at the predetermined time or date. Even though you changed a wheel and tyre yesterday and there were 100 landings left in the tyre, if tomorrow's schedule showed the wheel and tyre had to be changed, tomorrow we did it. Then we were introduced to opportunity or flexible servicing and believe it or not, quite a few of the old hands resisted the change. I think our workload was reduced by thirty percent with the new system. In AMCO (air craft maintenance control office) we had movicast boards with little white pegs onto which were stuck coloured pieces of paper with numbers. Each colour represented a trade and the number represented an operation in the servicing schedule. White for airframes and engines, green for electrical, red for radio and brown for ordnance. Displayed on these boards were all the inspections, for all trades, for the next thirty five days. As the inspections were carried out, the pegs were moved up the movicast board the required number of days. We could foresee days of heavy work load and if these coincided with a heavy flying program, we would do some or all of the work early, thus having both serviceability and aircraft availability. The terminology for the inspections changed as well and we then had one daily inspection and mainchecks 1, 2, 3 and 4, to replace the plethora of old inspections.

UP TO 1960. ... collarless shirts. We had detachable collars for our shirts that required starching and ironing. In my kit I had six shirts and twelve collars, but invariably, no matter how many sets of collar studs one bought, when we dressed for divisions, we would always find four or five front studs but no back studs, or vice versa.

... Divisions. While attached to NASREP (Naval Air Stores Repair Party) at Randwick Stores, I was accommodated at HMAS PENGUIN. Divisions at HMAS ALBATROSS always meant wearing one's best uniform in navy blue or white. Freshly dry cleaned, shoes highly polished, clean shaven and trying to look immaculate. Imagine our surprise at HMAS PENGUIN when the captain required dress for divisions "action working dress, carrying your gas mask on your right shoulder and your burberry on your left arm".

EARLY FIFTIES. ... Sunday Church parades. If you had not gone ashore on weekend leave as a native of either Sydney or Nowra, you had to work on Saturday morning and attend church parade on Sunday morning. You had to be in the dress of the day and be inspected by your divisional officer before entering the cinema/gymnasium for the service. In order to ensure everyone attended church parade the regulating staff would walk around the accommodation areas and try to collar any evaders. However, in the ceiling of each of the huts was a manhole giving access to the space between the ceiling and the roof, where evaders could hide, undetected, until the attendees returned and gave the all clear. Unfortunately, one master-at-arms was wise to the ways of sailors and crept into each mess, stood below the manhole and whispered in a loud manner, "is there any room left up there?" "Yes" would come the reply as the manhole cover was removed to allow him entry ... "GOTCHA" the quarter-deck was not large enough to accommodate the attendees for weeks afterwards.

Yes I thought you would remember some of those things. Your memories may be different but it is good to relive those times.

Now I don't know how any of the above could be incorporated into any official history book, but these are just some of the subjects we discussed from Wednesday until Sunday at the Reunion. Maybe someone with journalistic abilities could take up some of the other subjects and continue this unofficial history from the memories of those who were there. What thoughts do these words conjure up: Hammocks, knock before entering, ye old wind tunnel, bread buttering machines, duty watches and shore leave, searches of motor vehicles, 100 octane petrol and car performance. Someone please take over ... PLEASE.

There are thousands of stories waiting to be told.

Alan G. Spearpoint, Ex Chief Aircraft Artificer

LETTERS



Dear Bob, I would guess that most of your recent letters received relate to FAA Reunion '98; some complimentary, some not?

In the main I was satisfied with the outcome overall. I attended all major functions and am aware of only a few which were 'spoiled' either by the weather over which mere mortals had no control ie the race meeting and the Air Day, or by less than adequate management/infrastructure ie FAA History Review and the Freedom of Entry Parade.

I believe that the only one for which the Host Division and/or the Reunion Sub-committee could be held accountable was the History Review prior to the launch of 'Flying Stations'. Obviously it was not possible to conduct a full dress rehearsal prior to. But really, that sound system could have been checked out and faults rectified at the Cocktail Party the evening beforehand?

I read the programme very carefully and ensured that I was seated for the scheduled 1400 start of the review. I confess I did not remain until the scheduled 1500 conclusion. My absence at the conclusion (whenever that was), I'm told only a couple of dozen sat the performance through, included me in an unintended but obvious slight to all participants in general and to the Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG) in particular when making their presentations to the Museum and to our Association.

The Saturday Parade, at least the 'Old Timer's' contingent, seemed to lack a certain 'beat'. I can't believe that in this age of the mobile phone a better outcome could not have been achieved. I think Frank Burke's letter to the Shoalhaven Independent, Wednesday 11 November '98, sums it up pretty well. (Copy attached, "Best We Forget").

The Sunday 'International Air Day' did not reach the standard of the FAA Reunion '88 nor FAA Reunion '92. It's common knowledge that friendly foreign forces require about 2 years lead time before they can consider an invitation to provide an aircraft carrier to visit and provide aircraft to participate. International circumstances prevailing at the time may cancel participation.

Conditions under which participating aircraft operate are controlled by the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) not COMAUSNAVAIR. If you needed high power binoculars to see the aircraft flying, blame Dick not Chris.

Before concluding I'd like to return to the CNAG. I had the pleasure of meeting a few of their contingent including their 'Flag-Bearer' Bill Whitehead. I subsequently learned that they had made some very generous donations to the Australian Naval Aviation Museum and to the Fleet Air Arm Association. In particular a full colour, limited edition, print of an original painting by Marine Artist Alfred Leete. The handsomely framed 28" x 15.1/2" print is numbered and signed by the artist and depicts Swordfish aircraft launching from a carrier in the Atlantic during WWII.

There is quite a story behind the painting, the reason for the limited edition of prints and those involved in organising the presentation etc. Members should look for this print when next they visit the Museum

and ask Honorary Curator Bob 'Windy' Geale to relate the history, including the Toronto Chapter of CNAG and 10 years/22,000 hours of volunteer labour, an air worthy Swordfish Aircraft and the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

*Happy Editing,
Jim Lee*

*Article which appeared in Shoalhaven Independent,
Wednesday November 11, 1998*

"BEST WE FORGET"

DEAR SIR, I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS NOT ONLY FOR MYSELF, BUT ALSO FOR MOST OF THE OLD SALTS, MOST OF WHOM TRAVELLED FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND BEYOND, TO MEET AND MARCH ON SATURDAY AND NOT ONLY EX-NAVAL PERSONNEL BUT JUST ABOUT EVERYONE I HAPPENED TO MEET AT THE NAVY DAY RACES WHO HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE SERVICES.

WHOEVER ORGANISED THE WHOLE STUFF UP SHOULD HANG THEIR HEAD IN SHAME.

THEY NEVER EVEN PAID US THE COURTESY OF A BAND TO LEAD THE MARCH.

IF SOMEBODY HAD JUMPED IN WITH A FLUTE, VIOLIN, OR A GUITAR, WE WOULD HAVE CALLED FOR A SPECIAL MEDAL FOR THEM.

TO RUB SALT INTO THE OLD SALTS. I WAS INFORMED THAT AFTER WE MARCHED, THE SPECTATORS "GOD BLESS THEM ALL", THAT TURNED OUT AND EVERYONE OF US APPRECIATED EVERY ONE OF THEM, WAS INFORMED WHEN THEY STARTED TO DISPERSE, NOT TO, AS THE NAVY WITH BAND AND ALL, WAS ABOUT TO MARCH.

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL DID THEY THINK ALL OF US WERE? HAS BEENS PROBABLY.

THERE IS ONE THING FOR SURE, NONE OF US WILL MARCH AT THE NEXT 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION.

FRANK BURKE"



Bill Whitehead leads the Canadian Naval Air Group contingent participating in the RAN FAA Golden Jubilee Freedom of Entry Parade.

Photo courtesy Harry Harkness

Dear Bob,

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Neil Ralph, Max Altham, Jim Lee, Mike Lehan and his staff and, of course, the volunteers and everyone else who was involved in the organisation and running of the 50th Anniversary FAA Reunion. All the events ran very smoothly, which made everyone's participation most enjoyable. Special mention should be made of the excellent system that was in operation for the registration of the Reunion members.

The courteous and helpful manner of the registration staff and the excellent Reunion kit should be commended.

It was great to once again meet up with old shipmates, some that I had not seen for over 40 years, but once we started to have a conversation, it was as if it was only yesterday that we had last spoken, although at times the memory tended to be a bit faded. Congratulations again on a very memorial Reunion and I hope to renew contact with everyone in the near future (especially the ones I missed at the Reunion).

Regards to all, Mick Blair

Dear Bob,

"What a Reunion"

The organisers of the reunion can bask in the glory of a job very well done and very much appreciated by the hundreds of Fleet Air Arm Associate members who travelled from all over Australia to attend.

Held in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of HMAS ALBATROSS and the Nowra Spring Festival, it provided us with at least five wonderful days of meeting old friends and reliving the past. The professionalism shown in arranging the daily programs is to be commended. One wonders if the organisers sought advice or if their Navy training and experience taught them exactly what was required for so many people to meet without rushing from one function to another.

On behalf of all attendees, I would like to thank the organisers, the many volunteers and the pressed men and women for all the efforts expended in producing such a successful reunion. WELL DONE.

We all now look forward to the next time.

Alan G. Spearpoint

Attached is 'Another History of the Fleet Air Arm' for inclusion in the next edition of the Slipstream.

Dear Ed,

I have enclosed a few photographs of a diorama or, more correctly, a miniature that my wife and I put together.

During its construction we sought memories from people whom I thought had minds like steel traps. So much for experiences that we have burned into the soul. I could not find two blokes who remembered the same thing.

I have no doubt that the 'Lawyers' will now appear from everywhere but, "Too late, she cried", the stone has been cast.

The figurines do not depict any particular person and the scale is 1:12.

All the best, Ron Smith

Dear Ed,

Not being a regular reader of Slipstream, I thoroughly digested and enjoyed the October '98 edition - which was included with the bag of 'Goodies', for those attending the F.A.A. Reunion.

On page 28 I noted the P.S. to Jack McLoughlin's letter regarding Jock Nesbitt and Lofty Lawton. Some previous article must have been written for Ian Ferguson wanting to know Jock's name.

This query could only be in reference to the tragedy of the salvage party in N.Z. whilst HMAS SYDNEY was operating off the Bay of Islands in 1950.

I was one of the salvage team from the 20th C.A.G. sent ashore to repair the Firefly and Fury that had force landed. Apart from the Marine driver, I would be the only one who can give an account of this episode as I flew back to the ship in the Walrus instead of going back with the party in the Jeep and trailer.

Lofty and myself were Naval Artificer Apprentices together in 1941 and was my 'run-ashore' oppo. Should anyone wish to know the facts of this salvage operation and tragedy, I would be willing to recount it - or even scribe an article for Slipstream, should you think it appropriate.

*Regards, Gordon C. Evans
ex Air Artificer R.N.*

P.S. I located Lofty's grave near Russell when I emigrated to N.Z. in 1961.

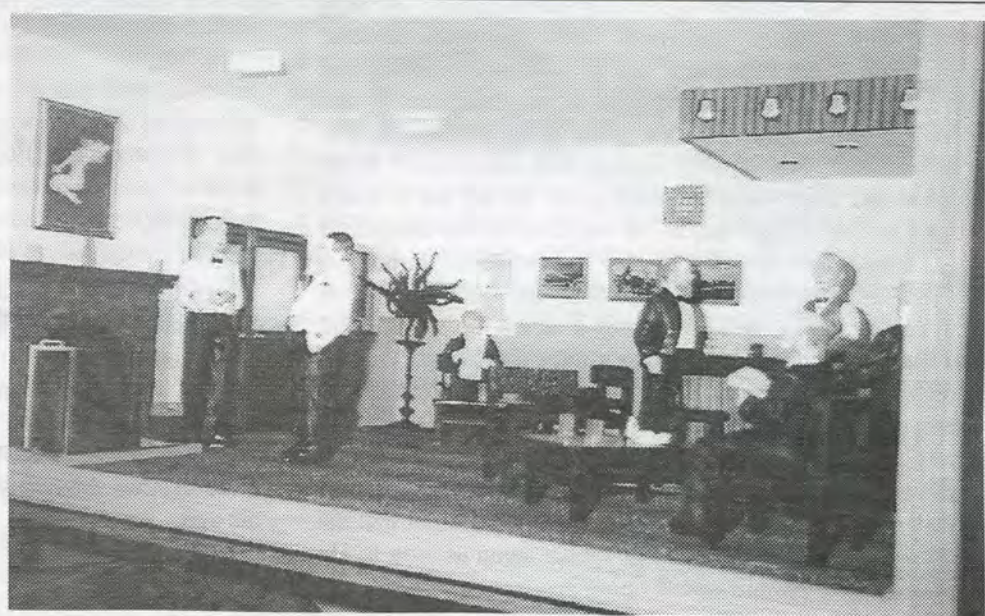


MISSING PERSON

Kevin Raddatz would like to make contact with 'Bluey' Hummerson. If you are out there 'Blue' or if anyone in SLIPSTREAM land knows of 'Bluey's' whereabouts please call Kevin on (07) 4067 1762.
ED

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Birthdays are good for you, statistics show that the people who have the most, live the longest.
- If you are an ageing golfer and find yourself complaining about how deep the bunkers are, how long the rough is, or how steep the hills have become, console yourself with the thought that at least you are on the right side of the grass.



Dear Ed,

Another little gem from the past.

MARCH ON THE GUARD AND BAND. OOPS

This little story goes back to the days of the formation of the Albatross Blue Jackets Band. As was the case in those days things just happened, no pre warning no notice, things just appeared out of the blue. Mind you it was a very trying period, after all we were creating history, there had not been a Naval Air Station, operated by the Royal Australian Navy, prior to the commissioning of ALBATROSS and so everything we did created a precedent.

On this occasion, from memory, it was lunch time in the Chiefs Mess and, as usual, the mess was crowded, the bar working flat out, the dining room full with hungry members. The President of the Mess entered the lounge area followed by a sight not seen before in the mess. The person accompanying the President was wearing a bright scarlet jacket with black piping and gold buttons, the uniform of the Band of the Royal Australian Navy. He was introduced by the President as Band Corporal Carr, who had been posted to ALBATROSS with the title of Band Master.

Apparently someone somewhere had decided the Navy's latest establishment was big enough to be entitled to it's own band for ceremonial occasions but there were not enough musicians in the Navy to stretch that far. And so 'Bluey Carr' was dispatched to ALBATROSS with orders to recruit volunteers from the ships company to form a Blue Jackets Band. Musical instruments were supplied and lessons on how to get a noise out of them were included. As an inducement, members of the band would be excused normal on board duties, such as watchkeeping, dining room and galley, messmen, etc. And so a new catch cry came into being "not me Chief, I'm in the Band".

Well it wasn't too long before a sound resembling a group of musicians practising started to emanate from the old gym every morning before Colours. Then suddenly one morning, much to the dismay of the Officer of the Watch, just before Colours, the Band assembled in front of the gym and marched onto the Quarter deck, where the alert was sounded and so began the Colours ceremony, on completion the Band marched off, back to the gym to rehearse their latest piece of music so as to be note perfect for the big occasion - Divisions.

We rehearsed them all Colonel Bogey, The Thin Red Line, The Director and a couple of others or, I should say, airs to be played during the inspection, Iolanthe being one. However, the big day dawned, Friday, Divisions. We had been rehearsing our new piece of music with great gusto it was that type of a march.

A big Surprise, and so we assembled outside of the armoury along with the guard, our instruments glistening and our gaiters and belts spotlessly white matching the guard. Then came the command "March on the Guard and Band" and so with much huffing and puffing and whumping and thumping of the big bass drum around the corner of the hangar came the pride of ALBATROSS. The Blue Jacket Band, very proudly playing their latest music. It felt really good and to our minds sounded great. We had put so much effort into getting it right and so we marched to our designated position, halted, and prepared to play the incidental inspection music, just like a real band would. Suddenly an out of wind Naval Airman came running, or I should say doubled, up to the Band Master and informed him the Captain wanted him to report to him immediately. So away went Band Corporal Carr resplendent in his scarlet uniform and white helmet marching to the dais to comply with the Captains command. After much saluting and Yes Siring, Blue came marching back to the band where he addressed the band with the news that the Captain had issued the order that the Band was not to play that particular march again as long as He was Captain of the establishment.

Yes Sir, The March? 'Under the Double Eagle'. Well that was a real kick in the teeth for we were all proud of our ability to play that one, it had great bass and really produced a top marching sound. It was of German origin and as usual with their music very Teutonic.

Unbeknown to us however, the Captain did not have a very good appreciation of things Teutonic, having spent a few years as a guest of Adolf in one of his famous Stalags. He actually rated a mention in the book 'The Great Escape' in relation to his involvement in the escape committee's work. Not a very complimentary mention according to the author, but that's another story, if you want to know read the book. The Captain in question? Captain Peter Fanshawe, R.N. In those days he was Lieutenant Peter Fanshawe R.N.

So we replaced 'Under the Double Eagle' with a fine old British March which, when played, had a habit of making one swing the arms just that little bit better 'Sussex by the Sea'. We got into trouble over that one also, but not as bad as the Eagle.

ALBATROSS in those days had a reputation for providing first class Guards of Honour and on this occasion the guard and band were invited to Canberra to participate in the ceremonial opening of Parliament. We were billeted at R.A.A.F. base FAIRBAIRN, in tents actually, and every morning we would march the guard to parliament house for rehearsal. We played our full repertoire but the most requested march was Sussex. Somehow it had the ability to lift the cadence and get that little extra out of the guard. But all good things come to an end eventually and we were told not play it again - the reason given? - the band that would play on the day did not have that music (it was the Band of the R.A.A.F.) and they wanted the guards to acclimatize to a standard piece. I said Guards because we were joined by the Army and the Airforce guards. Apparently we were good enough for the rehearsal but a bit ragtag for the main event. We did register a protest but what the ***** At least we were good enough to be invited.

I can't remember all the events we participated in but it sure beat middle watch patrols of the airfield and scullery duties. Life in the Blue Jackets was another of those events that made memories of ALBATROSS very pleasant indeed.

I won't go into the composition of the Band, young John Iken did that two issues or so ago but they were a great bunch of guys, some of them were reasonably good musicians also and when we combined our talents, WOW, even the Captain was impressed.

Hope you all had a great reunion - sorry I couldn't make it.

John Bray X C.A.F.(A)



Dear Ed,

In the last issue you published a 'Vale' for Reg Elphick. He was a friend. Some while ago I finished an autobiography, written purely for my children. In it is a yarn that I wrote some forty years ago which was published in the Slipstream of that era. Reg Elphick was one of nature's gentle men. That spacing is quite intentional, not a typographical error. As an eulogy perhaps you might like to publish this yarn about an adventure which we all enjoyed so many years ago.

*Charles Morris,
Eltham, Victoria*

EXPEDITION FORESIGHT

In 1957 life at Nowra carried on in a desultory fashion. The new jets had only just arrived and life had not yet become too hectic. One day being more than particularly bored and the Navy having decided that expedition training was a good thing for the overweight and unfit, the Electrical and Instrument workshop staff voted for an expedition into the bushland to the west of the air station. Appropriately named 'Expedition Foresight' (after the ill fated Forsyth expedition up the Amazon many years earlier), the route plan was to march due west from the airfield regardless of the terrain or obstacles, until we reached a dirt track running between Nowra and Yalwal, an old gold mining settlement dating back to the last century.

Overnighting at Yalwal we would then proceed the next day marching in a northerly direction, up one of the many gorges to the central plateau until we descended to the Shoalhaven river plains at the Pulpit Rock and thence hopefully back to the air station by a lorry that would meet us there some three days after our departure. The team comprised Reg Elphick, Harris Wills, Gus Markey, Roy Muscio and a couple of others whose names have passed from memory.

We started out on a beautiful warm, sunny day compass bearing due west across the bushland, down gullies, up hills but ever due west, it was after reading Jerome K. Jerome's book 'Three Men in a Boat' always going to be adventuresome with someone in the team called Harris, and so it proved. After an hour or so I said to Harris "Let's have a look at the map". Delving into his pack he remarked "I seem to have left it behind." The next few remarks were quite unprintable. By now it would be more than a little embarrassing to return. Nothing loathe and since I had the map committed to my superb memory, compass in hand, the decision was made to continue.

It was at this stage that Wills' boot fell apart, the sole leaving the upper completely. Tying the offending sole back in place we carried on until some thirty minutes later we reached the Yalwal track. The run, hobble, was then fairly easy down into the thriving metropolis of Yalwal (population 2 persons and a goat). The gold having long been worked out all that was left of the diggings seemed to be a shearing shed but it was not too clear what that had to do with gold digging. Adjacent to the 'village' of all things there was a rubbish tip and on this tip of all things we found a left foot basketball boot which just fitted Wills now exposed hoof. He finished the expedition with odd boots. That night we camped under a large tree to which we affixed a brass plaque with the names and details of our expedition. At least we hadn't forgotten that!

During the night, the temperature fell alarmingly and it rained so heavily that we moved into the shearing shed to keep dry where, despite Harris' snores, we slept fitfully until first light. First light was a slight misnomer for the rain clouds hung low all round the surrounding hills and it was impossible to tell one gorge from another. Still with trusty compass in hand and aided by my elephantine recall we proceeded north up the slopes. All went well for four or five kilometres when out of the cloud appeared a sheer rock face. The Morris memory recall had struck again. WE had gone up the wrong gorge!

It looked as though we were beaten until Roy Muscio discovered a cleft or chimney in the rock face. Roped together we started the ascent. Roy, who was a tower of strength leading the others at varying intervals determined by the length of the rope and the girth of the climbers stomach. At the top, the cleft had widened from the main plateau and a pinnacle of rock some ten feet wide on which we found ourselves was agape some four feet from the

main plateau. A simple step or jump across and we were ready to go forward, or were we? Dear old Reg, the last climber but one reached the pinnacle and said "I can't jump that. No way". One of us had to jump back and get him across. Until he crossed the gap the remaining climber could

not reach the pinnacle. It's a very simple thing to jump across a four feet gap going from a ten foot wide platform to a plateau. It is not so simple in reverse! Reg can vouch for that as he caught Roy Muscio leaping across at him.

Finally we were all across and marching across fairly level country, densely bushed but still fairly easy going particularly since the rain had now ceased. An hour later we had saw the plains of the Shoalhaven river. One small problem, the plains were some seven hundred feet below and what appeared to be sheer rock faces all round. From what memory we had left of the map there should have been a small stream running into the Shoalhaven and it was possibly on our left. As luck would have it, after ten minutes we had our stream. Once more, only one thing wrong, the stream immediately fell away into a three hundred foot waterfall.

We sat on the rock cliff edge. Reg and Harris made some sandwiches. Reg cut the bread and Harris ate most of the filling. So there we sat overlooking this chasm, eating our lunches, with Roy tossing the empty tins of salmon over the edge to listen to the impact some seconds later. The man had no nerves. He was sitting feet over the edge and tossing these bloody tins down whilst the rest of us were cringing in the background. Suddenly he said, "I think I can see a way down" and off he went. Moments later he appeared on the opposite side of the defile cut by the waterfall. "Yeh, she's right, just go up a few yards above the fall and cross there. I'll meet you on the other side." A most hair raising experience followed. The slope was steep, wet and very slippery and it was with a great sense of relief that after tentatively traversing the rock surface and stream, we grabbed the vines that hugged the sides of the ravine on the other wise.

We descended by crawling along under the creepers and vines using them as a safety net. This had the decided advantage that, by keeping our noses to the ground, we could not see over the edge of the drop that was only inches away. Just over half way down, an outcrop of rock provided a pool to soak our feet and rest a while. One of the rocks, newly fallen, had split on impact. It may have been fools' gold but there was certainly colour in the quartz vein running through the centre. We were not interested, we were only concerned with descending the final two hundred feet and reaching the valley floor. We finally reached Pulpit Rock.

Nowadays the rock is famous because Arthur Boyd used it as the inspiration for his beautiful series of paintings on "The Man and His River". For us too, it was a beautiful sight for it meant we had completed our obstacle course and the expedition was 'satisfactorily?' concluded. From a settler's house, weary, sore, cold and hungry, we phoned the base for a lorry. We packed ourselves aboard and headed for a hot shower, a feed and a good nights sleep. In hindsight we were stupid! I was stupid, we could have been lost in that country with no one to find us. We risked serious injury by climbing rock cliffs and descending into unknown terrain. We did in fact everything wrong we could have done, but we had survived and I suppose in the long run, that was the objective. We started as some people out of a workshop and we ended up, friends. Reg became godfather to my children and Harris? Harris went back to snore in the land of the Poms.



Fleet Air Arm Golden Jubilee 1948-1998
Reunion November 1998 - Tamworth Pilots

Dear Bob,

Please find enclosed an article on the group of Fleet Air Arm pilots who were either born at Tamworth and/or spent the majority of their school years at Tamworth. This article was sent to the Northern Daily Leader Newspaper at Tamworth.

An article with a little more detail follows which may be of interest for Slipstream or for the Museum records:

Phil Rowe joined the Navy in 1953 and flew Firefly and Gannet aircraft on 817 Squadron then Sea Fury and Sea Venom aircraft on 808 Squadron. On leaving the Navy in 1960 as a Leut(P) Phil flew for TAA for 6 years then QANTAS for 22 years before retiring from flying to become a grazier at Dyers Cross NSW. Phil had an interesting time on board HMAS MELBOURNE when taxiing a Gannet onto the catapult the nose gear folded and the contra rotating props disintegrated creating havoc amongst the flight deck and catapult crew. Minor injuries were sustained.

Ian MacDonald, joined the Navy in Dec.1947 and flew Sea Fires Mk15 and 17, Fire Flys and Sea Fury aircraft. He was active in Korea, gaining the Australian Active Service Medal 45/75, the British Korean Medal, UN Medal with Korean Clasp, the Vietnam Logistic Support Medal and the Australian Service Medal 45/75 with Japan Clasp. He was a member of 808 Squadron embarked on HMAS SYDNEY and ashore at Nowra from December 1950 to December 1952 and 723 Squadron at NAS NOWRA January 1953 to July 1954. Ian worked for QANTAS from 1955 until 1983, flying Boeing 707's as captain from 1965 to 1975 at which time he became a captain on the Boeing 747's. Ian has now retired and enjoys lawn bowls at Caringbah NSW. After reading the statistics of the Korean conflict I can only say that the skill and professionalism of these pilots is something they and the RAN can remain very proud of. The conditions under which they operated, the low accident rate and the results of their missions is a record to be envied.

Graham Quick joined the Navy in 1964 and flew Grumman Tracker and Skyhawk aircraft before joining TAA in 1974. He was a member of 816 and 851 Squadron. In 816 Squadron he completed six cruises on HMAS MELBOURNE and was the carrier air group LSO. Graham was also a member of VU-32 Squadron under training at HMCS SHEARWATER at Halifax Nova Scotia and did LSO training at VS-41 Squadron with the US Navy at San Diego USA. In TAA he flew Fokker Friendships, Boeing 727's and Boeing 737-300's, before leaving in 1989 to join the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Graham is now a senior pilot and captain at the new Brisbane Base and does patient retrievals flying a Super King Air aircraft. He has been awarded the Vietnam Logistic Support Medal and the Australian Active Service Medal 1945/75 with Vietnam Clasp.

Des Rodgers joined the Navy in 1953 and served for 27 years. He flew Sea Fury aircraft and Wessex helicopters and we understand, has the distinction of holding more squadron commands than any other naval aviator, commanding 817 Squadron

twice and 725 Squadron twice. He was amongst the first group of pilots to fully qualify the deck landings aboard HMAS SYDNEY in Australia. Des was awarded the Air Force Cross for the effort he and his squadron put in during the rescue of personnel at the collision between HMAS MELBOURNE and the USS EVANS in June 1969. Des has now retired and is raising Lowline Beef Cattle on the Southern Tablelands.

Geoff Litchfield joined the Navy about 1951 and flew Sea Fire, Sea Fury, Meteor and Sea Venom aircraft. Geoff's Navy career almost ended in May 1955, during an air display at Griffith another aircraft's propeller devoured the tail of his aircraft. Geoff was awarded the Australian Service Medal 45/75 and was privileged to meet the Duke of Edinburgh at Yeovilton in 1956. After leaving the Navy Geoff worked for TAA from 1960 to 1989 flying DC3, F27, ELECTRA, DC9, Boeing 727 and Airbus A300 aircraft. His TAA service included eight years in New Guinea. He is now semi retired at Eltham but flies his own Cessna 180 to Tamworth to do simulator instructing at the British Aerospace Pilot Training facility.

Garth Eldering (not in photo) joined the Navy in 1947 but is missing believed killed in a Sea Fire while training in England in June 1950. We believe that Garth's father had the Court House Hotel in Peel Street Tamworth. He was on No 1 pilots course.

I understand that there is another Tamworth native Navy Pilot, Anthony Sheehan, However I have not been able to get any detail on Anthony.

It is interesting that such a large number of Navy Pilots should come from Tamworth, I'm not sure why this happened but it could have had something to do with the early fellows like Ian, Phil, Des and Geoff doing fly pasts over Tamworth in the Sea Fury. I can well remember, as a primary school kid, getting six for disrupting a class as I rushed to the window to see a formation of Sea Furys roaring over the school, it was worth it. There are few sounds in this world as stirring as the roar of a Bristol Centaurus.

As far as I know there are no Observers from Tamworth and there may be other pilots of which I am not aware. Ian Boffinger (Met) is native of Tamworth, he taught me science in High School, it wasn't him that gave me six, he would have been at the window also. Maybe the readers of Slipstream can put us straight on any O or P that we have missed.

Graham Quick, MacGregor Qld.



L to R: Phil Rowe, Ian MacDonald, Graham Quick, Des Rodgers, Geoff Litchfield. All Tamworth Natives standing in front of a Sea Fury at the Naval Aviation Museum Nowra.

HAVE JUST RECEIVED A LETTER AND CHRISTMAS CARD FROM GEORGE CHADWICK (U.K.) IN WHICH HE WISHES US ALL MERRY XMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR. FROM ALL OF US HERE WE RETURN THE COMPLIMENT AND HOPE YOU HAD AND WILL HAVE THE SAME. A PRECIS OF GEORGE'S LETTER FOLLOWS:

Our numbers of 816 sqdn. '45 commission to disbanding in July '48 have increased in the HMS OCEAN Association membership and at the OCEAN Association Reunion in October at the Southsea District of Portsmouth made a full turn-out. We enjoyed an eventful and happy commission in OCEAN with the Mediterranean Fleet June '46 - July '48. It was during that time I was I/C Sqdn maintenance organisation and filled the same duty assignment with 816 Sqdn April '53 - August '54 at ALBATROSS and in SYDNEY and VENGEANCE.

Photograph of Commissioning of HMAS SYDNEY shown on front cover of October issue of 'Slipstream' held particular interest for me having been a guest at the commissioning of the fifth HMS OCEAN ON 30th September at Devonport. V.I.P. treatment - coffee in the Wardroom, mixing with illustrious guests, thence to the vehicle deck for the ceremony (rain made the planned fly-past and flight deck venue a washout). Ships company as smartly turned out as they ever will be. Proud happy relatives and friends looking on. Then to a splendid lunch with wines and spring waters at tables for eight - more than a thousand seated, with champagne for toasts. At the table which I was seated sat a CMDR R.H. Menzies and his wife. The RAN F.A.A. 50th Anniversary Reunion at Nowra to be held in October cropped up in talk at the table, to which Mrs Menzies mentioned that her father bought HMS - late HMAS ALBATROSS in 1946. I told of having 'Slipstream' journals informing of service life with ALBATROSS in commission, to which Mr Menzies said that he would be delighted to loan them. I sent the 'Slipstream' journals with a letter to Mrs Menzies for her

father, Captain Bristow, who came on the phone to me from Paignton at Torquay Bay in the manner of a real hearty Devonian sea-faring character. He told of steaming the ship across Torquay Bay with his owning partners - a \$5,500 in 1946 to raise steam.



The commissioning of HMS OCEAN was the only such event I have attended in a pensioned career in the R.N. - for me a most enjoyable memorable occasion.

I have had correspondence from a member who attended 50th Anniversary celebration reunion at Nowra referring well of it and am looking forward to January 1999 issue of 'Slipstream' landing on the doormat. I received my copy of 'Flying Stations' - signed but unable to distinguish the signatures* (* Neil Ralph (FAAA President), Mike Lehan (ANAM Director), and Max Altham (FAAA NSW President) who edited the book).

In February 1989 I attended the naming ceremony of HMS OCEAN by Queen Elizabeth at Barrow-in-Furness, seated second row and directly facing the dais for my first sighting of Royalty. A much enjoyed and memorable occasion.

1998 has been a fortunate year for me - both for FAA service connections and life in general. How 1999 will follow that! The millennium nearing its end (hope there no bugs in the Associations computer). My wish is for shipmates of old to keep drawing their pensions well into the 21st century, for the Association to thrive and for many reminiscences arriving in your post Bob.

One reminiscence, Christmas '53 in HMAS SYDNEY alongside at Kure, Japan. Me on stoppage of leave for dallying too long at the Commonwealth H.Q. mess. took on substitution of near all duty watch of senior rates and an officer. I like to think that they in their Christmas reminiscences spare a kind thought for me.

George Chadwick

LOOKING BACK

by Merv Heath

REPRODUCED FROM 'THE VOICE' THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

This is a short story by a silly sailor (me) about other silly sailors . . . In all our tours of duty in Korea in the RAN we mixed and got on well with all nationals that fought with the UN except one, that was the white American sailor. Whenever we met, it always ended up in an all in brawl.

They always called us Limey's with the added and very uncomplimentary remarks about the Queen, The English flag and so on.

Anyhow one day in Hong Kong on R & R from Korea, we went ashore to have a few cold drinks and lo and behold one lone septic tank (Yank) walked up the road in front of us and started calling us Limeys and the usual routine about the flag, Queen etc. This was the time we usually started fighting.

So I thought to myself lets change this and so I said to this white Yank, what do you drink mate and he said "Man I drink bourbon", so I said "Let's go and have some bourbon."

We went to this Beer Hall and shouted him bourbon all day, never letting him shout once and all this time he was abusing us Limey's and the Queen and the English flag.

Eventually, later that night he passed out and we took him down to Wanchai and the local tattoo artist where we had tattooed across his chest the English flag and also the words "God Save The Queen."

We then put him in a cab to return to his ship and next day we left Hong Kong and sailed to Sydney.

The following letter has been received from Veterans' Affairs:

I am writing to your organisation to let you know of the competitive insurance premiums presently being offered under the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme to eligible clients not currently insured with DSH.

Defence Service Homes Insurance is offering **50% off normal insurance rates** for the first 12 months on any **NEW Building Insurance** policy issued before 30 June 1999 on dwellings located in NSW or ACT.

I enclose a brochure detailing DSH's Building Insurance Scheme. You will note that the cover offered is quite extensive and includes **accidental damage, fusion and flood**. The policy is excess free apart from:

- # \$200 excess for earthquake damage.
- # \$100 excess for accidental damage (excluding glass).

Attached for your information is a further brochure setting out details of Contents Insurance which is also available.

I would appreciate you advising those members of your organisation in either NSW or ACT who are not presently insured with DSH about the **50% Building Insurance Offer** and also Contents insurance. If further information is required then please do not hesitate to contact our Marketing Officer Mrs Judy McLeod on telephone number (02) 9213 7660.

NOTE: YOUR EDITOR HAS DSH BUILDING INSURANCE FOR SOME YEARS NOW. RECENTLY, WHEN CONTENTS INSURANCE WAS DUE I SOUGHT A QUOTE FROM DSH INSURANCE. THEIR QUOTE WAS HIGHER UNTIL I MENTIONED I HAD A BETTER OFFER WHICH WAS THEN MATCHED BY DSH INSURANCE.

Dear Bob,

I realise I am late for the next edition but would you be so kind to place 2 ads in the next one after this.

Firstly we have only got half of the Rugby side enclosed from the 57, 58, 59 eras and we are trying to get the other half. There must be someone out there who can send me a copy, some of the guys here are Boxer Banks, Sailor Bill Collins, Ernie Keech, Trevor Beutel, etc .



The other is - can someone put a name to the 3 guys in this photo, the middle guy's nickname Lofty ex P.O. Handler - the others either side ?

Please have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year mate and compliments to everyone concerned for the 50th Anniversary it was a Beauty.

Any photos sent will be Laser copied and returned ASAP.

Allen J. (Weed) Smith, Oxenford, Qld
PS: I used to live at 41 Journal Street.



REPRODUCTION OF DISCHARGE CERTIFICATES

FROM JUNE/JULY ISSUE OF 'ATOMIC FALLOUT',
BOOKLET OF ATOMIC EX-SERVICEMANS ASSOC.
INC. ACT.

For those ex-service personnel who have recently been awarded decorations and medals and it does not show in writing on their discharge certificate the entitlements that are now being awarded for service in the Australian Defence Forces since their discharges, are encouraged to apply for a reproduction of their discharge certificate to show in writing the changes that now apply.

When applying for a reproduction of your discharge certificate; write as follows:

Navy: Directorate of Naval Personnel Services,
D-3-14 Russell Offices, Canberra, 2600.

Army: Soldiers Career Management Agency,
GPO Box E33D, Canberra, 2600

RAAF: Airforce Office,
PO Box E33, Queen Victoria Terrace,
Canberra, 2600



19th Conversion Course, RNAS CONDOR Arbroath, Scotland 2.3.51.

Left to Right: Ian Stilton, Terry McCullagh, Max Punton, Keith Taylor, Jack Griffin, George Hall, Ray Annand.

Photo Courtesy Max Punton



2.1.45 Commissioning HMS NABBINGTON (Where Swimming Pool is now)

Air Day

It was always exciting when the screaming jets started up. The heartrate quickened and you could feel the excitement in your chest when the pilots lifted their helmets on and started checking instruments, then closed the canopy and checked controls, then signalled they were ready for catapult take off, opening the throttle wide, full screaming power, throttle locked, head on rest, the aircraft rocking, straining at the hydraulic chocks, then the thumbs up, the sudden jerk forward and they were off. Most would drop a bit, some below the flightdeck, then reappear in flight. Occasionally one didn't make it and dropped in the sea. I lost a mate that way.

We joined up together, the first intake, January 1948, foundation members of the Australian Fleet Air Arm, the first of 26,000 who followed us over the years. We pioneered Australian Naval Aviation. I stayed on the flightdeck as a maintainer. My mate became a co-ordinator and flew No.2 in a Sea Venom alongside the pilot. Sometimes I envied him. When he died it was all so routine. A calm sea nothing on the horizon, a light breeze, everything peaceful and quiet and a feeling of lethargy, I remember, almost unreality. We chatted as he walked to his aircraft, helmet in hand and then the turbines started whining, the silence was shattered by the high pitched scream of engines and the air was full of the smell of kerosene. He waved as his aircraft was moved onto the catapult and I remember thinking "lucky devil, what a glorious day for a flight!"

There was the sudden surge forward as the catapult fired and the aircraft airborne, ahead of the ship, climbing and then the unexpected stall, the cartwheel and plunge into the sea, the huge splash of white water and it was all over, about five seconds.

Nothing ever did come out of that smooth slick on the ocean except a few bits of the plywood nose section. It was the first time I had ever watched a friend suddenly disappear without trace.

I remember thinking how pointless it all was, the whole episode seemed absurd at the time.

But men have been to the moon and back since then and I suppose in the long view, that is what it was all about and I can now see it as a small part of evolution.

The risks are great and the price high, but there will always be some men who will take the risks and pay the price of freedom and progress and we would all be lost without them.

Civilisation is built upon the sacrifices of a few for the ultimate benefit of the majority and often the sacrifices are made in the name of adventure. Society owes a debt to its adventurers even if it is only a debt of respect!

Flying was unbelievably hazardous in the early days of Naval Aviation, especially from light fleet carriers, with a straight runway, crash barriers ahead, a rolling heaving deck, a batsman instead of landing lights and no latitude for error. The fact that we had relatively few fatalities proved the skill of those early pilots who must surely have been among the best aviators ever to fly aeroplanes. How they ever got down during night flying in rising seas with only flight deck glim lights and a batsman with lighted wands to guide them in seems miraculous today.

The evolution of flying was incredibly rapid. I started off with Tiger Moths which were just fabric and wire, stringbags as they were called, where you started them by swinging the prop and jumped out of the way when the engine fired. Repairs, when you used a needle and thread and herringbone stitch to repair damage and doped a new piece of fabric over the top with cellulose lacquer paint. I was introduced to aerobatics in the back seat of a Wirraway Trainer, crankstarted the old Walrus, flew backseat in fireflies, saw the advent of helicopters and maintained jet fighters, all in the space of a mere twelve years.

Progress was so rapid that aircraft were obsolete by the time you took delivery and learnt how to fly them. Everything was tried, everything flew that was capable of flying. All the fantastic ideas in the Buck Rogers comic strips I marvelled at as a wide eyed ten year old came true.

One thing led to another, one step at a time until the final step onto the surface of the moon. Two world wars and a forty year nuclear stand off provided the impetus when it became essential to claim the high ground which was where aircraft were and later,

SPACE

If I told you that I considered space to be a naval environment you might think me a little weird yet we talk about navigating seas of space, most of the astronauts have been naval pilots and have travelled in space SHIPS which is exactly what they are. I have been inside one of the early ones and my first reaction was, this is familiar, this is a ship!

The bulkhead doors, the portholes, all the exposed plumbing, air-conditioning and electricals, the messdeck, the bunks, steel decks, and deckheads, all exactly the same. I have lived in such an environment and would be quite at home in space looking out the portholes at eternity, the same way I used to look out at the endless horizons of the oceans of water and infinite distance beyond which there was a landfall somewhere!

And as a qualified clearance diver I have been down in the old suits with the Brass Helmet you were locked into and the lead boots and air line and safety rope where you experience a sort of weightlessness and if you're dropped into mud where you descend blindly into a groping environment. So what's new?

A walk in space is still something I could do and wouldn't mind doing except I'm too old. At least I wouldn't have to worry about arthritis and worn out knees.

As you will read in my essay on Naval Aviation, I participated in and was part of the evolution of manned flight from fabric and wire stringbags to sophisticated jet flight, which went on later to rocketry and manned space flight. At the time it was a bit like being paint on an artists canvas. Nothing around you is fully coherent but years later it's like being on the other side of the room looking at the picture where the close up confusion of paint is a finished impressive pattern of design integrity. It all makes sense now! Good sense!

Even the Atomic Bomb at the Monte Bellos where I witnessed the awesome advent of Nuclear Energy makes sense and is part of the picture because a full knowledge of Nuclear Energy and how to use it and live with it is going to be vitally necessary for future living in space which is loaded with the stuff.

It is all part of a coherent development of complexity consciousness and survival into the unknown future.

I suppose we all like to see ourselves egotistically, as terribly important individual entities, when in reality, we are like one only of the trillions of atoms that make up our own very personal molecular structure and in relation to creation just one tiny unit relative to the infinite number of units in creation as a whole. Nothing, really! Like a grain of sand on a beach stretching to eternity.

It is only what we do together that is important, for only that way can we do anything at all!

satellites and the moon.

And now it's the whole milky way and Mars and Saturn and everything beyond that. How many know that the first powered flight was made, not all that long ago, at Kittyhawk in Carolina by the Wright Brothers in 1903. By 1914 fighter pilots were flying the first fragile wood and fabric warplanes.

One of the very first was an Australian Naval Pilot. In those days they used to catapult them off Battleships and when their mission was over they would ditch alongside a warship and hope to be rescued.

Only three months ago I helped some enthusiasts constructing a replica Sopwith Pup for the Naval Aviation Museum which used to take off from a platform built over the forward gun turret. That was in 1918.

Everything else followed until Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon in 1969 and I suppose we were all in some way part of that giant step that mankind made. Now rockets to the moon are as routine as jet flight became and who knows what lies ahead when new forms of space travel enable people to leave the earth and live in satellite communities in space, perhaps forever!?! Who can envisage the future of that endeavour.

Here I was 50 years later back where I had started for the Commemorative Air Day Golden Jubilee celebrations of HMAS ALBATROSS. I watched the young pilot lift his helmet on, perform his instrument checks, lower the canopy on the latest multi million dollar warplane, check the controls and start up. It was just the same except the aircraft, engines and jet noise were all much bigger.

As he taxied to the runway an old historic flight World War II DC3 lumbered into the air as if in slow motion, relative to the F111 that took off after it using most of the runway to get airborne. It climbed slowly, almost painfully it seemed, into the sky, its silver wings blending with the white clouds. I had been a Dakota maintainer for a while, all those years ago. The old DC3 had been restored. All its cancer had been cut out, all the corrosion and deterioration and it had been resprayed and tarted up. It look good. They had cut my cancer out too. We had both been restored to some semblance of health and were both still going, but I had a feeling the old 'DAK' might outlive me.

It seems perverse that all this seemingly logical necessary development of flight came almost exclusively from destruction and warfare but then evolution generally, if we accept the survival of the fittest and progress towards civilisation and democracy has been pretty much the same!!!

Space is a huge area with endless frontiers that will require a truly global effort, to conquer, that is now mankind's challenge!

John (Prof.) Edward

NEW CERTIFICATES RECOGNISE SERVICE

Certificates of Appreciation recognising the contribution of veterans and community members towards Australia's efforts during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, BCOF, the Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation are now available.

For the past two years only certificates for service during World War II had been produced.

Since then, there has been strong interest from other veterans, keen to see similar certificates awarded to Australians who made a contribution to the national effort during those wars and conflicts.

Applications for the certificates can be made through the offices of Federal Members of Parliament.

But you never know! You never know what is going to happen until it does. My shipmate never knew his aircraft was going to crash into the sea and it happened so quickly he would have known nothing. Life's like that. One second you're alive, the next you're dead, especially on flight decks. That's why so many 'oldies' had turned up for the reunion, 2000 of us.

There's a sort of bonding that develops out of situations of extreme danger, an intimate trust that glues people together. I'll watch your back you watch mine, trust me, I trust you! It was never said, just implied and it developed into a sort of love. Nothing sexual or even emotional, just an unexpressed bond of mutual care and concern which wasn't specifically personal but community oriented, a very human thing!

Our group got together for a dinner and read out the names of the dead and remembered them. Some of the old pilots were there, a few in their eighties who had survived wars, combat crashes and thousands of deck landings. They were all the steady ones and I recalled an old saying written on daily orders after a spate of accidents. "There are old pilots and bold pilots but no old bold pilots!" How true that was. There were all the usual stories endlessly told which got better with the telling. All the old amazing photographs and even a great many of the old aeroplanes with familiar call signs, numbers and insignia, static now, just standing on display and a couple being restored which would join the historic flight.

There were all the memories and some of the horrors that stay with you a lifetime and never go away. It had been a most unique exciting time, never to be experienced again, all history now. There is a pilots toast that says "may every take off be followed by a landing" to which naval pilots would add "that hooks a wire!"

The old DC3 came in slowly and landed beautifully. The F111 thundered across the sky like a huge black dart turning on its after burners and leaving a giant blow torch orange red flame behind it, brilliant against the dark clouds forming. That was the finale. The AIR DAY was over but not the saga of flying that still had a long way to go.

John (Prof.) Edward

TRAVEL CONCESSIONS (NSW)

The Government has recently announced an expansion of the free travel entitlements available to holders of the Ex-Member of Defence Force Pass.

In addition to your unlimited free travel on normal State Transit bus and ferry services, you are now able to use your Pass to obtain free travel on ANY City Rail service. These services operate within the area bounded by Goulburn, Nowra, Lithgow, Newcastle, Dungog and Scone.

Your pass is not available for free travel on XPT and Xplorer services operated by Countrylink.

Free travel warrants for travel by Countrylink services will remain available to those who are currently entitled to receive them. There is no expansion of this entitlement to other people.

Station staff have now been advised to recognise your existing pass for the new travel entitlements and a new pass for 1999 will be issued to you later this year. This pass will show the full details of your travel entitlements and will be magnetically encoded to allow use of the automatic ticket gates at major stations.

Free travel entitlements on local privately operated route bus services remain unchanged.



Women's Business



I don't know if John Fry's effort to assist young married sailors has ever been noted. Before 1966 John heard 'the lads' had to keep their grounds mowed and he said to me "These young fellows, just married, wouldn't be carting lawn mowers around with them".

Married quarters or 'the Patch' was then often temporary living quarters for Naval Personnel and often for a short period.

John approached the Chiefs Mess and put it to them that if he could get half a dozen second hand mowers he would maintain them and be responsible for lending them out at 5 shillings a weekend, filled with petrol. This was agreed to and John and I scoured Wollongong and Nowra for second hand mowers (not as plentiful as today).

John would service them when necessary, buying new blades etc. from the money collected. He kept a notebook of who took them out, when they were returned. Only one person abused them and it wasn't from the lower rank, he must have cleared a block of land with stumps, the mower took John weeks of work to restore. On the whole his efforts, I think, were appreciated by the young lads. Needless to say there was never a mower available to the chap who wrecked the machine.

Dorothy Fry, 13 Cox Avenue, Nowra

What a great success the 50th Anniversary turned out to be. By all reports everyone who attended enjoyed themselves immensely.

Congratulations must go to the organisers and their helpers who put in a tremendous amount of work to ensure the success of the occasion.

If you have a particularly good photo of some aspect of the occasion please share it with us. You will find one or two in this edition of 'Slipstream' and I'll have more for the next edition.

I am getting some input from the ladies. Keep up the good work so that we can ensure the success of Women's Business.

All the best for the New Year.

*Pat Perkins,
Women's Business Editor*

Rose Swanson has forwarded a short Autobiography which everyone can look forward to reading in the next issue of 'Slipstream'.

Women in The Navy

I remember quite sadly leaving HMAS PENGUIN to be in the first contingent of Wrens to invade HMAS ALBATROSS - fancy leaving fabulous Sydney to live in a country town called Nowra - aged 19 years, I considered that a catastrophe . . . I mean the worst possible event in my whole life was facing me!!!! and there was nothing I could do!!! (and my teenage children of today think they have problems!!)

However I managed to settle in like the other Wrens, mixed feelings - but generally speaking we were made to feel quite welcome. I was in the S & S department - the sailors felt the biggest positive about our arrival was that extra condiments were now available at scran!!!! And the variety of food suddenly was obvious.

Overall I had many happy days at Albatross - fortunately the good days exceeded the bad days. The day of severe sadness and stress of course was the HMAS MELBOURNE/VOYAGER tragedy; being a Writer I had the responsibility of typing up all the evidence from Naval Officers/Ratings behind armed guards . . . I can remember it all being highly confidential, frightening and a very sad time for the Navy . . . looking back, it was an overwhelming time for me as a teenager to have this responsibility placed on me with very much mixed emotions about dealing with such a tragedy, at that age, one thinks you just live forever!

On a happier note, I remember the time I went for my first joy ride in a Chopper accompanying the pilot was a Medical Officer (I think he had more than 2.1/2 stripes)!!! I remember boarding with fear and trepidation . . . I was right, all of a sudden the chopper just dropped . . . it seemed for ages . . . I thought all my Xmas's had come at once and my verbal response cannot be repeated (although I believe the Control Tower knew who was on board). To make matters worse they didn't even close the door and

I was sitting right near the opening . . . Can't remember much about the scenery. On the return I looked down to see all these fire trucks racing around - thought to myself

"these birdies certainly take their landings seriously - how exciting"

. . . would you believe . . . **THE CHOPPER WAS BILLOWING OUT THIS THICK BLACK SMOKE AT THE REAR AND WE HAD TO ALIGHT QUICKLY!! I NEVER WENT FOR ANOTHER JOY RIDE!!!**

Last but not least, now as I look back the incident was quite hilarious, but at the time I think it could have been handled better.

I was the kellick on duty at the Wrens quarters, the Wets closed down . . . and some dear sailor unfortunately had indulged too much . . . got our quarters mixed up with his block, entered, undressed himself and went to sleep on the bed.

The duty party did their usual bed check . . . open the door to Cabin 9 - low and behold, here is an intruder starkers, fast asleep snoring his head off!!! Being a responsible and efficient kellick, I immediately rang the **BIG GUNS (YOU KNOW, THE REGS)** to hurry down to our block, meanwhile I grabbed a 12" ruler and went and stood guard!!! well you can imagine the comments "he was too small, so the Regs were called in"!!! poor kid, quite innocent really was up on a charge and drafted out of Albatross . . . no big deal by today's standards!!!

Well that is just a few incidences of my life at the Tross, and I am so happy to return here to re-unite with friends made there many, many years ago - to think I thought it was the end of my world when I was drafted and here I am again - many friendships were made during those years and fabulous to catch up on memories again!!!

*Meg Taubman,
formerly Leading Wr. Wtr. Meg Yeow,
ex Commander L's Office,
Billing Office, Commander S's Office.*

WITH THE WRANS AT ALBATROSS . . .

"Hunter Block, 'home' of the WRANS who commenced duty at HMAS ALBATROSS this month is a most satisfactory building in which to live.

This is according to information received when 'Navy News' was privileged to visit the Block and learn how the WRANS had adjusted themselves to life in the one-time exclusive all-male establishment.

The Wrans had heard that Hunter Block would be comfortable and they were agreeably surprised to find a commodious all-brick building, with long wide corridors in each of which delighted Wrans espied full length mirrors.

Their purpose . . . only a Wran knows.

The two-berth cabins, large and airy, were tastefully furnished with the colour motif egg-shell blue walls and off-white ceiling shaded counterpane, furnishings and curtains.

'Lady Bird', in a message to 'Navy News', said the 'advance working party' comprised Second Officer Mullin, Third Officer Reid, Sister Aersen, Chief Petty Officer Maiden, Petty Officer

Smith, Leading Wrans Pointer and Provost, Wrans Smith, Worrell, Potts and Ashmeade.

Having drafted in, the girls settled themselves down to life in 'Birdland'.

Tuesday, January 7, was a very eventful day.

The photographers from the Wollongong TV station, the Nowra newspaper and HMAS ALBATROSS, showed an interest in the arrival of the first Wrans ever to serve in an R.A.N. Air Station.

The advance party thought they were soon to learn that there was to be a repeat performance the following week when the main party arrived.

On Saturday, January 11, came the invasion, which continued until Wednesday, January 15.

The Wrans now seem to have settled in, as the cinema, Junior Rates Club and Nowra township seem to be popular places every night.

Hope to have lots of chirps for you in the future - must fly now.
LADY BIRD"

AUSTRALIAN SERVICE NURSES MEMORIAL DESIGN CHOSEN

The design for the new Australian Service Nurses National Memorial was announced on 17 August. The memorial, to be built on Anzac Parade in Canberra, was designed by Robin Moorhouse, a Sydney based sculptor.

Horizontal in form, the memorial will feature a pair of curvilinear, low sculpted glass walls, raised slightly on an elliptically shaped platform. The surfaces of the glass walls will display images representing important events in the history of Australian Service nursing.

The memorial will honour the sacrifice and service of Australian Service nurses who died, and those who served and suffered, in caring for casualties in conflict. Most recently, the Australian Service nurses have shown tremendous dedication and compassion following the devastation caused by a tsunami in Papua New Guinea. It is this dedication, their sacrifice and service, which the new memorial will be commemorating.

The Federal Government has committed \$100,000 towards the construction of the memorial. The memorial's fund-raising committee launched a national fund-raising appeal on 15 August. The memorial is scheduled to be completed by October 1999, in time to mark the centenary of the establishment of military nursing in Australia.

Donations to the National Service Nurses Memorial can be made by calling toll free 1800 241 170 at any National Australia Bank or be writing to:

National Nurses Memorial Trust
Reply Paid 139
Royal College of Nursing Australia
PO Box 219
DEAKIN WEST, ACT 2600

From The Pen of '35607'

ODE TO THE A.N.A.M. DIRECTOR

We expected the Reunion to go like a dream,
Being run by people who discipline had seen,
The 'goodie bag' was a misnomer I fear,
T'was a 'memory bag' that will be kept for years,
From everything planned, pleasure was got
but the camaraderie far outweighed the lot,
How the past with golden rays do shine,
When they were ordinary days at the time,
When memories fade and take a dive,
It's reunions like this that keep dreams alive.

The Reunion

It's a funny thing how you fellas looked much older
not only that but fat and round shouldered,
Me missus and meself haven't changed a bit
You blokes should exercise and try and keep fit,
No remote controls on our black and white T.V.,
I get up and manually change the channel see,
Why did everyone wear a gadget in their ear?
Why did they whisper? There was no way I could hear,
Nobody recognised me, nobody knew me name,
Their eyesight must have gone it really was a shame,
Since me hip replacement and me knee as well
and me four by passes I'm sounder than a bell,
I try and picture you 'out of condition' blokes
standing on Divisions, oh Lord what a joke,
Get your act together, eat vegies and lots of grills,
Excuse me a moment I've gotta take me pills,
Now as I was just saying, watch your diet son,
When the next reunion's here you'll have a lot more fun.

NAVY MEDICINE

AN ARTICLE FROM NOTES IN THE DIARY OF A RECRUIT, A VICTIM, THEN A PATIENT, BUT NOW A CIVVY

1950

In our early days in the Navy we were introduced to the strange 'medical people'

in the Sick Bay who started off our long association with a lie to us. "I'm just scratching the surface of your skin to see if you have a reaction." one said. We, as new recruits, had just come from our very first free haircut by that comical mob who mistakenly used the title of 'Barber'. There we stood, in our new ill fitting uniform trousers, bald and dejected, awaiting our fate at the hands of these 'medical people'. They had us lined up so that we could see the array of needles and kidney trays and little bottles on the table, but they didn't tell us what to expect. I heard the 'medical person' ask the person in front of me "Name? Hold still." Then there was this funny smell as his arm was wiped and a large syringe was taken out of the kidney tray and had a large needle fitted to it. "Hold still, this won't hurt". CRASH. He fell to the floor and was dragged aside, (but only after he had been jabbed).

"Next". I shuffled up. "Name? Hold still". That 'medical person' took the needle off the syringe and selected another from the kidney tray. There was that funny smell again so I looked away. "Next". "When is he going to give an injection?" I thought. "Move on

lad", he said, and I realised that I hadn't felt the needle. "This is a breeze", I thought, "I will be OK". And so I passed through all the stages of inoculations and vaccinations feeling no pain. Nothing had affected me and I had seen others fall over in a faint. I was real proud of myself, even cocky.

We all fell in to be marched back to "G" Block for some more of the indoctrination that all recruits receive. "Swing those arms up shoulder high", called our Leading Seaman. Now this is where the effects of those inoculations were first felt and they didn't stop until the most strenuous rifle drilling has finished. The memories of the suffering still linger after a lifetime away from the Navy. That scratched skin at the top of my arm reacted and became a big blister that festered and wept and itched and ached. The scab that eventually formed was dragged off by the towel after a shower and it painfully renewed itself many times. I remember when on the Bull Ring, we presented arms over and over, again and again, until we did it properly . . . the only reason we didn't do it right first time was because as we raised our rifles up, our arms suddenly reached the painful limit of their travel and seized up. The sore and swollen muscles tightened up and gave those vaccination and inoculation areas a great big squeeze. "Ouch". We used to wake up during the night scratching at the tops of our arms, unintentionally giving ourselves more trouble for the next twelve hours. Thereafter of course, vaccinations or re-vaccinations when received them, became just a little itchy area that we had to avoid scratching.

1959 and every other time we embarked on HMAS MELBOURNE.

Did you know the 'medical people' couldn't organise anything. They were renowned for losing records, forgetting things, putting things down and forgetting where they were put, mixing up names, and generally, doing those things that ought not to be done. Let me deal with the last item first.

In the 'old days' (remember the good old days), needles were used over and over again. Not like today where you use it then throw it away. After each use they were placed into a tray and re sterilised. Did I write 'placed', sorry, I meant 'tossed' into a tray. The points of the needles curved up and the hole in the centre became constricted. The needles became hooks. Now if you ever thought that these needles were checked for sharpness, you would be mistaken. They were only checked for 'BLUNTNES', and if TOO blunt, (too blunt for what?), they were put aside in a group for consideration of renewal. Of course, if a squadron was going onboard the Melbourne, all needles would be collected for the inoculation program, regardless of whether they were sharp or blunt, old or new.

Now let me deal with the other points I made. Being on a squadron made things easy for the 'medical people' because they would have a list of, say, 200 squadron personnel's names, covering the air crew, ground crew and support people like stewards. It is easy, just tick off the names of people receiving their 'dose' and then draw the Medical History Documents out of filing cabinets for each of the named people and note the details of that 'dose' into the records. Two weeks before embarking onboard Melbourne, we lined up at the Sick Bay and were given TABs (whatever they are) and other injections. Over the next two weeks we were all individually called up to the Sick Bay because we hadn't had our injections. "I've checked the list and your name was not on it". After being onboard for one week, we were again all individually called to the Sick Bay to receive our injections because "they had missed you at Albatross". Protests only resulted in being shown

WARTIME MAGAZINE A CLEAR WINNER WITH VETERANS

The Australian War Memorial's official magazine, Wartime, has proven to be popular with veterans across Australia. Wartime is a 72 page full colour magazine, featuring well researched and highly personal accounts of the Australian experience of war.

Wartime editor Dr Peter Londey said the magazine had an easy to read style that appealed to a wide cross section of the community.

"In each issue, the main articles, some written by Australia's top military historians, bring to life the battles in which Australia has participated. Other items give background and depth to historical events, helping the reader understand the context in which they were played out," he said.

Issue three includes items about the 'G for George' Lancaster bomber, the Western Front 1918, and a diary kept by a sailor on HMAS GASCOYNE during World War II.

A subscription for six issues of Wartime costs \$36 or 12 issues for \$68. More information may be obtained from the magazine's publishers at PO Box 872, Woden ACT 2606, tel/fax: 02-6288 1900.

our Medical History Documents with no entries for the dates we stated. Remember when the International Vaccination Certificates were introduced, things worsened then. These certificates were supposedly put with our MHDs, but somehow they became lost, and new ones raised . . . but "One can't raise a blank replacement, you will have to have all those vaccinations and inoculation required by the Certificate". OUCH. When I left the Navy in 1975, amongst the papers with which I was presented, were FIVE International Vaccination Certificates. "If you travel overseas again, you will need these to show you are vaccinated", I was told. I don't know where they all came from.

It happens all the time.

I guess that most young sailors go through a period of learning. Some do it the easy way and some just have to learn things the painful way . . . Like rinsing the soap out of ones washing. Failure to completely rinse washed clothing results in a rash forming under the arms and between the legs. This rash is most annoying because not only is it itchy, but it is sore and responds with greater soreness if scratched. The 'medical people', that is Doctors and Sick Bay staff, had this yellow ointment called Whitfields Compound UNG that they loved to apply to the affected areas. After getting dressed and walking out of the Sick Bay area, the ointment would work. One would suddenly raise the arms shoulder high and spread the legs wide apart as the shock hit. One would also have to tenderly walk to work in this fashion. I think that the 'medical people' would all be at the windows to watch for our actions and laugh at us.

1950 to 1975

Antibiotics today are taken with a glass of water. In the good old days it was injected. The thought of those syringes and needles now make my eyes water. They used the same needles for horses and elephants. They were so thick that the Sick Berth Attendants (medical people) couldn't push them through the skin like they did with the inoculations above. "Drop your trousers", they would say. They would then place the needle between the outstretched second and third fingers of the right hand and slap a bare buttock to bury the needle as far in as possible and then attach the syringe. The slap didn't hurt nor did the antibiotic going in, but for days afterwards, one would have to ease oneself into a chair and sitting on a toilet was a chore one tried to avoid.

Happily, every time I was sick or in need of an op.

The 'medical people' were also very possessive. They don't like to lose anything that they had a claim to, like patients. Once you were in, you WERE IN. Just try to get out. If you were sick or in need of an operation they became very protective of you as a patient. They excelled at care, tenderness, patience, compassion, concern for your well being and welfare and they just didn't like to see you sick or in any pain. In fact, they'd go out of their way and work long hours to do everything possible to get you better again, BUT, just try to get out of one of their hospitals. God bless them. They healed a lot of our hurts during our years in the Navy.

I would be interested to hear from members who have tales to tell about their medical experiences. There must be many people just busting to tell someone about that time when . . . Well do it. You must have been a victim too.

THE EX-BIRDIE PATIENT



'Handfull of Happy Handlers'
50th Anniversary Reunion October, 1998

TOMBOLA

THE SERVICES GAME AND HOW IT IS PLAYED.

For the information of the unaffected. There are various names for this numbers game, among them are housie housie, bingo and the rules vary slightly but once you're hooked, you're an avid fan for life. The game consists of two controllers and as many players as possible. One of the controllers sells the tickets and works out the prize money. The other one is the more important as his skills will draw in or drive away potential players. He is the 'Caller'. The caller's tools consist of a board, ninety marbles and a deep canvas bag. The board (or modern cardboard or cloth), contains ninety sequential numbers from one to ninety, in nine rows of ten figures set in columns. All numbers in the left hand column end in one. The next and subsequent columns progress through to numbers ending in nought in the right hand column. Thus to find the number thirty three, one only has to go to the third column and then to the fourth row to find it. Early boards were made of timber and had depressions to contain the marbles and only the columns and rows were headed with a number. The modern marbles are really discs of thick plastic with a number moulded in the two flat sides. Old marbles would be made from spheres of brass, copper, aluminium or wood and would then have a flat surface filed or machined onto them to take the stamped or engraved number. The marbles would be numbered from one to ninety with no repeats of any number. To prevent two pairs of numbers being incorrectly called, a dot or line was placed at the bottom of the number, thus 6 and 9 or 18 and 81 were always easily distinguished. The bag consisted of a cylinder of canvas with a draw string at the top and a wooden base at the bottom. The bag was about 150mm in diameter and always at least 300mm deep. Marbles would be drawn from the bag one at a time with the right hand and placed into the left hand on the table. The right hand would then return to the bag. The caller would call the number on the drawn marble and place it into position on the board. The left hand never left the top of the table.

Certain rules applied to the game of tombola and these became part of the ritual. Before selling the first ticket, the caller would place his board on the table and place all the marbles into their respective positions. The bag with the draw string loose would be placed next to the board and the caller would ask "Please check the board", and at least one player was required to check that the numbers on the marbles tallied with the marked positions on the board. He would then grab the bag and shake it vigorously to ensure there were no spare or doubled up marbles. On being told "Board correct", the caller would nominate the number of games to be played, the types and number of non-standard games and the costs of each ticket for nominated games. He would then place the marbles back into the bag, shake it and open the play by saying, "The first game is for a line and house. Tickets are now on sale".

The ticket seller, having worked out how many tickets he needed to sell in order to make his profit, would then sell the tickets and exhort the players to buy more until his sales stopped. He then advised the caller that all sales had stopped. He next collected, counted and checked all unsold tickets. His accounting skills came to the fore now for he had to count the cash, confirm it tallied with ticket sales, ensured that only the correct colour and batch number of tickets had been sold, worked out the prize money from the takings in a percentage for the line, a percentage for the full house and a percentage for the profit. He then selected the next tickets for sale and advised the caller of all this. The caller would interrupt his game and tell the players . . . "Amount of the Line \$XXX,

amount of the full house \$XXX. The next game will be for a full house only and the tickets will cost \$XXX each". A complete record of ticket identification, numbers, sales, takings, prizes, prize winners and anything else one thought necessary was kept on each occasion that tombola was played.

Anyone who has played tombola in the various air stations in UK will have witnessed the above procedure with almost no variation but one would be amazed at the speed with which both the ticket seller and the caller operated. As many as twenty five games have been completed in forty five minutes each lunch time each week day, in one Petty Officer's Mess containing 200 players, and this also included checking the winning ticket's numbers against the board for each game. Sometimes there would be two or three winners per game.

What a wonderful vocabulary the Royal Navy caller developed to encourage player participation and enjoyment in this game. The numbers were called with a precision that left no doubt as to what number had been called such as: "By itself number five", "six and two, sixty two". However, tradition intervened and a colourful language pervaded the callers identification of the selected number and he often paused to invite reply or comment from the players. The ones that I can remember are listed below for your entertainment and interpretation.

In the United Kingdom, a Naval Outfitter, C.S. Bernard and Sons, from Harwich, produced other things besides clothing for the members of the Royal Navy. Whenever one played tombola, it was invariably played on the tickets from the books supplied by Bernard's. Each book met the requirements of unique identity. The book, its pages and its tickets, all carried a book number, its pages were all of the one colour and each page contained the whole ninety numbers and consisted of six tickets of fifteen numbers each. Boards, bags and marbles were also available from Bernard's.

The game would start with the call "Eyes Down. Looking for a line and house" and the caller would call the first number. The objective of the game was to be the first person to cross out the five numbers in a line or the fifteen numbers on the ticket as they are called by the caller. One can only cross out called numbers; penalty for claiming a winning line or house was forfeiture of that ticket. As the numbers were called one would hear the various players saying 'Blood', as they crossed out their first number, or 'Shake the bag', if many numbers had been called and they had not yet crossed off their first. The wooden base of the bag would resound to the sounds of the impacting marbles when the bag was shaken, informing the players that the request had been met. Various ways would be utilised to inform the caller that a player had filled a line or a full ticket (unless the caller prescribed a winning call at the start of the play). One would hear "House", "Yes", "Here You Are Then", "Got It" and many others shouted with joy, followed by the cries of the other players who had waited for one number for several calls.

On hearing that someone was claiming to have filled a line, the caller would not lay the last marble called into its position on the board but as the side of the board. A runner or checker authorised by the caller would take the claimants ticket to another player who would also confirm the check of the ticket against the board. This check would start with "The last number called was XX". If the claimants ticket did not have the last number called, the claim would be rejected even if the line or ticket was crossed out. The

players would call "House a Fraud", and tell the caller to destroy the ticket. After a successful check of a ticket against the board the caller would say "One line correct. Tickets are still on sale for the next game". "Eyes down, now looking for a full house". A repeat of the procedure for a claim to a full house would be the

same as for a line. And of course the winners would go to the ticket seller to collect their prizes. Runners or checkers would ensure that only prize winning tickets were presented for collection of the prize by marking them in accordance with an arrangement made with the caller at the start of the game.

Colourful Tombola Numbers

Number	Call	Without Pause	Reply With Pause
1	Kelly's Optic	number one	
2	One Little Duck	number two	Quack
3	On its Own	number three	
6	Spot Below	number six	
9	Doctor's Chum	number nine	You need it
10	Marine' Breakfast	number ten	Sausage and egg
11	Legs	eleven	Wipe them
12	One doz	twelve	One does not
13	Unlucky For Some	thirteen	Devil's own
16	She Was Sweet	sixteen	Sixteen and never had it
17	One and seven	Old Ireland	Seventeen
20	Two Oh	Plenty	
21	Royal Salute	Twenty one	Bang Bang
22	Two Little Ducks	Twenty Two	Quack Quack
24	Two and Four	Two Doz	Two does not
26	Two and Six	Twenty six	Dog's Licence
30	Three Oh	Thirty	Dirty
33	All The Threes	Feathers	Feathers
It's great to hear someone say "There are firty free fousand feathers on a frushes froat" from which this call comes.			
39	Three and nine	The steps	
44	All The Fours	Chatham Ladies	Pompey Hoares
45	Four and Five	Forty Five	Half Way
50	Five Oh	Fifty	Change Hands
55	All The Fives	Snakes Alive	
57	Five and Seven	All the Varieties	Heinz'z Beanzus
59	Five and Nine	The Brighton Line	
66	All The sixes	Clickety Click	
69	Six and Nine	Soixante-neuf	Wow, Yes and various others
76	Seven and Six	Seventy Six	Was She Worth It
77	All The Sevens	Boat Hooks	
88	All The Eights	Main Gates	
89	Eight and Nine	All But	Like the Billy Goat
90	Nine Oh	Top of the Joe	

I, like many of your readers, have played tombola in air stations in UK, in Australian Ships and shore establishments, in Singapore and at the Fleet Club in Hong Kong and no matter if we won or lost, we always enjoyed the games. When we reacted to the caller's pauses we enjoyed them even more.

I just remembered two variations to the game. One game per night was called the Snowball. If a house was called on seventy numbers or less during the Snowball game, a prize would be paid to the winner. The next Snowball game would have to be called at one number less than the last Snowball game. The prize jack potted (or Snowballed) until won. At times the Snowball game would be set as low as fifty five numbers and really worth winning. The other variation was a crafty way to get the place cleaned up after the games ceased. This was called the Trash Bin Draw. The caller would ask all players to write their names onto the back of each ticket and at the end of the play, place it in the trash bin. One ticket would be drawn out and a prize awarded to the person whose name was on the back. It is amazing how little was left to be cleaned away.

After having played the various types of games, one comes to regard the non-Service callers as complete amateurs and the way

some of them call numbers and stretch a game out over ten to fifteen minutes, one wonders how they ever became callers. Returning to Australia on RMS ORONSAY in 1954 I was unfortunate enough to play one game of Tombola called by the ship's sports officer. "We are playing with pink cards, has everyone a pick card?" he said. "The first number is fifteen. (pause) fifteen, do you have that number on your card? Fifteen, the number between fourteen and sixteen. No those numbers are not out lady. Fifteen (pause) if you have fifteen, cross it out. The next number is twenty five, (Pause) twenty five. We are playing on pink cards ladies and gentlemen, and the second number is twenty five, the first number was fifteen. Twenty five, (pause) please cross out twenty five." What a killing pace we played at. Would you believe that the prize we were playing for was a glass of wine or beer from the nearby bar. One could die of thirst before the game was over.

Do I play Bingo at the local clubs to satisfy my desire to have a game of tombola? No way, mate.

THE EX-BIRDIE TOMBOLA PLAYER

Golden Jubilee Reunion - Museum Perspective

28 October - 2 November, 1998

After Christmas, New Year and a busy school holiday period at the Museum the FAA Golden Jubilee seems so long ago. It was an extremely busy time for the Museum staff and for the local Fleet Air Arm volunteers and it took us a while to land back on two feet. However, with fond memories of a fantastic get together and significant period in our lives I am going to attempt to provide a debrief of the occasion.

Registration

One of the success stories of the Reunion was the registration routine. It went smoothly throughout, without a problem and the Museum staff had time to be sociable and assist with answering the myriad of questions asked by our visitors. I must say much was learnt from the Queensland reunion and we are grateful for their feedback after that event. Hopefully, at the next reunion the organisers will contact Museum staff for first hand advice and their experiences. We still have registration bags unclaimed. Anybody who paid their \$35.00 registration and would like a bag would you please contact the Museum on (02) 4421 1920 and make your request known. You can either pop in and collect it or we can send it once we have received \$10.00 for postage and handling.

Cocktail Party

The Cocktail Party was, by all accounts, an outstanding success and I hope everybody who attended enjoyed the reunion spirit, which prevailed throughout the 2,000 guests and attendees. The party afterwards in the Function Centre was a night to remember. With only two of us running the bar it was a case of one restocking and the other selling off the trolley as new stocks arrived. I can't help but feel as I wound my way through the legs up in the Function Centre with my porters trolley full of beer that I have never heard such a vast array of tall stories. But you all enjoyed it and that's the main thing.

Beat the Retreat

Beat the Retreat was originally planned to be held on the airfield adjacent to the Museum and it would have made an excellent spectacle, especially for those people up in the Function Centre. However, it was not to be and the ceremonial sunset was held on the Aussie Rules pitch. Notwithstanding it was a performance to remember from Navy and anybody who watched it would say the officers and sailors who took part excelled themselves. We are extremely grateful to Navy for allowing us to participate in this occasion.

Night Flying Suppers

We attempted to provide a meal each night at the Museum for those who were stuck. We called it Night Flying Suppers for want of a better term.

However, it fell flat because everybody wanted to know when night flying started. We will just have to put that down to experience.

Base Tours

Base tours were organised for Friday 30 October and it is amazing how events materialise from an informal idea to an outstanding success. We have our volunteers to thank for manning the buses for all those who had the opportunity of seeing the Base after all these years. There was a bit of confusion surrounding 816 Squadron who put out an invitation to all ex 'Tigers' to pop in for morning tea. I am unsure of how successful this was.

BBQ Lunch

The Museum took on the responsibility of providing a BBQ lunch on Friday for an unknown quantity of guests. Considering

that we did not have a Chef on staff one can say that the BBQ turned out to be quite an event to be remembered. We consider that we catered for nearly 1,500 people, which is no small order for the Museum to take on.

Marquee Bar

It was a pity that the marquee bar area was not frequented as much as we anticipated. We ordered in a container of beer (12f x 40f) and only got through one third of our supply. Half of that was light. It was obvious that there was more interest in talking of old yarns than having a drink. In hindsight the bar would have been better located inside the Museum at a more central position. We also ordered in 2,000 bottles of wine (clear skinned) with our own label attached for the event. We only managed to sell a quarter of our stock during the reunion. I am unsure whether that is indicative of the poor standard of wine or whether it was the right thing to do in the first place. As a consequence we have been selling it since the reunion in the shop and function centre but we still have 1,000 bottles left. They are now for sale in the shop for \$6.00 each - if you are passing.

Fleet Air Arm History Review

It was a great idea spoilt by the sound effect. When we did our rehearsal we obviously did not have too many spectators. When we tried the loud speaker system with 300 people sitting down in front, the sound was absorbed and nobody could hear what was going on. This was a great shame because a lot of effort had gone into producing this review in order to fittingly launch our book 'Flying Stations'. Another lesson that we have learnt for future reunions.

Flying Stations is available at the Museum shop and can be posted for an additional \$10.00 if required. There are a few people who have paid for their books to be collected at the Museum, but have not yet done so. Would those people please contact the Museum with their instructions.

Mini Branch Reunions

Before the reunion there was some confusion as to who was co-ordinating mini branch reunions. We in the committee decided at a very early date that we just didn't have the manpower to deal with this aspect of the reunion and attempted to establish co-ordinators - which proved difficult. Nevertheless from all accounts the mini reunions were an outstanding success, especially the Armourers at the Senior Sailors mess.

Jubilee Ball

The organisation for the Jubilee Ball was difficult. We originally wanted to do our own thing but decided very early on that because it was also ALBATROSS' 50th Anniversary that we should combine this event. As with all military events the military want to take charge and our ball was no exception. However, the feedback has been nothing but glowing and judgement has it that the ball was a great success. We have learnt lessons as we always do on these occasions, and we could do things differently. But by and large the event was exceptional value for money - thanks to the Navy for their sponsorship from major corporations.

Freedom of Entry Parade

We have received numerous complaints about the conduct of the Freedom of Entry parade through Nowra, from the lack of bands, supervision, co-ordination and recognition. All of these things we have debriefed extensively and we, the organising committee, were very unhappy with the way in which this event was conducted. After the experience at the Queensland reunion we were determined to learn from mistakes made there. Our event,

in effect, turned out worse. There is not much more that we can say to make things better other than to acknowledge that we were not proud of this event. It was a combination of errors.

Race Day

Race Day was spoilt by inclement weather but beyond that was a great success, attracting a full house and had the effect of bringing the States together in a joint Fleet Air Arm event.

BBQ Dinner

The Museum took responsibility for providing a Halloween dinner dance in the Museum on Saturday evening. It was an interesting exercise and a lot of lessons were learnt in trying to feed and quench the thirst of over 1,000 guests.

The Museum staff thoroughly enjoyed making the decorations in an attempt to achieve the right atmosphere. However, their enthusiasm waned when stacking chairs and tables until 3.00am in the morning, in preparation for Air Day the following day. They slept at the Museum overnight and were up with the birds preparing breakfast at a crack sparrow.

Ecumenical Service

A great deal of effort had gone into the preparation of the FAA 50th Anniversary monument, situated adjacent to the Museum car park. In the months leading up to the reunion. At 0830 on Sunday 1 November an august gathering of VIP's and FAA members dedicated the monument in a most moving service. On completion breakfast was served in the Museum.

Air Day

Most of us would express disappointment that the orientation of the flying display was conducted on 26/08 runway. It was almost as if there was jealousy of the Museum being in a privileged position for flying conducted on 03/21 runway. The Navy made this decision on safety ground because of problems with parking. We believe with a little bit of effort the safety issues could have been addressed and still use the north/south runway. We represented our case in committee but we were unsuccessful and had to accept the umpire's decision.

The Museum did very well on the day - the cold weather attracted most visitors to the relative warmth of the Museum. We had a gold coin entry, which proved popular.

Secure from Flying Stations

We organised a farewell end of flying drink in the marquee at the Museum. For various reasons this wasn't well attended. Nevertheless there were sufficient people to make it a significant haul down event for the reunion. The President wished everybody a safe journey home after a very successful reunion.

Domestics

- Raffle - The raffle raised sufficient funding to cover the transport costs for the reunion, which is a welcome relief to the organisers.
- Bus transport - As stated above the transport was paid for by proceeds from the raffle. We did have problems, especially when the sailors grabbed available seats from the ball, this was very unfortunate and we have learned a lesson. Next time we will run a ball for ourselves.

*Mike Lehan, Museum Director
15 January, 1999*



l to r: George Hunt, ?? & Tug Wilson
enjoy a barbecue during the 50th
Anniversary Celebrations

l to r: Peter 'Mandy' Girven, Bill
McGinlay & ?? a happy trio at the
50th Anniversary Celebrations



NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Your newly elected secretary regrets that he is unable to provide a full report for this edition.

Until such time that I am comfortable with what I am supposed to be doing I am not about to start writing reports on it.

A plea to all Divisional Secretaries - if things take a little longer than when Jim Lee was in the Chair, please bear with me as I am still on 'L' Plates.

I will however, take this opportunity to thank Jim for the exceptional job he has, and continues, to do on behalf of the Association. It is only when you get to sit in the seat that the reality

of the task becomes apparent. Although Jim may be out of the ring, thankfully he is still in my corner or in FAA terms my Plane Guard.

I trust all had an enjoyable Christmas and that 1999 is kind to us all.

All the best,
Gordon Edgecombe, National Secretary,
10 Elder Crescent,
Nowra, 2541
Phone: (02) 4422 1759

News from the Divisions

NEW SOUTH WALES

Secretary: Mr Mike Heneghan
PO Box 28, Nowra NSW 2541
Phone/Fax: (02) 4441 2901



Everything is slowly returning to normal here after a very enjoyable reunion week. I hope all who were able to come back to be part of the 50th celebrations had a safe trip home and have happy memories of their visit.

I have had literally dozens of Nowra people say to me during the last couple of weeks how great it was to see so many of the retired FAA members coming back to Nowra for the reunion celebrations. Of the Saturday march, one lady said she was reduced to tears "even without a Band to lead you, you all looked so proud and so smart".

Our Management Committee is currently debriefing the weeks activities and making sure the accounts are all in shape for the Auditor to look at when the books are put in. We are disappointed that some of the events did not go according to plan and with the benefit of hind sight the comment has quite clearly been "we should have done it this way or that way and all would have been OK". It is no good dwelling on the low points however, they were in the minority (I think). In my view the reunion was a successful one, it was certainly great to see so many old friends and work mates. I can't get over the fact that no one seems to have got any older!!

Just a few numbers for those who might be interested - 1051 people registered for the week and 1944 attended. 1079 attended the Friday BBQ, 832 the Saturday night 'do' and 1092 the cocktail party. These are FAAA figures only and do not include serving personnel. At the time of putting these notes together, a few bills are yet to come in so the accounts are not available but it looks very much like we will finish up in credit by a few dollars and that will please us because we set out in the beginning with the commitment that it was not going to be a money making venture.

Museum Staff and Museum Volunteer Staff worked very long hours to ensure we all had an enjoyable time. A number of loyal and dedicated members and their wives worked tirelessly in preparations leading up to and during the reunion. A number of

interstate Members answered the call for help on several occasions to set up and clean up various events during the week.

The NSW Division Management Committee thanks all of those very generous people for having lent a hand.

And finally (on the reunion), the Management Committee expresses sincere thanks to the reunion Sub Committee for having worked so hard on our behalf.

NSW Members are reminded that 1999 annual subs are due and there are something like 90/100 Members with 1998 dues outstanding. The Slipstream envelope indicates members financial status and Secretary Mike Heneghan has sent out a dues invoice and a reminder invoice during the year so we do not want to spend valuable funds sending out yet another reminder. Please, If you have not settled your 1998 account, consider doing it now. Be aware that dues for 1999 are \$22.00 and you might like to pay that at the same time. Your membership with the Association is very important . . . and while on the subject of membership, keep your eyes open for new members. You only need phone or phone/fax me or Secretary Mike and we will get an application form back to you quick smart.

You will all be aware by now, I am sure, that Commodore John Goble RAN (Ret) has accepted the position of Patron of our Association and I cannot think of anyone who would not applaud that news.

While I think of it too, we have booked the Museum White Ensign Club on the 28th August 1999 for an Anniversary Dinner. That's a Saturday night and a Museum Family Air Day is scheduled for the Sunday so please put the date in your diary. Following our 1999 AGM in March '99 I am sure the incoming Management Committee will take it up. Of course more information on this will be published during the year.

In closing, can I say to all who were able to make the reunion - thanks for your company. It was great seeing everyone.

The Management Committee hopes you had a great Xmas time and that 1999 is successful and productive.

Max Altham, President



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

John Green
1/7 Prinsep Road, Attadale, 6156
Tel: (08) 9330 7386

Secretary:
Theo Bushe-Jones,
PO Box 8336, Stirling Street,
Perth, WA 6841

Golden Jubilee Wash-up
Where do you start? Such an event of events! I believe it will be second only to the Sydney Olympics. One could write pages praising the efforts of all involved in staging and making the 50th Anniversary Reunion an occasion to remember - a gold medal to all concerned and on behalf of the West Australian members a thank you to all concerned: Organising Committee, ANAM staff, volunteers, HMAS ALBATROSS, Nowra Council and the people of Nowra and surrounding towns, Bravo Zulu to all!

involved in staging and making the 50th Anniversary Reunion an occasion to remember - a gold medal to all concerned and on behalf of the West Australian members a thank you to all concerned: Organising Committee, ANAM staff, volunteers, HMAS ALBATROSS, Nowra Council and the people of Nowra and surrounding towns, Bravo Zulu to all!

Reunion Program

Wednesday and Thursday, registration days and an opportunity to meet old mates and renew the friendships of days gone by. Many a handshake and the odd drink (necessary to keep the throat lubricated you understand), it was all so rewarding and I find my eyes misting over as I recall the events of those few days. I am sure the smile on my face will remain a permanent fixture.

Cocktail Party - a huge event which really put staff and facilities to the test. Once the storm troopers advanced on the waterholes things seemed to even out and one was able to circulate with the opportunity to again catch up with old friends. Saw the floor show performed by local school children - out of this world and very up market. Missed 'Beat the Retreat' (caught up again kissing and hand shaking) which, according to the reports I received, was excellent. The food was good and plentiful and I would give a high mark there.

Friday and back to the Museum once more to meet up with old friends and then later to the Army parachute school for the A.G.M. which was very well attended. Chairman Neil Ralph ran an excellent meeting, firm and fair and considerate to all. A major issue raised at the meeting was the acquisition of an aircraft carrier for the RAN. I'll reserve my thoughts on that subject. To National Secretary Jim Lee, we are all sorry to see you stand down - you will be a hard act to follow.

Jubilee Ball. Held away from the Air Station at Worrigege House, hearsay has it as a 'huge' event, everybody dressed in best bib and tucker and having a great time.



Saturday. A big, big day. Must have been about a thousand ex-members formed up ready to march up Junction Street to the Nowra Showground. The weather was good and so were the spirits of the marchers. A great crowd turned up to watch us and to cheer and clap as we marched. It was unfortunate we did not have a band to lead us (a break down in communications I understand), however, we knew what was expected of us and generally managed to maintain our dressing and

to keep in step. Someone remarked to me, in lighter vein, that we looked like Brown's cows heading up the paddock. After the march there was a race meeting at the local track. For me, off to the Bomaderry RSL Club for the 'Handlers' mini-reunion and an outstanding afternoon. The 'Ralphs' were out in force and a great day was had by all.

Sunday. Ecumenical service followed by Air Day. The strong icy winds did not seem to deter the crowds who were out in force. Apparently business was good and Norma and Jim Lee had takings of over \$1000 on the hot dog stand.

A touching ceremony at the rugby football club house where the ground was renamed after the late 'Bluey' Guild who many will remember as the Chief Writer who had a long association with the 'birdies' here at ALBATROSS.

To summarise I want to say the 50th Anniversary Reunion was a well organised event which I enjoyed immensely and I thank all involved for their efforts. Just a few postscripts. Firstly to Bill Julius - I have the photographs but not your address or telephone number. To Sue Grovermann, what a delight to meet you and all the other ex-WRANS again. I'll pass your message to Keith Doncon. To anyone out there in 'Slipstream' land who have snaps of anything they feel may be of interest to our West Australian members, send them to me and I will forward them on. Lastly to Leon and Wanda Dobson and family who put me up during my stay in Nowra thank you for your hospitality.

TASMANIA

Secretary:
Alan Andrews,
P.O. Box 88, Exeter, TAS.7275
Phone: (03) 6394 3448

The news again. Well it's all over now for another 50 years, but what a marvellous event it turned out to be. Seeing old faces again after all these years. Some easily recognised, some not so easy, the passage of time works in many ways.

Somehow to me six days wasn't enough to do all there was to do and see and spend time with all those old mates. I'm sure there was a lot of people there we did not meet up with whom we would have liked to. But that's how it goes.

Organisation of the whole show has to be commended, a few hitches maybe now with the benefit of hindsight, but as we all know hindsight comes along after it's all over anyway.

The Museum is a credit to all those involved with its organisation and management. The static displays, models, photo hall, layout, just everything.



Tasmanian contingent really enjoyed their time in Nowra and surrounds. The place really has grown since I last saw it in 1957, but whatever has been done to it, it is still Nowra and N.S.W. South Coast.

We had our quarterly get together on Tas. North West Coast on November 22 and a good roll up too. I was unable to attend because of another engagement but I was well informed as to what went on.

By the time 'Slipstream' is in circulation Christmas will be all over but all us down here wish you all up there a happy time with family and friends and God willing many more to come.

All the best,
'Jake'



News from the Divisions

QUEENSLAND

13A King Street,
Caboolture, Qld.4510



time over the festive season.

The reunion went well overall and it was great to enjoy the company of friends from long ago. At the March, the State Presidents were in the lead and I know we were in step! What a pity the band went down on the 'Ajax'. The best plans go astray!

'Polly' Perkins always manages to greet me - after X years - with an attack. In '88 it was over some stashed Avgas which he had thought I'd pinched and filled my car. At a loss I told him it wasn't me and he should talk to 'Punchy' Parsons who might throw some light on the event - next thing Punchy fronts up and says: "What's all this about petrol?" Anyhow, we all had a good laugh about "Polly Perkins, Punchy Parsons and the Pinched Petrol".

This time, Polly accused me of being the only one of 1500 or so who was drunk on the 'Melbourne' in 1958 between Japan and Hawaii when I saw a white whale. I recently spoke to Macca - Australia All Over - and told him about it, and no-one else saw it. I told Polly that I was probably the only one sober! Again, we had a good laugh and I told Polly he hadn't let me down. The greeting goes . . . Barry Lister I've got a bone to pick with you - remember, 38 years ago . . .! Don't let me down next time, Polly - I love it!

HS816 Squadron held the Caloundra 'Freedom of the City' Ceremony - December 4 and 5 and it was very enjoyable. We co-hosted a cocktail party at the Golden Beach Power Boat Club on the Friday night - about 110 or so attending. Our raffle was a success - 3 prizes - the third number drawn was 69 and no-one claimed it! A bit shy, maybe.

On Saturday morning, the march commenced at 10am and it was well received. The Naval Association, with Dick Allchin as President, joined us for the event.

Marian has been in Royal Brisbane Hospital for re-assessment and I brought her home for the weekend. She thoroughly enjoyed the events - though we both slept all afternoon after the March. She'll be in Royal Brisbane Hospital for a couple of weeks and probably will have some chemotherapy to back up the radium treatment. This will be localised in the spinal area and we're told secondary effects will be minimal. The fight goes on!

Mick Blair, Trevor Tite and I had a meeting recently with the RSM of Bulimba Army Barracks and our Anzac Day event should be well organised this time round. He apologised for some

confusion last year - due to his predecessor not telling him of our numbers etc. etc.

Trevor Tite has located a supplier of a blazer pocket badge who can take orders from 1 or 2 and above. If anyone would like one, contact Trevor at 37 Miles Street, Caboolture 4510 with order and money. They look good.

A reminder to our members - subs are due by 31st January - if not paid up by then no newsletter or Slipstream.

Recently, whilst at Royal Brisbane Hospital wheeling Marian into a lift to go for an MRI, Jan Williamson came up to us - Paddy has broken his left leg (or right?) Anyhow, I managed to see Paddy while Jan was getting the car. He'd fallen down the steps the night of the big storm a few weeks ago and managed quite a severe break, but we were able to have a laugh about it.

Shorty Neilson is home again having been in hospital for some 13 weeks with a broken hip. Hope everything goes well for both of you, Shirley and Shorty. I've just spoken with Len Zuch - fell off a ladder and broke his ankle. He's now managing on a walking stick and getting back to bowling again. He sends his regards to all wounded pals.

We're holding our next meeting at a BBQ on January 31st at Miami Beach Park - all invited - BYO food and drink - from 10am onwards. This is our 'after Christmas' function.

I met up with Buck Ryan at Nowra and he asked me to convey his regards and best wishes to Col Wheatley - Buck, I've done that and much appreciated by Col. Regards returned. Also met Merv and Chris Cundy - Merv told me that the dice were loaded when I threw 11 sets of heads one night and I find that hard to believe - but it was a good run of luck I reckoned.

Well, time to run now - best wishes, happy New Year to all.

Barry Lister, President

VICTORIA

Well this year is approaching its end and on reflection what a year it has been: Our AGM was convened in February followed by our attendance at RAAF Williams (Point Cook) for the occasion of Memorial Service to the 41 Pilots of 77 Squadron who lost their lives in Korea and the Dedication of the Memorial to these members on the 8th March.

The next memorable event was the Anzac Day parade, with a record number of personnel on parade and this year, being our Gold Jubilee, the RAN did us proud by the fact that the banner and flag party were serving members seconded from HMAS



Secretary:
Ron Christie,
15 Bianca Court, Rowville, Vic.3178
Phone: (03) 9764 5542 Fax: (03) 9755 5417

CERBERUS for the march, their attendance was greatly appreciated by all our members, so much so they were invited to join us at the after march Reunion, it was pleasing to note that all accepted our invite. Once again thanks to the CO HMAS CERBERUS, Captain John

Dierks RAN for his assistance on this occasion.

Then in June the Victoria Division held its annual RAN FAA Memorial Service at HMAS CERBERUS, comprising of the usual Chapel Service then a short ceremony at the FAA Memorial in the adjoining gardens. Unfortunately, this year, due to RAN Policy

we could not conduct our service on the nearest Sunday to the 28th August, so we had to accept our allotted day in June.

There were several other events some of our members attended, such as HMAS SYDNEY Association functions etc. then it was onto the big one!

The RAN FAA Golden Jubilee Reunion, sure there were a few hiccups, but this was to be expected with the sheer volume of numbers, a logistic nightmare, personally I

would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Reunion Committee and all personnel involved for the excellent manner in which they applied themselves to this mammoth undertaking.

Sure the book launch was a bit drawn out and the march, what can we say, no band, too long, to say the least very disappointing, and on some occasions the weather did not help the situation, but that's life, overall, excellent, to all the organisers. "WELL DONE - BRAVO ZULU".

Sunday last saw the last meeting of the Vic. Div. for this year and the Xmas breakup, unfortunately we only had twenty three members in attendance but these twenty three members had a very

enjoyable day, so it is those members who do not attend these functions who are missing out!

Please pencil this date on your calendar now, the AGM will take place on 14th February, 1999, commencing at 1100 at the Melbourne Naval Centre (ESU) 146 Toorak Road (West) South Yarra, on completion of AGM a Bar-B-Q Lunch will be supplied, but please advise the Social Co-Ordinator if you are attending so that she can organise the catering, thank you.

All Victoria Division members are reminded that 1999 Annual Subscriptions are due and payable on the 31st December, 1998. The Minutes of the last AGM and Annual Reports will be mailed to all financial members in the next few weeks along with membership renewal chits.

One of our members has advised me that he has a number of 723 Squadron lapel badges for sale, so if you require one of these badges, they are available from Jim Ferguson at a cost of \$6.50 each plus postage, contact Jim on (03) 5971 2316.

In closing, on behalf of the President, Committee and Members of the Victoria Division, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Ron Christie

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Before I progress on with my contribution from the Festival State, I will extend to you all on behalf of my team and members, the very best for CHRISTMAS and for an even better 1999. Truly the silly season is upon us as I see the department stores gearing up for that last minute panic buying not helped when someone inside the family has reminded you that you were made responsible to get a gift for an old and eccentric aunt. Just where do you go to get a jar of pickled Herrings?

I realise everyone will be chatting about the Reunion in their contribution to Slipstream, so why should I be an exception.

One word springs to mind when I think of that last Reunion . . . magnificent!

To meet up with old and valued mates at the Home of Naval Aviation was indeed a special and rewarding experience. The Leon Brown's, Dusty Grearson's, Spider Brookes, Phil Blakemore's, Terry Payne's, Sparrow Longford's, Stuart Stevens and the list goes on as each one of you who attended, remembered and if you were quick enough, wrote down the names of those mates you would have bumped into inside that blue FAA note pad and pen set.

I am basically saying that I believe the FAA Reunion Committee excelled themselves with this magnificent gathering of eagles. OK, so the sound system was crap at most venues and we had to march without the aid of a pipe band, although I kept in step by humming the 'Dad's Army' theme music much to the concern of Theo marching along side.

And yes, the Fly Day had the aircraft fixed onto the distant horizon where you could only recognise which aircraft was flying with the aid of the museum FAA "Which Aircraft was that?" booklet purchased over the counter. That's clever marketing.

There was a few more problems to contend with but generally I found the bulk of those attending did not complain or gripe but got on with meeting their mates and renewing friendships started decades past. So WELL DONE to all the team and their wives.



Secretary:
Dinsley Cooper,
17 Athol Avenue,
Blair Athol, SA 5084

We here in the Southern State are having our final outing this Saturday (5th) in the form of a dinner cruise up the Port River. I hope no one falls in as they will surely dissolve in an instant. Good food I believe with a heavy swell to remind us we are in fact "at sea" and not to get too cocky. Back onto Terra Firma around 2300, steady or otherwise.

All local Fly Navy SA newsletters had two petitions for members to chase signatures for. Please make an attempt to follow the instructions and return them ASAP.

The State Division's next meeting will be held at Dinsley and Junice's home on Friday 15th January 1999 not 1994 as printed from Dinsley's desk. Refer to your Fly Navy SA for details and do come along as Dinsley's home cooked damper is beyond description.

The Divisional AGM will be held at the Hutt Street Naval House rooms on the 19th February 1999, commencing around 1930 where our Divisional business will be dealt with and then all committee positions will be declared vacant and a returning officer will chair the election of a new committee, and I do mean a new committee! Most of us are pretty much exhausted and shell shock and would wish to be retired to the back bench. So the call goes out for new blood on the committee. Think about it please.

The FAAA SA has been returned back to our naval family for next years ANZAC DAY parade thanks mainly to Mary Rayner's many letters to the RSL committee. Don't they know who they are dealing with?

Finally a Quote:

"As Phil de Glanville said, each game is unique and this one is no different from any other." John Sleightholme Radio 5 Live.

Roger Harrison, Hon. Whipping Boy



News from the Divisions

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Secretary:
B.T. Treloar,
P.O. Box 3652,
Weston Creek, ACT 2611
Phone: (02) 6288 2730

In case this doesn't get published before Xmas, belatedly, this Division wishes all members a very Joyous Xmas and good health, happiness and success in all your endeavours in 1999. And what a year 1998 has been with all the events associated with our 50th Anniversary culminating in our Reunion festivities. Despite the odd hiccup, this event was notable for its opportunity to meet old friends from all over Australia that we had not seen for many years.

This Division congratulates Cdre John Goble on his unanimous election to the position of Patron of our Association and looks forward to his guidance and continued inspiration over the coming years.

Our last social event of the year was the Xmas Cocktail Party on 4 December and this was attended by some 34 members and wives at the RSL National headquarters. A good time was had by all and this was rounded off by the drawing of the Raffle with an



abundance of prizes thanks to the generosity of a large number of members.

The next main event will be the AGM to be held early in February. It would now seem that we have lost a few members this year, not having renewed their subscriptions. However, we give a hearty welcome aboard to John Crawley whose association with the Occupational Health and Safety Division in the Dept. of Defence will be most welcome and

helpful.

On the health side, we are glad that Nobby Clarke survived his heart operation successfully and now is recuperating at home. Unfortunately, Arthur Hussey is back in hospital and we wish both he and Nobby a full and speedy recovery.

We wish Jim Lee a happy retirement from his onerous duties as National Secretary. During his term of office has been most helpful and has done a mighty job over a very difficult period.

Again, a very merry Xmas to all.

Brian Treloar

THE FOLLOWING NOTES, EXTRACTED FROM THE REGULAR DEFENCE FORCES WELFARE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL 'CAMARADERIE' SPRING 1998 ISSUE, MAY BE OF INTEREST TO OUR ACT MEMBERS. ED.

ACT DEFENCE WIDOWS' SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION SHEET #1 - SPRING 1998

This information Sheet has been written by the Defence Widows' Support Group of the ACT. If anyone would like to pass on other information which would be of interest and advantage to retired service persons or widows/widowers please contact Mrs Betty Latham on 02 6249 7075 so that the details can be published in future newsletters. The information has been taken from various sources - please contact the relevant agency to confirm details and discuss your entitlements.

1. New Health Care Entitlement Cards for senior citizens will commence on 1st January 1999. The income test threshold will be increased for a single person from \$21,000 per annum to \$40,000 and from \$36,000 to \$67,000 for couples. Application for this entitlement must be made after 1st January and will cover pharmaceuticals, reducing the cost of scripts to \$3.20 each item, with no charge applicable when an annual total of \$166.40 has been reached.

2. Motor Vehicle Registration in the ACT will be free from 1/9/98 for those persons who hold a Centrelink Pension Concession Card or a Veterans Affairs pension. ACT Senior Card holders have a 10% concession on registration. Remember - third party and levies are still payable. Vehicle registration can now be taken out for 3, 6 or 12 months with a \$25 short term registration fee payable on registration periods less than 12 months. CONTACT the Road User Service 01 6207 7000 for further details.

3. 'CLASP' Program. The ACT Council for the Aging has

initiated 'CLASP', a program of home safety and security reviews. CLASP aims at protecting and helping elderly people choosing to live independently. Advice will be given by members of the police, ambulance and fire brigade. CONTACT 02 6282 3777 for further details.

4. 'Vial of Life'. Arrangements can be made for a 'Vial of Life' which stores relevant personal details and placed in your refrigerator, with a sticker on the front of the fridge to alert emergency workers if needed. A wallet containing similar details can be placed in the glove box of your car. CONTACT 02 6282 3777 for further details.

5. Debits Tax Rebate. Residents of the ACT receiving Dept of Social Security pensions or in receipt of Service pensions, TPI, POW, War Widow/er dependant and disability pension from Dept of Veterans' Affairs, are entitled to a rebate of debits tax if the tax paid is \$15 or more a year up to a maximum of \$50 per year. Application for rebates can be made on one account only. Application Forms are available from the ACT Revenue Office, Customer Service - CONTACT 02 6207 0087 for further details.

6. Memorial Plaque. Relatives of deceased Naval personnel may be interested to know how to arrange for the placing of a memorial plaque in the Chapel of Remembrance at Garden Island. The plaques are brass, 160mm x 100mm, inscribed with Rank, Name (incl honours and awards), Years of Service, Date of Death and age at death. Members service number is also useful for the order form. Cost is approx \$50. Enquiries should be directed to: Command Chaplaincy Centre, Building 921, Garden Island, Sydney, NSW 2000. CONTACT 02 9359 3760 for further details.

7. Veterans' Home Maintenance Helpline. The Department of Veterans' Affairs have established this service for the veteran community to provide advice on property maintenance and for referral to reliable and efficient tradespeople. They can also arrange a home inspection to identify current or possible future maintenance problems and also to link you to Government subsidised services.

Establishment of Australia's First Naval Air Base - HMAS ALBATROSS

Part One

Back on dry land in Australia plans were being made to operate aircraft from Nowra, New South Wales.

On 6 July 1935 the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) granted a license to operate a Municipal aerodrome on a site three miles from Nowra, near Calymea Street. There were a number of problems with that site and three years later in 1938, at the request of the Nowra Town Council, a further survey of the area was made. Mr Augerson, for DCA selected a site in an area known as Browns Hole, located on the Braidwood Road, six miles from Nowra for an aerodrome. At that time the Air Board advised the DCA that the selected site would also serve as a Royal Australian Air Force Advanced Operational Base. On 14 June 1939 the Government had acquired 357 acres of land at the site and just after war had been declared a further 118 acres had also been bought and gazetted. On 19 October 1939 approval had been given to develop the airfield for the RAAF. In May 1940 Nowra Municipal Council were granted permission to use the airfield on a non interference basis with the RAAF and by 21 July 1941 the aerodrome was ready for use. Approval was given for work to commence on building a Base with accommodation for 734 personnel, and a further 50 acres were acquired. It had been decided that Nowra was to be an operational RAAF Base and two squadrons were to be stationed there, a Reconnaissance Squadron and a Torpedo Bomber Squadron equipped with Bristol Beaufort Bombers. But it was not until the following year, on 7 May 1942 that the RAAF Base became operational. Shortly after the RAAF opened Nowra for business they had their first aircraft accident. A United States Army Air Corp (USAAC) bomber, a Martin Marauder (B26), crashed on landing and was destroyed by fire: all survived but two were injured. That month torpedo and bombing training operations commenced. By day practice torpedoes were released into the bay at the target ship, and by night the recovered torpedoes were fixed up by the Bombing and Torpedo Unit (BTU), ready to go again the next day. The BTU was situated at the end of the road from the Base to the Princes Highway, which is now known as the BTU road. The BTU camp was at the end of the road where the present Timber Mill is situated. Some of the camp buildings are still there but unrecognisable. Across the road were the torpedo and bomb storage buildings. The third anniversary of the formation of the WAAFS was celebrated at RAAF Nowra 15 March 1944 in grand style in the junior ranks dining room of the time. Serving females departed Nowra when the RAAF handed over the base to the Royal Navy, and did not arrive back until 1964. The RAAF Bristol Bombers, USAAC B26 and the Netherlands East Indies Air Force aircraft all used the bombing and torpedo ranges. During this period it is noted that the Chief Ground Instructor and his staff were both RAN Observers, both had seen operational service flying with the Royal Navy. Unfortunately, there were a number of accidents during the training, as the memorial at Lady Denman Museum at Huskisson testifies to. The most spectacular and unfortunately biggest tragedy happened on 14 April 1943 when a flight of three Beaufort's completed their torpedo drops against the target vessel HMAS Burra Burra. A Fox Movietone news cameraman, Mr Eric Bierre, was on board the ship and was shooting shots of the exercise for Movietone News. The aircraft had been briefed to do a fly past the ship followed by a climb and a 'Prince of Wales Feather'. The three Beaufort's were supposed to climb with the lead aircraft continuing straight ahead, while the two aircraft on his wings turned outwards. Unfortunately, one of the aircraft turned _ towards the leader - taking off his tail and causing both aircraft to crash into the sea: both four man crews were killed. With the

war drawing to an end in Europe the Royal Navy was ordered to the Pacific to back up the United States Navy in their attack on the Japanese mainland and their fleets at sea. This became known as the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) and included over 265 ships. Sydney was to be the main Fleet Base. When the Carriers were in Sydney for repairs the aircraft had to be landed ashore where they could carry out flying training. To provide for their needs the British introduced the Mobile Base system and seven of these units, called Mobile Overseas Naval Air Bases (MONABS), were established in Australia. They could provide all the services needed for the squadrons to operate from an airfield - workshops, stores, accommodation, transport. In very quick time the MONAB had turned the Base into a working Air Station and by February RNAS Nowra was ready to receive and operate the front line squadrons and their aircraft. From the beginning of February there was a continuous movement of aircraft as squadrons disembarked and embarked to and from their carriers, when the ships went into Sydney for much needed maintenance. For most of the squadron personnel Nowra was their first look at Australia and it obviously impressed quite a number of them because they came back after the war. Most of the operational squadrons each had over twenty aircraft and on one day alone over one hundred aircraft flew ashore to Nowra. On occasions, because of the lack of accommodation, some men from disembarked squadrons lived in tents when they were ashore at Nowra.

Lieutenant Hugh Langrishe RNVR was at Nowra in late 1944 in the early Royal Navy contingent. The RAAF were still operating the base. It was a very confusing time:

'To say that the RN FAA took control of the Nowra facilities on 15 September 1944 appears to be overstating the case. RAAF personnel were still administering what was left of the Beaufort OTU when the advance party of MONAB 1 reached Nowra - by rail from Sydney - on or about 21 December 1944. The party spent Christmas on the camp and in Nowra and were victualled by the RAAF. Naval officers helped their RAAF counterparts to serve Christmas dinner in the airmen's mess. By that time no USN personnel were to be seen, nor was there any visual sign of a RAAF torpedo unit. However, RN No 6 MATMU was established in its own compound just off the Princes Highway at the bottom of what was initially the main access road to the airfield, equipped to handle the 22" American torpedo. When the MONAB 1 advance party arrived one unserviceable Beaufort remained in the hangar, the last of the OTU aircraft. It was eventually flown away in the middle of January and the last of the RAAF officers and airmen departed. It was only then that flying control and meteorological services became a full RN responsibility. Initially, the established strength of MONAB I was between 500 and 600 officers and ratings. The Nowra runways were of a construction unfamiliar to most servicemen coming from the UK, basically being rolled and sealed gravel and sand. Compaction of the sand was done by "sheep's foot" and standard rollers and the top dressing was 1/2-1" of rolled tarred gravel. According to the RN official data issued in Australia Schofields had unsealed gravel runways in May 1944 when they were first laid but they must have been sealed by early 1945 and much more strongly so than Nowra because they never broke up and were still sound in March '46. The comment that the breaking-up of the Nowra runways was a partial consequence of their "temporary" nature is begging the question of whether or not they were ever suitable for the B-26s and Beauforts which used them, let alone Naval aircraft. It was a surprise to the newcomers that the runways gave so much trouble after several years' use by much heavier aircraft.

The problem could perhaps be understood by appreciating that it was only the touchdown points which broke up, and the cause of this was undoubtedly the severe impact loading due to carrier landings, aggravated by the small section of the aircraft tailwheels. There was more than adequate length in both runways and touchdown points were moved to clear the defective surface until the squadrons departed. It would be interesting to know whether rolled sand and gravel were used widely as a runway construction method. It is unlikely that Nowra was unique. The Naval squadrons disembarked on 9 and 10 February 1945 just before their ships entered Sydney Harbour to join the British Pacific Fleet as the 1st Aircraft Carrier Squadron. Only some six aircraft from each squadron were flown ashore to Nowra, a total of around sixty from ten squadrons of Avengers, Hellcats and Corsairs. There were several reasons for limiting numbers; at that stage aircraft parking areas were inadequate even for this number and many aircraft were parked on the grass beside the runways. Also, aircrew accommodation and wardroom facilities would have been overwhelmed by greater numbers. By using the carriers for accommodation it was possible to rotate aircrew between Sydney and Nowra for flying practice and a short leave period. It is known that some aircrew officers did not go down to Nowra at all during this period. The opportunity was also taken to exchange worn out aircraft from MONAB 2 at Bankstown. In view of the nature of the disembarkation it is unlikely that there was any serious use of the torpedo range and therefore of the torpedo unit. Indeed, it is questionable whether a torpedo was ever dropped by an Avenger of the BPF or supporting squadrons. The squadrons from Indomitable, Victorious and Indefatigable re-embarked on 27/28 February. Illustrious had been suffering from vibration and the ship was dry-docked in Sydney for the centre screw to be removed and the shaft sleeved. This delayed her departure and her aircraft were not embarked from Nowra until 7 March, by which date the other ships were at Manus. By the time the squadrons re-embarked, the ends of the runways were in a desperate condition. The pounding meted out by continual carrier landings had broken the thin tarred skin and cut into the sand. The airfield was promptly closed and the repair gang moved in with graders, rollers and tar spreaders to restore the surface. During the disembarkation some ADDLs were done at Jervis Bay which at that time was not manned permanently. No Martinets had arrived at Nowra by the time the runways became unserviceable even though 723 Squadron had officially formed. It was this squadron, under the command of Lt Cdr H A P Bullivant RNR, which had started the Expediter service between Nowra and Mascot in January 1945. This task was taken over by 724 Squadron when it formed in April 1945. The Martinets reached Jervis Bay in early May and were at Nowra by the end of the month. Plans had been made to set up a second-line unit for keeping replacement aircrew in practice and for conversion training. The nucleus of 706 Squadron started to form for this role at Jervis Bay at the beginning of March. It was equipped with two Avengers and two Corsairs, under the command of Lt Cdr (A) R E Bradshaw DSC RN. Maintenance personnel were borrowed from MONAB 1 because it was intended that the squadron should form officially at Schofields later in the month. When the nucleus transferred from Jervis Bay the Avenger and Corsair Mobile Servicing Units from MONAB 1 went with them to augment the ground crew being posted in. There was no work at Nowra for these units for the time being. On 24 October 1945, 706 Squadron transferred from RAAF Maryborough (whither it had gone from Schofields in August), bringing to Nowra twelve assorted aircraft: two each of Avenger, Barracuda, Corsair, Firefly, Hellcat and Seafire III. Maryborough's RN unit had been MONAB 6, a lodger since May 1945. It officially shut down and

withdrew to Schofields on 15 November. There was then a combined shakeout of men who were due to go home for demobilisation under the Age & Service Group scheme and MONAB 3/HMS NABTHORPE payed off. When 706 Squadron arrived at Nowra the main parking area was partially occupied by the 30 Corsairs of 1843 and 1845 Squadrons and the 15 Avengers for a re-formed 854 Squadron. These three squadrons formed the 3rd CAG, a replacement group which had been formed in August and which disbanded officially in October. 854 Squadron had landed all its aircraft on Pone on VE-Day and most of its aircrew went home in Illustrious, having completed their operational tour. New TBM-3 Avenger IIIs were ferried to Nowra but there is insufficient evidence that 854 actually became a flyable unit. No commanding officer appears to have been appointed although there were a few junior aircrew of officers. Regarding 1843 Squadron, there is evidence that it was still embarked (on and off) in ARBITER until July 1945 and did not reach Nowra until late that month, having first disembarked to Maryborough at the beginning of July. After transit in SLINGER to Australia and one trip with the Fleet, 1845 Squadron had been disbanded in April and its aircraft and pilots distributed to squadrons in FORMIDABLE and VICTORIOUS. A new 1845 Squadron was formed at the beginning of June when pilots collected a batch of Corsairs from Archerfield and work-up started at Maryborough later that month. It was not until the middle of July 1945 that the squadron transferred to Nowra. When 848, 1841 and 1842 Squadrons disembarked at the end of August they rapidly became virtually numbers only as most of the aircrew prepared to return to the UK; they sailed in VICTORIOUS from Sydney on 25 September. 1771 Squadron also seems to have suffered a long and lingering death after disembarking; pilots' logs show that some of its aircraft had been deposited at Bankstown by the end of August and it must have been a shadowy unit which officially disbanded in the middle of October. Nowra was not de-commissioned as a RN Air Station on 15 November 1945. All that happened was that MONAB 5 vacated Jervis Bay, which was then closed. All personnel transferred to Nowra, together with the Fireflies, Corsairs and squadron personnel of Glory's No 16 CAG, comprising 837 and 1831 Squadrons. The same shuffling of personnel then took place as had happened at Schofields. MONAB 1/HMS NABBINGTON payed-off and MONAB 5/HMS NABSWICK assumed control of the Station. From 15 November 1945, therefore, there were at Nowra No's 706, 723, 828, 837 and 1831 Squadrons, all of which undertook busy flying programmes. 706 Squadron made full use of the bombing, RP and gunnery facilities. 723 Squadron had by then been issued with several ex-RAAF Vengeance's and ex-RNZAF Avengers, refitted as target tugs to augment its Martinets, Corsairs, Hellcats and Ansons. All squadrons except 828 stayed over the New Year but departed during the next month. Movements were as follows: 706 Squadron to Schofields 18.1.46 and disbanded 31.5.46 723 Squadron to Schofields 2 1.1 .46 and disbanded 3 1 .5 .46 828 Squadron to Schofields 27.11.45 to join 801 and 1790 Squadron of No 8 CAG 837 Squadron to HMS Glory 14.1.46 then to RAAF Williamstown on 15.2.46 1831 Squadron to HMS Glory 14.1.46 then to RAAF Williamstown on 15.2.46 Rundown of RNAS Nowra commenced in January 1946 and it officially closed as a Royal Naval Air Station in March 1946.'

The advance party of MONAB 1 arrived at Nowra Airfield on 27 December 1944, to take possession of the Base. They were immediately followed by the Main Party, and on 2 January 1945 Nowra Airfield became the Royal Naval Air Station Nowra and was commissioned HMS NABBINGTON. The White Ensign was hoisted for the first time, at the Main Gate (the Main Gate in those days was near to where the swimming pool was built in later years).

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS PHOTOGRAPH?



FROM THE ANCIENT AVIATOR

Herewith a few more lessons I have learnt over the years. May I suggest that other readers be invited to contribute their lessons so we may all gain in knowledge from one another. Surely there are many philosophers out there. Perhaps you could run a segment in SLIPSTREAM titled "The Getting of Wisdom".

I have learnt that:

- Lending money to relatives and friends causes them to develop amnesia.
- No matter how old or experienced you are, you can always learn something from a child.
- Country music always makes me feel better when I'm melancholy because the people in the songs are always in a worse situation than I am.
- Ship's Captains and Squadron C.O's have good days and bad days. A smart junior quickly spots the difference.
- If you cut enough corners you will end up going round in circles.
- My best friend and I can do anything or nothing and still have a great time.
- A minute of thinking beforehand can save hours of worry later.
- The prayer I say most often is: "Lord please keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth."
- People place too much importance on progress and not enough on maintenance.
- If you finish the toilet roll without replacing it, you will be the first person who needs it next.

*Thank you,
The Ancient Aviator*

VALE

Dave Laird advises he has been notified of the death of former Kellick 'Handler' Colin James Thornthwaite - 27th October, 1998.

Ron Christie advises of the death of ex member Lieut. Michael (Mike) Price - 30th December, 1998.

Keith Bellert advises he had heard that 'Mocca' Cheyne died recently.

Norma Cunningham, wife of the late Bruce Cunningham (Slipstream Oct'98) herself died during December, 1998.

EDITOR'S COMMENT



All who were involved in the organisation and subsequent running of the recent 50th Anniversary celebrations will be pleased at the number of very positive comments which appear in the following pages. Add to these the many verbal Bravo Zulus and I think all can be well pleased with the result. It seems the camaraderie and good fellowship in the F.A.A. is alive and well.

During the course of the celebrations I met a number of people who, surprisingly, were not members of the F.A.A. I find that quite surprising and would encourage those who have not already done so, to make the effort and submit their application. To reiterate in part the remarks of our esteemed Patron (John Goble) membership is not confined only to 'Birdies' who served in carriers but is open to all including WRANS Flight Deck Engineering Parties, Cooks, Stewards, anybody who generally has an interest in the Fleet Air Arm.

I spoke to so many people during the 50th Anniversary celebrations that eventually the old cerebral computer crashed and I had trouble even remembering my own name. Since then I have had this vague feeling in my mind about promises made that I just cannot recall. If I made you a promise, I will be happy to receive a reminder from you.

My greatest fear when I put the current issue of 'Slipstream' to bed is that there will be nothing left for the next issue. So far I have been quite fortunate as each issue seems to generate more copy. What I find particularly pleasing about this issue is the number of articles from my correspondents which have a philosophical bent.

I would also like to have more contributors similar to the 'Ancient Aviator' and our resident poet '35607' who are now both making a regular contribution to this journal. I would like to swell their ranks with an 'in-house' cartoonist and a technical expert or two to contribute articles about aviation today.

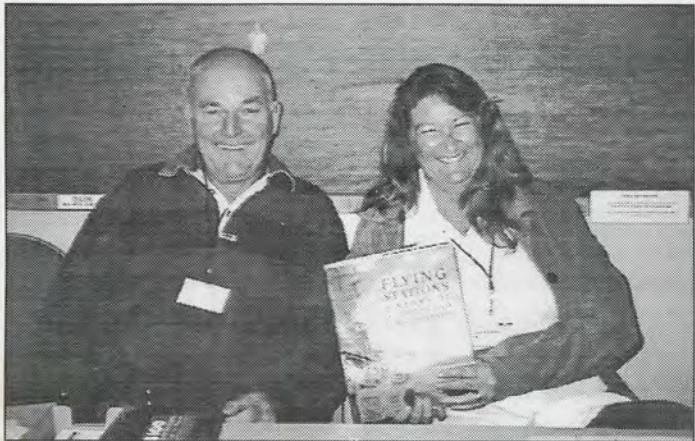
Over to you out there in 'Slipstream Land'.



l to r: Brian Treloar, Connie Treloar, Fred Lewis, Maggie Lewis, Sue Morritt, Ray (Alfie) Morritt.



'Squeaky' Rose and wife entertain a group of our Canuck visitors during the 50th Anniversary Celebrations



Flogging 'Flying Stations' helpers Bob Perkins and Tracy Dickenson, take a photo break during the 50th Anniversary Celebrations.



l to r: Connie Connellan, 'Rusty' Marquis, Marg. Marquis. Connie is the widow of the late Bob Connellan down for 50th Anniversary Celebrations



"Off Brakes Come Astern"
Refamil Training 50th Anniversary Reunion October 1998