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of the
Fleet Air Arm
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Slipstream
Established HMAS Albatross 1957



Sydney Harbour
817 Squadron's 50 th Anniversary Sea King flying the flag over the barque *Endeavour*
Photograph by POPH Peter Simpson – RANAS Nowra Photographic Section

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FOREWORD

by

Commodore K W Eames CSC, RAN
Commander Australian Naval Aviation Group



Being invited to provide this foreword for *Slipstream* is a great privilege for me, at an opportune time. I must say that the words of Vice Admiral Shackleton and Admiral Barrie in the two most recent editions have really set the scene for me. As the Commander of the Naval Aviation Force Element Group I too value the close relationship between today's Fleet Air Arm and the Fleet Air Arm Association.

We have moved a long way down a new path since the decommissioning of HMAS *Melbourne*, and the transition to an all-helicopter force has introduced many new and advanced skills in our people. We have very capable equipment and systems and the right people to operate and maintain them – albeit we are underborne with trained aircrew. In the face of the current difficult recruiting and retention environment, and the demands of training for single pilot embarked operations, we are making steady headway in redressing the shortfall. Of course, we are not alone in facing these problems, as the Australian Defence Force generally has problems maintaining adequate numbers of people with the specialist skills needed to operate and maintain modern platforms. Indeed, nor is the ADF alone amongst western forces in this regard.

At the same time we have retained a strong sense of identity which enables us say clearly that *Naval Aviation is what we do, the Fleet Air Arm is who we are*. This is very important when we find ourselves under scrutiny from whatever direction. I am sure many members will have got wind of a proposal circulating recently that all ADF aviation assets would be swept into the RAAF. Let me just say that it was a proposal that was never going to 'get off the ground.' The reality is that a study is currently underway to identify options to address the problems of aviation-related skill set shortages in the ADF and to look for ways of improving joint support and operations. It is true to say that we have come some way in recent years in developing a joint force approach to defence, including rationalised training, joint logistics support and joint operations. Clearly, a joint approach to our people management in the terms of recruiting, training and retention is important. Remembering the adage that the strength of "jointness" is in combining the different strengths of the Defence Force capabilities and not in all being the same, I believe we will see an outcome that meets Navy's needs without any reduction in capability.

Noting that there is an article in this edition which describes what the new Naval Aviation Force Element Group structure looks like, it would be appropriate for me to say a few words about business today. I believe that in the Naval Aviation Force Element Group we have been given a good basis on which to take Naval Aviation forward very substantially. We now have effective representation and visibility within the ADF, and a breadth of responsibility not previously held. We are structured to deliver the Naval Aviation capability and well supported through joint arrangements. That said, we have significant challenges which mean that the road ahead will not be an easy one.

As you know, the HS748 aircraft and the Electronic Warfare Training System were payed off at 30 June this year after 27 years service by the aircraft and 20 years by the EWTS – thus marking the passing of the last fixed wing aircraft in Naval Aviation. The replacement EW training capability is to be flown in a contractor supplied aircraft. We will introduce the new SH2-G(A) Super Seasprite with the Penguin missile over the next two years, as 805 Squadron reforms. This will bring the number of Naval Air Squadrons back up to four. From January 2001 we expect to see Navy basic rotary wing flying training move to 723 Squadron, for which the present five Bell 206B helicopters will be exchanged for six AS350BAs from Army. 723 Squadron will then operate just the 12 AS350BA in training roles.

As we venture forward in this challenging environment we will do so knowing that our heritage in the Fleet Air Arm is a strong and enviable asset. We know our business and that which has been learned over five decades of embarked operations in the Royal Australian Navy stands us in good stead today. We count on the continued support of the Fleet Air Arm Association and look forward to furthering the traditions set by those who paved the way for today's operations.



EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings to the readers. *This year is slipping along at a great rate of knots.* This is the opening sentence from the Queensland Division Report, and who can argue about it? As one edition of *Slipstream* disappears to the printer, the next edition is already on the starting blocks. The fact that the next edition is the last one before CHRISTMAS is a very sobering thought.

Winter is here with a vengeance and I would just like to remind all the ex-birdies no longer resident in this section of New South Wales what it is like. The rain has stopped for a while and the 'Westerlies' have taken their place. As usual, it's colder and windier at *Albatross* where the practice of 'laying into the wind' is still practised.

I can still remember telling the grizzled old Chief in the Perth Recruiting Office that I wanted to join the Fleet Air Arm. His immediate response was to describe to me his impressions of Nowra, 'where I would finish up'. He said it was the only place in the country where you could walk along with 'certain portions' of you anatomy dragging in the mud whilst getting dust in your eyes. A very observant man.

That's all for now, be kind to each other..

Ed.



I need help from anyone who was aboard the HMAS *Melbourne* in 1966 and witnessed the crash of Sea Venom WZ900 when LT E G Kennell went missing, presumed dead. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Rick Bolton

PO Box 239, WAROOKA, SA 5577

Telephone: (08) 8854 5450

UPGRADE for HMAS ALBATROSS

May 2000 media release

The Minister for Defence, John Moore, has announced additional funding of \$41 million for further upgrading of HMAS *Albatross*.

The most recent approval covers facilities and services to upgrade:

- Existing arrestor gear for fixed-wing aircraft using the main runway;
- Helicopter corrosion control and aircraft wash facilities;
- Flight deck procedural training simulators;
- Additional hard-stand for visiting military aircraft;
- Helicopter underwater escape training simulator;
- Gymnasium;
- Taxiway extension;
- Helicopter ordnance loading apron; and
- Perimeter fencing and engineering services.

These works continue the redevelopment of HMAS *Albatross*. Stage 1 represented a \$69 million investment. This seamless approach to the transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2 reduces costs and means that work can be finished at the earliest possible date. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The main event during the quarter was the 50th Anniversary national commemoration of the start of the Korean War that was held in Canberra and marked by the unveiling and dedication of the Korean War Memorial on Anzac Avenue. The Association was well represented by a group of our Korean veterans who gathered together in Canberra and participated in the ceremony. They met afterward at a function well organised by Norman Lee, and I'm told there was a good deal of reminiscing, as you would expect. It was a great opportunity for at least some of those who served in Korea to come together to remember those lost and the events of the time. Such occasions are important to this Association. I am sure there is more information in other parts of this issue.

The Museum has just received the HMAS *Albatross* book from the printers. Formally titled, 'HMAS *Albatross* A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES', it has been well put together by the previous Museum Director, Mike Lehan. It complements 'FLYING STATIONS', and does so very appropriately without the formality of a history. The book is well illustrated and the narrative covers *Albatross* from the beginning almost to the present day. There is a section on the Naval Air Squadrons and also on the lodger units on the base. All in all, Mike has done a very thorough job in putting it together and I am sure we'd all feel very indebted to him for this colourful record. I'd strongly recommend that you put your order into the Museum shop now.

Whilst on the subject of history, I should mention that the Museum has commissioned a scale model of HMAS *Sydney* (2) which will feature moveable turrets, propellers and the like, and importantly will show how its aircraft were operated. This will be of great interest in the Museum, it is due to be installed in August/September and should be on show when the Federation Wing of the Museum is opened during the Air Day on 9 September.

Talking about Air Days, there is a plan being prepared for a 2-day air day event to be run by the Museum at *Albatross* during March 2003. The idea is to commemorate the centenary of flight and to consolidate the Museum's position as Australia's Museum of Flight. Representative aircraft from right across the aviation spectrum will be sought and should result in a very comprehensive air show. Keep March 2003 free!

Although we are due for a reunion in 2001, there is a suggestion that this could be postponed until the occasion of the 2003 air day. This idea has not been considered by any part of the Association yet, but if it has reasonable support I would be keen to put it to the Federal Council in October. If you favour this idea, or do not favour it, let your State division know so we can measure the depth of support for the idea at the next Federal Council meeting.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Slipstream*.

Neil Ralph - National President

FR

FOR YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT

Editor's feedback from the last edition of Slipstream...



* A 'phone call from Bill Gault's daughter, Kerry, who said that the perspex carrier model depicted on page 18 of the last edition is at HMAS *Stirling*. I also found out that Bill has sold his Mini and purchased a Laser. I guess that means he can carry a bigger suitcase when he goes camping at the casino.

* From Ted Silsby, a correction to the name appearing on the photograph with 'Paddy' Williamson's letter. It should read A J COX – not Fox. Ted went on to say that in his time, AJ was one of the most famous personalities in the FAA – he was also a very good friend. [Sorry, Ted. Just finger trouble. Ed] *Recent news from 'Snow' Hall and Frank Donnelly is that AJ has passed away.*

* News from Mr R E Middleton, known as 'Stix', to advise that his book, which is a definitive history surrounding the events during 'Typhoon Ruth', is now available. 'Stix', who was onboard HMAS *Sydney* at the time, says that the book is 'our' story, a story that was never told. It also contains information from crewmembers aboard other vessels during the 'big blow'. In previous correspondence he referred to the incident as '*How HMAS Sydney nearly became the worst naval disaster in history*'.

The book, entitled '**Goodbye Tomorrow**', is available from the author at a total cost of \$11.50, delivered anywhere in Australia.

His address is: 52, MacDonald Ct., Dicky Beach, Queensland 4551 – Telephone (07) 5492 7433.

* From the cooler climes of Tasmania, a letter from A R 'Tas' Browning to advise that his book entitled, '**Operational Deployments**' of HMAS *Melbourne* (R21) 1956-1966, was launched at the quarterly meeting of the Tasmanian Division of the FAAA in May.

The 'NW Tasmanian Advocate', reported in part '*...the book also covers HMAS Melbourne's role in the Vietnam War and includes details of crew's medical reports and living conditions on the vessel. The author said, 'Conditions on the ship were very bad. It was very hot, there was no air-conditioning and there was asbestos in there'. Mr Browning has devoted the past ten years to researching the publication and much of the information comes from the national archives held at the Australian War Memorial...*'

The book can be purchased directly from the author at a total cost of \$23.50.

His address is: 8 Addison Street, Devonport, Tasmania 7310 – Telephone (03) 6424 6314.

R

[The following letter was at the bottom of the mail bag, it should have been in the last edition. Ed]



Dear Ed

Congratulations on another interesting and informative edition of *Slipstream*, Vol.11 No.1. There was much in it that interested me, especially those articles about the early years.

I noticed that Roger Harrison has welcomed me to the SA Division as a one type Firefly pilot when I always saw myself as an Observer who flew in different types. I must correct him on his oversight.

The article by Kevin 'Ambrose' Boulter about our beginnings was a worthwhile contribution; I always wondered where those guys came from. In his paragraph about 'those who lost their ships', he mentions my old shipmate, Henry Hall [Nobby]. Henry once told me how little those great men, that Ambrose describes, knew about aviation. On one occasion he was Duty Flight Deck Petty Officer (he had really been trained as Met.) and aircraft had to be struck down below. The first was a Sea Fury, so 'Nobby', in his understanding began by ordering the Handlers to start pushing. One of them said, 'Excuse me Chief, but no one is in the cockpit!' 'Nobby' responded with the sharp words, 'Do you think we have to fly the bloody thing into the hangar!' Henry admits that at this stage of his FAA life he was not aware that someone had to man the brakes!

I also sense from the articles that as most of us hasten to the grave, people are becoming anxious that stories are to be told that will be forgotten unless something is written. I also sense that more than likely we are the ones likely to read the print!

The article by John Buchanan (I last heard of him living at Deception Bay suffering from some breathing disorder) mentions your namesake, Peter Arnold. I remember him well, he was an Engineering Officer who had a tendency to do everything at half-pace. Naturally he was soon called 'Speed'.
'Dooley' Lord

[I bet Henry didn't tell you the story about when the barber at RANAS used to burn the sweepings from his shop in a small incinerator at the rear of the premises - and - as the acrid fumes swept across the roadway one day, a certain Chief suggested to the OIC of a passing WRAN Division that she might be marching them too fast! Ed.]

* *Just a reminder to Slipstream contributors – Slipstream is archived in the State Library of New South Wales; your news and stories are saved for posterity and are available to researchers etc..*

Dear Ed

Many thanks for finding the misplaced article 'Fleet Air Arm Beginnings' by Ambrose Boulter, and including it in the January edition of *Slipstream*.

I feel sure your readers, like me, found it full of interest. The author's coverage of the selection of foundation members of the RAN Fleet Air Arm, the story of their training in the United Kingdom, and an insight into the service history of some of those selected, made really great reading.

I was privileged to be trained by some of those mentioned, and then to go on and serve with, and under them, over a long period, including the Korean War. They were indeed the 'cream of the Navy'. Not only were they distinguished servicemen with high personal qualities, they were also great shipmates.

I was very thankful to be able to record a tribute to them in the recently published book, 'Flying Stations'.

Tom Henry

Dear Ed

In reference to the picture in the last edition of *Slipstream* concerning the Delta wing Avro being unloaded on 16 May 1956 from HMAS *Melbourne*.

On the trip home from Glasgow, Scotland, I was fire watch on the hangar-deck, the Avro was stowed on the Port side, after end of the hangar. At the time I was fascinated, as I had never seen an aircraft like it. Over the years I have often spoken of it and would also like to know about it, or what happened to it.

The reason that I don't know more about it, was because I was 'dropped off' in Melbourne to drive a shore patrol vehicle for six weeks during the Olympic Games in 1956

The cartoon picture of sailors at the Eiffel Tower was sketched when the *Melbourne* sailed to Le Havre and seven busloads of sailors travelled to Paris for the weekend.

The picture of the Wyvern and Sea Hawk are two of the four different aircraft used for flying trials off Portsmouth in 1956.

I get great pleasure out of *Slipstream* and a lot of memories.

With thanks.

Bob Jones - Tasmania



'Monsieurs, zis is Paree's main attraction!'



WYVERN



SEA HAWK



Another view of the AVRO 707 being off-loaded.

Photo courtesy Australia's Museum of Flight

Dear Ed

With reference to the photo of the Avro 707 on Pg 19 of the April *Slipstream*.

The aircraft was brought out from the UK in 1956 with, I think, a couple of other aircraft, one of them being a Meteor. They went to the British test base at Woomera.

I remember that they were loaded on in England and that they had to grease 'C' hangar deck and the after lift so that they could slide the aircraft in sideways to get it to fit. It wasn't allowed to travel as deck cargo, that was left to the Sea Venoms. [See photo above.] This aircraft was the forerunner for the design of the 'V' Bomber.

I hope this answers the query.

Ray Murrell

Dear Ed

The 'Mini Vulcan' in the recent issue of *Slipstream* (AVRO 707) was operated at Woomera SA in the late 1950's as a flying test bed for the slow-speed characteristics of the AVRO VULCAN bomber.

It went on to be flown at the RAAF's Aircraft Research and Development Unit at Laverton in the early 1960's.

Powered by a single turbo-jet of the Goblin/Derwent/Nene era (I don't recall which one) it was flown by the then Flight Lieutenant Billie Hicks-Collings a test pilot and veteran of the war in Korea, who went on to be the Deputy Chief of Staff before his retirement.

The 707 was a 'show-stopper' at several Air Displays before being sold-off to a collector at nearby Spotswood who only recently sold it to an aviation museum.

The unique Vulcan wing shape makes it a valuable collector's piece. During trials at Laverton a coating of pipe clay was applied to the wing surface and, in flight, a mist of AVTUR was sprayed from apertures in the leading edge to leave an indication of the airflow pattern in the pipe clay.

All this was well before computer designing and at the time was 'on the cutting edge of technical science'.

Sabre - ex-RAAF

The purpose of history is not only to recover the past and to inform; it is also to stimulate thought, to delight, and to entertain.

Orville Prescott

Dear Ed

I am taking this opportunity of writing to you to ask if you could help/advise me on the following information I have just received.

I have just been informed of the existence of a Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia and that you publish their quarterly journal. Furthermore, in the last edition there was an article called 'Barnacle Bill Griffon', written by a Roy Allman.

Apparently this article describes the resurrecting of a Griffon engine from the seabed, allegedly belonging to one of the two Firefly aircraft of 812 Squadron that collided in Port Phillip Bay on 20 July 1947, during the visit to Australia of HMS *Theseus*.

This is of great interest to me, as I served as an air mechanic (engines) in 812 Squadron, 14th Carrier Air Group in HMS *Theseus*, and was there at the time of the accident. Our senior pilot LTCDR N M.Earle, his observer, LT K Sellers, along with LT R Walker and his TAG, CPO W Lovatt, were all killed. I understand that Roy Allman went on to describe the complete rundown from when 812 Squadron was formed in Ireland in October 1946. It was there that I joined the squadron.

All this is very coincidental to me as I am currently trying to trace any of my shipmates who may still be around. At the time of writing I have traced three, making four of us in total to date (one is actually living in Australia). The name Allman rings a very loud bell to me and I am anxious to know if Roy is also a long lost mate of some 53 years ago.

Any help that you may be able to provide would be most appreciated, and if you could give me Roy's address, that would be super. I'd love to make contact with him.

May I thank you in great anticipation and hope to hear from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Grice

[I gave a copy of this letter to Roy Allman – they do know each other and correspondence between them has commenced. Bill Grice is currently recuperating from a bout of pneumonia, but if you know him, or served on the 14th CAG, he would be delighted to hear from you. He can be contacted as follows: 4 Newfield Close, Normanton, W. Yorks., WF6 1SJ, England. Phone: 01924 892246. E-mail: w.grice@virgin.net Ed.]

Dear Ed

I thought you might like the attached photograph for *Slipstream*.

The instructors from Helicopter Training 406 Squadron train crews every summer to land on water and take off again. The Waterbird, seen here, is a specially modified Sea King designed for this type of training. The training is an annual requirement for all Sea King pilots. (CF Photo)

Geoff Vickridge



Dear Ed

My last letter to *Slipstream* stated that the 'old gang' was getting organised for Anzac Day 2000. Well, I am enclosing a few photo's to let you know that we made it – and all agreed it was the best one yet. So much so, that we are now talking about next year and then the other one at *Albatross*. So, roll on you beaut!



Anzac Day 2000 – HMAS Sydney Association luncheon at NSW Bowlers Club - Sydney

L-R: Les 'Tug' Wilson – Leo 'Taff' Evans – Eric 'Scrubby' Bush – 'Digger' Schmidt – Ken Spragy – 'Righteous' Roy Torrens

I must say that 'Digger' Schmidt and 'Righteous' Roy Torrens were very well looked after by Legion Cab's driver, Phil Horder. They have already booked him for the next Anzac Day.

Eric 'Scrubby' Brush and I meet up a couple of times a month, this month at the Kirribilli RSL. He then heads up north for a few weeks, visit with 'Righteous' Roy and then call in to hear Max Gant's story regarding his absence from the Anzac Day reunion.



At the Olympic Stadium – Homebush

L-R: 'Tug' Wilson – 'Digger' Schmidt – Leo 'Taff' Evans – Wal Rose and 'Righteous' Roy Torrens

Photographs courtesy 'Tug' Wilson

A few weeks ago I was lucky enough to have a trip to sea in HMAS *Brisbane*, departing Garden Island at 0900 and returning at 0600 in time to step off with 'Liberty men'. This was indeed something special – 5" guns firing – Damage Control exercise – attack by F111 aircraft from Williamstown – small arms firing at towed target – complete tour of ship's boiler/engine room – man overboard drill – then 'tiddley-oggies' for lunch.

I also attended the switching on of the lights illuminating the flag on the HMAS *Sydney* (I) mast at Bradley's Head by the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard.

Regards to all from,

Leo 'Taff' Evans - (Ex-CPO 'A')
Vaucluse, NSW.

Dear Ed

Barry Lister's article on page 6 of the last edition of *Slipstream* needs some help.

The Sea Fury was bought by an American who intended it to go to the USA. He had a friend who was into War Birds in those days – he owned the Sea Otter JN-200, and to this day owns a Mig-15. This person approached Hawker de Havilland to have the said Sea Fury made serviceable. HdH's answer was NO, but my manager suggested he talk to me. He offered to pay for services rendered so I agreed.

After many months at Bankstown aerodrome, and with the help of your mate (let's call him Bill) plus some help from mates still serving at Nowra (Starter overhaul, cartridges, spark plugs etc.) she was ready to go.

It was one of the ten Furies that Fairey completely overhauled and then placed in cocoon. It was at *Nirimba* when I was Chief up there. The other aircraft went to scrap buyers.

Barry has it correct about flying it out of Bankstown one Sunday and DCA getting to hear about it. The pilot (RAN) shall remain nameless. When I arrived on the Sunday at 4.00am, the DCA had it surrounded so 'chicken' went home again.

The last I saw of it was when it was being taken to Darling Harbour to be put on a ship to the USA.

I spoke about it to our Mig owner quite a few years ago, he said that the guy killed himself in it after they got FAA certification, but I don't know when this was.

When you read this Barry, say hello to 'Bill' for me.

George Beasley

Dear Ed

I would like to clarify a couple of points that Barry Lister mentioned in the Queensland Division report in the last issue of *Slipstream*.

As the 'Department of Immigration' were not interested in my Great, Great, Grandmother's (not Great Grandmother) arrival in Western Australia, I wish to set the record straight for any 'Doubting Thomases' (not 'Honest' Ray).

Her name was Charlotte Davis and was aged two when she arrived in WA with her parents, Thomas and Catherine Davis, on the sailing ship *Parmelia* on 01 June 1829.

Really bad weather hampered the party who camped on, or near, Garden Island, before they proceeded ashore up the Swan River. Their boat was the first to arrive, and when Charlotte was lifted off, she became the first white female to set foot in Western Australia.

She is buried in the Toodyay (WA) cemetery; a stone block memorial to her in the shape of WA, is in a park in the main street of Toodyay.

In the 1950's, I seem to remember Ted Davis (ex-LAM-A) once telling me that he was related to me, but not knowing the above history at the time, it failed to register. I haven't seen Ted since he paid off, but he's a 'Sandgroper' and could be right in what he said.

As Barry said, 23:59 (one minute off midnight) was one nickname I had, there were other names I was called that had no effect, but the anti-racist brigade of today would have a field day. They were: Abbo, Blackie, Black Man, Black Fella, Black Bastard, Charcoal, Coon, Darkie, Ebony, Licorice, Mister Midnight, Sambo,

Nig and Nigger. I'm sure there were others but the memory fades.

I couldn't have been the darkest, because a couple of years ago, whilst living in Mandurah WA, the telephone rang. When I answered it, a voice

said, 'Is that you, Black Man?' I replied, 'Yes. Who's that Navy type?' The answer was, 'The blackest bloke that was ever in the Fleet Air Arm'. I immediately had a mental picture of 'Sambo' Summers and said so. 'No, it's 'Soje'. Yes, it was Kerry Sojan, so I guess you hold the Black Belt, 'Soje'.

I hope to see you all at the 'corroboree' at Bundaberg in September.

Bill Strahan

Dear Ed

Congratulations on a wonderful publication. Perhaps you might like to print this pearl of great price, I think that it could be better if I hadn't been trained not to think.

You'll be sorry! You'll be sorry! Who could ever forget those words of welcome into the Senior Service.

Who can forget the new experience of queuing up outside the sickbay at Flinders for the first touch of those delicate hands of the humanitarian minded [sic] sick berth attendants to deliver the first of many puncture wounds to our flesh.

Who can forget the excitement of the thrill of rigging our hammocks and having our work separate as soon as we put our weight in them. Do our modern counterparts have this unique experience of a hammock slide along the floor. Looking at today's liberal society, not political, I am quite sure that there would have been plenty of *phantoms* if the hammock had survived the transition to modern warfare, I still have the mattress of my hammock stuck in the roof of my shed.

It is a long time now, perhaps I should have waited for April 2001 until the fifty years had passed before writing recollections of the glorious Senior Service as it was.

However, having just joined the Association because of the 'inspection' undertaken by 'Admiral' Lawrence last year; and receiving the last issue of what appears on the surface to be a magazine that deals with subjects of things in the air and about people on the ground, I thought that I would write a short note. This is just to let all of my old shipmates know that I am still alive and can still think, even though 7 years of intensive persuasion from people more educated than this P.O.P. kept reminding me otherwise.

If any person would care to correspond on this wonderful medium of communication called E-mail [see directory] feel free, but please, no whingers as I did not regret my 7 years in the Senior Service and have encouraged people to join if they wanted to experience the only decent adventure left in this modern age.

Clive H Podd – A44974 ex- 723,850,851,808,724

Lot 11 Davies Road Boonooroo 4650 Qld



Bill Strahan and 'Kanga' Bounds visited the *Slipstream* office in June. Bill's the pale one on the left. Photo courtesy Peregrine

Dear Ed

Enclosed is a photograph of the 'Met Office troops' taken at *Albatross* in 1951.

I can remember the front row very well, from the left is PO Henry 'Nobby' Hall, who did over forty years of distinguished service and retired a LTCDR. He told me that he and 'VAT' Smith had a strange nexus in as much as that when one got a promotion, the other did likewise in the same ship. They were also sunk together on the *Canberra* off Savo Island. I always graded 'VAT' Smith as the finest officer I had contact with. If I can digress from the photo for a moment, I would like to recount an incident that could have changed his career progress.

The *Sydney* was fighting a gale in the North Sea in 1950; two sailors were servicing the Captain's launch, which was slung inboard. They decided to take an early 'stand easy'.

During their absence from their work place, a huge wave plucked the launch into the sea. Extending their break, and not knowing of the drama taking place, they were rattled to hear a pipe being made telling them to report to the Master-at-Arms office. Shaken, and under the impression that they would soon be mustering with the 'men under punishment', they fronted up. To their utter astonishment, 'VAT', who was the ship's executive officer, rushed forward and embraced them whilst thanking God they were still alive.

Now some would say that 'VAT' would still have them in front of the 'bloke', but on this occasion he just reprimanded them. If they had been swept out to sea, would an inquiry have found 'VAT' to be negligent in allowing personnel to work in such an environment? We don't know.

Back to the photo...The 'two-ringer' was an RN 'schooly', 'Dingly' Bell, who spent two years at Nowra learning Russian. I bumped into him at the official party for the commissioning of *Melbourne* in 1955; by then he was a LTCDR – I have never seen or heard of him since.

Next to him is 'Morrie' Lloyd, a rather rough 'Aussie' who would never make flag rank. He's the one who nicknamed me 'Dooley' a year before when he, 'Nobby' and myself were the MET staff onboard the *Sydney*; I believe that he is now deceased.

Chief Petty Officer Croft, at the end of the row, was the man that trained myself and others to be MET observers. He was a typical 'old salt', although I spent a couple of years with him, I confess that I never got to know him very well. It may have been due to the rank gap.

I am in the second row left; the only other three that I can remember are 'Percy Percival, who is fourth from the left in the second row, Bernie Brennan on the right, and on the right in the back is George Barron. I recognise the faces of all the others but can't put a name to them, 'Nobby' Hall probably could.

I believe that 'Percy' Percival died from a heart attack. Bernie now lives on the Sunshine Coast and last heard of was doing well. George has disappeared; he became a Sea Fury pilot but was



grounded and discharged due to Asthma. During initial training George would be seen using a ventilator but we thought little of it. We had the notion that asthma risks were all part of 'dare-devil' flying. Finally, the tall guy at the back could be Sam Tuck.

How we all managed to keep ourselves occupied ('Dingly' Bell excluded) is a mystery. Not long after this photograph was taken, George and I went off to do aircrew training, Bernie soon followed. Bernie had already done pilot training but managed to convince his instructors that he was accident-prone. His last act at Point Cook was to position his Wirraway, whilst landing, through some tall pine trees and come to rest on the street next to the RAAF College – minus the wings! It was Observer's wings for him.

Now that I am seventy, how I wish we could have frozen time to further explore those unworried days. However, that isn't possible but at least we do have some good memories. On that particular day when the photograph was taken, the sun was shining and the Fleet Air Arm was to reign for a thousand years.

Barry 'Dooley' Lord

Dear Ed

Many thanks for giving us a mention in the last edition of *Slipstream* and sending us the relevant copy. If we do get any visitors from your association we will look after them, no worries, and see that they get a discount.

I noticed in the magazine that your museum has acquired Dragonfly WG 725. We were at Flambards only a few weeks ago and I did think that a few of the aircraft looked as if they needed a coat of paint, but a holiday in Australia is pushing it a bit far. I'm a big fan of naval museums and my wife and I have been pushing the maritime museum here in Plymouth.

All best wishes,

Zola Budd – Haddington House Apartments, 22 Pearn Gardens, Plymouth, PL3 5JG, UK. Phone: 0044 (0) 1752 767730

It doesn't matter who says it first, it's who gets the credit for it last that counts.

Dear Ed

Your readers may be interested to know that the newly acquired Dragonfly WG725, and the already installed Sycamore XA219 are coming together again in our Museum after a 43 year separation.

The Dragonfly arrived at RNAS Gosport on 25 November 1952, some 43 days before the Bristol Aeroplane Company delivered the first three Sycamores, XA219, XA 220 and XA 221 to the RAN at Gosport on 07 January 1953. The Dragonfly departed Gosport on 11 January 1953, while the Sycamores departed five days later to join HMAS *Vengeance* for onward passage to Australia.

I converted to helicopters on Dragonflies at the Westland Aeroplane Company, Yeovil, and after a check out in an early mark civilian registered Sycamore, I was the first naval pilot to fly a RAN helicopter. The flight took place in XA219 (the first Sycamore to be purchased by an armed service) at RAF Boscombe Down, while I was sitting in on the Service Acceptance Trials of the type.

In my opinion, and to the best of my knowledge all pilots who flew both types, the Sycamore was by far the superior type. The reason I say this is because, when the Sycamore was correctly rigged and the pilot's manual trims were used correctly to relieve the cyclic stick pressure, it became quite stable and comparatively easy to fly.

On the other hand, the Dragonfly was very unstable and had only a 12RPM motor range in powered flight. I fully agree with Albert Riley, that without the sophisticated control interconnections that all corrections had to be anticipated, and input by the pilot.

Albert also referred to pilots having difficulty with the throttle twist-grips fitted to helicopters, and I could not agree more. The first time I rode a motor bike I twisted the twist-grip towards myself as for closing the throttle in a fixed wing aircraft – wrong – when I went on to helicopters after several thousands of miles on a motor bike I twisted the twist-grip towards myself to open the throttle – wrong again. Why do they make life so difficult?

The photograph on page 12 of the January edition was not a photograph of an anonymous Army pilot's accident, as a member of the Board of Inquiry I can pin-point his accident to when I was XO of *Harman*, mid 1959 – 1961.

The cause of the accident was that the pilot tried to turn the helicopter out of wind by taxiing it. The helicopter didn't want to turn, so the pilot kept applying more and more power (collective pitch) with cyclic pitch fully forward, until the helicopter suddenly lifted off tail first, and with the nose wheel firmly on the ground, the rotor blades struck the hard standing.

I seem to remember that there was still shrapnel damage in the western bulkhead of 'H' hangar as a result of this accident, when I left 723 Squadron for the third and final time in December 1969 (twice as CO).

Gordon McPhee



The absolute deadline for the next edition of *Slipstream* is **18 September**
NO reminders will be sent. Ed.

Dear Ed

Thank you for sending me the spare copy of the April 1997 edition of *Slipstream*. As you know, that edition contained an article about Guido Zuccoli, a civilian pilot who owned and flew a Sea Fury for quite some time. I wanted the copy to present to Guido's widow, Lynette, as a tribute to her husband.



I met them both at different times in the past and it was very enjoyable to chat with them about various aircraft.

Lynette still runs the hangar, on her own, which is full of all types of aircraft. She is very knowledgeable about all of them.

Since his death, no one has flown his beloved Sea Fury, it has been inhibited and placed in the hangar on display. It looks in A1 condition and is polished up beautifully.

Lynette is a lovely person and very interesting to talk to, she loves people to see this particular aircraft. So, if anyone is in Toowoomba, go to the airport and drive around until you see a hangar marked AEROTEC, which has a small painting of a Sea Fury with wings folded on the outer wall. Drop in and say, 'Giddy'.

Noel Fischer

PO Box 883, WOODRIDGE, QLD 4114 – Phone: (07) 38070807

Dear Ed

I observe that the greater portion of material submitted for publication in *Slipstream* refers to pre-1960's.

Of all the characters and events post-1960, little is mentioned. I assume that it is merely a result of no contributions from younger members. I am a member of the Victorian FAAA and pre-1960 members dominate it. I suppose the reason being that they are all retired and little else to do with their time.

I enjoy immensely the *Slipstream* publication, and thank all those who help make the circulation possible.

Fond regards,

'Jock' Hetherington

[Dear 'Jock', your first assumption is quite correct. Your reasoning in the second part could be wrong, because most retired people I speak to are so busy they can't remember how they found time to go to work. However, you have a valid point, so...all you 'young' blokes - 'get your finger out'. If any reader has suggestions for anything specific, please send in your ideas. Ed.]

Dear Ed

Information on RAN Sea Furies TF 925 – VW 232 and VX 730

With the help of 'Windy' Geale and John Bennett, I think I have finally pieced together the histories of the above mentioned aircraft. The stories are most interesting and I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to the above mentioned for their assistance in tracking down the information.

TF 925

This aircraft was a Sea Fury 10 issued to 805 Squadron for the work up of the 20th Carrier Air Group (CAG). Tony Robinson's logbook confirms that the aircraft was in the squadron in October/November 1948. The squadron diary records that on 02 February 1949, flown by LT Peter Seed (now deceased), the aircraft did a wheels up landing at RNAS Eglinton and was extensively damaged. The aircraft was repaired at some stage and was given/sold (?) to the RAN. It was conveyed to Australia in 1949 in HMAS *Sydney*, and on 07 November 1949, it was reduced to 'Stores and Produce' category. Maintenance sailors at Nowra recall TF925 being used as a training aid.

VW 232

This aircraft was also allocated to 805 Squadron for the work up of the 20th CAG 1948/49. Tony Robinson flew it in January 1949. On 24 February 1949, the aircraft was being flown by the squadron senior pilot, LCDR 'Jock' Cunningham. The sortie was strafing on a smoke float on the Moray Forth. He had just completed his dive when his aircraft was struck by four shells fired by his No.2, LT John Robathan. The damage was extensive and he was forced to make an emergency landing at RNAS Lossiemouth. I have been able to track down 'Jock' Cunningham in England his memory of the incident is very clear. He consulted with John Robathan before replying to my letter (they are still on speaking terms!) So VW 232 did suffer damage from gunfire, all on the starboard side; tailplane, rear spar, undercarriage fairing and two holes in one propeller. The aircraft was written off, but it may have been repaired before being transferred to the RAN as a training aid. There is no record of the aircraft ever flying again after the incident in February 1949.

VX 730

This aircraft was part of the consignment of aircraft transported to Australia in 1950 when the 21st CAG returned. It was off-loaded in Jervis Bay on 07 December 1950 and road transported to *Albatross*. It was on the strength of 805 Squadron in 1951 with the side number 109 (knowing the side number may help to research more details of its wartime career as pilots used the side numbers in their logbooks instead of serial numbers).

The aircraft had an interesting career in the RAN. On 10 September 1951, the aircraft suffered some damage when landing aboard HMAS *Sydney*. The approach was too fast, the aircraft flared and bounced and entered Number 2 and 3 barriers. The pilot was SBLT R Sinclair. In November 1951, the aircraft returned from a sortie in Korea with a bullet hole in the starboard tailplane. The pilot on this occasion was SBLT R Coleman. Both Sinclair and Coleman lost their lives in the Korean conflict.

On 17 December 1951, the aircraft once again sustained

damage by enemy gunfire. On this occasion it was being flown by CMDR M Fell RN, the *Sydney* Air Group Commander (later to become Vice Admiral Sir Michael Fell KCB, DSO, DFC* RN). The damage this time was to the starboard undercarriage and starboard mainspar; because the damage could not be repaired onboard the ship, the aircraft was off-loaded at Iwakuni for repairs. It was later re-embarked aboard *Sydney* for the return journey to Australia when the carrier left Korean waters. It was lightered ashore in Sydney and transported to Bankstown for engine change and radio modifications.

On October 1952, the aircraft rejoined 805 Squadron and embarked in HMAS *Sydney* in January 1953. It was transferred to 850 Squadron in April 1953, and in July and August it was embarked in HMAS *Vengeance*. On 24 August 1953, the aircraft was transferred to 808 Squadron and once again embarked in *Vengeance*.

VX 730 suffered its second barrier engagement on 27 October 1953, when LCDR Lavender RN flared out too late and landed in the barrier. It was once again off-loaded by lighter and transported to Bankstown for repairs. The aircraft returned to Nowra in 1955 and rejoined 805 Squadron on 25 November 1955. On 18 June 1957, SBLT J Davidson made a forced landing on the beach at Currarong after engine failure.

This appears to have been the end VX 730's flying career. It was sold, complete with engine serial number 22810, to the Department of Education, NSW, on 09 March 1959 and stored at the Sydney Technical college for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. It was later reported to be at the Camden Museum of Aviation. Around 1985 it is reported that the aircraft passed to the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and confirmation of this would be appreciated.

In 1987 the aircraft was transported to NAS Nowra where the RAN Historical Flight was meant to carry out restoration. A photograph of the airframe on the transport clearly shows on the starboard side the serial number VW 232 in fading letters/numbers, above this, in newer paint, VX 730 [see inset]. It would be interesting to see if the NSW Department of Education or the Camden Aviation Museum have any photographs of the aircraft alleged to be VX 730, taken during the time it was in their care.



You are aware of the story concerning an incident at NAS Nowra when it appears that numbers were switched and VW 232 became VX 730. This story has been confirmed by another senior sailor who was present at the time, but no one can say for sure what aircraft were involved. However, evidence does seem to suggest that some sort of switch occurred.

[The 'switch' referred to, allegedly occurred when a scrap

dealer commenced reducing the wrong aircraft to 'bite size' chunks. Ed]

I am not sure how the AWM acquired VX 730 or when the aircraft finally arrived at the AWM, however you will have all that data.

Although the above is not the complete story of the aircraft, most of the fascinating details are there. It has certainly had a most interesting life and deserves to be enshrined in the AWM. I will continue to delve into the subject, as I am sure more aircrew will find in their logbooks under side numbers 109 in Korea, and 100 later in life on 805 Squadron.

In conclusion, I must congratulate John Kemister and his team on the excellent job they have done in restoring the Sea Fury to all its former glory. It will be a most valuable addition to the AWM aircraft collection.

'Toz' Dadswell

[Members of the NSW Division have suggested that a bus trip should be arranged to visit the AWM and view the Aircraft Hall. I have been in touch with 'Toz' regarding an opportune time, he suggests that we wait until **after** the 'official' opening. He has kindly offered to make the necessary arrangements and conduct the tour when the NSW members get themselves organised. Ed]

Dear Ed

RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam – ANZAC DAY – Sydney 2000

The muster in Castereagh Street was at 8 bells and true to form, the vet's of the RANHFV turned up one by one until a total of forty turned up. Some looked like they'd had a hard life, some didn't look a day older, some had lost weight, and some had shortened to suit. It was great to see that so many had the energy to make it to the mini-reunion of the RANHFV.

Jim Hill, from Nowra, made sure that the banner was in good condition and that it was displayed in good time, especially since this was the first time that the RANHFV had marched in Sydney on Anzac Day. CDRE David Farthing DSC RAN (Rtd) led the march, and the CO of HMAS *Penguin*, CMDR Ted Wynberg, David Bengé (organiser), Jim Hill and John Waskiw took charge of the banner.

The crowds throughout the streets of Sydney were colossal, it was almost a repeat of the Welcome Home Parade. The march was taken in good stride and it was suggested by some stalwart that we were marching so well that we should continue into Paddington and find a hotel for some liquid refreshment; fortunately the idea was dismissed.

The Flight broke off and landed in the Hilton's Marble Bar for 'heart starters', before we lodged ourselves in the NSW Leagues Club for luncheon, where the bombs, bullets and 'bulldust' were exchanged. Some abstained from this group and vanished into another watering hole, the Edinburgh Castle, never to be seen again.

It was good to see Andy Perry, who had made the epic journey down from Townsville. I believe that Bernie Fisher's plane decided that it wasn't going any further south than Queensland. Eric Wile, 'master of the *English* language', with whom I had the pleasure of flying with on many occasions, was as good as his reputation for entertainment with his quick wit and the odd brown

ale. There were many others who had travelled from afar. The memory of those who were killed and those who died after the Vietnam conflict were remembered.

Some of the others who attended were Peter Jones, John Peart, Colin Blond, JJ Martin, Cory and Terry Brooks (Darwin), Keith and Matt Wardle, Terry Fenwick, Colonel (S.Army) Barry Grainger, John Clarke, Bill Barlow, Ray Howell, Kevin Camm, Hilary M Turner (ex-135th US Army EMU and of late the Australian Army), Stafford Lowe, Allan Davidson, Kevin Brennan, Mick Perrott, Len Connell, Pat Arthur (I apologise for those that I haven't mentioned, but some had trains to catch before I caught up with them).

Even though the day was short, it was a good one; the RANHFV spirit arose, even after thirty years. It's a pity that the *Albatross* 50th Anniversary celebrations didn't include a mini-reunion for the Flight.

Lest We Forget

David Bengé

Dear Ed

During the recent gathering of veterans for the Korean War Memorial dedication in Canberra, two members, Maurie Tiffen (ACT) and Lou Burns (WA), met up again for the first time in forty-nine years.

The enclosed photograph, titled 'Better Late than Never', was taken when 'Tiff' (R) was given the opportunity to return a book to Lou that he had borrowed from him during Typhoon Ruth. The name of the book - 'The Cruel Sea'.

Canberra Scribe



Dear Ed

14th Carrier Air Group Reunion Association

I have been fortunate enough to receive a copy of the January issue of *Slipstream*. I have read it with great interest, especially the article, 'Barnacle Bill Griffon' by Roy Allman, which in itself is part of the history of the 14th Carrier Air Group. I would like permission to archive the material that I have relating to the group and which is always on display at our reunions.

Originally, the Association, which was formed in 1996, was intended for all that served with, or was associated with the 14th CAG from January 1948 to May 1952 when it was disbanded. Over the last twelve months contacts have been made with

people who were part of the CAG with the same two squadrons, 804 and 812, during the period 1946-47, these people are now Associate Members of the association. Hopefully three of them will be at our next reunion in October.

I have been a long time in trying to find a way of finding people in Australia who served with 804 and 812 Squadrons during the period stated, in HM Ships *Glory* and *Ocean*, and now the earlier period in *Theseus*. I have been lucky in finding one or two, but feel sure that there could be several more out there who cannot be found in the UK; especially some who had a taste of Australia when HMS *Glory* visited Sydney and the Air Group went to Nowra for R&R from Korea in 1951. It is possible that some of them may even be members of your association. Ours is an 'all ranks' association, all who make contact immediately become members as one of the aims of the association is to find and maintain contact with all who were associated with the 14th CAG. This includes families of former members who are no longer with us.

We are a very friendly association, tending to focus more on the social side, and to this effect have at least one reunion each year, with wives of course. We also have widows and immediate family of some of those who have crossed the bar since those long-off days.

On another subject going back to my own service days, whilst serving on 762 Squadron at RNAS Cudroze (HMS *Seahawk*) in 1948-49, we had three or four of what I believe were the first Australian Air Mechanics who were over here training and gaining squadron experience. Should they be around I would like to hear from them. Sadly, although I have squadron photographs, I do not have any names and I am unable to recall everyone.

I also have in my collection of neckties (another hobby of mine) one which is navy blue, at the bottom are two light blue diagonal lines in between which are the numbers 805 in white with a gold anchor through the middle of the zero. Although the tie was made in England, I wonder if it has any connection with 805 Squadron that became a Royal Australian Air Squadron on 28 August 1948 when it reformed at Eglinton with Sea Fury FB11s, prior to joining HMAS *Sydney*.

Yours aye.

Ken Lambert -ex-LPM - 812 Squadron

[Ken can be contacted directly at: 17 Walgrove, Orton Malborne, Peterborough PE2 5NR, England. Phone: 01733 234655. Ed]

[I've had this little piece of useless information sitting in my computer for a long time - it seems like a good time to use it. Ed]

WHICH WAY ARE YOUR STRIPES RUNNING?

Why, do the stripes on ties go one way in America and the opposite way in Europe?

Heraldry offers the answer. It was customary for the sons of a Lord to have their father's device on one half of a flag, coverlet or shield, with their personal device on the other half, the two divided by a diagonal line.

If the son was legitimate, that line ran from the bottom left to the top right. If the son was a bastard, and acknowledged by the father, his line ran from bottom right to top left. Aware of this, European manufacturers made their ties accordingly.

Unaware of it, Americans put their stripes the other way.

Dear Ed

Greetings from the tropics. I have found another photo for the archives. It was taken at *Nirimba* in 1954 where we completed our NAM(E) course. There should be some of *Slipstream's* readers who remember him. *John Ahern*



Gil Nixon HMAS Nirimba 1954

WELFARE UPDATE

by *Sabre*

In conjunction with

The Regular Defence Force Welfare Association

The final outcome of the Far East Strategic Reserve Entitlement Inquiry seems to be a long way off. Argument still rages between the 'bean counters' but don't be disheartened; the matter won't easily be swept under the carpet.

Once again I urge everyone to consider their eligibility for compensation or treatment for defence caused or aggravated illness or injury. As time passes long dormant disabilities are emerging. The two that become evident 'further down the track' seem to be hearing loss and post traumatic stress disorders (physical and emotional).

In a recent case an ex-PO cook with a chronic knee problem was able to establish from his medical and service records a long-forgotten incident that resulted in his patella and soft tissue suffering a severe trauma which hospitalised him with chronic pain. The terminology's used in his medical records are the same as those detailed in the Statement of Principles used to determine eligibility. The claim was accepted.

In another case a refusal by the Department of Veterans Affairs was overturned by the Veterans Review Board, at appeal, on the grounds that a 'trauma' recorded in the veteran's medical record was misinterpreted and implications overlooked.

Contact the '*Slipstream*' Editor if you have a problem. An authorised Pension Officer will put you on the right track.

DEFENCE PERSONNEL ARE THE LOSERS ON GST

Retired Defence personnel will have to wait a full 12 months for their superannuation benefits to be adjusted for the inflation effects of the GST.

Military superannuation benefits are adjusted each July based on the previous March to March CPI rise. Benefits will not be increased for the inflation effects of the GST until July 2001. Defence widows under the DFRDB scheme will be further disadvantaged as they do not get the full CPI increase.

KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL DEDICATED IN CANBERRA

Article and photographs courtesy Norman Lee

The Australian Korean War Memorial has at last taken its place alongside the other memorials on Anzac Parade, some fifty years after Australian forces were first committed in support of the United Nations. Anzac Parade symbolically links the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with Parliament House and has seen the steady growth of memorials over the last decade. The most recent has been to the Nursing Service, with perhaps the most publicised, the Vietnam Memorial.

Activities to mark the dedication of the Korean War Memorial included an ecumenical service held in front of the War Memorial on the day before the dedication ceremony, and a reception in the Great Hall of Parliament House that evening. The latter was a little crowded with so many attending.

The dedication, which took place on Tuesday 18 April, was preceded by a march past of veterans in the presence of a large crowd on a brilliant Canberra autumn morning, and was attended by the Governor General, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries. A large contingent of South Korean veterans was flown to Australia courtesy of KAL especially to attend the ceremony.

Some fifty members of the two HMAS Sydney Air Groups, which took part in the Korean War, marched behind the FAA banner provided by the ACT Division of the Fleet Air Arm Association. Both air and ground crew members came from all around the country with one member, Colin Champ, who flew Fireflies on the first deployment, coming all the way from the UK. Space does not permit the listing of all those who attended.

Unfortunately many members couldn't make the trip due to time catching up with them, which is perhaps understandable, as the youngest wouldn't be much under seventy! Naturally many have passed on. It should also be remembered that many of the air and ground crew were RN personnel on loan.

The memorial is of a design, which is reminiscent of the 1950's and consists of a central walkway leading to an oval-shaped, semi-enclosed Contemplative Space, comprising panels of stainless steel inscribed with images and messages to give an understanding of the war. A boulder from a Korean battlefield serves as a ceremonial focal point.

Stainless steel poles, one for each of the 339 Australians who died in the war, are mounted in front of the Contemplative Space together with three figures representing members of the three services. The FAA can claim three poles in memory of LT Keith Clarkson, SBLT Ron Coleman and SBLT Dick Sinclair who lost their lives during the conflict.

Following the march past and dedication, the FAA vets and their relatives and friends repaired to the Canberra Services Club in Manuka for a buffet lunch, which was voted a great success. All agreed that the effort to attend the dedication activities was worth the cost of travel and accommodation, particularly for those who met old friends they hadn't seen in almost fifty years.



1950

1953

THIS OBELISK IS
IN MEMORY OF THE MEN FROM AUSTRALIA
WHO FELL IN THE KOREAN WAR
AND HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVE
THEY DIED WITH MEN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES
FIGHTING TO UPHOLD THE IDEALS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

A human being is the best computer available to place in a spacecraft. It is also the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labour. *Werner von Braun*

Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam Report on the Charlotte NC Reunion

June 1998 in Dallas Texas USA some 135th Vets and a few RANHFV members had a small gathering. It was decided to have another reunion in Charlotte NC in June 2000 in coordination with the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Mans Association (VHCMA). It was duly done.

The Australian side of things was coordinated by David Bengé, and after many phone calls and E-mails the word had passed around the world. Bearing in mind though, that the RANHFV /EMU's has no official association as such, just a lot of great memories and fraternity amongst old warriors.

June 21st 2000 was the assembly date at the Marriott Executive Park Hotel Charlotte NC. The Marriott Park Executive Hotel situated 8 miles south of Charlotte NC was the 'arena' for the VHCMA's reunion. There were over 500 members in attendance, but the 135th AHC 'EMU's and TAIPANS' were the best represented Aviation Company there and, of course, the most well behaved and subdued for the first few hours. There were a total of 51 EMU's in a roll call. Considering all the facts, that was a great effort, out of that 11 were Australians.

In the sobering early hours of Thursday morning there was a EMU's meeting of all and sundry, many in some bad state of repair and lapse of memory. Confusion reigned supreme, I would say, as most of the beers were free, and many of the spirits. The meeting was low key but hilarious, with interjection by humorists like Captain Don Millar. The meeting at the 'Zoo' was steered by Tom Staddt and David Bengé, the minutes were then taken that in the event that another 135th AHC RANHFV reunion was to be held then Australia was to be nominated as the primary site. The minutes were then misplaced but the motion was accepted unanimously that the next RANHFV /135th EMU and TAIPAN reunion would be held in Nowra Australia on ANZAC DAY 2002. That date was deemed to be the most appropriate. Nowra was also selected because of it's RAN FAA Museum locality, cost effectiveness and local hospitality. Also naturally because of the abundant RANHFV Vet's available to lend a helping hand.

A suitable sober committee was elected, Tom Staddt, David Bengé and David Hardy being elected to organise committee's from both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Office bearers will soon be eagerly sought from Australia to form a steering committee to organise the event. This should be a rewarding job, it takes a little effort but a lot of dedication and direction to achieve success.

It was also noted the David Bengé will basically stand down after the steering committee has been put into action.

Friday night was the EMU's and Taipans banquet date. 62 people attended, there were many apologies. Dick Marum and David Farthing in particular from Australia. The banquet was a great success with volumes of stand-up comics, their reception was the cause of many sore jaws the following day. There were stories of such magnitude that it was a wonder that the lot of us were not seen as 'Mercenaries of Fortune'.

John Leak, the senior RAN officer present took the floor and read out a congratulatory letter from the Chief of the RAN, Vice Admiral, DJ Shackleton AO. Also on the same note, a letter from Commodore David Farthing RAN (Ret) was also read out, both were well received.

Tom Staddt and David Bengé managed to hold a great raffle which resulted in US\$ 600.00 being raised towards a fund for Andy Perry's tickets and costs. There were some great prizes, plus some booby prizes. One prize, a bottle of RANHFV 1985 Port was donated, only to be broken at journey's end in Miami.

Saturday night was even better in some respects as there was over 500 in attendance. The meal was buffett style and excellent. During the banquet a fine demonstration of local Aboriginal EMU and Kangaroo dancing was expertly done by two ex-Wardroom types, John Leak and Clive Mayo, who understood the fine art of foreign diplomacy. Clive Mayo, one of these fine naval aviators, had done his time on the 'Moresby Flight' in the north west of WA in the mid 70's, therefore his expertise in this matter was certainly unquestioned.

The accolades were then showered upon this pair. The crowded room of Americans were astounded with the accuracy of this fine demonstration. It must have been a part of the 'knife, fork and potty training' course at the college of knowledge.

Carrier Type Deck Landings were forbidden as a sober batman was not to be found in attendance anywhere within the confines of the establishment. OJT was also considered. The fixed wing pilots continuation course was held over to the next RANHFV meeting in Nowra, or at a more suitable establishment where the rules could be more relaxed.

On a more serious note, Clive Mayo supplied some truly Australian music, the ballad 'I was only nineteen' was played over the PA system. The result being that there was not a dry eye in the room, the song by Red Gum, brought the whole place to a standstill. It was a very moving statement of all who went to Vietnam regardless of rank or race.

A Viet Cong flag was then auctioned for the Andy Perry Appeal. The result was US\$1,000.00. Not too bad for the 'Big Fella', 'The Big Bird', 'The Big Emu' or more like a 'big cuddly Koala'.

CSM Charlie Rains, the director of the whole show was congratulated in true Aussie style. The night went on until the wee hours, in fact the sun was up and shining in many rooms before the bullets had stopped firing. Talk of old times and to speak of old friends was the moment of truth. Despite many bombs, bullets, and tears, the reunion was a great success and will be a hard act to follow - despite the high humidity and 100 degree plus temperature which was reminiscent of those days thirty years ago. In the tradition of the 135th AHC EMU & TAIPAN's motto to 'Get The Bloody Job Done', it was certainly done with style and elegance.

The Australian contingent from the RANHFV was well represented by the following: Dick Marum, John Leak*, Clive Mayo*, Eric Wile, Andy Perry, David Bengé, Andy Curran, Dave Green, Allan Winchcome*, David Hardy* and Jim Shaw. The asterisks indicate that they were accompanied with their wives.

All Aussies left Charlotte with many fond memories and sore heads. Exhaustion was a small problem. The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association then had their Annual Reunion in Washington DC from the 1st till the 4th of July.

Andy Curran, from Fremantle, had some gold EMU's pins minted, which were in great demand from all the Americans. Well done, Andy, you saved the day.

Our final departure on Sunday was at Charlotte International Airport where David Bengé and Mike Guard said teary farewells to John Chea and Lloyd Ankrun, both whom we had not seen for over thirty years.

There were three former CO's of the 135th AHC present, Colonel Walter D Alexander, Colonel Fred C Dunaway, Colonel Harry T Woodmansee II.

The one 'Ace' which we had was Colonel John De Witt USMC, an ex-Taipan doorgunner, turned pilot, unfortunately John had a pressing engagement in Japan and offered his apologies for his absence. I believe he will be at Nowra in 2002.

I would like to say to those who couldn't attend the reunion, that apologies for you were presented and well received. I know that many of you couldn't be there for various reasons, your thoughts were present.

[For further information contact: David Bengé, 3 Rowan Crescent, Merewether 2291, NSW, Australia - Phone: 61 (02) 4963 4053
E-mail - dtbenge@aljan.com.au Ed]

ONLY IN AMERICA!



During a military exercise a few years ago, two US Air Force 'jocks' were flying in a tandem-seater on a cross-country transit. After a while the guy in the back seat started to get bored.

He went 'cold mike' and twiddled with cockpit dials and knobs, he then played with the screens but was still bored. He looks down at his life jacket and starts to take it apart, looking at the whistle, the emergency codes and the sea dye.

This still didn't excite him so he looks down between his legs and sees a dayglow toggle. After this much boredom he seems to forget that it's the inflation toggle for his life raft.

To cut a long story short, he gently pulls on the toggle, but it was enough to inflate the dinghy. Now that IS exciting!

It starts to inflate and make him quite uncomfortable in his straps, but because the straps only cut across his hips, his legs start to get pushed up in quite an unnatural and unflattering position. He panics and reaches for his survival knife. He blindly stabs around the cramped cockpit, finally puncturing the raft.

The front seat pilot, semi dazed by the relentless boredom of the long transit, hears this loud explosion from behind and then immediately sees a wall of talcum powder dispersing throughout the cockpit. Fearing a catastrophic but smokey engine failure, and being over the barren southwest, the pilot calls, 'EJECT! - EJECT!'

The rear-seater sees his buddy catapult skyward and fears that with his preoccupation within his own cockpit he hasn't heard the full story. He thinks that if the captain 'bangs-out', we must be in some serious trouble! He also ejects, leaving the once serviceable aircraft to sustain unbalanced flight for a while before crashing into the wastelands.

Needless to say, both pilots had a nice two-year ground posting to plan some in-flight entertainment for their next posting - long haul C-130 ops.

THE MECHANIC

by Frank Halliwell - Jimboomba

Sam was a gynaecologist,
But he'd done his last swab,
For after ten long years, he had
Grown weary of the job.

So he took down his diploma,
And the shingle off the door,
To seek a new horizon for
His talents to explore.

Now trees and shrubs were not his style
He'd shun those jobs botanic,
But wheels and gears might be the thing
...He'd be a car mechanic!

So off he went to take a course
To learn how someone solves
Why cylinders go up and down.
While gears and wheels revolve.

He graduated at the top,
The hero of his class,
His marks were of the highest
Any student had amassed!

Tomorrow was the 'practical',
The very final test,
And each and every student
Would be straining for his best.

An automotive engine was
Spread out along the floor
And he had but a single hour
To make that engine roar!

Sam was the last to take the test,
The head judge waved okay...
A wrench was slapped into his hand...
The test was underway.

His fingers moved at blinding speed,
His moves precise and neat,
And long before the closing bell
The engine was complete.

He nodded it was ready and
A judge switched on the key.
The engine roared without a miss
...Sam was the top trainee!

He was awarded record points
The reasons obvious!
When asked about those record points
The coach explained it thus:

"I've never seen a job so slick,
Without one washer lost,
...Or seen an engine rebuilding
Performed through the exhaust..!"



FLEET AIR ARM NEW ARRANGEMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

On 13 March 2000, following a Chief of Navy directed management review, Navy underwent the most fundamental change in management philosophy and structure in recent history. Seven Force Element Groups (FEGs) were established to provide output focussed, whole-of-capability, whole-of-life management of the Naval Force. As fundamental and sweeping as this change was for some in Navy, the FEG management philosophy was a natural progression of the system established by the Fleet Air Arm in 1995, with the creation of Commander Australian Naval Aviation.

What is a FEG?

The Force Element Groups, as the name suggests, are a natural grouping of like capabilities for management purposes. The FEGs are: Surface Combatants, Aviation, Submarines, Mine Warfare & Clearance Diving, Amphibious & Afloat Support, Patrol Boats and Hydrography. Concurrently, the Australian Naval Systems Command was established to provide coordination of issues which cross FEG boundaries. A Commodore or Captain heads each FEG. The FEG Commanders do not have Command or Control of Force Elements, rather they provide management of the Group to achieve capability output goals. Their role is broadly equivalent to that of the US Navy *Type Commanders*. They provide an agreed level of capability to the Operational Commander (Maritime Commander Australia).

Management, Isn't that a business term?

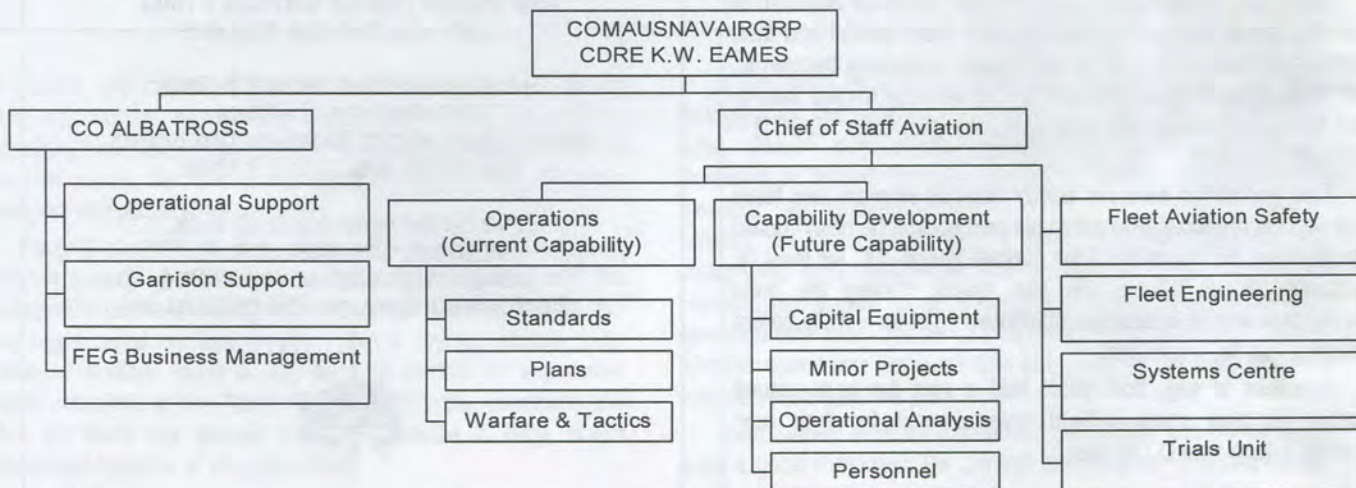
If a sufficient number of management layers are superimposed on top of each other, it can be assured that disaster is not left to chance.
Norman Augustin- Chairman Martin Marietta

Conversely, if insufficient management focus is applied, then disaster must surely follow. There are many aspects to the provision of a capability, such as personnel and training, equipment procurement, logistics support and eventually equipment disposal. The management of these functions is spread, in the case of Naval Aviation, across Navy, Air Force and Joint organisations. This has lead, on occasion, to a lack of coordination in the introduction and through life management of a capability. The FEGs provide a focal point for coordination all these aspects with respect to a given capability, thereby ensuring the delivery of capability as and when required. The FEG Commanders are *Responsible* and *Accountable* for the provision of this capability.

Commander Australian Naval Aviation Group (COMAUSNAVAIRGRP)

The Air Group (or Aviation FEG) consists of all aircraft (including the Kalkara target system), NAS NOWRA, Fleet Aviation Engineering Unit, the Air Warfare Systems Centre and the Aircraft Maintenance and Flight Trials Unit. COMAUSNAVAIRGRP is appointed by Chief of Navy and is responsible and accountable to Deputy Chief of Navy for managing the capability aspects of Naval Aviation and to Maritime Commander for the management of operational output delivery. As the 'whole-of-capability' manager, COMAUSNAVAIRGRP is responsible for coordinating provision of aircraft and systems, their logistic support, and appropriately trained flight and maintenance crews, as well as development and oversight operational and tactical doctrine, policies and procedures. As the 'whole-of-life' (also known as 'cradle-to-grave') manager, COMAUSNAVAIRGRP has a key part in future capability development including setting aviation research task requirements, manages introduction of new capabilities, and advises on retention of current capabilities and when those capabilities are no longer viable. Logistic support is provided by the Naval Aircraft Logistics Management Squadron (NALMS) – in former lives the SAMR and NALO organisations- which is a unit of Support Command (Air Force). NALMS' business is integrated with the Aviation FEG outputs; the unit is due to be fully relocated to NAS Nowra by December 2000.

COMAUSNAVAIRGRP Structure



There must be a Plan for all this.

Indeed there is a Plan. The Aviation FEG Master Plan has been in development for the past year and is to be issued in July 2000. Based on the RAAF Weapon System Master Plan, adapted for 'whole-of-capability' management rather than a single platform, the Master Plan provides a blue print for the management of the Aviation capability. The Plan allows all members of the FEG and enabling groups such as the training, logistics and acquisitions organisations to be informed of the capability output required and how the Aviation FEG will meet the commitment. The enabling groups will use the Master Plan in formulating their plans to ensure an appropriate level of support.

Aviation at the Fore

Since 1995, many of the tasks and innovations 'introduced' with the new organisation, have evolved under the auspices of Commander Australian Naval Aviation. Indeed in establishing the Force Element Group structure, Chief of Navy acknowledged the work done within the Naval Aviation community in the move toward Force Element management. Forward thinking within CANA which saw the merit of the Master Planning process and initiation of an Aviation Master Plan many months ago, has led to the Aviation FEG Master Plan maturing in short order and being used, in part, as a model for other Force Element Group Master Plans.

More Bombs on Target or Survivors Rescued?

At the end of the day, the job of the modern Fleet Air Arm is as it has always been – getting 'bombs on target' in support of the Fleet. Will the establishment of COMAUSNAVAIRGRP get more bombs on target? In the mid to long term, definitely. In the near term it will enable us to get to measure what we can do, articulate the difference between capabilities required and capabilities achieved and do our current business better. It will enable us to argue our case strongly, knowing what our business costs and what are the real options. The FEG structure, with a 1 Star COMAUSNAVAIRGRP in particular, provides the mechanism for effective and efficient management of Naval Aviation and the provision of aviation capability to the Fleet. Naval Aviation has a better structure now that it has had for a long time – and that has got to be good.

R

Commodore Keith William Eames CSC RAN



Keith Eames is a Seaman Officer who sub-specialised as a helicopter pilot. His naval career began in 1966 at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. After world-wide service and Seaman Officer qualifications he undertook flying training in 1971. He then served in aircraft carriers and support ships flying Anti-Submarine Warfare Sea King helicopters. In 1975 he converted to the Wasp helicopter and became Flight Commander, later returning to Sea King flying.

Lieutenant Eames joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1979 and took up flying duties at RAN Air Station, Nowra and embarked in the carrier HMAS *Melbourne*. In the rank of Lieutenant he completed the RAN Staff Course in 1980 and was awarded the Griffiths Prize as Dux of the Course. With subsequent postings and promotion he became Commanding Officer HS 817 Squadron in 1984. Promoted to Commander in 1985 he spent two years as Deputy Director Naval Aviation Policy (Navy Office) and then as Executive Officer of the replenishment ship HMAS *Success*. In 1988 he completed the Australian Joint Staff College which was followed by a posting in the Joint Plans Staff of Headquarters Defence Force (HQADF).

On promotion to Captain in 1990 he became Director of Sailors Postings, and in 1992 Chief of Staff HMAS *Stirling* Naval Base in Western Australia. Captain Eames returned to Canberra in 1994 as Director Long Range Planning and Concepts in Development Division, HQADF. From HQADF he was posted as the inaugural Commander Australian Naval Aviation Force (COMAUSNAVAIR) at RAN Air Station, Nowra in 1996. Captain Eames undertook the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies course in 1998. He was promoted to Commodore and posted as the Controller Joint Logistic Systems Agency, Support Command Australia, in December 1998. He is now posted to the position of Naval Aviation Force Element Group Manager, established in March 2000.

He was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross in June 1997 for his services to Naval Aviation.

The Pilot

The Fleet Air Arm pilot - dressed to kill in his uniform, went into a bar and ordered a whiskey. As he sat there sipping his drink, a young lady sat down next to him.

After she had ordered her drink, she turned towards him and asked him, 'Are you a real Navy pilot?'

To which he replied, 'Well, I can fly every type of aircraft the Navy has, so I guess I am.'

After a short while he asked her what she was. She replied, 'I'm a lesbian. I spend my whole day thinking about women. I get up in the morning thinking about women, when I eat, shower, watch TV – everything makes me think of women.'

A little while later she left and the pilot ordered another drink. A couple sat next to him and asked, 'Are you really a navy pilot?'

'I always thought I was,' he replied, 'but I just found out I'm a lesbian.'



MOMENTS IN TIME



Sea Fury VW 232 – 08 July 1953
 This is the aircraft mentioned in the letter on Pg. 10
Photograph courtesy Stan Corboy



RANAS NOWRA – TURNING THE FIRST SOD FOR THE NEW WARDROOM – 1977
 L-R: Fred Lewis – Don Coulson – Steward – Mess Manager – Works and Housing Foreman – David Bullock – John St B More
Photo courtesy Fred Lewis



ANZAC DAY GUARD – 1949
 LT Sykes, HMAS Albatross Gunnery Officer, leads the guard from the Nowra Memorial
Photo courtesy Ron Forrest



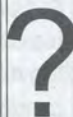
GUARD OF HONOUR MAN O' WAR STEPS SYDNEY - 1953
 For Field Marshall Sir William Slim taking over as the new Governor General. LT(P) Champ, Officer of the Guard.
Photo courtesy Clem Conlan seen second from right



MAIN GALLEY RANAS NOWRA – 1971
 'Toz' Dadswell – John Goble and David Orr
 'Toz' arguing that he did the washing up the last time



26 MARCH 1962 - 'UP-TOP' PARTY FOR PAT VICKERS
 L-R: Len Ackerley – the late Pat Vickers – Bob Cook – 'Juke' Matterson – ? - Tom Kenny – 'Junior' Davison – John George – ? - David Orr
Photo courtesy 'Spike' Jones



Photographs: I have received several complaints about photographs being published without names. Wherever possible, it would be appreciated if you could include the names and dates on your submissions. Many thanks for your help. Ed.



-Left to Right-
 Back Row.
 = RECRUIT CLASS. 30. 1951 =
 W. YOUNG, J. SAWYERS, D. WRIGHT, A. E. JONES, G. GLEDHILL, K. BELLETT, B. KIEHN,
 C. H. ARCHER AND A. E. LUTZ
 Front Row.
 M. F. DAVIS, M. A. MORIARTY, B. SIMMS, J. GILLESPIE, G. P. O. BASSINA,
 LT. ROBERTS, L. A. AINSWORTH, S. DOWNEY, N. MORROW, R. T. GARLIN,
 AND B. BOUNDS.

RECRUIT CLASS 30 – 1951

Dear Ed

In 1951, as I wasn't neat and tidy with a pen, I had John 'Prof' Edward print all the names on the back of the photo. Some fifty years later, thanks 'Prof', I hope you get to see this. 'Kanga' Bounds.

[Below is a 'Prof' cartoon from the front cover of Slipstream Vol. 19 – November 1958 – when it was the 'Journal of HMAS Albatross'. Courtesy Kevin Foot. Ed]



HMAS ALBATROSS ARMOURY STAFF – 1952
 Back Row L-R: 'Fingers' Long – Joe Gregory – George McKenzie – ? - ? -
 'Jock' McAlpine (hat) - Jack Dun (hat) - ? - ? - ? - Bob Peacock – ? -
 'Jock' Rintoul – ? - 'Tich' Bannerman – Jim Carrol – Keith Bellert – Jim Mitton
 Front : CPOs and POs not known – OIC Mr Harry Stone. Photo courtesy Jack Dun



ABOARD MELBOURNE January 1969
 LT Clive Blennerhassett manning his A4 Skyhawk
 Photo courtesy The Age



723 SQUADRON PERSONNEL 1964 – AFTER RECEIVING THE FIRST UH1B
 Back Row L-R: ? - ? - Tony Hutchinson – ? - Burgraaf – ? - Barry Arthur – ? - Ray Burt – ? - ? - Peter Becker – ?
 Centre Row : ? - Dave Masters – Les Kube – Errol Shelley – Kevin Longford – Bill ... - 'Digger' Dunne – ? - ? - Kevin Roberts – ? - Harry Harkness
 Front Row: Graham Price – Bob 'Jumpa' Cross – ? - LT? - LT (P) Booth – LTCDR 'Seamus' O'Farrell – LT(P) Gerry O'Day – LT 'Tug' Wilson –
 Arthur Sharland – Carl Fellenberg – 'Buzz' Warfield and 'Lofty' McCauley. Part of the squadron was away with the FESR. Photo courtesy Les Kube



817 SQUADRON UPDATE

By Commander David Gwyther RAN, Commanding Officer

It gives me great pleasure to bring you up to speed on the fighting 817th in this the Squadron's golden jubilee year. For many it must seem like yesterday when 817 stood up in the UK on the 25th of April 1950. The Squadron has come a long way, flown a lot of flying hours and distinguished itself in operations all over the world.

Where have we recently been? Our recent accomplishments include the Sydney to Hobart rescues where 817 aircraft were the first on the scene that fateful night and flew the most flying hours in the worst conditions. We put a Detachment in HMAS *Tobruk* for the first three months of 1999, the aircraft again running very well. We rescued the Scots college boys in Kangaroo Valley and then supported two aircraft in East Timor, where again the mighty Sea King was the first aircraft overhead Dili. Both aircraft, in *Success* and *Tobruk*, flew faultlessly achieving an impressive 96%+ availability. For the first half of this year we have been training hard to raise our number of qualified aircrew to where we want to be. We have also supported First of Class trials in the LPA, HMAS *Manoora*. Whilst the trials were frustrating from an aircraft availability point of view, we achieved a very good result and now have day and night envelopes in the LPA.

Where are we now? We are currently concentrating on our training. I hope to have the Squadron fully complemented with aircrew by 12 August. Thanks to the Squadron's stalwart Tanzi Lea and his team and a terrific maintenance effort we are on track. As an aside Tanzi achieved a remarkable 8000 hours and 7000 hours on Sea King this year. We are currently at an Amphibious Conference talking about issues which are clearly a large part of the Squadron's future. Lap tops and back rows are a beautiful thing! The Olympics loom large for us with a two aircraft commitment and LPA First of Class trials continue until the end of the year overlapping our Olympic commitment, busy.

Where are we going? In the very near future it seems that anywhere in the region is becoming a possibility, we hope that things settle down but if they don't we are ready. Obviously LPA and Amphibious operations are a huge issue and the balance between Sea King and Blackhawk is currently being sorted out. My view is that neither of the aircraft types can stretch across the whole role and as an interim measure we will share it. I think we will see Sea King in one ship and Blackhawk in the other. My view only. It is an exciting time with the Amphibious role taking shape. Planning for a potential three month embarkation in *Manoora* in the first half of next year in its infancy. A growing amphibious role, the fleet utility role ever present, Search and Rescue, supporting the community, it's a great time to continue on the proud history of 817 Squadron. I am honoured and privileged to be in command of a terrific team at 817. I look forward to seeing many of you at our 50th Anniversary Charity Ball on the 25th of November. *Auda Facere*. [Dare to Do]

Commander David John Gwyther:

CO 817 Squadron

Commander Gwyther was born in Rhodesia immigrating to Australia when he was three. Schooled in Sydney and Canberra he joined the RAN in 1979 as a Junior Entry Midshipman. Completing a BSc, he progressed through Seaman Officer training and holds FFG and DE Watchkeeping qualifications. Graduating from Pilot's course as Dux in 1987, Commander Gwyther has flown Sea King and SH60F Seahawk helicopters. Staff appointments include Deputy Fleet Aviation Officer, Executive Officer HMAS *Kuttubul* and Staff Officer Aviation at DNOP. He holds a psc and a Masters of Business Administration. Commander Gwyther is married to Kaye, who is from Colorado and has two daughters Caitlyn and Taylor.

50 years on – If you want to know what this photo is all about, read the enclosed flyer



The Fleet Air Arm Telephone Game

Captain's directive to his Executive Officer: 'Tomorrow evening at approximately 2000, Halley's Comet will be visible in this area; an event which occurs only every 75 years. The Lower Deck will be cleared in working dress and I will explain this rare phenomenon to them. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the men in the cinema and I will show them films of it.'

Executive Officer to Departmental Heads: 'By order of the Captain, tomorrow at 2000, Halley's Comet will appear over the airfield. If it rains, fall the men in, in their working dress, then march them to the cinema where this rare phenomenon will take place, something which only occurs every 75 years.'

Departmental Heads to Divisional Officers: 'By order of the Captain, be in working dress at 2000 tomorrow evening. The phenomenal Halley's Comet will appear in the cinema. In case of rain over the airfield, the Captain will give another order, something that occurs every 75 years.'

Divisional Officers to Regulating Chiefs: 'Tomorrow at 2000, the Captain, in working dress, will appear in the cinema with Halley's Comet, something that happens every 75 years. If it rains, the Captain will order the comet over the airfield.'

Regulating Chief to the 'troops': 'When it rains tomorrow at 2000, the phenomenal Admiral Halley, accompanied by the Captain, will drive his comet around the airfield in his working dress.'

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

An item courtesy of the Navy News – 15 May 2000

If you've ever even vaguely thought about getting a tongue stud, hopefully this article will make you think again.

A sailor off a DDG recently sheepishly presented to HMAS *Kuttabul* Dental Department. As it is illegal to wear a tongue stud in rig, he had been wearing a 'sleeper' to work so that the hole wouldn't grow over. It was made of thick fishing line, which he had melted and flattened at one end so it wouldn't slip all the way through.

Anyway, the flattened end had somehow slipped up into his tongue and was stuck. It had happened about a week previously and he had seen the medic onboard who wasn't able to remove it, even after cutting into the tongue to make the hole bigger. He was sent to *Kuttabul* to see a doctor, who in turn referred him to the dentist.

To avoid some uncomfortable injections, the dentist first tried to remove it without anaesthetic, but it was too painful to exert much force. So an injection was given and the fishing line was grabbed from under the tongue with thin pliers, an attempt was then made to pull it through but it was too difficult to grasp and was stuck fast. An attempt was then made to pull it through from the top side of the tongue, again without success.

The last alternative was to push it through from the top downwards and out through the bottom hole. It was stuck solid and so a fair amount of force was used. Suddenly it gave way and the dentist looked for it on the floor of the mouth. It was nowhere to be seen and the only place it could have gone was deeper into the back of the tongue.

So...two more injections directly into the side of the tongue, and then the tongue cut open to find the fishing line. Finally...after about twenty minutes of searching, it was located and removed and the tongue stitched back together.

The sailor left the dental department promising never to wear his tongue stud again.

The Sydney Olympics

A Swiss tourist visiting Sydney to view the Olympic preparations, pulls up at a bus stop where two locals are waiting.

'*Entschuldigung, koennen Sie Deutsch sprechen?*' he asks.

The two Aussies just stare at him.

'*Excusez-moi, parlez vous Francais?*' he tries.

The two continue to stare.

'*Parlare Italiano?*'

No response.

'*Habla ustedes Espanol?*'

Still nothing.

The Swiss tourist drives off in disgust. The first Aussie says to the other, 'Y'know, maybe we should learn a foreign language.'

'Why bother?' says the other. 'That bloke knew four and it didn't do him any good.'



Museum Hangar Happenings

By Don Parkinson

After a long spell in the restoration area of the Museum, the Westland Scout is finally receiving a new paint job. The proprietor of 'Ron McGuire's Smash Repairs', a local business, has offered to support Australia's Museum of Flight by donating his services free of charge; this is very much appreciated.

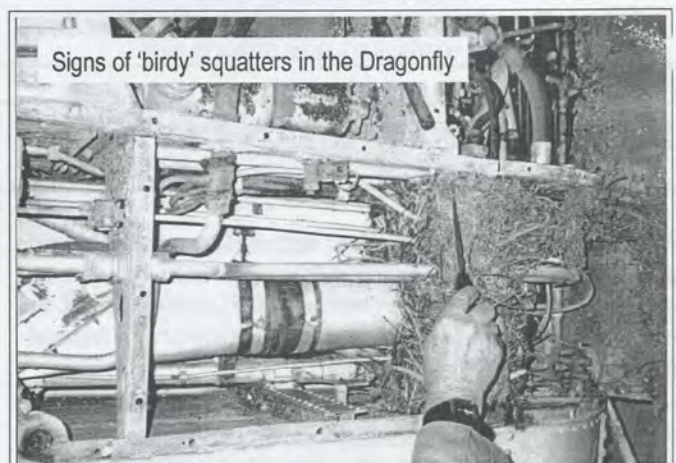
Stalwarts who deserve a mention for their efforts in the helicopter 'face lift', are Ron Ross, Roy Allman and Ray Larder.

The aircraft will eventually be displayed among our collection as the first of the RAN's small ship flights.

On completion, the return transportation of the aircraft will be borne by the new *Albatross* transport contractor, Serco Sodexho.



Work has commenced on the British Westland Dragonfly WG-725, which featured in the last edition of this journal. The helicopter has attracted more than its fair share of corrosion whilst at its previous home at Flambards Theme Park, RNAS Culdrose. Appropriately, our keenest volunteer on this project is Mr Dudley Kearn, an ex- RN Master-at-Arms.



A mention in dispatches must surely go to Frank McPherson and Alistair Ogg who, through their diligence with the stores programme, are beginning to notice a ray of light at the end of the tunnel.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



Greetings to all from the Western Australian Division.

Since our last report in the April 2000 issue of *Slipstream* we have enjoyed a rather full program. Most memorable was Anzac Day where the Governor of Western Australia, Major General Michael Jeffrey AM, MC who was retiring after six years serving the State, took the salute at the march past and later gave the Anzac Day Address.

Thirty-six members turned out for the March, which was led by the Naval Reserve Cadets carrying the FAA, banner. Later we repaired to the East Perth Bowling Club for R,R & F (Relaxation, Refreshments & Fellowship). Elva and Joe Jost had prepared delicious platters of finger food whilst the Ladies of the Corvettes Association provided hot dogs and hamburgers. They like to look after their 'boys'.

As part of the Anzac Week celebrations our President, Jack Suriano, addressed the pupils of the Gingin District High School about the significance of Anzac Day. Our Association provides a guest speaker each year. The address was followed by a fly past of a formation of aircraft from RAAF Base Pearce.

Sunday 11th June saw fifty members and families enjoying a luncheon and get together at Royal Aero Club at Jandakot Airport where the dining room overlooks the airfield. We were able to dine to the music of the take-offs and landings of piston-engined aircraft, not a jet in sight, reminding us of *Albatross* in the fifties. Adding to the nostalgia was the fly past of a Harvard dressed in naval livery and the sight of three Tiger Moths practicing formation flying. We also enjoyed catching up with ex-808 Squadron Sea Fury pilot Andy Powell and wife Jill who have returned to the West to live. We also welcomed Tony Everett and daughter Simone and it was good to see Chris O'Neill again.

Our next social function is to be held at the Rockingham Navalmens Club, Point Peron. Starting time 1100 hours until late. There is great food and bar service available. The Club is an ideal family venue with its children's playground and facilities. Bring along the grand children. Contact either Keith or Sue Doncon at Mandurah 95811947 or me at 93307386 for details.

Later, in November, we have planned to visit Fleet Base West

at HMAS *Stirling*. Approval for the visit has already been obtained from the Executive Officer. The details are to follow later.

The latest word on Ambrose Palmer comes from Ray Burt who advises that the National body of our Association will arrange for a plaque to be placed on the RANAS Memorial Wall. Thanks Ray and thank you to all those in the Eastern States who keep me posted about things nationally.

Lastly. Would anybody having any knowledge of the whereabouts of ex-POAH Barry Plester, last heard of in the Ballarat area, please get in touch with me.

Wishing you all good health and fortune, from your shipmates in the West.

John Green

1/7 Prinsep Road, Attadale.WA 6156 – Phone: (06) 9330 7386



WA member, 'Snow' Hall, and visitor 'Paddy' Williamson, checking out the labels and the model of HMAS *Sydney* on 'Snow's' bar.

Secretary: Colin Bushe-Jones
2/10 Athol Court, LEEMING WA 6149
Phone/Fax: (08) 9527 9186

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

All present and correct, Sir! Well...sort of. There are some still adrift with current membership but I expect they will drift in, especially if our new treasurer (Michael Cain) gets the whip out. At the last count the Division amount to thirty-seven financial members and about fifteen overdue.

Roughly one-third of the members are country residents and with the tyranny of distance, they seldom get together with the metropolitan dwellers. George Hunt seems to be an exception and was observed at our last function after a tedious journey from Wallaroo. Another factor is that there is seldom an impressive visible presence of the Navy in South Australia, especially the FAA, so that's our excuse for not gathering a large ship's compliment together at any given time.

There have been a few changes in the hierarchy, John Siebert was elected President at the last General Meeting, with Michael Cain

winning the Treasurer's spot. I think that they were elected unopposed so it was more like a press-gang set up. Roger Harrison has continued as Secretary on a temporary basis until someone else takes the reins. I became mindful of Roger's hopes and did something we were told not to do at an early age – I volunteered to take the job!

John Siebert recently transferred from NSW and we think we have a great President. He entered the RAN in 1969 and did all



the routine training at *Cerberus*, Point Cook and RAAF Base Pearce. Graduating in 1970 and posted to *Albatross*, he proceeded into an interesting naval career and flew all kinds of aircraft. He retired from the RAN as recently as 1994, I'm sure that many members would know and appreciate John.

Events! Not much to report except for the Anzac Day excitement, and the visit to Goolwa by 817 Squadron on Friday, April 21st with three aircraft and sixty personnel. There was some action on the following day with a Freedom of Entry ceremony, mayoral luncheon, band recitals and wreath laying.

Sunday was a recreation day with a well-contested darts match between HS817 and the Goolwa Hotel Darts Club. I have no idea who won. On Tuesday, the squadron assembled with the general public at the Goolwa Cenotaph for the dawn service, followed by a traditional breakfast at the RSL Club. The Squadron then departed for Nowra.

Twenty-three members of the SA Division marched in the Anzac Parade through Adelaide, this was followed by drinks and lunch at the Hotel International Brougham Bistro Room.

Also in April, we joined members of 723 Squadron on a wine tasting tour of the Barossa Valley. They were here 'showing the flag', so we thought it an opportune time to join up with them. Our Social Secretary, Dinsley Cooper, did a fantastic job organising

the trip, it all worked out very well and was most enjoyable. The lads from 723 Squadron seemed genuinely interested in the fixed wing days, especially when Henry Young got going with some Sea Fury yarns. Catching number ten wire was always a great thrill for the 'goofers'.

We do have one sad note, Sylvia, Jack Krieg's wife of fifty years, died suddenly on Anzac Day. We know Jack will miss Sylvia and our thoughts and prayers go with him. Just to jog a few memories, Jack was Safety Equipment Chief, he joined the FAA from General Service prior to the commencement of the FAA in August 1948.

Well...that's it! We all salute our shipmates in the other divisions and hope all is well.

Barry 'Dooley' Lord

[The two photographs on the header of this report were taken twelve months apart.. The one on the right was taken after 'Dooley' became aircrew. Ed]

Secretary: Barry Lord
65 Whitmore Square, Adelaide, 5000, SA
Phone: (08) 8212 2439

VICTORIA DIVISION

On behalf of the President, Committee and members of the Victoria Division, I send our best wishes to all members and their families.

After the predicted 'doom and gloom' for the Anzac Day march due to the lack of bands etc., it turned out very well. The weather was fine and sunny and, for the first time, we had a band immediately behind our contingent. There were about fifty-five members on parade and the usual, and appreciated, 'Groupies', doing their thing along the way.

On arrival at the forecourt of the Shrine of Remembrance,

someone started waving to us and we spotted the very familiar face of Mons 'Tiger' Lyons. Unfortunately, I was unable to get to speak to him, but I believe that some of the members did. 'Tiger' wished to come to the after-march reunion, but his medical staff advised against it. We would like to thank Ms Carmel Staff for her efforts in organising the ambulance and making the arrangements to convey 'Tiger' to the ceremony. He is at the Little Sisters of the Poor, St Georges Road, Northcote, but please telephone first if you wish to visit him. The number is (03) 9489 8444.



Anzac Day 2000

Victoria Division contingent heading up St Kilda Road led by L-R: John Ikin – Ian Stanfield (Flag bearer) – Rob Partington – Ralph Mayer – Geoff Litchfield – John Champion and Ron Christie

As usual, the after-march reunion was well attended. This year we shared the facilities (The Melbourne Naval Centre – ESU) with the Submarine Association, HMAS *Warramunga* Association, the HMAS *Australia* Association, and the Captain and some of the commissioning crew of the new, and soon to be commissioned, HMAS *Warramunga*. The facility was rather full – maybe the same could be said about some of our members, but that's another story.

Whilst on the subject of the Melbourne Naval Centre, I have just been informed that our steward, Kevin Pinney, passed away on the 21st May. Kevin has been looking after our members over the past few years, our sympathy and condolences go out to Kevin's family and friends.

Prior to Anzac Day, several members of the division attended the Korean War Memorial Dedication in Canberra and the various other

(Continued on page 24)

functions associated with this very memorable occasion.

Our next major event will be the FAA Anniversary Dinner to be held on Saturday 26th August at the Harbour View Motor Inn and Reception Centre. On the following day, the annual RAN FAA Memorial Service will be conducted at HMAS *Cerberus*. The venue of last year's dinner, the MV *Xanadu*, has been sold and is on its way to East Timor.

And there's more...on the Monday after this weekend, a number of us will be heading up in convoy to the Mini-Reunion at Bundaberg.

Ron Christie



Some of the 'cheer squad' slaking their thirst after the long haul along St Kilda Road. L-R; Marion Earle(back to camera) - Sylvia Ikin - Val Christie - Loris Jordan and Phillipa 'Dragon Lady' Terry



Post march activities - John Champion, pointing out to Betty Conlan another member who hasn't bought a raffle ticket. Geoff Litchfield and Phyl Davidson can be seen in the background.



John Ikin (Left), telling Ivor Jansz that it is good to see another 'Long-Distance gong' at the reunion
All photographs courtesy Brian Terry



Would YOU buy a used car from this lot?

Front row L-R: Ian McInnes - Rob Taylor - Brian Terry and 'Crash' Kennedy
Back row L-R: Ian Stanfield - Peter Harney - Jim Kalmund and Bryan Roberts

Secretary: Ron Christie, 15 Bianca Court, ROWVILLE
VIC 3178
Phone: (03) 9764 5542 - Fax: (03) 9755 5417

SEX NOW I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION -
THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
EDITION IS 18 SEPTEMBER

A helicopter rescue crew, helping people marooned by a blizzard in the Scottish Highlands, spotted a smoking chimney just above the snow. Landing, they made their way to the chimney and shouted down it that they were the RAF Rescue Team. Back came a voice: 'You can bugger off! I bought a fund-raising button off you lot last week.'

Sir Humphrey would be proud of THIS one!
There is a memo circulating in the British Civil Service that recommends secretary sharing as a means of economizing. 'This can be done,' it concludes, 'either horizontally between officers of equal rank or vertically between an officer and a senior.'

NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION



Hello to everyone from the NSW Division.

It was great to meet up with members of other divisions who were in Canberra in April for the 'Dedication of the National Korean War Memorial'. The memorial itself is a very impressive structure, located on ANZAC Parade, it very much worth a visit by everyone should they be in the Canberra. Several hundred people attended the ecumenical church service in front of the Australian War Memorial. The cocktail party held in the great hall of the 'new' Parliament House was attended by well over a thousand people, catering for the event was excellent and the program for the evening was very entertaining.

So many faces from the past were at the 'do', and it was great to see them all. My wife, Elaine, and I were able to meet up with Rae Maude, widow of the late Ernie Maude, and Rita McMurtrie, widow of the late Alec McMurtrie (McLellan). Both ladies had travelled down from the Gold Coast for the Dedication and we were both very happy to have seen them.

The march past on the Tuesday was great, there had to be at least one thousand veterans marching and as many spectators, the Dedication was impressive to say the least. The Navy Band led the HMAS Sydney Association, followed by the Fleet Air Arm Association, followed by all the other Service groups. We must have performed OK because no one was 'sent around again'. The weather for the two days was perfect, and in fact, the planning, organising and running of the whole event was outstanding. No wonder we all had a good time.



Dedication of the Korean War Memorial – Canberra

Showing some of the Fleet Air Arm veterans

Photographs courtesy Max Altham

Incidentally, a book entitled, 'Remembering KOREA', written by George Odgers, was released on this day, it's a hard cover and is a great read. It contains the names of everyone that came within cooe of Korea and is well worth obtaining. I am not sure whether the book is available in bookshops generally, but it is certainly sold from the Australian War Memorial bookshop.

Building works at the Museum continue to progress. Office and Curatorial rooms as well as Convention space are due to be opened (for use) at the Sept. 9 Air Day. This \$1.6M project was funded by the Federally administered Federation Fund, and when opened by a 'yet to be announced' VIP, will be known as the Federation Wing (or at least that is the thinking at the moment).

In June, the 'Naval Aviation Scene' changed once again when the last two fixed wing aircraft (HS 748's) were 'paid-off'. They were considered to be old technology and their role will now be provided by a civilian contractor. The FAA is now completely rotary wing, a great shame really, but that's the way it is.

Since the last issue of our journal, we are able to greet new members to our Division. They are Peter McLaren, Greg Neasbey, Ian Adams, Fred Wessel, John Hatchman, John Anderson and Geoffrey Gain. Welcome aboard to you all and I wish you well. I should point out to you that you will soon realise the importance of our journal, *Slipstream*. The *Slipstream* Committee always welcomes input from members... articles, photographs, stories and 'dits'. If you have anything you think might be of interest, don't keep it to yourself, send it in to the editor. The address is: PO Box 662 NOWRA NSW 2541 - E-mail: slipstream@shoal.net.au Should you send any information to the NSW Division Secretary, he will ensure it reaches the editor's desk. Any photographs sent in will be returned to senders (if requested).

Planning for our NSW Division Anniversary Dinner is well under way. The venue is the Bounty Motor Inn, which is located on the Princes Highway at Bomaderry. Ex-Nowra 'natives' will remember the location as the Gladioli Farm. The dinner will be held on Saturday, 9th September, pre-dinner drinks at 7:00pm, dinner at 7:30pm – the cost - \$30:00 per head, payable in ADVANCE. We can only seat 85 people, so book early to avoid missing out. We are thinking that maybe a bus could be provided to cater for the Nowra town area if enough interest is shown. Make your bookings, enquiries about accommodation or transport to the Vice-President, Nev Newbold (02) 4464 1734.

Don't forget... this particular Saturday is a big day in the town, the Olympic Torch arrives, an Air Day is scheduled by the Museum, and our Anniversary Dinner at night. Think about coming along, we would love to see you.

NSW Members please note that **ALL** correspondence should be addressed to the secretary of the Division - membership enquiries, change of address, general enquiries and the like. The secretary's address is: PO Box 28, NOWRA, NSW 2541. E-mail: faaasn@shoal.net.au - any items intended for *Slipstream* will gladly be received by the editor direct. That's all for this issue, good health and best wishes to all Association members.

Max Altham – President

A.C.T. DIVISION

Greetings to all of our shipmates in other climes.

I hope that your weather is a little warmer than the ACT over the past week or so. Those who viewed the Raider's game against West Tigers will know what I am talking about. However, it augurs well for the skiers and there is already good skiing at Thredbo and Perisher.

Well, we finally held our AGM and the New Committee is as follows: Brian Courtier, President – Jim Parsons, Vice-President – Brian Treloar, Secretary – Tim O'Halloran, Treasurer, together with 'Sandy' Sandberg, Les Powell, Maurie Tiffen and Harry Beardsell making up the Committee.

We say a very hearty thanks to Mike Astbury for steering us during the past three years on top of about three years as Treasurer. Mike retired in accordance with our by-laws, he has been a tireless worker for the Association and this Division in particular. He thoroughly deserved his holiday around the North Western areas of this fair land; after a short spell, we look forward to seeing him actively participating in the organisation of this Division once again,

Many of our members, headed by Norman Lee, participated in the Korean Reunion and the Dedication of the Korean Memorial on Anzac Avenue. This Divisions banner was paraded for the march, and opening ceremony.



This event was closely followed by Anzac Day and the Division paraded about 40 members and a few interstate friends who were most welcome. Once again we were blessed with a beautiful autumn day. Following the march, some 40 members and their wives adjourned to the Junior Sailors Club at HMAS *Harman*, where they enjoyed a very pleasant barbecue with Maurie Tiffen presiding as the gourmet cook. All enjoyed the afternoon very much.

We have been unfortunate in that a number of our members have had to report on the Sick List these last few months. These included our former President, Maurie Tiffen and myself and more recently, Digby Johns has had a couple of spells in hospital. Fortunately all have recovered.

We welcome Keith Stopford, who has recently joined our ranks. However, we are equally sure that there are many more ex- and serving FAA personnel in this area and we would be delighted to welcome them into the fold.

Best wishes for the rest of the year to come.

Brian Treloar

Secretary: RADM B T Treloar AO RAN (Rtd)
PO Box 3652, WESTON CREEK ACT 2611
Phone: (02) 6288 2730

TASMANIAN DIVISION

Not much to add at this time, just a note to let all and sundry know we are still around. Our Christmas get together and luncheon went well and despite some of our members not being able to attend for their various reasons (some on the sick list, some away on leave and others committed elsewhere) it was, all in all, a good turn out.

Anzac Day celebrations are over for another year. Because Tasmanian members are fairly thin on the ground it was agreed at our last meeting, held at Somerset on Tasmania's North-West coast, that we would attend the gathering closest to our centre and add our numbers to the ex-Naval contingent there Anyway, Launceston this year, who knows where next year.

As I mentioned above, our last meeting was held at Somerset. There was a good roll-up and all in all proved to be a pleasant day. Nice to see Bill Lowe back on deck again after a sojourn in the sick bay. Good to have you back Bill.

The 'All Ships Reunion' is on again this year. Venue is Shropshire Park, Ulverstone and the date is 10 – 12 November. Some interesting tours have been organised for the participants and for those who have never visited Tasmania's wild West coast the Reunion offers an ideal opportunity to do so. An information sheet has been included with this letter and I would be pleased if the Editor can reproduce the information for any member who

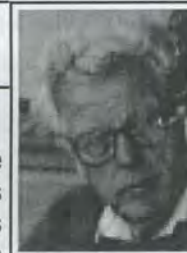
may be interested. [See Pg 28]

Irrespective of comments from some *Slipstream* correspondents the 'All Ships Reunion' is a good event where the organisers go out of their way to ensure everyone has a good time. The fact that the Fleet Air Arm did not start in Australia until 1948 may constitute an excuse for some WW 2 Naval personnel down here in the wilds of Tasmania not being aware of our existence. Attending the reunion in greater numbers can only raise the profile of the Fleet Air Arm in Australia, that Australia did possess aircraft carriers and was involved in significant post WW2 events including the Korean and Vietnam Wars. If the question is put to you about the significance of our organisation, we can front them with pride and enlighten them from their ignorance. This is my humble opinion and I know that others share it. We look forward to seeing you down here.

Cheers for now,

Matt Jacobs.

Secretary: Les Kube,
61 Lindhill Avenue, LINDISFARNE TAS 7051
Phone: (03) 6243 6540



Yesterday scientists revealed that beer contains small traces of female hormones. To prove their theory, the scientists fed 100 men 12 pints of beer and observed that 100% of them gained weight, talked excessively without making sense, became emotional and couldn't drive. No further testing is planned.

QUEENSLAND DIVISION

The year is slipping along at a great rate of knots (age has nothing to do with it).

Hello to all our interstate friends. It has been cold up here on the Sunshine Coast over the last few weeks. I had a chat with Arthur Johnson in Townsville and he reckoned it had been pretty chilly up there too.

Our Anzac Day went well, we had a good roll-up for the march in Brisbane, followed by an afternoon at the Bulimba Army Barracks. We presented a plaque to RSM Tony Hickey to express our appreciation for their hospitality to us. Sadly, they will be closed next year so we are organising another venue. The Britannia Club in town want us there – in the Queen Street Mall – and have a separate room for us and food available as well as a bar in the room. It sounds okay to me.



Pre-March Muster

L-R: Bevin Mewett – Dave Blundell – Mick Blair – Des Kelly

Warren Walters and his lovely fiancé, Maria, was with us again, she flew out from California to be with us for a few days. I had some guests from UK, Dee's cousin and husband, they also enjoyed the day immensely. It was good to catch up with Les and Kath Walker before the march. At the time of writing, Les is in hospital having a by-pass operation, unfortunately he has suffered a stroke and hasn't regained consciousness so far. We all hope he will recover.

Ian and Florence Henderson were there and set off again soon after for Townsville and points west. Brian and Kath Sargeson were there, Brian has had an operation on his shoulder and when he is recovered they too will be heading off again. Shirley Neilson made it – Frank is still in hospital and not travelling too well. 'Paddy' Williamson had his Crown and Anchor ready to go, but it was a bit late and people were beginning to leave. Next year, 'Paddy'!

Registrations for the Bundaberg Reunion are coming in well, but as usual, there will be a last minute rush. We are hoping that the Historic Flight can be involved again.

Max and Norma Wilson are back from their trip to UK and Europe. They went to the old church in North Wales, found my wife Marian's grave and took some photographs for me. They were in a little pub nearby one evening, the 'Jenny Jones Pub', and telling a lady why they were there; a big bloke came over to Max and asked him if it was me being mentioned. It turned out to be Philip Williams and his wife, his family had a Beech QueenAir

aircraft I did a lot of work on and which we flew around a fair bit. I haven't seen them for twenty years or so – it was also the first time they had been to the pub in ages. It's a small world!

The acceptance of the Service Anomalies recommendations by the government is good news. A lot of people have applied for the medals already, but there will be a bit of a wait for pensions etc. Congratulations to the Naval Association and Noel Payne and the FESR Association.

I've been managing La Promenade, a waterfront block of units let out as per hotel rooms, and café, since April when the owners went away. It has been a steep learning curve, particularly the café. I live in the manager's unit that is only a few steps from the sea. My fishing line is deployed as I write this, the rod tied to the chair in case a 'biggy' grabs the gear. I don't want to lose another rod. I caught a barracuda the other night – he put up a tough fight. Aaah – it's a rough life!

I wonder if 'Bear' Hammond has found a good fishing hole yet. The last I heard, he tried the Todd River – it did have water in it but no fish!

Bill Strahan phoned recently to say that he'd just spoken to Bill Warne who has been living near Albany Creek for the past eighteen months or so without making contact. I phoned Bill and found out that they were in the process of moving back to Nowra. I was disappointed we hadn't heard from him and told him so. Squirm, Bill!

Our AGM in March was well attended with over eighty members present, the weather was fine so we had a very pleasant picnic after the meeting. All the committee was returned, with the addition of Brian Simpson.

It was good to see Ray and Dot Guest there, they are living on this side of the country now. Lee Harris came along and offered to buy everyone a drink (from the big Lotto win), we thanked him for his kind offer and I gave him a beer.

We were asked to make a donation to the Naval Cadet base at Sandstone Point, it was agreed to give \$200. The CO, LT Robyn Houston was there to meet us all. Trevor Tite and Des

(Continued on page 28)



Post March Reunion – Bulimba Sergeants' Mess

L-R: Brian Sargeson – Ray Murrell – Barbara Murrell and Kath Sargeson

Kelly will present the cheque and some FAA photographs in the near future.

Our Ladies Day is proving very popular, they meet up at the Treasury Casino for lunch regularly, it is capably organised by Dulcie Blair and Lorraine Tite, they would like more to come along.

We welcome Geoff and Dianne Morton to the Coast. Geoff has retired now and has a nice spot on a canal. His boat tried to have a saltwater drink (maybe he thought it would be cheaper than diesel). We had a coffee with them and it was fortunate that I had to return to work quickly and couldn't get my hands dirty.

My computer is down once again so please be careful if you are sending me email.

Hope to see some of you at Bundaberg.

Barry Lister - President

Secretary: Trevor Tite, 37 Miles St, CABOOLTURE QLD 4510
Phone: (07) 5499 3809



Barry Lister, 'spinning the dit' that has made him famous with the ladies across Australia. Well...at least Shirley Neilsen looks suitably impressed.

All photographs in this report courtesy Mick Blair

ALL SHIPS REUNION – Ulverstone, Tasmania
10 – 11 – 12 November 2000
The Home of HMAS SHROPSHIRE
Australia's Largest Naval Memorial Park
90 Ships Commemorated.

Dear Shipmates,

EARLY WARNING

The Annual All Ships Reunion will be held on the above dates. Venues as in previous years.

Events will be as usual. Welcome function on the Friday evening, March, Service and luncheon on Saturday, Official dinner on Saturday evening and barbecue lunch on Sunday.

Price as in other years will be \$60.00 per person.

This year we have tentatively arranged a three day tour to the West Coast after the Reunion, Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th inclusive. If you wish to take part in this tour (30+ starters required) please indicate early so we can get an idea whether this tour would be viable and for you to make some transport arrangements. We will personally escort it; the west is an old stamping ground.

All up cost, including a day trip to the Gordon River in a top class boat will be in the vicinity (give or take a dollar or two) of \$210.00 per person. This will cover two nights, dinner, bed and breakfast, all coach costs and the river trip. (Less \$45.00 if you do not want the river trip).

We can arrange accommodation if you wish and transport from Devonport Airport and Spirit of Tasmania, if required. We suggest you come a day early if coming by air – it saves a lot of hassles on the Welcome Day. Do not be conned into cheaper airfares to Launceston – it is three hours away!

We will be on the mainland for April and May, returning 1st June. We look forward to hearing from you and once again having the pleasure of your company.

Accommodation ASAP – Fees by 30th September

Best regards,

Bob & Jean Boyd

Co-Convenors 'All Ships', PO Box 220, Ulverstone 7315

DON'T FORGET TO LET US KNOW EARLY

THE OLD MAN and the DONKEY

'There was an old man, a boy and a donkey. They were going to town and it was decided that the boy should ride. As they went along they passed some people who thought that it was a shame for the boy to ride and the old man to walk. The old man and boy decided that maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Later, they passed some more people who thought that it was a real shame for the man to make such a small boy walk. The two decided that maybe they both should walk.

Soon they passed some more people who thought that it was stupid to walk when they had a donkey to ride. The man and boy decided that maybe the critics were right, so they decided that they both should ride.

They soon passed other people who thought that it was a shame to put such a load on a poor little animal. The old man and the boy decided that maybe the critics were right, so they decided to carry the donkey. As they crossed a bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and it fell into the river and drowned.

The moral of the story is...

If you try to please everyone, you will eventually lose your ass.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY HISTORIC FLIGHT

By 'Yogi' Neasbey

Faith Hope and Charity

Since my last report the RAN Historic Flight is still moving forward. We have some new volunteers. Don Harmer (ex RAMAE) and young Paul Simpson have seconded to the C47 crew and have carried out a lot of cosmetic work improving the interior of old 802.

The new OIC called a clear lower deck on 06MAY00 to indicate the way ahead and to clear the air with some 'spirited discussion'.

I visited the civilian contractors at Bankstown in mid April to obtain quotes for C47 and Sea Fury pipelines and other component repairs and overhaul. This was an enlightening experience as everyone visited was very interested in the Flight and displayed a great willingness to help.

As the new Maintenance Co-ordinator of the Flight I applied to CASA at Bankstown for my LAME. Previous experience as the holder of a Flight Charge Certificate helped smooth some of the path, however the non recognition of time on some types of aircraft caused some friction and consternation (This caused me more stress so I will see the Welfare Rep. About an appointment with MCRB).

In mid-May Terry Hetherington and myself attended yet another course with CASA. This course qualifies us to issue Certificates of Airworthiness as approved CASA representatives, saving the Flight some funds in the long term as the people who already issue these certificates take a long holiday in the Bahamas every time they are paid for issuing one.

Our intrepid band of volunteers is still showing faith in the Flight.

All maintenance and restoration has been carried out this year with very minimal funding. We hope to be in a better financial position in the near future and not have to rely on charity and the 'old boy' network.

As a Navy unit we are obliged to address all current OH&S, good workplace relations and safety issues as well as those required by CASA. To this end a fair slice of our budget has been targeted towards ground floor improvements such as ladders that are amenable to older persons, tools, standardised air fittings, CASA publications and Maintenance Log Packs.

The aircraft status at this time is:

- UH1B is ready to fly and has been issued with a Certificate of Airworthiness by CASA.
- C47 (802) is awaiting funding to complete stud aileron, weigh, compass swing, starboard engine full-power runs, engine and flight controls independent checks, placarding for CASA and issue of Certificate of Airworthiness.
- C47 (086) is now formally transferred to the RAN Historic Flight and is to be civil registered, CASA Log Pack compiled,

System of Maintenance to be approved by CASA, placarded for CASA and Certificate of Airworthiness application made.

- C47 (both) . The majority of spares applied for via Marketing and Disposal have been approved and working parties will soon be on the ground at RAAF EDINBURGH to pack, catalogue and ship these spares. The spares package includes overhauled engines and propellers etc and will reduce the financial burden on the Flight for the operation of this type of aircraft for some years.

- S2 (844) are still having seal problems with fuel shut-off valves. A new system of maintenance is being vetted with a view to presentation to CASA to remove all shipboard operation maintenance requirements. The Northrop/Grumman 'S2 GURU' is in direct liaison with our Engineer and has been most helpful.

- Sea Fury airframe and engine critical components are being reviewed. It is intended to ship the engine sleeves to Aerotech Darwin for an assessment and condition report with a view to engine overhaul commencing next budget allocation. A Civil Aviation 35 (CAR35) engineer in the near future will endorse an approved repair scheme on the front main wing spar. The fuel control unit will have to be shipped to New Zealand for overhaul. This is the only CASA approved facility in the Southern Hemisphere. The Sea Fury should benefit fairly well from this year's budget allocation.

- Firefly is still at Tyabb and will be moved to Point Cook for final repairs and functionals. Experimental and test flying will be carried out at Point Cook.

- Wasp is progressing well and Tiny Warren has seconded himself and Nigel Apperley and together they have resolved a lot of the vibration problems experienced during the last ground run. This baby chopper attracts a lot of attention on Open Days and should prove a real hit when it commences flying.

- CDR 'Wacker' Payne went on the wagon and was seen at odd times running up Illaroo Road. He was also seen stumbling out of the local optometrist. It must have been all for the better as he passed his aircrew medical but couldn't see to sign the form! A couple of nights later he was seen leaving one of the local watering holes having problems with depth perception. We have ten spare Dakota wheels to cover his re-qualifying flights.

As can be appreciated a hell of lot of hands-on and background work is done by the Flight with minimal funding and manpower. If any 'olds and bolds' were willing to give even a small amount of their time and join the Flight any help would be greatly appreciated (free brews).

Applications to join the Flight can be obtained from XO RAN Historic Flight on (02) 4421 1148 or inquiries made through me on (02) 4421 1901.



BEHIND the ASPROS and 'GET-WELL LAMP'

By Ivan G. 'Chips' Gray



I find it difficult to establish in my thoughts, when I first became attached to the Fleet Air Arm.

My Certificate of Service records that one, GRAY, Ivan George, joined HMAS *Albatross* as a Leading Sick Berth Attendant (Laboratory), on 24 August 1954.

In early 1947, at HMAS Lonsdale, I had undergone a medical examination for Naval Airman (Pilot), along with a hundred or so other hopefuls. I remember looking the other applicants over and thinking that a lot were going to 'dip out'.

I had completed over two years part-time with the RAAF Training Corps, with a few hours up in Tiger Moths and many weekends spent training at Point Cook and Laverton. The last year or so I had been working as a farm labourer and knew I could 'walk' the medical in.

Things went well until they checked my colour vision... that was when I joined the other rejects that didn't make the No.1 Rating Pilot's Course.

In March 1948, I joined up as a Recruit SBA; this was after I had been found unfit for most other branches of the service. I arrived at Flinders (HMAS *Cerberus*) in the back of an open truck. Amongst those that made up the odd assortment of recruits at the time were 'Tich' Lees, 'Blue' Kerrison, 'Shorty' Greenaway and Hugh Molyneux.

The ones who did make the No.1 Rating Pilot's Course, I didn't see again until 1950, when HMAS *Sydney* paid a visit to Westernport Bay and members of the *Cerberus*' Ship's Company were invited onboard to witness a day's flying activities.

On arriving onboard, we were passed off to our respective branches for some shipboard instruction. After an hour or so visiting the various 'action stations' for medical staff, I ended up in the 'island' with the Sick Berth rating detailed for flight deck duties.

Whilst standing near the 'island', some of my acquaintances from the medical examination room at *Lonsdale* appeared. I can still remember the feeling of jealousy as they stood there, flying suits, helmets etc., waiting to climb aboard their Firefly aircraft.

The *Sydney* was steaming up and down not far off Somers, and it became quite cold and choppy. I guess that it was because everyone was keen to impress the 'landlubbers', that flying went ahead, or rather, a series of 'touch and goes'.

After about thirty minutes the aircraft came in to land, out of the six, three missed the wire and ended up in the barrier, one of them quite badly 'bent'. As I returned to *Cerberus* by boat, I was no longer feeling as envious and reflecting that perhaps some 'divine authority' does in fact determine the path we tread.

In April 1953, I was posted to HMAS *Tarangau*, Manus Island. As the laboratory technician, one of my duties was to assist in the diagnosis of malaria and work with the Hygiene Party. The 'party' consisted of six or so Japanese POWs, an equal number of native workers, two heavily armed 'police boys' and a driver. Our job was to tour the water catchment areas, testing the water and carrying out a mosquito reduction programme.

Whilst this activity was taking place at Manus, the Surgeon Commander at RANAS Nowra was Robert Coplans, known to all

(behind his back) as 'Mumbles'; a name derived from a Dick Tracey comic character of the time. He had suffered infantile paralysis as a youth that caused a mild speech defect, this was quickly seized upon by sailors, who love nothing more than a nickname.

As well as being a specialist in Aviation Medicine, Surgeon Commander Coplans was a Hygiene specialist, who acquired experience in that field during the London blitz. At the direction of the Medical Director General, he was flown to Manus to report on the general hygiene of the base, our efforts to reduce malaria, and the treatment of the fresh water supply etc. The visit only lasted for ten days or so, but it was the beginning of an association that lasted for many years.

After 14 months in a remote locality, one was entitled to time in your 'home port'. It therefore came as a surprise, when after two months back at Flinders Naval Hospital, to receive a draft to HMAS *Albatross*. The Laboratory rate had been taken sick and admitted to RGH Concord – it was only at a much later date that I found out that 'Mumbles' had asked for me. This was to be the beginning of a nine-year association with the FAA at Nowra and on the carrier *Melbourne*.

When I arrived at the *Albatross* Sick Quarters in August 1954, there was a Surgeon Commander, Surgeon Lieutenant Commander and a Surgeon Lieutenant. In control of administration there was a Wardmaster Sub Lieutenant, a CPO SBA responsible for stores, staff rosters and discipline, a PO SBA, two Leading SBAs and about four SBAs. Amongst the Sick Berth staff, there was required to be an Operating Theatre, an X-Ray, a Dispensing and Laboratory specialists. They could be of any rate; so on occasions there may be more than one Petty Officer as staff tended to be drafted to ensure that the correct mix of specialist ratings was borne.

The only time I ever served with a full complement of Sick Berth staff in twenty-one years of service, was onboard HMAS *Melbourne*; possibly because she was the flagship, and more likely because of flying operations. The shortage of Sick Berth ratings was common to most shore establishments in the RAN in those days, and it was normal for SBAs at Flinders and Balmoral Naval Hospitals to be in two watches, working 120 hours a week.

It was at *Albatross*, however, that hours worked could never be predicted. It must be remembered that at that time there were periods when 3,000 or so personnel were borne. Normal sickness and sporting injuries would have been enough to keep the staff occupied, but the intense flying programmes required an additional state of readiness that made life difficult. The shortage of married quarters meant that most off-duty personnel travelled to homes in Nowra, Berry and Gerringong in the north, and Huskisson in the south.

With something like 1,000 of the ship's company heading to Sydney for off-duty weekends, the road accident problem was so acute, that off-duty Sick Quarters staff were held back for at least half an hour after 'liberty-men' left the air station in case they were required. Accident cases were usually picked up by civilian ambulance and taken to the nearest hospital. The road between

Albatross and *Nowra* was the most dangerous, in one calendar year (1955/56?) there were 52 motor cycle crashes on that short stretch of road, not to mention the car accidents; many were fatalities. Many of the off-duty medical staff were called in to deal with a Sunday night road accident, and then continue on through Monday because night flying was on the agenda.

Night flying had special requirements, one of them being an ambulance with SBA and driver parked adjacent to the Air Traffic Control tower. It was a long night in the wintertime, night flying starting at around 1830 and often continuing until midnight, or later. The ambulance at that time was a British type (Austin?) that was used in the Western Desert during WW2; the body was wooden framed with a yellow-painted stretched fabric covering. It was a beast to drive, handled poorly and didn't have enough power to pull the skin off a rice pudding. One good thing about it, was that it had plenty of room in the back. At a guess I would say it was about 8ft by 10 ft, with plenty of hooks to hold blood transfusion bottles etc. On each side were racks that held two stretchers each, and in the roof, a 12-volt light to enable the attendant to work on his patients. The latter was usually used so that the driver and SBA could play cards whilst waiting for the 'crash alarm' to sound, or the call to 'Secure from night flying'.

During daylight hours, the Sick Quarters staff, filled the position of ambulance driver, it was only at nights, weekends, or trips to Sydney when a driver was supplied from the Motor Transport Compound.

In the beginning, many of the staff were ex-Royal Navy who had WW2 experience, couldn't settle down to civilian life, and joined the RAN for a six-year term in response to advertising throughout the UK. Whilst some were valuable additions to the medical branch, there were others who were in many ways unsuitable. It must be remembered that their training in the RN during WW2 had been limited, in many cases, to about six weeks. The training was basically first-aid and casualty, and it was only those who had spent time at the Naval Hospitals who had gained more nursing experience.

At *Albatross*, the WW2 experience of dealing with casualties from aircraft and road accidents was quite valuable, though the level of nursing for those admitted to Sick Quarters was not of a high standard. Many ex-RN personnel had never owned a motor vehicle or even learned how to drive; this meant that the staff who held licences carried out the driving of ambulances in response to emergencies during daylight hours.

More often than not, they would be the Australian SBAs who had the benefit of two years basic nursing training at Flinders or Balmoral Naval Hospital. As the 'emergency' or 'crash alarm' would sound two or three times a day, the most qualified of the staff were frequently required to drop what they were doing and man the crash ambulance. They would join the other rescue vehicles at the tower, later returning to the Sick Quarters and their interrupted work, often at a considerable time later. This in turn was the cause of missed, or at least delayed treatments, that did little to raise the poor opinion that many of the Air Branches had of the medical staff as a whole.

This was the situation when I joined *Albatross* in 1954.

Surgeon Commander Coplans was a tireless worker for all things relating to aviation, and in particular, RAN aircrew. He had great influence with almost everyone that counted, and was responsible for the establishment of the School of Aviation

Medicine. Many special drugs became available for the treatment of aircrew problems, such as sinusitis, only through his representation to the Medical Director general at Navy Office.

As a result of the high number of motor cycle deaths mentioned previously, Surgeon Commander Coplans carried out a review and found that most of the fatalities were from head injuries. It was therefore made an offence to ride a motor cycle in the air station or married quarters, or to proceed or return from leave on a motor cycle without wearing a helmet. This had an immediate reduction in the number of deaths and was adopted throughout the RAN some time later. Many years were to pass before civilian authorities followed this example set by the RAN.

The School of Air Medicine was situated adjacent to what was known as the 'new operating theatre', which was the first stage of the new hospital complex which was to be built over a five-year period. Unfortunately, that never eventuated and the Sick Quarters remained much the same until 1995, when the present complex was constructed on the site previously occupied by the School of Aviation Medicine.

The school contained a small cinema, night vision training facility, lecture room, an audiometer room - for testing hearing, and a mobile decompression chamber. The lecture room was also a display room of just about every type of flying suit and helmet used by aviators since WWI; not to mention some experimental types acquired by all sorts of means by 'Mumbles'.

Part of the Aviation Medicine Course was on survival methods for aircrew crashed in the bush, and there were display jars containing snakes, spiders, moths, witchetty grubs and all manner of things. As well as my considerable duties in the laboratory, I was soon to become very involved in the school activities; assisting with the lectures, and frequently being required to mount for display, snakes and spiders, usually brought in by the civilian gardeners.

Another task was being part of the decompression team. Aircrew entered the chamber, conditions at 25,000 ft were simulated and then their oxygen was turned off. This demonstrated to the aircrew the effects of high altitude without the benefits of oxygen. The decompression team comprised the Surgeon Commander, Wardmaster Sub Lieutenant and myself; as the exercise lasted for at least two hours, the programme for the decompression chamber was listed on Commander Air Flying Orders, and no flying 'normally' took place whilst the chamber was in operation.

Much of my work in the laboratory also related directly to aircraft operations. At that period, before the arrival of the jets, most of the flying was in *Sea Fury's* and *Fireflies*, or at least, they accounted for most of the crashes. After a fatal crash, it became necessary to determine the cause of the crash as being pilot error or otherwise. In the laboratory, I was occasionally able to show that cases of pilot error, were in fact the results of inhalation of carbon monoxide fumes. The Surgeon Commander could then present the findings to the Board of Enquiry, which could result in aircraft checks, or modification to procedures, such as taxiing with the canopies open.

Because of the shortage of medical officers from time to time, a good working relationship had been established with the local Shoalhaven doctors. On some occasions it was necessary to call

(Continued on page 32)

for assistance, often the MO called in would give the anaesthetic, allowing the naval surgeons to operate as a team. In later years, as the Shoalhaven grew, specialist surgeons lived locally and the roles were often reversed.

Supplies of blood for transfusions was always a problem; the nearest Red Cross supply was at Wollongong, and frequently injuries were too severe to permit any delay in obtaining blood. Shoalhaven District Hospital rarely held more than required for their own needs. On entry to the RAN, all personnel had been blood grouped, however, most hadn't been tested for the previously unknown Rh factor, so the blood group listed on medical documents, or dog tags, could only be a rough guide. Therefore, it was necessary for the Laboratory Sick Berth rate to carry out a direct cross match of blood between the patient and the potential donors. Immediately the patients group and Rh factor was confirmed, irrespective of the hour of the day or night, a 'pipe' would be made for donors of blood group 'so and so', to report to the Sick Quarters. I would then take a dozen or so samples, carry out the testing for suitable donors and collect sufficient blood for the immediate requirements.

HMAS *Albatross* became known as a good supply of blood, with requests for assistance coming, from time to time, from the Pathology Department of the Shoalhaven District Hospital. Some of the local MOs also approached 'Mumbles' for assistance with other routine procedures, particularly when the local technician was on holiday. I soon had more than I could handle, but it did establish a very good relationship with the medical fraternity of Nowra.

It must be remembered that in 1954, the use of helicopters for the transport of patients was not common; even with the arrival of two brand new Ford Fairlane ambulances, the journey to a hospital in Sydney would have been enough to terminate all but a healthy person. Many a young duty MO quickly matured when faced with a car accident with three or four seriously injured passengers, and the sudden realisation that the nearest help was a hundred miles away. I have the greatest admiration for the Sick Berth Attendants with operating theatre specialisation. I have seen them take control of, and restore order to the situation, until the panic subsided and the young doctor realised that he wasn't quite alone, and got to work saving lives.

Some years later, Nursing Sisters and WRAN SBAs were to come to *Albatross*, and whilst they made a great improvement to the general nursing and ward care, I never saw any of them measure up to the performance of the Sick Bay Operating Room Attendant in a crisis situation.

The two Ford ambulances were to remain at Nowra for many years. It was quickly learnt, however, that they were strictly a

highway vehicle. One morning, shortly after their arrival, the crash alarm sounded and I happened to be the closest licensed driver. I jumped in the vehicle and 'Mumbles' was in beside me before the engine had started. The correct procedure was to proceed with due haste to the perimeter of the airfield near the control tower, then, with the other rescue vehicles, await directions from the tower – the fire crew then rendered the aircraft safe before any attempted medical assistance.

On this particular occasion, the crashed Firefly was visible on the airfield and the fire engine was already pulling up alongside it, the aircraft was belching out clouds of dust and steam as it balanced precariously on its nose. As I headed across the airfield, I detoured slightly as I knew there was a deep storm water drain between the aircraft and us. 'Mumbles', not comprehending this change in direction, and seeing the fire crew clambering over the aircraft, pointed in that direction and shouted, 'GO', without any hint of a stutter. I tried to point out the obstacle ahead, but after another angry 'GO', I proceeded accordingly. We crossed the drain at probably no more than 14 miles per hour, but it was enough for the Surgeon Commander to strike his head with considerable force on the cabin roof. As we crawled back to the Sick Quarters with the two aircrew, who were badly shaken but not seriously injured, I was aware of horrible scraping noises from under the vehicle. An inspection showed the 'undercarriage' to be almost 'fully retracted', with the front wheels hard up, and rubbing on the mudguards.

It is typical of the man that Surgeon Commander Coplans never tried to shift the blame. In fact, he apologised to me for shouting. The Ford was beyond repair at *Albatross*, and was taken by low loader to the local Ford dealer who 'did the best he could'. It looked great, but was impossible to handle on the road at highway speeds; it spent the remainder of its life as the ambulance for sporting fixtures on base, or station runabout. It did achieve one other goal, it was the 'learner' vehicle for 'Mumbles'; despite all his other achievements, including attempts to pilot a Firefly, he couldn't drive. I taught him on the runway in the periods between day and night flying. Shortly afterwards he was posted to the UK to commission the *Melbourne* and was replaced by Surgeon Commander Armstrong.

There were many changes as time went on, the addition of a second Wardmaster to run the Air Medical School and the establishment of training courses in Aviation Medicine for SBAs who, on completion of training, were drafted to squadrons. They still worked at the Sick Quarters, but moved with their squadron to the carrier and back again. It meant that there was an extra staff member when extra numbers were borne.

Prior to the return of the Naval College (HMAS *Creswell*) to Jervis Bay, there were no permanent medical personnel at the Marine Section. Whenever flying was in progress, a Sea Air Rescue vessel, with a medical attendant on board, was required to be on standby. Unfortunately, I was only detailed for the duty on a couple of occasions, being standby meant that you had to be in the vicinity of the vessel – it was a good place to be when the fish were biting. The duty was usually given to someone considered to be of least value to the Sick Quarters at *Albatross*. In my case, the CPO SBA realised his mistake in sending me when one of the doctors ordered a lab test – all this while the technician was basking in the sun at JB.

With the return of the college and a permanent sickbay at



FORD AMBULANCE

Creswell, this duty became rare, although flying operations at the JB airstrip required an ambulance and attendant to be sent from *Albatross*.

In 1957, I was to leave RANAS Nowra for a nine months draft on HMAS *Swan*, which was mainly engaged in fisheries protection duties off Darwin. I thought that my association with the FAA was perhaps over.

From *Swan*, I was drafted to the *Warramunga*. I was to spend two years on the veteran Tribal class destroyer which, on many occasions, acted as RESDES (Rescue Destroyer) for the *Melbourne* in workups off the coast between Sydney and Jervis Bay; also on SEATO exercises on more than one occasion.

During that period, the 'munga' became a training ship for Fleet Air Arm officers, both pilot and observer, to undergo General Service time to qualify for watchkeeping certification. We knew each other well, as all of them at some stage had passed through the decompression chamber and the School of Aviation Medicine. I think they also came to understand the feelings of resentment that some general service personnel held for the Fleet Air Arm. One example was during the workups when on completion of flying, both ships would anchor in Jervis Bay. Leave was usually approved for squadron 'local natives' not required for duty on the *Melbourne*, this leave was rarely made available to the escort. Being married at the time, and a Nowra resident, it was hard to watch the liberty boats ply to and fro from *Melbourne* to the wharf at *Creswell*, where chartered buses took the 'natives' home for the night or weekend.

Mail was another service where the carrier had a distinct advantage over the small ships. It was a relatively easy matter to arrange for the Sycamore rescue helicopter to fly ashore and collect mail. Later, when the larger Wessex helicopters were carried, a mail run around the whole fleet became the regular routine.

Most escort destroyers carried a Leading SBA and Surgeon Lieutenant, or, a PO SBA without a doctor. As a Petty Officer, I only very occasionally had a MO on *Warramunga*, and then a Naval Reservist for fourteen days sea experience. Fleet Standing Orders required the destroyer's sea-boat crew, including a Sick Berth rating or MO, to man the sea-boat whenever aircraft were operating from the carrier. During daylight hours I was able to work in the sickbay, only climbing into the sea-boat as the destroyer took up position for the take-offs and landings. At night, however, we were required to remain in the sea-boat continuously until advised that night flying had been completed. The sea-boat crew were relieved each watch, but in my case, being the only 'Doc' on board, there was no relief. During SEATO exercises, flying would frequently continue for most of the night, and I survived on the occasional snack and brew brought to the boat by a messmate. The worst part was when the 'pipe' came over, 'Sea-boat's crew secure'; I would return to the sick bay to be confronted by ship's company members needing treatment for some conditions that 'couldn't wait until morning'. The *Warramunga* had a crew of 320 officers and men, so there was always someone requiring attention.

In 1960 I returned to *Albatross* and found many changes; gone were the Fury's and Firefly aircraft, in their place, Sea Venoms and Gannets. With the new aircraft, the 'crash alarm' sounded on a weekly basis (usually a warning light had flicked on), rather than hourly. Gone were the days of multiple 'prangs'!

Although there was still the occasional fatal crash, it was no longer necessary to have a morgue at the back of the Sick Quarters, and the old building was being used as storage for the archives.

Gone too, was much of the animosity towards the medical staff that had been present in 1954. Staff was more plentiful, better qualified and more able to carry out their duties without the constant demands of the 'crash alarm'. A permanent Naval Airman as ambulance driver was supplied, and WRAN Sick Berth Staff and a Nursing Sister carried out much of the nursing in the wards. The Air Medical School had its own Wardmaster Lieutenant and SBA specialised in Aviation Medicine to run the school almost separately from the Sick Quarters. The Senior Medical Officer still lectured in some of the subjects, and was always present when the decompression chamber was in operation.

Most of the ex-RN personnel completed their six-year engagements and left the RAN. The ones that remained, both in the air and general service branches were, as a rule, the ones the RAN wanted; many of these had become commissioned officers or CPOs. All the younger sailors of all branches were Australian, and probably for the first time since WW2, the RAN, and the Fleet Air Arm in particular, began to be Royal Australian Navy, rather than an extension of the Royal Navy.

During my first term at *Albatross*, the patients' meals were prepared in the Sick Quarter's Galley by a cook, and served by the duty ward SBA. After the evening meal, the cook was either off-duty or required for duty in the main galley. Later, with the opening of the new Ship's Company Galley and Cafeteria, the SBAs drew the required number of cooked meals direct from the galley. The only meals cooked in the Sick Quarters from that time on were the special diets.

The School of Air Medicine was now functioning at its peak; with the RAN operating jet aircraft and the USA and USSR engaged in the 'space race', there was little indication of a change of direction. As well as conducting courses in aviation medicine for new aircrew, regular revision courses were carried out, particularly for officers returning to *Albatross* after their time away as 'fish-heads'. Most medical officers throughout the RAN also underwent a special course, including many reserve officers, who in many cases were consultant specialists to the RAN. A school of Underwater Medicine had also been established in Sydney, with a recompression chamber at HMAS *Penguin* attached to Balmoral Naval Hospital. Many of the RANs medical officers became specialists in both fields. An 'Underwater Medicine' specialist qualification for sick berth staff was introduced. Part of the requirement to hold this qualification for both MOs and SB staff, was to qualify as Clearance Diver and to take part in regular dives.

Helicopters were being increasingly used for rescue work and Surgeon Commander Coplans was keen to have a medical staff, qualified as divers, to be lowered into the sea at the site of an aircraft ditching, to recover the crew who would then be winched into the helicopter. Some time later, the rate of Aircrewman was introduced into the FAA. The only involvement of the medical branch was in the Air Medical School where an extensive course in First Aid was part of the training.

1962 was to be spent onboard HMAS *Melbourne* which was operating Venom and Gannet aircraft. It was interesting for me to see flying from the carrier, as opposed to seeing it from the sea-boat or the escorting destroyer.

(Continued on page 34)

Whilst the sick bay staff of a carrier is always occupied, and during flying at a state of readiness, very similar in some respects to Action Stations. I never felt the sensation of 'being isolated' that I occasionally had to contend with on the *Warrungga*; or at *Albatross* in the mid-50s, when with only two sick bay staff, a road accident with multiple casualties occurred. On the carrier at sea, you always knew you had the complete complement of medical personnel available.

I was to spend two more periods at *Albatross*, and a second term on *Melbourne*.

There were further changes as the Sea Venom and Gannet aircraft gave way to the Skyhawks, Trackers and Wessex and Iroquois helicopters. With each change of aircraft, came changes in the routine employed to remove aircrew from a crashed aircraft; the need to know how to disable ejection seats and canopies, for example. Sick berth staff received basic instructions in these procedures from the Safety Equipment branch.

As the CPO SBA at *Albatross* in 1963-65, and again from 1968 to 1969 when I left the RAN, my main duty was administration and medical stores, though I was still the laboratory technician.

Towards the end of my career, I did get one unusual task, not normally expected of the medical branch. At *Albatross* in 1954, Wednesday afternoons were set aside as 'sports afternoons'. Inter-squadron teams battled out Rugby, Australian Football, Soccer, Hockey, or whatever the season dictated. Those in approved golf or bowling teams were permitted ashore for their chosen sport. Unfortunately, because of the high expectation of broken bones, and the fact that gliding, as an approved sport, also took place, the Sick Quarter's staff couldn't go ashore for sport and found it almost impossible to gain a place in a regular team. However, a gun club existed, and as clay pigeon shooting was part of aircrew training, there was an abundance of cheap ammunition and targets available. I already held 'marksman' qualification for rifle, so I joined the club.

With the decision to send a RAN Helicopter Flight to Vietnam, the members of the flight underwent special training. Part of that training was shooting at a moving target from a moving vehicle or

aircraft. I became instructor in this training, and was spared from my normal duties whenever required by the Armament Officer. I enjoyed this change of duties, and got great satisfaction from the improved ability of the flight when they applied clay pigeon shooting principles to their machine guns.

During the mid to late 1950s, a monthly magazine was published at *Albatross*, it was edited by the Instructor Lieutenant, who also doubled as the Air Station Met. Officer. The magazine became known as *Slipstream*, and was extremely popular. In a short time a team of volunteer editorial staff was formed and it evolved into a glossy paper publication, it was printed by the Leader Printery in Nowra. Publication costs were offset by the sale of advertising space to local business houses. The cartoonist in the beginning was 'Prof' Edwards, though I occasionally contributed a cartoon, usually based on Sick Quarters happenings.

When I returned to Nowra after my trips away on the small ships, *Slipstream* had become a high quality publication. 'Prof' had left the service to pursue a career in signwriting, and I was once again asked to contribute cartoons, eventually taking on the job as art editor.

The driving force that made *Slipstream* the success it was during the 1960s was Col Andrews, the Wardmaster Lieutenant, who took over as business editor, arranged the publication and sold the advertising. It was fitting therefore, that when the Fleet Air Arm Association decided to publish a quarterly journal, they gained approval to resurrect *Slipstream*. A student of life at *Albatross* in the 1950s and 60s would be well advised to study the back issues of the magazine.

In conclusion, the Senior Medical Officer of every ship and establishment is required to compile a quarterly Medical Officer's Journal, this is forwarded direct to the Medical Director General, Navy Office. In his journal, the SMO recounts the activities of the past quarter, lists the staff borne, cases treated, the standard of the ship's company meals, medical requirements, deaths etc. A study of the MOJs in the early years of *Albatross* should give an interesting insight into the supporting role that the medical branch played.

The Balloonist

A man is flying in a hot air balloon and realises he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon further and shouts:



'Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?'

The man below says; 'Yes, you're in a hot air balloon and hovering about 30 feet above me.'

'You must be an NCO', says the balloonist.

'I am', replies the man. 'How did you know?'

'Well', says the balloonist, 'everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's no use to anyone.'

The man below says, 'You must be an Officer'.

'I am' replies the balloonist, 'but how did you know?'

'Well', says the man. 'You don't know where you are, or where you're going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault!'

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND THE BATTLEFIELD

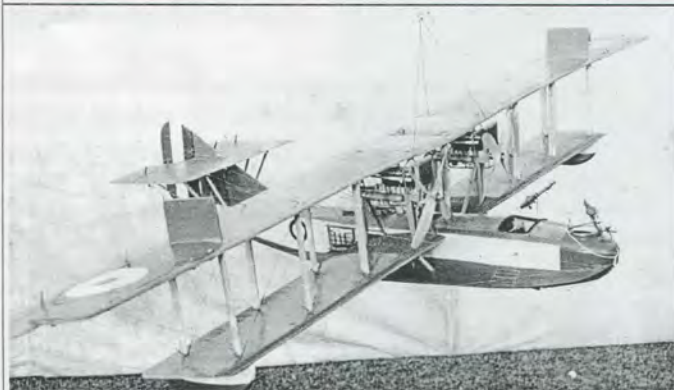
- They are not our enemy; they're our socio-political compliment.
- We don't damage their aircraft; we make unauthorised in-flight modifications.
- We don't spy; we deal in unreleased information.
- They're not casualties; they're inoperative battle units.
- We don't have scouts; we have unauthorised observers.
- We don't miss; we fail to actively engage the target.
- We don't waste missiles; we run a non-cost effective equipment exchange.
- We don't attack; we aggressively move into pre-occupied territory.
- We don't retreat; we consolidate at a previously held position.
- We don't waste money; we fail to effectively utilise funding.
- We're not at war; we're sanctioning with extreme prejudice.

GET TO KNOW YOUR MUSEUM

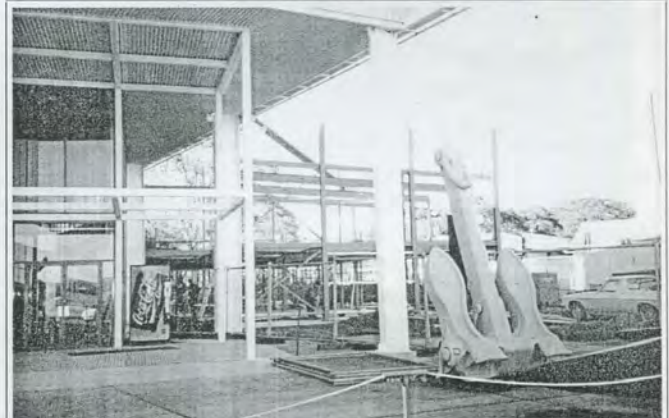
Recently donated to the museum was the magnificently crafted model of a WWI Felixstowe F2a flying boat. The 4.5 foot wingspan model, which took three years to build, was constructed by the late Bob Gawne (ex-AIF), and Henry Lobb (ex-RAN), of Coffs Harbour.



Bob Gawne (L) and Henry Lobb with their masterpiece



Stage 4 Museum extension under way. This framework is now completely covered and the first floor deck is completed and extends over the shop area to the level of the Function Centre. The fill removed from the site is being used at the airfield side of the Museum for viewing mounds. *Peregrine*

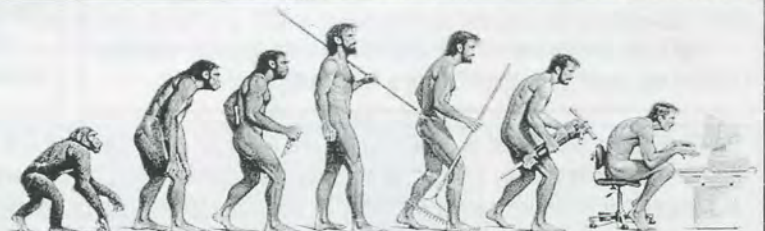


To give some idea of where these extensions are located, the bottom left of the picture is where the normal entrance to the Museum is located. *Peregrine*



The Editor catches up with old friends at the Museum, Graham Price (Centre) and Bill Barlow (Right) *Peregrine*

The Evolution of an Editor



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Righting the wrongs: at last, a day to celebrate.*Courtesy the Canberra Times – Scott Hannaford*

Frank Donnelly had plenty of reason to celebrate yesterday, and it wasn't just because it was his 70th birthday.

The secretary of the Mid-North Coast Korean Veterans Association travelled to Canberra from Coffs Harbour to see his fallen mates take their rightful place in history after standing in the shadow of others for so long.

Mr Donnelly said the unveiling of the Korean War Memorial yesterday righted the wrongs done to veterans and their families by years of waiting.

'We were concerned when the Vietnam boys got their memorial before us when the Korean War was fought first in the '50s, but it's great to see it here now,' he said.

Mr Donnelly served in Korea from 1951 to 1952 and again from 1953 to 1954 onboard HMAS *Sydney*, and said he would never forget the harsh conditions in Korea.

'You've never seen anything like it. It was brutally cold and we didn't know what to expect. We also had all the wrong gear which was inappropriate for the conditions, which made it very hard for all of us.'

He said many veterans, including himself, had travelled long distances to be at the unveiling which was indicative of the significance it had for them and their families.

'We've done a lot of fund-raising and even when it looked like we weren't going to get it, we kept plugging away and we never stopped expecting this day to arrive.

'Its just an exhilarating feeling to be here today because we have all been waiting 50 years and hoping that the memorial would be built.'

Mr Donnelly said one of the highlights of the day was the chance to catch up with some old friends he hadn't seen for 40 years.

'We'll be celebrating my birthday at a private function and then I reckon we might go to the RSL for a few drinks after that'.

A LAST FAREWELL

The Association records with regret the deaths of the following members and shipmates:

Raymond Charles (Ray) Ward – 17 April 2000

The family would like to thank the FAAA and it's members for the friendship offered to an old Naval Reserve Musician (and would-be pilot), and the pleasure he gained through membership of the FAA Association.

Kenneth Alfred Roberts – 25 March 2000

Tony Fletcher – 01 April 2000

Alan John Cox – 10 May 2000

Walter John Lombard – June 2000

Russ Jensen – 2000

Ernest Michael 'Tas' Boylan – 17 July 2000

VALE

Ernest Michael 'Tassie' Boylan was just 62 when he died, he is survived by his wife, Violet, sons Michael and Philip and daughter Michelle.

After retiring from his profession as Chef, much of which had been spent in the Navy, 'Tassie' spent his time restoring bicycles which he sold to raise thousands of dollars for Yurana House, an organisation dedicated to alleviating the suffering of young cancer victims. He became known as the 'Bike Man of Sanctuary Point'.

This decision was made after he learned that his two-year old grand-daughter, Kimberley, was diagnosed as having cancer.

'Tassie' was born in Cabramatta, and spent most of his life in the Navy. When he left the service, he worked at *Albatross* for a period as a civilian, then at the Ettalong Memorial Club at Peat Island, lastly, at David Berry Hospital. He retired early because of ill health.

VALE**ALAN JOHN COX**

28 September 1926 – 10 May 2000

Alan Cox prided himself on making sure that all games in the Great Northern Football League ran smoothly. He was a life member of the league and a diligent and skilful administrator.

He was born in NSW and joined the Royal Australian Navy when he was 19, spending the next 15 years as an aircraft mechanic travelling the world, leaving the RAN in 1958

Alan Married Valma Alison Rose during his navy service and they were together for almost 48 years.

He leaves his widow, Rose, and children Rosemary, Colin, Alanah, Dallas, Jay, Paul and Joyleen.

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