

CURATOR
LCDR R.E. GEARL, RFB



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Slipstream

Established HMAS Albatross 1957



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FOREWORD

by

The Hon. Danna Vale, MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence



I am honoured to provide this foreword to *Slipstream*, the publication of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia.

Slipstream plays a major role in supporting our community by keeping members informed of issues that are of importance to them. As Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, many of these issues fall into my portfolio, including repatriation income support, compensation and health programs for veterans, members of the Defence Force, certain mariners and their dependants, war graves and Defence Service Homes.

The Fleet Air Arm has a proud tradition of serving in the defence of the nation. The Association and its members have a long history of upholding that tradition by providing support to current and former members of the Fleet Air Arm. They make a vital contribution to the lives of many ex-servicemen and women and their families, and to the wider community.

It was with great pleasure that I was able to help your local [Gilmore] Federal Member, Joanna Gash, with the packing of the Fleet Air Arm Association Christmas hampers at Nowra on 10 December 2001. This was a very worthwhile project which involved packing of generously donated items into hampers to be sent to Navy helicopter crews deployed in our ships, who were away from their homes and families at Christmas.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Fleet Air Arm Association on this initiative, and I am sure the hampers were gratefully received.

It is an honour and privilege for me to serve the defence and veteran community. I look forward to continuing to work with the Fleet Air Arm Association and its members.

* * *

Biographical Notes

Mrs Danna Vale was first elected to the House of Representatives as the Federal Member for Hughes in March 1996 where she joined her parliamentary colleagues in the 38th Federal Parliament, and the first Howard Government.

Mrs Vale was re-elected as the Federal Member for Hughes in October 1998 and November 2001, where she represents some 85,000 Australians in an electorate that takes in Sydney's outer-most suburbs, from Oyster Bay, Sutherland, down to Waterfall and out to Moorebank.

Danna Vale was sworn in as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence on 26 November 2001. Danna, grew up at Sylvania near the Georges River just after World War II, the eldest of six children to Albert and Delma Ward, in an era she describes as the last of the billycart generation, before the invasion of television and technology which she says stole all the real fun from an Australian childhood. She left school at the age of 14 and became an office junior.

Since those early days Danna has overcome a great many challenges. By 20 she had obtained a private pilots licence. Soon after she married the flying school engineer, Bob Vale. Over the next five years their four sons came along.

In the mid 70's Danna Vale developed a passion for knowledge and spent the next 12 years managing the demands of family and study, both secondary and tertiary.

In 1987 she graduated from the University of Sydney with degrees in Arts and Law, and spent the next eight years practicing law.

In 1993 Danna joined the Liberal Party and in 1996 was pre-selected as the Liberal Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hughes. She defeated a sitting Labor Minister, Robert Tickner, to become the Federal Member for Hughes.

Today Mrs Vale is a wife, mother, grandmother, Federal Member, and Minister of the Crown.

EDITOR'S CORNER



What a horrific Christmas for the people in this 'neck of the woods'. Even for those not under direct threat the conditions were unbearable, with smoke and ash, hundred knot winds and high temperatures.

Slipstream also suffered a setback in that our long term printer had his business premises consumed, and to top it off, he lost most of his house and one of his dogs died. It's the kind of thing that Country and Western singers write songs about.

Being Nowra, when all the fires had been extinguished, we had pouring rain and thunder storms. Very welcome until my computer hard drive was 'zapped' by the lightning.

Nevertheless, the printer and I have overcome our problems and this is your offering.

My thanks to all those people who have contributed to the journal, you make my task so much easier.

To all those who sent me Christmas cards another thank you. Unfortunately with all the activity around here, the cards I had to send are still sitting on the desk.

In conclusion, on behalf of the membership I would like to thank **Kaman Aerospace International Corporation** for their sponsorship to the production costs of this edition.

Be kind to each other.

FESR ASSOCIATION REUNION / CONVENTION IN ADELAIDE APRIL 2003 'THE WAY AHEAD'

On behalf of the FESR National Executive, the 'Adelaide 2003 Reunion/Convention Organising Committee' would like to extend to you and your partner, a warm and cordial invitation to attend the Association's 2nd National Reunion/Convention to be held in Adelaide during April 2003.

For further information please contact:

The FESR Association of South Australia
BOX 484
BROOKLYN PARK SA 5032

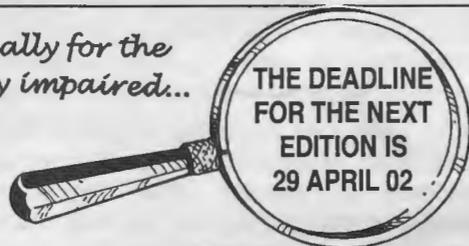
FAA 'GET-TOGETHER' 2002

SATURDAY 25 MAY 2002
CAMPBELLTOWN RSL
1200 - 1700

If the registration form for the event is missing from this copy of *Slipstream*, please contact: John Goble at (02) 9450 1537



Especially for the visually impaired...



FRONT COVER:

'Winching exercises from the flight deck of HMAS ADELAIDE'
Photographer ABPH Damian Pawlenko

Charles H Kaman is founder and chairman of Kaman Corporation, a diversified, Connecticut based company.

Born in 1919 and raised in Washington, D.C., he attended Catholic University and graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering degree. Following college, he was employed at the Hamilton Standard division of United Aircraft where, within a few years, he rose to the position of chief aerodynamicist.

In 1945, 26-year-old inventor/entrepreneur Charlie Kaman started Kaman Corp. on a shoestring. Two thousand dollars invested by two close friends and some basic laboratory equipment has evolved over the past half century into a diversified, \$1 billion company.

From its roots in aviation, the company has grown to provide a wide range of products and services for commercial and government markets. Kaman employees are at over 200 locations in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere.

While most often noted for building businesses, Mr. Kaman also is a respected futurist and humanitarian. His analyses of the American scene have a wide following within industry and government circles; and Kaman's growing and diversifying company is a testimonial to his ability to anticipate and manage change.

In honour of Mr. Kaman's many contributions to rotary-wing aviation and U.S. technology as a whole, President Clinton awarded him the National Medal of Technology in July, 1996. The medal is the country's highest recognition for contributions to his nation's technical excellence. Earlier that year, Governor Rowland awarded him the Connecticut Medal of Technology. Also in 1996, he was enshrined in the Hall of Honour of the National Museum of Naval Aviation. In recognition of his contributions to U.S. defence, Mr. Kaman in 1995 was awarded the U.S. Department of Defence Distinguished Public Service Medal, the Pentagon's highest award for a civilian. Also in 1995, he was named an Honorary Fellow of The Royal Aeronautical Society and awarded the Aviation Week and Space Technology Laurel for his development of the K-MAX helicopter as well as 50 years of pioneering vertical flight.

He is a recipient of the Navy League of the United States' highest award, the Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Award, recognizing his leadership, statesmanship, and contribution to his nation's security.

Mr. Kaman has received honorary doctorates from the universities of Connecticut, Hartford and Colorado.

One expression of Mr. Kaman's humanitarian interests is his work with the blind. He is the founder and president of the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation; New England's only guide dog school. Fidelco's pioneering 'in-community' training program makes it possible for a blind person to remain at home, and at work, while being trained with a Fidelco guide dog.

In 1996, Mr. Kaman and his wife, Roberta, were named Melvin Jones Fellows by Lions Club International in recognition of their many years of service to the blind community. It is the Lions' highest honour and is named for the organization's founder.

KAMAN AEROSPACE INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION - ALBATROSS AVIATION TECHNOLOGY PARK -



**Dear Ed**

Reading the last issue of *Slipstream* and its many interesting articles, two names came out of it, which in combination, remind me of an experience I had whilst on 723 Squadron.

The two names are Eddy Bell and David Orr.

I think it was in the final stages of David's conversion to helicopter training (though I can't remember who the other pilot was) when a flight was undertaken to the Jervis Bay airstrip for winch training. Because of my small size I was sometimes used as the 'strop bunny', and operating the winch that day was Eddy Bell.

Now it so happened that the latter gentleman, a little time earlier, had landed in a paddock because of, as I remember, a slight malfunction because of an oil cooler shutter not being opened after warm-up. Whilst on the way to JB, I reminded him of this little episode.

We landed at JB, I alighted and they took off and came in for the pick-up. When safely in the strop I was lifted into the air and then had this sensation of movement, and on looking up saw Eddy's smiling face, with his hand on the winch wire pushing it backwards and forwards swinging me like a pendulum.

I recounted this experience to Eddy Bell at the Gold Coast reunion a couple of years ago, but I guess like all of us the memory dulls and he couldn't remember it.

I do hope David Orr is continuing to make a good recovery.

Ian (Junior) Henderson

[David Orr recently visited the Museum at Nowra. I am pleased to report that he is going from strength to strength with a great deal of determination. Ed]

Dear Ed

I have read the report by Ron Smith regarding Sea Venom 866 and 'Shorty' Nielsen, and the effects that the loss of the aircraft and Observer had on Shorty. I must have read that report at least six times, and the *Slipstream* only arrived yesterday

I was virtually the acting CAA of 'B' Flight in 1965, Shorty was posted to the unit but was unavailable as he was doing his Leading Hands Course. He remained on 'B' Flight for the following year.

I first got to know Shorty in 1961 on 805 Squadron when the 'little fella' was on the crew of one of my aircraft, 804 - I can't remember the serial number. I think that that 'kite' had the worst hydraulic system of any operational aircraft anywhere, not just the RAN. That is, it was bad to start with, so bad in fact, that you could tell when the pilot shut the HP cock, because the deck-hook immediately dropped. Shorty used to sit under that aircraft with a stethoscope I 'borrowed' from the sickbay, and listened to the various components.

Eventually, I think we changed almost every component in that hydraulic system, with such a shock to the system that one evening when LEUT Riley was flying the old bus, she blew a non-return valve just behind the fireproof bulkhead, with the result that the nose wheel wouldn't lower. A nose wheel-up landing was carried out at the Bundaberg airstrip, luckily on the runway and not alongside on the grass strip, as the pilot had been advised to do. I say lucky, because anyone who knows the Bundaberg airstrip knows that there are drains about thirty feet wide and some twelve

to fifteen feet deep running at right angles to the strip. Boy what a mess it would have been if he had landed on the grass!

I watched Shorty that night and came to realise that 'his' aircraft was his world, and that he only loaned it to a pilot under sufferance. I honestly think that Shorty bit his fingernails down to the proverbial elbow that night, and was still biting until Jock Collins and John Duff returned to the ship next morning, and told us that the prang was due to component failure, not maintenance.

I can relate to Ron's statement that Shorty burst into tears, such was his devotion to his aircraft and its crew. I thank Ron for his account, because I think that this indicates just how much pressure and strain all of the maintainers were placed under when operating on board ship, more so than ashore. It has long been recognised that the aircrews were under a considerable strain during carrier operations. So far, no one has considered the maintenance supervisors and junior sailors and what they went through every time they signed for an aircraft's inspection, who then watched as it was launched and then arrested, always with the chance of a broken arrestor wire or a deck-hook failing.

Come on, National Executive, so many of your members have problems due to this stress, I reckon its time someone did something about it. I wonder how many have high blood pressure due to stress, and how many others have psychological problems, no matter how minor, which could be prolonged for an entire commission, although it usually began to build up after a couple of months on board. All one has to think of is how many of your messmates started to get a bit 'niggly' after a while.

Don Roberts - Ex CMECHAE

Dear Ed

The letter to the Editor by Ron Smith (*Slipstream* Vol. 12, No. 4 dated November 2001) regarding the loss of Sea Venom 866 (WZ 900) has stirred me, as pilot of the aircraft and OIC of 816 Squadron B Flight, into writing to you with my comments and some clarifying details regarding the accident.

It was very nice of Ron to promote me to LTCDR as at 28 April 1966, the date of the accident. I always considered him to be more appreciative of my value than my seniors in Navy Personnel, but I have to say that I was still a Lieutenant at the time!

A further indication of his perceptiveness is his assessment of my deck-landing skills - a bit of an exaggeration, perhaps, but what I would like to think was a fundamentally sound observation! Thank you, Ron.

I am sorry to hear that 'Shorty' Neilson has not been well. I have a great respect for him and all others of that professional band of maintainers in B Flight and I, for one, never had a moment of doubt during my period 'in command' of the Flight that the maintenance performed on those ageing aircraft was of the highest possible standard. It almost goes without saying that the WZ 900 Board of Inquiry found no evidence whatsoever to implicate aircraft maintenance as a cause of the accident.

As an aside, I am aware that a significant number of HMAS MELBOURNE or Squadron personnel have approached the Department of Veterans' Affairs regarding stress-related psychiatric conditions which they feel have resulted from having witnessed the accident. Without making any judgement on those claims, I unreservedly apologise for any distress which I may have inadvertently caused to any witnesses to the deck-landing accident and ditching. It must be that I was too busy at the time to

have been psychiatrically damaged myself while experiencing the actual traumatic event, because I seem to have escaped with only disabilities to my ankle and back (although I had plenty of time in the Sick-Bay in subsequent weeks to reflect upon it all!)

Turning to the accident then, I have the advantage of some contemporary documents and my own, perhaps somewhat time-affected 25-year memories, to draw on to set out what I believe to be an accurate description of events.

The touch-down on MELBOURNE's deck seemed normal enough, as was the first part of the arrest. However, things rapidly deteriorated. The deceleration suddenly ceased whilst the aircraft was still moving quite quickly (probably 20 knots or so below flying speed). The problem was not that the arrestor wire had broken (as suggested by Ron), but that one of the circlips holding the two halves of the port-side arrestor gear 'knuckle' together (the joint between the permanent arrestor gear wire connected to the hydraulic ram below-decks and the thicker, replaceable, cross-deck wire) had been dislodged when the knuckle struck the deck during the initial wire pull-out. This allowed the cross-deck arrestor wire to detach on the port side and whip through the arrestor hook, apparently removing a part of the aircraft fuselage as it went (probably from the 'beak' arrestor-hook housing). [The subsequent arrestor gear 'fix' was to redesign the knuckle to accommodate a spiral circlip].

Of course I had no idea what was going on behind me; all that I knew was that the aircraft was no longer decelerating and that there was insufficient deck remaining to stop by use of brakes, so I instinctively hit the throttle wide open.

It didn't take a brain surgeon to appreciate almost immediately thereafter that we were not going to achieve a successful 'bolter', so I gave the order to eject, even though our altitude and speed were below the ejection parameters for that model of Martin Baker seat. My observer, Ted Kennell, obviously reacted to that order because photographs show that he (certainly not me) jettisoned the aircraft canopy just as the aircraft left the deck. The Sea Venom canopy had to be jettisoned, usually by the observer, before either ejection seat could be activated. I was convinced at the time that during the very short time that it took for the aircraft to hit the sea, I had heard another loud noise which I believed to be the sound of Ted's ejection seat firing. As the aircraft struck the water, I ejected. After a violent tumbling ride, I entered the water, very hard, and more by training instinct than anything, inflated my Mae West and separated myself from the parachute harness.

The airborne Planeguard (SAR) helicopter crew reportedly saw two ejection sets leave the aircraft, one (mine) going relatively higher than the other. They also reported that as they rapidly came to the ditching site, they saw a person, attached to a deployed parachute canopy, lying motionless and face-down in the water in the vicinity of the area where the aircraft had come to rest and sunk. They then saw this person begin to sink, but in the few seconds that it took for the SAR winch operator aircrewman to jump into the water to attempt a rescue, he had disappeared. Ted's body was never recovered.

Meanwhile, bobbing around in my Mae West, I was concerned to notice some blood on the Mae West bladders in front of my face. I put my hand to my mouth and found fresh blood on my glove. Oh, no, internal injuries! Later, I was found to have some minor cuts on my face which had been caused by the metal parts of my oxygen mask when I heavily struck the water (which had bled profusely, of course, to the extent that I recall the SAR crew averting their eyes when they first pulled me into the helicopter!).

My next trauma was when the SAR came to the hover overhead to winch me up. The downwash inflated my parachute canopy which began to drag me, semi-submerged, away from the helicopter. Apparently I was still entangled with a parachute shroud line which, fortunately, I was able to lift over my head and come to the 'Ho' again, as did the SAR chopper. Once I was in the rescue strop, I released my dinghy pack, and was winched up. It was during this lift, and when I was being pulled into the helicopter, that I felt a severe back pain. Oh, no, a broken back!

This pain went away after 24 hours on my back in the sick bay, but returned with a vengeance some 10 years or so later when the damaged disc led to a lumbar laminectomy and disc excision. But it least it was not a broken back! On stepping out of the helicopter on MELBOURNE's flight deck, my left ankle collapsed under me. I was unable, on this occasion, to self-diagnose the problem, but it was found by the SMO to be a broken talus bone in the foot, probably caused by the impact of the rudder bar as the aircraft struck the water. An ex-RAF Government Medical Officer who examined me later, referred to it as a 'classic rudder-bar fracture', of which he had treated many during WWII following Typhoon or Tempest fighter aircraft wheels-up landings.

A point of contention in this matter was whether or not Ted Kennell had attempted to eject. I had told the Board of Enquiry of discussions which Ted and I had had as to the relative merits of ejecting or riding it out into the water should we have had a brake failure on deck. Despite the unlikelihood of the parachute fully deploying under such low-speed, low-altitude circumstances, I was convinced that ejection was the best bet. Ted, a big man, was inclined toward riding it out, but had made no definitive statement as to what he would do. (We had not discussed [or envisaged] the circumstances of our actual accident.)

The Board of Enquiry took that evidence into account in concluding, despite my statement that I believed that Ted had ejected, and the eyewitness reports of the SAR crew, that he had not attempted to eject and that that was the explanation for him not having survived the accident. However, after reviewing all of the evidence, including a now missing cine-film of the accident, taken from the flight deck, and taking into account some Defence scientific calculations, Navy Office subsequently disagreed with that conclusion. Unfortunately, the Navy Office file on the matter cannot now be found, but I have it on the authority of the DNAP staff officer at the time, that the following conclusions were reached:

- Ted Kennell was believed to have ejected as the aircraft was descending rapidly from flight deck level. Because of the aircraft's downward velocity, and taking into account his weight, the resultant vertical velocity due to the thrust from the ejection seat had been reduced to the extent that insufficient height would have been gained to achieve full seat separation or parachute deployment.

- My seat was believed to have fired as the aircraft struck the water and downward velocity had ceased. Accordingly, the trajectory gained from the ejection seat thrust would have been sufficient for full seat separation to occur and the parachute would have filled more or less as I struck the water ahead of the initial ditching point.

A tragic accident which is still painful in more than one way, but I am grateful to still be here to talk about it.

Regards to all who knew Ted.

John Da Costa

Dear Ed

Reading a few past issues of *Slipstream* has brought back many memories, some long forgotten, others not forgotten at all.

As time is running out for me, as well as it is for all of us, I figure to get pen to paper and perhaps revive a few fond memories for some ex-shipmates, namely, Jim 'Green Homet' Davis, Brian 'Fats' Levett, Ron Melville and myself, Gavin Greer. All ex-birdy 'crystal crackers'.

As 40 years has almost passed since the events, some of the recollections are a bit hazy, so please accept my apologies if Jim, Brian and Ron remember things slightly differently.

Some time around Easter 1962, Ron, Brian and myself were crash-drafted to Darwin Naval Radio Station (DNRS) as it was known in those days - *HMAS Melville* (Coonawarra). The reason for the urgency was that Jim Davis, who had been there for some time, had been injured whilst carrying out routine maintenance on a radio transmitter at Coonawarra East. A Darwin Brown snake had come at him, Jim had backed away from it but went straight through a set of glass louvers that resulted in an artery being cut in his arm. Being on duty by himself, he had to render his own first aid before finally being able to raise help. As a result of this incident, Ron, Brian, and myself were posted there as safety numbers, we were also expected to help the General Service mechs with their maintenance despite never having been trained on the equipment. Either the General Service were very short of personnel at the time, or Birdies were judged to be pretty adaptable, whatever the reason, we were chosen to go.

I can't speak for Ron here (who came through Brisbane), but when Brian and I stepped off the plane at about 7.30pm after a flight leaving Melbourne at 8 am, via Adelaide and lots of other stops, we thought we had landed in an oven. After leaving Melbourne's not too hot autumn morning, to arrive in what must have been 90 plus (Fahrenheit) was a bit of a shock. Needless to say we survived.

We had a couple of days to 'post-in' and we were given a quick run-around over the stations, both transmitting and receiving. After being told the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of being around WRANS (the first dealings we had had with them since recruit days at *Cerberus*) and being shown over Larrakeah Army Barracks, we were ready and raring to go.

Our quarters were at Coonawarra West and our work was at Coonawarra East, we travelled to and from work by bus. We were allocated to A, B, C and D watches and had a General Service mentor/guardian with us. We worked 24 hours on and 24 off, within the 24 on we worked two shifts. The work was very interesting even if the equipment seemed like farm machinery after the miniature (relatively speaking) gear we were used to.

The General Service mechs and Radio Operators were all great guys and our social lives were one great party. Remember 'THE LOG'? Bus trips there with supplies after the 'wets' closed, boat trips out to Mica Beach for 'smokies', shooting' roos at Adelaide River, building the speedboat and water skiing at Mindel Beach, finishing off the swimming pool to name just a few. The runs into Darwin, drinking at the Vic. hotel with its dirt floor in the bar, Saturday night dances at the RSL Club, the Don hotel (No Dogs or Sailors). The local native workforce who played football in their bare feet, who showed us how to catch and eat (raw and cooked) witchetty grubs, going walkabout whenever they felt like it, and the odd spear fight in their 'dongas', and Jimmy Kookaburra who was a real character.

There was the long, winding and undulating stagger back to the Mess from the 'wets' where a fire extinguisher or two was known to leap out from the wall and crack the skull. Trying to win a WRAN's heart, succeeding sometimes, going to the open-air movies, babysitting for the married sailors, nights at the Fanny Bay, Parap and Nightcliff hotels.

Heating a can of baked beans on the stove and forgetting to pierce the can - Boom! Instant coat of baked beans on the ceiling, possibly still there today. Ferocious - but fascinatingly beautiful lightning storms, heart flutters when we had to patch aerials in the middle of a storm, blackouts and starting the big Marine diesel generator downstairs. Sweeping away millions of flying ant wings during the Wet, big green frogs on the stairs, QSYs and ZRCs, India Kilo time, putting the water cooler to uses other than for chilling water. Divisions at Larrakeah, 'Fall out the RCs', and half the ships company fell out.

Squeezed into all that hard work, 'Fats' met Jan Gordon and married her, unfortunately they have divorced. I met Heather Owen and married her. Jim, I believe, met Betty there and married her, whilst Ron withstood temptation until a later date. Must have been something in the water for three-quarters of us to be 'de-bachelorised' like that. 'Okker' Collins, Trevor Maxwell (joined Army, served in Vietnam), Fred Harper, 'Splinter' Pilmore, 'Spin' Heywood (lost on *Voyager*), 'Benny' and Colleen Benson, Jim King, Laurie and Sue Dripps, George Ro (with the baby kangaroo), Nadine Stark, Joy Hody to name a few - (remember the faces but not the names of many more) bring back more memories.

As the saying goes - all good things come to an end - we did not escape, and over a period of several months we were all posted back to 'birdieland', all the richer for having had the experience of being 'fish-heads' for a short period.

I'd better close now before nostalgia gets too big a hold. Thanks for a terrific magazine and keep up the good work, it's great reading about and seeing photos of former shipmates.

Gavin Greer - Ex-POATC 1958-78

Dear Ed

Thanks for another great edition of *Slipstream*; it always makes for an enjoyable read.



With reference to the photograph on page 19 of the last edition showing the Firefly prang; the Observer climbing out of the 816 Squadron aircraft was SBLT Bren Hill, who later retired as a Commander.

The pilot, an RN Lieutenant whose name escapes me, became a little 'anxious' about flying and was repatriated to the United Kingdom by liner from Singapore. A few days after leaving port, the liner caught fire! I guess he was a little more 'anxious' after that.

Jack Suriano - Ex- 816 Sqdn (2nd Korean cruise)

Dear Ed

I refer to the article in the July 2001 issue of *Slipstream* regarding the fate of Gannet 825.

I was the Fitter (Engines) for 825, the Rigger (Airframes) was my good mate, the late George Richmond. If my memory is right, I believe the pilot was LT 'Cobwebs' Knowles.

I clearly remember watching as 825 went in, I don't think the pilot even got his shoes wet.

However, 825 should not be remembered for her ignominious end, but by the fact that she recorded the 10,000th land-on aboard HMAS *Melbourne*. To celebrate the event, a chocolate cake appeared on the flight deck and was rapidly consumed by the aircrew, although George and I both managed to score a 'lik-lik' piece.

I also read with great pleasure the article by CMDR John van Gelder RAN Rtd.

Many moons ago, the then LT van Gelder and myself took a Gannet Trainer (832, I think) from *Albatross* down to Sale in Victoria, to show the RAAF chaps how it all happens. Once airborne, rank 'went out the window' and John even allowed me time at the controls. I recall John as the epitome of an Officer and a Gentleman, a real nice guy. I was delighted to learn that he is still active.

Thanks Ed, many wonderful memories were re-born by these articles.

Trevor 'Johnno' Johnston

Dear Ed

Surfing the web this morning and came across the attached photographs of the Argentine Navy's S-2T; their aircraft carrier is the former Dutch aircraft carrier KAREL DOORMAN (now A.R.A. VEINTICINCO DE MAYO (alias - 25 May)).

I love the look of the turbo fitted Trackers – what a pity the RAAF canned the idea of the RAN having fixed wing aircraft.

Geoff Vickridge



Dear Ed

HMS VENGEANCE, the last Australian WW2 aircraft carrier, once the pride of the Royal Australian Navy is about to be scrapped in Brazil unless she can be rescued.

Exactly 60 years ago she was launched to lead the fight against the terrors of the Nazis and Japanese evils in the Pacific.

Today, she lies forgotten in South America awaiting her fate and eventual scrapping unless the British Nation can raise up to US\$6 million to purchase the ship from the Brazilian Navy.

This appeal urges the Australian and British Government to take the responsibility to safeguard this unique naval heritage for future generations.

A web site is available for the Press but its address should not be published widely but it is okay to the FAA Association publications:

<http://www.fleetairarmarchive.net/vengeance>

For further information for the Press please contact: Graham Falkner Drucker, Save the Vengeance Appeal.

Email: drucker@fleetairarmarchive.net

Dear Ed

Love what you are doing with *Slipstream*.

In light of the recent elections [FAAA] I thought that this photo might be relevant. The intrepid bunch of young, bit older, and ancient aviators were the sharp end of No.2 Tracker OFS.

The head student must have passed on some inspiration as we all passed and several of us ended up as Top Tigers [816 Squadron].

From Left to Right: Col 'Collywally' Jenkins, Ray 'Beachball' Godfrey, Richard 'Scotto' Scott, Toz 'DaBoss' Dadswell, Jeff 'Daggers' Dalgliesh, Jim 'Jock' Caldwell, Phil 'Pippi' Landon.



Now that I'm on the net I will be able to send in a few more exposé photos.

Ray 'Beachball' Godfrey

Dear Ed

Many thanks for sending me a copy of your excellent magazine, and also for being kind enough to print my note on the Field Gun Crew. Things have moved on a bit recently, the 2002 field gun crew will, hopefully, have a new 'home' in the Gosport area. So far we have 44 volunteers for next years crews, we intend to have one 'fast' crew and another one to provide competition and to give 'display runs', things are not so bad!

On a personal level, I wonder if I can ask for your members help with the following?

My uncle, Robert (Bob) Griffiths served in the RN during WW2 and transferred into the RAN on completion of hostilities, he served in the RAN for 10 years, reaching CPO status. He passed away some years ago and I would like to make contact with his Australian family. The only details I have are as follows:

1. He married an Australian lady called Amy and I understand that they had 2 children, one being a girl named Robin.
2. He spent some time at Nowra.
3. After leaving the service he managed a Servicemen's Club in the Shoalhaven area for many years.

I realise it's a bit of a cheek to ask your members for assistance in trying to trace Bob's family, and apologise for the very sketchy details, but I would be extremely grateful for any help they can give me.

Once again, many thanks for allowing me to view your excellent magazine; my best wishes to you and your readers for 2002.

Brian Gibbons

[If you can help Brian, please forward any details to the Editor.]

Dear Ed

I have just read my copy of the November 2001 *Slipstream*. When I read the article on the RAN HFV Crest, it rang a bell. I checked through my Vietnam photographs and found the enclosed photographs

They were taken at Bearcat in early July 1968 while I was on exchange from my main posting, that being on loan to 9 Sqdn RAAF (RAN Det 9 Sqn).

The first shows the main sign showing the crest in its original position alongside the EMU badge. The second is a closer look at the crest. It was mounted on the sign on a backing to make it stand proud of the background.



I greatly enjoy the magazine, particularly seeing old and familiar names popping up in just about every issue.

John 'Bomber' Brown - LCDR RANR brownbom@bigpond.com.au

Dear Ed

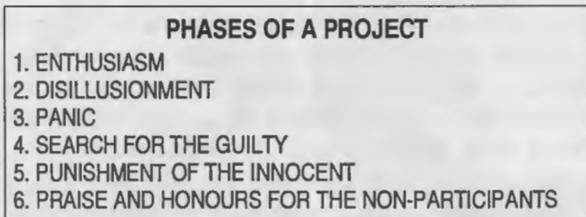
It may come as a surprise to you, but our experiences in the Navy are NOT confined to those hard working people like ourselves where we worked our guts out and someone else received the credit.

Whilst working at Cockatoo Dockyard, I was relating one of my experiences with the Supply Superintendent when he laughed and said that he thought that it only happened to him and his staff.

He then went to his desk drawer and pulled out a sheet headed 'Phases of a Project' which he photocopied and gave to me.

I found it two days ago whilst searching for some information to go into one of my books and thought this could stir up some memories for old maintenance hands from our days at *Albatross*.

Alan G Spearpoint



Dear Ed

I refer to the July 2001 edition of *Slipstream*, in particular page 19 and the photograph titled 'What's This Story?'.

Like many other readers time has taken toll on the old memory, however there are two I can recognise, top row second from the left is myself (Frank Clavey) and front row second from the right is John Stalker (dec) a long and close friend.

I do recollect attending a dance at the main drill hall, at *Albatross*, and this photo could well have been taken at the hall after the fair.

Frank Clavey

Dear Ed

GOLD CARD – KOREAN VETERANS

Regarding the previous letters from Andrew Powell and Les Powell, I would like to pass on the following information taken from the following publications:

- 'Veterans' Affairs Information Booklet' – supplied by my local Federal MP.
- 2001 edition of, 'You and Your Pension – Veterans' Affairs', available from Veterans' Affairs.

First of all, you don't apply for a Gold Card as such, but for a Disability Pension that is paid in increments of 10% at the following rates (correct at DEC 2001) each fortnight:

- 100% - \$273.80
- 90% - \$246.42
- 80% - \$219.04
- 70% - \$191.66
- 60% - \$164.28
- 50% - \$136.90
- 40% - \$109.52
- 30% - \$82.14
- 20% - \$54.76
- 10% - \$27.38

A Gold Card is issued to:

- A veteran receiving 100% Disability Pension.
- A veteran receiving 50% or more Disability Pension plus any amount of Service Pension.
- A veteran who receives a Service Pension, and qualifies for treatment under the Income and Assets Test.
- A war widow(er) and dependent children of a veteran whose death has been accepted as war caused.

Disability Pension may be paid to a veteran who has an injury or disease related to warlike or non-warlike operational service. It is not taxable and is not subject to an Income and Assets Test. It may be paid in addition to a Service Pension (which is taxable).

Do not attempt to complete any Vet. Affairs forms on your own but consult your local RSL (or Service organisation) and get an advocate to assist you. They will also hold all the correct forms you need to use.

Although a Gold Card may be issued to eligible veterans over 70 years of age, no mention has been made about a non-taxable Disability Pension with it. Your advocate may have the latest information.

A decision on a Disability Pension could take up to six-months to be approved, but this would be backdated to the time the illness or disease was detected.

Remember that it must be related to the service in Korea.

Good luck with your applications.

Geoff Larcombe

In a recent interview, General Norman Schwartzkopf was asked if he thought there was room for forgiveness toward the people who have harboured and abetted the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on America.

His answer was classic Schwartzkopf. He said, "I believe that forgiving them is God's function. Our job is simply to arrange the meeting."



Dear Ed

Ian Ferguson, in November's issue of *Slipstream* made reference to Sam Cates and his membership of the racing whaler's winning crew in the Bay of Islands, NZ, in 1950.

To attest to this event I have enclosed a photo of that crew and that moment. Sam can be seen standing in the stem of the day boat on the left, The 'bods' in the whaler are a little more difficult to identify except perhaps for me being thrown overboard. Those who participated will probably recognise themselves.



Also on that tour was a sojourn to Milford Sound a magnificent cathedral-like fjord. Whilst there, one of the Sea Furies from 805 squadron took to the air and engaged in some photographic work. Unfortunately, I don't have the full set of photos around, but one that survived is enclosed. It shows *Sydney* almost as a speck on the water. In fact when I had this copy made from the original, which was a bit creased, the operator making the copy thought the ship was a crease in the photo and obliterated it. Imagine my surprise when I got the copy back, looked, and found that the *Sydney* had disappeared. A rather sheepish photo clerk said, 'I guess the ship was the whole point of the exercise'. This was somewhat of an understatement. I don't recall who the pilot was, but I'm sure someone does and probably knows the Sea Fury number as well. So let's have the details, fellows.



Finally, in the October 2000 *Slipstream*, Ted 'Bungy' Willams included some photos of a couple of Sea Furies at Eglinton back in 1948. One of those shown was of Sea Fury 111, which we armourers referred to as 'nucleus' because of all the 1's.

I well remember the day the event occurred, not least because of the rather disturbing report that the crash of 111 was due to a 20mm-shell link. To recall that day I have enclosed a couple more photos of that crash, one of which shows Freddie Sherbourne craning his neck into the cockpit.



A footnote to Bungy. In the photo of the bodies (photo 4) in that edition, the person standing behind Bernie Lewis is me! But I can't recall the occasion of the photo. Perhaps you could let me know Bungy on doug dew@tpg.com.au

Doug Dewhirst- Ex-CAF (0)

Dear Ed

As a junior pilot in the Fleet Air Arm making my first tentative steps in the 'fling wing' environment, I always feel encouraged when I read your magazine. The quality of the publication and the enthusiastic contributions made each quarter betray the pride your members show in having served in the FAA.

This year 723 Squadron will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Events are currently being organised to celebrate the occasion in June. Please pass on to your members (particularly those who may have served in 723 squadron over the last 50 years) that they are most welcome to participate in the festivities. A working group has been stood up and will forward the dates to the Association as soon they crystallise. Readers with special memories are also encouraged to write to me at the email address below.

Best wishes for 2002,
 Andrew Rohrsheim LEUT RAN
 Tel: 02 4424 3723
 E-mail: andrew.rohrsheim@defence.gov.au

What is the difference between a commissioned officer and a warrant officer?
 When you 'Commission' a product, you hope it works.
 When you 'Warrant' a product, you guarantee it!

Dear Ed

I have just received, in Bognor Regis, UK, the November issue of *Slipstream*, posted 3/12/01 and delivered 6/12/01. Half the time taken for my 'oppo' in Gosport, 30 miles away, to receive our Christmas card!

As usual, *Slipstream* has stirred up a few memories of my time with the RAN. Ian Ferguson recalls Sam Cates pulling in a winning whaler in the Bay of Islands in 1950. That was in a regatta held at the end of a SEATO exercise involving several navies, including the Kiwis, whose contribution was led by the cruiser *Bellona*, which fell foul of the dirty tricks played by the 20th CAG.

Bellona's 'chippies' had prepared a racing whaler that was so thin they hardly dared to stand in it. During the exercises, an 805 Sea Fury was making one of those go-through-the-motions attacks on *Bellona*, but the 'jockey' obviously did something he shouldn't have done, and put two of Sam Cates's 3" rockets with 60 lb. concrete heads into *Bellona*. One ended up in the wardroom flat, the other smashed the racing whaler to bits! It has been said that, although in a slightly different context, they also 'went through the motions' in *Bellona*, hence the report that quite a stink was raised.

I also participated in that whaler race, although my previous rowing experience had been confined to the Trentham Park lake near that well known naval port of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire where we trained, and tried to impress our girl friends, 1940-43. (As in that town they did not know the difference between a sailor and a whaler, they were somewhat surprised, in early 1940, to have a FAA training establishment, *Daedalus 2*, dumped on them at four days notice!). Our whaler crew was made up from the Air HQ members of the CPO mess. CEA Jimmy Gutteridge (who was reputed to take his bath in a pint pot) was the cox'n, Ted Weam of the ACR, CAA Jan Bosworthick, me i/c the Armoury, Basil Holmes, and one other I do not re-call, were on the oars. As we actually finished the course, we regarded it as a successful do.

As I write, more memories come up. One of a very different kind comes to mind from the Bay of Islands. A Sea Fury had made an emergency landing ashore, and a team of, I think, four artificers went ashore in the Army liaison group's jeep and trailer, driven by a corporal, with the appropriate gear to effect repairs. On the return trip, going downhill to cross a bridge over a gully, the trailer took charge, overturning the whole outfit into the gully killing them all. One, a tall Yorkshireman I only remember as 'Lofty', did live for a couple of days, but I remember LTCDR Manners-Clark (he of sartorial excellence!) predicting that he would not survive. (It was Lofty, who in our first week of service, not at the time knowing my name, addressed me as 'Smiler', a nickname which stuck to me until I returned from the RAN since when I was known as 'Blue' which is still used among my competition shooting 'oppos'). These sad events led to the inhabitants of Russel witnessing a funeral such as they had never previously seen, and have probably not seen since.

HMAS Sydney, being a flagship, had the RAN Band aboard. The funeral parade, under the command of the *Sydney's* XO, was headed by the band and an armed guard followed by a contingent from every navy in the exercise. I seem to remember the cemetery overlooking the sea, and the graves being close to some of Captain Cook's men. We slow marched to the burial site, but as we formed up for the return, I heard, for the last time in my naval career, the traditional order given by the Commander, 'Bandmaster, strike up a merry tune'. (At my funeral, they will go

home to 'Sussex by the Sea', more merrier than that is difficult to get!)

Another memory relating to the band. Does any ancient reader remember the time in Hobart, c.1950, when a somewhat disgruntled bandsman, not quite himself, returned aboard late one evening, and ditched all the band instruments into what is probably the deepest quayside berth in the world? It took a diver all day to get 'em back up again!

Hobart brings up another memory. I had joined *Sydney's* ships company at Devonport in August 1948, when we were all living in the *Glory* at the coaling jetty. I was in a small minority of Air members among a predominantly 'Fish Head' membership. I don't recall how the conversation came about, but I was ridiculed for stating that using the aircraft on the flight deck had turned a carrier around in Bigi Bay, Malta. In vain did I point out that twenty-four aeroplanes running on the deck could produce as much HP as from the 'gubbins' down in the 'blackhole'. I was vindicated in Hobart, when the 20th. CAG pulled the ship off the wall, and turned her to point to sea! I do not remember why, but there was one occasion when a carrier thus beat striking dockies.

The account of the Wessex re-placement mission mentions Arthur Sara when he was in the RAN London office. Arthur and Lillian were, with Margaret and me, among the 'Showground Gypsies' at Nowra, after I had left the ship, 50-51. 'Digs' were hard to obtain, and very expensive. There were no Married Quarters either, so some of us bought caravans to park on the showground site. Also living there were Gordon and Jo Foale, Ron and Rose Higgins, Harry and Judy Wade, 'Bluey' Harrison and Jock Lacey and their ladies, the Ordnance Officer Harry Stone and Pam, and Jan and Eleanor Bosworthick who lived in a tent! We had to carry clean and dirty water, and for most of the time there was no electricity, and the heads and bathroom were 100 yards down the road. We started there with a two years old daughter, and acquired No.1 son while we were there. (He has a Nowra birth certificate that states his father's place of residence as 'Showground, Nowra, NSW'. When he went to join the Civil Service, the interviewer looked at this document and asked, 'What does your Old Man do? Run a coconut shy?') Many years later, when I was the Ordnance Officer and Assistant General Manager of the RNAY at Fleetlands, Gosport, Arthur paid us an official visit, and as a result of this we exchanged domestic visits, he and Lillian living in Croydon.

Gordon McPhee's letter about weapon and infantry training leads me on to the origin of the air station at Nowra, which may be news to some of the younger readers, at least. During WW2, the British Pacific Fleet was the largest fleet ever deployed by the Royal Navy that, until the USN expanded after Pearl Harbour, was the largest navy the world had known. I served on one of the 60 RN air squadrons operating from 34 aircraft carriers. To support the aircraft of this fleet, there were commissioned Mobile Naval Air Bases (MONABs), which all had ship's names beginning with 'Nab'. MONABs were intended to, and were capable of, following the fleet up through the islands as the Allies closed in on Japan, but the two big bombs put paid to that. However, the personnel of the MONABs were all given weapon and infantry training as they were expected to be well forward. My Service Certificate indicates that my squadron disembarked, first to *Nabthorpe* (Schofields), moving on to *Nabstock* (Maryborough), ending the war at *Nabbington*, which was Nowra. There were other MONABs but I do not recall their names, but I believe that one was at Randwick racecourse! I know that this is not strictly relevant to the RAN, but

I chucked it in to indicate that letting matelots loose with dangerous toys is not a new concept!

In my previous letter, I mentioned the spring in the United Kingdom. I am now writing this on 8th. December when winter should be well set-in. Autumn has been so mild that the trees have retained their leaves until now, this has resulted in the most glorious colours we have had for many a long year. This 'arvo', I saw a bee in the winter jasmine flowers, and I have picked some tomatoes in my unheated greenhouse. Those ancients, who were in the UK during the miserable winters of 47,48 and 49, will understand how unusual this is. I wonder what the next issue will dig up for me! Of course, you may not wish to publish my ramblings but, if you do, I hope my recollections will revive some memories for those of my dwindling generation, and perhaps be of some interest to those of the younger.

Finally, if I have got any of it wrong, and it is a long way back to remember, I will be only too happy to be corrected. Can't stuff the 'grandbrats' up with a load of old bull!

Hope you all had a good Christmas.

Maurice Ayling - Phone: 01243 262082

13 Elizabeth Avenue, Rose Green, Bognor Regis, Sussex UK. PO21 3EL

Dear Ed

This cartoon is one of my favourite memories of my time in the Fleet Air Arm.



It was drawn by one of the squadron members, Ian Hughes, who must have spent many hours wringing his hands while this bunch of 'makee-leamees' frightened both their instructors and themselves.

It was presented to us on completion of the OFS.

Ray Godfrey

HMAS MELBOURNE ASSOCIATION Inc.

The above Association invites all past and present serving members from ships named HMAS MELBOURNE, to participate in a reunion which has been arranged from Friday, 28 June through to Sunday, 30 June 2002.

The ships include the Cruiser 1912-1929 – The Aircraft Carrier 1955-1982 and the Frigate, which is currently in service.

For full details regarding registration, venues, cost and events, please contact the Honorary Secretary of the Association:

Mr Kevin 'Mitch' Miller

2 Bottlebrush Avenue - BRADBURY NSW 2560

Phone: 02 4628 6840

Dear Ed

I have been following the story of the RANHFV weapons and infantry training and I would like to add my pennyworth as it were.

I was being employed as hangar marshal having been posted to 723 Squadron on 19th August 1967 until I was promoted to A/ POAH on the 27th October 1968.

It was in April 1968 when it was decided to provide the 723 Squadron with it's own weapons instructors to attend to it's aircrew and ground crew weapons instruction.

The following personnel were selected to attend No.3/68 Platoon Weapons Instructors Course at the Infantry Centre, Ingleburn, NSW: -

POQMG(FC) Ken TRAILL

POAH 'Dad' BRUCE

LAMAE Gordon 'Pancho' WALTER

LAAH George PLANT

And there was one other winch man whose name escapes me, but as I recall had reasons for not attending the course.

There were 28 members on the course 24 of which were army and mostly of NCO rank.

From the word GO, we were thrown in the deep end and due to our complete weapons ignorance (other than Colour Guard) had no idea what we were doing for the most part. However, we did have four experienced Weapons and Tactical training instructors in WO's Metzoff, Palmer, Curry and Bulowe, and after 4 weeks we were able to instruct personnel to handle and fire the weapons that the RANHFV would be, and could be, using during their deployment. These included the 9mm Browning Automatic Pistol, the LIA1 Rifle, Grenade Launcher, M60 Machine Gun, and two rocket propelled anti-tank weapons which did not enter into the proposed training. Hand grenade and instruction of the Mk18A1 Claymore Mine was also given. I also give mention to the M15 Armalite.

Since none of us had seen, much less handled these weapons before, I thought we did very well and hope we served in no less manner in doing our part for the Service.

Unfortunately, during our Weapons Instruction on Beecroft Range, we lost a UH1B helicopter over the cliff. That loss does not rate a mention anywhere in the 'History of the Fleet Air Arm'.

George Plant

WO RAN Rtd.

Dear Ed

VALE

It was with great sadness that I read of the passing of Ashley 'Aspro' Hardinge just before Christmas. He served in the 4th group of the RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam 1970-71, later leaving the service as a Leading Airman Armourer.

Aspro had been going through a very rough time with his health and spent a large part of his latter life in hospital. Over a period he had both kidneys removed, one leg amputated, a series of heart attacks and a heart by pass.

I was Aspro's friend for a long time before he went to Vietnam. I lost touch with him when he returned home and it saddens me that I was not aware of his illness.

To his family, his wife Jenny and her children, I would like to pass on my condolences.

Jim Hill

Dear Ed

Greetings and salutations, we have just returned from our annual pilgrimage to Western Australia

Last December 6th, Anne and I enjoyed lunch at a FAAA gathering at Gloucester Ridge, formerly Mulberry Farm, in the upper Swan Valley. We dined with John Green, Bevan and Kay Daws and Peter and Kath Adams (ex-Tracker driver).

I had a chat with John Green about a report of this luncheon for *Slipstream*. I don't know if he has done so, but I am sending you some of the photographs taken at the time.

- (1) Armourer gold, Keith Murdoch
- (2) Hilton 'Dad' Devereaux and 'Skinhead'
- (3) Armourers bold, 'Jo' Jost and Bob Pesca
- (4) Kay and Bevan Daws
- (5) Pat Murdoch and Anne Kelson
- (6) Chris O'Neill and Colin Bushe-Jones



Daughter Patricia and I were wandering down Hay Street recently when outside the Central Law Courts I espied with my little eye a chap who bore 'great' resemblance to one of my Divisional Officers. I called out in a stentorian voice as I raised my arm in true naval salute and addressed Geoff Vickridge. That turned the afternoon around. Instant make and mend. You should have seen us quaffing caffeine instead of 'slurping suds'.



On the same day, I also bumped into Theo Bushe-Jones.



Avis and John Gorin called to see us, and we have been in company with Bob and Shirley Gilmour, who are happy and still in love.



Keith Doncon is also well and happy enough, but Kerry Sojan has experienced some heavy surgery and claims he is recovering okay. Considering what he has been through he looks pretty good.



We also called by and wished Peter 'Kipper' Britten a happy 60th birthday.



Greg 'Skinhead' Kelson
The Living Legend RAN Rtd.

Dear Ed

The following article from the RN Navy News of 04.01.02 may be of interest to the readers.

Geoff Vickridge

The last World War I Royal Navy pilot, Conrad Philip Bristow, has died just a fortnight short of his 102nd birthday.

Philip Bristow joined the Royal Naval Air Service in 1917. He was summoned to London for an Admiralty board, and on his 18th birthday made his way to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich as a Probationary Flying Officer, learning navigation, the principles of flight, and how to take apart and put together a machine gun.

The next stage of his training saw him actually get his hands on the controls of an aircraft, when he headed off for France, to Vendome in La Rochelle. He was taken aloft in a Caudron bi-plane for a handful of flights until he was judged ready for his first solo flight. Then it was "Off you go, Bristow!" - and off he went, his son John recalled him saying.

After circling above the French countryside and making a perfect landing on the bumpy grass, Philip taxied hurriedly over to his instructor to ask if he had qualified as a pilot. "Yes, but don't you taxi as fast as that!" came the reply.

The fledgling pilot then returned to the Naval Air Station at Lee-on-the-Solent for training in seaplanes - a completely different technique, as water presented a difficult platform for both take-off and landing. There was the added complication at Lee-on-the-Solent of having to avoid the jutting pier.

Once fully trained, Philip moved on to Westgate-on-Sea to begin submarine surveillance flights. Coming down at sea was a serious risk for Naval pilots, not least because of the unreliability of the engines, and each aircraft trailed a long copper wire to act as a radio aerial - and two carrier pigeons as a back-up in calling for assistance.

On three occasions Bristow ditched with mechanical problems. He was rescued in turn by a trawler, a drifter and a British destroyer - twice employing his pigeons.

In April 1918 the RNAS was absorbed into the newly-formed Royal Air Force and Philip left the RAF as a flight lieutenant in May 1919 to rejoin the family glass merchants business in Cardiff, of which he became managing director in 1938. But he kept his Naval uniform throughout his time at Westgate and described his RAF uniform as 'rarely worn'.

Philip Bristow was made a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur in 1999. His wife Norah died in 1983 and he is survived by two children, five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Dear Ed

I found the enclosed photo of my recruits class whilst reminiscing with an old album. I think it was taken about the end of 1950, but I wouldn't be sure. In those days, you got posted to *Albatross* as soon as you had finished at *Cerberus*, which was after you passed your basic training.

I think all of the older members would remember Mr 'Tid' Carter - Senior Commissioned Bosun - who was OIC of the Recruit School and one who liked to tell 'birdies' that first of all you are a sailor, and WILL pass your seamanship!

Thence to *Albatross*, where, until there were enough to start a class, you filled one of many roles, i.e. CP0's messman, PO's messman (if you were lucky) or one of the scullery hands in the main dining hall.

I arrived at *Albatross* some time in July and spent the next two months in the scullery washing mess trays and mugs. No such things as plates and your own issue mug in those days. Only a stainless steel tray and a cracked mug – if you got there early; otherwise you went without a brew or just waited for a mug. There seemed to be plenty of 'fighting irons', although on the odd occasion, you had to wait for them as well.

When a class was started at Recruit School, each man started as a Recruit Naval Airman, and went through all the facets of the Air Branch, i.e. you did about a week on each of the following subjects: Engines, Airframes, Photographic, Meteorology, Ordnance, Safety Equipment and Aircraft Handling. On completion, you did your exam, and, depending on the results and, to a degree, on your own choice, you were earmarked for future training. At least, in those days you had some idea of what you were in for. I did an Engines Course of 24 weeks, and in that time covered the Centaurus and Griffon engines reasonably well. The class in the photo had representatives in Airframes, Engines, Ordnance and Handling, but none of the other branches, which was unusual.

The officer in the middle is LTCDR Sykes RN, who, as a Lieutenant, spotted Prince Phillip's photo in the morning paper, that showed him wearing LCDR's rings. He immediately challenged the roster, as he was senior to Phillip. Not long afterwards, he too was promoted.

The remainder in the photo are:

Rear: AA Jack Griffin; D. Roberts; R. Turner; G.W.J. Harper; G.R. Terry; R.L. Burke; H. Davidson; A. Diver; L. L. Fitzpatrick; F. Welch.
Front: N. T. Magnus; J. Day; G. Edwards; J. Green; R.E. Smith; LTCDR Sykes; D.J. Randall; B. Fry; V. King; A. McGowan; L. Hodgson.

In the background is a Mk. 4 Spitfire, and at one stage the Dummy Deck (up where the Museum now stands) had a number of A4k 8 spitfires which were used for Aircraft Handler training. If my information is correct, the difference was that the Mk. 4 had a three-bladed prop and the Mk.8 had a four-bladed prop as the obvious differences. The photo is over 50 years old now, so none of us would look much like our photos any more. They were a good bunch of mates.

D.A. Roberts - Ex-CMECH AE



Dear Ed

I have enjoyed reading *Slipstream* for many years, however, after reading every word I always feel there is something missing. One can compare it to an exciting session of sex, but on completion one should feel there should be more, with more variety. [Try a cigarette when you've read it - it works in the movies. Ed]

It appears to me that numerous writers to *Slipstream* are, or have been, workaholics. Although I am not one of those, I did love working as a meteorological observer in the navy.

The work being made more exciting when 'panic buttons' were pressed due to 'naughty' weather. The Chief or PO would be running around in circles, for no other reason than to assert their power of authority, and the Met. Officer would be threatening to 'run-in' the duty Met. Rating – who was overworked and underpaid.

At times like this we didn't need 'Minties', we needed Lance Corporal Jones from 'Dad's Army' shouting, 'Don't panic! Don't panic!' The navy can be very thankful that the Junior Ratings continued to work at a high standard, even under these stressful conditions.

I would like to mention some runs ashore. I'm sure most sailors (including Admirals) went ashore. I can't speak for what the Admirals did, but I do have many morally excellent memories of my shore leave. It was an important part of our navy life and it helped strengthen our mateship.

The enclosed photo shows L-R: Myself, Jock Todd and Maurie



Mankoph enjoying ourselves at the Bognor Hotel in 1958, a favourite 'watering-hole' for many sailors on Friday and Saturday nights. Many lovely young women also gathered there, Rita, Ruth and Barbara come to mind.

Johnny O'Keefe performed there in the early days of his singing career. The Juke Boxes were also a big part of life in the 50's and 60's.

I can remember Charlie Quinn taking over the microphone whilst the band were having a break, and crooning away better than Bing. I was the only patron to applaud him, but although we were both neatly dressed in our charcoal green suits, we were requested to leave the premises.

(Continued on page 14)

We complied; but Charlie managed to throw a few quick punches on the way down the stairs.

The Bognor closed at 2200 and there would be a rush to go elsewhere to hotels that closed at midnight, such as the Royal Standard and the Civic. There was a cover charge levied to gain entrance that also included a small plate of food.

At 0001, if still 'raring to go', there were other options, or one could return to 'Johnnys' for a good night's sleep. At this time of the morning 'Johnnys' was a great spot, especially in the years when dark Beenleigh Rum was served in the cafeteria from midnight on. I can remember being the sole drinker there one early morning and three Aircraft Handlers joined me. One of them let off a firecracker and old Dick behind the counter nearly had a heart attack. We all thought it was a great joke, but Dick had the last laugh, he turned off the rum.

Maybe Kings 'Bloody' Cross was a better option for a hamburger at the Hasty Tasty, or for some other form of entertainment.

Under the trees in Rushcutter's Park was a popular night-spot for some of us. With a big bag of small prawns (bought from the 'Rockers'), numerous bottles of beer and girl friends, the hours would race by.

On other nights we would return to the ship at Garden Island, stopping at Harry's Cafe de Wheels for a hot pie and peas with tomato sauce, all washed down with a cup of tomato soup and a 'goffa'. It was better than any sleeping pill. A spare 'goffa' was also a must to put under the pillow at night to be drunk at room temperature the next morning.

There were many other watering holes around Sydney that the sailors made popular, each pub providing a variety of amusements.

I wish to remind all old seafarers that two glasses of red wine a day are a health kick. Cheers to one and all.

Raymond 'Occa' O'Connor

Spotted this in a recent Sydney newspaper. Ed

'CAFE DE WHEELS' EXPANDS NORTH

Short Black's search in recent weeks for Sydney's oldest food business really should have included Harry's Cafe de Wheels. While not the record holder, it did open in the late 1930s and, the war years aside, has shunted around Woolloomooloo ever since.

A new era begins this week for a Sydney institution founded on 'providing working men with a working man's feed'.

Not only will a new van, modelled on the original Harry's, take up residence on the corner of Memorial and Surf streets in Forster this week, but the fare appears to be unshackling itself from humbler origins.

A new seafood pie will be introduced to the Forster menu: fresh chowder topped with filo pastry. It's a long way from Harry 'Tiger' Edwards's original pie floater.

VICE DURING WARTIME

"Far from reforming us, the terrorist attacks on America seem to have driven us ever further into the arms of our familiar friends: alcohol, cigarettes, sex and gambling," writes Carol Midgley.

Despite hasty post-September 11 resolutions to live healthier, more spiritual lives, many Britons are seeking comfort in familiar vices, Midgley reports in the Times of London – drinking, smoking, eating and, er, dating like there's no tomorrow. "If we learn anything from what happened it should be that you must live for the moment because tomorrow you could be toast," says one barroom philosopher. Bookies are doing well, too, says Midgley.

In the U.S., jittery travellers arriving hours early for flights are lending patriotic assistance to the American liquor industry, adds Monte Reel in Tuesday's Washington Post. "Nowadays, I'd say nine-tenths of the people who get on a plane are drunk," says a woman caught tossing back a few at an airport bar. "I gotta say, if this is what we have to do for national security, I'm all for it," adds her drinking companion.

Dear Ed

On page 19 of the Quarterly Journal, Volume 12 Number 4, you showed a photograph of His Excellency the Governor – General Field Marshall Sir William Slim at RANAS Nowra Divisions, with a query about the date.

The date was 12 November 1953.

For your perusal I have enclosed two more photographs taken on the same day. The one with Sir William on the dais includes Captain Rhodes, and on his left, LTCOL Martin Gilliot, Kings Royal Rifle Corps and Military Secretary to the Governor General. I am on the right of Captain Rhodes. At that time I was the Naval aide-de-camp to the Governor General.



Martin Gilliot was knighted and for many years was Private Secretary to the Queen Mother.

CMDR John Griffin MVO RAN Rtd.

Dear Ed

We in the Blue Mountains may only be few, but we don't forget our shipmates who have lost their lives in the service of their country.

The photograph shows the wreath we placed for the memorial service for HMAS Sydney at Springwood, NSW.

John Cattan



Dear Ed,

As many of the older readers will know, our man in Adelaide, Barry 'Dooley' Lord, lost his gear during Cyclone Tracey in Darwin. Barry and Lee, his wife, lost all their records and photographs and nearly all else. As a self confessed hoarder I was amazed at how well Dooleys – 'Wave of Nostalgia' article did such a good job about our course, NAC3 Aircrew Class of May 1951 – See *Slipstream* October, 1995 pages 21-23.

I will endeavour to fill in a few gaps and perhaps the odd update. My wife Di has been at me for years to get rid of all the junk. I promised that when we were settled I would sort it out and do some 'pruning and filing'. I have found quite a few old photographs and have had some enlarged for Lee and Dooley as recently as today. I must point out that today is my 69th birthday [20 November] – the 'magic number' - look at it anyway and it is interesting. Unfortunately, to explain my poor staff work or by way of excuse for quality, I will give you a little of my medical history.

In the past ten years I have 'holidayed' in Nambour Hospital. They pinched part of my bowel and put me on a bag - six months later they took the bag back again. The next visit was to the Royal Brisbane Hospital to have a Parotid gland removed. "You are too sick", they said on the day of the operation – and cancelled it. I spent the next 42 days in bed and then they took my left kidney out and gave me a deep vein thrombosis in the process!

Then I tried the Prince Charles Hospital, but they pinched a vein from my left leg and said they used it to patch my heart in a triple bypass operation, in the course of which they put a bloody Black and Decker through my sternum. It is a real worry; I think they are using me for spare parts.

Finally, in September this year [2001] I went to Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, they spent days carrying out tests, they then opened me up to remove a cricket ball size tumour from the left lobe of my liver. "That's the least of your troubles, mate", said the surgeon. "Unfortunately your kidney cancer is back so we cannot do any more for you. When I asked them how long I had in 'ball-park' figures, they told me about two years. I asked another doctor the same question and he said about a year. So I am ignoring them, I set a goal of making my 69'er and will now go for a 96'er. I am a survivor - not a victim!

Back to update page 21 October 1995 Slipstream paragraph 1.

I have a photograph clearly showing 'Munka' Gleeson so he must have gone off course after Archerfield or from RAAF Uranquinty, I don't know.

We joined up with the RAAF 'chappies' to become No 8 Course RAAF. I think our own Rear Admiral Neil Ralph was on No.9 course.

On arrival at Point Cook we began our aeronautical ground subjects. We were hoping however to do some flying in Tiger Moths, but it was not to be. (Sorry, Ed. As my pain relief medicine wears off, so my handwriting varies- I will stop and take a pill)

Takes a pill and changes pens.

One cold wet night at Point Cook, a couple of blokes were riding bikes in our hut and getting up quite a pace. The huts were two to three steps above unsealed, wet and mushy surrounds. As 'Spewy' Richards came racing along, some one behind distracted him whilst some wag opened the hut door. Spewy became the first member on our course to fly – fly solo! What a prang!

As he said in his *Slipstream* article, Dooley and Co volunteered and off they went to the UK. I was also keen to go, but the 'buzz' was that the rest of us would be going to my home state of

Queensland to open up the RAAF Initial Training School. (Note that they didn't have the word FLYING in the school title). The RAAF put on many extra students in order to meet their future aircrew needs.

I guess this would cover the major post Korean expansions with Hercules, Helos, P&Cs and the forecast F111 types, not to mention the major training programmes from fixed wing to jet powered aircraft.

The big lure for me to RAAF Archerfield was my 17 years old sweetheart, 'Di' McClelland, who was studying at the University of Queensland – I was only 19.

At this stage of my life my flying experiences consisted of a one and only return flight, 'Brisbane-Sydney- Brisbane with TAA to attend my final aircrew interview in Sydney. Pilot or Observer – still yet to fly!

I can hear the grinding of teeth from all the pilots who have been part of my career saying, '200lbs of lumbering blubber'. I am now down to 70 kilos, but girls, don't try my cancer diet, it's too drastic.

I was in heaven at Archerfield, back with my old GPS Rugby mates, my PMG (forerunner of Telstra-Telecom) 'Technician-in-Training' school mates from Newfarm and, of course, my Brisbane Grammar School mates. I had been a boarder at BGS 1947-1948 and that is how I met Di.

Our aerodynamics instructor was my BGS Science Master, now Squadron Leader, M.F. Newel RAAF Archerfield. Later he returned to BGS and became Headmaster from 1956 to 1964.

It's now January 1952; hot as Hades and our huts have galvanised iron roofs on trusses, there are no ceilings and no ventilation. We still had plum duffs for lunch as well as meat and three vegetables. I would doze off and 'Shorty' Newell would launch pieces of chalk to clobber me. Incidentally, 'Shorty' was six foot six – so you work it out.

The late Brian 'Soapy' McKeon had been two years ahead of me at BGS. As the 'Captain of Boats', he picked on me for using what he claimed was the wrong shell. I happened to be right on this occasion and as a result I told him where to stick his shell, thus ending my rowing career there and then.

Soapy and I met later as the remaining two Queensland candidates for the aircrew interview in Sydney. I was accepted and Soapy tried again for the next course and I think was on NAC4 (if they had one), Neil Ralph will know.

We finally got to fly in Tiger Moths – during our flight grading we kept our hours (everyone did 10 to 12 hours) on loose leaves from a log book. At the end of the course those going on to pilots training had a proper Flying Log Book with their name on the outside. Came our last day and my name was on a logbook. Had I been a RAAF Trainer I would have ended up a failed pilot, a dead pilot or a RAAF pilot - such is life.

I passed every test I ever took at RAAF Archerfield, 'Nat' Gould was our 'father' there so I never faced a 'rescrub' board.

The next thing, Des Giles, Ivor Jansz and I were posted to *Albatross*. I was glad to be off, as I couldn't continue with my almost monastic lifestyle as I was very 'fit and fruity' and couldn't see myself keeping Di as somewhere between bride-in-waiting and a younger sister. No sex or pills in those days - just loaded shotguns pointed at your head. 'Go below the waist and you're dead', was one of our slogans.

I joined 816 Squadron on 1st April, 1952 and stayed to 4th July

(Continued on page 16)

1952. During this time I gained an 18 hour plus lead flying in the Fireflies over my future RN Observer Course members.

When we started at the Observers School our first flight was in an Avro Anson in which we had to wind the wheels up (120 turns I recall); it was to be another year before I flew a Firefly again.

Page 22 of Slipstream October, 1995

Rick Boughtons tale of Manila went this way. Rick, Dooley, Mulgate and I, missed the last officers' boat from the Manila Club and had to race around to the SEATO pier by Jeepney to catch a liberty boat. Wrestling matches were being held, and as we had just attended the SEATO Cocktail Party in our immaculate long whites, and were now wearing not so immaculate long whites, we were careful to keep out of sight as much as possible. Rick wanted to see the wrestling but we told him he was on his own with that one, an answer that made him more determined rather than 'tired and emotional'. After several attempts to talk him into coming back to the ship, we left him to it. I'm used to being called 'old Slug', but as the baby of our course I had had enough of some of the activities and returned onboard.

Next morning after breakfast, I had a call from Surgeon Commander Coplans to come and join him for coffee. "Good morning, Slug. Apparently you were on Pier 5 last night in Manila. I have just been to the Sick Bay and seen your friend, Boughton, and he told me a most fantastic story".

I explained how we had missed the last officers' boat after attending the official SEATO Cocktail Party at the Manila Hotel earlier in the evening. Trying to remain low key we had Jeepneyed to Pier 5 to catch a sailors boat back to HMAS *Melbourne*. Wrestling matches were in progress in a ring on the wharf and Rick Boughton had to be a part of it.

Surgeon Commander Coplans continued, he said, "Boughton told me that he had decided to represent the Australian Fleet against the local Phillipino champion. I said to him that you do not wrestle in your best dress whites, he agreed, but said that he had taken them off and wrestled in his underpants. Anyway, he is now in the Sick Bay with a couple of suspected broken ribs. HA! HA!"

Rick was invited to leave the RAN on return to Australia, an invitation he accepted.

Our Observer Course No. 13 – unlucky for me - not really, the unlucky outcome – no commission. This was due to a combination of the UK, Wrens, Rugby, Flying and a certain Rolls Royce circa 1926 or 1928 that had a penchant for trouble.

After OFS (Anti-Submarine) I arrived back in Brisbane after six weeks at sea on the P&O ship, the RMS *Malaga*, with 800 women and 200 men. The ladies were mostly UK migrant brides – lovely ladies all.

I had a bit of trouble explaining to Mum, Dad and sister how I passed 'Wings' but not a commission.

Our No 13 Course graduates were, Ivan Bear, Rick Boughton, Keith Roberts, Bill Mulholland and yours truly Arthur George 'Slug' Whitton.

I have written this, as I said, mainly for Lee and Dooley and hope you will find it acceptable.

I forgot to mention that Ivor Jansz and Des Giles were back-coursed and finished, I believe, with the next course.

Dooley also mentioned in your last *Slipstream* how Herby Becker, Ned Kelly and I were about to be launched from the *Melbourne* when our take-offs were cancelled and we were pushed back to allow a Sea Venom to be launched. Lieutenant

Barry Thompson and Keith Potts, who waved to me on their way past, manned it. I acknowledged them; and then sat transfixed while two of my mates from NAC 3, went into the sea off the shot that should have been ours- the first shot of the day.

This all took place SSE of Hervey Bay and North of Caloundra. We could not operate in Moreton Bay other than with 'choppers'. The law required us to remain in the main shipping channels in Moreton Bay.

Yours aye,

'Slug' - A G Whitton LCDR RAN Rtd - Ex-CO HT 725 /HS 817

[Slug wrote this letter to me on 20 November 2001; sadly, he died a few weeks later. In this interim period he contacted many of his old friends and told them that he wouldn't be around for much longer. His funeral was held in Queensland on 18 January 2002. Farewell, Arthur George Whitton. Ed]

An item of interest from the RN Navy News...



Wartime plans to construct an aircraft carrier out of ice left one Navy News reader bemused - but the tale is true.

Mr M Stanford wrote to us from Ramsgate saying that a friend of his had just had a holiday in Canada, where he visited Lake Patricia.

Whilst there he saw a plaque which described trials carried out during World War II intending to create an aircraft carrier out of two million tons of ice.

Mr Stanford and his mates, pilot launch crews, had a good laugh at the idea - but it was true.

Operation Habbakuk was the name of the plan by eccentric British boffin, Geoffrey Pyke, to construct, from a form of ice, either a 'relay floating air base' for long-range aircraft, an aircraft carrier for shorter-range anti-submarine patrols, an advance fighter base, or a cargo carrier.

A copy of the directive, as agreed by the Deputy First Sea Lord and dated April 9, 1943, is kept at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton in Somerset. The directive states: "*The ultimate function of the vessel is not specified at this stage, apart from the fact that it must be unsinkable ...*"

According to Pyke's cousin, Magnus, the celebrity TV scientist, Geoffrey Pyke realised that with the addition of between four and fourteen per cent wood pulp as water freezes, a very hard, durable and buoyant substance is produced, which was named 'pycrete' or 'pykcrete' in his honour.

Churchill was interested in the prospects for huge vessels made of pycrete, but Allied advances in the war - including the Normandy landings - and the relative cheapness of steel aircraft carriers, led to the scheme being abandoned.

So artificial 'berg-ships', up to 2,000ft long with 30ft thick hulls, containing hangars, accommodation, a refrigeration plant and banks of diesels to power them at less than seven knots, never saw the light of day, despite the fact that torpedoes would have caused barely a dent and they were impervious to bombs.

It was estimated that a torpedo would cause a crater a metre deep and six metres across, which could quickly be repaired using sea water, wood pulp and the cold air which would circulate throughout the berg-ship in cardboard tubes.

The prototype berg-ship - a framework of wood and pycrete blocks - floated throughout the summer on Lake Patricia, sinking later that year. Divers later found the remnants on the lake bed, and a plaque was recently unveiled to record the experiment.

KAMAN AEROSPACE INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

Kaman Super Sea Sprite SH-2G(A) Progress



The Number 3 production SW2G(A) Super Seasprite aircraft arrived in Sydney harbour via the 'Talabot' on 10 January 2002, was unloaded that midnight and flown to Nowra later that morning.

Kaman pilot, John McGonagle, and SMA pilot, Mark Henschke, flew the aircraft and were supported by their crewman, Jason Smith. Prior to the flight, Andy Rowe and his team from Safe Air Limited of Blenheim New Zealand, did the necessary maintenance checks.

John McGonagle noted prior to the routine flight to Nowra, "because the SW2G(A) was point designed for continuous shipboard use, it's transition from a commercial shipping vessel to the full flight mode was very easy".

During the flight to Nowra, Mark and John conducted system tests and collected data for later training flights.

Mark Henschke will be leading Kaman's training program with the RAN.

Also, on the same vessel was the Number 7 aircraft, which being only partially assembled and cocooned, was transported via truck to NAS Nowra on Tuesday 15 January 2002. Further aircraft deliveries will occur over the next four months.

The arrival of these two aircraft brings to six, the number of SW2G(A) aircraft at NAS Nowra. Two aircraft, Number 1 (Bureau No 161656) which first arrived via the Avalon Airshow in February 2001, and the Number 3 aircraft (Bureau No 150156) are complete and fitted with Build 1 software.

The other four aircraft are being completed by Kaman's sub-contractor, Safe Air Limited, who has been on site at NAS Nowra for the last six months. As part of the Industry Program, Safe Air has virtually completed assembly of the first aircraft, with the other aircraft to be completed over the remainder of this year.

As a result of weapon system software delays that occurred with a previous contractor in the development of the Integrated Tactical Avionics System (ITAS), Kaman initiated in November 2001 a larger role for CSC of Australia in the development of the software. The software development task is now being led by CSC of Australia and Comptek, (now part of Northrop Grumman IT).

Kaman is also working with the RAN to develop a plan for phased acceptance of the aircraft at the earliest opportunity.

Meanwhile activities centred on the establishment of SH-2G(A) logistic support continue at the Kaman Aerospace International Support Centre (KAISC) located in the Albatross Aviation Technology Park. Spares, support and test equipment are flowing into the warehouse and five Part Task Trainers have also been delivered and set to work.



HELICOPTER CREW

L-R: Neil Kelly, Keith Boot, Andy Rowe, John McGonagle, Jason Smith, Mark Henschke

Photograph courtesy KAMAN AEROSPACE

☞ MOMENTS IN TIME ☞



1961 - 805 SQDN Frank Gardner and ... Join the MELBOURNE



1955 - 808 SQDN - Christmas at Culdrose UK

STORY PLEASE



1968 - 805 SQDN - THE FIGHTER PILOTS

Rear L-R: McMillan - Daley - Lane - Callan - Diamond

Front: Blennerhassett - King - DaCosta - Mike Gump USN - Dutch



1955/56 - 817 SQDN ENGINEERING STAFF AT CULDROSE UK *Photo courtesy Ted Drinnan*

Rear L-R: Bruce Loiterton - Danny Thorburn - Don Routley - Ted Drinnan - Carl Fellenberg - Frank Howden

Centre: Merv Willis - Bruce West - Merv Harris - Phil Richardson - ... Middleton - Don James - Alex Jenkins - Max Green - John Edwards - Jim Napier

Front: Keith McCarley - Bill Hitchcock - Neil McMillan - Bob Basford - LT Caws - LT (P) Rowe - Lou Luther - ? - Col Davies - Jack Constantine

Missing: Bruce Bounds - Bill Strahan - Max Kerr - 'Darky' Barber - Philip Lee - Ray Murrell - Gilbert Nixon - Fred Barnes and Ike Saunders



WHERE and WHEN? Mr D Blake Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee on Aircraft Noise with Mr S Benson MP, LCDR Keane and POACM Brian Wilkinson of 816 Squadron.



?? HMAS VENGEANCE AND SYCAMORE HELICOPTERS



1954 - 808 SQDN - LT Fairbairn prang aboard HMAS VENGEANCE



STORY PLEASE



STORY PLEASE



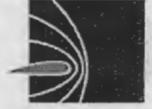
2001

I AM A BOMB TECHNICIAN IF YOU SEE ME RUNNING TRY TO KEEP UP



AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT

by Mark Clayton – Museum Director



The first year of the new Millennium ended much as it had begun with the Museum reeling from the impact of yet another financial body blow caused, this time, by the Christmas bushfires which have led to a dramatic drop in patronage during what would normally have been our busiest season.

Perhaps 2001 will be looked upon more kindly in years to come whereas from my present vantage at least, it looks more like our nadir. The year began with rumors of an imminent HIH collapse the full impacts of which have previously been reported in these pages. This was then followed by the cancellation last September of our major fundraising initiative for the year, the Federation Airshow. The Christmas bushfires swept through just when we thought things couldn't – and wouldn't – get any worse, adding further insult to the year's collective injury. The Foundation's financial prospects can only improve from hereon and we are greatly encouraged by those many, loyal supporters who have responded to these setbacks by donating to our Foundation.

In order to try and redress these losses and, so as to reflect the many recent improvements to the facility, the Foundation's Director's resolved in October 2001 to review the Museum's admission charges which, we've long known, were well below those fees being charged by comparable attractions elsewhere in Australia. The GST inclusive admission price for a family (2 adults and 4 children) is now \$24 while the adult admission price has risen to \$10. Card-carrying Pensioners (not Seniors) now pay \$7 and children pay a modest \$5 each.

The Foundation's Board also resolved late last year to press on and complete the Stage Five Exhibition Redevelopment programme which had been put on hold following the HIH collapse. Quotes for this task are now being obtained with a view towards having this work completed during the second half of 2002.

December 7th marked the formal end of No.2 Squadron's (RNZAF) decade long association with the Shoalhaven, the RAN, and HMAS *Albatross* in particular. The Museum was privileged that day to be able to host the formal farewell ceremony and was also the focus for the last Skyhawk flypast.

The last of the RNZAF A4s departed *Albatross* for Ohakea (N.Z.) the following Sunday without fanfare, the perimeter fence lined with devotees who had come to witness the end of the Skyhawk's thirty-four year association with HMAS *Albatross*.

The RNZAF Skyhawks have always been the star attraction at Museum Airshows and 2 Squadron were always very generous with their support for these important fundraising events.



Fire-bombing aircraft and helicopters operated continuously from HMAS *Albatross* throughout the Christmas bushfire crisis.



Smoke from the bushfires, seen here blanketing *Albatross'* southern skyline, occasionally grounded the firebombing fleet – *Elvis* included.



In with the old and out with the not quite so old... Laurie Ogle's remarkable Lockheed L.10 is towed into Australia's Museum of Flight at HMAS *Albatross* on the morning of Saturday, December 8th while in the background, a pair of RNZAF 2 Squadron Skyhawks are being towed away from the Museum following the previous day's farewell fly past. The last of the 2 Squadron Skyhawks departed Nowra for New Zealand the following day.

The goodwill that the Kiwis have always displayed towards our Museum was evident even during the final hectic days of their deployment when the CO, Squadron Leader Easthope, presented the Foundation with a \$930 donation. Squadron personnel also found time late last year to tidy up the Museum's A-4B which was missing a number of external fittings. It now has a full complement of underwing pylons and ordnance stores which we hope to install this year.



Thankfully we were able to repay this generosity by making the Museum available for the Squadron's farewell party (and hungi) which was also held on December 7th.

Another notable event hosted by the Museum late last year was the Shoalhaven City Council's inaugural Art Awards. Council lavished considerable expense on this important event which seriously tested our planning and resource capabilities. From all accounts the evening was judged to be a resounding success with our Function Centre Supervisor, Christine Knowles, having proved, yet again, that she was more than equal to the occasion.

Several interesting collection items have also been acquired by the Foundation since my last report. In January this year we were given a Supermarine Walrus wing float which had previously been found in bushland near the former RAAF Rathmines flying boat base. Although it turned out not to be the Sea Otter float we'd been encouraged to expect it will no doubt benefit some current, or future Walrus restoration.



A WW1 studio portrait of Second Lieutenant Dudley Ransom, RFC wearing the flying coat and mittens which have now been loaned to the Museum by his daughter, Mrs J Spooner.

That seemingly bottomless source of interesting artifacts, Commodore John Goble, also arrived late last year bearing a rare RFC pilot's leather flying coat and gloves which had previously belonged to one 2nd/Lt Dudley Ransom. The latter, who served with No.20 Squadron, was the first Tasmanian ever to volunteer (and be accepted) for service with the RFC. Ransom became a grazier after the war and continued wearing the coat for many years thereafter so as to ward off cold during the winter months. This helps to explain perhaps why the coat has lasted so well, and for so long.

Our most significant recent arrival however was Lockheed 10 VH-UZO which flew in to HMAS Albatross on December 8th, just as the last RNZAF A4s were getting ready to depart. The magnificently restored Lockheed, which is the only example in the country (and one of about dozen surviving worldwide), has been generously loaned to the Museum by Sydney businessman, Laurie Ogle, who spent more than a decade painstakingly restoring the unique airliner.

Although the type was operated by the U.S. Navy the Lockheed 10 is best remembered for its association with pioneer aviator Amelia Earhart and, for its role in the final scenes of the Humphrey Bogart film *Casablanca*. VH-UZO happens also to Ansett's oldest surviving aircraft. The Lockheed is expected to remain on display at the Museum until the next Airshow on Sunday, April 28th.

Mark Clayton - Museum Director

TWO ADDITIONS TO THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS

Element Name: WOMANIUM

Symbol: WO

Atomic Weight: (don't even go there)

Physical properties: Generally soft and round in form. Boils at nothing and may freeze at any time.

- Melts when properly treated. Very bitter if not used well.

Chemical properties: Very active. Highly unstable. Possesses strong affinity with gold, silver, platinum, and precious stones. Violent when left alone.

- Able to absorb great amounts of exotic food. Turns slightly green when placed next to a better specimen.

Usage: Highly ornamental. An extremely good catalyst for dispersion of wealth. Probably the most powerful income reducing agent known.

Caution: Highly explosive in inexperienced hands.

Element Name: MANIUM

Symbol: XY

Atomic Weight: (180 +/-50)

Physical properties: Solid at room temperature, but gets bent out of shape easily.

- Fairly dense and sometimes flaky.

- Difficult to find pure sample.

- Due to rust, aging samples are unable to conduct electricity as easily as young samples.

Chemical Properties: Tends to form strong bonds with itself. Becomes explosive when mixed with KD (Element: CHILDIUM) for prolonged periods of time.

- Neutralize by saturating with alcohol.

Usage: None known. Possible methane source. Good samples are able to produce large quantities on command.

Caution: In the absence of WO, this element rapidly decomposes and begins to smell.



The 'Wolfman' Confesses - The Truth and the Facts

As you could well imagine I was extremely interested in the article in *Slipstream* in the April 2001 edition written by 'Toz' Dadswel, a former XO of HMAS *Melbourne*, about the 'Wolfman'.

This article along with many stories about the Wolfman has many inaccuracies and distortions - there is only one person who can tell all, and that is the Wolfman himself.

In replying to the article I don't aim to offend anyone but to tell the readers EXACTLY what happened in a truthful and factual manner. Age or substance has NOT affected my memory and records; readers can judge for themselves.

There was some colourful language used during Wolfman's 'Reign of Terror' - for obvious reasons I will not include it - I'm sure the readers can fill in the gaps.

The Wolfman is born

The Wolfman made his first appearance in 1974 at the BONG BONG picnic races in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Having heard many stories about the fun and festivities to be enjoyed at Bong Bong, I was one of the first to put my hand up when the Bomaderry Australian Rules Football Club proposed a bus trip to go there.

In those days wearing fancy dress to such events was uncommon, but I decided to add my own entertainment and bought myself a mask and a top hat - to complete the costume I wore my trusty old Pusser's Burberry. Amongst the social confusion of the Bong Bong races, the Wolfman became a celebrity - so much so, that he appeared on what was the first live colour TV transmission in Australia.

The Wolfman Joins HMAS *Melbourne*

In 1975 I joined HMAS *Melbourne* as part of the maintenance crew with HS817 Squadron operating Wessex helicopters, to participate in a RIMPAC exercise off Hawaii.

During this particular trip my duties were 'flight deck servicing'. This entailed being on duty every second night on the flight deck from 1800 until 0800 the following morning doing routine minor servicing, assisting with folding and spreading rotor blades and refuelling the helicopters.

I had done the same duties in 1974 during Exercise Kangaroo 1 and was well aware of how boring it was and how slowly those hours dragged by. The Wessex would return from their ASW (anti submarine warfare) sorties - change crews, refuel and take off again - being on deck approximately 10 minutes every 2 hours. Those of you who have worked the same routine will know what I am talking about - this night time boredom.

It was with this in mind that I decided that Wolfman would also join HMAS *Melbourne* - to liven up the ship and create some interest.

The Wolfman's 'Reign of Terror'

The Wolfman only appeared every second night - those nights when I was on duty from 1800 until 0800 the following morning (it must have been a full moon every second night). These events which I will describe DID happen, are TRUE and are the ONLY ones in which I participated in as Wolfman - any other stories are either fiction - or maybe there was more than one Wolfman.

On the first occasion I donned the mask (no top hat and Burberry)

- I used some red bunting as a cape. It was about 0100 when I went up to the ComCentre and knocked on the shutter. When the duty communicator opened the shutter I asked him, "Are there any telegrams for the Wolfman tonight?" He wasn't frightened, but the look he displayed can only be described as 'Am I awake or dreaming?' When he gathered his thoughts he just laughed and I disappeared into the darkness.



The second occasion was about the same time (of course, in the middle of the night) when I entered the mirror gyro compartment. For those who aren't familiar I'll explain. A very important part of the landing mirror system is the gyro - so important in fact that a 'greenie' (electrical sailor) must keep watch in the gyro compartment to monitor the correct operation of the gyro during all flying operations.

This compartment was situated alongside what we called the 'TA100 Sponson'. This was where the maintainers from HS 817 would wait for the 'chopper's and fill out the aircraft log books (TA100). Naturally we got to know the greenies that kept watch in the compartment and also knew that as the gyro was very reliable, they slept for most of the period they were on watch. The compartment was air-conditioned and quiet - just the perfect place for a good sleep. They even had a padded vinyl covered board in there to make their naps more comfortable.

The night that Wolfman entered, AB Osborne was the greenie on watch. I gave him a shake and said, "Aren't you meant to be on watch?" He awoke with a start and threw a punch that missed, and I disappeared. I don't think he would ever sleep on watch again!

Another night I decided it was time for the Wolfman to pay a visit to the briefing room. It was an ideal location as it had doors at either end - more chance of escape should he face the possibility of apprehension. I entered via the forward door - there was no briefing being conducted at that time, but many pilots and crews were relaxing - drinking coffee, smoking etc. I gave some growls and raced down the aisle and left via the aft door being chased only by laughter and cheers.

Of course sailors talk about what's going on and it was becoming known that there was a Wolfman onboard. This was evident during the next activity.

The maintenance crews for VS 816 (Trackers) would sit and wait for their aircraft inside the island on flight deck level. At night during flying operations this area was dimly lit with red lights, but being a Wolfman I could see quite clearly.

On this particular night two of the squadron Chiefs, Bill Strahan and 'Blue' Walker, were kneeling on the deck checking out a Tracker logbook. I leaned over their shoulders and pointed to the book and said, "What's that entry?" As I was disappearing to the flight deck I heard, "Did you cop the hair on that?" and then, "That was the Wolfman!"

It was also becoming common knowledge amongst the 'birdies' that I was the Wolfman. When I entered the HCP (hangar control post - a small compartment overlooking the hangar) and gave my customary growl, the Chief on duty, CPO Egan said, ".... off Locko!"

The last time I appeared at night as Wolfman I entered the hangar to an area where the emergency party was sleeping. Every night several sailors from each squadron formed the emergency party and had to sleep on stretchers in the hangar. I gave AB Dixon a shake and he also said, ".... off Locko!"

After such an exhausting RIMPAC it was time for some relaxation in Hawaii.

One afternoon I returned to the ship with three of my 'stepping mates', LS Goodsir, AB Joyce and AB Hazelton - we needed a shower and change clothes for the night session ashore. I had already 'had a couple', but was by no means 'socially confused', so I thought it would be a good time for Wolfman to step ashore.

I told my mates my plan. As I was Leading Hand of the mess I had to make out the short leave cards, I had a couple of blank spares and decided that Wolfman should also have a short leave card so he could leave the ship in a proper manner.

In the relevant boxes I filled the card out for Wolfman.

Name – WOLFMAN

Initials – GRRRR

Part of Ship – THE BLACKEST

Special sea duty – SCARING PEOPLE

Mess – WHAT A MESS!

Official Number – *The mathematical symbol for infinity* ∞

I had hired a Dodge Dart vehicle for the length of our stay in Hawaii and I had it parked adjacent to the forward brow. I asked Norm Goodsir to go and start the car and then get into the passenger side. 'Dingo' Joyce agreed to put my proper short leave card on the short leave card box while the gangway staff were occupying their thoughts with Wolfman, and Steve Hazelton followed from behind.

From my mess (4 Charlie Starboard) I went up into the Supply mess on 3 deck and then aft out to the gangway - laughter following all the way. There was also laughter from the Officer and Duty Leading Hand on the gangway as Wolfman went growling and howling his way over the brow and into the waiting car. As I was driving off I waved to the ship, and noticed WOCOXN Tim Collins (a man I respect) standing on the flight deck with a less than amused look on his face.

At about 0400 I returned to the ship to pick up some belongings and at the brow I spoke with LS Tooke (Duty Leading Hand) and I said, "I believe the Wolfman stepped tonight". To which he replied, "Yeah - funny as all it was! His card is still in the box". He pulled out the 'W' cards, and sure enough Wolfman's card was there.

When I returned later, I picked up my own card and didn't say anything about Wolfman - his card would be taken to the Coxswain's office along with those of others who didn't make it back on time.

This brazen act had really offended the ship's Regulating Department and shortly after departure from Hawaii, I was piped to the Coxswains' office. WOCOXN Collins questioned me about my knowledge of the Wolfman as he had heard rumours about me being connected. I assured him I wasn't Wolfman and I didn't know who was, but I thought that the whole thing was funny and kept the ship on its toes.

As you could imagine he wasn't impressed with my remarks and he then asked me, "Leader. Didn't you have a beard before we came to Hawaii?" I confirmed that this was so. He then asked me as to whether or not I had put in a 'request to shave off' (you must have official approval to grow a beard and also to shave it off). I replied that I hadn't - I didn't have the heart to tell him that I didn't put one in the first place as I had grown it whilst on leave and during Cyclone Tracy in Darwin.

As a consequence of not following this procedure, I was told that I would cease shaving immediately. Because of this directive, the growth of beard would not be of acceptable appearance by the time we arrived in Fiji and therefore my leave was not good for that port.

During the trip back to Australia the Wolfman made no further appearances (he must have still been enjoying himself in Hawaii - after all, his card wasn't picked up).

However, what did happen, was that 'Wolfman Patrols' were instituted. The Officer and Leading Hand who were on duty and had failed to apprehend the Wolfman when he stepped ashore in Hawaii led them. I believe, (this is not necessarily fact as I was not a member of the patrol) that they had to sign a 'Wolfman Rounds Book' relating to their findings each night. On two occasions (that I know of) a Leading Coxswain came to my bunk at night to ensure I was in bed and not out 'howling around'.

Prior to arrival in Sydney the fixed wing elements of the Carrier Air Group - the Skyhawks and Trackers, flew off and made their way back to HMAS *Albatross* leaving just the six remaining Wessex helicopters to fly off while the ship was alongside.

Before I went up to the flight deck to witness the flypast I had stuck a poster sized painting of the Wolfman on the bulkhead alongside my bunk. A very talented and witty member of our Wessex flight deck crew, PO 'AJ' McCarthy had painted it and it bore a marked resemblance to the Wolfman. I wrote on it, 'The Wolfman says farewell to the Coxswain' and I signed it, 'W. Olfman'.

As well as the aircrew, several maintainers were given the privilege of flying back to Nowra in the choppers instead of the three-hour ride back in a Pusser's bus. One of these maintainers was PO Tim Wade, who asked if he could borrow the Wolfman mask and, as the chopper was leaving he would lean out of the back and wave to the bridge. I was all for it (naturally) and so was the pilot, LT Barry Costa - all was arranged and I would be on the flight deck taking photos of the event.

It was time. The six Wessex were started up, rotors engaged and they lifted off and as they flew past the bridge the Wolfman leaned out of the back and waved to the ship. I was standing alongside the FDO (flight deck officer) - LCDR Bob Salmon, taking photos and he said to me, "That man (referring to the Wolfman) is in a heap of trouble".

All of a sudden the Wolfman helicopter was recalled and PO Wade was escorted away by the coxswains. It took off again and was recalled for a second time so that the mask could be retrieved.

It is fact that the Wessex helicopter with the Wolfman inside was 819 and it had a Part 2 entry in its TA 100 clearing it for one flight only back to Nowra because of a serious oil leak. No regard was given to the safety of this aircraft or its crew - it was recalled twice- just to get the Wolfman.

I then decided that it might be prudent to return to my mess deck and remove the painting - not wanting to infuriate the coxswains any further. In the mess I was speaking with our squadron Regulating Chief, CPO Alec 'Boxhead' Stevens, when the pipe was made - 'Leading Seaman Lockett - Coxswains Office'. What the Reg. Chief said to say to the coxswains was very colourful and explicit to say the least and fully echoed my sentiments.

POATA Wade had convinced the coxswains that he was not the Wolfman and of course I was now their target. In the coxswains' office I was accompanied by one of the squadron officers whilst I was questioned by WOCOX Collins. He told me that 817 Squadron couldn't disembark until I had signed a statement stating that I was Wolfman.

We had been away for over two months - there were wives, families and girlfriends waiting on the wharf but the Wessex maintainers were not allowed off to be with their loved ones. My brother-in-law had driven down from Newcastle to welcome me home - later he was allowed on board but I wasn't allowed off. There were also buses full of sailors waiting to depart for Nowra being held up until I signed a statement.

In my frustration I told him I would sign a statement and would be 'Batman' too if he wanted. My comments weren't appreciated but the WO said he would inform the XO that I was signing a statement and

(Continued on page 24)

promptly left the office. About ten minutes later a pipe was made, '817 Squadron can now disembark'.

When WO Collins returned to his office I said that I wasn't going to write a statement any more. The WO met this with extreme anger and he escorted me to the ship's Medical Officer (under instruction of the XO).

The MO, Surgeon Commander Bayliss, asked me some questions about my activities and I told him what was going on - he was laughing throughout the conversation and he filled out an outpatient's card with the words, 'no sinister symptoms - certified sane'.

Then the WOCOXN stated that my hair was too long and I was given an impromptu haircut at the hands of a Leading Handler.

Investigation and Trial of Wolfman

Of course I was not allowed to leave the ship and return with the rest of the squadron to Nowra, but was detained on board HMAS *Melbourne* for investigations and trial.

Part of the process was a hearing in front of the Officer of the Day to ascertain as to whether or not a person has a case to answer. WOVN Jenkins approached me and offered to act as my Divisional Officer for this hearing. In conversation the WO told me about a story that had circulated concerning him, in that the Wolfman had given him a heart attack. He went on to say that his medical condition at that time was totally unrelated to any activities of the Wolfman. Nobody received any injury or illness as a result of the Wolfman.

The Officer of the Day I had to appear before was LTCDR Gerry Purcell. I was informed that I was being charged with 'Creating a disturbance in Hawaii', and a second charge of, 'Telling a lie to WOCOX Collins'. In my defence I stated that if I have been charged with creating a disturbance why is there nothing in the ship's incident log referring to such an event. At the end of the hearing LTCDR Purcell said, "Leader - there is nothing here you should be charged with and I should dismiss the case but my hands are tied because the XO wants to see you at his table". I was then put on Commander's report.

Standing in the wings at the Officer of the Day session were two Sub Lieutenants, Garner and Bonzer (sorry - I'm not sure of the spelling). They approached me and asked if they could defend me at the Commander's table - stated that all the 'subbys' onboard were working on the 'Save the Wolfman' case. I replied that I didn't know who would be defending me, WO Jenkins had already offered his help, but I would have to wait until I received notification from Nowra as to who could defend me. It was reassuring to note that so many were prepared to help.

I was kept on the *Melbourne* for a further two weeks - during which time I did no work nor was I requested or ordered to do so. I had no aircraft to work on - all were back at Nowra and I basically did as I pleased except my leave was not good. All this time the Regulating staff was preparing their case. In this two-week period, the three mates I had stepped ashore with in Hawaii were also charged. They were at HMAS *Albatross* but would be brought back to Sydney to face a charge of, 'Aiding and Abetting' the Wolfman'. It was also confirmed that SBLT Fairhurst would be brought up from Nowra as our Divisional Officer.

The big day arrived and the Commander's table was set up in the 3 Mike Port Boat Space. Well, you have never seen such a set up (mind you I had been to many a Commander's table before). I had never seen so many coxswains in one place at any time. Prior to the Wolfman trial commencing, several other 'bad guys' were duly found 'guilty as charged' and punished accordingly. Then was it my turn? No - first of all, ALL the coxswains were piped to the boat space, with

only one coxswain not being in attendance. Then the four of us were arranged in a square, back to back, with a coxswain at our sides - we might have whispered something or even worse, passed a note - it was comical!

Then the XO re-tucked his shirt into his shorts, readjusted his cap and gave a big sigh - I will never forget it! My three mates, Goodsir, Joyce and Hazelton were 'tried' and found guilty on the charge of 'Aiding and Abetting' the Wolfman. This was done even before I was fronted up - quite obviously this was to be another Kangaroo Court with the defendant already a guilty and condemned man. I know this sounds unbelievable but it is FACT!

For punishment they received 'admonishment' - a minor charge recorded against their names but no actual punishment or fine. This was only applicable for the period they were posted to that ship - but in effect they were NOT posted to HMAS *Melbourne* but to HMAS *Albatross* and therefore no conviction was recorded there.

Then it was my turn. SBLT Fairhurst, in an effort to defend me, raised the point that no one had actually seen me remove the mask so how could they say it was definitely Leading Seaman Lockett. Also at the table, six other masks of various varieties were submitted, so the Wolfman could have been one of a number of personnel. At this point the XO just said, "Shut up Sub!" and he took no further part. I was found guilty of both charges and fined \$50 for each offence.

The XO then said, "This is going to cost you your job in the Navy, Lockett - grown men just don't do these things. I am sending you to a psychiatrist".

An appointment was then arranged to see a consultant psychiatrist, Dr. D O Hill. He asked all sorts of questions about what happened and I sat the 'inkblot test'. At the conclusion of the session, he said, "You have got to be joking - all those big brave sailors - in theory, trained killers, and they are scared of someone in a mask. This is not a psychiatric case and I will write back and tell the XO that! You will do well in the Navy". I have attached scanned copies of both the Medical Officer's report and the Psychiatric report for verification.

Medical Officer's Report / Request for Advice

18.4.75 This sailor is referred at the request of the C.O. He has recently appeared at the Captain's table following several incidents on board in which he terrorised Junior Sailors at night by appearing in a 'wolfman costume'. He states his activities were purely a practical joke and of no sinister significance. He does not appear to have considered the seriousness of his actions and the implications of someone being injured, say as a result of falling down a ladder after being frightened. His 'prowling' in the wolfman's costume always took place at night in the middle watch with one exception (when he went over the brow in Pearl Harbour).

He has no past history of psychiatric illness, is not on medication, is single and has no history of behavioural aberrations.

I think that he now realises that his pranks were not compatible with the quiet enjoyment of rest in the silent hours, which the ship's company can reasonably expect.

I cannot detect any evidence of underlying psychological disturbance, however, I would be grateful for advice on the management of any possible psychiatric condition.

G. Bayliss, Surg. Cdr. RAN

Consultant Psychiatrist's Report

28.4.75 Referred after an incident on board MELBOURNE when he dressed in a fancy mask apparently causing consternation amongst junior sailors.

I agree with Surgeon Commander Bayliss.

This man is suffering NO psychiatric illness and this episode should be dismissed as one of exuberance in an otherwise responsible and able sailor.

D.O. Hill, Cons. Psychiatrist

I was then allowed to return to my base - HMAS Albatross - a free (Wolf) man!

The Outcome

When I returned to HMAS Albatross (it was evening) - there was a sign posted on my cabin door 'Welcome Home Wolfman'.

The following morning I went to my squadron and a 'clear lower deck' of 817 squadron maintainers was arranged with some of our Officers also in attendance. At this event, PO Kinross summoned Wolfman to the front where he was charged once again, the squadron Electrical Officer, LT Roach, then spoke about the Wolfman giving some life to the ship and creating a good humorous atmosphere on board the *Melbourne*. He then presented me with a sum of money collected at Albatross in appreciation, and as compensation, for the fines received aboard *Melbourne*.

The Wolfman was never court martialled nor was he at any time placed in cells - all was recorded as 'minor charges'. As was the case with my three mates, the conviction was only valid during the time I was posted to HMAS *Melbourne* and I rejoined HMAS Albatross with a clean slate. Had I been posted back to the *Melbourne* I would once again start with a clean slate.

To further highlight the absurdity of the ship's action is the fact that although I was fined a total of \$100, I received an extra two-week's sea pay (even though we were alongside and I didn't have to work). I also received reimbursement of two weeks 'rations and quarters' which would have been deducted from my pay had I been living on board at Albatross during that time. Yes, I was financially better off - thank you for that!

The extra two weeks on board also completed an extra month sea time and for each completed month of sea time (I was alongside) a sailor would receive an extra day's long leave. But, Wolfman was a South Australian which meant he was entitled to 4 days travel leave to return home on annual leave so this combined with the extra day sea leave led into a weekend - so in effect I received an extra three days annual leave - thanks for that!

My three mates were paid detached duties expenses for being sent to Sydney to front the Commander on the *Melbourne*. All helped pay for the beers we drank the night before!

On top of it all we all had clean crime sheets and the Wolfman was certified sane - and has a certificate to prove it! How many of us can say that?

To all the readers of *Slipstream*, those people who have had an interest in the Wolfman or have heard (or read) some of the tales - you now have the FULL story - the FACTS and the TRUTH!

In writing such an article I cannot close without saying how fortunate I was to be part of a team of really great blokes on 817 Squadron. Both officer and sailor proved how good they were in the way they supported me - to all of you guys - a big thank you!

Ian (Locko) Lockett - 'Wolfman' (From Russia with love.)

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed - and thus clamorous to be led to safety - by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary. H L Mencken

LOGIC

Two rednecks agreed that they weren't going anywhere in life and decided they should go to college to get ahead. The first redneck then went and saw an undergraduate advisor, who told him to take math, history, and logic.



"What's logic?" the first redneck asked.

The professor answered by saying, "Let me give you an example. Do you own a weed-eater?"

"I sure do."

"Then I can assume, using logic, that you have a backyard," replied the professor.

"That's real good!" said the redneck.

The professor continued, "Logic will also tell me that since you have a yard, you also own a house."

Impressed, the redneck said, "Amazin'!"

"And since you own a house, logic dictates that you have a wife."

"That's Betty Mae! This is incredible!" The redneck was obviously catching on.

"Finally, since you have a wife, logically I can assume that you are heterosexual," said the professor.

"You're absolutely right! Why that's the most fascinatin' thing I ever heard! I can't wait to take that logic class!"

The redneck, proud of the new world opening up to him, walked back into the hallway, where his friend was waiting.

"So what classes are ya takin'?" asked the friend.

"Maths, history, and logic!" replied the first redneck.

"What in tarnation's logic?" asked his friend.

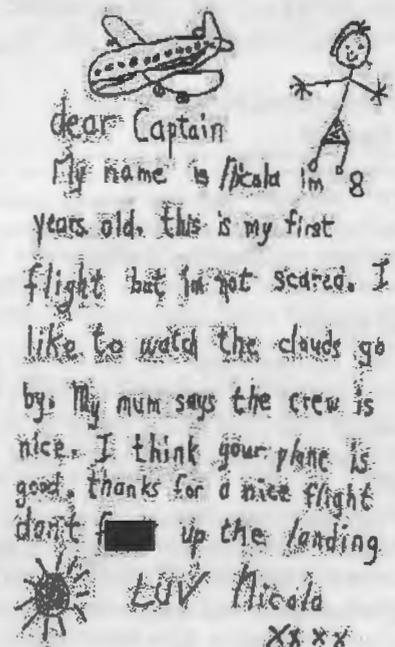
"Let me give you an example. Do ya own a weed-eater?" asked the first redneck.

"No," his friend replied.

"You is queer, ain't ya?"

Keeping up with the modern generation...

an actual drawing, handed to a flight attendant on a Quantas flight by an 8 yr old girl



NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It has been a busy time for the Executive since coming to office in October last year, but things are moving along nicely and we face the new year with enthusiasm and high hopes.

The Christmas Hamper appeal was an outstanding success. A detailed report will be found elsewhere in *Slipstream*. The feed back from the Flights is most encouraging and we hope to repeat the exercise next Xmas.

A Steering Committee has been formed to examine the way ahead for the proposed Naval Congress. Our representative on the Committee will be our patron, John Goble and he will keep us informed on developments. I thank John for giving up so much of his time to this task.

The FAAA's next project will be the creation of a paperback library at Nowra. We will hold a store of old paperbacks and invite embarking Flights to visit and select a box of books for reading during their deployment. State Divisions have been asked to collect books from their members and forward them onto the National Secretary. Please support this worthwhile project.

The next 'National Reunion of the FAAA' will take place in Nowra the week commencing Monday 21 April 2003. The NSW Division has accepted an invitation to organise and run the Reunion and a Committee has been formed. The Committee would appreciate suggestions from the members about what they would like included in the programme.

The NSW Division is considering a scheme whereby the local branch of the RDFWA, the Naval Association and the FAAA would combine resources to create a local facility for advising members on Veteran Affairs entitlements, assisting with claims, etc. I think this proposal has considerable merit and it would get support from the Department of Veteran Affairs if properly established and managed. However there is still work to be done on this project.

In conclusion I am pleased to inform, you that our Hon. Chaplain, Monsignor Frank 'Tiger' Lyons reached four score years in December. I sent him a card with the good wishes of all members.

Best wishes to you all for 2002.

Toz Dadswell

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



The National Executive recently held a meeting on 18 January 2002, the minutes of which have been forwarded to State Secretaries.

The Department of Fair Trading WA has accepted the amendments to the Constitution, which were moved at the last AGM. Amended pages will be forwarded to Divisional Secretary's when completed.

Planning for the next National Reunion 2003 is underway, it will be held in conjunction with the Centenary of Flight celebrations. At the request of the National Executive, the NSW Division formed the National Reunion Committee whose members are Toz Dadswell (Chairman), Neville Newbold, Dennis Mulvihill, Greg Wise and Mike Heneghan.

The first meeting has been held, also in attendance were the CO of HMAS *Albatross*, CAPT Tim Barret, Museum Director, Mark Clayton and Immediate Past President, Neil Ralph. Although it is early days, the foundation is laid for a strong working base with planning and direction in progress.

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable festive season and wish everyone and their families all the best of everything for the year ahead.

Mike Heneghan

TASMANIAN DIVISION



The last meeting and lunch for 2001 was held in November at Cooley's Hotel, Moonah, in Hobart. It wasn't a great turn up, but those that did attend thought that it was a good venue and worth considering in the future.

One of our members, an ex-pilot, usually has a smile for all. It is even bigger now that he has sold his house for the price he wanted.

The secretary told us that the National President was a bit concerned that the donors to the Christmas Hampers may not have been thanked. This Division had a letter of thanks on its way to the Woolworths' Operation Manager, Derwent Park, that included a couple of stickers of a Sea King and Sea Hawk 'choppers'.

I feel sure that everyone had a good Festive Season, I know that I did. The only problem I have is that they seem to be getting closer together. Twelve months just doesn't seem like a year anymore.

In a recruiting vein, I urge anyone who knows of ex-birdies out in 'civilisation', to let us know so that we can get them to join the Association. We all need to increase our numbers, also to rekindle friendships with old acquaintances.

Matt Jacobs - Scribe

Probability Theory

If an infinite number of rednecks riding in an infinite number of pickup trucks fire an infinite number of shotgun rounds at an infinite number of highway signs, they will eventually produce all the world's great literary works in Braille.

NOTE : President 'Toz' has recently returned home after an extended stay in hospital on 'secret men's business'. This was the last medical update I received from him. Ed.

Medical Report

"Now hear this. Good ship 'Toz' has left the dockyard hands and proceeded to home port for R and R and limited work-up.

Repairs to underwater fittings appear to have been successful. Ballast capacity needs revising and overall tonnage has been reduced.

All ABC panels removed and checked and the ship is clear of contamination. Main propulsion machinery is slightly intermittent but will improve with lubrication and an upgrading to higher-octane fuel.

Magazine area intact but weapon fit including fire control will need careful tuning and testing. Apart from a check, dockyard assistance no longer required."

VICTORIA DIVISION



On behalf of the President, Committee and Members of the Victoria Division may I convey our best wishes and greetings for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year to all for 2002.

Our last meeting for the year and Christmas break-up was conducted on the 2nd December, there were thirty members in attendance including two visitors, Meg and Warren Seip from South Australia, a most enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

Things have been very quiet in this neck of the woods of late, fortunately, unlike the terrible bushfires experienced by NSW, our thoughts go out to all those people involved.

Congratulations to 'Toz' Dadswell for his excellent idea and bringing to fruition the Christmas Hamper project, and our thanks to all the other personnel involved, the donors, the packers etc, well done! I urge all to get behind the 'Paperback Library' project [library for the seagoing element of the FAA]. So, to the Victoria Division members, dig out all your unwanted paperbacks so that we can get them delivered to Nowra, This way they can be put to good use, thank you.

Our next major event after the AGM will be Anzac Day. Our form up point will be the usual place at the south-east corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets, the time to be confirmed. The 'After March Reunion' will take the same format as last year and will take place at the Melbourne Naval Centre. A spit-roast luncheon will be supplied. The cost is to be confirmed and full details will be supplied when known.

Since the last report in *Slipstream*, I am sad to report that two esteemed members have passed away, Norman Fargher and Bruce E. Smith. 'Lest we Forget' - they will be missed.

In closing I would like to thank all those members for their support over the years. By the time this is published I will have stood down as State Secretary (Victoria). It has been an honour and a pleasure to carry out this position for so long. All the very best wishes and congratulations to the Committee for 2002.

Until we meet again.

Ron Christie - State Secretary (Vic)

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



The Christmas function was held at the Bells Function in the Swan Valley winemaking area. Thirty-eight members and partners attended. It was disappointing that the food standard and presentation did not meet the standards that we had previously enjoyed under the previous management.

Leon Battle is currently not in the best of health. I am sure that he would be pleased to hear from any of his mates, get well soon Leon.

Bill Strahan and his wife are now back in the West visiting and we get the feeling that they have now seen the light and may return to 'Paradise in the West' permanently.

Leo Wall, ex NAAH, is keen to hear from any of his 'birdy' mates, ring me if you require his contact details.

It is great to see that our recently elected National President, 'Toz' Dadswell, and the National Executive have commenced their term full of enthusiasm. Christmas Hampers were sent to the flights that are currently embarked. May this humble scribe offer a BRAVO ZULU on behalf of our Division.

Our President, Jack Suriano, represented us at the Armistice Day and laid a wreath. He reported that the service was very well attended, the Guard of Honour being made up of cadets from the three services.

Mini-Reunion News: The Social Committee has the plans well in hand and many enquiries have already been received from our Eastern States shipmates. The dates are the weekend of 01 to 04 November 2002.

As members of the Association your support and co-operation would be appreciated. Should you feel that you could assist in any way please contact the Secretary, Peter Welsh, or any other Committee Member. We are seeking thoughts and suggestions on Accommodation/Entertainment/Tours/ Sports/Venues etc. This will be a great opportunity to catch up and renew friendships with our old mates. The full schedule and details will be noted in the next issue of *Slipstream*.

Committee members to contact are:

John Green - 08 9330 7386

Bevan Daws - 08 9293 0229

'Jo' Jost - 08 9250 7441

Peter Welsh 08 9454 6045

All State Divisions will be notified of the progress of the arrangements and updates as they come to hand.

The major venue is the Rockingham Navalmen's Club, which is adjacent to HMAS *Stirling*, Garden Island.

In conclusion we send fraternal greetings to all members and their partners, in particular, those on the sick list to whom we hope will get well soon. God Bless you all.

John Green - Unit 1/7 Prinsep Road, ATTADELA WA 6156

A.C.T. DIVISION



Unfortunately, Xmas and New Year came in with some blazing fury in eastern NSW and we trust that none of our members suffered any great property damage.

The fires on the south coast no doubt involved many of our members in some way or another and I understand there were a number of very close calls.

Our thanks go to the stirring efforts of Rural Fire Brigades and like organisations who risked their lives and forewent any festivities to keep these fires in check as far as was possible. What a welcome relief it was some nights ago to hear the falls of rain which quenched these flames after more than three weeks.

The ACT did not escape these fires and much of the pine forests of Mt Stromlo and crossing the Tuggeranong Parkway has left many desolate areas which will take some years to reforest.

It is a dismal sight driving along the Tuggeranong Parkway from the Glenloch Interchange almost to the Cotter Road which the fire crossed and drove up through Curtin almost to the Mint.

A further fire burnt out much of Red Hill and threatened many homes on Mugga Way.

(Continued on page 28)

A former member, Harry Adams, had much damage done to pastures and fencing at his property at Melrose Park a little further south and east of the Monaro Highway.

Considering that many of these fires are known to have been deliberately lit, one wonders at the mentality of such members of our society who can cause such wanton destruction of public and private property.

Pre-Xmas, some 40 of our members enjoyed a very pleasant Cocktail Party at RSL Headquarters. The ladies provided some splendid fare and with the bubbly and other refreshments, the party progressed with a swing. Maurie Tiffen was very busy with his camera catching some of the guests in various poses, a few of these accompany this for publication at the discretion of the editor.

It was pleasing to see George Beazley from Sydney join the party where he had the chance to renew old friends.

Our President, Brian Courtier welcomed all guests and towards the end we had a very pleasant raffle, most of the prizes having been donated. The treasurer was pleased to report that the evening was a resounding financial success.

Nothing else to report, except that our AGM will be held at the RSL National Headquarters on Tuesday, 6th March. A good roll up would be appreciated to set up the administration for 2002. One worrying trend which seems to be occurring more frequently, is the fact that members change their address and fail to notify the Secretary. As you can imagine, this prevents them receiving mail concerning divisional meetings or events, as well as *Slipstream*. The undelivered magazine gets redirected to the National Secretary, who then writes to me and asks what's up.

That's all from me and that's all from him. A HAPPY NEW YEAR to all!

Brian Treloar



Clockwise from top right:

Photographs courtesy Maurie Tiffen

1. Digby Johns and Jane Lee share a 'dit' from days gone by.
2. Do you remember this chick? Beryl Green, who was the Captain's personal secretary at RANAS back in the early 1950's, with husband Barrie.
3. Vice President Jim Parsons.
4. Treasurer Les Powell.
5. Two neighbours from Perth Drive in the 1960's, Anne McMillan and Con Treloar, discuss how their carpets used to lift during the Nowra westerlies.

NSW DIVISION



How many of you find yourselves in the same boat as me? – Just about ready to start on that delayed chore which had been postponed to January 2001 from the year before, and its 'out pipes' for January 2002. I personally am a very slow learner in this regard. Then again if we rush in and do everything today, there will be nothing left to look forward to tomorrow. Ha! Ha!

Last chance for any who may have forgotten to return their raffle tickets to rectify their oversight. Or for those who may wish to improve their chances by increasing their holdings, a quick phone call to 02 4447 1602 will reach our friendly 'raffle co-ordinator'. The ability of your committee to meet the ever-increasing costs incurred in the daily running of our Division without increasing the annual subscription is dependent on the revenue raised in these raffles. Draw day is March 2nd, 2002.

The summer time 'bogey' is still with us. The fires seem to be bigger and hotter each passing year. Thankfully all seems to have been controlled for the moment. All our thanks must go to the wonderful volunteer workforce who on every occasion, put aside their own pleasures and willingly give their time and efforts to address whatever emergency presents itself. Thankfully there

have been no reports of property loss incurred by our membership apart from sooty paintwork, smoke filled houses and, I believe, some refrigerators which needed restocking. I don't believe the statement made by the editor of a popular magazine that he could identify the different eucalypts by the smoke emanating from them.

Our State Welfare Officer has again expressed concern at the sparsity of communication he receives. If you know of someone who is experiencing illness, or just needs to have a talk, or be directed to an appropriate authority for additional assistance, please give Ray Burt a ring on 02 4421 8815. The population spread in NSW makes it impossible to be aware of those needing support if the membership doesn't remain in touch.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2002 to you all
Neville Newbold

THE LAST SALUTE

The GI had been killed in combat. His body was brought back and delivered to his small home town in South Carolina. At the cemetery, a large gathering came together to honour the lad, with family, friends and sympathetic acquaintances. It was a sad occasion. Finally the guard of honour fired the final salute and old Aunt Sadie, queen of the family, keeled over in a dead faint, just as the riflemen fired their salute. There was a moment of complete, shocked silence and then a small boy yelled so that his voice carried over the entire crowd, "Damn, they shot Grandma!"



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



I am perfect officer material. Most of the time I don't know what's going on and I forget important things.

Someone gave me a change of address and I lost it. That someone will have to work out that I messed up again when he does not receive his *Slipstream*.

Anyhow it's report time. SA is still here but from what we hear on the news is that NSW may be burnt out especially in the Nowra area. We express our concern about this and hope that the fires have hurt no member. It seems Sussex Inlet was badly hit.

Our activities have been low key. The Xmas celebration held at The Links Hotel was good. Dinsley our social secretary organised a great get together and many members turned up. Ian Laidler was the lucky recipient of the Xmas hamper and apparently he has had high hopes for 17 years. Below are some of the photographs taken at the event. The names have been withheld to protect the innocent. Photos courtesy Ken Hyde

Our routine meetings are still being held at the Hackney Pub and I don't know whether it's the environment that keeps us there for long periods or that we have pressing decisions to make.

I notice also that meetings are well attended so I suspect it's the pub liveliness that is enticing numbers.

After many meetings we have at last obtained a plaque that will be placed in the Daw Park repatriation chapel. It has taken years to resolve this venture but we got there. Well not quite! The Daw Park administration is working upon a suitable time for the dedication of the plaque, let us hope that they are quicker than we have been.

The sausage sizzle fund raising is to continue throughout 2002. This plan is keeping us financially viable and will no doubt keep our fees constant for the oncoming financial year that comes up in March.

Dinsley and Junice publish a regular newsletter that brings us all up to date with all manners of news and articles. The latest had a profile from Gordon McPhee one of our more senior members.

It was interesting to read, especially when from time to time his navy days and mine crossed paths. He was the first RAN pilot to fly a RAN helicopter. He retired in 1971 and now lives in the comfortable suburb of Beaumont. Many people would remember Gordon with warm feelings.

Sick list has been small. Paul Shiels has had some master



plumbing done. A bypass was required and he is now well. I am not sure how this will effect the progress of the web site but I suppose there will slow progress. There has been the odd faltering in health of some but by and large we are a healthy lot.

Greetings to all other divisions. Congratulations to the brand new National Executive, we wish you well in your endeavours. Thank you to the previous workers on the Executive.

Let us all work in harmony during 2002.

Barry Lord

QUEENSLAND DIVISION



With a branded forehead [header photo last edition] it would be difficult to miss the deadline again. With any luck, the head will be healed and back to it's normal grooved self. Good for a laugh!

Hello to all and I hope you all enjoyed the festive season. I've never known it so hot here over the last few weeks. We are having a pool constructed in the back yard of our new place and it should be in operation within three weeks. [Everyone is invited.]

Eric Cottrell has asked to pass on a message. He's been in Greenslopes Hospital for a few weeks and didn't send out any Christmas cards, so wishes everyone a merry Xmas and good New Year. We hope he'll be out shortly.

Our trip on the steam tug, *Forceful*, was an enjoyable day. Around twenty-eight of us were on board and it was good to meet up again with Mick Wright and Ann.

It was a bit lumpy out in the Bay. Dee was a bit 'crook' as well as a couple of others. Des Kelly and Bob McBride had wine cases and they were awash at one point, but were quickly rescued.

Bob went close to having two black eyes. He was sitting on the port side and a young, buxom girl was walking past when the ship

(Continued on page 30)

lurched and she went headlong into Bob. Her 'buxoms' got him in each eye and his nose was buried twixt them. We reckoned it was a very good shot. Didn't see her again but Bob was a bit red in the face. He didn't want me to publish the tale, but there you are!

We held our Xmas BBQ [see photographs] at Noosa Sound Resort and Col Spence and his staff put on a great meal. 'Blue' Bryant got into the cooking as well and reckons he's changed his rate from butcher to cook.

Col had posted Daily Orders with Trevor Bolitho as PO of the Day and Col as Regulating PO; both did a sterling job. I promoted Col at the end of the day to Master-at-Arms.

There were sixty-four there and it was hot. Ron Powell got into the pool to cool off. Glen Hartig donated five bottles of vintage port -two for immediate consumption and the rest for the raffle. Flossie Nugent donated a bottle of Bourbon that was won by Bob Peacock- with much glee.

When we arrived, I was accosted and brought to order, on threat of being sued, for making some incorrect statements in my last letter. Trevor Bolitho was the lap dancer, **NOT** Trevor Tite, and it was the men who tried to set a new world record for red wine consumption—not the ladies. I think I've got it right this time.

Several stayed on for the night and a good time was had by all. Thanks from all of us, Col.

We'll be holding our AGM up there and will make a weekend of it. A room should be available at the Tewanin RSL for our meeting on the Saturday morning, 16 March, with golf at the Mt. Coolm course on the Friday 15th. Brian Simpson is Club Captain there.

The Tewanin Bowls Club will be happy to have our bowlers there and there is a new ten-pin bowls there as well.

Col is arranging a Sunset Jazz Cruise on the Saturday evening and there is a good Carvery Dinner at the RSL on Sunday night. He is also providing accommodation at \$25 pp/per night, 4 to a unit. Interstate visitors are very welcome. Col's phone number is (07) 54498122. Join us for a fun weekend.

We completed our move before Xmas to No. 3 Royal Close, Regatta Park. Wurtulla 4575 Ph.54934386. and enjoying doing various improvements, which keep me busy.

Woolworths' donated vouchers for nuts and sweets for the

hampers to be sent to the embarked Flights, but they went by camel train to Mike Heneghan to use at 'Woollies', Nowra. Mike used his own cash to make the purchases then used the vouchers for his own goods when they arrived. Thanks, Mike.

On a sad note, Dave Hayward passed away on New Years Day, just before a bypass operation. I have spoken to Vema and passed on our condolences.

I had a phone call from 'Slug' Whitton just before the Xmas BBQ to say he'd 'had the chop' and asked me to convey his best wishes and farewell to those attending, which I did. He passed away last week and quite a few of us attended his funeral on 18th January. His family had produced a dossier of his life and I'm sending a copy to John Arnold.

As usual you meet people you haven't seen for years at funerals. Observer Steve Wilson, Barry Daly, Ian Lawson, Ben Matthews, Observer Anderson, Bernie Brennan and 'Bobo' Olsen, just to name a few. Colleen Conellan was there and had been with the family for a few days.

Trevor Tite and I then went on to see Col Spence to check on the AGM weekend details.

Frank (Shorty) Nielsen has had another seizure and is in Greenslopes again. He and Shirley are having a tough time.

We were pleased to hear that Bob Cronin was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal last year by the Naval Association of Australia. Only one award is made nationally each year. Congratulations, Bob, from all of us in QLD. [Bob has since passed away.]

Ray Murrell has applied for a driver's job for CHOGM, which is to be held up here later this year. We reckon he won't get the job of driving the Queen around, but we wish him luck. Incidentally, Ray and Barbara won both raffle prizes on the *Forceful*, they wanted to put one back for another draw, but we wouldn't have that. That really was good luck or something.

Warren Walters thought he might be here for ANZAC Day, but he tells me he and Maria have booked a thirty-two day cruise from Tokyo to San Francisco in April, calling in all over the Pacific etc. We'll have drink or two for you on Anzac Day, mate.

That's it for now, so best wishes to all.

Barry Lister- President Email: blister@caloundra.net



Clockwise from above right hand corner:
 1. 'Blue' Bryant and Don Spencer
 2. Bill Strahan - Mick Blair -Trevor Tite and Mick Wright
 3. Gary Reid - David Ray - Glen Hartig - Rex Day - Barry Lister and Peter Harman
 4. Bob Christie and Jim Pavier
 5. Bill Aubrey - Dave Randall - 'Paddy' Williamson and Col Spence
 6. Des Kelly and Bob McBride
 Photographs courtesy Mick Blair

JUST REMINISCING ... about the early days at RANAS NOWRA

by Fred Wessel

I had the pleasure of arriving at NAS Nowra about September 1948 as a member of class NAR7. Affectionately known as the Magnificent 7s. Some of the members (from memory) were Trevor Tite, John Stewart, Dave Laird (what a story could be told about those last two in Melbourne many years ago). Geoff Strickland, who started the Gliding Club, John Moncrieff, Morrie Tiffin and Steve Wilson.

Classes NAR 5 AND 6 were already at Nowra.

- Meals (?) were held in the OLD dining room which was a leftover from WW 2. The meals in those days left much to be desired but the 'bread fights' left nothing to be desired. They were hard fought both for the honour of the different classes and the individual throwers.

- It is true that Divisions were held on the Quarterdeck in the early years. An event that many today may find difficult to believe, but due to the small number of sailors on establishment it was the ideal place.

- How about the number of kangaroos that roamed the area and were frequently fed by the sailors. Bloody snakes appeared from nowhere and would frighten the 'you-know-what' out of anyone in the vicinity. Oh they were the days!

- The 'Wild Beast' patrols, that consisted of sailors armed with broom sticks who were organised to scare off unwanted kangaroos, birds, sheep, snakes, cows, wild horses and whatever that dared to cross the airstrip when an aircraft was required to land. Yes! We were the guardians of land.

- Who remembers when Rear Admiral Collins arrived by Dakota for an inspection of the air station and its sailors? The 'Wild Beast' patrol dressed in No.6s and armed with the inevitable broom handles protected the airstrip from marauding stock and allowed our Admiral to arrive and depart with safety.

- Could anyone forget the ORIGINAL liberty boat, an old WW2 bus that would take the sailors into Nowra for a well-earned R and R each evening. It was so old that during the summer months it always boiled on the way back to base. Not to be outdone, those of us who had consumed more than we should have, were ever ready to volunteer to replenish (in flight if required) the dwindling water supply in the radiator. All available equipment was used to transfer the 'coolant' from one source to the other regardless of the consequences of burns and damage to private parts. Many a brave (?) sailor still bears the scars of engagement.

- Do you remember 'Col the barber' and his assistant, Peter? One evening after work Col was in the mess, very quiet and not his usual happy self and I asked him what his problem was. He told me that he had just returned from the morgue in Nowra after identifying the body of his assistant. Apparently, Peter had left the base during his lunch break and spent some time watching road repairs being carried out. After the steamroller had gone back and forth a couple of times, Peter had then thrown himself under the roller. The rest I leave to your imagination.

- Who can forget Leading Electrician Ike Pauley? One evening when I was Duty RPO, Ike returned on board under the influence of what sailors drink a lot, and requested permission from the SBLT Officer of the Day to 'return on board'.



Permission was granted and then Ike asked if that also included his ELEPHANT! Having noted Ike's 'condition', the OOD, with a smile, assured him that it did. Foolish man! Ike went outside and was seen leading an elephant on the end of his lanyard. Ike said that having missed the liberty bus, he was walking back to RANAS and passed a visiting circus, in passing he had spoken to the elephant that had agreed to take him back on board. After the circus owner and the police had been placated, it was decided to let Ike sleep off the night's experience in a cell.

- Many may not be aware that in the mid-50's, the Safety Equipment Section was requested to evaluate the benefits of a new adhesive reflective tape from the 3M company. Jack (Blitz) Kreig, being a Petty Officer, volunteered to be the 'guinea pig'. So one night, in the middle of Jervis Bay, Jack was set adrift in a life raft with the reflective tape applied to the paddles. The Sea Air Rescue vessel (SAR) motored around for a while, then the searchlight was switched on and we soon had Jack in the beam and picked him up. The second trial was not so successful but much more sensational. Jack was set adrift for a second time. We went for a run around the Bay in the SAR, then had a smoke and a cup of coffee before looking for our fearless sailor. When we returned to where we thought was the correct area, and with our searchlight probing near and far, no sign was found of Jack. After about a half-hour had elapsed there was still no sign of him. 'Panic stations' were starting to set in because during the search clouds had rolled in over the moon and a night wind had started to become a nuisance. After about another 30 to 40 minutes searching, a reflection was seen near the rocks at the entrance to Jervis Bay. Bingo! We had found him. On bringing him back on board, the language he used did not testify to the fact that he was very pleased with the night proceedings. Anyway, all is well that ends well, and the tape was found to be inadequate for our use.

- Some of the sailors who arrived in later years at Nowra would not be aware that one of the early Commanding Officers was none other than Captain Peter Fanshawe RN, who was the 'head penguin' in the 'Great Escape' from Colditz during WW 2. During rounds of the married quarters, the Captain was appalled at the number of dogs running around the area and barking at the inspection party. He told the Buffer that signs should be erected stating, 'NO DOGS ALLOWED IN THIS AREA'. The Buffer, with a smile on his face, remarked to the Captain that he thought the signs wouldn't be of any use. The Captain, quite indignant at this comment, asked the Buffer why they would not work. The Buffer replied, 'Because dogs can't read, Sir!'

These are a few incidents that come to mind concerning a most enjoyable and happy time as a member of the Fleet Air Arm.

THE GROUNDCREW

by E Sykes - 1942

He gets no rake off for working 'till take off;
or helping the aircrews prepare;
but whenever there's trouble, it's quick at the double;
the man on the ground must be there.

GOOD ANSWER

Whilst doing rounds, the Officer of the Day asked the starboard lookout what he would do if a man fell overboard.

"I would shout 'Man overboard'," the sailor replied.

The OOD then asked what he would do if an officer fell overboard.

The sailor paused and thought, then said, "Which one Sir?"



THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS HAMPERS PROJECT

At its meeting on 25th October 2001, the National Executive decided to supply Christmas hampers to the men and women serving in the embarked helicopter Flights who would be away from families and home over the festive season.

All Divisions supported the proposal and the Squadrons were asked to indicate what the personnel would like included in the hamper. They put in a request for T-Shirts and Water bottles and left the selection of the rest of the hamper to the FAAA.

The FAAA supplied the T-Shirts, complete with 'Wings of Gold', and the water bottles were also emblazoned similarly. These articles cost \$1195.00.

As time was short an intensive gift raising campaign was launched. Donations were received from the following firms/organisations.

David Jones, Coles, Amotts' Biscuits, Woolworths*, Southlands Photographics, The Australian War Memorial, The Department of Veterans' Affairs, HMAS Albatross, Navy Office and the Salvation Army (through the Albatross Chaplains).

**The Woolworths vouchers were obtained by the Queensland and the Tasmania Divisions*

The packing of the hampers was carried out in the Museum of Flight on Monday 10 December. Present were the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Mrs Danna Vale, the Member for Gilmore, Joanna Gash, and the Mayor of Shoalhaven, Greg Watson, CDRE Keith Eames and CAPT TIM Barrett.

Members of the FAAA, assisted by a team of officers and sailors from Albatross, arranged the goods for display and took part in the packing.

Originally it was intended to pack one hamper for each of the six embarked helicopter Flights, but such was the generosity of the donors that we had an abundance of gifts. (Amotts Biscuits gave 72 tins of biscuits). It was then decided to pack two hampers for each Flight.

A typical hamper contained T-Shirts (one for each individual), water bottles, Xmas cakes, Xmas puddings, biscuits, sweets, nuts, writing pads and pens, books, calendars, mouse pads, magazines (including Slipstream), lapel badges, and NAVY stickers.

Members of the FAAA can be very proud of the Xmas Hamper Project. The hampers were well received and are the first step in establishing a closer relationship between the FAAA and the men and women of today's FAA. A very positive step.



Some of the letters of acknowledgement...

HMAS ADELAIDE

My Flight team and I were moved by the thoughtfulness of your organisation. We received the two large packages of gifts just a few days past Christmas from our newest and best friend, the 'Desert Duck' – the USN Sea King helicopter that does the stores and mail runs in our current area of operations.

The fact that your gracious gifts were received a little later than you had intended, only added to the surprise and pleasure with which they were received. We were at sea over Christmas and your gift certainly lifted spirits within the Flight before the post Christmas blues had a chance to set in.

It filled us with pride to know that our 'aviation fraternity' was 'with' us throughout a potentially difficult time. Other departments within the ship did not appear to enjoy such brotherhood.

Please pass our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support of our efforts to the members of the FAAA and the sponsors who so generously donated the gifts that made the hampers so bountiful.

LCDR Marc Pavillard RAN – Flight Commander

and...

This is just a short note to thank the members of the Fleet Air Arm Association for the Christmas Hampers to our ship's flight during our deployment to Operation Slipper.

The arrival of the hampers was greatly appreciated by the entire flight. Everybody received something and have been wearing many of the items daily. The inclusion of the magazines was a great idea and were used to while away the hours while the helicopter is airborne.

It didn't take long for the lollies to be devoured and the fruitcakes have supplied many morning teas. It is safe to say that none of us were expecting to receive quite so much and we were impressed by the amount of thought and effort that was evidently put into it.

I have also been asked to mention the video that was sent with the hamper which the flight greatly enjoyed. It was noted that some of the articles mentioned were related directly to the personnel on this flight. I have a feeling that copies may be made.

Once again, on behalf of the Flight and personnel, I would like to thank you all for your thoughtfulness. It is gratifying to know that not only are we thought about, but also have the support of fine organisations such as yours.

LSA Justin Poole – Sensor Operator

HMAS LEEUWIN

On behalf of the Flight I would like to thank the members of the FAAA for the outstanding Christmas Hampers that you organised for us. As I write we are spending our 42nd consecutive day at sea and the gifts that we have received are very much appreciated by all members of the flight and has given morale a big boost.

Our aircraft throughout this deployment has been beset with mechanical problems and the flight has worked hard to ensure a serviceable aircraft is available. The arrival of the hampers two days before Christmas was well timed and a very pleasant surprise. The magazines were really appreciated after so long at sea, the food didn't stay unopened for long, and the tee shirts were being worn by the afternoon. Overall, the selection of gifts was entirely appropriate and I have no doubt that the past experiences of your members contributed towards this.

The thoughtfulness of the Association and those who provided contributions has reminded us that although we are from our family over this period, there are people in the community who appreciate the difficulties service life sometimes places upon us. Please pass our thanks to all your members and those organisations who provided assistance.

Once again, thank you very much for a very kind and extremely thoughtful Christmas gift.

LT G A O'Loughlan RAN – Flight Commander

HMAS KANIMBLA

What a wonderful surprise it was to receive a large package for the 'birdies' which were not aircraft spares.

It really was Christmas when we opened the boxes and saw the most generous gifts that the FAAA had collected and sent to us.

The heartfelt appreciation of everyone was evident when gifts were shared around, including items to the ship's company.

I know that you would have already thanked the firms and organisations individually. May we sincerely thank the FAAA for their support in what we are doing and appreciation of the demands that the festive season brings in these circumstances.

LCDR P R 'Tanzi' Lea RAN - 817 Sqdn Detachment Commander

HMAS WARRAMUNGA

On behalf of all the Flight personnel embarked during the 2001 Christmas period, I would like to express our heartiest thanks for the Christmas hampers and good wishes provided by the Fleet Air Arm Association, and to the companies and organisations who donated so generously. It is through gestures such as this that we reaffirm we are all members of a small and closely knit Naval Aviation Community.

On Christmas day the Flight conducted a sortie early in the morning to ensure that the approaches to ship's position were clear of unidentified contacts, thus allowing all of the ship's company to relax and make the most of the day.

On completion of the sortie the hampers were opened with much excitement by all of the Flight personnel.

The hampers provided a welcome acknowledgement of the support for our duty to the country as well as providing some traditional Xmas treats.

Once again I would like to thank the FAAA for their support and would encourage the continuation of this programme in future years.

CMDR G N Fiedler RAN - XO 816 Sqdn - Flight Commander

HMAS SYDNEY

On behalf of my Flight on HMAS SYDNEY, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Fleet Air Arm Association for their good wishes and the hamper we received over Christmas. It was very much appreciated by the 'boys', who didn't take long in polishing it off, thus adding to the Christmas happiness onboard.

Once again, thank you.

LCDR L. Curac RAN - Flight Commander

and...

I am a part of the Seahawk FLT currently deployed in the Arabian Gulf doing Maritime Interception Operations. Just prior to Christmas time we (Sydney F11), received two large boxes full of goodies (lollies, books, t-shirts, Christmas cake, etc), from the Fleet Air Arm Association. I am writing to thank the members of The Fleet Air Arm Association for their kindness and thoughts with these gifts.

Could you please pass my thanks (and my Flights thanks), to all Fleet Air Arm Association members through *Slipstream*.

I have been a birdie for twenty years and it has made me proud to be a member of the Fleet Air Arm knowing that there are retired and current Fleet Air Arm members thinking of us while we are out here away from our loved ones over the Christmas period.

Once again, thank you all, and I hope to have a beer with some of the members at the next *Albatross Senior Sailors Reunion*.

CPOATA Fred Campbell - HMAS SYDNEY FLT

HMAS MANOORA

On return from pre-deployment work-up in December 2001, 817 Squadron Detachment personnel were pleasantly surprised to receive a Christmas hamper that was organised by the FAAA and ALBATROSS.

Please accept our thanks and pass on our gratitude to all those within the Association who had a hand in organising this very kind gesture.

LT M M Lindsay RAN - Detachment Commander 817 Squadron



Mrs Joanna Gash MP, Member for Gilmore - Sorry, sailor's name not known at time of going to press - The Hon. Danna Vale MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, LCDR L Irwin, CMDR G Fiedler and Captain Tim Barratt, assist with the packing of the FAAA Christmas Hampers.

Photograph courtesy RANAS Nowra Photographic Section



Two 'professional' models from RANAS display the T-shirts and some of the goods collected for packaging. We thank them for their help.

Photo courtesy RANAS Nowra Photographic Section

We're Happy Little ...

Exercise Tandem Thrust was held in the Rockhampton area with US and Australian air, and sea forces. In the various briefings for the visitors there was a segment on flora and fauna and what to be careful of. In some of the briefings for the US land forces, they were warned about the feral koalas which lurk up in trees and drop on people before inflicting serious damage with their long claws [and these were illustrated]. The wounds so caused need lots of Vitamin E to cure, but luckily the Aussies had such stuff available - a black paste which is plastered on your skin, mostly on your face, ready to be working in case of drop bear attack.

So the hulking USMC and US Airborne moved out on patrol and operations with Vegemite smeared on their faces.

OBITUARY

BOB CRONIN 1922 - 2002

Robert Frederick Cronin was born 14th April 1922 in Kilburn, London.

After leaving school, he started work in the sheet metal industry as an electrician and joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and commenced training as an Air Mechanic [Electrical].

Bob saw war service afloat in the Atlantic and Pacific and ashore in England and the Middle East. Part of his service saw him in Ceylon on passage to Singapore when the country fell to the Japanese. The ship returned to Aden from where his group went overland to Alexandria to join up with a RN Squadron. He often told the story of trying to maintain aircraft with a broom in one hand and a rifle in the other.

It was during this tour that he met the late Haydn Davies, little did either know that their friendship would last a lifetime and most of it would be spent together in the RAN at Nowra. Many who knew them would recall them saying, "It wasn't like this in the desert in '42", when something out of the normal would upset their routine.

On return to the UK he joined HMS *Glory* and soon found himself on way to the Pacific. Whilst in *Glory* he witnessed the signing of the surrender by Japan. The ship then steamed south to Australia and Bob was drafted ashore at Jervis Bay, in transit to the *Golden Hind* at Bankstown, NSW.

He was then drafted to HMS *Victorious* to return to England, but two hours before sailing, he and a group of aircraft maintainers were sent ashore to HMS *Nabbington*, which was later to become HMAS *Albatross*. Little did he realise what the future held for him in the area. After a short stay he returned to England and was discharged on 16th February 1948.

After six months away from his beloved Navy, he applied to join the RAN, was accepted and commenced service in August 1948. He sailed to Australia on *Karimbla* and arrived at HMAS *Cerberus* in mid-October. On 12th January 1949, he returned to *Albatross* but only for a short stay of three months, before returning to *Cerberus* for instructional duties. It was at this time that he married his late wife, Edna.

OBITUARY

d'ARCY DOYLE - ARTIST

D'Arcy was born in 1932 and raised in Ipswich, Queensland. From an early age, d'Arcy showed an interest in drawing and he always had a wish to be a designer or to be involved in graphic arts.

He left school at the age of 13 to work as an apprentice signwriter.

This was his only arts training – otherwise he was self-taught.

Later on d'Arcy joined the Royal Australian Navy [FAA] and served for seven years before leaving in 1961 to move to Sydney to become a professional painter.

At this time, he worked as a commercial artist painting anything from stage drops to murals. He was commissioned by St George Leagues Club to paint several murals and it was his mural work that really started his career.

He was commissioned by RSLs and Leagues Clubs around Sydney – some of which have survived several renovations. One is still at the Belmore RSL in south-west Sydney.

He returned to Queensland in the mid-1970s and settled at Mudgeraba on the Gold Coast.

From about 1982 his career started to climb. His nostalgic paintings of children playing in suburban or rural Australia give a nostalgic look at post-World War II Ipswich. As a result he was often referred to as 'Australia's Norman Rockwell'.

Ipswich Mayor, John Nugent, said that he was shocked to hear of d'Arcy's death, after whom d'Arcy Doyle Place was named. "The city has lost a great son and someone that Ipswich can be proud of."

Courtesy 'The Queensland Times'



In October 1951, they returned to Nowra and raised their family, two daughters, Moira and Lisa, and two sons, Colin and Peter. They lived in the St Georges Basin Area and Bob became a member of the Bush Fire Brigade and served with them until the family moved to Nowra in 1962..

Bob was to see service in HMA Ships *Sydney* [Korean waters], *Vengeance* and *Melbourne*, and in Squadrons 805, 816 and 817, before he completed his twenty years service in August 1968.

This ended his uniformed service with the RAN, but he stayed within the naval environment by taking up a position with the Public Service as Chief Librarian at the Air Publication Library at HMAS *Albatross*.

In 1966 he became a member of the Shoalhaven Sub Section of the Naval Association of Australia. Shortly after joining he became a member of the executive and remained in one of the executive positions until 2000 when, due to ill health, he found the work too much.

During this time he was honoured by being awarded a Life Membership; in August 2001, he received the highest honour made by the Association, that being the Meritorious Service Medal, of which only one is presented each year. The Federal President of the Naval Association, Admiral M W Hudson AC RAN [Rtd], made the award, also present at this presentation were two Commodores and a Captain which was a great tribute to an old Chief.

In 1988 he was asked to chair a steering committee to form the NSW Division of the Fleet Air Arm Association, this committee was very successful and the Division was formed in 1989. Bob became President of the FAAA and remained so for four years, only relinquishing the position when his wife's ill health made it impossible for him to continue.

During the early years of the development of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum (AMoF) he spent hundreds of hours preparing some of the present displays of Naval Aircraft and Equipment.

From 1980 - 1990 Bob found time to join the Royal Coastal patrol at Greenwell Point and serve in an active role.

So in saying farewell to Bob, those of us that knew him can say we had the honour of knowing a man who loved his family and served his Navy, Country and Mankind.

Bill Kerr - President Shoalhaven Sub Section of the Naval Association

VALE

COMMANDER JOHN HENRY YOUNG USN (RETD)

Passed away suddenly at his home in Orange Park, Florida, USA in late November 2001 of a suspected heart attack.

He had only recently retired from his civilian occupation and commenced to enjoy his retirement.

In the early 1980's John Henry spent two years on loan to the RAN at the Naval Air Station Nowra where he served as Gunner (Air), OIC Weapons Assessing Unit and OIC Bomb Dump.

Highly respected for his professional skills and expertise, he was popular and well liked by the Armourers who worked with him.

LEUT Young, (as he was then) will be remembered for his easy going, genial personality and ready wit. We are saddened by his passing.

J J Harrison

**I have no face, but everyone knows me.
I grow stronger and larger as I age, and I am impossible to track.
I feed off the innocent, and my followers are weak.
I ruin friendships, relationships, and jobs.
What am I?**

Answer on back page...

Men are like fine wine. They all start out like grapes and it's the woman's job to stomp on them and keep them in the dark until they mature into something they'd like to have dinner with.

Women are like fine wine. They start out all fresh, fruity and intoxicating to the mind and then turn full-bodied with age until they go all sour and vinegary and give you a headache.

**BIRTHDAY PARTY
CELEBRATES
140 YEARS**



Bill Vallack and Steve Smith celebrated their 'Big Seven-O' birthdays with a combined '140th' at Steve's Terrey Hills property last January 18.

'Olds and bolds' like Andrew Robertson, John Goble, Nat Gould, Digger Bourke, Toz Dadswell, Jeff Gledhill and Jim Bailey, together with their wives and more than a hundred other guests, nearly all ex-RAN and heavily birdie-oriented, dined and wined and danced the night away.

Steve proved he still had both lip and rhythm when he joined Bob Bamard and his world-famous jazz band with his ever-reliable trumpet for a couple of golden oldie classics

Photos: Clockwise from top right. Read L-R

- Steve Smith (second left foreground) leads the harmony with Bob Bamard (on clarinet) and his jazz band.
- Bill Vallack, Margaret McKeon, Judy Rowe and Phil Rowe.
- Bob Simmonds and John Sticpewich.
- Jean and Kevin Knowles (foreground, also Tony Horton left background and Les Anderson right background).
- Gwen Dadswell, Margie Barratt, Malcolm Barratt, with Ray Morrirt (foreground).
- Fred Lewis.

Photographs and article courtesy Dr Fred Lane



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SLIPSTREAM EDITOR - SEE FRONT COVER

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF LIFE

*Living on Earth is expensive,
but it does include a free trip
around the sun every year.*

*How long a minute is
depends on what side of the
bathroom door you're on.*

*Birthdays are good for you;
the more you have,
the longer you live.*

*Happiness comes through doors
you
didn't even know you left open.*

*Ever notice that the people who are
late are often much jollier
than the people who have to wait
for them?*

*Most of us go to our grave
with our music still inside of us.*

*Wal-Mart is lowering prices every
day,
how come nothing is free yet?*

*You may be only one person in the
world,
but you may also be the world to
one person.*

*Some mistakes are too much fun
to only make once.*

*Don't cry because it's over;
smile because it happened.*

*We could learn a lot from crayons:
some are sharp, some are pretty,
some are dull, some have weird
names, and all are different
colours....but they all exist very
nicely in the same box.*

*A truly happy person is one who
can enjoy the scenery on a detour.*



Member's E-mail Directory # 8

If you wish your E-mail address published,
please contact the Editor.

Ray 'Beachball' Godfrey
beachball@hotmail.net.au

Answer: GOSSIP or RUMOURS

CAN YOU HELP?

A member is trying to contact the relatives of

Petty Officer (Airman)
WILLIAM GEORGE MacLEAN MID - FX 85866

who died aboard HMS *Emperor* on 24 August
1944, at the age of twenty.

The son of Robert Gordon and Cissie
MacLean of Glasgow. It is believed that he had a
brother and sister.

If you can help in this matter, please
contact the Editor at:

PO BOX 662, NOWRA NSW 2541
AUSTRALIA



A LAST FAREWELL

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

CMDR John Henry Young (USN Rtd)
November 2001

Norman Fargher
30 November 2001

Robert 'Bob' Silver Davson
14 December 2001

John Jeffries
17 December 2001

Bruce Edward Smith
22 December 2001

David Hayward
01 January 2002

Darryl L McKellar

Keith Irwin OAM
07 January 2002

Arthur George 'Slug' Whitten
January 2001

Robert 'Bob' Frederick Cronin
19 January 2002

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