



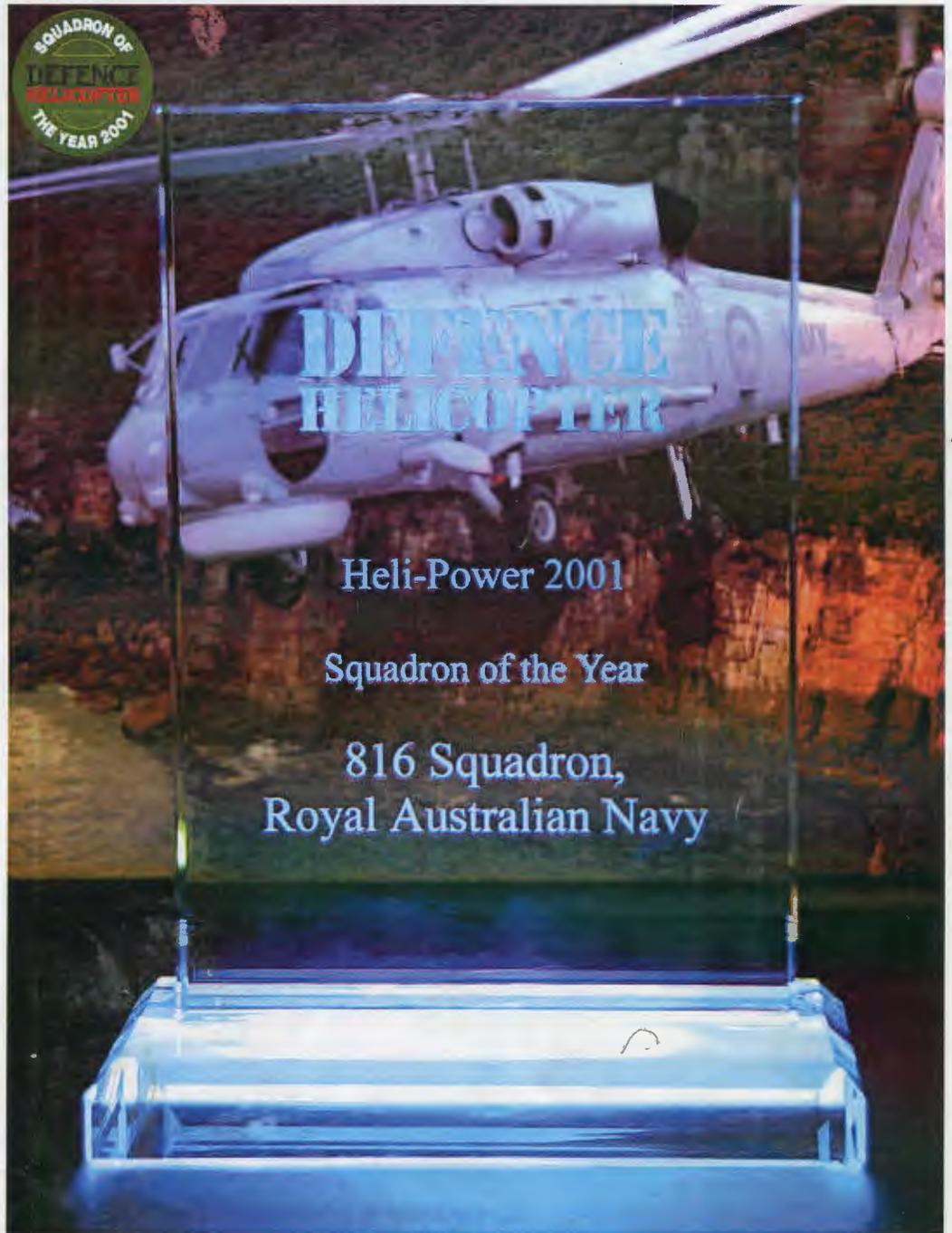
The Quarterly Journal
of the
Fleet Air Arm
Association of Australia Inc.

Volume 13 Number 3

2002

Slipstream

Established HMAS Albatross 1957



Published by the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Inc.
Print Post Approved – PP201494/00022
Editor: John Arnold – PO Box 662 NOWRA NSW 2541 Australia
Phone/Fax (02) 4423 2412 – Email slipstream@shoal.net.au

FOREWORD

by

Vice Admiral C.A. Ritchie AO RAN**Chief of Navy**

First, let me thank the National President, Commodore 'Toz' Dadswell AM RAN (Rtd), for his kind invitation to provide the foreword to such a fine journal. *Slipstream* provides not only a wealth of information to the ex-Navy members of the FAAA but also an important link to the men and women of today's Navy. I confess that I have an affinity for the aviation world. As the CAG TAS, and a great job it was for a young warfare officer, I served at ALBATROSS and embarked in the "big war canoe", as MELBOURNE was affectionately known. I have many fond memories of my time at sea with the Fleet Air Arm.

In my mind Navy's people never 'retire'. Once Navy is in the blood, it remains forever. This is very clear in the way that the FAAA maintains its links with today's Fleet Air Arm. The initiative of the FAAA in providing 'hampers' last Christmas to the embarked flights deployed overseas was a clear sign of the strong ties of loyalty that bind the naval aviation community.

While quite different in size and shape to the carrier-based Fleet Air Arm of the past, today's Naval Aviation is every bit as essential to our mission today as it was then. Navy's embarked helicopters are at the heart of combined operations in the Middle East and in border protection operations to our north. Everything our aviators do, they do with great credit - at every turn. The professionalism of the people that make up today's squadrons and embarked flights is quite outstanding.

The level of integration of aviation assets into surface combatants today is impressive; helicopters are not just an extension of the sensors and weapons of our fleet - they are integral and vital. Our Seahawks and Sea Kings are in great demand at sea and our aircrew and aviation technicians are putting in more sea time than ever before. Because of the very high operational demand we also have the Squirrel embarked in the Hydrographic ships for surveillance duties in the north. As VADM Shackleton remarked at the Divisions that marked his departure from the RAN in July *"the aviators are making a magnificent contribution to operations"*.

The challenges that lie ahead for Naval Aviation are major, but they are also certain to be very rewarding. I am confident that, as always, we will bring new aircraft systems into service and maximise their fighting capability. It is in the spirit and the history of the Fleet Air Arm to do so. Putting aside the unfortunate media exploitation of delays in the project, I am confident we will have an excellent weapon system in the Super Seasprite. We have introduced, ahead of schedule, new Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) equipment to the Seahawks, which is proving exceptionally effective in current operations. System upgrades to the Seahawk and introduction of a Night Vision (NVG) capability to both Seahawk and Sea King, now underway, will boost our operational effectiveness very significantly.

As I close, I wish all FAAA members and past aviators the very best of fortune and I know that you will join me in wishing well the current members of our squadrons as they serve their country and their Air Arm forebears with pride. I, and the men and women of today's Fleet Air Arm, greatly value the support of the Association and we look forward to ever-prospering ties between the past, the present and the future of aviation in the Royal Australian Navy.

BIOGRAPHY

**Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie, AO
Royal Australian Navy
Chief of Navy**

Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie graduated from the RAN College in 1968 and received further training at sea and in the United Kingdom before undertaking a succession of seagoing appointments and a staff appointment at the NATO School of Maritime Operations at HMS DRYAD.

His commands have included HMAS TARAKAN, HMAS TORRENS, and HMAS BRISBANE. During his period in command of HMAS BRISBANE the ship deployed to the Arabian Gulf, where she participated for the duration of the Gulf War. In 1991, as a result of this service, he was appointed a Member in the Military Division of the Order of Australia.

In 1992, Vice Admiral Ritchie attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom. On completion he was promoted to Commodore and had appointments in Naval Policy and Warfare, and Military Strategy and Concepts. In 1997 he was promoted and appointed as Maritime Commander Australia, returning to Canberra in May 1999 to serve briefly as Deputy Chief of Navy before taking up the appointment of Head of Capability Systems. As a consequence of his service in these appointments he was promoted to Officer in the Military Division of the Order of Australia in January 2001.

Vice Admiral Ritchie was appointed as Commander Australian Theatre on 3 August 2001. He was the first Commander to have previously served as a Component Commander to the Headquarters. On 03 July 2002, he was appointed as Chief of Navy and was promoted to Vice Admiral.

Vice Admiral Ritchie is married to Julia and has two adult sons.



EDITOR'S CORNER



Greetings readers. Please accept my apologies for the delay in producing this edition of *Slipstream*, but the circumstances have been beyond my control.

This edition has been produced with the financial assistance of Bovis Lend Lease and on behalf of all, I thank them.

I also thank the mystery donor who sent in the Money Order for the *Slipstream* account, the gesture was very much appreciated.

Whilst reading through various newsletters, particularly from the Royal Navy Associations, I start to feel quite envious of the rapport that exists between the 'old and bold' and the current serving members. Apparently when they leave the service, the door doesn't clang shut behind them, but remains slightly ajar for the exchange of news and updates of the service they helped pioneer. It is a source of great angst to me that the same courtesy is not extended to our Association by the current Fleet Air Arm.

Despite many attempts by myself and the previous and current National Executive, trying to get information and updates is nigh on impossible. Most 'news' that you read in this journal has to be extracted from the local press, which I can only presume is indicative of our position on the 'birdies' totem pole.

The only recent exception has been the totally unsolicited, and very much appreciated, submission by Andrew Whittaker, the Commanding Officer of 816 Squadron, which appears in this edition. He is obviously very proud of his Squadron's achievements and is prepared to share that pride with those who went before.

To the members who requested updates following the 723 Squadron Anniversary, I apologise. After two requests to the squadron the information has not been forthcoming.

I suppose that we are regarded as 'boring old farts' by the up and coming, but rest assured, it is a condition that catches up with everyone in the fullness of time.

Be kind to each other.



ANOTHER TOUGH COMMITTEE MEETING!



SO THIS IS A CANBERRA DESK JOB!

FRONT COVER:

SEE ARTICLE PAGES 12 AND 13

DEADLINE! FOR NEXT EDITION 11 NOVEMBER 2002

**Dear Ed**

The last issue of *Slipstream* was up to the usual standard. I know full well the effort on your part to produce the same. My very best wishes to you for the future.

The story 'UP and DOWN a Unique Experience' by *Sandy Sandberg* certainly stirred some memories. First up let me say a 'Big Thank You', Sandy. This is the first time since the event that the Armourers have been acknowledged for their effort.

I commenced working in the Ejection Seat Bay at the RANAS Armoury in August 1958 as a Mech 1. By the time of the ejection in June 1960, I would have serviced each Ejection Seat both Mk4A's and Mk3B's at least seven times each, ably assisted by my Naval Airman offsider Peter McDonald. The Safety Equipment lads would attend on an 'as required basis' to service the seat harness quick release box.

Of more interest, however, was the fact that we had not long before began to strip and service the Drogue Guns and Barometric Time Release Units. Joe Gregory and myself had been sent to RAAF Amberly to learn how to strip and inspect the various components of these units. The RAAF had sent their people to the Martin Baker Factory in the UK to learn the 'ins and outs' of these items. We did it the cheap way.

The drawings for a machine to 'time' both the Drogue Guns and Barometric Time Release Units after servicing, had been received from the UK. Yours truly was given the task of building the machine.

The finished product was about two feet six inches long, about fifteen inches wide and six inches deep. The top was made of a piece of resin bonded fabric ½ inch thick normally used in electrical switchboards. Under the Naval Supply system it was supplied by the 'Pound weight'. We had no end of trouble convincing the 'stores bashers' that we needed a piece of certain dimensions.

The heart of the machine was a 78rpm 'handrauclic' gramophone motor with a turntable made of solid steel about ¾ inch thick. It made a great flywheel!

Mounted on the underside of the top were various caged nuts that allowed any type of drogue gun or time release unit to be bolted down for testing. A circular piece of paper was clipped to the turntable with a pen attached to the item under test. When the unit was fired the pen scribed a line on the paper.

A series of perspex templates were made and engraved to show the maximum and minimum time in which each unit should operate in.

The drogue guns were .5 second plus or minus .1 second, while the time release units were initially 3 seconds plus or minus .1 second. The unit for the 0-90 Knot version of the seat operated in 1.5 second plus or minus .1 second. It was a very effective means of testing these units. Thankfully it all worked very well in this instance.

I wonder what ever did happen to that piece of equipment?

Ian Ferguson

Dear Ed

Hugh Wells' note about the Venom at the Mareeba Museum and reference to the Ikara trials brought back some memories. I don't recall the serial number(s) of the aircraft used though.

I was involved with the trials whilst on 724 Squadron from late

'64 to '66 and initially used to fly to Avalon with Neil (Limpy) Louer and we billeted at Point Cook. Later, Jerry O'Day took over and we then billeted at Laverton.

As I recall, the aircraft carried 2 rockets with dummy heads on the port wing to counteract the weight of the black box unit on the starboard wing. One day, the 'torpedo drop' went off course and it landed in the bush on the western side of the Geelong highway. The boffins and I jumped into two cars and shot straight across all four lanes into the scrub to recover the unit before any 'not for your eyes' spotted it. Luckily, there wasn't a lot of traffic about but there were a few startled drivers nevertheless.

Sometimes the rockets and other equipment were delivered to Avalon by the DC3, but on one occasion I drove down from Nowra with the two rockets on my roof rack, well wrapped in a tarp. I often wonder what would have been the reaction of the local gendarmes if they'd unwrapped it or if I was involved in an accident.

"Hullo, hullo, wot's this then?"

"Oh, just a couple of old rockets, mate."

"And why are you carrying them on your roof rack?"

"Well, I might fire them at some bugger who won't let me pass."

I reckon I'd have been in the slammer so quick and trying to phone the squadron CO for explanations!

During one trip the Venom developed a fuel leak from the starboard wing and we hadn't been able to find the source of the leak. We were ready to fly back to Nowra and after some discussion Jerry decided we'd go. Whilst at 30,000 feet over Kosciuszko, the fuel gauge suddenly dropped to zero. I remember Jerry saying that, if the engine stopped, he'd be out like a flash and if I didn't get a move on I'd be there on my own.

We were dressed in shorts and summer flying suits, and the mountains below had a fair bit of snow cover. I thought at the time that this could be 'fun', summer clothes, broken ankles (at least) and no skis! Anyhow, it turned out to be a faulty gauge and we reached Nowra okay. The fuel leak was found to be coming from the tank filler neck seal and was easily fixed.

We were due to head to Avalon again so Jerry took the aircraft up for a check flight. He came back fairly quickly to say that the nose gear wouldn't retract. The aircraft was jacked up and several retraction tests carried out with no faults experienced. Jerry went up again and came back with the same problem.

The aircraft was placed on jacks again and I had a good think about the problem and realised the only thing missing was the airflow/pressure. Terry Payne braced himself and put both feet on the nose gear fairing and pushed hard. The undercarriage was selected 'UP' and there it was no retraction, only a 'clunk and grunkle' and a bit of a twist was all.

On closer inspection I found that the right-hand mounting structure was badly cracked and the attachment panels so distorted that the guys from D-H at Bankstown had to come down to do a major repair. So there was another Venom used at least once on the project. I never thought it was finger trouble, Jerry.

My final bit with Ikara—I was due to leave the Navy and we were stuck at Avalon by the bad weather. Eventually, Jerry agreed to get me back to Nowra so off we went.

The 'clag' was set in from 600ft to 30,000 plus, so we tracked inbound on East Sales Radar then outbound on the radar heading for Nowra. Estimating that we were getting reasonably close to

base and still 8/8ths, Jerry said that we might have to go to RAAF Richmond for a GCA there. Suddenly we saw a small hole down to a shoreline and we belted full bore down the hole from 30,000 and came out over the coast south of Jervis Bay, from there we went low-level to Nowra.

'Sandy' Wilson was part of the crew when we were at Laverton and he also thinks there were two Venoms used, if only because of the above nose-gear problem. I'm sure others will have a better memory.

I understand that 'Sandy' married one of the WAAFS he met whilst we were there at Laverton.

Days of fun.

Barry Lister

Dear Ed

An article in a recent *Slipstream* that grabbed my attention was about the Sea Venom, piloted by SBLT Dutch, which crashed on the down-wind approach during a night landing.

On that particular night I was duty at the Salvage Section, sitting in the 3-ton International and watching the spectacle unfold. I had the vehicle underway before the parachutes and their occupants had landed.

After everyone had inspected the crash site and decided that nothing could be achieved in the dark, it was decided that Bernie Biddle and myself should stand security watch at the site until relieved the following morning. It was an extremely cold night and we retrieved a small tarpaulin from the recovery vehicle to try and keep warm. It was the most miserable night of my life!

Dawn eventually arrived, and so did the recovery party who proceeded to carry out their tasks.

About three weeks later, I was requested to front the Commander who proceeded to question me at some length as to what I had done with the Observer's 'bone dome'. Apparently it had not been recovered – and – as I owned a motor bike at that time – it was assumed that I had 'nicked' it.

Could you imagine anyone silly enough to ride through the main gate wearing a flying helmet?

Okay! Don't answer that.

Neville Cowgill

Dear Ed

The saga of Venom 807 seems to go on, but I feel sure the following may amuse.

The pilot who thought that the forrard Bofor was Fly One was (if memory serves and if not apologies) Col Patterson. As the article in Vol 13 No2 rightly states, there was a certain amount of humdrum around the aircraft.

The Admiral was (again if memory serves) Arch Harrington. Everyone was having a penn'orth of what had happened, what to do next, and the asking inevitable question, 'Whose to Blame!'

There was a lull in the noise level and a voice belonging to that great character, the late Electrical Lieutenant, Bill Cousins, came shattering down on the assembled experts from the goofers, "Well done the CAG!" The Admiral, looking rather like Mrs Brown, was definitely not amused.

As an aside, the most memorable action that I ever saw Jim Lamb perform during our time together happened during a day's operations with the Defence Minister on board. There had been a

heavy salt-water contamination in all aircraft fuel tanks rendering the slide valves almost inoperable in the Venom fuel system. It was hilarious watching Jim climb aboard each Venom as it landed, still in the wires, armed with a hammer knocking 'seven bells' out of the fuel control levers all the time looking as though this was an every day occurrence.

Jim loved to cultivate Tiger Lilies. He had a Tiger in his tank that day.

Chas Morris

Dear Ed

Please find enclosed a few snap shots of model AEW Gannet 841. If you remember, yourself and 'Windy' Geale provided me with some information and specifications on the original aircraft which enable my eldest son, Peter, who lives in Tasmania, to complete the model.

As you can see he has done a very professional and detailed job of it. If you think this may be of interest to your readers these are a few facts about the aircraft and who was involved with it during my time on 816 A Flight in 1965/66.



The aircraft was a 'Hangar Queen' and normally flown by the CO, LCDR Mike Astbury.

The AEO was Bert Webster (I think), the Chief AA in 1965 was Alan Spearpoint, and in 1966, Don James. The maintenance crew, and I can't remember them all, was Curly Davenport and Don Cundy.

The aircraft handlers were, Reg Chiefs Burgoo Bill? In 1965 and Don? in 1966. LAAH's Tony Halpin and Bill Koisk (both promoted POAH on the first cruise 1965) George Mills, Mal Fagg, Slim Sutherland and myself. The remainder I can't put a name to, perhaps some of your readers will remember.

Norm Pickering

Dear Ed

I would firstly like to thank all the good people who responded to my recent requests for names and titles for my upcoming book.

Secondly I would like to make some comment on a recent letter in *Slipstream* by Norman Lee.

Given that he has experienced several incidents of some note, I would first point out that the condition is PTSD - not PTSS.

I would say that he has never been in the position of Pension's Officer. From that role I am sure he would have a very different view of PTSD as there are a lot of veterans out there that have experienced far worse than he can imagine. Everyone handles stress in many different ways – no two persons are the same.

'Tas' Browning

Dear Ed

After reading the last edition of *Slipstream*, I feel that I must comment on a letter by Norman Lee. I feel that he has stirred up a hornet's nest and that many comments will be made.

In the letter he refers to Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS), I presume that he is referring to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), this being the most common disorder claimed by the Vietnam Veteran community and others.

I can assure the writer that it is REAL disorder that has many symptoms, it can be treated but not cured. It has to be lived with but requires constant care.

To flippantly suggest that he could get 'half a million bucks' if he has a good lawyer, would tend to indicate that it is a subject on which he hasn't done his homework. Most recognised PTSD sufferers wind up with only a DVA Gold Card, something that many would forego just to have their health back.

Norman should get on his knees and thank the Lord that he has no ill effects and is still happily married. I know of many sufferers on their second and third marriages because of the far-reaching aspects of the disorder. The condition doesn't just disrupt the life of the sufferer, it affects the whole family around them.

One of the contributing factors for the Vietnam Veterans was the social stigma imposed upon them when they returned from war. Marching through Sydney and being abused by the populace, and afterwards receiving the many taunts from the 'great unwashed' who should have known better. Something, I might add, that still goes on to this very day in smaller doses. This was something that didn't occur when the Korean War forces made their heroic return to their homeland.

To correct the misconception that the writer holds, I would like to suggest a few books that may improve his outlook on the subject.

THE CARLA EVANS TRILOGY

Trauma, Tears and Time (Anecdotes by Army Vets.)

Mostly Sailors (Anecdotes by Navy Vets.)

Wings of Support (Anecdotes by Air Force Vets)

They are available from the Canberra War Museum

Clinical books put out by the DVA are: *PTSD and War Related Stress* – and - a book especially for the wives and children entitled, *'I thought it was just me'*. These last two are available from the Vietnam Vets Counselling Service in Canberra at: Gas Industry House, 7 – 9 Moore Street, Canberra, ACT.

If after reading this material he believes that some veterans don't have PTSD and are just screwing the government, then he has no compassion for his fellow veterans.

K W Camm

Dear Ed

It seems a pity that Norman Lee should choose to sully our magazine with a bombastic letter on what could be a very sensitive issue to some of our association's members and other readers. 'Ex-birdie PhD' has addressed more appropriately what seems to be the same or closely related subject.

Many an ex-service association has allowed issues based on 'creed', 'culture', 'rank', 'what war', 'we had it harder', etc, to dominate their proceedings and they have splintered and become less relevant.

Robert Ray

Dear Ed

I have been reading the 'Brief Biography of Captain J A Gledhill, DSC RAN (Rtd)' which featured in the last edition of *Slipstream*.

SubLt Gledhill RNZNVR, would have joined 827 Naval Air Squadron early in 1943 whilst the squadron was based at HMS *Blackcap*. At the end of December 1942 to March 1943 the squadron took on charge its complement of Barracuda-1 aircraft directly off the production line at the Fairey Aviation site at Ringway airfield. I was the Aircraft Artificer on the squadron and can recall SubLt Gledhill.

The biography refers to the squadron having '*..suffered serious losses..*', by which, *air crews perished when Barracuda-1 aircraft unaccountably failed to 'pull-out of dive' and plunged into the sea during navigational exercises. The losses occurred in April/July 1943 whilst the squadron was based at a satellite airfield to RNAS Crail, HMS *Jackdaw*, undergoing work-up for operational standard and developing tactical deployment of the newly arrived Barracuda.

It may be of interest that a week or so prior to 817 joining *Blackcap* in December 1942, at Lee-on-Solent, HMS *Daedalus*, all ranks excused Sunday Divisions were cleaning and greasing flying wires of its Fairey Albacore aircraft. Whilst carrying out this chore, a SubLt came out of the office pronouncing a news flash – the squadron was to be lead of tbr squadrons in conversion to the Barracuda. Revelry and frolic followed spontaneously that morning.

827 Naval Air Squadron was the first squadron to be based at *Elackcap*, at which time construction work was ongoing. All station hands were turned-to around the airfield perimeter as the twelve Albacore's landed, guiding the aircraft to the hard standing of the site it was to occupy. The approach to the site required the aircraft to double back off the perimeter track, the squadron Senior Pilot spotted what could be a short cut across the intervening grass area and came to a sudden stop as his aircraft suddenly sank to its axles. The remaining aircraft, taking their lead from the SP, finished up in the same pickle.

Appleton church and the Thorn pub were inside the station boundary. The latter serving effectively as mess for all squadron personnel, each in their respective nooks. The publican, with family assistance, including grandmother, going flat-out to cope.

George Chadwick

* *aircrews ... the aircrews were experienced in that they had been embarked with the squadron in HMS Indomitable during raids on Petsamo, Finland (occupied by the German invasion), the Indian Ocean during the invasion of Madagascar, Pedestal convoy operation through the Western Mediterranean to Malta, and replacement aircrews joining for their first operational appointment.*

Dear Ed

The photo of the RAN Sea King flight in the UK on Page 18 of *Slipstream* Vol 13, No2, is located at RNAS Culdrose. The hangar marking of B4 locates it on the Bravo site which is the NE corner of the airfield .

I arrived at Culdrose in 1981 and the RAN flight had left by that time.

Roger Eaton

(Ex RN Sea King now RAN Sea King)

[The following letter has additional information. Ed]

Dear Ed

With regard to *Slipstream* Vol 13, Number 2, page 18.

The photo of the RAN Sea King Flight, UK was taken at RNAS Culdrose (B Site to be precise) early in 1975 (probably February) if my fading memory serves. We had taken delivery of three aircraft and were in the final stages of working the flight up prior to return to Australia. The Flight was packed up in March and we all returned to Oz in April 1975 to reform at Nowra.



The aircrew were as follows:

Front row, left to right: Rodger Cooper, Rocky Stone, John Wilkie, Tony Baker, Pat Arthur, Carl Daley, Andy Craig (SP), Eddie Bell (CO), Bob Ray (SOBS), Peter Hart (AEO), Peter Ey, Paul Fothergill, Alex Wright, John McCaw, 'Susie' Wong.

Second Row, left: Peter Andrew, **2nd from right:** Bob Tingey, **Right:** Lofty Kimpton

Rear Right: Bill Hornstra, **2nd from Right:** 'Budgie' Parrott

The rest of the team are all very familiar but I fear the years have taken a toll of my memory. The Museum could probably fill in some of the blanks.

Andy Craig

Dear Ed

FAITH - Faith begins as an experiment and ends as an experience. (Dean W.R. Inge 1860-1954)

The scene is Cornwall UK in November 1961. The activity is a wet winching practice for newly trained helicopter aircrew.

Dressed in immersion suits and suitably briefed, the aircrew were handed Mae Wests from the SE Section and hastily despatched to the waiting SAR chopper. Three of us were dropped individually 500 metres apart, without dinghies, (3) three miles off the coast near Predannack.

The SAR helo crew were 'new boys' and had difficulty recovering people from the water in the prevailing conditions (cold, wet, windy) After the second aviator was winched up the helo approached me and the winchman called out that the aircraft was low on fuel and must return to base. I couldn't tell him that the Mae West I had been given was faulty and would not remain inflated, I was therefore dependant on the air in the immersion suit to keep me afloat.

Things got worse. My immersion suit was leaking.... I can't explain the feeling I had seeing the helicopter disappearing in the failing light and not knowing how long it would be before it returned. You will forgive me if I say I had a 'sinking feeling'!

By the time I was winched up my immersion suit was full up to my knees. Yes, I had faith in my rescuers, but I certainly also had a better understanding of the expression 'pucker up'!

From that day on, you have no idea how much time I spent in checking all my own safety equipment before flight. In a later incident off Newcastle, NSW, it really paid off.

New boys take note - there is a lesson here.

Don McLaren

Dear Ed

It was with regret that I read of the passing of my old Gannet pilot, Gordon McPhee, and I send my condolences to his family.

Gordon was the Senior Pilot of 817 Squadron at Culdrose in 1955 - 56 with Gannet aircraft, his aircraft had Call sign 'B' 435 with Serial No. WN-458. This aircraft was delivered from the Fairey Aviation Company in August 1955. Lt Palmer was his Observer and SLT Bob Whitten was the Tel.

I was the Leading Pilot's Mate and Phillip 'Bats' Lee was my offsider. The enclosed photograph of the aircraft with all the names on the side shows why Merv Willis nicknamed the aircraft 'The Flying Muster Board'. It was the only aircraft on the squadron to have five names on the side after the 'Batman' conned 'Prof' Edwards into adding his name to the list.



I was never very keen on flying and I didn't fly in 435 whilst in UK, however, I did go up in the 'flagship' 310 (Don James' aircraft) with the CO, LTCDR Gledhill. The aircraft developed vibration problems over Cornwall so it was a short flight - that aircraft became the 'hangar queen'.

They changed the Call sign on 435 to 314Y, then 314M whilst in the UK. The aircraft was the first RAN AS1 Gannet to have a double starter change courtesy of Brian Gilroy, 'Kanga' Bounds, Gilbert Nixon and myself.

Whilst on the first trip 'up top', one of the engines failed and rather than risk a single engine landing on board, the aircraft was diverted to Darwin. A crew was sent ashore to change the ECU, they later received a 'very well done' from Captain Gatacre.

I 'paid off' after that cruise and re-entered the service in 1959 as a single trade - Engines. By this time 435, 314, WN 458 had become 888NW on 725 Squadron and later that year crashed and burned whilst the pilot was attempting single engine landings on the East / West runway at Nowra. Unfortunately the pilot was killed in the accident. It was also a sorry end for my favourite aircraft.

Some of my flying experiences are still well remembered. In late 1954, just after I received my Pilots' Mate 'Certificate of Competence' (for which we were paid the princely sum of a half-penny an hour - one shilling a day for doing the work of four trades) I was on 851 Squadron, which was equipped with fifteen Firefly aircraft.

Doug Stone and I were 'bludging' (not Stand Easy) in the crewroom when the Senior Pilot, Col Wheatley, came in. He barked, 'Strahan, get a parachute and get in the back of Stone's

(Continued on page 8)

aircraft (274). 'Stone, when we get back you get a parachute and get in Strahan's aircraft (267)'.

We took off and went south to Ulladulla and then over Jervis Bay, buzzing up all the beaches along the way. I was never so pleased in my life to eventually land and step on to *terra firma* once again. I believe that Doug Stone felt the same as I did when he eventually returned.

After the short flight I had experienced in the Gannet at Culdrose, I eventually was game enough to experience a launch from the ship with Phil Rowe the pilot. We flew over Rabaul and some of the islands near New Guinea and it was all very enjoyable – except for the shot off the booster.

I didn't fly again until I was drafted to 817 Squadron on Wessex helicopters and embarked and disembarked several times. I fell out with the AEO, or maybe I was 'skidded' by another CPO, and ended up spending a weekend in Sydney and on the *Stalwart* at sea for 'family day', which didn't do much for one.

Whilst on Wessex as MU Chief, I was often asked by the Senior Pilot if I wanted to go on maintenance test flights after an engine or major component change. I always replied, 'I'll go if you give me a direct order'. I never got one!

The last flight I had was in the Dakota (N2-43) in 1975. I had been to Nowra to learn how to run the engines with Bob Skinner. The Dakota was to be flown 'Mobi-land' (HMAS *Nirimba*) as a training aid for the MOBIs. [Naval apprentices were known as the **Most Objectionable Bastards Imagineable** – hence MOBI. Ed]. Two pilots, along with LT Robb and myself flew up the coast to Sydney Heads and eventually landed on the old airstrip at Quakers Hill. It was a most pleasant flight compared with my first one in the old Firefly.

The letter from Jim Parsons regarding the old *Vengeance* brought a smile to my face. I served aboard her with 808 Squadron for a time and lived? in messdeck 102 which was one of those he mentioned. I often think of the times when we would be having breakfast at the messdeck table when the late risers, sleeping in hammocks above us, would descend upon the table, often in the 'bollocky', and upset the routine. It wasn't my favourite ship either, Jim.

Finally, Sea Venom WZ904 (898) at Syd Beck's Museum at Mareeba. I am pretty certain that this aircraft was on 724 Squadron in the mid – 1960s. It returned from service at DeHavillands to Nowra and when the undercarriage was selected to the 'down' position for landing, one wheel failed to cooperate because of a riveting dolly that had been left in the wheel well. I had just become a Mech II, and with Peter Hill, had the job of repairing it. We changed the tip tank, the ECU and a couple of engine panels and it was serviceable once again. Ian Stilton fathomed out how the problem had originated.

I don't think anything happened to anyone at DeHavillands.

Bill Strahan

Dear Ed

My time whilst on loan to the RAN FAA at Nowra included but the one Christmaside and the heavy rain was the bogey.

I had an invitation from Don Hanrahan to spend my one-week's leave at Melbourne. Hec Gray was travelling there with his wife, Jen, and baby Robert, and offered me a lift in their car.

Crossing the many creeks on the route and encountering bridges a foot or so under fast-flowing waters whilst I walked ahead of the car.

Enclosed is a photograph of the Station Flight apron at HMS *Blackcap*, RNAS Stretton in Cheshire, some twenty miles from Manchester and Liverpool. In the photo can be seen PO Fox with artificers of the first RAN FAA Air Artificers' Course in early 1949.

I was drafted to Stretton following service on 816 Naval Air Squadron 1946 – 48 aboard HMS *Ocean*, and assigned I/C Station Flight.

Entering the office one morning, I was met with a room full of men in uniform bearing the AUSTRALIA flash on their sleeves.

Straight away, section and messes livened up. The Stretton part of Cheshire featured the countryside and leafy lanes that typify an aspect of England. Typical English country pubs were also dotted around and Station bicycles were available for trips to and from them.

Harry Gibson, a giant in stature and role model of nature, on one occasion, whilst his companions were holding up the bar, steadied himself by applying one hand to the ceiling. Realising that his sweaty palm had marked the ceiling, he pointed it out to the publican and made his apology. The publican waved his apologies aside and was being taken by the handprint, had a circle drawn around it. Other publicans hearing of the featured hand were quite envious.

Whilst at Stretton, Gordon Foale courted and married Wren Josie Stewart of the Captain's Secretary's Office. Don Hanrahan was a particular friend and all were good company.



First course of RAN FAA Artificers with the 'GIANT'

Whilst serving on HMS *Vengeance* in late 1951 on a much enjoyed 'number', I was drafted off when the ship was taken out of commission for preparation for transfer to the RAN.

In early 1952 a signal called for volunteers for loan service with the RAN and I made my application. Taking passage in RMS *Maloja* in the week of my 30th birthday, a single Chief Air Artificer, able and ready for the coming experience.

Five weeks accommodation in a P and O liner made for a good start, a luxury with which the passage by airline can in no way match. I was truly honoured to have voyaged in company with emigrant 'Poms'. In the nature of living in the UK at the time, it needed spirit to 'up and off' to a faraway land, splitting families which of the day had known close ties and close- by dwelling, to pioneer the immense developments in Australia of this day

Today, fifty years on from preparation to leave the UK for Australia, I can reflect on an eventful, well-spent commission served with the RAN.

George Chadwick

Dear Ed

I am not a member of your Association, but during a visit to your beautiful country a friend loaned me a copy of *Slipstream* magazine. As a veteran of two conflicts, I thought that the following might be of interest to your readers.

This is a letter written by an American citizen and published in a Tampa Newspaper.

'IMMIGRANTS, NOT AMERICANS, MUST ADAPT - I am tired of this nation worrying about whether we are offending some individual or their culture. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, we have experienced a surge in patriotism by the majority of Americans.

However, the dust from the attacks had barely settled when the 'politically correct' crowd began complaining about the possibility that our patriotism was offending others.

I am not against immigration, nor do I hold a grudge against anyone who is seeking a better life by coming to America. Our population is almost entirely comprised of descendants of immigrants.

However, there are a few things that those who have recently come to our country, and apparently some born here, need to understand. This idea of America being a multicultural community has served only to dilute our sovereignty and our national identity.

As Americans, we have our own culture, our own society, our own language, and our own lifestyle. This culture has been developed over centuries of struggles, trials, and victories by millions of men and women who have sought freedom.

We speak ENGLISH, not Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, or any other language. Therefore, if you wish to become part of our society, learn the language!

'In God We Trust' is our national motto. This is not some Christian, right wing, political slogan. We adopted this motto because Christian men and women, on Christian principles, founded this nation, and this is clearly documented. It is certainly appropriate to display it on the walls of our schools. If God offends you, then I suggest you consider another part of the world as your new home, because God is part of our culture.

If Stars and Stripes offend you, or you don't like Uncle Sam, then you should seriously consider a move to another part of this planet. We are happy with our culture and have no desire to change, and we really don't care how you did things where you came from.

This is OUR COUNTRY, our land, and our lifestyle. Our First Amendment gives every citizen the right to express his opinion and we will allow you every opportunity to do so.

But, once you are done complaining, whining, and griping about our flag, our pledge, our national motto, or our way of life, I highly encourage you to take advantage of one other great American freedom; THE RIGHT TO LEAVE.'

PS: I reckon the same sentiments apply to Australia!
Dwight Jackson

Aircraft Handlers Mini Reunion

There is to be a Mini Reunion for 'Birdie Handlers' at the Goodna RSL (Qld) at 11 am Saturday 09 NOV 02.
Don't forget to bring your partners along for this luncheon/reunion. All welcome.
For details contact, Terry 'Boxer' Banks on (07) 4128 0187

Dear Ed

A friend of mine recently gave me a couple of issues of *Slipstream* and was stunned, to say the least, when a photograph virtually leapt off the page at me. It was of such three photographs that I have in an old photo album. [Fleet Air Arm Rifle Team on Melbourne's flight deck. Ed]

I am enclosing one of the photographs and hope that it may bring back some other memories to other 'birdies'.

1954 - HMAS VENGEANCE - FAA CHAMPION RIFLE TEAM
L-R: 'Sacks' Middleton - 'Tex' Millar - Bill McFarlane - 'Weed' Smith - Brian Carroll - 'Rastus' Park - Freddie Phillips - LTCDR Duffy



I have to correct 'Weed' Smith on a couple of points, my Service Certificate indicates that I didn't join *Vengeance* until 1954 – also – in spite of everyone and his dog trying to add either an 'S', an 'E', or 'ES' to my surname, it remains as PARK!

I can remember the earlier editions of *Slipstream* which were much smaller than the current editions. They were about pocket size and had about sixteen pages. Amongst a lot of old memorabilia I still have the draft of an article I wrote for the magazine in those days, it was about Skydiving, I can't recall whether it was ever published. Please send me an application form to join the Association and I'll see if I can start catching up with some big gaps.

Gwen, the secretary of our local Vietnam Vet's Branch, commented that it was a lovely name for a service magazine.
BARRY 'RASTUS' PARK

Dear Ed

Peter Cleaver, ex-FAA, sent me these photographs of the RAN Trackers in a very sorry state.

They are in a hangar at the West Sale airport.
Peter Doyle



Dear Ed

Firstly, I would like to thank Norman Lee for his contributions, not only for his thoughts through *Slipstream* thereby giving an enjoyment/points to ponder to many old and not so old Navy types, but also for his deeds over many years. I suspect he comes to mind to many of us whenever the conversation turns to leadership by example. His contribution to the FAA, the RAN and Australia over many years has, like so many other Korean veterans, been underrated and has gone largely unrecognised.

I would like to make some comments about what Norm refers to (in *Slipstream* Vol 13 issue 2) as post traumatic shock syndrome, or as others put it, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I do so with the thought that to some of your readers may not be familiar with issues of PTSD, and Psychological Casualties. Some people have suggested to me that these terms are a pseudomamma for skulking, shirking or avoiding one's duty. That is not the case. PTSD is a genuine disorder, defined as a psychiatric condition as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of American Psychiatry Association, ICD Code 309.81

PTSD may develop as a result of being a psychological casualty caused through operational stress. By operational stress, I mean the array of effects caused by the stressors of military operations, and in this context, it refers to a temporary or lasting psychological imbalance causing a marked reduction in an individual's ability to function effectively.

Operational stress is not all negative. Stress responses are adaptive in that they enable an individual to concentrate their full attention on a particular threat, and to mobilise physical and mental energy in response to that threat. However, stress reactions can become maladaptive if they are sustained or inappropriately attended to.

I have heard operational stress defined as the reactions of normal people to abnormal situations. Pretty much common sense I suspect. Most people, particularly those who have experienced combat, will agree that important lessons from history show that operational stress reactions are an inevitable consequence of military operations, and, all individuals are susceptible to its effects. By now I suspect most people are already thinking that this is the case with all stressful incidents in life, and the exposure to experiences in combat are just something that needs to be dealt with, then people need to get on with their lives.

I wholeheartedly agree. However, I am sure we also agree that a particular experience can affect different people in different ways. RAN Senior Leadership courses are taught that operational stress is, by its very nature, an inevitable part of operations and its effects can manifest from none, to acute or chronic reactions. Operational stress affects individuals in four broad areas: emotionally, physically, mental ability, and behaviour. Responses can range from:

- a. Low Level- irritability, fearfulness;
- b. Mild -slowed responsiveness, self medication; to
- c. Severe Combat Stress Reaction- autism, catatonia, and/or complete unresponsiveness.

Three categories are identified for the management of operational stress:

- a. transient stress response- adverse stimuli of the operational environment, distressing but not dysfunctional;

- b. stress reaction which incapacitates in the short term- renders the person unable to function effectively in the unit role for a relatively short period of time (72 hours); or,
- c. post trauma reactions –incapacitating to the extent that the person is unable to perform normal unit duties and where the symptoms are expected to last beyond the force operational holding area policy, i.e. long term.

Interestingly, studies indicate that there is no correlation between the observed response category at the time of operational stress, with symptoms and disabilities that may develop later on in life. In other words there seems to be no mechanism which will allow for the prediction of a disability by categorising how an individual reacts at the combat scene. In fact there have been a number of well-documented cases where a combatant has suffered disablement later in life when he/she was noted, even decorated, for bravery under fire. Other studies have identified individuals who were categorised as catatonic or completely unresponsive but who went on to, become 'good soldiers', or did not suffer psychological after effects or disabilities, even later in life

Operational stress is not a modern warfare affliction. The incidence of operational stress is well documented. In World War 1 it was known as Shell Shock, later it was termed Battle Fatigue. In World War 2, about 23 per cent of American Army casualties suffered from psychological disorders. In combat units the figures were much higher, particularly when fighting was intense. For example the 2nd Armoured Division in Italy fighting for 44 days, reported 54 per cent of total casualties were combat stress casualties. In 1943 US Army psychological casualty discharges exceeded the numbers conscripted. An Australian example is Tobruk where the 2/4 Gen. Hospital Neurosis Clinic treated 207 casualties in 3 months, and in one month half of all hospital admissions were due to self inflicted wounds. Israeli psychological casualties in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war were estimated to be around 30 per cent of total battle casualties, although of the first 1500 casualties of the war some 900 were psychological casualties, reflecting the intensity of combat in the first 48 hours. After the Vietnam war some 30 per cent of veterans were estimated to have dysfunctional psychological reactions, and about 15 per cent still experience those currently. I suspect that higher rates of operational stress casualties are inevitable, but much data was hidden due to misreporting, assessment as discipline cases, or management within the unit. In preparations for the Gulf War, United States forces planned on 25 per cent of the force to be operational stress casualties. The fact that these did not occur does not necessarily reflect the fact that the war fighting was less intense than was expected. An obtainable objective, a decisive victory, popular support and the resultant high morale, belief in technological may have contributed to the low numbers of operational stress casualties.

Another most important element in the reduction of operational stress casualties during the Gulf War was the very effective individual and unit training and preparation combatants (and support elements) received. Training is considered by many to be the most effective and efficient way of reducing operational stress casualties. Although morale is the foundation, training and leadership are considered the major elements in giving combat forces effectiveness and sustainability.

Although unit and individual training is highlighted by the RAN and Australian Army leadership courses as the main ingredient

which can be most easily addressed, other elements also come into play. Increased individual risk factors include low level of education, low motivation, part time/Reservist/ new chum. Another major risk factor which impacts commanders is 'age'- it seems the older you are, the higher the risks. This element is most important for commanders when they assess themselves for signs of operational stress - poor concentration, memory lapses, intrusive thoughts and, most importantly, rigid thinking.

Present Australian Defence Force leadership is now very much aware of the effect that operational stress can have on their unit's effectiveness. Management procedures are in place to ensure that these challenges are kept to a minimum. Combat leaders are now much more aware of 'preventative' management practises: training and education issues, continuing care during deployment, and pre return and post return debriefings and follow up now takes place. I suspect not just a tick in the box for the caring/sharing modern ADF but skilful management and leadership of a very valuable, long lead time assets-trained motivated personnel, which must not be squandered.

Although I have mentioned the current thoughts on operational stress management at the operational and support level, I ask your readers to extrapolate the effects and experiences over the period of many years by those who were unfortunate to experience operational stress in less enlightened times. The treatment of psychological casualties should take place as soon as possible, preferably at the operational level, to minimise its detrimental effects. The lasting effects of operational stress are most likely to manifest as PTSD if symptoms are ignored, and/or as the individual affected gets older. Co-morbidity of depression, substance abuse, self-medication, and acute stress disorder can all add to the mass that finally pushes a veteran into the PTSD category.

Having presented some words for the acceptance of PTSD as a legitimate diagnosable disorder let me go on by stating the following: I believe individuals need to play the cards that fate deals them. I believe individuals need to learn from their experiences and not allow experiences to hold them back. People need to strive for their well being and should take responsibility for their health. However, I also know that for all sorts of reasons it is not in our Nation's interest to let those who are permanently impaired by the effects of combat whilst in our Armed Forces during the defence of Australia and her interests, should struggle with those effects without recognition or help.

I do not have an opinion on the pros and cons, or the ethics of large sum cash payout to veterans making claims against the Commonwealth for PTSD. However I must point out *Australian legislation, under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986, prevents lump sum payment to veterans claiming any disability as a result of operational service.* (Within this context, generally, a person shall be taken to have rendered operational service if that person was injured, or contracted a disease, or death occurred, as a result of enemy action while the person was rendering continuous full-time service as a member of the Defence Forces of Australia (WW1 & 2), or allotted for duty (Korea, Malaya, Malaysia, Vietnam).)

I expect any lump sum payments made for PTSD to a veteran would be as a result of legal proceedings taken under the Commonwealth Employees Compensation Act 1948, or the Compensation (Commonwealth Government Employees) Act 1971 or later, the Commonwealth Employees Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 subsequently renamed the Safety,

Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988. These Acts are a complex legal minefield and anyone seeking assistance through schemes administered through these Acts would need the services of a legally trained advocate. The Military Compensation Act 1994 and Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 presently provide compensation packages- including retraining, for our current ADF personnel.

Frank Eyck.

Dear Ed

Always enjoy reading *Slipstream*, everything stops until I have read all letters to the editor and then the rest is digested in slow time (like a fine wine).

I am forwarding a couple of photographs, the Wessex is from an early start of my career with Naval Aviation. The second is the Airframes and Engines instructional team and some members of the 'Sea King Flight UK' at Westlands UK, and the third is a Sea King operating from HMAS *Manoora* during First of Class Flight Trials. [Remainder of photographs on Pages 18-19. Ed]



WESSEX at RANAS

Trevor Eppis on the servicing platform and
L-R: Unknown and 'Larry' Kent

For the past four years I have been hiding away in the Amphibious Transport (LPA) Project as the Aviation Operations Officer, responsible for the installation of the aviation facilities on HMAS *Manoora* and HMAS *Kanimbla*. I am working with Adrian Pay, Derrick Frew and a cast of many from the Fleet Aviation Office, Aircraft Maintenance and Flight Trials Unit and the Director General Technical-Rotary Wing 3 (the old Ships Bases and Facilities Section of DAVENG-N). We have established two amphibious platforms capable of taking to sea and operating four Blackhawk or three Sea King helicopters.

My congratulations to CMDRE Goble for a great reunion at Campbelltown and to see, but not talk to, Jim Lee (a busy man). Jim was my instructor on my Naval Airman's Course, little did I know what great times lay ahead after completion of that course. Fireflys, Gannets, Sea Venoms, Vampires, Dakota, Wessex and Sea King, I got to work on them all.

Now being involved with getting multi-spot ships to sea, although not on an Aircraft Carrier, we are heading in the right direction. I am now preparing to leave the Defence Material Organisation and head north to warmer pastures

David 'Larry' Kent

816 Squadron - Royal Australian Navy '2001 In Retrospect'



816 Squadron is based at Naval Air Station Nowra (HMAS *Albatross*) on the New South Wales south coast, some 100km south of Sydney. It operates the S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopter, providing the Navy with a formidable weapon system. The Seahawk operates both autonomously and in direct support of tactical operations at sea, which expands the war fighting capabilities of the parent ship well beyond the horizon. Nowra is the principle base for deep maintenance activity and training (which also includes the simulators and part task trainers). Shore based operations are also conducted in Western Australia from the Helicopter Support Facility at HMAS *Stirling* near Fremantle. Embarked operations are conducted from both the ADELAIDE Class FFG and ANZAC Class FFH.

816 Squadron has successfully maintained its training throughput while providing widely dispersed operational support to embarked Flights and detachments spread across the Australian continent, from the Arabian Gulf, India, and SE Asia including Vietnam and Hong Kong. At its peak the Squadron was operating seven aircraft off six ships.

The total fleet comprises 16 airframes of which 816 SQN currently operates 7 aircraft with 6 operated by ships Flights/Detachments. The Squadron and Flights are expected to fly around 4000 hours in 2001. This will be achieved with aircrew manning at 85% for instructors and 15% for "staff" aircrew, and maintenance manning of 70% qualified personnel. Operational level maintenance is integral to the Squadron and Flights. Flight manning is at 100% for maintenance personnel. Total maintenance personnel manpower is 160 men and women which includes trainees and embarked personnel (10 per Flight). Aircrew numbers are 53 personnel of which 15 are under training and 24 with embarked Flights (current complement of 4 aircrew per single aircraft Flight with 6 on multi aircraft Flights).

The aircraft's primary roles are Under Sea Warfare (USW) and Surface Warfare (SUW). Secondary roles include utility, SAR/MEDEVAC and Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations. The typical crew is one pilot, an Observer as the

Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) and an Aircrewman as the Sensor Operator (SENSO). Operations are conducted at low level over water by day and night in most weather conditions.

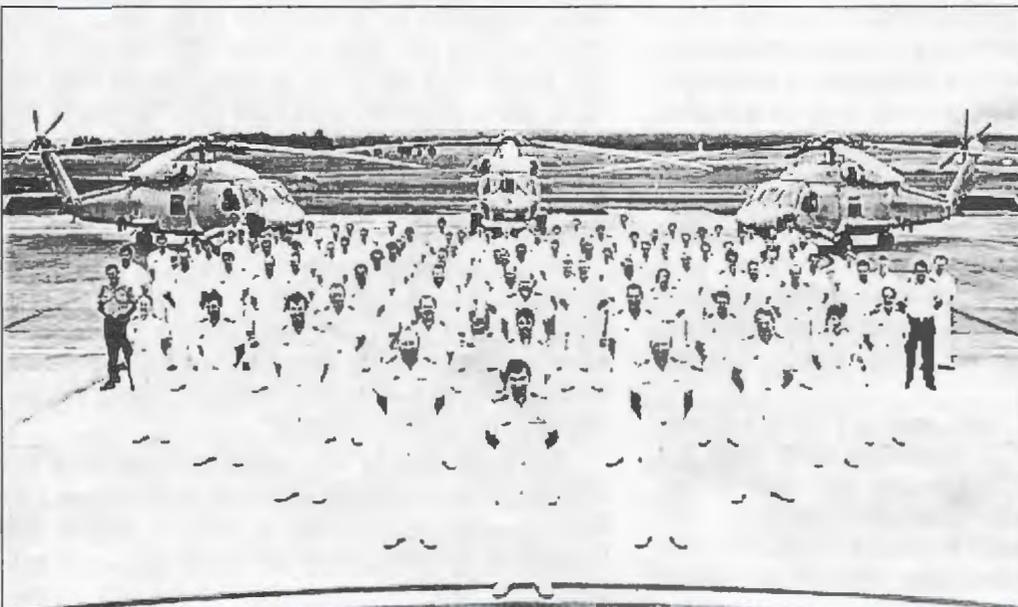
During 2000, 816 Squadron had been involved in force protection work in East Timor, primarily in providing Army support for the international force in the Oeucssi Enclave. Having just moved into new hangar and administration facilities, 2001 appeared to be an opportunity for solid training of new aircrew. The year 2001 began with a formation flypast in Sydney on New Year's Day (Federation Day) and became progressively busier from that point. Other early major commitments included the establishment of a new ship's Flight (some 8 months early), standard Flight deployments around the Indian and Pacific Oceans and events in support of Australia's Centenary of Federation.

Early in January, the Squadron was told to prepare to deploy two aircraft in an FFG deploying to the Solomon Islands in support of the International Peace Monitoring Team. After a rapid work-up HMAS Newcastle Flight embarked with two Seahawks and manpower supplementation from the Squadron. Operations in the Solomon's were to demand a significant part of the Squadrons resources for most of the year with the rotation of ships and Flights on station. This was associated with extended working hours, particularly for the maintenance team.

During the first four months of the year, there was barely a weekend without some flying or maintenance activity taking place. The attitude of the personnel was exemplary. (Typical of this was the night watch, who turn-to at 1400; on one occasion were still at work at 0600 the next day when the morning watch arrived. They had refused to go home until the aircraft required that day were fixed. It has not been unusual for maintenance personnel to turn-to during their weekend stand down to assist those who were on duty, or voluntarily work extended hours to ensure aircraft are available. It reached the point where personnel had to be told to

go home because they presented a possible fatigue hazard.)

In March the Squadron deployed three aircraft in support of flood relief operations on the New South Wales mid-north coast. The 816 Squadron element was part of a joint force that reached a maximum of thirteen aircraft commanded by CO 816 SQN. The evening of the first day of operations typified the cheery dedication of personnel. Personnel had been notified late the previous night, then had an early start to prepare and deploy the aircraft. At the end of operations on the



first day the maintainers were marshalling and conducting rotors running refuels in the dark and torrential rain, however were keen to greet the aircrew as soon as they stepped from the aircraft with a "G'day sir, how's it going out there? Are we winning?" During the flood relief operations the Seahawks of 816 Squadron conducted personnel evacuations, food and medicine drops, MEDEVACs, flood reconnaissance and road/bridge surveys.

In May the new HMAS ANZAC Flight embarked and after conducting work-up, deployed for the Arabian Gulf to conduct operations in support of UN sanctions against Iraq. The primary task for the aircraft was boarding operations via fast rope insertion. Following the terrorist attacks in the USA, HMAS ANZAC's deployment was extended.

The Squadron has also been busy conducting trials. These have included establishment of night vision capability for the Royal Australian Navy, support of FLIR and ESM modifications for the aircraft, and bi-static/multi-static acoustic sensors. It has also been busy training with a significant through put of aircrew, involving deployments to Darwin and Perth (each a three day transit) for exercises and training asset availability. It has also had a very high public profile in promoting the Australian Defence Force at major events throughout Australia (eg. National Rugby League Final at Stadium Australia and ANZAC Day celebrations at Melbourne Cricket Ground).

In August HMAS Melbourne Flight conducted a SAR mission in the Solomon's for a missing inter island ferry with over 50 people on board. The ferry had indeed sunk and the survivors were located by the Seahawk crew. Twelve were plucked from the water in the first lift and delivered to land, with a second lift of seven conducted before the aircraft had to return to "mother" with a patient requiring medical assistance, fuel growing short and night approaching. However, the aircraft remained on task until it had vectored a rescue vessel to the area to pick up the remaining survivors. The crew has been commended for their clear thinking and professionalism in executing the rescue.

In early September the Squadron and embarked Flights were tasked at less than 48 hours notice to deploy in support of border protection operations off Australia's north west coast, in addition to other current taskings. Indeed some personnel received less than 12 hours notice to be on a transport aircraft to Western Australia to supplement a deploying West Coast based Flight. Up to three aircraft were deployed in support of this operation with a continuing commitment of a Squadron Detachment formed from aircrew instructors and Squadron maintenance personnel. During the deployment, the Det has had to move ships several times. While this normally takes several days in port, this has been conducted at sea by VERTREP. The maintenance team in particular has been recommended for a commendation for their sterling efforts. Without a full embarked maintenance kit, they deployed at short notice over land to Darwin, bounced several ships and have continued to provide an outstanding level of aircraft availability and support to operations.

Following the 11 September terrorists attacks in the USA, the Australian Government invoked the ANZUS Treaty and committed forces for support of US led operations. As part of this the Squadron prepared two Flights for short notice embarkations. This involved the work up of the aircrews in Nowra while the Squadron supplied maintenance personnel to supplement activity in Western Australia and a maintenance test flying team. The Squadron is also in the process of working up two other Flights for rotational relief.

Extra Bits

- In 2000 fisheries protection operations were conducted in the extreme sub-Antarctic waters around Heard Island, south west of Australia.
- 816 Squadron and embarked Flight Seahawks have participated in a large number of SAR/humanitarian relief operations including fire bombing during the NSW bush fires of 1994

Rescues conducted during the 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race and participation in the amazing rescues of round-the-world sailors Tony Bullimore, Thierry Dubois and Isabelle Autissier.

Andrew Whittaker - Commanding Officer 816 Squadron

Defence Helicopter's Magazine

International Helicopter Squadron of the Year 2001 Awarded to 816 Squadron, Royal Australian Navy

Part of the citation read by the Editor of Defence Helicopter Magazine at the Helipower Conference in Hanover reads...

'So you can see 816 has been under particular pressure this year: Training and supporting operations with a significant throughput of aircrew, all the while involved in cross-continental and international deployments on operations and exercises. It thoroughly deserves Defence Helicopter's inaugural Squadron of the Year award.'

Letter from the Prime Minister

Dear Commander Whittaker

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on recently being awarded the "International Helicopter Squadron of the Year" by *Defence Helicopter Magazine* and *Shepherd Press*.

I understand your past year was a difficult one, with deployments across the Australian continent and overseas from the Middle East through South-East Asia to the South Pacific. At one point I understand you had seven aircraft operating from six ships deployed around the world. Yours were remarkable achievements.

Other than being chosen first among all of the hundreds of helicopter squadrons from across the world, I consider this award even more significant because the criteria by which you were selected so strongly reflect the Australian spirit. You were chosen not for spectacular individual achievement, but instead for the way everyone in 816 squadron performed to an exceptional level, under difficult conditions and largely without recognition.

Please pass on my congratulations to each and every one of your men and women on behalf of all Australians. Your squadron's achievements have made us all proud.

Fair winds and following seas,

John Howard



HMAS Albatross Redevelopment Project

ALBATROSS TAKES FLIGHT

The HMAS Albatross Stage Two Redevelopment at Nowra in New South Wales reached a major milestone in July with practical completion and handover of the \$40 million project.

Bovis Lend Lease was Managing Contractor on the project, an upgrade of the naval air station, completed for Department of Defence, Corporate Services Infrastructure Group (CSIG).

Stage two included the design and construction of a new helicopter corrosion control facility, and helicopter underwater escape trainer.

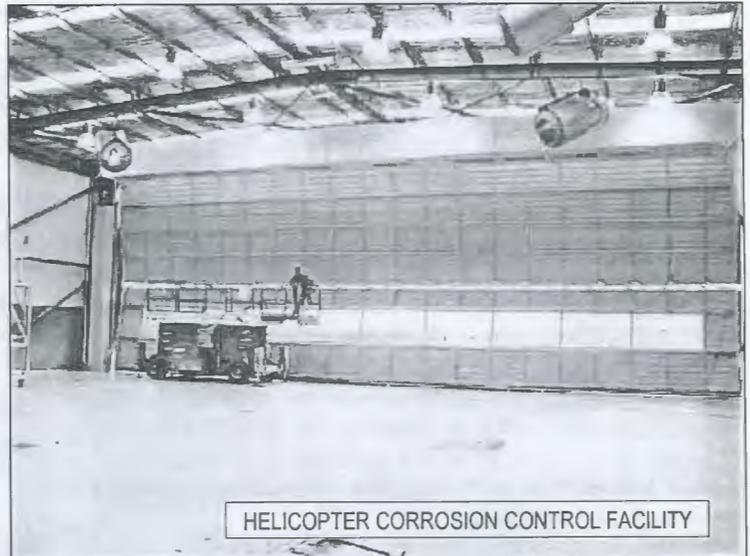
The helicopter underwater escape trainer will simulate a helicopter ditching and rolling over into water, with the occupants being trained in emergency escape drills. The facility will be a valuable addition to the base's training facilities.

Additionally, the redevelopment included an upgrade of infrastructure at the base, including, security fence, and extension of an existing taxiway pavement. Other projects included the construction of a new aircraft wash facility and visiting military aircraft hardstand.

Design work on stage two commenced in 2000 and construction began in June 2001. The stage two works bring the total value of the redevelopment to A\$110 million.

To date the project has been widely recognised, with industry awards including category winners in each building class, as well as Project of the Year.

The project has increased both the training and operational capability of Naval Air Station Nowra, bringing the facilities in line with the current Australian Defence requirements.



HELICOPTER CORROSION CONTROL FACILITY



HELICOPTER UNDERWATER ESCAPE TRAINER



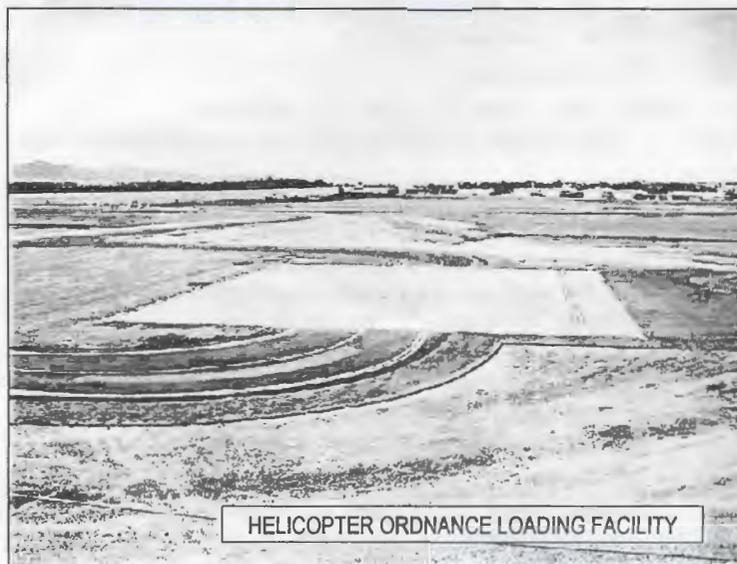
AIRCRAFT WASH FACILITY



GYMNASIUM



ARRESTER GEAR UPGRADE



HELICOPTER ORDNANCE LOADING FACILITY



THIS EDITION OF SLIPSTREAM HAS BEEN SPONSORED BY BOVIS LEND LEASE - ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, I THANK THEM. ED

Carrier Accidents

USS ORISKANY

Two sailors aboard the USS Oriskany were restoring aircraft flares off-loaded from aircraft returning from a mission over Vietnam on October 26, 1966. One of the sailors dropped a flare. The arming mechanism had not been reset to "safe" and somehow the safety lanyard was pulled. Another sailor picked up the actuated flare, threw it into a locker, and closed the door. **There were 2.75 inch rocket warheads in the locker!**

The flare ignited in the locker, and the heat caused a warhead to detonate, spreading the fire. Subsequent warhead detonations soon followed. Finally, a liquid oxygen tank exploded, killing 44 sailors and injuring 156. Two helicopters and four aircraft were severely damaged.

USS FORESTALL

Eight months after the Oriskany fire, there was an accident on the USS Forrestal. **A ZUNI rocket was fired accidentally** from an aircraft being readied for a mission on July 29, 1967. The rocket screamed across the flight deck, struck another aircraft and ignited a fuel fire. The initial fire could have been contained, but 90 seconds after the fire started a bomb detonated, killing or seriously wounding most of the fire fighters.

The detonation ruptured the flight deck, and burning fuel spilled into the lower levels of the ship. Bombs, warheads, and rocket motors exploded with varying egress of intensity in the fire, killing 134 and wounding 161 men. Twenty-one aircraft were destroyed.

After this incident, the Navy established a flag level committee to pursue improvements to the systems used to control flight deck fuel fires. An ordnance safety program was also initiated to characterize flight deck fuel fires and study ways to delay the "cook-off" times of munitions. As a result, insulation is now applied to some bomb casings, delaying "cook-off" times 5 to 10 minutes in a fuel fire, but does not diminish the violence of its explosive reaction.

USS ENTERPRISE

A third aircraft carrier accident occurred aboard the USS Enterprise on January 15, 1969. The **exhaust from an aircraft engine starter unit was directed onto a pod containing four ZUNI rockets**. Heat caused a warhead to detonate and fragments ruptured the aircraft's fuel tank and ignited a fire.

Three more ZUNI warheads detonated less than a minute after the first explosion. The shaped charges blew holes through the flight deck allowing burning fuel to invade the lower decks.

In all, there were 18 munitions explosions and 8 holes were blown through the flight deck. Losses totaled 15 aircraft, 28 dead, and another 344 injured.

USS NIMITZ

Another accident involving munitions explosions occurred on May 26, 1981 aboard the USS Nimitz. An EA-6B aircraft attempting to land at night struck a helicopter, then hit another aircraft and tow tractor before coming to rest. A fuel fire erupted. Improved flight deck fire fighting systems quickly contained the fire, and once the fire was believed to be out, the order was given to start the cleanup.

As sailors approached the scene, **a SPARROW missile warhead that was buried in the debris detonated!** The explosion restarted the fire and three more warheads detonated before the fire could be extinguished. Fourteen sailors were killed and 39 injured. Three planes were destroyed and nine were damaged.

* * * *

The Flight of the Phoenix

Dear Ed

Your photographs on pages 7 and 18 of the last edition featuring the 'Firefly on the Stick' at Griffith, NSW, and 'Bill' Bailey with 'Windy' Geale standing by a Firefly at Nowra, are in fact one and the same aeroplane.

Firstly the photo on page 18 depicts Fairey 'Firefly' WD-828 which served out its time in the RAN as a target tug (TT-6). I suspect that the photo was taken in 1985 outside 'C' Hangar at *Albatross*, on the occasion of its first visit to Nowra as a privately owned 'warbird', following a protracted restoration.

WD-828 was disposed of by the RAN in 1966 and finished up in the hands of the Australian Aircraft Restoration Group, the operators of Moorabbin Aviation Museum in Victoria. The AARG commenced rebuilding the aeroplane for flight however it was later sold in an unfinished state to Mike Wansley from Newcastle NSW who had the rebuild finished and test-flown in September 1984.

The aircraft visited *Albatross* on several occasions including the RAN's 75th Anniversary Airshow in 1986. I can be sure of one thing, the photo on page 18 was taken prior to December 1987, as in that month WD-828 crash-landed into a market garden near Camden Aerodrome and sustained major damage. The engine failed after take-off at about 1000', and the pilot, a former RAN senior sailor, together with his engineer passenger, had no option but to ride it in.

It is as a result of that incident that Don Roberts was able to photograph WD-828 at Griffith in January this year. Many visitors to that prosperous Riverina city have seen a 'Firefly on a stick' there since 1967, but few realise that in the early nineties, WD-828 was swapped for the aeroplane that was originally placed there by the city fathers as a memorial to airmen three decades earlier.

At about the same time that WD-828 was sold by the Navy, a group of Griffith citizens were on the lookout for a suitable aeroplane to erect as their memorial, and in the absence of any available WW-2 RAAF types, a deal was done for Fairey Firefly WB-518. This was a sister-ship to WD-828, having also been converted to Target Tug configuration.

The wreckage of Mike Wansley's Firefly, together with all the spares and manuals, were sold to a Bankstown warbird restoration company, who set about collecting replacement parts world-wide in the hope of yet again rebuilding WD-828. After protracted negotiations, that included having to post a substantial financial guarantee with the Griffith City Council and the local RSL, the new owners were given approval to remove WB-518 from the pole and swap it for WD-828.

The latter's fuselage was unfit for flight so the swap involved transferring its fuselage centre-section, from firewall to aft bulkhead with that of WB-518. Most of the other major components such as the wings and empennage from WB-518 went back on to the display aeroplane, the whole assembly received a fresh coat of paint and new insignia before being hoisted aloft again onto its perch outside the Griffith Tourist Information Centre. Interestingly, and I guess at the Council's insistence, the aeroplane has retained the serial WB-518.

Work progressed in a hangar at Bankstown to restore and reassemble the composite Firefly. A replacement engine was sourced as were numerous parts from the UK, but the project

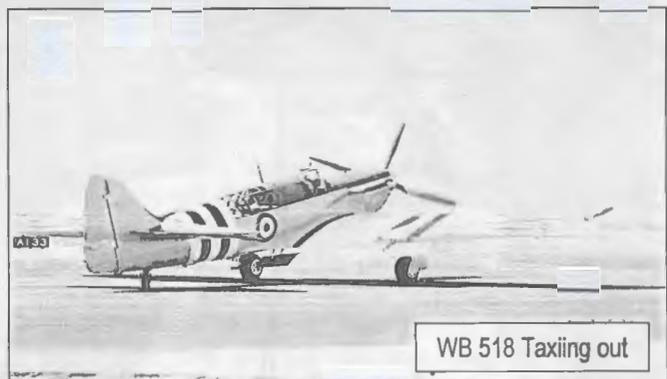
founded and a new buyer came on the scene in 1994.

Captain Ed Kurdziel, a Boeing 747 pilot with Northwest Airlines, and a former USN naval aviator, exported the project on a Russian cargo ship to the USA and had it delivered to 'QG Aviation of America' at Fort Collins Airport in Colorado.

The Firefly, also, and more correctly identified by the serial WB-518, had its maiden post-restoration flight on 6th April 2002, under the command of Don Sigourney. Don gained his Firefly experience in WB-271 of the Royal Navy Historic Flight; yet another ex-RAN aeroplane that saw out its days towing targets past the West Head Gunnery Range near HMAS *Cerberus*.

By the time that this letter appears in *Slipstream*, Ed Kurdziel's Firefly will have been flown and displayed at the Oshkosh Airshow in Wisconsin, the largest annual gathering of Warbirds and historical aircraft anywhere on the planet. Ed is very proud and conscious of his aeroplane's heritage and that it represents an era of great significance to the Fleet Air Arm of Australia.

Although basically an AS-6 version, Ed has rebuilt WB-518 as an FR-5 of 817 Squadron serving in HMAS *Sydney* during the Korean War. The accompanying photograph was taken during that first sequence of test flights in Colorado in April, before the final application of serial numbers, side numbers and ship's code.



WB 518 Taxiing out

How do I translate the sound of that magnificent Rolls-Royce Griffon V12 engine onto paper?

Terry Hetherington

THE PEOPLE YOU MEET- OSHKOSH AIRSHOW USA 2002

In December 1950 Antisubmarine Fireflies WB518 and WD828 were delivered to the Royal Australian Navy as part of 817 Squadron and the 21st Carrier Air Group. Half a world away and over fifty years on, major assemblies of both aircraft have been combined to create a 'Grand Champion Warbird' at the 'Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2002' in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

This year's EAA AirVenture was Firefly WB518's first public showing after an eight year - 40,000-manhour restoration. Amongst the hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts attending Oshkosh were a diverse group of Aussies; not one known to any of the others until that one week in July. There was however a common thread, and this is their story.

Kevin Arditto, a Melbourne-based LAME, was part of the contractor's maintenance crew at Avalon in the 1960's who serviced and maintained the Firefly target tugs. He has supported owner Eddie Kurdziel for most of WB518's rebuild and justly deserves the sobriquet 'Mr Gizmo'. No question was too tough for

Kevin, nor were those hard to get parts any problem. During the airshow Kevin revelled in relating 'tales of yore' to anybody willing to listen.

On two consecutive days in February 1966, a young Arthur Johnson flew as a winch-operator in a Firefly from *Albatross* while awaiting his pilot training course to begin. That aircraft was WB518, which was attached to 724 squadron. 36 years later Kevin and Arthur were to meet by the restored WB518 at Oshkosh. To his great delight Arthur was invited to join Eddie Kurdziel in the back seat of WB518 for a combined display with scores of Mustangs, Corsairs and Hellcats. Although they did not get airborne, Eddie later reported that Arthur was incredulous that he was on the other side of the safety barriers, staring at the 200,000 airshow patrons who were staring at him sitting in an aircraft that he had flown in many years before.

Long time RAN Historic Flight member and former FAAA National Treasurer Terry Hetherington was also at Oshkosh, and had the great privilege of flying in WB518 with the owner from Oshkosh to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Along the way, a flat tyre in Milwaukee, a formation departure with a P-51 Mustang and a 2 hour photo session above the Mississippi River with another Mustang, a B-25 Mitchell bomber and a Howard '500' executive airliner, were just some of the highlights.

Geoff Litchfield, one-time RAN Sea Fury pilot, airline captain and latterly author, came along to inspect the Firefly and prevailed upon Terry to flog off copies of his autobiography 'Fly Boy' from the display table under WB518's wing on the Oshkosh flightline.

Yet another visitor was West Australian Brian Collingridge, once a Naval Airman and then a Fleet Air Arm pilot, who now is an aircraft owner/operator and dealer from Jandakot.

During the show another Aussie visitor approached the members of the Firefly support team to proudly boast that, as a youth, he and his school mates would attempt to scale the Griffith, NSW, plinth that was the Firefly's home from 1967 to 1991.

All these Aussie visitors saw WB518 at Oshkosh with Korean War markings, rocket rails, gyro gunsight and 20mm guns, and in pristine condition. With little imagination one could easily visualise it on the deck of HMAS *Sydney* being prepared to launch - some 50 years ago. The Warbird judges obviously thought along similar lines. 'Oshkosh Grand Champion Warbird' is a fitting recognition of the dream and determination of a man, and the achievement of a team.

At the Warbirds Presentation Dinner on 27 July, in an atmosphere similar to the Oscar Presentations, WB518 was announced 'Grand Champion Post WWII'. Those present were left with no doubt Aussies can be a boisterous lot and the Brits present added to the din. The locals then seemed to accept that it was perhaps time a non-US manufactured aircraft won the top award and joined in too; sort of like when the Americas Cup went to Australia.

In accepting the trophy Ed modestly spoke of the huge effort made by a lot of people to ensure the project's success. Terry Hetherington and Kevin Arditto were graciously invited to join the rebuild team, Ray Middleton and Timmy Fries, and the aircraft's owner on the podium. Camera flashes galore; and they all gained their 15 minutes of fame. But there were countless others who also deserved recognition - the painter, the engine builder, the sheet metalworkers and the parts suppliers. Once one starts here - where do you stop?

Afterward, there was time to reflect how the thinnest of threads had brought everything together.



WB 518 airborne over Minneapolis, Minnesota USA



Captain Eddie Kurdziel and Terry Hetherington



Captain Eddie Kurdziel and Arthur Johnson



Judging the 'Warbird Grand Champion' - Oshkosh 2002

MOMENTS IN TIME



LEFT: HMAS MELBOURNE - STORY PLEASE. (Photo AMoF)
TOP: APRIL 1949 - Naval Probationary Pilots at Point Cook prior to posting to UK for operational training. (Photo AMoF)
L-R: J R Hears - G Eldering - J N Young - N W Knapstein - D P E Small - P R Treneman
BOTTOM RIGHT: RANAS NOWRA 1952 (Photo Kevin Parks)
L-R: Unknown - Ron Salter - 'Googie' Withers - Rob Pfennig



WESTLANDS UK (Photo courtesy David Kent)
 Sea King Flight A/E Training team and A/E rates from the SEA KING Flight UK
L-R: Milt Wilkin - Roy Edgar - Horace Harley - Mick Purdy - Peter Penny - George Hall - Westlands' Instructor - Brian Morgan - Trevor Gibbs - 'Darkie' Cole - David Kent - Trevor Epis




The average Navy pilot, despite the sometimes swaggering exterior, is very much capable of such feelings as love, affection, intimacy and caring. These feelings just don't involve anyone else.

1966 - VA-125 SQUADRON NAS LEMOORE USA
 Sign on the squadron noticeboard



JUNE 2002 - OLD FRIENDS MEET UP AT THE MUSEUM (Photo J Hetherington)
L-R: Don Parkinson - Steve Beales - Barry Thatcher - John Hetherington



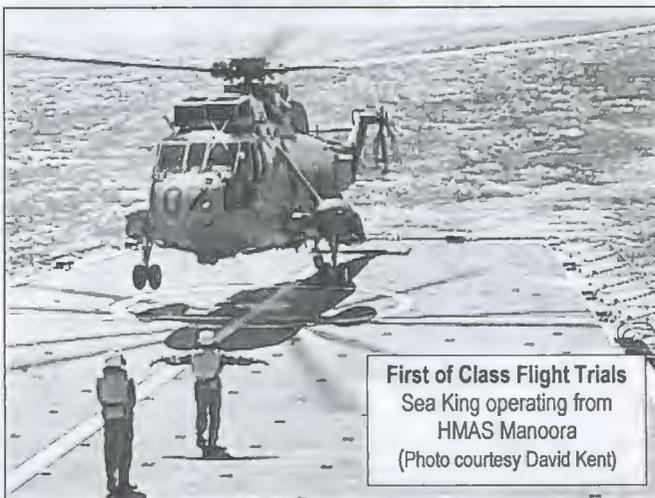
Circa 1900 - ROYAL NAVY SHIP'S COOK AND MARINES
Note the cook's bare feet and the clay pipe ready to be flashed up.



12 NOVEMBER 1975
What's the story?



1948 - 1949 THE FIRST RAN ANZAC DAY
MARCH IN NOWRA



First of Class Flight Trials
Sea King operating from
HMAS Manoora
(Photo courtesy David Kent)



26 OCT 1975 JINDIVIK AT JERVIS BAY AIR FIELD



Afghanistan 2002 - View from inside Bin Laden's car



Story please?



AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT

by Mark Clayton – Museum Director



The focus on events at the Museum over the last several weeks has remained on work associated with the reconfiguration of aircraft displays and the suspension of some of the aircraft. We have been talking about this for a while now but although it is an easy idea to conceive, the associated problems need careful resolution especially in the context of safety. We don't want aircraft falling down and have to take every precaution to ensure this does not happen.

We are just about through the preliminary process and will start suspending aircraft early in August. Meanwhile, design work is proceeding and the visitor interactive pods, through which the visitor will be able to call up the detail of each of the displays, are being built. And at last our large blue showcases will take on a different appearance with some very good graphic work on them. So toward the end of this year, the interior of the Museum will have taken on a different and much more attractive appearance.

We are concerned that we have not yet had allocated to the Museum a Macchi aircraft – the present arrangement is to 'borrow' one courtesy of the RAN Historic Flight. This arrangement is an interim arrangement only. The reason for this is that the Museum is not regarded as a Defence museum, neither was it when known as the Australian Naval Aviation Museum, and this means that in principle we may have to buy former naval or Defence aircraft and bid for them in competition with other organizations, which can be very expensive. We have written to the Minister for Defence and everyone else who might have some influence on giving this Museum status as a Defence – related museum, which it is, and be allocated former naval or defence aircraft when paid off, as part of the maintenance of Navy's aviation heritage. Naval aviation will always be a powerful theme in Australia's Museum of Flight and it is obviously important to be able to maintain a wide ranging and up to date collection.

On the note of 'the powerful (Naval Aviation) theme', we had a visit by Jeff Watson, whom most might know as an aircraft enthusiastic or better perhaps as a reporter on Getaway travel programs. He was tasked by Channel Nine to do a program on Korean food but instead persuaded the producer that a program on Naval Aviation would be more palatable. He came down to the Museum this week and spent the day with his cameramen shooting Venoms and Gannets etc., and the final product when aired will be great publicity for all of us – the FAAA, Museum and the Navy, as well as of great interest to the public. He is a good supporter of the Museum and of Naval aviation.

Some very interesting collection items have been loaned to the Museum from Museum Victoria. The Wirraway loan reported in the last edition of *Slipstream* is now onboard along with the prototype Air Tourer, the forerunner to the 'Plastic Parrot' or CT4, plus some early aero engines. One of these, 'Moteur Wright Ateliers' built in Paris, was the engine that powered the first flight in Australia. Another, a 1910 Robbins /Lock engine is a flat 4 and was the first air-cooled horizontal format engine to be flown in Australia and, with a 40hp rating, it was at the time the most powerful to have been built in Australia. Its construction reflects a degree of technological skill quite remarkable for the time, particularly given the relative infancy of internal combustion technologies. It was built by two young motor mechanics, Robbins and Lock, at Dalgety's engineering shop which was on the site

now occupied by the Melbourne GPO. The flat 4 design was used in the VW Beetle of course and in many piston engine aircraft flying today.

There is increasing interest among former FAA members to donate some of their memorabilia to the Museum and this is to be encouraged. At the moment Bob Geale is setting up the special FAA Gallery which will feature the carrier ship models and many of the photographs which were in the original Naval Aviation Museum when a collection of huts, along with other FAA memorabilia. If you have something in your locker that is representative of some aspect of Naval aviation and would be of general interest, he would be pleased to hear from you.



WESTLAND WHIRLWIND S55 GOES INTO FULL HOVER Courtesy of Ison's crane and Museum volunteers

The first Westland Whirlwind S55 flew as long ago as November 1949. The Museum acquired this helicopter in 1992, courtesy of a Sea King airlift from Bankstown, and donated by Helimuster P/Ltd.

(Photo's courtesy Tom Mac)

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

George Santayana

FOR YOUR INFORMATION By Rick Fischer

The F111 Board of Inquiry re: Chemical Injury to Airmen working in F111 fuel tanks AND ex - Fleet Air Arm Sailors

Recently I was doing some work for Navy Systems Command and through the Defence intranet I became aware of the results of the Board of Inquiry (BOI) into the injuries to Airmen resulting from chemical exposure inside the fuel tanks of F111 aircraft.

The terms of the BOI tweaked my curiosity because of events that had occurred back in late 1983 and as a result I sent the following message to the Air Force officer responsible for implementing the BOI recommendations.

Quote: *As a Navy Senior Sailor on A4s, my colleagues and I were exposed to the same or similar chemical compounds when working in and around resealing of A4 fuel tanks. No protection from the aromatics was provided. Indeed, I don't recall any "Cautions" in the Navair maintenance publications.*

In addition the sailors who worked on S2 and Seaking rubber fuel cells were exposed to chemicals identical to those used in the repair of integral tanks.

The main reason for bring this to your attention is that on my return from Navy Office to Nowra in 1983 as the WO(E) for HS817, some of my previous colleagues from VC724 and VF805 raised the matter of an alleged leukaemia cluster among young blokes who had been my sailors on 724, all were almost exclusively A4 sailors.

*This had occurred while I had been in Canberra from 1980 till late 1983. Either in late '83 or early '84. I raised the matter at a personal interview with Commodore Dadswell, CO of Albatross at the time. I am not aware of any progress or any further investigation because I paid off shortly afterwards. I assume that because of the turmoil in the Navy's Fleet Air Arm at the time this matter may well have fallen down the cracks. **Unquote***

Fallen down the cracks? I don't as yet know. However, I was advised that Navy, the Fleet Air Arm made no submission to the

RAAF BOI. This is probably reasonable as the events I described happened twenty years ago and Navy's corporate memory is just not that long especially given the FAA turmoil of the mid eighties. The reason that the F111 matters came to prominence is that the aircraft in question is still in service and the Airmen were exposed over such a long time.

Whether the sailors I mentioned in the Quote above were in fact affected by the same or similar chemicals to those used in the F111 is a moot point. I used the same or similar chemicals for removing fuel tank sealant, and with my face stuck inside 885's wing for months; and as I also said in the quote above, similar chemicals were in use in the fuel cell bay at MRS in B Hangar.

In 1983 however, I recall I was more worried about CSD oil, that swish special silicon compound, being the only other factor common only to A4 sailors.

The fact is that there were allegations of problems, whether Pussers actually followed up on the matter I don't know. Arguably, if there had been some sort of result the FAA may have made a submission to the F111 BOI (but then again lack of corporate memory).

The advice I received in reply to the correspondence quoted above is as follows:

- the BOI recommendation Implementation team were not the appropriate authority to handle the matter as their terms of reference only extended from after the BOI, that NAVSAFE (i.e the current OH&S authority for Navy) has been made aware of the matter, and
- all sailors who might be affected, or might be experiencing unexplained symptoms will need to be advised, and will need to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The last dot point, and what for me has become some unfinished business is the reason for this article.

'Readers who worked on A4s or in the MRS tank bay and who may have been exposed need to be aware that health problems they have, or may develop, may be directly related to those chemicals used during their FAA service.'

ADVICE FOR SELF FUNDED RETIREES

My sister sent these to me so I figure it won't hurt to invest...Watch for these consolidations to take place and make yourself a bundle!

Investment predictions:

Following the Exxon/Mobil deal and the AOL/Time Warner implode, I want to make you aware of the next expected mergers

1. Hale Business Systems, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Fuller Brush and W.R.Grace Company will merge and become Hale, Mary, Fuller, Grace.
2. Polygram Records, Warner Bros. and Zesta Crackers join forces and become...Polly, Warner Cracker.
3. 3M will merge with Goodyear and issue forth as MMMGood.
4. Zippo Mfg., Audi Motor Car, Dofasco and Dakota Mining will merge to become, of course, ZipAudiDoDa..
5. Federal Express is expected to join its major competitor, UPS, and consolidate as FedUP.
6. Fairchild Electronics and Honeywell Computers will become Fairwell Honeychild.
7. Knotts Berry Farm and the National Organisation of Women will become Knott NOW!

* * * *

MORE ADVICE...

Beer and the stock market

Summarized from an article in the Toronto Sun Sept 5, 2001.

On July 26, 2000, Jim and John each got a \$1000 bonus from their employer.

Jim put the whole \$1000 in his employer's stock. With the transaction cost of \$35, he was able to buy 7 shares of Nortel at \$123 each.

John used his \$1000 to buy 66 cases of beer (1584 bottles of beer). At 15 bottles a week he would have beer for a year.

In the summer of 2001, both Jim and John were laid off. Jim sold his 7 Nortel shares at \$12 each and after the \$35 transaction fee was left with \$49.

John finished the last beer and cashed in his empties for \$158.40.

From the 'GOOD OLD DAYS'

By Bob Harrison USN Vet.

From time to time, I have read articles concerning two topics about which I would like to write. One of these topics was the 'good old days', the other was about how 'rough' the duty was aboard a submarine, especially a diesel job.

One or two individuals mentioned the concept that the 'good old days' were known by that name because our minds tend to remember only the good times while the bad times are relegated to the back corners of our memories.

My slant on this is much different. I think that most of you young whippersnappers wouldn't know rough duty or bad times if they hit you on the head. You think that living in close quarters for weeks at a time, smelling other unwashed bodies, inhaling the obnoxious fumes of diesel engines, stale food, bad breaths, of going without baths for long periods, of having to live in confinement obeying the orders of superiors whom you deemed not half as intelligent as yourselves, and of crawling through filthy bilges constituted rough duty. To this I say, BALDERDASH! You guys don't know what rough duty and bad times are. Let me elucidate.

In the days before WWII, we lived at various times either on farms or in small rural communities. We did not have modern conveniences such as refrigerators, electric dishwashers, or indoor plumbing. Our trips to the 'bathroom' were down a path to the outhouse.

An outhouse was also known as a toilet or privy. Sometimes they were a simple wooden structure whose basic concept was to hide you from the view of the outside world while you performed your necessary body functions. Some were more elaborate, being constructed with an arbour covered with morning glory vines leading to the inner sanctum. They could vary in size from a one-seater to a four-seater. I never saw one larger than a four-seater and I must also confess that I never saw anyone sharing the occupancy of an outhouse so I am at a loss to know why they built multiple holes. Perhaps for show, to brag to the world that WE HAVE A FOUR SEATER.

From earliest infancy we learned to schedule our trips to the outhouse. Soon after potty training it became evident that scheduling was of the utmost importance. One trip to that far off oasis at 2:00 in the morning on a cold winter's night when the temperature was hovering in the 20 degrees below zero range was enough to etch into one's brain forever the necessity for scheduling.

Rich people had inside plumbing. We had no inside plumbing. Moderately rich people had chamber pots. We had no chamber pots. Our only recourse was the outhouse.

For those of you who do not get the picture, let me explain. Assume that you awake at 3:00 a.m. with a sudden, demanding urge to 'go' (It seems that you are a poor scheduler.) If you are not sick, (Dad's standing rule was that you were not sick if your temperature was less than 104 degrees and our thermometer was your standard outdoor instrument about two inches wide which could be used as a rectal thermometer when needed, a procedure which we almost always waived when we recalled the jagged metal edges of the thermometer), then you went to the outhouse. This required getting fully dressed, including pants, socks, boots, sweaters, and an overcoat (remember, it is 20 below outside) and

beginning the trek, perhaps through two or three feet of snowdrifts.

Inside the outhouse, you have to undress partially, lower yourself to an ice-cold, sometimes wet or icy seat, do your very best to hurry the process, keeping in mind that you don't EVER want to do this again, at least tonight. Finally, your job is finished, you complete the necessary cleanup details, redress yourself, and scamper back to the house. Back in bed, you suddenly discover that you are numb from the waist down to your knees. In an hour or so, this too shall pass away. I once heard of a guy who had to 'go' when it was 35 below zero. The poor guy froze his most prized appendage and while they were preparing him for a thawing out procedure at the local hospital, the doctor inadvertently hit it and it snapped like a candy cane.

So much for the wintertime. How about summer, you may ask. And well, you might, because those hot, muggy, hazy, lazy days of summer that the song writers sing about were not much fun either.

On an afternoon in August, you stroll down the path to the bath and place yourself over the hole. Down below, the flies, the bees, and the spiders are having their annual picnic. If you have never experienced a swarm of flies buzzing around your nether extremities, you don't know what hard times are. And when you hear the whine of an angry, distraught honey bee or an occasional bumblebee running amok coming in for the kill, you soon learn the meaning of fear. Raw, unadulterated fear. This is where the men are separated from the boys. The men stay put and suffer the slings and arrows of Mother Nature while the boys run screaming from the privy with their pants still down around their knees.

So, I ask you to re-examine your premises about the good old days and hard times. Re-think your position about how 'rough' submarine duty was. Thank your lucky stars that all you had to undergo was an occasional depth charge attack from a few Japanese tin cans and that you were never subjected to the agonies of the old country outhouse.



To the 'MODERN DAYS'

True story...? This actually happened which is why it is so funny.

I left Brisbane heading toward Maryborough, when I decided to stop at a comfort station. The first stall was occupied, so I went into the second one. I was no sooner seated than I heard a voice from the next stall: "Hi, how are you doing?"

Well, I am not the type to chat with strangers in highway comfort stations, and I really don't know quite what possessed me ... but anyway, I answered-a little embarrassed, "Not bad."

Then the stranger asked, "And, what are you up to?"

Talk about dumb questions! I was really beginning to think this was too weird! But I said, "Well, just like you I'm driving east."

Then, I heard the stranger, sounding very upset, said, "Look, I'll call you back. There's some idiot in the next stall answering all the questions I am asking you."

"Well," snarled the tough old Navy Chief to the bewildered Seaman. "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and dance on my grave."

"Not me, Chief!" the Seaman replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

Night Launch

At sea, the moonless, mantled night
 Is blacker than a hundred midnights
 Deep in the maw of a cypress swamp,
 And the Carrier's running lights
 Are hooded and dimly impotent.
 Sixty feet above the sea's foaming curl
 Sleek swept-winged birds are unchained
 From a gray steel slab--the flight deck.
 Whining and howling engines contain
 The turgid power to sustain flight,
 The inky blackness is punctuated
 By director's glowing amber wands,
 Like syncopated fireflies
 Beaconing signals with practiced hands,
 Guiding blind craft to the catapult.
 The movement is a symphony
 Of frantic, chaotic precision
 That reaches a shuddering crescendo
 With each taut, measured decision
 To unleash the catapult's awesome might.
 Each cockpit is an instrumented
 Womb of pale red profusion,
 Eerily silhouetting mask and helmet
 Donned by young lions--their calm tension
 Mounting as the critical moment nears.
 First a red wand circles, stabs the gloom,
 Urging the throttle forward to ignite
 The red afterburning tongue of flame
 Searing the fragile veil of the night.
 The tethered bird shrieks and strains to soar.
 Then the green wand--all is right--
 Signals in a graceful, swinging arc.
 Powerful scalding, steam is unleashed
 To hurl the bird into the milky dark,
 Jolting the pilot with blurring force.
 And the loud, sweaty ballet goes on
 As each winged chariot, one by one,
 Is given the wrenching gift of flight,
 Until the last is away and gone,
 Engines' thunder fading in the night.
 - John Newlin - 1988

OUR GROUND CREW

Here's to the men with greasy hands -
 Who fuel our planes when we come in to land
 Who fix the flak damage and stop the leaks
 Who change the tires and stop the squeaks
 Tend to the controls to make them fly straight
 Wait for the planes when the pilots are late

Who smooth the scratches and rivet the panels
 Check, "Loud and Clear" on the radio channels
 Who read the write-ups and make the repairs
 Check the lines for chaffing and tears
 Who pull the chocks and check the wings
 And do a million other things

That make an aircraft safe and ready to fly.
 So - Here's a salute to those hard working guys,
 From a group of fliers who too seldom ponder
 About the men who keep us up in the wild blue
 yonder.

88-year-old 'wing walks' to record

From correspondents in London August 21, 2002

An 88-year-old World War II hero with an artificial leg has become the oldest person to 'wing-walk' atop a biplane at speeds of 160kph. Les 'Dizzy' Seales, from Shoreham in Sussex, southern England, clinched the world record - previously held by an 87-year-old South African woman - when he stood for a total of 75 minutes atop a 1940s-era Boeing Stearman.

"I would not have minded staying up for longer but my pilot Mike said we had already been up for a long time," Seales said when he was back on the ground.

"I plan to come back every year until I am 100, but I am very laid back about the record.

"It is just another cross in my diary."

No stranger to stunts, Seales first climbed out of a plane in mid-air in World War II when, as a gunner in a two-man Defiant fighter, he went on to the wing to save its pilot who was trapped in the cockpit.

Later in the war, as a member of the Royal Air Force air-sea rescue squadron, Seales helped to rescue around 100 allied airmen from the English Channel.

Seales - who broke the record with help from Europe's only professional wing-walking team, the 'Utterly Butterlys' - has wing-walked several times before, despite an artificial leg.

His limb was amputated after an accident involving a London bus 15 years ago.

Agence France-Presse

Navy helicopter on Christmas Island to boost border protection

The Defence Minister, Robert Hill, recently announced that a Royal Australian Navy helicopter and crew will be based at Christmas Island to boost Australia's border protection.

"One Sea King helicopter and 20 crew will be detached from 817 Naval Air Squadron to conduct surveillance of the approaches to Christmas Island," Senator Hill said. "They will also provide a shore-based response capability for search and rescue." Senator Hill said the deployment of the Sea King is another facet of the important border protection operations being undertaken by the Australian Defence Force. A range of Navy vessels including frigates and patrol boats, maritime surveillance aircraft and intelligence capabilities are engaged in the day-to-day monitoring and patrolling of our maritime approaches against encroachment from external threats. The ADF was given an extra \$22.3 million in the last Budget to continue operations to deter unauthorised boat arrivals.

"The Navy's helicopter squadrons are working at the highest tempo they have seen since the Vietnam conflict," Senator Hill said.

"Their continued hard work and dedication has been successful in deterring unauthorised boat arrivals."

A temporary hangar for the Sea King is currently being erected at the Christmas Island airfield by the RAAF 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing to provide facilities for the detachment. The Squadron is looking forward to continuing Navy's close ties with the people of Christmas Island, working with the local community and contributing to border protection operations," Senator Hill said.

"In addition, the Christmas Island Administrator has written to me to welcome the detachment on behalf of the local community."

US Military Aircraft

On some air bases the Air Force is on one side of the field and civilian aircraft use the other side of the field, with the control tower in the middle.

One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?" The tower responded, "Who is calling?" The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?" The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference. If it is an American Airlines Flight, it is 3 o'clock. If it is an Air Force, it is 1500 hours. If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells. If it is an Army aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3. If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon."

A Mild Sense of Panic

By Cpl. Joe Frame - 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers



The sun rose, blood red and looming, topping the minarets on the skyline with a rosy glow. Atop Episkopi Hill, some ten miles to the west of Limassol, huddled two of Scotland's finest.

Outside the roofed entrenchment, Rab was hunched over the wireless set checking calibrations; dials and gauges being easily read through the windows, already losing their luminosity in the rapidly lightening dawn. Inside, I had been no less busy.

"Brew's up." I handed Rab his mug, accepting the fag and lighter in return. "Right. We'll finish these fags, then check in; just in case they think we're lost."

Lords of all we surveyed, our orders were clear: 'Set up, check in every hour. Other than that, well, just keep your eyes open, and call in if anything happens'. That's one thing about our sergeant - explicit. Every detail planned to minutia by a brain honed to perfection on Haig's Dimple!

"Right Rab, better check in." "Hello Three-two, this is Three-two-Charlie, radio check over." "Three-two, OK, out."

Time to relax. What'll we have for breakfast? **BANG!** "Whit the Hell was that?" "Sounded like a shot." "I know that, but from where?"

"Over there I think." Quick, grab binoculars, follow Rab's outstretched arm. Aye, puff of smoke about a mile away - maybe. Grab the map grid. Grid seven, seven, one; no, better make that two. "Get back on that set." Seven, seven, two, five, nine, one. Right. "Right Rab, phone that in. At least it'll let them see that we're no' sleepin' up here." "Hello Three-two, this is Three-two-Charlie; shotrep, over." "Three-two, send grid, over."

"Three-two-Charlie. Shots at grid seven, seven, two, five, niner, one; over." Good God, no' another wan. Seven, six. "Hell's Bells, there's about a dozen of them noo! They're gaun daft doon there."

"Hello Three-two, this is Three-two-Charlie. Report more shots, about a dozen. Impossible to give specific grids, but they're all roughly in the same area as the first one. Aw naw! There's mair, scattered all over the bloody map by the sounds o' it."

"Three-two-Charlie, keep your head down, don't panic; we're on the other net to Battalion HQ, things'll soon be moving. Ask Joe if he can make out whether they are Turks or Greeks, over." How the blazes am I supposed to know the difference from up here? It's all Greek to me. Heh-heh, some joke, eh? And he says no' tae panic! "Tell him that General Custer hasnae a bloody clue, and you can tell him that he'd better get some of the boys up here A.S.A.P. It sounds like a war's breaking oot doon there, and if he

thinks we're going to hang about, wae just ten stupid bullets each, tae take on the whole of bluidy Cyprus; well he can just think again".

"Ah cannae say that." "Dae it!" "Hello Three-two, this is Three-two-Charlie. Request back-up, A.S.A. Bloody P, over."

"Three-two. OK, OK, the reserve section's already on the way; until they arrive, just keep your heads down, and try and keep track of any concentration of shots or movement. Out."

How can you keep your head down, and be up there observing at the same time? Easy! Rest the old binos on top of the sandbags, and stretch up just enough to peep through. Whit are they shootin' fur anyway? Why spoil a perfect Sunday morning with all that racket? Anyway, we're supposed to be the referees, the good old United Nations, and we've got the sky blue bunnets tae prove it. Maybe that's the problem; maybe they're all colour blind. Now don't be daft, Joe. Just cool it. Take it easy. "Here come the cavalry, Joe."

Sure enough, tearing up the track in his customised formula one Landrover, gallant platoon commander hanging on for grim death, comes the fanciful Fusilier Fangio. As the scourge of Silverstone screeches to a tyre-burning halt, Second Lieutenant Superman leaps out and over the sandbags like a speeding bullet.

"Right chaps. What's the problem, then?"

"Just a coupla hundred fuzzie-wuzzies ready tae attack us. Sur." That's oor Rab. Quick as a flash with the tongue; though the brain sometimes takes a wee while to catch up!

"Sir." The Landrover spoke. "Company Commander's on the line." Whoosh. Leaping tall sandbags in a single bound. Two minutes later - crunch; Krypton's favourite son was back.

"OK chaps, you can relax now." Arms akimbo, legs apart - Action Man on one of his better days. "Seems like there's been a bit of a muddle." Pregnant pause. "It would appear that this is the start of the local shooting season." "I thought they had that all the year round sir; using each other for targets."

"Ha-ha. Good one that. Must remember it for the Mess." Oh God, thinks I. Now I'm script writer for the Officers' Mess comic!

"Unfortunately, Bn HQ forgot to pass the message down the line. Bloody typical. Still you did the right thing. Good show. Soon as your message came through we crashed the battalion net, and then the balloon went up. We all thought it was the real thing." Thank God it wasn't, thinks I, else we'd be up to our arm pits in Sandhurst action men by now. "Well then. Anything else? Good. Be off then. Well done. Glad to see you're on your toes. Keep it up." Whoosh, crunch, thump, grind, screech. I honestly expected to hear a 'High-ho Silver' coming from the Landrover as it sped back down the track.

"Well Rab. That's the excitement over for the day. Get the burner on, your turn for the tea."

This is a true life anecdote about Albert Einstein, and his theory of relativity.

After having propounded his famous theory, Albert Einstein would tour the various Universities in the United States, delivering lectures wherever he went. He was always accompanied by his faithful chauffer, Harry, who would attend each of these lectures while seated in the back row! One fine day, after Einstein had finished a lecture and was coming out of the auditorium into his vehicle, Harry addresses him and says, "Professor Einstein, I've heard your lecture on Relativity so many times, that if I were ever given the opportunity, I would be able to deliver it to perfection myself!"

"Very well," replied Einstein, "I'm going to Dartmouth next week. They don't know me there. You can deliver the lecture as Einstein, and I'll take your place as Harry!"

And so it went to be... Harry delivered the lecture to perfection, without a word out of place, while Einstein sat in the back row playing "chauffer", and enjoying a snooze for a change.

Just as Harry was descending from the podium, however, one of the research assistants intercepted him, and began to ask him a question on the theory of relativity.... one that involved a lot of complex calculations and equations. Harry replied to the assistant "The answer to this question is very simple! In fact, it's so simple, that I'm going to let my chauffer answer it!"

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It has been a busy period for the national executive but in general things seem to be falling into place. The big test will come when delegates meet for the Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held in Nowra on Saturday 5th October. I do hope the delegates will come armed with constructive proposals for the way ahead. Anyone can sit back and say, "Why did you do this. Why didn't you do that". What we need is for people to say, "Let's do this and here's a plan of how it can be accomplished". The challenge is there.

Life in Canberra has been cold and hectic. Cold because that is what Canberra is at this time of the year and hectic because Gwen and I sold our house without buying a replacement. Tent life is rough. To escape the cold we headed north for an extended holiday. The replacement home will have to wait.

The 2003 Reunion Committee has met with the Commanding Officer HMAS ALBATROSS and representatives of the Museum of Flight and is now able to confirm that the National Reunion will be held in Nowra from Thursday 2nd to Monday 6th October 2003. The 2003 will not be as grand as the 50th Anniversary held in 1998 and the emphasis will be on people related events. The theme will be "Getting Together Again". Please note the dates in your diary now.

We have had a very good response to the appeal for paperback novel and now have a good selection for the embarked Flights to choose from. My sincere thanks to all those donors.

We also intend to repeat the Xmas Hamper Project that was so successful in 2001. If you have any suggestions on items that might be included, or thoughts on Companies that could be approached for contributions, I would be most interested to hear from you.

'Toz' Dadswell

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



The Minutes of the National Executive meeting held on 12 July have been sent to all Divisional Secretary's together with the Agenda for the National AGM which will be held in the AMoF on Saturday 5th October 2002 at 0930.

Also please note that our Reunion will take place in October 2003 to coincide with the Centenary of Flight, the Schedule is:

2nd October 2003 - Registrations at Bomaderry RSL.

Friday 3rd October 2003 - Late Registrations. Tours of HMAS Albatross / Sports / Cocktail Party.

Saturday 4th October 2003 AGM / Barbecue / Dolphin Tours / Branch Reunions / NSW Anniversary Dinner.

Sunday 5th October 2003 - Air Day.

Whilst this Reunion is some 12 months away, our overseas members may like to start planning. I can be contacted by Email on mheneghan@shoal.net.au or by phone or mail should further information be required. Thanks to every one who have supplied the books to build up our library for the Flights away.

Mike Heneghan

TASMANIAN DIVISION



Once again, not much to report from 'Tassy'.

Our last meeting was held in the 'Fifties and Over Club' at Ravenswood. You wouldn't believe it, there was no power supply, we could get in, but nothing was operating. So we had a quick meeting and then proceeded to the Country Club Casino for lunch. Our next meeting will be the AGM and members will be advised of the date.

On a sad note, our oldest member, Max Mackrill, passed away at the age of 82. Max served on the original HMAS *Albatross* seaplane carrier in the 1930s, passing to England for the delivery of HMAS *Adelaide* to Australia. He then saw service in several ships during WWII, later serving in Japan with the occupation forces. On completion of his service, he drove taxis in Launceston until his retirement.



KEN ALLEN AND THE LATE STAN MACKRILL

Another old stalwart at our functions, Wesley Lowe, the older brother of Bill Lowe ex-POAH has also passed away. Wes also served in HMAS *Adelaide* during WWII. Karen, Wes's daughter passed away not long ago.



Our Anzac Day parade was held in Launceston, the local members of the FAA marched with the South Launceston Branch of the Naval Association, yours truly carried the FAAA flag. All in all, a good day was had by all.

Matt 'Jake' Jacobs

VICTORIAN DIVISION



Attention on the flight deck!

Caught with my pants down, absent without leave at Oshkosh when the deadline passed me by unnoticed, to the chagrin of our esteemed Editor.

A glance in the letterbox revealed the usual vacuum of offerings for this column, so what else can I do but tell you what little I know of to tell.

Our annual dinner at Hastings on the evening of Saturday 24th August has attracted about one-third of our membership, yet promises to be the successful gathering it has proven to be in the past. We look forward to welcoming the Welcomes (pardon the pun) from New Zealand – Robert, from Henderson, Auckland, who recently joined our Division, and wife Marie.

Arrangements for the memorial service at St. Mark's chapel, HMAS *Cerberus* appeared in some disarray when correspondence relating to security arrangements temporarily 'went astray', but persistence overcame staff shortages and changes, and Nick Sparkes assures me that all is now in order.

No news is good news so they say, but it does give the impression I am, not doing a good job.

Meetings of Kindred Organisations and Unit Associations seem to have straightened out a few local contentious issues. Past enemies will NOT be allowed to march on Anzac Day; the march will not be shortened, unit groupings have been agreed upon and the rotation of order of units agreed to. We aim to retain the right to maintain our independence with one banner only at our head.

We look forward to having Alan and Beryl Clark amongst us again after an uncustomary absence due to health hiccups.

Oshkosh was a mind-boggling experience. A total of 21 P51 Mustangs attended, opening the first day by taxiing past in review. Shutting down in a herringbone park on the taxiway facing the crowd, supremely disciplined behind obstacle cones, the Master of Ceremonies broadcast details of the dedication of the 2002 Airshow to the courage of Ted Beamer. Accredited leader of the assault upon terrorists who were apparently intent on crashing their hijacked aircraft into the White House, his last overheard command "Let's Roll" became the theme for Oshkosh 2002.

Assembled attendants, national and international, joined together in shouting "Pilots, man your aircraft!" as private owners boarded their immaculate P-51s. An orchestrated countdown resulted in the precise ignition of all assembled Mustang engines, the Merlins erupting into a pulsating throb of reverberating power which permeated Witman field and raised 'goose pimples' on most enthusiasts.

Mass formations of 50 Harvards, 30 Mentors and Trojans, Mustangs, B-17s, B-25s, Corsairs, Sea Fury and Firefly to mention just a few, constantly overflew the airfield in opposite directions, some trailing smoke. The rumble of multitudes of various engines combined with the eerie wail of an air-raid siren as B-17s and B-25s at lower levels, accompanied by escorts of paired Mustangs, made dummy attacks on Witman field, the staccato of pyrotechnics simulating machine guns whilst enormous eruptions of walls of flame hundreds of feet high shot skyward. So intense, the blast, that a wave of heat assailed observers 300 metres distant, the total effect no doubt causing

many veterans to inwardly cringe at the reality of this Hollywood-like extravaganza, as only the Americans could produce.

If you have not been, and you are an aviation enthusiast, don't miss it! But make sure you take a Stetson and strong walking shoes! The temperature almost daily was 96 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees centigrade).

Oh! Congratulations to Terry Hetherington and others who helped restore the one attending, and flying Firefly, owned by a Delta Captain. Parts of the Firefly once perched on a pole at Griffith were used in the restoration. This aircraft, with light blue spinner a la 817 Squadron, was adorned with Royal Navy insignia on the fuselage (WH-518). It won the award for best post WWII aircraft at the show, and attracted a lot of admiring and quizzical attention especially during wing-folding demonstrations.

Sadly, Murray Douglas lost his battle with lung cancer. Whilst he was in palliative care at the Broadmeadows Health Centre I visited him quite regularly. He will be sorely missed.

Till the next time.

Carry on!

Geoff Litchfield.

[NOTE: With reference to Geoff's book, 'Fly Boy', following professional advice the RRP is \$36.00 plus GST. There is a 25% discount to FAA members. Packing and postage is \$7.15 within Australia. Ed]

A.C.T. DIVISION



Hi everyone - as you are aware I have taken over from Brian Treloar as ACT Division Secretary - and what big shoes I have to fill. I am sure that you all agree with me when I say a big thank you to Brian for all those years in the job. Please bear with me as I muddle through!

I was Captain's Secretary/Stenographer at HMAS ALBATROSS during the 1950's and worked with Captain Peter Fanshawe and then Captain VAT Smith, until July 1959. I have fond memories of a very busy naval air station during that time with all the squadrons working at full capacity.

My father was the Wardroom Mess Treasurer and we had wonderful times at various balls etc. I also ran the Brownie pack in married quarters and played the organ for church services in the gym hall each Sunday.

Since the last *Slipstream*, some of our members attended the get-together at Campbelltown and enjoyed catching up with old mates. A few drove up and stayed over, but our President, Brian Courtier, drove a mini bus up and returned the same day.

Some old members of 723 Squadron attended a great reunion in Nowra on 29 June and enjoyed a dinner dance at Worrigeer House on the Saturday night. Brian Courtier took a carload of paperbacks up with him for the embarked FAAA Squadron's library and I believe he only just had enough room for his luggage!

Things are pretty quiet in Canberra at the moment, but being the beautiful place that it is we can overlook the cold. So come on down, as they say, and join us anytime - we would make you very welcome.

Well, I hope this finds you all happy and in good health and I send my best wishes to you all.

Beryl Green - Secretary

NSW DIVISION



Due to the president being a bit off colour I find myself detailed off to cover his brief in this edition of *Slipstream*. Not being all that brilliant as a scribe, I will attempt to fill the space.

The social get together at Campbell town this year was not as good a turn out as was expected due to many reasons, not least of all medical complications that seemed to jump out of the woodwork.

From the Nowra area we started with about 40 and finished with 20 so we were well down on our commitment. Never the less, it was once again a chance for comrades to greet each other and as usual there were reunions that bridged a lot of years.

New members continue to arrive from these get-togethers and old friendships are renewed, this alone is a good reason to have them. Many thanks go to our Patron, John Goble, and the others who put in a lot of effort arranging the day out. Our thanks are also extended to the Campbelltown RSL for providing us with such a good venue.

We have found the need for a fitting sympathy / condolence card so in conjunction with John Downtown, who was kind enough to do a painting of a suitable subject for us, we have had two cards commercially produced.

One card depicts a vase of red roses, it has two inserts included (one a bereavement and the other a sympathy - get well message) which are contained with a ribbon - you use whichever is appropriate at the time.

The other card is a general-purpose card with a Fleet Air Arm background and depicts the *Melbourne* at flying stations with a Sea King in the foreground (this is also a painting by the same artist that was used on the cover of *Slipstream* a few editions back. This card was made because of quite a few requests for something of this nature that could be used for many occasions from greetings to Xmas. Both of the cards are encapsulated in a plastic cover to protect them and have included an envelope and the cost to any Fleet Air Arm personnel is \$2.50 each. We are not out to make a deal of money out of them rather to provide something that is recognised throughout our movement as a unique offering of comradeship.

The cards should be available from the secretary of all Divisions. Don't forget to include postage to cover return mail if you wish to purchase any of these.

The Annual Dinner for this year will be held in the same venue as last year (Bomaderry Bowling Club) on Friday the 11 th of October and will run on the same lines as last year - hot, seated, 3 course meal and \$1 drinks. Come along and have a convivial evening - the guest speaker is yet to be announced. Bookings for this can be made through the Secretary (written), or ring Greg Wise on (02) 44471602 or by email to gregwise@shoal.net.au

Our memorial rose garden at the museum has had a bit of a face-lift. Hopefully we have stopped the annual burst of westerlies depleting the ground cover and top dressing the playing fields nearby. A good distribution of crushed terra cotta has given it a lift in colour and should hold everything in place. A selection of new varieties of roses has been planted and it will ensure a pleasant greeting to the visitors attending the museum.

Anyone arriving in Nowra from the north will be greeted by an

empty pole as you come across the bridge where once sat the Iroquois helicopter. At present it has been removed because of the treatment handed out to it by local vandals and just where it will be repositioned is up in the air (literally). The pole will have to be altered and then, depending on the council, a new home for it is to be established. At present the helo is in residence at *Albatross* awaiting a decision, and probably some restoration, before being returned.

We will be conducting another raffle over the ensuing months and, as soon as our artist and committee decide on the offering, we will let everyone know the details. The prizes will probably be along the lines of last year. The mix of paintings covering Naval and 'civilian' themes were very well received by the members and the general public.

Greg Wise - Vice President

[When the helo was removed from the pole, the debris left behind by the 'visitors', indicated that it was being used as the local yokels' Mile-High Club. Ed]

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



Hello Australia! A warm welcome to all, particularly those that follow our Association's activities throughout the world.

We in the West are getting excited about our forthcoming Mini Reunion to be held November 1 to 4. There are quite a number of members from the East making their way across the Nullabour and we have arranged a variety of activities to suit all tastes, including a visit to Fleet Base West, the most modern Naval facility in the world. With the Two-Ocean policy now in effect, half of our Navy is based here.

The home of the Submarine Fleet and training facilities are open to Allied Forces, a good money earner for Australia. Fleet Base West is situated on Garden Island, a forty minute drive from Perth CBD. The Base is serviced by the nearby City of Rockingham, a vibrant city with a population of 70,000 and growing. It is a tourist paradise with shopping for the ladies Golf, Sailing and all Aquatic Sports.

The thousand acres Kings Park overlooking the City of Perth is must for tourists, as is the expansive Swan River. Kings Park is the site of our War Memorial and the Anzac Day Dawn Service. It is also home to the Botanical Gardens and, as the Wildflower season starts in October, our visiting shipmates will really have something to remember.

Another place not to be missed is the RAAF Aviation Museum. It is the most comprehensive Aviation Museum in Australia with Spitfires, Macchis, Lancaster Bomber and a host of early aircraft that contributed to our Aviation History.

Perth is the jewel for to tourists, a pristine city, great beaches and fourteen sailing clubs on the Swan River.

Fremantle is a thirty-minute drive from Perth and the Gateway to the West. It was also the home of the Americas Cup. It is a friendly place with the most complete group of 19th century buildings that have been restored to reflect the history of our State.

Following the last Anzac Day march a number of our members were very impressed with the caps worn by the

(Continued on page 28)

Vietnam Army Veterans who were positioned alongside us on the Esplanade. We made enquiries about their headgear with the Army Vets and, after a lively discussion at the Tattersalls Club following the march, it was decided to proceed with a design and production of a peaked cap that would enhance our appearance as a group at later marches and gatherings. Caps will be available at our next meeting.

This cap could be the 'Standard Cap' for the Fleet Air Arm, each tailored with the State Association Badge. See your Division Secretary for further information.

We in the West wish you all well and may your God be with you. Best Wishes.

John Green-

Unit 117 Prinsep road Attadale WA 6156

Phone (08) 9330 7386 - Mobile 0422 943 488

Email: johngreen@iprimus.com.au

WA Mini-Reunion Programme

Friday 01 November 2002

Registration commences at 1000 at the Rockingham Navalmen's Club (Nibbles/drinks and BBQ packs will be available at the club.)

Saturday 02 November 2002

River Cruise

Tour of HMAS *Stirling* Naval Base

Bus tour of Fremantle / Perth and Kings Park

Bowls (Venue to be determined)

Golf (Venue to be determined)

[For the above, the times are to be determined dependant upon numbers]

Bullcreek Aviation Museum

Swan Valley vineyards

1900 - Pre-Dinner drinks

1930 - Formal Reunion Dinner (Minimum dress Lounge suit

Miniature medals may be worn)

Sunday 03 November 2002

Bullcreek Aviation Museum

Church Service at HMAS *Stirling* Chapel

1230 Banyan at Rockingham RSL Club

Monday 04 November 2002

Free day for individual group gatherings.

The contact list for the reunion is as follows:

President - Bevan Daws

46 Berry Drive, MAIDA VALE WA 6057

Phone: (08) 9454 7228

Mobile: 0411 831 609

Secretary - Peter Welsh

42 Saddleback Circle, MAIDA VALE WA 6057

Phone: (08) 9454 6045

Fax: (08) 9225 2097

Email: pwelsh@eftel.com.au

Treasurer - Brian 'Jo' Jost

11 Wade Square, STRATTON WA 6056

Phone: (08) 9250 7441

Committee - John Green

Unit 1/7 Prinsep Road, ATTADALE WA 6156

Phone: (08) 9330 7386

Committee - Jack Suriano

PO Box 26, MAYLANDS WA 6051

Phone: (08) 9335 3566

Mobile: 0414 699 626

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



I am being drowned in paper. The old saying, 'you should not have joined if you can't take a joke' is becoming real once again. I am of the vintage that took time out to quickly examine 'daily orders' and then move into an uneducated world.

I am about to write an answer to Guy Griffiths that the SA lot does want to come under the Naval Association umbrella for future peace of mind. The Clarke report is also growing but we have decided to adopt a watch and wait policy.

However it was good to allow a wave of nostalgia engulf us as we read *Slipstream*. Most of the SA Division comment and wait for the next edition. It is very popular. I did some sentimental surfing especially when I was reminded by Fred Wessel of a rather fateful day ashore in Malta when 'Muscles' Vinen changed the furniture configuration. Fred and I tasted goat on that day. I have not touched it since.

Norman Lee also wrote that he was a good candidate for post traumatic shock treatment and quoted a few instances to bolster his claim. He forgot to mention the occasion when in a Firefly with me in the back seat he beat up one of the ships of the fleet after some vague exercise and came much closer to the superstructure than was normal. The *Slipstream* is our lifeline even though we are now on line with the Internet.

On the subject of the Internet! Paul Shiels submitted a report of progress to our last meeting and basically stated that to date those who have access to the various pages have been reluctant to insert items of news pertinent to their division. I have found the method of gaining entry simple and worth while and would encourage others to make use of the site. A reminder of the address is www.faaaa.asn.au and it is assured that this new innovation will be further developed and fine-tuned. Paul has advised me that there have been 12 on line applications to join the Association mainly in NSW and QLD. Two have applied in SA. I am sure there will be growth due to the web. I notice that the web site is on the agenda for the Federal Council Meeting in October so some decisions should emerge from that assemblage.

For some years (I do not know how many) The SA Division have planned to place a FAA plaque in the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital Chapel and I am pleased to announce that on Tuesday 23rd July 2002 at 1430 this actually happened. A plaque is now in place and suitably dedicated to all that have served in the RAN Fleet Air Arm from 1948. CMDR John Siebert (SA President) pledged the dedication and made special mention of those who served in Korea, The Malay Emergency, Indonesian Confrontation, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Timor, and the present war against Terrorism. The Reverend Peter Miller who is the Chaplain of Daw Park conducted the service. CPO Jack Kreig gave 'The

Ode of Remembrance' with much feeling and sincerity and CPO Musician Andrew Stapleton from the SA Navy Band rendered the Last Post and Reveille perfectly. It was a touching moment causing a few moist eyes. Tea and refreshments were taken after.

Many turned up including LTCDR Tracey McKeith, Deputy SNO of SA, and the State President of the RSL, Mr John Bailey OAM. I thought that CPO Grant Jesser looked most impressive in uniform and it puzzles me how people like him can still appear at the ready.



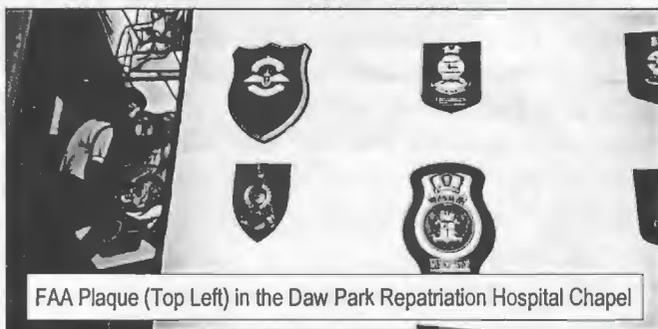
Jack Krieg - Andrew Stapleton and LTCDR Tracey McKeith



Ralph Cain - Grant Jesser (drinking his tot) and others



Roger Harrison and Henry Young, watching out for terrorists.



FAA Plaque (Top Left) in the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital Chapel

The tireless Jack Kreig represented us at the ceremony celebrating the cessation of hostilities in Korea on Sunday 29th, July 2002 and laid books that go to the children's hospital. In the past wreaths have been laid but the committee have decided to be more practical. Jack tells me that all retired to the RSL Sub-branch at Henley to enjoy drinks etc. Thank you Jack.

These days I am constantly preoccupied with the fearful thought of total knee replacement. Many have been involved with the process of reaching this point, but special thanks must go to John Berry, Dinsley and Junice Cooper and Jack Kreig. At long last we have completed the job.

Finally I wish to express thanks to those who supported Lee and myself at the sad loss of our daughter Mandy (aged 45) who had for the past 7 years fought a brave battle against breast cancer. We probably did not get around to formally thanking all and I take this opportunity to let all know that we did appreciate the kind support that was offered.

Barry Lord - Secretary

QUEENSLAND DIVISION



Sitting down to write seems easier than trying to play golf lately. However, it's been pleasant to be out in the 'winter' sunshine and frightening the 'roos with some erratic shots.

Things have been fairly quiet up here since the last newsletter. We had a good day at Chelmer Bowls Club on 21 July, though our attendance was down on the usual numbers. It was about 24C in the sun and Roy Hathaway had put plenty of table and chairs out for us and there was plenty of shade if needed. Roy cooked up a heap of onions on the BBQ for all to partake with their meals. Ray Murrell ran the raffle - Trevor Tite was away at a Christening - and did a great job. Bob McBride, who now lives near me, had donated a copy of Geoff Litchfield's book, 'Fly Boy', which was won by Ian (Junior) Henderson. Tad Fotek's wife won a nice pen and Garry Reid won a towel set. Many thanks for your donation, Bob. I'm looking forward to reading your book, Geoff.

Several of us had a go at lawn bowls, but Mick Blair took a while to realise that he wasn't ten-pin bowling and threw a few googlies at first. It was good fun and the cold beer afterward was enjoyed. Shirley Nielsen came with Ian and Florence Henderson and we were pleased to see her. 'Shorty' was in respite care for the weekend to give her a break. Shirley says that Frank is not real good, but holding on. Thanks, Roy for arranging the venue - It's pity there weren't more there.

Tad Fotek and Don Spencer are going to WA for the reunion, as is Gordon Walter. I reckon Bill Strahan will be over there too.

Earlier this year, we put a submission to the Revue Committee on behalf of our Division. They held a public meeting in Brisbane in June which Mick, myself, Rex Day and Royce Kimlin attended.. I had a call earlier to suggest that we might like to have a private meeting with them after lunch at the Vet. Affairs Office. Mick and I went along and met with two members of the Committee. We enjoyed an in-depth discussion with them over a whole range of matters and felt that something positive could come from them, at least in their recommendations to Government by November. Then it's up to the Government.

(Continued on page 30)

We're delighted to welcome new members, Peter Greig, David Casey and Rob Hingston and look forward to meeting them in the near future.

I was pleased to see Beryl Green coming onto the ACT Committee. Beryl phoned a couple of years ago but I was away and my brother took the phone number down incorrectly. I will be in contact soon, Beryl.

John and Ros Crawley were in Brisbane on the weekend of the 21st and came up for lunch with us, it was good to touch base with them again.

I thought the Viking Helmet and '29 July' tag on John Green's head looked better than the date stamped on my forehead!

[You can't please some people. How do you like the header this time? Ed]

Incidentally, I have a news flash for the readers:

'An American decided to write a book about famous churches around the world. For his first chapter he decided to write about Australian churches. So he bought a plane ticket and took a trip to Hobart, thinking that he would work his way across the country from South to North.

On his first day he was inside a church taking photographs when he noticed a golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign that read "\$10,000 per call". The writer, being intrigued, asked a priest who was strolling by what the telephone was used for. The priest replied that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 you could talk to God. The writer thanked the priest and went along his way.

The next stop was in Melbourne. There, at a very large cathedral, he saw the same golden telephone with the same sign under it. He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Hobart and he asked a nearby nun what its purpose was. She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 he could talk to God. "O.K., thank you," said the writer.

He then travelled to Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, and Alice Springs. In every church he saw the same golden telephone with the same "\$10,000 per call" sign under it.

The American, upon leaving Alice Springs saw a sign for Queensland and decided to see if Queenslanders had the same telephone.

He arrived in Brisbane, and again, there was the same golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read "10 cents per call." The writer was surprised so he asked the priest about the sign. "Father, I've travelled all over Australia and I've seen this same golden telephone in many churches. I'm told that it is a direct line to Heaven, but in every state the price was \$10,000 per call. Why is it so cheap here?"

The priest smiled and answered, "You're in Queensland now son, it's a local call."

That's it for now. Best regards to all.

Barry Lister - President

THE SENILITY PRAYER

God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

NEGATIVE PEOPLE

This is something to think about when negative people are doing their best to rain on your parade. So remember this the next time someone who knows nothing and cares less tries to make your life miserable...



A New York woman was at her hairdresser's on Park Avenue getting her hair styled prior to a trip to Rome with her boyfriend. She mentioned the trip to the hairdresser, who responded, "Rome?" Why would anyone want to go there? It's crowded and dirty and full of Italians. You're crazy to go to Rome. So, how are you getting there?"

"We're taking Continental," was the reply. "We got a great rate!"

"Continental?" exclaimed the hairdresser. "That's a terrible airline. Their planes are old, their flight attendants are ugly, and they're always late. So, where are you staying in Rome?"

"We'll be at this exclusive little place over on Rome's left bank called Teste..."

"Don't go any further. I know that place. Everybody thinks it's gonna be something special and exclusive, but it's really a dump, the worst hotel in the city! The rooms are small, the service is surly and they're overpriced. So, whatcha doing when you get there?"

"We're going to go to see the Vatican and we hope to see the Pope."

"That's rich," laughed the hairdresser. "You and a million other people trying to see him. He'll look the size of an ant. Boy, good luck on this lousy trip of yours. You're going to need it."

A month later, the woman again came in for a hairdo and the hairdresser asked her about her trip to Rome.

"It was wonderful," explained the woman, "not only were we on time in one of Continental's brand new planes, but it was overbooked and they bumped us up to first class.

The food and wine were wonderful, and I had a handsome 28-year-old steward who waited on me hand and foot. And the hotel - it was great! They'd just finished a \$5 million remodelling job and now it's a jewel, the finest hotel in the city. They, too, were overbooked, so they apologised and gave us their owner's suite at no extra charge!"

"Well," muttered the hairdresser, "that's all well and good, but I know you didn't get to see the Pope."

"Actually, we were quite lucky, because as we toured the Vatican, a Swiss Guard tapped me on the shoulder and explained that the Pope likes to meet some of the visitors and if I'd be so kind as to step into his private room and wait, the Pope would personally greet me." Sure enough, five minutes later, the Pope walked through the door and shook my hand! I knelt down and he spoke a few words to me."

"Oh, really...What'd he say?"

"He said, "Where'd you get that lousy hairdo?"



A Very Haunted Ship

A true story from a Texan contributor



Hello. Before you read this, I have to say that it is quite long, but there is a lot to tell here. I beg your patience. None of this is scary, just weird.

I was the first assistant to the curator for a Naval Museum that was on board a decommissioned Aircraft Carrier that had been turned into a tourist attraction/museum on the coast of Texas, USA. It was an artefact from WWII as the last operating Essex-class carrier, and was still used by the U.S. Navy as a training carrier until 1992.

During the war, it had many deaths due to a Kamikaze hit, and two torpedoes. It had some service in Korea also. There were also a few plane crashes on the flight deck during training exercises. Not only that, but as any seaman would know, ships are really dangerous craft in their own way, and many non-battle deaths occur even in peacetime from all sorts of accidents. And after a 50 year career of active duty, there is no telling how many people might have lost their lives aboard this ship. I was hired on several months before we even opened up to the public as a museum.

Anyway, I was never in the Navy, and had never been on a ship before I was employed there. This thing is amazing, 910' long on the flight deck, and 16 decks from the island to the holds at the bottom. Housed up to 2,500 personnel and had close to 1100 compartments of various forms throughout. A tribute to shipbuilding indeed for it's day. Now it is considered minuscule compared with the modern ones!

Although I have had very strange experiences in my life, I had never met a ghost before I got there.

A lot of very strange things were always happening to me and many others that worked there. It was a given among us that things like that happened. Unlike others, my job took me to all parts of the ship, and at all hours of the day and night. I was single, had nothing better to do, and just always stayed on the ship to escape the crummy place that I lived at on the beach. I was there way too much actually. But was allowed to do so, as I had a lot of duties and responsibilities there.

To preface some of this, I would like to tell you that on any naval ship that is static, in mothballs, and dead basically, there is NO wind below decks. Only ventilation from the internal systems, and we mostly did not have that for the first two years of operations. They definitely creak and groan from the expansion and contraction from the metal during day and night, but this does not adequately explain very many things.

A few of the things that happened to me:

The first strange thing that I noticed was that I dreamed of this place every single night for a year and a half. I remember my dreams well, and this ship was always in them, and I still get these crazy dreams about it from time to time.

12:00 noon on some Saturday, I was the ONLY employee anywhere below decks. I happened to be working in my office on the deck below the hangar deck (where they store the aircraft), and left to go down the passageway to the quarterdeck (our reception area kind of, and even with the hangar deck). Suddenly I hear a tremendous rattling, and finally noticed, after looking around, that what was happening was that a heavy sliding metal

door in front of me across the bulkhead, was slamming violently back and forth at a very high rate of speed. I stared in disbelief for several seconds, and then I said, "Hello?" It immediately stopped. I asked again "Hello?" Nothing!

This unnerved me a bit due to surprise, so I ran no more than 20 feet to the ladder to the quarterdeck and grabbed a DC guy (damage control, kind of like a security guard) and told him there was someone in this space and could he check it out?

I wasn't gone for more than one minute before I returned with him. He went down into this space (an old radio-control room that went down two decks and had only the one metal door) with his flashlight, and of course, no one was there. Neither could they have gone down the passageway to another ladder in that amount of time and not be seen. It was very strange. Everybody wanted to give me random drug testing after that day, but I got the last laugh when months later, all the sceptics started turning white as sheets and telling even stranger tales.

Another time I was told to bring down a table from the aft crew quarters to put in one of the Gun Galleries for an outside 'employee lounge' table. Since that half of the ship had not had power run to it yet, it was pitch-black where I was trying to get this table from. Well, everything on a ship is bolted down pretty much, and with the aid of a good flashlight, I am unbolting and disassembling this thing when I hear the familiar footsteps of someone in hard-heeled military shoes walking up the passageway right next to me.

I froze, and listened. What was really unusual, (and this happened all the time to us), was that whoever was walking, never broke their cadence when they reached the coaming of a hatch, but sounded just like they walked through it. A hatch is above the floor by about 18 inches, and you have to pause ever so slightly to step over the coaming (or sill I guess) on your way down the passageway. This person never did, and didn't have a flashlight, but walked a long ways down the passageway till the sound faded.

No one could have walked in absolute darkness like that for so long without running into something! On top of that, what was stunning to me, was the fact that the air moved from this person walking past the open hatch I was next to. I could feel it very well. Wave your hand in front of your face. Feel the air? It was just as if it was a physical person, but they never responded to my hellos, just walked in the dark without a flashlight, and did not step over the coamings.

This phenomenon happened quite frequently, I would be alone and hear someone with hard heeled shoes walk past the door, and of course, no one would be there, and every one above decks would deny that they even were down there. Plus, all of us wore soft soled tennis shoes to work as they were better on the slick steel floors on dewy days.

I had another witness to one of these incidents, and it scared her so bad that she would never again work after hours. We compared notes as neither of us believed ourselves. But this turned out to be more common than even I realised later.

(Continued on page 32)

The space that we made into an office for the accountant and had the photocopier and fax machine and was adjacent to my office. It also had several old, rolling military office chairs in it. Well, like clockwork, as soon as the accountant and her assistant left for the day, me and the woman across the hall could hear them creaking as if people were sitting down, and then getting up often, and rolling across the floor but with weight in them. It's a distinctive noise, and it happened too often to not mistake it.

I was never brave enough to walk in there while they were doing this, but they always did it after everyone had left. I worked many a Saturday and Sunday there and they would then do it in the daytime as well.

I was evicted from my horrible little apartment on the beach one day, and had no where else to go, and no money or time to get another place or a hotel room so I asked the assistant XO if I could live on the ship for awhile. He said sure! I put some things in storage somewhere, and they gave me the "Air Boss's" Cabin.

The air boss was the person who directed all the flight operations on the ship. Man, it was crude, but better than where I came from, and since it was only 30 feet away from my office I was never late for work! It was also a palace compared to the enlisted men's quarters, or even the Flight Lieutenants'. It had a bathroom with a shower and a decent bunk, and I had a pretty decent sleeping bag. I got along famously.

I didn't have cooking facilities, so I ate out on the beach, or cold food out of cans, but I got along well. All I did was work at whatever I needed to do during the day, wander around in the evening and then go to sleep in my cabin. I lived there for about three weeks until I could rent another place.

Remember that I was absolutely the only living person on board this huge aircraft carrier. At night we had a security guard on the quarterdeck which led to the pier, locked gates after hours and an electronic security system at the entry way, which was high-tech for the time.

This is the fun part!

Since the very first night I was there, I locked the door of my cabin and didn't come out until working time in the morning. It didn't bother me when I didn't live there, but now I had reason to wonder about things.

Once again, like clockwork, I would be woken in the wee hours of the morning to armoured hatches dropping from deep inside the ship somewhere. Next morning, none of the (overhead) hatches were closed anywhere on the ship, because I went everywhere that I knew of. These things weigh close to 800 lbs, or more in some cases, and winches are used to lift them. But they sure make a sound when they drop! That happened every night, and it would wake me up. The Security guards would never hear them so I guess that it was just me.

The other thing that would happen was that I would hear two men having a loud discussion just down the passageway every morning at about 4:10 am. Every morning! I could never understand them, but could definitely hear them. It didn't sound angry, just loud and animated. I wish I would have been brave enough to step out of the cabin to hear better, but I never did. I just went back to sleep when I could, and waited for the next night when the same thing would happen. Ha! I would always hear these indistinct voices a way off yelling something from somewhere, but never identified where from.

When I wasn't busy with something else, I would give assistance to the ship's mechanic/locksmith. I personally was

there when we put in screws on the backside of the doors to the captain's galley. He (the captain) didn't eat in the officer's mess, but had his own cook, and we secured this kitchen on the 02 or Gallery Deck very well with screws. We also disabled the lock as it was on the tour route and we didn't want people getting in there. I did the doors myself and it was well sealed from anyone!

Well, lo and behold, two weeks later we get a massive stream of water coming onto the hangar deck where they store all the aircraft below, and we trace it back to this galley. I had secured it so well that we had to kick in the door, only to find that a tap for a service sink had been opened up and ran over and flooded everything, and went to the lowest gravity point.

Well, it wasn't running when I sealed the doors, but when we got up there it took a pipe wrench to shut it off! Salt-water air tends to rust things, and after a few years of neglect this tap was corroded entirely. It would have been just as difficult to turn the handle 'on' as it was to turn it 'off' with a sturdy pipe-wrench! Or that's my opinion anyway.

So, there were many other things that happened to me for quite a while after I moved off of there and I got frustrated. So one night I went to 'D.C. Central' which is in the very bottom of the ship. It was like a very protected communications centre exactly mid-ship and at about 15th deck. I went down there one morning at about 1:00 am. I figured at the time that something would be hanging out around there as it was the nerve centre of the ship, and it's guardian place for communications. Anyway, I was all alone and spoke aloud to 'whatever' that I wished to be left alone and, although they were not malicious but only amusing, I still had other problems in my life at the time to contend with and would they please leave me alone?

Well, guess what? I was there for another full year, and never experienced another thing since. So, I truly believe they were both intelligent and courteous. I never did any harm to anything or anyone while I was there, and I think that they realised that and just wanted me to be aware of their presence. They were most kind really. I could have just dropped dead from fright had I experienced what some others did.

All that I have said here is honest and sincere. Thank you so much for reading.

[The aircraft carrier referred to in the above story is the USS Lexington. It is now known as the "USS Lexington Museum on the Bay" at Corpus Christi, Texas, USA. Ed]

Speeding Humor

A fellow bought a new Mercedes and was out on an interstate road for a nice evening drive.

The top was down, the breeze was blowing through his hair and he decided to speed her up. As the needle jumped up to 80mph he suddenly saw a flashing red and blue light behind him.

"There ain't no way they can catch a Mercedes," he thought to himself and sped up faster. The needle hit 90, 100 110 and finally 120 with the lights still behind him.

"What in hell am I doing?" he thought and pulled over.

The cop came up to him, took his license without a word and examined it and the car.

"I've had a tough shift and this is my last pull over. I don't feel like more paperwork so if you can give me an excuse for your driving that I haven't heard before you can go!"

"Last week my wife ran off with a cop," the man said, "and I was afraid you were trying to give her back!"

"Have a nice night", said the officer.

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY

With regards to the Gannet book; it is on track and I hope to have the full draft completed this year to be presented to the FAA Association. It is now in its fourth year and the time has come to 'bite the bullet' and have one last call for 'papers' from as many ex-Fairey Gannet 'birdies' as possible.

A simple recollection, experiences, humour, photo's, anything that may further enhance the history of the Fairey Gannet in RAN service would be appreciated. I am lacking information on the Gannet in service with 724 and 725 Squadrons, so if there is anyone who can help, it will fill in what is at present a very slim chapter. Another lean section is post 1966 to decommissioning in 1968.

I did want to include a chapter on the Sycamore plane guard helicopter, this will depend on what response I receive. It would certainly make a great addition to the book, especially stories from the aircrew, maintenance personnel and those involved with rescue operations.

To all those who have already contributed, a big thank you. Each one will be receiving in the near future a limited edition print of the painting depicting 'Toz' Dadswell's Gannet as displayed at the FAAA reunion at Campbelltown, (see above) the same applies for all new contributors.

Once again, I would like to stress that this is not a private venture. The finished book will be offered as a fund raiser for the FAAA, but more importantly, to record the service life of a sadly neglected chapter in the history of the Fleet Air Arm, especially that of the personnel involved.

Regarding photographs, please send copies or send originals by registered mail. They will be promptly scanned and returned within a few days also via registered mail.

Ben Patynowski - 16 Cowper St Fairy Meadow NSW 2519 - Ph (02) 42841801 - E-mail patynow@1earth.net



Ron Christie proudly displaying his Life Membership Certificate at the FAA Memorial at HMAS Cerberus.



'Very serious discussion'
L-R: Col McKenzie - Rob Earle - George Self and Les Profit.



Beryl and Alan Clark in camouflage

Top three photographs taken at the Victoria Division Memorial Service at HMAS Cerberus.



CAMPBELLTOWN GET-TOGETHER
Peter McLaren - Kevin Camm - Neville Cowgill



CAMPBELLTOWN GET-TOGETHER
Bill Callan and Bill Kerr



CAMPBELLTOWN GET-TOGETHER
Tony Horton - Charles Grose - Don McLaren

OBITUARY

Lieutenant-Commander Ken Pattisson, who has died aged 85, was the Swordfish pilot whose torpedo was believed to have fatally crippled the German pocket battleship *Bismarck*.

In the first attack, launched from the carrier *Ark Royal* on May 26 1940, Pattisson was mistakenly led down on the British cruiser *Sheffield*, which was shadowing *Bismarck*. But he recognised her silhouette and withheld his fire, unlike his 14 colleagues whose torpedoes fortunately detonated in the heavy seas before reaching her; when *Sheffield* saw the next attack of Swordfish arriving she calmly signaled that the enemy was 15 miles north.

After rearming with torpedoes, now equipped with impact detonators and set to run shallower, 810 Squadron was launched again in worsening weather. Climbing to 9,000 ft Pattisson lost contact in a snow squall with everyone but his leader, 'Feather' Godfrey-Faussett who led him into an attacking dive.

Shrapnel started to tear away the flimsy canvas covering his wooden airframe. Breaking through the cloud at 900 ft, Pattisson found himself alone as he saw *Bismarck* on his starboard side.

Although conscious that his lumbering 'stringbag' made an easy target for *Bismarck's* gunners as he flew straight and level towards her, Pattisson waited until he was 900 yards off and 90 ft above the waves before firing. He then started to jink wildly from side to side to put the Germans off their aim.

Later, he modestly admitted that it was 'highly probable' that his torpedo hit *Bismarck's* stern and jammed her rudders, though others, who saw a large column of water rise up on her starboard side right aft, were more certain.

Bismarck steered in circles throughout the night before the Home Fleet caught up with her. At dawn next day, 810 Squadron was launched again, but was told to hold off while *King George V* and *Rodney* pounded her. Pattisson then watched from the air as *Bismarck* capsized, leaving the heads of the survivors, he recalled, 'bobbing like turnips in a field'.

He was awarded a DSC for his part in the operation. A piece of shrapnel which had lodged in his aircraft became a prized souvenir; but while returning to Britain as a passenger in *Springbank* in Convoy HG73, he lost all his possessions when she was sunk by U-boats. Jumping from her on to the deck of the corvette *Jasmine*, Pattisson broke three ribs, though this was his only injury, bar one high landing, in 20 years' service.

Kenneth Stuart Pattisson was born in North London on December 12 1916, and educated at Newport Grammar School on the Isle of Wight before responding to an advertisement to join the Fleet Air Arm. As part of Force H, his squadron bombed Italy, which was out of range of RAF bombers, and escorted Mediterranean convoys. After *Ark Royal*, Pattisson flew in several training and trials squadrons.

As commanding officer of 815, based in Scotland, he once drove to where a Barracuda, which had suffered engine failure, had landed in a small field. After repair, he taxied to the end of the field, tied the tail of the aircraft to a tree, and told the local farmer to cut the ropes when the engine reached full throttle; he just cleared the hedge at the opposite side of the field.

Pattisson served in the carrier *Colossus* with the British Pacific Fleet in 1945. He was also commanding officer of his old squadron, now flying Fireflies in the carrier *Theseus*, during the Korean War when he was mentioned in dispatches. Later, several desk-bound jobs did not suit Pattisson, and he retired from the Navy in 1958.

Pattisson lived most of his life on the Hampshire and Dorset coasts, and his great passion was sailing. He taught his children to sail, one of whom, Rodney, became an Olympic gold medal winner.

After the Royal Navy, he took over his father's business in London, running exhibitions. He was Honorary Lifeboat Secretary in Poole, 1976-86, and an active member of the Royal Naval Sailing Association.

Pattisson, who died on July 13, married Margaret Collett in 1939. She predeceased him, and they had four children.

OBITUARY

Ian Gregory LARSEN
1947 – 2002



The family and friends of Ian 'Swede' Larsen wish to advise his fellow shipmates of his sudden and untimely death on the 17th of August, 2002.

Ian joined the RAN as an Aircraft Artificer at HMAS NIRIMBA in July 1963 and quickly became popular for his easygoing nature and cheery personality. Arriving at ALBATROSS in 1967 he quickly rose through the ranks gaining a reputation as a reliable, enthusiastic leader, who attracted strong loyalty from his subordinates and respect from all those he encountered in the workforce. At the same time his fame as a rugby player spread quickly throughout the RAN.

He experienced service on HMAS MELBOURNE through several deployments, with a highlight as the CAA on HS817 Squadron in the late 1970s.

Swede was 'commissioned' in 1979 and among his appointments served as HC723 AEO during 1982/3, overseeing hectic deployments in support of Bass Strait surveillance operations out of East Sale.

Swede represented at RAN and Australian Combined Services Rugby and he was a strong achiever as captain/coach of RANRU in 1981. He was highly successful as captain/coach in Shoalhaven Rugby in the early 1980s.

Ian left the RAN in 1984 returning to his native Bundaberg where he established a successful restaurant business and later created a building and construction enterprise in the area.

He will be long remembered for his honesty, integrity, unflinching loyalty to his family and friends and a wonderful sense of fun.

Ian is survived by wife, Jennifer, daughter, Peta and son Nathan.

VALE

Arthur 'Pop' KELSO

Arthur Kelso, who was an armourer who served in the fifties, sadly passed away in late June/July of this year. At 22 years of age, Arthur was 'significantly' older than his intake cohorts and was thus christened 'Pop'.

He only served one engagement, paid off, and like so many of that period disappeared over the radar horizons of 'birdy-land', only to reappear in odd circumstances quite recently.

'Pop' had been married but at the time of his passing was divorced and living alone.

GOODBYE TO A FORMER NAVY CHIEF**1940 - 2002**

The Royal Australian Navy is remembering the tremendous service and seamanship of former Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Rodney Graham Taylor, who died on Sunday, 01 September 2002.

VADM Taylor joined the RAN in 1954 as a Junior Entry Cadet Midshipman and graduated from the Royal Australian Naval College in 1957. He went on to serve both at home and abroad.

In addition to serving in a number of RAN ships, he also served in Her Majesty's Yacht BRITANNIA and later qualified as a sub-specialist navigator.

VADM Taylor saw active service in Vietnam and was mentioned in despatches during the first deployment of the guided missile destroyer, HMAS BRISBANE.

Other significant career highlights included service as Commanding Officer HMAS VAMPIRE (1979-80), Commander Third Australian Destroyer Squadron and Commanding Officer HMAS TORRENS (1983-85), Deputy Fleet Commander and Chief of Staff (1987-88), and the inaugural Commodore Flotillas (1989). In 1990 he was promoted to Rear Admiral and held the appointments of Assistant Chief of Defence Force - Operations (1990-91) and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (1991-94). RADM Taylor was made an Officer in the Order of Australia in 1992.

Promotion to the rank of Vice Admiral followed, along with appointment as Chief of Naval Staff in March 1994. VADM Taylor served in this role with great distinction. During his command, VADM Taylor oversaw considerable development and change in the Navy. In this time the first of the Anzac class frigates and Collins class submarines entered service.

Feeling strong commitment to Navy's people, he continuously stressed the importance of preserving Navy's values, tradition, ethos and professionalism during the defence efficiency review and the subsequent defence reform program. In February 1997, VADM Taylor's title became Chief of Navy.



In 1977, he joined HMAS MELBOURNE as OIC Air Engineering Department. He was posted to VF805 as Senior Air Engineer in 1978 and then as Senior Air Engineer of VC724 squadron in 1980. In 1982, he was posted to the HMAS ALBATROSS Air Training department as Course Implementation Officer.

'Baz' was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 1985 and posted to the Directorate of Navy Training. In 1987 he was posted back to Nowra as Senior Air Engineer Officer HS 817 squadron. The following year he was posted as Commander Engineering Production NAS NOWRA. He was posted to MHQ as Fleet Air Engineer officer in 1991. Retiring from the Navy in 1997 after 40 years of naval service.

He will always be remembered for his loyalty to his 'troops', his depth of knowledge and his courage when standing up for what he believed in.

OBITUARY**Peter GOLDRICK**

Peter, passed away on 2 August after a long illness and was buried at the Waverley Cemetery on 07 August 2002.

Peter was the only RAN aircrew flying from an RAN carrier to be wounded in action. Three 805 Squadron pilots were killed in Korea and Peter, of 808 Squadron, was wounded in his right arm by small arms ground fire while flying a Sea Fury.

Ironically, one of the first administrative measures that followed his wounding, later rescinded, was stoppage of flying pay.

REST IN PEACE**Murray DOUGLAS**

It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you that our old mate, Murray Douglas, slipped his moorings on 03 September 2002 after a long battle with emphysema and cancer.

It was a peaceful departure, having been in a coma for the past four days.

OBITUARY**LCDR Barry David GARRATT****1942 - 2002**

'Baz' Garratt served in the Royal Navy from 1958 to 1972. During this time he saw three years active service in the jungles of Borneo fighting the communist Indonesian forces. He spent three years on loan to the British Army in the Rhine Army Air Corps (Detmold Germany) and also served on 805, 727, 814, 815, 845 Squadrons and in HMS ALBION.

In 1973, Barry joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. In 1976, he was promoted to SBLT and posted to HMS MANADON and HMS DAEDELUS for promotion courses.





FAA ASSOCIATION STATE CONTACTS

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

President : CDRE A T Dadswell AM RAN (Rtd)
 21/1 Wilkins Street, MAWSON ACT 2607
 Phone/ Fax (02) 6286 2013
Secretary: Mr Mike Heneghan
 PO BOX 7115, NAVAL PO, NOWRA 2540
 Phone/Fax (02) 4441 2901
Or - 16 Ibis Place, SUSSEX INLET, NSW 2540
 Phone/Fax: (02) 44223979

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY DIVISION

President: Mr Brian Courtier
 61/15 John Cleland Close, FLOREY, ACT 2615
 Phone: (02) 6259 7736 - Mobile: 04 0816 6741
Secretary: Beryl Green
 PO BOX 3652, WESTON CREEK, ACT 2611
 Phone: (02) 6258 9891

WESTERN AUSTRALIA DIVISION

President:: Mr Bevan Daws
 46 Berry Drive, MAIDA VALE WA 6057
 Phone: (08) 9454 7228 - Mobile 0411 831 309
Secretary: Mr Peter Welsh
 42 Saddleback Circle - Maida Vale WA 6057
 Phone: H (08) 9454 6045 - W (08) 9411 7781
 Fax: W (08) 9411 2860
 Email: pwelsh@eftel.com

SOUTH AUSTRALIA DIVISION

President: CMDR John Siebert RAN
 PO BOX 177, MITCHAM, SA 5062
 Phone: (08) 8299 0445
Secretary: Mr Barry Lord
 65 Whitmore Square, ADELAIDE SA 5062
 Email: didiburr@optusnet.com.au

VICTORIA DIVISION

President: Mr Ron Christie
 15 Bianca Court, ROWVILLE VIC 3178
 Phone: (03) 9764 5542 - Fax: (03) 9755 5417
Secretary: Mr Geoff Litchfield
 9 Stringybark Road, ELTHAM SOUTH, VIC 3095
 Phone/Fax: (03) 9439 9736
 Email: geoff805@tpg.com.au

NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION

President: Mr Neville Newbold
 61 Queen Street, BERRY, NSW 2535
 Phone: (02) 4464 1734 Fax: (02) 4464 1593
Secretary: Mr Mike Heneghan
 PO BOX 28, NOWRA NSW 2541
 Phone/Fax: (02) 4441 2901

TASMANIA DIVISION

President: Mr John Nobes
 8 Elizabeth Street, SOMERSET, TASMANIA 7322
Secretary: Alan Andrews
 PO BOX 88 EXETERSTON, TASMANIA 7275

QUEENSLAND DIVISION

President: Mr Barry Lister
 3 Royal Close, Regatta Park, WURTULLA QLD 4575
 Phone: (07) 5493 4386
 E-mail: blister@caloundranet.com
Secretary: Mr Trevor Tite
 37 Miles Street, CABOOLTURE QLD 4510
 Phone: (07) 5499 3809

A blonde decides to try horseback riding, even though she has had no lessons or prior experience.



She mounts the horse, unassisted and the horse immediately springs into motion.

It gallops along at a steady and rhythmic pace, but the blonde begins to slip from the saddle.

In terror, she grabs for the horse's mane, but cannot seem to get a firm grip. She tries to throw her arms around the horse's neck, but she slides down the side of the horse anyway.

The horse gallops along, seemingly impervious to its slipping rider. Finally, giving up her frail grip, the blonde attempts to leap away from the horse and throw herself to safety.

Unfortunately, her foot has become entangled in the stirrup, she is now at the mercy of the horse's pounding hooves as her head is struck against the ground over and over.

As her head is battered against the ground, she is mere moments away from unconsciousness when to her great fortune.....

Frank, the Coles New World Manager, sees her and unplugs the horse.

One very astute old guy!

An elderly couple had been dating for some time and decided it was finally time to marry. Before the wedding, they had a long conversation regarding arrangements and so on. Finally the old man decided it was time to broach the subject of their physical relationship.

"How do you feel about sex?" he asked, rather hopefully.

"Well, I'd have to say I like it infrequently," she responded.

The old guy paused then he asked, "Was that one word or two?"

DISCLAIMER

Slipstream is published by The Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Incorporated. All rights reserved. Reproduction in part or whole is forbidden without the express permission of the Editor in writing.

All care will be taken with material but no responsibility is accepted or assumed by the publisher or editorial staff for loss or damage. The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Association or Committee of Management.

...

NEW WEB SITE

The FAAA of Australia web site is now on line at <http://www.faaaa.asn.au>

The webmaster, Paul Shiels, has requested constructive input from the members regarding the site. He can be contacted at: pshiels@bigpond.com or through the SA Division Secretary.

Member's E-mail Directory # 10

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

Ambrose Boulter

ktboulter@bigpond.com.au
 Fax/Tel (08) 8364 6227

Peter Barnes

(Change of address) ranfaa@primus.com.au

A LAST FAREWELL

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

Maximilliam Mackrill
 1920 - 2002

Wesley Lowe
 1923 - 2002

Barry David Garratt
 01 June 2002

Michael Thomas
 2002

Arthur 'Pop' Kelso
 2002

Norman Farquhar
 2002

Peter Goldrick
 02 August 2002

Ian Gregory Larsen
 17 August 2002

VADM Rodney Graham Taylor AO RAN Rtd
 01 September 2002

Murray Douglas
 03 September 2002

J
 10150.171

**SHELF
 CW2-C**