



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

Volume 14 Number 1

2003

Slipstream

Established HMAS Albatross 1957



'IMITATE THE ACTION OF THE TIGER' – 816 Squadron mascot checks the hardware
Photography by RANAS Photographic Section – Courtesy of the Royal Australian Navy



Published by the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Inc.
Print Post Approved — PP201494/00022

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FOREWORD

by

Captain Simon T Cullen RAN **Commanding Officer HMAS Albatross**

2002 was a very busy year for HMAS ALBATROSS and culminated in two significant events for the Base and the local community.

Extensive restoration of the Navy Graves section of Nowra General Cemetery was completed in November. Earth movements since the site was established in 1950 had caused considerable damage to gravestones. Paintwork had peeled from headstones and gravel pathways encroached onto the graves. The restoration work, which commenced in May 2002 included the replacement of the existing gravestones with polished granite headstones, cleaning and polishing of plaques, linking of gravestones with concrete supports and the installation of a pathway and turf. Chaplain Ted Brooker, RAN rededicated the Navy Graves site on 18 November.

December saw the return of the Iroquois 894 to its site at the gateway to the town of Nowra. The helicopter was removed from this site earlier in the year, having been severely damaged by vandals. Navy volunteers, some of whom were involved in undertaking the extensive restoration work, carried out the re-positioning of the helicopter. Both civilian and military personnel, based at HMAS Albatross, participated in the restoration effort. This Iroquois is a lasting reminder to those entering the town of Nowra of the long and proud association between Navy and the Shoalhaven community.

Navy personnel from HMAS ALBATROSS contributed to fire fighting efforts from November to February. Bushfires affected the Shoalhaven region from November to December, during which time airfield and refuelling services were provided in support of the fire fighters

The fire fighting services at HMAS ALBATROSS worked in conjunction with RFS crews to battle blazes in the Nowra Hill area and to put out spot fires on the base. Helicopters from 816, 723 and 817 Squadrons provided water bombing, fire spotting and transport support during the Shoalhaven, ACT and Victorian bushfires, and refuelling tankers were deployed to provide refuelling for civilian aircraft.

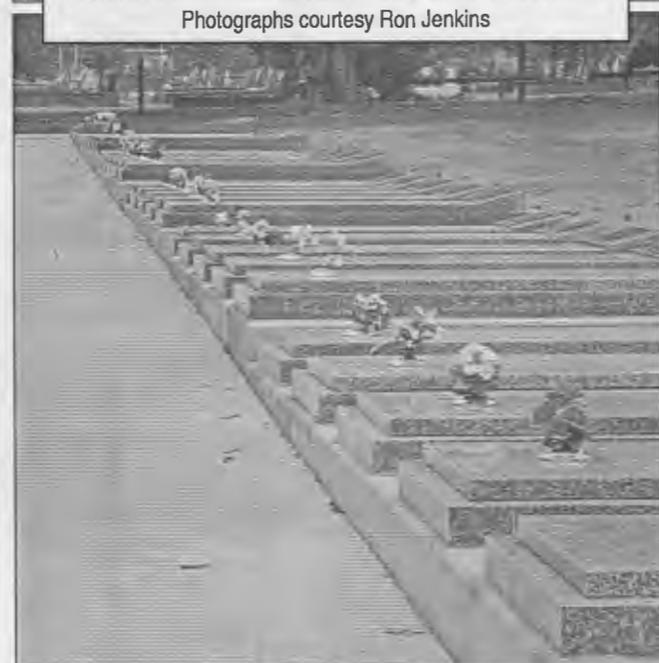
I have commenced my term as Commanding Officer of HMAS ALBATROSS and I am looking forward to maintaining the strong relationship that exists between ALBATROSS and the Fleet air Arm Association.

RS



NOWRA NAVAL CEMETERY - BEFORE AND AFTER

Photographs courtesy Ron Jenkins



IROQUOIS 894 BACK ON THE POLE - Photo courtesy Jim Hill

BIOGRAPHY

Captain Cullen was born in the United Kingdom in 1959. After migrating to Australia, he completed primary and secondary schooling in Western Australia.

Captain Cullen joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1977 as a Seaman Officer. After initial officer training both at sea and ashore, Captain Cullen gained his Primary Qualification in HMAS BRISBANE in 1979.



Captain Cullen's initial career postings were to HMA ships SWIPE, BOMBARD and PARRAMATTA. In 1984 he undertook a posting to HMAS STIRLING in Western Australia as the Assistant Operations Officer before commencing Warfare Officer training in the United Kingdom, specialising in Anti-Submarine Warfare.

On completion of his training, Captain Cullen returned to Australia to take up duties in HMAS SYDNEY. This was followed by a posting to HMAS WATSON in Sydney, as an Instructor on the Australian Warfare Officers course (following repatriation of the course to Australia from the United Kingdom).

Captain Cullen was selected to undertake an exchange posting with the Royal Navy in 1987, where he served in HM ships BRAZEN and PENELOPE and on the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training. Returning to Australia in 1990, he completed the Royal Australian Navy's Staff Course before undertaking a posting as a Staff Officer in the Warfare Branch of Navy Office in Canberra. This was followed by postings as Operations Officer to Commodore Flotilla's and Executive Officer of HMAS DERWENT.

On promotion to Commander in 1994, Captain Cullen was posted ashore to undertake duties as Commander Operations West at HMAS STIRLING. In 1987 Captain Cullen returned to Canberra as the Deputy Director of Sailors' Career Management.

Captain Cullen commanded HMAS SYDNEY from April 1999 until November 2000, during which time the ship played an active role supporting INTERFET in East Timor.

On completion of his posting to HMAS SYDNEY, Captain Cullen was promoted to his current rank and was posted to Canberra, where amongst other duties, he was the Director of Naval Communications. Captain Cullen assumed command of HMAS ALBATROSS in late December 2002.

Captain Cullen has a passion for watching cricket and rugby, enjoys bush walking, playing social sport and is an avid reader. Captain Cullen resides in North Nowra.

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EDITOR'S CORNER



The next edition of *Slipstream* will probably be my last as editor.

For over a year I have been in and out of the hangar in an endeavour to correct problems brought on by heavy landings and overloading to the airframe during my time in the Service. The result so far has resulted in a jury rig to support the Starboard oleo. The AEO has suggested that I need a break for some lengthy rehab. If another editor is not forthcoming, I may reconsider at a later date.

In closing, I must apologise to Norman Farquhar and his family, for including his name in the Last Farewell section two issues ago.

Be kind to each other.

Australia's Navy turns 102

The Australian Navy has reached another milestone as it celebrates its official birthday. It was formed 102 years ago on 1 March 1901 with the transfer at Federation of Naval Forces from the six independent States to the Federal Government. The title 'Royal' was not granted until 10 years later in July 1911.

Since its inception the Navy has served the people of Australia in peace and war with honour, integrity, loyalty and courage. These are the characteristics that its men and women continue to strive for 102 years later.

While a dynamic and often-changing organisation that is determined to represent the community it serves it has nevertheless maintained its strong traditions and values in a challenging world to become a naval force that is respected world-wide.



ANZAC DAY MARCH SYDNEY

Those members of the Association who will be participating in the Sydney Anzac Day activities are advised that due to the closure of the Hilton Hotel and Marble Bar, arrangements have been made for the HMAS MELBOURNE and FAA Associations to gather for refreshments and small eats at the VERANDAH HOTEL, 60 Castlereagh Street, after the march.

Entry can also be made from Elizabeth Street, opposite the NSW Leagues Club. For those attending the Dawn Service, bacon and egg roll breakfasts will be available at the Verandah Hotel after the service.

Marchers should rendezvous at the usual spot in Castlereagh Street by 0900.

NEXT DEADLINE - 23 JUNE 2003

**Dear Ed**

Frank Eyck, (Slipstream Vol 13 No 3) presents what I believe to be an irrefutable case for the acceptance of PTSD as 'a legitimate diagnosable disorder'. K W Camm and Robert Ray also raised valid points. They all seem to have failed to notice, however, that Norm Lee was referring not to PTSD arising from combat service, but was commenting on the awarding of compensation to people who merely witness non-operational traumatic events. As Frank Eyck points out, veterans claiming disability as a result of operational service are prevented by law from receiving lump sum compensation.

Further, the subject of compensation was not raised by Norm Lee, but by John Dacosta in the previous issue of *Slipstream*. John Dacosta seemed somewhat bemused that an ex-sailor who had witnessed a fatal aircraft accident in which he (John) was involved had received a large sum in compensation, while he himself had not. That remark must have 'struck a bell' with a lot of people, including me.

Apart from the well-known Sydney Harbour episode, I was involved in several rather traumatic incidents. I saw *Voyager* sink. I saw *Evans* sink. I was on the scene immediately after two fatal aircraft accidents. On one occasion after an engine failure in a (civil) helicopter I spent thirty minutes or more swimming among the white pointers in the Great Australian Bight. I was involved in several helicopter rescues, and a couple of very hazardous but failed rescue attempts. Failed rescue attempts are for more traumatic than successful ones. On one occasion after a mountain rescue the victim died in my aeroplane. I rescued some shipwrecked sailors from a beach on which two of their number had died. Rats had been eating the heads of the corpses. I'm sure that I too could collect a couple of million dollars from various authorities if only I was a drunk! But how would money help?

I would support Franck Eyck's argument that a particular experience will affect different people in different ways. For example, one fortunately fine calm morning I experienced an engine failure in a float-fitted helicopter, and put it down in the sea, about 20 miles offshore. My eight passengers, all oil industry technicians, and I were rescued by another float-fitted machine, which was able to land on the water nearby, enabling us to paddle over to it, with their baggage, in our own aircraft's life-rafts. Nobody even got their feet wet. We arrived back on shore just at lunchtime, and their employer took my passengers to lunch. The dollar rules in the oil industry - I was invited along to reassure them, and after lunch I flew them out to their oil platform destination in another aircraft of the same type, all but one that is. One man who had said not a word from the time of the incident refused to go, and resigned on the spot. Two or three others did not look very happy, but they went.

I am quite sure that there are many genuine cases of PTSD. Furthermore, as Rob Ray says, it is a very sensitive issue, and there are probably those who feel that they have a case who nevertheless make no claim because they do not wish to be regarded as bludgers, or do not wish to spend years in court attempting to prove that they are psychologically unstable. But at the same time, we live in an increasingly litigious society, and I suspect that there is a positive correlation between the incidence of PTSD among the witnesses to traumatic events and the availability of compensation for PTSD. After all, ambulance drivers and policemen who daily attend horrific accidents are not compensated. *Albert Riley*

Dear Ed

My wife and I passed through Broome in early August 2002 and came across Roger Colless, ex-AEO of 724 and 805 Squadrons in the 1970's, and who would be remembered by many of *Slipstream's* readers. Roger, and wife June, own and operate the hovercraft from the base close to the Deep Water Port area south of the city.

The unique capabilities of the hovercraft allow tourists to visit coastal sites inaccessible to other modes of transport, such as the wreckage of flying boats sunk by the Japanese in WWII and dinosaur footprints in rocks at a beach landing at Red Cliffs. Sunset flights include hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic cocktails on the beach. (Bring your own alcohol).

If anyone is planning a visit to Broome, consider taking a trip on the *Spirit of Broome* Hovercraft or enjoy the best cup of coffee in Broome in the base's coffee shop.

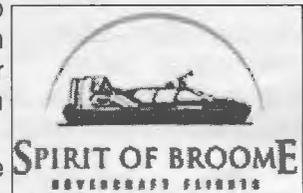
We certainly enjoyed the experience.

Roger can be contacted as follows:

Email: broomacv@wn.com.au

Website: <http://www.broomehovercraft.com>

John Selby

**Dear Ed**

I enjoyed reading the article by Terry Hetherington in 13(3)* and the subsequent letter by Nobby Clark in 13(4)* concerning the restoration of Fairey Firefly WB518 from the original components of both WB518 and WD828. The restoration is also nicely written up in *Flightpath* 14(2)* following its success at Oshkosh earlier in the year.

This aircraft is one I flew 20 times while Senior Pilot and Commanding Officer of 816 Squadron RAN in 1951-53. My flights in it were from RANAS Nowra, off the HMAS *Sydney* and off the HMAS *Vengeance* and they ranged from anti-submarine patrols, tactical reconnaissance and rocket-firing details to air displays featuring aerobatics and rocket-assisted take-offs.

The original aircraft was a Mark 6 and, unlike the restored version, it carried no cannons. Significantly in relation to the article by Terry Hetherington, although the numbering on the restored version is that of 817 Squadron, most of the aircraft's early operational career was with 816 (which, unlike 817, arrived in Korean waters too late to see action). Nonetheless, the restoration is clearly a magnificent one and I congratulate those who contributed to it.

Bill Herbert - LCDR RAN Rtd

* Hetherington, Terry, "The flight of the Phoenix", *Slipstream* 13(3): 16-17.

* Clarke, M.A. (Nobby), "Dear Ed.", *Slipstream* 13(4): 4.

* "Tale of Two Fireflies", *Flightpath*, 14(2): 10-12, November 2002-January 2003.

Dear Ed

If anyone knows the whereabouts of John 'Mitch' Miller, who went to live in United States after he paid off, please contact me on allsplitpin@hotmail.com or (07) 32638390.

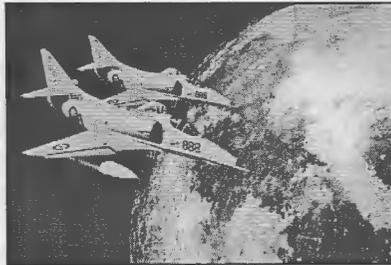
'Burrie' Arnell

Dear Ed

The Skyhawk was the obviously the most versatile aircraft in the RAN.

It's a wonder the Japanese lost the war, their FAA was obviously advanced as they could take off over the stern.

Pictures from the Motion Picture 'Pearl Harbour'.
Barry White



Dear Ed

A number of ex-RAN FAA personnel are attempting to compile a register of those involved with the Photographic Branch. We have an incomplete list from 1992 which has not been updated. I believe the Branch was formed in the late 1940's and, although small, at times had up to thirty officers and sailors in it.

During my time (1964-1973), sailors were selected for the Branch after spending a year as an 'Ord NA various' on the *Melbourne*. They then did their Basic Course at NAS Nowra and became Naval Airman (Phots) and part of the FAA. I understand that this system was altered, and that sailors 'change over' similar to the way the Regulating and PTI Branches were maintained in those times.

Photographic Officers, during this period, were usually Observers or SDAV.

We are seeking the assistance of FAAA Members and *Slipstream* readers to compile this register. I would appreciate being contacted at the addresses below by anyone who was a member, or associated with the Branch, or who knows anyone who was.

Once a comprehensive list has been compiled, we have a view to look at the possibility of arranging a reunion in late 2004.

Dean Gedling
Phone: 041101551 - Email: sicambre@optusnet.com.au
Postal: 79 Campbellfield Ave. Bradbury NSW 2560

Dear Ed

CAN THE FAAA MEMBERS HELP ME?

Background: A lady in Arbroath, Scotland, carried out some research for me and, during the passage of mail, she revealed that she had on an occasion attended the wedding of her close friend, Margaret McNiven, who married an Australian sailor (don't know if he was an officer or maintenance crew).

They were married in Friockhiem Church which is about 7 miles away from RNAS Condor in Arbroath. My contact hasn't seen her friend since that day and as a favour I would like to get them back together again. Do you know this person?

Dennis Charlton
Phone: (03) 9750 5245
Address: 8 Weigela Court, Frankston Vic. 3199
Email: dfcd@primus.com.au

Dear Ed

On parade with FriendsReunited.

Top reunion website FriendsReunited is going into action with a new service to get people back in touch with their old military comrades. The site carries listings of current military unit names and bases for army, navy and air force. Site members can add in the names of older units that may have been renamed, reorganised or amalgamated.

All you have to do is enter yourself against your own postings and check them for your old comrades.

More new facilities on FriendsReunited

Australia www.friendsreunited.com/au/ help people find their old civilian workmates and fellow members of clubs and sports teams. The Australian site has gained nearly 30,000 members in just a few months. FriendsReunited's original UK site has 8 million members including 150,000 Australians with English roots. FriendsReunited began with a basic service that has allowed millions of people to find their lost friends of childhood, school and university. But new ways to get back in touch are being added all the time.

The service often brings more than renewed friendship. Parents have found lost children, couples have got back together and finally married after anything up to 50 years.

Eddie Castellan - FriendsReunited Australia
<http://www.friendsreunited.com/au/>

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It's on again! The 2nd Annual Aircraft Handlers Reunion is to be held at the Prince Alfred Hotel, Brisbane Rd. Booval (near Ipswich, Qld.) on Saturday November 1, 2003 at 11.00am. The hotel has provided a room that holds at least 150, bar facilities and 'pokies' for those who wish to indulge, along with excellent food at very reasonable prices.
Booval is on the main railway line to Ipswich and the pub is only 400 metres from the station so you can leave your cars at home and have an extra ale or two. Please contact one of the following as soon as you can to advise of your intention to attend, this will enable catering arrangements to be made.
Glen Hartig (07) 3299 6336 - or email hgrc@primus.com.au
Doug Murray (07) 3281 3428 or Boxer Banks (07) 4123 6164
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Dear Ed

Every time I receive a copy of *Slipstream* I am amazed at the number of articles sent in by the early blokes of the Fleet Air Arm (Korea etc), and the lack of articles from around my era of 1960's, 70's and 80's or basically the end of the Sea Venom, Vampire, and Gannet and heralding in the new era of 'Wessex', 'Skyhawk' and 'Tracker'. The last part in the history of HMAS *Melbourne* (R21) and the fixed wing element of the Fleet Air Arm

I enlisted with the Navy in Brisbane, in May 1963, and joined other recruits for that dreaded economy class train trip from Brisbane to Melbourne, via the lay over in Sydney, to be met, after getting off the pussers bus at *Cerberus*, with those prophetic words 'you'll be sorree', by all the other recruits, hanging out of their cabin windows, who had already started their training.

HMAS *Cerberus*, the only place in the world I know where you can get four seasons in one day, and the fog can be still around 'till lunchtime'.

The new lingo 'scran', 'fighting gear', 'dhobeying', 'irish pendants', 'donga', 'stepping ashore', 'Johnnies' (Royal Naval House) and of course 'chooks' to name but a few. Recruit training was, to say the least, trying, for a young fella fresh out of school. Marching around all day doing parade drill, then with the old .303 doing rifle drill, we could never seem to do it right, no matter how hard we tried, but finally, we did and 'passed out'. Then - categorisation. Of course not all branches were in need of numbers so we had to take what was on offer, some, who had joined to be Mechanical Engineers, (misnomer for stokers), ended up being stewards or cooks (what a happy thought). Some were lucky, Kev Stevenson and myself were categorised for the Electrical Branch but the runs ashore took their toll and we found ourselves re-categorised to the Fleet Air Arm.

Kev ended up training as an Armourer and I ended up as Airframes/Engines.

I can still remember PO Butch Jenkins (of inter-service rifle fame), not understanding why the difference between bolts and washers with different markings was not on my agenda as one of the most important things to know, to me a bolt was a bolt etc.etc.

Sheer strength and dissimilar metal corrosion were not in any way related to aircraft servicing, to me, at that time, anyway. I finally learned enough to be 'passed' and was posted to 725 Squadron, to work on Wessex.

Shortly after this posting HMAS *Melbourne* had the collision with HMAS *Voyager* (Feb 1964) and I can still remember LS Col Callow running in to the Wet Canteen yelling for all squadron personnel to report for duty. For me, that night was a blur as the 'Wets' cleared and only us recruits were left to muse on what was happening and wishing that we could be involved somehow.

'J' hangar was where 725 and 817 Squadrons were billeted, (you couldn't get any further from the 'scran hall' - a good 10 to 15 minute walk), 817 packed in their 12 aircraft on one side of the hangar, blades folded, and 725 Squadron had their 6 aircraft, with blades spread, on the other side of the hangar.

It was probably the Navy's way of getting us used to the congestion of ship life for maintenance.

After spending some months training and working on 725, I was posted to 817, in other words, move toolbox from one side of the hangar to the other, with lashing attached. 'Curly' Adams, 'Pearl' Wilson, 'Slug' Wilson and others were posted off and we took their places for the 1965 Far East Cruise 'up top'. The stories 'Pearl' and 'Curly' told whetted the appetite for young blokes more

than ready to sample the 'delights' ashore up-top. The big day arrives when we are to 'post out' of *Albatross*, pack your kit bag, return bedding, return 'short leave' card to the guardhouse and get on the pusser's bus for the trip to Sydney. Embark HMAS *Melbourne* to 'post in', get bedding, 'short leave' card, anti-flash gear, respirator and be given your leaving ship, and emergency/collision stations. (*Voyager* was still prevalent in everyone's mind).

Nothing better than being new to a ship, getting there just after dark, after scran was over, and find yourself in '4 Sierra' section, with kit bag over shoulder looking for '4 Charlie' starboard mess. 'Bloody 'birdie' OD's', was heard, as we finally headed in the right direction through other mess decks). Stepping through hatchways, remembering to double dog or single dog or leave open the hatches as you proceeded through the ship. Finding out where your locker's located and then realising why your kit was folded the way it was. It was because there was no space for anything else, fortunately in those days you were only allowed to wear uniform ashore.

One also had to learn very quickly to listen to the 'piping system' as this is your only way of knowing what was going on throughout the ship at any one time. (*Albatross* had the 'piping system' throughout the depot, even in the hangars, it was still no excuse if you missed hearing being piped to the guardhouse just because you were on the flight line or there was an aircraft running up and you didn't hear the pipe). 'Crushers' never had a sense of fair play or humour.

I remember leaving the 'Wets' one night and marching up to the guardhouse with several other sailors with a birthday cake they had made to present to Leading Patrolman 'R' (a well liked walloper). I was assured that it contained the 'best' of ingredients for his consumption.

Those were the days of Doug Mossman. 'Nugget' Williams, 'Slim' Sutherland, Alfie Diver, 'Pop' Stark, Col Callow, Vince Nolan, Basil Sheather, 'Slack' Grattan, Brian Lambert, Nick Roberts, 'Kipper' Britten, Kev Doyle, Keith Staff, 'Skinhead' Kelson to name just a few.

I digress, memories, are made of this.

A couple of days alongside, sampling the well known delights of Kings Cross, the Bognor, Rockers, and Harry De Wheels before moving out to the buoy to ammunition ship and then depart for the trip up top, Procedure 'Alpha'.

The ship left Sydney harbour and proceeded to Jervis Bay to load the aircraft stores via helicopter from *Albatross* and then the fixed wing aircraft embarked. After the aircraft were embarked, we were on our way.

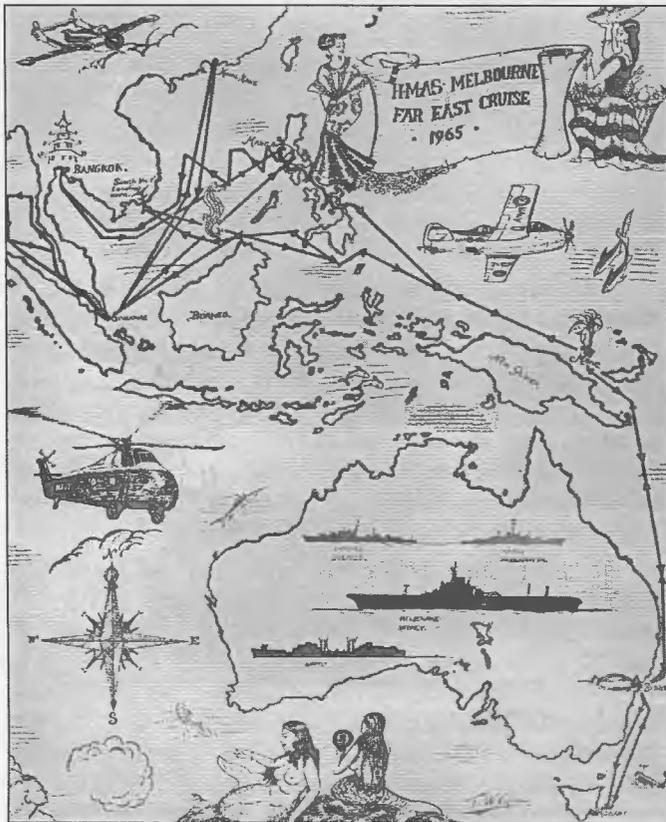
There were plenty of drills to keep us on our toes, such as, 'all hands to leaving ship stations', all hands to emergency stations, etc, etc. What fun it was trying to remember which ladders you go up or down or which deck you go forward or aft, all very necessary but confusing for a young fella.

Enclosed is the 'Far East Cruise 1965' trip sheet, that was drawn by AB (H) Tug Crichton, an aircraft handler, who sold this copy, black and white for a 'quid' and a coloured one for a 'fiver'. This was done in conjunction with the ship's photographic department. [See next page]

(We weren't told that Communist China was a significant threat to the peace and stability of the Indo China-Malay region where we were heading, and that the Far East Strategic Reserve was set up to defend this region, as well as countering the Communist terrorists active in Malaya at the time. Nor did we

know that there were Rules of Engagement for our ships in the event that the Communist Chinese attacked friendly shipping and we needed to respond. We were just sailors going where we were told, doing what we were told and that was that. - (From *Memories of 'Up Top'*, by Russ Ames, *The White Ensign*, Summer 2002.)

I often wondered why we had the Sea Venom parked in Fly One loaded with rockets etc.



Singapore, the delights of 'Boogie Street', 'Change Alley', The Coffee Stalls', the bars in Sembawang, Nee Soon and places in between, the only trouble was that a young fella never had enough money. How can a bloke have a good time and still buy 'rabbits'?

After the SEATO exercise had finished, we were taken ashore in the work boats for a 'banyan', on the rocky and coral covered shores of Lankawai island, (I think that is how you spell it), which is now a resort island of some note. How times have changed.

After we had spent some time playing games with the RAF 'Hunters' out of Singapore and exercising with the Brits during SEATO, we left the sunny shores of Malaysia and headed to Hong Kong, where we moored alongside the destroyer wharf for two weeks whilst Jenny's Side Party chipped and painted the ship.

Whilst alongside, we had underwater lighting strung around the ship, and one of the more pleasant (?) duties for the duty watch, was to patrol the flight deck looking for divers that may want to say hello, along the lines of Asama Bin Laden. Trying to walk around the deck with the Gannets and Venoms lashed down was a painful task. There were many tales of skin being removed and bruising whilst carrying out this task. Probably through inattention whilst looking with longing at the lights of Wanchai, Victoria and Kowloon and musing on the delights of being ashore.

The names of Keith Staff and 'Kipper' Britten spring to mind as they used to run a crown and anchor game in one of the bars, just for fun like, no profit intended!

For the more sedate there was always the China Fleet Club that ran Tombola and to watch the Chinese buying sheets, not just a couple of tickets, but a row, and they would whiz through the numbers and not miss a beat. The caller was quick but prefaced every number with words to the effect '5 and 9 the Brighton line', 'legs eleven', 'on its own number one' etc., so there was a bit of time if you knew the cadence.

Whilst at sea, the after café on the ship was the place where the Chief Writer ran the Tombola. (Bob Bryce, the Chief Writer, on the '65 trip, ended up running the dry canteen at *Albatross* as a civilian.)

During this period, I had someone take the following photograph of 'us' young naval airmen beside one of our Wessex. L-R: Frank Swinfield, Don Parkinson, Brian Simpson and 'Woofa' Walker, who was obviously not happy with Bruce Burns, the SU PO, when we were given some 'well liked' item of servicing to do.



It wasn't much fun doing external oils, with K48, in the hangar, after that days flying, once the forward and after lifts were up the hangar became a sauna and asking the flight deck party and the hangar party to put the safety fence up and have the lifts half down, for ventilation, was like trying to pull teeth.

Internal oils weren't much fun either using the old pump-up Rega sprayers filled with PX110. In this day and age I am sure Work Place Health and Safety would have us in fully self-contained breathing apparatus. We didn't know any better nor did our supervisors; even earmuffs were a luxury in those days.

Remember the old asbestos blankets we used to have to throw over the tailplanes of the Venoms and Vampires in case they had a 'wet' start, asbestos fibres can't hurt you, can they?

During that cruise we had 12 Wessex aircraft (817 Sqdn) on board along with 4 Sea Venoms (816 'B' flight) and 6 Fairey Gannets (816 Sqdn). What fun and games the Hangar Party had when stowing these aircraft in the hangar - and what fun and games we had tripping over the lashings whilst trying to get from 'A' hangar to 'C' hangar, it was easier to go out on to the weather decks to go forward or aft.

Timing, it was always about 'timing', or being on time or earlier. Some days if you were a little late to get to 'scrab' you would find that the end of the queue for lunch would be out on the weather decks. To get a brew at 'stand easy' you had to be quick to beat the 'dib dabs', all they seemed to do all day was practice the draw of their marlin spike from the tool belt and swan around the mess decks, splashing on or chipping paint, polishing brass or practice tying knots.

(Continued on page 8)

It was the same for the beer issue at 1900, you started lining up at 1830 or otherwise the queue would wind back through 4 deck for what seemed like forever. And then have to stand and watch the Chiefs and PO's swan down at 1900, jump the queue and take away their 'unopened' cans back to their mess, ah well RHIP I suppose. But when you've been standing in the queue since 1830, or before, and have to wait whilst the hierarchy are served, was just another thing to 'piss you off' about the Navy.

The forward café was for the beer issue where you were issued one can per man per day (perhaps), a good sized can though, 26 ounces either VB or Fosters for 2 bob (20 cents).

The only way you could get extra was to convince the non-drinkers to stand in line for you and so get their ration. (Not many people did that though ha-ha!)

I didn't know it at the time, but this US Navy Skyhawk [see photo], was the promise of a new era for the Fleet Air Arm and longer life for the HMAS *Melbourne* (R21). The pilot of this aircraft must have done at least half a dozen passes before attempting to land on, as he called it, "That postage stamp you guys call a flight deck". I am sure he would have had a story to tell about the catapult launch also, as the Americans were not used to such a short shot from the *Melbourne's* steam driven catapult.



This aircraft was from the USS *Bennington* but I am not sure what part of the trip that we took her on board, I would assume that we may have been somewhere off the Philippines as we did dock in Subic bay and anchored off Manila. (Work boats ashore again, lovely for blokes dressed in 7A's). Many a 'rig' was thrown overboard after a run ashore in Olongopo city, outside the gates of Subic Bay Naval base.

We were on our way home when we were told over the piping system that we were to meet up with HMAS *Sydney* and escort her, the first lot of Australian troops and vehicles, to Vietnam. Many a groan was heard from the 'Nowra Natives', but it didn't extend the trip too long and it was, after all, what we were being paid for.

After leaving HMAS *Sydney* in the capable hands of the Americans and their air cover off Vietnam, we headed home.

It is a wonderful sight, North and South Head bathed in sunlight as the ship broke through the fog off the heads that morning. Just enough time to see that sight before heading to the locker to get dressed in No. 2's, Procedure Alpha, into your home port. This happened a few times over the years, but the first time has left an indelible memory of those sunlit headlands of Sydney Harbour.

In 1966, I was posted back to 725 Squadron to work with the likes of 'Lofty' Blakemore and Neil Jefferson. I was working with these guys on the Wessex run-up base when the first RAAF Caribou tried to do a short field landing on runway 26. (This was before they extended the threshold some 200 metres to alleviate the 'downdraught' problems that were notorious when the westerlies were blowing). It was a short field landing alright, he never made it past the concrete apron of the runway, with the undercarriage spiralling through the air and, as a last gasp, the high tailplane gave a decided lurch towards the runway as if to say I give up.

That aircraft was cut up outside 'J' Hangar' and many a sailor came down to get some of the AVGAS to put in their cars. The young Flight Lieutenant who was piloting the aircraft at the time spent some time sitting up against the Stop Butts contemplating the rest of his career.

I still have a mental picture of 'Lofty' Blakemore running towards that aircraft with a 2lb CO2 extinguisher in hand, ready to fight any fire that may occur. Sailors are like that though, they act and then suffer the consequences. If the aircraft had caught fire, the AVGAS would have exploded and NO 2lb CO2 extinguisher would have had any effect. But as I say, sailors are like that, act first, think later, and then drown it under a few too many beers. NO counselling in those days, just get on with it as though nothing happened.

The same scenario occurred some years later when 816 Squadron (Trackers) were loading the port side PMBR with practice bombs between 'H' and 'J' hangars, John Trood had secured all, or so he thought, when one fell from the rack, exploded, and took a chunk out of John's lower leg. LS Armourer Jim 'ocker' O'Connor and myself were outside 'J' Hangar as this happened, he ran to attend to John and I went to run out the fire hose. In hindsight, what if the rest had fallen and taken him out too. I am sure John Trood was grateful for the assistance as he was in shock and losing a lot of blood.

The outcome of the investigation into that PMBR malfunction, is not known to me, I had known John Trood for some time prior to that incident and he was NOT one to make mistakes. All armourers were aware of the dire circumstances if you made a mistake when servicing ammunition or ammunition carriers.

Runway 26 also claimed the life of one of our Sea Venom pilots who came in too low and too slow and crashed and burned. Poor bastard, there was even a 'crash tender' on point duty but they were unable to put the fire out before the pilot perished. (There is a sadder tale to be told regarding this incident but it is better to let sleeping dogs lie.)

Brian Simpson

Dear Ed

Slipstream, Vol. 13, No. 4, (Christmas 2002 Edition), page 11 has a photo submitted by Claude Matthews showing the HMAS *Melbourne* Pay Office Writers 1962. In the centre row is an unidentified SBLT. He is in fact Peter Newcomb (with whom I became acquainted in Navy Office Canberra in the late 60's and who finished his naval career in the Supply Branch with the rank of Commander).

I forward this information for the benefit of Claude Matthews who may wish to fill in one of the blanks on his photo.

John Selby

Dear Ed

I am seeking assistance with photographs of RAN FAA stations to help complete my research into Nowra, Jervis Bay, and Schofields.

I was given a photocopy of an article detailing the history of Nowra from its original civil aerodrome to becoming HMAS *Albatross*, it appears to be from your publication, parts 1 & 2 January and April 1999. Could I please have permission to reproduce parts of (or all of) this piece within my web based history of the Mobile airfields of the Royal Navy?

As you will see by visiting my site (currently under reconstruction but still fully functional) I have carried out extensive research into the Australian airfields loaned to the RN during 1944-46 but I am still short of some key elements to complete a balanced picture for several airfields. I have no overhead airfield photos of Nowra, but plenty of Jervis Bay. Can you help?

I would also be most interested in hearing from any of the AFAAA who may have served with the units in my web site. Do you have anyone who may be willing to contribute photographs, memorabilia and their memories for inclusion in my project?

I do have a number of reminiscence pieces relating to Mobile Operational Naval Air Bases (MONABs) in Australia, but would like to acquire more, after all, every one had different experiences and remembers things differently.

Thank you.

Tony Drury, R.N. Air Historian, Brighton, UK

tonydrury@btinternet.com

<http://members.madasafish.com/~monabhistory/>

Dear Ed

I once heard that there are very few aircraft accidents and incidents – just the same old ones happening to different people in different places with different aircraft. It was therefore with a sense of déjà vu that I read of Bill Strahan's and John DaCosta's experiences with riveting dollies left in a aircraft by Hawker DeHavilland at Bankstown (Slipstream Vol 13 Nos 3 and 4).

In the mid 1970's as a Tracker pilot on 816 squadron we were working up prior to embarking on Melbourne. Toward the end of one of the numerous sessions of Field Carrier Landing Practice or FCLP (MADDLs / ADDLS to earlier generations), I sensed that the ailerons were heavier and less responsive than normal. They were not jammed but just binding slightly. After landing I placed the aircraft unserviceable for the ailerons. Subsequent investigation found (you guessed it) a riveting dolly left in the wing by HdH. This aircraft had at the time being doing arrests and cats on MELBOURNE.

I am just left to wonder if there was an individual at Bankstown who kept losing riveting dollies!!!

Owen Nicholls

Dear Ed

I enjoyed reading John Brown's article on pilot training with the USN and thought the readers might like to know how selection for Pilots course has changed. Whilst the RAAF conduct our "wings" course, as it has for a long period of time, the biggest change is how a person is selected to attend Pilot's course.

In the past, the RAN has competed with the other services for applicants. The services saw this as counter productive and established the ADFPSA (ADF Pilot Selection Agency) in January

2002. All pilot applicants, including in-service personnel, are selected for the Flight Screening Programme (FSP) from the ADFPSA.

The Flight Screening Programme is conducted by the ADF Basic Flying Training School (BFTS) at the BAE Systems training academy at Tamworth in Rural NSW. This course is NOT designed to teach aspiring pilots to fly, instead the two-week flying programme is there to assess the applicants suitability for further flying training. The course uses the CT4B and CAP10 aircraft and will see the applicants flying 10 flights (15 hours) plus two trips in an Instrument Flying simulator.



Photo: courtesy RAAF website

To ensure there is no bias toward people with previous flying training, the programme has two discrete categories; the Basic Programme for those with little or no experience and the Advanced Programme, that caters for those who have flown previously.

Each programme has predetermined score norms and scores are awarded on a per sequence basis for a number of sortie profiles and an applicant's final score is derived at the end of the FSP.

Pilot and Officer assessments are linked into one by an Officer Selection Board held on the last day of the FSP. Receive an unsuitable assessment from the FSP and you will not be able to apply again.

Applicants are asked to indicate their service preference. The successful applicant will be made an offer by a service, be it Army, RAN, RAAF based upon the Officer Selection Board recommendations.

This may not be the applicant's first preference and it will be up to them to accept, or to wait in the pool in the hope of receiving a 'first preference' offer.

After all that the aspiring Naval Aviator is off to Officer Training and then back to Tamworth to start Flying Training. If you have any relative applying for flying training, suggest a visit to www.defence.gov.au/raaf/psa/index.htm

Todd Glynn

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Dear Ed

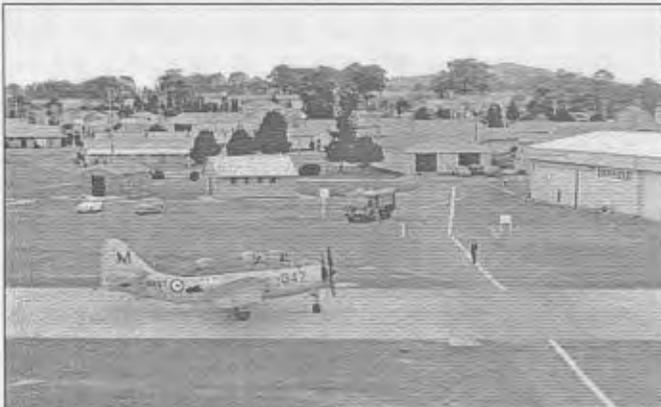
Please find attached a photograph of a Christmas Day 'get-together' in Cairns that you may like to use in *Slipstream*.



From left to right: Terry Ford (ex-Tracker Pilot), Graham Winterflood (ex-Skyhawk and Wessex Pilot), Paul Shiels (ex-Air Traffic Controller) and Larry Mills (ex-Tracker and HS748 Pilot).
Paul Shiels

Dear Ed

Further to our phone conversation, enclosed is the photo of the Gannet in question (ex-816) probably late 1966-67 judging by the style of the code number '847'.



Could anyone help with the significance of the BAT symbol on the horizontal stabiliser fin.

Ben Patynowski

[Replies to the editor please.]

Dear Ed

Enclosed is a letter I have sent to our Federal Member of Parliament regarding a matter that is causing some angst among the veteran community.

Jim Hill

Mrs Joanna Gash - Federal Member for Gilmore

Dear Mrs Gash,

With regard to our conversation on the Vietnam Veterans cruise on Saturday 30/12/02. I would like to bring to your attention what is a blatant disregard of our Naval and Australian heritage, the so called loan of the HMAS *Sydney* (the Aircraft carrier) anchor to RAAF Base Wagga

The 8 tonne anchor has sat at the entrance of the Naval Aviation Museum, now Australia's Museum of Flight (AMoF), since I and a group from the then sheet metal workshop mounted it on a stand in the late 70's.

It is the anchor from the 3rd HMAS *Sydney*, The aircraft carrier, and in my opinion it is an Australian historical treasure that must remain in the custody of the home of the Fleet Air Arm HMAS *Albatross*.

The historical importance of this artefact is that it was on a ship that served Australia in more significant events and conflicts than any other ship to date. Australia's first purpose built aircraft carrier was there for:

1. *The Korean War*
2. *The Nuclear Testing at Monte Bello*
3. *The Malayan Emergency*
4. *The Far East Strategic Reserve*
5. *The Vung Tau Ferry The ship that carried our diggers back and forth to Vietnam*
6. *Also it was the training ship that launched thousands of naval careers over its 25 years plus of service to Australia*

I don't know for sure what is left of the *Sydney* but I would expect that there is not much with our previous apathy to history. When I put the anchor on its stand all that time ago it had an unveiling by Admiral Robertson who was the instigating force behind the Naval Aviation Museum. I recall him saying words to the effect that the days of discarding our history had come to an end and that we had a duty to preserve our heritage for future generations

The anchor actually belongs to Spectacle Island Naval Museum in Sydney harbour. It was on permanent loan to HMAS *Albatross* and the Naval Aviation Museum. We as Vietnam Veterans would have wanted this anchor instead of the one from the HMAS *Melbourne* which now resides in Walsh park Bomaderry due to its significance with Vietnam and in fact its varied history. This was not acceptable at the time. It is amazing how the importance of things change when it does not suit a particular individual.

I also wonder why the timing of this move came to pass after the deadline for the Fleet Air Arm Association Newsletter, *Slipstream*. There is a lot of dissent with the AMoF from members of the association and the only voice that they have is through the newsletter.

I have been told that the *Sydney* anchor is headed for RAAF base Wagga Wagga. It will sit in front of the airman's mess the rationale being that it was a joint mess where sailors also frequent while training at Wagga. I can see that those sailors would like to set their mark but why the *Sydney* anchor when as you know there are many available and nowhere near as large and awkward as this 8 tonne monster. Is there a not so hidden agenda in all of this?

The *Sydney* anchor came to my attention when I saw it on the back of an Air Force truck I actually stopped the truck as part of my duties as an NSW RTA Inspector. The truck was incorrectly loaded. I directed the driver to a weighbridge then back to HMAS *Albatross* to correct the situation

I and others started to take an interest in the early 1970's, building the Australian Naval Aviation Museum from nothing but an old discarded aircraft on a slab of concrete the same size as

the Sydney's flight deck The concrete had been used as a skid pan for driver instruction and was covered in oil that we had to get rid of before we could do anything. It was a heck of a job.



Mrs Gash, I implore you to please ask what is going on at the AMoF, this is one of many items to be discarded from our naval heritage. If we slowly erode away our Navy history at Nowra and fill the Museum with insignificant general aviation light aircraft and foreign Mig's, where can anyone with an interest in Naval Aviation go to?

Can we get our anchor back?

Thank you for your time and concern.

Dear Ed

The enclosed prints came into my hands via an ex-RAAF friend at the retirement village where we now live. The original screed that came with them claimed that the aircraft were Seafires – I was able to put that right.

I am not aware of any similar incident occurring in the RAN, but it would be an easy mistake for eager pilots.

I thought that they may be of interest to anyone who flew or worked on or around Sea Furies.

The accompanying script is as it was handed to me.

Bryan Dunne

'FURY at SEA'

In 1951, a Dutch squadron of Sea Fury aircraft were practising deck landing and take-off with the British carrier HMS INDOMITABLE. One pilot attempting to land thought he'd missed the arrestor wire and gunned his motor to take-off again.

His plane HAD caught the wire! The Sea Fury's tail was ripped off and fell into the ocean.

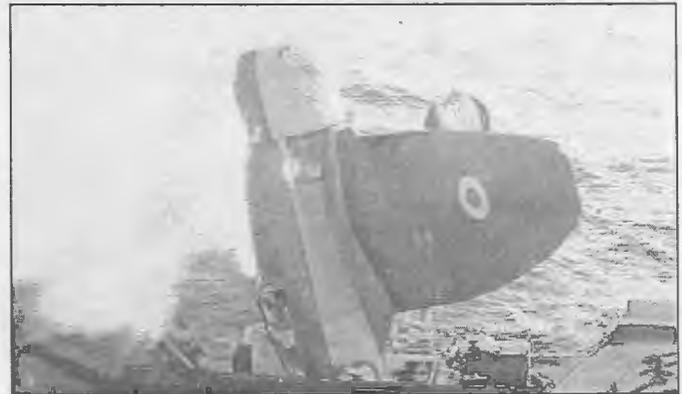
The aircraft's nose ploughed into the deck and it tipped to the left, rolling over and catching on the side of the carrier and then bursting into flames.

The fire crew rushed to put out the flames and rescue the pilot, but he had already freed himself from the cockpit and can be seen crawling along the fuselage.

What could have ended in tragedy was averted, the pilot saved, the aircraft lost and the carrier repaired.

Congratulations go to the photographer who captured this event.

The original photographs were supplied by Arch Furnidge, ex-RAN, from Western Australia.



The pictures in this column are taken from copies of copies of very old prints and cannot be improved for the printer. Ed.

Being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned. Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784)

Dear Ed

I have enclosed a couple of items sent to me by an old shipmate in England. We both joined the service in January 1946 at HMS Royal Arthur, Skegness (Butlin's Holiday Camp). The last time I saw him was in December of the same year when I was drafted to HMS Theseus, the flagship of Rear Admiral Creasey (Pacific Fleet).

After not hearing of him for 54 years, we have since been in touch and for the last two years have corresponded monthly. Apparently he was drafted to Malta RNAS.

I came to Australia on Theseus when she did the Pacific tour with HM Ships Glory, Cockade and Contest. I believe that this tour was a sales promotion for the purchase of HMA Ships Sydney and Melbourne to the Royal Australian Navy.

Gordon Cansdale



FAA MEMORIAL - LONDON
Armistice Day 2002



The reverse of this National Fleet Arm Memorial base is inscribed:
'To the everlasting memory of all the men and women from the United Nations and British Commonwealth and the Allied Nations who have given their lives whilst serving with the Royal Naval Air Service and Fleet Air Arm.'

Dear Ed

The last Slipstream seeks details on a photograph of Wessex 823 being lifted from the water. The following information is taken from the 'Melbourne 1977 Spithead Cruise' book and provide the major details of the accident.

Bruce Hamilton



'A Wessex helicopter, 827, from HS 817 Squadron, embarked in HMAS MELBOURNE, ditched into the North Atlantic Ocean, east of the Faroe Islands, on July 13.

At the time of the accident the aircraft was hovering near the carrier, acting as SAR helicopter for the launch of Skyhawk fighter bombers in 'EXERCISE HIGHWOOD'.

The crew of three, pilot LEUT Phil Pinniger, air crewman POA Bob Cousins and SAR diver ABATA Richard Stanford, all of Nowra, were rescued uninjured from the water by HMAS BRISBANE, which was at the scene.

Once in the water the flotation bags attached to the wheels inflated.

In the fresh wind and moderate seas, the aircraft rolled over but remained suspended by the flotation bags, just below the surface.

MELBOURNE's diving team led by LCDR Ian Wegener, was quickly in the water and attached lines to the submerged helicopter which was lifted onto the flightdeck by the ship's crane. The extensively damaged helicopter was examined by engineers onboard the carrier and their findings will be presented to a Board of Inquiry to be convened to establish the cause of the accident.

On completion of the salvage operations, MELBOURNE and BRISBANE rejoined other forces taking part in 'EXERCISE HIGHWOOD'.

Dear Ed

I would like to request, through Slipstream, information regarding memorials to the three services. If any members have such a memorial in their area, would they please tell me about it, especially if the services they represent are depicted by military hardware.

As a member of the Far North District branch of the RSL, I brought to the attention of those present that the Army had a 25lb gun on display at the cenotaph in Anzac Park, but the other two services had nothing. It was resolved that an anchor and a propeller be sourced and placed alongside the gun.



FAR NORTH DISTRICT RSL MEMBERS AT THE LOCAL CENOTAPH
'Roger' Raddatz far left - Errol Willes ex-RAAF far right
The proposed memorial will be at the side of the cenotaph.

I have spoken to our area councillor regarding permission to erect these extra memorials, he very kindly offered to fund the project to the sum of \$10,000 from the local area fund. This amount should enable us to place the memorials and plaques etc. and erect a cover over them.

If any of you old shipmates can help me with the suggestions, photos or plans to help to bring this project to fruition, it would be very much appreciated. Ideas for a suitable inscription for the main plaque is also required.

'Roger' Raddatz - PO Box 329, BABINDA QLD 4861

Dear Ed

There are lessons that you learn in life, this particular one from Colombo (Sri Lanka) in 1955 when Ron Cole (Front) and myself decided to ride an elephant.

The lesson? 'Don't ride elephants when you're wearing Number six suits!'

PS: I bet that elephant couldn't lift us now!

Alan O Hill



Dear Ed

Having moved back to the coast after living in Canberra for the past 12 years, I was having my 'post draft' cleanup. (You never clean up prior to moving just in case you throw out something you may need in your new abode). Anyway I came across an old box of photos and other memorabilia, so I thought I would share some of the photos with you and your readers.

Below is the 'Waller 65' intake of 'Birdies', April 1959.



Rear L-R: Tom Kliver, Mick Carr, Lyn Ferguson, Jan Schonveld
Centre: 'Jessie' James, 'Pedro' Fenwick, Bill Barlow, Rod Venning
Front: Col Poulton, 'Tex' Cridge, Don MacIntosh, 'Kipper' Britton, ..Cooper

The photo of the Gannet with the 'ornamental' prop blades is of a wheels-up landing in 1964, but I don't know any details.

I have also enclosed a photo of L-R: Cal Paine, John Salthouse and 'Alky' Annan posing in front of Sycamore 849.



It was with much sadness that I read of the passing of Gordon McPhee. He was my Commanding Officer when I was first drafted to 723 Squadron from SAME in late 1959, he was a good CO and a really nice person.

Bill Barlow

A letter to Mike Heneghan - FAAA National Secretary...

Hi Mike, Just a short note, sorry I didn't get a chance to stop over and have a cuppa with you during my last time at home. My orders to return to work crept up on me, so here I am back in the Indonesian area shifting cargoes mainly of IFO & IDF (Fuel oil & diesel) to power stations around the island of Java.

Trade is very quiet here now, container traffic in/out of the country greatly reduced, this is also exacerbated by the Longshoreman strikes in the US and the general downturn of the worldwide economies.

One of my great pastimes, whilst onboard, is to take the time to read the back issues of *Slipstream*. I have overdosed myself on Issues: 1-3 (2002), they are most fulfilling and a credit to all the contributors.

The initiative taken by the Executive in preparing the Christmas hampers and distribution of paperbacks to the embarked Flights is a truly forward step. This I believe will encourage the current serving population to input their stories back into *Slipstream*, when time and security constraints permit.

I was proud to see the article '816 Squadron - RAN 2001 In Retrospect' by CMDR Andrew Whittaker (CO 816 Sqdn) it shows us all just how professional and efficient our Service personnel remain. It is also good to see that recognition of their efforts have been acknowledged by the Prime Minister of Australia and Defence Helicopter's Magazine award for International Helicopter Squadron of the Year 2001.

Geoff Gain

Master M T TANDJUNG AYU

Dear Ed

For many years I carried around with me a couple of shoeboxes with photographs in them. Over the years, many moves, fire and flood, and the two boxes became one until there were very few photos left.

Having just finished yet another relocation, I found that the enclosed photos are the only ones that are identifiable – so, I thought that it was about time to send them in and get them printed in *Slipstream*.

I have tried, where possible, to put names to faces, but I'm afraid after almost forty years the memory is much dimmed. Perhaps the readers can fill in the blanks.

Brian Levett – ex-LEM AC

[Brian, you don't know how reassuring it is to know that there are other people out there who have trouble remembering things. Ed]



RAF SELETAR - SINGAPORE 1961
L-R: Phil Wright - Brian Levett - Gavin Greer



HMAS MELBOURNE - 1961
L - R: Geoff Sharrock - Leon 'Chooks' Cleary - Gavin Greer



HMAS MELBOURNE - 1961
Arthur Rowe



AIR DEPARTMENT PARTY - NEPTUNE BAR - HONG KONG 1965
Rear L-R: Fred Rubly - Brian Levett - ? - ? - Greenfield - Steve Roper - Gavin Greer - Bill Hilzinger - Fred Lewis - Lionel Leggat - Barry Bird - ?
Centre: Eddie Lamb - Danny Hanigan - Bill Sonsee (obscured) - ? - ? - Barry Sunderland - Blundell - Ken Prior - Des Carroll
Front: ? - Bill Shaw - Ron Melville - Col Payne - Bill Davies - Rick Forbes



816 SQDN PARTY - KOWLOON BAR - KOWLOON 1966
Rear: Brian Cheers - ? - Nick - O G Hughes - Tiny McLean (at rear) - Jack Cutler - ? - ? - Lionel Leggat - Brian Levett
Front: ? - ? - Keith Doncon - Barry Sunderland - ? - Blundell - ? - Charlie Fisher - Dave Thomas



BANYAN LANKAW - 1965
L - R: ? - Bill Davies - ? - Barry Sunderland (back to camera) - Harry Harkness - Brian Sargeson - ? - Peter Clark

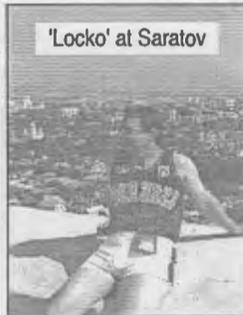
NOTICE: Any ex-Aircraft Handlers that are not receiving the NEW Aircraft Handlers newsletter, but would like to receive a copy and be placed on the mailing list, contact, Glen Hartig, 8 Valerie Close, Edens Landing, Queensland 4207 - or contact him by email at: bgrc@iprimus.com.au

Dear Ed

Just wondered if you think *Slipstream* readers would be interested in some tales of day to day life and traumas from an ex-FAA member living and studying in 'hostile enemy territory'.

There are so many stories about the way the locals keep me entertained (and often frustrated) on a daily basis.

Ian Lockett (Wolfman)



NO LONGER A MYSTERIOUS COUNTRY

With our Naval backgrounds many of us have had the opportunity to travel far and wide and experience what life is like in 'strange foreign land' – and most of us have come back with the realisation that there is no place like home.

For most of us, Russia was a country on the 'other side' and was never visited by our ships, raising thoughts of, "I wonder what it is really like?" Now having lived and studied here for almost two years (with three to go) I can pass on some answers to those questions.

Away from the sham facades of Ulitsa Tverskaya, and Nevsky Prospect (the main streets of Moscow and Saint Petersburg) and the Kremlin, most Russian cities (I have visited fourteen) are a conglomeration of decaying old soviet style concrete monoliths, interspersed with some beautiful old architectural masterpieces and some 'attempts' at trying to catch up with the west.

Daily life in Russia is putting up with lies, laziness, incompetence, theft, alcoholism on a grand scale, filth and just plain 'nonsense' – particularly in the retail and service industries. I will write some more about the nonsense at another time (would fill a couple of computer CD's with examples) and if you haven't been here and experienced it first hand, you could be excused for thinking 'this is a lot of bull - it could not be that bad'. Travelling in the new 'free and open' Russia is not as easy as one would expect, bearing in mind it is a super power, has put people into space and just recently has been admitted into the G7 - booking tickets (within Russia) is a nightmare - for Russians and foreigners alike. It involves waiting in long queues (I waited for 3 hours on one occasion to buy train tickets to Samara - and was then told I couldn't book the return, but to try when I arrived in Samara - this is despite the country being on a computerised booking system).

Staff at booking offices are quite often rude and if you cannot speak the language they will definitely not try and help you. I stood alongside a woman who tried (unsuccessfully) to buy a domestic plane ticket. She was greeted by a face full of abuse from behind the counter demanding the flight number and told the unfortunate woman to go away and not to bother her until she had all the correct details. The 'seller' was just too lazy to look the details up on her computer. On another occasion at the main booking office in the station at Ekaterinburg, the window was open for business but no cashier - we waited for approximately half an hour and then I suggested to my partner that she ask at the administration as to what's happening. As it was, the cashier returned, *drunk* - it was her birthday, she served us and two others from the queue and then she disappeared WITH the administrator to drink some more!

I rang the railway 'information service' to get details of trains - the woman said that she cannot do this - use a computer yourself. Well, having a computer, I managed to track down all the relevant information but, when going to buy the tickets the woman cashier said, "Where did you get this outdated information?" I told her I'd tracked it down by computer as advised by the information service. She then informed me that the computers hadn't been updated for over a year and most of the information was wrong. She did, however, sell me the required tickets. There is no such thing as 'phone bookings' here.

The queuing system - there are approximately 20 'windows' in Ekaterinburg station in the booking hall and each window has an individual queue. No system whereby the next free operator calls the waiting client. If you are caught in a slow line - it's your problem! Then, as is quite often the case wherever one queues here, not just at stations - post offices, shops - everywhere, it may be the time for lunch so the cashier will simply pull down the shutter and walk out. They also have a tea break and an unusual third break called a 'technical break'. DON'T try and ask for any service during such times if the attendant is still there - you will automatically get a face full of abuse. Your patience will also be tested by the 'old babushkas' who seem to think they have a God given right to barge their way to the front of the queues and take offence when are told by people (such as yours truly) to wait their turn. The cashiers don't tell them to go the back - they just serve whoever is first at the window.

Trains - Russia is a huge country with a vast network of railway lines all over the country and it is in only in some of the very isolated areas of the far north and east that one cannot access by rail. A big plus for the rail system is that the trains have a good record of arriving on time. They might not be running to schedule at points in between, but with the timetables having so much scope for delays etc. they do arrive on time. With the country being so big and the trains running at only 'moderate' (approx 70kms per hour) it often takes days to travel between destinations. Depending on the service, for example, ten days from Moscow to Vladivostok in the far east, three days from Ekaterinburg (in the Urals) to Simferopol in the Crimea, five or six days from Moscow to Irkutsk near Lake Baikal. The trains are NOT comfortable, with three classes of travel. Despite having to spend such long periods on the trains, showers are non-existent. First class or 'Lux' is a cabin exactly the same size as a second class cabin with only two berths instead of four (upper bunks have been removed). You must pay the attendant extra for your sheets and pillowcase and threadbare towel. This price varies from train to train and staff to staff - even though it is EXACTLY the same article - a package from the railway linen service. Second class is the four- berth cabin. Third class is an open area partitioned into six berth sections but not cabins as such - and believe me it *stinks* - I've travelled only once in this section for a four and a half hour trip and that was enough thank-you! At the end of each carriage there are small toilets with a hand-basin - the only washing facility on board, so it means get up early in the mornings and 'first in best dressed'. Often the 'friendly' conductor locks one of the toilets for personal use.

When booking travel, you have no choice as to who your travel companions will be - male or female - there is no such differentiation here in Russia - you just take pot luck. The same goes with the errrrr....well.. cleanliness (or lack of it), state of sobriety, stench etc. of your travelling companions.

(Continued on page 16)



On some of the longer trips, I will leave it to your imagination as to what condition they will be in - joining a train halfway along its journey when the other passengers in your cabin have already spent three days without a shower (some not even a wash) in a non air-conditioned compartment.

On one trip from Moscow to Tallin (Estonia), I travelled Lux and I thought, "You bewdy - no other person in my compartment - peace!" Unfortunately not so, around midnight a very obese female staff member in a state of sobriety of at least two bottles of vodka, reeking of tobacco and garlic, simply barged in and said she will be using the cabin for herself - end of story. Absolutely nothing I could do about it as she was staff. The border passport and custom's officers were well aware of this particular woman as they said, "We don't worry about her", when it came to checking documents etc - she just continued her drunken loud snoring. So much for Lux travel. I do believe that there (maybe) some long distance trains running from Peking to Moscow, which may have 'showers' - but I am not sure. Like our long distance trains in Australia these Russian ones also have a dining car. BUT, there is a HUGE difference in standard of service and menu when compared with even our worst ones in Australia. Many have 'Non-Smoking' signs on display - but that must be just for the passengers' benefit as it is 'open slather' if you are staff.

A menu is available - albeit not a great range of choice - probably arranged to suit the limited ability of the cook. Prices are two and three times what is charged in cafes on the streets. When the waiter (normally one rather large, boisterous and rude late middle aged woman) decides she will come and serve, on many occasions what is written on the menus is not available and you must eat what the cook has decided or felt like preparing for that day. Meals are not included in the price of your ticket.

When asking for the bill - CHECK IT! Any way they can they will make 'mistakes' and add in what was not ordered and overcharge - not just on trains, but the restaurant trade here is notorious for these 'mistakes' despite everyone having a calculator. Computerised electronic tills here are a rarity - but are slowly making their way into supermarkets etc. Most bills (called 'shots') are hand written. A common trick on the trains is that they will charge for sachets of sauce, mustard, mayonnaise etc - even though not ordered - a small basket will be provided with these condiments in it. The passenger is charged regardless, and what is not used will be sold (again and again) to the next passengers. Only after a heated discussion with one particular 'senior waitress' did she remove the cost of these items. It is this substandard service, overcharging, and limited menu, which sees most passengers bring on their own food. This gives the restaurant and kitchen staff an easy trip - they don't want to work, so the less passengers who eat in the dining car the better. They will still receive their pay at the end of the fortnight regardless of how many meals they provide. Unfortunately, for the foreigners who may be travelling in a cabin with Russians who are 'self caterers', the smells on occasions are not what we are accustomed to. It is forbidden to take your own food into the dining car.

I have not painted a very glossy picture of train travel in Russia, but that's the way it is. I'm not trying to entice people into travelling in another country without being forewarned. It is because of the experiences I have had on the trains that I decided to 'Cruise the Volga' on a river boat rather than another extended train trip around the country as I did with fellow 'ex-birdie' (Phil Beck) last winter. Compared with trains - a much better and more comfortable means of travel. Will write about that in a later edition.

Dear Ed

It was said in the 1950s that the best way to get a draft to sea was either to buy a car or get married.

The first car I had was a Morris 8/40 with twin claxon horns. The second car, which I had in my courting days, was a Vanguard Estate car with the registration ADM 027. My girlfriend's younger siblings used to say, "Here comes Albatross Dumb Mechanic 027".

The girlfriend's parents had come out from England with Cortaulds. They lived on the top of Waroonga Street at Raymond Terrace. When leaving their house, I used to let the Vanguard roll down the hill very quietly so that her parents wouldn't know what time I left.

In those days my girlfriend used to keep a long hatpin on the car seat - just in case I got over amorous.

In September 1957, Margaret and I got engaged and almost immediately I was drafted to the *Melbourne* for a Capital City Cruise with 817 Squadron and their Fairey Gannets.

In January of the following year we were married. I went away the same month aboard *Melbourne* for a Pacific Cruise and didn't return until six months later.

I joined the Australian Customs Service at Newcastle in late December of 1958, and stayed with them for 35 years, retiring 8 years ago.

All best wishes to Ray Murrell, Mick Blair, Charlie Morris and all members of the FAA Association.

Kevin Frances Foot

Voyages to Vietnam

Many of you have seen Stephen Lewis' book "My Vietnam. A photographic celebration of Australians in Vietnam". He is now putting together "Voyages to Vietnam". Photographs by Australian Naval and Military Veterans of the Vietnam Conflict' and invites contributions of slides, photographs and any other memorabilia for consideration of inclusion in the sister volume of "My Vietnam".

Items sought are those which show the daily routines of those who served in the 19 naval vessels that made the Vietnam trips, plus the clearance divers, members of the helicopter flight, those who loaded the vessels in Australia and the many other personnel who contributed to our naval involvement in Vietnam.

Contributions will be received until 1 September 2003, and it is anticipated that the book will be available by late 2003. If you can help, or know of someone who can, Stephen can be contacted at 135 Gilles Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, 08 8232 3404, stewel@diebureauxom.au.

Directorate of Honours and Awards

I have been advised that the Directorate of Honours and Awards will be relocating from the Russell Offices to the Tuggeranong Churches Centre on 21 February 2003.

This will mean that Headquarters, Policy and three of the four Medals sections will finally be co-located.

The Army Medals section will move up from Melbourne later this year. Ed.

'History is full of people who out of fear, or ignorance, or lust for power have destroyed knowledge of immeasurable value which truly belongs to us all. We must not let it happen again.' *Carl Sagan, 1988*

ADEQUACY OF FLEET AIR ARM KOREAN DISPLAY IN THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CHALLENGED

By Norman Lee

Visitors to the Australian War Memorial's Bradbury Hall are welcomed at the entrance by the following statement " This gallery looks at the impact of air power and its development - from the piston-engine aircraft of the Second World War to the jets and helicopters of Korea 1942 -53". A somewhat hazy photographic display at the entrance depicts several Brewster Buffalos, a Beaufort bomber, an unidentifiable aircraft, and a Mk I Firefly being 'batted on' to a carrier. These are all aircraft from WWII, none of which, apart from the MK I Firefly operating from HMS Triumph, took part in the Korean War.

On entering the gallery most will be awed by the sight of a magnificently restored Sea Fury FB II in a display which inter alia, endeavours to set out the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Air Arm's participation in the Korean War some fifty years ago. Three squadrons were embarked in the light fleet carrier HMAS Sydney as part of Australia's contribution to the UN's resistance to the aggression of the communist North when it invaded South Korea in 1950.

The combined air group known as the "Sydney Carrier Air Group" consisted of two Sea Fury squadrons and one Firefly squadron. All three squadrons took part in interdiction of the North's transport structure, with the Fireflies being tasked with bombing all the rail and road bridges in the area of operations. Unfortunately, the display cards in the gallery covering each aircraft's role are more to do with their peacetime activities than what they were tasked to do in Korea. This is regrettable, as the Korean conflict was the only occasion in which the RAN FAA was involved in a war, operating in its true role from an aircraft carrier. This is particularly so in the case of the Firefly in which the display cards place more emphasis on the aircraft's peacetime ASW role rather than bombing bridges.

817 squadron that was selected to go to Korea, normally flew the MKVI version of the Firefly which was essentially an anti-submarine aircraft not armed with cannon. It was therefore necessary to take some of its sister squadron's (816 squadron) Mk V's to work-up at Nowra before the ship sailed for Korean waters. The squadron was subsequently fully equipped with Royal Navy MK V's on arrival at the Kure naval base in Japan.

Regrettably there are very few examples of the Firefly extant and hence reliance has had to be placed on photographs. However as pointed out, the AWM has chosen to display a photograph of a Mark I Firefly being 'batted on' at the entrance to the Hall not, as might be expected, a Mark V version of the aircraft.

While the average visitor to the memorial might not pick up the fact that the Firefly mark displayed is not the one flown by RAN crews, aviation buffs know, and the accompanying photographs clearly show, there are considerable differences between the two, the main being a chest mounted radiator in the MK I, whereas the MK V has its radiators mounted in the wing roots. Other differences are rounded wing tips in the MK I, square in the MK V, and a much more curved fin and rudder in the latter aircraft. The spinner is blunter in the older aircraft which had a three-bladed wooden airscrew, and it had a flatter canopy. Although as already mentioned, some might not note the differences, the point is that 817 squadron flew the MK V not the MK I.



Mk I Prototype



Mk V

Australian Visitors to the AWM might reasonably expect to see examples of aircraft flown by Australian crews on display, rather than those of some other country. The ill-fated Buffalo and the successful Beaufort Bomber were certainly flown by Australians, why then is the AWM displaying a 'foreign' aircraft, rather than an aircraft flown by Australian crews? One might wonder what the reaction of the RAAF might have been if a photograph of a MK III Mustang had carelessly been included in the display of 77 Squadron's activities in Korea?

The matter was first drawn to the attention of the War Memorial, together with a list of errors in the display cards relating to the squadron commanders, and other matters, shortly after the Hall was opened. A slow protracted process has since seen most of the errors corrected (except for the Air Group Commander's decorations), but the curatorial staff have dug their heels in over the matter of the photograph at the entrance.

Unfortunately in correspondence to the curatorial staff it was mentioned that some RAN aircrew had trained on the MK I Firefly in the UK. In reply it was stated that the MK I Firefly was deliberately chosen for that very reason!

In view of the errors in the display cards, it would stretch the credulity of the average person to believe that the curatorial staff carried out deep research to establish the fact that RAN FAA aircrew trained on this particular aircraft; they might as well have chosen the Seafire, or Barracuda.

A cynic might suggest that someone on the curatorial staff was told to pick a photograph of a Firefly out of the archives, and lacking aircraft recognition skills, chose the MK I 'landing on' because it was a good 'action' picture.

A further justification put forward by the AWM for not replacing the subject photo is that the AWM archives have no photographs of the MK V as flown by 817 squadron in Korea. However a photograph of a MK V aircraft of 817 wearing 'invasion stripes' about to land on HMAS Sydney during the Korean War was recently unearthed from the FAA archives at Nowra, and supplied to the AWM. Nevertheless, despite all the effort that has been expended in tracking down the subject photograph, the AWM has refused to change the entrance display. Perhaps the real reason, apart from curatorial intransigence is that it could prove expensive to alter it.

The surviving aircrew of 817 squadron are angered at the War Memorial's attitude and believe it is an insult to their service in Korea; this is particularly so since there is only one photograph of a Firefly in the Bradbury Hall itself, whereas there are five of the Sea Fury, plus the actual aircraft.

Finally, apart from the wish to see an historically correct display of the FAA's operational service in Korea, I have to admit to a vested interest in seeing this matter corrected as I was a young Firefly pilot in 817 squadron during its deployment in Korea.

I would also like to invite members to contact the War Memorial to express their views on the matter.



MOMENTS IN TIME



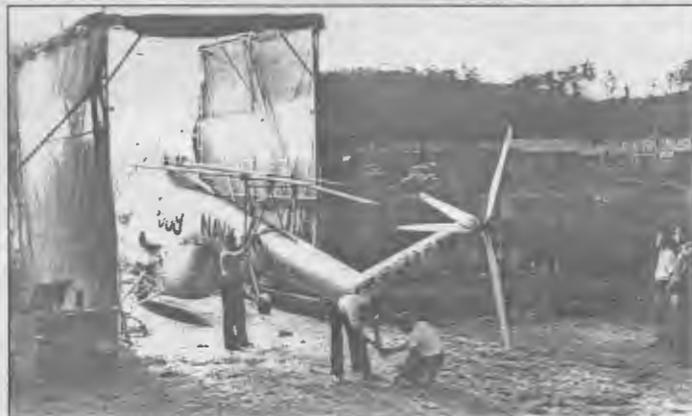
FIREFLY WB 506 - INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PRANG IS BEING SOUGHT. CAN YOU HELP?



805 SQDN UNOFFICIAL CREST
Produced during Bob Hawke's period as PM. Story?



1954 / 55 - 20mm GUN SHOP RANAS NOWRA
NAM(O)s L-R: Kevin Pools and Rex Baker
Photo courtesy Kevin Parks



Photograph above:
1955 - SYCAMORE AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE - ADELAIDE
The three Sycamore photographs to the right were taken during a deployment in Tasmania. Do you have the full story?
These photographs courtesy AMoF

The fleet's in . . . with Rigby



1955 - The Captain's barge was lowered from one of our carriers and motored up the Swan River where it promptly ran aground. Courtesy Kevin Parks

"May I say just how relieved we all are to have the pride of the fleet in these submarine infested waters?"



2003 NOWRA - 'HUEY' HOISTING SUPERVISORS
 L-R: Jim Hill - Greg Morris - Garry Holoway - Rob McNeal
 -'Rummy' Searle - Warren Spinks and Geoff Pratt
 Preparing to put the Huey back on its pole after refurbishment.
Photo courtesy Jim Hill



2003 - SLOW DAY IN THE GULF
With thanks to Michael Sandberg



1954 - PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION HMAS SYDNEY
 L-R: Kevin Pavlich - George Watts - 'Taffy' Roberts and Les Proffitt
Photograph courtesy Kevin Pavlich



1950s - TYPICAL SCENE OF 'BIRDIES' DRAFT OUT AT FND

AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT

by Mark Clayton – Museum Director

The news of CDRE Rob Partington's tragic death late last year was received with stunned disbelief by everyone associated with the museum. CDRE Partington's commitment to the Museum Foundation and its museum was unswerving, well pre-dating his appointment as a Foundation Director in February 1997.

As CO NAS (1990-1993) he was instrumental – and effective in securing Navy and corporate support for the fledgling Museum Foundation. Widely respected and liked, he was as much at home in the Boardroom as he was, working alongside other volunteers on the workshop floor.

CDRE Rob Partington has bequeathed us many fond memories and, with the Museum at HMAS Albatross we have a legacy that will endure as a fitting testament to man, his commitment, and his passion for flying.

As foreshadowed in the last *Slipstream*, Wessex N7-221 was suspended from the ceiling of the museum hangar in December, complete with partially deployed sonar. N7-221 joins the National Maritime Museum's N7-216 as the country's only suspended Wessex although the latter, we've since learned, is earmarked to come down some time this year for maintenance and repositioning.



N7-221 SUSPENDED - Blades tips yet to be supported by guy wires

Although it never flew, a replica of Hargrave's 1894 Glider has also been suspended near the entrance to the main hangar where it will serve as the starting point for our new thematic displays.

Two homebuilt aircraft were also added to the museum's temporary static lineup around Christmas. These include Viking Dragonfly VH-JRJ (formerly displayed at Wangaratta's Airworld) and MY-20 Minicab VH-ANK, the latter being a 1949 French design.



1949 Minicab VH-ANK that is to be used by our lessee, Aerospace Training Services as a ground-running training aid.

Another recent arrival has been Mig-17F VH-ALG belonging to Sydney businessman Hockey Treloar, who already has a Mig-15 displayed here at the Museum. The type was used operationally in Vietnam and VH-ALG is the only Mig-17 ever to fly in Australia. Both aircraft were restored to flying condition and have been made available to the Foundation as long-term loans. And while we're on the subject of Migs we can report that we've finally been able to find a covered home for our 'spare' Lim-2 (Polish built Mig-15) which departed here late last year bound for Adelaide's Classic Jets Fighter Museum which has accepted it as a loan.



The Museum's Mig-17F photographed at Bankstown in the 1990s, prior to being restored. Photo courtesy R. Willis' Collection

Much effort is being focused now on preparing the Lockheed 10 *Ansertes* for repositioning near the entrance to the main hangar. We intend moving the Lockheed – the full length of the hangar – sideways on castoring trolleys. Before we can do this we firstly have to remove the upright supports for the overhead mezzanine walkway – and about half our display aircraft - before then collapsing the main undercarriage (using the aircraft's onboard electrical retraction system). Everything then has to be reinstalled which gives some insight, perhaps, to the huge planning and logistical effort that still confronts us.

A parallel effort to ready the Macchi, Grunau, Heron and Skyhawk for suspension has continued with most work centering around the resolution of engineering (i.e. liability) related issues.



Ex- RAN JINDIVIK
Recently suspended

Accompanying Sidney Cotton's Lockheed 12 when it arrived here last year was a dismantled P&W R-985 engine which, thanks to our volunteer, Rick Barnes, is now ready for installation.



The Lockheed 12 that was owned and operated by Sidney Cotton's company, Aeronautical and Industrial Corporation, and which is now awaiting reassembly before being displayed at the Museum of Flight. Australian, Sidney Cotton, served with the RANAS during WW1 and subsequently commanded Britain's Secret Intelligence Service during WW11. G-AGWN later served in Australia as BHP's first corporate aircraft (A J Jackson Collection)

The Foundation had planned to hold a two-day Centenary of Flight Airshow at HMAS *Albatross* on April 26-27 however, as we've been unable to secure sufficient ADF input we've decided to return to the usual one-day (i.e. Sunday, April 27th) format. Planning for this is well underway although there's a chance this may yet be affected by events in the Middle East, in which case we'll place a notice on our web page:

www.museum-of-flight.org.au

Several interesting recent acquisitions have been received by the Foundation, including a magnificent oil painting by John Downton depicting an Army Blackhawk in East Timor.

Former PO ATA John Waskiw has also delivered us the perspex cupola from a Martin 250 gun turret. These were fitted to several American medium and heavy bombers, including the B-25, B-26, B-17 and B-24.

We remain ever grateful for these demonstrations of continued support.

Mark Clayton - Museum Director

A4 Nightmare!

by Kit Sanders



It was Mid March 1967, AMERICA and our AIRWING 6 were back at sea after a port call in Barcelona. It was late morning, and the launch was proceeding normally. My A4C tanker was spotted for launch on the outboard waist catapult, and as the Phantom ahead was launched, the jet blast deflector was dropped, I began my roll to the catapult. A4C's had no nose wheel steering, we were 'led' around by a tiller bar in the nose wheel, and a young sailor.

For some reason, the F4 on the catapult seemed slow, then I saw the nose pitch down, as the shuttle hit the nose wheel, and the nose banged on the flight deck. The catapult bridle had shed the aircraft, and the big jet was rolling down the catapult track in burner, nose firmly planted on the flight deck. As the aircraft crossed the deck edge, I saw the fuel tanks rupture, and the fuel ignite from the flaming afterburner.

My tiller bar man, looked over his shoulder at the fire, and froze in place. In seconds, the flames enveloped my aircraft. Vainly I tried to eject, using the alternate handle between my legs, but I had not armed the RAPEC seat, habit being to only arm the seat when crossing the shuttle.

For what seemed like an eternity, I was inside the fireball, the canopy was closed, and now the flames blackened it, and lack of oxygen caused my engine to flame-out. I knew I was dead. Being burned alive in a fire, no place to go, sitting in an A4C tanker with 10,800 pounds of jet fuel, and unable to eject!

After a terrifying length of time, I could hear activity outside the aircraft. Something was being sprayed on my aircraft, but I could not see due to the blackened and deformed canopy.

Finally, after all hope was gone, the canopy popped open, and my plane captain appeared. The launch was cancelled, my bird was burned up.

As I exited the aircraft, I saw my tiller-bar man lying on the flight deck, burned horribly, only his helmet, belt and boots left on the body. My aircraft tires were burned and blown out, the radome was burned off and the canopy deformed and blackened, but the two drop tanks and the buddy store still were intact, and had not exploded or burned.

Rubber legs propelled me across the flight deck. Numbly, I transited the knee knockers and passageways back to the safety of my Ready Room.

Upon reaching the Ready Room, I was met by the Skipper. Words may have been exchanged, I don't recall saying much, just weakly sat down in a chair and surveyed the damage from the PLAT TV. The tape was running of the accident. The pilot of the Phantom was lost, but the PLAT TV plainly showed the RO ejecting, the flames enveloping the deck edge operator, the tiller-bar man and my aircraft.

I could not watch the rest, and barely made it to the head where I emptied my stomach.

After a brief meeting with the Skipper, he asked if I felt good enough to try it again, and we mutually agreed to schedule me for the next launch.

That one I made!

THE FIRST HELICOPTER NAVAL RESCUE

Courtesy Sikorsky Archives

February 9, 1947

Lieutenant Shields reporting aboard, sir. I wish to report an accident.....

"What d'ya mean you're Lieutenant Shields?" snapped the flight control officer without even bothering to look up. "Shields just had an accident. His plane was forced down. He's in the water right now." Casually, he glanced up-and then did a 'double take'. For, wonder of wonders, the bedraggled young flier standing there was Lieutenant Robert A. Shields.

But how had he done it? Scarcely six or seven minutes before Shields had radioed he was ditching his SB2C because of engine failure. He'd ditched it, too, by the looks of his soaked flying suit. But, here he was, big as life, back aboard his carrier, the *Leyte*, when by all odds he should have been bobbing about in a life raft waiting to be picked up by a tin can and returned to the carrier later in the day, or maybe the next day.

The flight control officer shook his head. "Hell," he muttered, "this man's navy is getting too fast for me."

The answer to Shields' speedy return was a Sikorsky S-51 helicopter flown by D. D. (Jimmy) Viner, chief test pilot for Sikorsky Aircraft. Viner, based with Task Fleet 2 to demonstrate the capabilities of the rotary-winged aircraft, had just picked up Shields and the latter's crewman, Aviation Radioman Don K. Little. The date was February 9 and it was the first of four rescues made by the helicopter during the fleet's recently completed manoeuvres in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

Operating from the big carrier, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, the helicopter, in the eyes of hundreds of officers and seamen, proved beyond doubt its usefulness to the fleet not only for rescue work but for many other duties which it performed more speedily and efficiently than they had ever been done before.

On his first day at sea, Viner picked up and delivered ship-to-ship correspondence - 'guard mail' in navy jargon - covering a dozen vessels in thirty-five minutes. Ordinarily, the 'guard mail' keeps a destroyer busy from sun-up to sun-down. Carrying the mail became routine for the helicopter as the cruise progressed.

A few days later Viner flew a fleet's senior surgeon over to the *Randolph* in time for an emergency operation on a young crewman. Countless hours were saved during the manoeuvres by ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore helicopter shuttles. The forward gun turret of the battleship *Missouri* made a perfectly adequate helicopter landing field.

Once, Viner transferred a submarine commander from the FDR to the submarine *Greenfish* which had surfaced nearby - the first time such an aerial transfer had ever been made. When the FDR left Norfolk, Va., at the start of the cruise, the harbour pilot was flown ashore by helicopter, completing in a few minutes an operation usually requiring a couple of hours.

But the rescues made naval aviation history and drew most of the attention. One flier escaped death by a split second thanks to swift, skilful handling of the helicopter. It happened on February 18, southeast of Bermuda.

Viner and Lieutenant Joe Rullo, a naval aviator assigned as observer on all the helicopter flights, were whirling along not far aft of the FDR. This was their customary position on what is called 'plane guard'. They were keeping a close watch on the launching and recovery of the carrier's planes.

Several SB2C dive-bombers were landing. Suddenly, one plane spun out of a turn at low altitude. Even before the craft struck the water, Viner nosed the S-51 down and plummeted toward the impending crash. The SB2C splashed and sank immediately.

Pulling up over the crash site, Viner and Rullo saw no sign of life. Then the pilot, Lieutenant Commander George R. Stablein, bobbed to the surface. The crewman, August J. Rinella, perished in the accident, either knocked out by the impact or unable to free himself from the smashed airplane.

Badly hurt and unable to inflate his life jacket, Stablein went down twice and was sinking a third time as Viner guided the helicopter right down to the water. Rullo lowered his hoist cable directly into the drowning man's hands. Stablein clutched frantically at the cable, grabbed it and hung on.

Viner lifted the S-51 clear of the waves as Rullo used the hydraulic hoist to haul the 230-pound Stablein up alongside the helicopter's open door. Stablein, too dazed to fasten a rescue belt harness, with which the cable was fitted, still clung by his hands. At the top of the hoist his fingers were pinched by the pulley wheel and he released his grip. But split-second teamwork by Rullo and Viner saved the day. Rullo threw his arm around the falling man and Viner, at that instant, tilted the helicopter sharply to the right. The result: Stablein toppled into the helicopter instead of back into the water.

Back aboard the FDR, Viner and Rullo suddenly realized how low they'd flown. Water was pouring from the helicopter's nose wheel pylon, evidence enough that the nose wheel had actually been under the surface. It was an unbeatable example of precision flying and a most convincing demonstration of the helicopter's rescue capabilities. A few minutes later, from Vice-Admiral William H. P. Blandy aboard the flagship *Missouri*, came the rarely-given commendation, 'Very well done'.

In contrast, the helicopter's third and fourth rescues were routine affairs. Picked up from their life raft on the morning of March 3, Lieutenant (jg) W. J. Forgy and Ensign R. Felty were safe aboard the FDR just seven minutes after setting their SB2C down in the water two miles from the carrier. The Viner-Rullo team had clicked again.

That noon, Jackson E. Beighle, a Sikorsky Aircraft pilot, who had joined the task fleet February 28 at Trinidad, needed only four minutes to carry out the rescue of Lieutenant Eugene J. Weinbeck, a Hellcat pilot.

Upon completion of the helicopter's part in the fleet exercises, both Viner and Beighle, as well as Sikorsky crew chiefs Stewart



Hill and Miles Roosevelt who also made the cruise aboard the FDR, praised the cooperation given them by Captain John P. W. Vest, and all her officers and men.



Slim, dark-haired Joe Rullo will never forget the cruise. "These last six weeks have provided the most wonderful experiences of my life," he said. Somebody asked why. "Because I've been flying with Jimmy Viner," he replied.

It's natural to expect enthusiasm for the helicopter from such air-minded officers as Captain Vest and Lieutenant Rullo. But Rear Admiral John Wilkes, commander of the Atlantic Fleet submarine force, was every bit as glowing in his estimate of the rotary-winged craft's place in future naval operations.

Admiral Wilkes, who witnessed the recent exercises as an observer aboard the submarine *Greenfish*, said the usefulness of and efficiency of the helicopter was one of the vitally important facts disclosed by the manoeuvres. He said the work of the helicopter was astonishing and that the craft had 'sold itself' to the fleet by the various and versatile activities which it performed throughout the exercises.

The helicopter carried several hundred passengers during the manoeuvres, among them John N. Brown, assistant secretary of navy for air; Admiral Blandy, Vice-Admiral A. W. Radford, Rear Admiral A. M. Pride, Rear Admiral John H. Cassady, Captain Vest, Captain T. B. Hill, skipper of the *Missouri*; Captain John L. Pratt, aide to Mr. Brown, and Sir Errol Dos Santos, governor of Trinidad.

Admiral Blandy was enthusiastic about the helicopter's possibilities for service with the fleet. Its chief value, he believes, lies in rescue work, submarine detection and reconnaissance, light pickup and delivery operations, and passenger exchange among units at sea.

Jimmy Viner never saw as much ice cream as he did the day he left the FDR to return to the Sikorsky plant at Bridgeport. It's an old navy custom to give the crew of a rescue ship ten gallons of ice cream. Having made three rescues, Viner and Rullo got thirty gallons. They took one look at this windfall and declared open house in the ready room. When Viner left, the crew had cracked open the last ten gallons and were still going strong.

Dimitry D. (Jimmy) Viner

Mr. Viner has flown and demonstrated Sikorsky helicopters in all parts of the world. During his career he was considered one of the world's foremost helicopter pilots and a leading authority on the problems of engineering test flying. Viner had 44 years of experience in aviation.

Jimmy was born in 1908 in Kiev, Russia. In 1923, when Jimmy Viner was 15 years old, he and his family came to America.

He joined the original Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation at Roosevelt, Long Island, in 1923, when the company was founded by his uncle, Igor I. Sikorsky. He was Sikorsky's 15th and youngest employee. He started as an errand boy, stock chaser, sweeper and truck driver. When he requested a title, his uncle designated him 'Sikorsky's Director of Transportation'.

He moved to Connecticut with the company in 1929, learning to fly fix-wing planes during the same year. He has been with Sikorsky ever since, with the exception of the early 40's when he was a flight instructor for the Bridgeport Flying Service at Turner Falls, Mass.

Jimmy has acquired more than 1,500 hours of fixed-wing aircraft time and more than 4,000 hours of rotary wing flying. He flew almost eight hours in the VS-300, the first Sikorsky helicopter and he was the first helicopter pilot to log 1,000 hours, in 1947.

Other firsts for the veteran pilot are: first flights of the S-51, the S-55 and the S-58; first helicopter civilian rescue, in 1945, of two crewmen from an oil barge off Penfield Reef in Fairfield during a storm; first helicopter mail service in New York City; first pilot to operate a helicopter in plane guard work from an aircraft carrier in 1947, this resulted in the first Naval rescue, saving pilots whose planes went into the ocean; set a helicopter world speed record of 115 MPH in 1946.

The list of pilots and persons who have received helicopter training under Jimmy reads like an aviation 'Who's Who'. He is a two-time recipient of the 'Winged-S' Rescue Award of Sikorsky Aircraft, is an honorary member of the American Helicopter Society and a member of the Society of Experimental Test pilots.



Stories of helicopter rescues increased as the helicopter matured and Mr. Sikorsky started the tradition of presenting the 'Winged-S Rescue Award' to each aircrew member. When asked about these rescue mission aircrew's performance, Sikorsky responded:



"I personally would like to express my deepest respect and admiration for these gallant pilots and helicopter crews who perform these flights. Their action, representing considerable skill and courage equal the most heroic of battlefield achievements. It would be right to say that the helicopter's role in saving lives represents one of the most glorious pages in the history of human flight."

'The helicopter approaches closer than any other [vehicle] to fulfilment of mankind's ancient dreams of the flying horse and the magic carpet.'

Igor Sikorsky

Naval Aviation Force Element Group (AVNFEG) UPDATE

By Commodore G A Ledger, RAN
Commander of the Australian Naval Aviation Group



I have settled into my new position as COMAUSNAVAIR, and had a chance to visit the HS 817 Christmas Island detachment with Chief of Navy just before Christmas, in fact I arrived home in Canberra at midnight on Christmas eve.

Captain Vince Di Pietro posted out in December to undertake Defence Studies at the Australian Defence College in Canberra and Captain Tim Barrett moved from CO Albatross into the position of Chief Of Staff (Aviation) in the CANAG HQ. The new CO Albatross Captain Simon Cullen has settled into his new position and is currently calling on local dignitaries introducing himself to the community as well as visiting the squadrons.

HS 816 squadron has a new commanding officer, Commander Brad White. Brad led his squadron in several water bombing serials in and around Canberra during the recent terrible bushfires. 816 had two Seahawks in the area and were supported by two Squirrel helicopters from HC 723 led by Commander Stu Harwood.

Aviators featured in the Christmas promotion list. CMDR Dowsing currently in the US and CMDR Jerrett D/DNAPO were both selected for provisional promotion to Captain for January 2004. CMDR Fealy AE was acting as Captain and his promotion was confirmed and posted to DGTA at RAAF Williams in Victoria. The FAA also had a good number of LCDR's selected for CMDR which was a great result.

The year has started at the same pace that 2002 finished. Whilst there is uncertainty on the world scene, the squadrons and ships flights continue to provide aviation assets for the Maritime Commander to embark on the ships. I am sure the tempo at HMAS Albatross with all the support agencies will again be high this year. We again thank the FAA Association of Australia for your continued support and encouragement of the men and women who are involved in Naval Aviation operations.



CMDR Andrew Whittaker, then CO of 816 Squadron, with squadron members and Windsor, a seven months old Bengal Tiger. The occasion was the annual HMAS Albatross divisions. Note the CO's firm grip on his sword. Photograph by Kaye Adams, RANAS Photographic Section

TIGERS OVER ULURU

By LCDR Tony Johnston PRO 816 Sqdn

It was a case of history repeating itself in Central Australia when three S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopters from 816 Squadron were



Photograph by LSPH-1A Brad Fullerton - RANAS Photographic Section

photographed in formation over Uluru recently.

The aircraft were returning to their home base at Nowra after a busy month in Western Australia. Some of the activities undertaken included support to HMAS STUART's workup, PWO sea training and Under Sea Warfare training against HMAS DECHAINEAUX. Several successful Mk 46 torpedo attacks were also conducted on the Under Water Tracking Range.

For the historically minded, the photograph reprises a well known scene from another era. Thirty years ago (almost to the



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For help with Disability claims, Pensions and Welfare for Serving and ex-Members of the ADF and their dependants. Located on the airfield side of the Australian Museum of Flight and manned between -
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Phone for appointment on (02) 4424 9067
Address: 489A Albatross Road, Nowra Hill, NSW 2541
NO FEES, NO FRILLS, MANNED BY RETIRED ADF VOLUNTEERS

Adam was hanging around the garden of Eden feeling very lonely. So God asked him, "What's wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to.



God said that He was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman.

He said, "this pretty lady will gather food for you, she will cook for you, and when you discover clothing, she will wash it for you.

She will always agree with every decision you make and she will not nag you and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement.

She will praise you! She will bear your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will never have a headache and will freely give you love and passion whenever you need it.

Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?"

God replied, "An arm and a leg."

Then Adam asked, "What can I get for a rib?"

And of course, the rest is history....

George Carlin's Views on Aging

Do you realise that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. "How old are you?" "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five.



That's the key. You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16!

And then the greatest day of your life - you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony - YOU BECOME 21. . . YEARS. But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED, we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed? You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 - and your dreams are gone.

But wait! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70!

After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime.

And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I am JUST 92." Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!" May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!

After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting from Harare to Bulawayo had escaped. Not wanting to admit his incompetence, the driver went to a nearby bus stop and offered everyone in the queue a free ride.

He then delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling staff that the patients were very excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies.

The deception wasn't discovered for 3 days.

Far away in the tropical waters of the Caribbean, two prawns were swimming around in the sea - one called Justin and the other called Christian.



The prawns were constantly being harassed and threatened by sharks that patrolled the area.

Finally one day Justin said to Christian, "I'm bored and frustrated at being a prawn, I wish I was a shark, then I wouldn't have any worries about being eaten"

As Justin had his mind firmly on becoming a predator, a mysterious cod appears and says, "Your wish is granted", and lo and behold, Justin turned into a shark. Horrified, Christian immediately swam away, afraid of being eaten by his old mate.

Time went on (as it invariably does...) and Justin found himself becoming bored and lonely as a shark.

All his old mates simply swam away whenever he came close to them. Justin didn't realise that his new menacing appearance was the cause of his sad plight.

While out swimming alone one day he sees the mysterious cod again and can't believe his luck.

Justin figured that the fish could change him back into a prawn. He begs the cod to change him back so, lo and behold, he is turned back into a prawn.

With tears of joy in his tiny little eyes, Justin swam back to his friends and bought them all a cocktail.

Looking around the gathering at the reef, he searched for his old pal.

"Where's Christian?" he asked.

"He's at home, distraught that his best friend changed sides to the enemy and became a shark," came the reply.

Eager to put things right again and end the mutual pain and torture, he set off to Christian's house.

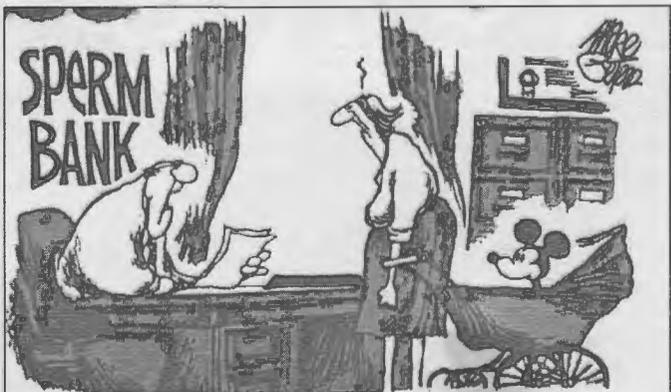
As he opened the coral gate the memories came flooding back. He banged on the door and shouted, "It's me, Justin, your old friend, come out and see me again.

Christian replied "No way man, you'll eat me. You're a shark, the enemy and I'll not be tricked."

Justin cried back "No, I'm not. That was the old me. I've changed"...

(wait for it)...

"I've found Cod, I'm a prawn again Christian!"



LOOK, LADY - YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ASKED FOR A FAMOUS MOVIE STAR WITH DARK HAIR, STRONG NOSE AND DEEP SET EYES...

'People sleep peacefully in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf' - G. Orwell



NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Tradition dictates that I start this report by wishing you all a Happy New Year but so far it has been anything but, especially here in Canberra. I am sure you will have read about the dreadful bushfires so I won't bore you with more graphic descriptions but believe me it was a most interesting, and for some, a most devastating, few hours. Our daughter arrived from New York on the Friday and on Saturday evening she said, "I knew I would get a warm welcome but this is a bit over the top"

The old year finished on a very sad note when Rob Partington was killed in a plane crash in Victoria. Our deepest sympathies go out to Tina and the children.

On a brighter note I can report that the Xmas Hamper project was an outstanding success again and all members can feel a sense of pride in the positive support the FAAA is giving to the current band of naval air warriors. Some of those warriors were flying in the swirling smoke and heat around Canberra during the bushfire emergency. It was good to hear the steady beat of the rotors and to know that they were there.

Planning for the 2003 Reunion continues apace and a registration form with programme and costs is included as a flyer in this edition. A notice giving further information will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Due to pressure of work Paul Shiels has resigned as the FAAA web-master and the South Australian Executive is actively seeking a replacement. The FAAA thanks Paul for the time and effort he put into the successful launch of this important project.

I wish you the very best for 2003, it can only get better, and look forward to seeing you at the October Reunion.

Toz Dadswell

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION XMAS HAMPER PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHS

Starting from top left:

'Lending a hand'

L-R: AB Josh Greenwood and AB Brenton Heath

'FAAA Members in attendance'

L-R: Toz Dadswell - Mike Heneghan - Ian Ferguson - Ray Burt - John Arnold - Denis Mulvihill and Neil Ralph

'Squadron reps ensuring a fair and equitable distribution'

L-R: CMDR A Whittaker (816)

LCDR D Cooper (723)

LCDR Gagnon (723)

LCDR Ashworth (CO 805)

LCDR D Jose (XO 816)

CDRE Toz Dadswell AM RAN Rtd

CAPTAIN Tim Barrett

'Wearing the FAA T-shirts included in the hampers'

Christmas Island- 817 Squadron 'C' detachment

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



Thankyou to the secretary's of all Divisions for assisting me to bring the 'Slipstream Mailing List' up to date. There are constant alterations to it with changes of address which come through the secretaries and Slipstream editor, [DO NOT send them to the editor, I have nothing to do with the mailing list. Ed] plus the addition of new members, who are most welcome.

We will have held a 'Reunion 2003' and National Executive meetings by the time you receive this edition. I will send draft copies as soon as possible.

I will be sending all secretaries a few copies of a 76 page booklet titled 'Visit Shoalhaven', this book lists all the accommodation available and contact phone numbers and information to answer any member or visitors questions, It is a very informative booklet listing all facilities available in the Shire.

If I can be of any assistance I can be contacted by Email at: heneghan@shoal.net.au or Phone/Fax (02) 4441 2901.

Kind regards to all.

Mike Heneghan

VICTORIAN DIVISION



Attention on the flight deck!

Expectations of reports of happy family reunions over the festive season were shattered for many at the news of the tragic aircraft accident near Geelong which took the life of our most respected shipmate, Commodore Rob Partington AM RAN (Rtd).

There was standing room only at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Williamstown, Melbourne, on Friday 10th January, 2003, which indicated to all the high esteem in which Rob was held by those lucky enough to have 'rubbed shoulders' with him, within and without the RAN.

A moving Service of Thanksgiving was conducted by Principal Chaplain, Monsignor Brian Rayner OAM RAN, during which a eulogy was presented by Commander Toby Selby RAN (Rtd), a touching family tribute by proud son, Chris, and daughter, Cassie, moving many to tears, and a Navy tribute by Commodore Geoff Ledger RAN, Commander of the Australian Naval Aviation Group.

Many familiar faces were amongst the congregation – Mike Hudson, Neil Ralph, David Farthing, Monsignor Frank 'Tiger' Lyons, John Burns, Graham Bailey (SA Division) and a good representation from the Victorian Division, to mention a few. National President, Toz Dadswell, had previously expressed his deep regrets due to the arrival of overseas visitors on that day.

A formation of aircraft from Point Cook piloted by personal friends, led by a sole Tiger Moth, flew overhead to honour Rob, a gentle man, prior to the service. Traditionally, one of the forming aircraft broke away to port just as they approached overhead the church, leaving a space for the 'missing airman'.

Our deepest sympathy has been conveyed personally and by mail to Rob's delightful wife, Tina, as well as to Chris and Cassie.

As I was preparing this contribution for *Slipstream*, I received

a call from Dawn Goodwin to advise that her husband, John, ex-Aircraft Handler, had suffered a heart attack and passed away on 14th December, 2002, at the age of 70. The Goodwins had recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and were living at Strathdale, Bendigo. Recuperating from her own heart attack, Dawn has nevertheless expressed her wish to maintain contact with old Fleet Air Arm friends by becoming an Associate member. I have offered her sincere condolences on behalf of the Association.

It is difficult to find light and happy news to add to this article following such shocking events, but life must go on and, having honoured Rob, I am sure he would expect that we look forward with some confidence to the future, which wish, I am sure, would be endorsed by John.

Ian 'Tas' Webster, Sea Fury pilot during the Korean campaign, and forced to ditch his aircraft (wheels down!) in the Pacific Ocean when his engine failed due to oil starvation, was recently in Melbourne. Subsequently, in the 1950's, 'Tas' became one of the most respected batsmen in HMAS *Sydney* prior to leaving the RAN to join Qantas, where he rose to the rank of Boeing 747 Captain.

Less known was his able navigation during the return voyage of HMAS *Vengeance* to UK, under the watchful eye of the late 'Red' Merson. After age retirement, he settled in the northern outskirts of London, where he now resides. Expecting to return for a visit again next year, he asked to be remembered to all those of his era.

Les Coleman, brother of Ron, who was lost during the Korean campaign, was also in touch and keen to contact any Fleet Air Arm personnel who may have known Ron. Quite a coincidence, since 'Tas' Webster revealed to me that it was he who was leading the flight over Korea in atrocious weather conditions, Ron Coleman on his wing, when Ron disappeared during a period of severe turbulence at altitude in cloud. Ron's aircraft was never found.

David Baddams, one-time A4 pilot who elected to transfer to the Royal Navy when RAN fixed wing flying was terminated, has also been in touch. His father, Bob, was an RAAF trainee pilot on 9 Course with the writer, recently suffering a severe stroke, and presently resident in Murray Bridge, South Australia. David flew the Harrier from HMS *Invincible* enduring many forays ashore in Hong Kong in 1992 with ex-Navy types employed by Cathay. He commanded 800 Squadron, RN, prior to returning to Australia, where he is presently employed in a supervisory capacity by British Aerospace at the Aviation College, Tamworth, NSW. I am feeling an urgent need to terminate this report, for the longer I linger, so does the list of catastrophes grow.

Raging fires in the northeast of our State dwindle to insignificance as tortuous heat and cyclonic winds encourage a raging fire front to assault the fringe suburbs of our national capital, Canberra, torching to destruction 400+ homes and taking at least four lives. Phone calls revealed that whilst our respected National President, Toz Dadswell was, with his family, staring disaster in the face as homes in his vicinity were burnt to the ground, the Dadswell family survived a similar tragedy. Long, anxious moments were endured as Toz and Gwen fought deluges of blazing embers with a hose until midnight, when conditions subsided. Their car, loaded to the hilt with valuable cargo (little room for the pilot!) was on standby on the ramp, ready for 'launching' at Wing's command.....sorry!! Got carried away a bit, there.

A report from Rob Earle alerts me to the fact that popular shipmate, Les Profitt, passed away on 15th January following a heart attack in his sleep. Les had been an active member of the Victorian Division for the past nineteen years, having served in the Fleet Air Arm for 15 years from 1948, finishing up as a PO (A) PHOT prior to discharge. He was a young 72 years of age. Ten representatives from our Division attended a service held at Altona Memorial Park, on 22nd January and appropriate messages of sympathy were conveyed to his family on behalf of all members. George Self highlighted the outstanding qualities of our shipmate to attending relatives and friends in the form of a moving eulogy.

On a more pleasant note, we heartily welcome new member, Richard Serafin, ex- CPO ATA, a resident of Wodonga, and hope to have the opportunity of soon making his acquaintance at one of our functions.

Vietnam veterans' attention is drawn to a recently released report establishing a possible link between a variety of latter-day illnesses and the presence of diotoxins in drinking water not eradicated during on-board desalination processes during that campaign. A 78-page document has been received by all Divisions, which is available for perusal by Victorian Division members through the Secretary. The report can also be downloaded from the DVA web site at: www.dva.gov.au. It involves the 'examination of the potential exposure of RAN personnel to polychlorinated dibenzodioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans via drinking water'. Studies of Australian Vietnam Veterans have revealed greater than expected mortality occurring among the RAN.

Agent Orange (TCDD) and Agent Blue and organochlorine pesticide were used in Vietnam. TCDD is now known to have many toxic effects in humans, including carcinogenesis.

In closing, our thoughts are with those desperately unfortunate families who have lost all in the recent widespread fires. The burden of facing up to starting from scratch is unimaginable to we who have never faced such a disastrous setback. In times of such desperation, it is extremely gratifying to hear of so many cases of gratuitous assistance. Perhaps there is hope for us all, yet!

Carry on!
Geoff Litchfield



VICTORIA DIVISION CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

BACK ROWS L-R: Margaret Mayer, the late Les Profitt, Ron Christie, Ian Stanfield, John Ikin, Geoff Litchfield, Rob Earle, 'Hank' Fargher, Bryan Roberts, Jim Kalmund, Ken Pryor, Ralph Mayer, Clem Conlan, Norm Thompson, Les Jordan.

CENTRE: Shirley Thompson, Valda Christie, Enid Champion, Beryl Clark, Marion Earle, Betty Conlan, Jenny Roberts.

FRONT: Di Stanfield, Loris Jordan, Sylvia Ikin, Alan Clark.



'You expect me to believe that?'
Rob Earle and 'Hank' Fargher chewing the cud



Ian 'Tas' Webster - Vintage pilot and batsman at Jimmy Watsons - Melbourne 06JAN03

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



It is time once again to give a complete, concise, accurate, and short report about the activities in SA.

We are actually on the lookout to acquire a second hand aircraft carrier so that we can do our bit against the war on terrorism. There was one going at the 'flea market' at Port Adelaide but it was a little beyond our financial recourses. Money made from the 'sausage sizzle' in Salisbury, although very lucrative, fell short of the asking price. Maybe other divisions would like to join us. We thought that strategically positioning it in the Greek Isles would be a sound idea with once a week anti-

submarine sortie being flown to ensure that there would be plenty of time for other duties. We need an Admiral and a Captain but can supply Commander 'Air' from our own ranks. I have attached a photo of the said ship for your inspection.



Christmas and the New Year were full of festivity. Dinsley Cooper, our social secretary, arranged for our Christmas celebration at the Links Hotel. About 35 people attended and had a great time. John Saywell won our once a year raffle. The prize was a \$100 voucher to buy goodies like a leg of ham and other things. Because I didn't win I lost interest in the detail but I think it was well worth winning.

Our treasurer, Mike Cain, decided to be generous and from our coffers bought drinks to keep everyone happy. I noticed that a line book was passed around and that generated much nostalgia. It was a pleasant outing and enjoyed all round.

At the New Year we got together (Sunday 5th.) in the parkland adjacent to the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide for a BBQ. Those that did not manage to make the date missed out on a very pleasant get together. My wife Lee and I turned up with a bottle of diet coke and then proceeded to drink Jack Kriegs expensive red Sparkling Lambrusco in Roger Harrison's chilled wine goblets. The cooks produced excellent chicken and meat portions to be eaten with salads caringly prepared by someone. Thank you once again to those responsible for such decadence. I am sorry to admit that I have no photos to prove these events took place.

The web site is plodding along. Paul Shiels who did much to establish the site has resigned from the webmaster position. He has explained that on the web site. In the meantime John Siebert has volunteered to care take until we get someone to replace Paul. That should be resolved by the time this article goes to print. The web site has been an initial success and with further development will in time be an important adjunct to our Association. There are many useful links to the site. I thought that the link described as 'The Gun plot' is a real gem. Many people are visiting the site to make comment in the guest book and it is noted that there are steady applicants to join from the online application questionnaire.

Whilst on the subject of members.....Ken Adams, who is a farmer at Kapunda, has decided to rejoin. Ken was a former member and thought it a good idea to sign up. Ken served in 724, 725, 805 squadrons from 1956 to '62. He was a LAM (AE).

John Ferguson has admitted to ill health so we wish him a recovery and a get well message. John is one of the general

service people who transferred to the FAA in the early days. He joined the navy in 1946 and was involved in bringing home the 20th CAG in 1948. He came out of the navy in 1959 with the rank of PO. The rest of us are OK, sort of, and feel sure that we will be able to capably man our dreamtime aircraft carrier when the time comes.

John Berry is complaining that the BBQ is getting too heavy to put on the trailer for our sausage sizzle money making rip off so Dinsley has issued him a chit excusing duty.

I received a letter from the Marketing and Development Manager of the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital. They are issuing Repat Cards for veterans. Daw Park is now a Public Hospital and so that veterans, war widows and other entitled patients can get easy access to the hospital these cards is designed to allow priority over public patients. For those members who use Daw Park it would be a good idea to get one of these cards. I have application forms so just give me a call.

Our next meeting will be on the 21st March at the Airport Club, Adelaide Airport and that will be our Annual General Meeting. This may be my last communiqué!

Barry Lord - Secretary

QUEENSLAND DIVISION



Our best wishes to you all for 2003 and trust you enjoyed the festive season. The fires at Canberra were dreadful and hard to believe. I hope none of our members lost homes.

I've spoken to John and Ros Crawley, who spent one night at least, putting out embers around the house, but, at the time, he hadn't heard of members losing their homes. We're very lucky here generally in that, apart from the drought, we've had a pretty good run.

We had a great day for our Xmas function at the Bribie Island RSL - good weather, plenty of shade and about 70 or so enjoying the day. There were some new (old) faces and plenty of stories getting about. It was good to see Barry Turner, Rob Hingston, Barry Andrews, Joe Seib, David Smith, Ron Bensley and Lofty Davis. Nev Hall and his wife called in briefly to catch up with Rob Hingston and the rest of us. They were leaving the next day to begin touring. Nev has sold his business at Redcliff Airport and now retired. They donated some wine for our raffle, Glen Hartig put in another few bottles of Vintage port and Don Spencer put some wine in he'd brought back from the West. Thanks to all of you. We had quite a few prizes and we reckoned there would be a good chance of the committee having a win at last! Trevor Tite and I did as well as Gary Reid and Sharon who won the Xmas Hamper. Jan Williamson got the touch Lamp and I think Paddy got a bottle of the good stuff as well

Jock and Margaret Collins looked well and Jock has a big lump under his skin-the computer that runs his new pacemaker. I reckon he could put himself on Internet with that! Bill Strahan looks good after his bypass operation, and it was good to see Bob Peacock there fighting the recovery road after a stroke. Bevan Mewett got the BBQ unlocked and going - a good machine which got very hot very quickly.

Alan and Melba Barlow told us of how they used to look after the crew of HMAS *Brisbane* in the Gulf- we were talking about the

(Continued on page 30)

reluctance of our Government here to take the ship for sinking off Mooloolaba. Alan gave me a few WW2 flying books. Thanks, Alan. I'm enjoying them.

Our next function will be our AGM to be held at the Currumbin RSL on March 16, from 10 am to 12 Noon and then picnic/BBQ after. Looking forward to a good roll up. We have decided to alternate our AGM's between Currumbin and Bribie RSL's. Anywhere else wants to charge an arm and a leg for using a room for 2 hours.

Re the increased cost of *Slipstream*, Des Kelly, Treasurer, did up our budget for 2003 and we have agreed that we can cover the extra cost without increasing our annual fees. We will check again in our 2004 budget to assess the position then.

We're delighted to welcome new members, Barry Turner and David Smith and Frank Fox has transferred in from down south. I haven't seen Frank since I left Nowra in '66 and look forward to meeting up soon (at the AGM, I hope).

We went, with brother Peter, to Cooroy recently to have a short visit with Max and Norma Wilson. Max is steadily recovering from his ordeal in hospital-lost 20 kg and has regained 6 kg so far. Managing a beer, but Max reckons he's lost the taste for food. Anyhow it was good to see him and Norma after a fair while and I hope they'll make the do at Currumbin.

Trevor had 24 caps sent over from WA and they are proving very popular. I can see another order coming up soon. Des Kelly tells me he's just got his service pension after a long struggle and Aileen is hitting the golf ball well and using his cart, and I'm waiting for Aileen to let me know when she beats him. I also hear that Gordon Walters is going very well after having a pacemaker and can now drive when Sandra is not playing golf - if you can figure that out. These lady golfers are getting serious!

Mick Blair is looking for a volunteer to take over our flags, banner and frame and deliver them to Brisbane for Anzac Day. He's been doing the job for 10 or so years now and his garage is getting worn out- or something. A request has gone out in the last newsletter. Good luck, Mick.

We're going to Bulimba Army Barracks again after the Anzac day March. Mick and Trevor are arranging to meet with the right people to try and establish satisfactory catering arrangements. We may have to take our own play lunch!

Well, that's it for now. Best wishes from all of us here. Don't go to visit the Hanging Gardens of Babylon for the next few days!

Barry Lister - President



XMAS 'DO' AT BRIBIE ISLAND RSL
L-R: Rex Day - Arthur Rowe - Ray Guest - 'Jock' Collins - Ray Murrell



XMAS 'DO' AT BRIBIE ISLAND RSL
TOP L-R: Glen Hartig - 'Weed' Smith - Rex Day - Col Spence and Tom Henry
BELOW L-R: Garry Reid and Ken 'Bear' Hammond



XMAS 'DO' AT BRIBIE ISLAND RSL
TOP L-R: Bob Peacock and Tom Christopher
BELOW L-R: Bill Strahan and Barry Andrew
All photographs this page courtesy Mick Blair



A QUEENSLAND FAIRY STORY

Cinderella had migrated to Australia many years ago and built a home on the Queensland coast...the story continues...



Cinderella was now 75 years old. After a fulfilling life with the now dead Prince, she happily sat upon her rocking chair, watching the world go by from her front porch, with a cat called Alan for companionship. One sunny afternoon, out of nowhere, appeared the Fairy Godmother.

"Fairy Godmother, what are you doing here after all these years?" said Cinderella.

The Fairy Godmother replied "Well Cinderella, since you have lived a good, wholesome life since we last met, I have decided to grant you three wishes. Is there anything for which your heart still yearns?" Cinderella is taken aback, overjoyed and after some thoughtful consideration and almost under her breath she uttered her first wish, "I wish I was wealthy beyond comprehension."

Instantly, her rocking chair was turned into solid gold. Cinderella was stunned. Alan, her old and faithful cat, jumped off her lap and scampered to the edge of the porch, quivering with fear.

"Oh thank you, Fairy Godmother", said Cinderella.

The Fairy Godmother replied, "It is the least I can do. What does your heart desire for your second wish?"

Cinderella looked down at her frail body and said, "I wish I was young and full of the beauty of youth again".

At once, her wish having been desired, became reality, and her beautiful youthful visage had returned, and the vigour and vitality began to course through her very soul.

Then the Fairy Godmother again spoke, "You have one more wish, what shall you have?"

Cinderella looked over to the frightened cat in the corner and said, "I wish you to transform Alan, my old cat into a beautiful and handsome young man".

Magically, Alan suddenly underwent so fundamental a change in his biological make-up, that when complete he stood before her, a boy so beautiful the like of which she nor the world had ever seen, so fair indeed that birds began to fall from the sky at his feet.

The Fairy Godmother again spoke, "Congratulations, Cinderella. Enjoy your new life." And, with a blazing shock of bright blue light, she was gone.

For a few eerie moments, Alan and Cinderella looked into each other's eyes. Cinderella sat, breathless, gazing at the most stunningly perfect man she had ever seen. Then Alan walked over to Cinderella, who sat transfixed in her rocking chair, and held her close in his young muscular arms. He leant in close to her, and into her ear breathed as much as whispered, blowing her golden hair with his warm breath, "I bet you're sorry you had me de-nutted now, you bitch!"

A.C.T. DIVISION



There has been no reports of losses by ACT members in the recent bushfires, but nevertheless, they have all been through a rather terrifying time. We wish them all well. Ed

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



Hello! Australia - and a big hello to all fellow ex-birdies, in particular, all members of the FAAA of Australia.

Here we are again facing up to another year 2003. MY GOD! I hope things improve in a hurry, what with the weather patterns (El Nino) facing our country, the bush fires and the loss of life and damage caused by these disasters. Come on Aussies, let's lift our shoulders and assist those unfortunate enough to face such calamities. Perhaps the National body could make some donation or offer of assistance and then perhaps the other State bodies may follow suit.

A big 'thank you' to Toz Dadswell and Don Mc Laren for their kind words in their report on our Mini-Reunion last November.



WA MINI -REUNION - L-R: Keith Doncon - Toz Dadswell - Kerry Sojan
All photo's in this report courtesy Greg Kelson

Thanks are also extended for all the Emails, Christmas and Thank You cards from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and from the far North West of WA.

Thinking ahead, it is only months away until the National FAAA Reunion at Nowra. Now is the time to start organising for this event.

Thanks to Ken Staff and committee, Vol. 1 Issue 1 of 'The Journal of Naval Aircraft Handlers' inaugural meeting report, together with pictures, has been received. We look forward to the next edition.

By the time this report is published we would have had our AGM on February 9th. Fortunately most of the committee will continue to look after our Division.

I am sorry to learn that the following WA members are on the Sick List, Eddie Cook, Keith Murdock, Ron Tate and Jack Griffin. We hope that they soon return to good health. My apologies if I have missed any one.

The following extract from the West Australian dated 10 December 2002, may be of interest...

VETERANS FACE PAY-OUT CHECK

'WAR veterans' face checks to ensure they are not double-dipping under the \$2.7 billion-a-year service pension scheme. The Veterans Affairs Department will exchange details with the Defence Force Superannuation Fund, ComSuper, from Tuesday to ensure pensioners are declaring superannuation income. A pilot data-matching programme last year revealed

(Continued on page 32)

several hundred service pensioners failing to declare superannuation income, leading to over payments of about \$ 400,000. The service pension available to, 155000 veterans who faced hostile fire in war, is the only payment to be means-tested.'

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FAAA WA MINI -REUNION

L-R: Keith Taylor - Tom Moss - John Cole and John Stewart



L-R: Winston 'Fish' Ferguson - John C 'Dusty' Grierson - Mick 'Stubbo' Stubbington - Barry 'Baz' Todd and Robert Earle



L-R: John 'Nat' Gorin - Greg 'Skinhead' Kelson - Stephen Morrison - Geoff Vickridge and Bob Mitchell



L-R: Pat Stevens - Ron 'Gabby' Hayes - Marie Kempnich - Rose Hayes and Maureen Hill

NSW DIVISION



With Xmas/New Year festivities now in the past, it is time to look ahead to another year.

My article in the last edition mentioned the presence of widespread fires on the NSW coastal area, the coverage in all forms of the media in recent days adequately brings home the scope to which this problem escalated following the Christmas break. At the time of writing they seem to be coming even wider spread. Spare a thought for the unfortunate people who have had to contend with this catastrophe.

To date I have not heard of any of our members who have been involved – however it would be presumptuous to think that we would not have someone who has been affected when you consider the vast area which has been decimated.

Have you visited the FAAA Website yet? If you haven't done so, please spend a few minutes and have a look. You may even wish to leave your notation in the visitor's book. Should you have comment or criticism feel free to utilise my E-mail address and I assure you it will be actioned as appropriate.

The forthcoming reunion details will be noted on the website. Those wishing to participate in branch get-togethers should keep an eye on the site, as this will be able to be kept current as contact persons are identified. Details of functions etc. will also be displayed as they are organised. Ideas for this event have been invited but it seems all are content to be hand-fed. If you have ideas now is the time to make them known as the organisation is entering the 'lock-in' stage of proceedings.

As reported last edition we welcomed our new social secretary. It didn't take long for him to make his presence felt. The final executive meeting before Xmas was combined with a social get together over a 'couple' and supper. It was pleasing to see the support this little publicised get-together attracted. The fact that half of the Safety Equipment Branch attended was encouraging when we think of the forthcoming reunion!

Your continued support for the annual raffle has once again allowed the containment of ever increasing costs to be controlled without resorting to the burden of increasing annual membership fees. The major impost last year was the need to increase the Slipstream cost by \$1 per copy – the first such rise in many years, which was implemented at the National AGM. Results of the latest raffle were:

1st Prize Ticket No. 3170 R. LASCELLES
2nd Prize Ticket No. 2922 E. MARTIN
3rd Prize Ticket No. 3278 K. HARVEY

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who supported this project. The above draw was conducted at the home of our Welfare Officer and our thanks to Ray and Paula Burt for their generosity in making their home available for this function. Social secretary Phil promises further get togethers in the future.

Don't forget the NSW Division AGM on Sunday 16th March at 1100. Those who enjoy reading this magazine and wish to continue receiving their copies are reminded that financial membership is a prerequisite for inclusion on the mailing list.

Neville Newbold - President

adam.com.au/bsiebert/faaaa

TASMANIAN DIVISION

Now that Christmas and New Year is over, we can get down to another year of activities that probably won't be much different to previous years.

Not much to report from Tassie either – Alan and Bev Andrews have been holidaying in the West with family and have only recently returned. Whilst away, Trevor Tite, of the Queensland Division, gave Alan's address and phone number to Ron Melville in the NT so that Ron, who is moving to Tasmania, will be able to contact Alan and transfer to our Division. You will be most welcome, Ron.

At this stage we must all send our thoughts and sympathy to those people in the mainland States, particularly the ACT, for the terrible loss of property in the recent bush fires. Thankfully, loss of life was minimal considering the ferocity of the fires.

Tasmania has had her losses too but not on the same scale.

The Seasons Festivities must have gone OK as I have had no reports to the contrary, in fact, no reports at all. If I don't get the information, I can't tell it.

That's all from down here so I'll say cheerio for now.

Matt Jacobs



FAA INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE HISTORIAN

Over the years, 'Windy' Geale has compiled a diary of RAN Air Stations, Ships and Squadrons. In the case of squadrons, the names of the aircrew are recorded. The exception to this is 816 Squadron, as all the line books and other historical items were lost in the 1976 arson attack.



To enable a complete as possible record to be produced, we are now asking you to put your thinking cap on and forward the names of ALL squadron personnel you served with in the squadrons. The information required is Squadron, Year, Rank or Rate and Name.

The next *Slipstream* will have an article on this matter in it, but to get the ball rolling early I ask you to spread the word ASAP.

We have the duty watch on stand by as it is hoped to have CDs and inexpensive hard copies ready for the October FAAA Reunion.

My postal address is: 9 Crest Ave Nth NOWRA NSW 2541

Bill Kerr

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

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In New Guinea a helicopter is called '*mixmasta bilong Jesus Christ*'

Strange things in Mexico

This happened in a little town in Mexico, and even though it sounds like an Alfred Hitchcock tale, it's absolutely true!

This guy was on the side of the road hitch hiking on a very dark night and in the middle of a storm. The night was rolling and no car went by. The storm was so strong he could hardly see a few feet ahead of him.

Suddenly, he saw a car coming towards him and then stop. The guy, without thinking about it, got in the car and closed the door - and only then realised that there's nobody behind the wheel!

The car starts very slowly. The guy looks at the road and sees a curve coming his way. Scared, he starts to pray, begging for his life.

He hasn't come out of shock when, just before the car hits the curve, a hand appears through the window and moves the wheel.

The guy, paralysed in terror, watched how the hand appears every time they are approaching a curve. The guy, gathering strength, gets out of the car and runs all the way to the nearest town. Wet and in shock he goes into a cantina, asks for two shots of tequila, and starts telling everybody about the horrible experience he just went through.

A silence enveloped everybody when they realise the guy was crying and wasn't drunk.

About half an hour later two guys walked in the same cantina and one said to the other, "Look, Pepe, that's the mongrel who got in the car while we were pushing it."

WAR IS A TERRIBLE RESPONSIBILITY

Saddam Hussein was sitting in his office wondering whom to invade next when his telephone rang.

"Hallo, Mr. Hussein!" a heavily accented voice said. "This is Paddy down at the Harp Pub in County Sligo, Ireland. I am ringing to inform you that we are officially declaring war on you!"

"Well, Paddy," Saddam replied, "This is indeed important news! How big is your army?"

"Right now," said Paddy, after a moment's calculation, "there is myself, my cousin Sean, my next door neighbour Seamus, and the entire dart team from the pub. That makes eight!"

Saddam paused. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have one million men in my army waiting to move on my command."

"Begorra!" said Paddy. "I'll have to ring you back!"

Sure enough, the next day, Paddy called again. "Mr. Hussein, the war is still on! We have managed to acquire some infantry equipment!"

"And what equipment would that be, Paddy?" Saddam asked.

"Well, we have two combines, a bulldozer, and Murphy's farm tractor."

Saddam sighed. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 16,000 tanks and 14,000 armoured personnel carriers. Also, I've increased my army to 1-1/2 million since we last spoke."

"Saints preserve us!" said Paddy. "I'll have to get back to you."

Sure enough, Paddy rang again the next day. "Mr. Hussein, the war is still on! We have managed to get ourselves airborne! We've modified Harrigan's ultra-light with a couple of shotguns in the cockpit, and four boys from the Shamrock Pub have joined us as well!"

Saddam was silent for a minute and then cleared his throat. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 10,000 bombers and 20,000 fighter planes. My military complex is surrounded by laser-guided, surface-to-air missile sites. And since we last spoke, I've increased my army to TWO MILLION!"

"WOW!" said Paddy, "I'll have to ring you back."

Sure enough, Paddy called again the next day. "Top o' the mornin', Mr Hussein! I am sorry to tell you that we have had to call off the war."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Saddam. "Why the sudden change of heart?"

"Well," said Paddy, "we've all had a long chat over a bunch of pints, and decided there's no way we can feed two million prisoners!"
God Bless the Irish!

OBITUARY

COMMODORE Robin Nyren PARTINGTON AM RAN (Rtd)
 'The 'Grey Eagle'

In their sub-conscious naval aviators generally consider that, having survived the perils of naval aviation, they are safe from the "dangers of the air". The fallacy of this belief was made evident when the many friends of Rob Partington heard that he had been killed in an aircraft accident in Victoria on 20th December. Not even a careful, proficient professional pilot, such as Rob, was immune from the "perils of the sky".



Robin Nyren Partington was born in Melbourne in 1940 and joined the RAN College in 1954 as a thirteen-year-old entry. He was affectionately know as "Parto" for the rest of his naval career. After graduating in 1957 Rob's career path followed the normal pattern for a junior officer until he volunteered to train as a pilot in 1962. As training of naval pilots in Australia had been terminated following the 1959 decision to scrap the Fleet Air Arm, Rob Partington's pilot training took a most unusual track. He trained in the UK with Bristow Helicopters and from there was awarded his wings.

On return to Australia he converted to Gannets and joined 816 Squadron in mid 1964. His natural aptitude and zest for flying was recognized and in 1967 he completed a QFI course at East Sale. Postings as Senior Naval Officer at Point Cook and RAAF Pearce followed. After converting to the S2E (Tracker) Rob was first posted as Senior Pilot of VS816 and then became the Commanding Officer of the "Flying Tigers". Promoted to Commander in 1976 he served on the Aircraft Carrier Project in Navy Office and in London as the Aviation Officer on the Naval Advisers staff. Rob was promoted to Captain in 1984 and served in two posting in Navy Office before being posted to Darwin as Naval Officer Commanding North Australia. Promoted to Commodore in 1990 Rob then served as Commodore HMAS ALBATROSS and Naval Officer Commanding West Australia. He retired from the RAN in 1995. For his contribution to naval aviation Rob was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1990.

Rob Partington was a man of many skills. In addition to his exceptional flying ability, he could easily dismantle, and reassemble in working order, car engines, radios, computers, and all manner of electric and electronic appliances.

After leaving the Navy Rob retained a close involvement in all aspects of aviation. His flying skills and his profound knowledge of aircraft operations meant his assistance and advice was constantly sought by many. He was a devoted family man and sincere condolences are extended to his wife Tina and his children Cass and Chris.

OBITUARY

John GOODWIN

John Goodwin, ex-Aircraft Handler, passed away at the age of 70 following a heart attack.

OBITUARY

Les PROFFIT

Les joined the RAN on 12th April, 1948 - served in HMA Ships *Cerberus, Australia, Lonsdale, Sydney, Vengeance, Melbourne, Nirimba, Kuttabal*, RNAS Culdrose and 817 Squadron.



Awards: Korea Medal, UN Medal and RAS badge. He was discharged on 11th April, 1963 with the rank of PO (A) PHOT.

After discharge he became a cameraman for the ABC and then, because of Civil Cine duties in Vietnam, became involved with War Correspondents in later years.

Popular with his shipmates, he joined the Victorian Division on 23rd August, 1984 and served as a Committee Member with the Victorian Division in 1991, 1992.

Les was 72 year of age at the time of his death.

A LAST FAREWELL

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

William 'Mac' MACFARLANE
 29 November 2002

John GOODWIN
 14 December 2002

CDRE Robin Nyren PARTINGTON AM RAN Rtd
 22 March 1940 - 20 December 2002

Robert Clegg FORGIE
 1917 - 2002

A Civil Engineer who, at the outbreak of WW II, was seconded to the Federal Allied Works Council to build fighter airstrips at Trangie, Orange (Milthorpe), and Schofields (Albatross II and then HMAS Nirimba)

Edgar 'Ted' B SILSBY
 07 January 2003

Les PROFITT
 22 January 2003

Crew of the space shuttle 'Columbia'
 01 February 2003

Colin WHEATLEY
 February 2003

Michael BUNN
 14 February 2003

Peter D 'Kipper' BRITTON
 28 February 2003

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION 2003 REUNION



The Reunion Committee is progressing planning for the 2003 FAAA Reunion and final details of costs have been decided. The programme is aimed at providing people with opportunities to catch up with old shipmates and to make new friendships. The outline programme is:

- Thursday 2nd October Registrations at Bomaderry RSL
- Friday 3rd October Late Registrations.
Tours of HMAS ALBATROSS
Sporting Events
Cocktail party in "H" Hangar
- Saturday 4th October Annual General Meeting of FAAA of Aust
B-B-Que at Museum of Flight
Shoalhaven Tours
Branch Reunions
NSW Anniversary Dinner
- Sunday 5th October Air Day at ALBATROSS

It will be seen from the programme that costs are now settled for the Cocktail Party, the B-B-Que and the NSW Dinner. Please complete the detailed application form which is enclosed with this edition of *Slipstream*, to enable you to register for those events you wish to attend. These applications forms will also be communicated by means of the FAAA web site.

It is stressed that transport to Nowra and accommodation in the Nowra area is the responsibility of members wishing to attend the reunion. The Shoalhaven Visitor Information Center has listing of accommodation in the Nowra area and can be contacted on their web-site :

www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au or by E-mail on tourism@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

For those not on line, telephones are:

1800-024-261 or 02-4421-0778 Fax: 02-4423-2950

The Information Centre does produce an information booklet, copies of which will be sent to all Divisional Secretaries. (It would be too expensive to mail a copy to all members.)

The Committee welcomes any suggestions on what could be done to enhance the Reunion plans but time is running out for any major alterations.

OBITUARY

Edgar B SILSBY

'Ted', as he was known as, was born on 27-11-28 at Wiley Park Sydney. He was to eventually complete his education at Canterbury High. He started work with the NSW Railways, then with Ansett Airways and finally Smith's Weekly. Due to his interest in aviation, he had been a member of the Air League, he eventually joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1949.

After recruit training he was drafted to HMAS *Albatross* to train as an aircraft maintenance sailor. On completion of his training he joined a Sea Fury Squadron [805] and was to serve in HMAS *Sydney* during the Korean conflict. He gained the rank of Petty Officer before leaving the service in 1961.

On leaving the Navy, Ted returned to the Sydney area and became a successful businessman. He married his wife, Bev, some 45 years ago.

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SLIPSTREAM EDITOR - SEE FRONT COVER
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ABOVE:

**HMAS MANOORA
ALONGSIDE IN SYDNEY**

LEFT:

**RAN SEAKING HELICOPTER
CONDUCTING REPLENISHMENT
OPERATIONS WITH
HMAS MANOORA
IN THE BACKGROUND**

*Photographs courtesy of the
Royal Australian Navy
Photographic Branch*