



The Quarterly Journal
of the
Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia

Volume 4 Number 4

October 1993

Slipstream



Those were the days my friend, we thought they'd never end...



FOREWORD

by **Rear Admiral Oscar Hughes AO RANEM**

On 28 August 1993 the first of the new Collins Class submarines was launched in Adelaide by Lady Collins, widow of Vice Admiral Sir John Collins KBE CB.

This historic event marked the culmination of more than a decade of effort to construct in Australia a class of submarines specifically developed to meet the requirements of the RAN.

That the programme is on schedule, within budget and that the performance of the submarines are expected to equal or exceed navy's requirements reflects admirably on all involved.

At the end of August I retired from RAN service which included some fourteen years in Fleet Air Arm billets and the last eight years or so at the helm of the New Submarine Project. I now realise how much there is in common between the Fleet Air Arm and Submarine Arm which supports the often expressed view that a submarine is an aircraft which flies at negative altitude!

Safety is the dominant concern of all involved in both the Fleet Air Arm and the Submarine Arm. The Collins Class, like modern aircraft, is 'fly-by-wire' and completely automated. Like aircraft, submarines operate in a medium which is unforgiving. Submarine equipments and components are subjected to the same rigid 'airworthiness' requirements (qualification testing, configuration management, certification, etc) as aircraft. There are numerous other parallels.

Most importantly, the backbone of both the Fleet Air Arm and Submarine Arm is the people involved and the *esprit de corps* that characterises each group. Both are dedicated, loyal, hardworking and thoroughly professional and both contribute essential capabilities to the Australian Defence Force. Australians have every right to be proud of their navy.

I take this opportunity to wish the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia on-going success.

HOW TEAMWORK UNMASKED THE *Albatross* ARSONIST

by Superintendent H.E. (Harry) Delaforce - New South Wales Police Department

Summary of fire investigations at Naval Air Station *HMAS Albatross* Nowra on 4/12/1976.

Editorial Note

The following is a paper prepared by the author in 1977 after police investigations into this matter. At that time he was a Detective Sergeant and the Officer in Charge of the Wollongong NSW Scientific Investigation Section. Harry Delaforce is now the Commander of the Physical Evidence Section at Sydney Police Headquarters.....

About 11:30pm on Saturday, 4 December 1976, a fire commenced in 'H' hangar at *HMAS Albatross* near Nowra which destroyed the total naval surveillance and submarine detection aircraft of Australia.

The fire occurred at a time when the air station was 'winding down' prior to most personnel leaving for annual vacation over the Christmas/New Year period. The consequences of this fire are still being felt today, and apart from bushfires, is by far the most costly and complex fire to ever have occurred in this country.

The Naval Air Station is positioned in a rural setting about 10 kilometres south-west of Nowra on the South Coast of New South Wales and not far from Jervis Bay. It housed at the time of the fire, squadrons of helicopters, Skyhawk jet fighters, Macchi jet trainers, VIP and Grumman SE2 Tracker aircraft.

This incident concerned the 12 Tracker aircraft comprising 816 and 851 Squadrons and two Hawker Siddeley VIP aircraft. At the time of the fire the latter aircraft were standing on an apron close to the northern end of a hangar housing the 12 Tracker aircraft. The hangar was about 70 metres long by 46 metres wide, of arch type construction with corrugated walls and roof. It was orientated in a north-south direction.

Located at the northern and southern ends of the hangar were gantries which enclosed six large sliding doors. Internally along both walls were work rooms.

The northern half of the hangar was severely damaged by fire with the roof from that area collapsed on the floor. The southern half, while still standing, had heavy smoke and heat damage. Of the 12 aircraft in the hangar, six were located under the collapsed roof while the remainder had been removed during and immediately after the fire.

Local police were advised of the

fire at 11:40pm when assistance in controlling the fire was sought from Nowra Fire Brigade. Because the air station was a Federal installation it came within the Commonwealth jurisdiction and not that of New South Wales. This meant that in the initial stages all matters relating to the fire were controlled and handled by naval authorities.

During the early hours of 5 December, it became apparent to naval authorities that they didn't have the resources or expertise to investigate the cause of the fire. At 5:30am a message was received from Rear Admiral McDonald, Flag Officer Commanding the Eastern Australia Area, seeking assistance from the New South Wales Police specialising in fire investigations.

Of the 12 aircraft in the hangar, six were located under the collapsed roof while the remainder....

This request was acceded to and at noon on 5 December 1976, the first police scene investigators arrived at the air station. After discussions with naval authorities, arrangements were made to have the hangar contents, surrounding area and damaged aircraft secured. The area was barricaded and roped off with guards posted 24 hours per day. This continued unchanged for 45 days until physical examinations were completed on 17 January, 1977. During that time weather conditions varied between a heat wave and violent thunderstorms with strong winds.

Upon reviewing the whole inquiry, the most important decision made affecting the direction and final results of the investigation, was the one to secure the scene at the earliest moment.

Following the arrival of the main contingent of New South Wales Police,

a conference was held late in the afternoon involving both Naval and Commonwealth Police. At this meeting the control of and various roles in the investigation were determined together with a number of procedural and accommodation matters. Shortly afterwards a Naval Board of Inquiry was instituted. While the Board of Inquiry conducted its hearings separate to Police investigations, the two ran a parallel course because of close liaison and cooperation.

Police investigations were directed towards two main areas. The first dealt with the physical examination of the fire scene and all matters considered to be associated with it in some way. The second aimed at establishing the identity of all duty personnel and other persons who were on *Albatross* shortly before, during, and shortly after the fire. Included in this area was the obtaining and recording of information received from those persons about their movements, involvement and observations during the relevant periods.

Responsibility for conduct of the fire scene examinations was given to Wollongong Scientific and Investigation Section while the second role was in control of the Special Breaking Squad attached to the CIB, Sydney. They were assisted by detectives attached to Wollongong, Nowra and the Fraud and Motor Squads, Sydney.

As the inquiry expanded, Police attached to Fingerprint Sections at Wollongong and Sydney became involved, as did members of the Scientific Investigation Section, Sydney. Over the course of the inquiry, 34 New South Wales Police with a number of Commonwealth Police were involved. The latter performed the important role of liaison between State and Federal authorities.

On the first day of examinations a pair of chrome plated electrical side-cutters were found in the Sprinkler Control Room at the southern end of 'H' hangar. These had apparently been used to cut a leather strap securing the handle of a valve controlling water flow to the sprinkler system. Upon examination this valve was found to be in the closed position. The following day a fingerprint expert from Wollongong developed portions of latent fingerprints on the handle and head of the side-cutters.

At the beginning of the investigation opinion varied as to whether the valve was closed deliberately, by accident or in panic during the very early stages of the fire. To resolve the situation it was decided to obtain finger and palm print

impressions from all persons known or considered likely to have entered the Sprinkler System Control Room during the fire or at any time recent to the development of the latent fingerprints.

Despite taking this course of action, the latent fingerprints developed on the side-cutters remained unidentified and no satisfactory explanation was found for the closed valve in the sprinkler room. While the above was taking place, physical examinations were being made of the fire scene. The hangar was divided into ten sections, each designated 'A' to 'J', to ensure that a proper and thorough examination was made. Each section approximated an area covered by one of the six aircraft on the hangar floor. The intact southern end of the hangar and work rooms on either side comprised the remaining four sections.

Examinations were completed in one area before commencing the next. As items or other matters arose of probable assistance to the investigation or of some evidentiary value, it was photographed in situ, position recorded by measurement, labelled, taken possession of and details entered into the recording system before being placed in a security area.

..efforts were made to obtain the finger and palm print impressions of every person at Albatross...

Numerous outside experts were brought to the fire scene either by Police or the Naval Board of Inquiry to cover an area of the investigation applicable to their particular expertise. Their attendance had to be arranged at a time when it was possible for them to make a meaningful examination. As a result of discussions and liaison with them, Police put into motion requests made to have tests or experiments carried out.

The type and condition of material involved in the scene examinations made it necessary to use working parties comprised of naval personnel. They were utilised throughout the scene examinations and because they were untrained and not familiar with examination requirements of the Scientific Section investigators, constant supervision was necessary. This ensured items or matters of importance were not overlooked or destroyed.

Naval photographers attached to Albatross and acting at the direction of



'H' Hangar after the fire. Photo RAN

the scene examiners were used to take, process, print and file the 2500 individual photographs involved. This course was adopted for security reasons and because the inquiry was of a Service nature.

Many separate scale plans were prepared to show the layout of 'H' hangar, position of aircraft and ground support equipment, furniture contained in all offices, electrical systems, water sprinkler system, roof trusses and skylights, together with the general layout of the air station.

When all collapsed roof covering and steel trusses had been removed, a terrestrial photogrammetry survey was made of the northern end of 'H' hangar. This was done before any of the items contained therein were disturbed or examined. The virtue of using this system to prepare scale plans is that once used, information coming to hand at some future date and not known at the time of the survey, can be visually checked and accurately placed on a scale plan whenever desired.

As the inquiry progressed new lines of investigation arose from the physical examination of the scene. Some were of vital importance while others were necessary to provide information essential to the investigation such as supporting or rebutting theories advanced, or those that inevitably would be advanced. Briefly these lines of investigation included:

i) Detailed examination as to the state of electrical installations and appliances in 'H' hangar.

ii) Normal operation of the fire sprinkler control and fire alarm systems and whether there had been any significant discharge of water from the sprinkler system on the night of 4 December, 1976.

iii) The accepted fuelling and defuelling procedures employed on Tracker aircraft and any practice which departed from these recognised procedures.

iv) The state of all external doors and windows of 'H' hangar at the time the fire was discovered.

v) The key status in 'H' hangar and the movement of these keys.

vi) The identification of keys recovered from the fire during scene examinations.

vii) The composition of 851 Squadron Tool Control Room as at 3 December, 1976, and after the fire.

viii) An examination of the Air Station perimeter for signs of illegal entry or other matter that would indicate entry to 'H' hangar from outside the base.

On 9 December, 1976, the investigation took a dramatic turn when experts from the Air Transport Group found evidence that a defuelling valve on one of the aircraft was in the open position when that aircraft was destroyed by fire. The whole approach to the inquiry then changed as investigators were almost certainly faced with the crime of arson.

Increased efforts were made to obtain the finger and palm print impressions of every person at Albatross on the night of 4 December,

1976, for comparison with the latent fingerprints developed on the electrical side-cutters. This was a mammoth task as more than 2000 people were involved. It was further complicated by prevailing heatwave conditions and by personnel having left the base and travelled interstate.

It was pointed out to every person that the supply of impressions was purely on a voluntary basis with an assurance given that if supplied they would be used solely in relation to the fire investigation and later returned for destruction.

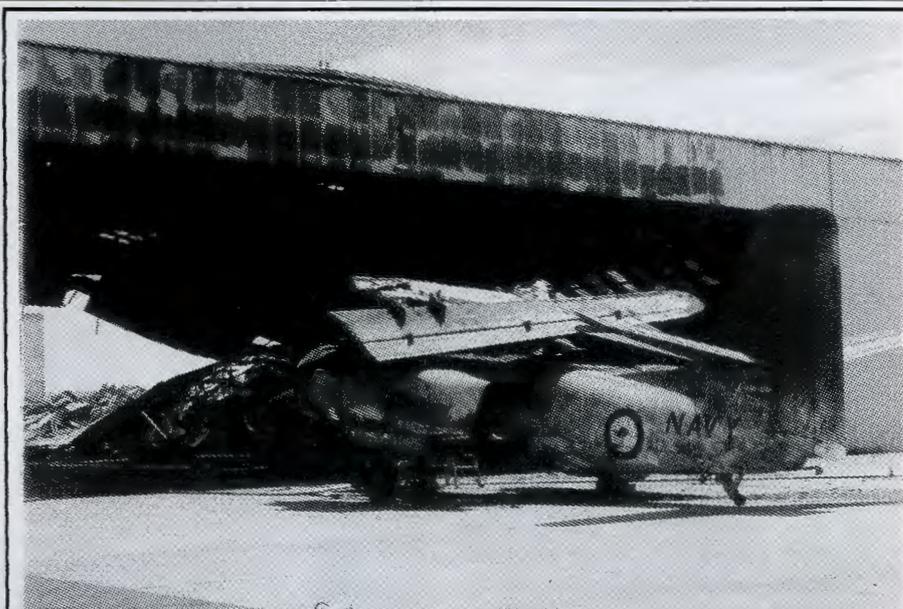
The heatwave conditions initially made the task of obtaining suitable quality impressions almost impossible as perspiration prevented fingerprint ink from adhering evenly to the skin. This problem was overcome by wiping perspiring hands with a cloth soaked in methylated spirits.

As each person gave their finger and palm print impressions they were invited to complete two separate forms. The first form required them to set out their name, rank and where attached, and to agree or otherwise, that at no stage during the evening of Saturday, 4 December, or the morning of Sunday, 5 December, 1976, did they enter the Sprinkler System Control Room for 'H' hangar nor had they entered that room on any other occasion prior to those dates.

...identified the two partial fingerprints discovered on the electrical side-cutters...

The second form was in the nature of a questionnaire asking whether they were on the base at the time of the fire; in any case who they were with at the time; if on the base did they attend the fire; if so what they did and whether their normal or some other duty took them into 'H' hangar; if so the last occasion they were there; whether they were on duty watch the night of the fire; any knowledge they possessed as to the cause of the fire.

This questionnaire was introduced to allow investigators to shorten interrogation of persons who for various reasons would obviously be of no assistance to the inquiry. To avoid the possibility of a guilty party arranging for a substitute to volunteer impressions, proof of identification



'H' Hangar and damaged aircraft. Photo RAN

was obtained from each person and when satisfactory an endorsement made at the foot of the questionnaire.

When another defuelling valve of a second destroyed aircraft was found in the open position by Air Transport experts, the necessity to establish the identity of all persons on *Albatross* during the night of 4 December, 1976, became paramount.

Without going into details, it can be said that the task of identifying the latent fingerprints developed on the chrome plated side-cutters was made very difficult because of variable factors involved with the interpretation.

Notwithstanding that, an expert attached to the Central Fingerprint Bureau, Sydney (Detective Sergeant Jim Dowling), on 19 January, 1977, identified the two partial fingerprints discovered on the electrical side-cutters as those of the left thumb and right ring finger of Graham John TRENT, of 851 Squadron. It was quite a breakthrough and had taken Sergeant Dowling weeks of painstaking comparisons and elimination before the culprit's identity was finally revealed.

Shortly afterwards TRENT was taken into custody and in a recorded interview which he signed, he admitted lighting the fire in 'H' hangar on the night of 4 December, 1976. Prior to lighting the fire he had opened defuelling valves on two aircraft and closed the control valve supplying water to the sprinkler system. The side-cutters were used to remove a leather strap securing this valve.

On 20 January, 1977, TRENT voluntarily accompanied Police to the various locations around the air station

re-enacting what he did on the night he lit the fire in 'H' hangar. As this took place his actions were recorded both in writing and by photography.

In his record of interview, TRENT raised matters in relation to certain acts done by him on the evening of the fire. These matters could be fully supported by evidence, although when found well before TRENT was identified, their implications were not fully appreciated. They would only have been known to the person responsible for lighting the fire and, by falling into place, incriminated him further.

By the time the investigation reached the above conclusion some 851 separate lines of inquiry had been followed. A total of 349 statements or records of interview were taken or conducted ranging from 2 to 15 pages. In excess of 100 items were recovered from the fire scene during examinations and held for evidentiary purposes.

Naval officers had the responsibility of preparing the prosecution case against TRENT which was presented to a Court Martial hearing held at *HMAS Penguin*, Sydney, during April, 1977. The case was found to be established and TRENT was detained at the Governor's pleasure.

In conclusion, this investigation clearly demonstrated what can be achieved by teamwork, cooperation and DOING IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.

* Our sincere thanks to the Editor of the *Australian Police Journal* for permission to reprint this article.

HANGARound for a bit more history!

A few of the 'old and bold' may recall that the original 'H' hangar went into self destruct mode in September, 1951, whilst under construction. The notorious Nowra 'Westerlies' left the framework a mass of twisted metal.

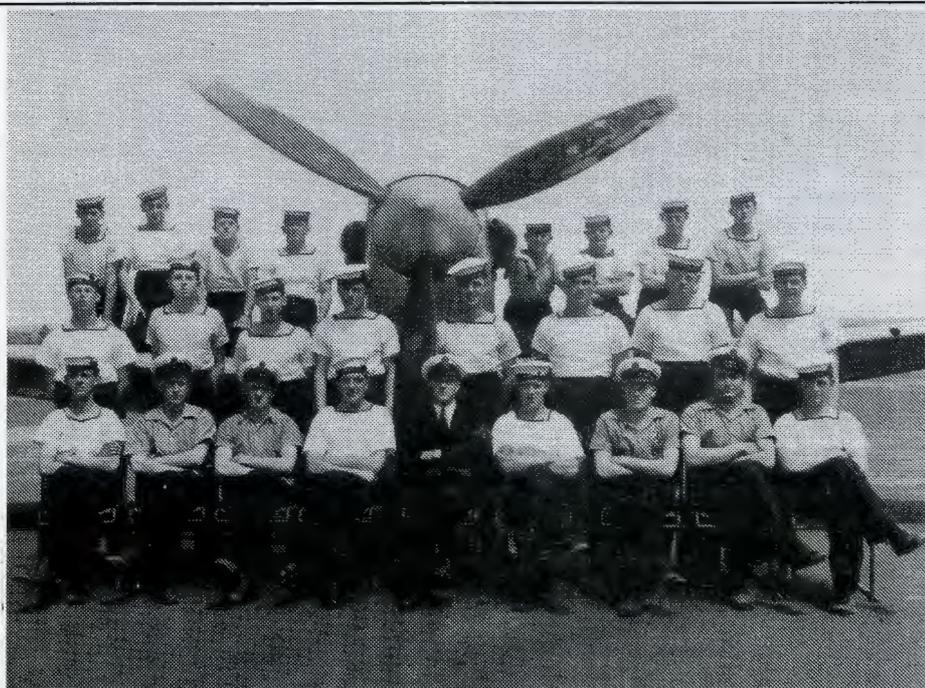
A supervisor connected with the project later committed suicide.



This photograph shows 'J' hangar under construction in 1953.

The Sea Fury aircraft in the foreground, being armed with practice rockets, belonged to 808 Squadron attached to HMAS Vengeance.

The days of Wine and Roses



Naval Airman Recruit Class No. 7 of 1948 Photo courtesy Bill Tierney

Back Row Left to Right:

C. Cherry
W. Tierney
G. Strickland
G. Mullins
J. Stewart
J. Moncrieff
F. Wessell
?.....

Centre Row:

S. Wilson
I. Wilson
R. Kingsley
A. Leslie
M. Tiffen
R. Hammond
T. Tite
K. Peach

Front Row:

M. Smallman
J. Herringe
J. Bootle
L/A Taylor RN
PO Walker RN
L/A Lemon RN
J. Grenfell
B. Rogers
D. Laird

This article is being written in the hope that some long lost Aircraft Handlers may be reunited with forgotten shipmates

Muster on the Flight Deck!

by Frank Larter

best sportsmen to serve at *Albatross*.

Let's not forget Master at Arms Bert Harrell's biggest nightmare, Brian

of the past - either prior to, or at the 50th Anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm Reunion scheduled for 1998.

I am indebted to Ian (Jock) Stanfield for providing me with the almost perfect collection of AH3 Class photographs, names and course results, from 1948 to the disbanding of the AH and Aviation Branch in the 1980s. My thanks also extend to Dave Laird for matching names to photos for the period 1948 to '52 - which was before my time.

As a matter of interest, in the ten year period from Class No.1 in November 1948 to November 1958, almost 1300 sailors completed AH3 Courses and almost every class eventually produced at least one Senior Sailor.

Okay, slip the memory-box into gear, here we go!

I've heard that Bill Tierney is in Kiama and Alan 'Lips' Leslie in Hobart, but whatever happened to my old Recruit School instructor, 'Massa' Austin? Then there's Ken Marsden, 'Stalky' Mailey, Trevor (Snow) Tite, 'Gladys' Moncrieff, Wilbur Forrest, John Heffernan and George Houghagen. Let's not forget Peter Kelly who used to walk his imaginary dog on its imaginary leash around the depot.

What about Billy (Wombat) Love, who somehow managed to roll one of the Thorneycroft fire tenders - 'Tex' Rickard, Billy Castle and K.L.Kelly, who I am told, went to live in Canberra - and Don (Boong) Graham who went to Frankston as a school teacher.

There was Davey Cross, Jim Lemke, Ross Wyllie and Colin Cherry, Alan (The Great Gatsby) Cross, Ronnie Burns, Clive Tanzier, 'Rajah' O'Keefe, 'Murlex' Bradley. Not forgetting Barry Tyrell and Bruce Redpath who, with an unnamed Dental Assistant and 'yours truly', got into some bloody awful alcoholic concoctions in the Dental Surgery on weekends.

Martin Moriarty is a Queensland Council in Queensland, Don (Dad) Bruce is at Crib Point, but where is Jimmy Sparkes, Reg (Snake) Kelly, Ronny Breaden and the one and only 'Strawb' Bruce, who used to man the Red Rover in our Air Traffic Control days?

'Chicken' Mickan went to Byron Bay, 'Ace' Kleidon is in Warwick,

Queensland, and Ron Powell and his lovely wife, Gwen, are on the Gold Coast. Col Spence was working at Moorabbin and Johnny Goodwin has just re-emerged as a member of the FAAA in Victoria. 'Smiley' McGowan and 'Big Julie' Jeffries are living in Elwood, Victoria, and I have their telephone numbers somewhere.

There was Tom Henry, Ron Smith and Jimmy Good who, in my opinion, was one of the best Air Traffic Controllers to climb the stairs to Air Watch - where are you Jimmy?

Arthur Nixon (MAA), Ron Andrews, Jimmy McCook, 'Horrie' Swan and Teddy Blaine, Bill Barry and Terry Martin, who I think was a 'Mickey-mouse kellick'. 'Paddy' Burk, Lyle (Pop) Stark, John (Mother) Green, 'Nulla' Mount, Zane Weller, Ray Gartin, Ray Garland and Charlie Malpass - where are you all?

I think that 'Tubby' Murtagh is in Kiama but no word of 'Trigger' Trindall, Wally Barton, Cameron Reed and Doug Murray, who taught me to ride elephants in Colombo whilst on the way to UK in 1955.

Others that spring to mind are Ray (Whalesteeth) Cotterill, Artie Lysle, Jack Cattin, John Powell and 'Banjo' Patterson. Peter Donniger, Reg McCrory, Billy Sincocks, John Drinkwater and George Sawyers who was my Fire Crew 'kellick' in '57. 'Tick' Treloar, Mickey Hester, Des Malcomon and my old mate, Bob Dalton, who lives at Belmont near Newcastle.

Keith (Digby) Whitby, Don Pengilly, John Fenner, who has a cane farm near Mackay - Zeke Smith, Kim Kimmorley, 'Googie' Withers, and Des O'Bree and John Slattery who both became 'Jossmen'.

Ray Wellings and Terry Holmes, 'Boorie' Levis, AJ Vine, Barry Baker, Bob Hokin, Eric Bayliss and Dickie Baverstock, who caught the biggest bloody shark I've ever seen in Aden Harbour in '56.

John Jeffreys, 'Crash' Kennedy, Vince Nolan, Murray Edgar and John (Hank) Terry from Ballan, Victoria, with whom I share a birthday and enlistment date.

Cliff Eaton, 'China' Byron, Ken Pashley, Sid Silburn, Terry (Boxer) Banks, Dave Brock, Don McCutcheon (Dandenong Vic) Ross McVea, Dave Radley, Bevan Styles and Trevor Beutel and Dave Hoskins, two of the

Koch.

'Burberry' Cheal, Ken Damm, 'Tex' Gaffney, 'Blue' Sedgewick, Mick Hourihan, Roy Onley, 'Bobo' Olsen, Barry (Butch) Fay, Leon Penn and 'Buncha' Keys.

Ian Struhs, 'Speed' King, Monty Middleton, and Ken (Bear) Hammond.

Tony Halpin, who lives on the Gold Coast and Billy Koest who lives in Denmark, Western Australia.

'Jingles' Mathews, Graham Fawdry, 'Tonto' Kerwitz, Eddy Ryan, 'Olly' Oliver, 'Darcy' Da Silveira, Trevor Chatwin, Trevor Chatterton, George Hunt, Peter May, Pat Franklin, John Mulhall, Harry Philistin, 'Chook' Fowler, Herby Scroop, Barry Leuders and Steve Parrish, whose brilliant Australian wildlife photo's can be seen and purchased at every Post Office in the country.

Fred Olinga, Darcy McVean, 'Pinky' White, Dennis Morrison, Verrell Clarke, Graham Rattray, Terry Alloway and last but no means least, John Sendy, who pulled LtCdr Fred Goodfellow from his crashed Vampire, live seat included.

I know that I've missed out hundreds of names, and I have deliberately excluded those of you who attend our Fleet Air Arm reunions. If you know the whereabouts of any of the above, or any other ex-Aircraft Handlers, please advise them of the forthcoming 50th Anniversary Fleet Air Arm Reunion in 1998. Remember, it's not really that far off and planning for the event has already commenced.

If you wish to contact me with any names and/or addresses, or application forms for those wishing to join the Fleet Air Arm Association, please write to: Frank Larter, 15 Greenwell Point Road, Nowra NSW 2541 - PLEASE enclose a couple of 45 cent stamps as I hope this will prove to be an expensive exercise. **

I've just been reminded about one of the above, who was nicknamed after a Highland beverage. After failing to muster for Men Under Punishment, the mobile patrol eventually located him at his favourite haunt - the Pig Farm. Still covered in pig muck, he was being dressed down by the OOD who concluded his 'bollocking' by commenting that it was obvious that he had no ambition in life! The culprit replied that he did so. He wanted to pay off and come back as the Wardroom Caterer. Ed.

The Great Seatbelt Lesson

In the early 1950's the Canadian Navy's Avenger aircraft were used to conduct an anti-submarine tactic called *GLOW-WORM*.

Glow-worm was a hair-raising night time manoeuvre in three parts:

- 1) A dive to increase speed
- 2) A sharp pull-up to loft rocket flares high into the night sky, and
- 3) A quick push-over to attack visually the submarine illuminated by the flares.

My startling introduction to this roller coaster tactic came one night in 1952. In those days I flew in Avengers as a back seat radio/radar operator. My crew station was deep inside the lower fuselage of the aircraft with only two small perspex windows looking outside.

I was away on leave when my squadron adopted *Glow-worm* so I missed all the ground lectures and the daylight practice flights. On my very first night back from leave I found myself in the back of an Avenger flying seaward into the blackness to practice *Glow-worm* with an exercise submarine. My pilot was new to the squadron so I didn't know him well. I knew less about *Glow-worm*.

En route to the exercise area we investigated a few radar contacts but not in a very aggressive manner. This lulled me into believing that the new pilot might be a bit conservative. I didn't realise he was adapting himself to his night time surroundings. Since the radar compartment was not used for take-off and landing I had neglected to strap myself into the seat.

As we approached the exercise area at 1500 feet, a submarine-like contact appeared on the scope. I dutifully reported it to the pilot, fully expecting a gradual run-in not unlike the kind we had just been making.

I should have guessed something would be different this time, for instead of getting an acknowledgement, I heard an ominous increase in engine RPM and felt a slight yaw as my 'conservative' pilot pushed against the rudder pedals to wedge himself more firmly into his seat. Concentrating on the target, I kept my face pressed into the rubber visor of the radar scope and continued to report the decreasing range - then - I uttered the fateful words the pilot was waiting like a coiled spring to hear - '*Range.....2 miles*'.

Before the last syllable was out,

three things happened - **all at once!** ON came the power, OVER went the nose, and UPWARD shot the writer - propelled towards the roof of the pitch-black compartment by negative G.

Part One of *Glow-worm* had begun!

As my seat and I parted company, my helmet with its short cord was instantly torn from my ears, adding the engine's howl and the roaring slipstream to the shock of my sudden dislocation - just as my eyes assumed the shape and size of dinner plates, the aircraft steadied in the dive, allowing dissipated 'G' to drop me onto the cabin floorboards somewhere in the blackness behind the seat I had occupied seconds ago. I groped for something to cling to and had partially regained my feet when three more things happened all at once:

- 1) We reached the bottom of our dive.
- 2) We hit our maximum airspeed, and
- 3) We commenced *Glow-worm* Part Two!

As suddenly as he had pushed the nose over, the pilot now wrenched back on the 'pole' to send the aircraft zooming skyward at a fearful angle, buckling my knees and throwing me back onto the floorboards.

My heart was now racing at about 300 beats per minute. In my frantic search for something to hang onto, I unwittingly grabbed the elevator control cable that ran exposed along the fuselage wall. I didn't know what I had seized but I wasn't about to let go, even though I could feel my arm moving oddly back and forth each time the pilot moved the controls.

Suddenly I sensed a slight change in attitude and some reduction in airspeed. Were we about to level off all safe and sound? Not on your life! We had just reached the apogee of our upward zoom and *Glow-worm* Part Three was only a microsecond away.

With the nose of the aircraft still high above the night horizon and the airspeed falling off at an alarming rate, the pilot triggered off the *Glow-worm* rockets and simultaneously pushed over for the attack, sending the rockets skyward, the aircraft seaward, and me, once again - towards the cabin roof. But this time I had a death grip on the elevator cable and floated only as high as the bilge window that gave onto the underside of the wing.

Unfortunately, my startled face appeared at this small opening just as the rockets, suspended on the wing rails, suddenly belched out their fiery 'innards'. At this precise moment my

fingers, moving along smartly with the elevator cable, jammed painfully into the small tunnel that guided the cable into its recessed pulley. All this proved too much - I LET GO!

Down we hurtled towards the submarine, the night sky now alight with flares and me sprawled once again on the cabin floor - convinced that the rockets had misfired and were now burning off the wings.

Just as suddenly as this wild roller coaster had begun, level flight was restored followed by normal engine power and a kick by the pilot on the rudder in accordance with lost intercom procedure.

I recovered my helmet, and in a voice I didn't recognise said, 'Y-Yes , Skipper?'

And skipper cheerfully replied, 'Sorry, Radar. We can't make a second run, I had the rocket switch on SALVO and shot off all four!'

To which the unrecognisable voice said, 'Aah, too bad...too bad!'

* With thanks to the Newsletter of the Canadian Naval Aviators and Associates .

Around the Corner

by Henson Towne

*Around the corner I have a friend,
In this great city that has no end.
Yet days go by and weeks rush on
And before you know it a year is gone.
And I never see my old friends's face
For life is a swift and terrible race.
He knows I like him just as well
As in the days when I rang his bell
And he rang mine. We were younger
then -
And now we are busy, tired men,
Tired with playing a foolish game;
Tired with trying to make a name.
"Tomorrow", I say, "I will call on Jim,
Just to show I'm thinking of him".
But tomorrow comes - and tomorrow
goes;
And the distance between us grows
and grows.
Around the corner - yet miles away...
"Here's a Telegram, sir".
"Jim died today".
And that's what we get - and deserve
in the end -
Around the corner, a vanished friend.*

* With thanks to 'Lead and Line', the newsletter of the Naval Officer's Association of Vancouver Island.



Letters to the Editor



TO THE READERS

On Page 12 of the last edition of *Slipstream*, a letter was published from Colin Davies an ex-Air Mech/E, Royal Navy, who came to Australia (HMAS Albatross) in 1948 on two years loan.

When a non-member of the Association contributes to *Slipstream*, it is customary to forward them a copy of the edition in which their submission appears. This was done in Colin's case.

The following letter is self explanatory.....

Dear John,

On behalf of my husband, Colin, I would like to thank you for the Journal that you sent.

Unfortunately, on the day it arrived, 22 July, he passed away in hospital from cancer, but I know that he would have been so pleased that you published his letter.

Colin would often tell me of the time he spent at Nowra, of the friends he made and of how well he was looked after.

I think he would have loved to go back for a holiday and see it all again, especially your Museum - but it wasn't to be.

However, thank you once again for your interesting Journal.

Yours sincerely, *Olive Davies (UK)*

Dear Ed,

Many thanks for the membership form to join the esteemed association of the 'old and bold', and thanks for the copies of *Slipstream* you forwarded, I look forward to them arriving.

Enclosed is a copy of a sign which at one time (way back), was displayed in a little cafe next to the Waterloo Hotel, which was close by Waterloo Station, London.

The hotel itself was frequented by many of the first group of ex-Stokers to go to England in 1947-48. I went back again in 1950 and that is when I had the sign presented to me by the manager of the cafe (NO! ..I didn't knock it off).

As I recall, I was part way through my meal when I first spotted the sign suspended from the picture rail. I couldn't believe my eyes!

**The Steak sold
in this Restaurant
is the Very Best
Horseflesh.**

Looking back on that meal, I definitely couldn't handle it now.

Best wishes and keep up the good work,

Regards, *Max Gant*

Dear Ed,
Could I please place the following ad. in the next issue of *Slipstream*.

Thank you very much,
Denis Mulvihill

ATTENTION! All ex-JR's of Eighth Intake - HMAS Leeuwin January '64.

It is proposed to hold a re-union in the early part of 1994.

For further information please contact one of the following:

George Picone - AH (07) 824 0130

Tom Clark - AH (02) 899 4796

Bob Green - AH (042) 835 201

Mick Heaney - AH (062) 297 2347

Denis Mulvihill - AH (044) 217 616

There you are, Denis, no problem at all. Now how about joining the Association, we need people of your vintage. Ed.

Dear Ed,

May I appeal through the pages of 'Slipstream' for any ex-Air/ Photographers who may be interested in joining a new Association now being formed in the United Kingdom called the NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSOCIATION.

Very briefly, membership is open to all serving and ex- Air/Phot's and commissioned Officers, who are, or was a Specialist Photographic Officer.

The proposed fee for the first year is Five Pounds. Should anyone be interested they can write direct to: Ian Wrightson, 3 Green Walk, Fareham, HANTS PO156AZ, England - or contact me for any information I can give. (28 Royal Terrace, Royal Park, Adelaide SA 5014)

I was traced after twenty years in Australia, so they must have a pretty good intelligence network in UK.

Yours faithfully, *Robbie Burns*

South Australian Division and ex-Glory '45-'47.

Back Row Left to Right:

'Happy' Clark - 'Lofty' McCarley -
Lou Luther-'Lofty' Millington - Jack Lombard
- Joe Malcolm - John Cashmore -
'Bluey' Haarsma

Centre Row:

Stan McCutcheon - Les Wilson -
'Spike' Jones - Alan Goddard ?- Dan Duigan
- Bill Hitchcock

Front Row:

John Hibbert - Clive Cotter -
Brian 'Gaspar' Edwards - Max Gant -
Dave Rice

Photo courtesy John Cashmore

Dear Ed,

This is the photo of the Australian Rules Football Team at Yeovilton, England, in 1949.

These were the first to change over to the Fleet Air Arm from General Service, mostly Seamen and Stokers, who left Australia in 1948/49.

Can't remember all the names. Regards, *John Cashmore*



Dear Ed,

I am sending you some photo's a mate of mine took in Pusan (War Cemetery) while he was on holidays in Korea. He knew that I had been on the *Sydney* in Korea in 1951 and thought that the photo's would interest me. They certainly did, and brought back a lot of old memories.

I thought that 'Slipstream' readers may be interested in seeing them too.

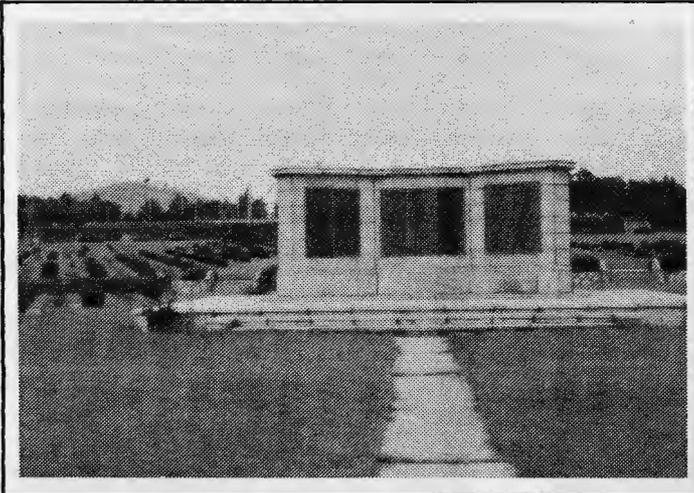
Looking forward to the next edition,

Yours faithfully, *Geoff Beardsley*

PS: I saw Ron Mosman recently (ex-PO's Mess President in mid 50s). He is 'mine-host' at the Grandchester Hotel, Qld.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY-reads
 Lieutenant K.E.Clarkson DFM
 Sub-Lieutenant R.J.Coleman
 Sub-Lieutenant R.R.Sinclair
 (All Sea Fury Pilots of 805 Squadron. Ed.)



Dear Ed,

It was with great interest that I read Ted Tinsdale's report on the last Kamikaze, because if I have my three R's functioning (Rapidly Receding Recollections), *HMS Indefatigable* was in at the start as well as the finish of the Kamikazes.

This fact had never registered previously.

At 1100 on 01 April, 1945, an Easter Sunday, *HMS Indefatigable* collected the first Kamikaze to hit a British ship; it crashed on to the aft end of the island.

Yours faithfully, *Doug White* - ex-887 Squadron on *Indefatigable*.

* A correction to the article, 'The Last Kamikaze', which appeared in the last edition, is as follows: The photograph showing the aircraft should indicate that the photograph was taken from *HMS Victorious*. With thanks to *Harold Chandler* - ACT Division. Ed.

Dear Ed,

Mother-in-Law, *Jean Wiley*, was thrilled to read about the Coronation Ball in the last edition of *Slipstream*.

Jean still has the newspaper cuttings and original photographs of the debutantes.

Jean, and husband *Keith*, ran the Dance School at the CWA in those early years, with all the proceeds going

to the hospital and ambulance. They taught lots of sailors during that time, of course.

Keith is now 78, and Jean 81. They still get an occasional visit from *Chris O'Neill* (ex-CPOSE) when he comes over from the West, and also know *Col Bushe-Jones* quite well.

Regards, *Frank Fox*

The following is an abridged version of a letter from LtCdr Ron Robb RAN (Rtd), who is currently writing the definitive history of HMAS Nirimba - 'The Flight of the Pelican'.

Dear John,

The 'book' is now in high gear with me looking over my shoulder as the publishing deadline gets alarmingly close.

I've found 'old hands' all over the world, literally, who've been sending an avalanche of photos, brochures, posters, memoirs, biographies, recollections etc going back to the WW2 years covering RN, RAAF, RANAS and RANATE.

Yeovilton and RAAF Museums, and the *HMS Indefatigable* and PONAM Associations are all onside. The Navy Office historian is also very helpful.

For example, retired Chaplain,

Walter Wheelden, flew *Seafires* out of *Schofields* as a SBLT RNVR, he later served here as a Chaplain in the 1960s. All kinds of old British Pacific Fleet RNFers have been popping up from all over the place, both here and in the UK. RAAF, both past and present have been very enthusiastic and helped with plenty of material. I also served here while it was still RAAF *Schofields* in 1952 and for the commissioning on April Fools Day in 1953.

'*Nat*' *Gould*, who served here as *FltLt Gould* RAAF and soon became *Lt Gould* RANVR, has also loaned me some priceless pictures.

I have decided to go from go-to-whoa and even include in the pre-history section a bit about the pre-1788 Aborigines. A subject that has been thoroughly researched and documented by the professor of Archaeology at *Macquarie University*.

Even some of the descendants of the early white settlers who lived on what is now the airfield have been located. One sprightly old fellow who came to light, was one of the original members of the Civil Construction Corps that did the airfield construction which started in 1941. (The CCC eventually became the Dep't of Housing and Construction, now the Australian Construction Services).

Some other items of historical

interest, has been the discovery that the RAAF buildings were used as a Migrant Hostel in the late 1940s, something the Dep't of Immigration had no record of; and that QANTAS used the place for touch and go's with the Constellations during the late 1940s and also with Dakotas in the early 1950s. This information even surprised QANTAS who have had to amend their own history books.

Not many people know that *Nirimba* featured in the 'Petrov Affair' during the early '50s. When Mrs Petrov was 'rescued' in Darwin, she was flown back to Schofields from where she was to disappear into anonymity.

There are dozens more fascinating bits and pieces. If you want to know more, you will have to buy the book.

I have asked the Australian Naval Aviation Museum for its reaction to taking over the publishing rights and copyright to the book when *Nirimba* vanishes; the proposal includes inheritance of all the research data, including the unpublished stuff.

With kind regards, *Ron Robb*

* A flier is included with this edition of *Slipstream* giving a brief profile of HMAS *Nirimba* and details of the Closure Events. *Ed.*

To all concerned with the recent 45th Fleet Air Arm Anniversary Dinner, hosted by the NSW Division and held at the Naval Aviation Museum White Ensign Club Function Centre.

Congratulations to all those involved in the organisation of the FAA Dinner on 28 August 1993.

My wife and I thought it was an outstanding success and we were pleased to see all the old faces - even if I couldn't remember some of the names. Well done! Can I come again?

Kind regards to all, *Alky Annand*

Dear Ed,

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed photographs, they were taken at RNAS Eglinton somewhere around February 1956.

816 and 817 Squadrons were in the final weeks of their familiarisation with their new Gannets, and only weeks away from embarking on *Melbourne* for the trip back to Australia.

The colour slides from which these prints were produced, were taken by myself during night flying exercises on a very cold and snowy Londonderry evening.

With the exception of Jim Lee and Don Chisholm, I'm afraid that the names of the others were not recorded and have long been forgotten.

Maybe you can use one of these photographs in *Slipstream*. Unfortunately, the originals have not been treated too kindly over the years and I was surprised that they printed so well, but possibly not good enough for *Slipstream*.

When you have finished with the photographs, would you please pass them on to the lads at the museum with my compliments so that they can be added to their collection. In the meantime, maybe someone can identify some of the nameless.

Congratulations on the standard that you have achieved with the publication of *Slipstream*, I was at *Albatross* when *Slipstream* Mk.1 was born, and it is good to see that Mk.2 is even better.

Yours Aye, *John R. Ahern*

* Thank you for the photographs and the kind words. *Ed.*



RNAS Eglinton 1956 -Clockwise from Front Left: Jim Lee - Don Chisholm -Chris O'Neil - ?.....- Les 'Juke' Matterson. Photo courtesy John R. Ahern

Gentlemen, A most unexpected happening has just taken place here! I was attending a dinner party with friends at their home to help play host to some Australians. (I am the unofficial Aussie host in the NW USof A)

Sooo! when we arrive, who greets me at the door but Mike Astbury and his lovely wife Margaret. What a pleasant surprise! And then he hits me with the 'Big one!' Gifts from the FAA Reunion for me! i.e. a beaut jumper with logo, peak cap and a lovely FAA Tea Towel for my wife, Jewel. That was so very thoughtful of my mates in the RAN and we thank you all for thinking of us.

We hope to get back to Australia soon, but this depends on family commitments. I do get away for a day now and again so I can take in a Car Show, or, seeing that I've done up the old blue ute (again), I show it at the bigger shows in the Seattle, Portland area. I also show my '56 Chevrolet two door wagon, and '63 Cadillac Coupe. I have five old cars and two new ones, so I'm kept busy (and healthy in the bargain).

I very much regret missing the reunion and seeing 'you lot' again, but I guess we are meant to play the cards we are dealt and not whinge about it. All the best, *Joe Gates*





SPIN us a DIT!

JUST REMINISCING

Recruit School, Flinders Naval Depot, 1950's.

"Do you poor bastards realise, that when you leave this cream of establishments you're going to Nowra?"

These were the words of the grizzled Chief Gunner, who had the dubious honour of being our Divisional Chief petty Officer during our recruit training.

"I presume you've all heard about Nowra, you'd have to, being bloody BIRDIES."

He somehow managed to say the word, Birdies, as if he was trying to clear rust from his throat.

"Do any of you know where the place is or anything about it?"

There was dead silence for a few seconds and then the class 'Einstein' couldn't contain himself any longer.

"I think I've read that Nowra is an aboriginal word meaning Black Cockatoo," he offered.

The Chief visibly bristled and appeared to grow another six inches taller.

"Black Cockatoo my arse!" he bellowed

The class took a discreet half pace to the rear.

"I'll tell you about Nowra," he continued.

"It's the only place on earth where you can walk around with your 'nuts' in the mud and still get dust in your eyes."

For almost forty years, I've often thought of that thumb-nail sketch of the place that many of us now call home. What's more, I still can't find any argument with the description.

It was on such a day some months later, we'd had intermittent sleeting rain and non stop Westerly winds. Flying was suddenly cancelled and we all charged off to the crewroom like iron filings to a magnet.

On opening the crew room door, it took a minute or two for the eyes to adjust. All the windows closed, twenty blokes smoking fags and steam belching out of the water urn in such large quantities that the lid rattled like castanets.

After the eyes had adjusted it was the nose's turn. What an assault on the uninitiated 'schnoz' that was.

The overpowering smell of greasy overalls, wet burberries, dripping white hat cleaner, instant coffee, fumes from the 'hepatitis bucket' and the not too infrequent beery fart to complete the recipe. But... we needed the heat that close proximity produces and the hot brew was a bonus.

It was during these crew room breaks, with a fag in one hand and a brew in the other, that the matelots mind and conversation usually got around to sex, sport and motor cars.

During one of these in-depth conversations, when one of the blokes was enumerating his weekend sexploits, a deep voice, in a slow Queensland drawl interrupted proceedings.....

"Funny bloody things sheep," said the voice.

There was instant silence as nineteen pairs of eyes played 'Spot-the-Kiwi'.

"I said, they're funny bloody things sheep," said the voice, a little louder this time.

The 'voice' turned out to be Bob the armourer, a six foot 'banana bender' with a head like a beat up sand shoe.

Now that he had everyone's full attention he continued.

"You're not going to believe this," he said. "But when I was a young bloke, my uncle drove a mob of sheep from East to Western Australia. It was the biggest mob of sheep ever moved over the biggest distance."

A doubting Thomas chipped in.

"If it was such a big deal it must be on record somewhere."

This interjection from the peanut gallery didn't faze Bob one iota, as he calmly rolled another 'coffin nail' one handed and thought up a suitable reply.

"No," he said.

"When I was a young bloke Guinness only made beer, they hadn't gone into writing record books at that stage. Well, like I said, this uncle of mine drove this big mob from East to West, I can tell you now, it caused quite a stir in the local papers."

"How many sheep were there, Bob?" someone had the temerity to ask.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Bob.

"All you could see as far as the horizon was this big, white, woolly sea of sheep on the hoof."

"Yeah," said someone else. "But how many sheep were there?"

"I'll tell you," said Bob.

"It took all me uncles, all me cousins and all their mates to push them sheep along."

"Yes, but how many bloody sheep were there?" cried several voices in unison.

"Well," said Bob. "I can't tell you the exact number 'cos my job was looking after the dogs."

"Alright then," said another goofer. "How many dogs did you look after?"

Bob slowly struck a match, lit his one-handed fag, took a big drag and exhaled twin plumes of smoke from his nostrils.

"Ten thousand of the bastards!" he said.

You could have heard a pin drop as we all walked out into the hangar in stunned silence.

* *Peregrine* ©1990

SAFE...TY EQUIPMENT

Whilst in charge of the Dinghy Bay at Albatross, I detailed off one of the sailors to cut the lawn around the Bay.

The 'bod' duly went away, borrowed a lawn mower from Naval Stores and proceeded to cut the lawn.

Every now and then we would see him pass the windows as he pushed the mower back and forth.

About an hour and a half later he came back inside the Bay and said, "I've finished the lawn but the mower didn't do a very good job."

On being asked why it hadn't done a good job, he replied, "There were no bloody blades on it!"

* *Geoff Beardsley - No doubt many ex-SEs will recall this particular sailor.*

Excerpts from the activities/conversations at the RN Fleet Air Arm Armourer's Association annual reunion held at the DeVere Hotel, Coventry, earlier this year..

* ...but the Star Prize of the evening must go to 'he who shall remain nameless', who tried to smuggle a two litre bottle of Sainsbury's wine (camouflaged in a Sainsburys poly bag), into the dining room without the head waiter spotting it.

Unfortunately, the foyer must have listed heavily to starboard, because he staggered into a pillar and accidentally smashed the bottle on it.

He is my new hero, for having the presence of mind to look around him,

smile sheepishly at his audience and say, "I name this hotel, DeVere," and then shoved off back to where he came from.

*....Gor, I had a terrible journey down. I had a puncture and my spare was too soft to go any further, so I drove off the motorway and stopped at the first village filling station. I said excuse me, do you happen to have an air line? He said, you'd be havin' a laugh mate, this is Little Blogsworth, we don't even have a bloody bus service.

*....it should be pointed out that the tickets being sold for their local policeman's ball, was not a dance, but a raffle!

*....and then there was this dyslexic devil worshipper who made a pact with Santa.

.....
...It is not uncommon for the healthy rivalry between different services to end up in a punch-up.

Following such a ruckus at an Army tank range, I had been given the task of taking statements from several of the combatants. Being some distance away from home base, I persuaded my boss to give me the loan of a staff car and a WREN driver (of whom I was very fond)

Having completed the job, I booked into a B&B place who I knew did not have any single rooms. We arrived very late, the landlord met us and I asked for two single rooms, he said in a strong Welsh accent, "Oh, sorry Bach, I only have twin ones, see. But I can rig a screen between the two beds you know."

I said to the WREN, that I was too tired to look for anywhere else at this late hour. If she agreed to this arrangement, I would go for a quick pint which would give her time to get undressed and into bed. She agreed.

After my pint, I went upstairs, tapped on the door, got the OK, and did what I have always done, switch off the light, open the window and get into bed.

After a short while, a timid voice from the other side of the screen said, "Excuse me, Chief, Are you still awake?"

I said, "Yes, what is it?"

She said, "Would you close the window please?"

I couldn't believe my luck, my plan was working. I said, "Why, what's the matter?"

She said, "I'm ever so cold."

Bingo! I thought, I'm in.

I said, "How cold?"

She said, "Absolutely freezing."

I got right up to the far edge of the bed and turned back the covers, and said, "OK, how would you like to pretend, just for tonight mind, that you are Mrs Chiefy?"

She said, "Oh, I would love to."

I said, "Good. Then you shut the bloody window!"

* *Our thanks to the RN Bombheads Association - For details of this Association and/or information about the Armourer's Reunion being held in Hong Kong -1995, please contact: Mick Holdsworth, Aylesham Lodge, Adisham Road, Barham, Canterbury, CT4 6EY, UK.*

CHILDHOOD

by Jason Stevens

My childhood was different from others, it seems

With slang and with Nautical jargon it teems

I grew up with my Dad in the Navy you see

And life had some different lessons for me

At meal times we'd gather, my Dad and his clan

For the food Mum had cooked us, the Duff and the Scran

In our Married Quarters house, not far from the base

We'd fill up our Goffas, and then we'd say Grace

There were lots of times though, when Dad wasn't at tea

He was away on the Melbourne, working at sea

I missed him those times when he wasn't there

But because you followed orders doesn't mean you don't care

I know, because when he got back we'd have fun

With thousands of presents from Dad's Rabbit Run

There were records and books (If Dad saw it - he'd grab it)

One thing was confusing though - where was the Rabbit?

Navy slang, to a kid is confusing you'd guess

Like your room's not the only thing considered a mess

And Dad's got a half-day he's home getting jolly

It's called M & M, but you don't get no lolly

So the Navy taught Dad and then Dad he taught me

I've a 'Thing' for routine and a love of the sea

'Such a different childhood you've had,' my friends say

Different and wonderful, well, I like it that way.

A CANADIAN REMEMBERS

* The young pilots, who with ludicrously minimal training, splattered their aircraft all over the airfield and the length and breadth of Somerset, and came back cheerfully for more.

* The little Wren who couldn't carry a 12 volt battery, until she was seen running for a bus whilst carrying her large green suitcase.

* The pilot who pranged into a field of cows, climbed out and walked across to the farmhouse, no doubt in search of a telephone. Invited into the house, he went to sit by the fire. He blew up and burnt the farmhouse down - obviously he was soaked in 100 octane.

* The fully equipped dummy Flight Deck built in the wrong direction for the prevailing wind, and so arranged that if the wind ever did blow the right way by chance, a farmhouse was right in line with it. The Artificer appointed to maintain it was known as 'Dummy Deck Dick', he must have had just about the quietest number of all.

* As duty PO Electrician, standing by the Batsman as the Trainee Pilots attempted their first night deck landings. (We were there to ensure the illuminated bats did not fail) It was not a job for those of a nervous disposition.

* Not forgetting the old Painter, called up at the age of 63, who, in answer to a question of seniority connected with the Mess Presidency, said, "I was rated PO in 1910!"

UNDERSTATEMENT

Commented by Admiral Sir David Beatty, commanding a battle cruiser squadron during the World War One Battle of Jutland as he saw one ship after another, including the Queen Mary, sunk by the Germans:

'There seems to be something wrong with our bloody ships today.'

COME ON READERS, TWO BEERS UNDER YOUR BELT AT A REUNION AND THE DIT'S FLOW LIKE WATER - HOW ABOUT SHARING YOUR YARNS WITH OTHERS? Ed.

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

In the June '93 edition of the Naval Association Journal, *White Ensign*, there was an article on Travel Insurance by Cdre M.A McK (Nobby) Clarke, AM RAN (Rtd). It is essential reading for those contemplating overseas travel.

Whilst visiting a European country he required hospitalisation, it was at that point, he discovered that his Travel Insurance Policy had so many exclusions that it was of no value.

On his return to Australia, Cdre Clark carried out a thorough investigation into many aspects of health cover whilst overseas, he was alarmed to find that with all the travel policies, although some were better than others, none were ideal.

After negotiations, the RSL Pathfinder Travel Insurance Plan was developed. This apparently caused a mild revolution in the travel insurance business with companies reducing the amount of 'small print' on their policies.

Further development has taken place and in the light of fresh research, we have now have the ultimate - RSL Passport Travel Insurance Cover (Tel. 008 816 312). It is designed for the veteran who often has pre-existing

medical conditions that are excluded under other policies.

The cover is also available for the general public, but not with the privileged conditions that apply for RSL and kindred organisations. (*This includes the FAA Association.Ed.*)

Take heed! One veteran who thought he was covered, ended up \$70,000 out of pocket.

The Annual General Meeting of the Shoalhaven and District Regular Defence Force Welfare Association will be held on Friday 12 November, 1993, at 1800 in the Old Dining Room of the Bomaderry Bowling Club - this is just a fore warning, letters to members will be sent out closer to the event.

The Contact Group, since its formation, has accomplished a great deal, resolving many problems not only for veterans and widows, but also serving personnel. With a few minor changes, the committee comprises mainly the same members each year.

This year we have functioned without a secretary. If we are to continue into the future we need some new members on the committee. Please think about it before the AGM. Contacts are: John Arnold (044) 232014 - Neil Gage (044) 460484 - Ivan (Chips) Gray (044) 416006.

**Ivan (Chips) Gray - NSW Division Welfare Officer & Chairman Shoalhaven and District RDFWA*

members will be listed in this column.

New design lapel badges are now available for both Full and Associate members at a cost of \$5 each. The badge is oval and in the same colours as the logo on the name tags, with silver replacing the gold background for associate members. They measure 20mm across the wing tips and are 15mm deep, for those who joined the King's Navy, that is 3/4" x 9/16". With an overall acrylic finish, they look really classy. If you wish to purchase the new badge, please contact your Divisional Secretary who will be holding a small supply.

Members will recall that CNS, Vice Admiral McDougall, in his foreword in the July edition of *Slipstream*, announced his approval to incorporate the Australian White Ensign into the Association flag. Our President, 'Toz' Dadswell (currently swanning around the Greek Islands) commissioned the West Aussies to find a supplier, since it was their idea originally. Hopefully they will be available for the plaque dedication at Cerberus on 31 October and Entombment of the Unknown Soldier in Canberra on 11 November.

The past few issues of the journal have been published by the assistance

of sponsors, however, the well seems to have run dry and the costs must be met by members. Put simply, if you are not a FINANCIAL member, you don't get the goods.

Following is the list of new members who have joined in recent months:

TASMANIA: Athol Laing, Dick Lea, Geoff Larcombe and Peter Woolford.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: A.D. (Tony) Bernt, K.A.Bryant, J.F.Burns and R.G.Vargerson.

NEW SOUTH WALES: Cec Dorrell, David Bevan, Eric Busch, John Da Costa, Alan Bird, Roy Torrens, Alan Zammitt, Derek Frew, Jack Kitney, George Parker, Arthur Goodall, Kevin French and Alan Spearpoint.

QUEENSLAND: Royce Kimlin, John Stewart, Les Walker, Ray Bucholz, Roy Hathaway, Ron Marsh, Tom Henry, Peter Robinson, Charles Rennie, Harry Harkness, Ross Flower, John Barber, Don Vinson, Jim Ferguson, Robert McDermott, Arthur Johnson, Bevan Mewett, Warren Mears, Graham Quick and Douglas White.

VICTORIA: Geoff Wagstaff, Edward Young and Associate members Fay Breden, Barbara Butler, Elaine Bye, Val Christie, Beryl Clark, Betty Conlan, Alison Crowe, Helen Egan, Evelyn Farquharson, Lois Forbes, Bernice Hatfield, Sylvia Ikin, Dorothy Kemp, Evelyn Lacey, Margaret Laracy, Joan Lucas, Gwendoline Martin, Margaret Mayer, Isabella Mitchell, Eunice O'Keefe, Iris Priestly, Robin Ramsdale, Jennifer Roberts, Joyce Robertson, Azella (Sally) Ross, Loris Siegle, Beryl Smith, Dot Weddell, Gwenneth Weston, Budd Weston, Norma Wilson and Doreen Stirling.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Jeff Astfalck, Allan Roebuck and Peter Vickridge.

ACT: O.J.Hughes, A.N.Hussey, S.J.Lloyd, P.M.Mulcare, D.F.Neenan, R.G.Ray, M.B.Taylor, J.Woodyard and M.Wright.

It is wonderful to see so many familiar names appearing. Til the next issue,

** Ian Ferguson - National Secretary*

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

This report is coming from beautiful downtown Vincentia on the shores of the glistening Jervis Bay.

My wife and I had a great time on our holiday in the USA, however, the opinion I formed 27 years ago still stands, it's a wonderful place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there. It is good to be back in the land of Oz.

While in the USA I called in on John 'Ichabod' Purcell, who lives very comfortably on the outskirts of Detroit. He mentioned that he would like to get in touch with some old shipmates who are members. The Association has adopted the policy that member's addresses are confidential and I cannot pass them on without the permission of the member. Should any member wish to get in touch with another member, they can forward to me a sealed and stamped letter complete with the member's name, I will then address and forward the letter. In future, the names of new

**THE ABSOLUTE
DEADLINE FOR THE
NEXT EDITION OF
SLIPSTREAM IS
15 DECEMBER '93**

NEWS from the DIVISIONS

QUEENSLAND

We are delighted to see our membership steadily increasing and good support for our functions. Thanks to Slipstream, old mates are contacting each other as we go, and Jeff Coker Godson is currently visiting Ken (Snow) Nicholls in Caboolture as a result of the last issue.

Tom Christopher is recovering well from his recent health problems, he and I consorted to get 'Snow', and wife 'Taff', to our Dinner in the Wardroom at HMAS Moreton on 21 August. Fifty-five attended the dinner and had a very enjoyable evening. Our thanks to Cdr Derek Caton, CO of Moreton, and the XO, LtCdr Wayne Richards, their help was very much appreciated.

Kevin Raddatz flew down from Babinda, he has a magnificent collection of gems, but of more importance is the collection of photos, newspaper clippings, daily orders and more, relating to our FAA day to day history from Korea onwards. He has offered us the collection to produce a 'Fleet Air Arm Line Book' to eventually donate to the Naval Aviation Museum. To that end, we would like anyone, anywhere, to add to it. We can get photographs and other material copied and returned to the owner undamaged. If you can be of assistance in this matter, please contact Mick Blair, 5 York Ct., Albany Creek, Qld 4035. (Phone 07-2641207).

In early July, Marian and I drove up to Cardwell and spent a week on Hinchinbrook Island. We called to see Jack McLoughlin and Champ Manning in Mackay, we were sorry that we couldn't stay longer. We also caught up with Keith Hope, who lives on a beaut 32' Catamaran in Bowen Yacht Basin.

Arthur Johnson was our host in Townsville - boy what a busy lad! Arthur is sub-dividing and selling waterfront and adjacent land at Mystic Sands, near Rolling Stone, 50ks north of Townsville. He has built a Country Club, golf course with pool, lawn bowls and an airstrip (kangaroos can be a hazard!) for his Victa CT4, which he purchased at the RAAF auction which was held at Bankstown recently. Arthur is another FAA guy who has gone onto success. He has Rosshaven Shipyards and a huge cold

store complex in Townsville - well done, mate. I hope we'll see the Victa at the Bundaberg reunion.

Our programmed reunion is in Bundaberg on 11-12 and 13th March, 1994. Indications are, that we will be having a good roll-up - all interstate members are invited to participate in this fun filled weekend. The Bundaberg RSL is the venue as the meeting place, AGM and Dinner on the Saturday. The Tourist Bureau are being very helpful and will organise tours for us, especially an out of hours tour of the Rum Distillery - we did a dummy run on that tour in August, you wouldn't want to miss it.

We're planning golf, BBQ and other activities - more information will be available later. Any interstate people who want to come, please make initial contact with, Ian Henderson, PO Box 113, Cleveland Qld 4163.

It is important to book accommodation early because Bundy can fill up really quickly. Our Bundaberg members have arranged for many of the motels to give discounts on bookings. We can send you a list of same.

Lee Harris has been of great assistance in organising our Queensland Polo Shirt - white with navy blue collar and blue pocket with gold FAAA logo and 'Queensland Division' under the logo. The first batch is ready for delivery NOW!! Priced at \$20 each plus \$2 postage, orders can be placed with Ian Henderson.

Our BBQ is organised for Sunday 10 October at Clark Pool, Mooloolaba, and a good turn-up is expected. Mick Blair (07-2641207) and Noel Fischer are organisers for the bus from Beenleigh and points north.

Paul Woods is still working in Indonesia, his wife has just returned and we hope Paul will be home for the BBQ.

We seem to be sadly lacking in membership of aircrew and other FAA officers. Hey! We really do want you in the fold, a lot of our memories revolve around you guys. Without you there is a gap in the proud heritage of the FAA. I'm sure that 'Toz' Dadswell and Col Wheatley will back that up. Jeff Coker Godson recently gave me a rundown on the ACT Division, their officer membership numbers are quite surprising and very pleasing.

Incidentally, Jock (Frank) Collins' hiccups (as mentioned in the last Slipstream), were last reported skirting the edge of the Birdsville racetrack the other day. Some inebriated punters couldn't believe their eyes and dried up real quick when they saw them. They just couldn't believe the speed they were doing!

For the fishing buffs, her's my 'one-that-got-away' yarn

Marian and I took our boat on the Maroochy River recently in a good spot reported for Jewfish - no bites except sand crabs - lovely weather (Qld, of course!). Stayed on after dark to catch the start of the in-tide - still no bites.

Put the rod down with the reel locked (not in one of the four rod holders), had coffee and a biscuit, lit the pipe and decided to use the mobile phone to call aged mother - the battery was flat! Stood up to check it under the stern light and suddenly - Bang!! - off goes the rod over the end of the boat like it was fitted with RATOG.

In stunned amazement we watched the rod and reel surfing along. 'Well', I thought, and 'Stuff this for soldiers'. We could see quite well by the lights of Maroochydore and I said to Marian 'He'll come to the surface in a few minutes'. Sure enough, big bow wave and into the pool of light came a 'big' one, about two foot or so long, chugging along the surface. We saw the size and shape very clearly.

Well, by the time I'd got the anchor up, motor started and turned - gone - disappeared - no more. We raced ashore, snatched a torch from some bloke and back we went - alas and alack - no fish - no rod - no reel!

Got home, phoned a mate and told him the story - plenty of laughs.

A bit later the phone rang and another mate started talking Real Estate, I tried to interrupt to tell him the story, however, he got in first and said he had a good fishing yarn. He said his brother-in-law had been fishing in the Maroochy River that night and had caught a big Jewie, and you wouldn't believe it, it had a hook, line and rod attached to it.

Well, I was ten foot off the floor by this time (almost) and I yelled, 'Bruce, that's my bloody fish and gear!' At this he started laughing and I realised I'd been set up. He'd been phoned my other 'mate' and told to 'hook-me-up' real good - which he did.

Good laughing material. I'm offering a reward - keep the fish - I'll take the rod and reel. No response as yet.

OK, that's it for now. Catch up with you later and best wishes to all shipmates wherever.

* Barry Lister - President

**YOUR - articles,
anecdotes, reminiscences,
photographs etc. are still
required for
SLIPSTREAM!**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Ahoy Shipmates,

Once again that time has arrived when we must get things down on paper of what has happened since the the last Slipstream.

You will all be aware that at long last Navy Board has granted us our wish for a flag of our own, this will take the form of a White Ensign in the top left hand quadrant on a navy blue background with the Association logo in the lower right hand quadrant. Its first airing will be in October at the forthcoming Federal Council meeting in Melbourne, then the plaque laying ceremony at *Cerberus* followed by the Entombment of the Unknown Soldier at Canberra in November.

Ron Tate and myself will be attending the Federal Council meeting on behalf of the the West Australian Division, we will then go on to the ceremony at Canberra, representing our Division and the WA Branch of the Naval Association. We will let you know how things went on our return.

To all you readers of Slipstream, I am sure you enjoy this wonderful journal and all agree that the editor has done a truly magnificent job of getting it out each quarter. Unfortunately, in this economic climate sponsors are extremely hard to find, to ensure its continuation, the Federal Council will be discussing 'ways and means' to raise the necessary finance.

As the only access to other 'birdies', both here and overseas, it is imperative that we ensure its longevity. In the meantime, please keep sending in your stories, old photos, or just old buddies names you haven't heard of in 'yonks'. You never know - that bloke you lent a quid to in 'Honkers' in '52 may be trying to pay you back and can't find you.

Some sad news from Melbourne last week, was that the great old Armourer and Sportsman, 'Muscles' Vinen, had 'slipped his painter'. Our thoughts go out to his wife at this time and we remember the good old days when we were all a lot younger. I do know that his passing shook up his old 'run-ashore' mate, Lou Burns, and he hasn't got over it yet. Vale, 'Muscles', you will be remembered by all who had the pleasure of your company.

Our last monthly meeting was cancelled as we had the pleasure of the company of Commodore Rob Partington, Captain Keith Eames and the Senior Naval Officer RAAF Pierce, LtCdr Mark Jerrott, for the dedication

of the 'Roll of Honour to the Men of the Fleet Air Arm', who lost their lives in flying duties at home and in Korea and Vietnam.

This Roll of Honour is displayed on two brass sheets with names engraved and black filled, they are mounted on a Jarrah timber board. It is hung on a special wall in the new meeting hall at the Naval Association Headquarters - 71 West Parade, East Perth. The board is surrounded with photographs of squadrons and aircraft, the three carriers and their crests and a metal propeller in the centre of the wall.

After the dedication, the Commodore spoke on the state of the Air Branch and the state of the Museum, showing a video of the Museum and the area to be completed. It was a very informative evening and was enjoyed by all who attended.

There was only ONE hitch! I was required to bring along the equipment to show the video, yes, I did bring the gear, but for some unknown reason, when it was plugged in the video didn't work. It was okay when I left home - good old Jack Suriano came to the rescue - rushed off home and brought his video back in time for the proceedings - so all was saved.

On a lighter side, Lou Burns' little house on the Ponderosa is at least under way. So - should you be passing this way in the future give him a call, It has only six bedrooms so you should be right for a night or two. When the concrete went down and the Council Inspector came to examine it, he wanted to know if Lou was building a factory unit. When it's all finished it will really be something, the brickwork is coming along fine, I do an occasional inspection on it just to make sure.

'Pappy' Gault is in the throes of sitting for his Skippers Five Ticket and should be finished next week - it will then be, CAPTAIN 'Pappy' please. No, he's not looking for a crack at the QE2 yet, that's in the future. All the best, 'Pappy', hope you make it.

Hilton Devereux has returned from his (annual) trip to the US of A, from all accounts he enjoyed the company of his daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. He has now settled back down to suburbia and the running of the Division. Yes, it's still here, Hilton, and we didn't spend all the money!

Geoff Vickridge has gone off to the UK, visiting all the old Air Stations and Depots around the place where he served in his younger days, plus meeting up with the 'old and bold'. We should have a good evening on his return, with lots of photos and videos.

I don't know if he got permission from the Prime Minister to go to UK, if you could believe what you read in the newspapers you'd think we were in a state of war with them.

To all Divisions who wish to order a FAAA flag, please forward your cheques to the WA Division and I will deliver the flags to your delegates at the Federal Council meeting.

The Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday, 19 November '93, at the Carlton Hotel, 248 Hay Street, East Perth. Cost is \$30 per head for the meal, which includes a carafe of wine, or a jug of beer, or squash. Those wishing to attend please contact: 'Snow' Hall, 19 Garfield Way, Greenwood (3425317), or Lou Burns, Lot 41, Marri Park, Casuarina (4391598). Remember - no ticket -no dinner, so get your money in for a great night.

Well, enough of this, must away as they are waiting for this in Nowra with bated breath.

May health and happiness go with you and your families, Till next time,
* Theo Bushe Jones - Secretary

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Once again the ACT has emerged from the coldness of winter and the City of Canberra is bedecked again with wattle and the flowering shrubs and trees of spring. Shortly, the brilliant display of Floriade will be there for everyone to enjoy. Fortunately, the winter this year has been relatively mild. With the coming of spring, we could reflect how quickly the years slip by and we neglect many opportunities to get together with past shipmates.

Recently a reunion of two Fleet Air Arm aircrew intakes was held in Canberra, which prompted a big reunion organised by Mike Astbury. It was great to see so many old faces who had travelled from all over Australia for this occasion. There were many tales of happenings in the past, you can be assured.

A few members of this Division journeyed to Nowra on the week-end of 10-11 July to assist with the removal of stores from Building 30 and 33 into the Museum. They were ably supported by stalwarts from Nowra and TS Shoalhaven. In all, both buildings were virtually cleared and readied for demolition. We all enjoyed the chance to help the museum and also to participate in the annual

Yulefest run by the RDFWA at Bomaderry Bowling Club.

This division will be holding an out-of-town barbecue on 19 September as part of our planned social outings for the year. The venue will be Harry Adam's property at Melrose Valley on the Old Tuggeranong Road. Info on this has already been sent to all members and friends and we hope for a good roll up.

Several of our members have either departed or are about to depart for overseas. Our National President and Divisional Treasurer and Secretary have already gone, while our Divisional President will be departing in October for about six weeks.

We welcome two new members in Mike Taylor and David Neenan and look forward to seeing both of them at our social functions. Another member of slightly more than a year, Margaret Wright has been posted to Washington with Foreign Affairs for three years and we trust that she is enjoying this posting. Needless to say, she will be getting her copy of SLIPSTREAM every quarter to bring her some news of home.

We wish all members nationally a happy run up to Christmas and look forward to seeing some of you at Federal Council in Melbourne next month.

* B. T. Treloar - Hon Secretary

VICTORIA

Well Shipmates, we are pleased to report that the arrangements for the forthcoming Federal Council meeting and the associated activities are now in place.

To all delegates and observers, the 1993 FAAA of Australia Federal Council will be convened on Saturday 30 October, at the RAAF Sergeants Mess situated at 6 Dorcas Street, Melbourne. Agenda and times will be notified by the National Secretary.

Also at the RAAF Sergeants Mess on the evening of Saturday, 30 October 1993, the 45th FAA Anniversary Dinner will be held. It will consist of a three course sit down meal with full bar facilities at Mess prices.

Bookings are Necessary - they close on 30 September, the cost is \$20 per person. Bookings and payments can be made to the Secretary, Ron Christie, 15 Bianca Court, Rowville, Victoria, 3178. Cheques should be made payable to 'FAAA of A (Vic) Inc'. (*Slipstream will not be posted until first week in*

October, but give him a call anyhow.Ed.)

On Sunday 31 October '93, the historic RAN Fleet Air Arm Memorial Plaque unveiling and dedication ceremony takes place at *HMAS Cerberus*.

The ceremony is scheduled to commence at 1115 at the garden area between the Chapels. The actual unveiling will be performed by Commodore John Goble RAN (Rtd), and the dedication by Monsignor Frank Lyons in conjunction with the Naval Chaplains of *HMAS Cerberus*.

At the appropriate time, a Fly-past of twelve aircraft, courtesy Royal Victorian Aero Club, will pass overhead. Our special thanks to the Chief Flying Instructor RVAC and John Ikin for organising this event.

As previously reported, the duration of the Service is approximately thirty minutes. This is followed by a short tour of the depot and then to Club Cerberus where light refreshments will be served. The club bar will be open and drinks available.

Once again, if you are attending please advise the Secretary, unless you have already done so.

A notice advising of these events has been placed in the RSL Mufti.

Monday 1 November, has been held open at this stage of planning in case further periods are required for the Council Meeting - if not required, other arrangements will be made, possibly a BBQ.

Tuesday 2 November, Melbourne Cup Day - we have a limited number of complimentary passes, courtesy of the Victoria Racing Club. As stated, these passes are limited, so 'FIRST IN - BEST DRESSED'. Contact the Secretary if you need passes.

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend a national welcome to three new members to the Division: David Maloy ex-L/Air Phot - Geoffrey Wagstaff ex-L/Wtr - Edward Young ex-NA1/AH. Welcome to the Association and may it be a long and happy involvement.

On Sunday 12 September, the Division had a 'Pokie Tour' to the Corowa RSL per Pat and Ron's Tours (Ron being Ron Forbes, one of our members). Despite the poor weather conditions, we had a very good turn up and an enjoyable day was had by all. Unfortunately - NO Big Jackpots or Wins.

In closing, let us remember, the success of these coming events depends entirely on the participation of the membership of our Association.

Hoping to see you all there.

* Ron Christie - Hon. Secretary

NEW SOUTH WALES

I was only one of many members disappointed when the August 'Special Edition' of Slipstream did not materialise in the mailbox. Unfortunately, limited funds in the National Association coffers precluded issue of this second of the 'Anniversary Specials'.

Fortunately, receipt of Divisional Capitation Fees and subsidies has boosted the account and enabled National Treasurer, 'Pancho', to write the cheques to produce this October edition of our journal. Fund raising for future editions will be high on the agenda at the Federal Council meeting in Melbourne.

Since my last report, things have been fairly quiet on the Division front, possibly due to the fact that it was the winter period, albeit comparatively mild.

Meetings have been poorly attended and volunteers for the museum working bees and Family Fly-in Days have been very thin on the ground.

On the up side, the major function in our Division Social Calendar was very well attended. One hundred and thirty members and guests attended the FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner held in the White Ensign Club Function Centre at the Naval Aviation Museum.

It was unfortunate that we were unable to enjoy the company of our National President and his usual after dinner post-speech dit, but at the moment, 'Toz', and wife Gwen, are currently 'doing it tough' in Europe.

Similarly, we missed the company of RANAS Commanding Officer, Cdre Geoff Morton. He and wife Dianne, were attending the launch of HMAS Collins in Adelaide.

We did have the pleasure of the company of our Official Guests, His Worship the Mayor, Alderman Max Atkins and Mrs Atkins, Cdre John Goble RAN (Rtd), and Cmdr Geoff Ledger and wife Bethany.

The dinner has been judged to be a success and our sincere gratitude goes to, Museum Director Mike Lehan, Manager Derek Whyte, their staff and helpers who suffered much inconvenience over the whole weekend to ensure that everything went smoothly.

Compliments are still being received relating to the professional

standards of Chief Steward Gary McDonald, Chief Cook Vince Ruffo, and their excellent staff.



Pearl Meacham caught changing 'Juke' Matterson's battery at the FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Publishing

Now that winter has waned and warmer weather is with us, perhaps more of the local members will be able to stir aching bones and attend the open forum meetings. The next one will be held in the Bomaderry RSL Club Board Room on Tuesday 19 October, commencing at 1930 sharp.

The next Museum Family Fly-in Day is programmed for Sunday 31 October, the start of Daylight Saving. The regular operators of the Division Hot-Dog stand will be away at the Federal Council meeting in Melbourne. Any local member willing to put in an hour or so on the day, please contact me (044) 217579 for a quick familiarisation.

Despite the transfer of a large number of NSW members to the recently formed Queensland Division, our numbers have increased to make up the shortfall. There are currently 345 members registered with the NSW Division, comprising 320 Full and Associate members, 24 Perpetual members and 1 Honorary member.

The total membership of the Division include 34 members resident in Queensland, 5 in Australian Capital Territory, 2 in Western Australia, 2 in the Northern Territory, 2 in Victoria and 2 in South Australia.

We are flattered that these members choose to remain with the NSW Division and it causes us no administrative problems, other than a

little extra care with Slipstream enclosures and Registered Mail bundling.

The only concern is that interstate members of the NSW Division would not receive newsletters etc. from their home State Division and would be denied the opportunity to attend certain functions and enjoy the camaraderie of the same.

As this October edition of Slipstream is the last for 1993, it is appropriate to remind you that fees for 1994 are unchanged. Annual subscriptions remain set at \$15 and fall due on 01 January 1994, (New Year-New Subs). Members not financial by 31 January 1993, will be removed from the mailing list for Slipstream until financial.

Please ensure that your subs are paid in promptly, because every time we have to chase a subscription it costs us more money, this unnecessary wastage of funds is very unfair to members who are financial. Previous practice has been to extend the privileges of membership even to the most tardy, we can no longer afford to do this, members in arrears will be promptly deregistered in accordance with the Constitution. Application for membership after deregistration will incur an additional joining fee.

Fleet Air Arm Association Christmas Cards are available and can be purchased from the Secretary, please contact: Terry Hetherington, PO Box 28, Nowra 2541 or phone (044) 230056 for details.

* Jim Lee - President

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

No correspondence received from South Australia. Ed.

TASMANIA

Division President, Barry Simpson, has been in touch to let everyone know that all is well in the 'Apple Isle'.

There is no news for this issue, but he will be forwarding more information relating to 'Skyrace Tasmania' in time for the next edition. Ed.

AIRCRAFT RESTORATION REPORTS

SEA VENOM WZ 895

Since my last report concerning this aircraft, work has progressed at a steady rate.

Some three hundred components have been catalogued and placed into proper shelving as well as the part numbers and stock numbers being entered into the computer. When the time comes to find a part we, by rights, shouldn't have any problems.

The main fuselage has just about been completely stripped of all pipe lines and control cables. The greenies have just about got the cockpit completely stripped of all the wiring and black boxes etc. Ninety percent of all 'AE' bits and pieces have also been stripped from the cockpit. It is hoped that the fuselage will be inspected in the very near future thereby telling us if the aircraft will be a flier or not.

The port boom is ready to be stripped of all the old paintwork, hopefully this will happen within the next week or so. Once that has been done, anchor nuts for the inspection panels will be renewed if needed, joints will be resealed, full anti corrosion treatment will be carried out, inspection panels refitted and the whole unit undercoated and put away ready to be refitted with control cables and wiring at a later date. The same treatment will then be carried out on the Stbd boom.

*Tony Penno - Project Manager

SOS.....HELP WANTED.....SOS

I am looking for information concerning the Sea Venoms that were converted to target towing and Ikara testing.

In particular, I need to find out the serial numbers of those particular aircraft as well as side numbers if possible. As this information is going to be used for Museum records, I ask that the information be verified by either a photograph or a photo-copied entry from a pilots log book. If a photograph is supplied I would like to copy it and would return the original.

*Tony Penno - Replies to:

PO BOX 442, NOWRA, NSW 2541

DAKOTA 800

Thanks to the dedication and hard work put in by my enthusiastic team, this aircraft is improving day by day and is starting to resemble her former glory.

When you consider, that this aircraft sat on the tarmac tethered to concrete blocks and fully exposed to the elements for more than fifteen years, the results that these volunteer have achieved is a credit to them. The only losers in the game being the Starlings, who lost their high-rise apartments when restoration commenced.

The first step of the major painting exercise is almost completed. Although it may seem a primitive method of paint application to the purists, but necessary in the absence of spray facilities within the museum complex, the aircraft was painted with silver solar roofing paint using rollers. Despite the critics who said it couldn't be done, the finish turned out quite well, although it is not suggested that the method or material be used for aircraft that grace the skies.

Ninety percent of the fuselage detailing has been completed, including an 80cm 851 Squadron transfer positioned on the tail.

When the museum walls are completed, hopefully before Christmas, the aircraft will be parked in the eastern corner which will hopefully become her final resting place.

BELL SIOUX

We now have two of these small helicopters, one which will eventually be restored to airworthiness, the other as a static display.

Two engineers from Camden have already commenced restoration work on the static display aircraft, we are fortunate to have their assistance and expertise. Thanks, fellas, your efforts are very much appreciated by all.

MISCELLANEA

◇ I would like to thank George Beardsley for the Sycamore tail rotor drive shaft assembly and the assortment of aircraft spares he so kindly delivered.

◇ I could use the services of a responsible person to fill the position of team leader to take on another restoration project.

Other projects pending:

◇ Fit out cabin area of Wessex

31B with sonar racks and equipment - an ideal task for an ex-aircrewman.

◇ Detail (paint) a whole host of aircraft engines and other memorabilia.

◇ Restore Sea Otter hull.

* Don Parkinson - Project Manager

SEA FURY

Progress on the Sea Fury is progressing steadily.

Paint stripping of the cockpit fuselage section has been a long and time consuming process, but I am happy to report that it is now almost completed.

The grit blasting of the centre wing section is approximately 75% completed, structurally there are no problems evident to date.

A number of hydraulic actuators, valves etc have been checked and tested, they are now ready for installation.

Our thanks once again to George Beasley for the box of 'goodies' sent to us in the form of tooling and other parts relating to the Sea Fury.

Any Sea Fury bits and pieces that the readers may have tucked away in the back of the garage from days gone by, would be very much appreciated.

* Oscar Harper - Team Manager

FIREFLY WD 826/245

No work has been carried out on this aircraft since the last report.

Our contact in the USA has notified us that he has despatched our u/s Rocker Arms to the repair facility for overhaul. When these are returned, work on the project can recommence.

FIREFLY WJ 109/207

The rudder sent to RAAF facility for re-bagging, has been returned to us so that internal structural repairs can be effected. When these are completed, it will be returned to the RAAF for covering and painting.

The panels previously forwarded to RAAF facilities for refurbishing should be returned in October. The Rear Wedge and other parts sent away at the same time, should be completed shortly afterwards. When all the pieces arrive, reassembly will commence.

* Keith Boundy-Maint. Co-ordinator

MY FIREFLY

by Icarus

*Just an old fashioned Firefly
With old fashioned ways
And a fuselage all tattered and torn
A broken propeller that never goes round
She's as sweet as the day she was born
Though she boasts no fine petrol
(Or rich Castrol oil)
There's something that makes her divine
She's quite safe and sound
'Cos she can't leave the ground
That old fashioned Firefly of mine.*

THE PROUD RESTORATION TEAM OF SEA VENOM WZ 937

Back Row L - R : Les Roberts - Tony Penno - Jules Ducret - Rod Tremlett
Front Row L - R: Chris Brown - Ken Park - Garry Bowers

Photo courtesy T.Penno



There's movement at the Station!

HMAS ALBATROSS UPDATE

As you all would be well aware, the Air Station has always been dynamic in nature but now more than ever this is true. The recent awarding of two Commercial Support Programme contracts will slightly alter the way business is done on the base.

The Commercial Support Programme is a Government initiative which will see financial savings and a reduction in Service personnel performing some of the traditional tasks at the Air Station. The two contracts outlined below are now in the process of being implemented at NAS.

The first contract has been awarded to British Aerospace Australia for Aircraft Component Maintenance. The second contract is for Base Support and has been won by the In House Option developed by the Air Station. One obvious outcome of these contracts is that there will be a down sizing in the number of uniformed personnel at NAS. In all, 130 less uniformed personnel will be employed here but 70 additional civilian jobs will be created.

The Air Station has also recently taken the Defence lead in the protection of the environment. In July this year, a \$500,000 environmentally sound, effluent irrigation system was commissioned. Treated effluent is being used to irrigate approximately 26 hectares of land at the Air Station. This, I add, is a first for Defence land in Australia. The area has been sown with a variety of grasses and in the future it is hoped to harvest these and sell them as cattle feed. This is not only a strong environmentally 'green' project, but one that may save some Defence dollars.

The Air Station has also undertook to establish links with the new Berry Campus of Wollongong University. A course in Industrial Relations was conducted at the Air Station by University staff for 12 key station personnel. This type of course is becoming more important as it provides awareness of industrial relations and its application in the military environment, particularly with our increase in the civilian work force.

We have also been providing assistance to the local community by allowing the use of one of the runways by the Shoalhaven Drag Racing Club for their drag days. In time the club hopes to raise funds to construct a

purpose built club on land to the South West of the Air Station.

In June this year, we also played host to the inaugural Defence Force Police Games which were held to raise monies for a local boy suffering from Cerebral Palsy. These games were a great success, due mainly to the excellent efforts of many of the local businesses and personnel at the Air Station working together for a common goal.

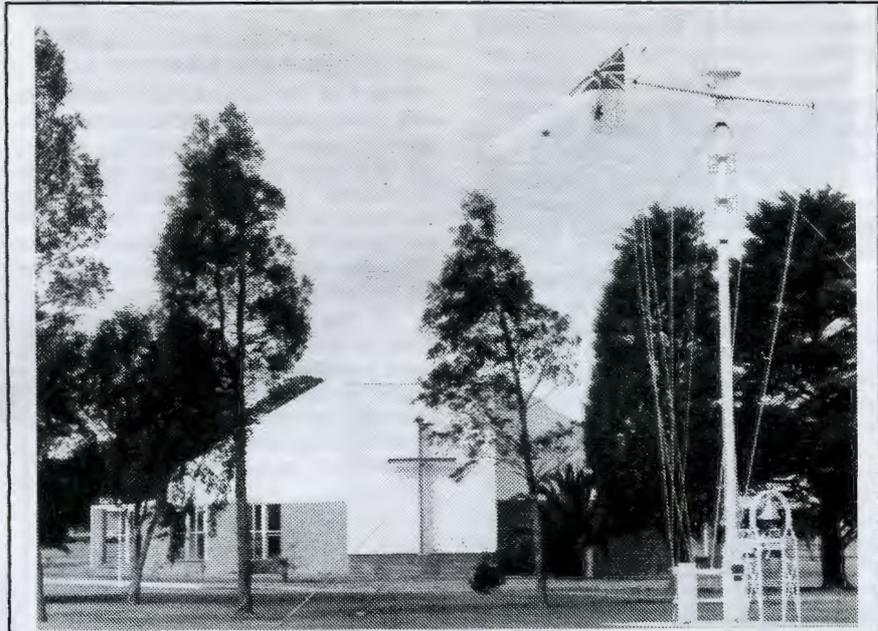
The Air Station is progressing well with the construction of new hangars for the Albatross Aero and Gliding Clubs on a site adjacent to the old civil terminal. Through the use of largely volunteer labour from the clubs, the two Army prefabricated hangars are almost complete and both of these clubs will be well catered for in the future. This change will serve to separate recreational activities which are open to non-service personnel from all operational areas.

In August, the opening of the new multi-denominational Fleet Air Arm Chapel took place. The new chapel replaced two old corrugated iron chapels that were originally used by

Sea Lord of the Royal Navy, Admiral Sir Benjamin Bathurst GCB ADC visit on 26/27 August. It was a time for reflection for Admiral Bathurst as he was on exchange at Nowra in the 1960s as a Lieutenant. He commented that his time here was during the formative years of his flying training and that he learnt most about aviation here. He enjoyed the opportunity to revisit the Air Station and renew old friendships. Admiral Bathurst took the opportunity to visit sections of the Air Station and to view the Naval Aviation Museum.

We have achieved much in the past 12 months and more changes are on the way. The project to build a new sick quarters has been brought forward and construction will start early next year. The achievements so far are the result of all personnel, both Service and civilian, at the Air Station adapting to change in a truly professional manner. If it was not for the efforts of these people we may not be as well placed as we are to provide quality service to the fleet. The way in which we do business today may seem rather strange to many of you, but we are ensuring that the finest traditions of the Fleet Air Arm and the RAN are being maintained.

* our thanks to Cdre Morton, Commanding Officer RANAS Nowra and the PR Officer.



wartime base torpedo units. These buildings had been in use as chapels since 1958. A feature of the new chapel will be a peal of bells funded by a donation from the old White Ensign Club in Nowra. I would encourage all of you to come and make use of this wonderful new facility.

The Air Station was privileged to have the Chief of Naval Staff and First

TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD
THIS CHAPEL WAS
BLESSED AND DEDICATED
AS
THE FLEET AIR ARM CHAPEL
BY
MOST REVEREND G.F. MAYRE AM
RIGHT REVEREND A.C. CHARLES RFD ED
REVEREND D.J. GRIFFITHS RFD
ON
15th AUGUST 1993

• 8,9,10 Squadron • Museum Support Squadron

OUR ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE

1. The Australian Naval Aviation Museum cannot survive without a strong volunteer force in support of day to day activities. There is hardly a Museum in the world today that can make ends meet, let alone make an operating profit. Volunteers are our most essential commodity and must be nurtured; they must be made to feel welcome and to feel the Museum is a 'family' affair whose future depends on their loyalty and support.

2. We must learn to obtain the best from our volunteers - to recognise skills and how to best utilise and harness these skills to everyboy's advantage. We must provide the basis to project initiative, with minimal supervision. We must develop a bond of trust and goodwill.

3. All of this takes time, but the rewards in the longer term are enormous. A Volunteer Support Squadron/ Fraternity is essential.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SQUADRON SPIRIT

4. 8, 9, 10 Museum Support Squadron was formed in May 1993 in an effort to lay a solid base for the expansion of our Museum volunteer force. Three meetings were held in reasonably quick succession in an attempt to develop a workable manpower structure based on core supervisors and an overall co-ordinator who would be responsible to the Director.

Groups developed and natural leaders emerged, but the position of co-ordinator 'Senior Pilot' was never established as there were no volunteers for this position. Without the benefit of a volunteer/s co-ordinator, communications between the Museum Staff and our Volunteer Support Group has been lacking.

5. A log of potential volunteers has been developed but not followed up, for a variety of reasons. Volunteer groups have expanded in some areas but contracted in others. Overall, our active volunteer force has decreased steadily, and this factor is giving cause for concern.

THE FUTURE OF 8,9,10 SQUADRON

6. In order to discuss the problems associated with developing a volunteer workforce, and to provide a basis for a future direction, a meeting between the Director and principle volunteers was recently held at the Museum. This meeting proved very productive with wide ranging decisions being made.

7. The great achievement of the evening was to obtain the volunteer services of Mr John Arnold as the link between the volunteer co-ordinators and the Director: as the 'Squadron' liaison officer. He stopped short at taking on the full role of 'Senior Pilot' as the co-ordinator, but a volunteer is a volunteer...and the door is now open...

8. Other initiatives included:

- * Production of Squadron Orders - to include all the information a volunteer needs to know regarding safety precautions etc. Additionally, background information regarding our development and our future goals etc.

- * The introduction of a 'Work Board', which will list tasks to be done by volunteers who have offered those appropriate skills.

- * Introduction of a training programme specifically designed for volunteers.

- * Nominate work group co-ordinators/ leaders who will be responsible for the groups training, performance and continuing liaison.

- * Introduce 8,9,10 Squadron into the 'staff' structure of the Museum.

- * Introduce 'Risk Management' for volunteers. i.e. apply minimal supervision beyond the training plan.

- * Establish the position of 8,9,10 Squadron Liaison Officer.

- * Introduce an 'Adopt an Aircraft' scheme - advertise in the local papers etc. Offer the three local Cadet Units an aircraft each in the first instance.

9. All of the above initiatives are currently being actioned and when operating frameworks are in place, specific On Job Training designed to expand the volunteer force will commence.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF VOLUNTEER GROUPS

10. The Curatorial volunteer staff is our only area of expansion, Bob Geale has a dynamic team of would-be boffins, carrying out all manner of duties, from research to cataloguing, preparing displays, answering numerous questions regarding our past, and continuing the arduous task of asset register computer input. However, he is always on the lookout for more volunteers.

11. **The shop.** We are desperately in need of volunteers for the shop. We really need a pool of about ten trained (in-house) personnel for flexibility to cover holidays and sickness. Half-day shifts seem to be the future way to go perhaps, this concept may be more suitable to some people.

12. **The Snack Bar.** Any assistance offered, especially during the Christmas holidays, would be of great benefit to the Museum.

13. **Fund raising.** We are taking over fund-raising from the Sydney Capital Campaign Team at the end of the year, training for this event has commenced. We would welcome volunteers into this new organisation.

14. **Aircraft Restorers.** The cold winter months have had their toll and our team of restorers have contracted. Projects currently underway include: The Dakota, Firefly, Bell 47, Scout, Sea Fury, Sea Venom and Wessex. We would love to see you at any time.

15. **'Adopt an Aircraft'.** The call to adopt an aircraft is an attempt to improve the standard of the aircraft displays in the Display Hangar once the aircraft has been restored. We need permanent teams to provide essential and continuing TLC, not just to the aircraft, but to the patch it occupies. When the hangar is clad we will not have the weather as an excuse for our lack of attention to detail. This care can easily be extended to promote the history of the specific aircraft with appropriate signs/ duty officers etc on Fly-in/ Family Days. Competitions can also be run as a feature of this volunteer support group and to provide the necessary incentive.

16. **Stores teams.** A fantastic cataloguing job is being achieved by a two man team, but they need help. We have emptied one of the old buildings and the Gliding Hangar of stores, thanks to the working-bees of FAA Association members and Sea Cadets, we now have a 'mountain' to sift through, log in and stow. One of the old chapels (It will be reverently looked after) is in place at the northern end of the museum, ready to be converted into a temporary store, pending the construction of a permanent facility.

17. **Other Tasks.** We need Photographers, Computer Operators, Sign-writers, Guides, Administration, Line Book Officer, PRO's, Stores Teams, Cleaners, Drivers and a Social Secretary.

18. Please do not hesitate to call me (044) 211920 or John Arnold (044) 232014, if you think you can help. There are numerous niches for interested people, and we desperately want our volunteers to feel totally at home at the Museum, and to also achieve their specific aims and goals, whatever they may be.

19. The next meeting of 8,9,10 Squadron will be held in the Museum Function Centre on Wednesday, 27 October commencing at 1900, with a Sausage Sizzle. Those who may be interested in joining in with the Museum activities are also welcome.

All best wishes,
Mike Lehan - Museum Director

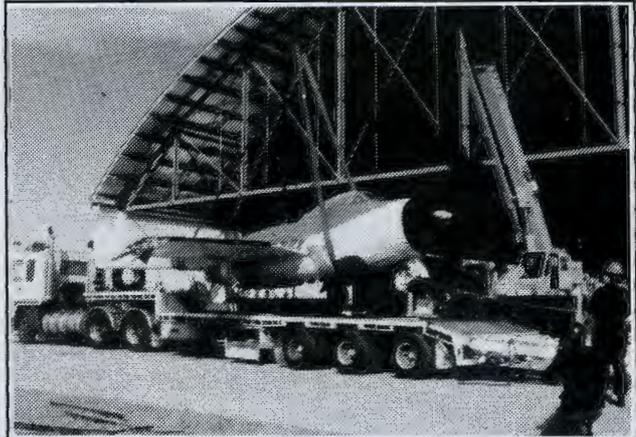


8,9,10 Squadron Project Manager, Don Parkinson, does a 'Picasso' on the Dakota. Photo courtesy RAN

SPOTTED around the traps!



Curator, Bob Geale (L), and Museum Director, Cdr Mike Lehan, escorted CNS and First Sea Lord of the RN, Admiral Sir Benjamin Bathurst, GCB ADC, during a recent visit to the Naval Aviation Museum. Sir Benjamin, is shown checking an early 723 Squadron Line Book. He served on 723 whilst on loan service to the RAN in the early '60s. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



HMAS Nirimba's Sea Venom being unloaded at the Naval Aviation Museum, its final resting place. Photo: NavAvMus



L-R: Paddy Williamson, Bob Baxter, Kevin Raddatz and Mick Blair, spinning dits of derring-do after the Qld Div. Dinner at Moreton.



L-R: Marian and Barry Lister, Harry Harkness, Bob Conellan and Fay Harkness, dining with Bob during a recent visit.



Chaplain Walter Wheelden, Steve Smith and Henry Hall at the NSW Div. FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Pub.



The 'Smithers', enjoying themselves at the NSW Div. FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



Bill Robertson, Ralph Turner and Rod Coupland at the NSW Div. FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



Charlie Grose, Ron Hay, Don McLaren and Brian Carroll, caught between, 'Do you remember whens?', at the NSW Div. 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



The Roberts/ Pring-Shambler party getting into the spirit of things at the NSW Div.FAA 45th Anniversary Dinner. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



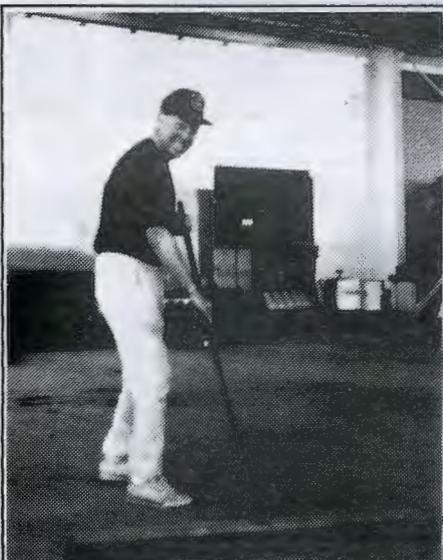
Seen at the Naval Aviation Museum -(L) Bernie Baalham from the Old Div. (R): Bill West from the ACT Div. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



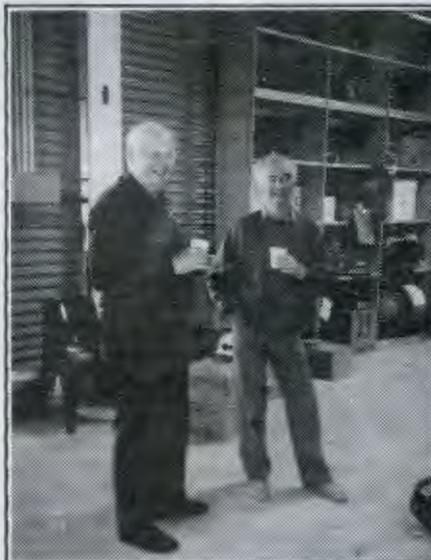
Several Sydney members of the Association teamed up with some of the locals for a working-bee at the Museum: L-R Ken Barnett, John Goble, Hugh Molyneux, Alex Stevens, Fred Lewis, Nat Gould, Jack Cunneen, 'Soapy- McKeon, 'Shorty' Rolands, 'Juke' Matterson, Tony Horton and 'Pancho' Walters. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



The old Church of England Chapel, now on site at the Museum and used as a store room. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



'Soapy' McKeon, wasted half the Museum 'clean-up day' trying to find the shovel that fitted the broom. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



ACT members, Brian Treloar and Mike Astbury taking a 'Stand-easy' during an earlier working-bee. Photo: NavAvMus



A perfectly good day was almost ruined when Ken Barnett asked the photographer, "Where do you think I should put this spare part?" Photo: Peregrine