



The Quarterly Journal  
of the  
Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia

Volume 6 Number 3

October 1995

# Slipstream



Published by the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Inc. - Print Post Approved - PP201494/00022  
Editor: John Arnold - PO Box 662, NOWRA NSW 2541, Australia - Phone (044) 232014 - Fax (044) 232412

FOREWORD

**By Admiral of the Fleet  
Sir Benjamin Bathurst  
GCB**

I was delighted when invited to provide the foreword for *Slipstream*. Indeed, after reading a recent edition, it brought back many happy memories of a wonderful two years I spent at Nowra.

Nearly thirty years on, I have now retired from the Navy having had both the luck and the privilege of being Chief of Naval Staff and First Sea Lord; only the second naval aviator to hold that appointment, the first being Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Caspar John. Although I had to keep my tribal loyalties carefully concealed, this did not matter since throughout my time in office, naval aviation was in the forefront of the RN's business with our Carriers on back to back deployments to the Adriatic. As I write, Sea Harriers are involved in the current bombing campaign over Bosnia, and 845 Squadron Sea Kings have provided the backbone of the UN's helicopter force ashore for at least two and a half years.



I left the Ministry of Defence with the initial funding for the replacement for the Sea Harrier approved via participation in the USA's JAST programme, Merlin helicopters in production, and the Lynx 8 coming into squadron service. Replacement Carriers were under active discussion and the new Commando carrier, *HMS Ocean*, is about to be launched. So the Fleet Air Arm is in a far healthier state than it was in the dark days of 1981, and long may it continue.

This August, the veterans of the British Pacific Fleet gathered in Portsmouth to celebrate VJ Day. Many of the shared memories were of the unstinting, unflagging support and the overwhelming hospitality given by the people of Australia to our Carrier Fleet. So it was here that the long connection between our two Fleet Air Arms could be said to have begun. The late forties saw the birth of your Fleet Air Arm and our Carriers and their Air groups worked closely together during the Korean War. A succession of common aircraft, Fireflies, Sea Furies, Gannets, Sea Venoms and Wessex, meant continual interchange among our aircrew on courses and through a very healthy exchange programme. Both our Services have seen swings of fortune over the last fifty years, but the ease with which our people have moved from one to another is a testament to that closeness.

I was lucky enough to be one of those exchange pilots and my two years instructing with 723 and 725 squadrons was without a doubt the most varied, exciting and challenging of my career. Looking through my Log Book, you got your pound of flesh; over one particular 6 month period 335 hours. Few Fleet Air Arms offer the opportunity to be Senior Pilot, Duty QHI, Duty SAR pilot, Chief Ground Instructor, and eat a sandwich lunch whilst putting together next days Flypro all within the same hour. It was all tremendous fun and I believe I developed a professional edge to my flying which I would not have done had I stayed at home. I made many good friends and I remember with much sadness colleagues and students who flew and died so gallantly in Vietnam shortly after I left.

I suspect that when I did leave Nowra in 1966, I never said a proper thank you to all those who made Sarah and I and our young family so welcome, nor to those who taught me so much about how naval aviation should be conducted. Can I do so now and wish your Association the best of all possible luck. My time with you was a formative moment in my career and I am immensely proud of having served with you.

**EDITORIAL**

Well, this is the last *Slipstream* for 1995, and although the past year seems to have zoomed along at an alarming rate much has been achieved. Our membership has increased, our National Incorporation has been finalised, and our own 'Taj Mahal', the Naval Aviation Museum, has really blossomed. It is all very rewarding.

Sir Victor and Lady Smith honoured us with their presence at the Museum recently, it must have all been quite an eye-opener for them, the last time they visited, the memorial plaque had to be anchored to a rock in the absence of a wall to adhere it to.

I received a phone call from Gordon McPhee relating to the aircraft prang and the Jeff Craske letter on Pg22 of the last *Slipstream*. He admitted to being the 'driver' of that particular aircraft. When I asked him what the extenuating circumstances were, he told me that it was just 'finger trouble'. On the basis that he is the first pilot I've spoken to who hasn't blamed the maintainers, I'm forwarding him the unclaimed Angus and Robertson book voucher from Swampy's recent quiz. For the sake of the record books, the incident occurred on 03 March 1950.

Errors that have occurred in the two previous *Slipstreams* are as follows:

The author of the "Musings from 1851 Squadron" (April) was Maurie Weston. The photograph on the back page of the July edition was not of Maurie and Gwenneth Weston but Max and Margaret Punton. Please accept my apologies.

Of some concern at the moment is the rising production costs of *Slipstream*. Paper and printing costs are on the increase and postage is expected to rise shortly. If you have any bright ideas, please write to the National Secretary.

In conclusion, all the very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you and your loved ones. Ed.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Whoever said that life wasn't meant to be easy certainly knew what he was talking about. A number of issues have recently surfaced which are of great concern to your national executive, but we will try, as usual, to resolve them by talking them through. Hopefully we will find a middle ground which will prove to be satisfactory to all parties. I do not intend to elaborate at this stage as the Federal Council is meeting in Tasmania later this month and that august body will have to apply their vast knowledge and experience to sorting things out.

Could you please check the list of donors to the FAA History Fund which appears below. To those whose names do not appear, may I ask that you give some serious thought to contributing to the Fund. As I have said before, if we want the history written then we have to put our hands in our pockets and provide the means to get the project started. We cannot expect outside sources to fund the writing of the history, although we may get some assistance, if we do, then that's a bonus.

I should advise you that the format of the history is an agenda item for your delegate at the Council Meeting.

In conclusion may I remind you about the 1996 FAA Reunion to be held on the Gold Coast. Please help the organising committee by registering now.

Thank you.

'Toz' Dadswell - National President

**DONORS TO THE THE 'HISTORY OF NAVAL AVIATION IN AUSTRALIA'**

Les Anderson	Ian Ferguson	Gary Northern
Alan Andrews	Peter Fleming	Danny O'Keefe
John Arnold	Paul Gaynor	J.G.Pollard
Bill Barry	A.J.'Nat' Gould	Brian Poole
Mick Blair	Peter Harman	Fred Randall
Daniel Bowden	Lee Harris	George Riches
John R. Brown	Tom Henry	Albert Riley
Monty Brown	Don Herman	David Robertson
Eric Bruce	Owen Holston	R.M.Robertson
Bob Bryce	Reg Holton	Graham Rohrsheim
Syd Bull	Les Jordan	A.J. 'Weed' Smith
James Caldwell	Jim Kelly	Sir Victor Smith
Ron Christie	Stan Laughlan	Clive Smithers
Alan Clark	Barry Lister	Ken Staff
David Collingridge	Barry 'Dooley' Lord	Les Swebbs
Clem Conlan	Michael S. Mack	Ron Tate
Andrew Craig	George J. Mackenzie	George Taylor
Bill Cregan	Bob Marsh	A.G. 'Slug' Whitton
Toz Dadswell	W.J. 'Jack' McLoughlin	Phillip 'Mick' Wurtz
Jules Ducret	Peter McNay	Gerry York
Ben G. Dunn	Charles Morris	Alan Zammit
Trevor Epis	Len Murray	Len Zuch
FAAA (ACT) Division	Arthur Nixon	
FAAA (WA) Division	Paul Norris	

**DISCLAIMER**

All rights reserved. Reproduction in part or whole is forbidden without the express permission of the Editor in writing.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Association or Committee of Management.

**A LAST FAREWELL**

**BRUCE** Don - 'Dad' - 8 July 1995

**JAMES** Gerald - 8 July 1995

**FULLER** Noel - July 1995

**CLAYDON** Ted - July 1995

**LEWIN** Henry - 'Harry' - 16 August 1995

**COKER-GODSON** Geoffrey - LtCdr RAN (Rtd) - 3 September 1995

**FORBES** Richard - 5 September 1995

**BODDAM-WHETTAM** A.P. - LtCdr RN DSC (Rtd) - 6 September 1995

**ROSS** Norris A. - 'Norrie' - 24 September 1995

## HMAS ALBATROSS UPDATE

*An interview with a reporter from the Shoalhaven and Nowra News Chronicle*

**Commanding Officer of HMAS Albatross, Commodore Graham Sloper, has seen a number of important changes during his first few months at the base.**

"It has been a very busy and enthusiastic base - the four squadrons have been kept extremely busy." Commodore Sloper said. "We've had some success with lodger units and associated bodies winning awards.

"For example, the Naval Reserve Cadets were recently named the Best Naval Cadet Unit in NSW.

"One of the big highlights was the success of the Community Services' Support Dinner which raised \$9000 for the palliative care unit at David Berry Hospital.

"The Albatross Australian Rules team won their competition. Regrettably the rugby team didn't do quite as well, but I'm sure we will next year.

"The opening of the new hospital and medical centre is a milestone and our agreement with the Shoalhaven District Hospital is progressing.

"I have been amazed with the interaction we have with so many different groups, not just on the military side."

Another exciting proposal Commodore Sloper said that the base is examining is the establishment of a new child care facility.

"It is planned to be the best facility the South Coast will have ever seen," he said.

"We are proposing it will be built somewhere adjacent to the primary school at Nowra Hill.

"It will provide four levels of child care - babies to two year olds; three and four year olds; four and five year olds; five to twelve year olds for before and after school care and holiday programmes.

"It will effectively mean the 'K Hangar' [Child care on base] and the pre-school will close down and become incorporated under one body."

Commodore Sloper said his stay at Albatross had been a lot busier than anticipated.

"I was aware of the civilian community interaction, but wasn't aware of the full extent of it," he said.

Commodore Sloper said that he had been impressed with what he has

seen of the Shoalhaven.

"I'm very impressed with the potential for the Shoalhaven, but I don't believe it has been realised to its full extent due to a large number of circumstances," he said.

"These include the area being at the end of the railway line; socio-economic factors; the lack of facilities to cater for tourists; unemployment levels and employment opportunities," he said.

Commodore Sloper said the base's proposals for new facilities in a bid to provide pre-Olympic Games training facilities were progressing well.

"We have had a recent value management study where we put up what we see as the future of Albatross until 2005," he said.

Representatives from all other functional areas came in from Canberra and Sydney and the issues were all debated.

"Then we will go to a Facilities Forum in October to discuss each of our facility proposals in detail.

"If the proposals are successful they will then go before a four structure planning policy committee meeting prior to going before the Federal Parliamentary Works Committee next year.

"People have realised that Albatross has been let run down, it wasn't a deliberate policy, it was just that there were higher priorities with the moving of the Navy to the west and the Army to the north.

Commodore Sloper said the base isn't looking for any facilities expressly for the Olympics.

"If we have facilities here that are suitable for the Olympic athletes to use prior to the Games they can use them as a training venue.

A new swimming pool is a possibility, a new gymnasium another, it is possible that some of our superseded accommodation may be made available.

"Meanwhile we have offered council a spare parcel of land if they would like to develop it for athletics or hockey or something like that.

"There is great scope for the area."

A number of areas around HMAS Albatross have been earmarked for updating. Commodore Sloper said that he is very keen for these projects

to go ahead.

"We are looking at increasing hard standing areas for parking aircraft, new hangars, new accommodation, new workshops, galley upgrades and changes to our explosive storage area to make it more modern.

"We are also looking at improving facilities for washing off and fuelling aircraft so there will be less potential for spill.

"We are going to increase the area that we reticulate our sewerage water into so it will also be used on the golf course and sporting fields.

"We are also doing a survey of our accommodation to find out from the married people where they want to live, what style of house they want to live in, and then we will start replacing houses in the married quarters outside the base.

"For those who aren't married and are living ashore, we want to find out why they are living ashore and, for those living on board, find out why and what sort of facilities they would like.

"Something that has come out of the survey already, is that people onboard, or just off the base, don't have access to a store, so we will be looking at establishing a small store in a recreation complex.

"They would also like to have some sort of bus service to and from Nowra, but we will have to examine if this proposal is cost effective."

Commodore Sloper said that he sees Albatross remaining as the major air base for the RAN.

"There will be aviation support facilities built for the Navy in Western Australia and in the Northern Territory, but we will stay here and see the ANZAC helos starting from here and then probably being deployed to the west," he said.

"The next combatant coming along will be the offshore combatant and, if we end up in a joint venture with Malaysia, it will be known as a joint patrol vessel and will have a similar helicopter to the ANZACS.

"There will be an increased number of flight deck trainers and we will continue to operate a fixed wing component.

"The current agreement with New Zealand expires in June, 1996, and we are currently undertaking negotiations with them," he said.

*\* This article first appeared in the Shoalhaven and Nowra News Chronicle, 28SEP95, as a supplement for Navy Week.*



## WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

by Ivan 'Chips' Gray JP - NSW Division



### ROUGH GUIDE TO VETERAN AND DEFENCE SERVICE ENTITLEMENTS

#### Eligible Service and Peace Time Service

**Repat Act (1920)** : Introduced to cover War Service, amended by **Veterans Entitlement Act (1948)** VEA, further amendments from time to time to introduce cover for special circumstances, peace keeping forces etc.

The above Acts are administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs. To gain benefits under these Acts, broadly the veteran must:

Have '**eligible service**' -

a. Service in a war or campaign approved as eligible service

b. Be serving on a 3 year or more engagement as at December 1972; or

c. Have at least three years service after 1972 and before April 1994; or

d. Was discharged on medical grounds with a service caused or aggravated condition that prevented service as defined in 'b' and 'c'.

( a ) is war or operational service.

( b ) ( c ) ( d ) are defence service.

Disability pension and medical treatment for accepted conditions are available under VE Act. Amount of pension received varies depending on the percentage of disability, and is not taxable and not counted as an asset when assessment is being made for Service or Age pension.

Additional entitlements for those with operational service:

1. Service pension at age 60 (assets test and benefits similar to age pension).

2. Service pension prior to age 60 if medically unfit for work (not necessarily related to service).

(Service pensions can be available for certain veterans of Commonwealth armed forces who served in theatres of war that Australian forces were involved in, subject to 10 years residency.)

(Defence service as defined in ( b ) ( c ) ( d ) have no entitlement to service pension.)

3. Widow has pension entitlement (members death must be due to disease or injury caused by operational service.)

**Commonwealth Employee's Compensation, Commonwealth Employee's Rehabilitation and Compensation Act replaced by Safety Compensation and Rehabilitation Act (SCRA), often called COMCARE, introduced to cover the Public Service and peace time military service, post WW2 to April 1994.**

**Military Compensation Scheme:** Introduced in April 1994, adds certain provisions to the above Acts (SRCA 1988), to cater for military service but also removes entitlement to 'defence service' under the Veterans Entitlement Act as in ( b ) ( c ) ( d ) above after April 1994.

**Entitlements:** Medical treatment for service caused conditions (classed as 'on duty') and payments for loss of earning ability in certain circumstances.

1. Widow entitled to lump sum if death due to on duty service caused or aggravated condition.

Money received for loss of earning ability etc. is taxable. Lump sums, eg. to widow, not taxable.

Medical and pharmacy accounts have to be claimed

Claims should be lodged as soon as the condition manifests itself or the injury becomes apparent, as the Commonwealth can apply the Statute of Limitations (may reject claim after 7 years).

#### DFRB - DFRDB - MSBS

**Entitlements:** Pension after qualifying length of service or invalidity irrespective of 'on duty' or 'off duty' (except in cases of injury/death whilst engaged in illegal or treasonable acts against the Commonwealth).

**Pension:** After 20 years full time service.

If discharged for medical reasons, the degree to which unfit for civilian employment (UFCE) is assessed.

**Category A invalidity** - 60% or more UFCE 76.5% of pay as pension.

**Category B invalidity** - 30% / 59% - UFCE 381/4% of pay as pension (if service is over 20 years, then pension is for that period if higher than 381/4%).

**Category C invalidity** - 29% or less UFCE - refund of contributions x 2 1/2. If served over 20 years, then pension is for the period served.

Widows - 7 pays at the pre-widowhood rate, then 5/8 rate. If commuted previously, 5/8 of rate prior to commutation.

There is provision for widows to commute portion of their pension in certain circumstances.

**Serving Members** - Should ensure that service caused, or aggravated conditions are recorded in medical records. If after a reasonable time there are residual effects, or there is a possibility of deterioration in the future, lodge a claim under VEA or MCS depending on 'peace time service' or 'operational service' being the cause. If the injury/condition is due to service during period, December 1972 to April 1994, lodge a claim on both VEA and SCRA. If successful with both you will be required to choose as generally benefits can only be received from one source. It is often preferable to accept VEA as Disability Payments are not taxable. Reject offers of lump sum payments of compensation without first seeking competent advice.

**Veterans with War Service** - If under the age of 60, it is a wise idea to lodge a claim for 'entitlement for Service Pension' by writing to the Department of Veteran Affairs. This way, before you reach 60, you will know how you stand. You may have to distribute some assets if you have too much. As the asset levels are the same as for the age pension, the financial advisory service at the Department of Social Security are available to give advice.

**In all cases - DON'T TRY TO GO IT ALONE - consult any experienced RDFWA or RSL advocate BEFORE you submit your claim forms.**

#### IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Service Records can be obtained from:  
Director of Service Records  
Department of Defence  
PO Box E33  
Queen Victoria Terrace  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Department of Veteran Affairs:  
Safety Rehabilitation & Compensation  
Section:  
Regular Defence Force Welfare Association:  
In each Capital city phone book.

Commissioner for Superannuation  
ComSuper  
PO Box 443  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

RSL Welfare Officer:  
Local RSL Sub Branch

## US HONOURS TO BE RECOGNISED BY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Australian servicemen can now accept and wear US military awards earned during service in the Vietnam War.

The Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Frank Walker, said the Government decided to formally recognise these US military awards following last year's Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards.

Records show that some 400 Australians received US military awards during the Vietnam War, but at that time Australians were not allowed to officially accept or wear foreign awards.

Mr Walker said both the United States and Australian Governments had agreed that these men should be able to receive and wear their awards with honour.

"This recognition is something that veterans have sought for a long time and I hope that, as it becomes widely known, more recipients or their families will apply for their awards," Mr Walker said.

Application forms are available from the US Embassy, the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam Association, and the Returned Services League of Australia.

*Media Statement -23 August 1995*

## RAN GLIDING ASSOCIATION REUNION

The Royal Australian Navy Gliding Association (RANGA) will be hosting a reunion for past and present members of the club over the Easter break 1996.

An informal dinner will be held at the Australian Naval Aviation museum on the Saturday night. Gliding activities will occur over the duration of the weekend, also on the programme will be tours of the museum and *HMAS Albatross*.

RANGA has been in operation now for forty years, recently located time sheets for the first flying day are dated 24 July 1955. The glider was a Slingsby T 31 G 'Tandem Tutor'. The average flight for the day was three minutes and the weather was recorded as 'dull and calm'. The only thing that hasn't changed to the present day is the July winter.

RANGA is still going strong and has a fleet of five aircraft which includes; a Piper Super Cub tow aircraft, two Blanik trainers, a Pilatus single seater and a Cirrus competition glass glider.

Still operating most weekends, RANGA provides the opportunity for Defence personnel and civilians to enjoy a fantastic sport. This year a scholarship was initiated for junior sailors and was presented to AB Doug Tebbit. The scholarship entitles the member to free flying up to solos standard and is aimed at promoting the RANGA and aviation amongst the Junior Sailors.

For further information on the reunion or club in general, please contact the president, FLTLT 'Stew' Murphy (Air Traffic Control RANAS Nowra) on (044) 211 755 during business hours. Limited on base accommodation can be provided so please be early.

For specific information on our normal flying weekends, please contact Bob Bowler (044) 552 287 or the CFI, Bill McInnes (044) 674 213.

## HEADSTONES

It is not widely known that anyone who served in the Australian Military forces is entitled to have their Service emblem used on the headstone. The Office of Australian War Graves acts as agent of the Department of Defence to give its permission to those who wish to have the Rising Sun, the RAAF or Navy emblems on their headstone. All that is needed is for the War Graves office to sight a copy of a Discharge Certificate or other documentation which proves the veteran's service and permission will be granted without delay.

For further information telephone 06-289 6511.

*\* With thanks to Vet Affairs and Ron Baxter.*

## VIETNAM VETERANS NOMINAL ROLL

Advice has been received from the Department of Veterans Affairs that the Department proposes, in the near future, to publish a nominal roll of Australians who served in the Vietnam war between May 1962 and July 1973. The roll contains the names of 59,053 men and 484 women. The roll will be made public, but before this can happen the Department needs to make sure that no one on the list will consider this to be an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

If any FAAA member who served in Vietnam objects to their name and details being published, they should contact the Department of Veteran Affairs on the toll free number 1-800-026-185 extension 4806 by 30 November 1995.

## HMAS ALBATROSS SENIOR SAILORS MESS REUNION

On 3 November 1995, commencing at 1830. All past and present Mess members welcome. A bus service will be provided to and from Nowra. If further details are required, please contact CPO Andy Brown - (044) 211870

**WHY WORRY**

There are only two things to worry about;  
Either you are well or you are sick.  
If you are well there is nothing to worry about;  
But if you are sick there are only two things to worry about;  
Either you will get well or you will die.  
If you die there are only two things to worry about;  
Either you will go to Heaven or you will go to Hell:  
If you go to Heaven there is nothing to worry about.  
But! If you go to Hell, you'll be so damn busy shaking hands with friends,  
You wont have time to worry.

## The Commander with Nine Lives

By Alan Zammit

Commander A.S. 'Donk' Storey, DSC and Bar RAN (Rtd), aged 86, has a record of escaping death, beaten only by a few who are alive today.

In March 1942, he was Gunnery Officer of the 'Fighting' 15th Cruiser Squadron under Admiral Vian, escorting merchant ships to Malta. The battered island was on the verge of famine, and food and ammunition were imperative for the island to survive the German and Italian onslaught.

When Commander Storey's ship, *HMS Naiad* was sunk by German U-Boat U565 on 11 March, 1942, with the loss of 77 men, he transferred to the light cruiser *Cleopatra* with Admiral Vian.

Eleven days later, four light cruisers, an old anti-aircraft cruiser and a flotilla of British destroyers escorting four merchant ships, came under attack from the German Luftwaffe. Heavy Italian warships were also approaching, including the modern 35,000 ton battleship, *Littorio*, with nine 15 inch guns, and supportive cruisers and destroyers.

The British ships turned to attack while the convoy headed away under the cover of a smokescreen. At the height of the action, *Cleopatra's* bridge

was hit, with 15 killed, Storey, on the bridge at the time, had a narrow escape. For two hours the 6,000 ton light cruisers fought at fantastic odds against one of the most powerful battleships afloat. In the evening the Italian ships headed for home. Of 26,000 tons of supplies, only and approximate 5,000 tons reached Malta.

On 21 October (Trafalgar Day) 1944, at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, Commander Storey was Staff Officer Operations to Commodore Collins

Commander Storey was one of the few on the bridge not to be killed or wounded.

He transferred to *HMAS Shropshire* and on 25 October, 1944, was on *Shropshire's* bridge to take part in the battle of Surigao Strait when the Australian cruiser, with the American warships and the Australian destroyer *Arunta*, opened fire on the Japanese battleship *Yamashiro* and its escorts. The *Yamashiro* was sunk in the last battleship-against-battleship action in history.



During the Lingayen Gulf landings off Luzon, Storey was Commodore (Fearless Frank) Farncomb's Staff Officer Operations on the open bridge of *HMAS Australia*, when the cruiser received five more Kamikaze hits which killed 39 of the crew.

At Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Vian's request, Commander Storey served on his staff in *HMS Indomitable* during the Okinawa campaign where he survived two more Kamikaze hits, then on *HMS Formidable* when the carrier was off Japan at the cessation of hostilities.

onboard *HMAS Australia* when a Japanese Kamikaze aircraft dived into the ship's foremast, exploded and showered blazing gasoline and debris over the bridge. Thirty of the crew were killed and sixty wounded, Captain Dechaineux and the Squadron Navigating Officer, Commander Rayment, died of their wounds, while

As a thirteen year old naval cadet at Jervis Bay in 1923, Arthur Stanley Storey was given the nick-name 'Donk', because of his initials, A.S.S. If they only knew, they could have called him the 'Kamikaze Kid'. To have survived 8 Kamikaze hits must surely be a world record.

## VP 50 CELEBRATIONS IN TOWNSVILLE

By John Ahern - Northern Slipstream Reporter

During the recent VP50 celebrations in Townsville, I was fortunate to obtain a media pass which enabled me to attend all events unhindered by either participants or spectators. This magic pass opened many doors which otherwise would have been 'no go'; areas to the general public.

One of these doors was the Civic Reception for the veterans of the 5th USAF (founded in Townsville in 1942)

together with the visiting *USS Rentz*.

Midway through the proceedings I became involved in a conversation with an ex-Army Airforce pilot who was among the first combat fliers to reach Australian shores early in 1942. He and his mates had left San Diego and 31 days later, after experiencing attacks by the Japanese finally arrived in Brisbane. Bob's first recollection of Australia was the Bulimba Brewery and Fourx signs on buildings along the banks of the Brisbane River. Ever since then, he assured me, he was a dedicated XXXX fan. However, I did notice that the can of Fosters he was drinking from didn't last too long either.

I put the question, "Were you able to see anything of other parts of the country before being posted to New Guinea?" He answered, "Yes. I got to Brisbane and Sydney. But the best six weeks of the war was spent at a little town on the south coast of NSW." Which town?" I asked. "Nowra", he replied. "I was there as part of a torpedo training exercise early in '42." This revelation called for a photograph and more talk. When I told him that I had also been stationed at Nowra and knew the area fairly well, he asked, "Is the Nowra Hotel still there? I had a great time there."

It was at this point that he drew my attention to the .....continued over.....

'SILVER FLEET' patch on his jacket. After I pleaded ignorance as to its significance, he gave me the details.

Apparently, the day after reaching their base in New Guinea, they tuned in to hear the latest from 'Tokyo Rose' and were amazed to hear her welcoming their unit to the front line with the 'Silver Fleet' of aircraft they had brought with them. This was a reference to their squadron of uncamouflaged, unpainted, B26 Martin Marauders.



VP50 visitor, Bob Marshall. An Air Gunner, he flew 49 combat missions on B26's and 6 on B29 Liberators. Photo J.Ahern

Hopefully, Bob Marshall, ex-22nd Bombardment Group, US Army Air Corps will return to these shores sometime in April 1996, if you bump into him, please buy him a Fourex.

[ Bob Marshall hopes to visit Nowra and the Museum on his next visit. Ed]

### VIETNAM DISPLAY DEDICATION CEREMONY

The Australian Naval Aviation Museum held a dedication ceremony of the Vietnam Display in the main museum display hall on 19 August.

The Vietnam display from the old museum has been relocated to reflect the significance of this conflict in our history.

Admiral Ralph was the guest of honour and officially opened the display.

See photograph elsewhere in this edition of *Slipstream*.

### THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

BY Alan Zammit

On Sunday 20 August 1995, a ceremony to commemorate Commonwealth Nationals who died in World War II was held in the Sydney War Cemetery, Rookwood.

Amongst the overseas visitors were ex -CPO's Dick Sweet and Gil Trotter DSM, both of whom served on *HMS Formidable*, with ex-SIG James Baberstock, who served on *HMS Indomitable*. They laid wreaths in memory of 85 of their shipmates who are buried in the Sydney War Cemetery.



L-R: Dick Sweet - Gil Trotter - James Baberstock  
Sydney War Cemetery -Rookwood

Photo Alan Zammit

### BRITISH PACIFIC FLEET VISITORS AT AUSTRALIAN NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM

On 15 August, a group of British Pacific Fleet veterans from the UK, visited the Australian Naval Aviation Museum at Nowra.

Two of the visitors, Bob Taylor and Cyril Cox, both ex-Telegraphist Air Gunners, met up with one of their war-time classmates, 'Chicka' Edward, who is resident in the Shoalhaven area.

The last time they had been together was in 1943 at Worthy Downs.



L-R: Bob Taylor, an ecstatic 'Chicka' Edward and Cyril Cox at the ANAM

Photo Peregrine Publishing

# ALL IN THE DAYS WORK

By GRM

*Reprinted from the RANAS Nowra Magazine - vintage early 1950's*

The uneventful dive-bombing exercise was completed and the Sea Fury was heading for base. The pilot was feeling hot and sticky in the cramped cockpit and the thought of a long cool beer at lunch-time made him moisten his lips in anticipation.

However, there were more important things to think about. Airspeed, altitude, fuel and sundry other gauges all demanded frequent attention. Their mute evidence was 'as per the book', till his eyes came to the oil temperature gauge. The needle pointed to a figure considerably higher than it should have been. Check the cooling shutters ..... open as they should be ..... What the hell????

Then the rev counter started a slow but steady skid around the clock and the pilot's blood pressure climbed with it. Movement of the pitch control lever failed to reduce the now dangerously high revs so the pilot eased back on the throttle lever. Sure enough, the revs dropped but the loss in power caused the aircraft to lose altitude.

A call to base cleared the field for an emergency landing, but hardly had he finished the transmission when thick smoke belched from the exhaust and a stream of oil smeared the windscreen. The engine was now coughing and spluttering. Tongues of flame licking back from the cowlings settled the matter ..... a few more minutes and he must leave the aircraft.

Good training now overcame any tendency to panic; the moment for which he had rehearsed many times had arrived and the emergency procedure was clear in his mind. He transmitted a 'May Day' or distress call, fixing his position and height and stating his intention to bale out. He knew that

even now his radio was being 'D-F'ed and a rescue team being summoned. But he also knew that it was by his own efforts alone that he would get clear of the burning aircraft. Brother! An ejection seat would certainly have been a help just then. He went into action ..... open the hood a fraction, down head, pull the jettison lever. The engine and slipstream noises increased so the hood must have gone. He glanced to starboard and saw another Fury which had seen his plight and was standing by. Disconnect R/T lead, release safety harness and, yes .... this was it! Two thousand feet to go. From a crouched position on the cockpit seat he hurled his body head-first over the port side.

A horrible thought ..... supposing the tail plane hurtling through the air at 140 knots should hit him! It had happened before. Then he sensed, rather than saw, the tail plane pass overhead and his mind switched to the next problem. His right hand already grasped the rip-cord out of its housing. Several hours later .... or was it only seconds ..... his fall was viciously arrested as the parachute developed and he was swaying peacefully in the air with the other Fury orbiting above him.

Below him was thick bush and a landing in the trees was inevitable. First of all a pull down on the rear lift webs to slow his drift then, just before hitting the trees, legs up to protect the family jewels and tummy, arms in front of the chest and hands in front of the face. The tree tops rushed to meet

him. A flurry of leaves and branches and he was safe .... or was he? Looking down he realised that he was still 30 feet from the deck suspended from a branch. A Tarzan swing enabled him to reach the trunk of the tree and, having grasped it in a loving embrace, it was but a matter of seconds to release the harness and shin down to terra firma.

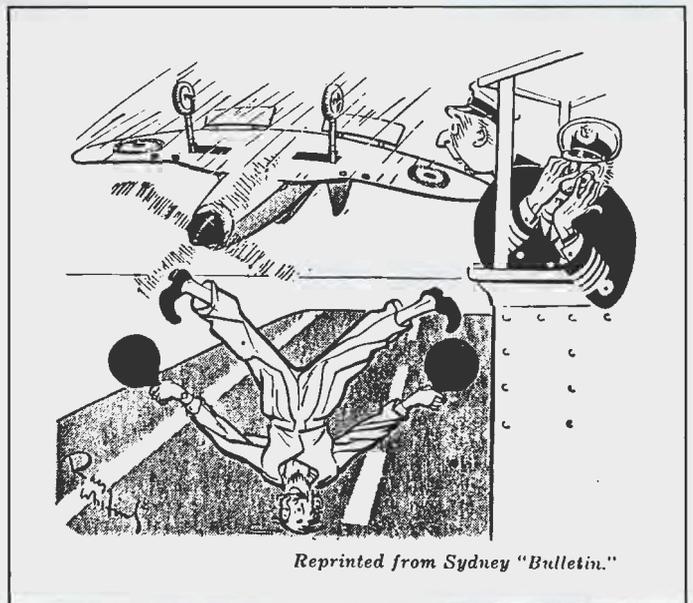
Shortly afterwards rescuers were at the spot and the pilot was soon on his way back to the Air Station little the worse for wear.

A straight forward bale-out is grim enough but it became apparent during the subsequent inquiry that the pilot had experienced one of the luckiest escapes imaginable. The auxiliary parachute had torn away from the main canopy and was never found. The main chute was oil stained and burned in places. Evidence proved fairly conclusively that the parachute had developed prematurely and had been caught on the aircraft. Fortunately only one cord snagged and this broke, thus freeing the chute and pilot.

Shortly after this event occurred at *HMAS Albatross*, the same pilot did a repeat performance whilst serving in Korea.

Hair raising? Yes .... but all in the day's work for aircrew.

*[Okay, I found the story, you tell me the date and the names of the pilot and GRM, the author. Ed]*



*Reprinted from Sydney "Bulletin."*

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**



**No.3 Naval Air Crew Course - HMAS Cerberus 31 May 1951**

**L-R Back row:** Max Glenn - Des Giles - Roy Prior - John Sutcliffe - Peter Zafer - Ivor Janz - Barry Thompson - Rick Boughton - 'Spewey' Richards - John Cook  
**L-R Front row:** John Dudley - 'Slug' Whitton - 'Dooley' Lord - Kevin Knowles - Keith Potts - 'Munka' Gleason - George Barron - 'Flossie' Gully (Photo courtesy Barry 'Dooley' Lord)



**ALBATROSS ATHLETIC CLUB - at the end of the club's first season in the Sydney athletic competition 1952**

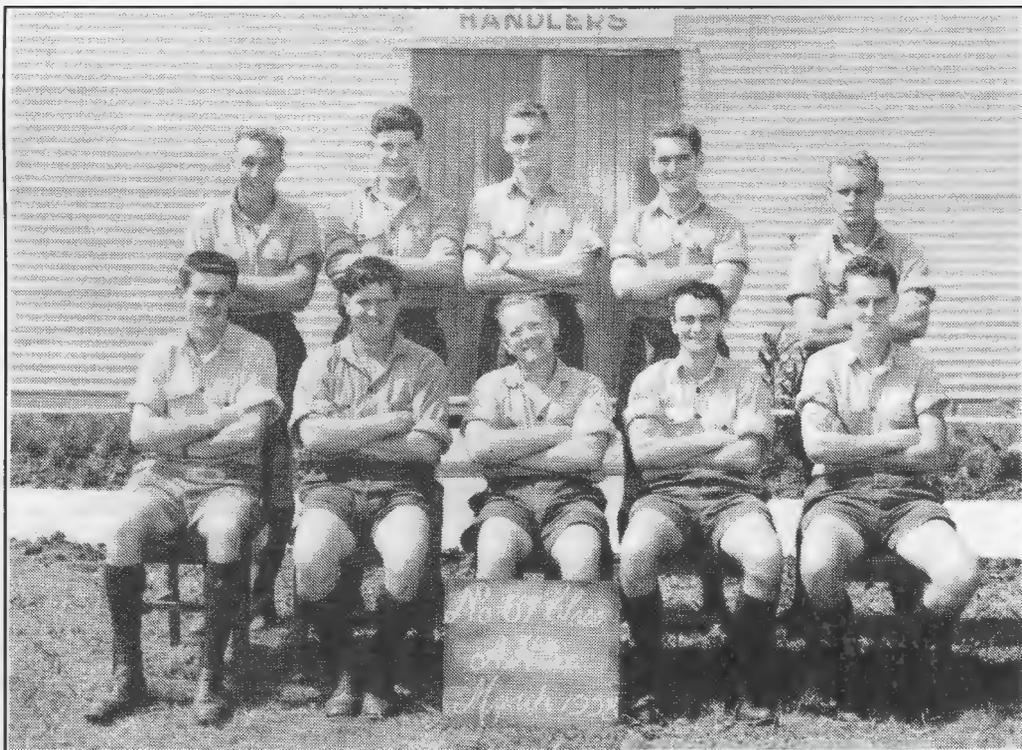
**Back row L-R:** 'Chas' Baldwin - John Elliot - ? - ? - Ken Hyde - Jim Hawkins - Charlie Morris - Raoul 'Ned' Kelly  
**Centre:** 'Prof' Edwards - Ernie Rowe - Joe Love  
**Front:** Frank McCaffrey - ? - LtCdr 'Bash' Kirkwood - Ron Hay - Kevin Foot - ? (Photo courtesy Charlie Morris)



**No.12 NAR CLASS- April 1949 - HMAS ALBATROSS**

**Back row L-R: ? -'Bluey' Thompson - Ray Leroy - Tom Jenkins - Ron Reed - Don Graham - Don Eldridge - R. McDermott - Max Fleming - Jimmy Watts**

**Front row: 'Chuck' Doherty - Billy Brown - Joe Dawson - 'Mechanic' McCullough - Alex Wardrop**  
**Missing from photograph Clive Tanzer and 'Tex' Nankivell (Photo courtesy Don Eldridge)**



**NAVAL AIRMAN AH3 COURSE No.67 March 1958**

**Back L-R: Ken Hickey - Leo 'Fury' Kirkman - Don Hume - Glen 'Grogan' Harris - Maurie Mankoph**  
**Front L-R: John Baker - Kevin 'Butterballs' Prew - PO Smith - Ken Staff - Tony 'Slim' Smith (Photo courtesy Ken Staff)**

Dear Ed,

I was fascinated to see the Ferguson/Litchfield/Sycamore story. As you will see from the enclosed signal and photograph, Sycamore XD 654 seems to have had a habit of going for a swim. This one was its final plunge.

The photograph was taken from *HMS Hermes* and the scene was the middle of the Indian Ocean. It's too long a story to tell but probably worth a mention.

Yours sincerely, 'Nobby' Clarke

UNCLASSIFIED MESSAGE

S1320d

R M 041030Z  
FM MELBOURNE  
TO ACNB  
INFO FOCAF  
FOICEA  
NAS NOWRA

IFAA ART 602

(A) SYCAMORE MK 51 XD 654 HRS 1084.25  
(B) LEONIDES MK 17302 HRS 239.15  
(C) HMAS MELBOURNE 723 SQDN  
(D) NIL  
(E) LT (SL) JOHN RAYMOND DA COSTA (P) RAN  
(F) LT CDR M C REEVES RAN LT CDR M A McK CLARKE (O) RAN  
LT CDR D J ROBERTSON (P) RAN LT CDR I K JOSSELYN (P) RAN  
(G) 04 DEGS 27 MINS N 86 DEGS 42 MINS E 040310Z  
(H) NA  
(I) THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO HOVER ALONGSIDE HMS HERMES PRIOR TO  
LANDING ON . THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT WIND TO MAINTAIN HEIGHT  
AT THE AIRCRAFTS ALL UP WEIGHT . THE AIRCRAFT DITCHED BEFORE  
THE PILOT COULD RECOVER FROM THIS SITUATION  
(J) NA (K) NA  
(L) A/P ZZ ENG ZZ  
(M) YES (N) NO (O) NO (P) NO

DIST F F124 X X1 C W S A O N

SS PL TOD I/T LJT 4/3/61

Dear Ed,

17 September 1995

Next Saturday we leave England and go to stay in Amsterdam for two months, with the excitement of VE and VJ Reunions in England still strong in our memory.

On 31 August we travelled to Portsmouth and called upon Bill Crozer in his penthouse overlooking 'Pompey' Dockyard. Bill was recovering from his recent 80th birthday party and was in fine spirits. Although he admits to slowing down a bit, he still enjoys a pint with his mates each lunchtime.

I had thought of joining Bill at the Fleet Air Arm Reunion at Lee-on-Solent the following day, but Bill advised me that the weather would be foul. He was correct! After three weeks of sunshine there was a torrential downpour for the event and thousands of old sailors were drenched. Bill and I were absent - but dry!

The following two days were given over to a British Pacific Fleet and East Indies Fleet Reunion, plus many more small, unofficial reunions of old shipmates. These were held on Southern Common.

More than 10,000 ex-Navy veterans had converged on Portsmouth for the VJ events. The two day events cost about £330,000, with Portsmouth City Council providing £100,000, P&O sponsored the events with £90,000, while the Midland Bank, Shell and Swires all chipped in.

After a drumhead service on Sunday 3 September, I was led grumbling and complaining to join a march past where Prince Phillip took the salute.

Following the march all veterans were given a special ale brewed by Horndean based Gale and Co. The NAAFI mounted a huge catering operation (free to veterans) serving more than 8,000 sandwiches and 20,000 cups of tea.

Although we all enjoyed ourselves greatly, it was generally agreed that this was the last 'big-one' as many 1939-'45 veterans could just not manage to attend any more, Age and health had finally caught up.

After our stay in Holland we go to New Zealand for Christmas and the New Year, then return home to 'Aussie' in January. Hopefully we will meet up with you soon after that.

Kind regards, Stan Brown - ex-PO Electrician (Air) (Not the other one!)  
[Thank you for the enclosed newspaper clippings. Stan. Ed]



Dear Ed,

Referring to Geoff Litchfield's article in the last edition of Slipstream, I would like to confirm the correct would have been October 1955 as I witnessed the ditching and left the Navy in 1956.

Geoff's story was correct, but he failed to mention the Safety Equipment bods who were assisting in this operation.

Kevin Wolstenholme, who was on the larger dinghy we were using, dived over the side, watch and all, and swam to assist the aircrew. I was on the shore and went in for the same purpose, fortunately the air crew were out quickly and we made our way to the shore.

Many months later (August 1956) I was paid £2-5-11 compensation for damage to clothing, Kevin also received compensation for clothing and his watch.

Geoff can thank his lucky stars he wasn't on the end of the winch line, he could have finished up anywhere in the Basin!

Regarding the Gliding Club, I am enclosing a photo of a badly bent glider. I can't remember the date of the prang but it would have to be before September 1956.

As far as I can remember it was involved in practice for an Air Show when the wings started flapping and down it came into the trees. I don't remember the name of the pilot but he was okay.

The photo may jog a few memories, I hope it helps in the history of the Albatross Gliding Club.

All the best, *Kevin (Chick) Hawkins - ex-Safety Equipment*



Dear Ed,

The Slipstreams of April and July 1995, pp9 and 19 respectively, contained material seeking identification of HMAS Albatross sporting teams in the early 1950s. Readers may be interested to know that two of those in the Albatross Athletic Club group photograph, Tommy Joyce (Back row -second from left), and Maxie Boyed (Front row - third from right) were REMs on loan from the RN. Both were my contemporaries, and at various times, the 'best of mates'.

On return to the RN, both continued to pursue outstanding all-round sporting careers. Tommy's principal claim to fame was in the football domain, (real football, of course, played with the feet - erroneously called 'soccer' in Australia) in which he gained just about every Service honour possible throughout the rest of his lengthy career in the Navy, both as a player and in later years as an administrator.

Maxie Boyes also achieved high representative honours in the football domain, but unlike Tommy, he also continued down the athletics track (no pun intended), and his brilliance was eventually rewarded when selected as

Dear Ed,

*HMAS Sydney - 5th January 1952*

This is a sequel to Lt P. Goldrick landing on the ship after being wounded.

After the flurry of activity associated with the recovery of the aircraft serial, with Flight deck crews dodging the occasional 20mm round and 6" rocket hang-ups whilst aircraft were being arrested, Pilot's Mates manned the cockpits for re-spotting or striking below.

'Muscles' West manned the cockpit of the aircraft in which Lt Goldrick incurred his wound. The projectile which had caused his injury had entered the cockpit on the mid Starboard side, in doing so, it had passed through the message dropping bag which was weighted with lead

shot. This had resulted in a spillage of the shot on the cockpit floor.

An inquiring voice from the Port side (from the Batsman, RN Loan type) asked 'Muscles' what all the debris was on the cockpit floor. He was told that it was buckshot. The response from the Batsman was instantaneous, "The dirty bastards, putting buckshot in their bullets!"

Regards, *W.J. 'Jack' McLoughlin*

PS: I noticed in the RN Navy News, May 1995, that LtCdr A.P. Boddam-Whettam DSC had passed away. He was the Training Officer of the RANAS Nowra Airmanship School from its inception for the first classes, NAR 5 and 6 in September 1948. Other officers were Lt Routley RN and Mr Bill Crozer RN.

Great Britain's 400-metre hurdles' representative for the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. Sadly he didn't figure in the medals, nevertheless it was an outstanding achievement when considering the limitations automatically imposed by the 'exigencies' of service life.

Coincidentally, the captain of the British Olympics team in the 1960 Rome Games was also a serving RN

member - Surgeon Lieutenant John Wrighton. Remarkably, he too was a '400 - metre' individual and '400 - metre medley relay' events. The team was successful in reaching the 'final' of the latter, only to experience the acute disappointment of finishing 4th! Incidentally, 1960 was the Games in which Herb Elliot won the 1500 metres.

Regards, *Tom McDonald*

Dear Ed,

The enclosed photo was taken on a bus trip from Nowra to Braidwood in the early 50's. The bus was owned and driven by a Ralph Rolton of Nowra.

Unfortunately my memory seems to have receded in direct proportion to my hairline, as the majority of names escape me. However, Len Zuch, 'Rip' Lamont, Jeff Lancombe and 'yours truly' [Owen 'Baldy' Holston] are certainties, with possibles being 'Sherlock' Hood, Jim Lee and Kevin McKay. Maybe some of our readers will remember the rest.

Friends of Rex Grennan (formerly Hounslow), are advised that Rex passed away a couple of years ago.

The following incident may jog a few memories:

The setting was 'F' Hangar - 805 Squadron in the days of CO 'Digger' Bourke, 'Kitty' Bluett, Litchfield, Cooke, Rogers, O'Grady, Smith, Waite, just to name a few that come to mind.

At the time I was in the AEO's office talking to Lt. Jarvis, when the deafening roar of a Sea Fury suddenly became a deathly silence.

Lt. Jarvis commented, "That sounded bloody expensive!"

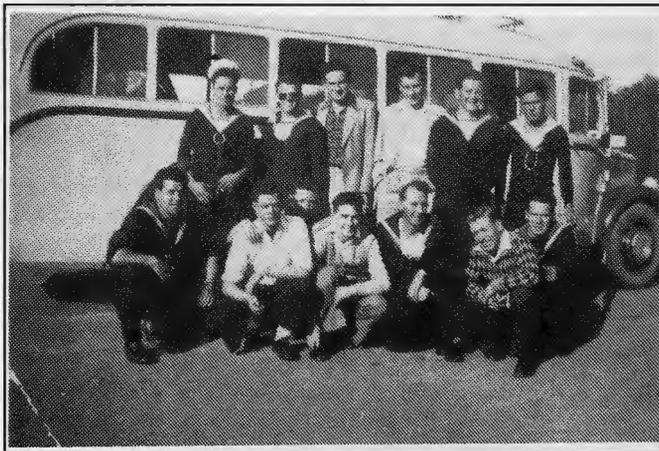
We raced outside to see one Sea Fury, complete with rearranged props, standing on its nose amid chunks of torn-up tarmac; hot footing it off in the opposite direction was one naval airman, still clutching his two-gallon foam extinguisher.

Making an equally hasty exit from the cockpit was CPO 'Darky' Hodges (actually looking fairly pale at the time).

It appeared that an injector fault had over-ridden all his efforts to throttle back.

Congratulations on a terrific publication.

Kind regards to all, Owen 'Baldy' Holston



Dear Ed,

With reference to the 'Black Panty' item mentioned by the 'Mirriwinni Mafia' in the last edition of *Slipstream*.

These were actually flown from C in C Portsmouths masthead and caused quite a deal of trouble for Commander Bill Cook, the Executive Officer of *HMAS Melbourne*.

Who were the culprits? Midshipmen from the *Melbourne*. They were also responsible for hoisting the Australian Flag above the White Ensign on *HMS Victory*, and for removing some of the cannon balls from the same ship.

Quite possibly 'Billy' Cook could advise you of his very torrid session with C in C on Christmas morning, relating to these incidents and some other particularly nasty incidents in which the Officers of *Melbourne* were involved.

'Curley' Fahey - CDR RAN (Rtd)

## AN AMBULANCE

### DOWN IN THE VALLEY

'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,  
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;  
But over its terrible edge there had slipped  
A Duke, and full many a peasant.  
The people said something would have to be done.  
But their projects did not all tally;  
Some said "put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff."  
Some: "an ambulance down in the valley."

The lament of the crowd was profound and was loud,  
As their tears overflowed with their pity;  
But the cry for the ambulance carried the day,  
As it spread through the neighbouring city.  
A collection was made, to accumulate aid,  
And the dwellers in highway and alley  
Gave dollars and cents - not to furnish a fence -  
But an ambulance down in the valley.

"For the cliff is alright if you're careful", they said;  
"and if folks ever slip and are dropping,  
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much,  
As the shock down below - when they're stopping."  
So for years (so we heard), as these mishaps occurred  
Quick forth would the rescuers sally,  
To pick up the victims who fell from the cliff,  
With the ambulance down in the valley.

Said one, to his please, "It's a marvel to me  
That you'd give so much greater attention  
To repairing results than to curing the cause,  
You had much better run at prevention.  
For the mischief, of course, should be stopped at its  
source,  
Come neighbours and friends let us rally,  
It is far better sense to rely on a fence  
Than an ambulance down in the valley."

"He is wrong in the head," the majority said,  
"He would end all our earnest endeavour,  
He's a man who would shirk this responsible work,  
But we will support it for ever.  
Aren't we picking up all, just as fast as they fall,  
And giving them care liberally?  
A superfluous fence is of no consequence,  
If the ambulance works in the valley."

The story looks queer as we've written it here  
But things oft occur that are stranger.  
More humane, we assert, than to succour the hurt  
Is the plan for removing the danger.  
The best possible course is to safeguard the source  
But attending to things rationally;  
Yes, build up the fence and let us dispense  
With the ambulance down in the valley.

*From RAN Aviation Safety Digest November 1986*

Dear Ed,

As always, I was very pleased to receive the latest (July 1995) issue of *Slipstream*. It is a great magazine and you are to be congratulated on the interesting and nostalgic articles that appear in each issue.

I am writing in reply to your query about the lovely photograph on page 11. It must have been taken in the latter half of 1950, as 'Jock' Cunningham, our Squadron CO, went back to the UK in November 1950. (I was one of the original pilots who joined 805 Squadron at Eglinton on 28 August 1948.)

The names are as follows:

**Back row L-R:**

Jimmy Bowles - Senior Pilot  
 Fred Sherbourne  
 Tony Robinson  
 'Jock' Cunningham RN - CO 805 Squadron  
 Ronald? Manners-Clarke RN - AEO 20th CAG  
 George Jude  
 Dickie Dyke

**Centre row L-R:**

Mike Stanley RN  
 John Robatham RN

**Front row L-R:**

Peter Seed  
 Dougie Baker RN

The chap leaning against the old car - I can remember the face but can't put a name to it!

I hope this is some use to you.

Yours sincerely, *Tony Robinson* CMDR RAN (Rtd)

.....and on the same subject Roy Allman had this to say:

'Commissioned Warrant Officer, Harold Kent, spoke to me about forming a Gliding Club - late 1949, but to the best of my recollection, the club had not formed by October 1951 when I was posted back to the UK.'

.....and, in a letter to Ken Bullock, the Gliding Club 'historian', Gordon McPhee said that after consultation with Henry Young, who was an RAN pilot in 805 Squadron during that period, they had come up with the list of names [as per above]. He also added:

'The glider was sent to Australia by an RNER, prior to his arrival at NAS Nowra. I cannot remember his name, he did not join a squadron. But I do remember that his brother was a UK, if not world, gliding champion at the time. Prior to the RNER's arrival, Harold Kent took the glider up and the so-called landing resulted in Harold breaking both legs.

You may be interested to know that 'Jock' Cunningham was CO of 805 Squadron at the time. Earlier this year, Henry [Young] had spent time with him in the UK and France. He also spent time with Peter Seed, now living in the UK.

I have a strong feeling that the civilian in the photograph was a tradesman from Nowra town and more than likely a plumber.'

[Peter Walsh, our Nowra 'Mitre 10' man, confirms that the civilian with the 'T' Model Ford was a plumber, his name was Jack Ellison.

[ Thank you for the information. Ted Silsby also contributed on the same subject. Ed]

Dear Ed,

I refer to the Quarterly Journal Vol.6 No.2 and the photograph of the young officers on P8.

I imagine that you may have had quite a bit of a reaction to this as a number of those featured are alive and well and some are active with the Association or the Museum.

However, I can tell you that the photo was taken during a Short Service Officers' Course early in 1955. The course was at *Cerberus* and *Penguin* and I think a bit of time was spent at *Watson*. The course members were mainly from No.16 Pilots' Course but there were some SD officers, observers and a couple of university entry engineers, I cannot remember everyone but -

[Note: the names appearing in square brackets [ ] are suggested by 'Curley' Fahey. Ed]

**Back row L-R:**

- NK [ Bill Hill - Commissioned Engineer]
- Mike Astbury (Retired at Captain)
- NK [David Parr - Commissioned Engineer]
- Warren Browne (Killed in Firefly crash a year later)
- Frank O'Grady (TAA then ANA)
- NK
- NK
- Bob (Jerry) O'Day (Retired at CMDR)
- Ken Henry (Killed in Sea Fury crash a year or so later)
- Les Shaw (Resigned a few years later)
- Leigh Cooper (Resigned a few years later)

**Front row L-R:**

- John Selby (Retired as Captain) [Jack Birch - Commissioned Mechanician]
- Jim McClelland? [Surgeon Lt (D) Neville Merrifield]
- Des Rodgers (Retired LCDR lives in Canberra)
- Tony Eccleston (Retired as Captain - was DNI)
- Graham Stevens (QANTAS in about 1959)
- NK [Jack Levy - Commissioned Gunner]
- Geoff Coker-Godson?
- Curley Fahey
- NK
- Dick Lea (Retired as Captain 1983)

I am sure that this and other info that you receive will soon complete the picture. I think the photo was taken at *Penguin* but I am not sure.

Best regards, *Dick Lea*

Dear Ed,

I wish to inform you of the recent death of a former Fleet Air Arm member who passed away on 16 August, 1995, at Coffs Harbour.

His name was Henry Francis Lewin and his Service No. 47649, he was known to all as 'Harry' Lewin. Harry and I joined the FAA in 1952 at the time of the Korean War and served for six years. He served on 808 Squadron, travelling to the UK on the last trip of the *Vengeance*, and returning on the *Melbourne* in 1956. After discharge, he and I both joined QANTAS as Aircraft Engineers, Harry was to remain with them until his retirement.

We last met two weeks before his death when he visited me at Callala, I was fortunate to have taken him out to the Museum to rekindle old memories. He was not a member of the FAAA, but was active with the Naval Association in his capacity as President of the Coffs Harbour Branch.

*Ted Drinnan* - 46884

Dear Ed,

With a Federal Election possibly in the offing, and certainly no later than March next year, I thought this issue of Slipstream would be an opportune and suitable vehicle for updating interested parties on just what the present Government is doing with regard to the awarding of the British Naval General Service Medal and/or the Australian Service Medal (ASM) 1945 -75 to RAN personnel who served in the Far East Strategic Reserve between 1955 and 1970 during SEATO deployments. In a word, NOTHING!

Repeated letters to the Prime Minister have brought only the standard replies from Public Service bureaucrats stating that the Government is satisfied with the outcome of the Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards and does not intend to re-open the matter. At no stage have they made any attempt to answer, let alone correct, the many anomalies and inconsistencies raised by myself and numerous other concerned ex-service personnel. It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand the logic behind their stance. Why any politician would choose to antagonise and possibly alienate tens of thousands of voters by blindly defending a document as blatantly flawed as the Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards Report is well beyond my comprehension.

Then again, not all politicians are completely happy with the Report. On 27 September 1995, Mr Wilson Tuckey, Shadow Minister for Veteran Affairs and Defence Science and Personnel, issued a media release headed, 'COALITION MAKES ITS OWN AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS COMMITMENT BY WIDENING SERVICE MEDAL ENTITLEMENT'. For those of you who may have missed it, the Coalition will, when elected to office, extend the award of the ASM 1945-75 to cover service in the BCOF - Japan between 1 July 1947 and 28 April 1952; the Korean War between 29 June 1950 and 27 July 1953; Malayan Emergency between 31 May 1950 and 31 July 1960; Far East Strategic Reserve between 2 July 1955 and 30 October 1966; and the Indonesian Confrontation between 24 December 1962 and 11 August 1966. It also covers the Berlin Airlift and standardises all previously recommended qualifying periods of

Dear Ed,

I was interested to read in the April issue 'Musings from 1851 Squadron' about the Mosquitos in *Striker* and Bill Wilson's letter in the July issue. I know nothing about that particular exercise, but, as Bill Wilson says, operating Mosquitos from an escort carrier would be virtually impossible.

I flew nearly 400 hours in Mosquitos at Dale and Stretton from 1946-49. Some people will remember that Winkle Brown did deck landing trials in a Mosquito on a fleet carrier in the Channel in 1946, this was before angle decks. It was found that the starboard wing tip missed the island by 6 feet and on one take-off the port undercarriage was bouncing off the top of the port side gun turrets. After about six tries, everyone decided it was much too dangerous.

As a gentle little line - we used to have fun landing at RAF Airfields. The RAF used to wheel land Mosquitos at 150 knots and take the whole runway. We used to three-point them on the end at 95 knots (they stalled at 93) with lots of power, and then it was a matter of honour that you turned off at the first intersection. I think it put the fear of God up the RAF Air Traffic controllers!

Kind regards,

*Basil Nash* - Ex Lieutenant (A) RN

service to 30 days. Anyone who is not covered by at least one of the above I would suggest never went to sea.

Now, whilst the award of the ASM 1956-75 for any of the above service can probably be said to rank below the nation's \$180 billion foreign debt in overall importance, the fact of the matter is that the current regime is not doing a hell of a lot to fix either of them. I am not going to tell you how to vote at the next Federal Election, Heaven forbid, but if you are in any way uncertain or wanting more information on either the medal or the National Debt, please do not hesitate to drop me a line or give me a ring and if I am not available, try the Prime Minister or your local Federal Member.

*Barry Roberts*

14 Berith Street

WHEELER HEIGHTS NSW 2097

Dear Ed,

For the sake of historical accuracy, Don James did relieve Ron Robb on the PTA Unit, I took over from Don in September 1965 onboard *HMAS Anzac*.

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing some photos and old paper clippings you may want to use in your *Slipstream* or Museum.

The photos are of the bus accident in February 1954, referred to on page 25 of your July issue. I was also on the bus that day, as a member of the Guard of Honour for HRH Queen Elizabeth.

I am also including some photos of HRH when she disembarked from the Royal Yacht *Gothic* and inspected the Guard of Honour at Farm Cove and *HMAS Penguin*, then finally as she embarked at Circular Quay.

Yours sincerely, *Frank Hamilton*

[The guard photos and other enclosures will appear in another edition. Ed]



Thank you for a fantastic mag, although a sad one at times when I read 'A Last Farewell'.

*Don Roberts*

Dear Ed,

With reference to Frank Donnelly's remarks accompanying his photograph of NAR 6 in the last *Slipstream*, where he mentioned that few of the class signed on again.

The early days at Nowra were, to say the least, primitive. The 'mossies' were in plague proportions, as were the blowflies and mice. We even had to find broken glass to scrape the paint from the floors, and the grease traps hadn't been cleaned out for years.

One pub in town wouldn't serve sailors, and one of the local butchers was paid five quid a head to destroy a TB infected herd, which he promptly cut up and sold to the Air Station. Our technical training was attempted by RN instructors from obsolete Air Publications, and notes that were circa WW2. The air component was a Tiger

Moth, a Wirraway and a Spitfire in a crate.

The DFRB was yet to come in and we were on a gratuity, 240 Pounds after 12 years service, and another 120 Pounds for 6 years in the Fleet Reserve.

Recruiting figures were so low that the Navy reduced the initial engagement time to six years and encouraged an influx of RN personnel. This resulted in the encouragement of these people to sign on through promotion and trips all over the world to bring back new ships and train for new aircraft. The RANEB failed whole classes of the original Australian trained personnel.

The late 1950's saw the projected demise if the Fleet Air Arm, for me to re-engage I would have had to change categories to 'stoker', of course, this did not eventuate until much later.

Despite spending eleven of my twelve years at Nowra going absolutely nowhere, I am a Foundation Member of the FAAA formed in Western Australia, and a Foundation Member of the Naval Aviation Museum.

Yours aye,

B. Worthington (Once called 'String Bean' now a 'Broad Bean')

Dear Ed,

I recently dug out this old snap that I am enclosing. You may find it interesting enough for comment or display in the Museum Gallery.

It was taken aboard *HMAS Sydney* and possibly in the Hervey Bay area, around 1949/50.

That's me as a PO No.1 Director in the landing area. As you can see, the wheel tore loose as the aircraft landed. I can't recall who the pilot was, or the name of the duty photographer who took the picture. However, he was credited in having the shot published in the RN FAA publication, 'Flight Deck'.

The runaway wheel whipped past me as I continued to back pedal into the safety net. The deck hook to arrester wire relationship showed it to be an obvious barrier job.

Regards to *Slipstream* and Museum crews - doing a great job!

E.R. Bush - ex-CAAH



## MUSEUM MANAGEMENT

Dear Ed,

Recently we have had some FAA Association Members confused as to where they fit into the scheme of things, and who's in charge of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum, especially at weekends.

The museum article in this issue may resolve some queries members may have. It is very obvious that our separate organisations have common goals and bonds and that Association Members should always feel welcome and visit us with a sense of belonging and déjà vu.

The museum is operated with the following structure:

- \* CHAIRMAN (Commodore NAS)
- \* BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- \* MUSEUM DIRECTOR
- \* OPERATIONS MANAGER - CURATOR - CATERING MANAGER - SHOP MANAGER

(As a matter of interest, the Board is made up of business men and Naval personnel, and includes Max Altham, President of the NSW Division of the FAA Association.)

The museum is open seven days a week except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day, to cover the weekend periods we have a roster of Duty Managers. This duty is designed to be a point of contact for all matters concerning the museum's activity, so please, don't be shy, say hello when you visit. Don't be surprised if you find the Duty Manager helping out in the galley, fork-lifting spare parts, or helping Don Parkinson and his restoration team - it's the nature of weekend activity.

Notwithstanding, we are always pleased to meet members of the FAA fraternity.

Please remember that we have a well stocked Museum Shop full of souvenirs - it only takes a phone call to get mail orders moving.

With kind regards,

Mike Lehan  
Museum Director

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter 'Another time, another place', contained in the June issue of the RN Navy News. I doubt whether its author will object to its inclusion in *Slipstream*. In fact, if one reads his final paragraph, I feel sure that he would be delighted.

I feel that it would also complement the write-up in the last issue of your very informative magazine, by Alan Zammit on 'The Forgotten Fleet'. It will further bring to the notice of the 'Doubting Thomas' element of the Australian public and matelots that there was an RN presence in this area of the world during the last war. I think the *HMS Hermes* was sunk by the Japs off Coimbo in 1942, or was it 1943? MONAB 6 was entrenched in Manus before war's end, but to argue is not my object in writing this.

Alan mentions the personnel billeted at *Golden Hind*, Warwick Farm Racecourse. What he doesn't mention is that the princely sum of sixpence a day 'hard lying' money was paid, without their consent, as a contribution to the British Centre in Hyde Park, Sydney. The majority of these hands were in tents on duck boards, not in wooden huts or under the grandstand!

I remember the British Centre very well but cannot imagine how they could have served so many meals with such a small kitchen area. To arrive here from a starved UK and to be able to buy steak, eggs and chips for a 'bob' was like walking into the Hilton.

I befriended a LWran whilst visiting the British Centre one evening. We were doing what young people tend to do at an earlier age today, in Rushcutters Park (she was billeted in the YMCA) when an old fellow walking his dog came along. He tapped me on the bare part of my anatomy and said, "You shouldn't do that here, son!" I didn't realise I was on the footpath!

On a recent trip to Sydney, I stood where I remembered the building to be, opposite the Roman Catholic Cathedral, but found it impossible to orientate myself. Trees grow!

Whilst involved with various organisations in Sydney, I enquired as to the whereabouts of the building. It was acquired by a Councillor Storey, Shire President of Hornsby Council for fifteen shillings and was transferred to Hornsby Hospital as the maternity section (it probably enjoyed its new position after its experiences). On my last visit to the hospital, the front entrance was still there, lions and all.

There was another British Centre above David Jones, or was it Grace Bros in Pitt Street?

*Eric Manuel*

## ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE

Due to the International Date Line, we, in the British Pacific Fleet, were 24 hours ahead of the UK, so we learned of VE Day on 9th May.

This was the day when the whole of Britain was rejoicing and celebrating Victory in Europe. It was a day we could not celebrate. We were far too busy. In position 23°29N, 125°49E, we had been at Action Stations since 0515. We stayed there until 2045.

Here is a brief report of our VE Day:

'Four bomber strikes, two on each island totalling seventy-three Avengers with rocket armed Fireflies and escort. Lt. D.Cameron of 1834 Squadron failed to return. Runways were cratered, motor vehicles and grounded aircraft shot up.

At 1145, CAP fighters were unfortunately unable to catch a high flying snoopie to the west and at 1645 a group of low flying bogies was detected westwards at twenty-eight miles.

Six minutes later, four Seafires piloted by S/Lts F.Hockley, Gall, Gradley and Taylor RNVR of Indefatigable's 894 squadron shot down one Zeke at fifteen miles but apparently allowed themselves to be drawn away from the other four bogies which closed the Fleet at 1650.

A large Fleet course alteration of 60 degrees at 22 knots to starboard did not prevent a Zeke 52 diving towards *Victorious* and despite being hit, went over its starboard quarter onto the flight deck forward abreast B (port) 4.5 inch gun turrets.

A parachuted 500lb bomb it released at about 300 yards from the ship exploded a hole into the flight deck, putting the catapult, a 4.5 inch gun and a forward lift motor out of action.

The resulting fire was quickly extinguished. A few minutes later at 1650, a second Zeke approaching *Victorious* from astern in a shallow power glide was hit and set on fire, but still continued, hitting the flight deck a glancing blow and burning furiously as it skidded over the side.

This damaged one arrester wire unit but wrecked beyond repair a 50mm director and four parked Corsairs.

## Burning Petrol

Casualties from both these were three killed and nineteen wounded, four seriously. At 1657 a third Zeke made a pass at *Victorious*, but then shifted target to Howe which was next in line ahead, approaching her over the starboard quarter.

Then gunfire from Howe, *Victorious* and *Formidable* hit the Zeke, which burst into flames as it flew over Howe's quarterdeck, crashing into the sea a hundred yards beyond.

At 1705, a fourth Kamikaze, with overload fuel tanks under each wing, approached *Formidable* from dead astern about thirty feet above the water. Though repeatedly hit, it dived into aircraft parked aft, sweeping the flight deck with flame and explosion, destroying six Corsairs and an Avenger and damaging two Corsairs.

Burning petrol fell through a blown out plate rivet hole into the hangar below, starting another fire which was then extinguished by spraying the hangar, but not before three or four more Avengers and eight Corsairs were damaged by fire and water.

With only several wounded, casualties were lighter than on 4 May though a hurtling wheel decapitated one rating on the flight deck.

All fires were put out within fifteen minutes and an hour after the attack, the Captain signalled at 1775 that the ship could land on aircraft. Admiral Vian had reason enough to praise the steadfast courage of the gunners who faced this truly fearsome form of attack. They remained serving their guns undismayed, but for which fact more Kamikazes would have scored direct hits.

Task Force 57 emerged from today's attacks with four carriers still intact but the state of the carrier air groups and flight decks required a programme reorganisation. The Commander Fifth Fleet was signalled of Admiral Rawlings intention to withdraw to area Cootie and make good damage, to return on the 12 and 13 May. At 1915 the course to Cootie was set.

## Executed

In his book, 'The Forgotten Fleet', John Winton wrote:

'The reports of bullets fired from burning aircraft, the towering columns of smoke and steam, visible for many miles and the sound and smell of the fires, contributed to one of the most

dramatic scenes in the war at sea.'

When we withdrew from the Action Zone that evening, we were of course tired as usual. Our thoughts were now centred on our families and our home towns back in the dear old UK and the Commonwealth.

We imagined what it was like, with the lights shining again and people laughing. We felt relieved that they were now safe and hoped and prayed that soon we would be able to join them.

Some of course did not make it. We suffered many more casualties and on the very last day of the war, two of our aircrew were shot down, captured and executed. They were S/Lt (A) Freddie Hockley, a Seafire pilot, and S/Lt (A) Johnnie Bonass, Observer, 820 Avenger Squadron.

We remember them, together with many others, including the 'Palembang Nine' who had been shot down over Sumatra in January 1945, imprisoned at Changi and executed at the war's end.

Oh yes - we remember them. We hope that others who are living in peace will also.

S.Eadon - Ex Lt RNVR, Chairman of BPF/EIF 50th Anniversary Reunion Committee.

Dear Ed,

I'd like to further refer to the photo of various bodies and a bus [April edition Page 9] in a previous issue and subsequent letter from Charlie Morris.

I make a point of copying and forwarding parts of *Slipstream* to a very good friend of mine in the UK, ex CAA Peter Bunn.

On receipt of the Charlie Morris letter, Pete immediately wrote back to clarify and deny certain remarks made in this 'scurrilous' article [July edition Page 20]. I quote his letter verbatim: 'I decided to make sure that I was on the bus ready for an early start. Having been to a party in the cinema the night before, I felt that I'd better sleep in the bus, ON the back seat, NOT under it! I don't remember falling off during the night.' He writes with tongue in cheek!

Charlie was always a romantic except when truthfully telling of his fights with Red Back spiders.

Peter Bunn had several claims to fame. His daughter, Lesley Jane, was the first babe christened in the Chapel at *HMAS Nirimba*. He also enjoyed riding his landlady's autocycle around the C&POs Mess - inside! He spent a

considerable time behind the bar and was often responsible for it staying open into the early hours.

He stayed longer than the majority of we loan persons and was involved with the RANEB (Exam Board).

He returned to the UK, became a civilian 'Schoolie' and was a teacher in Canberra for a short while. He continued teaching in the UK until his retirement and now enjoys his home brew, home made wine and the company of his good wife, Shirley.

His eyesight is on the wane, but it does not prevent him being a Councillor, British Legion official and a much travelled holiday-maker in Europe.

The enclosed photo was taken at Sembawang in 1945. I was on MONAB 9 as a very young POAF/A.

Eric Manuel



**'THE VICTOR'**

Eric, on the tailplane of a Japanese 'Bessie', the tailfin insignia indicates 'No.1 - Leader'

Dear Ed,

Keep up the good work with *Slipstream*, it brings back many memories to myself and my wife, who loves to read it as well. Maybe there could be a section in *Slipstream* where the ladies could contribute some of their stories about being a 'birdies' wife, life at *Albatross*, or maybe just to be able to get in touch with some of their old friends. I am sure that they also made many friends during their 'Navy' days.

I have also enclosed a story that may be of interest to the many people who carried out the duties of OOD during a certain period at *Albatross*.

John Ward -ex-WOAVN

[Thank you for the enclosures, John. I think that the idea of contributions from the ladies is a good one. BUT - NO recipes, knitting patterns etc. Ed.]

**COLOURS**

The duty of OOD was not particularly looked forward to, especially at 0800 when Colours took place.

One particular Commodore, I won't mention his name but it started with the letter 'L', was rather keen on this particular ceremony. Many OOD's had received extra duty because the timing had been out by a few seconds. It was reported that on the weekends, when he went outside his house to pick up the paper, he waited for Colours, blasting the OOD if things hadn't been to his satisfaction.

One Saturday morning whilst OOD, I was determined not to get caught. I got the two Flag Hands together, fifteen minutes before Colours, and told them to hook up the flags and come back for a final brief.

Off they went to carry out the task and soon returned to the Guard House. Once again I ran through the routine for them. During my brief, I was interrupted by one of the sailors who informed me that he wouldn't have any trouble because his flag was already UP! It appears that he had misunderstood the difference between 'Hook' up and 'Haul' up. The flag pole was about a hundred and fifty paces away - I'm sure he covered the distance in five in his turn of speed to get the flag down.

There was no phone call! As it turned out, the paper boy had been early that morning and the CO must have thought it was too long to wait for Colours and went back inside.

After that episode, when duty on Friday nights, I always endeavoured to have his paper delivered early. JW

Dear Ed,

Just a comment on the picture in July's *Slipstream* of a Blackburn Firebrand of 813 Squadron and the statement that they never saw the sea.

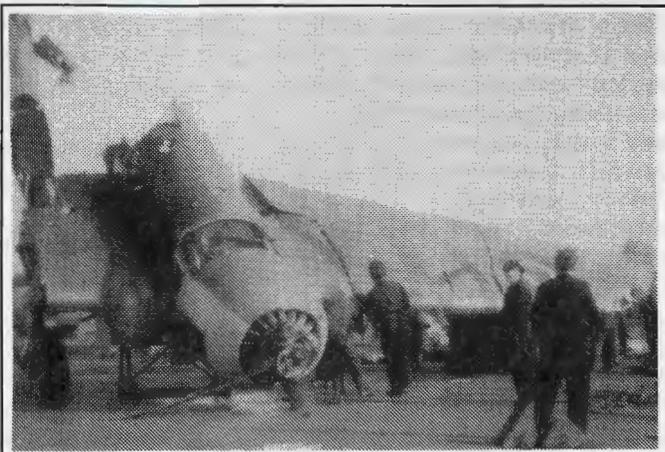
Together with 801 Squadron (Sea Hornets), we formed the 1st CAG and, for the record, were embarked on *HMS Implacable* from January 1949 to March 1950.

The faithful 'Box Brownie' captured a couple of take-offs and a fairly impressive landing - the 'driver' went for a 'Bex' and a good lie down!

The picture of Harrys Café de Wheels was taken about 1950 when the *Sydney* was in dry dock. Gourmet cooking wasn't in at that time.

Keep up the great work.

Bob Marsh



Dear Ed,

A wave of nostalgia is stirring the land due to World War II memories of 50 years ago.

The July issue of *Slipstream* has encouraged me to join the mood and promote a few memories of the FAA early days. What prompted me was a photo of No.6 NAR Class which ushered into remembrance a couple of mess mates that more than likely have not given me a thought in 40-odd years.

Tommy Lew and George Self seemed to leap out as if to speak and say, "it's time you emerged from the shadows". Tom invited me home once to his parents house in North Sydney and I remember the weekend well. The most lasting memory was that his father at one stage won Tatts, which was worth ten thousand pounds in those days, he lamented that he had nothing left to show for it. Was he having me on?

I remember Tom some time later in Cornwall, 'running-in' a mess mate who had shaved with an electric razor which had resulted in some sort of pollution to Tom's breakfast (the RN had us eating in all sorts of odd places). Tom was the Leading Hand of the mess and issued an order to refrain from further shaving. This lawful command was disobeyed, so Tom had the offender on an insubordination charge, a most serious indictment that would ultimately lead to the Captain's Table.

I was involved by being Officer of the Day (a role I always had difficulty in discharging, unlike some) and was looking forward to the end of a trouble-free watch, but Tom was insistent upon spoiling what was going to be a restful forenoon. I dismissed the RN disciplinary staff, then proceeded to calm tempers and got to talking about the 'good old days' when we were all sailors together at Nowra (the offender was also of our ilk), and then it was 'give way together lads' prattle. When the RN Master-at-Arms deputy returned, at my command the charge had been assorted and there was to be no aggrieved Commander's Table with 'off-caps' for us. I was often counselled that this sort of performance would never qualify me for non-stop promotion. Only recently at a FAA Association reunion on the Sunshine Coast, I heard Tom's name mentioned so I presume he is alive and well.

George Self was not one of us. He didn't drink alcohol, swear, or make lewd remarks about the opposite sex. He was always working on his fitness, had an air of well being about him, and always turned out immaculate. I remember once going ashore with George, it was either in New Zealand or Tasmania, it was probably my most economical run - ever! We played badminton until I was dead. We concluded with a long lemon squash to empower me with adequate strength to get back onboard.

I was in the Met Office in those days, living in constant fear of one CPO Croft. It was later on when I swaggered around as an Officer, that I realised he was fairly harmless and could be kept quiet by leaving a tin of fags lying about. Bernie Brennan (who became an Observer and now lives on the Sunshine Coast) and I had a trick packet of Benson and Hedges, when opened it allowed a rather large imitation hairy spider to jump out. We left it for CPO Croft to help himself. We in turn suffered a bit - but it was worth the laugh at the time.

My main reason for writing is that I am enclosing a photo of No.3 Naval Air Crew Course that started training

at *Cerberus* on 31 May, 1951.

[This story now ties in with the photograph on Pg10. Ed]

Roy Prior, John Sutcliffe, 'Spewey' Richards, 'Dooley' Lord, Keith Potts, George Barron and 'Flossie' Gully, were recruited from the Fleet and the remainder were brand new recruits. There was only one 'casualty' during Bull Ring bashing and that was 'Munka' Gleason. He was a lad from Broken Hill and seemed to have some difficulties in sensing right from left. It was noted on many occasions that the squad, in perfect order, were heading in one direction and 'Munka' in another. He was given a ticket to Broken Hill, never to be heard of again.

Our Course Instructor, PO Phil Stilwell, thought that the remainder were equipped to continue and were drafted to Point Cook for initial flying training (02 October 1951. From memory, I think we became part of No.9 RAAF Course and known as Navy Flight. We arrived in time to hear all about a colleague by the name of Sweeney, who had managed to unsuccessfully barrel-roll a Wirraway at 'dot' feet somewhere in the Werribee area, this resulted in his death along numerous innocent sheep. Peter Zafer was the only one to show any compassion and was soon comforting Sweeney's girlfriend who was a serving member of the WAAF's.

Numbers soon thinned. The Senior Naval Officer, LTCDR Nunn RN, announced to the class towards the end of 1951, that the Navy had an urgent need to train Observers and that five men would be selected from our course to travel immediately to St. Merryn NAS, Cornwall. We had until the next morning to sort it out. That evening, it was decided amongst ourselves that the following would abandon pilot training and volunteer for Observer training. They were Max Glenn, Roy Prior, John Dudley, 'Dooley' Lord and Keith Potts. This was accomplished with no ill will and, in hindsight, was short of a miracle.

At about the same time, LTCDR Nunn severely reprimanded us for what he described as disgraceful conduct in as much that we had 'hounded out' one of our numbers, 'Flossie' Gully. 'Flossie' was an ex - Sick Berth Attendant who had decided that a life tending to the sick would be more peaceful than being tormented daily by us. I have never heard of

'Flossie' since. Was this an unenlightened moment in our lives??

The six phlegmatics who were programmed for Observer training arrived in England in February 1952. Kin George VI had just died and the land was in mourning. They hurried into Canberra House, expecting tickets to Cornwall. A droll PO Writer informed them that no one knew of this urgent plan and that the next Observer's Course would not start until May that year. Once again ineptness in planning changed the course of six lives. Were they predestined by Navy confusion or by some sovereign act of God to play out some vast eternal plan?

Regardless of the hypothesis of that debate, the Navy, in flexible style, soon had them onboard the Training Ship *HMS Indefatigable*, which was alongside in Plymouth, to mess with the National Service Upper Yardmen, a most unusual experience. Their Divisional Officer, LT Coleman RN (supposedly of the mustard clan), soon wearied of their presence and attached them to *HMS Indomitable* which was an operational Fleet Carrier about to do duty in the Mediterranean. That enterprise, by the way, is not on any official Navy record. They enjoyed the time and even got the odd flight in Barracudas and time ashore at Malta and Gibraltar. Max Glenn developed a medical problem, which was a pity because he had all the virtues to become a high ranking officer. He was sent back to Australia and discharged.

In time the remaining five arrived at St. Merryn to commence training on 11 May 1952. The Course Officer for initial training was LT Andy Phillips RN, who was soon to find his way to Nowra to join 723 Squadron. He emerged from that experience as the 'Uckers' Champion of both navies. The Course Officer for final training was LT Jerry Mullan RN, who had already served in the RAN with the 20th CAG. Later, Jerry went down in the Irish Sea and proceeded to die from hypothermia. This piece of information shattered all confidence in immersion suits forever.

One more lad, Peter Zafer, failed. He used to get air sick and also had some difficulties in locating St. Merryn after navigational exercises. One problem may have led to the other. His departure left many broken hearts in the WRENS Quarters. Roy, John, 'Dooley' and Keith persevered and ultimately won their wings on 31 January 1953.

They arrived at Eglinton on 2

February 1953 for Anti-Sub training. During the course of interpreting strange noises from non-directional sonobuoys, they witnessed 'Piwi' Wren fly his Firefly straight into the sea, which ended his career and his life. Does anyone remember 'Piwi'?

In the meantime, one LTCDR 'Snow' O'Connell in Navy Office, Melbourne, consistently attended mass, praying that Dudley, Lord, Potts and Prior, would get safely back to Australia to make up the deficiencies in 816 and 817 Squadrons. These four were never 'scrubbed' pilots, and each would have been just as successful if they had completed pilot training. They arrived back in Australia in May, 1953, as Probationary Acting Sub Lieutenants. After a 'knife, fork and spoon' course with Peter Wyatt and Andy Powell, they were attached to squadrons.

In the meantime, all sorts of drama was befalling the assemblage still in Australia. Des Giles, Rick Boughton, 'Slug' Whitton and Ivor Janz were casualties of the overworked 'Scrub' Board and were doing Observer training at St. Merryn. Oh for a crystal ball on the night a decision had to be made concerning who was to go to England for 'urgent' training! 'Spewey' Richards must have offended once too often and I think he went back to his 'sparker' vocation, or maybe even discharged. John Sutcliffe, Barry Thompson, John Cook, Kevin Knowles and George Barron were awarded pilot wings. George soon went by the way due to chronic asthma. George always had asthma and how he ever got through the medical net is a puzzle. John and Kevin became Firefly pilots and Barry and John Cook, Fury drivers. George was also a Fury man - but not for long.

The 'Looker' fraternity mostly went into 816 and 817 Squadrons and, with the exception of Des Giles and Ivor Janz, received short term commissions. Des and Ivor became Chiefs. Rick Boughton and 'Slug' Whitton for a while were also non-commissioned, but time sorted that out.

1955 was a big year in the FAA history. The *Melbourne* was to be commissioned, with 816 and 817 Squadrons to be converted to Gannets and 808 Squadron to Sea Venoms. Some of the group helped to steer the *Vengeance* back home, and then take up duties in those squadrons at Culdrose in Cornwall, and Yeovilton in Somerset. From memory they were (816), John Sutcliffe, 'Dooley' Lord, 'Slug' Whitton (808) Barry Thompson,

Keith Potts, and possibly John Cook. In three days we lost Peter Wyatt and 'Spanky' Brown during take-off in fog conditions at Yeovil, and Van Gelder the Younger (a cousin of Van Gelder the Older), Dave Padget, and one other whose name escapes me, when their Gannet disappeared into the English Channel. [Aircrewman N.J.Self. Ed] I remember receiving the latter news from 'Soapy' McKeon whilst attempting to pot the pink in a centre pocket at the JASS Wardroom, Londonderry. LTCDR Nunn, now well and truly passed over, was reading the Londonderry Times in the background. I presupposed he was surveying the Situations Vacant column.

'Soapy' also included into the conversation that my collar was soiled and I needed to sharpen up. Further inference to my unsuitability to high rank. Now, 40 years later, I resentfully read in the July '95 issue of *Slipstream* that Commodore 'Nobby' Clarke is described as a scran bag. There but for the grace of God go I.

What became of them all? I have some sketchy information about most of them but certainly could not fill in 40-odd years.

Max Glenn became a school teacher in the Northern Territory and did well. My last understanding was that he went to Canberra. Des Giles spent many years in the Navy and his progress from about 1958 is hearsay only. I am told that he now lives in Kiama.

Roy Prior left the Navy after a short term and melted away into the world of commerce. Did he become an accountant?

John Sutcliffe stayed employed as a pilot. He had an interesting career in New Guinea with many hair raising incidents to relate, firstly with Bobby Gibbs Sepik Airways and then with Mandated Airlines, which was bought out by Ansett. He finished his flying days with East West although he may still be seen in the skies flogging about his banner towing aircraft. John and I flew together for many hundreds of hours in Fireflys and Gannets.

Peter Zafer became a school teacher and was last heard of some years ago somewhere near Frankston in Victoria, married and happy with life. Peter was the athlete, never drank alcohol except on one occasion, and always did well on sports days.

Ivor Janz stayed in the Navy for some time and I believe paralleled Des's career. Maybe someone may be able to bring me up to date with Ivor.

Barry Thomson, alas with Keith Potts, were killed in a Sea Venom accident off Hervey Bay in 1956. It was to be a routine exercise flying off the *Melbourne*. For some unexplained reason they nosed into the sea from the catapult and did not come up. Barry was the only child of a wealthy couple in Sydney and had great potential. Keith was respected by all. A book could be written about his impulsive 'Walter Mitty' capers and his death had much impact upon us all, even to this day.

Rick's career came to a sudden halt one night in Manila. The incident has never been fully aired and maybe one day Rick may tell us all about it. He was asked to seek other employment - this he did. He flew for a while with Adastra and then became an Air Traffic Controller with DCA, after working in Papua New Guinea and Western Australia he retired. I saw a recent photo of Rick and he had grown thin on top and fat everywhere else.

'Spewey' just disappeared.

John Cook stayed in the Navy, went out, then came back in for a while, with some perseverance would have become an Admiral for sure. He was polished, well presented, always caught the same wire, and self assured. I used to see him some time flying for King Ranch. He was always good for a free meal when in town and had more credit cards than anyone I knew. John also had some connection with Aviation Companies that dealt in guided missiles and the likes, so he may have an office in Zagreb or some such other place.

John Dudley was our artistic talent, he could paint, sketch and sculpt. He did a rather long course at Navy expense to learn Chinese at Point Cook. Upon completion the Navy thought it best that he be appointed to 816 Squadron where that talent would doubtfully be used. They were more into Double Dutch. However, upon discharge the Australian Broadcasting Commission must have thought it worth something, for John became a manager in the Radio Australia part of the ABC that beamed propaganda to China. John was a Reservist for some time, attending parade nights at *Lonsdale* under the watchful eye of its Captain, LTCDR Guy Beange.

'Slug' Whitton was the only career officer. I have never worked out whether he was the smartest or the mosr insecure. The former for sure! He was the youngest and his duration in the Navy is well documented and common knowledge, especially with

long term personnel. He is now retired in Queensland, enjoying life. He has had a couple of medical scares of late, but has come through in typical 'Slug' fashion.

For myself, 'Dooley', it was to be a continued tense life of aeroplanes and aerodromes. I went into DCA not long after discharge and became an Air Traffic Controller to serve in any part of Australia and PNG. I passed through the main gates of *Albatross* in late March 1957, to be discharged from *HMAS Torrens*. I distinctly recall that God's vast eternal plan for me was adopting a scary pose, for the Navy had been my home since September 1948. Fortunately I was soon back in the comfort zone, active with other like types, mainly WWII aviators, ex RAAF and RAF who warmly welcomed me into their midst, even though being a Navy man.

There was a handful of us ex FAA who went into Air Traffic, Rick being one, 'Blue' Bolton another, and one of the odd breed of third seat men in Gannets, by the name of Peter Davey. There was also an ex RN 'Looker' who was a Midshipman Training Observer about Rick Broughton's vintage, by the name of George Edwards. I remember George well. Cyclone Tracey had just devastated Darwin. I was 'Boss' of the Civil staff in Darwin and was at the Airport Operational Control Centre when I noticed a figure marching with a pronounced limp towards the building. As he got closer I recognised by the stooped gait (a long term aggravation resulting from the ditching of a Barracuda in 1952) that it was George. He had just had his home destroyed, 90% of Darwin was laid waste, the airport wiped out, not to mention the loss of my precious flying log book, and there he was, at 'the attention' to report for duty. He also enquired if there were, in view of my circumstances, any special duties that I may have for him. I played out my part by officially standing him down from further responsibilities and informed him that arrangements would be made for medical attention to his severely wounded leg which was still bleeding profusely. This was a true navy man! George died of cancer in the late 1970's and it was reported to me that in the end he was so ill that he had been placed on a life support system. It was further reported that he called in his family to bid them farewell and then instructed the medical staff to switch off the support system so that he could move into afterlife obligations.

I retired in 1985 and now live at 8 Sunset Court, Alice Springs. I have not become a recluse and would welcome any fan mail.

Kevin Knowles was the most entertaining of the group. He was an enigma. He used to keep us all enraptured with far fetched yarns, especially in our more naïve days, spending hours reminiscing about life on the Bulolo gold dredges. The spicy bits about how he would spend 2,000 pounds in a few days on high living in the 'Cross', allowed our imaginations to flow as we speculated how we could stretch our scant finances to re-enact his wastefulness. I went ashore with him on a few occasions, but those times never seemed to live up to his erstwhile stories. He married a rich American widow, so the story goes, and is supposed to have been made a Director of Optics with NASA. Apparently this came about after he read a book on lenses whilst recovering from some minor ailment in hospital, saw an advertisement that NASA was seeking some suitable person, so 'Knowlesy' dobbed in for it and got it. This seems a far fetched story, I saw him once bustle through Port Moresby, he was investigating the possibilities of setting up a factory off-shore to make springs. I thought that an odd thing to do but I was never interested in working or making money so that probably explains my reaction.

They were a great bunch of men. Most of them are mid-sixties coming up to seventy years now and it's possible that one or two have passed on. I only know that when I look at the youthful images in the photo that it does not seem possible.

I would suggest that, and dare I say it, that we were a mediocre (derogatory description of average) bunch, but regardless of strengths and weaknesses, when given a job to do, helped to make up a dynamic defence force which was in keeping with Government policy of the day. I have many personal memories of the early FAA days, most of which would be classified as trivia, but collectively these moments of trivia enacted out by us all is the real history of the FAA. Dates, times and statistics are pretty dry reading and are merely the backdrop and set the stage to expose the consequences of human interaction that took place during those short heady years.

I must mention in closing, J.D.Goble. He was CO of 817 Squadron in 1953, Dave Robby SP and Des Harvey SO. The remainder

were mostly Subs like David Orr, Neil Ralph, with maybe the odd exception like Norm Lee and John Mathews. Boy! A bit of future 'heavy metal' amongst that little lot! One day, one of the Subs, Darcy Kimber RN (Bensen Haywood was his RN twin) and I crewed for squadron formation flying, after take-off it was noted that we were falling behind the rest. Darcy pleaded that there was something wrong with our Firefly, everything seemed in order but it had no acceleration. JD, curtly and caustically advised that with the wheels down most Fireflies were sluggish! After an embarrassing silence, the wheels were tucked away and without further comment and added energy we hurried to number four position where all Subs should be.

This incident must have lodged in JD's subconscious that aeroplanes always operate better with the wheels up. During a landing some time later, with this conviction being locked into his mind, he managed a wheels up landing with Steve Wilson in the back screaming, "Wheels - Wheels - Wheels". And so the fallibility of JD became apparent and thus he joined the ranks of us mortal men.

My last flight in the Navy was a few

days before discharge. It was in a battered old Firefly piloted by one SBLT Browne. At the conclusion of the flight I mused that the pilot had an intrinsic essence of danger languishing about his person, nothing that I could identify, but I was a little relieved when the flight was over. Two nights later SBLT Browne and his Observer were killed instantly when their Firefly hit high terrain in the Kiama District. [Observer MIDN (O) I.T.Caird. Ed]

I hope you can make some use of this letter in *Slipstream* for it may flush out a bit more about life in those days.

As a post script, I am enclosing a more up to date photograph of myself. I did eventually get my own Squadron. This photo was taken on Anzac Day 1995 at Redcliffe, Queensland, and portrays myself and Tony Frodsham, a RAF veteran, also a hero of Cyclone Tracey days, leading the Redcliffe Squadron of the Australian Air League with banners held high. One of the troops sporting his great grandfather's VC. So once more I reflect in others glory.

Yours faithfully,  
Barry 'Dooley' Lord



Second from right - SQUADRON CO 'DOOLEY' LORD

.....once more reflecting in other's glory.....

**There is Dick Tate who wants to control everybody. Ro Tate who tries to turn things around. Agi Tate who stirs up trouble and Irri Tate who helps. Hesi Tate and Vege Tate always procrastinate. Imi Tate mimics everybody. Devas Tate likes to destroy things and Poten Tate wants to be a big shot, but it's Facili Tate, Cogi Tate and Medi Tate who save the day.**

**Which one are you?**

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

This item is being prepared for the fourth and last edition of *Slipstream* for 1995. Thus we are almost at the end of yet another year.

The decals I mentioned in the last edition are now available to all members direct or from Division Secretaries at \$1.50 each. They are made to fit to the inside of the car window and depict the Association Flag. Which has the Australian White Ensign in the upper hoist and the Association Logo in the Fly on a blue ground. They measure 100mm by 65mm.

The Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia is now registered with the Australian Securities Commission. As Australian Registered Body Number 071 291 677. For the benefit of those people who have recently joined, the Association has two insurance policies which provide protection for members in all Divisions throughout the country.

The first is Public Liability Insurance

and is a requirement of State Incorporation Acts.

The second is a Voluntary Worker policy and provides for injuries and loss of Salary etc, in the event of an accident while working on behalf of the Association. This avoids the necessity of each Division having to take out separate policies which together cost a little under \$1000. This represents quite a significant saving to each Division.

There has been a very good influx of new members in the past three months, although as usual there have been far too many who have been dropped for not renewing their membership. This very is disappointing, for a fair percentage it must be just an oversight. Following are the names of new members who have joined since the last edition of *Slipstream*;

**ACT**; Roy Edgar and Associate Merron Matthews.

**WA**; Leon Penn.

**VIC**; Harry Farmer, Ian Leach, and Associate Shirley Thompson.

**NSW**; B.Cunningham, M.Herbert, D.(Joe) Mumford, Laurie Jago, A.Fyfe, A. (Bert) Glossop, B.Melville, B.Jose, Owen Nicholls, Ted Evans, Colin Andrews, N.Thomas, Michael Aylmer, Vic Levitt, Eddie Lamb, Len Connell, Len Bolden, Polly Perkins, and Associates Effie Lamb, Eunice Groome and Guy Beange Jnr.

**QLD**; Alan Martin, Ray Godfrey, Ed Thompson, Ross Herbert, Paul Baker, Brian Dutch, Bob Proud, Andrew Perry, Brian Chadwick, Ian Strachan, Peter May, Barry Costa, Ken McKenna, Tony Halpin, Ray Schealler, Barry Mills, Reg Turnbull, John McWha, Brian Roberts, Graham Husband, Bill Heaney, Bob Christie, Ern Chiverton, Robert Renneck, Brian Keating.

Last, but not least, I would like to wish all members and their families a happy and healthy festive season. Til next time.

*Ian Ferguson*

Hon National Secretary



### NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Here we go again! Another attempt at an article to let all those who have not been able to forward any information on their happenings since the last issue of *Slipstream*. We must all live very humdrum lives in the West, it appears that nothing ever happens to anybody.

Hilton Devereux has been in hospital for surgery, but is now on the mend. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, Hilton.

The news on Lou Burns isn't so good. After spending twelve weeks in hospital having his knee replaced, he came down with a Staph (that's not one of the nursing staff), it very nearly did for him. After many doses of antibiotics and tubes hanging out everywhere, he was eventually considered well enough to go home. He was suddenly rushed back to hospital with his blood pressure reading 200 over 90. It appears that the infection was not being contained

by the anti-biotics, the prosthesis was removed and it was found to be the source of the infection. His leg has now been immobilised in plaster for the next six weeks until the infection is cleared up, then another operation will be required to replace the knee joint once again. He has also sustained a partial sight loss due to the rupture of blood vessels behind his eyes as a result of the high blood pressure. We all hope that this will improve as his health gets better. If it hadn't been for the good clean living in his younger days he might not have been able to cope and pull through. All best wishes from all of us and looking forward to seeing you up and about again. Incidentally, the Swan Brewery has stood down another ten men due to the drop in consumption of their product since your hospitalisation.

The social programme the committee developed to encourage member participation in a more social gathering at meetings, has been a complete failure. When you, the members, received your copy of the programme, if there were things you didn't approve of why didn't you let the committee know? Changes could have been made along lines suggested. But not to attend the meetings without any word what so ever is a bit much. As no one attended to help or advise on the Annual Dinner, this year will be the

first time in twenty years that there wont be one.

There are only three more meetings for this year, so all other planned evenings have been cancelled and we will revert to just the ordinary meetings. It was an exercise that the committee had hoped would bring a social atmosphere to the meetings, it appears that it is not wanted. If you are not happy with the way the Division is being run, all positions for Office Bearers will be open at the AGM in 1996, please come forward and nominate.

Geoff Vickridge will not be carrying out the job as Treasurer as his new job entails being away quite a bit. My job as Secretary is also available, I am afraid I have nothing more to give and feel sure that there are those out there who can do a better job and get the cooperation of the members. Please get together and start things moving.

Next year the reunion in Queensland is being held at the same time as the Federal Conference, these events will also coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the FAA Association of Australia Inc., so try to get there and make it a good show. There are still some of the foundation members around, I hope they will be able to attend.

Ron Tate will be our only delegate to the conference in Tasmania this year,

Geoff Vickridge had to pull out because of business commitments, health problems prevent my attendance. I am sure that Ron will do us all proud, he is the only person from WA who has not missed a meeting since we started. We hope that Ron and Aileen have a wonderful holiday.

Bill Strahan has moved to Mandurah and is in contact with other ex-birdies down there, all playing bowls. He was going to send me an article for this edition, I haven't received it yet and the deadline prevents me waiting any longer.

Ron Tate will be our official photographer whilst in Tasmania. During a recent trip to Esperance Ron photographed all the scenic beauty spots, on his return it occurred to him that the film was lasting an extra long time, he checked the camera and discovered that he hadn't put a film in. All members attending the conference are asked to ensure that Ron has a film loaded - he can easily recognise them, they come in small metal cases and fit in the back of the camera.

To the delegates, we hope you have a good meeting and trust that your deliberations will benefit us all in the years to come.

I've had a phone call from Leon Penn, Cloverdale WA, about becoming a member. The papers are on the way, Leon. Welcome aboard.

It was a bit of a shock to hear that Dick Prentice had a heart attack whilst in Queensland. I am pleased to hear that he has recovered and wish him all the best.

From all those who are privileged to be living west of the Rabbit Proof Fence, to all those who live in foreign climes east of there, we wish you all good luck, good health and all the best for the Festive Season.

Theo Bushe-Jones - Secretary

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Greetings to you all from everyone here in South Australia. Our kindest regards to Sir Victor Smith and 'Toz'.

As the winter of our discontent starts to thaw, one can view the exciting renewing cycle of life. Blossoming fruit trees and flowers, overactive doves, a noticeable increase in the sun's rays, all be it - straight through the ozone layer. Life in general starts to pick up the tempo. See this as a call for all members to be more supportive of Division functions no matter how big or small.

Whilst writing this, our hilarious Scottish Night is almost upon us. I have been volunteered to be MC and so the remaining members and wives attending should take fair warning. Who could imagine being dragged up to dance above crossed swords with the lovely Leonie?

A visit to RAAF Edinburgh on Sunday 05 November should promise to be full of interest to all members remotely interested in aviation. Lunch will be with the WO and Sergeants and at a great price of \$8 for three courses, would you believe! The visit has been arranged by one of our new members, Andrew McCabe.

Andrew is in fact, still serving his Queen and Country. If you missed the response time for this invitation - 'tuff'!

Details relating to Sea Venom WZ 939 restoration viewing at Parafield Aerodrome (love that old word) will soon be provided via our internal newsletter. November has been earmarked for the visit. The 'newsletter', by the way, is posted to you from the busy desk of our Treasurer, John Saywell. Lovely Moira, of course, does all the typing and hard work while John dictates.

Our last meeting saw another financial member join our Division. His name is Kevin Max Evans, and we welcome him aboard.

Navy Week over here got off with a bit of a whimper. As mentioned in my last correspondence to *Slipstream*, Navy Week was to begin on 20 September with the oversize White Ensign being raised on Port Road with due ceremony. Well, so much for the theory side. In fact the Ensign was rushed up the pole a week and a half



John and Moira Saywell with John Berry, dining at the Port Dock Brewery



### Members at the Cooper's barbecue

Back L-R: Dick Widger - Ralph Lehmann - Roger Harrison - Tom Turner - Ken Bryant - John Saywell  
 Centre: Tom Turner's Mum - Joan Berry - Moira Saywell - Jo Bryant - Jean Lehmann - Marg Richards - Bob Vargesson  
 Front: Dinsley Cooper - Sadie Brooks - Mary Raynor & granddaughter - John Berry - Ron Richards  
 Sitting in front: Junice Cooper  
 Photos courtesy Dinsley Cooper

early, catching most of us completely off guard. Our President, Mary Raynor, did offer a reason but it escapes me now. I can only guess that the remaining programme will remain as before.

Speaking of the 'White Ensign', are members with dual membership (FAAA and Naval Association) receiving their copies of the magazine? If not, please contact Mary Raynor direct.

I have to report that our Association has suffered the death of one of its members, Mr Gerry James of Clapham. He passed away on 8 July. Flowers and wreath were presented by our past President, John Berry.

John and Joan have also suffered this year with the untimely death of their daughter, Susan. Our collective thoughts of sympathy go out to both families as they struggle to adjust with this personal loss.

Mary Raynor is also our delegate to the Federal Council Meeting in Tasmania. A 'general alert' to all other

States attending the meeting, as Mary and her Committee have a bee in the collective bonnet concerning the Constitution and Incorporation. One of the committee members, who shall remain nameless, has removed the feather from her knickers so she wont be smiling quite as much as she normally does. Good luck for the meeting.

It is pleasing to be a witness to the dramatic progress of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum. Where would we all be if we didn't have these hard working members toiling away behind the scenes. Most of us know who they are. Many thanks lads.

By the way, has any thought been given in producing a handsome binder for all these precious *Slipstream* magazines we receive?

Finally, one more 'Naval Blunder' to dwell on as you reach for the Port and cigars:

"The system of several ships sailing together in a convoy is not recommended in any area where submarine attack is a possibility."

An Admiralty Memorandum on Convoys -1917.

Their Lordships of the Admiralty were very slow to come to terms with the threat posed by German submarines. It took a younger generation of naval officers, aided by the common sense of politicians like David Lloyd George, to convert the Admiralty to the use of convoys.

Roger Harrison - Hon. Whipping Boy

## VICTORIA

Greetings to one and all.

The Division conducted its Annual Remembrance Service at *HMAS Cerberus* on Sunday, 27 August, with thirty two members in attendance. Proceedings started with a service in the All Denominations Chapel which was conducted by RAN Chaplains, Gary Lock and Graeme Watkinson, ably assisted by Alan Clark and Bernie Butler. Alan gave a short address on the history of the RAN Fleet Air Arm and Bernie read the lesson, their efforts were greatly appreciated.

On completion, a wreath laying service was conducted at the RAN FAA Memorial Plaque located in the Memorial Gardens between the two chapels. We were delighted that the Commanding Officer of *HMAS Cerberus*, Captain N.M. Carson RAN and Mrs Carson were able to attend our ceremony.

The next item on the agenda was a visit to the Cerberus Museum which houses a very interesting collection of naval memorabilia.

We then proceeded to the WO's and Senior Sailors Mess for an informal luncheon, where all participated in the facilities of the Mess. It is alleged that certain members, who shall remain anonymous, were still enjoying the conviviality at 2130! What I am allowed to say, is that the Thompsons and the Christies would like to thank the Mess members for their company and great hospitality.

All in all, a very successful and enjoyable day was had by all who attended.

Sunday, 10 September, saw a new innovation to the Division with the introduction, on a trial basis, of our open Committee Meetings being conducted on a Sunday. I think this will become the norm, with attendance of Jim and Rose Fletcher from Ballarat, Bill Martin from Mt. Eliza and new members Ian Leach and his wife, all very encouraging to say the least.

Our next Meeting/Christmas break-up is scheduled for Sunday, 10 December, commencing at 1200 at the Melbourne Naval Centre, 146 Toorak Road (West), South Yarra. On completion a barbecue, or whatever takes your fancy, and bar facilities will be available. Pencil the date in your calendar right now. I hope to see you there!

Sorry to hear that Anne Taylor is not too well at the moment, but is making good progress on the road to recovery. We wish you well, Anne. The same wishes are extended to other members on the sick list who we are not aware of.

It is with sadness that I report the death of Norris A. Ross, who passed away (suddenly) on 24 September. 'Norrie' was one of the first of the NAR Classes that went to UK aboard *HMAS Kanimbla*.

Looking forward to meeting up with those who will be attending the Federal Council Meeting in Tasmania, also old acquaintances at the All Ships Reunion that follows.

The Victorian contingent, twelve in all, will be going down (unfortunate choice of words) aboard the Spirit of Tasmania, departing Melbourne 25 October, returning 8 November. I'm sure that it will be a very enjoyable period for all.

As this will be the last edition of *Slipstream* this year, on behalf of the Victorian Division may I take this

opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy, and prosperous New Year.

Ron Christie - Hon. Secretary  
.....and from Victoria

## Lest We Forget

Extract from the funeral service for Richard Andrew Forbes, ex-FAA (LEMAW), who died on 5 September 1995, from asbestos related cancer.

*'Not so long ago, two short years, I had the pleasure of speaking for Rick on the occasion of his marriage.*

*Now it is my privilege to once again speak for him.*

*We were all young, bright eyed teenagers eager for adventure when we first met in the Navy almost forty years ago with not a care in the world. We of course got into all kinds of adventures and scrapes (of which there will be no detail), and laughed and lived for the day.*

*By the time we were twenty-six or so it was finished, we returned back to our origins and turned to family life.*

*No one was to know that during this time the seed of a terrible ordeal was planted in the core of many a young man.*

*In the service of your country and in the heat of battle, men and women are awarded medals and honour for their bravery and devotion to duty.*

*There is no medal for Rick, and yet he has fought with great courage, humility and humour an enemy over which there is no victory. I and many of you here know this to be so.*

*There is no medal for Dian - what devotion to duty, love and care she gave to Rick in his time of need. There is no measure.*

*Farewell, Rick, may your last voyage be in peace.'*

\* Rob Taylor

## TASMANIA

Sorry we didn't send a report for the last issue of *Slipstream*, we're making sure that we don't miss this edition, even though there isn't much news from this beautiful island State.

We held our AGM at Orford (East Coast) in the early part of August, all the office bearers were re-elected, mostly unopposed. Division President, Barry Simpson, is doing a good job,

his illness worries now appear to be over and he's handling his new leg as if he's had it all his life. It's good to see!

Due to another commitment I was unable to attend the meeting, but from all accounts a good weekend was enjoyed by all. The hosts of the Blue Waters Motel are to be congratulated for their hospitality to all ex-matelots.

I had a phone call from Don Mills, an ex-stoker who served on the Sydney in Korea. I haven't seen Don since we both lived at Longford (Northern Tasmania) over thirty years ago. He had been reading some back-copies of *Slipstream* and had spotted my name, after a few enquiries he had tracked me down. Don belongs to the Naval Association - Tasmanian Division. It just goes to show that it's not only 'birdies' who read the journal!

I'm told that Bill Lowe, ex-POAH wasn't at the AGM. The last time anyone saw him, he was heading west towards Adelaide. Bill has become a 'latter-age' bkie at the grand old age of 67, it would appear that 'birdies' take a lot of stopping. Not too long ago, he did a trip through Victoria and NSW and had himself a ball.

Our Division is having a plaque made for placement in the Remembrance Area of Shropshire Park at Ulverstone. 'Big Island' visitors to the 'All Ships Reunion' in November will be able to cast their eyes upon it.

Preparations are falling into place for the National FAAA Conference to be held here this month. A good effort has been put in by all and should be well rewarded.

All best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

'Jake' - (Matt Jacobs)

## NEW SOUTH WALES

Greetings to all members.

A number of activities have been undertaken by the Division since our last report in *Slipstream*.

The Family Air Day held at the Naval Aviation Museum in August was very successful. Perhaps not as well attended as the one held in June, but there was a great crowd who seemed to be really enjoying themselves. The food from our stalls was very much in demand and our share of the profits was (as usual), very welcome.

The members and friends who were able to staff the food outlets worked very hard - non-stop for five hours or more, satisfying the hunger needs of the patrons. I personally thank each of



NSW members, Ted Brodie and Chaplain Walter Wheeldon, meet up at the 47th Anniversary Dinner held at the ANAM Function Centre. They hadn't met prior to this occasion, but soon discovered that they had both flown at Ponam Island during WWII. Photo Peregrine Publishing



NSW members, Jim Napier and Clive Smithers at the 47th Anniversary Dinner held at the ANAM Function Centre. 'Get yer 'ands out of yer pockets!' Photo Peregrine Publishing

our band of workers, including some from the ACT Division, for their time and support. Our share of the takings from days such as this are an important revenue raiser for the Division. Providing *Slipstream* at no cost to the NSW members is just one of the benefits achieved by this fundraising.

October 29 is our next Air Day, a Museum Wings and Wheels Air Day where the aviation and car buffs meet on common ground. From past experience, it is expected to be a very big day and we will welcome all those members and friends who can assist with all the various duties. These range from car parking attendants,

servicing and cooking on the stalls to a variety of other tasks, not forgetting the all important job, cleaning up afterwards.

In July, another very successful George Blondel Memorial Yulefest was held at the Bomaderry Bowling Club. Up until now, this function has been organised by the local RDFWA Contact Group, the NSW Division has now taken over that responsibility. For this year, the committee of the two organisations pooled their resources and a great night was had by all those who attended. Our official guests for the evening included the CO of *HMAS Albatross*, Commodore Graham Sloper AM RAN and Mrs Sloper, the CO of the Army Parachute School and his wife, and representatives from the Bomaderry RSL. This is the one night

of the year when the FAA Association, Naval Association, WRENS Association and the Vietnam Veterans Association, join together for the camaraderie.

Our Social Committee arranged a very enjoyable RAN FAA 47th Anniversary Dinner which was held at the ANAM White Ensign Function Centre - a good night was had by all who attended.

So far this year we have signed up at least three new members at each of our monthly meetings, this is just great and we hope that the trend continues.

Later this month the meeting of the Federal Council will take place in Tasmania. To the National President and the Council Members, I hope you have a productive and enjoyable meeting. Our three delegates, Barry

Roberts (Vice President), Jim Lee (Public Officer) and John Arnold (NSW PRO) will be there, I wish them well.

The sorting and cataloguing of old aircraft stores is still going on, thanks to Les Matterson and his helpers. There is still a long way to go but the job is progressing well. Anyone able to assist with this task, no matter for how long or how often, should contact Les or John Arnold. Your help would be most appreciated.

To anyone on the sick list, I hope that you have a quick recovery.

This being the last edition before the end of the year, may I take this opportunity to wish all the readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Max Altham - NSW President

### Australian Capital Territory

Unfortunately I start this article with sad news. Geoff Coker-Godson passed away at his home on 3 September. Geoff will be well remembered for his 30 years of dedicated service to the RAN and the Fleet Air Arm. He joined as an ERA 5th Class in January 1946 and retired as Lieutenant Commander. He served in *HMA Ships, Albatross, Nirimba, Carpentaria, Vengeance* and *Sydney* and *HM Ships Condor, Hermes, Daedalus*, and three years as Base Engineer Officer at *HMAS Tarangau*, Manus Island. He served with the 20th CAG, 724, 725, 808 and 816 Squadrons. He joined the Fleet Air Arm Association in 1991 and served on the committee in several positions.

Geoff's funeral was well attended by stalwarts of the Fleet Air Arm and personnel from Tidbinbilla Tracking Station where he worked after retiring from the Navy. The funeral service was conducted by former Air Engineer Commander, Gary Basset, who is now a full time Church of England Chaplain. He will be sadly missed and our sincere condolences go to his son, Geoff, and daughters, Julie and Francis.

To move to a happier note, the Division welcomes two new members. Roy Edgar and Merron Mathews (wife of Ben). We wish them both all the best and hope that they enjoy their membership of the Association.

The social scene has been a little quiet over the winter months,

Canberrans seem to hibernate from June to September. A great night was enjoyed by 30 members and their partners at the dinner at the Yamba Sports Club on 30 June. The weather that night was absolutely miserable with heavy rain and some sleet, but the atmosphere inside the club was very warm and convivial.

The next social event will be a Mess Dinner at the Joint Services Staff College at Weston on Friday, 20 October 1995. Any interstate members in town at that time would be most welcome to attend. Details can be obtained from our Social Secretary, Daphne Clarke, on (06) 286 3940.

'Nobby' Clarke has recovered well from his hip surgery and it was great to see him at his first social outing at the Yamba Club. We hope to see him at more events later in the year.

I recently visited the Naval Aviation Museum, and once again I am even more impressed with the standard and variety of the displays, and the standard and size of the complex. What makes it even more incredible, is that it has been achieved from mainly voluntary donations. What a great monument to the Fleet Air Arm and asset for the Shoalhaven area!

P. Schilling - Hon, Secretary



The Australian Naval Aviation Museum Function Centre bar which was constructed with the financial support of the ACT Division.

Photo Peregrine Publishing

**QUEENSLAND**

The year is moving along at a rapid rate of knots; it seems only a couple of days since last Christmas, and here we are, almost there again!

We participated in the VP50 celebrations in Brisbane and Townsville. The Brisbane parade was excellent, Len Zuch carried the flag, but the rest of us got lost in the general naval contingent. My thanks go to 'Snow' Tite, 'Blue' Ditcham and Betty and Ron Baxter, for helping me try and find my wife, Marian. We eventually located her in the park near the Eternal Flame in company with an old timer who had lost his wife - he reckoned that he'd been trying to lose her for some years! Anyhow, all's well that ends well and it was a great day.

Plans are well in hand for our Christmas get-together on the weekend of 1 - 3 of December at the Caloundra Power Boat Club. On Friday, we have golf organised at the Caloundra Championship Course, those with an official handicap can participate in a 'chook run'. For the bowlers, arrangements have been made at the Mooloolaba Bowls Club. There will be a bus tour on Saturday to the New Sunshine Plaza (Myers) at Maroochydore, then to Montville on the Maleny Range and to the Mary Cairncross walk-rainforest etc.

There is an excellent menu for the dinner on Saturday night, the 'Pelican Room' overlooks the water (Bribie Passage). We're expecting a good roll-up, so please return the chits and the dollars to Ian Henderson as requested in the Division Newsletter.

Our whale watching weekend at Hervey Bay at the beginning of September was a great success. Most of us met at the RSL on the Friday night for dinner. Mick Blair dragged himself away from his penthouse to meet us, he walked around the RSL for a half hour or so, couldn't find any FAA people so went back home all forlorn - little did he know, that we were all grouped together at the far end of the dining room so that we could be as far away as possible from the loud music. Anyhow, on the next day we cheered him up and let him have his photo taken whilst being cuddled by Mimi McPherson [sister of Elle] on her whale watch boat, the 'Matilda'.

The weather was perfect and we were able to get close to a couple and whales and then a mother whale with calf. The lunch was excellent and we



WHALE WATCH TRIP ABOARD 'MATILDA II'  
L-R: 'Blue' Ditcham - Marian Lister - Mrs. Ditcham - Barry Lister



WHALE WATCH TRIP ABOARD 'MATILDA II'  
L-R: Dulcie Blair - Mavis Chiverton - Kath Sargeson - Sharon Reid



WHALE WATCH TRIP ABOARD 'MATILDA II'  
L-R: Tom Christopher - Pat Christopher - John Stewart - Sharon Reid -  
Brenda Stewart - Dulcie Blair Photos courtesy Mick Blair

were looked after very well indeed. If you haven't participated in such a cruise, I can definitely recommend that you put it on your itinerary.

On the Sunday, about 75 of us gathered for a barbecue at the Botanical Gardens. Tom Allwood and the Naval Association put on a good meal and refreshments. The setting was very pleasant and everyone enjoyed the day. The Naval Association President, Bruce Swain reckons that he should have been a 'birdie' - he sends his kind regards to 'Toz'. Our thanks are extended to Bruce and members.

We were sad to hear that Geoff Coker-Godson had passed on. At the barbecue we held a minute's silence in his memory. He was my first AEO on 724 Squadron and cleared me to run Sea Furies and Fireflies. We met last year when he came up to visit 'Snow' Nicholls at Caboolture.

The Naval Reunion in Toowoomba on November 11, with the RSL as the venue, appears to be attracting large numbers, the FAA attendance is expected to be pretty high.

At our recent committee meeting at the Corrparoo RSL, the secretary, Frank Nielson, was able to report that our financial membership stands at 202. We are delighted with the result, as we had targeted a figure of 200 by the end of 1995. Unfortunately, 20 of our members are unfinancial and will no longer receive the Newsletter or *Slipstream*.

The support for the writing of the FAA History is strong, all are happy with the voluntary funding arrangements.

FAA Reunion '96 planning is progressing well, Bob Bryce has nearly 400 registrations so far and we should have another information package ready for distribution shortly.

I will be attending the National Council Meeting in Tasmania at the end of October. My wife will only go if she can go by train! Maybe we'll have a 'chunnel' one day!

After selling my office in Maroochydore, it was quite a relief to settle back into the Caboolture office. Caboolture was once a jink on the Bruce Highway, it is growing into quite a metropolis with over \$500 million currently being spent on developing the infrastructure for growth over the next ten years. 'Snow' and Lorraine Tite have just relocated there.

Des Kelly is doing a bit of taxi driving of late and has some good tales to tell, they range from being kissed by a

local 'beauty', to being spat on by a local 'ugly'. The 'ugly' then proceeded to hide from the Police and commenced throwing stones at them. Des, you'll have the floor at the Christmas Dinner!

We have recently enjoyed the company of 'Toz' and Gwen Dadswell, as well as John and Ros Crawley (Editor, please note that I will get his membership yet! BL) [ *IF you do, it will probably be in 'deeners' and 'zacs'!* Ed]

Ray Larson and sons are coming up in November, enroute to Fraser Island. Ray's brother, Greg, is joining them (Greg is the father of State of Origin player, Gary Larson). Some thirty odd years ago, Ray, brothers Alan and Greg, Mick Wynnum and myself, planted a paddock of tobacco on their farm. Greg brought a couple of cartons of beer from town and the planting developed into a dangerous mission, particularly if you were driving or locked onto the planter. Later on, Ray's father reckoned the zigzag rows looked quite striking, except when picking commenced and everyone got lost.

During this episode I can recall stripping off and jumping into a 44 gallon drum of water to clean up, whilst in there the family turned up, they pinched all my clothes and drove off. This resulted in a very tricky 3/4 mile dash through the scrub before I managed to sneak into the bathroom.

Peter Ryan (Main Street Realty, Caloundra) and I, took part in the 10th Anniversary Sunstate Air Race in early August. A fairly long Navex around the back blocks; four hours on the first day and three on the second day - finished up in the middle of the bunch - once again! We reckon that next year, we would rather spend the time flying somewhere pleasant instead of spending the money looking at the drought conditions and trying to find a windmill in a 1,000 acre paddock!

Marian and I will be in Sydney mid-November (to see son George), who



Frank and Margaret Collins - Hervey Bay BBQ



Brian Sargeson and Alec McMurtrie at the Hervey Bay BBQ

now informs me that he will be on his way north to see us! Anyhow, I'm taking Marian by rail to Canberra on the XPT (for fun???) She still wants to travel to Melbourne by train, but my memories of such trips in the early '50's are still strong enough for me to keep away from that one for a bit longer yet!

Time to shut down once again. As this is the last edition of *Slipstream* before the end of the year, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, and a much better New Year.

Regards to all,  
Barry Lister - President

## THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM

*Many members have asked how the Australian Naval Aviation Museum came into being, its subsequent growth and plans for the future, to answer this question, the Museum Director, Cmdr Mike Lehan RAN (Rtd), produced the following article. Ed.*

HMAS Albatross, located in Nowra, New South Wales, commissioned as an Australian Naval Air Station on 30 August 1948 to support the carriers HMA Ships Sydney, Vengeance and Melbourne. After the Korean War, the RAN commenced its first re-equipment programme, selling off the obsolete aircraft on the open market. However, some of the aircraft remained at Albatross as 'gate guards' and trainers. Others remained because there were no buyers. Successive Base Commanders stowed these machines away in far corners of the airfield, creating a variety of aircraft 'grave yards'.

That was until the early 1970's when the then Base Commander, Commodore Andrew Robertson decided to gather all the old aircraft and surviving items of memorabilia into one of the old World War 2 hangars, and set about the first, albeit rudimentary, Australian Naval Aviation Museum. Known then as the Fleet Air Arm Museum, the exhibit was a culmination of years of voluntary efforts. Housed in and around a surplus aircraft hangar at the RAN Air Station, the museum was opened in 1974 by Admiral Sir Victor Smith, the then Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee and recognised as the 'father' of the Fleet Air Arm. Although the collection had previously been stored on the Base, this was the first time it was open to the public.

On 10 August 1982, Commodore 'Toz' Dadswell, the then Commanding Officer of HMAS Albatross, established the Heritage Trust of the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Air Arm. The Trust's activities were based upon the Charter of the Fleet Air Arm. This Charter was an agreement by serving officers, appointed by their position, to further the aim of preserving the history of the Fleet Air Arm.

Formation of the Trust was the first step in providing the already established Fleet Air Arm Museum with a formal basis to plan and conduct its future operations.

Previously, the museum was not provided with this form of leadership and guidance, relying heavily on the enthusiasm of voluntary staff and the continuing endorsement of Base Commanding Officers.

Located on Commonwealth land at the North Eastern boundary of HMAS Albatross on a concrete area known as the 'Dummy Deck', which had been the training ground for sailors of the Aircraft Handler Branch, the museum, until quite recently, had comprised of five fibro, timber and galvanised buildings. Whilst most of the memorabilia was housed inside these buildings, the aircraft were parked in the open, exposed to the elements and deteriorating quite rapidly. The Heritage Trust, recognising the importance of preserving and displaying this significant representation of Australia's naval aviation history, agreed to progress the development of new facilities.

A number of decisions were made in an effort to progress the establishment of a first class museum. Specifically, these were:

- \* Change the name to the Australian Naval Aviation Museum,

- \* Incorporate the Heritage Trust as a Company Limited by Guarantee, called 'The Australian Naval Aviation Museum Foundation', and,

- \* Commence raising funds (known as the Capital Campaign) from the corporate sector, Government and private sources, to finance the development of new museum facilities.

In its decision to change the name of the museum from its previous title of the Fleet Air Arm Museum to the Australian Naval Aviation Museum, the Heritage Trust considered a number of factors. The term 'Fleet Air Arm', is normally applied to the body of aviation specialists who served the nation and the RAN since 1948. Australia's naval aviation precedes that time involving Australians who served with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm prior to and during both World Wars as well as Air Force personnel who served on Australian ships prior to 1948. The Trust therefore considered that a more meaningful title for the museum would be one that encompassed the total history and which more aptly linked with the theme of the Heritage Trust Charter, ie, 'the

preservation and display of Australian Naval Aviation'. This theme and title were transferred with the process of incorporation in order to retain the museum's true identity in the tradition established by the original charter.

In September 1988, A National Campaign Committee to raise the necessary development funds formed in Sydney under the chairmanship of Rear Admiral Robertson, who had retired from the RAN some years previously. The committee continued through the very difficult recessionary years of the early 1990's to raise almost \$6 million by 1993. This gigantic effort enabled successful development of the first three stages of the construction plan and the establishment of a viable business to operate the museum. Fundraising continues unabated to this day in an effort to complete the \$10 million facility.

On 6 June 1990, the Australian Naval Aviation Museum was incorporated as a public company, limited by guarantee with the following objectives:

- \* To take the funds and other assets and liabilities of the 'Heritage Trust' the object of which Trust has been to ensure that as the years pass the story of the development of Australian Naval Aviation is faithfully recorded, preserved and presented with energy, thoroughness and dedication for the benefit of Australia and the Royal Australian Navy.

- \* To ensure that the story of Aviation in the Royal Australian Navy is recorded by various media and that it will continue to be so recorded.

- \* To ensure that the history of Aviation in the Royal Australian Navy of yesterday and today which is essentially the story of the deeds and sacrifices of the many men and women who have served their sovereign and their country, in peace and war, is preserved for the benefit of the people of Australia.

- \* To ensure that the Naval Aviation Museum at the Royal Australian Navy Air Station, Nowra, New South Wales (the Museum) is preserved, maintained and expanded in furtherance of the objects of this Company.

- \* To ensure the Museum will always contain, and serve as a memorial to those who have lost their lives in the

service of Naval Aviation in peace and war.

\* To ensure that all of the aircraft, equipment and paraphernalia presently in the Museum is at all times fully maintained and properly presented to the public and that as and when the opportunity arises the Company will acquire by purchase, gift or otherwise or accept on loan all further aircraft, equipment and paraphernalia which the Company consider appropriate and will restore, preserve and present or display in the Museum such further items thereof as the Company might consider appropriate in furtherance of the objects of the Company.

\* To assume and maintain executive control of the Museum and to take all steps necessary as desirable from time to time for the efficient administration, management, maintenance and expansion of the Museum and all the exhibits therein.

\* To ensure that the Museum shall be accessible and open to the public, with or without a charge for admission, at all times and from time to time as might be decided by the Company.

The museum has now developed to a stage where it is recognised as the foremost tourist attraction on the South Coast of New south Wales, generating the necessary capital to meet the ongoing objectives of the Company.

The ability to progress and maintain the displays and historical collection would not be possible without the dedicated and enthusiastic support of our cadre of volunteers and sponsors.

Due to their efforts and that of the very small museum staff, the facility boasts a first class and vibrant 120 seat Function Centre, a souvenir shop and the finest collection of restored naval aircraft in Australia.

Our aim is to promote the museum as a family event and as an attraction for all ages. We have a high quality shaded children's playground installed and a cabin module for children to 'embark'. Visitors can sit in the cabin of our fully restored DC3 and watch continuous play videos, and most aircraft on display have a cockpit access for viewing. Our regular Family Air Days are a popular feature for aviation enthusiasts and their families, who come to enjoy the relaxing and secure environment of the museum enclave, which is turned into a food venue and a free children's entertainment arena. The aircraft flying is first class with top quality performances by the Base operational aircraft, War Birds and the RAN Historic Flight aircraft. World standard aerobatics and parachute displays by the Army Red Berets are also performed. Joy flights are also available at modest prices. All this for \$15 a car entry, and the chance to win a free flight for five in a Lear Jet on the day! More information on our programme is available from the museum by dialling (044) 21 1920, however, the flying programme for the next twelve months is as follows:

- \* 29 October 1995 - Wings and Wheels
- \* 26 January 1996 - Australia Day
- \* 17 March 1996

\* 23 June 1996

\* 1 September 1996

\* 27 October 1996

The Museum Foundation has formed a Society of sponsors who are dedicated to preserving and developing this aspect of our nation's heritage. Various levels of acclamation are awarded depending on the level of sponsorship and names are recorded on our Honour Boards, displayed prominently throughout the museum. Many benefits are also available to Society Members for a basic membership donation fee of \$125 per year. The Museum is a Registered Charity and all donations are tax deductible.

Our main fundraising focus is now towards building a 150 seat Theatre and Administration Building at a total building cost of \$1.5 million. Completion of this facility will enable us to conduct seminars and conventions and enhance our already successful school visit programme. Additionally, the administration complex will provide us with additional meeting facilities, kitchens, plus our first purpose designed curatorial library and storage. When completed we will be able to enlarge our public reference and conservation facility.

As further funds become available, theme capsules will be added to the main museum display hall, to depict significant aspects of Australian Naval Aviation history, including stories of our carriers, squadrons and the men and women who served in them.

Mike Lehan -MuseumDirector

*Welcome Home!*

*New addition to the Museum*

### Gannet aircraft - Gift from the Royal Navy

Sponsored by P&O Containers Australia, ex-RAN Anti Submarine Gannet Aircraft, call sign XG 888, arrived from England this month aboard the *C S Auckland*, which berthed at the Botany Bay Container Terminal.

The aircraft was built by the Fairey Aviation Company at Hayes in the UK, as a Trainer MK2, and delivered to the RAN in *HMAS Sydney* on 20 December 1957.

#### RAN SERVICE

- 1957 - 1959: 816 Squadron - operational.
- 1959: 724 Squadron - training
- 1959 - 1963: 816 Squadron - operational

- 1963 - 1965: 724 Squadron - training
- 1966: Sold to the Royal Navy
- 1967: Collected by *HMS Victorious* and taken to the UK
- Returned to the factory for a Mk5 conversion.

#### RN SERVICE

- 1969: Delivered to 849 Squadron
- 1970 -1978: Served at RNAS Lossiemouth, RNAS Bawdy as a trainer
- 1978: Taken out of operational service
- 1978 - 1985: RNAS Culdrose - long term storage
- 1985 - 1995: Hangared at RNAS Lee-on-Solent

#### FUTURE

Offered as a gift by the Royal Navy to the Australian Naval Aviation Museum. The aircraft will be repainted in its RAN colours and placed on public display.

## MEMORIES OF TYPHOON RUTH

By W.J. Jack McLoughlin

**HMAS Sydney, 14 October 1951,  
Sasebo Harbour No.8 buoy.**

Sunday morning routine, Divisions and Church interrupted by a pipe over the loud speaker system -'Due to deteriorating weather conditions the ship will proceed to sea'.

Soon afterwards, the *Sydney* and several other ships were clearing harbour for the Yellow Sea.

Another pipe was made for the crew of the Sea Fury to report to the flight deck. Before long, the late L/PM Pat (Nigger) Maloney and myself, were attached to life lines securing external control locks on the aircraft and any other tasks, under the supervision of POAF(A) Bill Bailey RN.

Early in the afternoon it was a Duty Watch situation, Frank Donnelly and I were the A/E part of the Emergency Party and LAAH 'Ace' Kleidon was the Duty L/H, we were on the flight deck with instructions to secure anything that moved. A call came from one of the Handlers,

'A w a y Skimmer', as the craft, which was normally cradled outboard of the flight deck crane, suddenly appeared on the crest of a wave off the ship's side. (The Skimmer was an 18' long (approx) carvel built power craft which could carry about six passengers.)

Early Tea in

the forrard cafeteria and enjoying the break. L/PM Mick Thomas was sitting opposite and his brew slid off the table into his lap. He quickly disappeared and returned shortly afterwards wearing his inflatable life vest.

It was then back to the hangars to double lash the aircraft. The ship's movement was causing amounts of high octane to be vented from the aircraft tanks so they had to be defuelled. Then it was back to retensioning the bottle-jacks on the lashings, the adjustments of which were very primitive in those days.

All this activity was constantly being interrupted by Emergency Parties attending reported fires, Bomb Room, Wardroom Galley, Main Switchboard etc. There were some worrying thoughts as you headed to the most recently reported fire. It turned out that there were no major problems, just plenty of water in the ventilation fans.

The night was spent in the hangars, fire curtains lowered, any loose gear

was soon heard and secured. As the ship's bow buried into the seas, you could hear the water cascading along the flight deck and emptying into the forrard lift well.

By daylight the after flight deck was in disarray, one Firefly had disappeared over the Port side, and a Sea Fury had collapsed onto its centre section and damaged a couple of adjacent aircraft.

In the book, 'Australia in the Korean War 1950-53 Vol. 11 Combat Operations' by Robert O'Neill, these events are mentioned on pages 472-473 where it quotes our Captain, D,H,Harries. Worth mentioning is the tractor referred to, it was a fork lift with solid rubber tyres, although locked in gear, it broke free of its lashings and left skid marks across the flight deck forrard of the island before disappearing near P1 sponson. No.1 and No.2 Motor Cutters were stove in as all the heavy weather was taken on the Starboard side.

Eventually it was 'Hands to Breakfast', in the forrard café was a foot of water and all the tables and stools lashed down.

I did enjoy the skinless sausages and the brew.



Photo courtesy  
Bert Glossop

### THIS IS TRUE!

'Pancho' Walter told me a story the other day about when the Brewarrina floods were in full swing some years ago.

The Navy 'choppers' were up there pulling out the 'bods' when and where required, the Army were also there with their amphibious vehicles, the DUKS, being utilised for

delivering stores to the inaccessible areas.

Whilst the waters were at their height, a voice came crackling through the ether to the Army two-way radio system. It originated from a stockman who was isolated some twenty miles out of town. He told the Army radio operator that there was no tucker left, was 'bloody famished' and asked what they could

do about it.

The radio operator conferred with his superiors, then told the stockman that they would send two DUKS out to him in the morning.

"Two, bloody ducks!", was the reply. I've got six kids here, they wont last through bloody breakfast!

## Advice for Wedded Bliss

*Men who are everlastingly wed to the witching waters of the world, but who incidentally have a wife based on land, may fathom the helmsman tactics in a marriage contract unearthed by an Edinburgh lawyer from an old deed box. Drawn up by a seafaring man, it envisages each mate's duties in a shipshape union:*

*'Having read to her the Articles of War, I explained to her the conditions under which we were to sail in company on life's voyage, namely:*

*\* She is to obey signals without question when received.*

*\* She is to steer by my reckoning.*

*\* She is to stand by as a true consort in foul weather, battle or shipwreck.*

*\* She is to run under my guns if assailed by picaroons or privateers.*

*\* I am to keep her in due repair and see that she hath her allowance of coats of paint, streamers and bunting, as befits a saucy craft.*

*\* I am to take no other craft in tow, and if any be now attached to cut their hawsers.*

*\* I am to revictual her day to day.*

*\* Should she be blown on her beam ends by wind or misfortune, I am to stand by her and see her righted.*

*\* I am to set our course for the Great Harbour in the hope that moonings and ground to swing may be found for two well-built craft when laid up for eternity.'*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Micah Clarke

## SEA VAMPIRE XG770 RESTORATION

Progress is steady, one can't be in too much of a hurry with these old aircraft.

Wood rot, due to exposure to the elements, is a major concern at the moment. The areas mainly affected are the catchment areas under the aircraft's belly. However, we have the technology and willingness in Ron Ross to be able to remedy the problem.

Ray (Make and Mend) Larder is plodding along with the cockpit, wherever there is a hole, he will insert a gauge.

A few 'over the shoulder' advisers have indicated that we might have the wrong Mark of ejection seats earmarked for installation - too late - they're going in very shortly!

All that remains to be done is the filling, sanding and painting, then the aircraft will be finished. The proposed paint scheme will indicate the role the aircraft fulfilled as a trainer. When completed (static display only), it will fill another gap on the museum hangar floor as part of our FAA history.

Don Parkinson - Project Manager

## MANILA - AND MY FIRST REAL KNEE TREMBLER

By John Ahern

On 22 October, 1956, *Melbourne* was anchored a couple of miles off Manila, on the way home after visiting Singapore and Hong Kong as part of Exercise Albatross. It was a perfect tropical day and I considered myself pretty fortunate to be in the watch that was to be first ashore. When the magic words, 'Liberty men fall-in on the flight deck' was piped, I, along with a couple of hundred other eager sailors, fell in so that the OOD could satisfy himself that all hands were of a fit and proper appearance to be turned loose on the unsuspecting local populace. Up and down the ranks he wandered, making sure that all caps were white, all shoes black, and the bits in between absolutely pusser. Had that officer the ability to see into the not-so-distant future, he would have been the first to agree that the entire exercise had been all in vain.

We proceeded ashore, on a landing barge provided by the USN, you know the type, a small wheelhouse to one side and a drop down ramp at the front. Everything was going according to plan until we reached a point midway between ship and shore when the heavens opened up, one of those tropical downpours that absolutely bucketed down. As there was NO shelter of any kind to be had on the craft, it was only the quick thinkers amongst us that survived without becoming completely soaked. This minority had the presence of mind to strip to their underwear and stuff their uniforms into overnight bags, or just simply rolled it up into a tight ball, turn their backs to the rain and hope for the best. That may have been OK for the ones that were going ashore in shorts, but spare a thought for those of us who had opted to wear 'icecream suits', not the sort of rig that one can get out of in a hurry, especially in this particular instance. Not unexpectedly, the rain stopped as quickly as it had started, but the damage had been well and truly done. White hat cleaner started to discolour tally bands, carefully ironed creases dropped out of bell bottoms, shoes squelched, socks oozed and once blue collars were sprinkled with white spots. To make matters worse, if you stood with the sun behind you it was possible to see right through the soaked material of the uniform. All in all, not a pretty sight.

It was in this condition that we were eventually put ashore on the Manila waterfront. Now came the big decision. What to do? Return on board, get changed and try again? Not likely!! OK, press on into town and whilst doing so try to ignore the feeling that everyone is looking at you.

Temporary sanctuary was found in a taxi that eventually disgorged its steaming contents on to a Manila footpath. It was here that my companions and I parted company. They headed for the fleshpots of the city and I, being totally innocent of such carryings-on, and recalling some of the advice that my Mother had given me when I enlisted, declined their offer to accompany them. I made a bee line to the nearest Cinema, for it was there, I reasoned, that I could spend a couple of hours in relative comfort, dry out and emerge around sunset ready for what ever the evening may bring.

The first feature passed without incident, as did the intermission, and by this time my condition had improved to 'Slightly Damp'. I have no idea of the title of the main feature, but I do recall that it was a WW2 epic starring John Wayne. The film was about three parts of the way through, the main action sequence had just commenced with the US Fleet about to give the Japanese navy some 'what for' in the Coral Sea, and the sound track had been turned up a notch or two to add to the realism. It was at this point in the proceedings when I imagined that my seat had developed a slight swaying sensation, a few seconds later it happened again and I thought it was caused by one of the patrons sitting behind me and getting carried away with Commander Wayne's feats of derring-do.

It suddenly occurred to me, that the guy behind me had nothing to do with the mystery of the moving seat because everything, including the theatre, was swaying from side to side. It was one of the most frightening experiences that I have ever had, and that takes into account fronting up before an irate Master At Arms on a couple of occasions. People were making for the exits at a great rate of knots and the place just kept on rocking, the chandelier swaying, the whole works. It was at this stage that I lost all interest in the eventual fate of

John Wayne and started to seriously consider the eventual fate of ME! I was about to join the throng making for the Exit signs, and was halfway out of my seat, when the old fellow sitting next to me grabbed my sleeve and said, "It wont' last long boy and you can't get out anyway". I looked at him and as far as I could see he didn't appear to be out of his mind, or even overly concerned about what was going on around us. Not entirely convinced, I took another glance at the exits and had to agree that my new acquaintance had the situation summed up pretty well. All the doorways were jam-packed with people who suddenly remembered they had urgent appointments somewhere else. Just as I resumed my seat (the edge of it), and not entirely sure if it was the most sensible thing to do, the swaying stopped and the moving theatre became stationary once again. It was all over. The audience started to trickle back to their seats. The only things left shaking all belonged to me.

I watched the defeat of the Japanese Navy and John Wayne sailing victoriously into the sunset to the tune of the Star Spangled Banner. Outside the cinema I saw the evidence of the minor earth tremor, as it turned out to be, there were wires down, a burst water main and a minor crack in the roadway, hardly the major earthquake I had imagined it to be a little earlier. What a pity! Think of the impression the story would have created when retold back home.

That was my first experience of the Philippines and not one to be forgotten. The remainder of the evening was spent watching Jai-Alai and partaking of the local Rum and Coke, questionable in origin but effective in results ..... So much for all that good advice, Mum!

*[The experts reckon that it's not a strong earthquake until your post code changes three times in less than a minute! Ed]*



**FIRST COURSE OF NAM(O) UNDER TRAINING RANAS NOWRA 1948**

L-R: Clive Smithers - Dick Prentice - Brian Worthington - 'Nobby' Clarke - Keith 'Ace' Hartmann  
(Absent: Lou Burns - W. Mackie - Bruce Loiterton?)



**FIRST COURSE OF NAM UNDER TRAINING RANAS NOWRA 1948**

L-R: B.'Muscles' West - Vic Baugh - Fred Lane - B.E. Smith - Ken Medding  
Front: Jack McLoughlin - Frank Donnelly - R.G 'Guntha' Craig - Ken Hegarty  
(Absent: Harry Jackson)

## TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL RANAS NOWRA

The series of photographs to the right of the page come from the private collection of Jack McLoughlin. They were taken in November 1948

### THE FIRST TRAINING STAFF

L-R:  
CAA 'Chalky' White  
AA3 'Jumper' Collins  
CAFA Fred Bath  
Snr.Comm.WO Harold Kent  
AA3 Garner  
POEL Bichen

All were RN Loan except for Harold Kent



**VIETNAM DISPLAY  
DEDICATION AT THE ANAM**

Vietnam Veterans from L-R:

- Kevin Camm
- Peter Clark
- Richard Marum
- Admiral Neil Ralph
- John Dawe
- Basil Todd
- Jim Hill
- Len Connell
- Keith Wardle
- Cmdr Ted Wynberg
- 'Curly' Guilck
- Kevin French
- Terry Delaney
- R. Shewyn
- NK

Kevin Miller with David Hardy in front



Partaking of light refreshment at the Albatross Senior Sailors Mess prior to a NSW Division Dinner L-R: Barry Roberts - Bob Cronin - Don McLean and Gordon Turner. Photo Peregrine Publishing



Also at the NSW Division Dinner, Cmdr Guy Beange RAN Rtd, and son, Guy Joseph Beange, a new member of the Association. Photo PP



Ron Reed Jnr - 'Tex' Nankivell and Ron Reed visiting the Slipstream Office. Photo Peregrine Publishing



Other members at the Division Dinner L-R: J.D.Goble - Richard Marum and Charles Grose. Photo Peregrine Publishing

**Seasons Greetings to All Readers of Slipstream**