

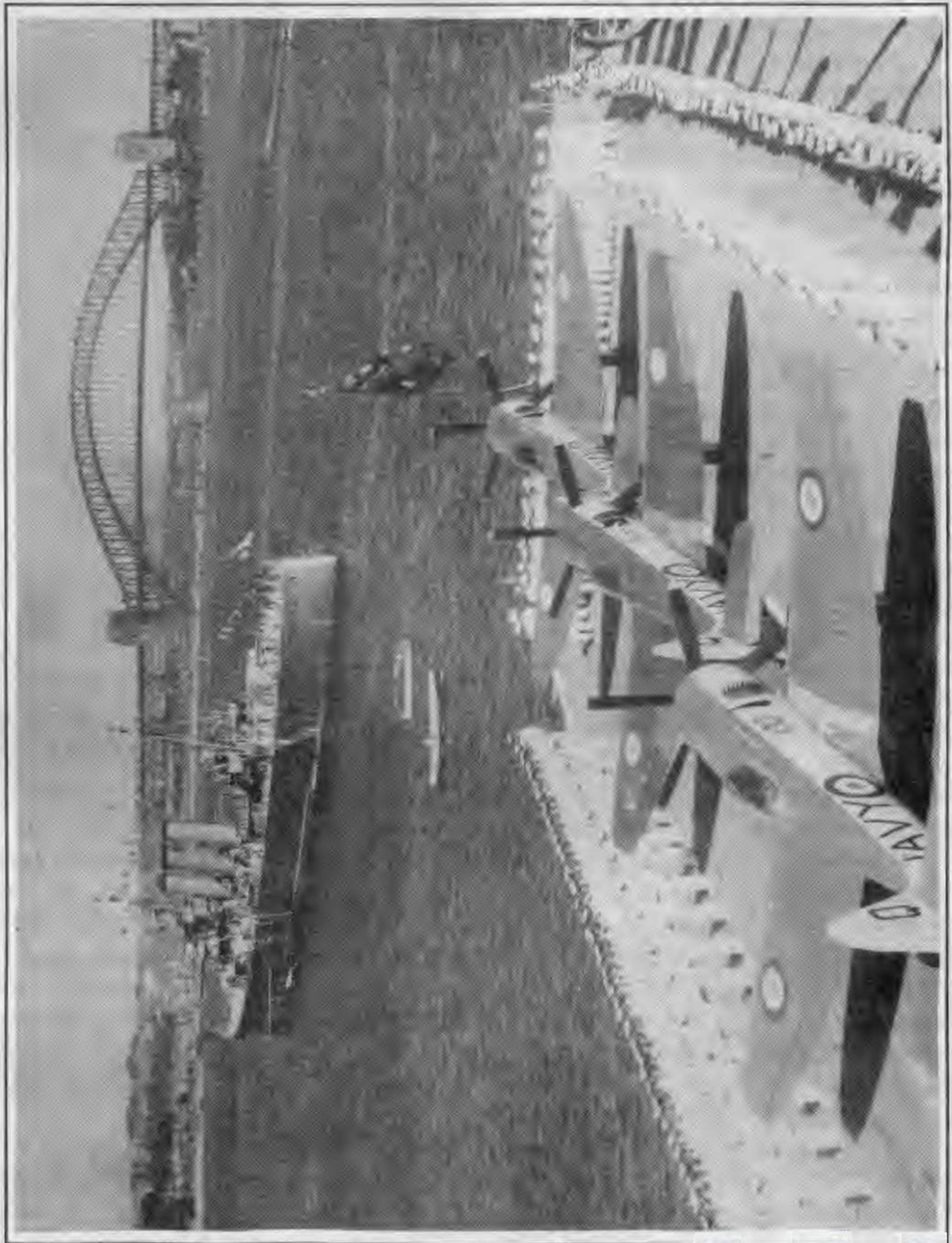


The Quarterly Journal
of the
Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia

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Slipstream



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Editor: John Arnold - PO Box 662, NOWRA NSW 2541, Australia - Phone (044) 232014 - Fax (044) 232412

FOREWORD

by

Rear Admiral Murray B Forrest AM RAN

Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel)

Although I have never really been closely associated with the Fleet Air Arm, I do remember a rather daunting day or two at sea in MELBOURNE as a Cadet and several great Gunroom and Wardroom parties; looking through back numbers of your very spirited and entertaining magazine also reminds me of some wonderful people of my youth; and I do have many friends among your number.

But that said, we are all a part of the same very fine Service and as Navy's current 'people' person, I am delighted to come to the party.

Professionally, my early dealings with Naval Aviation were confined to the not so glamorous world of logistics where I was amazed by the staggering quantities of bits and pieces demanded by Air Engineers to keep those airframes flying and also gained an understanding of their commitment to air worthiness. The ROE [role of effort] has not diminished! Now, I have to man the aircraft and provide the technicians; not always an easy task but, as ever, there are many fine people in the Naval Personnel Division and the wider community to assist.

In that role, the excellent contribution of the Fleet Air Arm Association in maintaining the *esprit de corp* is invaluable. *Slipstream* and the Australian Naval Aviation Museum are tangible examples of your continuing interest and support.

The face of Naval Aviation is changing. No longer is the operational focus centered on the squadron alone; rather it is increasingly upon the flights deployed to very many of our fleet units that our concept of operations is based. Elsewhere in this edition, there is an article which describes the establishment of Commander, Australian Naval Aviation Force, put in place by CNS to meet the RAN's need for a restructured organisation for the planning and operation of a fully integrated Aviation Force. Navy is well served by the commitment of its people, their training and their professionalism, and our platforms and sensors are second to none in the region in technological capability; it is the way we direct and operate those resources which determines how we fight and whether we win.

I am confident the FAA Association is well able and willing to assist us in meeting the challenges of the future. I have heard that the association is arranging for the history of the FAA to be written and what an excellent undertaking this is. I hope all of you will lend support in whatever way you can to this venture. This type of initiative is invaluable in cementing the relationships between naval aviation personnel of yesterday and those of tomorrow.

I wish you all well.



EDITORIAL

My apologies for the delay in producing this edition of Slipstream.

In an effort to further reduce costs, *Slipstream* is now being printed by another company.

Keep all your letters and stories rolling in. Don't forget, anything forwarded for the journal will also be used as possible material for the 'History'.

There were so many volunteers for the job as Editor, that I thought I might hang on a bit longer until I discover what the attraction is.

Thank you for your support.

AT HOME AND OVERSEAS

Our condolences are extended to Bob Cronin, whose wife, Edna, passed away recently.

Also to Harry Bannister, Editor of the PONAM Journal UK, on the loss of his wife, Vera.

ooOOOoo

Best wishes to Ken Greenaway, who is recovering from a triple bypass in the Strathfield Private Hospital.

Also to our RAAF mascot, Neil Gage, recovering from an operation on a broken ankle he acquired whilst trying to 'splice a mainbrace' on a wire rope. Now safely ensconced in the Shoalhaven Community Hospital.

Not forgetting 'Kanga' Bounds, now recuperating from a triple bypass and tweaked up tight with locking wire.

FRONT COVER

Photograph showing flight deck of *HMAS Vengeance*, in Sydney Harbour on the occasion of the Royal Visit in 1954.

Photo courtesy Dave Eagles

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A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Members are well aware of the recent efforts by the Federal Council to have the History of the RAN Fleet Air Arm written. There were problems in getting the project underway and the Australian Naval Aviation Museum, being aware of those problems, offered to take over the project. This was accepted by the Federal Council and the ANAM is forging ahead with the project.

A committee, under the chairmanship of the Museum Director, has been set up to oversee the writing of the 'History', with John Arnold, Max Altham and 'Windy' Geale on the committee.

I thank those members who supported the writing of the history by making a donation to the FAAA History Fund. Your willingness to give support in a practical manner was appreciated. For legal reasons, the Executive have decided that all donations will be returned to the donors, but I hope you will give consideration to making a donation to the History Fund set up by the ANAM.

The important issue in the matter of the 'History' is that it gets written and is an accurate record of the FAA story. It is **your** story, so please get involved and support the committee with your stories and photographs.

Thank you. *Toz' Dadswell*

PROFILE

REAR ADMIRAL MURRAY BRUCE FORREST AM RAN

Rear Admiral M.B. Forrest RAN was born in Sydney on 3 February 1942 and entered the Royal Australian Naval College on 28 January 1958 as a 15 year old Cadet Midshipman. He graduated in 1960 from the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay as the Queen's Medallist. Up until December 1963 he undertook professional and academic courses at the Britannia Royal Naval College, UK and in HMA Ships SWAN, SUPPLY and VOYAGER.

In January 1964 he was posted to the staff of Flag Officer-in-Charge East Australia Area and in May 1965 posted to the commissioning crew of HMAS HOBART as the Deputy Supply Officer. His posting to HMAS HOBART included service in Vietnam in 1967. In January 1968, he joined HMAS CERBERUS as the Training Officer in the Supply School and then in April 1970 was posted as Supply Officer HMAS ANZAC.

Shortly after joining the staff of the Fleet Commander, he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in September 1972 and in October 1973 was posted to the staff of Chief of Naval Personnel as the Personnel Liaison Officer.

In January 1975 he returned to HMAS HOBART as the Supply Officer and this posting included being present at the US Bicentennial celebrations.

Promoted to Commander in 1976, he was posted as Deputy Fleet Supply Officer. In January 1979 he became the Officer-in-Charge of the RAN Supply School in HMAS CERBERUS, and then as the Supply Officer of that establishment, the RAN's largest. During 1981 and 1982 he was on exchange service in the United Kingdom with the Royal Navy.

On return to Australia in 1983 he joined HMAS STALWART as the Supply Officer. On promotion to Captain in 1984 he was appointed the Chief Staff Officer (Administration) to the Naval Support Commander.

During 1988-89 he was appointed as the Assistant Director General Supply - Navy in Canberra and in July 1989 he was attached to the Headquarters Staff of the Australian Defence Force.

He was promoted to Commodore in January 1990. After two years as the Director General Naval Logistics Policy he returned to Sydney as Deputy Naval Support Commander and Chief of Staff in March 1992. On 3 April 1995 he was promoted to Rear Admiral and assumed his current position as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel) on 6 April 1995.

Rear Admiral Forrest married the former Rose-Mary Hoarau in 1966. They have two children, Jacqui and Tim, and have their home in Barton, ACT.

A LAST FAREWELL

†

COOPER Les - ex-CPO RN / RAN - 10 February 1996

APPLETON Bernard George - Lt (A) RN (Rtd) - 20 February 1996

GILROY Brian - ex-CPO - 19 February 1996

NUGENT Kevin 'Nugget' - ex-CPO - 28 March 1996



WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

by Ivan 'Chips' Gray JP - NSW Division



In my last report and in the article by Fred Kirkland OAM regarding The Australian Service Medal 1945-75, information was given on the then Government's Veterans' Affairs Policy and that of the Coalition. Since the election very little information regarding changes has been released other than the appointment of the Hon. Bruce Craig Scott, National Party member for Marana, Queensland, as Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Scott was born in Roma and is married with three children. He was on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training from May 1990 to May 1992; the Joint Statutory Committee on Public Works from May 1990 to March 1993 and on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO from May 1993.

He has held the positions of Shadow Minister for Primary Industry and Rural Matters; Shadow Minister for Regional and Rural Development and was Shadow Minister assisting the Shadow Minister for Primary Industry from April 1992 to May 1994.

The new Secretary for the Dep't of Veterans' Affairs is Dr. Neil Johnston.

Dr. Johnston, a Victorian, has a Doctorate of Economics from the University of Pennsylvania (1972) and an Honours Degree in Economics from the Australian National University (1966).

He has worked for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1972-76); the Australian Treasury (1977-1984); Employment Education and Training (1988-1994); and was Deputy Secretary in the Department of Social Security from September 1994 where he was responsible for social security policy and audit.

No statements on changes to policy as detailed in the election strategy have yet been announced, the only exception being:- DVA PLEDGE SIMPLER SERVICE: The DVA has committed itself to simplifying procedures to improve veteran access to its services. The Veterans' Service Delivery Model (VSDM) project will define how best the services can be delivered; identify changing needs of veterans and services they require and then propose a comprehensive framework for delivering those services - from a veterans rather than Department's perspective. The model is expected to be completed by July.

For those of you who are house-bound or enjoy listening to the radio, Veterans now have their own radio spot - 'On Air With Veterans' Affairs'.

Broadcast every Wednesday, you can tune-in on IRPH in Canberra 1125-AM at 9:00am; 2RPH in Sydney 1224-AM at 8:35am; 3RPH in Melbourne 1179-AM at 10:30am; 4RPH in Brisbane 1296-AM at 9:50am; 5RPH in Adelaide 1197-AM at 10:15am; 6RPH in Perth 990-AM at 10:30am; and 7RPH in Hobart 864-AM at 4:30pm. This could be a useful source of information.

HMAS ALBATROSS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

by Cdr L.N. Phillips RAN, Executive Officer

Those who have visited *HMAS Albatross* in recent years will no doubt remember the large number of buildings remaining from when the Air Station was first commissioned into the RAN. For many years now, modern, state of the art aircraft and components have been maintained in facilities which were built before most of those working in them were born and many support staff continue to work in very noisy areas.

With the anticipated arrival of up to 27 new helicopters for the ANZAC Ships and the mooted Offshore Patrol Vessels, the available aircraft hangarage at *Albatross*, which barely copes with current demands, will be totally inadequate to hangar all aircraft.

A master plan, which has zoned *Albatross* on the basis of noise levels, has been developed and this will see the operational areas of the airfield moved to the south-eastern end of the current building area. Three new hangars will arise to house current and new helicopters and the current squadrons will gradually move from the northern end of the airfield as space becomes available. In the fullness of time, workshops will be immediately behind the operations they support and stores, administration, medical and accommodation areas will be stepped back from the runways into quieter areas of the air station. The current road network will be rationalised and straightened to provide better access for normal business and emergency situations. And high security areas will be better protected while accommodation areas will

become more open. In twenty years from now, *Albatross* will be unrecognisable.

In the immediate future, *Albatross* will see the beginnings of a purpose built fire station located near the current administration building. This will have ready access to the airfield and the domestic areas and will solve the most pressing Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) issue at *Albatross*. The other OHS issue soon to be resolved is a better workshop facility for the Aircraft Maintenance and Flight Trials Unit at B Hangar. A new child care centre will be erected adjacent to the Nowra Hill School to provide care for pre-school and older children after school.

Major facilities anticipated before the turn of the century include:

- * a new control tower either on the current site or a new location,
- * a new training facility near the current canteen site,
- * a new administration building near Hunter block,
- * a new sporting complex incorporating a gymnasium, heated indoor swimming pool and canteen facilities at the current main gate, and
- * modern accommodation at the latter end of the building period.

The airfield will see a new Explosives Storage area developed and an Ordnance Loading Area with aircraft refuelling and washing facilities developed south of runway 08/26. Extensive areas of tarmac will be built over the 'Old Oval' site and, later in the period, on the current Western Pad site for parking our own and visiting aircraft. Many activities currently conducted on the airfield will have to be relocated, probably on the farmland to the south. These include a parachute drop zone, flight deck procedures trainers and some areas for helicopter activities like winching training, load lifting and basic handling.

Hopefully most of these facilities will be in place by the turn of the century. Certainly, those who served at *Albatross* before the 1990s who come to watch athletes involved in pre-Olympic training in 2000, will not recognise the establishment, if all our current planning comes to fruition.

oooOOOooo

LAUNCH OF NEW NAVAL AVIATION COMMAND AT NOWRA

On Friday, 01 March 1996, The Chief of Naval Staff, VADM Rod Taylor and the Maritime Commander, RADM Chris Oxenbould, officially launched the Commander of Australian Naval Aviation's new organisation at *HMAS Albatross*.

Their opening addresses are published in full:

MARITIME COMMANDER

I am delighted to be here for this special ceremony to formally set in place significant new arrangements for the management of aviation in the RAN. At the outset, I would like to stress the importance of this new and exciting development. There is no question in my mind, that the focus which this new organisation will be able to bring to all matters relating to naval aviation, will result in very significant benefits for both the RAN in general, and the naval aviation community in particular.

As Maritime Commander, I am charged with significant responsibilities regarding the defence of Australia and the protection of our national interests. To fulfil these responsibilities, it is important that all forces in the Maritime Command are operated, administered and supported to the very highest standards. As a very important element of these forces, the naval aviation force, makes an extremely valuable contribution to the effectiveness of the Fleet. Indeed, the integrated aviation capabilities we now enjoy are the product of much hard work directed towards the development of operational concepts and procedures over the last fifteen years. Today, helicopters embarked in our surface ships provide a force multiplier effect to ship weapons systems - and one I would not want to fight the maritime battle without.

Looking to the future, there are a range of new developments on the horizon which will significantly increase the effectiveness of aviation in the RAN. Here I refer to the upgrading of Seahawks with the fitting of Electronic Warfare and Infra Red equipment. The upgrade

that is occurring with the Sea King life of type extension, and, the acquisition of helicopters for the ANZAC frigates and the offshore patrol craft. The overall effect could be that the naval aviation force will expand to about 55 helicopters by early next century, and be equipped with superior weapons and sensors. Clearly, naval aviation is on the threshold of an important period of growth and we need to ensure that all this development is properly co-ordinated and supported from both the operational and policy aspects.

In recent years, Navy, in common with other services, has had to respond to ever increasing pressures to streamline its organisation to meet demands for more efficient and effective use of resources. Put another way, yesterday's way of doing business is not adequate for tomorrow's requirements, even for a navy which is noted for its proud tradition and heritage.

There has been a growing recognition that the way the management of aviation policy matters had evolved in the last five years would not adequately support the new and very taxing demands that are now being placed on the aviation community. About two years ago, shortcomings in the way naval aviation was managed were recognised and this resulted in the Chief of Naval Staff commissioning a review of naval aviation, led by Captain David Ramsay. This review was wide ranging and as it got underway, it became clear that naval aviation required a more robust and relevant framework. This review provided the basis for a proposal which allowed the Chief of Naval Staff to quickly put in place measures which have led to us being here today.

In a widely distributed signal of 09 October last year, CNS announced that new arrangements for the leadership and management of the naval aviation force would centre on the establishment of a Commander Australian Naval Aviation Force. COMAUSNAVAIR, as the position will be known, will be the principal and central aviation operations and policy adviser for the

RAN. The organisation will be located here at NAS Nowra as a Maritime Command lodger unit.

Embodied in this new organisation will be the formerly independent units of The Flight Safety and Standards Centre, The Fleet Air Engineering Unit, and the Air Warfare Systems Centre. The contribution to naval aviation made by the personnel who have served in these units over the years has been extremely valuable and I would like to publicly acknowledge their work and commend them for it. I know that the opportunity for synergy afforded by the establishment of COMAUSNAVAIR will enhance their ability to do their important jobs.

The naval aviation force, in common with all other fleet assets will remain under my command, and COMAUSNAVAIR has been vested with the necessary authority to fulfil his responsibilities through a personal directive from me. He will be responsible for the oversight and supervision of the naval aviation force element group, including the management of resources and the maintenance and control of operational airworthiness, as well as flying engineering and safety standards.

Squadron Commanding Officers will retain their direct line of responsibility to the Maritime Commander for the day to day operation of their squadrons, but they are to keep COMAUSNAVAIR fully informed of matters which need to be brought to my attention.

The general responsibilities of COMAUSNAVAIR are even more wide ranging. In addition to his Maritime Command obligations he will also be responsible:

- * to the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff for aviation policy advice at the strategic level,

- * to the Flag Officer Naval Training Command for advice and subject matter expertise on aircrew training requirements,

- * to the Flag Officer Naval Support Command for defining aviation logistic support requirements,

- * to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Materiel for providing advice on project and acquisition matters, and

- * to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Personnel for the provision of guidance on aviation personnel and manpower matters'

Undoubtedly quite a job! ...over

It won't have taken you long to realise that COMAUSNAVAIR has a lot on his plate from day one, and much is expected of the organisation. The business list includes the resolution of many major and complex issues including:

- * the further development of the RAN safety programme,

- * detailed planning for the introduction of the New Intermediate Helicopter (NIH),

- * addressing critical manpower planning issues for naval aviation, and

- * ensuring that the whole basis for the conduct of naval aviation is supported by appropriate regulations and managed with appropriate controls.

But above all else, COMAUSNAVAIR will be expected to provide leadership and management for the naval aviation community. Leadership is not something that can be decreed and it is not something you can buy. The extent to which COMAUSNAVAIR is able to establish his organisation in a position of leadership of the naval aviation community, will depend on how effectively he is able to provide the vision and direction that many involved in the business of naval aviation are looking for, as well as empowering the naval aviation force to achieve its full potential. This is a major challenge, but one I am confident Captain Keith Eames is well able to meet.

Today, therefore, is a very important one in the history of naval aviation in the RAN, we are taking the first steps in what I believe will be a continuing process of evolution in the way aviation matters are managed in the RAN. The establishment of COMAUSNAVAIR is not an end, but rather a beginning, and I do not underestimate the magnitude of the task ahead.

I look forward to the future of naval aviation with confidence, it is a vital part of our operational capability and it is only right that appropriate prominence is given to its leadership and management.

I wish Captain Eames, the first COMAUSNAVAIR, every success in this new venture. Keith, it is up to you to set the pace and in meeting this significant challenge you have my best wishes, total support and trust.

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CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF

It is my pleasure to be here this morning to officially launch the Commander Australian Naval Aviation Force Organisation - to be designated COMAUSNAVAIR.

But before I do, I would like to sketch out some historical background to highlight the important role naval aviation has played in helping our navy to carry out its responsibilities. I also want to emphasise some of the recent circumstances that served to provide the impetus for the establishment of the COMAUSNAVAIR organisation.

In many respects, the history of naval aviation in our navy can be likened to the tides that rise and fall on our shores. In the halcyon days of the late 1950s - a period of not just high but **king tide**, if you like, the navy operated two carriers simultaneously - SYDNEY and MELBOURNE.

But, as many of those present today would appreciate, we have also experienced periods of low tide. Admiral Sir Victor Smith, a former Chief of Naval Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and our most distinguished naval aviator, described in a brief autobiography the difficulties facing those men attempting to establish a Fleet Air Arm in Australia in the early years. He wrote:

'From the end of WWI until 1947 the organisation of Naval Aviation in the RAN was unsatisfactory. There appeared to be a certain amount of lethargy on the part of some senior officers towards having a well organised Fleet Air Arm...[and] the RAN Air Arm was something that never seemed to achieve any great enthusiasm from the Naval Board of those years.'

Of course, a more recent example of a low point was the decision in 1982 to decommission the MELBOURNE - followed by a decision not to replace her. At that time I was working in Navy Office and was personally involved in much of the staffing. This was a time of much soul-searching on Navy's part. Importantly though, it forced us to re-examine critically, many of the premises on which our operating philosophies were based. On a positive note, a series of studies and projects in those years

provided the basis for many of the changes in force structure and operating procedures which have since evolved.

Despite the decision not to replace MELBOURNE, this **did not** remove the requirement for naval aviation assets and personnel at sea. Significant challenges remained, as our aviators continued to look for the best ways to extend our sea based capabilities by integrating their unique capabilities into the fleet, while maintaining the rigorous and demanding standards which they set themselves in the air.

But enough of the past.... As you have already heard, in 1994 the Naval Aviation Review was commissioned to examine a range of issues of concern. Captain David Ramsay and his team worked diligently to study the issues. Importantly, the establishment of a COMAUSNAVAIR type organisation was one of the review's major recommendations.

The spotlight was focused clearly on that recommendation by events last year at the Naval Symposium in Sydney. In response to concerns raised during an open forum, I directed that a safety audit of naval aviation be conducted, that limitations be placed on flying operations at sea pending completion of that audit, and that organisational issues arising from the Naval Aviation Review be presented to me for decision as a matter of urgency.

After considering the issues, it was clear to me that the most practical solution to resolving the problems which were apparent and meeting the challenges of the future, was to establish a Commander Australian Naval Aviation Force with appropriate organisational support.

The Maritime Commander in his address has referred to COMAUSNAVAIR's specific responsibilities. I would simply like to emphasise that from my perspective, I will look to COMAUSNAVAIR to provide leadership for our naval aviation community and for the entire naval aviation organisation.

Captain Eames and his COMAUSNAVAIR team face formidable challenges as they consider the many important issues which bear on safe, effective, professional naval aviation - now and in the future.

But the future is a bright one

for aviation and for the RAN. We will shortly announce the successful tenderer for a New Intermediate Helicopter for the ANZAC class frigates and the future offshore patrol vessel. The Maritime Commander has mentioned the program to upgrade the capabilities of the Seahawk. The first of the Sea King helicopters has completed its life of type extension. Returning to my earlier metaphor, I think we are seeing the signs of another king tide.

Thank you very much for your attendance this morning. It is now my very great pleasure to formally launch the COMAUSNAVAIR Organisation by unveiling the COMAUSNAVAIR crest, and to wish all concerned every success.



Captain Eames and Vice Admiral Taylor unveil the COMAUSNAVAIR crest

Photo courtesy RAN

PROFILE
Captain Keith Eames

A naval aviator of 25 years experience. He is primarily a helicopter pilot who also maintains a civilian fixed wing licence. Key postings have included Commanding Officer HS 817 Squadron in 1984, Executive Officer HMAS SUCCESS, Director of Sailors' Postings, Chief of Staff HMAS STIRLING, and most recently, Director of Long Range Planning and Concepts in Headquarters Australian Defence Force.

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

First of all, a plea to all members - please, but please, if you change your address let your Division Secretary know your new address. Letting the *Slipstream* Editor or myself know is okay, but, before each issue of *Slipstream* is produced, a listing of members is sent to each Division Secretary to confirm addresses, and financial status etc. If the Division Secretary is not aware of a change then he alters it once again, this causes great confusion.

A couple of weeks ago I received a phone call advising me that an application to join the Association had been received from a ex-sailor living on the Southern Highlands of NSW. This sailor had joined the Navy in 1946 as a Stoker, a year later he changed over to the Fleet Air Arm and went to the UK for training, eventually being drafted to the 20th Carrier Air Group at RNAS Eglington in Northern Ireland.

When HMAS Sydney returned to Australia in May 1949, personnel of the 20th CAG with foreign service leave to take were sent on a months

leave when the ship arrived in Melbourne; the balance of the leave due was to be taken at a later date when the ships programme permitted. This Sailor made the train trip from Melbourne in the same compartment as Nev Russell and myself, eventually leaving the train in the early hours of the morning at Mittagong.

Later in the year, whilst on board Sydney in the Manus area, he became ill and was sent to Balmoral Naval Hospital. Months passed, and the 'buzz' went around that he had died whilst in hospital. You can imagine my surprise when I heard the name on the application! I talked to him by phone the next day and he assured me he was very much alive. I know there are a lot of others who will also be surprised. Welcome to the Association - Roger Montgomery.

The following new members have joined the Association since the last issue of *Slipstream*;

- ACT: Joe Hattley, Philip Landon.
- NSW: Chris Maloy, David Rey, JJ Martin, Noel Parker,

Darcy McVean, Harry Jenkins, Joseph Kaposi, Tony Hill, John Kelly, John Siebert, Col Thornthwaite, Randy Gover, Barry Icceton, George Parker, Roger Montgomery.

Associates: Ede Kerr, Pat Perkins, and Bill Wilson.

WA: John Gorin.

VIC: Wayne Smith, Tony Ward.

Associates: Di Strickland, Phillipa Terry, and Anne Jackson.

TAS: Eric Mutton.

QLD: George Hunt, Terry Strong, Robert Wicks, Jim Ryan, and Stephen Ross.

* Ian Ferguson - Hon.Nat. Sec.

OWED ODE

One thing a man must learn to do
Is pay his subs when they fall due,
For now I know to my regret,
The penalty it will beget.

For having in my duty failed,
I find my *Slipstream's* not been mailed;
No excuses can I find,
(Except a rather wandering mind).

So, Ed, please forgive my sin,
My subs in future will be in
On time. So please restore me to your list,
And send my *Slipstream*, sorely missed.
* With thanks to EM

FROM THE ARCHIVES



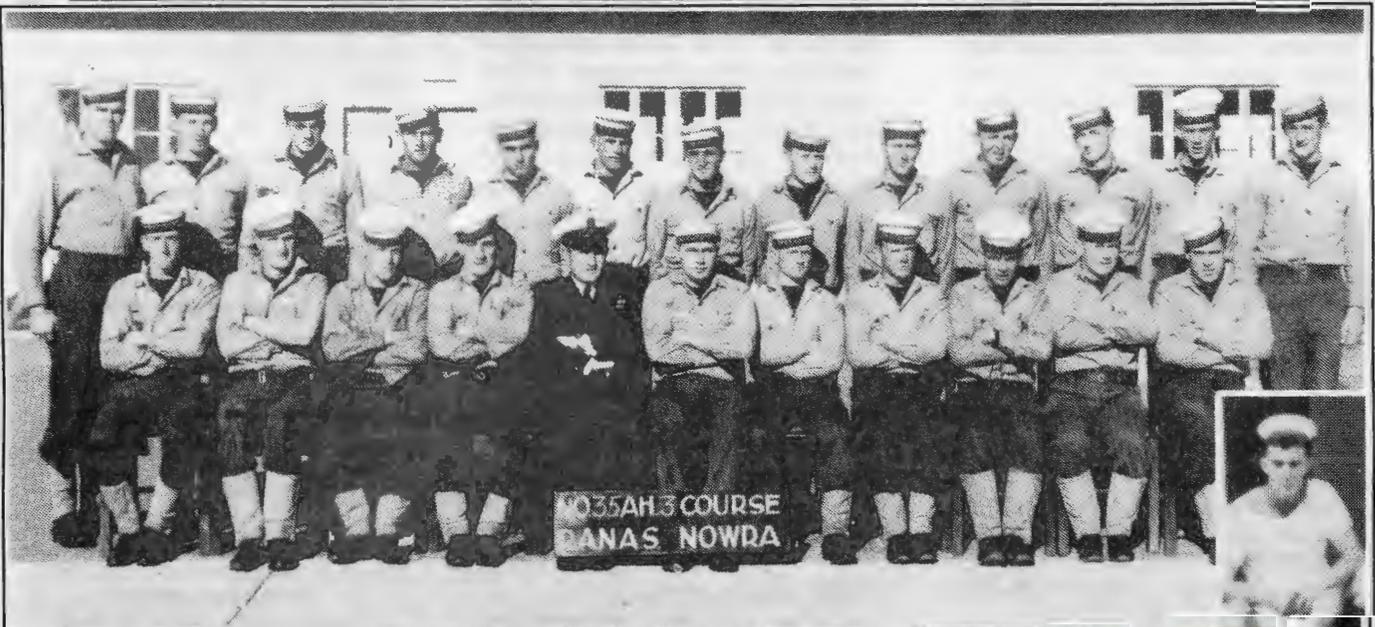
NO.1 NAVAL AIRCREW COURSE

(No.6 Course FTS RAAF Point Cook - June 1950 to December 1951)

Front L-R: Stewart - Matthews - * May - * Sweeney - Ferguson

Rear L-R: Becker - O'Farrell - Fargher - Wilson - Hilliard (* indicates direct entries)

Photo courtesy J. Ferguson



No. AH3 COURSE RANAS NOWRA - July 1952

Back Row L-R: Mitchell - Raddatz - Blair - Hounslow - White - Ostle - Gregory - Barry - O'Callaghan - Robinson - Cox - Stanton - Anderson

Front Row L-R: Crowton - Skinner - Davenport - Chapman - CPO Blondel - Cunneen - Vaughan - Bosanquet - Crane - Cross - Trinder - inset Les Pascoe away on Band duties, Photo courtesy K.Raddatz



HMAS ALBATROSS BLUE JACKET'S BAND 1952-53

Back Row L-R: C.Carey - Col Davis - Ron Forrest - Ray Turner - 'Blackie' Dowson - C.Chisholm

Centre Row L-R: Ron Pink - T.Harding - ? - John Ikin - John Robson

Front Row L-R: ? - 'Bluey' Carr - Cecil Hibbash (David Laird missing)

Photo courtesy John Ikin



SALVAGE AND MT VEHICLES AT HMAS ALBATROSS

Photograph take 17 March 1953, the late Bill Zimmer is astride the motor cycle in the centre. Note the hangar in the background that collapsed whilst under construction.

Photograph courtesy 'Rusty' Marquis

CARRIERS - AS SEEN FROM A DESTROYER

by Russell M. Caro RAN Rtd

When the British Pacific Fleet first sailed from Sydney in early 1945 to add its weight to that of the American forces about to carry out the assault on Okinawa, there were in the task force four destroyers that took part in almost every operation the fleet carried out from then until the end of the war. Two were Australian, *HMAS's Quickmatch* and *Quiberon*; the others British, *HMS's Quality* and *Quadrant*.

The crews of these four ships during the six months that followed were afforded a great opportunity of watching the British Fleet Air Arm in action, for not long after the Okinawa campaign began they were given an unusual job.

They became KK destroyers. The KK stood for Kounter Kamikaze, their task being, when 'Action stations' was sounded, to close to within a hundred yards or so from the stern of the carrier to which they had been assigned, and from there to ward off any attack made by the Japanese suicide planes on the carrier.

It was a permanent job. So permanent, in fact, that on one occasion when *Quickmatch* was taking up her position astern of *Victorious*, the skipper of *Quickmatch* noticing a short length of rope trailing from the stern of the carrier signalled to her, "I still see you still have your leash there."

Each destroyer trailed its carrier all day and night, only on odd occasions going into the screen at dark. Their crews had a bird's-eye view of all that went on aboard the flat tops.

And it was a fascinating sight. Even now it is easy to visualise them preparing for the strikes against the Sakashima Group, for strikes against Formosa, and finally for attacks on the Japanese home islands.

The bombers came up from the hangar deck first and were wheeled back as far as possible to give them the longest run on the flight deck. The fighters were next. The pilots could be clearly seen as they climbed into their planes; the roar of the engines was deafening.

Then the whole fleet turned into the wind and away they went. The nifty little Seafires and Corsairs

needed a run of only half the flight deck to take off: the more cumbersome bombers required every foot of the flight deck to get safely away.

Often a plane dropped sharply as it left the carrier. The wheels almost touched the sea. Sometimes they did, and the pilot would just manage to raise them in time to clear the water. Many sighs of relief were breathed over that. On one occasion the wings instead of the wheels of a plane that had just cleared the deck folded up and it dropped like a stone into the ocean.

Taking off had other hazards. On days when the sea had a long swell and the bows of the carrier were dipping in and out of the ocean, the pilots had to judge their take-off in order to arrive at the end of the flight deck as it lifted out clear of the sea. A few crashed like that. They misjudged their run and went straight off into the water without a chance; the pilots must have known they were going in during those last seconds they were still on the carrier.

Watching them returning from the strikes, too, was fascinating. And somewhat saddening.

The fighters flew in fours, the bombers usually in groups of six, and as they circled around the fleet awaiting their turn to land it was easy to see how many were missing. The formations often appeared uneven with a nasty-looking gap in the middle of them.

They came back in all conditions. Some with no wheels, some with one wheel, some with their controls damaged and other with the pilots wounded. Those minus their wheels usually ditched in the sea close by a destroyer, while many, not being able to make the carrier, crashed into the edge of the flight deck, hung there for a second or two and then fell with a splash into the sea.

The KK destroyers were quick off the mark, however, one of these four destroyers holding the record of more than thirty airmen saved.

The pilots, too, gave invaluable practice to the gunners on board the supporting warships. They carried out mock suicide attacks and often put on a far better

show than the Nips themselves.

When the end of the war came the work of one of the carriers, *HMS Indefatigable*, was still not completed. Her pilots did a fine job in conjunction with airmen from the American carriers of the United States Third Fleet by carrying out aerial searches over Japan for unknown prisoner-of-war camps, and supplying those they located with food.

One prisoner tells a story of a fellow in the camp who was without boots. They signalled the fact to an American plane. The following day five hundred pairs were dropped.

But flying planes on and off a carrier was dangerous work, and remembering now those last six months of the war spent with the British Fleet I believe all who saw those pilots in action would say, "Well, that's one job I wouldn't like." Would you?

[Article forwarded by Eric Manuel from a 1948 magazine called, 'As You Were'.]



Cockroaches!

It ain't my fault, fair dinkum, Sir;
I've done me bloomin' best;
But I can't keep the blighters down,
Or find their flamin' nest.
I've 'ucked out all the corners, Sir,
And cleaned behind the sink;
But still the little beggars come,
They do, Gawd strike me pink!

I've tried them Pusser's powders, Sir,
And different kinds of spray;
But they don't do no flamin' good
Or drive the cows away.
They lay them up, that's dinkum, Sir;
They seem to make them fat;
And make their coats all glossy, Sir,
Like that one on the mat.

That's 'Erbert, Sir; I know 'im well,
'Cos 'im and me is mates;
I wouldn't 'urt old 'Erbert, Sir,
For all yer leading rates!
And 'Erberts pals is 'armless, Sir,
That's them behind the door;
Be careful, Sir - don't step on 'im!
That's 'Orace on the floor.

I keep some in me pockets, Sir,
And one behind me ear;
'Ere's Sammy, Sir, and little Tom,
With Aggie in the rear.
But 'onest, Sir, I'll keep 'em down,
Although it breaks me 'eart:
I'll put 'em in the Wardroom, Sir,
And give 'em a fresh start.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

I am always saddened whenever I receive my copy of *Slipstream* to see that all of the articles are of very ancient history written by a bunch of geriatrics. I am always hopeful that we will receive from some of our more youthful members, anecdotes of recent operations and current aircraft.

The events of my offering are certainly dated and written by another geriatric, but they do relate to a current aircraft.

Regards,

Jim Parsons

[Dear Jim, you don't know the meaning of 'saddened' until you take on the job as Editor. Despite a great deal of effort by Jim Lee, our 'arm twister', we have not been able to get any response from our Squadrons regarding their aircraft and activities. The only people to respond to our requests over the past four years have been the Kiwis from No2 Squadron]

Many thanks for your contribution, it is a 'side of the the system' that few are privy to.

On a personal note, I don't mind being a geriatric, it's a privilege denied to many of our shipmates. Ed.]

Spares support for Seahawk

by Jim Parsons

Those who have had to operate equipment newly introduced into service will have undergone the agonies and frustrations of inadequate spares support in the early years. Seaking and Skyhawk are two notable examples.

There are a number of reasons why this occurs; the main one being the practice of procuring spares from Australia using existing procurement organisations whose priorities rarely coincide with the priorities of the project manager. Other lesser reasons are the need to comply strictly with Australian Commonwealth procurement regulations and the need to involve the overseas contracting boards in overseas procurement. Inadequate funding can also be a factor.

In an endeavour to overcome these problems, it was decided to create a dedicated spares procurement team for Seahawk within the Naval Materiel Division., to be known as the Initial Spares Procurement Team (ISPT), and to co-locate this team with the production team in Sikorskies factory at Stratford, Connecticut USA. This approach had never been used before.

The ISPT was to be made up of two elements; a technical element

comprising serving technical air branch sailors and a procurement and cataloguing element made up of civilian officers drawn from the naval supply branch, the whole overseen by a civilian senior naval supply officer. The team leader was Mr Bob Scott, Technical team leader was Leut Tom Kinross and his team were CPO Phill Carey, POs Bob Smith, and Mario "Z" Zanattini, L/S Ray Luckins and Pat Wright, ABs Andy Wilkes and Alex Darby. Procurement team leader was Mr Dannie Macgrath and his team were self, Mr's Rohan Ginnane, John Allcott, Dereck Finch and Andie Balodis, the last three were from Supply Manager (Air) in Sydney and may be familiar to old ASUCO or DESS hands. Our cataloguer was Mr Terry James, to be replaced later by ex chief 'tiffie' Syd Mitchell.

The technical teams task was to assess the range and quantity of spares required to support the aircraft in the field for a maximum of 90 days full time deployment and to provide for two years in country support. They were also to determine the requirement for those items that were expected to never fail but whose failure from events such as accident or battle damage would cause catastrophic impact on the operational task of the aircraft.

The procurement teams task obviously was to procure the items identified by the assessing team and also to catalogue those items not already catalogued in the NATO cataloguing system and to codify those items that were included in the NATO system but not included in the Australian defence catalogue.

Procurement was to take place in two phases; under phase one Sikorski was to supply the ISPT with a list of spares considered necessary to support the aircraft for a limited period that was defined but I now forget the details. They were also required to provide the information to assist in procurement, such as their price and delivery lead time, the name and address of the true manufacturers of each item, the manufacturer's part number and stock number where available. This list was to be accepted pretty much at face value and most items were purchased and in store well before any aircraft were delivered.

In phase two, Sikorski were to provide the ISPT with illustrated parts breakdowns for all systems in the aircraft together with any information needed to enable assessment and procurement. The technical element would massage this information in weird and wonderful ways and then feed the data into a computer program and lo and behold out would come a list of spares and the quantities required for the ongoing support of Seahawk. There was, of course, quite a bit more to it than that, but that is the best I can do. On receipt of this information, the procurement element would do their bit.

Anybody who has had to research the Australian defence catalogue will know that it is a painful task of browsing microfiche sheets until one is almost blind. However, because most US government information is available to the public through freedom of information laws, it is possible to obtain from commercial sources a complete copy of the US defence catalogue on CD ROM together with a programme that allows the catalogue to be interrogated to obtain such information as the prime manufacturer's name and address, which service made the last purchase, how many they bought, when they bought them and how much they paid for them. There was all sorts of other useful

information available on the disk that was extremely helpful but is not readily available on the Australian catalogue. Another spin off from FOI was that technical data, specifications, drawings etc for the development of systems funded by the US Government remain the property of the US Government. As a consequence, a number of manufacturing companies avail themselves of this information and create a niche market in high usage items, generally at a significantly lower cost than the original manufacturer can produce them.

Because of the scale of the market in the US there are a number of companies separate from the manufacturers who supply spares almost exclusively to the aircraft industry. These companies are able to buy in quantities that are out of the question for the ordinary user and hence at a much cheaper rate. As a consequence we were also quite often able to get a better deal from these sources than from the actual manufacturers.

Procurement went very well in general, however, there were a few exciting moments such as the time a main rotor blade shipping container turned up in Australia sans its blade. Since all the blades are serially numbered the blade was quickly located and shipped. A more exciting event was that unbeknown to us, it is the practice in the US to fit actuating squibs to flotation gear gas cylinders at the time of manufacture. Supply Manager Air almost had kittens when the first and of course last cylinder turned up instore fitted with an explosive squib. The last I heard SM (Air) and SM (Arm) were still arguing as to who should be responsible for storage.

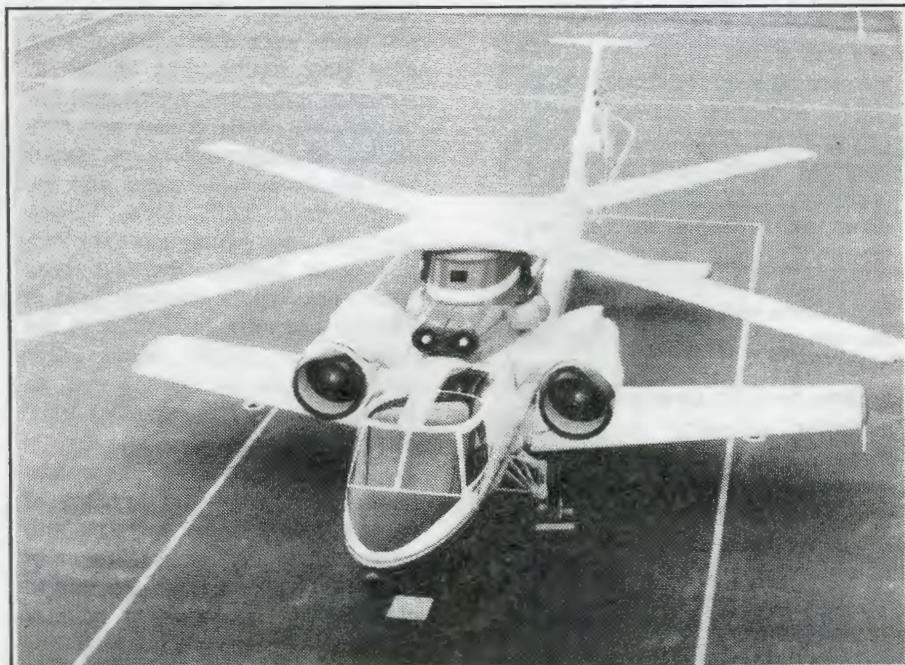
The project was initially planned to be completed in three years but because of the slippage in production of the avionics elements it actually took about four and a half years. I elected to return to Australia



Seahawk AN1 rolls out of the hangar for the first time, celebrated by the project team. Clearly she is not quite ready to fly yet. This exercise was to mark a milestone, the aircraft was then wheeled back into the hangar and almost completely disassembled.



The first flight of an Australian Seahawk (AN1)



As a matter of interest, the above photograph shows the rigid rotor, or X-wing prototype helicopter. This machine was projected to be the way ahead for all future helicopter development. It did fly at the hover whilst at Sikorski's works, but I don't think it ever transitioned into horizontal flight. It was later removed to Edwards Airforce Base in California and the project abandoned.

on completion of my three year term so did not see the end result but I do know that more than 80% of spares were in country before the first aircraft went operational. I have no doubt that operators will dispute that statement as according to Murphies Law the first spare required will always be the item that has not yet been delivered into store.

While the system used for initial spares procurement for Seahawk was generally considered highly successful it was also very expensive and as far as I know has never been used since.

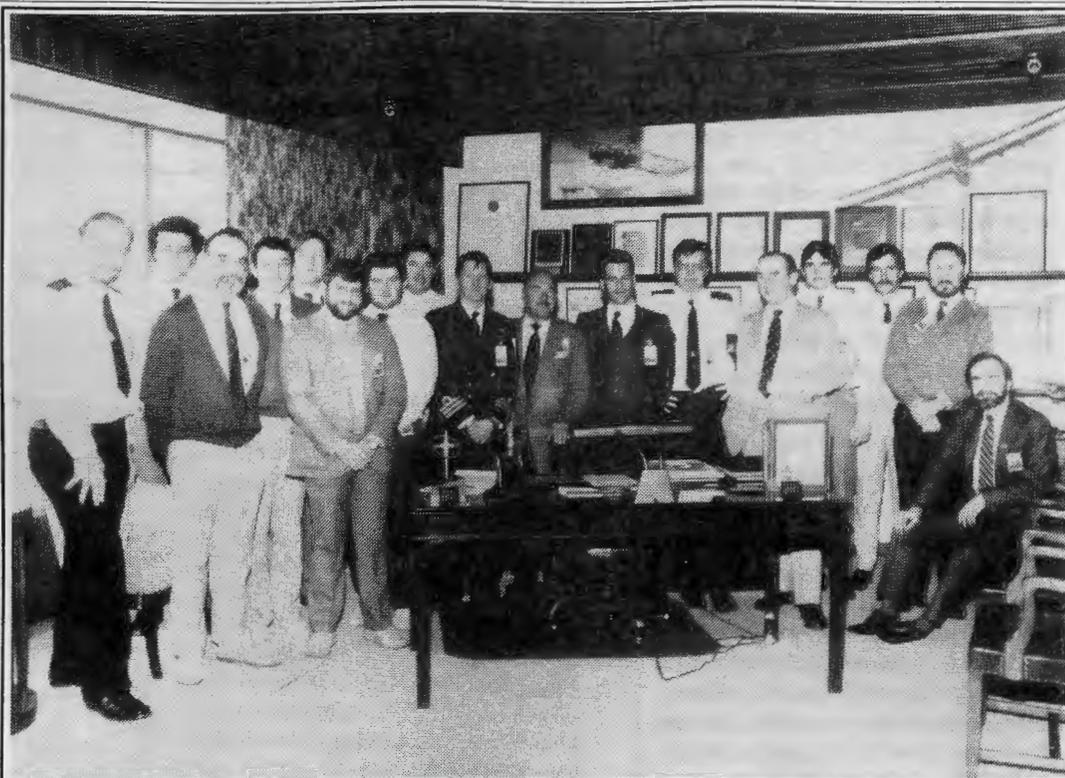
IGOR SIKORSKI'S OFFICE

When Sikorski Aircraft was taken over by United Technologies,

Igor Sikorski was kept on as a consultant and company icon, he continued to work from his old office until he died. After his death his office was maintained in the same condition as a tribute to the great man.

Those visitors who saw favour in the eyes of the company were given a tour of the office and those who really saw favour were given a presentation by Igor's son, Sergei. The project team got the full treatment, a tour and presentation.

The office still retains all of Igor's drawing implements, his many awards and presentations, photographs of Sikorski aircraft and his black homburg hat. Igor always wore a black homburg, even when test flying his prototype aircraft. There are several photos of Igor test flying his earlier model open cockpit aircraft with his black hat jammed upon his head.



THE INNER SANCTUM - IGOR SIKORSKI'S OFFICE

L-R: Jim Ireland, Derek Finch, Jim Parsons, Pat Wright, Bob Scott, Alex Darby, Tom Little, Steve Rogers, Vic Battese, Sergei Sikorski, Sikorski Rep., Bruce Hamilton, Dave Peters, Andrew Wilkes, John Alcock, Colin Percival and Chris Chamberlain.

Dear Ed,

With reference to a previous mention about Jimmy Bowles' first bale out - there is more to the story.

Jimmy had experienced a runaway propeller over Beecroft Range and was limping back to Nowra when the engine failed. (A runaway propeller is when the constant speed unit fails to hold the propeller revs within limits, as well as engine revs, a very big no-no with a sleeve valved engine).

The point of the bale out was shortly after crossing the western shore of Jervis Bay, over a wooded area not far from Huskisson. After getting down from the tree, as stated in the article, Jimmy was in need of a cigarette and, while he had the cigarette he did not have a light. He therefore proceeded to the burning wreck where he was found by Gordon Hardcastle, the 20th

CAG Army Liaison Officer, poking a stick into the fire to get a light.

Gordon drove Jimmy back to the Air Station in the Army Jeep and, as it was 1300, went straight to the Wardroom Bar where we had all congregated to ply Jimmy with beer. A pursuit Jimmy was no slouch at. As the bar shutter came down one hour later, Surgeon Commander, later Rear Admiral, Coplans ('Mumbles') walked in on us. As he had been waiting at the Sick Bay for the pilot to be brought in for a check-out, he was not amused at what he saw. 'Mumbles' took one look at the situation, gave voice to one of his one-liners, for which he was famous, then stormed off to his married quarters at Jervis Bay, then a holiday resort.

In passing, I wonder what a modern, highly paid Trauma Counsellor, would say to a cigarette and bar solution to this incident. Before somebody asks what we

were all doing in the bar at that hour, we used to work tropical routine and finish work at 1300; unless you were unlucky enough to get an afternoon Fleet Requirement (FRU) exercise, which occurred to me with some frequency as a junior pilot.

I recently discussed Jimmy's bale out with John Berry, who was an electrician on Station Flight (MRU) at the time of the incident, he had this to add.

In the second half of 1950 he had been working on a Sea Fury to rectify a generator defect, when completed, AA Morrie Green then proceeded to ground run the aircraft. Whilst doing so he also experienced a runaway propeller, but, as the aircraft was stationary and Morrie was quick enough to switch off the magneto switches, no damage was done. The cause of this second runaway propeller was that the coupling at the fireproof

bulkhead, between the pilots throttle rod and the rod to the fuel injector, was not split pinned. This resulted in the nut vibrating off, the bolt falling out and subsequent loss of engine control from the cockpit. John went on to say that it was not an isolated fault and that it was found on a batch of Sea Furies as they were taken out of storage. One can only wonder if this problem had any connection with the bale out.

With kind regards,
Gordon MCPhee

Dear Ed,

I am no longer in Alice Springs but have moved back to my unit that overlooks Boston Harbour in Port Lincoln, maybe the sea views will inspire me to write more about Navy life.

I have asked 'Nobby' Hall for some info about his life in the Navy, which was most extensive, he has promised to send me some details which may help me to throw some words together. If you do happen to have contact, remind him and pass on my address. He has trouble keeping up with me. I think his history could be of great interest for he started as a boy seaman and 40 odd years later retired as a Lieutenant Commander.

I've enclosed some ramblings about 1950. I get sentimental when I think of that year for the sun always seemed to shine (even in England) and I managed only once to become a defaulter. It was a most bizarre charge - 'Unintentional sabotage' - I hung some washing on an electrical terminal (which was not alive) and the Duty Electrical Officer had me 'before the bloke' in a flash. VAT Smith managed to look very serious, as always, and laced me up with 7 days.

Later, the same officer copped five of us in the Met. Office playing pontoon, money everywhere, he told us to pack up and go to bed. No charge! I think he may have been a nice guy deep down and wanted to keep us all out of cells - or maybe the whole thing was too much of a fag to pursue.

I noticed in the October '95 issue that Dick Prentice received some publicity. In the photograph on page 35, he is seen all smiles and looking most youthful with others, including Brian Worthington, who appeared more implacable than the rest.

Brian's reserve may be explained by his letter published in

the same issue. When the photo was taken he must have had some presaging inspiration about the future. I was intrigued about his eleven years out of twelve being confined to Nowra, when we, who were constantly on the high seas, daydreamed of life ashore. Where was Brian in that odd year?

I tend to agree with him about the early days being crude although I can't recall using broken glass to scrape the floors. We all longed for the new galley and dining hall to open to get away from the WW2 relic that we were using, it lacked everything, including hot water. Mess duty was a nightmare when attempting to wash the metal trays that were used in those days. We eventually dined in the new building sometime in 1949.

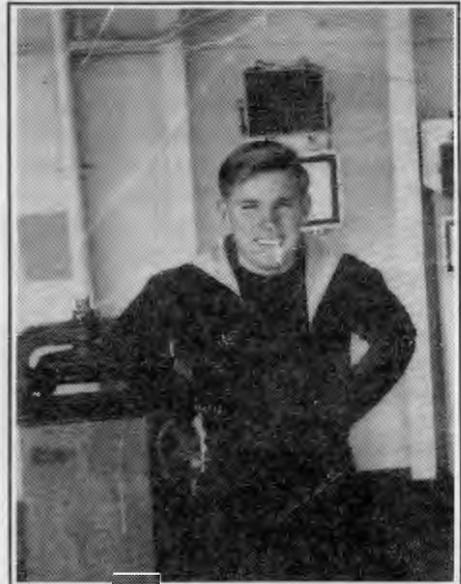
The report by the WA Secretary stated that Dick had suffered a heart attack whilst in Queensland but is on the road to recovery. We all hope that the recovery is quick and lasting.

It is astonishing how a trace of information can stir memories long put on hold -

I was drafted to the Sydney in January 1950 as a Naval Airman Class Two, qualified as an Acting Met 3. It would have been difficult to have found anyone more junior in the whole ships company. By this time I had served a scant 14 months or so in the Navy. I was assigned to a mess on the port side hangar deck, I think it was described as H3, to most it was deluxe and enviable. Fresh air and views could nearly be advertised in the brochures, there was also unused space for at the most it only berthed twelve men.

The mess immediately forward berthed the ship's band which always had something of interest going on. They looked like Royal Marines, extremely colourful, not with the bland appearance of today's musicians.

What the brochures neglected to say was that the lion's share of the mess dwellers were Armourers with an odd SE and PHOT. Dick was one, with 'Morrie' Tiffen, 'Muscles' Vinen, Darcy Egan and, I think, Alan Pilbeam and a few RN misfits, one of them being a three badge you-know-what 'Geordie' that no one could understand. I stayed in that mess for twelve months and having recently turned nineteen, those guys were to attest that I was to come of age in many respects.



'Dooley' Lord - aged 19 and not yet aware of his great looks and devastating charm!!!

It proceeded to be a very exciting time for the ship took us to New Zealand and other ports of call before steaming off to England to pick up the 21st CAG.

I can't remember whether it was Captain Beecher or Harries who was in command, but I surely know who the Executive Officer was! I initially thought that being some sort of protected species that worked in the Met Office that it would be a life of leisure and little duty. I had only been on board a matter of hours when Commander VAT Smith addressed me by name - which immediately alarmed me - and proceeded to inform me that my part of ship would extend beyond the Met Office. To prove his point, the next day I joined the 'victualling ship party' and learned all about store rooms that were buried deep into the hull of the ship. My mess mates, by and large, were with me. We left all the heavy items to 'Muscles' Vinen who, unlike 'Muscles West, did have enormous strength.

It was an active year and yarns about shore time in all sorts of fascinating ports were numerous and probably, in some cases, dubious about recalling. 'Muscles' made his presence known in Strait Street, Malta, by moving from one bar to another with the aim of clearing them of foreign matelots. There was also a French ship in Valetta Harbour with its liberty men wandering about like us. We, at a distance and with one eye out for the shore patrol, goaded him into

performing this cleansing process.

I moved back to Nowra twelve months later, by now an Able Rate, Met Class 2, I was then transferred into aircrew.

This was to mean that I would no longer be one of the boys and ultimately would be rubbing shoulders with those who were destined to become Captains, Commodores and the odd Rear Admiral. Regardless of my problematic progress I never lost empathy with those shipmates and savoured every moment of those adventuresome twelve months.

Later, when I was doing Officer of the Watch duties in the adjacent bay to H3, I wondered about the fateful steps that took me from the carefree side of the bulkhead to the one burdened with the mantle of leadership - a curse that is yet to be broken.

In the mid-sixties, I once again saw 'Muscles' in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. To me he seemed a crushed, dispirited man. Not long afterwards I heard that he had died prematurely. This saddened me for up until then, I always saw 'Muscles', immaculate in his No.8's, carrying two depth charges away from his body so as not to soil his uniform.

The phlegmatic Darcy Egan was spotted in 'Happy Valley', Konedobu, Port Moresby in the sixties and seventies working for the PNG administration and enjoying the semi-colonial life. I became Darcy's Divisional Officer later in our navy days. This impressed me, but Darcy never seemed to share my importance.

I saw the ever-smiling 'Morrie' later at Nowra when I was a civvie on leave from PNG. He was a Sub by then and worked as a Air Traffic Controller military style.

I can't remember having much to do with Dick after the year '50, but no doubt we did have duties that brought us together.

I have often wondered about Alan Pilbeam's fate for he was a great mate of mine and also my protector in the early days when the odd bully wished to take advantage of my slight stature and bloodless nature. I did hear that he married an English girl that could not measure up to the health standards to come to Australia and he was transferred to the RN. He used to boast that his father was the Lord Mayor of Rockhampton, something we took

with a grain of salt, but the records do show that a Mr Pilbeam was Mayor of that town for a long time.

In the photo's I am enclosing, one is of me aboard *Sydney*, coming of age in 1950, I suspect in UK waters because of the rig. I have also found one showing Dick looking very fit with maybe just a hint of the heart problems yet to come. Dick was a mirthful man, full of one-liners, he was always a worthwhile mate to go ashore with.

I have a vague memory of us all being in Dublin (our ship was in Belfast) and we were all planning to jump a ship to the USA and become famous. With one accord and without a word said, we sacrificed fame and raced to the railway station just in time to get the train back to Belfast. On the journey back to our ship not much was said about the USA plan for the comfort of the club car took over and other plans were formulated as we exchanged drinks.

Yours,
'Dooley' Lord



Dick Prentice on the right in typical pose - all smiles.
[Bruce Loiterton centre]

Dear Ed,

I think that the enclosed is a fine old photo which could come up well in our mag. It was taken 01 August 1955 during a Petty Officer's course at the Technical Training School, RANAS Nowra.

All the best.
Frank Donnelly



Front L-R: 'Spike' Jones - Bob Conellan - Frank Donnelly - Bruce Burns and Instructor Laurie Dixon
Rear L-R: Keith Harris - Clem Conlan - ? - Ian Ferguson - ? - ? -

Dear Ed,

I thought that the following story may be of interest to your readers, it originated from Cedric Allen, Broadbeach, Gold Coast.

Cedric, although a New Zealander, had a colourful career in the British FAA which covered the Russian Murmansk convoys, the Atlantic and Mediterranean theatres of operation and seven plane crashes. His story is as follows:

...Returning from Murmansk and anchored in Scapa Flow, Cedric received a signal from the Admiralty to go to the FAA Medical Board at Lee on Solent, adjacent to Portsmouth. The connotation was that he had done an instrument flying course and some problem had arisen. Cedric told his Captain that he was at sea when he was supposed to have done the course, he was told to attend the Medical Board and sort it out.

When he eventually arrived for his appointment, he duly informed them that he had never done the course, they responded to this information by telling him that if this was the case, he had better do it!

The course was to be conducted close to Birmingham and, seeing that it would take a day or two to organise, Cedric had some time to kill. Whilst wandering around the base, he bumped into Colin Cramp, an old school chum who had just arrived from NZ to start his training. During the ensuing conversation, Colin mentioned that Cedric's brother was also on the base, in very short time, Cedric found his brother and they organised a binge in Portsmouth.

Cedric was on the carpet the very next day. He had been reported as being seen with his arm around a matelot's shoulder in Portsmouth. He was advised that it was behaviour unbecoming an officer and frowned upon. After explaining that the matelot in question was his

brother, he was warned to be more careful in the future.

He eventually headed up north to commence his course, on arriving at his destination, he was advised that the course had been moved to an unknown abode. The SNO. in Birmingham, an old RN Commander, although sympathetic to Cedric's problem, suggested that under the circumstances he should rejoin his ship but, seeing that Cedric's wife lived in Birmingham, he granted him 48 hours leave.

With train warrants arranged, Cedric was soon on his way back to his ship and the war. On arriving at Kirkwall, in the Orkneys, which is adjacent to Scapa, he signalled for a liberty boat to take him back to *HMS Striker*. He received a signal in return which said that all liberty boats were suspended, and he was to report to *HMS Nelson* and await transport to *Striker*.

Arriving on board *Nelson*, he headed for the Wardroom. Whilst chatting away and sipping Pink Gins, he looked over the bar and was surprised to see a blue collared and bell bottomed matelot knocking back the noggins. He asked a companion, "what's a matelot doing drinking in the wardroom?" "That's not a matelot", was the reply, "It's John Mills, the actor."

Apparently a studio crew were filming 'In Which We Serve', all the stars, including Noel Coward, were enjoying the shipboard hospitality.

As it turned out, the reason for Cedric's detour via *Nelson*, was because King George was visiting the fleet. Later, when he arrived back aboard *Striker*, the King came over and they had a most enjoyable time in the wardroom, singing around the piano. The King, singing lustily, showed no sign of the stutter he was afflicted with, but his repertoire consisted mainly of Boy Scout songs. It certainly made Cedric's day, and all of the crew.

Arthur Conway-Jones

Dear Ed,

Browsing through a copy of *Slipstream* and seeing a photo of a group of the former Albatross Athletic Club, brought back many memories of the sport in the RAN some years ago.

One happy memory was the Navy's win in the Interservice Sports at the Sydney Sports Ground. It was the first time in some fifteen years that Navy had won and most, if not all, of the team were from RAN Air Station Nowra. So a few of us got together and formed Albatross AAC, which was affiliated to the AAA NSW. The whole thing was done by the sailors, although we had the blessing of the powers that be.

For the few years of our existence we fared very well in competition and actually staged two NSW Championships at *Albatross*. These were the NSW Road Relays. Our members from all over Australia competed in track, field and cross-country and won many titles. Being 100 miles from Sydney we were a country club and competed in both NSW Country and State Championships.

In track and field, John Elliot and 'Ned' Kelly dominated the field events and sprints, while Len Murray was always prominent in the triple and long jumps. 'Prof' Edward won many an 880 and one-mile race—not to mention the individual title in the Country Cross Country Championships. Albatross AAC also took out the 'C' Grade Metropolitan Track and Field Championships one summer, defeating the all-conquering Western Suburbs AAC in a thrilling final with the crowd being with 'the sailors' all the way.

Although I say it myself, we were a very popular and much respected club in Sydney and made many friends. The AAA NSW regarded us as 'a highly dedicated and enthusiastic group' and often remarked on our 'good sportsmanship and appearance'.

In two successive years we ran in relay from the *Albatross* gates to Sydney. The first year we finished at Marrickville Town Hall in conjunction with a festival there, we grouped together over the last mile accompanied by a police escort and cheering crowds. The second year we finished in Centennial Park. A photo of our group appeared on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald.

Dear Ed,

There is no great story behind the 1954 photograph on Pg. 7 of *Slipstream Vol.7 No.1*.

It was taken at Hawker DeHavilland, Bankstown, Sydney, on the completion of a Vampire maintenance course. However, the AA3 next to Lex Drake is not Errol Dreher but Sid Mitchell, behind me is Keith Taylor, who went to the RAAF later on and became a Squadron Leader.

I can't remember the names of the civvies, they were from DeHavillands and SAMR.

Regards,

Tug' Wilson

[Thanks also to Sid Mitchell for his phone call. Ed.]

Some names that come to mind in the life of Albatross AAC (the first-ever Services AAA Club in NSW) are: 'Ned' Kelly, John Elliot, John Mackie, Len Murray, Brian Eagleton, Keith Shenn, Dave Carr, 'Blue' Stivey, Max Boyes, who later represented Great Britain in the Rome Olympics 400m hurdles; Lieut Carter, RN, a brilliant sprinter whose young brother won the GB 400m championship; Lieut Commander 'Pat' Hannah, a very popular long and triple jumper, Lieut Charlie Morris, a walker and Australian hammer champion and Olympian and Lieut Commander 'Bash' Kirkwood, our president.

I remember that when our squadrons were in *HMAS Sydney* I'd train around the heaving deck of the carrier at sea, doing lap after lap dodging parked aircraft in the dog watches. RO Ron Mosman joined me a few times and one evening, in the semi-darkness, he collided with the pitot head of an aircraft and

ended up in the sick bay with a serious eye injury. Eventually flight-deck recreational running was banned, although the game of deck hockey was not only permitted but even encouraged, a regular competition with about ten teams was a popular thing each evening.

We 'running and fitness' types often got permission to go ashore for a pre-breakfast run while the ship was in port. Whilst in Sydney, Lieut Charlie Morris, one lunch hour at Woolloomooloo, took his hammer ashore for some practice and slipped a little in his circling take-off, sending the 16-pound hammer crashing through the windscreen of a parked car!

Albatross sporting teams did well in many competitions not only locally but in NSW State sports including soccer, RL, rugby, Australian Rules, athletics and swimming.

Frank McCaffrey, ex- RN, RAN.
[Nice to hear from you, Frank.]

Dear Ed,

I am writing to inform you that ex-CPO Kevin 'Nugget' Nugent passed away on 28Mar96 and was cremated at Mt. Thomas, Mt. Gravatt, Queensland on 01MAR96.

'Nugget' died of cancer, he had a terrific send-off with a number of ex-RAN and RAAF people forming a Guard of Honour. Many may not realise that he served in the RAN from 1940 to 1963, then joined the RAAF and served for another twelve years.

Whilst reading through the last edition of *Slipstream*, I saw mention of an old shipmate of mine, 'Stalkey' Maley, we served together at *HMAS Tarangau* and I would like to contact him.

Thanking you,
Joe Flaherty, ex-CPO CD

Dear Ed,

Just a short note to thank you for the photo of Len and myself [a copy appeared on the back page of the last edition. Ed.] we appreciated this very much.

It was great to see and have a yarn with the rest of the old 'gang' who were down at Orford for the AGM.

Len, as well as having a laryngotomy for cancer of the throat, has also had a triple heart by-pass and a stroke. Because of the latter his writing isn't too good, hence it is my duty. As he says, you can't keep a good sailor down for long. I think this attitude has helped him no end.

Will no doubt see you at the next reunion.

Take care,
Ada and Len Ackerley

[I have published this personal letter in the hope that it may give encouragement to other shipmates and their families who I know to be in similar circumstances. Ed]

A LETTER FROM UK

Dear Ed,

I am trying to find anyone who served in the same squadron as my father in WW2.

He lost his log-book in July 1943 when the Albacore he was flying had to ditch in the Mediterranean. At the time he was part of the Bombardment Flight of 815 Squadron on the way to Malta

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing a newspaper cutting [published in 1958], about a pet pig named 'Oigle', which was owned by 'Righteous' Roy Torrens when he was mine host of the hotel at Coen, Cape York. Roy reckons it would have won an Oscar if it had been in the movie, *Babe!*

The old crew are all meeting for three days in Sydney and parading once again on Anzac Day with the *HMAS Sydney* Association. We hope to see some of the FAA 'boys' at the League's Club after the march. We never miss Chas Baldwin, how could you with his shiny head.

Regards to all the gang down at Nowra. Keep up the good work with *Slipstream*, we all enjoy reading about the latest doings and the old times.

Leo 'Taff' Evans

Oigle hogs all the limelight at the pub



'Oigle', the beer-drinking pig, is one of the regulars at the only hotel in the far north Cape York township of Coen.

He insists on his daily bottle of beer; drinks it from the bottle held by his owner, the hotel licensee.

He refuses pig-food; likes boiled lollies, cakes and peanuts and an occasional soft drink. He wont mix with other pigs; prefers to play with dogs.

He takes his siesta lying in his own chair.

for the forthcoming invasion of Sicily.

I know that he was in the following squadrons:

815 Squadron August 1942 to September 1943

826 Squadron December 1943 to July 1944

717 Squadron July 1944 to July 1945

After this he was test flying Barracudas at Dunino Test for a few weeks and finally returned to 826 Squadron until he left the service in 1946.

He was Lt (A) Jack Harvey RNVR, I don't know for sure whether any of his colleagues moved to Australia or if they were Australian.

The Observer in the Albacore at the time of his ditching has been referred to as 'Digger' Spademan (Lt. P.R. Spademan).

My father died thirty years ago, but it is only recently with all the celebrations commemorating VE and VJ days that I have become completely engrossed in his career.

Yours sincerely.

[No name supplied. If you can possibly supply any information to help the writer of this letter, please contact me.Ed.]

Dear Ed,

Regarding the photo on page 14 of the October 1955 issue [photo from Owen Holston] I am able to identify almost all the 'bods' included therein.

Back row from left: Guiseppe Angelo 'Joe' Bonventi NSW - Godfrey 'Geoff' Lambert Butler NSW - Self, Geoff Larcombe TAS (after 36 years in Queensland) - Mick McCulloch TAS - Jim Lee - Eric Treloar QLD.

Front row from left: Jim Carroll - 'Rip' Lamont NSW (Braidwood) - can't recall - Don McCulloch TAS - Owen Holston - Len Zuch - Billy Blackwell VIC.

The photograph was taken outside the Steam Packet Hotel, Nelligen [It's still there. Ed], on Sunday 7 September 1952, the day after the Braidwood Ball, which was the main purpose of the weekend trip.

This was the time when bottled beer, or indeed any beer, was extremely hard to get, but 'Rip' had arranged supplies to be collected at a little place called Nerriga, which is on the way to Braidwood. I will never forget the beer, a brand called

'Terry's Lithgow Breweries' and, although we were mighty glad to get it, we rated it well outside the 'Top 40'.

The Braidwood Ball was great and the 'Navy' was given the honour of selecting the Belle of the Ball.

The next day we set off once again and after a few refreshments at Nelligen we eventually arrived at Batemans Bay. You may remember that oyster lovers were given 'picks' by the café owners and directed to the lease across the road to collect supplies for their meal.

All-in-all it was a great weekend. Some others on the trip but not in the photograph were, Doug 'Eli' Ellis, Kevin 'Flung' Maxwell TAS. Kevin Newley QLD.

TO OUR ED, keep up the great work and thanks for keeping us in touch.

TO ALL, Good Health, Happiness and the ability to blow the froth off a few in 1996 if you so desire.

Regards, Geoff Larcombe

Dear Ed,

With reference to the photograph [HMAS Albatross] on Page 9 of the July 1995 edition, I would like to add more names.

Back Row: fourth from Right Kevin Parks - last on Right John Canfell

Centre Row: third from Right Rod Moody - centre SubLt Jim Waterhouse

Regards,
Timothy J.O'Halloran

A LETTER FROM UK

Dear Ed,

It appears that there are a number of events listed on the NSW Division calendar. My apologies for missing out on the AGM.

Recently I have been pleased in having obtained a photo print of the official sealed pattern of the HMAS Sydney badge. The topic of this ship's badge had arisen at our local Branch Meeting (Manchester FAA Association), between Don Short, an AM(E) who had served in Sydney in support of 816 Squadron when working up on formation '48-'49, and myself. Another branch member, Jack Wilkie. An ex-POREL(A&R), served RN loan to RAN '52-'55, on 805 Squadron, Vengeance and Sydney - Korean

waters '53-'54, also Workshop's Section at RANAS Nowra.

The RN FAA Division Base, 'for those in peril down at Lee', closed at the end of March '96. There is to be a closing end-of-commission ceremony, many members and all Branch Standards attending. A 70 ft paying-off pennant will be flown, this will eventually be displayed at the Yeovilton FAA Museum.

My regards and best wishes to the Association.

Cheers, George Chadwick

Dear Ed,

Thanks for a great 'mag'. It brings back a lot of forgotten memories and heaps of good reading.

I read the enclosed advert for the RAAF's 75th Anniversary Airshow and I nearly fell out of my chair when I realised that I had been wearing the wrong uniform whilst serving onboard Melbourne.

Regards to all the local ex-birdies.

'Blue' Ditcham



BLAST FROM THE PAST
A4 Skyhawks served with the Royal Australian Air Force on board Australia's last aircraft carrier, the HMAS Melbourne.

Dear Ed,

I am enclosing a photograph [see front cover] from an old friend of mine, Dave Eagles.

In his covering letter to me, he promised to write up a few things for Slipstream and also mentioned that he would like to hear from old friends, his address is: Gatecote, Omokoroa Station Road, RD2, TAURANGA, New Zealand - Phone 0011-647- 548 1014.

Dave was one of my gliding instructors in 1957. The thing that I most remember about him, was that at the top of his launch he would do six loops back down the strip and land on coming out of his last loop. Talking about loops, perhaps a

certain 'Barry' might like to tell us about his attempt to do one or more and his passenger's view on his effort!

I would like to take this opportunity to make a public apology to Graham Rohrsheim for almost killing him.

In 1959, when I came back to RANAS for Reserve Training, I went to the Gliding Club to do some gliding, Graham, the duty instructor, said that I had to be checked out. Down the strip we go in the Kookaburra - 1200' - release - left circuit - doing well and half way back when he told me to do a wing stall. Drop the nose - go into stall - sit back - nothing said about pulling out of it! I wasn't sure how to do so anyway! Down to 200' - air speed 180kts - thankfully, at this juncture, his instinct for self preservation took over and he pulled us out of the dive, flew back and landed. On exiting, he gave me a few choice words and told me to stay away from the glider.

Later that same afternoon, Geoff Strickland, the Chief Instructor, took pity on me and we went for another flight, this time it was successful and I was right to fly the next day. I don't think I was ever a good glider pilot.

Cheers, *Roger R.*

Dear Ed,

Recently I was shown copy of the January 1996 edition of Slipstream. On page 35 there appeared a photograph of 'Stalky' Maley, myself, Col Thornwaite and John Heffernan, in the caption you asked where and when?

I too have a copy of that particular photo and can let you know that it was taken in the public bar of the Criterion Hotel on the corner of Pitt and Park Streets in Sydney. I am not too sure of the date but I think it was either late 1949 or early 1950.

The last I heard of 'Stalky', was that he was living at Allambie Heights in Sydney. Quite some time ago I heard that Col Thornwaite was over in West Aussie, Perth, I think. John Heffernan was living around the Wollongong or Dapto area.

In the photograph that appeared below, with the old Spitfire in it, I can recognise a few faces. In the 2nd row on the left is yours truly, 5th from the left is PO Moyland, a PO

Handler on loan from the RN, last on the right in the same row is Ron Newsome from Queensland. Sitting on the mainplane on the extreme left is Merv 'Slim' Harris, next to him is Ray Moncrief, 8th from the left and next to the fuselage is Leading Airman Lemon, also on loan from the RN.

Sorry I can't help out anymore but the old eyes aren't as good as they used to be.

Hope this information helps out a bit and best wishes for the future.

Ken Marsden - Clontarf Qld.

Dear Ed,

John Da Costa's letter about ditching a Sycamore helicopter in March 1961 coincided with my sorting out a very large photo collection. The one I've enclosed is of good technical quality (ship's photographer) and I thought that it may be of use to Slipstream.

The connection with John is this; very shortly after this picture was taken on Melbourne, John was occupying the same cot in the Sick Bay as the patient shown in the picture, who had just had his appendix removed. John's occupancy was a little more dramatic, he was under our care as his lungs had taken an amount of the Indian Ocean during his ditching of the chopper. This occurred during Melbourne's cruise in the first half of 1961, taking in Australian ports and Bombay, Karachi, Trincomalee (12 sheep and a cricket pitch), Singapore, 'Honkers', Subic Bay, Manila, Manus.

In the big multi-navy exercise in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the patient lost his appendix and John lost his chopper - the only aircraft on

the whole cruise. I remember that it was a hot, calm, glassy-sea'd rest day and John was detailed to ferry some (more senior) officers over to the RN carrier for an exercise wash-up, over a few jars, I would think. With so much gold braid on board, weight factors may have approached critical but, as John says, he was a junior lieutenant. Doubtless the nil wind and high temperature conditions contributed to the splashdown just off the 'Brit' carrier's flight-deck. JD was the only casualty, but TLC in Melbourne soon had him fighting fit and ready to check-out all that Bombay could offer.

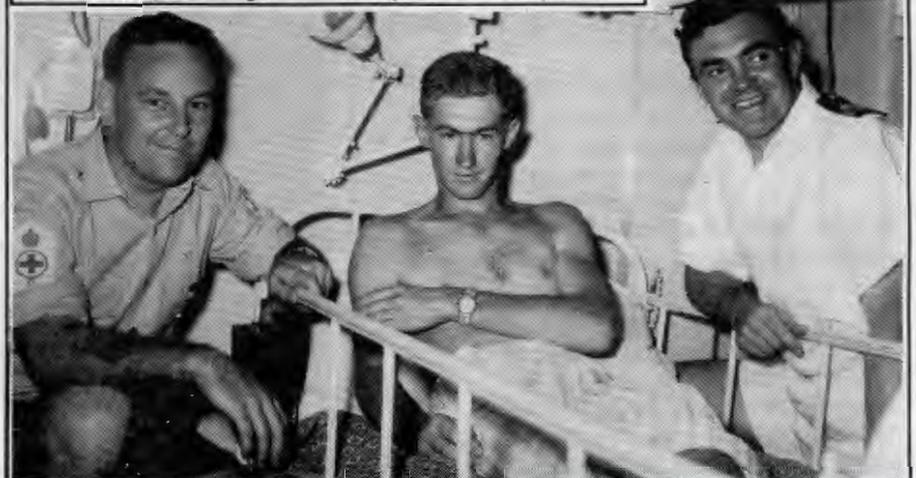
I meet John occasionally at reunions and have to report that he went on to senior rank in the RAN, retained his good looks and obviously suffers not at all from his brief sojourn in the 'oggin'. Perhaps he will tell us in more detail of the ditching, especially the names of the more senior officers who energetically asserted their right to leave the sinking aircraft with such alacrity, even if it did mean using the Da Costa torso as an exit ladder.

To refer back to the patient in the photograph, his appendectomy meant that for a few brief minutes, the medics in Melbourne were in command of the whole fleet; this was because the admiral felt that we should dictate course and speed during the operation to ensure maximum stability. Necessary or not, there was no way we were going to pass up such an opportunity.

With good luck to Slipstream, may you attract lots of similar reminiscences, there must be loads of good stories waiting to be told.

You are much appreciated by -
'Tommy' Thompson (Doc)

Doc' Thompson on right - LSBA and patient - names please.



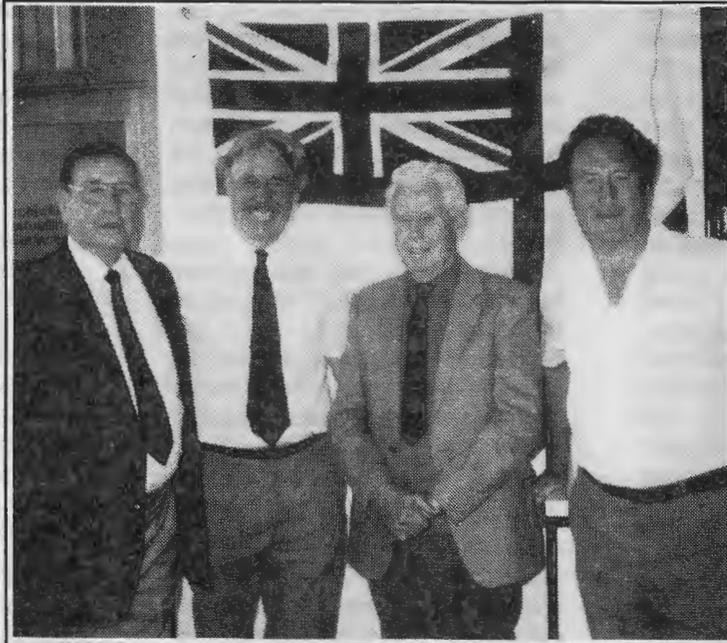
Dear Ed,

On October 13 last year, a historic occasion took place at Archerfield Airfield, Brisbane, with the presentation of a plaque commemorating the Royal Navy FAA who occupied this airfield during World War Two when it was known as *HMS Nabsford*. Former RN Petty Officer, John Barker, of Camp Hill, Brisbane, who served at *Nabsford*, saw his months of effort and negotiations come to fruition.

The idea for the plaque came to John when he attended a 50th Anniversary for the American 5th Bomber Force at Amberley air base where, in all the speeches being made, not one mention was made of the British and Commonwealth contribution to winning the war in the Pacific. In an effort to do something about it, he decided that *HMS Nabsford's* war record should be recorded for posterity.

After discussions with John, the Manager of the Archerfield Airport was quite keen to see something recorded of the RN's occupation there, he in turn, discussed the proposal with the Federal Airport's Authority who granted permission for John to proceed.

John's first approach was to the Admiralty in London for a directive on the wording of the plaque, the response was that 'they were too busy to devote time to this at the



John Barker on left with Arthur Conway-Jones and Cedric Allen, representing war-time pilots, and Queensland Division representative, Alan 'Weed' Smith.

moment'. Not to be outdone, he approached the Minister for Veteran Affairs, Con Sciacca for a grant of \$1264, after a wait of several months, he was granted \$600 - the wheels were starting to turn.

His next approach was to Wayne Roberts of Station 4BC, Brisbane. After telling his story he was told, "Okay - you're on the air, make your broadcast". Apart from anything else, he had four of his ex-shipmates contact him who had served at *Nabsford*, none of whom he had seen or heard of for fifty years.

The date for the presentation was set, the catering arranged and the plaque duly engraved - BUT - the engraver misspelt one of the words, repeated the error on the

second one which resulted in a rush job on the third edition.

The British Consul, Mr Peter Broom, did the unveiling. A good number of the Queensland FAAA members turned up, including the Division President, Barry Lister and members of his committee. During the Consul's address, he mentioned the fact that almost 400 ships served out of Australian ports with the British Pacific Fleet in the battle against the Japanese. They included four 35,000 ton battleships, 26 aircraft carriers, 17 cruisers, 40 destroyers, 36 submarines and 6 midget submarines.

The Fleets were manned by over 200,000 men. The men and women of Archerfield provided the support to the allied armies and the navies of the Pacific. *HMS Nabsford* was a Technical Air Maintenance yard which serviced hundreds of planes, on occasion, there were several hundred parked here on the gravel. For a brief period it was also a Mobile Naval Air Base which was designed to carry the fight to the Japanese as the assault troops captured territory.

To quote the British Consul, "It is important and right that *HMS Nabsford* be not forgotten, this plaque will ensure that memories are not forgotten. Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in unveiling this plaque."

Arthur Conway-Jones

**RANAS NOWRA 1948
MECHANICS COURSE No.1 (NAR 7)**

Back Row L-R:

Bill Bolitho
Ron Kingsley
Geoff Strickland
Ross Jeffreys

Front Row L-R:

'Aussie' Austin
George Mullins
Rick Hammond
Bryan Dunn
Bert Glossop

Missing: Ron Pink - he took the photo!



Dear Ed.

The photo on page 28 of the January '96 edition of Slipstream was first published in a local paper shortly after or during the Sydney's refit, it was before the ship's second tour of duty in Korea; the pose was by either the Chief Shipwright or the Buffer.

The story behind the scroll is interesting. It was designed in 1948 by Able Seaman Allen Cliff o/n 29570, who, together with other members of the Sydney's ship's company, were standing by in HMS Glory preparing the Sydney for commissioning.



Able Seaman Allen Cliff

Allen's idea was to have the battle honours of the former Sydney embracing the ship's badge, leaving room for future additions, the whole piece to be carved out of one solid slab of English oak with no paint or varnish treatment.

The design was approved by Captain Dowling and Commander Beecher, the shipwright set to work and the result was a magnificent piece of design and craftsmanship. Allen and his mates were duly congratulated by Commander Beecher and the ship was commissioned.

'Now, where shall we hang it for all to see?'

It was hung just above the pilot's ready room on the island, but not for long, a Firefly soon reduced it to chips! You can imagine the tears of blood and the search for guilt.

Allen Cliff completed his term in the navy having served in HMAS's Sydney, Burdekin, Anzac, Hawkesbury, Shropshire and Kanimbla. He became a highly respected police sergeant at Holden Hill, one of Metropolitan Adelaide's busiest precincts, he is now retired and in good health.

PS: I think the Firefly in question was VX 378 (218) Slipstream July 1995.

Ambrose Boulter

Dear Ed,

I hope that the enclosed photo is of some interest to you and your members, it was taken during catapult trials[HMAS Melbourne] at Portsmouth during December 1955.

The deadload you see in the picture is a skid deadload as opposed to the wheeled deadload used in trials in Australia and was the first fired from the catapult. It may be hard to believe, but prior to launching this 'beast', heavy grease was spread over the full length of the catapult on either side of the shuttle so that the deadload would move fairly freely down the track during launch.

We had a pretty good run initially, but we ran into trouble when the shuttle pistons seized up in both cylinders some thirty feet after the launch started, due entirely to insufficient lubrication to the cylinders.

This resulted in my spending the whole of Christmas Day 'inside' the Starboard cylinder, grinding the score marks from the cylinder which had been caused by the seizure. Hardly a nice job in the depths of a UK winter!

The carrier you can see in the background is HMS Bulwark, the little chap in the foreground is me, acting as Safety Officer for the trials.

It may be of further interest to you to learn that the Melbourne had the first fully operational steam catapult in the world, and the first carrier fitted with the angle deck, mirror landing aid and fully developed up-dated arresting gear, to be fully operational.

I could probably regale you with stories of Melbourne's initial flying activities and the pilots and observers who, I suppose at that time, achieved results that surprised even them.

I think I have spoken enough for this period and close with the wish that you and yours are all well.

Regards, 'Curley' Fahey



INSTALLATION DAY

Dear Ed,

Congratulations on the forewords of the last two issues of *Slipstream*, by two senior RN'ers but with connection to our Fleet Air Arm. The picture of the Duke of Edinburgh is a rare one in the uniform of the Admiral of the Fleet of the RAN and it was great to see that Ben Bathurst did well on his return from his stint in the colonies. I hope he is not embarrassed by you promoting him to Admiral of the Fleet while wearing the uniform of Admiral.

The current First Sea Lord, Sir Jock Slater, is also an Admiral, with no serving Ad. Of the Fleet in the RN although they never retire. Perhaps they don't have a fleet, but we don't have a FOCAF either, that's what the politicians have done to us.

Enclosed are a couple of photographs from the early sixties, one shows, amid others, Ben Bathurst, Neil Ralph and Hiriam Bronson (USN) also on exchange at the time.

The group is the first OFS on Wessex with 725 Squadron (Benny Matthews in Command). There couldn't be a course that contained more 'brass hats', even if you don't count all the airline 'captains'.

Regards, Don McLean

[Sir Ben supplied the photograph accompanying the foreword, maybe he likes the 'younger' version better. The Duke's Press Secretary advised us that his photograph was available for purchase from HMSO in the UK. As Slipstream is run on the 'smell of an oily rag principle', the published photograph was torn from an old magazine. Ed.]



PRESENTATION OF HMAS ALBATROSS PLAQUE

During celebrations in Portsmouth for the British Pacific Fleet / East Indies 50th Commemoration, ACT member and ex-Telegraphist Air Gunner, Bill West, presented a suitably engraved *HMAS Albatross* plaque to the organising committee.

Correspondence from the events chairman, Stuart Eadon, since Bill's return to Australia, reads in part:

'A belated but tremendous 'thank you' for the splendid crest. Please pass on all our Best Wishes to those who had a hand in it.

'At the final BPF/EI Fleet Committee meeting near Stroud on the 14th of March, where the crest was greatly admired, it was decided in order to secure its future, that it would be passed to Terry Thorne, 'our man in Pompey', for him to put it with other commemorative crests which will be displayed for all to see at Portsmouth City Administration in Guildhall Square.'

In the group that went to the UK to participate in the celebrations, nine of them were ex-crew members of *HMAS Quiberon*. The destroyer was the *Indefatigable's* escort on frequent occasions and had picked up some of the downed flyers.

On one occasion, an 820 Squadron Avenger returning from a strike in a damaged condition, went over the side after landing. *Quiberon* picked up all three crew members, plus a sailor who got caught up in the event. The destroyer had four extra mouths to feed for a few days, but they were well looked after. A sailor from *Quiberon* even provided the TAG, Bill Jones, with a tooth brush and paste. A gesture that was very much appreciated and one that Bill promised to repay some time in the future. Fifty-one years later, the promise was fulfilled at the reunion.



Bill West, left, presents the *Albatross* plaque to BP/EI Fleet Committee Member, Dickie Richardson DSM.



Ex-TAGs (820 Sqdn) and ex-*Quiberon* crew members at the 50th
L-R: Rex Sweatman - Allan Latham - ? - *Roy Gibbs - *Bill Jones - 'Shorty' Walding -
Ray Semmler - *Bill West - *'Bing' Crosby - Des Badcock (*Denotes TAGs)

ADVANCE BOOK INFORMATION

HMAS GLORY

by Peter Barrett

Foreword by Rear Admiral Godfrey Place VC CB CVO DSC

The history of *HMS Glory* is a very comprehensive study of a single ship, dealing with many different aspects of war, peacetime and social conditions aboard an aircraft carrier during the 1940s and 1950s. In that era naval air power increased like a rising wind and the aircraft carrier reigned supreme in the Royal Navy.

Although *HMS Glory* was not one of the bigger carriers her contribution towards the tremendous potency of the Fleet Air Arm was enormous. The flying records achieved during her years of operational duty show the dedicated professionalism of everyone on board,

She was not a handsome ship in the way destroyers, cruisers or battleships were, but she was impressive: a floating airbase with hangars, workshops and repair shops. Her flight deck was 690 feet long. Living conditions were austere compared with today's Navy.

The author has researched in letters, squadron diaries, journals, reports and log books. Illustrations from private and official sources cover *Glory's* whole career.

Peter Barrett joined the Navy at 16, in 1949. After introduction at *HMS Royal Arthur*, he joined the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*. Qualifying from the School of Aircraft Handling at *HMS Siskin*, he was drafted to *HMS Glory* with the Mediterranean Fleet in 1950 and, following a tour in Korean waters, was posted to the Naval Air Station at Machrihanish, Argyllshire. In 1953 he joined 803 Squadron, who were flying Supermarine Attackers, the first jet fighters allocated to an FAA front line squadron. Further service was on *Eagle* and *Albion*, and at Malta. He completed his career at the FAA base, *HMS Heron*, Yeovilton.

For more details contact:
Parapress Ltd., 12 Dene Way,
Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
TN3 0NX

Reference: ISBN 1-898594-36-8

'HUGHIE' - a song from an 805 Squadron Line Book - Tune 'Frankie and Johnnie'

805 flew from Nowra
To embark for a tropical cruise
We were greeted in *Vengeance* the right way
The Fish-heads bought plenty of booze
Oh land us on, Hughie land us on.

Hear the boys bitch in the crew room
Waiting for flying to begin
No need to get excited
The ship's still looking for wind
Oh send some round, Hughie send some round.

When Al comes over the roundup
To the goofers it looks pretty weird
His seat's so far to the bottom
There's just a flying beard
Oh wave him off, Hughie wave him off.

The Squadron owned Sea Furies
Lordy and how they could fly
'Til they got in the circuit
Then they prayed to the Lord on high
Oh help us on, Hughie help us on.

The A.D.R.'s really a whizzer
With liner, buster and gate
No need to waste your petrol
The interception's sure to be late
Oh land us on, Hughie land us on.

James made a dart at the flight deck
Nearly went over the side
But there's no foundation in the rumour
That Bevan was hypnotised
Oh keep him on, Hughie keep him on.

The batsmen are keen and agile
Performing their witch doctor dance
With leans high-dips and come-ons
The boys don't stand a chance
Oh get us down, Hughie get us down.

Fifty one calling Hostage
What's the bogies' angels and course
Wait till we signal to FOCAF
He'll send it back in morse
Oh land us on, Hughie land us on.

Mac's an ace at live bombing
On any target we choose
But to stop the slaughter of wild fowl
He decided not to drop them fused
Tell the Brisbane Press, Hughie tell the press.

Fergie came in for a landing
Flying a little too fast
His hook missed all the wires
He went half up the mast
Oh help him down, Hughie help him down.

Air Sea Rescue's no problem
If in a dinghy you drift
Just wait for McPhee or McMillan
In Bristols mobile lift
Oh hoist us in, Hughie hoist us in.

Rocketing's fraught with danger
When Furies and Fireflies mix
There's no need for flak near a target
When you fly with 816
Oh try again, Hughie try again.

We have to get up in the morning
Around about quarter to four
To twitch on the end of a booster
And pour on the old full bore
Oh help us off, Hughie help us off.

Bill is our Senior Pilot
And of him all Subbies beware
They reckon the very first words he spoke
Were "Get into the air"
Oh where's the whip, Hughie where's the whip.

Now we've finished this work-up
We're amazed that we're all still alive
Despite the booster and batsmen
There's still an 805
Oh fly us home, Hughie fly us home.

AS A MATTER OF INTEREST.....

In December 1945, a committee was formed to draw up the RAN Naval Aviation Plan. The RAN had no naval aviation expertise except for a small group of officers who wore observer wings, so the committee had to identify the hardware required and the manpower bill to man the RAN Fleet Air Arm.

All billets had to be established and costed. A huge task, but less than eighteen months later, not only was the comprehensive plan finalised, it had received the approval of the Chifley Government.

Then came the second miracle. Within fifteen months of receiving the go-ahead, the naval air station (*Albatross*) and two squadrons (805 and 816) were commissioned.

The plan contains some interesting statistics and some of these are given below. The costing is in Australian Pounds.

SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT

2 Light Fleet Carriers	@	£2,587,000	£5,175,570
110 Sea Furies (Note 2)	@	£28,487	£3,133,570
118 Fireflies (Note2)	@	£23,237	£2,741,966

MANPOWER

General Service personnel

Officers	176
Ratings	1825
Civilians	94

Aviation personnel

Aviation Officers	99
Rating Pilots	73
Aircrewmen	39

Aircraft Handlers	629
Safety Equipment	33
Photography	27
Meteorology	10
Aircraft Maintainers (Note 2)	
Air Artificers	66
Air Mechanics	32
SAM(A)	113
SAM(E)	109
NA(AM)	516
Fabric Workers	12
Electrical Artificers	26
Electricians	42
Electrician's Mates	96
ERA's	14
Shipwrights	9

Total Manpower Bill 4019

Note: These were the planning figures. Records indicate that 101 Sea Furies and 108 Fireflies were purchased.

Note 2: The figures for maintenance ratings includes a 15% Drafting Margin.

By the way, did anyone ever know a fabric worker?

by 'Tad'



NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Here we go again, another missive to the Apostles! Time sure does get away from us and that dreaded CRAFT is catching up with us all. It's terrible when you can't remember what's happened and what you are to convey to the mob. I've tried keeping notes, but can't remember where the paper is that they were written on.

Firstly we have disbanded the FAA sub-branch of the Naval Association. Ron Tate will stay non-attached, Hilton Devereux has transferred to the Fremantle sub-branch and I have transferred to Rockingham. What other members have done I cannot say.

This has come about because the sub-branch membership dropped to eight members. The State Council asked the Naval Association Federal President, 'Knobby' Clarke, for his views when he was over here last year. He said that he wouldn't close sub-branches if they got down to four members, but would endeavour to recruit members into the sub-branch. The State Council then put forward a resolution to the forthcoming Federal Conference of the Naval Association that, 'when a sub-branch dropped below twelve members it would no longer exist.' So, rather than wait until the shouting stopped, we decided to fold the sub-branch and apply for affiliation to the Naval Association, this only costs twenty dollars a year as opposed to eight dollars per year for each member.

I ran into Greg Kelson in the shopping centre a while ago, he told me how his wife, Anne, had suffered a stroke after they arrived over here for a holiday to see their family and new grandson. Anne was treated in the Fremantle Hospital and has now been discharged and returned to Nowra. Whilst over here Greg made contact with Lou Burns, Keith Murdoch, Keith Doncon and Kerry Sojan. With all the running back and forth to the hospital we were not able to do much for them, or to see

much of Greg. Our best wishes go out to both of you.

This is our Division's 21st Birthday this year. We will be holding our Birthday Reunion Dinner on 30 November, the venue will be decided when we are able to get an idea of the numbers attending. Jack Suriano, with the able assistance of Joe Jost, has taken on the task of organising the event. Let us make this a great night, please let the organisers know if you are attending. We will let you know the cost involved when the arithmetic is completed. There is plenty of time yet, but please mark the day on your calendar. Visitors from the Eastern side of the continent who may be in the area are most welcome to attend.

There are still a few members who have not as yet paid their dues. If you haven't paid, this could be your last *Slipstream*, so get busy with those cheque books!

Keith Murdoch was at one of our recent meetings, he looked well and, as he said, 'he has his days'. We hope they are many more, pal.

Lou Burns has had another spell in hospital where he underwent tests for Staph. He is back home but still a bit weak on it.

Rick Hammond still has a big problem with his legs and they can't do any more for him. Barbara, his wife, has recovered from her own hospitalisation and is looking after him.

Eddy Cook has been in hospital for an operation on his back. The operation had to be cut short because his blood had been thinned too much and they were having trouble controlling the bleeding. He is now at home and on the way to recovery. We miss you at the meetings, Eddy.

Our AGM was held in February and the Office Bearers for 1996 are:

President: Hilton Devereux
Vice President: Eddy Cook
Secretary: Theo Bushe-Jones
Treasurer: Ron Tate

This year we ask that fellow members come forward and help us to help you!

I will leave you now and wish you all the best of health to you and your families. From all in the West to all you people in the East who are unable to live here.

* *Theo Bushe-Jones - Hon. Sec.*

[With reference to Greg and Anne Kelson - you can imagine their joy to be presented with a grandson on the same day as their wedding anniversary, you can also imagine their grief when Anne suffered a stroke a short time later.

In a letter written in February from WA, Greg had this to say:

'Anne is now in the Rehabilitation Ward where the course of



L-R: Anne Kelson in the garden at Fremantle Hospital with visitors Avis and John Gorin.

John, ex-LAM(A) 1954-'61, has recently joined the Association.

physiotherapy has begun. The team have done wonders with her. In just a short time they have Anne standing, maintaining balance and now teaching her to walk again. She has no control in her left arm nor retraction of her left leg and no control of the knee and ankle. She is gaining strength from day to day.'

Anne is now back in Nowra undergoing therapy. They wish to thank their many friends for the support they have given them. Ed.]

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As the Autumn colours slowly appear throughout the Adelaide Hills and Plains, they herald yet another change in seasons. We pause to wonder at all the changes in our own lives, our own colour change (to grey) on craggy, barren features. To wonder at those misty memories of our misspent youth whilst under the protection of the White Ensign. More reason than ever to put the history of sacrifice, struggle and triumphs down in book form. For surely as those seasons change, so too will our collective memories of past deeds done. Let us all get behind this new venture and donate to the 'History of Naval Aviation in Australia'. (Refer to *Slipstream*).

The AGM was successfully managed on 16 February with the expected results. No pushing or bloodletting apparent as the committee positions were filled. Junice Coper chaired the meeting with the following results. Mary Raynor - President for the second year, Ron Richards - Vice President, he only needed a slight nudge. The Secretary and Social Secretary went to Dinsley Cooper, ably supported by Junice. The position of Treasurer went to John Saywell, he muttered something about the failure of the association funds to electronically transfer to somewhere in Bolivia, hence the second year for a retry! Committee members are, Ken Bryant, John Daly, Jim Elston and John Berry who volunteered. Will have to keep an eye on him! State Delegate is Mary with the assistance of John Saywell.

After a one year rest as editor, I have once again restarted our local 'Fly Navy' Newsletter, with all its items, photos and jokes, as from February this year. All financial members will receive four copies

per year to their door - FREE! Incidentally, this year will be our tenth year of providing the newsletter and I can still only type with two fingers! The Coopers have come to some arrangement with their local council to allow all the photocopying we require to complete the newsletter. This is certainly an enormous saving to members.

Renewal of membership for '96 is now overdue as you all well know, so contact John Saywell direct or post back a renewal form with cheque to his address. Refer to your last 'Fly Navy' for details. Fees are on page one. Don't forget to add on \$8 for the *Slipstream* journal.

John Berry has asked me to include a message about our past member, Brian Gilroy. Brian has lived in Victoria, for what ever reason. Unfortunately, he died whilst on the 6th green at Port Lonsdale on 19 February 1996. He is survived by his wife Pam and one daughter.

Our major raffle was duly drawn by the committee, the following are the winners:

- 1st Prize - Robert Kreig, son of member Jack.
- 2nd Prize - Maurice Davies, member.
- 3rd Prize - Robin Wood, member.
- 4th Prize - M. Ingram
- 5th Prize - Ken Bryant, member.
- 6th Prize - N. Leigh

I am pleased to see so many members actually come away with a result at long last. Congratulations to all the winners and a 'Well Done' to the ticket sellers and support staff. Treasurer John is smiling!

The social Secretary has been toiling away behind the scenes gathering up several varied social functions that should please some, if not all. Listed below are those functions in order and as they approach you will receive a 'notice of intention' which should be handed or posted to Dinsley. Phone him if you don't like the taste of the new stamps.

- 22 June - BBQ lunch at the Adelaide Hotel.
- 07 August - Old ime Music Hall, St. Leonards Inn.
- 22 September, Harris Bus Tour, includes winery and BBQ lunch.
- TBA November - RAAF Base Edinburgh.
- 07 December - Association

Christmas Dinner, Blair Athol Hotel.

Pick a couple of functions to attend, we certainly need your support. Promise you will enjoy yourself.

Mrs Joyce Howlett, our only Life (Social) Member, is no more! She in fact married Bill Ryan on 10 March. Bill is ex-RAN. Congratulations to Joyce and Bill who are at present honeymooning somewhere in Bolivia. She said something about John Saywell paying for the trip if only she could contact this character at one of those large international banking groups. Sounds all above board to me!

To those members who are on the sick list for what ever reason, cheer up, as we all wish you well and hope to see you soon.

To those new members - Welcome.

To 'Trader' Horn and Ken Hyde, who are the only members we see who can still squeeze into their naval uniform on Anzac Day - how do you do it?

Finally, I'll finish with another blinding 'Naval Blunder from days gone by -

'On 23 January 1915, the German armoured cruiser, *Blücher*, rolled over and capsized with the loss of over 900 men after being battered by the British battle cruisers at the battle of the Dogger Bank. The *Blücher* was far too weak and too slow to stand in the line of battle with the faster German battle cruisers, under Admiral Hipper, which managed to escape when a signalling error by Lieutenant Ralph Seymour, aboard the British flagship, *Lion*, caused the other British ships to call off their pursuit.'

Regards to one and all,

* Roger Harrison - Honorary Whipping Boy

TASMANIA

News time again from the Island State. Not a great deal has happened, we're probably still recovering from Christmas - back to work - kids back to school - State and Federal Elections. Hell! It's Easter and Anzac Day! It's amazing how time flies when you're having fun.

The Tasmanian members will be meeting at Ulverstone this year, members will be advised by letter of the details.

Ex-CAA Alan Andrews has had a treble by-pass operation but is coming along at a great rate of knots. I visited him in 'sick-bay' a few days after his operation, apart from the hospital 'scran', he didn't have a complaint in the world. His comment was, 'that he was resting nicely, thank you'.

I have heard that Bill Lowe, ex-POAH, had some outings with the Ulysses Club [Motor Cycle Club] during their big tour of Tasmania. Bill seems to get younger as he gets older, at least that's how his nephew, ex-AH Geoff Singline, describes him. I suppose that by being active you don't get time to age - just mature.

I don't have much to write about in this issue, except to add that which we already know, and that is how this wonderful magazine has brought so many old friends back together again, for some of us it's half a life time.

Best wishes to all our readers,
* 'Jake' Jacobs

VICTORIA

Greetings to all.

Our Division convened its AGM on 11 February, the following were duly elected to head up the committee for 1996.

President: Les Jordan

Vice President: Frank Crowe

Secretary: Ron Christie

Treasurer: John Ikin

Committee Members: John Champion, Alan Clark, Jim Kalmund, Bill Martin and Ralph Mayer.

The AGM was well attended, the weather perfect - believe it or not. We all had a very pleasant day, sitting around in the garden setting of the Melbourne Naval Centre, enjoying a few sherbets, good food and good company.

Kind regards to all,

* Ron Christie - Hon. Secretary

NEW SOUTH WALES

Hello there and greetings to everyone.

Our Annual General Meeting for 1996 was very well attended and a new team of committeemen was elected to look after the affairs of the Division. Several of last years committeemen were unable to

nominate for re-election due to private commitments and we thank them for their time and input into Division affairs over the past 12 months and more.

A number of matters brought to the attention of the AGM by members, will be discussed at our next Division meeting and each of the members will be advised by letter as to the outcome of their inquiry or suggestions.

THE HISTORY

Following the decision of the National Council to have the Naval Aviation Museum take over the project of having the History of the RAN FAA written, things are underway. Reference to the project is made elsewhere in this journal and I hope the final product will be something we are all pleased and proud of. To be successful though, it is important that experiences of life in the FAA not only at sea but at the Air Station (both inside and outside the Main Gate) be communicated to the Museum so that the author has the opportunity of including them in the book.

Life in the Married Quarters, Paynes Bus to town (with the dozens of prams and strollers hanging on the rack at the back), into town AM and home PM - some could give great stories which would be of great interest. Some of the wives and families are bound to have a good 'dit' about life in Greenwell Point or Husky or the Basin or the Nowra/Bomaderry township, or what about the 'First Married Quarters' up at the Show Grounds - caravans and Firefly packing cases being the building code of the day. With a bit of luck, Brian and Ailsa Dunne might read this and find time to pass on their experiences of life in the Show Grounds.

If anyone has something of interest to contribute, be it stories or photographs, please take the time to contact Mike Lehan at the Museum your interest and your memories would be greatly appreciated.

THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLEET AIR ARM

We have had a response from CNS regarding Navy support in our efforts to have the 50th anniversary

of the FAA recognised and celebrated, but it was not encouraging.

Our NSW Division PR representative (Mike Lehan) has been nominated as the Chairman of our 50th Anniversary sub-committee (yet to be formed), to get things moving.

TELSTRA SMART SAVER DISCOUNT SCHEME

We have commenced the Telstra smart saver project which is aimed at raising funds for the Association and offering members considerable discount on their telephone accounts. Stafford Lowe is the organiser and will be forwarding application forms as soon as they are available.

AMENDMENTS TO NSW CONSTITUTION

Proposed amendments to our Division Constitution, necessary in order to comply with current NSW Government legislation, were passed by members at the AGM on 10 March 1996.

Those amendments were accepted by the Department of Fair Trading (NSW Gov't Protection Agency) effective of 01 April 1996.

The secretary is currently amending the constitution and new members will receive an amended copy in the near future.

In the meantime, all holders of our constitution dated December 1992, should make the following amendments:

Page 8, Para 16(a) change 'Charitable Collections Act 1934' to read 'Charitable Fundraising Act 1991'.

Page 10, Para 25(b) change 'such registered or exempted and tax exempted charity or charities' to read 'such like tax exempted Association or Associations'.

Page 10, add new Para 26. Internal Disputes:

(a) The Management Committee shall appoint an independent person to arbitrate on any internal dispute.

(b) The arbitration process shall conform in all respects to Chapter 330 of 'Best Practice Guidelines for Charitable Organisations'.

Page 10, 11, add new Para 27. Complaints and Grievances:

(a) The Management Committee shall appoint one particular person to investigate all complaints made by members of the public and grievances from employees.

(b) The investigation process shall conform in all respects to Chapter 300 of 'Best Practice Guidelines for Charitable Organisations'.

The Division Management Committee hopes all our members and their families are well and NSW passes on regards and good health to other Divisions.

Yours aye,

* Max Altham - President

Australian Capital Territory

The Annual General Meeting of the ACT Division was held on Wednesday 21 March 1996. Geoff Ledger was re-elected as President. The remainder of the Executive Committee consists of Brian Treloar (Vice President), Mike Astbury (Treasurer) and Peter Schilling (Secretary). The Committee members are Daphne Clarke (Social Secretary), Maurie Tiffen, Phil Landon, Peter McNay and Richard Scott.

The Committee held its first general meeting for 1996 on 20 March. The first event for 1996 will be the ANZAC Day March followed by a barbecue at HMAS HARMAN. If any members from other Divisions

are in town for the March or just a long weekend they would be most welcome to join us either for the March or afterwards at HARMAN. If you would like to come to the barbecue, please contact our Social Secretary, Daphne Clarke, on 06 286 3940 before 19 April. The cost is \$12.50 per person or \$30 for a whole family.

The ACT Division would like to pass on a BZ to John Arnold, the Editor of Slipstream. It is not easy to put together a publication like this and to maintain such a high standard takes extra dedication and effort. From personal experience, I know how much time and effort is required. Well done, John, and thanks for a newsletter which we all read carefully to see who we know and what is happening around the Divisions and at the Aviation Museum.

I have had been asked by an ex-RAN member to try and obtain a couple of memorabilia items for him. The first is one of the brass bells that were produced to commemorate the decommissioning of HMAS MELBOURNE and the second, a copy of a short film or video which was made in HMAS MELBOURNE to demonstrate shower water conservation. I am sure there are many FAA personnel out there who remember the film. I would also like to obtain one of the brass bells myself so if anyone has a couple of

spares or know the whereabouts of a copy of the film I would appreciate a call on (06) 289 4898 during the day or (06) 291 4681 after working hours.

* Peter Schilling - Hon. Secretary

[Thank you, for the 'vote of confidence'.

I can't recall seeing a film on water conservation relating to HMAS Melbourne. When I was onboard, they didn't need a film to encourage people to use shower water sparingly; a large, 'hairy-arsed' stoker standing near the bathroom access with a 'shifter' in his hand was usually sufficient.

The cartoon shown below, thanks to Gordon Walter, is the best I can do for you. It depicts the forard bathroom on the Sydney and applies equally well to the Melbourne. Ed.]

QUEENSLAND

In March, we held our AGM at the Eastern suburbs League's Club at Coorparoo. The election for Office Bearers saw the bulk of the committee returned with the exception of Len Zuch, who stood down. The elected committee are now as follows:

President: Barry Lister

Secretary: Frank 'Shorty' Nielsen

Treasurer: Ian 'Junior' Henderson

Committee Members: Alex 'Macka' McMurtrie (McLelland), Brian Sargeson, Des 'Ned' Kelly, and Trevor Tite.

It was noted that ten members had not renewed membership for 1996 and in the Division Newsletter, I have explained as to how the \$15 membership fee is disbursed i.e. \$5 capitation fee to the National Body, \$8 for Slipstream funding, the \$2 remaining goes into our coffers. You can therefore see how important renewals are, as well as the requirement to attract new members to our ranks. For those who have been remiss, a 'jogger' will be included in the Division Newsletter.

Incidentally, the Newsletter is distributed to Queensland members every two months, a copy is also sent to the National Secretary, if other Division Secretaries would like a copy, please notify Frank Nielsen, 655 Priestdale Road, Rochedale, QLD 4123. [What happened to the NAT PRO's copies? Ed.]





1996 QUEENSLAND DIVISION COMMITTEE

L-R: Alex McMúrtrie - Barry Lister - Brian Sargeson - Mick Blair - Frank Nielsen - Trevor Tite - Ian Henderson

Photo courtesy Mick Blair

It was a great relief to all of us when the Naval Aviation Museum elected to take on board the production of the FAA History. I hope that all will support the project as per the letter you will all have received from the Museum.

Darcy Doyle has agreed to the proposal that the funds raised from the Art Union Raffle for his artist's proof of the *HMS Endeavour*, be allocated to the funding of *Slipstream* which is of the utmost importance to us all.

Anzac Day sees us marching well back in the Brisbane Parade. The RAAF are at the front and we are about 107 behind the *HMAS Melbourne* group. Our meeting place is at the corner of Elizabeth and Albert Streets at around 0930. We form up on the right hand side of Elizabeth Street. Let's hope that we don't have an Irish Pipe Band to keep up with! We have been invited to the Officer's Mess on the riverbank at the Bulimba Army Barracks - this will be great! Seeing that 'Shorty' Nielsen celebrates his 60th birthday on that date, he had better beware!

Sad news - Kevin 'Nugget' Nugent, ex-CPO Armourer and ex-Cruiser man, passed away on 27 March after a short stay in Greenslopes Hospital. Many of us attended his funeral at Mt. Gravatt, acting as bearers and forming a Guard of Honour. Flossie, his wife, is bearing up well and has passed her sincere thanks to all for the tremendous support she and

'Nugget'; have received over the last few weeks. Shelia Zimmer is with her at the moment - Ian and Florence Henderson have been pillars of strength for them. We all extend our sympathy and love to Flossie and the family.

We were pleased to hear that Eric Cottrell has received his Active Service Medal for the second trip on the *Sydney* to Korea. It will be interesting to see how the new Federal Government treats medal applications.

Jock Collins reports that the Gannet at the Caloundra Air Museum is now moveable and that

the wings have been welded in the spread position. 'Blue' Ditcham and Trevor Bolitho have been assisting him - they have a cut-away sectioned Double Mamba and are working on a Coffman Starter. No doubt many of us can remember the Coffmans from the Firefly and Sea Fury days - pour in the kero then whack with a hide face hammer...then try again! I don't know if the recollections bring tears of memory or tears of remembered frustrations. If nothing else, they were sworn at - most severely!

The first Gliding Club Reunion will be held at Nowra over the Easter weekend, it was initiated at our Bundaberg Reunion and pushed along by Ken Bullock (an ex-President of the Gliding Club). He tells me that over seventy people will be attending. I can remember back in 1965 when Arthur Johnson, John Crawley [STILL - not a member! Ed] and myself, represented the Club at the National Championships at Waikerie in South Australia. I spent the first week in the air conditioned hotel, scoffing salt tablets and trying to recover from heat exhaustion. Even my dog had to be taken to the Doctor's surgery (no vet) for the same complaint, he too was given salt tablets! After the few weeks spent there, we were all converted to 'winos' - the Barossa Valley Wineries were delighted for us to sample their wares.

In one race, I flew the 'Arrow' for 7.5 hours and landed in desert style country in the dark. I managed to



GROUP AT QUEENSLAND DIVISION AGM DINNER

L-R: Noel Fischer - Mrs Shirley Neilsen & son - Barry Lister

Photo courtesy Mick Blair

find a farmhouse and knocked on the door, wanting to phone the airfield to get the crew to pick me up. I was wearing the light green RAN flying suit - the door opened and then slammed in my face, accompanied by the directive to 'Piss off! It wasn't until later that I found out that there was a Prison Farm close by and the locals were not receptive to late night calls. After much walking and hitching, I was eventually retrieved.

It has been agreed that our next AGM should be held at a place where we can hold a barbecue on completion of the meeting. Brisbane is not a good venue to ensure a good roll-up.

Our recent dinner was excellent with fifty or so members attending. The table service, drinks and the music was very good, the Club really looked after us.

Ernie Payne of 67 Horizon Drive, Bomaderry, is keen for ex-aircrewmembers to contact him at the above address, or call him on (044) 217688. He's coming to the National Reunion at the Gold Coast in November and is looking forward to catching up with old mates.

Bob Bryce, A.O. Hill, 'Tas' Hartnett and company are doing a wonderful job organising the reunion. Bob hopes to have a revised programme included with this *Slipstream*. It is very important that those who haven't registered yet should do so - ASAP! Time moves very quickly and it will be on us before we know it. The tear-off slips need to be returned to Bob - **NOW**, as the Golf Club and Bowls Club need to know the numbers to finalise arrangements for the Sports Day. At present we have almost 400 registrations and I know that many more have said that they are attending - so - DO IT NOW!

Rainbow Realty, telephone 075 536 1833, have some unit accommodation available, walk to Rainbow Bay beach and walk to Twin Towns Club. Marian and I obtained a unit for \$270 for the week. Do contact them if you don't wish to drive. Bus transfers are arranged to the various venues.

Now for the 'stiffy of the week'. 'Junior' Henderson has an old bay cruiser for sale. Based at Cleveland - a buyer comes along - out they go to steam to a shipyard for survey - wind SE at 35 knots - OOPS - engine temperature goes off the clock - drop anchor - rough seas -



BOB'S LAST FLIGHT

During the recent Gliding Club Reunion at HMAS Albatross, Commodore Geoff Morton, piloting the 'tug', flew Colleen Connellan over Jervis Bay where she scattered the ashes of her late husband, Bob Connellan.

A fitting end to a fine man.

Photo courtesy Jim Lee

3hr wait to get towed back - blown head gasket - buyer still keen - repairs done! Then, the following weekend - buyer and family on board - head off once again for the shipyard - not far out - temperature gauge reads 'HOT' - back to anchorage - much checking of previous repairs etc. etc. Pundits say, " Air lock, bleed, bleed!" Off once again and very soon - HOT, HOT, HOTTER - boiling water hitting the deck-head. Buyer and family still on the go. Must be keen! Florence reckons it's a dead-cert for an insurance loss! Wait for the next issue for an update.....

After going through the process of the writing of the History of the FAA, it becomes very clear to us in Queensland (and I'm sure in other State Divisions), of the importance of *Slipstream* to us all and its continued production and representation of our stories and recollections of events and fun and games in the FAA. We will be making a concerted effort to assist in the continued funding of the magazine and I encourage all members to do the same.

I had a visit from Errol Greer a few weeks ago. Errol lives at Emu Park, on the coast near Rockhampton. He has a 40' boat for sale, good for offshore fishing and cruising. The asking price is around \$40,000, if you are interested give

me a call. Bob Brown (ex-WO Fire Section), now living at Ningi, near Bribie Island, is baby-sitting the boat for a few weeks while Errol is away on a jaunt in the Philippines. Tough life!

Real Estate is gradually picking up now that the new government is on the go. Investors are coming in hard and there are good deals to be had in the Caboolture area. One hopes that the [pain of the last three years will be relieved. The finger nails will be healed up soon!

All of us in Queensland send our regards to those elsewhere.

Best wishes to all.

* Barry Lister - President

'JOCK' COLLINS - UPDATE

Dear Reader,

I have had a fair response to my request for members suffering heart or vascular problems to contact me. So far I have 63 names but only twelve letters.

Come on, you guys!

There is a renowned cardiologist who will write a paper on these figures, but it is essential that the data is provided for him. Please, don't forget to give your age when the problem first presented.

My thanks to all who have written.

LtCdr 'Slug' Whitton RAN Rtd is recovering well from his by-pass operation which he underwent a couple of weeks ago. Welcome to the club!

Regards, Frank 'Jock' Collins,
PO Box 490, BUDERIM QLD. 4556.

Australian Naval Aviation Museum

Dear readers of *Slipstream*

The Museum is developing at a steady rate, as funding becomes available. The following is a sitrep on our current activities.

The Old Museum

The Old Museum has been evacuated and will be demolished in the near future. A new display "Memories of the Old Museum" has been developed in our main display hangar, mainly for the benefit of our ex FAA members.

Shoalhaven City Air Terminal

We have applied to the Shoalhaven City Council for the Museum to become the City Air Terminal as the old site is being taken over by the various ALBATROSS air sporting clubs. It is yet another way of promoting ourselves as we will now appear on all Shoalhaven advertising/tourist brochures etc. A small 24 hour waiting room is to be provided for visitors.

The History of the Fleet Air Arm - Book project

You will have all received your copy of our promotion for the Book and will be aware that the Museum is now co-ordinating this very important project. We have received over 70 pre-sale orders for books and approximately \$2000 in donations, which is a fantastic start. Pre-sales of the books are extremely important as this is the method of funding production and achieves another important element - that of automatic market research ie, we will have a good idea just how many books to order. Please remember, if you are local to NSW South Coast - or are attending the 1998 Golden Jubilee Reunion at NOWRA, you do not need to pay \$10 postage and packing because you can collect your copy during your visit to the Museum.

Please help us by ordering and paying early, and by sending us

your personal stories and significant photographs. All money received is being held in a separate account (gaining interest) and any material you send will be stowed away separately from Museum assets, under my personal custodianship.

All deposits of money and material will be acknowledged in writing ASAP, quoting the number of your book. If you are unable to fund your copy of the History all in one hit, please pay by instalments.

In writing to the Chairman of the Museum Foundation to hand over the carriage of this very important project, the National President of the Fleet Air Arm Association expressed some real concerns from Association members. These concerns are summarised as follows:

- that we may not have canvassed a selection of suitable authors for the project;

- the format of the history and whether, in the time available, we can do justice to more than just a story of Australian Naval Aviation;

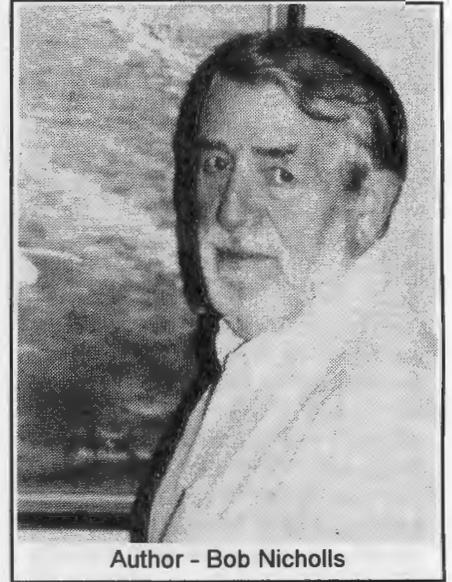
- whether the book is an account of the Australian Fleet Air Arm or of Australian Naval Aviation - most will remember that is exactly the reason why the Museum went through a name change in 1990 - in order to fully record Australian Naval Aviation;

- that the history will be dominated by aircrew.

Members can rest assured that all of these concerns have been/will be taken into account in the production of the book and our progress will be promulgated throughout in *Slipstream*. Several authors were contacted and Bob Nicholls was selected as our preferred author. It will be a balanced book of both aircrew and groundcrew and will concentrate on the fixed wing era as the main body with coverage of other aspects of naval aviation in a reasonable detailed prologue and epilogue.

Our committee, Mike Lehan as Chair, John Arnold, Max Altham, 'Windy' Geale, Derek Whyte and the author, will do their best to ensure that we produce a 'work' that the Association members will be proud of.

If you have any questions at all on this project, please do not hesitate to contact the 'History Secretary' (Tessa) on (044) 211920 or in writing to PO Box A15, Naval PO, NOWRA NSW 2540.



Author - Bob Nicholls

Air Days

FAAA support of the Museum Family Air Days continues to grow, with members arriving from far afield to assist in these ever increasingly popular events. The 'food hall' is generating some useful revenue for both the Association [NSW Division] and the Museum and is a magnificent example of both our organisations being mutually supportive to a common goal.

You may have read in the newspapers that hygiene is of paramount importance to stamp out the spread of infectious diseases and we are now under very strict guidelines when handling food.

Members who volunteer to work FAAA food stalls will be briefed prior to the next event on 19 May, however, it would be of great assistance to arrive dressed appropriately to meet the new guidelines. The guidelines in effect mean that all 'food' workers must be readily identified, in a 'uniform'. Would it therefore be appropriate to suggest that FAAA members wear an Association shirt and hat, for example, on Air Days. If this were achieved it would have the added benefit of being readily identified to the general public as members of the FAA Association - to be prompted for those 'warry' stories!

The new rules for handling food will be dealt with on the day.

Firefly Restoration Project

We have a team of 8 New Work Opportunities (Long Term Unemployed) personnel funded by the Department of Education and Training restoring Firefly 207 to a static display standard in Korean War colours. A log book is being maintained of restoration progress to record those parts of the aircraft that have not been assessed as airworthy. This is to ensure that 'down the track' when we have the cash to prepare this aircraft for flight we do not re invent the wheel. The photograph tells all. British Aerospace will professionally respray the aircraft when it is prepared, in October/November of this year. Don Parkinson has been employed and funded under this scheme to supervise and manage this project, which he reports, is progressing well. Our Historic Flight representative, Terry Hetherington, is keeping a very close eye on the progress in view of future airworthy considerations.



FIREFLY RESTORATION PROJECT

Don Parkinson, front left, with his team of trainees.

The project has been made possible by support from the Department of Employment Education and Training for the Australia Remembers programme.

Photo courtesy ANAM

Stores/Aircraft Spares

Les Matterson and Peter Penny's team of FAAA workers transferred the mountain of spares from 'G' Hangar to the Museum over a weekend 'working bee' during April. These aircraft spares were those remaining after our initial mammoth removal effort last year. All the initial stores have now been catalogued, recorded and stowed away and we are now tackling the computer database aspect.

This is an enormous task that the NSW FAAA Branch have dedicated themselves to and I pass on the thanks of the Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Museum Foundation for a continuing job well done. Without the support of the FAAA this task could not have been tackled. Thank you, Les and Peter in particular, for your perseverance.

Mike Lehan - Museum Director



MUSEUM'S 'MOUNTAIN' MOVERS

Some of the volunteers who are moving and cataloguing spares for the ANAM.

Back Row L-R: Bob Pierson - Bill Heard - Peter Penny - Frank McPherson - Roy Pickering

Front Row: L-R: Bill Kerr and Jim 'The Judge' Napier (Because he's always sitting on a case)

**Are YOU a member of
The Australian Naval Aviation
Museum Foundation?**

For more details write to : PO Box
A15, Naval PO, NOWRA, NSW 2540

A TIFFY'S ODYSSEY

by C.C.Price
December 1995

Being the recollections of a
Royal Australian Naval Artificer
1941 - 1961

PART TWO

On my arrival at *HMAS Penguin* I was ordered to report to the Royal Australian Naval Torpedo Factory at Neutral Bay to undergo 8 weeks training on Torpedo and Paravane maintenance. I pleaded it was all a big mistake, for torpedoes were serviced by Electrical Artificers. I was an Engine Room Artificer and my job was in the engine room. My demarcation problem was soon resolved and I found myself at the factory at Neutral Bay!

I had managed to move my family from Brisbane down to Manly and was thus able to commute daily between our flat at Manly and the RANTF. To add further to my confusion, I soon realised it was not to be a formal course when I was taken down to the factory assembly floor and placed in charge of two NCO's of the Dutch (NEI) Navy. They were crew members of either the K9 or the K12 submarines then lying alongside the wharf at the torpedo factory.

I was given excellent instruction in the servicing of British Mk4, Mk8, Mk9 one and two star, and an 18 inch torpedo the Mark of which I have forgotten, and the servicing of paravanes for merchant ships. My instructors were excellent, practical tradesmen, their knowledge of British torpedoes surprised me. I formed the impression that the 18 inch (460 mm) aerial torpedo was being manufactured at the factory and assembled on the floor where I received my instruction.

The remainder of the establishment was restricted to me. It seemed to me that the torpedo fitter assemblers had a cosy arrangement as they all had female Fitters Mates. Enough said!

During this period, my Service Certificate states that I was employed on Depot duties at *Penguin*. On completion of my torpedo training I was drafted to the RAN Torpedo Workshops at *Melville* in Darwin. My travel warrant stated that I was to proceed from Sydney

to Mt. Isa by train and on arrival report to the Army for transit by military convoy to Laramah,

and to complete the journey to Darwin by train.

Towards evening on the leg of the train journey from Townsville to Mt. Isa, on a lonely stretch of track, the train slowed to a stop, the engine had broken down. Examination revealed a clevis-pin to be missing from the valve gear. It had obviously fallen off some distance back. Passengers were requested to search along the permanent way, as we would be unable to proceed until it was re-fitted. About 112 mile(314km) down the track it was found, then replaced, and by using a bent piece of fencing wire for a split pin we were ready to proceed. After a couple of blasts on the whistle the passengers clambered aboard and we continued on our journey to Mt. Isa.

During the trip I shared the train compartment with civilians, one was a good looking barmaid employed at one of Mt. Isa's hotels. She surprised and amused me when after leaving her seat for a few minutes, she returned, lifted the window and dropped it down on her wet scanties, they were dry in a few minutes.

On reporting to the Army, all service personnel heading north were given a 'short arm' inspection; after which I found myself victualled in the Sergeants mess.

Next morning I loaded my kit on to a very large Army truck and clambered aboard. I was told that these trucks had been destined for Russia, but had been diverted to Australia and now formed part of a huge truck convoy proceeding due north up the Stuart Highway.

The average speed of the convoy was about 20 mph(32 kph), we travelled only in daylight hours stopping each night at army staging camps.

I often wonder these days why these convoys were not attacked by the Japanese? I never did ascertain if any of those trucks carried anything for defence, except the odd rifle.

We stopped every hour or so, lit a fire and brewed-up; some of the lads were able to shoot scrub

turkeys during these stops.

At Laramah I was able to sling my hammock across a not very clean cattle truck and was able to complete my journey to Darwin in comparative comfort, although covered in grit and coal dust.

I reported at *Melville* in August 1944 to find the town had been extensively bombed during my absence. Later, close examination of the homes in Darwin revealed that in addition to bomb damage, vandals and thieves had been at work. All the plumbing fittings had been removed from most homes and sent south.

On my arrival I began what was known as the 'mad mile'. Beginning at the office of the Master-at-Arms, where I was given a piece of paper containing a list of all departments and told to report to each one, have the paper stamped and return with it to the 'Jaunties' office. I found *Melville's* 'mad mile' took me around an hour and on completion I knew my way around the town, which the RAN now controlled, and in which the offices of the departments were located.

I was to be accommodated in Tombol Flats in Mitchell, sharing a ground floor flat with four or five CPO's from *Melville*. This two-storied block comprised eight or so flats and was used as a dormitory by the CPO's of *Melville*.

The building had previously been occupied by the submariners of the USN who had sunk a large concrete air-raid shelter in the backyard; and which consisted of a box about 20 ft (6 m) by 10 ft (3 m) with steps at one end and walls approx. 4 ins (100 mm) thick. The roof was formed by laying water pipes 3 in (75 mm) in diameter at 18 in (450 mm) intervals, over the top of which were placed sandbags. I thought that it would be proof against anything but a direct hit.

On one wall a highly skilled artist had painted in colour a beautiful reclining nude young woman. This air-raid shelter was to be the scene of the suicide of one of my flat mates. I was the last person he spoke to. Had I only known.

On reporting to the Torpedo Workshops I was challenged by an armed sentry who demanded a pass before admitting me. On gaining entry I found the Commanding Officer to be a Lt. RANR and my immediate superior a Chief Electrical Artificer. The staff

included Electrical, Engine Room Artificers and Seaman Torpedomen.

The complex consisted of two brick buildings, both were located at the corners of Smith Street and Harry Chan Avenue, directly opposite each other. Our Torpedo storage was in a building now called Brown's Mart and our old workshop is now a ruin, partially flattened by Cyclone Tracey. A correctly dressed sentry maintained round-the-clock patrol at the front entrance to the workshop but the rear of the storage building invited a sabotage attempt.

An air compressor with an output of 2000 psi had been installed in a separate annex adjacent to the south wall of the workshop. Both buildings were outfitted with torpedo handling gantries and work-benches. Test equipment and associated plumbing had not been set up, this work was to be carried out by the workshop staff. I have always retained a great admiration for the skill displayed by our young ERA Coppersmith, I cannot remember any of his brazed joints failing under these very high pressures.

Much to our surprise, a few days before we became operational, we were joined by our two Dutch Instructors who remained with us until we got the show on the road.

The torpedoes held in stock required only the minimum of servicing before they were issued. Very soon "T" class Royal Navy submarines began arriving at frequent intervals and we were kept very busy. Torpedoes were unloaded from submarines at the wharf onto cradles and loaded on a 3 ton truck for transfer to the workshop.

They often came with the war-heads still fitted, but with the 'pistols' removed, they were often covered in mud. On removal of the war-heads they were dispatched to the magazine.

We were indeed fortunate in having a very knowledgeable and experienced Chief Electrical Artificer as foreman. The workshop was provided with an excellent set of overhaul manuals, or as the Navy called them, 'Books of Reference'. I found the work demanding, adapting to the close engineering tolerances required in torpedo maintenance. It was in Darwin that I deleted the expression, 'she'll be right', from my vocabulary and

sought perfection.

We did a brisk business in Mk4 and Mk8 submarine 'fish'. Our remaining stocks were given routine maintenance according to the BR's. We issued only a few paravanes to Merchant ships.

It was of interest to me to learn that the Argentinean Cruiser General Belgrano was sunk by a Mk8 torpedo fired from the Atomic powered submarine *Conqueror*, during the Falklands war.

Life in Darwin at this time was very monotonous, the food terrible, live entertainment a rarity and women in the town non-existent.

The Mess was at least half a mile from the workshop, most of the time we ate bully-beef, beans and dried egg-powder, the food was the worst I had in my period in the service. We often missed lunch to go down to the wharf to swim, diving from the wharf at low tide was quite a thrill. We kept this up until one day we saw a very large crocodile go drifting past.

We soon found ways of occupying our lunch breaks by making 'rabbits'. In the workshop was a 4 1/2 inch Southbend lathe which was put to good use producing the handles for our top product, the Torpedo workshops 'copper kettle', internally tinned, with a laminated handle highly polished, they were a first rate job. Mine lasted a good thirty years.

On Sundays we drew rations from *Melville* and, using the workshops 3 ton International truck for transport, we would set off for Berry Springs or Manton Dam to go swimming and have a picnic.

During my stint in Darwin I was given permission to make one phone call to my next-of-kin, during the night. When my turn came around, I waited until 0130, the call being made from an underground concrete communications bunker in close proximity to the new Darwin Hotel.

After I had been in Darwin for eleven months a signal was received informing me that my father was terminally ill with cancer. I applied for and was granted compassionate leave. To obtain the leave it was necessary to apply to the Duty Chaplain, Father McMahon, who died many years later in Ballarat which was my home town. I was later to learn that we had grown up in the same street and had been playmates during our

early school years.

For the flight home I was permitted a suitcase weighing 36 lb(16 kg), mine was underweight, the Duty Naval Patrolman in the Master at Arms Office insisted I bring the weigh up to the 36 lb. with a chimney brick. Don't laugh, he was typical of the branch, all morons!

On reaching the airfield I boarded a RAF Transport Command Dakota. Before leaving, the pilot requested us to steady the cargo at take-off as nothing was lashed down. Take-off was at 0600 and we flew until late afternoon and finally arrived at Parafield just near Adelaide.

I arrived in Ballarat by train the next day and was thus able to bid my father farewell. He died in a matter of hours. On my return to Darwin I travelled via Adelaide, Moree and again as the guest of the Army similar to the first trip.

I resumed duties in the Torpedo Workshops until the 28th Sep 1945 when I was drafted to *HMAS Lonsdale* at Port Melbourne. With WW2 over, the Navy had obviously intended to discharge me at *Lonsdale* as my Official No. was PM 3279.

This was the time for me to make decisions relative to my future as I was now a married man with a wife and child to support. The Navy provided security, at least in the short term, it took me six months to make the choice to remain in the service.

Life in the Navy is not conducive to happy marriages. Long absences from home, crazy political decisions which affect the futures of serving personnel produced the inevitable result, but at a later date.

My service documents are endorsed 'Transferred to Permanent Naval Forces (seagoing) vide CST. letter No.2018 dated 28th Feb 1946'. My new official number was A31828.

Life in Darwin had been tough, the isolation of the place was hard to accept. At least this time I was flown to Brisbane on a commercial aircraft, but I hadn't forgotten our escape on the *Katoomba* in 1942 on a badly damaged ship, unescorted, with a 15 degree list and a speed of four knots.

I was to spend eleven days at *HMAS Lonsdale* reassembling the engine of an old tug at Williamstown dockyard, commuting daily in the

Navy work boat. I was able to get my morning and afternoon 'cuppa' from the Seaman's Mission in Nelson Place. As my mother lived in Richmond, accommodation was no problem.

My next draft was to an ex-North Coast Steam Navigation vessel the Mine Tender and armament stores carrier *HMAS Uralba*. My first reaction to seeing her berthed at the north end of Station Pier at Port Melbourne was that the only thing Naval about her was the grey paint and the White Ensign.

When I reported at the gangway I was told that she didn't carry an Engineer Officer and that as I was the Senior Artificer on board, I would be directly responsible to the Captain for the efficient running of all machinery on the ship.

The Captain was an RANR Lieutenant, and wore interlaced rings. He always wore a roll neck jumper under his jacket. I was to gain great admiration for his ability as a seaman and that he was able to run a happy ship. She was commissioned on the 23rd Nov 1942 and was to pay-off on the 20th Aug 1946.

She had been built by E. Wright of Toncurry NSW, her tonnage was 603 tons gross, her beam was 37 ft. (17.5 m), with a length of 154.5 ft. (73 m). Her speed at commissioning was given as 8 knots, but she couldn't attain this speed during my time on her, even going down hill with a tail wind?

Her timbers appeared to have been hewn with an adze, she had a large deep wooden keel with two sister keelsons on each side of the main keel. She had no bulkheads. It had been designed to slide over the sand bars at river mouths on the northern rivers of NSW loaded with mill logs.

When the hull was finished, propulsion machinery was unavailable, however, an old Scotch type marine boiler, coal fired, three furnace, 75 years old was fitted. I found documentation relative to the age of the boiler on board. God knows in what junk yard they found it.

The engine had a long life previously fitted to a vehicular ferry which had been scrapped when the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened. The controls of the engine were at the level of the cylinder heads, with a scuttle port and starboard for observation purposes,

it was a triple expansion engine with the auxiliaries operated by a beam actuated by the engine; she had a Worthington boiler feed pump, a compound 110v ungoverned electrical generator which, due to low steam pressure, was never capable of delivering 110v. The Captain often complained about the malfunctioning depth sounder as a result of this deficiency.

She had one cargo hold which was serviced by a very old, noisy but reliable winch, it too had been resurrected from a junk yard. Her anchor windlass did its job without any trouble.

I was given the Chief Engineers cabin, the crew lived in the forecabin. She was full of rats when I joined her, one of the seamen told me he had woken up the previous night to feel a rat on his pillow.

I often objected to the Stoker Petty Officer about the low steam pressure, even the Captain in desperation on one occasion decided to go down into the stokehold and demonstrate how it should be done. He grabbed a 'slice', which a few seconds before had been red hot, burning his hands, he only did it once.

The stokehold crew appeared to be doing their best. It was not until after the ship had paid-off and the boiler was opened up for examination by the insurance surveyor, that I found the tubes to be heavily coated with salt. It had been operated for a long period using salt water.

I was overcome with feelings of remorse and compassion for the Stoker Petty Officer and his stokers who had put so much effort into producing steam pressure.

She had an old fashioned horseshoe type thrust assembly which needed a lot of tender loving care to prevent it over heating, however, my biggest problem was that the engine would not always go astern unless the HP crank was positioned at the right degree. It was my opinion that No.1 bearing journal section of the crankshaft had been replaced and the astern eccentric incorrectly positioned in relation to the piston.

With all her faults, at sea, this ship with her creaking timbers and reciprocating engine, sang a very harmonious song. It sounded like 'Going to Sydney'.

To be continued.....



HMAS MELBOURNE - 1978

The last Tracker of the deployment leaves the ship.

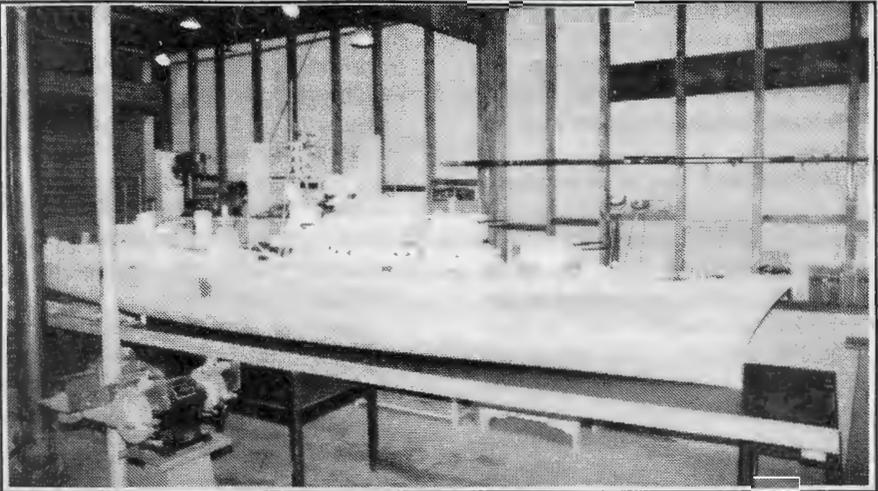
It's anyone's guess as to whether Flight Deck Captain, Bob Perkins, is assisting the take-off by 'putting the boot in', or doing a dance of ecstasy.

Photo by Mal Wilson

BITS 'n' PIECES



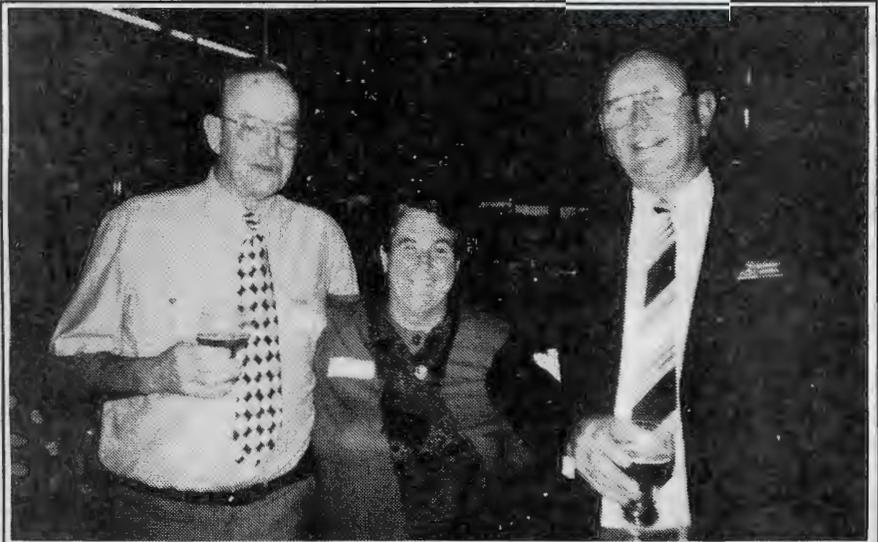
ANAM Curator, Bob Geale, outside the entrance to the new museum display.



Scale model of HMAS Voyager being constructed by Ken Taylor. On completion it will be displayed in the Australian Naval Aviation Museum



Nigel Apperley working on the Gannet-that-came-home, now on display at the ANAM.



Meeting up at the Gliding Club Reunion at Nowra
L-R: Jim Parsons - Colleen Connellan - Don Daniels



...and from Queensland Ernie Maud hitting the straps!



Some of the Museum Stores Party and their wives, pictured after a 'thank-you' luncheon at the ANAM Function Centre.