



# SLIPSTREAM

The Quarterly Journal of the  
Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia,

Volume 8, Number 3

OCTOBER, 1997

*Incorporating*



The Official Publication  
of the Australian Naval  
Aviation Museum  
Foundation



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association of Australia Inc. - Print Post Approved - PP201494/00022  
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# Dale

**Edward Charles Brodie R.N.V.R.  
F.A.A.**

**Died on the 25th April, 1997  
At the age of 73 years**

Ted joined the Royal Navy on the 7th September 1942 at R.N. Barracks, Lee-on-Solent, most of his training as an observer took place in Walrus, Swordfish Lysanders, Albatross and Ansons at Arbroath in Scotland and then before joining his pilot and gunner in Lewiston and Boston, U.S.A. to collect their avenger and form what he believed was 857 squadron.

Immediately on their return to England they were transferred to 847 squadron then attached to Coastal command at St. Eval, and later joining H.M.S. Victorious with the same squadron to become involved in the South East Asia campaign. The bombing of Palamborg, Sumatra oil refineries in January 1945 was on the list.

On arriving in Sydney, they left the Victorious and spent short periods of time on H.M.S. Slinger, H.M.S. Unicorn, H.M.S. Fencer at Ponama, Manus, before returning to Nowra to join 854 Squadron at the close of the war.

Ted returned to England in May 1946 on the Athlone Castle, after we were married at Nowra in September 1945. I followed him to England in July 1946 on the H.M.S. Victorious with seven hundred brides on board. We arrived back in Australia in March 1949 to live in Sydney.

(Mrs) I. Brodie

# In Memoriam

**SGT ANTHONY WAYNE  
OLIVER  
1960 - 1997**

It is with deep regret that we announce the tragic death of Sergeant Anthony Oliver, AVTECH1 (Weapons Specialist).

Members of 492 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Base Edinburgh, wish to extend their sincere sympathy to his wife Stella, daughters Emily and Amy and parents Max and Noel.

Sergeant Oliver or 'Ollie' as he was known to his friends will be sadly missed both for his friendship and the high quality of work which he offered the Squadron.

Ollie started his service career by joining the Royal Australian Navy in 1979 where he served at HMAS Albatross, Nowra NSW in the Fleet Air Arm, VC724 Squadron as an Aircraft Armourer.

In 1984 he transferred to the RAAF and served at 1CAMD Kingswood, Sydney, 503 Wing RAAF base Richmond, back to 1CAMD and in 1995 to 492 Squadron at Edinburgh.

AFSA and its readers also extend their deepest sympathy to Sergeant Oliver's family and friends.

*Rest in Peace*

With the recent passing of Alex McMurtrie, I have been in contact with Reta (his wife) to make sure that she has received the proper entitlements from Vet's Affairs. I'm pleased to say they have responded in a very positive manner.

I spoke with Reta only yesterday and asked her if I may respond on her and son Greg's behalf in SLIPSTREAM for the many acts of care and kindness that had been given during and after Macca's illness. Many of the cards received have been so moving that she is finding it most difficult to sit for any length of time to answer with her thanks and appreciation. However, she will in time answer all. It was then I offered to write to you. I do so with her blessing

## VALE MACCA

**Alex 'Macca' McMurtrie (McLellan)**

**1929 - 1997**

## THANK YOU

Two simple words. But coming from Reta McMurtrie and son Greg, they include all the other expressions that can be used. Both have been overwhelmed by all the messages and cards expressing; sympathy, condolences and support, during Macca's illness and his subsequent passing. Reta has told me that she will respond to all in time but she needs that time to do so. The messages have been so beautiful and caring that a few at a time can only be managed. I know you'll all understand.

I would like to express my thanks to those Shipmates and wives that went to visit Alex during his illness. Some travelled long distances to do so. I may omit mentioning someone but not due to anything other than forgetfulness. Micky Mack, Trev Bolitho, Max Gant, Bill Kerr, Max Wilson, Ernie Maude and Abbie Tedford. That only mentions a few.

Thank you also to all the callers per phone. I mention but a few from memory. 'Pappy' Gault, 'Darkie' Harris, 'Gabby' Hayes, Theo Bushe-Jones, 'Juke' Matterson, 'Big Jewley' Jeffries and last but not least: Monsignor F. 'Tiger' Lyons. To all the others, you know who you are, thank you.

It would be remiss of me if I did not, on Reta and Greg's behalf, give an extra special thank you to Rae Maude. While Reta sat with Mac for long hours on his frequent hospitalization, Rae was inundated with many calls of enquiry as to Mac's progress which she willingly accepted and gave. A great Lady.

From the pain and suffering Mac endured prior to his passing, two wonderful events emerged. I briefly relate them. His daughter from his first marriage came to see him after many years and both became forgiving of each other and told each other of their love. Secondly, 'Tiger' Lyons phone call. Neither Reta nor Mac believed it was 'Tiger' when he told them who he was, but after chatting for a while he knew it was and although Mac wasn't of the faith he told Reta and later me, that not long after 'Tiger' said "God Bless You My Son" and hung up, he felt suddenly to be in peace. How wonderful to have these two occasions to take with him. Thank you all,

*Clem Conlan, Mill Park, Victoria*

# National President's Message

Dear Member,

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Slipstream and are able to feel you are being kept up to date on the various matters that interest you.

Next month marks the occasion of the Federal Council Meeting which has the finalisation of the Constitution as its main agenda item. There are some important financial management issues which also need attention and a proposal that a list of the entire membership, complete with addresses and telephone numbers be compiled and made available to divisions.

Since the Association is principally a social organisation aimed at facilitating contact among its members irrespective of State of residence, this list is a good idea. Without pre-empting the Council's consideration of it, there may be a problem with privacy regulations, that is some members may

not wish their details to appear on such a list. We will need to address this.

I recently called on our Patron, Admiral Sir Victor Smith AC KBE DSC and was very pleased to find him and Lady Smith in fine spirits. I passed on the best wishes of the Association to them both.

For this edition Mike Lehan has given a short account of the Museum financial and running situation and, as Secretary of the 50th Anniversary Committee, a read-out on the Reunion events. If you have any comment on any aspect of the Reunion program or arrangements, please drop us a note so that they can be considered. There is still time to make some adjustment. Also we are keen to do our best to facilitate, encourage, coerce and persuade members to attend the Reunion. Tell us what we can reasonably do to get you here.

Best wishes to all, *Neil Ralph, National President*

## Editorial

Editing this journal can, in many ways, be likened to a conversation among shipmates in the messdeck or wardroom. A subject will be raised among those present, data will be added and confirmed or disproved. Points of view will be expressed, opposing viewpoints argued, the conversation may be led away from the original subject and will eventually perhaps, bear no relation to the original subject. Eventually the congregation will break up and disperse to go about its varied businesses, usually happy to have had an opportunity to interact with their fellows and looking forward with anticipation to the next meeting.

'Slipstream' then is a conversation among shipmates - the only difference now is that the messdeck/wardroom has grown greatly in size and now covers vast areas, extending even as far as the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The congregation members, now separated by distance and not able to easily get within speaking distance of their shipmates utilise this journal to meet and continue their conversations.

An excellent example of how a subject develops was the mystery photograph of Ava Gardner with a submarine sail in the background taken during the filming of the movie 'On the Beach' which appeared in the April 1997 issue of 'Slipstream'. That photograph is still providing 'copy', conversation if you like, for this journal. In this issue are excerpts from a letter written by John 'Ichabod' Purcell to Ian Ferguson. 'Ichabod' you may recall appeared in the July issue in a photograph, same submarine sail in the background, taken

during the same period that 'On the Beach' was filmed. To me 'Ichabod' had just been a name of a fellow Handler who had gone off to the U.S. of A to make his fortune. I have never met him and knew nothing about him at all, now he has an identity, a personality and I imagine we would all look forward to meeting him should he ever come to visit us in Australia.

In this issue of 'Slipstream' we see for the first time a women's page 'Women's Business'. It is intended that 'Women's Business' will be a regular feature in our journal starting with a description by Betty Allwood of her trip to Australia to be with her R.N. loan 'tiffie' husband. The following issue will see another story from a woman who made the same long trip but in the opposite direction.

One can only admire these Naval wives and many others like them who left the support of family and friends, separated from them by vast distances, to be with their husbands. I believe it required women of great character and an independent spirit to maintain a marriage and make a home in a strange place. Being alone for many months at a time in a strange place required great determination and presence. Then, all too often a posting and the whole process had to be repeated.

My wife Pat will edit 'Women's Business' and as we are still a couple after 36 years of marriage your contributions can be sent to her at the same address or, for those ladies who would like to speak to her personally, the same telephone number.

## Acknowledgements

I understand there has been some criticism by contributors to 'Slipstream' that their efforts are not acknowledged or used.

I understand from my predecessor that it had been the policy not to acknowledge contributions personally because it was time consuming and costly. I have followed that policy. I do however, when requested, return material to the contributor after it has been used in 'Slipstream'.

Cost constraints limit the size of each edition of 'Slipstream'. Consequently, it is not always possible to use all the available material in a particular edition. Priority is given to those articles which have a degree of immediacy or which the EDITOR considers

may be of greater interest or relevance to our readers. Additionally, consideration is given to maintaining a degree of balance in the type of material presented. Also too many long articles may mean that some will have to wait for later editions and smaller articles which have been stored in readiness for such a contingency are used to fill the gaps. Nothing is thrown away or forgotten.

It has been suggested to me that a list of acknowledgements be included in 'Slipstream'. Commencing with the January edition names of contributors of material received since the previous edition will be tested.



# FLY NAVY

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday 23 November - Family Air Day (all invited to attend)

### Family Air Days 1998

Sunday 25 January

Sunday 29 March

Sunday 14 June

### Saturday 22 November

0900 National Executive Meeting - AJAAS Cinema  
1300 Sausage Sizzle - Museum  
1900 for 1930 FAA Anniversary Dinner at the Museum  
Please let us know early if you are attending. \$30.00 in advance for dinner would be appreciated.

Saturday 29 August FAA 50th Anniversary Dinner at Museum - launch HMAS ALBATROSS Golden Jubilee Book.

Sunday 30 August Family Air Day (free to FAA members) Reunion Programme.

## THE AUSTRALIAN NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM MAJOR SPONSORS

Our grateful appreciation is extended to all our major sponsors. Other Museum sponsors names are acclaimed on the honors boards and donor books at the Museum.

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## Sculptured Presentation Update

The term Monument or Memorial tends to signify something extra special from the past. The project we have undertaken is intended to be aligned to everyone who has, is and will be serving or supporting RAN FAA activities. We first referred to it as 'The Bird on a Stick' project but it is much more than that now so for the purpose of this update and until a better title surfaces, I'll call it the 'Sculptured Presentation'.

As has been said before and I repeat, we are fortunate and very grateful to Hawker de Havilland Australia for having taken up the sponsorship of the project.

To refresh your memories, the presentation consists of an 8 metre diameter Rose Garden with a sculptured Albatross as the centre piece. The Albatross is being sculptured in Stainless Steel, will have a wing span of 6 feet and will be mounted on top of a Granite Pedestal. The foundation for the granite pedestal to rest on will be a large piece of rock we have at the museum which in its own right, has special significance. Our Patron Admiral Sir Victor Smith used it as a dais when he stood and officially opened the Museum.

The Sculptor (Denis Adams) is currently making a wooden model of the centre piece which, he informs me, is a natural progression to the finished item.

50th Anniversary Chairman Neil Ralph and I have selected the bricks and pavers, we have marked out the construction site and the aim is to have the sight ready for the garden to be set and the roses planted early 1998 so that it should look at its best for our reunion. The Shoalhaven City Council has offered (and of course we accepted) to carry out the garden preparation for us at no cost.

The garden will be backed by a flag pole from which we would fly the National flag, the White Ensign and the FAA Flag. The flag pole is in fact, the pole that was originally sited at the White Ensign Club in Bridge Street Nowra so it too has a history.

That is where the Sculptured Presentation project sits at the moment, we are satisfied with arrangements so far and we hope the end result will meet with the approval of every one.

Max Altham, 50th Committee

# From the Museum Director

I have received a lot of enquiries on a wide ranging scope of activities concerning the Museum and also how the Foundation sits with the FAA Association and the Museum Society. I thought therefore it's timely for a data dump. The sequence of the following comments is in no way indicative of priority in the scheme of things, and I am aware that I open the door for much and varied comment and reaction.

## OBJECTIVES

I see the Museum as the centre of the Universe for Fleet Air Arm personnel, Society of Museum Members, the ADF and any other interested person or scholar, as a meeting place for like motivated people to obtain and spread knowledge, to develop our mutual understanding and promote the 'Naval' family that we belonged to and cherished.

Our other major objective is to preserve and present our Naval Aviation heritage. Within stringent financial constraints we are successfully achieving all of this.

We are extremely fortunate to have Bob Geale on our staff who can assist with research projects.

Entry to the Museum for financial members of the FAA, Naval Associations and Society are free. Free entry is also given to members of the Defence Department. A special consideration is given to HMAS ALBATROSS and the Parachute Training School as we provide immediate families of personnel posted there free entry. More on the reasons for this later.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY

When I joined here almost 5 years ago - still serving in the Navy - I was presented with a very small organisation that made a total profit of \$30,000 (approx) a year which was just sufficient to pay the salary of the Administrator. That money was generated from entry fees and a small shop.

The Museum was a repository for 'much loved' items by some and unwanted gifts from others.

The Base provided a great deal of administrative support. My job was to break the umbilical cord to the Base, stand on our own two feet, and develop the Company that was formed 6 June 1990 - two and a half years prior.

Fundraising by the Capital Campaign Committee and local efforts was progressing at an amazing pace. Development of Museum could only be achieved by using these funds.

Operationally, therefore, the Museum has always run at a loss - mainly because of the requirements to develop - but also because we do not receive any funding from any source other than from our members and through our operation. There is no private Museum in the world of our comparable size that survives without additional financial help. Recent international conferences have drawn testimony to that.

In today's climate the Capital Campaign Committee and ourselves are experiencing severe difficulties raising funds to develop and operate. Mr Ray Williams has pledged \$1 million over five years for Stage 4 and \$400,000 has already been paid. The project, however, is just under \$2 million and in order not to go into debt again, we have delayed construction start - until at least year 2000. Mr Williams agreed this year that we could pay off outstanding loans on Stage 3 from his pledge. We are therefore debt free with building assets valued at \$7.5 million and artefacts conservatively valued at over \$100 million.



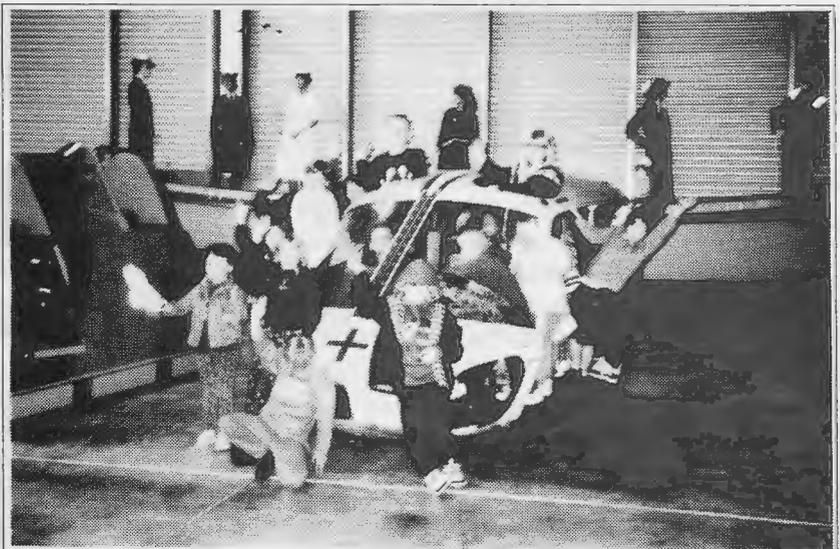
*Modern Sailors helping our Cash Flow*

However, cash flow is our problem and having just experienced one of the worst trading winters on record we are engaging in all manner of entrepreneurial fundraising activities to improve our financial position. Additionally, professional advice is on tap, prices and procedures are constantly under review and without going into too much detail our Staff (me included) elected to reduce to part time employment. (We still work a 7 day week!!!). We must also understand that as we develop and expand we require additional personnel to support the new functions.

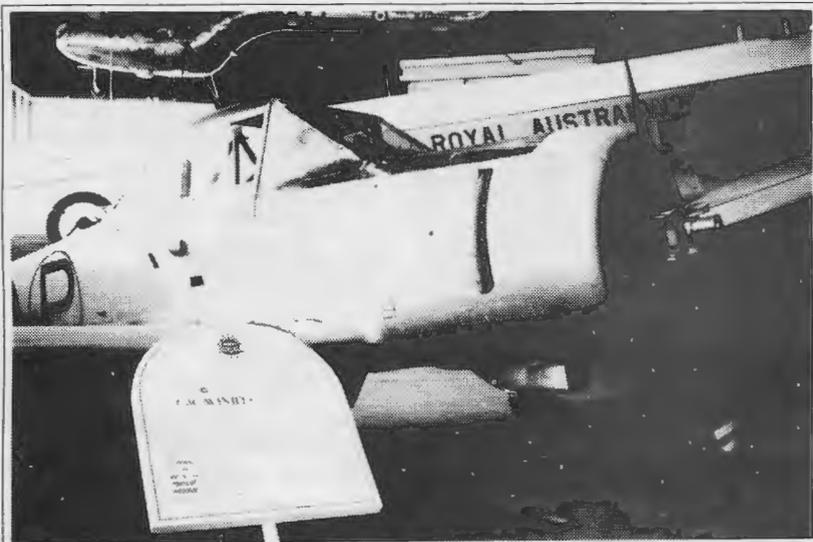
The reason for this detailed discussion is because we have gone to the Fleet Air Arm Association to assist in our fundraising endeavours and you all deserve to know what the situation is if you are being asked to help raise money. I will give a briefing on these matters at the next Federal Council Meeting.

## VOLUNTEERS

Our Volunteer workforce has been hard at work in numerous areas of the Museum helping Windy Geale, the Shop Supervisor, cataloguing stores and moving them to the new storage shed,



*Children enjoying the Aircraft Cockpits*



*Winjeel*

aircraft restoration and of course our Family Air Days. I must confess we miss Les Matterson and Peter Penny over their extraordinary efforts in coordinating the placement of surplus RAN Air Stores. It was indeed a labour of love and I hope that they are enjoying 'retirement'.



*The Museum Loco*

### WORK FOR THE DOLE PROJECT

As you may recall we got in on the-ground floor with the previous Government New Work Opportunities, as a way of saving money for labour. An extremely successful project restoring the Firefly. We followed that up with being the first business to sponsorship the 'Shoalhaven Earning a Living' (SEAL) Program - a local work for the Dole program. We are currently half way through the Coalition Governments first 'work for the Dole' initiative and have six participants working throughout the Museum on various occupations and they are proving to be a beneficial workforce for the Museum. The objective of this program is to build up work place confidence, esteem and enthusiasm in preparation for long term employment - and it is working. We have applied to be our own case managers for 10 long term unemployed from 1 November onwards.

None of this would have been possible without a dedicated supervisor. He (Don Parkinson) has been

sponsored by Mr Ray Williams for 3 years, for which we are extremely grateful.

**PROJECTS** - Our workers and volunteers have been engaged on the following:-

**CHILDRENS COCKPITS** - The SEAL's successfully modified the Gannet and Squirrel cockpits and upgraded the Tracker. We now have three first class aircraft cockpits that children (and adults) can sit in and become instant Tom Cruises. They are extremely popular.

### MUSEUM TRAIN

The Train has been completely stripped, modified and repainted. It is now a safe, mechanically sound and an attractive asset, that provides a great deal of fun on Air Days and special occasions such as Birthdays.

### MUSEUM DISPLAY PANTECHNICON

The 'Van' as we affectionately call it has been completely renovated over the last six months and all our grateful appreciation is extended to Murray MacLean for all his hard work. We have been on display at Platypus - thank you Don McLean for your assistance in the shop - and are currently preparing to participate in Sydney Navy Week 18/19 October. The organisers of the Avalon Air Show have again offered us a free display space and we hope to stay at Point Cook again. The Van is a money spinner and a great promotion for the Museum and the RAN.

### DISPLAYS

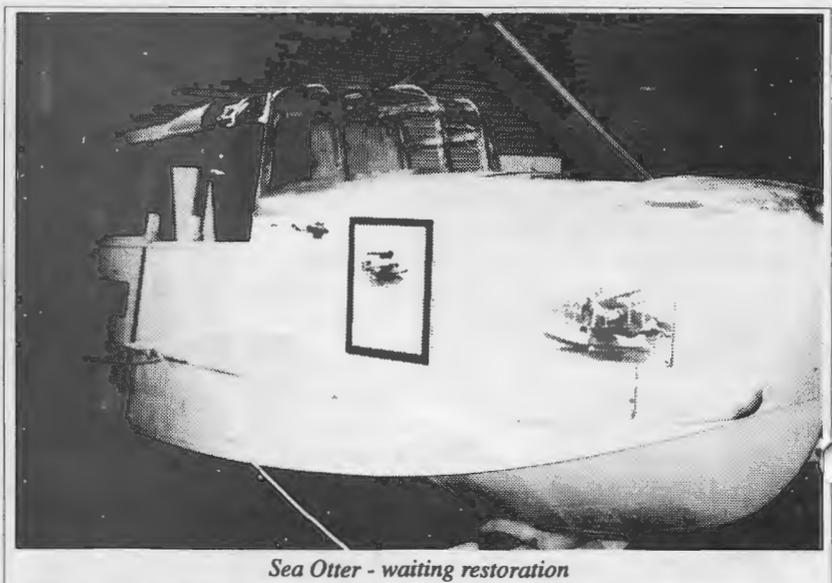
Memories of the Old Museum is progressing slowly, mainly because we are borrowing the photographs for the FAA History project.

### AIRCRAFT - RESTORATION

**BELL 47 HELICOPTER** - Ray Larder and Ron Ross have nearly completed this project which is to be suspended from the roof alongside the airfield (side) wall of the Museum. We have done a deal for a new bubble, and that has to be fitted and the 'MASH' paint job completed to finish the project. We need some mannequins for the aircrew display.

**SCOUT HELICOPTER** - PO John Johnson is steadily progressing with the Scout. Most of the engine and transmission parts are in the Base workshops being

restored -we should begin to see some progress on this very important project soon.



*Sea Otter - waiting restoration*



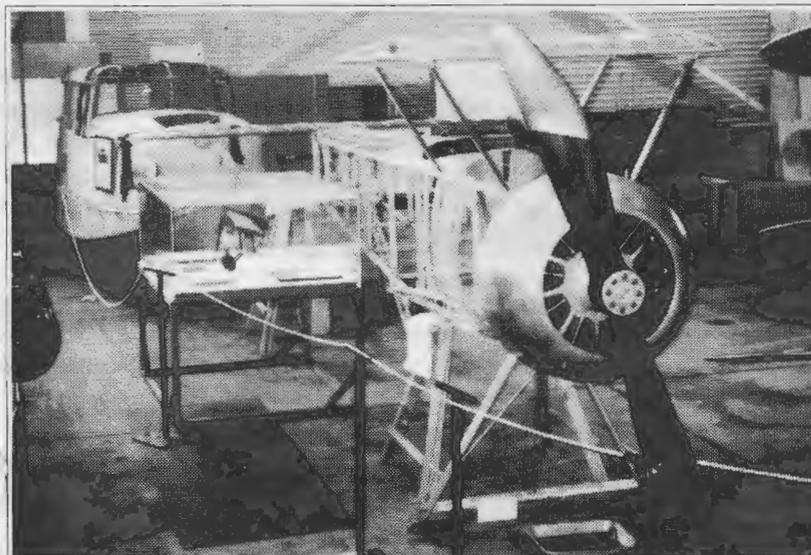
*UHIB from Heathcote Inn. Note Auster on the pole in the background.*



*Melbourne Gun - WWI Vintage*

**FIREFLY** - The Firefly is all but complete;- the cockpit has yet to be worked on and the rudder is still up at RAAF RICHMOND - It will be the spare for the flying Firefly of the Historic Flight.

**WINGEEL TRAINER** - We have received some spare parts but are still outstanding too many items to commence this project yet. We are in the process of wheeling and dealing for the remaining items.



*Sopwith Pup - a truly labour of love*

**SEA OTTER** - The Shell Company of Australia have donated \$30,000 towards constructing a display that utilises our Sea Otter hull and cockpit. A design has been developed by our artist, David Marshall, to paint a full size Sea Otter for this purpose. Before this project can commence the Sea Otter hull requires a complete strip down and restoration.

### **UHIB**

Members may have noticed that our UHIB Iroquois helicopter has been missing from the Heathcote Inn in Sydney's south. The Albatross Rugby club did all the work to put it there as a promotion for the Museum, and also to register a fond link between the base sports teams and this watering hole. A popular place to stop after Navy sports fixtures held in Sydney.

The deal was that should the pub change hands we would get our loaned UHIB back. It is now in the Museum and it is our intention to place it on its pole outside the front of the Museum.

### **MELBOURNE SHIPS GUN**

Many of you will know the early history of Naval Aviation. We have been fortunate enough to have received on long term loan from Navy the WWI forward gun from HMAS MELBOURNE (one). In 1916 trials were carried out on these cruisers (Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney) to operate aircraft to counter the Zeplin threat and to a lesser extent to be used in gunfire support role. A 16 foot platform was constructed over the top of the gun and early biplane aircraft were operated by the Royal Naval Air Service. This particular gun was recovered from Norfolk Island in a very sorry state, completely renovated by Navy and placed on display at Sydney Fleet Base. Now under cover it is our intention to build a replica 'flight-deck' over the gun, complete with ground crew and 'flight-deck' personnel. It is intended to place our replica Sopwith Pup on the platform in the take off position

and surround the display with a historical collection of memorabilia. Should any of you out there have some keepsakes of this era and would like to donate them to this cause we would be extremely grateful.

This display will commence our historical sequence of the story of Australian Naval Aviation in due course.

Our grateful appreciation is extended to the RAN for this loan and also to the Motor Transport Section for carrying out this difficult transfer from Sydney. It was intended to place the gun in the Museum display hangar adjacent to where the Melbourne Ships Cutter is now - to commence our display of aircraft etc. However, as the gun weighed 23 tones and the new hangar floor concrete was not stressed to take that sort of concentrated weight we had to have the gun positioned on the old dummy deck on the other side of the Hangar. Future tour guides note - our tours will have to be conducted anti-clockwise . . . !

### **SOPWITH PUP**

The Sydney team of volunteer aircraft builders and engineers operating out of their garages have progressed this project at amazing pace and it is indeed a labour of love. It is now rapidly becoming to look like an aircraft with the tail plane fixed, engine and propeller in place, and undercarriage ready to receive the wheels. Currently work is progressing on the wings.

When completed it will make a magnificent display over the Melbourne gun.

### **WHIRLWIND HELICOPTER**

The Whirlwind (ex RAN) Helicopter is to be turned into a childrens module. An enormous effort to cut out the rust and completely strip down is required.

### **WESSEX HELICOPTER**

We have two Wessex out on loan for restoration to which we are supplying spare parts. One is at RMIT in Melbourne, the other is at the Coloundra Aviation Museum in Queensland. A third Wessex has been prepared for suspending from the hangar roof. Two other wessex are being placed undercover in the stores shed for long term preservation. The sixth will remain on display on the hangar floor.

### **GANNET**

There have been investigations by Bill Kerr and his team to engine run the Gannet -for the 1998 Reunion. Unfortunately at the moment we do not have the space undercover to spread the wings for this purpose. Hopefully, next year space will become available. It would be a great achievement and produce many a nostalgic tear if we could have the Gannet taxi at our 1998 Reunion.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES AT THE MUSEUM**

### **FUNDRAISING**

In this issue of the combined Slipstream and Fly Navy, we have included a list of our major donors. Our grateful appreciation is extended to all our benefactors as we would not have progressed this far without your generous contributions.

Raising additional funds is currently extremely difficult - but we still have pledges coming in from past endeavours, notably among these as previously mentioned is Mr Ray Williams, many other pledges and locally the Shoalhaven Council, Manildra, Jim Caldwell and the Dairy Cooperative.

Grants have been applied for by both the Capital Campaign Committee and the Museum - of 8 applications only one was successful and that was for the history project. An extremely demoralising situation. Don McLean, doing a Masters in Museum studies, has offered to assist in this regard.

### **STAGE 4**

We have been reviewing whether we really need a Theatre - whether we can afford to operate it, and if so should it be multi functional. We have come to the conclusion at this stage that we should develop a theatre that can also be used for specialised displays. We did look at placing the Korean War display there but it is not big enough and there is insufficient room to expand the building.

### **KOREAN WAR DISPLAY**

We have commenced planning and fundraising to install a Korean War display to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in 2002. The Capital Campaign Committee have approached Korean interests in this country for sponsorship but with no avail as yet. Watch this space.

### **AIRCRAFT ON A POLE IN NOWRA**

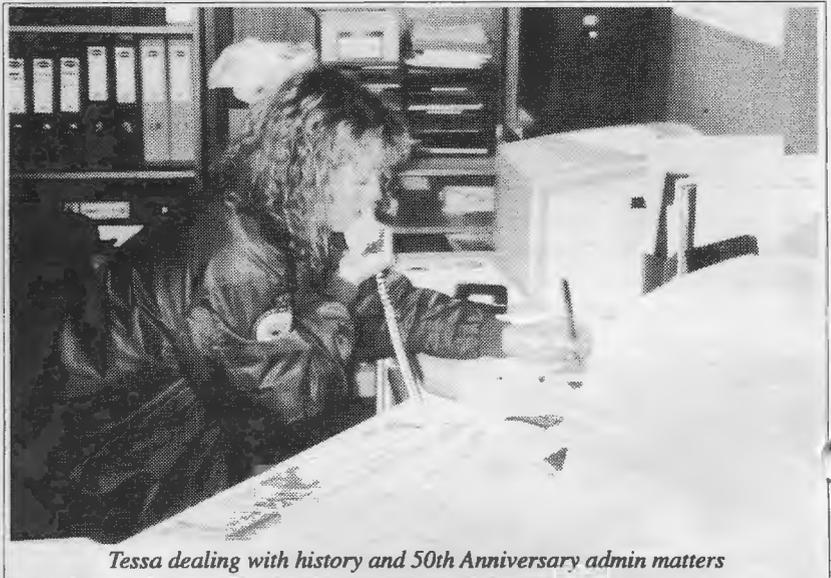
We have been in contact with Council to float a proposal to erect a Tracker aircraft (from the Museum) on a pole on the approach to Nowra, south side of the bridge. HMAS ALBATROSS has now taken the lead in this massive project. It is most unlikely that it will be in place before the reunion next year, because of

financial constraints.

### **MEMORIAL - 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

As mentioned elsewhere in this periodical the FAA Association is organising the establishment of a memorial garden (adjacent to the Museum car park) to commemorate the Jubilee of HMAS ALBATROSS and the Fleet Air Arm.

### **THE FAA HISTORY BOOK PROJECT - SITREP**



*Tessa dealing with history and 50th Anniversary admin matters*

"Flying Stations" - A story of Naval Aviation is progressing steadily and we should meet the deadline of October 1998.

The writing of this book has not been without its problems as I alluded to in the last issue of Slipstream/Fly Navy. Since then I have received many and varied comments and especially the concern that in our haste to meet the deadline we may not produce a comprehensive book. In response I think an explanation of events is in order, especially to all the contributors and pre-purchasers of the book.

Mr Bob Nicholls did not proceed as the author because he would not change his political history to a more social work with less denigration and controversy, as required by the Committee. Fair enough! He put in a great deal of research work and will be acknowledged in the final book for his part.

We attempted to amend the work ourselves but that was not successful and eventually sought assistance from Fred Lane and his wife - both authors of various books and journals. They agreed to drop everything they were doing and revamp the book; That situation has been in progress now since July of this year. The task has been gigantic, notwithstanding the valuable effort by Bob Nichols, because the feel and drama of the Fleet Air Arm had to be injected, and a greater contribution from sailors was required. Researching and balancing personal stories to fit into the story line and checking authenticity has been a mind boggling job. Especially as some good dits have arrived only recently. Prioritising has been an interesting job as we obviously cannot place all 300+ stories in the 20,000 words allocated for this aspect of the book.

We are researching our history but do not know yet whether it will be sufficiently comprehensive to call a history. We have preferred to call it 'the story' of Naval Aviation and achieve the right balance to appeal to the broad spectrum of our fraternity - from our wives experiences, the maintainers and support groups, to aircrew and of our heroes. We are striving for the best effort, and if we do not achieve a product to our satisfaction we will delay the launch accordingly.

Currently, with our main researcher Windy Geale away for 6

weeks and Fred and (Gerry) his wife off to the US in late October we have our backs to the wall. There are still hundreds of outstanding facts and statements to authenticate, personal stories to review and precis; and photographs to locate, title and sort. It is almost a full time task for our small team.

ensuring that these events are a success. The Museum Staff also deserve a pat on the back for giving up their Sundays at home with their families so enthusiastically. Their loyalty and keenness to assist in every area of the Museum has been outstanding and we are extremely fortunate.

## RETAILING

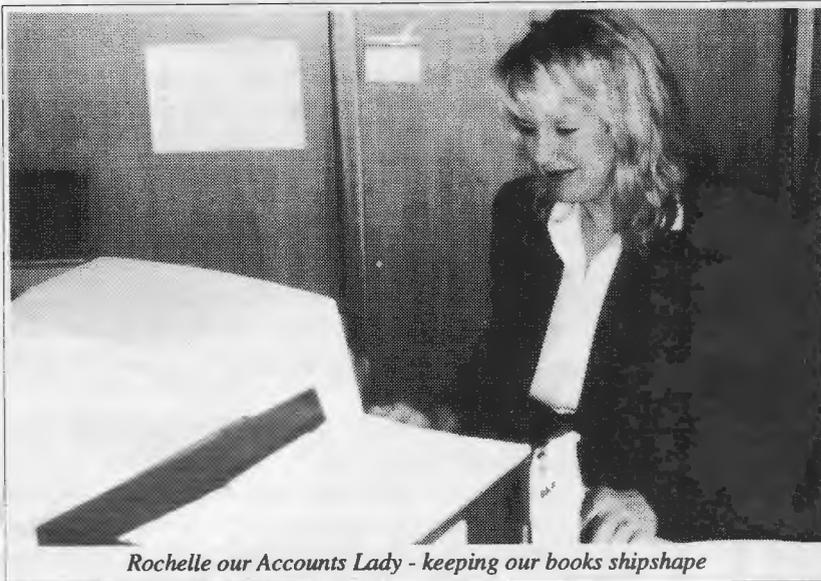
We have taken over the sale of FAAA merchandise and are currently developing the following items for the reunion: Baseball caps, Mugs, Port and glass sets, biros, writing/note pads, ladies silk scarves, wineglasses, and polo shirts. A brochure will be out soon but most of these items will be on sale from this December at the Museum.

## JOY FLIGHTS

Don't forget if you are visiting this area and would like a helicopter joy flight we can take the booking or you can ring Aerowasp direct on (02) 4423 3575.

## 50TH REUNION ADMINISTRATION

The computer administration for the 50th Reunion is being run by Tessa (02 4421 1920) and seems to be progressing well. Registrations are coming in steadily from across the world. Please register as early as possible in order that we can progress with our financial program commitments.



*Rochelle our Accounts Lady - keeping our books shipshape*

Financial support for this project is also of concern and changing authors/editors etc. did not help. Fortunately Tim Johnson our Company Honorary Solicitor provided his legal services free to sort out change of contracts etc.

We still need sailors stories and humour - plus photographs to support this if you have them.

We'll get there and you'll have a book that you will be proud of.

## "HMAS ALBATROSS" - Celebrating the Golden Jubilee 1948 - 1998

This is another Book being produced by the Museum to commemorate the Jubilee of HMAS ALBATROSS which as you all know occurs on 31 August 1998. The book will detail the history of Nowra airfield from its early beginnings through to the present day and will be funded by Congratulatory Advertisements from all the companies that have had anything to do with the Base or the Museum over the past 50 years. It is being produced as a fundraiser for the Museum in soft and hardback and will hopefully be launched on the 50th birthday dinner at the Museum in August.

If you have any contributions - stories, photographs that we can use for this project please forward or drop them in to me. I will ensure your photographs are returned to you as soon as possible. There will be no pre-sales of this as we do not want to cause confusion with 'Flying Stations'.

## FAMILY AIR DAYS

Family Air Days are becoming part of the South Coast scene and the last event held 24 August was no exception. Despite awful weather - freezing cold - the day was a great success with the fewer visitors spending up big in the shop and food outlets. Once again our sincere appreciation is extended to the FAA Association volunteers who worked like slaves on the day. They received a well earned 50% of the profits for the NSW Division of the Association for all their hard work.

Our gratitude is also extended to all the aircrew, other volunteers and RAN Reserves who put so much effort into



*Chief of Navy - Vice Admiral Chalmers at a Museum Function recently.*

## IN SUMMARY

Rest assured that the Australian Naval Aviation Museum is here to stay. We will overcome cash flow problems and develop. We are continually seeking expert professional advice and reacting accordingly. Next year will be a great year for the Fleet Air Arm, young and old and we look forward to seeing you all.

*Kind regards*

*Mike Lehan Museum Director*

## THE MIRROR

Each year my mirror seems much older  
Somewhat duller and a fraction colder  
The glass which always gleamed and twinkled  
Now appears all scratched and wrinkled  
Appears more blotchy, tired and droopy  
Confused and haggard, dazed and loopy  
Sadder, slower, grimmer, glummer  
I think that I've been sold a bummer.

# 50th Anniversary Update

## REGISTRATIONS

1. Registrations are slowly arriving. We would appreciate an early decision and commitment as we have to purchase our Reunion 'giveaways' with this funding.
2. Registrations total 105 (250 attendees) to date, but we have been inundated with enquiries world wide. We'll just have to wait and see, but the scene is set for a grand slam reunion.

## REUNION REGISTRATION FEE

3. The Registration fee of \$35.00 per family is to pay for administration (paper, Postage, etc) and one set of goodies (whether you pay \$35 for a family or come on your own), transport to and from local accommodation throughout, tea and coffee etc at the AGM. If there is any balance remaining - and that will depend on numbers - we will use that money on offset tokens - meal or beer chit. There is no intention of making a profit on Registration Fees.
4. The contents of our Reunion 'giveaway' treasure chest will remain a secret until the day.

## REGISTRATION FORMS

5. These forms can be used for booking events or just registration - we will automatically send a further form on registration acknowledgements/receipt.

## CALLING ALL EX FAA PERSONNEL

6. We are still attempting to locate as many ex FAA personnel as possible - whether or not they are in the Association - to attend. Please keep spreading the word.

## REUNION POSTER

7. After many meetings and proposals the full colour reunion poster has been approved by the committee and will be ready to hand to delegates at the next Federal Council Meeting in November. If you have a spot to hang a poster to promote the Reunion would you please contact your State FAA Secretary to bid for posters. Our aim is to spread the posters across Australia in shop windows etc, for maximum exposure.

## PROGRAM - POINTS RAISED

### PROGRAM COSTINGS

8. We have received many comments and queries regarding our costing of events. These were based on late 1998 prices and knowing we had to pay commercial rates -(The Navy have gone over very firmly to the user pays principle). However, having said that we have reviewed prices and comments on these aspects follow.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

9. We have received numerous questions regarding the reunion and I will do my best to clear the air as follows:-  
**REGISTRATION** - The \$35.00 registration fee covers singles or families and only one give away pack whether single or family.  
**DIVISIONS** - Seats will be provided for those who wish to go on board and watch - the FAAA will not be marching.  
**COCKTAIL PARTY** - Navy will provide grog - we pay our way, and the Museum will provide food. \$15.00 is a fair price for food and drink.  
**FAAA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING** - to be held in the

Parachute Training School. Tea/Coffee etc will be paid for out of registration fees.

**BASE/MUSEUM TOURS** - We need volunteers to act as guides - currently we only have Max Altham, Derek Whyte, Don Parkinson, Neil Ralph and myself and we all are involved in the Reunion administration and coordination. Tutorials will be available.

**BBQ LUNCH** - \$15.00. Depending on attendees - the more we have the cheaper the cost - we may offer a beer or meal chit for \$2.00 eg. Watch this space.

**MINI BRANCH REUNIONS** - are and should be organised independently - meeting at RSL's etc. The bar at the Museum will effectively be open every day but Mini Reunions held there would have no privacy.

**DOLPHIN WATCH CRUISES** - on Jervis Bay - excellent value as we have negotiated 1997 prices.

**Friday 30 Oct** - Coach will depart the Museum at 1345 for Huskisson - boat departs the jetty at 1430 - if you are making your own way there. You can attend the BBQ at the Museum first if you wish, but you will have to steam. \$25.00 includes afternoon tea.

**Saturday 31 Oct** - Coach departs for Huskisson from Stuart Place in Nowra at 1215. Boat departs jetty 1300 for those wishing to arrive by own transport. \$40.00 includes lunch.

We have booked our own boat on Friday, but Saturday is a routine event for the general public.

**KANGAROO VALLEY/BERRY TOURS** - \$30.00 with lunch to the trendy shops (and pubs) of Kangaroo Valley and Berry. Two days - please specify on your booking whether you wish to go on Friday or Saturday. Coach will depart Nowra - Stuart Place - 1100 each day, returning approximately 1700. **THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY BALL** - The price of \$50.00 a head for this event was based on having two bands and the need to decorate 'A' Hangar. This is an ALBATROSS sponsored event and there may well be scope to offer free drinks on arrival - or something. We are working on it. The latest info is that the Base does not want to stage it in 'A' hangar and the Museum has been approached to host it. As we want the Museum in 'presentation' mode for the Reunion we really cannot set up for 1000 guests in the main display hangar. I rather suspect that this event will be staged ashore.

**SPRING FESTIVAL (Saturday 31 Oct)** - includes the Freedom of Entry March and float parade. We will be marching as an Association and Reunion Group behind Navy on a shortened route, to culminate at the Nowra Showground and be entertained at a Civic reception - sponsored by the Shoalhaven City Council. It is hoped to tow some selected historic aircraft (from the Museum) in the parade.

**FAA HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH** - Have you bought your book yet? We need prepaid orders as we have to pay for 3000 books up front. To date we have sold 350 books.

**NAVY RACE DAY** - The \$10.00 fee covers entry and smallie eats. There is a canteen there for a more substantial meal if required.

**EVENING BBQ MUSEUM** - \$18.00 covers the cost for out of hours staff. The Function Centre will be open with a full bar. Nibbles will be provided.

**ALBATROSS AIR DAY (Sunday 1 Nov)** - The Museum has been given the full franchise for catering on Air Day and for selling

Memorabilia, with 10% of nett profit going to the Ships Welfare. We intend to subcontract our catering but will retain sole souvenir rights. We will also be selling the HMAS ALBATROSS Jubilee souvenir book. We will be seeking volunteers to assist us in this task. Entry to Air Day is free.

**GOLF DAY (Monday 2 Nov) - \$20.00.** The Club have reduced green fees from \$18.00 to \$12.00 per head. The \$8.00 remaining will be used for trophies - if there are sufficient takers for a tournament.

**BOWLS DAY (Monday 2 Nov) - \$20.00.** The Club estimate that it will cost in the order of \$10.00 per head all up. In order that we do not have to change 6000 brochures already printed, we will continue to charge \$20 per head and give a \$10.00 voucher to be spent at the Bowling Club on registration.

**SYDNEY TOURS - All day tours to Sydney, if sufficient demand.** We will try and organise a visit to the Olympic site at Homebush.

**SOUTH COAST TOURS - Berry, Jervis Bay, Creswell, Green Patch, Huskisson - if sufficient interest.**

#### ACCOMMODATION

10. Accommodation number 1800 024 261. Do not leave your booking requirements too late.

#### SOUVENIRS

11. We are building up souvenir stocks at the Museum and some items are on sale now. We are hopeful to get a brochure out in the near future.

#### PROFITS

12. It is not our intention to make profits out of the Reunion program. Any cost saving that can be passed on, will be.

#### COMMEMORATIVE STAMP AND FIRST DAY COVER

13. The stamp will come on the market on 14 April 1998. The First Day Cover will be launched on the 50th Anniversary of HMAS ALBATROSS.

I hope these matters assist you.

*Best wishes*

*Mike Lehan 50th Committee Secretary 25 September 1997*

## SOMETIMES I CAN'T REMEMBER

Just a line to say I'm living  
That I'm not among the dead  
Though I'm getting more forgetful  
And more mixed up in the head.  
For sometimes I can't remember  
When I stand at the foot of the stair  
If I must go up for something  
Or I've just come down from there.  
And before the fridge, so often  
My poor mind is filled with doubt  
Have I just put food away, or  
Have I come to take some out.  
And there are times when it is dark out  
With my nightcap on my head  
I don't know if I'm retiring  
Or just getting out of bed.  
So, if it's my turn to write you  
There's no need in getting sore  
I may think that I have written  
and I don't want to be a bore.  
So remember, I do love you  
And I wish that you were here  
But now, it's nearly mail time  
So I must say goodbye, my dear.  
There I stood before the mailbox,  
With a face so very red  
Instead of mailing you my letter,  
I had opened it instead.

## Blimp Over Nowra

The appearance of the Whitmans Blimp in the skies over Nowra came as a big surprise for many residents.

The bright yellow airship stopped over at HMAS Albatross for a refuelling and replenishment visit on the way to Melbourne to cover the Bledisloe Cup Rugby Union match between Australia and New Zealand at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Arriving on Thursday evening, crew members were given a taste of renowned Naval hospitality and Shane Watkiss, Whitmans Blimp public relations officer, said, "we were really happy with Albatross; the people were very helpful and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit."

On Friday morning the airship flew over HMAS Creswell as part of the Naval officer graduation parade, before heading off for Melbourne with a stop at Merimbula on the way.

Shane said it takes about five to six hours to fly from



Bankstown to Nowra, at a speed of about 43 knots with a tail wind, or 20 knots without.

The airship, which arrived in pieces from the United States in 1996 carries 69,000 cubic feet of helium and is powered by two 72 horsepower engines.

In recent weeks the blimp has hovered over the Australia and France Rugby test match and various Swans games at the

Sydney Cricket Ground.

A crew of 12 fly with the Blimp and Shane said they all live out of a suitcase continuously flying half way around Australia from one week to the next.

"We don't know where home is any more," he said. Jim Unkles, public relations officer with HMAS Albatross, said the crew of the Blimp were most welcome at Albatross. "Still I didn't find the chocolates," he said.

"Maybe next time."

# Welfare Report

## Gold Card Holders - Caution

Veterans who are in receipt of a Service Pension and a Gold Card for medical treatment should be aware that if they intend to return to the work force they run the risk of losing both the Service Pension and their Gold Card.

## Internet

D.V.A. now has information about its services available electronically on the Internet's World Wide Web.

If you have access to a computer that is linked to the Internet you can find information on Pension Rates, Budget information, health issues and media releases.

DVA Internet address is:

HTTP://WWW.DVA.gov.au

## Prostate Health

DVA has published a book 'You and Your Prostate'. An overview that provides information on prostate health and management.

This book is FREE and if you would like a copy please contact your nearest VAN or DVA office.

## Carer Service Pension

A Carer who provides constant care and attention to a severely disabled Veteran may be eligible for a Carer Service Pension. This Pension is subject to the income and assets test. Your Carer cannot be paid this pension if he or she is already receiving another DVA Pension or a Social Security Pension. Contact your nearest VAN or DVA office for further information

## Transport for Treatment

Gold Card holders and White Card holders with accepted disabilities may receive assistance with transport for treatment.

A car (and driver) will only be approved if your treating doctor certifies that you are unable to use public transport or a private vehicle. For travel to certain treatment services you will need to meet specific medical criteria.

## Temporary Incapacity Allowance

This allowance is paid to you if you cannot work because of treatment of an accepted condition and you are not eligible for the loss of earnings allowance or the temporarily totally incapacitated (TTI) rate of pension.

## Rates Drop on DSH Home Loans

Interest on Defence Service Home Loans will fall to 5.63 per cent from January 5 to keep pace with reductions in civilian housing market rates.

Alex Stevens ('Box Head')



## TO THE EDITOR

I am a regular receiver of Slipstream and look forward to my copy as it helps me to keep in touch.

In the April Slipstream John Gunn had an article about Firefly 227. I have 2 photos taken at RANAS of 227 which was badly damaged when I RATOG rocket came adrift putting the plane into a spin.

Enclosed in this letter are 3 photos which is part of 100 collected during my service in FAA between 1952 to 1958 (you may keep them). Thought they may be of interest.

Sincerely, Bob Jones, Railton, Tas. R47555



## The Navy Latrine

(To the tune of BEGIN THE BEGUINE)

My job is to clean the Navy latrine  
The sort of latrine that everyone uses  
The paper's okay, on each side the news is  
To read when you've been to my latrine.

I scrub it all night, I scrub it all day  
To keep it that way, just how you'd expect it  
And when it gets high, I just disinfect it  
Terrifically clean is my latrine.

I scrub it again at four in the morning  
My buddies all join in, we even polish the chain  
And there we are scrubbing away together  
All with one endeavour  
We'll get out that stain.

What motions divine  
What ruptures I've seen  
When crowds come along  
And we find our efforts were wasted  
They don't seem to care, don't care where they place it  
You see what I mean, in my latrine.

If a man is a freak and must leak like a creek  
Make him pay  
I've placed pots for the clots, who take shots in all directions  
I've sand-papered the place where the base can establish  
connections  
But it all goes unseen in my latrine  
Oh I can't keep it clean, that bloody latrine  
Though the seats are all neat and complete with wooden edges  
But they still get it wet  
Like an artist's palette round the edges.

But I am aloof  
They can't reach the roof  
That's the one spot that's clean  
In my latreeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!



# TO THE EDITOR

As a supporter of the Museum I have been receiving Slipstream and thoroughly enjoying the read.

## Obituaries

### Lieutenant-Commander Myles Osborn

Lieutenant-Commander Myles Osborn, DSO, OBE, DSC, wartime naval pilot died on May 2 aged 82. He was born in Lytham St Annes on December 15, 1914.

It was while flying a Swordfish with 829 Squadron from the aircraft carrier Formidable that Myles Osborn took part in the Battle of Cape Matapan on March 28, 1941, for which he was awarded the DSC. Admiral Cunningham, naval C-in-C in the Mediterranean, had learnt from Ultra decrypts that an Italian force, led by the fast battleship Vittorio Veneto had sailed out to attack British convoys.

Cunningham intended that an advance squadron of four Allied cruisers should try to lure this force towards his three battleships, which were naturally immensely superior in gunpower. At 1500 hours, just as the Italian cruisers and battleship were assailing Cunningham's cruisers, 829's five attack aircraft - three Albacores and Osborn's two Swordfish spotted the Italian battleship and attacked with torpedoes.

The intervention was decisive. Osborn led his sub-flight through heavy ack-ack fire towards the Veneto, his slow biplane 'Stringbags' (Swordfish) drawing enemy fire. Although his torpedo missed, one faster Albacore hit the target close to her bows and the Italian battleship limped back to port, taking with her a cruiser escort which might have been more usefully employed in the subsequent engagement.

At dusk 289's aircraft returned and found and crippled the heavy cruiser Pola. She was later sunk by British destroyers. In a night action, the Pola's two sister cruisers, which had been sent to her aid, and two Italian destroyers were sunk. After the victory of Cape Matapan the Italian fleet ceased to pose a threat in the Mediterranean.

Osborn's father Ashby had been ranching in Canada when the First World War broke out, but he crossed the Atlantic and joined the Wiltshire Regiment, one of Kitchener's first 100,000 volunteers. He was killed in May 1917 in Mesopotamia.

Brought up by his mother Marjorie, who never remarried, George Myles Thomas Osborn passed through the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth between 1927 and 1931. His mother lost her savings in the Great Crash but the college chaplain was her brother and he paid for her son to complete his training. After serving in the fleet as a midshipman, Osborn was recommended for a course in flying at Greenwich and subsequently served in various aircraft carriers.

At the outset of war 'Woozle' Osborn (the nickname was a reference to a favourite passage in Winnie the Pooh) was with 829 Squadron RN in the Mediterranean, first in Ark Royal, then Illustrious. By the time of Matapan, he was one of the Navy's most experienced pilots and a natural leader. Attacking convoys and shipping supplying Axis forces in North Africa, Osborn believed in dropping his torpedo as close as 250 yards from the enemy and always from the regulation 60 feet. This called for rare flying skills and considerable sang-froid. Flying at around 90mph, the Swordfish offered a slow, bulky and combustible target for enemy anti-aircraft gunfire.

During the Battle of Crete, Formidable was badly damaged by Stukas and she was sent to the USA for repairs. No 829 Squadron was disbanded, Osborn and four other experienced pilots joining

I was, some years ago, Hon. Sec. of the AFAA Officers Assoc. but dropped out of the scene some years ago.

I was S.O. Cash in 'Melbourne' from 1956-1958 and the Sussex in 1974-75.

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed Obituaries for my cousin LCDR Myles Osborn, a distinguished RN Aviator.

A great guy according to my son who stayed with him in Spain some years ago.

All the best with 'Slipstream' - keep up the good work.

*Yours, Ron Osborn, Cmdr. RAN Rtd., Wollstonecraft, NSW*

PS: I appreciate there is no RAN connection!

*Article from 'The Times' Monday May 12, 1997*

830 Squadron in Malta, at the beginning of June 1941. His first foray from Malta was a night attack against a large ship, steaming south at nine knots with all its lights burning brilliantly. Osborn spotted the red cross on her hull which denoted a hospital ship. Nevertheless he was ordered to attack - intelligence had reported that Axis hospital ships might be carrying troops and arms. The independently minded Osborn did not consider the target fair game and deliberately aimed his torpedo to miss astern. The squadron war diary blamed such poor marksmanship on 'indecision'.

Over the next few months Osborn led numerous attacks on Axis ships, destroying at least 50,000 tons of enemy shipping carrying cargoes for Rommel's troops in North Africa. This earned him a DSO.

One night he found and sank an enemy merchant ship of 5,000 tons and a destroyer alongside her with a single torpedo, despite appalling visibility and a dense destroyer smoke screen. His repeated close range attacks on tankers and warships within Tripoli and Syracuse harbours called for the utmost skill and daring, through intense AA fire and a dense balloon barrage.

Osborn's luck ran out on the night of November 11, 1941, thanks to the stubbornness of a new squadron CO who insisted that the course he had set would lead his four Swordfish back to Malta. Instead it resulted in their running out of fuel and ditching off the coast of Sicily. One crewmember was killed. Osborn intended to overpower the Italian coastal patrol that fished them out but found he had lost the use of his legs through exhaustion. Osborn was incarcerated first in Italy, then - after Mussolini's overthrow - in Germany. He made numerous escape attempts, being desperate to get back to the fight. He found that a persistent obstacle was the senior British Officer; he was "like a senior prefect sucking up to the Head" - in this case the German Commandant - he later recalled.

Osborn retired from the navy as a lieutenant-commander in 1947, and joined the Colonial Service, serving first in Sierra Leone, then in Singapore and lastly for ten years in Malaya, where he was a District Officer. During the Emergency, he was involved in counter-insurgency, particularly with ensuring the loyalty of rural populations.

After independence he left the Colonial Service and in 1963 was employed under the Colombo Plan (the Commonwealth initiative of 1950 to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific) as 'Hill Tribes adviser' to the Laotian Government, increasingly threatened by the Communist Pathet Lao. In fact he reported to M16. He was an expert on communist infiltration; his Malayan experience had taught him that the 'hearts and minds' and the allegiance of the people were crucial.

For his work with M16 Osborn was appointed OBE. He retired to Spain in 1971. Myles Osborn was a short, forceful man with an impatient intelligence who dominated a room through charm and wit. His undiplomatically boozy parties in Bientane were legendary. Only a succession of strokes in his last years reduced his physical and mental energy.

He married Pamela Dolman, nee Sturges, the widow of an RAF officer, in 1947. He is survived by her and by their daughter.



# TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed, Thanks for sending those extra copies of Slipstream. I am going to ring a few of the old and bolts this weekend and see if they are interested in joining the FAAA and if they are I will send them a copy of Slipstream with advice that they should write to their local Secretary.

I am enclosing a photo taken outside C2 mess, which was transport drivers' accommodation. This has Barry Fallon in it. There is one or two of those in the photo that I'm not sure about. Maybe you can remember their names or know someone who can.

Bob, it seems likely that some copies of Slipstream will find their way into the hands of others who are not in the FAAA. It may induce those others to join if there was a page in every edition of Slipstream which included a tear off application for membership coupon to fill out and send off to the local Secretary.

I thought the last issue of Slipstream was great. Keep up the good work.

Regards,

*Buncha' Keys, Biggera Waters, Qld.*



*Left to Right - Lower Front: Roy Wellings. Front: Ben Harwood, ?, Hank Matheson. Middle: George Wilcox, ?, Lindsay McDonald, Brian Parrote, Many Martin. Back: Lofty Stonehouse, Barry Fallon, Icabod Purcell.*

Dear Ed, First of all I would like to thank you for the copies of Slipstream that have been sent to me in the last year. Please find enclosed my membership renewal fee of 20 dollars. Could you please let me know when they are due, not sure if there is a fixed annual date for everybody to renew by or if it is just 12 monthly from joining. If it is the former apologies for any inconvenience.

My chum and I who is also a member have plans to come out to Nowra for the reunion in 98. Are you aware of any other UK residents who have the same idea. We are both looking forward very much to the trip and renewing our acquaintance with Nowra (town and air station) and most of all friends of a long time ago as we go back to 21st CAG and Sydney ??? Group days (need I say more). One friend in particular was an armourer 'Connie' Constantine. Perhaps you could let me know any news of him. The armourers contingent of the Association may well be able to help there. The two of us coming out are both ex bombheads and I am also a member of our own armourers association here in the UK. It may be of interest (tho I expect they are already known) cos I got them from a 'Daily Orders' printed sometime en route back to Australia from Korea in Feb/Mar 52.

Expenditure of ammo between 3 Oct.51 and 25 Jan.52 Bombs dropped 1,162, 3" Rockets fired 8,665, 20m/m Fired 571,218 and

this was from a total of 2,366 Sorties flown during the time in the operational area.

Looking forward to hearing from you shortly and of course meeting you in the longer term.

*Best wishes,*

*Don Quartermaine, 160 Chichester Road,  
North End, Portsmouth, Po2, DAH., UK*

**We traines hard  
but it seemed that every time we  
were beginning to form up into teams  
we would be reorganised  
I was to learn in later life that we  
tend to meet any new situation by  
reorganising;  
and a wonderful method it can be for  
creating the illusion of progress -  
while producing confusion,  
inefficiency and demoralisation.  
Petronius 210 B.C.**



# TO THE EDITOR

South Coast Register, Wednesday, July 23, 1997.

## HMAS ALBATROSS HOSTS PERSONNEL FROM THREE NATIONS FOR OPERATION VIGILANT BLADE

Dear Ed, Haven't met, but huge congrats on the April 97 edition of Slipstream.

Due to ill health haven't made any contribution to Slipstream for yonks - hope this changes - health hasn't improved but an old Birdie has to do something.

John Barker (ex RN) a current member of the FAA Q'ld Division gave me some editions of the UK Navy News to look thru. I spotted a photo and thought historically you may be interested. The caption reads: "Commodore Peter Melson enjoys a joke with HMS Tamar's most famous celebrity - Mrs Ng Mukkah, BEM, known to generations of sailors in Hong Kong as 'Jenny Side Party'. For over 60 years she has run a party of Chinese women who specialise in painting visiting ships." So many of us remember her girls at work on our ships, I guess many would think she would have been toes up by now.

Before I forget, please pass on my best regards to John Arnold and appreciation for his service to us all thru Slipstream and effort given to get it to where it became.

Whilst I am in the corresponding mode - Mrs Aileen Barker, wife of FAAA Q'ld Div member who resides at 112 Watson Street, Camp Hill, Brisbane, Qld 4152, gave me a copy of her memoirs as an Australian War Bride and her voyage to the UK on the 'Brideship' HMS Victorious 1946 and which maybe of interest to other ladies who experienced that draft - perhaps you could acknowledge Aileens effort, I know it would go down well.

*Regards, Ron Baxter, Camp Hill, Brisbane, Qld 4152*

Dear Ed, Just a line to let you know that I received the Branch copy of the Christmas issue of Slipstream and Fly Navy along with the April issue of Slipstream, for which I thank you. Our members look forward to reading them.

I hope that you received our Christmas issue of the Branch News Letter 'Hangar Gen' which I sent in December.

As I have said before, if there is anything of interest to your members please do not hesitate to use same.

The Branch will, once again, be going down to HMS Heron, RNAS Yeovilton for our weekend visit, when we will visit the F.A.A. Museum.

For your information, I have recently changed my address, I am now living with my daughter as my Lucy (ex WREN-F.A.A.) died on the 1st March.

I hope that things are now getting back to normal with the Association in Australia, as I believe you had a few problems. The best of luck to you and all concerned.

Regards to all our Shipmates in Australia.

Yours Aye,

*H.N. (Haydn) Taylor, Secretary, Fleet Air Arm Association, Greater Manchester Branch.*

A voice said unto me  
Smile and be happy things could be worse.  
So I smiled and was happy and behold  
things did get worse.

Pat 1991

A joint operation to prepare military personnel for service in overseas trouble spots is currently underway at HMAS Albatross.

Operation Vigilant Blade involves Army, Navy and Air Force personnel from Australia, the United States and Britain.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Dowse said the operation involves about 80 Australians, 20 British and 60 American military personnel.

"The operation is about going into a country, for instance Rwanda or Somalia, and getting people on the ground who can report to their commander exactly what threats there might be to his troops in country," Lt Col. Dowse said.

"It is about getting people to find out in a very low key manner what is happening in the country."

Lt Col Dowse says that Operation Vigilant Blade is about more than just reconnaissance.

The scenario for the operation is that NSW is an imaginary country that is split between two warring factions.

Tension between the factions has got to the point that the President of NSW has asked for help from Australia, Britain and the United States.

A feature of the operation is the set-up and administration of a screening centre.

Warrant Officer John Shaw, of the Australian army, is in charge of the screening centre.

"Our job is to identify and confirm the identity of those personnel that we have a particular interest in and get them out of here (the troubled area)," he said.

"The types of people we typically get through the centre are people from other countries who want to get out of the war zone."

Warrant Officer Shaw said the screening process determines if an individual is eligible for evacuation.

He says the centre will deal with people who are eligible for evacuation, people who are illegally trying to leave a country and some seeking political asylum.

Warrant Officer Shaw says that some of the problems that have to be overcome in a joint exercise are as simple as different terminologies being used by the different armed forces involved.

Lt Col. Bob Kett, of the British Army, said the exercise was important for more reasons than just perfecting the evacuation process.

"What we are learning here is to co-operate and combine our efforts," he said.

Lt Col Dowse agreed.

"When we deploy in places like Somalia it is inevitable that we will be working with other nations," he said.

The operation began last Saturday and runs for a week.

## PLEASE NOTE

Due to Xmas/New Year break copy for January 1998 issue of 'Slipstream' must reach the Editor no later than 5th December, 1997



# TO THE EDITOR

**Donald Oswin McGowan,  
Brother of Sydney Harry Ames,  
1908-1930  
Royal Australian Navy**

Enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy as a Boy and served aboard the Boys Training Ship HMAS TINGIRA from the 8th February 1923 until the 30th September, 1923.

He subsequently served aboard the following ships as a Telegraphist rating:

HMAS PLATYPUS (Destroyer Tender and Repair Ship) - HMAS SYDNEY (Battle Cruiser) - HMAS ADELAIDE (Cruiser) - HMAS BRISBANE (Cruiser) - HMAS ALBATROSS (Seaplane Tender).

Whilst aboard these ships he served in the Australia/New Zealand areas, Singapore, New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Hawaii areas.

He was subsequently killed, on the 19th March 1930, when serving as an Acting Leading Telegraphist aboard HMAS ALBATROSS during fleet exercises in Norfolk Bay, Tasmania. The Seagull aircraft in which he was flying as a Telegraphist/Air Gunner was spotting the fall of shot during a gunnery shoot, when it crashed off Primrose Sands Beach (then called Roaring Beach) and he was drowned in spite of the efforts of the pilot and co-pilot.

He was honoured by a full military funeral through Hobart and buried at Cornelian Bay Cemetery, Hobart. Further details of this event are covered under McGOWAN in this study.

Medals awarded: Nil

Source: File No. N24/1/7, DSP(R) 789/82 Navy Office Canberra.

## CONTACTS . . . .

Fred McCreanor called from South Australia to advise that Peter Sincocks was living at Queanbeyan and looking to join the Association.

\* \* \*

Peter 'Buncha' Keys called from Queensland where he's busy recruiting members for the Association.

\* \* \*

Col Tietzel and wife Rhonda in down-town Nowra where Rhonda operates the . . . Fitness Centre. Col works? four days a week at RANAS in the Quality Assurance section. Made sure Col had a copy of the membership application form.

Dear Ed, Please find attached details of the death of my uncle, Don McGowan when serving as a Telegraphist/Air Gunner in a Seagull aircraft aboard HMAS ALBATROSS in March 1930.

I hope you find it of interest.

In Lew Lind's book Day to Day Events in the Royal Australian Navy he states that the entire crew was killed. That is incorrect, it was only Don. *Yours sincerely,*

*Russ Ames, AFAIM, Senior Advisor to The Hon. John Beswick, MHA,*

*Minister for Police and Public Safety, 15 Senator Street,  
New Town, Tas.7008.*

### The death of Acting Leading Telegraphist Donald Oswin McGowan

On the 19th March 1930 units of the Australian fleet were in Southern Tasmania on fleet exercises. This included HMA ships Australia, Albatross and a number of destroyers. HMAS Australia was conducting a gunnery exercise in Norfolk Bay (near the Tasman Peninsular) towards Frederick Henry Bay using Pine Island as a target. Those familiar with the area know Pine Island as the Island of Caves off Primrose Sands Beach.

A number of Seagull aircraft from HMAS Albatross were in the air spotting the fall of shot when the aircraft in which Acting Leading Telegraphist Donald Oswin McGowan was a crew member fell into the sea off Roaring Beach (now Primrose Sands beach) and sank by the stern. In spite of the best efforts of the pilot and observer, Pilot Officer Grant (RAAF) and Lieutenant Observer Ian Elliott RN McGowan could not free himself of his leather harness and drowned. Other aircraft landed immediately in an effort to keep the aircraft afloat long enough to effect a rescue but to no avail.

Don McGowan's body was recovered and taken to Hobart by destroyer. His funeral in Hobart several days later was one of the biggest military funerals ever held in Tasmania and he was buried at Cornelian Bay Cemetery. His impressive headstone was paid for by the Ships Company of HMAS Albatross.

At the subsequent enquiry the reason for the crash was loss of control after too tight a turn but the pilot was not held responsible and no compensation was paid to McGowan's father (a widower) living in Sydney.

Don McGowan's death was one of the first such deaths in Australian's naval aviation history.

Reference: File No.N24/1/7 DSP(R) 789/82 Navy Office, Hobart 'Mercury'

### I'M TIRED

Yes I'm tired. For several years now I've been blaming it on middle age droop, poor blood, lack of vitamins, air pollution, saccharin, obesity, dieting, under-arm odour, yellow wax build-up and other maladies that make you wonder if life is really worth living.

But now I find out I'm tired because I'm overworked. The population of this country is 17 million but 6 million are retired. That leaves 11 million to do the work. Then there are 4 million at school. That leaves 7 million to do the work. Of this total 1 million are unemployed and 3 million are employed by the Government. That leaves 3 million to do the work.

Take from that total the 2 million employed by Council and local authorities, that leaves 1 million to do the work. Now there are 620,000 in hospitals and 379,998 in prison. That leaves JUST TWO PEOPLE to do the work.

You and me - and you're just sitting on your backside reading this.

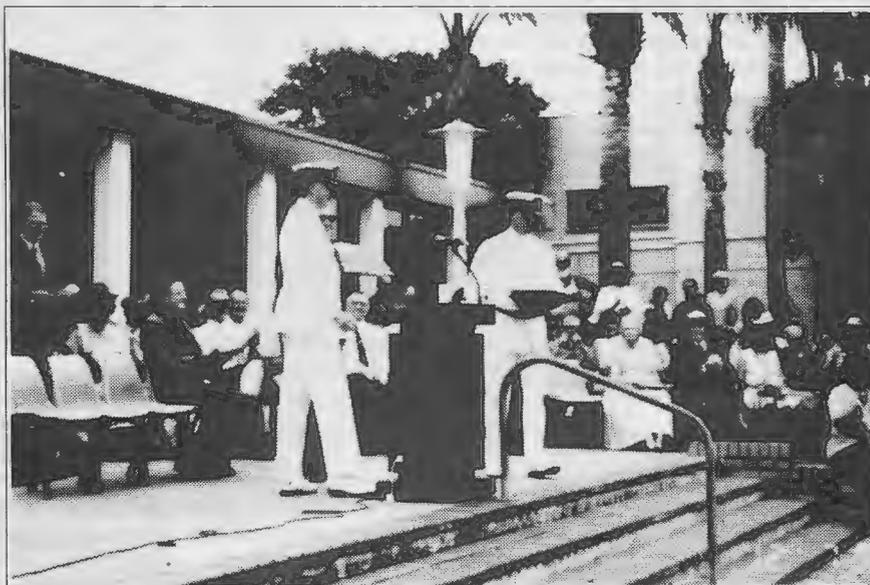
**NO WONDER I'M TIRED!**

# Women's Business



During a recent visit to the United States of America, Ruth Mateer, the wife of the late 'Shorty' Mateer presented a plaque from the Queensland Branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association to the Chief Petty Officers Club at the Ault Field, Naval air Station on Whidby Island in the Puget Sound in Washington State. It was accepted by the Operations Clerk Cherrey Wallace and the Chief Chef Ken Jordan.

Ruth also sent us the following photos taken at Caloundra last year when 816 Squadron was given the keys to the City.



# THE FULL CIRCLE - A YOUNG WIFE'S TALE

by Betty Allwood

We met at RNAS Stretton (HMS Blackcap) near Warrington, Lancashire in late 1948 when Tom was serving there as an Aircraft Artificer and I was employed as a civilian typist.

Soon after, he was drafted to HMS Ariel only a few miles away to instruct electrical and radio mechanics including WRNS on the subject of aircraft administration. Also to maintain a few non flying aircraft for the purpose of familiarisation, and where they could apply the skills of their trade taught in the classroom while learning the danger of whirling propellers and their slipstreams.

Wedding bells rang for us at Warrington Parish Church on the 25th June 1949, but Tom had forgotten to tell me that he had previously volunteered for two years loan service with the Royal Australian Navy. He considered himself part Aussie, as he had from the age of two spent eight years with his parents on a dairy farm near Stanhope, Victoria, where farmer Jack McEwen (later Prime Minister of Australia) often gave him a lift to school in his car. Further, he had spent many months on board HMS Glory in Australian waters during and post WW2.

The draft chit duly arrived ordering him to report to RNAS St-Merryn (HMS Vulture) in Cornwall to participate in the formation of the RAN's 21st Carrier Air Group. I had never left Warrington apart from short holidays in North Wales less than a hundred miles away and the prospect of a journey down to Cornwall seemed enormous, let alone to Australia at a later date.

Our train ride to Padstow seemed an eternity and I was home sick already, but we arrived safely at our pre-booked bed sitter in the village of St Merryn. My emotions were mixed, saddened at leaving my parents for the first time, but elated at the thoughts of the adventure ahead.

ANZAC Day 25th April 1950 was the official forming up date for the Air Group consisting of 808 Sea Fury and 817 Firefly Squadrons. Tom was allocated to 808 Squadron as he previously had taken a Sea Fury course at RNAS Yeovilton. He was delighted that some of his ex Naval Halton apprentice friends, or ex brats as they called each other were part of the group. Most of the complement were RN, but a few were Australian who had been trained in the UK. Arthur Traynor, a Pilots Mate was the first Aussie I met to whom I was introduced in Padstow during the May Day parade. Two of the pilots were Lieutenants Beange and Wheatley, while the Air Group Commander was Lieutenant Commander Harrington RN.

The spring weather in St Merryn was beautiful and the friendly locals made us welcome. Meanwhile the Air Group was carrying out its working up exercises and flew over the village most days when I could even distinguish between a Sea Fury and a Firefly.

Tom was on RA (living out allowance), and cycled to the Air Station about three miles away. We were elated to find on his first pay day with the RAN his salary had almost doubled, on top of which was an extra allowance of a few shillings donated by the RN and nicknamed the Pommies Pittance. We never really knew the reason for its existence, surely it was not hard layers money!

News came that aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney was on its way to the UK to embark the Air Group, spare aircraft and stores so we knew the form of passage to Australia that our men would be taking. It seemed that the wives were to follow via various passenger liners.

Our blissful stay in Cornwall came to an end on the 2nd September when the Air Group embarked aboard Sydney for some flying. I returned to my parents at Warrington, but was able to spend a weekend with Tom when Sydney visited Bangor, Northern Ireland. Later she tied up at King George V dock near Glasgow where spare aircraft, stores and personnel were embarked from nearby RNAS Abbotsinch. Before finally leaving for Australia the ship visited Portsmouth which gave us the opportunity to farewell our husbands. The next time we would meet of course would be in Australia.

The wives returned to their various homes anxiously awaiting to be informed of their sailing dates and ships for the long journeys. This seemed to be an eternity as Sydney had already arrived in Australia with the Air Group off loaded to RANAS Nowra before

most of us were advised. However, letters from our husbands kept the morale high.

Eventually six nervous wives and myself embarked on SS Esperance Bay (built 1915, 14,204 tons) at Southampton after tearful farewells to our families, and sailed on Christmas Eve for a five week voyage to Sydney. They were Joyce Cottle, Joan Pratt, Nola Davey, Venda Stirling, Tassie Bell, Gerd Jarrett, and Betty Allwood. I had already met Joyce and Gerd, a Norwegian girl at St Merryn and Bangor

We all became good friends having so much in common enjoying the highlights like calling into the ports and receiving mail from our husbands who were all at Nowra. Many were the tales exchanged from the stories of our men searching the area for accommodation, so we came familiar with names like Huskisson, Bomaderry, Greenwell Point, Werri Beach, Jervis Bay, Gerringong and Nowra Showground. Some of the boys were even travelling during their spare time to Jervis Bay airstrip where they were given permission to renovate the old living quarters consisting of derelict wooden huts, but this turned out to be uneconomical and was abandoned. As a coincidence Tom had stayed there for a few days in 1945 when his Corsair Squadron (1831) had disembarked from HMS Glory, also to RNAS Nowra (then HMS Nabbington).

My memories of Esperance Bay are not too nostalgic as never a day went by without me being violently sea sick, but tried to take part in the activities on board. The other girls were good to me bringing down odd titbits to the cabin and even assisting me up on deck for fresh air, and making sure that I didn't fall over the rail when "calling for Bill". The only relief came when the ship was motionless except for the gentle trip down the Suez Canal. The runs ashore at Malta, Port Said, Aden, Colombo and Fremantle were heaven with maximum intakes of whatever food came my way because I knew what would befall me when the ship was again under way.

Landfall in Australia on 23rd January 1951 was at Fremantle where we were greeted with striking wharfies and a frustrating delay of five days. The lovely trips to Perth and the Swan river with its black swans were very enjoyable, and the fresh Aussie food delicious, which compensated for the delay.

At Nowra our husbands were becoming anxious, and decided that we would leave the ship at Melbourne, then fly commercial to Sydney, yet another first for me. The cost was five pounds via ANA DC.6. (I think) with four engines. John Pratt had met us at Melbourne with our tickets and shepherded us on the uneventful flight to Mascot airport where we were very relieved to find our husbands waiting for us.

The train journey to Bomaderry was rather a joyous one after a night in beautiful Sydney, arriving safely at our temporary accommodation in St Enoder guest house. This was situated not far from the showground in Junction Street, consisting of a bed sitter, sharing the kitchen and bathroom with several other Naval couples.

Tom had arranged to buy a caravan from Sydney which we were to site on Nowra showground by the river, the only caravan park at that time. Tassie Bell's plywood covered van had already arrived, fitted out by husband Dinger to look homely and comfortable. A few Albatross people were living there including one officer in a tent. Unfortunately our caravan suffered a broken chassis during the journey from Sydney forcing us to abandon that idea.

My ex shipmate Venda Stirling and Charlie had moved into a cosy little three bedroom cottage with Mr and Mrs Ison at No. 2 Plunkett Street. When the third room became vacant it was arranged that we take this as a bed sitter, all sharing the kitchen, woodburning stove and about a cubic foot of ice box. Hot water for the bath was supplied from a woodchip heater, fuel for which was extracted from the bush at our back door and was there for the taking providing one had the ability to wield an axe.

Plunkett Street was wide compared with English standards, unsealed with plenty of pot holes. The folks across the street possessed a horse and gig for their transportation, but a ten minute

walk would find us in the middle of Nowra's Junction Street shopping centre. Our main entertainment would be either a visit to one of the cinemas on a Saturday night or a short walk through the bush, ever watchful for snakes, to a creek flowing into the Shoalhaven River where we spent happy times cooling off during the warmer weather. Sometimes we would hire a rowing boat for a fishing trip down river, blissfully unaware that this was a breeding ground for sharks. At night we could hear the boards rattling on the old bridge as vehicles crossed accompanied by the ceaseless high pitched call of the crickets.

The original seven ex Esperance Bay wives resided over a distance of thirty two miles from Werri Beach to Huskisson, but it was amazing how often we met as none of us owned any motor transport. Somehow we found ways and means to arrive at a destination.

I was lucky to procure employment with the Shoalhaven Council, typing and mailing rate notices at an excellent salary of ten pounds per week. The offices were wooden huts situated on the right of Junction Street above Berry Street. Once the national Weekly Times newspaper featured Nowra people, a copy of which I still proudly possess where my photo appears among the locals.

ANZAC day 1951 saw the 21st CAG re-embarked aboard Sydney for a cruise scheduled to circumvent Australia, but after two weeks and while at Port Lincoln the carrier was ordered to return to Jervis Bay to disembark the Air Group before proceeding to Sydney. This was to prepare them for a tour of duty off Korea where the war was in progress.

We were delighted to have them back so soon, even though anxious about their forthcoming trip to a war zone, the second in Tom's career. However two weeks before their departure I was taken ill with appendicitis and admitted to Nowra's new hospital on the banks of the river. One of my nurses was Connie Foreman, wife of Jim Foreman who had been a Halton apprentice with Tom. Winnie (Ron) Churchill, single then and our best friend actually walked all the way from the Air Station to see me.

HMAS Sydney finally departed for Korea near the end of July 1951 and did not return to Jervis Bay until the 4th March 1952 when the Air Group disembarked to HMAS Albatross.

Meanwhile, the wives of those who had sailed away settled into a quiet life in the Nowra and outer areas eagerly awaiting the postman's whistle, I was lucky to have my job at the council where at the front desk I met so many of the local friendly people. A few of the girls would meet on occasions and exchange any rumours that were going around, especially speculation as to when Sydney would return. A devastating rumour one morning, supposedly seen in one of the newspapers reported that HMS Sydney was missing in a typhoon. Our fears were soon dispelled after a telephone call to Albatross gave us the news that in fact the ship had been in Typhoon Ruth, after putting to sea out of Kure harbour where she had been taking on supplies. No injuries were reported but, some of the aircraft on deck and ships fittings were badly damaged causing a delay before returning to the Korean coast.

After finishing her tour of duty we assumed that Sydney would head full speed for home, but this was not to be as word came that she was to proceed to Hong Kong and wait there before sailing to Fremantle where King George VI was to review the fleet. Frustrating news for us and an honour for our men, but regrettably the King died while the ship was still in Hong Kong, whereupon she immediately headed for Jervis Bay.

Imagine our pride, joy and jubilation to see the Sea Furies and Fireflies once again flying over Nowra in beautiful formations signalling to us that HMAS Sydney had returned and about to anchor in the bay. My thoughts and sympathy went out to the families of the men who did not return.

Our husbands arrived home that night, given special leave from the ship, but had to return on board in the morning to assist in the disembarking to Albatross. What with all the presents and mementos it was a wonder that poor old Sydney floated at all.

Long leave was granted to all those who had been away, giving us the opportunity to visit Victoria where Tom's relations were living, just a few miles from where he had spent those early childhood days. A wonderful experience and fulfilling my wish to see more of Australia.

Life returned to normal with the enjoyment of an occasional social evening in the CPO's mess, but as the expiration of the RN

personnel loan period was approaching our thoughts were when and how we would be returning to the UK, Would we be travelling with our husbands?

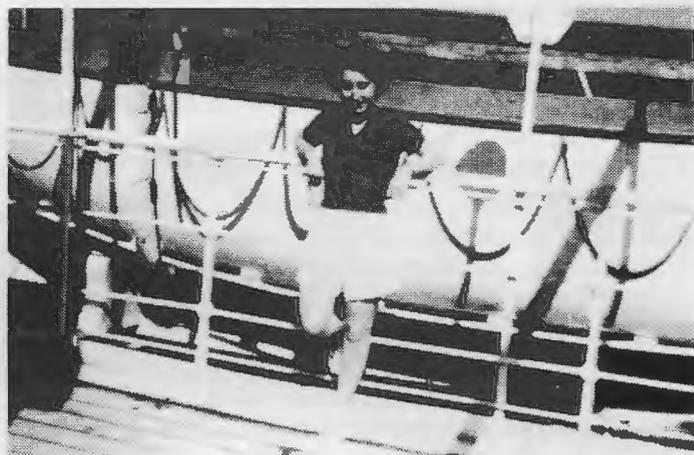
The first married quarters at Albatross had been completed, situated at the foot of Nowra Hill and one of the first couples to take up residence there were Fred and Margaret Lewis with whom we had made friends. During our visits there we were impressed and a little envious, but they had come too late for us as by now we knew the date and the name of the liner that we were to return home by. It was to be RMS Orion departing Sydney 14th June 1952, and Tom was to travel with me.

My original two suitcases became a dozen tea chests for the voyage plus Tom's Naval outfit, not forgetting the hammock. I was sure that we would not be using this on the forthcoming trip! We finally bid farewell, a little reluctantly to Nowra and our friends, boarding the train for the last time at Bomaderry station.

It was goodbye to Sydney where we had spent several pleasant weekends, feeling that one day we would return. Rounding the heads my worst fears were realised as the sea-sickness suddenly returned and remained until the Red Sea when I discovered the tablet named "Quells". We were lucky to have our own cabin, and of course Tom thoroughly enjoyed the voyage with no duties, travelling like a civilian and being paid for it. None of the ex Esperance Bay wives accompanied us, all booked on other liners at a later date.

Orion docked at Tilbury, after which we reported to HM Australian Naval Depot London, granted twenty eight days "foreign" service" leave, after which Tom, now a Chief Artificer was to report to the Fleet Air Arm at RNAS Lee-on-Solent. From there he was drafted to RNAS Stretton near Warrington, where I obtained employment in the Signals Section, on the very same teleprinter that I had operated many years before. The wheel had truly turned a full circle!

Many years later we returned to Sydney, and later Melbourne to live before retiring to Queensland. We enjoy reading "Slipstream" and attending the reunions where we meet many old, while making new friends. During a reunion at Nowra I was flattered when Arthur Traynor recognised me among a group of people. He had not changed much either during those forty odd years!





# TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed, I thought, perhaps, you might like this anecdote for the next issue of this very wonderful publication. Not only do I enjoy seeing in print the names of my contemporaries, thus evoking old memories, but there is always some humour and information that never appears to be in any other publication that falls into my hands.

Well done and, please, keep up the good work.

Yours, aye,

John Clifford ('de Lacy'), Ex-Armourer, Westmeadows, 3049

## SMALL WORLD DEPARTMENT

On a recent trip to USA (late June) two of my friends in Sacramento invited me for a game of golf. On arrival at the golf course the pro asked us if we minded another person joining our group as he had a single looking for a game. We agreed, and clambering in our carts, set off to pursue the small, white spherical object.

It was sometime before I had a chance to talk with the newcomer (the kind of golf I play tends to limit conversation between tee and green, since there is seldom anyone in earshot) who, on hearing my Oz accent, informed me that he had been very friendly with another Australian for many years. But, he remarked sadly, his good friend Guido has recently died in a plane crash. Not unnaturally, on hearing the name my ears pricked up and I told him that I had met his good friend at the re-union at Nowra in 1992 and had taken some photos of him his Sea Fury; I also remarked that he was held in high esteem by all in the Fleet Air Arm. By this time my friends were somewhat open-mouthed at the coincidence and a bit left out as this chap and I started to about aircraft and suchlike things.

It transpires that this chap sold Guido Zuccioli his Sea Fury and another aircraft, some time ago and that he was in the business of restoring and selling Warbirds - he informed me that he had another 4 Furies that were in the process of restoration as well as a couple of Trojans - hopefully, we will eventually get to see one of them out here. Unfortunately, part way through our game he received a call on his mobile phone and had to leave us at the 9th hole.

The amazing part of this encounter was that there were three other courses that we considered playing at that day - Fate works mysteriously, doesn't it?

## DISCOUNT AT NAVY HOLIDAY CENTRES

Did you know that if you completed 20 years or more of Naval service, you are eligible for a discount card, which gives you up to 40% off the price of the fees charged at the Naval Holiday Centres, Ambil Park, W.A., Bungalow Park near Ulladulla NSW and Forster Gardens, mid-north coast NSW. If interested contact 'Mitch' Miller (Secretary HMAS Melbourne Association) who can advise where to apply for a discount card. 'Mitch's' telephone (02) 4628 6840.

Dear Ed, Re the article in the latest Slipstream magazine on the late Barry Fallon.

I was a Customs Officer on duty at Darwin airport in November 1967. My job was to examine cargo and manifests of incoming RAAF aircraft.

A Hercules arrived and as the rear ramp was lowered I saw a row of aluminium coffins on the ramp. On checking the labels I saw the name B. Fallon. I had heard that Barry had joined the Army and so I checked with the Army Liaison Officer and found out it was the same Barry Fallon I had known in the Navy. That Hercules was rapidly cleared through Customs and proceeded to Richmond RAAF Base.

W.R. (Ron) Forrest ex P.O.A.H.  
Bargara, Qld.

Dear Ed, Thanks for another great issue of 'Slipstream'. However, there is a problem with the photograph on the rear cover.

All the R.A.N. Ships are correctly identified as is indeed the R.N. Cruiser, but the four Loch Class Frigates of the R.N.Z.N. (named after New Zealand Lakes) are all incorrectly named. The caption should read: 'Taupo', 'Rotorua', 'Tutira' and 'Pukaki'.

Perhaps the photograph's owner would like to know, and I am sure that one of our Kiwi readers will probably advise accordingly.

Yours etc.

Fred Dawson,  
7 Yalwal Road, Nowra, NSW2541

Dear Ed, A follow up to Ron Richards photo of H2 P.O.'s Mess HMAS Sydney and the Hammock - July issue of 'Slipstream'.

Xmas Day 1951 Kure, Japan

Wakey, Wakey lash up and stow, opened my peepers and hanging from my hammock clews a neatly wrapped bright package, a peep down and there sat Digger Schmidt and Percy Diggles, a grin from ear to ear. 'Suspicion', what were those little Bs up to, so out of the 'sack', aren't you going to open your present says you know who? First I gingerly removed the package from my Hammock clews, smelt it, squeezed it, nothing happened, unwrapped and lo and behold a small silver cup inscribed "The Champion Spinebasher of the Navy from Two Admirers".

I will admit I did enjoy my sack time.

We had an issue that day, 2 bottles one beer one stout, the Ballarat variety.

I am enclosing a story of the Hammock which I feel fits the occasion.

Look forward to Slipstream, there is always an article that brings back memories.

(REFER TO PAGE 23, ED)

Roy Torrens, Kirra, Q'ld.

## Reunion - 14th Intake Leeuwin

Dear Ed, I am on the organising committee for the 14th Intake Leeuwin and have set a date for our second reunion for the 23rd to 25th October, 1998 for Sydney.

So as any Fleet Air Arm members of our intake can participate in our reunion and attend the FAA in Nowra later in the week I have sent a copy of the Navy News article on the FAA reunion to the editor of our newsletter for inclusion. I can be contacted at the following address for further information.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Mitchell,  
74/313 Harris Street, Pyrmont, NSW 2009  
Phone (02) 9660 3817



# TO THE EDITOR

After reading the last copy of 'Slipstream' I went through some old photos and found a few which may be of some interest to you for publication in some future magazine or any other purpose you can find for them. They have been named where possible

but some names now escape me.

I can give some names for the mystery photograph in the July edition the top photo at the rear from left to right Trevor Tite, Nev Russell, Peter Kelly but the front row has me beaten apart from the centre who is Merv (Slim) Harris. As for the lower photo can't remember his christian name but I think the surname was Kelly.

Hoping these photos will be of some use other than filling up a drawer here, keep up the good work.

*Jim Lemke, Ningi, Qld.4511*

THANKS JIM, I THINK THE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE EXCELLENT. WE WILL INCLUDE THE GROUP PHOTO BELOW IN THE MYSTERY PHOTO CHALLENGE.

## TEST YOUR MEMORY - CAN YOU IDENTIFY FACES AND PLACES ????



EVEN AFTER NEARLY HALF A CENTURY SOME OF THE VERY YOUTHFUL SUBJECTS IN THE FOLLOWING PHOTOS ARE EASILY RECOGNISED.



# A Tiffy's Odyssey

by C.C. Price, December, 1995

Being the recollections of a  
Royal Australian Naval Artificer - 1941-1967

## Part Four

Finally the *Lithgow* sailed north to the Barrier Reef to form part of the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla. This flotilla was to sweep up in excess of 1000 mines along the east coast of Australia, the score when I left the *Lithgow* on the 9 July 1947 was 1006. It was unfortunate that one of our flotilla struck a mine off Cockburn Reef on the 13 August 1947 killing four of the crew and injuring many others. The *Warrnambool* will be long remembered amongst those who served on the ships of the 20th Flotilla. I had foolishly decided to keep a standing 4 to 8 watch in the engine-room thus placing the other ERA's into four watches. The boiler-room gave me no trouble but I had a succession of problems in the engine-room, some of which with the benefit of hindsight could have been avoided had a higher standard of diligence been exercised by the engine-room watchkeepers. In addition to keeping watches, I was on call 24 hours a day. On one occasion I was awakened at 0200 hrs and was presented with a handful of white metal which had formed part of the valvelink gear of the port engine, necessitating shutting it down.

On attempting to fit the spare from those on board I was alarmed to find it was semi-finished and would not fit. Only with great difficulty was I able to machine it in the small lathe on board. At about 1000 hrs one day as we were taking a sweep across a minefield, one of the engine-room watchkeepers came to me and reported that the level of water in the engine-room bilge's was rising rapidly. It took me a minute or so to establish that there was a hole in the hull directly below a vertical bilge suction pipe located amidships under the plates at the aft end of the engines. I soon realised that I was completely unprepared to cope with this worsening situation and rushed to the bridge requesting them to get help from the *Swan* quickly and to get *Lithgow* off the minefield as soon as possible. I returned to the engine-room and with the help of the ERA on watch, we were able to lift the floor plates and to chisel the nuts off the flange retaining bolts which were so badly corroded it was impossible to get a spanner to fit them to remove the suction pipe. We also found the hull badly eroded around the pipe suction area. *Swan* was very prompt in sending help and with the arrival of a Warrant Engineer Officer with patching material, a patch was soon applied, timber shoring fitted and we were able to resume our duties. I had to keep the engines going to enable the ship to get off the mine-field. By the time we had finished with our damage control the water was up to the engine crankshafts, the hole was about 6 inches (150mm) in diameter.

Another experience involved the steering engine, it jammed and when I examined it I found it had been re-assembled without split pins resulting in the big-ends working loose. It was necessary to first isolate it and by using a pinch bar to free it, then re-assemble it, this time fitting split pins. While this was going on we had changed to hand steering and found that two burly AB's were required as helmsmen. I got the impression that seamen don't like hand steering as it is very hard work. I got some idea of what it must have been like back in the days of sailing ships.

We were berthed at Gladstone, Queensland when we were

ordered to take a doctor to Lady Elliott Island to attend a seriously ill light-house keeper. On reaching the Island we experienced high seas, and on attempting to use our boats they were damaged against the ships side, despite the release of oil to calm the wild conditions. We were forced to place medical supplies in a balsa-wood life raft then lash the doctor and a volunteer seaman therein and cast them adrift. They made it to the rocky shore and the light-house keepers life was saved. That Able Seaman was 'Alonzo' Brooks later to become a CPO. Armourer in the Fleet Air Arm. On another occasion after coming off watch at 0800 hrs, I showered and requested the Mess-man to get me some breakfast and then get back on the upper-deck to safety, as Standing Orders did not permit the crew to be below decks during sweeping operations. I was enjoying my breakfast seated on the mess settee with my back against the ships side when I heard the distinctive noise of a mine-horn scraping its way along the hull below the water-line. I suddenly lost my appetite and realised that the Mess was no place for Mrs Price's little boy. Fortunately the mine didn't explode.

Mine-sweeping is the most hazardous of occupations, not only is your ship liable to hit a mine at the bows going into the mine-field, but you are likely to have your tail end blown off due to a mine being caught in the sweep gear when retrieving same. Sweeping amongst coral-reef frequently resulted in the sweepgear becoming fouled by coral niggerheads, the hardened wires breaking and coming back over the ship like a stock-whip lash. For the risks involved, the crews of the 20th Minesweeping Flotilla were granted the Naval General Service Medal with the mine-sweeping bar. The number of these medals issued is not known but they are now considered to be rare amongst collectors and have a market value of \$500. I wear mine with pride.

During the first week of July 1947 a signal was received drafting me to HMAS *Cerberus* and advising me that I would be going to the United Kingdom for training as an Aircraft Artificer later in the year. I was physically and mentally tired and pleased to leave the *Lithgow*. Unlike the *Uralba* where the skipper had shaken hands, thanked me and wished me well, the officers on the *Lithgow* said nothing as I went over the side. It had been a hard thankless task, but at least I had achieved the personal satisfaction of knowing that she had been able to meet all that had been asked of her while I was her Engineer. On my arrival at *Cerberus* I was told "Take it easy Chief, try and find something to do in the machine shop". Later in Nov. 1947 I was drafted to HMAS *Lonsdale* where on arrival I was told to be prepared to leave for England in a few weeks time, however within a few days the Senior Engineer sent for me and asked me if I would volunteer to have my draft to the United Kingdom cancelled and accept a draft to HMAS *Wyatt Earp*. The RAN were intending to use her in the Antarctic. I was surprised at this sudden turn of events and refused. The *Wyatt Earp* had been built in Norway in 1919 and had been used as a base ship in the Antarctic by Lincoln Elsworth the American explorer. She had served in the RAN as HMAS *Wongala* during WW2 as an examination vessel. In 1947 the RAN changed her name back to the *Wyatt Earp*. In 1948 she was decommissioned and sold to a private shipping firm which changed her name back to *Wongala*. That wasn't the last however, for it was under the name of *Natone* that she run aground and was lost north of Brisbane in Jan. 1959. The *Wyatt Earp* would have passed as a sister ship of the *Uralba*.

With that little hiccup over, in due course I was issued with a ticket for passage on the *Esperance Bay* an Aberdeen and Commonwealth passenger liner due to sail from Melbourne for Southampton on 19th Dec. 1947. My travel orders stated that on arrival at Southampton all RAN personnel would come under the

jurisdiction of the Royal Navy. On boarding the *Esperance Bay* at Princes Pier, Port Melbourne I found about fifty lower deck ratings of the RAN bound for training in the RN. The ship had not cleared the heads when a messenger came to the cabin which I was sharing with ERA Stan Cox, instructing me to report to Lt. A. Synott RAN. On meeting him he told me in a most official manner, that as the Senior Rating he was placing me in charge of the draft and that he didn't want me to approach him except in extreme emergency. Thus I was indoctrinated into the art of 'buck-passing' or as it is called in official terms 'delegation'. In this manner are Admirals fashioned, for Synott did indeed become an Admiral. I was never to meet him again. He gave me no nominal list of those travelling and I have often wondered how he came to choose me? I was indeed fortunate as no trouble ensued during the voyage. We berthed at Southampton on 28 Jan. 1948, after calling at Fremantle, Colombo, Aden and Malta completing a happy voyage.

At Southampton we were met by a representative of the RAN Naval Depot at Australia House, London and travelled up to London in the boat train. Here the draft was split up into groups and sent to various parts of the United Kingdom for specific training. I found myself class leader of a group of twenty Engine-room Artificers and Motor Mechanics, who were to be converted into Aircraft Artificers. We travelled by train north to a small town on the east coast of Scotland called Arbroath. We were met by a bus from H.M.S. *Condor* which was the RN Aircraft Artificers apprentice training establishment. Here we stayed until 10th Jan. 1949. We were officially designated as Aircraft Artificer Conversion course No.4 or C4 class. The names of my class mates were as follows: Max Gardiner, Ken Nichols, Stan Cox, Ron Higgins, Nat Hallas, Stan Paul, Harry Gibson, Jeff Coker-Godson, Ted Barker, Brian Gilroy, Jack Sergeant, Maurice Green, Arthur Sara, Alan Woods, Doug Eastgate, Jim Lamb, Ken Roberts, Gordon Foale and Ron Smith.

I was to find the class environment at *Condor* very competitive, being thirty-three years of age and with the exception of Stan Cox, all my classmates were younger. The apprentice syllabus had been amended to exclude C4 class from turning & fitting. Subjects covered included theory of flight, aircraft sheetmetal fabrication, heat treatment, coppersmithing, aircraft electronics, hydraulics, pneumatics plastics, aircraft engines, aircraft fabrics, wheels, brakes, tyres, propellers, aircraft servicing and associated documentation, airframes and flight controls. Classes commenced immediately after colours at 0800 hrs. It was my duty to march the class from the parade ground to the class-room. The class parade marker was generally big Harry Gibson who was a gentle giant of a man, who often, when the class had marched off, would increase the length of his step forcing me to break into a near trot. Evening classes were often held until 2100 hrs, as a result making a long day. There were many social functions held in the CPO's Mess, always well attended by the nurses from the local hospitals and the station WRENS. It was the happiest time of my life.

We all succeeded in passing the final examination and were destined to be sent in small groups of around four or six people to the Naval Air Stations throughout the British Isles. Before dispersing however it was decided to have a farewell dinner, to be held at the Windmill Hotel in Arbroath on the 12th Dec. 1948. It was a great party attended by the Captain of HMS *Condor*, the heads of all departments, together with our instructors. I had the privilege as class leader of being on the official table, sharing it with J. Sergeant, J. Coker-Godson jointly with the Captain and Commanders.

During our period at Arbroath we paid a visit as a class to

Invergordon to go aboard the newly commissioned HMAS *Sydney* and another day in Aberdeen to see the great Don Bradman and the Australian Eleven wallop the Poms yet again. I attended the Aboyne Highland games on the 8th Aug. 1948 with a group from the Brechin Hospital. To be absent on the day it was necessary for me to obtain leave from the Commander and I duly applied. When I fronted the 'great man' he asked me if I was going to see 'Flying' Fanny. As a colonial I had to be careful how I answered that one. I was to learn later that he was referring to 'Flying' Fanny Blankers-Koen a Dutch woman runner, well known in the United Kingdom at the time. My first annual leave in UK was spent in London. I was able to rent a flat in Kings Cross and spent a most enjoyable time visiting the land marks, museums, Saddlers Wells and daily bus trips down as far as Windsor Castle.

During August 1948 I travelled from Arbroath down to Easthaven on the coast of England and by the channel ferry across to Dieppe, France and then by train to East Paris. Here I changed trains and went to Basel and then to Lucerne, Switzerland. There I stayed for about 10 days at the hotel Frischi which was an old Swiss Inn, from here I explored the Swiss Alps by bus. Lucerne is a beautiful clean city and has an old wooden bridge called 'Chapel Bridge' which was built in 1330 and runs across Lake Lucerne. My travels took me to the Rhone glacier at Gletsch which on the day I visited was sky blue and as the glacier had been tunnelled out I was able to enter for about 50 yards (70m). Another day I visited the village of Altdorf-Telldenkmal where in the market square there is a bronze statue of William Tell with a cross-bow over his right shoulder and his left arm around the shoulder of a lad about 10 years of age. I also climbed Engelberg by cable car and Pilatus by both cog railway and cable car. It was a good holiday marred by the currency limitations imposed by UK regulations.

Another leave was spent with my classmate Max Gardner, who had obtained a bike so we joined the Cyclists Touring Club, membership of which enabled us to obtain bed and breakfast in private homes. From Arbroath we cycled up to Inverness from where we travelled by train down to the Kyle of Lochalsh, and boarded an inter-island ferry which took us to the Isle of Skye then up to Stornaway on the Isle of Lewis. We disembarked and stayed in the local hotel that night and cycled down to the village of Tarbet on the island of Harris next day and stayed the night in a private home. At Tarbet I purchased 7 yards (6m) of hand spun and hand woven Harris Tweed which I took back to Australia where my mother had it made up into a great-coat and an attractive hat. We returned to Arbroath (*Condor*) by a different route. My maternal grand-mother immigrated to Australia from Tarbet in 1956 as little Miss McDonald aged 4 years. Max Gardner was a splendid travelling companion. During our journey we experienced cold, wet weather. When the going became tough Max was always cheerful. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of our journey we are still good friends. On completion of training at HMS *Condor* I was drafted to HMS *Fulmar* at Lossiemouth in Marayshire in the north of Scotland. Our little group comprised Nat Hallis, Ron Smith, Brian Gilroy and myself. Here we remained from January 1949 until the end of May, gaining experience with the squadrons on the station. I remember well spending time on Trainer Flight, operating a squadron of Harvard's, an aircraft similar to the Australian Wirraway. At the rear of the squadron hangar was a family burial site many hundreds of years old, it had evidently been an old quarry. The headstones were in an advanced state of decay and graphically illustrated that 'Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust' is indeed true.



# TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

Again, I would like to congratulate you on the efforts that had been put into the 2nd issue of the Slipstream/Fly Navy, it really is great to keep up with all the news from around the nation.

One such story that appeared in the July issue was the story sent in by Jim Fletcher regarding a very close friend of mine, the 'late' Barry Fallon. I was privileged to have been a friend of Barry's from 1957 until he paid off in 1963, when, like a lot of us, I lost contact with Barry, but had heard, sadly, that he had died in Vietnam in 1967 whilst serving with the Army.

I was amazed to see that he was buried at Southport, on the Gold Coast, now I, along with a few other old 'Handlers' that are now residing on the coast will now be able to pay our last respects to a man that we all knew and loved.

I enclose a photo of Barry, taken about 1963, when he was playing 'Aussie Rules' with South Sydney AFC, I'm sure that a lot of ex-Birdies would be pleased to see.

Thanks Jim, for the resume on 'my mate's' life, it has brought a tear to the eye and put a lump in the throat.

Sadly, yet another old footballer friend passed away since the last issue, 'Macca' McLellan (McMurtrie). R.I.P.

Regards,

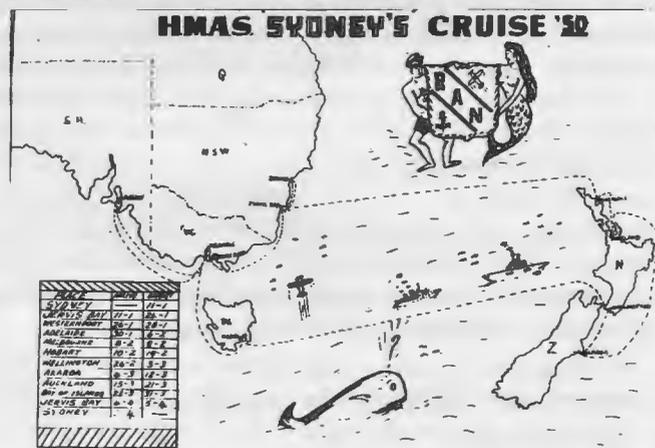
*Ken Staff (ex Handler and proud of it!)  
South Tweed Heads, NSW*

Dear Ed, Firstly, congratulations on your first edition, it's good to see 'Slipstream' back in the system again. Am enclosing two snaps of 1949 vintage, names on the back. Also the early 1950 cruise, showing off our new carrier and with 20th Carrier Air Group on board. You may be able to include them in a future edition. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,

*Frank Donnelly, Urunga Waters, NSW 2455*

THANKS FRANK, I THINK THE PHOTOGRAPH 'THREE MEN AND THREE DOGS' IS AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE FOR THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH. ED.



God put me on this earth to accomplish a number of things. Right now I'm so far behind I will never die.





# TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed, My good friend FAA Assoc Secretary Ken West (Canada), included the following verse in his last Assoc. Newsletter which he kindly sends to me regularly as I did my flying training there under the Empire Air Scheme.

## HIGH FLIGHT

A nineteen-year-old American fighter pilot wrote these verses on the back of a letter to his parents. Shortly afterwards he was killed on active service in England.

*Oh I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.  
Up, up the long delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,  
Where never lark, or even eagle flew;  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

*John Gillespie Magee*

John Magee's parents were missionaries in China where John and his three brothers were born. When he was older his American father wanted him to go to Yale University in which he won a scholarship. However his mother was English and considered England 'home'. Therefore he joined the RCAF as the USA was not at war, and he was an American citizen.

He took his flying training in Canada, obtaining his wings in 1941, he converted to Spitfires at Llandow Wales and was posted to 412 RCAF Spitfire squadron at Digby Lincolnshire. He had extensive offensive fighter sweeps over France claiming one enemy destroyed.

On the morning of Dec. 11, 1941, while flying in cloud, he collided with a twin engined Oxford from RAF Cranwell. He bailed out but was too low to deploy his parachute and was killed. He is buried at Scopwick.

His poem High Flight, was written on the back of a letter to his parents. It captures the thrills and exuberance of flying far better than anything I have read and is an instant success with students and adults alike.

John Arnold was always looking for articles, whilst this man was not FAA he was part of the team defeating Hitler and many who trained under the Empire Air Scheme were trained by the RCAF or RAF and then handed back to the navy. So I hope you can use it.

Best wishes for your success as editor.

Yours sincerely,

A. (Arthur) Conway-Jones

## THE HAMMOCK

"The issue hammock, the beloved pusser sack - one of man's most endearing inventions - has vanished, alas, from Navy messdecks and establishments. It has been replaced by the impersonal between-deck bunk.

Yes, the sack has gone, but it is certainly not forgotten. Those of us who have experienced the pleasures of the snug, canvas cocoon, have many a warm memory to share and treasure. To those who sailed the stormy seas or served ashore in Navy bases during the war years, the humble sack was perhaps the sailor's most important possession. It was much more than merely a sleeping contraption - it was extra storage space, and a great hiding spot for a bottle of the best or a box of Mum's cookies. It was a clothes press, a reading-room, sometimes a life saver, or a patch to mend a damaged hull. Even his winding sheet. Above all, his hammock was his refuge. In the confining, constant welter of the crowded messdeck, it offered an Island of privacy, in a press of togetherness. Slung high above the confusion, the occupant, secure in its warm embrace, was magically transported far from the maddening crowd below.

The sailor's introduction to his hammock was generally an innocuous affair - it was issued along with jumpers, singlets, bell-bottoms, cap, blankets and sundry other paraphernalia. It was just one more item to lug back to the new sailor's sleeping quarters.

Here, after new uniforms were donned, extra gear stowed away, the vast wide expanse of canvas was folded lengthwise. To this was added the thin bed and two white issue bed blankets. Under the careful supervision of an old hand, the young sailor would go to work turning it from inanimate canvas to his best friend. First came the nettles and lanyards for each end. Then, the virgin hammock was slung at waist level. The mattress carefully put in place, followed by the blankets. It was lashed up neatly and tucked in.

All that remained to consummate the affair was a night together. On that first night - the frustrations in slinging at just the right height and tension; the awkwardness of trying to swing into it gracefully. Then, once inside, the beast seemed to want to smother you or turn turtle. The blankets threatened to fall out, or ball up. After many a furtive check to see if the knots were holding, the new matelot fell asleep until the morning, "wakey wakey - rise and shine", echoed through the messdeck.

It was then that morning after the night before, the sailor was committed to his hammock. Over the months he would fit it with a sturdy, wooden clews stretcher, liberate a pillow for his head and learn how to press his trousers between the mattress and the canvas. He would customize it, make it his own, give it a special personality.

Yes, . . . The sailor and his hammock . . . a love story that deserves to be told.

# On Detachment to Manus

by Chief Aircraft Artificer George Chadwick

At the commencement of a R.N. to R.A.N. loan draft, then a chief aircraft artificer airframes and engines (A & E), thirty years old and a bachelor. Departing Tilbury 2nd July 1952 in the P. & O. liner R.M.S. 'Maloja', on passage to Sydney.

Joining H.M.A.S. 'Albatross' at Nowra 14th August, assigned to Station Firefly and Sea Fury Receipt and Despatch (R. & D.) Section. Settling in at Section and mess, getting to know people and places.

At the fifth week, 22nd September, being informed by the officer i/c Station aircraft workshops that A.C.N.B. had signalled commanding that a senior aircraft artificer together with an air mechanic and a electrician (air) were to be sent to Manus, to progress preservation and preparation for shipment one Sea Fury aircraft, VX751, adding that myself was to be the artificer for the undertaking and then later, as the outcome of a lottery because a call for volunteers had been massively over-subscribed, that L.P/M Gault and L.E.M. Newton would accompany me - the detached party.

Sub-Lt. McDonald R.A.N. of 805 N.A.S., when on a sortie from H.M.A.S. 'Sydney' during 9th September, due to an engine failure had put his Sea Fury down in an 'undercarriage-up' forced landing upon an abandoned and deteriorated airstrip at Cape Gloucester on New Britain.

Passage from Sydney to Manus for the party was noted in the A.C.N.B. signal to be by air departing Sydney 29th September. Listing, obtaining and packing the required equipment was set-about with a will.

Came the day of departure, Monday 29th September, taking the early morning train to Sydney, By transport to H.M.A.S. 'Penguin' for obtaining clearance papers to enter Australian administered League of Nations mandated territory of Papua-New guinea, a short stop and then on the road again to Kingsford-Smith airport. The party was booked on the morning 'Bird of Paradise' flight by D.C.8 to Port Moresby. Such way of travel was at that time far from the popular experience of the present day - not at all like the then 'pussers' movement orders. Passenger stops occurred at Bundaberg, Townsville, Cairns and Cooktown, after which over the Coral Sea to arrive at Port Moresby at nightfall. Overnight accommodation at a hotel, the party met-up with a group of men employed by a company that recovered military material abandoned on the islands, whom told of their having transported the Sea fury the party were being sent to process from the site of its landing at New Britain to H.M.A.S. 'Tarangau' at Manus. A.C.N.B. in its signal to 'Albatross' had informed that the Sea fury was being recovered into Naval custody by NOIC NEA, and that assistance would be required from a working party at Manus.

Next morning the party boarded the Islands Courier, a DC3, seating being forms along its sides with cargo netted down the centre. Once airborne, the aircraft spiralled to height for the crossing over the Owen-Stanley range - a bumpy ride the steward remarking that he had never before made the crossing during such atrocious weather. Having arrived over Lae, the flight made a spiralling descent to a landing at the airport. Airborne again following a brief stop for off-loading and loading of what seemed a local public transport service - the general populace including natives Kanakas and hardware as also groceries. Evidently air travel between these islands was a normal experience. Brief stops followed at Finschaven, Rabaul and Kavieng before arriving at our destination R.A.A.F. Manus.

Joining H.M.A.S. 'Tarangau', after formalities which included informing that our assistance would come from WW2 war criminals serving sentence at a Navy run prison camp adjoining

the establishment, the party headed straightaway to view the object of our purpose, Sea Fury VX751. The aircraft lay in the open, covers on but in a poor state, supported upon three 40 gallon drums, subject to scorching sun or tropical rain intermittently. It had not, by a long way, the appearance of a squadron aircraft. Additional to damage to be expected from a landing with undercarriage retracted on a rough hard surface, clearly, weather exposure and retrieval from the spot it came to rest on New Britain had wreaked havoc. Tow lines had been purchased to propellor and to aircraft lifting point distorting spinner about propellor hub and shearing rivets attaching lifting point member to frame 1. A large opening had been hacked in the port side of the fuselage and services pipelines and wiring cut away for extracting equipment. After checking fuel and oil had been drained and deciding to attempt to put the aircraft on its wheels, there and then the hub was forced off and the propellor removed whilst the aircraft was in a convenient altitude and height.

The following day a meeting was held with the war criminal camp staff whom briefed on conduct when employing prisoners in manufacture of crates and signwriting. Further inspection of the aircraft revealed serious damage to airframe and to engine such that both were write-offs. NOIC NEA was informed of the assessment on state of the Sea Fury and suggestion made that it be signalled to ACNB for their consideration, advising that engine centrifuges and magnetos had been removed by work party from H.M.A.S. 'Sydney' but not replaced by covers, so that exposed gear drives had corroded. A.C.N.B. reply was passed on to the party by NOIC NEA, informing that the Centaurus engine be made ready for shipment and salvageable components at their discretion.

The Sea Fury undercarriage was 'lowered', power plant and mainplanes removed, airframe items assessed for salvage. A crate incorporating a local manufactured power plant stand was manufactured and another three crates for airframe components. Co-operation from the war criminal prisoners allotted to the works was good as was the standard of workmanship. Disappointment was felt at circumstances which prevented the party carrying out its assignment as given at the outset. NOIC NEA complied with A.C.N.B. instructions in recovering the Sea Fury into Naval custody, but it would have been prudent for an experienced aircraft technician to direct such undertaking.

Recreation time was spent pleasantly and interestingly. For myself, at the senior rates mess at the prison. A memorable Sunday was spent on a mission to re-float an MFV which was aground on an islet. Passage was made in an MFV carrying a score or so of kanaka natives. As the grounded vessel hove in sight, there was one mighty splash as all plunged over the side and it was with much frolics that the vessel was raised, propped up and brought into the channel, after which a banyan. An amusing daily occurrence, was witnessing the Australian mandate official mustering and then detailing the native workforce in 'pidgeon'. All in all, an interesting and memorable experience.

After twenty-six day on Manus, the party did leaving routine and packed for return, my own packing included a carved native catamaran which has remained beached on a shelf in my caboosh - the spare bedroom my wife terms the crows nest.

Return was reverse of passage out, arriving at Nowra on 27th October, on detachment seemingly having speeded up time towards leave in December.



# TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed,

In the April Edition of SLIPSTREAM, John Arnold in an article, (We need your help) and subsequently in the July edition FLY NAVY section, the Museum Director also requested articles, anecdotes and I reckon photos previously unseen for use in the book Fleet Air Arm History, The History of Naval Aviation or Flying Stations, whatever it is to be named. Draft manuscript ready by 31 September. Question: When? Last year this year or next year?

Like other Shipmates, I have sent in items but have never received acknowledgement of them having been received nor have they been produced in SLIPSTREAM. This makes us loathe to

comply with further requests for same. What happens to the personal photos donated to the Museum and SLIPSTREAM? Can just anybody gain access to them to use for personal gain? I ask this question because a photo I donated to both parties ended up being published in a book. I don't know how he came by it but to put his name to it incensed me. It should have been either the Museum or my name. The Book concerned was for monetary gain therefore the Museum should receive some small royalty for its use. Does this occur?

I still have a number of photos and will donate them providing that they will remain solely for the Museums use and are not permitted for use for gain by public Authors. I'm sure others will have the same concerns. I take this stance or attitude because I was once threatened with legal action for reprinting an article from an aeroplane magazine even though the Author's name appeared. Apparently no monetary gain was forthcoming. Water under the bridge. Let's get on with the future but make sure this sort of thing doesn't happen again. After all we are Shipmates. Keep up the good work.

*Yours sincerely, Clem Conlan, Mill Park, Victoria*

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE LOCATION ???



# SLIPSTREAM - FORTY YEARS AGO (July, 1957)

## End of an Era

Those who were awake early on the last day of May (1957) saw (and heard !!!) the last group of National Service Trainees leave 'Albatross'. Since the first Trainees arrived, over four years ago, about 500 men have carried out three months of their training here. This, and sea time in the Training Carrier, has given them an introduction to Naval Aviation.

The men have presented a wide cross-section of Australian youth and have included many University Students, at least one well established grazier, the proprietor of a flourishing and extensive trucking business and an Olympic athlete. While regretting the passing of the National Service Training era, Chief Airman BLONDEL was quick to remind me that the Training Office is still very much in business. Regular recruit classes continue to be an important part of the Air Station's task.

Editors Note: I am sure there are a few more stories to be told of our National Service Trainees and their peccadillos. For my part, National Service training was with the R.A.A.F., the year 1955 and the training venue R.A.A.F. Station Pearce in West Australia (careful now - the first disparaging comment about 'Blue Orchids' will get you stoppage of 'Slipstream').

Anyway, the period of service in the R.A.A.F. was six months and as far as I was concerned it was a six month holiday from the W.A.G.R. and much easier work than being a locomotive fireman shovelling coal in the middle of summer in up-country West Australia.

Yours truly managed to attain the rank of Corporal (Aerodrome Defence) before an altercation with an officer at a barbecue somewhere near the station, details about which I am somewhat vague (must have been the night air), resulted in demotion and a few days in the 'cooler'.

\* \* \*

Recently offered by the Department of Supply for public auction: 4,000 new Canvas Hammocks and 10,000 Lashings. Bunks must be here to stay !!

\* \* \*

### PREPAREDNESS

"Thrice armed is he who has his quarrel just. But four times he who gets his blow in first"

\* \* \*

The Office-Bearers of the Nowra Hill Tennis Club are:

Patron: Captain V.A.T. Smith

Chairman: Lt. A.G. Whitton

Secretary/Treasurer: Mrs Shirley Davis

Committee Members: Mrs F. Manual (Air), L. Air, R. Cole, P.O. B. Burns, LSA T. Mitchell . . .

\* \* \*

This 1957 issue of 'Slipstream' notes the opening of a new nine hole golf course at 'Albatross'. It comments that "unseasonable weather had left fairways dry and hard." So what's new?

An accompanying photograph shows a very trim Club Secretary Les McCulloch discussing the draw with Air L.E.M. Dillon and C.A.F. Dewhirst. The Club House, it seems, was the clipboard Les has in his hands.

\* \* \*

Another photograph shows Mechanician Saunders and Leading Airman Burns and Leisk arming a Sea Fury.

\* \* \*

And lastly, at least for this issue, an intriguing 'Wanted' Ad. Someone out there may know the full story:

WANTED - Elephant suitable transport Air Station, Huskisson. Should not be more than part used. Box 1957A or 367 Hangar.

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## Museum Air Stores by Peter Penny

Work commenced cataloguing Museum Air Stores in September 1993 and continued up until the present time.

Les Matterson and I grossly underestimated the task ahead of us and I for one, had I known the size of the task ahead, may well have been loathe to commit myself to the project.

September 93 as near as I can recall, we commenced moving the store from the Glider Hangar and also the old huts which were to be moved to improve the view from the museum.

Work party, members, many from Sydney, would assemble at NAS on Saturdays and spend the whole day transferring stores. Afterwards a BBQ at either Wardroom or Museum and depending on who was paying. Some of the regulars I remember were: John Selby, John Goble, 'Shorty' Rolands, John DaCosta, 'Aspros' Treloar, Eddie Bell and Barry Roberts. There were many more of course.

Also the temporary hangar erected by the Army on the "H" Hangar site was to be cleared of stores so that it could be moved to make way for a new hangar. A team of volunteers, mainly from the local area was organised by 'Juke' Matterson to help with this task including, to name a few, were 'Connie' Constantine, Danny Synel, Ted Drinnan, John Robson, George Meecham, Jim Lee, Frank Macpherson, Roy Pickering, Kevin Camm and Alistair Ogg. Barry Roberts and Charlie Gross also

assisted - bringing an air of respectability to the proceedings.

Work commenced one Monday morning cataloguing and boxing the items with a list of contents placed in each box and the master kept by 'Duke'. Distribution was to be in three categories as follows:

1. Restoration Flight - spares for aircraft still flying.
2. Museum and
3. Scrap (to Hollingsworths or similar).

Because of a lack of space at the Museum at the time categories (1) and (2) were to be stored temporarily in the Igloo Hangar. Where, without the ability to provide adequate security, some of the stores went missing and in the process much of the documentation was lost or left laying about, eventually to be blown away by the 'Westerlies'. From a personal point of view this was a tragedy and caused a great deal of heartache.

Finally storage space in the Museum was arranged i.e. four forty foot containers and the walls of the workshop, the weekend rallies began once again to move the stores and to return them to some sense of order. I would like to specially commend our R.A.N. Liaison Officer, Warrant Officer Peter Dickenson, who proved to be one of our most valuable assets - particularly as truck driver, forklift driver and general jack of all trades.

The shelving around the workshop, now known as 'A' Store,



# TO THE EDITOR

Please find attached a true story of an experience I had in 1977. You may be able to use it in Slipstream or the forthcoming 'history' book. It might interest you to know that one of my co-lackeys at Hollingsworths was none other than Frank McPherson, who'd recently paid off and was looking for anything to do to keep himself busy! I notice he still is! As one of the stores bods.

*Yours sincerely, P.J. Williams, Campbelltown, NSW*

## TWICE BURNT

If some humour can come from a tragic incident then I hope this yarn can provide some laughter.

I had paid off in Dec. 1976 after 6 years service. I'd been an AB spanner wanker with HT725 & HS817 (wessex), having spent the last 14 months of my time at Albatross in the A.S.U. mothballing 10 of the old girls in and out of long term storage. (L.T.S.) The last week before my departure was spent saying goodbye to everyone I had known, including a stroll through the 851 and 816 Tracker hangar, was it H hangar? and trying to drink the Junior Rates bar dry! Two weeks after I left Nowra those beautiful S2 Trackers were destroyed in that mindless act of vandalism! I lived in Rockhampton QLD for about 9 months and returned to live at Greenwell Point in late 1977. I had acquired some knowledge of oxy-acetylene cutting and armed with this approached the Hollingsworth's scrap metal re-cyclers yard in East St Nowra.

During my 6 week period of employment with them I carried out many duties including collecting scrap metals etc. from all around the Nowra district, occasionally breaking various parts of the trucks and getting them bogged!

One fine sunny day Mr Hollingsworth sent me (alone) out

to Albatross for he had obtained the contract to remove and recover what was left of the Trackers. I was very excited for it was the first time I'd been back to the 'tross since leaving. My job was to cut the engine frames and undercarriages from the airframes and load the pieces onto the tipper truck. The larger pieces of airframes and wings were taken by semi-tippers to be melted down for scrap. I checked in at the main gate and was given permission to proceed to the burnt out hangar. What a sight lay before me! The extreme heat of the flames must have been fearsome. Large craters in the hangar floor, some 2"-3" deep, molten aluminium stuck fast to various debris everywhere. The twisted steel frame of the hangar roof had started to rust and I wondered whether an atom bomb could have destroyed as much.

Needless to say there was nothing combustible left anywhere near the remains of the Trackers or the Hangar area, or so I thought! I set up the oxy cutting gear, donned my gloves, goggles and commenced to cut the steel from the alloy. I'd been plodding away for about half an hour or so when, to my disbelief, a small spot fire had started on the deck beneath me! To this day I don't know what was alight but I suspect it was some oily residue. I calmly turned my oxy cutter off, closed the bottle valves and strolled towards the nearest flower bed to scoop some dirt up to smother the 'fierce blaze', two handfuls ought to do it!

Unbeknowns to me a conscientious, though over zealous fire spotter, had phoned the 'fireies' and within 2 minutes I was surrounded by the duty 'fireies' clad in their fearnought suits, hoses at the ready, giant foam canon aimed at the 'blaze' and sirens wailing! I unloaded my handful of dirt onto the 'inferno' and smiled at the 'subby' who led this gallant band of men!

On explaining my role and reason for doing what I was doing he mumbled something about "nev er can be too careful" and "it helps to keep in practise"! I apologised for causing any affront and was relieved when order was restored.

It took me 2 days to finish cutting those Trackers apart and I'll never forget that day nor the incident I'd created!

*Regards, Phil (bungy) Williams*

## Air Stores cont'd . . .

holds over 16,000 line items. Eventually 'A' Store will need to be sanitized.

December 1996/January 1997 the 'Shed', the ex-Army replacement for 'H' Hangar was moved to its present site near the Museum. Two thirds of the space was for the use of the Restoration Flight, the remainder to be used for Museum stores. Great! 'B' Store had arrived. Later a container was placed in 'B' Store to be used as a library and office and another placed between the 'Shed' and the playing fields will, when empty, serve as an 'L' workshop and a secure storage for our valuable 'L' and 'R' test equipment - Bob Pierson Hon. Proprietor.

It remains now to complete the transfer of stores from the containers to the 'Shed' - hopefully the last move! At the time of writing (July 1997) it appears there will be enough space in the 'Shed' to destore the Museum hangar and the containers.

No bulk storage area as yet (no slab) and these may be a problem fitting all the larger items into the 'Shed'.

'Juke' Matterson fell ill early 1997 and the team sorely missed his presence. Without 'Duke's' efforts the project would never have gotten off the ground. "Thanks Les".

The Museum management from top to bottom have always helped where possible - sometimes a bit tardy perhaps - we put that down to money problems. Don Parkinson and his diverse team are always willing helpers. Don and his forklift proved invaluable - somewhat hectic - but what the hell!

Rapport with the Restoration Flight has improved immeasurably and it is hoped that at some stage our stores management can be combined thereby simplifying accountability.

Drafting this note while baby sitting a computer printing out a list of 'A' Store items. Preparing this list has been quite an exercise. It lists all the items on the workshop area shelves ('A' Store) and includes a description of the item plus a part number or FSN (Reference number). Most times both are included. In some cases no description appears as many of our volunteers had no stores or engineering experience and instead of guessing were asked, on my instructions, to leave a blank.

At a later time an updated, fully detailed, list can be prepared listing all the missing descriptions, part numbers and reference numbers.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Murphy's Law which states that if anything can go wrong it will, was first recorded in 1949, when Californian aviation engineer Captain E. Murphy uttered the words.

Since then there have been further Murphy's laws including: **Second - Nothing is as easy as it looks;** **Third - Everything takes longer than you think;** **Fourth - If there's a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will cause the most damage will go wrong first. And the Tenth? - When things can't get any worse, they will.**

*Sunday Telegraph 07-09-97*

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS



How time flies.

It is that time again and I have just got down to doing something about the article for the magazine.

I have been able to talk John Green into taking over the task of representing the State and you in

future articles for the Magazine. So please, even if you didn't help with news or stories for me, do get behind John. It's a bit hard trying to get news and articles, when no one advances anything and when you try and fill the pages, you are told, "we don't want that sort of thing". John's address is 1-7 Prinsep Road, Attadale 6156, telephone number 9330 7386. Best of luck John.

Ron Tate and myself are not standing for Office in the year 1998 so there will be a vacancy for both Treasurer and Secretary. There must be people out there who would like to take over these positions. So become involved. We find that after 22 years in Office it is well overdue that someone else takes over. *Really do not have the time since the Welfare and Pension Office has been established at the Rockingham Sub Section of the Naval Association of Australia (inc.) with money supplied from the Veterans Affairs and until we can get more Pensions Officers and Advocates trained to help, I am the only one in the Office.*

News from people that I have come into contact with; Keith Murdock is still battling on. Lou Burns is improving, he now walks with the aid of crutches, 30 laps of the verandah and that's quite a long way, he has hopes that he will be able to join us in the march next Anzac Day. Hilton has been in America to see his daughter who is suffering from Cancer, as of this time I have not heard how she is, but we all hope that she is recovering. Pappy



## WEST AUSTRALIA

Secretary: Theo Bushe-Jones,  
PO Box 8336, Stirling Street,  
Perth, WA 6841  
Ph/Fax: (08) 9527 9186

Gault has had a couple of trips to the Hospital, but is bearing up well.

It was sad to see one of our original members Bob Pattenden succumb to Cancer, I was able to see him and have a good conversation a week before his death, he was still full of hope and was able to crack a joke. A good turn up for the funeral. Our thoughts go out to Sadie and the boys. You will be sadly missed Bob.

We have in our wisdom taken the money out of our investment and are contemplating some of the money to pay part of the cost of having either a lunch or dinner in the early part of the new year 1998. The cost will be to members and their wives \$10.00 per head, to non members who wish to take part the cost will be \$25.00 per head. Please fill out the attached flyer and return.

To all the people who cannot live this side of the rabbit proof fence we wish you all the best of health and if any of you get lucky and are visiting these parts, please get in contact and we will endeavour to make your visit more enjoyable.

Hope you and your families are in good health and are enjoying life to the full and once again give John Green your full co-operation.

*Yours, Theo*

## TASMANIA

Our A.G.M. was held in Launceston on August 17. A good number attended but due to unforeseen circumstances some couldn't make it. Me being one who couldn't.

Anyhow, some changes to Office Bearers -

Our new President - Geoff Singline; Treasurer - John Nobes; Secretary - Allan Andrews; Scribe - Jake Jacobs.

Our next quarterly function is a weekend at Orford on Tassies East Coast for November 22-23. Lunch and meeting on the Sunday. This time of year the Apple Isle is in it's prime, beautiful warm sun, scenery and all the rest. So come on you old spud diggers, let's fill some vacancies.

### Social News:

Bill Lowe's niece, Karyn, joined as an Associate Member and was heartily welcomed by all.

Greig Henderson-Smith is back living here after a few years in Queensland.

Peter Woolford from Hobart is back on deck after suffering a stroke, he's one of our younger members. Just goes to show strokes can come at any age.

As mentioned in last issue of Slipstream Barry Simpson also had a mild stroke, but he's back in circulation and just as good as ever.

Now the '98 Reunion - Looks as if about 10 of us with wives will be going up 'Andy' has booked us into Cross Country Motel



Secretary:  
Alan Andrews  
PO Box 88, Exeter, Tas.7275  
Phone: (03) 6394 3448

in Nowra. Vacancies for more names yet - have a good think about it.

Some of us that couldn't make the /88 Reunion for whatever reason - work commitments being one - having since retired will be making the pilgrimage. I for one haven't seen Nowra and Albatross since my D.E.E in 1957 and really looking forward to going. I'm sure a lot of others feel the same.

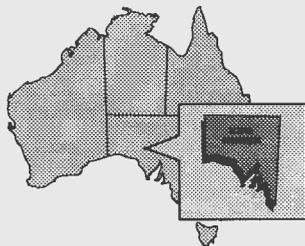
It's up to us collectively to make this a ripsnorter it will most likely be the last big one for a lot of us and if after another 10 years passes who knows?? I can only try to understand the enormity of organising such an event, full marks to the people doing the job. We owe you.

Keep 'SLIPSTREAM' coming, it will be a sad day if it's let lapse, it is the other half of the F.A.A.A.

Once again another year has snuk by and without us hardly noticing they pass faster with each one, so to you all out there from all us down here we wish you the best of seasons greetings and keep that flag flying.

*Matt Jacobs, 'Jake'*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**Secretary:**  
**Mr Dinsley Cooper,**  
**17 Athol Avenue,**  
**Blair Athol, SA 5084**  
**Phone: (08) 8344 8812**

Just how quickly does an average October come around? I do not believe that this year has really got up to speed yet and here we are, winding down for the Christmas silly season. Speaking of the silly season, I'll take this opportunity on behalf of all our SA members, to wish each and everyone of you "Good health and a Merry Christmas".

Several things have been on the boil since my last input to the National Slipstream, firstly we have drawn our major raffle and winners have been announced and notified via the new electric telephone that our Social Secretary has recently had installed. Dinsley says it is cordless and subject to hanging up in your ear without so much as a "by your leave" . . . not to mention some jet like squeal and constant gabble! Possibly a Telstra reject and I should know as I had one too.

The raffle was drawn at the last social function, Sunday 31st August during the magnificent WINERY TOUR DOWN SOUTH. Reports have it that Dinsley had managed yet another bus load of members for the tour and BBQ, which by the way, was held at the Hardy Winery, McLaren Vale. Apart from the required number of clowns I can guess were present, I really haven't heard anything reportable for this item. One can draw the conclusion that something did happen which made the day special and the bus ride home rowdy! Next year Dinsley has plans to travel north for the winery tour, personally, I'll take my own wine with me as I'm not so sure the Barossa Valley can put out a gold medal Cav/Sav like they do Down South. I could be wrong!

John and Moira Saywell are on the road in their campavan headed North. Something about scrambling up Ayres Rock to install a satellite phone link to Banco de Brazil to check on our

Division Funds, something like that anyway. He reminded us that he intended to return to take back the treasurer's job from me and not to bother to check the books. Well I certainly don't have a problem with that.

Several members have battled through all manner of coughs and colds to date and I'm pleased to announce that we have all survived. A GET WELL wish from your Division and, I'm sure, from everyone else throughout Australia.

A reminder that our next social function will be another bus trip Down South, but this time it will be to the Victor Hotel and this will be our 'end of year' Christmas Dinner. do check your last 'Fly Navy SA' for a return tear off slip which must reach Dinsley before the end of this month. Same bus idea as before. The bus will pick you up from your nominated pick-up point, travel you down to Victor Harbor ( the spelling is correct) and return you safely after a 3 course meal with entertainment chucked into the cost. So mark the 7th of December down immediately!

As the weather improves, I'm hoping a few more of you locals will visit our monthly meeting with some input for the committee. We meet every 3rd Friday evening at the Adelaide Sub section, Naval House, Hutt Street. Starting time remains 1930H and for all aircraft handlers and armourers, read 1930H as 7.30pm.

Navy week is well over as you browse through this edition, I hope we enjoyed it! Enjoy the drama of raising the over-sized White Ensign up the pole along Port Road. Just how do you hoist such a large item without it being stretched all over the ground . . . shameful!

It seems obscene to say it this early, but . . . A Merry Christmas to you all.  
*Roger Harrison, Hon. whipping boy*

## VICTORIA



**Secretary:**  
**Ron Christie,**  
**15 Bianca Court, Rowville, Vic.3178**  
**Phone: (03) 9764 5542 Fax: (03) 9755 5417**

Firstly greetings to all members wherever you may be, the following article is a report of the Korean Veterans Association, Memorial plaque Dedication Service at HMAS Cerberus, by Charles Thwaites EO KVA.

What a wonderful day it was for all those who attended the KVA Dedication Service at HMAS Cerberus on Sunday 29th June, 1997, the day was an unqualified success with approximately 600 people in attendance. The service was conducted by Senior Chaplain Brian Raynor OAM RAN, assisted by Chaplains Bill Reddin and Andrew Constance RAN and Padre John Brownbill RFD of the KVA.

The Australian White Ensign was paraded as were flags of the 22 Nations who served alongside the Australians in Korea.

Guest speaker was CDRE Dacre SMYTH AO RAN Rtd. Captain J. Dierks RAN, CO of HMAS Cerberus read the first lesson.

Following the service in St Marks Chapel, a plaque provided by the KVA, honouring the service of all officers and men of the nine ships and three Fleet Air Arm squadrons that served in Korea during 1950-1953 was dedicated in the Memorial Gardens.

Music for service was provided by the band of the Defence Force School of Music, under the baton of WO Rod Coughran-Lane OAM.

Senator Judith Treoth represented the Minister for Veterans Affairs and delivered the keynote address, Col Lee, Military Attache who was to represent the Korean Embassy sent an apology

due to sudden illness. The United States was represented by its Melbourne Consul, Mr Paul Fitzgerald, the United Kingdom by Mr Roger Davies Deputy Consul General Melbourne. The Victorian Government representatives were Hon Robin Cooper, Minister for Transport and Hon Ron Bowden and Ken Smith for the SE Province, Mr Hong Lim represented the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Mario Cattapan represented the Deputy Commissioner DVA Vic, ADM M Hudson AC RAN Rtd Federal President Naval Association of Australia and Mr Charles Stevens Executive Member RSL Vic were also in attendance.

Refreshments were taken in the WO & Senior Sailors Mess where all were welcomed by Mr Vic Dey National President of the KVA.

R/ADM I Crawford AM RAN provided a presentation on the Australian National Memorial which is to be dedicated in Canberra in April 2000. It was most gratifying for me to see so many of my old shipmates still able to celebrate an occasion such as this, I also believe this is the first time since 1953 that all elements of the RAN that served in Korea were represented at one function. Despite the fact that Korean Veterans are still awaiting recognition by the Government to approve an Australian medal for active service in Korea, our spirit is still strong as ever and we must not let Australians ever forget the 'FORGOTTEN WAR'.

# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS *Victoria cont'd*



Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Senior Chaplain Brian Raynor OAM RAN and Chaplain Bill Reddin RAN.

Thanks to the generosity of CDRE Smyth, prints of a seascape painting recently completed, titled 'Australia's Navy in the Korean War 1950-1953' were offered for sale, and a brisk trade was

done. Anyone wanting copies of this print should contact Mr Don McLeod on (03) 9478 0930, cost is \$20 which includes P&H.

Following on from that report I should add the FAAA of A was represented by twenty odd members of the Victorian Division at this service and this was a KVA function not FAAA, I must commend the KVA for this service, it had a full two page spread

alike. But for the benefit of members who maybe in our neck of the woods, our Division will be conducting an open forum meeting followed by a Christmas Breakup on Sunday 7th December 1997 at the Melbourne Naval Centre (ESU) 146 Toorak Road (West) South Yarra, but please if you are in the area and intend coming please let me know prior to the event so that we can adequately cater for you.

For information, I received a copy of a letter sent to one of our members John Goodwin, thanks John, I will not go through the whole letter, but the pertinent points which I am sure will be of interest to some of our members.

Authoritative advice has been received from the First Sea Lord, Royal Navy, that no Royal Navy Ships rendered qualifying service for the Naval General Service Medal with clasp Malaya during the period of involvement of Royal Australian Navy ships in the Far East Strategic Reserve, namely 1955 to 1960. As a consequence, it has been determined that Royal Australian Navy Far East Strategic Reserve personnel do not qualify for the award Naval General Service Medal with clasp Malaya.

Investigations have been ongoing since 1994 into the award of the Naval General Service Medal with Clasp Malaya to Royal Australian Navy personnel attached to the Far East Strategic Reserve. Following receipt of the above advice, the matter has now been resolved and no further reviews will be undertaken.

So I guess the answer John Goodwin received will be the same for anyone else that has made application for this award, this letter was received from Navy Medal Section, Canberra.

However, the Government recently announced that Veterans who served in the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation will be awarded an Australian medal with an appropriate clasp.

The regulations governing these awards have yet to be promulgated and will be widely publicised when approved.

On behalf of the President, Committee and Members we "Welcome Aboard" Ron Bailey, Ray Brauer, Graham Hine, Noel Lyon as new members also the same applies to Jim Ferguson who has recently transferred in from Qld.

That's about it for now, so good health to you and yours and kind regards from all of us in the Vic Division.



*KVA Memorial Plaque Dedication in Memorial Gardens HMAS Cerberus Sunday 29th June, 1997.*

in the Melbourne Sun-Herald prior to the event. But unfortunately, it was noted that a mistake had been made on the plaque, namely in reference to the RAN FAA Squadrons, 807 is depicted, instead of 808, of course this fact was brought to the attention of the KVA.

Our Division then revisited HMAS Cerberus again on Sunday 31st August 1997 for the Annual FAA Memorial Service, a similar format to the KVA, certainly not with the same amount of members in attendance, though! None the less we had thirty three members who took the time and made the effort to attend!

The church service was conducted by Chaplain Andrew Constance RAN in the Chapel of St Mark, the first reading by CO HMAS Cerberus Captain John Dierks RAN, second reading by Bernie Butler and Alan (Happy) Clark delivered the address, on completion of the Chapel service a brief service and wreath laying was conducted at the RAN FAA Memorial in the Memorial gardens.

Refreshments were taken in the WOSSM, with special thanks to the following ladies for their efforts in arranging the excellent refreshments, Val Christie, Sylvia Ikin and Loris Siegle and a special thank you to the mess personnel of the day, your efforts were greatly appreciated. Well Done.

There are a number of members making the trek to Nowra in November this year to attend the Federal Council Meeting, Anniversary Dinner and Air Day and looking forward to meeting with old and new friends



*FAAA of A Annual Memorial Service at HMAS Cerberus, Sunday 31st August, 1997. A scene in WOSSM. l to r Front: Rob Taylor, Bryan Roberts, Jenny Roberts, Margaret Mayer. Back: Geoff Litchfield, Col McKenzie, Ray Brauer, John Ikin, (half face), Ralph Mayer, Ron Christie, Bernie Butler, Les Jordan, John Champion.*

# AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Spring has sprung in the ACT and the air is thick with the scent of blossom and the buzz of bees. If ever you wanted to see Canberra at its best, it has to be now while Floriade is in full bloom.

I understand Seamus O'Farrell has not been in the best of health recently but is now on the mend. We Canberrans must be a reasonably healthy lot because I have not heard of any other members being on the Sick List during the cold winter months.

The ACT Branch has two social functions coming up. The first is our annual Mess Dinner at the Joint Services Staff College on Saturday 25 October. The cost is \$42.50 per head which includes a three course meal, drinks and coffee and cheese on completion of the meal. If any interstate members receive this copy of Slipstream in time, are going to be in Canberra at the time and would like to attend, give me a call on 02 6289 4898 during the day or 02 6291 4681 after hours and I will give you the details.

Our last function for the year will be our Christmas Cocktail Party which is tentatively booked for Friday 5 December. Once again, if any members from other Branches are in town and would like to attend, just give me a call. We hold this event at the R&SL National Headquarters in Campbell and is always a great way to finish off the year.

Our President and his lovely lady are currently swanning around the UK and the Continent. We hope they have been having a great time and wish them a safe return.

Another one of our stalwart members and his wife have decided to move away from the long and dreaded Canberra winters. Ben and Merron Matthews have moved permanently to the Queensland Sunshine Coast and I guess in time they will transfer to the Queensland Branch. Thanks for your support over the years, Ben and Merron. The ACT Division wishes you all the best for your move and hope you settle quickly into your new home. You have carried out many recce missions over the past few years so no doubt you will settle in quickly. All the best for the future.

The ACT Division has asked that the availability of the names and addresses of all members be discussed at the Federal Council Annual General Meeting on 21 November. The Division would like this information to be available to all FAAA members. A significant reason for establishing associations such as ours is to help members keep in contact with each other. If a member is planning a trip to a region or an extended tour and the addresses of ex-RAN or FAA members living in those areas is readily available it can make a holiday an event of considerable significance and much more enjoyable. Asking for a specific member's address in an area to be visited is okay if you know who lives there but it does not help if you do not know where your ex-service mates moved to after they retired.

If other Divisions have similar thoughts on this matter, could they please support this proposal. If there are concerns about privacy, then at least the full membership list should be made available to Presidents and Secretaries.

To celebrate the FAAA's Golden Jubilee, the ACT Division is



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21 Ashcroft Crescent, Monash, ACT 2611  
Ph: (W) (02) 6289 4898  
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Fax: (02) 6289 4711

planning to hold a church service (hopefully in the ANZAC Memorial Chapel in RMC Duntroon) and a Mess Dinner (in the Wardroom in HMAS HARMAN) on Friday 28 August 1998. I will keep you posted as plans progress. It may appear to be a long way in the future but you know how time flies faster the older you get. If you would like to participate, write it in your diaries now or at least stick a note on the refrigerator or the back of the dunny door.

I am preparing this article late in the evening while sitting in the rather palatial new Medical Centre in HMAS ALBATROSS. The call to arms for three weeks of RAN Reserve time as the Medical Administration Officer in an establishment which I left as a POMED in 1976 was too good to turn down. I must say how impressed I am with the professionalism of today's Navy. We had three airfield emergencies yesterday and to see the Medical Centre and other emergency services swing into action with no fuss or nonsense was most impressive.

ALBATROSS certainly has changed in the last 21 years. It has lost some of its character (such as the D area wind tunnel accommodation blocks, the old chapels and, of course, the old Sick Quarters - what a story that old building could have told). It is a very professional and well maintained military establishment displaying a variety of different uniforms and accents.

The sailors of today don't seem to get up to the same tricks or get into the same trouble as they used to do. Certainly from a medical point of view there seem to be less serious accidents and loss of life as there was in the late 60s early 70s. Thank God. No doubt this can be attributed to the drink driving laws, better cars and better driver education.

Anyway, enough waffle from me. The best of luck to the Federal Council for the November meeting. Hopefully the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Inc constitution will be finalised to everybody's satisfaction this time.

That's all from Canberra this time. Enjoy the rest of 1997 and have a great Christmas.

*The Sun-Herald, August 10 1997*

## SACRIFICES

Every Anzac Day, Year 7 children of Newtown State hold a moving service to honour the veterans of all wars. During the service we have the 'calling of the roll' from the School's honour board. On this board are the names of 196 past pupils who fought in World War II.

After the service this year, a Vietnam veteran asked if we had considered placing another honour board listing the names of past pupils who fought in the campaigns since World War II. The children decided they would like to do this as their major project for 1997. We would be pleased to hear from past pupils who would like their name placed on the honour board.

*Helen McLean,  
Newtown State School, Toowoomba West, Qld.*



# NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

**Secretary: Mr Mike Heneghan**  
PO Box 28, Nowra NSW 2541  
Phone/Fax: (02) 4441 2901

## NEW SOUTH WALES

The year is fairly flying by and our next Federal Council Meeting is just around the corner. We are looking forward to seeing

Delegates and visitors who are coming here for that meeting and, of course, the Anniversary Dinner which is being held in the Museum on the Saturday night (Nov.22nd). Those who intend coming should book as soon as possible, contact the Museum or you can ring me on (02) 4421 6042 and I would be pleased to pass it on. I notice there is a great response to the Dinner from the Victorian Division which is great and we are hoping for a really good night to be had by all.

Most of my time lately is being spent on 50th Anniversary arrangements and the putting together of the FAA history book and I will not elaborate on either of those two subjects as they will be written about in more detail elsewhere in this edition of our journal.

The Rose Garden with a sculptured Albatross which has been very generously sponsored by our long time supporter in Hawker de Havilland is progressing, the Sculptor (Dennis Adams) is putting his part of it together so that project should be well and truly ready for the '98 Reunion.

Our last Air Day food stall working bee resulted in a good financial return and thank you to the small band of supporters who worked so hard all day to make it a success.

Les (Duke) Matterson had a short stay in hospital recently, he is home now and on the mend which is good news. No one has worked harder for the Association over the years than Les and we are looking forward to seeing a bit more of him in the near future.

Our Management Committee continues to meet monthly on the 3rd Monday with a good attendance of committeemen and visitors and there are at least four or five new membership applications at each meeting which is a healthy sign. New members (from September to December 97) are classified



financial for 1998 when paying their fees and as stated earlier in the year, annual fees for 1998 will be \$20 (a rise of \$5) so when you come across anyone submitting an application form, please tell them to enclose \$15 joining fee and \$20 annual subs.

Thanks to all those members who responded to a request in the last issue of Slipstream to pay outstanding dues for 1997. Can I just ask again that members take note of the address label on the envelope of this issue to ensure 97 appears showing

financial membership. If 96 appears then you owe \$15 for 1997. . . thanks.

All our efforts in getting the word out that the Jubilee '98 Reunion is being planned has every sign of being successful. Enquiries are coming in from all over, the last thing we want to hear from anyone is that they did not know it was on. Alan (Scotchie) McMillan heard the news and I got to talking to him on the phone and it was great to make contact with him after more than 30 years. I am hoping he might make it down for the reunion, he is not a member (yet) but time will tell. In the mean time, he lives in Bargara and if any of you QLD boys are in that area or passing through, maybe you could make contact with him and say g'day.

I'd better quit now and get on to something else, best wishes from the NSW Management Committee to all our members and of course, to all other State divisions as well. We look forward to seeing you at the November Meeting.

Our Secretary, Mike Heneghan, passed on to me a great action photograph (about 900 x 600) of HMS Ark Royal launching a Buccaneer. It is similar to our print of Sydney launching a Sea Fury copies of which, incidentally, are available for sale in the Museum shop. Although the content of the photo is RN, our close association with them has been considerable and it would seem appropriate that we have the photo framed and held as Division property. The photo was given to Mike by Eric Bruce, a retired RN Loaner now living in Sydney. Thanks Eric for your generosity.

Yours aye,

Max Altham, President

## THE CHIEF'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. *The Chief is always right.*
2. *In the event that an A.B. may be right, Rule No.1 becomes immediately operative.*
3. *The Chief never sleeps, he rests.*
4. *The Chief is never late turning to - he has been detained elsewhere.*
5. *The Chief never leaves work early - he has been called away to an important meeting.*
6. *The Chief never reads the paper at work - he is keeping abreast of current affairs.*
7. *The Chief has always just had the last shout.*
8. *Whosoever enters the office with an idea of his own must leave with the Chief's idea.*
9. *The Chief is allowed to call anyone an OD.*
10. *The Chief is always the Chief, even dressed in bathers.*

# NATIONAL SECRETARY'S WISH LIST

I wish it was about this time next year and we were gearing up for FAA JUBILEE REUNION '98. But it isn't and we're not.

However, all members should be aware that their State's Divisions Delegates will convene with the Interim National Executive Committee in Nowra on Saturday 22nd November, 1997 for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the FAAA Federal Council.

As a NSW Division Delegate back in April 1990 I attended my first such meeting, a Federal Conference in Perth WA. The mood at that time was very positive with great hopes that a National Association would grow and prosper.

The first item of business agreed unanimously was that the Federal Body of the FAAA would move from WA, where it had been formed some 14 years prior, to NSW. A new National Executive was elected.

The second item of business agreed by majority vote was that the existing Constitution would be used until the Federal Council made necessary alterations in company with all Association Bodies.

At that time those bodies were the WA, Vic, SA and NSW squadrons, all Incorporated Associations, plus the Australian Fleet Air Arm Officers Association (AFAAOA). Only one body dissented but did agree to liaise with the others to form a Federal Constitution and to carry out the duties as laid out in that constitution when finalised.

I wish that the spirit so evident at that Perth meeting had prevailed in the ensuing period. Would you believe that seven years on, successive AGM's have failed to come up with an agreed National FAAA Constitution? The Interim Executive Committee are about to embark on including amendments proposed by Divisions into the 3rd 1997 working document of the draft Constitution.

At this point I make it very clear that the following comments and opinions are my own personal beliefs and in no way should be construed to reflect the opinions of any other member of the FAAA.

Those Divisions which are Incorporated Associations are mindful of respective State's Laws and a Duty of Care to their members as laid down in their own Constitutions. I suspect that a number of those Divisions' Constitutions are dated?

Some Divisions perceive conflict between the proposed National Constitution which is framed on the WA Associations Incorporation Act and their own Constitutions framed from their respective States Associations Incorporation Acts.

To overcome this problem the previous National Executive Committee, at the direction of the federal Council, registered the FAAA with the Australian Securities Commission (ASC) as an Australian Registered Body. This at the direction of the Federal Council I note from minutes dated 29 October 1994 and 28 October 1995.

I wish that action had satisfied all Divisions, but some seemed more concerned with preserving their own constitutions rather than accepting the possible benefits of one National Constitution. Parochialism prevailed as evidenced by many amendments proposed.

I admit to being as parochial as any States Rights Advocate during my time on the NSW Division Committee. During the early development stages of the National Constitution I was not always impressed with it's progress or direction. I was not alone. For example, "whilst THEY seemed to be continually bogged down with conflicting States proposals, WE on the NSW committee got on with it." In the process we found that various Government Departments required us to amend our Division Constitution in return for concessions.

We applied to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to have our

members fees and subscriptions tax deductible. We failed in that regard but did gain Tax Exemption on our income. (Non profit organisations can be liable to pay tax at 39 cents in the dollar if their taxable income exceeds \$416 in any one financial year). A clause has been included in the Draft National Constitution.

At one stage the parochial NSW committee intended to dispense with small raffles and embark on some serious fundraising, this required becoming registered as a Charity. The application was approved and the Division has an 'Authority to Fundraise' current to the year 2000.

I believe that the National FAAA can be included within that authority for the time being.

Again parochial, the NSW Division developed a local newsletter, SLIPSTREAM (MK3), then successfully applied to the ATO for 'Streamlined Sales Tax Exemption' to reduce costs. Today all members should benefit from that early initiative. Those members forced to pay levies on top of their Annual Subscriptions in order to receive SLIPSTREAM (MK4) probably don't.

Since I won the lottery for this job I can see beyond 'States Rights' theories. No member of the National Executive Committee can afford the luxury of parochialism. I wish all committee members of all Divisions could have a few months in this chair. I'm sure that would make life a lot easier for the lucky devil who wins it next year.

I hope that Delegates to the 1997 Federal Council Meeting can approve the proposed National Constitution which must be submitted to the WA Department of Fair Trading within **one month** of that AGM. If the Commissioner approves the Constitution, without changes imposed, it can then be lodged with the ASC.

Only then can we say we are a truly National Association. Those Divisions which so desire could voluntarily relinquish Incorporated Association status. Others could amend their local constitutions to resolve any perceived conflict.

Immediate benefits would include reduction of costs by economy of scale purchase of stationery and the need for only one paid auditor; to name but two apparent cost savers..

I wish that there was only one agreed common membership application form for prospective members to join The Association, via any Division. Not the proliferation of forms presently in existence.

I wish that there was one common joining fee for all approved new members. \$15 seems reasonable to me.

I wish that there was one common subscription fee for all Annually Subscribing members. The Annual Subscription should include provision of the National Journal SLIPSTREAM. A maximum of \$25 should do it, in the present format without sponsors or advertisers.

I wish that there was one common membership card for all members. A halfway Smart-card which could be swiped across the computerised cash registers at the Australian Naval Aviation Museum (ANAM) to allow free entry for the bearer. This concession might be extended to other facilities with reciprocal agreements.

If the electronic wiz could detect that a member was unfinancial then that member could pay his/her subscription on the spot. Present day systems for electronic transfer of funds could ensure that the payment was credited to its rightful account.

All manner of thing beneficial are possible IF we become a truly united National Association of members under one banner.

I wish that this can finally come to pass, commencing 22 November 1997. Finally, I wish I could win OZ Lotto, about the same odds I'd guess!

*Jim Lee*



*'Ichabod' enjoying retirement at Eagle Harbor, Florida*