

SLIPSTREAM

Volume 9, Number 2

APRIL, 1998

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

Fleet Air Arm

and

HMAS Albatross Reunion

Nowra NSW

1998



28 October - 2 November

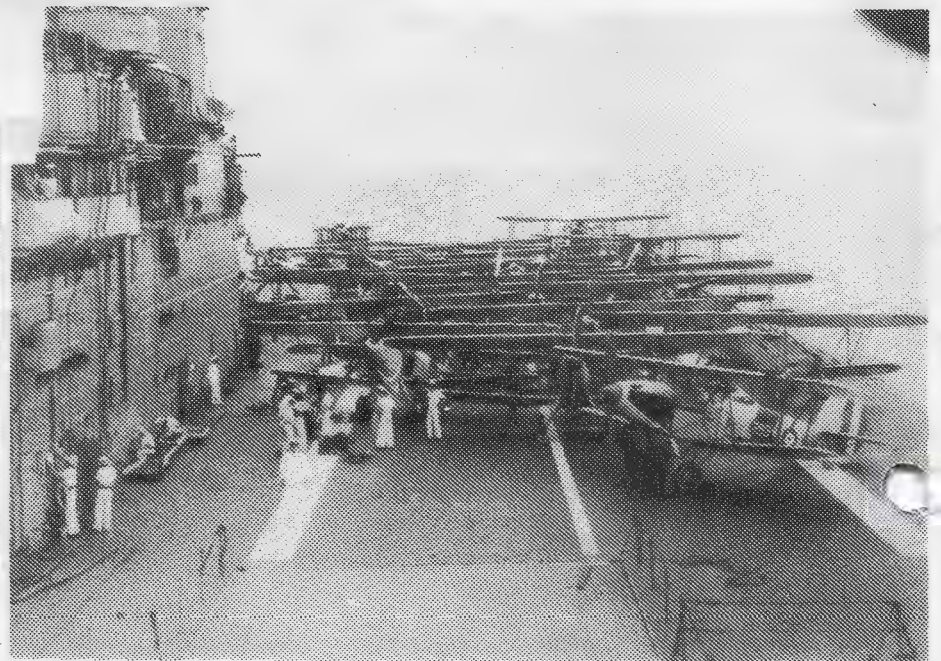
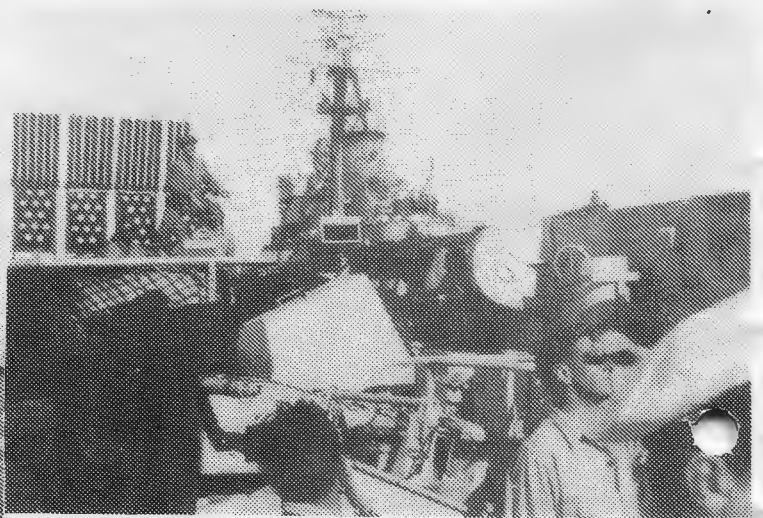
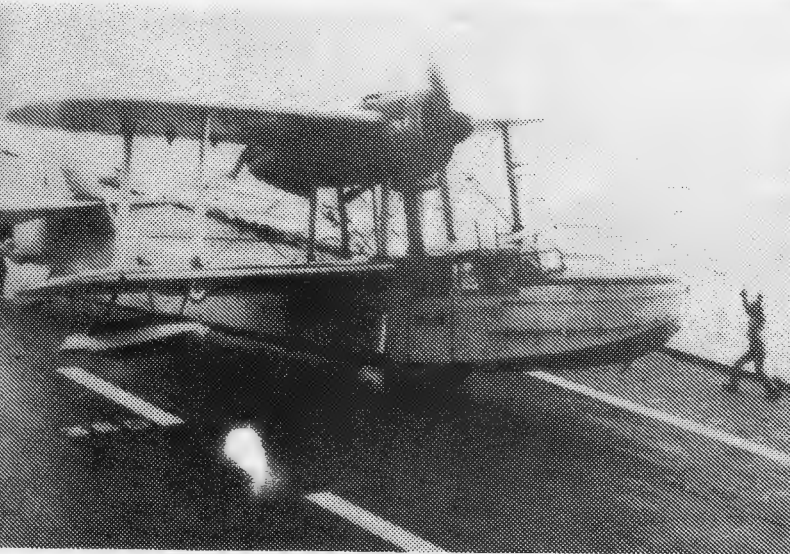
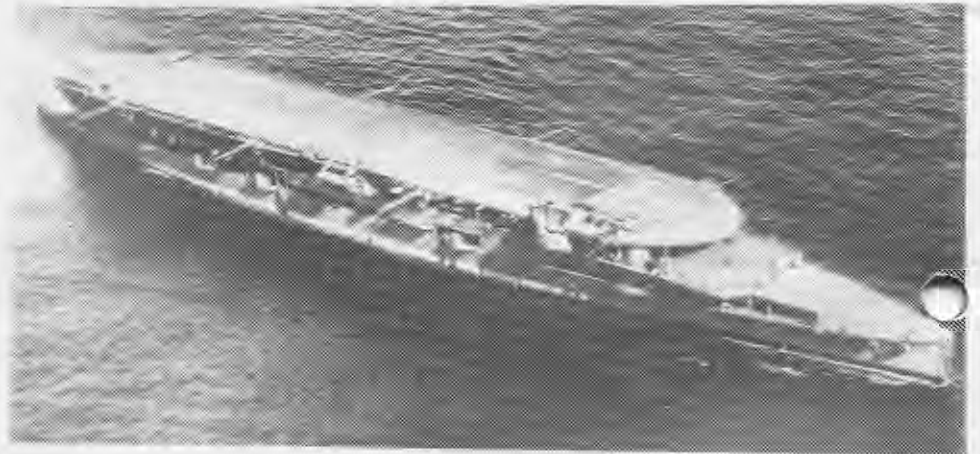
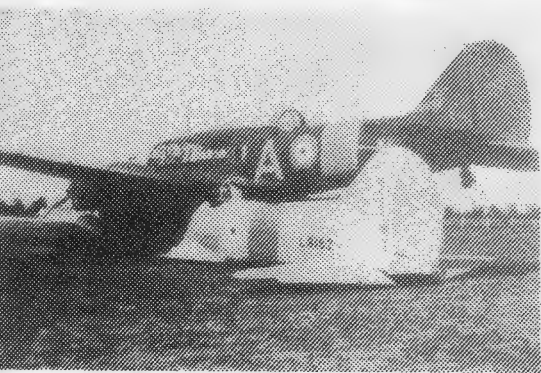
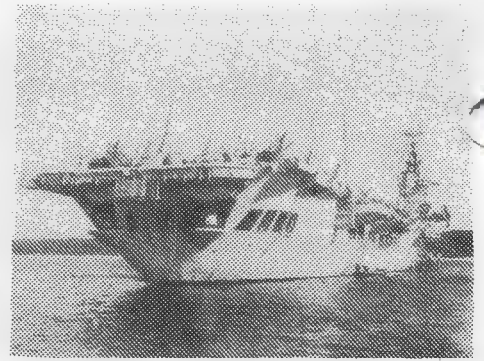
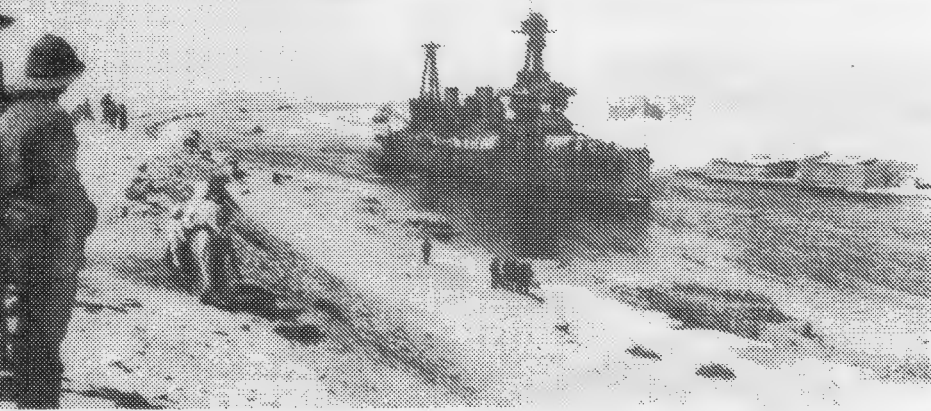
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President's Report

As at the time of my last report, the 50th Anniversary preparations are engaging us extensively here at Nowra as we move into the detail of the planned events. This edition of SLIPSTREAM seeks to provide more detail on the events in the program which you may find useful especially if you have yet to decide whether you will join us for the week-end of the 29 October - November 1998.

Firstly, I should recap on some of the background to the 50th Anniversary program. As you may be aware, there are several events which will collectively be celebrated during the Anniversary weekend:

- the 50th Anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm;
- the 50th Anniversary of HMAS ALBATROSS;
- a Re-Union of members of the Australian Fleet Air Arm Association, to which potential members, i.e. those eligible to join the Association, would be most welcome;
- the Annual General Meeting of the Federal Council of the Association;
- the Annual Shoalhaven Spring Festival.

It made sense to bring the observance of all of these related events together in one combined celebration. The Spring Festival is relevant since most of us have been residents of the Shoalhaven community at some time or another and there will be included on the 1998 occasion a Freedom of Entry March for the Navy. With the program so broadly based there is ample scope for more people to identify with it and join in. Such celebrations obviously depend on very good attendance and participation by as many people as possible to be successful, especially so in the case of re-unions, and for many this might be the most important part.

The organisation of the program events is the responsibility of several 'committees', i.e.

- the Association's 50th Anniversary Committee is arranging the registration process, the AGM of the Federal Council, Base and Museum Tours, BBQ functions, FAA History Review, mini re-unions, the Nowra Race Day, the Ecumenical Service and Monument Dedication and sporting events;
- HMAS ALBATROSS Golden Jubilee Committee is organising the Cocktail Party, the Cabaret Ball and the Air Day;
- the Shoalhaven Spring Festival Committee is organising the Spring Festival Parade.

Naturally there is considerable inter-committee consultation and cross operating to ensure the best co-ordination of events and the program as a whole. Obviously we have a great interest in the events organised by ALBATROSS since we will be involved in them and we look to the Air Day in particular for a fitting climax to the celebration.

We are hopeful that our Patron Admiral Sir Victor Smith, together with Lady Smith, will be able to attend for at least some part of the program. He is very well known either personally or by reputation to all of us and he and Lady Smith have had a pervasive role in the history of the Fleet Air Arm as you will read in 'Personality Profile'.

The Minister for Defence has been asked to unveil the FAA Monument at our Sunday morning Ecumenical Service. The Monument is currently being fabricated near the entry to the Museum and it will be a tribute to the service of those who have been in the FAA at some time during the last 50 years and to those who continue to serve. We hope he agrees to come since this would be appropriate Government recognition to the role played by the FAA and of HMAS ALBATROSS in Australia's defence over the last 50 years.

While on hopes, we hope that you as a member or a potential member or someone who ought to be a member will register and join us for this great weekend, even perhaps persuading others to come. The weekend will only be successful if it is well attended. We all realise travel etc. is expensive these days but 50th anniversaries are special occasions which deserve special sacrifice. Everybody else and especially your old mates will benefit by your presence.

Onto other Association matters, I should bring you up to date on a proposed scheme to circulate details of membership, to include contact addresses and telephone numbers of all members. This was moved by the ACT Division at the last meeting of the Federal Council but was not carried because of national privacy laws which require that such circulation should have the approval of the individuals listed before promulgation. ACT made the very valid point that the Association's objective of enabling social contact between former FAA colleagues would be helped by the promulgation of the list of members and contact details. The Council decided that privacy could be maintained if the membership list was promulgated by State of membership only, i.e. with no other contact details. Because of the enormity of the task, the National Executive has proposed that Divisions of the Association should exchange these lists so that each Division secretary would hold the complete national list by State of membership. Your Division secretary should therefore be able to provide you with the state of residence of any of your old colleagues and it would be for you to follow that up. This falls considerably short of the ACT proposal but Council had no choice but to follow the laws of the land.

We now have a computer in the National Headquarters at Nowra and are looking at ways this might be upgraded to enable desk top publishing, enabling perhaps the publication of SLIPSTREAM. This will be pursued if it can save us costs in producing the magazine and reduce its cost to the membership. Any computer or desktop whiz who can help us in this quest is requested to contact the Editor.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

It has been agreed that a list of members names be compiled; by Divisions to which they belong. The list would be made available to all interested members in the near future.

All members who do not wish to have their names included on the list should advise the National Secretary without delay and no later than 30 June 1998.

**c/- PO Box A115,
Naval Post Office,
Nowra, NSW 2540
Fax: (02) 4421 7579**



Editorial

The National Executive have loosened the purse strings sufficiently to allow me to enhance this edition of 'Slipstream' with glossy coloured covers and photographs of our most illustrious naval airman. All of course designed to draw your attention to the coming 50th Anniversary celebrations - more about which appears elsewhere in this journal.

Women's Business Editor (Pat Perkins) finds herself a little disappointed at the limited response from the ladies to this interesting new addition to 'Slipstream'. The several articles received, and printed, were excellent. Well written stories which clearly describe the emotions and experiences of two women who, as young brides travelled to a new country and a new life. Even "Slipstream's" lady typesetter thought the stories were great. Your stories do not have to be great sagas, even a few lines which simply describe some minor event in your life or remembers about a person some of us might know, are all interesting to our readers. They like to be reminded of these experiences and personalities of an earlier time when we were all young and life had its interesting moments - when cars were not even fitted with heater/demisters let alone air conditioning. "Women's Business" Editor is fond of describing the difficulties of driving to Sydney Town to meet the ship. The early departure from Nowra with two young children in the car. fog to contend with on the plains past Bulli and with no heater/demister in our EJ Holden were all tests designed to examine the mettle of any Navy wife.

National Secretary (Jim Lee) advises that from time to time he receives letters of complaint from members who have sent in contributions to "Slipstream" which have not been acknowledged or printed in "Slipstream". Presently it is not my policy to acknowledge contributions to "Slipstream" - I have enough to do (though I return photographs when requested). Some material I have had for more than twelve months with the expectation it would be used eventually. Some of these correspondents have stated they would be reluctant in the future, an attitude I find unfortunate as the strength of the journal is in the contributions of the members. You will recall in an earlier edition of this journal I described contributions to "Slipstream" as a conversation between former shipmates who are now separated by time and distance. So readers don't be despondent if your article does not get a guernsey immediately, be patient and keep up the good work.

A recent HMAS MELBOURNE Association newsletter I received is promoting the sale of a new book "RAN Aircraft Carriers" which may be of interest to readers. Published by the Naval Historical Society of Australia and written by former 'chippie' Vince Fazio. While I have had no opportunity to do more than riffle the pages it appears, to me at least, to be a comprehensive history. If you want a copy details are as follows:

"RAN Aircraft Carriers"
Naval Historical Society
Building 32
GARDEN ISLAND, NSW 2000

Cost: \$40.00
Postage: \$5.00

Mini reunions: Those readers who are organising mini reunions during the 50th Anniversary celebrations might like to promulgate the details in the next (July) issue of "Slipstream". Dave Laird, Alec Stevens and yours truly have put our heads together and made arrangements for the Handlers reunion to be held in the Bomaderry RSL Club. The plan is to bus all the participants from the Nowra Showground on completion of events there to the Club where the

auditorium has been set aside for our use. As none will have had lunch, arrangements will be made with the Club to put on a light meal at a nominal cost. Participants may stay as long as they wish. The Club has a courtesy bus (as do most of the liquor serving establishments in Nowra) which makes regular runs around the Nowra area. You will not need your own transport. Please note that the mini reunion arrangements includes partners.

SLIDES

I have three boxes of slides kindly lent to me by a fellow 'Sea Rider' and FAAA member during passage on HMAS MELBOURNE to Sydney Town last year. Unfortunately I omitted to get the owner's details before we parted company - I would like to return them. Somewhere out there in 'Slipstream Land' - if the owner could call me I'll be pleased to return your property.

Editor.

P.S.

I wish I was really clever and every time photographs arrived here I would note on the reverse details of the owner and the disposition of the photo after use. Unfortunately I'm not and at times forget. So it would probably help if you were really keen to have your photographs returned, to write your details on the back of the photo then I would have no excuse for not returning them.

P.P.S.

Sometimes I'm sent a number of photos - use some and then think I'll keep the remainder for a later edition of 'Slipstream'. I have a whole herd of photographs I borrowed from Richard Holmes ('Old Wallinga', Mudgee) more than twelve months ago. Some I have used, the remainder I have been keeping for a rainy day.



Yellow Bar - Manila, May 1960

THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR

DETAILS OF YOUR MEMBERS FOR INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR

We have recently published the first edition of *THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR: Recipients of National Honours 1975-96*. A copy of the brochure for this volume is enclosed together with a brochure for the volume on Imperial awards 1952-98 soon to be published. We are now about to embark on a new volume: *THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR: 1939-52*.

While we have been able to trace almost full details of all recipients of awards for valour and service for recent periods, we have not been able to trace all those eligible who received medals and distinctions in the period 1939 to 1980.

We thus seek your urgent assistance. To complete the books, what we need from you are:

- Lists of your members who are eligible, or may be eligible for inclusion (if possible, we require full first names and family names of all recipients). The list should include all awards such as CBE, DSO, DSC, OBE, MBE, RRC, DFC, MC, DFC, AFC, ARRC, DCM, CGM, GM, QPM, QFSM, DSM, MM DFM, AFM, QGM, RVM, BEM, RFD, ED, and also

- WORLD WAR II MEDALS, including all Stars (1939-45, Air Crew Europe, Atlantic, Italy, Pacific, Burma, etc.), Defence Medal, 1939-45 War Medal and all Service Medals; all medals for JAPAN, KOREA, MALAYA, VIETNAM, UN and others following World War II, all Australian Service Medals, Civilian Service Medals and all other medals awarded since 1939.

- Details of addresses, if available; if full addresses are *not* available, we need at least an indication of suburb, town or location where the recipient or their family can be contacted.

No full entries will be published without the permission of the recipient and without the opportunity to provide details for their entry. If the person/s concerned are deceased, we seek to contact their families or relatives who can provide details for their entries in the book. All entries are provided free and there is no obligation whatsoever to purchase a copy of the publication for an entry to appear.

Your co-operation and assistance is vital to ensure that eligible members and former members of your organisation can be included with full entries in *THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR*. In return for your assistance, we will send you complimentary a copy of the already published volume (Australian National Honours 1975-96) and a copy of the new volume when published.

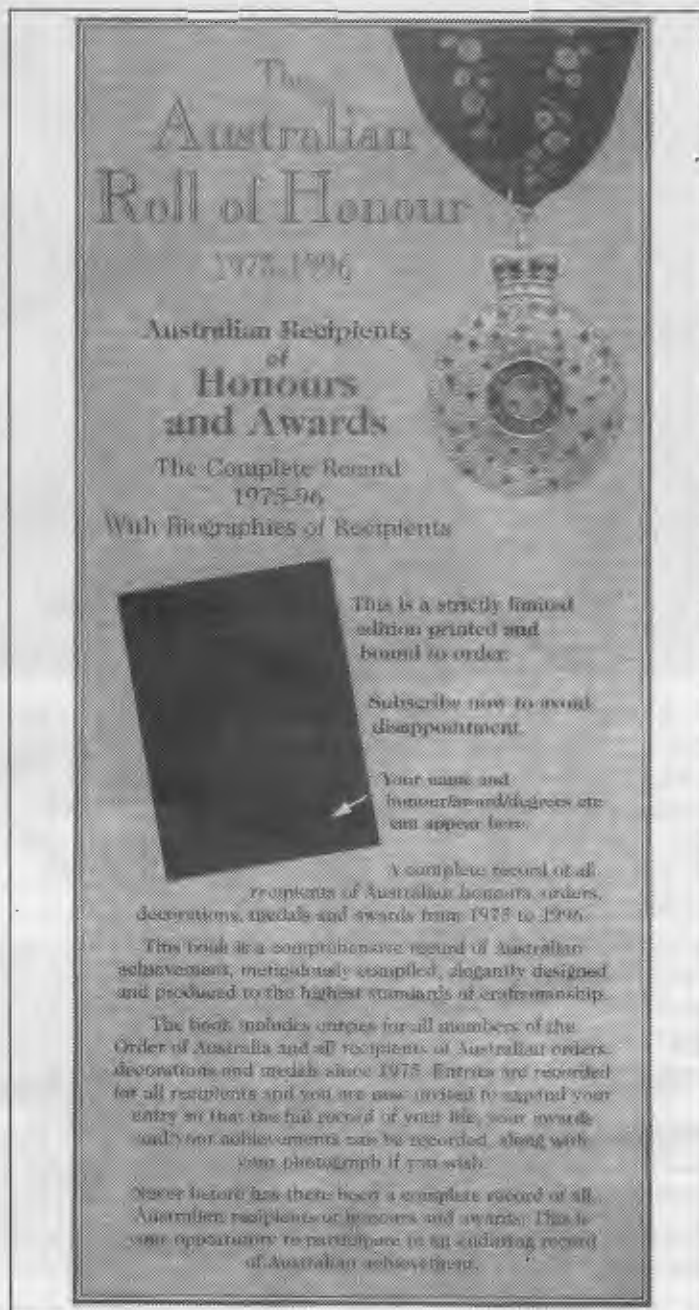
Please give this request your early consideration and reply as soon as possible. *THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR* is a unique record of the many thousands of Australians who have served their country; we hope that your members and former members have the opportunity of recording their contributions in full.

THE ABOVE LETTER FROM ROLL OF HONOUR PUBLICATIONS PTY. LTD. WAS RECEIVED BY THE NATIONAL FAAA AND PROBABLY ALL REGISTERED (INCORPORATED) DIVISIONS.

IT IS SUGGESTED THAT A CO-ORDINATED REPLY WOULD BE BEST FOR THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND THE ASSOCIATION.

IT IS SUGGESTED THAT MEMBERS AND SURVIVING RELATIVES OF DECEASED EX-MEMBERS BEING RECIPIENTS OF AWARDS AS DETAILED, SHOULD

- A) CHECK THE FIRST EDITION AT YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY OR RSL OFFICE FOR CORRECT ENTRIES;
- B) KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE SECOND VOLUME SOON TO BE PUBLISHED, FOR CORRECT ENTRIES;
- C) IF YOU BELIEVE THAT ENTRIES IN THOSE VOLUMES ARE NOT COMPLETE OR CORRECT THEN PREPARE A CONCISE PRINTED SUBMISSION GIVING DETAILS;
- D) FOR THE PROPOSED NEW VOLUME, "THE AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR: 1939-52", AND OF COURSE FOR THE PERIOD 1939 TO 1980 IF YOU ARE AWARE OF A RECIPIENT WHOSE DETAILS ARE NOT RECORDED, PREPARE A CONCISE PRINTED SUBMISSION GIVING DETAILS AS REQUESTED IN THE LETTER.
- E) FORWARD SUBMISSIONS TO YOUR DIVISION SECRETARY WHO WILL THEN FORWARD BULK SUBMISSIONS TO THE NATIONAL SECRETARY PERIODICALLY FOR FURTHER ACTION. *HON. NATIONAL SECRETARY*



The Australian Roll of Honour
1975-1996
Australian Recipients of Honours and Awards
The Complete Record 1975-96
With Biographies of Recipients

This is a strictly limited edition printed and bound to order.
Subscribe now to avoid disappointment.
Your name and honours/awards/degrees etc. can appear here.

A complete record of all recipients of Australian honours, orders, decorations, medals and awards from 1975 to 1996.

This book is a comprehensive record of Australian achievement, meticulously compiled, elegantly designed and produced to the highest standards of craftsmanship.

The book includes entries for all members of the Order of Australia and all recipients of Australian orders, decorations and medals since 1975. Entries are recorded for all recipients and you are now invited to support your entry so that the full record of your life, your awards and your achievements can be recorded, along with your photograph if you wish.

Never before has there been a complete record of all Australian recipients of honours and awards. This is one opportunity to participate in an enduring record of Australian achievement.

Profile

ADMIRAL SIR VICTOR SMITH AC KBE CB DSC RAN (Rtd)



It is very appropriate that we profile Sir Victor Smith in this special Golden Jubilee promotion edition of SLIPSTREAM since his name pervades the history of the Fleet Air Arm and so many of us have been very privileged to serve with him at some point during that time.

Born in 1913, Sir Victor was christened Victor Albert Trumper Smith, being named after his uncles, one of whom was the great cricketer. He began his education in Sydney and independently derived an ambition to join the Naval College and train for a naval career. He joined the RAN Naval College at Jervis Bay in February 1927 as a cadet midshipman, being one of 13 accepted for entry from well over 200 candidates.

In May 1932, the five cadet midshipmen remaining from the 1927 entry were sent abroad for training in the Royal Navy. Among other courses, the group joined the RN carrier HMS Glorious for a 2-week air familiarisation course. Midshipman Smith found this course 'absolutely absorbing' and it "awakened an interest in me toward the Fleet Air Arm". He later applied to do an observer's

course as the pilot's course was not open to RAN officers at the time, owing to an arrangement with the RAAF for their pilots to fly naval aircraft.

On completion of his observer's course in 1937, Lieutenant Smith joined HMS Glorious and was attached to No. 825 Squadron equipped with Swordfish aircraft, then quite new in the RN. In August 1939 when the dark clouds of war were gathering, Lieut Smith was posted to No. 821 Squadron in HMS Ark Royal, then in Scapa Flow. In June 1940, he led a flight of 6 Swordfish on a daylight torpedo attack on the German battleship *Scharnhorst* off the Norwegian coast. The flight was not able to score any torpedo hits but lost two aircraft. He received a Mention in Despatches for the operation.

Lieut Smith later joined No. 807 Squadron which in early 1941 embarked in HMS Furious which subsequently sailed for Gibraltar. There the Squadron re-embarked in HMS Ark Royal. The squadron was equipped with Fulmar 2-seat fighters with .303 guns in the wings. While on combat air patrol in May 1941, his Fulmar was directed to attack a force of enemy bombers heading for the convoy which the carrier was escorting. Because of battle damage, the Fulmar had to ditch and the crew was picked up by HMS Cossack. The ship's company initially thought Lieut Smith and his pilot were Italians because of their acquired sun

tan, and were about to deal with them fairly harshly. On a similar convoy escort mission to Malta some four months later, his aircraft was again shot down and ditched, with the crew being rescued by destroyer. In November 1941, HMS Ark Royal was escorting another carrier ferrying Spitfires to Malta when the Ark was sunk by torpedo. Again, Lieut Smith was rescued by a destroyer. He was later to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his service in No. 807 Squadron.

Arriving back in Australia in February 1942 when the war generally was going very badly as witness the sinking of HMS Hood and Repulse, the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin among other events, Lieut Smith was posted to HMAS Canberra for duty particularly with the ship's Seagull flight. The ship was in Sydney Harbour when, during May 1941 Japanese midget submarines made attacks on targets in the Harbour. Unscathed, HMAS Canberra departed for New Zealand and in August 1941, she was sunk at the Battle of Savo Island.

It was then back to the UK for service in HMAS Shropshire,

donated by the British Government to the RAN as a replacement for HMAS Canberra. This appointment was short-lived, instead he joined the RN carrier HMS Tracker as the Operations Officer in the rank of Lieutenant Commander. The ship formed part of the Atlantic convoy escorts and later escorted convoys to Murmansk.

Next was an appointment to the planning staff of Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy. Off Normandy in the early hours of 6 June 1944 when the invasion began, LCdr Smith was soon ashore and was able to see something of the tank battles then raging. While on the London based planning staff, LCdr Smith met, courted and married at five days notice Miss Nanette Harrison in an exercise typically showing his characteristics of fine judgement, decisiveness, unswerving aim and good organisation. Miss Harrison might be said to have the same characteristics but she certainly had and has a great deal of personal charm which has endeared her over many years to the Fleet Air Arm community in particular.

Leaving his new bride of ten days in England, LCDR Smith returned to Australia in November 1944 to plan for the establishment of the British Pacific Fleet in Australia in preparation for its part against the Japanese in the Pacific. This work was to prepare him well for his next task near war's end - the raising of a plan for an RAN Fleet Air Arm based on two aircraft carriers, two carrier air groups and the accompanying shore organisation. This task took him back again to Britain in October 1945 where he resided most of the information and experience to be used in planning.

In May 1947 these plans resulted in the Australian Government approving the formation of an Australian Fleet Air Arm and the task of implementing the plans began. LCDR Smith became the Director of Air Warfare Organisation and Training before again being sent to London as Air Staff Officer to implement that part of the plan. He was promoted Commander in December 1947. HMAS Sydney was commissioned in 1948 and the Carrier Air Groups established virtually concurrently, realising the plan.

Appointed to HMAS Sydney as executive officer on 9 Jan 1950, Cmdr Smith served in her during her first Korean deployment. It was then to RAAF Schofields to take it over and prepare it as a Naval Air Station, later to become HMAS Nirimba. That done, Cmdr Smith returned to Navy Office as Director of Air Warfare, Organisation and Training with a staff of 5.

Promoted to Captain rank in December 1953, our hero went to sea as Captain F in Quadrant and Queenborough. The Fleet Air

Arm next saw him in January 1957 when he was appointed as the Captain HMAS Albatross. His period of nearly three years in command is well remembered by most as a time of great progress in the administration of the Station and improvement in its facilities, especially in the Married Quarters. By then the FAA had been equipped with Sea Venom and Gannet aircraft and HMAS Melbourne had arrived in Australia. Captain Smith was appointed in command of HMAS Melbourne in 1961, where he spent 18 months before being promoted to Rear Admiral and to duty in Navy Office. This ended his direct connection with the RAN Fleet Air Arm which had been continuous with only two breaks, his period as Captain F and when attending the Imperial Defence College.

RADM Smith returned to the Fleet as its Commander in January 1966 for just a year. He became Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff in 1967 and later that year was promoted to Vice Admiral and appointed as Chief of the Naval Staff. It was during his time as CNS that HMAS Melbourne collided with USS Frank E Evans. It was also during this time that the RANHFV and the RAN Diving Team were sent to Vietnam and which he visited on two occasions.

VADM Smith became the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, on 23 November 1970 and was promoted to Admiral. He served with great distinction in that capacity for 5 years, when many national and international events were bearing on the office, such as the withdrawal from Vietnam, developments in SEATO, Five Power Defence Arrangements and, at home, the controversial Tange Report on the Re-Organisation of Defence.

At the time of his retirement in November 1975, Admiral Smith had served 49 years in the RAN and was the first and only graduate of the RAN College to attain the rank of Admiral. A truly remarkable, comprehensive and successful career in both war and peace and one in which he won the full respect and admiration of all who came into contact with him.

We of the Fleet Air Arm during that time might remember his career best by his drive for the quality and effectiveness of naval air operations, and for the consistency of his concern for the welfare of all those under his command. We are most proud to have him as our Patron.

We hope to see Sir Victor at the Golden Jubilee celebrations and our Re-Union later this year when we can share a few memories with him.



Who,
When,
Where,
Why?

What are they doing now?

All should be revealed
in the July edition.

50th Anniversary Report

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to bring you up to date on the events planned for the 50th Anniversary or the Golden Jubilee celebrations during the week-end of 29 October - 2 November at NAS NOWRA. The 50th Anniversary Committee believes that there is something in this program which is very relevant to your interest or service in the Fleet Air Arm and which you would want to participate or witness with those with whom you served.

Registration

The registration arrangements promulgated in earlier editions of SLIPSTREAM continue to apply. Should you wish a registration form to be posted to you or any other information about registration, please call:

Tessa on (02) 4421 1920 or

Karen on (02) 4421 7463.

The cost of registration is \$35 (family or single) and in the process of registration you can elect to attend and pay separately for those events in which you wish to participate and which carry a separate charge, e.g. the Cabaret Ball, the Cocktail Party or the various sporting events. The schedule of costs is presented on the registration form. Registration entitles you to attend all other events and to receive the registration pack of carry bag, note book with pen and other memorabilia of the Anniversary.

You might consider registering as soon as you can to enable us to process your registration amid the steady stream of registrations in an orderly way rather than in a last minute intensive rush.

If you have registered, perhaps you would consider rousing up your mates to register, remembering that it takes most of us to make a re-union.

Turning now to the programmed events.

The Cocktail Party - Thursday 29 October, 1830.

The Cocktail Party will be conducted in the magnificent Museum building amid most of the aircraft types which have served the RAN Fleet Air Arm during the last 50 years, aircraft which you may have sweated over in the SYDNEY or MELBOURNE or at NAS NOWRA during your naval career. The occasion will bring many former colleagues together and the atmosphere will start many yarns of the old days and also enable us oldies to hear something of present day naval aviation from our successors.

We are hopeful that our Patron, Admiral Sir Victor Smith and Lady Smith will attend the Cocktail Party. He will want to talk old times and new times with those who served with him during his many years in the RAN.

The ever popular Beat Retreat ceremony will be staged by the ever popular Navy Band, a treat which everybody always enjoys.

You just simply have to be there. Cost is \$15 per head.

Annual General Meeting of the Federal Council of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia - Friday, 30 October at 1000 at the Parachute Training School.

We are grateful to the Parachute Training School for making this venue available.

Although essentially a meeting of Division delegates, you as a member or potential member of the Association might wish to see how the Association is run and who is responsible for making all of those mistakes. On this occasion all offices of the National Executive will be declared vacant and a new executive elected.

The agenda will be promulgated nearer the date of the Council meeting.

BBQ Lunch - Museum, 1200 Friday 30 October

Join your mates and former FAA colleagues at this BBQ and catch up with them. It will be a very informal occasion for everyone

to rekindle old friendships and recall past experiences. One of those occasions for which there is no substitute.

Cost is \$15 per head.

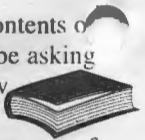
FAA History Review - 1400 Friday 30 October

The idea of the History Review is to refresh us with the rich history of our Fleet Air Arm or indeed to acquaint us with much about it which we might not have known. Illustrated presentations will cover the various eras of the RAN FAA right from its inception. You will recognise the era or eras in which you served. Each of the Association's Divisions will make a presentation on the era allocated to them, with the substance of the presentation coming from the Museum archives and researched by our history curator Bob Geale and his team. The presenters will add something from their own experience of the era or quote from someone else's.

If you have an anecdote about an era which simply must be told, please let Bob Geale, c/e The Australian Naval Aviation Museum, know about it. We need to spice up the facts of history with some human experiences.

From this review you will know something of the contents of the book 'A Story of the Fleet Air Arm' which we will be asking Sir Victor Smith to launch immediately after the Review.

The Launch of 'A Story of the RAN Fleet Air Arm'



The Australian Naval Aviation Museum is in the course of producing a book describing the origins and development of the RAN Fleet Air Arm over the last fifty years as researched from Navy Office and Defence Dept files by author Bob Nicholls and written by him in first draft form, redrafted by our own Dr Fred Lane, a former navigator well known in our RAN FAA community and finally edited within the Museum to include stories and contributions from many who have served in the FAA. Well illustrated by photographs, this book is currently being printed by Allen and Unwin and will have a dramatic front cover, a copy of which is included with this edition, together with an order form.

This book is a must for each of us who have served in the FAA or in its support, as well as those who are interested in this chapter of naval history. It would mean a lot to your family to have a record of the service in which you proudly participated and for them to understand better the nature of your part in it. It was felt important that this story of our unique part of the Navy be told accurately as possible, complete with a human dimension and made available to the public which might not have much of an idea of the FAA.

We suggest you order a copy now and give it to yourself and your family as an advanced present for Christmas 1998.

Mini Branch Re-Unions

Most re-unions feature opportunities for former branch colleagues to get together independently of the main group and enjoy recalling their own experiences and times together, united by common circumstances and events. The 50th Anniversary Committee is not able to organise these separately, instead it is looking for former branch personalities to undertake to convene branch mini reunions which can then be notified in SLIPSTREAM. There are opportunities in the program for these events and many venues in Nowra which could be booked for them.

We have been advised that Bill Paul is organising an Armourers' re-union, Ambrose Boulter a Handlers' re-union, Henry Hall a Met Branch get-together, someone else an 817 Sqn re-union and perhaps some others are starting to get off the ground. If you can help organise one for your former branch colleagues, let us know and we will ensure it is advertised in the next issue of SLIPSTREAM.

The Golden Jubilee Cabaret Ball - Friday 30 October at 1900.

This event is to take place at the Worrigea Convention Centre in Nowra, a large establishment with several banquet areas for weddings etc. To augment the space, large marquees are to be set up. There will be a limit of about 700 on the numbers attending but we here think that all who want to go will be able to do so, that is, present indications are showing that the event is being taken up by about half of those registering.

The RAN Band will be providing the music and, again, it will be a great occasion. You should take your wife or partner along for a great night out.

Table reservations for a party are not yet available and we will let you know next issue what the arrangements for table bookings will be.

Cost is \$50 per head.

Freedom of Entry March - Saturday, 31 October at 1100.

As you may know, the Shoalhaven Spring Festival occurs each year and both ALBATROSS and CRESWELL usually take part. The parade usually features marchers and floats made up by various community groups which make a colourful procession. This year, ALBATROSS will mount a contingent in the march and be offered the Freedom of the City.

The ALBATROSS contingent will lead the march and the Association will field a contingent to follow, showing how a march should be performed. Subject to satisfactory flat top and security arrangements, a Sea Venom from the Museum will accompany our contingent in the march to add even more interest to it. We will also endeavour to obtain suitable transport to enable members not able to march to participate.

The Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Don Chalmers, will be the Reviewing Officer and is bound to notice the difference between our marching and that of the current 'Trossians'.

We are arranging to finish up with a brief interlude for refreshments at the Showground, where the march finishes and, perhaps, be joined by ADM Chalmers before we head off for the Nowra Racecourse and the Jubilee Race Meeting.

The Golden Jubilee Race Meeting - Saturday, 31 October at 1400.

This splendid event will feature six races, carrying the titles of former FAA ships and establishments:

- Sydney
- Vengeance
- Albatross
- Nirimba
- Melbourne, and
- The Golden Jubilee



The Association is providing prize-money of \$100 for each race and individual race prizes will be presented by a Division president.

The entry fee of \$10 per head will entitle members access to special refreshment facilities at the course.

The notorious westerly wind will not be blowing on that occasion.

Don't miss it.

Ecumenical Service, Monument Unveiling and Dedication - Sunday 1 November at 0830.



An Ecumenical Service is planned for Sunday, 1 November and this will be conducted by former Navy Chaplain Bishop Geoff Mayne, who is well known to most of us, and who will be assisted by Monsignor Lyons, Rev Walter Wheeldon and other well known former Navy Chaplains.

We have invited the Minister for Defence, Hon Ian McLachlan MP to unveil the Monument which the Association is having constructed near the entry to the Museum and which is to pay tribute to the service of former and present RAN FAA personnel over the fifty years of the FAA. We believe it to be appropriate for

the Government to recognise the fifty year service of the FAA and of ALBATROSS to the defence of Australia by the Minister performing the unveiling ceremony. The unveiling will be followed by the dedication of the monument by the Chaplains.

The ceremony is expected to last for about 40 minutes.

As reported in previous editions, the monument will feature an albatross in flight, with a wing span of about 2m, sculptured in bronze and stainless steel by maritime sculptor Denis Adams, a very accomplished artist. The sculpture will be mounted on a plinth which in turn will be mounted on a large rock used as the original foundation stone of the Museum. This will be set in a rose garden contained by a circular brick wall and path surround. The aircraft firm, Hawker de Havilland of Melbourne has very generously donated \$35000 for the construction of the monument and the sculpture. Volunteer Association labour is doing the landscaping around the area and the whole structure will significantly improve the approach to the Museum.

You would not want to miss this.

The Golden Jubilee Air Day - Sunday 1 November starting at 1030.



The Golden Jubilee Air Day may be for many the climax of the Jubilee celebrations. An exciting display from Navy aircraft and the resident RNZAF Skyhawks is promised and participation by other Service aircraft and from the USN and RN has been invited. The RAN Historic Flight, featuring the Dakota, Tracker and Firefly will feature in the program and representation from general aviation or commercial aviation has also been invited.

There have been very many excellent air days at NAS Nowra since its inception and we all have memories of particular occasions. This is a special air day since it marks 50 years of Naval aviation and, although Service aircraft availability for displays and fuel budgets are much more limited these days than they were in earlier times, this may prevent overseas participation especially, a stirring display appropriate to the occasion is nevertheless the aim.

The Association will have a marquee set up near the Museum where members can meet throughout the day. From 1600 until 1800, a final get-together in this marquee is planned along with suitable refreshment.

The RAN is the host for the Air Day and there is no charge for admission.

Jubilee Bowls Competition - Monday 2 November at the Bomaderry Bowling Club.

Bomaderry Bowling Club is arranging a day of mixed events at the Club and the entry fee of \$10 covers access to the program, some refreshments and food. Bowlers will have a field day.

Golf Day Nowra Golf Club - Monday 2 November.

Golfing visitors will remember playing on the select Nowra course by the River. The course has improved a great deal since you last played it and a special day has been organised at the Club for you to recall past good form. Steve Cottam is the organiser for this event.

Fee is \$20. A game will help you to recover from the events of the previous few days.

Fleet Air Arm Association Raffle.

The Association is raising funds to cover the cost of bus transport for members to as many of the Jubilee program events as we can afford. QANTAS has generously donated 2 return airline tickets to West Coast US, specifically Los Angeles, as first prize and you may purchase your raffle tickets via the registration form or separately. Books of 10 tickets are available for \$20.

Our aim is to provide a comprehensive service from the motel areas to the locations of the events in the Jubilee program.

As free bus transport to and from program events depends on a successful raffle, please participate in it and sell books to others.

Welfare Update

TPI Veterans - Stamp Duty Exemptions

At the Central Southern District Council meeting on 8 February 1998 you asked me about some newspaper reports you had seen on Veterans winning Stamp Duty refund on new or used cars. I have made some enquiries and the background to the situation is that the NSW TPI Association and Vietnam Veterans' Association have been lobbying the State Government for some time to exempt TPI veterans from the payment of stamp duty when purchasing a motor vehicle.

The NSW office of State Revenue has recently given approval for this exemption which applies from 1 January 1998. The exemption was reported in some Sydney weekend newspapers and on some radio programmes.

When registering a motor vehicle, a TPI pensioner will need to show his/her Gold Card when completing the appropriate registration forms. This will give them Stamp Duty exemption as well as the usual concessions on motor vehicle tax and CTP Fund Levy and free car registration.

It appears that DVA was not included in discussions on the new exemption. The Sydney Office was aware that some changes were "in the wind" when the Road Transport Authority (RTA) contacted us in late January to ascertain how a TPI pensioner could be quickly identified.

After making some enquiries we received a letter from the office of State Revenue which stated;

"I advise that approval has been given for the Stamp Duties Act to be administered on the basis that an exemption from stamp duty will apply to a Motor Vehicle Certificate of Registration in respect of the purchase of a motor vehicle by a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated veteran who is eligible for a special pension under the provisions of section 24 of the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986.

The Variation to Statute will operate with effect from 1 January 1998 and continue until appropriate amendments can be made to the Stamp Duties Act and the Duties Act.

If you have any further enquiries, please contact Mr Bob Nagel on 9689 6484."

I understand the office of State Revenue has written to the TPI and Vietnam Veterans' Associations to advise of the new benefit.

Kind regards,

Jack Maurer, Director Health Care & Services, Veterans' Affairs

South Korean Presidential Citation

On 27 July 1953 the then President of the Republic of Korea, Dr Syngman Rhee, awarded a Presidential Citation to United States Seventh Fleet for "exceptionally meritorious service to the Republic of Korea during the period July 1950 through July 1953."

It is understood the following HMA Ships and FAA Squadrons formed part of the United States 7th Fleet during that period: HMAS ANZAC, HMAS BATAAN, HMAS CONAMINE, HMAS CULGOA, HMAS MURCHISON, HMAS SHOALHAVEN, HMAS SYDNEY, HMAS TOBRUK, HMAS WARRAMUNGA, 805 SQUADRON, 817 SQUADRON.

The wearing of the award by eligible persons was approved by the Governor General of ember 1997. The process of gaining recognition for Australian servicemen to wear the award was initiated and pushed through the system by Mr Charles Thwaites, Executive Officer of the Korean War 50th Anniversary Committee (Victoria) and a member of the Heidelberg Sub Section of the Naval Association.

Therefore, persons who served in Ships and Squadrons listed above during the period July 1950 through July 1953 should apply for the award to:

Staff Officer (Medals), D-3-32A

Department of Defence, CANBERRA, ACT 2600

CONTACT



'Nifty Nev' Russell is home again after a stay in Prince Henry Hospital - heart problems I am told.

Call from Robert Dickinson who lives in Gerringong (NSW) wanting to join the Association. I heard Len Kenderdine had paid him a visit and gave his arm a twist. Welcome aboard Robert.

Brian Minett - former NAMA E during the seventies and now a prison officer and living in West Australia. Brian Tells me his hobby is Navy memorabilia. I believe he also has a small business mounting medals.

Saw Alf Moffatt in the 'Nowra Fair' (shopping complex) recently. Age has certainly not diminished him at all.

Denny Lynch was here today (see class photograph elsewhere in this journal). Thanks Denny for the practical vote of confidence.

Great deal laughter in the kitchen this morning, Marg Marquis is around to assist Women's Business Editor select the photographs which will accompany her article.

The Editor thanks Denny Lynch for his practical vote of confidence.

I would not wish to embarrass Denny but I do feel greater recognition of his action is warranted.

As a local NSW Division member Denny has long been a practical supporter of the FAAA and the Museum. He was a regular member of the Les Matterson - Peter Denny Air Stores cataloguing team until serious family illness curtailed that activity.

Incidentally, that project is still on-going under the able stewardship of Frank McPherson.

However, Denny Lynch has made an extremely generous donation of \$500 to the SLIPSTREAM operating account. This gesture benefits all of us who enjoy receiving and reading The Association Journal.

The National Executive Committee, and I'm sure all members, offer sincere appreciation to Shipmate Denny for his 'practical vote of confidence'.

Jim Lee, Hon. Secretary

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

To follow on from my January Report I can now inform members that the National Constitution approved by The Federal Council in November '97 has been accepted by the Ministry of Fair Trading in Western Australia, the State in which the first All Ranks FAA Association was registered as an Incorporated Association.

The Constitution has also been accepted by the Australian Securities Commission in Victoria where we are registered as an Australian National Body (ARBN 071 291 677).

Consequently Divisions, registered in their own rights as States Incorporated Associations, are considering amendments to their own constitutions to resolve any perceived conflict between articles.

Personally, I believe the next step for the Federal Council to take is to approve an approach to the Australian Taxation Office for National Association Income Tax Exemption and Streamlined Sales Tax Exemption (for publications). That achieved, the next logical step would be to gain an Authority to Fundraise, as presently held by the NSW Division until the year 2000 (under the Gaming and Racing Act).

The NSW Division Executive have indicated that when all that is done they could confidently cancel their Incorporation as an Association knowing that their members would be fully protected, certainly no less than they presently are. Added bonuses would be that Annual Audits by registered accountants could be dispensed with. A considerable cost saving; notification of annual statements and proposed changes to constitutions/by laws/rules with mandatory lodgement fees would also be no longer necessary. Another cost saving.

Other Divisions may also consider those points.

A carry over from the last Federal Council Meeting was a requirement that comprehensive Policy Statements regarding Funds Management be drawn up. National Treasurer Terry Hetherington has provided Divisions with Policy Statements for The Association General Fund, SLIPSTREAM Account and Reunion Fund.

A revised Membership Application Form has also been forwarded to Divisions for consideration.

It is disappointing that proposed self help to set up the 'Old chapel' as a National-cum-Local Division HQ has not made much progress. A direct appeal for a working bee, made at the NSW Division AGM, attracted only busy, busy President Max Altham and Frank McPherson to Turn To on the appointed day. An indication of the "Not-Me-Chief" times we live in I guess.

For the January edition of this Journal we slipped in a couple of business card size adverts, of worthy supporters of The FAAA, to attract comments and enquiries from members about possible future limited advertising. The National Executive is keen to contain costs and strictly limited Ads for a fee are one consideration. It is thought that a maximum of two A4 pages, eg. back cover pages 35 and 36, might be allocated for members wishing to advertise their businesses nationally; Real Estate to mention one.

Alternatively equal space could be provided by a Loose Leaf Flyer, without detriment to PrintPost cost effectiveness weight restrictions for members wishing to advertise nationally OR only within their Division Home State. Fees would be variable/negotiable, eg. half page Ad national distribution, single edition, \$250 - advertiser supply artwork for reproduction.

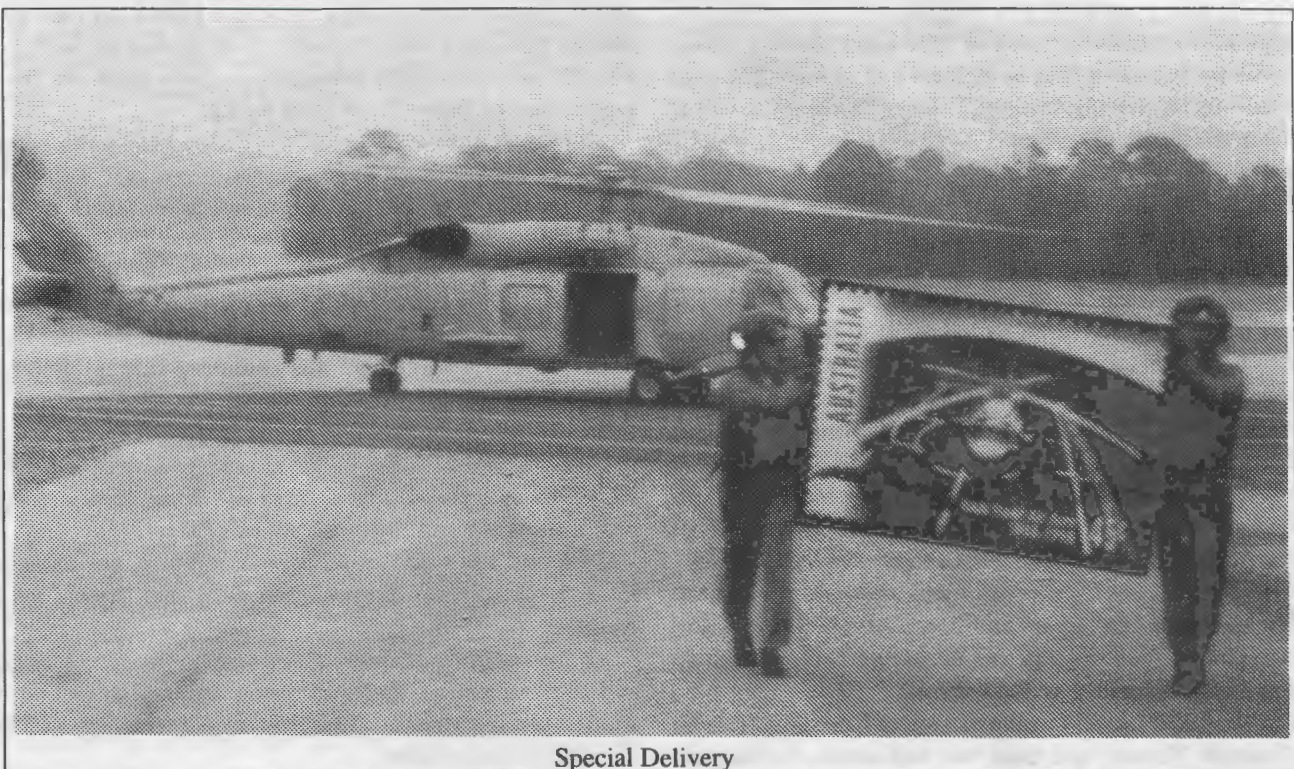
Think about it, we would appreciate some feedback.

Time remaining to FAA Reunion '98 is ticking away relentlessly. I'll leave advertising for that event to the more involved and qualified sub committee.

I do remind members that in conjunction with Reunion activities a Federal Council Meeting will be held to elect a National Executive Committee for the following three year period.

I don't know if any of the present Interim Committee members will nominate for office, I can't speak for them. I can only say with certainty that I will not. I will however retain an active interest in The Association and affairs of my Division. I will be available to assist the incoming National Secretary in any capacity I am able that he or she may deem appropriate.

I suggest all members think beyond the BIG REUNION. if we are to remain a viable association and uphold our aims. Start lobbying your division Committee to, in turn, lobby local Nowra members to stand for office on **The Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia National Executive Committee - NOW.** *Jim Lee*



Special Delivery

THE LAST OF THE LIGHT FLEETS

At the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, 1941-1942, the British Admiralty started to look for ways of quickly producing fleet carriers on a smaller scale. They were not, however, scaled down versions of the armoured fleet carriers of the time but different in several respects, such as smaller power plant, of 40,000 S.H.P. mercantile hulls, no armour two main machinery spaces combining boilers and main engines, single passage way forward to aft #4 deck.

Sixteen ships were planned in two classes but only ten were to see service in the Royal Navy. Of the rest of these two classes some went to France, Holland, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Canada and India.

The two classes - Colossus class (13,190 - 13,350 tons) and Majestic Class (14,000 tons design) most ended up closer to 20,000 tons still with 40,000 S.H.P. commissioned into various navies. None of the "Majestic's" were destined to be commissioned in the R.N.

Many ships of both classes saw service in various "police actions" in the years up to Vietnam.

Colossus Class

The name ship "Colossus" was originally loaned to the French Navy in 1946 and renamed "Arromanches". She spent two spells in the South China seas operating off Indo-China in 1949 and 1953 having been purchased by France in 1951.

Arromanches was again in action off Suez in 1956. Following a refit in 1957 she emerged as an angle deck carrier until another refit in 1968 when she was re-classified as a helicopter carrier; she was finally paid off in 1974.

Vengeance

Was loaned to the R.A.N. to act as a training carrier in Australian waters for air crew and flight deck personnel for active service in Korea, however, Vengeance did not go to Korea, this was left to the larger Sydney. She did, however, make several trips north with personnel and aircraft stores for Korean campaign, whilst "Sydney" was away she also acted as R.A.N. Flagship.

Vengeance was put into reserve in 1956 when she was sold to Brazil given an extensive refit in Holland and re-named "Minas Gerais" she was re-commissioned in 1960 and currently is still in commission as an A.S.W. carrier.

Venerable

After a period in reserve was purchased by the Royal Netherlands Navy, renamed "Karel Doorman" she was given a major refit in 1954 including steam catapult angle deck, her Island and mast radar fit were completely altered so that when she emerged she was unrecognisable as a light fleet. In 1968 a major fire caused her withdrawal from service. But Argentina, impressed by her 8° angle deck radar fit, etc. bought her using the incomplete Majestic Class "Leviathans" boilers, she was refitted in Holland and commissioned as "Veinticino de Mayo". As such she took part in occasional exercises, however, she was a major worry to the R.N. during the Falklands War as by then she was flying "Super Etendard" fighter bombers capable of carrying "exocet missiles". She sortied once during the campaign but was unable to launch her air group due to light wind conditions (40,000 S.H.P. again) so she withdrew to her base as the Argentine Navy also were worried re R.N. submarines in the war zone.

Four of the Colossus Class gave service in Korea - ie: Ocean, Glory, Triumph, Theseus and their two half sisters Perseus and

Pioneer (aircraft repair carriers) giving a good account of themselves off the West coast of Korea.

Majestic Class

Work was halted on all six ships in 1945 to evaluate lessons learned in the Pacific War. Originally it was proposed to fit new boilers and turbines to give 52,000 S.H.P., however, this would have meant completely reworking the machinery spaces, etc. as most of the class was 70% complete it lapsed. Nevertheless, boiler pressure was increased as was the boiler circulation rate and automatic and semi automatic firing was fitted on the latter ships of the class to compensate for the steam catapult, most of which ended up in Commonwealth navies and one with India.

Terrible

For years was the "iron lung" of Devonport Dockyard as completion work proceeded slowly. Purchased in 1948 by the R.A.N. she was renamed "Sydney", commissioned in 1949 she became the Flagship of the R.A.N. Regular exercises was "Sydney's" lot until 1951 when she sailed to Korea relieving H.M.S. Glory on the West coast.

"Sydney" acquitted herself very well in Korea and at one stage held the record for the most sorties ever carried out from a carrier. Upon return to Australia she became flying training carrier for the newly commissioned "Melbourne". It was intended to return her to UK for modernisation, however, costs and manning problems saw her paid off into reserve. In 1962 she was re-commissioned as a fast transport with helicopter facilities to support Australia's involvement in Malaya and Vietnam and was nick-named Vung Tan ferry. She was paid off in 1972 and finally sold for scrap, in spite of efforts to retain her in Sydney, NSW, as a museum ship.

Melbourne (ex Majestic)

Purchased by the R.A.N. and fitted with an 8° angle flight deck, steam catapult mirror landing aids, she was not completed until 1955 with a complement of Sea Venoms and Gannet aircraft. During her life time Melbourne played a most active role in representing Australia at sea in SEATO exercises. In 1967-69 came her life refit and a new air group, A-46 Skyhawks, S-2F Tracker aircraft and Wessex 31 helicopters, which made her the most modern carrier in the South West Pacific.

Another refit followed in 1976-77 when extra turbo generators were installed and the living spaces (quarters?) were fully air conditioned (all on 1943 as laid down boiler plant). Melbourne was finally paid off in 1982 and towed away for scrap in 1985.

Hercules

Almost followed Leviathan into years of no activity, however, in 1958 negotiations were started with India so Hercules received a last minute reprieve and was commissioned in 1960-61 and named "Vikrant" for the Indian Navy.

In 1972 she played a major part in the Indo-Pakistan war. Later she was fitted with a new 9.75° ski jump and given a major refit. However, her propulsion system has long been a source of problems so she was to be paid off in 1997.

"Vikrant" has received yet another reprieve, due to an engine room flooding of her Hermes Class sister ship "Viraat" (ex HMS Hermes).

Of the rest of the Majestic's, two went to Canada - Magnificent and Bon Adventure, the latter being destined to be one of the shortest serving Majestic Class paid off and scrapped in 1970 after 12 years in commission.

Leviathan

Languished in Portsmouth Harbour for many years, even after her boilers went to her half sister "Veinticinco de Mayo" refitting in Holland in 1968, finally scrapped mid 1970s.

Of these sixteen ships only three are now left.

Argentina

One Colossus Class "Veinticino de Mayo" has been in dockyard hands since the late 1980s, reportedly with engine trouble. Many proposals have since been put forward, such as new boilers, gas turbine boosters, but it was recently announced she was to be scrapped due to refit costs in excess of \$150 million. There was no guarantee that even then the 50 year old hull would prove satisfactory for further service.

Brazil

One "Colossus" class "Minas Gerais" still in commission mainly as a helicopter A.S.W. concept believed to spend most of her time as a floating "heliport" and show piece in the harbour of Rio de Janeiro. Recently (1997) steamed to America to pick up new aircraft, 50 years young.

India

One Majestic Class "Vikerant" still active has a mixed air group of Harrier jump jets Sea King helicopters. She is also fitted with four L.C.V.P. landing craft with transport capability for 750 troops, however, due to machinery problems of an unspecified nature will probably soon be phased out of service.

The Admiralty's good idea of cheap carriers in 1942 were never designed or meant to fly modern jet aircraft. However, some have lasted and operated up to 35 years doing just that. This reflects on long refits and professional ability of their crews, all who were tasked with getting top performance out of 40,000 S.H.P. and ships designed in the 1940s to operate aircraft of the day.

R.G. Clarke, (HMAS Melbourne 1960-1962) Ocean Reef, W.A.

THANKS REG FOR YOUR INTERESTING ARTICLE "THE LAST OF THE LIGHT FLEETS" I AM SURE 'SLIPSTREAM' READERS WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE ORIGINS AND FATE OF THESE CARRIERS. ED.



To The Editor

Dear Bob, Thought it about time I contributed something to your excellent 'production'.

With the strong likelihood of myself and 'Skinhead' Kelson being able to swap plenty of lies at the reunion I feel this little story gets me away to a good start on him?

Like everyone I'm keen as mustard to get to Nowra and see the boys we really grew up with.

I have been actively endeavouring to get someone to blow up Bronwyn Bishop over her attitude towards the non recognition of F.E.S.R. for R.A.S. entitlements. The disdain in which she entertained V.A. Peek and other 'seniors', is unforgiveable and highlights her lack of 'quality'.

Kindest regards. Keep up the good work.

Leon 'Swampy' O'Donnell, New Norfolk, Tas.

"SKINHEADS BEDBATH"

By the time one has assumed the mantle of grandpop it is difficult to accept the fact that one was not so very smart back in the youthful Navy days.

Specifically I refer to the hot summer period at R.A.N.A.S., Nowra 1959. Having had a rather embarrassing 'sporting injury' I was obviously 'green' enough to agree to allowing the Naval surgeons scalpel rights to my 'lower band'. I even agreed to them removing the bit of skin that would have long gone had I been of the Jewish faith.

To emphasise just how naive one was I even allowed a Pommy Flyboy, Lt. Thompson, to apply the knock out drops.

First off the operation was supposedly successful - but - 'someone' in their wisdom decided I was having a good kip and wouldn't surface for a while so 'someone' went off to do whatever it is that amuses S.B.As. Coming out of the stupor, in rather a bit of discomfort, I obviously groped the painful area and, silly me, tore out all the good surgeon's needle work.

Another week on the back, telling the Red Cross ladies the appropriate lies about my injuries, then back to the boys for a re-sew.

This time, I think, they lashed my hands to the bedhead until I was at least conscious. I was provided with a 'squirter' bottle of what I think was ethyl bromide - with the instructions to "use liberally". The problem occurs because all the nerves are exposed, the lower band is virtually in a state of angryness all the time. The pain of it all.

My mates were helpful - no flowers or chocolates - just pornographic photos - thoughtful.

Comes the time for the first try at emptying the bladder - a fair old build up - pressure immense.

Here's the scene:

Bed next to mine occupied by that well known ex Birdie 'Skinhead' Kelson. 'Skinhead' had allowed the surgeons into the other side of his anatomy to remove a rather painful grape like bunch of things, commonly known as piles. Poor old 'Skin' was face down and completely unable to move.

The clever S.B.A. helps me to gingerly ease the legs over the side of the bed and produces the gleaming, chrome, bottle. The 'old ferret' is swathed in bandages with an opening at the end. We're set to fire. As mentioned the pressure was enormous, and what a relief - fire away.

The problems:

a) The clever S.B.A. had me pointed at the helpless 'Skinhead'

b) The urine, under pressure, chose to track around the intervals of the bandage and exited as a spray rather than a stream, this completely eluded the opening of the gleaming chrome bottle and showered across the space onto my erstwhile 'grape shy' mate.

c) The build up was too good for me and I couldn't stop - 'Skinhead' couldn't move, the S.B.A. thought it cabaret at its best and fell about laughing. Skinhead's lungs were not a problem - he was hollering like hell.

Note: If 'Skinhead' is suffering from that recently identified yuppie memory loss - 'repressed memory syndrome' - I've got a few witnesses.



To The Editor

Source: 'Sunday Sun' 5th May, 1985 (front page)
'Old Lady Fights Back'

Reluctant Traveller

From the early to mid 1980's I was stationed at the Brisbane Headquarters of the Queensland Water Police. I was fortunate enough to be on shift the day Melbourne was towed into Moreton Bay by the slightly disabled salvage tug. My instructions were simple, "Go and meet the vessel, keep all spectators away as manoeuvring difficulties werelikely".

Three Brisbane tugs assisted in the delicate operation of guiding Melbourne down the narrow shipping channel alongside Moreton Island. The object of the exercise was to anchor Melbourne in

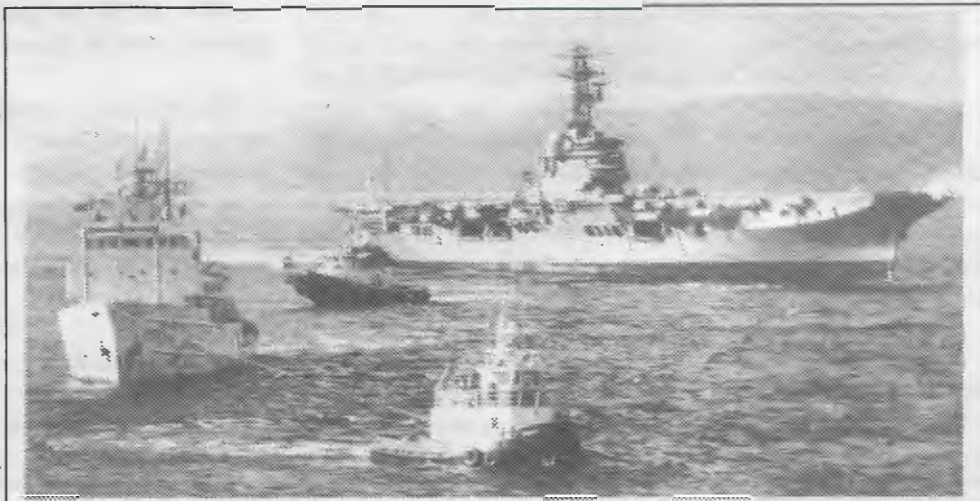
100feet of water. The area of water of this depth in moreton Bay is just South of the navigation aides known as the four beacons. The area is well away from the main shipping channel and fully exposed to the predominant South Easterly.

The tow configuration was one Brisbane tug either side of the salvage tug at the bow and the third was in control of a line from Melbourne's stern. My colleague and I watched in awe as Melbourne drifted sideways as she passed through the very narrow channel area of the four beacons. Her flight deck passed over the top of the two western tripods, her stern missing the north western tripod, from our observations, by a cigarette paper thickness. At this point the stern tug had no option but to give up the attempt to regain control. With engines full astern she was being dragged through the water and healed over on her starboard side so far that all the scuppers on the starboard quarter were under water. The two line was beginning to fail, this was visually evident and the loud and reverent tones being emitted from the line also reinforced this fact to the point that the deck crew made a hasty retreat from forecastle.

Upon reaching the desired anchorage south of the four beacons we again watched in awe as the tugs, which appeared miniature and grossly outclassed, attempted to swing Melbourne in the desired anchorage. To this day I am still at a loss to understand why this particular manoeuvre was ever attempted in such adverse wind conditions. If Melbourne had all way taken off upon entering the anchorage she could have been secured with her bow facing the wind as this was the way she entered the anchorage in the first instance. She then could have swung in any direction wind and tide would take her and no untoward incident would have arisen.

The instant Melbourne was beam on to the South Easterly all four tugs lost control of the situation. Melbourne dragged all four vessels, which were powering their little engine rooms out, across the anchorage to the shallows on the Moreton Island side. This is where she stayed for many hours until a modified contingency plan was formulated. That was the official comment I am informed. I personally believe it was a try again situation after the South Easterly abates. During this indiscretion I recorded soundings around the 15 to 17 feet along Melbourne's port quarter. Melbourne was indicating a draught of 24 feet for the same area.

During Melbourne's short stay in Moreton Bay I managed to negotiate various pieces of memorabilia from the relevant authority. I also have some very interesting photographs (somewhere) of this last and unexpected visit of what appears to be the last of her kind for this country. Steve W.R. Allard, Ipswich, Queensland



Dear Bob,

Thoroughly enjoyed the last issue of Slipstream, as usual. Like you I managed to snare a ride in HMAS Melbourne last year. Gerry Christian who is a personal friend dropped in on Joan and I in September last and, over a cup of coffee, he asked if I would like a run to sea. I did not hesitate.

I joined the ship about 1900 on Wednesday 15th October JB, where we spent the night. The ship was in defence watches for the full period I was aboard. They were involved in sea qualification trials after refit. We sailed at 0500 on the 16th for the East Australian Exercise Area for two Standard missile firings. The first I viewed from the Bridge and the second from the Flight Deck. All on board were very happy with the results, as both recorded direct hits.

During the afternoon there was a full blown damage control exercise, which lasted about 3 hours. The following morning a Surface shoot was carried out at a towed target. About 50 rounds were fired from the 76mm gun. This was assessed as the best surface shoot by an RAN FFG. Late in the morning we secured alongside the Fleet Base and I made my way home. It was a memorable occasion for me, since I had spent the 50th Anniversary of the day I joined at sea in HMAS Melbourne.

Having read Col Price's "A Tiffy's Odyssey" Part Five, I feel compelled to comment about the loss of a servicing crew in New Zealand. The incident happened on the outskirts of Russell in the North Island. A Sea Fury of 805 Sqd had damaged a propeller during a forced landing. The jeep and trailer were supplied by the Carrier Borne Air Liaison Group of which Joe Curry was the Sergeant at the time and the driver was a Corporal Edwards.

There were six in the jeep and three were killed. Two were buried in the cemetery on a hill overlooking Russell, one of those was an RN AA called 'Lofty' Lawton. Frank Brotherton was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium at Chatswood in Sydney. Seem to recall that Jim Galliot may have been involved and the third fatality may also have been an RAN member. Can recall it all fairly well since I was a member of the Funeral Firing Party on both occasions. The OIC at Chatswood was at that time LCDR A.M.Synnot, with LEUT G.R.Griffiths in charge of the firing party. LCDR Synnot was to become an Admiral an CNS, while Leut Griffiths was to retire as Rear Admiral.

Keep up the good work Bob.

Regards,

Ian Ferguson, Vincentia, NSW

NO ADDRESS!

THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR DID NOT INCLUDE A RETURN ADDRESS. IF THERE IS SOMEONE OUT THERE IN SLIPSTREAMLAND WHO KNOWS THE GENTLEMAN IN QUESTION - OR MORE PARTICULARLY HIS ADDRESS - PLEASE ADVISE US SOONEST SO THAT WE CAN GET THE INFORMATION TO HIM. ED

Dear Mr Lehan,

I am writing to you on behalf of my husband regarding the Golden Jubilee Reunion advertised in our local paper in Adelaide.

We would like more information about it all as we are thinking of coming over for it.

His number in the Navy was R43197 and his rank in the Navy was POATA Evans K.M. and he served between 1966-1976 first at HMAS NIRIMBA, then at ALBATROSS and on the HMAS MELBOURNE.

Hoping to hear from you soon as we have to organize our holidays to be able to come over in October this year.

Mrs Sylvia A. Evans

Dear Bob,

I am writing with reference to your article "Early History of the Formation of Naval Blue Jacket Band" by John Ilkin, Slipstream Vol.9, No.1, Jan 1998.

I was one of the foundation members of this band which was in existence before the arrival of the 21st. C.A.G. My instrument, the tenor horn, was owned by the Nowra Town Band with whom I played from 1949. We were very light on the ground in the early days but as time progressed we were well and truly augmented by the names mentioned on the list.

During 1951 we played at the Captain's daughter's wedding at the Church of England church in Nowra. Bandmaster Jack Bestman decided that if the Captain's daughter could get the band, one of his players could also. Permission was obtained from Commander Rodney Rhodes to play at my wedding in September 1951 at the Presbyterian church, Nowra. This was quite an occasion for Nowra on a Saturday afternoon in those days.

On behalf of myself and wife Dorothy, best wishes to all those ex bandmembers. I have met some of you over the years at different venues. I am now retired and hope to attend the reunion later this year.

Congratulations to the Slipstream Production Team for a job well done.

Best wishes,

*Cyril E. Carey, ex (PO/EL AIR) R.A.N.,
Maroochydore, Queensland*

Museum Director, RANAS, HMAS ALBATROSS

Dear Mike,

Looking through albums (have many) I found the enclosed Xmas Card I sent home in '49. Would you say "Fireflies" over the Conral Tower and I thought the verse was quite good.

Good luck for '98 and if I come across any more will send.

Have you or your staff had any communication with any of the following, if so I would like the addresses: Bill Dumett A.M.(O), Baggys Baker A.M.(O), Jarvie Chapman A.M.(O), Lofty Riley L.A.M.(O), Bert Simpson AM(O), Blondie Chappell (Electrical), Knocker White A.M.(E). All same draft as me - seen none since.

Many thanks,

Bill Dennis, Mulbon, nr. Helston, Cornwall, U.K.

The Editor, 'Slipstream',

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of my son Nigel Apperley at present working in Indonesia. He has asked me to contact you about the possibility of placing a paid half-page advertisement in 'Slipstream'.

He has been working on a project over a period of time and feels with the Reunion later this year there could be valuable opportunity for him to widen his material. He will be present at the Reunion activities in October/November, a greatly anticipated time by him I may say.

He has great interest in and feeling for all historic aviation, starting in teenage years and growing in depth subsequently. He has spent many hours in past years using his expertise helping with the Historic Flight at Albatross.

The last 2-3 years he has been based in Indonesia and upon marrying and starting a family he has not been in Australia so often. He was last here twelve months ago, but now is planning to relocate himself and family here permanently later this year.

I will quote what he has written as to the substance of the notice/ advertisement he hopes you can accommodate.

"Requesting aircrew, witnesses and others to contact me regarding Naval Aircraft Incidents primarily involving the loss of the aircraft or being converted to components because of extensive damage. Also incidents that necessitated repair of the aircraft and with possible photographs."

The contact address is:

The Bower-Bird Aviation Collection,
Nigel Apperley,
375 Princes Highway,
Bomaderry, NSW 2541
Australia

He will be attending the anniversary celebrations in October/ November and would hope to have interviews then.

I understand his aim is to collate as many as possible to produce a comprehensive record in the future. He has already met and spoken with a number of ex-crew and survivors and has gathered already quite substantial material.

He would like to take advantage of the coming together of so many this year.

Thanking you, Barbara Apperley

Dear Mike,

From notice in Navy News I see that you are contact for 50th RAN/FAA Anniversary in October. I am ex-FAA (1939 Art-entry UK) and in order to update our Divisional record list (Benbas 1) I am looking for whereabouts or circumstances of several who I believe transferred to the Australian Navy/FAA during/after WW2 and who might be attending celebrations or may be known to others who do so, or are in touch with you. I expect you will be displaying a contact notice for the benefit of those who seek long lost friends and I would appreciate having the following attached. All were ex FAA Arts (UK) and all are now aged 74/75 years. (and were (L) or (O) or both).

FRANK G. CAMPBELL, TERENCE G. HOGBEN,
GODFREY GOODYERE, CHARLES GEORGE
WOODMORE, ROBERT WILLIAM LEAT.

I have been trying to locate above for some considerable time therefore any information whatsoever will be very much appreciated.

With best wishes from one of the Job (ex).

*Jim Wood,
Cornwell, UK*



To The Editor

Dear Editor,

Could you please publish the enclosed photos taken on our recent visit to Perth.

One is of a group of "old" Pilots' Mates being (left to right) Bill Strahan, Keith (Darky) Harris, Ron (Gabby) Hayes, Bill Dunlop and Max (Tug) Wilson enjoying a couple of 'coldies' as well as a few tall stories of 35 years ago. Also at the lunch reunion held at the home of Bill and Gladys Gault, were Rick Hammond and Brian Dunne.

The second photo is a "Do you remember this face?" He was, and still is, respectfully known as 'Pappy'.

We would like to say thanks to everyone in Perth who showed us a good time, especially the Gault's and the Hall's, with whom we spent most of our time. Our boat trip up the Swan River together was great.

If anyone is visiting Perth and wants a good game of lawn bowls, don't hesitate to call Rick (Snowy) Hall.

Cheers *Max (Tug) & Norma Wilson, Kilcoy, Queensland.*



"Tags"

Roy Gibbs, Editor of the Telegraphists Air Gunners Association (U.K.) Journal of that name, writes to wish our Association all the best for our 50th Anniversary.

Roy, we here in sunny Australia thank you for your kind remarks. Personally, I always look forward to receiving my copy of "Tags". From time to time I reprint the odd article which I think may interest our members.

"A well remembered view" (photo courtesy TAGS Magazine, Jan. '98)



NAVAL AIRMEN
RECRUIT SCHOOL



Navel Airmen Class A70 (Easter 1953)

Back Row (left to right) Jack Tamkin, Trevor Wright, Sammy Marino, Warren Llewellyn, Reg. Commings, Pat Preston, Denny Lynch, Pat Martin, Bill Dunlop, Jim Power.
Front Row (left to right) Allan Anderson, Mick Gorton, Bill Dixon, Ron Scott, Bob Beamish, . . . Asby, Russell Storch, Eddy Bewry, Les Rann, Brian Jost.

Photograph courtesy Denny Lynch



To The Editor

Dear Editor,

A notice of the following in your excellent magazine would be most appreciated.

"This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Malaya Campaign in which 848 Squadron, The Royal Navy's first operational helicopter unit, was involved. Commissioned in October 1952, following the Army's urgent call for 'Heavy Lift' troop carrying helicopters, 848 became land based in

Malaya, pioneering the role during four years of jungle operations, disbanding in December 1956 after handing the role to the R.A.F. In recent years, with 80 'all ranks' in touch, many are attending Squadron Reunions and seek contact with others believed to be in Australia. Your help in tracing them greatly appreciated.

Contact, Sec., 848 Malaya Association, Les Smith, Oakdale, Ashford Carbonell, Ludlow, Sy84BX, U.K. Tel: 01584831397."

Thank you in anticipation,. I would also be most grateful if, additionally, you could forward this notice to an Australian Aviation Mag., or similar likely source of help.

*Yours sincerely,
Les Smith, Ludlow, Shropshire, UK*

FLEET AIR ARM MEMORIES

John Buchanan (Snodgrass) writes of his entry into the Fleet Air Arm:

"At the minimum recruitment age of 17 and a half years (plus 14 days), I joined the RAN (Naval Aviation Branch) at Alice St., Brisbane. At the time I may have been the youngest sailor in the service - a service having neither a carrier nor an aircraft to its name!

One week later I, and some 20 other recruit Naval Airmen from all States, arrived at HMAS CERBERUS, Victoria. We were the first intake of civilians to train as aircraft mechanics. As a group, we were possibly the best educated intake of sailors ever in peace time. Some had Year 12 certificates, and many had Year 10.

'Birdies' was the collective term used by 'real sailors' for our kind. Originally it was used in a derogatory sense. Actually, we were an enigma; what do you teach birdies? The induction given us was that designed for Seamen. We learned to tie knots, pull cutters and recite rhymes like, "Green to green, red to red, perfect safety go ahead." And a Buffer is a bloke, a Chief.

Then there were lots of lectures - subjects like Hygiene, Dhobying (washing), Social Diseases, KR&AI (King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions), Naval Tradition etc. Oh, and every day for weeks and weeks - Parade Ground - learning to walk carrying a gun in the summer sun. Sir Laurence Olivier visited us too. A flyer in the FAA (WWII), his talk was entertaining. We had gas mask drill which included a dose of tear gas. Also painful were the weekly injections at the 'Bay'.

At the end of it all was the big thrill. We boarded a real ship, the corvette HMAS *Latrobe* to experience the roughest of seas. Many found an alternative use for a bucket! I was lucky to find I don't get seasick.

On completion of the course we were put to work with the various Depot working parties whilst awaiting the February and March intakes to complete their courses. Billy Reid and I became garbos! It was with cheers we received the news that January, February and March intakes would proceed to the UK to undertake trade training. In the meantime, a School of Aircraft Maintenance was being established at Nowra, NSW, for subsequent training needs. HMAS *Kanimbla* departed Melbourne for Plymouth on 23 June 1948, the eve of my eighteenth birthday. It was *Kanimbla's* last voyage as an RAN vessel. Although the ship called only at Fremantle, Aden and Gibraltar, it was for me an unforgettable experience.

HMS GAMECOCK, RNAS (Royal Naval Air Station) Bramcote, was near Nuneaton in the Midlands of England, as far from the sea as one might get. Our arrival on 03 August coincided with the RN leave period. So, off to London for 10 days on £20!

Initially, our life at Bramcote was less than comfortable. We were not permitted to mess together, but were distributed throughout the RN trainee's quarters. Also, the NCOs appeared to be exceedingly harsh. The reason soon came to light. We had been preceded by a group of RAN ex-stokers, transferees to the Air Branch. They had, we were told, behaved in a manner not becoming of guests of the Mother Country. Fortunately it soon became evident that we were there to learn to play sport and to see the country. It was an enjoyable 10 months we had there. I recall being issued with a bottle of beer to celebrate the birth of Prince Charles. I also remember the visits from a LtCdr VAT Smith RAN, who would listen to our requests and complaints and write them in a little black book. He was instrumental in obtaining approval for us to wear AUSTRALIA shoulder flashes. It was during this time No.8 work uniforms were first issued in the Royal Navy. At the conclusion of training we were sent in groups to various Air Stations throughout the UK for squadron experience and to become Qualified to Sign (QA) ie qualified to establish that an aircraft is serviceable.

On 12 May 1949, my group crossed the Irish Sea, going to HMS GANNET (RNAS Eglinton) near Londonderry. Here we did have our own Aussie mess, an old igloo hut with two coal heaters. I was assigned to a squadron of Seafires (Naval version Spitfires). We all fell for Ireland - its scenery, friendly people and addictive guinness. December 1949 we left the Emerald Isle for HMS HERON in Somerset for specialist courses on the Firefly and Sea Fury aircraft that the RAN would be operating.

On completion of those courses, it had been expected we would be returning home in civilian ships; our original six month stay had become 19 months. Only a handful did return then. The majority remained to return in *Sydney* on her next trip to collect the remainder of our aircraft.

The passenger vessel *Esperance Bay* departed old Blighty's shores on 01 March 1950 and on her deck were four Australian sailors of whom I was one. The ship went all the way to Brisbane town and arrived for ANZAC Day. Six weeks leave and £200 of pay!!"

NAVAL AIR ONLINE

The Open Forum

Suggestions for the ex-sailor who misses "the good old days". (thanks again to Craig Petersen)

1. Sleep on the shelf in your closet.
2. Replace the closet door with a curtain.
3. Six hours after you go to sleep, have your wife whip open the curtain, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and mumble "Sorry, wrong rack" or "Your watch!"
4. Renovate your bathroom. Build a wall across the middle of your bathtub and move the shower head down to chest level.
5. When you take showers, make sure you shut off the water while soaping.
6. Every time there is a thunderstorm, go sit in a wobbly rocking chair and rock as hard as you can until you're nauseous.
7. Put lube oil in your humidifier instead of water and set it to 'high'.
8. Don't watch TV, except movies in the middle of the night. Also, have your family vote on which movie to watch, then show a different one.
9. (Mandatory for all ex-engineering types) Leave lawnmower running in your living room 2 hours a day for proper noise level.
10. Have the paperboy give you a haircut.
11. Once a week, blow compressed air up through your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot across onto your neighbour's house. Laugh at him when he curses you.
12. Buy a trash compactor and only use it once a week. Store up garbage in the other side of your bathtub.
13. Wake up at midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread. (Optional: cold canned ravioli or soup.)
14. Make up your family menu a week ahead of time without looking in your food cabinets or refrigerator.
15. Set your alarm clock to go off at random times during the night. When it goes off, jump out of bed and get dressed as fast as you can, then run out into your yard and break out the garden hose.
16. Once a month, take a very major appliance completely apart and then put it back together again.
17. Use 18 scoops of coffee per pot and allow it to sit for 5 or 6 hours before drinking.
18. Invite at least 85 people you don't really like to come and visit for a couple of months.
19. Have a fluorescent lamp installed on the bottom of your coffee table and lie under it to read books.
20. Raise the thresholds and lower the top sills of your front and back doors so that you either trip over the threshold or hit your head on the sill every time you pass through one of them.
21. Lockwire the lugnuts on your car.
22. When making cakes, prop up one side of the pan while it is baking. Then spread icing really thick on the other side to level off the top.
23. Every so often, throw your cat into the swimming pool, shout "Man Overboard, ship recovery!"

I'LL BET

A little old lady entered the main branch of a large downtown bank with a large grocery bag in her arms. She told the teller that she wanted to open an account to make a substantial deposit, in excess of \$200,000. Further, she said that since such a large sum was involved, she would deal only with the president of the bank to make the necessary arrangements.

The teller looked in the bag and confirmed that it was, in fact, full of cash. He called upstairs and explained the situation to the bank president, who agreed to see the woman. The teller escorted her to the president's office, and the president invited her to have a seat, which she accepted.

She repeated her request to open an account.

The president said he would take care of it personally, but his curiosity was killing him. He said, "Mind if I ask how you happened to come into such a large sum of cash?"

"Not at all," was her reply. "I bet".

"You bet?" he countered. "At the racetrack, or on professional sports, or in casinos . . .?"

"Nothing like that," she said. "I just . . . bet. For example, I'll bet you \$50,000 that by tomorrow morning your balls will be square."

The president chuckled but, seeing that the lady had the funds to back up such a wild bet, agreed. They shook hands on it, and she promised to return at nine the next morning to follow up, and left.

As the day wore on, the president found himself frequently checking to make sure that all was in order. It was, but just as a precaution he cancelled his regular Tuesday-afternoon golf match and went home early.

The next morning when he showered, he was actually quite relieved to find that nothing had changed drastically while he slept. He confidently headed for the bank, laughing all the way at the unexpected windfall that was about to become his.

The little old lady showed up promptly at the appointed hour, accompanied by a young man. When the president asked who he was, she replied that he was her lawyer, who she always brought along when payoffs involving significant sums were involved.

The president told her that sorry, she had lost that particular bet, so the funds would be outgoing rather than incoming. She insisted on examining the evidence for herself, considering the amount at stake.

He deemed it a reasonable request under the circumstances, so he stood up, unbuckled his belt and dropped his pants. She proceeded to closely inspect his jewels for any abnormalities.

As she did, the president noticed that her lawyer was standing in the corner, banging his head against the wall. He asked the lady, "What's the matter with him?" She paused her inspection long enough to glance at the lawyer and replied, "Oh, him. I bet him \$250,000 that before ten A.M. today I'd have the president of the bank by the balls."



Women's Business

I am quite surprised - not one contribution for "Women's Business". It would be awful to think Navy women do not have as many interesting stories as their men and that "Women's Business" was to fold up because of lack of interest.

Talking to Colleen Jenkins (wife of ex-Chief AE Ron Jenkins) recently who had spoken with another ex-Navy wife Val Bofinger who now lives in Yamba. Val had mentioned how much she had read and enjoyed my articles in "Slipstream". Val and I go back more than 20 years when we used to play golf together at ALBATROSS. We, Val, along with husband Ian, Ronette Hancock and husband Kevin (both men were meteorologists) were all members of the Albatross Golf club and all played golf together.

Apré golf was of a high standard and we certainly had some good times together. We seemed to lose contact when my husband was posted to Navy Office in Canberra.

If I remember correctly the three of us, Val, Ronette and Myself were all on the Ladies Committee of the golf club. They were great times and if those golf club walls could speak there would be some interesting tales to hear. As our husbands were often at sea for long periods the camaraderies of the golf club certainly helped to keep us sane. They were a great bunch of girls, mostly navy wives. I have listed some, but by no means all, of their names below. Perhaps they will bring back a fond memory or two and encourage my readers to relate some of their memories. Those names who immediately come to mind are: Gill Davies, Connie



Val Bofinger



l to r: Gwen Dadswell, Norma Lee, Ena Storey, ? Kayleen Parr, ?



Val Bofinger, Gil Davey



Connie Conillan



Norma Lee

Women's Business



Connellan, Ena Storey, Marg. Marquis, Norma Lee, Pat Stevens, Pat Pearson, Sheila Zimmer, Gwen Dadswell, Pam DaCosta, Tina Partington, Millie Dale, Madge Macpherson, Kay Price, Margaret Astbury, Di Whitton, Barbara Anderson, Jenny Hammond, Rose Swanson, Gwen Schmidt, Joan Wheeldon, June Heard, Trish Edwards, Dot Larter and many more whose names I can't remember.

I have been back in Nowra two going on three years now and sad to say, nothing stays the same. The Albatross Golf Club was the best club on the coast and the atmosphere and friendships made there were great. Unfortunately there are only a few of those former Navy wives left in a club membership made up now largely of civilians and it is difficult to capture that wonderful atmosphere I remember from earlier times. Rumours abound and there is much

speculation about how much longer the course will be available to us.

With this article I have included a photograph taken from a fifties edition of "Slipstream" plus the odd photo of some of the girls who belonged to the Club in the seventies and eighties. Hopefully they will jog your memories of that period and of the men and women who helped make the Club what it was.

It would be nice to see some of those faces at the coming reunion. Plans are proceeding apace for the great reunion and ladies, make sure your husbands are registered for the great event.

That's it for this edition, look forward to some feed back from you girls - it is most important if this page is to both continue and importantly be interesting.

Pat Perkins



l to r: Pat Stevens, Dot Larter, Ena Storey, Marge Marquis, Coleen Jenkins



Ena Storey, Marge Marquis



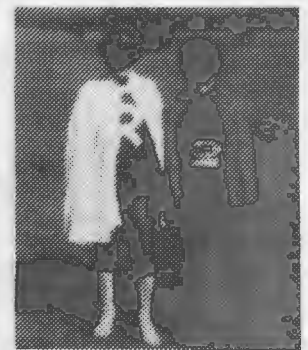
Ena Storey



Mystery Photo



Val Bofinger, Flo Luton



Batman & Robin
Marge Marquis, Shirley Russell



Who is the Shiek of Arabi?
l to r: Marge Marquis, ?, Ena Storey, ?



Irene O'Donovan, June Heard, Gil Davey

WAR BRIDE

On 4th July 1946 the Sydney bound train pulled out of the Interstate Railway Station, South Brisbane carrying on it the Queensland brides of British personnel on their way to join the aircraft carrier H.M.S. Victorious at Woolloomooloo Docks. These brides were, together with their sisters from other Australian states, to embark on the Royal Naval carrier and be rejoined with their husbands in Britain.

Although it is now over fifty years ago, I can still remember clearly that journey to Sydney - myself in tears at leaving my home and family as were many others - but excited too with the prospect of beginning a new life in Britain with my husband. We arrived in Sydney and were conveyed to the Docks where I remember being overawed by the size of the ship. Up close it seemed enormous.

Upon embarking we were shown to our quarters - in my case a triple or double decker bunk (I can't remember which) in the aft hangar space which had been converted into dormitories to accommodate us. Pregnant women had special arrangements I believe. For myself, I remember my feet becoming intimately acquainted with someone else's head.

We were 655 in number when all the people from other states arrived. How the Navy managed to house all those people with special female needs, seems to me at this juncture remarkable, but house us they did. Certainly it wasn't the Hilton and there were a few moans and groans but to most of us young brides it was adventure with a capital 'A'. I seem to remember that those dormitories were overseen (I hate to use the word 'policed') by Wren Officers and Australian Army women volunteers to ensure that the rules, most of which were for our comfort and safety, were observed. Two of these people stand out in my memory - a Ms McNeish, an Australian, who was a real doll and a Wren Officer Samuels to whom I am indebted for a remark she made to me about art appreciation. When I said to a friend that I didn't know much about art (and I'm married to an artist), only what I liked, she overheard me and said to me "My dear, if you like what you see you know something about art. There are so many people so afraid not to know that they'll go along with anything." I took her remarks on board and have used them as my criteria ever since. By now I've developed a fair knowledge.

As we made ready to get underway, all lined up on the rails of the flight deck and every other vantage point, brides waving goodbye to families on the dock - in my case to P.O. Hector 'Jock' Stewart our best man who had come on board to bid me Godspeed, there occurred one of those hilarious incidents which highlight the moment and print it indelibly on one's memory. Some matelots returning late to the ship - no doubt after a heavy night ashore - signalled they wanted to be brought aboard. Through a mass of streamers and people a cargo net was lowered to the dock and in a tangle of arms and legs sticking through the net like so many fish, they were hauled aboard. Talk about a Max Sennet comedy! Grist for any cartoonist worth his salt.

Once underway - what a thrill to be actually moving! - we passed under the Harbour Bridge towards Sydney Heads and the open sea. Any feeling of a cruise was quickly dispelled however when we hit the Great Australian Bight and I do mean HIT! The brides and I suspect some of the crew went down with seasickness it was so rough. There were a few exceptions among the brides of which thankfully I was one. We were over one wave and under two and it was awesome. No longer was the sea just a place to surf. I shall never forget the power and majesty of the ocean.

To make things more difficult the dining area was awash and the 'Heads' overflowing. Hundreds of pieces of crockery were smashed and I remember we were exhorted to hang on to our cups or produce the pieces for substitution. One other thing - there were signs displayed "NO GASH OVER THE SIDE" which I forgot and promptly ended up wearing the contents of my cup.

Were we ever glad to reach Fremantle our first port of call. Eager to explore we disembarked and found that the 'terra firma' we'd looked forward to after the last few days was a little difficult to negotiate. The 'terra' didn't seem so 'firma' until our land legs adjusted again. Now I know why sailors have that rolling gait!

Back on the ship after a shopping spree, some blissful sleep and ready for a foray into Perth next day. Perth was a bit of a surprise. I hadn't expected it to be quite so modern and pretty. In any case I found it quite delightful and ate up all the goodies we didn't expect to get in Britain which was still heavily rationed. We in Australia hardly felt the rationing we had, it was so minute. I

remember all the war years always being able to have steak, roast joints, eggs, sweets of all kinds, bread whenever I wanted it. Tea was rationed a little and butter a little but it hardly made a dent in our everyday living. Rationing in Britain was a shock to the system. I did feel the clothing coupons shortage - what young girl didn't?

Leaving Fremantle our last port on Australian soil to the accompaniment of an Australian Army band playing 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'Now is the Hour When we must say Goodbye' or 'Maori's Farewell', suddenly brought home to me the enormity of what I was doing - leaving all I knew and loved and might never see again hit me and I dissolved into tears. All the streamers, gaiety and adventure in the world meant nothing to me at that moment. However at 21 one is resilient and interest in my surroundings and the pleasant company of June Wright my dormitory companion soon pushed the tears into the background. There were more mundane things to worry about. For instance, showers were a proverbial! To that date no soap ever devised raised a lather in seawater. The less said the better - at least we were clean.

The Indian Ocean was marvellous after the Bight - the sea sparkled and flying fish lived up to their name - a source of fascination to me. We spent the days lazing on the deck, listening to the band which the navy had provided for our entertainment, gossiping and soaking up the sun. To those who were seasick crossing the Bight this was more like it! Only one thing marred our enjoyment. We were requested to line up for shots against cholera and other tropical nasties. For my part it didn't bother me but some girls made a fuss. I felt like making a fuss when later my arm swelled up to nearly twice its size so that I had to cut the sleeve of my blouse - my favourite blouse - which hurt more than any old injection!

The Navy had arranged endless entertainment for us, to keep us out of mischief no doubt! There were dances on the flight deck which were fine if you had one leg shorter than the other. A band played during the day and I can never hear 'Sentimental Journey' or 'Atichon, Topeka & the Santa Fe' without being instantly transported back to the 'Victorious', even after all these years.

At some point in time here we were introduced to the 'Crossing the Line' ceremony and that was something else! A canvas swimming pool was erected on the flight deck and the crew got their own back on the officers by plastering them with syrup, flour and various cooking substances before charging them with all sorts of crimes and then dunking them well and truly. Mind you, it didn't do to be too vindictive - there was always tomorrow!

One of the crew dressed as King Neptune, complete with wig and trident - and very impressive too - and was addressed by one of his 'subjects' as 'Neptunus Rex, allergic to Bex', Bex being a headache powder consumed by the bucketful by Australians of the time for everything from headaches to piles and broken legs! (and very likely the cause of liver damage today). It was a fun day all round.

Up until now we had carried on deck some planes - Fairy something - or - other, and rumours began to fly that soon we would be putting in at the R.N. base at Trincomalee on the Indian mainland to unload this cargo. We arrived there on 17th July and hoped to go ashore but it was not to be.

After the planes were unloaded and we were again underway we heard that we could possibly be given shore leave at Colombo the capital of Ceylon (no Shrilanka). Expectations were high and with concern for our safety the Navy informed us that in order to go ashore we must first collect an escort each from the purser's office - rather like shopping in a supermarket!

Another friend Dorothy Vessey and I collected our escorts - both about my own age and younger than Dorothy. They were nice lads as I remember though their names now escape me. I know one was named 'Jack'. Whether this was his real name or whether he was having a joke at my expense I still don't know. Suffice it to say we were glad of their presence. Together with our escorts the brides embarked on lighters in Colombo Harbour and were landed on the Colombo Docks. What - it seemed to my inexperienced eyes - an exotic scene! Nowadays it would be mundane - even boring - such is the frequency and ease of modern travel - but then it was the East, Kipling and John Company all rolled into one for a romantic young girl brought up on Kipling and 'the sun never sets etc.'

I remember vividly my first impressions of the local people themselves, some of their mouths stained with the red juice of the betel nut, the foreign sailors - some French I think - all milling around on the dock and I remember too thinking how much like real men were our lot. Our escorts took us to what I now would consider a dive but then seemed romantic - just like 'Casablanca' which I had seen twice. The name of the bar was 'The Lord Nelson' (no doubt a few matelots will recall the name AND the place) and we had a beer there. I was fascinated by the piano player a British matelot

obviously three sheets to the wind, who consumed one beer from the top of the piano and then shared the other with the piano, lifting the lid to do so. I've wondered over the years if the piano became a dipsomaniac.

When we left we were immediately surrounded by the locals trying to sell us nuts and sweets in twists of newspaper. We had been warned not to eat from street vendors and Jack told them - in Hindi - I presume to 'imshi', whereupon they hurled a few insults at us and I was very glad of the navy's presence.

Lunchtime and our escorts took us to an Indian restaurant where we had a delicious meal marred only by the attentions of the waiter who took a fancy to me much to my discomfort and to the amusement of my companions.

The rest of the day was spent sight-seeing then back to the ship. That night we brides swapped impressions and experiences - some quite hilarious as I recall. I really understood then how a sailor looks forward to port.

Next day saw us ready to again collect our escorts and sally forth to explore again - this time to look a little deeper. I'll always remember the sights and sounds - the Indian cinema we peeped into for a few moments, the number of people sleeping on the footpaths and the slightly acrid smell of the streets.

Next day we sailed for the Gulf of Aden and the few days until we arrived in Aden Harbour were uneventful - we listened to the band, visited the cinema, gossiped on the flight deck speculating on the reception we'd have from our new families and just generally enjoyed the warm lazy days. We saw distant ships and as we neared Aden a large mountain range loomed on the distant coastline, setting fire to my imagination. I told myself it must be the Atlas Mountains - whether it was or not I don't know - but I settled for the Atlas Mountains anyhow and my imagination peopled them with Blue Toureg arabs, camels and caravansari. Looking back now I know how silly that was but I wouldn't have missed that indulgence for quids! Now at my age I can still close my eyes and see it all again.

We did not go ashore at Aden as I recall and my impressions of the town were of brilliant light and a white mosque up on a hill overlooking the harbour and children diving for pennies in the harbour. For the next two days the weather was hot, hot, hot and the night before we were to reach Suez prior to our passage through the Suez Canal it was very oppressive sleeping in the hangers. Taking pity on us the Navy issued camp stretchers to those who wished to sleep on deck to escape the heat.

I set mine up right at the stern of the ship and just as insurance I tied my leg to the stretcher with a stocking lest I sleep walked right over the side of the ship! Had I known just how hard it was to get stockings in London I'd have used something else. As I lay in bed I could see the moon shining on the phosphorescence of the ship's wake and still count it as one of the most magical sights I've seen.

From the sublime to the ridiculous! We awoke to find ourselves at Suez and the subject of much interest from the locals who on spotting us promptly lifted their garments to show us their wares, calling out heaven knows what! Needless to say we beat a hasty retreat dragging our stretchers behind us.

The passage through the canal was memorable. On one side there appeared to be fortifications and great skeletons of sunken ships - casualties of the war - and on the opposite bank it was as if time had stood still since Biblical days. The mode of dress, the primitive farming methods, a donkey pacing round and round a well drawing water - it all seemed frozen in a time warp.

We negotiated the last part of the canal in the evening and it still amazes me that such a great ship was able to sail through that narrow waterway with only a few yards leeway either side. I dips me lid to British seamanship!

Port Said was an eyeopener. For a start one could smell it way out to sea and further acquaintance didn't lessen the impact. The port itself was teeming with life both animal and human and we were eager to explore. We really needed our escorts there as we were importuned time and again to buy - quite aggressively - and a refusal on our part met with a "You Mrs Simpson" or "You Jock McGregor", epithets which apparently they deemed insulting. I wonder what Clan McGregor thinks of that! Hordes of children followed us, hands out demanding 'baksheesh' and I was prevented just in time from giving them some money by Jack who said it would only lead to hordes more demanding money and a refusal could be nasty. One lesson learned anyway.

I remember trying to bargain for a box of Turkish Delight to take to my husband who loved it, and let myself in for a most embarrassing episode. I enlisted Jack's aid in the bargaining

process not being 'au fait' with the system and let myself in for more than I bargained. The local gent offered for a little more money to throw in some dirty postcards and, with a nudge at Jack some Spanish Fly. Jack handled the problem with the usual kindness and grace of the British matelot abroad - a method of which I'm sure all sailors are familiar - and we moved on, myself mystified as to what Spanish Fly could be. Eventually we got our Turkish Delight from another vendor and I found out to my embarrassment why Jack was so violent to the previous seller. Another lesson learned.

We had dinner at the N.A.A.F.I. and met some very nice people there as I recall. Then back to the ship where Dorothy and I recounted the story of the Turkish Delight much to the amusement of the other girls. Needless to say when the navy had a fancy dress ball later and some enterprising officers rigged up what looked like a pirate ship with her name 'Spanish Fly-er' prominently displayed, I got the joke!

The statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps standing sentinel over the canal his genius begot was one of the last things I saw as we headed out to sea once more. What a great pity it has since been destroyed by people with no sense of history.

About this time a rather weird rumour circulated among the brides. It was said that one of our number had gone ashore with her escort who got drunk and deserted her. They had gone to see a local tourist spot it was said - he got drunk, the taxi left and she had not been seen since. We apparently sailed without her it was claimed. Where this originated I've no idea and although those I have spoken with remember the rumour they and I have no recollection of any outcome and all the talk of white slavers appears to have been a figment of someone's overheated imagination. At the time, however, it provided an interesting talking point and no doubt a few people have dined out on the story over the years.

Our next port of call was Gibraltar and on 3rd August we put in at the fabulous Rock, bastion of British seapower and shades of Nelson, the Empire and all that. I couldn't wait to see it and the blood of my English, Scottish and Irish forebears surged to boiling point. I remembered that it was said that Britain would only leave Gibraltar when the Barbary apes left the rock and hoped to see some but didn't.

I loved Gibraltar, the narrow winding up and down streets, the cafe where we saw Spanish dancers - colourful dragonflies it seemed to me with their whirling and stamping of feet and clicking of castanets - heady stuff to a girl who had never even been to Sydney up till now! I was dead set on seeing the border and the Spanish town in the distance so the others patiently put up with me and we trooped off. The border guard told me the name of the Spanish town I could see in the distance - La Linea - obviously The Line and remarked that I would soon forget it. Well I've proved him wrong.

Gibraltar was our last port of call - next stop Plymouth - our journey nearly over now. The weather in the Bay of Biscay was fairly rough but excitement ran high as we packed our belongings ready for the next phase of our journey - our arrival in Plymouth and reunion with our husbands. Our last night aboard and I'm sure that more than one girl felt a little tinge of regret at the end of what was surely a unique journey - not only in our lives - but in the annals of the British Navy. I have done a bit of travelling since those days but nothing has ever quite equalled the sense of expectation and wonder of that journey on the H.M.S. Victorious so long ago and I shall always be grateful to the Navy for it.

August 6th and Plymouth Sound where the Mayor of that City came aboard to welcome us to our new homes in Britain. I'm afraid my attention wandered while he spoke - my mind was full of images of Drake and the other freebooters who set sail from here, of Drake and the Armada and Drake's drum which is supposed to sound when English is in peril, of Arthur and the knights of the round table and the banners of the Elizabethan court and I was only brought back to the present when the applause sounded. To this day I am not sure what the mayor said!

August 7th and waiting on board for my husband John to claim me - then the excitement of our meeting - both talking at once - and the voice of a marine I remembered speaking to a few times on board - "I kept an eye on her P.O. for you!" A friend of my husband's who had just found out who I was.

Then after Customs clearance which was made easy for us, I was handed a letter from Australia informing me that I had won thirty bob in a lottery. From the sublime to the ridiculous!

Although 51 years have passed since that journey - we have just celebrated our 51st wedding anniversary - I remember still with great affection the H.M.S. Victorious.

Aileen Barker

News from the Divisions



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



NEW SOUTH WALES

Our 1998 Annual General Meeting was pretty well attended on Sunday 15th March, the outcome of election for positions on the Management Committee is as follows:

President - Max Altham; Vice President - Neville Newbold; Secretary - Mike Henegham; Treasurer - Denis Mulvihill; Committee - Terry Hetherington, Ray Burt, Kevin Longford, Clive Smithers, Frank McPherson and Alex Stevens (Welfare). We will do our very best to serve the interests of the NSW Division during the coming year.

The Management Committee submitted a notice of a proposed amendment to the NSW Division Constitution Para. 8(e) with the deletion of the word 'Perpetual'. The first sentence of Para. 8(e) amended would read: "Only 'Full' and 'Life' members shall be eligible for election to the Committee."

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and carried. Notice to alter copies of the Constitution will be given when ratification of the alteration is given by the Government Authority.

The attention of the members present at the AGM was also directed to para 5 of the Constitution which states that the Committee shall decide on the amount of fees payable by members.

It had been the practice of Committee to calculate the prescribed fee for an applicant requesting 'Perpetual' membership, when the application was received. This has proved to be an untidy way of dealing with the matter and it has been decided that having set the prescribed fee for 'Perpetual' membership applicable as of 1st January 1998, the rate would be reviewed and revised if required, annually prior to the commencement of each new year.

At the time of our AGM membership totalled 508 which is excellent, however 40 of the names have been listed as unfinancial.

I would remind members that financial status can be seen on the address label of each issue of your copy of Slipstream . . . 98F/98A/98P. It indicates Full, Associate and Perpetual members are financial for 1998.

Our H de H sponsored project with the stainless steel sculptured Albatross is progressing very well. As previously informed, this slightly less than 2 metre wingspan bird will be placed in a rose garden which is located and being prepared in the car park adjacent to the Museum main entrance. There is still a bit of work to be done but it will be looking pretty good by October.

The 50th Anniversary Committee is still hard at work but I will not elaborate here as reunion details will be found in more detail elsewhere in this journal.

I recently received a letter from Jack Diehm together with a copy of the eulogy he presented at the funeral service of our late shipmate (Keith (Mattie) Mathieson. Thanks very much for that Jack, I have passed your letter on to both our NSW Division PRO and the Slipstream Editor. You will of course get your copy of Slipstream and I will make sure you get a copy of the local paper covering Mattie' passing.

The days of 1998 are coming and going very quickly, we have a big year ahead of us, there is much to do and we are looking forward to seeing everyone at the reunion. I would remind you that arrangements for your accommodation requirements in Nowra over the reunion week should be seen to NOW. Do not leave it till the last minute.

Good health to everyone and a special welcome to all new members who have joined since the last issue of 'Slipstream'.

Yours aye, Max Altham

Secretary:
B.T. Treloar,
P.O. Box 3652, Weston Creek, ACT 2611
Phone: (02) 6288 2730

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Greetings to all our shipmates in other divisions. By now the Festive Season has passed for another year and we can look forward with clear eyes to 1998 and our 50th Anniversary.

This Division held its AGM on 25th February, and elected a new Committee and Executive. Due to our constitution several had to retire from specific offices due to the three year rule and as a result our new Office Bearers are as follows:

President - Mike Astbury; Vice President - Brian Farthing; Secretary - Brian Treloar; Treasurer - Tim O'Halloran.

Maurie Tiffen and Harry Beardsell a new recruit to this Division have been persuaded to assist on Committee. It is with regret that we see Peter Schilling retiring from the Secretary's position. He has served the Division faithfully during the past three years and has been a great help in the smooth running of the Division. To

Peter, as well deserved thank you from your fellow members and Bravo Zulu.

Our first big function this year will be Anzac Day and this being our 50th Anniversary, the FAA Association will be leading the March in the ACT. This will be televised on local ABC. Should there be any serving or former Fleet Air Arm personnel in Canberra on that day, we would be delighted if they could join us in the March and should they wish, in a Post March Barbecue at HMAS Harman Function Centre afterwards. Fall in for the March at 1030 and the barbecue about 1245.

Brian Treloar

News from the Divisions



Secretary: Trevor Tite,
37 Miles St., Caboolture,
Qld 4510
Phone: (07) 5499 3809

QUEENSLAND

Greetings to all Divisions from the Queensland Mob. I'm pleased to report that our membership is steadily growing as more old mates hear that there is a FAA Association. Some members have transferred interstate and we wish them well on their move. Ben Matthews phoned recently to say that he and Merren are now living in Caloundra and have been busy refurbishing their home in Moffat Beach.

We're hoping for a strong turn-out on Anzac Day for the march in Brisbane - we'll be spending the afternoon at the Sergeants' Mess, Bulimba Army Barracks, on the river, again. Doug Jago has arranged for a bus so that will take the sting out of getting there and back. Thanks Doug. The bus is free but the driver will require a small sub from each traveller.

We tried to get up to the front of the Naval Contingent due to this year being our 50th Anniversary, but we were given the slot ahead of the HMAS Melbourne group instead of following them. The Navy leads the Parade this year, so we should all be able to make Bulimba by lunch time.

Max Wilson tells me that he and his wife had great fun recently over in WA. 'Pappy' Gault laid on a boat trip, BBQ etc on the Swan River and they thoroughly enjoyed meeting up with a lot of mates over there.

Warren Walters spent a couple of weeks with us in January and was a tremendous help in looking after Marian whilst I was at the office. He's up later this month (March) and then on to Cairns and back to march with us on Anzac Day.

Marian is improving and we've now virtually discarded the wheelchair as she gets stronger. Our thanks again for all the support, phone calls, etc.

Bob Brown from Ningi and Val call in regularly. Bob has given me a couple of excellent car stickers of the Melbourne at full steam. Bob has a motorbike now and recently attached a trailer to it and he's undergoing a learning curve in how to drive it with the added tail wagging. Sounds like a lot of fun.

We held our AGM on Saturday 21st March at the Bribie Island RSL and had an excellent roll-up of 65 or so. The weather was fine and pretty warm. Election of Office Bearers for the committee were:

President: Barry Lister; Vice President: Mick Blair;
Secretary: Trevor Tite; Treasurer: Des Kelly;
Committee Members: Eric Cottrell, Bob Witt,
Ray Murrell and Garry Reid.

Max Gant did the honours to take over the chair. He nearly didn't make it - he phoned me on Wednesday over another matter and said he'd see us all later in the month and when I told him the AGM was on Saturday he nearly dropped the phone. You did well to make it Max.

It was good to see Ben and Merren Matthews, 'Pony' Moore and other new members there. Unfortunately, our BBQ arrangements were astray. The RSL had given us a booking to 3pm but we found the whole park and BBQ area roped off for construction works and we weren't allowed in. A lot ate at the Bistro and most of us adjourned to a park by the sea for BBQ and picnic. During the meeting FAA plaques were presented to Ian

Henderson, Frank (Shorty) Neilsen and Noel Payne - Noel has done a huge amount of work in the fight to have the AASM awarded to Navy personnel and is still fighting. Later, at the picnic we presented a plaque to Robyn Breen, my office manager, in appreciation of the work she does for our Division ref Newsletters, Slipstream, Minutes etc. Robyn said she also acts as censor to my material - enough said!

Trevor and Lorraine Tite put together an Easter Basket as 1st prize for our raffle and guess who won - right on - Trevor! He wanted to put the prize back in for redraw but in the end gave various items to others - a furry rabbit plus a chocolate rabbit to Marian. Thanks, Trevor.

Max Gant and Trev Bolitho bought a stack of tickets and won 2nd prize - 3 Easter Eggs. Well don Max, Trev and Co.

During the AGM, the subject of overdue membership renewals was discussed in the light of costs of Slipstream, capitation fees and Newsletters having to be borne by the paid-up members. A motion was put up, from the floor, seconded and passed unanimously, that any member not paid up by 31st January shall cease to receive the benefits until paid up.

The basis of this is that the Qld Division - viz the financial members, are not prepared to carry the burden any longer. Therefore we urge those who put their renewals to one side and forget about them for 10 or 12 months or so - take 5 minutes or so to deal with it straight away.

Max Gant made a comment to me that all of our members (Nationally) should be encouraged to send in their stories - funny or otherwise - to Slipstream - there seems to be less lately. We all know plenty of yarns, that's for sure. In plain words, don't let Slipstream 'slip away' from us!

Alan Arnell was sitting in my office recently when Judy (his wife) phoned to say a package had arrived from the Medals Department. When he got home, he phoned me to say that he'd got the ASM (FESR Bar) for the '61 trip (which called at Trincomalee). I phoned Warren Walters to let him know and he's applied as well. I think a lot of our people are not aware that they qualify for same.

Our next function - after Anzac Day - will most likely be a BBQ at Currumbin RSL - probably around July - full details will be in the Newsletter after our next Committee meeting.

Well, that's it for now. We're all looking forward to the 'big meet' in October/November. See you then.

Barry Lister, President

ALL OUR READERS WILL BE PLEASED TO HEAR THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT MARIAN AND ALL HOPE SHE CONTINUES TO IMPROVE. I THINK A NATIONAL BRAVO ZULU IS IN ORDER FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED EASE BARRY'S LOAD DURING MARIAN'S ILLNESS.

MAX GANT MUST HAVE BEEN READING MY MAIL, OR LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER AS I WROTE THE EDITORIAL FOR APRIL 'SLIPSTREAM'. THANKS MAX, IT IS LITTLE MORALE BOOSTERS LIKE YOURS WHICH KEEP ME GOING.

ED



News from the Divisions

Secretary:
Dinsley Cooper,
17 Athol Avenue, Blair Athol, SA 5084



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

What a surprise, for I firmly believe this Divisional editor has managed to get the next Slipstream "News from the Divisions" item onto the Editors desk, on time. So what happened to the January items I hear you ask! Just a technical glitch within our empire as the bloke who receives the reminders ain't the bloke who writes the article. For a brief moment I thought of offering all manner of excuses like lost in the mail, or just missed the Slipstream printing date, but what the hell, we all fall on our faces now and again.

I'll move right along with all our news from this Division and firstly our February AGM was held at Naval House, Hutt Street and there are no real shocks. Perhaps just the one, as the Hon. whipping boy has won the prestigious position of State President for a full year. I have decided to learn the ways of a President from watching Bill Clinton and his many peccadillo's. Where can I go wrong, Mr Teflon can do it why not me!

The new committee are as follows:

President - Roger Harrison; Vice President - Ian Laidler; Secretary - Dinsley Cooper; Treasurer - Grant Jesser; Social Sec. - Dinsley Cooper; Local Editor - Roger Harrison; Committee - Des Reardon, John Berry, Mary Rayner and John Saywell; Delegates - Mary Rayner and John Saywell.

Thank you to all those other members who badly wanted to take on the above positions but as you can see, they have all been taken. Perhaps your nominations were lost in the mail or just missed the printing date. Never mind!

ANZAC DAY is fast approaching and we face a slightly different format this year than others. The ANZAC committee are letting the second world war boys and girls march first to commemorate some anniversary or other followed by the remaining 'small war' and 'police action' rabble taking up the rear. The state FAAA will gather on the corner of Gawler Place and Flinders Street at the usual time of 0915H. Look for that yellow roundal or banner, we will be there. After the Service, a group of us with spouses are meeting for a lunch at the Adelaide Hotel, overlooking this lovely city. Dinsley has organised this event and so if you wish to attend, contact him. Phone No. in the last "Fly Navy" Newsletter. By the way, I do believe that a Tracker aircraft from the Historic Flight will do a fly-over during the march. As President, I get first swing at any civvy we hear ask if that was the air force flying overhead.

The Edinburgh RAAF Base tour is on and completed as I write this report. Dinsley has organised two buses to assist in touring the base and from past tours these have always worked well. Dinner will be held in the Sergeants Mess with the normal 4 choices plus coffee and cake. Meeting at the Main Gate. Further reports to follow.

The Barossa Valley Wineries tour has been set down for Sunday August 30th. This will follow a similar procedure as the Southern Winery tour except we travel north. A big bus will do a pick up from various locations which will be made known to you all at a later date. Cost will be between \$12 and \$15 each and this covers the bus and a BBQ lunch cooked by several volunteers, yet to be named. This tour will be travelling into Trevor Klose's territory

and so we will all have to be on our best behaviour.

Speaking of Trevor, he has volunteered to frame that large "Reunion 98" poster for the benefit of this Association. We will possibly try to raffle it as a fund raiser. Price of framing is approx. \$200 and all reports say he has done a magnificent job of it.

The tour will cover some selected wineries inside the Barossa Valley but to date, I am not sure which ones.

If we don't sing any of those old world war 2 songs on the bus trip home, should be a good day!

Finally for our December break-up, Dinsley has planned a Port River Cruise-Dinner Dance for Saturday December 5th. A three course meal aboard the MV 'River Queen' which leaves the dock at 1930H and returns with all the unsteady passengers at 2300H. Cost remains \$25 per person, byo paper bags. Contact Dinsley ASAP.

Mary Rayner and Jim Elston are on my sick list at present. Mary is having a steel pin placed inside her knee which it is hoped will allow her to carry us and the Naval Assn with a lot less pain. A speedy recovery Mary.

Jim has other problems which will take him away from our naval family. His absence will certainly be missed. Hoping Barbara is coping well.

For all you others out there suffering some sort of unwellness, cheer up and get better!

The "Reunion 98" just what can I say. Most of our extended naval family is counting the days till we all arrive at Nowra to finally meet with distant friends. For the president (me) and his vice, we look as if we will be struggling to get away from work commitments here in SA. For myself it is the penalty of running your own one man business, for Ian it is the heavy commitment of watching out for his shaky employment prospects as a Government Driver. That will not stop the hundreds of others who can get away from enjoying what would have to be "The Reunion of all time". Good luck with the organising committee, do not falter under the shear weight of responsibility.

Regards to all other States and Territories.

Roger Harrison Hon. Whipping Boy



The Ships Sea Otter (SAR) being lowered over the ships side to take off to NAS Nowra.



Secretary:
 Alan Andrews,
 P.O. Box 88, Exeter, TAS.7275
 Phone: (03) 6394 3448

News from the Division

TASMANIA



News time has rolled around again so let's see what we have, not a great deal I'm afraid.

Christmas and new year has come and gone and from what I can gather a grand time all round. Family and friends getting together and enjoying each others company.

Our last General meeting was held at Somerset on Tasmania's north west coast on 22nd February and a good roll up of numbers too. A new member has emerged from the woodwork in Kevin 'Flung' Maxwell. I haven't seen him for over 40 years and it is good to see him again. There is a lot of other faces out there that should come forward and be recognised again and swell the numbers of our wonderful association. We were all in it together, why not still be together??

Lawrence O'Donnel is recovering from quite a major operation and we are all pleased to hear he is back on track to good health. Hope to see him soon.

After a lot of years of hard work and quiet dedication as President and original organiser of our Tas. Division, Barry Simpson was presented with a meritorious award from all of us. With our appreciation and best wishes to go with it. Have a think about this bit as well. Whilst doing all this he lost his wife to cancer, lost a leg, gained a metal one (including parrot for shoulder) gained a second wife, kept his job although ladders are not for him now, also keeping his sanity. Birdies ARE made of good material after all.

A couple of points resolved at the meeting. It was agreed that membership be raised to \$20.00. It's the first increase we've had but costs are increasing all the time.

Tas. Division will march in Hobart on ANZAC Day this year. See you down there - better bring a coat too its bound to be cold.

We are losing one of our staunch members, Roger Itchens and wife are leaving this beautiful state and going to the Gold Coast to live, so you Banana Benders get onto him. Really we ought to charge you for them, but seeing as we are all such good mates we'll let it go and scrub round it this time. Now to being serious, we are very sorry to see them go but we all wish them well and give them all our support.

It was also decided our next meeting be held at the new Launceston R.S.L. in Wellington Street. The date has not yet been confirmed but a newsletter will be circulated and all will be told. Don't say you didn't know.

Our Secretary, Allan Andrews, has been busy contacting ex FAA bods in an attempt to encourage them to join our association, so if anyone in Tas. knows of anyone who qualifies would you please let Allan know so he can apply his personal charm (pressuré) to get their name on our register. His phone number is (03) 6394 3448 or 66 Gravelly Beach Road, Blackwall 7275.

Now let me get this into the FAX machine so it will make the deadline.

Cheers to you all, Matt 'Jake' Jacobs



Suda Bay, Crete 1940 Walrus being embarked by 'Sydney' after damage from a poor night landing (after patrol of anti - Kithera Strait, Pilot RN ex SBLT from Glasgow



News from the Divisions

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Much, much has taken place in the West since the last Slipstream, Vol.9 No. 1 January 98.

First of all the AGM was held in February 98 and most positions still remain the same, because of the lack of interest from the members. But am pleased to add that Eddy Cook has been elected President. Our thanks to the outgoing President, Hilton Deveroux, for the job well done. Ron Tate has again taken on the Treasurers job as there were no takers. The gentle giant, Theo Bushe-Jones, is again the Secretary, he can't give the job away. Big big thank you men. I think the trouble is you do such a good job, nobody is willing to throw their hats into the ring.

The lunch held in December at the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle was a great success with fifty members and their partners in attendance. Much good will was had by all and many new friendships developed throughout - and old ones rekindled - through the day. No mention of the Stars of the Day, but quite a few Oscars could have been awarded. But that I suppose is what makes these outings so enjoyable, so they go off with such a bang.

The day was marred by the death of Leon Penn, who's wife and family arrived with the sad news of Leon's death the night before. Leon had been suffering from Cancer for some time, but had always attended any function that was held. He had paid for the lunch, that's why the family had attended to notify us.

Like to hand out some extra thank you's on behalf of the West Aussie Branch, to you the Editor of Slipstream.

Great Journal Bob - So say all of us. Only one problem, waiting for the next issue to arrive B.Z.

On Sunday the 29th March 1998 the Dedication of the Fleet Air Arm Plaque was held at the Naval Memorial Park Rockingham at 1100.

Also there was the dedication of four other plaques at the same time, The Naval Association, HMAS AUSTRALIA, HMAS MILDURA, HMAS WAGGA.

A crowd of over three hundred attended with brilliant sunshine and the ocean in the background to hear a dedication performed by a Chaplain from HMAS STIRLING and a most moving speech by LCDR Bedoe representing the Commanding Officer.

At the completion of the Service some two hundred persons attended at the Rockingham Sub Section Building where they partook of the Bar facilities and the Bar B.Q. A great day was had by all. The Memorial Park is well worth visiting for those in the area. It is set in a park atmosphere on the shore line, with safe beaches and Bar B Q facilities supplied. It is to the East of the main town and easy to find on the Rockingham Beach Road.

1998 FAA REUNION

Excitement is growing as the reunion draws near. Leon and Wanda please don't give my bed away yet, things are looking a bit brighter, will be in touch. Not sure how many are attending from the West, but indeed it will go big like the State with great pride.

ANZAC DAY

Almost on us again. Beaut day. Come on men muster around the flag and lift our members attending the March and afterwards.

IS ANYBODY OUT THERE

This is a plea to all ex Handlers AVN whatever and all other

Branches are welcome, to drop me a line or ring (in the cheap times) with news on who's who and what's what. Am thinking of writing a book on the lighter side of the face. See my address and phone number at bottom of article.

Page 21 of the last Slipstream re the Band, Theo has brought to my attention he was not a Base Drummer but in fact played the Saxophone. He did on occasions fill in as the Drum Major.

AROUND THE STATE - TIT BITS

Keith and Pat Murdock are off for a well planned trip up top Singers - Bon Voyage.

Lou Lou is slowly returning to two legs, watch that stick.

Jack and Shirley Suriano, Busy Busy arranging new business venture.

Bill Strahan and wife moving to Queensland to be with family. Your gain our loss.

Amy Bushe-Jones back in motherhood - raising Grandchild Monday to Friday.

Well West Australia that's all for this issue so, once again, please, oh please, keep coming forward with tit bits for next issue.

John Green

Unit 1/7 Prinsep Road, Attadale 6156, W.A.

Phone: (08) 9330 7386

A LITTLE ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

HOW DO YOU KNOW

WHEN YOU ARE GETTING OLD?

Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work.
The gleam in your eye is the sun hitting your bifocals.
You feel like the morning after, but haven't been anywhere the night before
Your little black book contains only names ending in 'MD'
You get winded playing chess
Your children begin to look middle aged
You join a health club and don't go
You decide to procrastinate but never get around to it
A dripping tap causes an uncontrollable bladder urge
You know all the answers but nobody asks the questions
You actually look forward to a dull evening
You turn out the lights for economic rather than romantic reasons
You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going
Your knees buckle but your belt won't
You begin to regret all those times you resisted temptation
Dialling long distance wears you out
You become intolerant of people who are intolerant
The best part of your day is over when your alarm goes off
You burn the midnight oil after 9pm
Your back goes out more than you do
A fortune teller offers to read your face
Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you watch a good sort go by
The little grey haired lady you help across the street is your wife
You get your exercise going to funerals for your friends who exercised.

Courtesy: Di Strickland



News from the Divisions

VICTORIA

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



Our AGM was held on the 1st February 1998 with 49 members in attendance. The duly elected Committee for 1998 is as follows:

President: Ralph Mayer; Vice President: John Champion; Immediate Past President: Les Jordan (Les declined nomination this year, after holding the President's position for many years); Secretary: Ron Christie; Treasurer: John Ikin; Committee: Jack Berry, Alan Clark, Frank Crowe, Ian Stanfield and Val Christie Social Co-Ordinator.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

For all of you Korean veterans, who had service in HMAS ANZAC, BATAAN, CONDRAMINE, CULGOA, MURCHISON, SHOALHAVEN, SYDNEY, TOBRUK, WARRAMUNGA, FAA SQUADRONS 805, 808, 817 between July 1950 through July 1953 are entitled to the above citation, the wearing of the award by eligible persons was approved by the Governor-General on the 28th November, 1997.

The South Korean Presidential Citation is awarded to all eligible persons who served in the aforementioned Ships and Squadrons who were part of the US 7th Fleet, 77 Squadron RAAF during the Korean War during the specified dates.

If you have applied for the Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 clasp Korea, you do not have to apply for the above citation, it will be automatically issued with AASM when they become available.

Sunday 8th March 1998 fourteen members of the Victoria Division attended a Memorial and Dedication Service at RAAF Williams, Point Cook at the invitation of the Korean Veterans Association of Australia.

The service and Plaque Dedication was to honour the 41 Pilots who lost their lives in Korea 1950-1953 as members of 77 Squadron RAAF.

An excellent Fly Past was executed by the RAAF Roulettes, followed by a lone Mustang which carried out several low level passes over the congregation, was greatly appreciated by all.

The service was conducted on the same Parade Ground where most of our first RAN Pilots were presented with their 'Wings', in fact Geoff Litchfield informed me that he received his 'Wings' at the approximate position we were seated for the Ceremony, some forty five years earlier.

Sadly I have to report the gentleman responsible for organising the above event and the one at HMAS CERBERUS last year and was in the process of the setting up of the National Remembrance Day in the year 2000, and creating a close liaison between the KVAA and the FAAA of A (Vic), passed away suddenly 19th March, 1998.

VALE: Charles (Charlie) Thwaites

This notice will possibly be too late but I shall give the details just in case - ANZAC DAY: Firstly the march, the Victoria Division of the FAAA of A will muster at the south east corner of Flinders and Swanston Streets at 0830 for step off at 0900, to the Shrine of Remembrance.

On completion of March, a reunion will be conducted at the Melbourne Naval Centre, a Spit Roast lunch will be available at a cost of \$10.00 per head, bookings are essential for the lunch. Bookings and payments to be sent to the Social Co-Ordinator, 15 Bianca Court, Rowville, Vic.3178. (Cheques made payable: FAAA

of A (Vic.).

Full bar facilities available, drinks at club prices, so come along and join in the march or reunion or both. Let's show the strength of the Association in this our Golden Jubilee Year.

Another date to pencil in on your calendar, RAN FAA Memorial Service at HMAS CERBERUS, this year it will be held on the 21st June, 1998 at the request of the CO Capt. J.A. Dierks RAN as only two days a year can be allocated to Associations such as ours due to manning restrictions etc.

So if you have not already done so, please let the Social Co-Ordinator know that you will be attending so that she can organise the catering.

Light refreshments will be supplied and full bar facilities will be available at Mess prices and as with all our functions, associates, wives, girlfriends are invited.

That's about all that time will allow, so good health and best wishes to all and hopefully we will see you in the near future.

Ron Christie

P.S. For those of you who do not know, the Melbourne Naval Centre is at 146 Toorak Road (West) South Yarra.

A LITTLE MORE ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

SECOND BEST

At a recent reunion, Bill was telling his mates that he had recently visited another of their comrades. He said that when he knocked on the door of the house, the wife opened it. "Can I see Phil?" he asked.

"Haven't you heard?" replied the wife. "Phil was down in the garden yesterday getting me a cabbage when he dropped dead!"

"Good heavens!" remarked the chap. "What on earth did you do?"

The wife replied "I had to open a tin of peas!!"

A fellow had wined and dined with some friends; and feeling in a generous mood, thought he would tip the waiter. He placed three five cent coins on the table - the waiter looked at them for a while and then said: "You know sir, those three coins tell me a lot about you. Yes the first coin tells me that you want the best things in life, food, company, etc." "The fellow replied: "Well, that is true, go ahead."

"The second coin tells me that you are a bit of a loner, a bachelor in fact."

"Remarkable, that again is true," said the fellow. "What about the third coin?"

The waiter replied: "And your father was a bachelor too."

Courtesy: Richard (Sunny) Sundstrom



FLY NAVY

From the Museum Director

Introduction

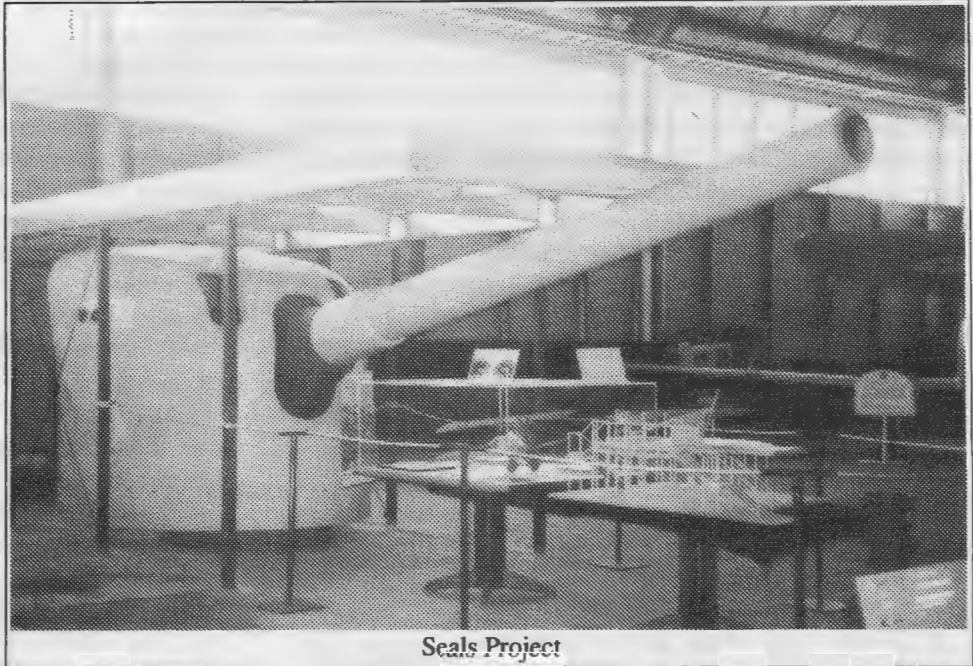
The Australian Naval Aviation Museum is going from strength to strength thanks to extremely professional staff, dedicated and loyal volunteers and our hard working group of long term unemployed (we refer to these personnel as SEALS - Shoalhaven Earn a Living Scheme).

There have been many changes at the Museum and, some successes. All of which will benefit the Foundation in the longer term.

SEALS

The 10 participants are currently working on the following projects:

The Sopwith Pup/WWI Cruiser Gun display - As you may know we have the original gun of HMAS *Melbourne* that supported the flight deck from which the Sopwith Pup and Camel aircraft operated just after WWI. The SEALS are involved in recreating this birthplace of our heritage and it will eventually become our first display on entering the hall. John Goble and his team of eager and extraordinary clever volunteers continue to beaver away in their Sydney garages to finish the Sopwith Pup and we are aiming to marry the two projects well before the 50th Reunion.



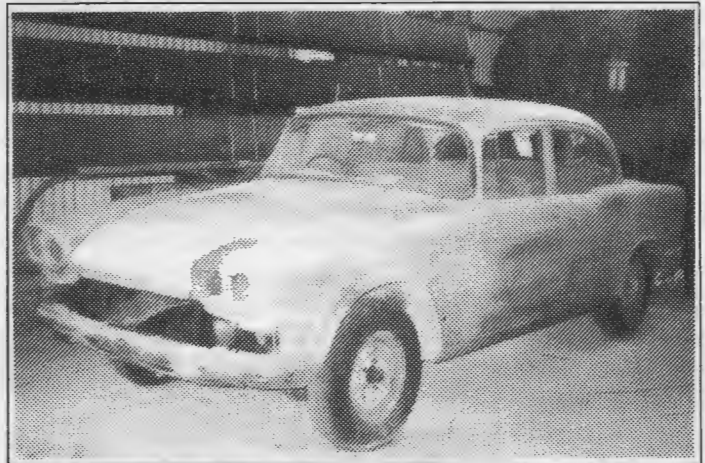
Seals Project

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The 1956 HMAS ALBATROSS Captains Car - We have been donated the old Captains car and are fortunate that we have a panel beater and motor mechanic among the SEALS. This car will form a static display in the hall.



John Goble & George Beasley studying Sopwith Pup plans



The ex ALBATROSS Fire Tender - Being restored for a display in the hall - it is possible to restore it to full working condition but we do not have the manpower to maintain it. The bushfire tender and ex RAN crash tender are also gradually being restored.

Memories of the Old Museum display - is being upgraded. We now have a full dust cover of ex PTS parachutes overhead and all displays are being bolted down and more professionally presented. Our appreciation is extended to the CO of the Army Parachute Training School for the gift.

Scout Helicopter - The SEALS are assisting Petty Officer Johnson in the total restoration of this helicopter. The engineering parts have been completed and work has now commenced on the airframe.

HMAS *Melbourne* display - This is a new display centred around the Sea Boat and Mirror Landing System and includes a lot of

items 'rabbited' from the grand old lady.

Flag display - Newcomers to the Museum could not fail to notice the display of flags flying from the airfield side bulkhead of the hall - this theme will be extended as we obtain/find more flags to hang. They look very impressive!

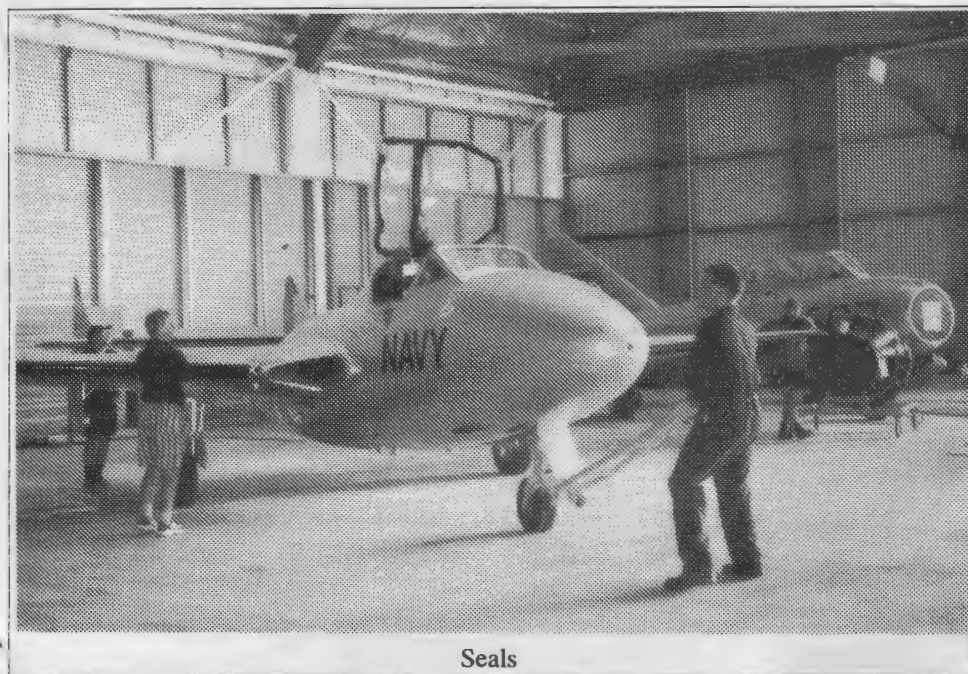
Engine display - All our engine displays are gradually being upgraded by the SEALS.

Wessex 834 - is being rebuilt as a long term project.

Aircraft husbandry - cleanliness, tyre pressures, drip trays and corrosion is being attended to in a continuous working programme. The SEALS are also repainting the Stores Containers and are continually involved in hangar maintenance requirements.



Flag Display



Seals

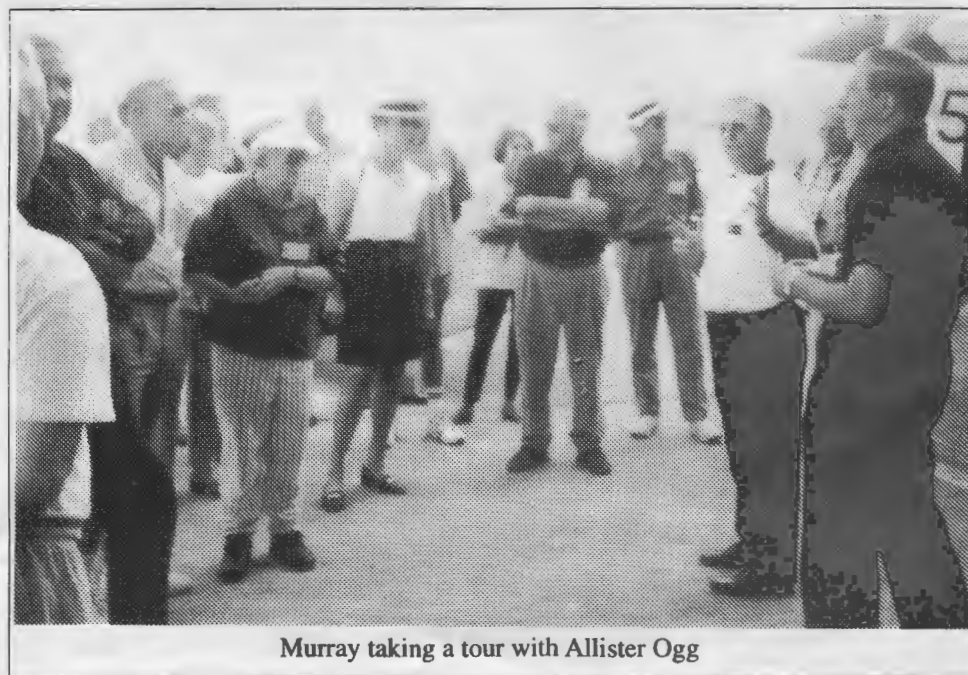
The SEALS programme for us is an outstanding success and I hope it will continue as a permanent feature of government policy.

Volunteers

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the volunteer efforts of Murray McLean in this magazine. We have many volunteers who support this Museum in a variety of ways and do sterling work, without which we could not function as a Museum. However, Murray turns too at the Museum virtually every day and turns his hand to anything that requires attention, from skilled carpentry to taking tour groups through the Museum. To see him marshal aircraft around the Museum - having had no previous FAA/ Navy experience - is an amazing sight. He is conscientious, of unswerving loyalty and a very dedicated worker and, on behalf of the Directors and all of us here, I publicly commend his support. Thank you Murray, BZ!

Civil Aviation Terminal

We are now the Shoalhaven Civil Aviation Terminal and unfortunately, having attracted increased air traffic movements through the Museum, we appear to have created a mammoth security problem for the base and ourselves. All aircraft visiting now have to be chaperoned through the pedestrian airfield/Museum access gate by NAS duty personnel. The Museum does not hold a key. The recent heightening tension in the Gulf and the increased security footing of NAS highlighted severe security problems between the Museum 10 acres and the Base. Hopefully, commonsense will prevail and we will all reach a satisfactory compromise.



Murray taking a tour with Allister Ogg

The History Book project

'Flying Stations - A Story of Australian Naval Aviation' is now in the final editing stage and is on course to be produced in time for the reunion. My grateful thanks again are extended to Max Altham and Neil Ralph for helping in this phase of the process - without their assistance it would have taken me weeks - which is time we do not have to meet the programme. If you haven't taken advantage of the 20% discount price now being offered and intend to buy a copy of the book please do so **before** the reunion, because then the book comes on sale at the full price of \$55.00. This history project is not so much the Museum making a profit but to meet a commitment and ensure we balance the books. In order for that to be achieved we have to sell 1,500 books - we have just recently achieved 500 pre sales at \$44, plus \$5,000 (rounded) in donations. We have a long way to go to break even. So, if you intend to purchase a book please do so early to enjoy the discount. It's a great book!

ALBATROSS History

We have written a history of the RANAS called 'HMAS ALBATROSS - A Collection of Memories' to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the base. We have received \$20,000 advertising

sponsorship and donations but still have not made a decision to proceed because of the risk factor. The book traces the story of the original ship *Albatross* built at Cockatoo Island in the 1920', to her becoming HMS *Albatross* during WWII and finally the *Hellenic Prince* - bringing Italian immigrants to Australia. So named because she was commissioned the day Prince Charles was born (bit of trivia). The story then picks up with the early development of NAS for the RAAF until the present day (you are now all aware that ALBATROSS II was commissioned 31 August 1948). Interspersed throughout are personal accounts and experiences, recollections from past Commanding Officers, and the names of those who served her.

Hopefully this project will proceed - watch this space! However, to ensure the book is launched and you wish to sponsor an advertisement or donate cash, all donations are tax deductible.

50th Anniversary

There has been some criticism of why the Museum is so involved in the 50th Anniversary. The Museum Foundation (Board of Directors) passed a resolution that we are to assist the Fleet Air Arm Association in administering the Reunion as appropriate, and that we would meet half the cost. This was seen as a practical way

of repaying the outstanding support that we have received from Association members. Administration covers ensuring that all letters are answered, all monies are forwarded to the treasurer (Kevin Longford), for banking in the IMB (a separate FAA account) and for operating a dedicated database. Max Altham follows this procedure on his computer as a secondary check. Those who have organised reunions previously will be well aware of the huge administration workload involved. I often wonder how Les Matterson and Co ever managed before computers. I have also had criticism directed at my personal involvement with the 50th Anniversary. I can only say that as the secretary I do as I am told by the committee and like any other democratic process my suggestions are only approved by the majority.

My voluntary role is extremely time consuming and I spend most weekends and evenings attempting to fit it into a full time job. If there is another volunteer out there keen to take over I will willingly stand down - and spend more time with my Grandchildren.

NOTE: Accommodation - We hear that Motel accommodation is full in Nowra and that potential attendees may be put off seeking accommodation out of Nowra because of transport problems. We are attempting to resolve this problem by investigating:

- a. a free coach route to the Huskisson/Vincentia area; and
- b. seeking more accommodation in the Nowra area through B & B and private houses willing to let/provide bedrooms/B & B.

The accommodation number of 1800 024 261 still applies and should be contacted for further information.



Prime Minister's visit - 29 March



Party faithful (400) to a Museum lunch

Bell 47 Restoration

Another group who deserve public acclaim is the Bell 47 restoration team of Ray Larder and Ron Ross who have recently completed this latest labour of love. The helicopter is configured in MASH colours of the Korean conflict and sports a patient in the external stretcher carrier. It is a superb job well done and we are extremely grateful to you both for your efforts.

Fundraising

Returning to Museum business to complete my input for our journal, fundraising by our Capital Campaign Committee in Sydney has reached new heights.

Lead by Admiral Robertson, the committee has achieved the following success towards the theatre development of Stage 4:

- \$1,000,000 over 5 years - pledged by Mr Ray Williams (\$600,000 received to date)
- \$10,000 - Commonwealth Bank
- \$10,000 - STN Atlas
- \$5,000 - John Swire and Sons
- \$500 - HMAS SYDNEY Association
- \$43,000 - NSW Government PWD costs reduction
- \$2,500 - James Kirby Foundation

Construction for the Theatre, Exhibition complex will commence in the year 2000. The target is \$1.7 million.



Ray Larder and the Bell 47

Additionally:

- \$50,000 has just been pledged by TELSTRA for the Melbourne Gun/Sopwith Pup project
- \$6,413 worth of free advertising in South Coast Rural Press has been pledged by John Fairfax
- \$105,000 over three years (from Feb 97) has been pledged by Ray Williams to sponsor the SEALS project.

And finally, our grateful thanks are extended to all the smaller donors, so essential for our continued survival. Thank you.

Best wishes, Mike Lehan, Museum Director

GREEN AND GOLD MALARIA

The day would soon arrive when I could not ignore the rash.
I was obviously ill and so I called on Doctor Nash.
This standard consultation would adjudicate my fate
I walked into his surgery and gave it to him straight:
"I wonder if you might explain this allergy of mine,
I get these pins and needles running up and down my spine
From there, across my body, it will suddenly extend
My neck will feel a shiver and the hairs will stand on end
And then there is the symptom that a man can only fear
A choking in the throat, and the crying of a tear."
The doctor scratched his melon with a rather worried look
His furrowed brow suggested that the news to come was crook.
"What is it, Doc?" I motioned. "Have I got a rare disease? I'm
man enough to cop it sweet so give it to me please."
"I'm not too sure," he answered in a puzzled kind of way.
"You've got some kind of fever but it's hard for me to say.
When is it that you feel this most peculiar condition?"
I thought for just a moment then I told him my position.
"I get it when I'm standing in an Anzac Day parade,
I get it when the anthem of our native land is played,
I get it when Meninga makes a Kiwi-crunching run,
And when Border grits his teeth to score a really gutsy ton.
I got it back in '91 when Farr-Jones held the Cup,
And I got it when Japan was stormed by Better Loosen Up.

I get it when the Banjo takes me down the Snowy River.
And Matilda sends me waltzing with a billy boiling shiver.
It hit me hard when Sydney was awarded with the Games,
And I get it when I see our farmers fighting for their names.
It flattened me when Bertrand raised the boxing kangaroo,
And when Perkins smashed the record, well, the rashes were
true blue.

"So tell me, Doc," I question, "Am I really gonna die?"
He broke into a smile before he looked me in the eye,
As he fumbled with his stethoscope and pushed it out of reach.
He wiped away a tear and then he gave this stirring speech:
"From the beaches here in Queensland to the sweeping shores
of Broome.

On the Harbour banks of Sydney where the waratah's in
bloom.

From Uluru at sunset to the mighty Tasman Sea,
In the Adelaide cathedrals, at the roaring MCG,
From the Great Australian Bight up to the Gulf of Carpentaria,
The medical profession call it 'green and gold malaria'.
But forget about the text books, son, the truth I shouldn't hide,
The rash that you've contracted here is 'good old Aussie pride'.
I'm afraid that you were born with it and one thing is for sure,
You'll die with it young man because there isn't any cure."

Jason 'Rupert' McCall

R.I.P

PHILLIP HENRY HANCOX

Died in his sleep at 2.00am Sunday 8th March, 1998.

Philip Hancox joined the R.N. in August 1942 as a Telegraphist

Air Gunner and trained at Worthy Down HMS KESTREL & HMS VULTURE ST MERRYN CORNWALL, passing out in October 1943.

From training he went to a front line Squadron 823 BARRACUDA's. He sailed on HMS ATHELING in February 1944 to India.

In June 1944 he joined 822 Sqd BARRACUDA's on board HMS VICTORIOUS and took part in air



strikes on Sumatra including dive bombing railway yards at Sigli and returned to England on HMS RAJAH December 1944.

He was posted to RAF THORNEY ISLAND Jan 1945 carrying out Anti U-Boat patrols and stayed there to the end of WWII.

After further service at HMS GOLDCREST and SEAHAWK he

left the Royal Navy in March 1948. Liking the life of flying so much he joined the RAN in September 1948 to be trained as an OBSERVER. Having completed his training at Lee on Solent and St Merryn he was promoted to an OBSERVER 1ST CLASS on the 16th July 1949 and joined 815 Sqd Barracuda's at EGLINTON, NORTHERN IRELAND. His first crash was at Eglington when on take off his pilot selected dive brakes instead of flaps and they went in from about 100ft., luckily none of the crew was injured. He then joined 817 Sqd, which was the Australian Squadron, on ANZAC DAY 1950, where he did a work up on board HMAS SYDNEY and sailed for Australia in October 1950 arriving in JB then Nowra December 1950. In July 1951 HMAS SYDNEY sailed for Korea with Phil on board, the Squadron 817 Fireflys. After carrying out lots of strafing, Bombing Bridges, etc. Phil's luck ran out on the 26 October 1951 when he was shot down 55 miles behind enemy lines and force landed in a paddy field. Attacked by North Korean troops on the ground he returned their fire with his own gun, plus the Sea Furies from HMAS SYDNEY stayed with him firing at the enemy troops. The rescue helicopter from the Sydney, and flown by an American CPO BABBIT, landed and picked them up after being on the ground for at least 1 hour. They landed at SEQU, KIUPO AIRFIELD and a truck had to use its headlights to let the helicopter land it was that dark.

The American pilot received the British D.S.M. for this rescue, one of the very few Americans to receive it.

He arrived back at Nowra in March '52.

Other work he did was to take food, fuel, tools, etc. to Maitland during their floods Feb.'55-Mar.'55 in one of our Dakotas. He also was detached to WOOMERA ROCKET RANGE Jan.'61 - July '62. He joined 816 Sqd on board HMAS MELBOURNE in July '62 then on the 16.3.63 he crashed into the sea off New Guinea in a GANNET. He was commissioned as a Sub Lt. in Aug.'65 and served on Escort Destroyers HMAS DUCHESS & YARRA to Vietnam escorting HMAS SYDNEY. He was promoted to Lt. Aug.'66 and served one year as the EXECUTIVE OFFICER COONAWARRA.

Phil left the RAN in June 1977.

After a short holiday he did voluntary work at our Naval Museum with Bob Geale. Alas in January 1998 he entered the Shoalhaven Nursing Home and died on the 8th March, 1998.

KEITH ('MATTIE') MATHIESON

A little of the background of Keith Mathieson (Mattie)

I thank you all for attending this private service to say farewell to Mattie.

Judy rang me and asked would I be able to say a few words about her late husband. I am honoured to do so.

Keith joined the R.A.N. during World War II as a young stoker and served below decks in the engine rooms of Corvettes, the cruiser HMAS HOBART until the Fleet Air Arm formed in 1948.

He went to the UK and trained as an Air Fitter attaining the rank of Petty Officer and eventually Chief Petty Officer Air Fitter (E) and ultimately Regulating Chief of his branch at HMAS 'ALBATROSS' at Nowra which position brought him into close contact with many junior rates during their formative years. He was responsible in many ways for the guidance and ground laying rules of many young naval airmen who passed through his hands.

As an engine room crew member he didn't see much of the light of day but all that changed when he served in the Aircraft carriers because much of his duty time was spent on the flight deck which no doubt greatly contributed to his ultimate demise when he was stricken with his dreadful affliction.

I joined 'ALBATROSS' in 1951 as a Petty Officer Cook and our Mess President was no other than Mattie, he seemed to relish the task of controlling 200 Mess members from all branches of the Service, running a highly socially active mess at the same time still keeping a weather eye out for a suitable partner to control him for the rest of his life.

He was indeed fortunate in that regard, he met the daughter of the Post-Mistress of a nearby hamlet of Terara, down the Shoalhaven River from Nowra. I am not too sure whether he conned Mrs Vaughan or whether Judy convinced her mother that Mattie was right for her but marriage followed and their vows "till death do us part" lasted for 45 years as you all know.

The past few years have been a very great strain on Judy who has been such a wonderful carer and devoted wife.

On discharge from the Navy the family kept on the move due to Mattie's work requirements both in Queensland and here in Caves Beach but more recently a lot of time at the Repatriation Hospital at Concord so I was at least able to spend some comforting hours during his regular stays at Concord.

His wife and extended family were a great comfort to him in his latter years and he was able to enjoy his grand-childrens' company when he and Judy took them on a school holiday trip to the Gold coast this year in spite of his failing health.

I am richer for having Mattie's mateship and I have had a learning experience through spending some time with him as he bravely approached the end.

'May He Rest in Peace'

Jack Diehm

Lieutenant Commander (AEO) 'Bill' Harry Winston Hayter, ex-Royal Canadian Navy, ex-RAN (7 years), later a public servant, died 5th March, 1998 - Gold Coast Hospital

POSTCARDS - POSTERS - MEMORABILIA

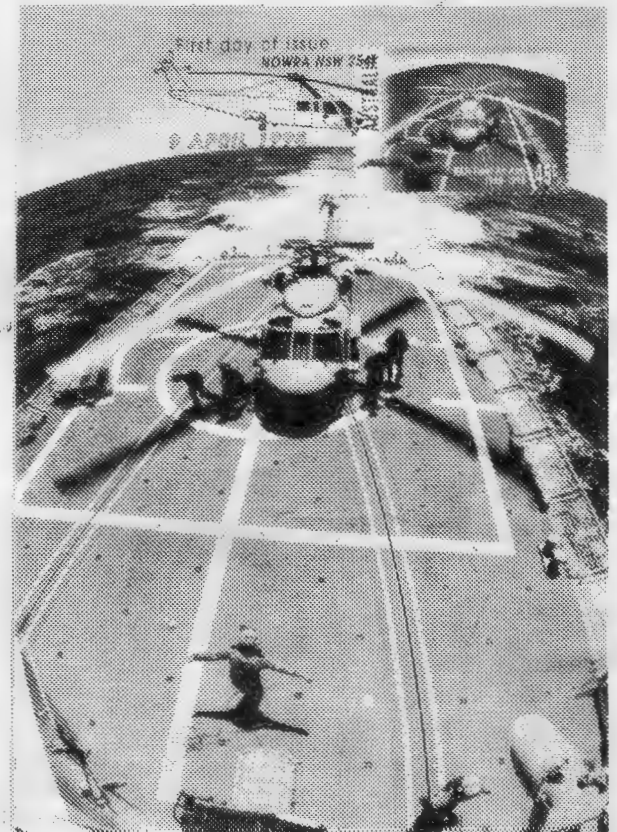
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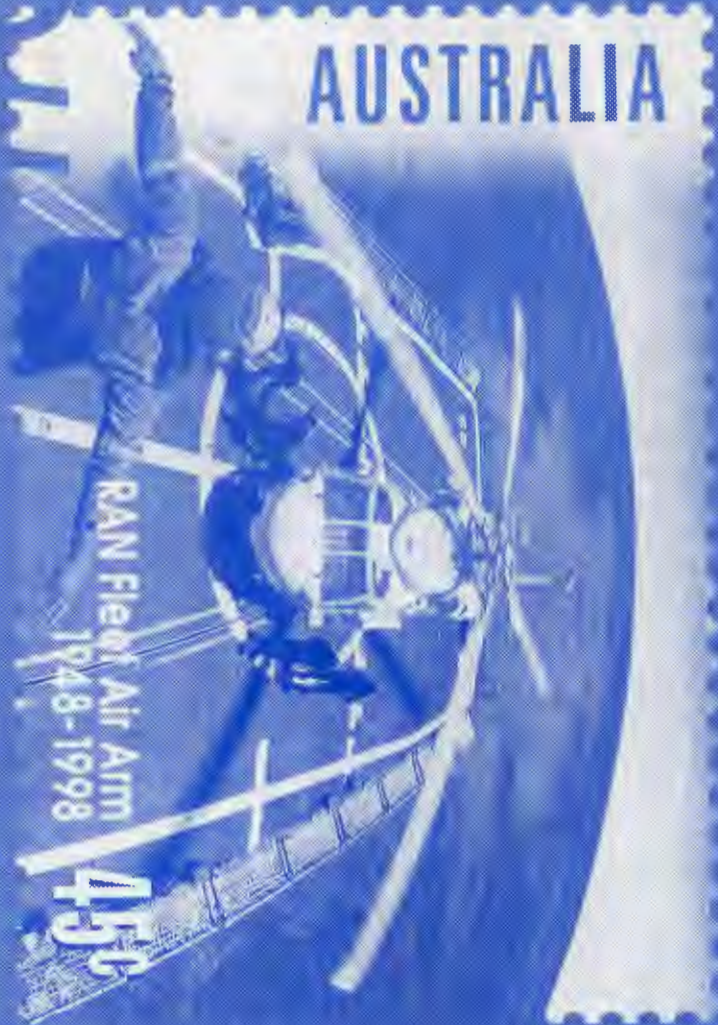
THE GIFT SHOP



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