



November 8<sup>th</sup> will mark the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of one of Australia's greatest airmen: Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. No other aviator has come close to overshadowing his exploits and daring, nor accrue as many aviation milestones.

But who was the man, and what about the aircraft in which he accomplished his first great adventure, the crossing of the Pacific?

Born in Brisbane on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1897, Charles Kingsford Smith, or 'Smithy' as he was universally called, enlisted in the Australian Army on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and served in Gallipoli as a motorcycle dispatch rider at the rank of Private. He narrowly escaped death when a sniper's bullet frayed the edge of his cap. He later served in Egypt and France.



In 1916 he joined the Australian Royal Flying Corps at the rank of Sergeant, later transferring to the Royal Flying Corps in France where he became an accomplished fighter pilot over the battlefields of France. Having killed a number of the enemy he was himself shot down: his aircraft peppered by over 150 rounds, one of which passed through his foot. He was awarded the Military Cross for his 'fine offensive spirit and disregard of danger', and his CO

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Website Appeal

We have had a marvellous start to our Website Appeal with over \$1800 raised so far. This was donated by some 40 members who believe that a vibrant, viable website is essential for any organisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A big THANK YOU to those who have stepped up to help.

By way of background, our current website, which has hundreds of pages of history, news, views and articles, is on its last legs as one of the essential "Plug Ins" has become incompatible with the core WordPress software. We've explored every option to fix it, but all roads now lead to an expensive rebuild.

A rebuild would not only fix the problem, but will provide a brighter more modern interface. It would also future-proof us against a similar situation arising in the future, as software design has come a long way since 2014.

BUT...a rebuild is very expensive and we really need help from every reader of this newsletter, even if it only a few dollars. So can you help, please? A viable website is vital to our organisation and the information on it is now at risk of being lost. Take a minute now to make an EFT payment or write a cheque and do your bit for the Association and the people who work to keep it going. ✈

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please help by making a contribution to the repair of our website.

### By Electronic Fund Transfer:

Bank: Australian Defence Credit Union

BSB: 642 170

Account No: 100 00 3851

Ref: **Web+Surname** (eg WebSmith)

### By Cheque to:

The Treasurer

PO Box 7115, Naval Post Office, NSW 2540

(Please mark the back "WebAppeal" plus your name and address).

## Mystery Photo No 61



We had lots of responses to last month's Mystery Photo, above, all of which were correct. It seems we are making them too easy! The aircraft is, of course, the Short Seamew, which had a short and un-illustrious career in the RN as a contender for replacement of the Fleet Air Arm's Grumman Avenger AS4s. Read more on the next page....

## Mystery Photo No 61 Answer



The Seamew was designed to fill Admiralty specification M.123D for a simple, lightweight Anti-Submarine aircraft capable of operating from any of the RN's aircraft carriers, including the smaller Escort Carriers, which were still abundant in the fleet after WW2. The was to be suitable for mass production and operation by the Air Branch of the RN Volunteer Reserve. Its design was such that it could also be used by the RAF for land-based use, in response to the alarming increase in the number and capability of Soviet submarines.

The design had originally called for a piston engine, perhaps the tried and tested Rolls-Royce Merlin, but the RN had decided to phase out pistons so that AVGAS need not be carried on ships. The power-plant chosen was the Armstrong-Siddeley Mamba mounted directly under the pilot, which lowered the propeller. This required in turn a long stroke on the main undercarriage, both to allow for heavy deck landings and to give propeller and radome clearance - but it gave the aircraft an alarming attitude on the ground. To counteract this, the tailwheel was extended on landing to give a more level attitude, and the main undercarriage could be jettisoned in the event of a ditching. The Sea Mew was clearly an aircraft of compromises!

Three prototypes were ordered in April of 1952 and the first flight took place in August of that year. Testing continued during 1953 but was set back by a crash that killed test pilot SQN LDR Walter

Runciman during an air display at Belfast in June of 1956 while attempting a loop. There were rumours the tragedy had been caused by material failure but this was not confirmed by the subsequent accident investigation.

The handling characteristics of the Sea Mew were poor, and extensive modifications were made to the original design to try and improve them – including heavily modified leading-edge slats, slots to the trailing-edge flaps, alternations to the ailerons and slats to the tailplane roots. Despite this, handling was never satisfactory, and it was said that 'only Short Brothers' test pilot Wally Runciman seemed able to outwit its viscous tendencies and exploit its latent manoeuvrability to the limit'. Before he was killed in it, Runciman seemed enthusiastic, reporting '*...take off and landing are straight forward and simple*' and '*...it is impossible to bounce the Seamew*', and that '*its performance in crosswinds was outstanding*'.

Despite design and performance problems, Defence placed an order for sixty aircraft, split evenly between the Fleet Air Arm and the RAF, with Seamew XA213 successfully completing carrier trials on HMAS *Bulwark* in 1955. Two Seamews subsequently completed Naval Service Flight Trials with 700 Squadron, including catapult trials and some 200 take-offs and landings on HMS *Warrior*.

The RAF were not so keen and lost interest after four Mk.2s (the land based version) were built.

In March of 1957 the RNVR Squadrons were disbanded, however, in keeping with the 1957 Defence White Paper. Robbed of the primary reason for its existence, the Seamew contract was cancelled. The seven aircraft eventually delivered to the FAA were scrapped, as were another eleven awaiting delivery.

The last surviving Seamew, purchased by Shorts for ground instruction, was broken up in 1967. None of the aircraft survived. ✈



## More About Tracker Diversion...



In the previous three editions of *FlyBy* we brought you various aspects of the story of the S2G which diverted to Whenuapai on the night of 23 Aug 1979 on one engine.

In this issue, Daffy Donald, who was in the accompanying Tracker, brings his perspective.

Hi,

Daffy here - I was in the other S-2 that Pigpen couldn't recall why we were there! His crew and our crew did a joint brief - Bad Ronald (Gary Caldow) and Piggy were the 2000-2339 on task slot and we were the 2330 launch to relieve them at 2359. I think my crew (thank you crap post 1974 Observer's log book) was a scratch crew because I normally flew with the SQN LSOs (we shared pilots Vid the Kid and Wingfold Willy Wilson) and Pierre Coulson as TACCO - but he wasn't there that night. So the only person I definitely recall is Vid the kid driving 845. But Graham Bates (crewie) and Alan Oliver (TACCO) keep flashing before my eyes

Snap answers to confirm other observations: it was a SEA KNIGHT and its mother was USS CAMDEN AOE-2 - an absolute sexy Sacramento Class Fast Combat Support Ship. Why would a birdie know that you ask? Well in 1967 three US ships visited Sydney for Coral Sea Week - USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20), USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1) and EPPERSON (DD 719) and I was lucky enough to get a boat ride out to SACRAMENTO for a look (very impressive- 53,000 tons of ice cream, bullets & fuel delivery vessel) - so the class was welded into memory.

Hughie Schneider was our first foe of the evening - it was as rough as guts and the 2215 pre-flight up on the wing over the angle was fraught - and the pre-flight was meticulous - looking for something scary to gripe - NOTHING - until Vid the kid checked the fuel tank water drain and noticed he could feel wet on the glove but a sniff revealed no AVGAS scent. Engineer sticks a beaker under the fuel tank water drain and finds lotsa water but no fuel (43% water is in my brain). Yippee - the badgers have done us scary cats proud. So we adjoin to the reserve bird and check the fuel -

## † REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of **Jeff "Pony" Moore, Graham Falkiner and Barry Rolfe.**

You can read a little more on our Obituary pages [here](#), and, if you are a member of the Association, you can leave a comment there if you wish. ✈

same result safe as houses - but Hughie pulls the hangar queen 845 out of B Hangar and damn she was perfect, so we launched into the tempest a mere 15 minutes late at 2345. And that held good the VS 816 maintenance crew record of not dropping a sortie that deployment! Hughie and the boys were a great team.

Lots more memories of the flight to Whenuapai but I won't bore with those - Vid did ask if we could land on to mutually support Bad Ronald as we didn't relish going back to a deck we knew was likely to technically out of limits, but the ever empathetic ship tells us to return to Mother so we flew back through all this crap pondering the possibilities but as we closed the recovery point around the top of the North Island we saw the moon come out, the wind drop and the sea state go glass so a wonderful no-pressure LSOs OK 3 wire 0330 recovery. The storm would catch up to the ship later in the day, give the kid on the engine mount the ride of his life, and topple the LWO4 antenna (which was replaced with VENDETTA's LWO2). Kim Fischer was the boy who came down from rounds and told the ORO Ian Magilvray that the Radar was gone rather than down. And someone may recall the CO's reaction to that news.

Oh yeah the submarine we were hunting was having its own problems finding the bottom at 400ish feet in 2000 metres almost at the same moment that Gary's engine shat itself from memory. Have the full bottle on that just can't lay my hands on it at the moment. Cheers, Daffy. ✈

## Wall of Service Update

Order No. 46 has been received back from the Foundry and the following plaques have been affixed to the Wall:

- K. McLACHLAN R63880 ABATC Nov 64 – Nov 73.
- A. DICKINSON O129050 LEUT SLEX(P) May 80–May 90.
- B. GRAINGER R59354 CPO ATA3 Jul 62 – Mar 74.
- T. NELSON O122334 LCDR GLEX(P) Jan 77 – Jul 95.
- A.H WHITTAKER O121002 CAPT(O)(P) May 76 – Aug 13.
- M. CARR O114148 LEUT(P) May 76 – Jan 84.
- S.G. ELMS O124017 CAPT(O) Jan 78 – Feb 17.
- G.P. LUNN O120457 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 – Sep 88.
- R.J. HILL O120451 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 – Oct 90.
- M.R. GALVIN O113975 LCDR GLEX(P) Jan 74 – Jul 89.
- D.S. MCKEAN O122250 LEUT GLEX(P) Jun 77 – Apr 95.
- R.L. MILLS R43039 CPOA Jan 65 – Sep 87.
- G.D. HAWKINS O109072 CMDR(P) Oct 70 – Dec 15.
- C. W. MARCOMBE O120458 CMDR GLEX(P) Feb76-Dec19.



The FAA 'Wall of Service' was constructed in 2005 and, fifteen years later, now bears the names of over 1000 people.

To commemorate this milestone, the NSW Division has agreed that one lucky person in the forthcoming order (No.47) will get their plaque totally free!

To enter, all you have to do is apply for a plaque in the normal way. When the order is about to be sent to the Foundry one name in it will be picked out of a hat, and will have their money refunded. It's as easy as that!

The competition is open to any person who is eligible to have their name on the Wall with the exception of any elected office bearers or committee members of the National Body or of any Division of the FAAAA.

So, if you were thinking of getting a plaque, now is a really good time to do it.

For the conditions of the competition and simple instructions how to enter, click [here](#).

S. HARWOOD O122228 CMDR(P) Feb 77 - Apr 10.  
 G.L. KNOX O120455 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 - Feb 99.  
 C.S. PRICE O126713 LEUT(P) Mar 82 - Sep 90.  
 R.J. FRANCE O114150 LCDR(P) May 76 - May 94.  
 S. MURRAY O114094 LEUT SLEX(O) May 76 - Jun 83.  
 M.J. MARTIN O120508 LCDR (A) Apr 76 - Aug 16

Order No. 47 remains open and we have eight names in it so far, as follows:

T.R. HETHERINGTON R43207 CPO ATA4 Jan 66-Dec 13.  
 A.N. MUDGE O43225 LCDR AE Jan 66-Jun 95.  
 R.I. GAGNON O165860 CMDR (P) Feb 98-Aug 09.  
 O.L. NICHOLLS O3018 CMDR GLEX(P) Feb 68-Jul 16.  
 D.A. RUSSELL R51593 LEM(A) Jan 56 - Mar 62.  
 H.R. HURREN R38167 EM1(A) Mar 50 - Jun 53  
 B. BURDETT R50605 ? 55-61  
 J.D. DEERING R54530 EMAW Jul 58 - Jul 67.

We only need another five before this order can be submitted for manufacture, **so this might be your last chance to win your money back** (see sidebar to the left).

Details on what the Wall of Service is and how to order a plaque can be found on our website [here](#). ✈

## FAAAA Holds Annual Meeting

The Fleet Air Arm's Federal Council was held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October. This is the premier gathering of the Association, at which representatives of all Divisions meet with the National Executive, to discuss the state of the organisation and its ongoing management. This year the forum was held on 'Zoom', which was a first.

Minutes of the meeting will be published on our website in due course, but this report provides an unofficial gist of the main discussion points and the principal outcomes of the meeting.

The overall state of the Association remains much as last year, although we continue to experience a slow decline in membership. This has been offset to some degree by above average recruiting for the first eight months of this year, although that has now declined. Recruiting of new members and the retention of existing ones remains a priority.

Two particular submissions were considered: the Governance of Slipstream, and Website Technical Problems and Repair Options. Both papers, and the recommendations arising out of them, were accepted by the Council with minor changes. The effect of this is:

- A new 'Standard Operating Procedure' setting out process and governance for the development, production and distribution of Slipstream was accepted and is now in place. It was noted that further minor amendments would be considered in due course, and (continued on page 9)

## Main Story (continued from page 1)



Lt Kingsford Smith as a military pilot (AWM)

wrote to his parents: '*He was one of the very best fighters I had, full of grit and a splendid war pilot*'.

After the war Smithy found work in the burgeoning aviation industry, including as a stunt pilot in Hollywood's silent films. In one stunt he almost lost his life when he was stuck upside down hanging from the undercarriage of an aircraft.

## Did You Know...



There is a tenuous connection between one of our Fleet Air Arm pilots and Sir Charles Kingsford Smith?

**Alex Ignatieff** enlisted in the RAN in January 1951 for flying duties and was subsequently posted to No.10 pilot's course at RAAF Uquity in September of 1953. He served with distinction, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander before taking voluntary discharge at the end of 1965. His service included Point Cook as Senior Naval Officer; 723 Squadron as Senior Pilot; 724 Squadron in Command and also a spell on HMAS *Queensborough*.

In civilian life he did equally well, and by 1968 was the Test Pilot for Hawker de Havilland but on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July that year this career was tragically cut short when his Beech Muskateer crashed shortly after take-off from Mount Hagan in PNG.

Alex Ignatieff lost his life in the crash, together with his three passengers – one of whom was **Commander Eric Kingsford Smith** RAN Retired, 'Smithy's' last surviving brother. He had served as a supply officer in the Navy in earlier years and was visiting his son who owned a coffee plantation in the highlands of PNG.

Following the death of a friend there Smithy gave the job away as too dangerous and moved back to Australia, where he flew on an aerial postal service as well as offering joy rides. It was rumoured that young, attractive women were regular passengers where no money changed hands, and he rapidly gained a reputation as a womaniser, chain smoker and heavy drinker. Ken Craig, a psychiatrist of the time, wrote: "*There are...things... about him that are very*

*common to alcoholics: his promiscuity, the constant need for fresh conquests, seeking reassurance about his potency; his chronic restlessness; his early flighty irresponsibility as a pilot [in WA]; his inability to handle money; the great generosity – ready to give away his last penny, always broke; and the evidence from the photographs that show how rapidly he aged – another consequence of alcoholism."*

But his heart was into breaking new aviation barriers. In June of 1927 he completed a round-Australia circuit with his friend, Charles Ulm – a notable achievement with minimal navigation aids. Kingsford Smith at once sought support for a trans-Pacific flight and was granted £9,000 from the NSW Government, as well as support from an American oil magnate, G. Allan Hancock.

Searching for a suitable aircraft, they came across a Fokker EV11b/3m tri-motor: a converted 1920s airliner featuring a fabric-covered steel-tube airframe with a spruce wooden wing with a plywood skin. It had crashed in Alaska in 1926 as one of the aircraft of the Detroit News Arctic Expedition, but had been recovered and repaired by the Australian expedition leader, Hubert Wilkins. He regarded the tri-motor as too big for his needs and sold it to Kingsford-Smith, who renamed it *The Southern Cross*.

On 31 May 1928 the crew of the Southern Cross – Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm and Americans Harry Lyon (Navigator) and James Warner (Radio Operator) took off from Oakland, California for the 7,250 mile flight to Australia. After a brief stop in Hawaii, they set course for Fiji, arriving 35½ hours later with one engine running poorly. A large and enthusiastic crowd witnessed the aircraft land at Albert Park – the first aircraft to ever land in Fiji, and the longest overwater flight ever completed.

The final leg of the journey took just over 21 hours, passing through a violent storm and at times flying only a few feet above the water: but they landed at Eagle Farm in Brisbane on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1928, to be greeted by a crowd of 25,000 people.

Throughout the journey the aircraft was in constant radio communication with ships and shore using four transmitters and three receivers powered by a ram-air turbine attached to the fuselage. The first paid commercial messages were sent and received during the flight, and a new world record distance was set with short wave reception with Bloemfontein, some 12,800 miles to the west. The concept of long distance air communication was proven beyond doubt.

The next day the Southern Cross flew to Sydney, to be greeted by a huge crowd. Kingsford Smith's fame was sealed: in 1930 he was the inaugural recipient of the Seagrave Trophy awarded for 'outstanding Skill, Courage and Initiative on Land, Water [or] in the Air.' Two years later he was knighted for services to aviation and was later



*The Southern Cross arrives at Eagle Farm Brisbane, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1928.*

appointed honorary Air Commodore of the RAAF.

Smithy went on to do other record-breaking flights – most notably an east to west crossing of the Atlantic, before going on to Oakland California to achieve a circumnavigation of the world. He also completed the first nonstop trans-Tasman flight in the Southern Cross, using seven mile beach near Gerroa as his departure runway.

For an accomplished aviator who had broken so many long distance records, Smithy had a curious phobia – an

absolute fear of flying over water. He was quoted in Mackersey's biography as saying:

*'Alone in the middle of the deserted Tasman Sea, we could see nothing, hear nothing. We didn't know where we were. I think that night I touched the extreme of human fear. Panic was very near and I almost lost my head. I felt a desire to pull her around, dive – climb – do anything to escape. We were like rats in a trap – terrified, dazed with fear.'*

Some suspect this fear may have led to the crash that killed Charles Kingsford Smith in the

Andaman Sea off Myanmar. He was attempting to break the England-Australia speed record when he disappeared in the early hours of November 8<sup>th</sup> 1935. An extensive search of the area failed to find any trace of him or his aircraft, the *Lady Southern Cross*. Some 18 months later Burmese fishermen found an undercarriage leg, which Lockheed confirmed to be from his aircraft. It is estimated the wreckage lies in 15 fathoms of water not far from the island of Mottama. ✈

## Rebirth of a Legend

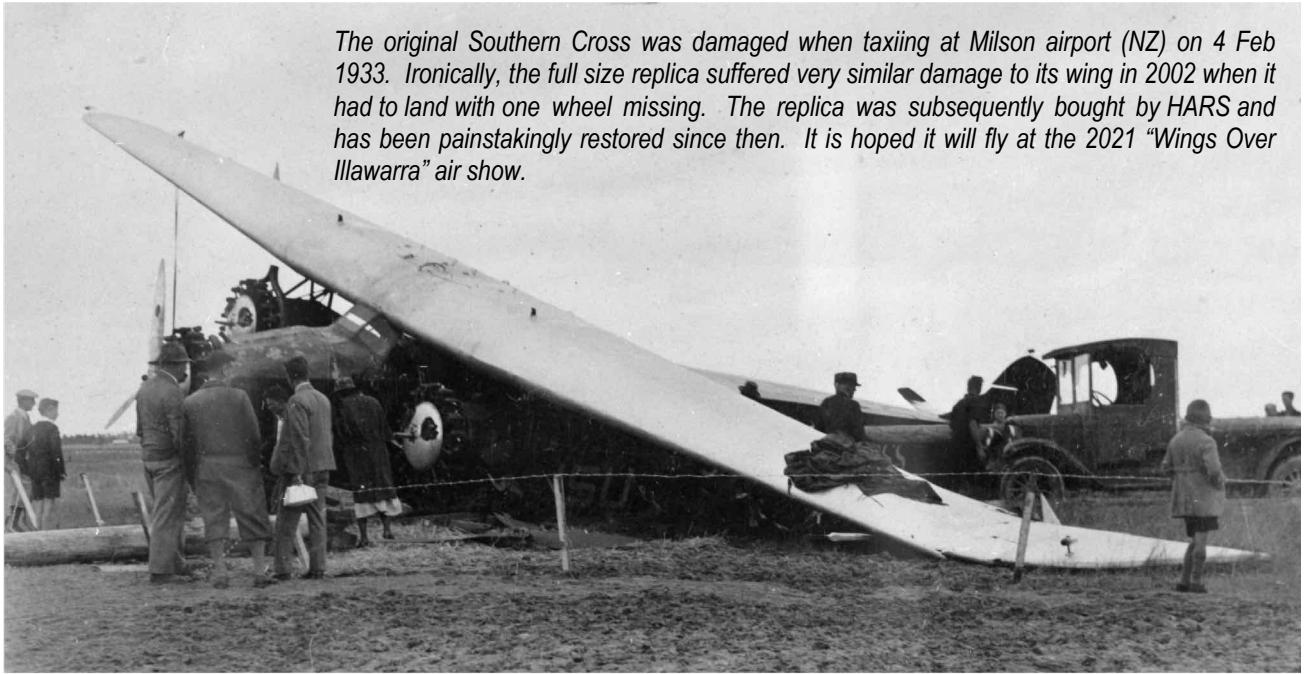
Kingsford Smith sold The Southern Cross to the Australian Government for £3000 in September 1935 to be displayed as a museum piece. It subsequently featured in the 1946 movie 'Smithy'. It was refurbished in 1985 for display at Brisbane airport, where it resides to this day.

During the 1980's a full size replica was built in South Australia, and was used to tour Australia to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It lost a wheel on take-off in May of 2002, however, and was damaged in the subsequent landing. After protracted negotiation the damaged aircraft was bought by the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) in 2010 and has been undergoing a ten-year refurbishment, which is nearing completion.



*The Southern Cross replica under repair in HARS' hangar at Albion Park. (HARS image).*

The original Southern Cross was damaged when taxiing at Milson airport (NZ) on 4 Feb 1933. Ironically, the full size replica suffered very similar damage to its wing in 2002 when it had to land with one wheel missing. The replica was subsequently bought by HARS and has been painstakingly restored since then. It is hoped it will fly at the 2021 "Wings Over Illawarra" air show.



**Left:** The Southern Cross team work on the replica aircraft at HARS' facility in Albion Park. All three engines (**above**) have been refurbished and are being installed. (HARS images).

HARS won the bid to buy the wrecked replica, beating a Dutch consortium. Work has taken some eight years, slowed in recent months by the COVID crisis – but it is hoped to have it flying by the next Wings Over Illawarra airshow. This had been postponed to Nov 2020 but has been further delayed to Nov 2021.



**Left:** The beautifully restored cabin of the replica (image: Greg Ellis).

A good article on the rebuild can be read in the Illawarra Mercury [here](#).



# Mystery Photo No.62

Mystery Photo No.62 shows a Gannet on the Flight Deck of Melbourne. There's something odd about the markings, though. Can you see what it is, and explain how it happened? Click [here](#) to submit your answer. (Thanks to Ron Marsh)



## FAAAA Annual Meeting (continued from page 5)

that Federal Council clearance of these changes would be necessary.

- The Federal Council endorsed the need for a website and accepted that a full rebuild would be necessary to overcome the current technical difficulties. The National Executive has been authorised to expend funds and the National Treasurer will liaise with Divisions to finalise which of them is able to assist financially and to what extent.

**Slipstream Levy.** The Slipstream Levy is the price the National Executive charges each Division for the hard and soft copies of the magazine distributed to its members each quarter. It has remained unchanged for many years at \$5.00 and \$2.50 respectively.

The Meeting was advised that inflation, diminishing membership numbers and changes to payment policy have taken their toll and the Levy is no longer covering production, printing and distribution costs. It was agreed that the Levy will increase to \$6.00 (hardcopy) and \$3.00 (softcopy) with effect from the June edition of Slipstream next year.

**Capitation Fees.** These are the annual fees each Division pays to the National Body to meet the costs of running the Association (e.g. Insurances, zoom licence, Internet, wreaths, website costs, annual audit of accounts etc). The Fee has been \$5.00 per head for many years and the diminishing number of members and inflation has now

resulted in the situation where this amount does not cover our costs.

The Council agreed that the Capitation Fee will increase to \$7.00 per head per annum. It was also agreed that, to reduce costs, future Federal Council Meetings will be conducted on 'Zoom', except for every third year when National Executive Members are elected.

The next FCM is scheduled for 23 October 2021. ✈

## WHY YOU SHOULDN'T RIDE A BIKE

The CEO at Euro A Bank Ltd got economists thinking when he said:

"A cyclist is a disaster for a country's economy. He does not buy a car and does not take out a car loan. Does not buy car insurance. Does not buy fuel. Does not send his car for servicing and repairs. Does not use paid parking. Does not become obese. Yes - and he stays well, damn it !! Healthy people are not needed for an economy. They do not buy drugs. They do not go to hospitals and doctors. They take too long to die, depriving funeral homes of high casket charges. They add nothing to a country's GDP.

On the contrary, every new McDonald's outlet creates at least 30 jobs: 10 cardiologists, 10 dentists, 10 weight-loss experts apart from the people working in the McDonald's outlet.

Walking is even worse. These people don't even buy a bicycle!!" ✈

## Queensland Division Social Gatherings in November



As it is difficult to get Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast people together for socials, QLD Division has decided to trial two separate events this month:

### Sunshine Coast.

The first gathering will be at the Queensland Air Museum at Caloundra on Wednesday 11th November, commencing at 1030. As this is Remembrance Day a short service will be held at our memorial outside the museum at 1100. This will be followed by family BBQ.

Please note there is a \$15 entrance fee for the museum and staff will open the aircraft so we can have a good look - but I must have numbers by the 4th November, please.

### Gold Coast.

Event No. 2 will be at Elizabeth Sloper Park Gardens Laguna Ave Palm Beach. The date is Thursday 26th November, commencing at 1100. Numbers please by 19th Nov.

It is important you let **Ray Murrell** (President of QLD Division) know if you are attending so he can cater for you. Please ring or text him on 0412 608 507 as soon as possible, and no later than the dates indicated above. ✈

## NHF Iroquois Takes to the Skies

Special Navy Heritage Flight (NHF) Report by **Michael Hough**, HARS NHF Project Leader

*"I am delighted to advise that the dedicated team of HARS volunteers had a very productive day last Sunday [11 October 2020] when 898 was taken up for a maintenance check flights at Nowra. The team was pleased with the flights. HARS expects to showcase the helicopter at the next Shellharbour Tarmac days in November.*

*Please find attached some still shots of this extremely important milestone event, and on behalf of all of us I would*

*like to thank and congratulate all the HARS volunteers who made it possible, and the sponsors who have supported us - especially **Mr. Chris Sievers** CEO of Air Affairs*

*Enjoy the photos and the good news is that we have commissioned Mountain Lion Productions to record these significant stages of restoring 898, and we plan to produce an AV program of its restoration to flying, at this stage entitled 'Launch Huey 898'."*

*(All images courtesy of HARS). ✈*



## Patch Heaven

**Ray Godfrey** has asked that we circulate [this link](#). It will take you to a very comprehensive collection of 'Patches' used by the US Army in Vietnam, for those interested in such things.

The person who put together the collection would like any additional information on our patches, if you are able to help. ✈

## The End of Tracker 845



Here's a sad sight – the remains of Tracker 845 (152334), one of the remaining G model aircraft which had been saved from the 'Hookway Tracker Graveyard' but suffered twenty plus years of decline in a paddock not far from Albatross.

There was hope of resurrection, however, as the airframe had finally been donated to the Vietnam Veterans' Museum at Phillip Island, and a team was in the process of dismantling it for transit when the New Year's Eve conflagration of 2019 did the above. You can watch a short video of the final remains [here](#).

Don't forget you can see the full story of the Trackers, including a very comprehensive history in photographs, [here](#). ✈

## AFGHANISTAN INQUIRY

We have received the following letter from DVA and reproduce it here for the interest of any reader who may be impacted.

"Dear RADM Campbell,

### PROVISION OF WELFARE SUPPORT TO PEOPLE IMPACTED BY THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE AFGHANISTAN INQUIRY

The Department of Defence, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is committed to ensuring current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families have access to the right support at the right time, with a focus on supporting those who are vulnerable or at risk.

Those impacted by the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry (the Inquiry) will include current and former serving members, their families, and potentially the interests of deceased members. Those impacted may have been directly contacted by the Inquiry or vicariously impacted by close knowledge and relationships with those involved.

In order to provide ongoing support to impacted people after the release of the Inquiry report, an IGADF Afghanistan

Inquiry Support page has been established on the Department of Defence website which can be located [here](#).

Your assistance in helping Navy reach out to those potentially impacted by the Inquiry is requested to the extent that the Fleet Air Arm Association includes the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry Support page link on your webpage. The webpage details a number of welfare support services available for those who have had contact with an Inspector-General of the ADF inquiry or other process.

Should you have any queries regarding Navy support to the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry welfare plan, my liaison officer is CAPT Anne Andrews [anne.andrews@defence.gov.au](mailto:anne.andrews@defence.gov.au) or phone (02) 6266 2976." ✈

## Update on Toz

Many readers would know that Toz Dadwell has been in ill health recently, but we are pleased to bring you this update from him:

"Hi Terry.

Have just come home after six weeks in hospital. Things were a bit "iffy" there for a while but I have managed to survive a four and a half hour operation which surprised the medicos as blokes of my age usually don't take kindly to such treatment.

They found my vital organs had gone walkabout and so it was a big job to sort them out and nail them back in the right place. However I can now say that my heart is in the right place.

I have been overwhelmed with cards, e-mail-telephone calls from well wishes. There is no way I can reply to everyone so could you please pass onto the FAAA members my deep appreciation for their concern and well wishes.

We truly belong to a wonderful family. The tiger can still roar??

Yours aye, Toz." ✈

### MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

Well, the Mystery Photograph Ready Use Locker is officially empty and we need more.

Images should be of something that resonates with the majority, not just snapshots of your mates who only a few folk might know. Ideally, they should evoke a 'WTF' reaction when someone first looks at them.

Ideally they should also be aviation related, but we can be creative if you have something else you think would be interesting.

Send any contributions [here](#), please. ✈



**Operation Bursa** Recognition – update for award of the Australian Service Medal with clasp Counter Terrorism/Special Recovery (ASM-CT/SR)

The project team officially stood-up on 26 October, however there has been almost five years of work by some dedicated (persistent) personnel to get to this point. Accordingly, due recognition should go to those who have brought this to fruition; in particular **CDRE Brett Dowsing** and the late **CMDR Ted Wynberg**.

The Determination, which specifies the conditions of eligibility and evidence requirements, was recently signed by the Governor General and Minister for Defence. In brief, the eligibility requirements include Navy personnel, or allied foreign defence force members, who:

- a. have served a period of 60 consecutive or more days on Op Bursa; and
- b. were posted to one or more of the following Squadrons during the periods designated:
  - HC723 Squadron (01Aug80 to 09Feb84)
  - HU816 Squadron (09Feb84 to 01Nov86)
  - HS817 (01Nov86 to 31Dec89)

The 60 consecutive days qualifying period includes deployment, training and while on a reduced notice-to-move.

This award is not restricted to aircrew. It includes all personnel who meet the eligibility criteria, but please note you will be required to apply for the medal.

More details can be found on the Op Bursa ASM page on

our website. You can see that page [here](#).

The project team is working through the methodology and qualification requirements. Verifiable evidence is essential for the processing of any application, in order to maintain the integrity of the Honours and Awards system. This will take time, but in order to expedite the awards as much as possible, they will be processed in batches rather than a “job lot”.

Getting the word out to people about their possible eligibility is essential, so spread the word to your mates about the Op Bursa ASM project, where to get information and how to make contact with the team.

The project team may be contacted on email by clicking [here](#). ✈

## Veterans’ Health Week

Veterans’ Health Week is a DVA initiative to promote the physical and mental health of Veterans. This year it was held from 26 October to 01 November. You can see their website [here](#).

**John Macartney** (Mac) kindly sent us this phot of Old Bar RSL members who walked to Club Old Bar to meet up with less active members for a healthy grilled fish and salad lunch, as a part of the Health Week. For a small community that was great to see.

It is interesting to note that in such a small town as Old Bar (population about 4500) there are three people who served in the FAA together. **Jim Buchanan** far right, next to him **John Macartney** and kneeling **Mike Doyle**. ✈

