

THE CLIPPED WINGS



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AIR DISPATCH ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA

WINTER 2020

President's Report



Hello everyone.

Is this year over yet?

I do not think I have come across a worse year in my short time on this planet. Since our Autumn edition of the Clipped Wings, we have lost another four members Ken Smythe, Chris Felkin, Bernard Birtles and Graeme O'Brien. We also lost Gerry Lieben's wife, Janet, better known as "Kiwi". The most unfortunate aspect of all these sad events is none of us could pay our final respects at the funeral. That said, I understand there are memorial services planned for some of those who have passed. In all cases, our sincere condolences go to the families

This year has been challenging, to say the least and its now only June.

Yet again, the Squadron, recently returned from Operation "Bushfire Assist", stepped up to the plate in support of the fight against the Coronavirus. With personnel working in many different areas as part of Operation "COVID-19 Assist", with soldiers deployed to various locations. To all those involved, "Well Done".

The world has changed as we once knew it, with social distancing, people working from home and those of us over seventy advised to remain at home and not venture out except for food, essentials or medical appointments. Even the Veterans Review Board is conducting hearings by telephone only.

Our International Reunion, held in March was terminated two days short due to the Coronavirus. We had representatives from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the US attend. Australia had 23 people of the full compliment of 37. Australia continues to be the driving force in these events which is a credit to the Association members. Many people have commented about us being on the "Ruby Princess" but from my perspective and those of the Association who were on the cruise, we all enjoyed the cruise. The aftermath was the devastating part of the reunion. Our widow, Lonna Opie and her daughter, Allana, joined us and had a good time. The Reunion Wrap Up and Lonna's article is also inside this edition.

ANZAC Day was very interesting this year, with the inaugural driveway service. It was, I believe, a very personal way of commemorating an occasion which is indelibly etched into Australia's history. We have gathered a few photographs from members who participated in the driveway service; these are shown inside this issue.

The Association normally holds its AGM on or around the ANZAC Day period. This year, it has been postponed and will be held at a time and place to be determined. Again, this is totally beyond our control, and we trust

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members understand the Committee's decision on this. Association members will be notified by email as soon as a decision is made in regard to this.

With the current restrictions in place, Bunnings have ceased our sausage sizzles until further notice. This has had a major effect on our fund-raising activities. This, coupled with the restrictions of gatherings and the closing of pubs and club, has compelled the Committee to cancel the Myola Ball for this year. The decision to cancel this event was not taken lightly and it saddens us to have to do so, but in the interest of everybody's wellbeing, we believe it is the best option.

Hopefully, our end of year functions will still go ahead, but again, this is subject to government restrictions being completely lifted by the end of the year.

Whilst we were attending the International Reunion, our order of AD Coins and badges were delivered to our postal address. The majority of coins have been posted to those who ordered them. We still have a good supply of coins available as well as badges for sale to both members and non-members. Look inside for order forms.

This edition may be a little light on for content but apart from the COVID-19 issue which is upon us, not a great deal has happened.

Please stay safe.

Until next time,

Cheers,

Nicko

June 20



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Treasurer's Report

Shown below are movements through each of our bank accounts. These are the figures sent to the Australian Taxation Office when we reported our GST activity for the 1st quarter of this year. If you would like further information, please send your request to me by email, treasurer@adaa.com.au.

Regards
Rob Ward

ADMINISTRATION		
Bank Account Opening Balance	1-Jan-20	16,527.40
Income		
Donations		
GST refund		564.00
Interest		4.10
Memberships		1,425.00
Total Income		1,993.10
Expenses		
Bank charges		8.30
Donation	Vietnam Veterans Association	500.00
Funeral costs	postage for sash	12.20
Insurance		1,276.00
New member badges		4.84
Postage		44.58
Presentations	Oberon RSL	262.50
Website and emails		500.50
Total Expenses		-2,608.92
Bank Account Closing Balance	31-Mar-20	15,911.58

MERCHANDISE		
Bank Account Opening Balance	1-Jan-20	480.96
Income		
Interest		0.17
Postage recovered		12.80
Sales		559.00
Total Income		571.97
Expenses		
Postage		20.65
Total Expenses		-20.65
Bank Account Closing Balance	31-Mar-20	1,032.28

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FUNDRAISING		
Bank Account Opening Balance	1-Jan-20	2,479.21
Income		
Bushfire appeal Sausage Sizzle		2,470.70
Interest		0.57
Total Income		2,471.27
Expenses		
Bushfire appeal Sausage Sizzle		344.57
Donation	WIRES	2,126.13
Signage		197.00
Reunion costs	widow's travel insurance	128.95
Total Expenses		-2,796.65
Bank Account Closing Balance	31-Mar-20	2,153.83

GRANTS		
Bank Account Opening Balance	1-Jan-20	317.46
Income		
Interest		0.06
Total Income		0.06
Expenses		
Total Expenses		0.00
Bank Account Closing Balance	31-Mar-20	317.52

Membership fees for 2020 are now overdue. Check the membership list, if you are not sure when you are paid up to. Payment options are:

Online by bank transfer

- Westpac Banking Corporation
- BSB 032-814
- Account number 485891 In the name of "Air Dispatch Association Administration Account"
- Use your surname and initial (or regimental number if we have it on file) as your reference

Deposit over the counter at any Westpac Bank.

- As the bank does not allow any letter in the payee's details, use your regimental number as a reference, and, if we don't have it on file, send me an email with the details of the date, branch and amount of your payment

You may also be able to deposit at the Post Office, but a transaction fee could be payable

By cheque or money order

- Made payable to Air Dispatch Association of Australia
- Post to PO Box 483, Helensburgh NSW 2508

Online by credit card

- If this is your payment choice, send me an email so that I can set you up with this facility. Charges will be passed on to you when I send out your invoice

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Membership Report

Welcome to New Members

Since the last edition of "The Clipped Wings", the following new members have joined our Association:

LANG, Anna Maria
ROGERS, Paul
OLIVER, Steve

HEAD, Gerda
HUXLEY, Glenn
SHINE, Christopher

Life Members

BABER, Kemm
COLE, Gary
EDDIE, Anthony
FERGUSON, David
GANNON, Barry

HUTTON, Bob
IRVING, Brian
McCANN, Denis
SLEE, Pat
VARLEY, Nev (deceased)

Financial Members

ARGUS, Howard	2020	EVANS, John	2020
ASBURY, Paul	2020	FARMER, Raymond	2020
BAINES, Ian	2022	FEDDERSEN, Brendan	2020
BARNES, John	2020	FIGG, Peter	2020
BARNES, Pamela	2020	FLINT, Bob	2020
BARNET, John	2020	FOLKES, Chris	2020
BATES, Paul	2020	FOSTER, Denis	2020
BEAVEN, David	2023	FOSTER, Grant	2020
BELL, Albert	2020	FRACARO, Lyndon	2020
BERMAN, Gary	2020	FRANKEL, Ray	2020
BLAKELY, Ron	2020	GELLER, Michael	2020
BLYTH, Peter	2020	GOAD, David	2022
BRENNAN, Denis	2020	GODDARD, John	2020
BUCHANAN, Graeme	2020	GRIMSHAW, Max	2020
CHRISTIE, Ross	2020	GUSTER, Tony	2021
CLARKE, Andrew	2020	HANCOX, Keith J	2020
COCHRANE, Dan	2020	HAYES, Bill	2023
COHEN, Peter	2020	HEAD, Gerda	2020
CONWELL, Matt	2020	HEAD, Vince	2020
CORMACK, Will	2020	HEIDENREICH, Lou	2023
CORNISH, Andrew	2020	HEIDENREICH, Susan	2020
CORNISH, Hannah	2020	HEYDON, Terry	2020
CRAKER, David	2020	HILL, Brian	2020
CUNNINGHAM, Lou	2020	HILSBURG, Stuart	2020
CUTTS, Geoff	2020	HILSON, Peter	2020
DALTON, Alan	2020	HOLDEN, Phil	2020
DEJENEY, Peter	2020	HOLECEK OAM, Brian	2020
DOWD, Tony	2024	HORDERN, Anthony	2021
EGGINS, Greg	2020	HOWARD, Roy	2020

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HOWES, Alan	2021	PEARKS, Kevin	2020
HUDDLESTON, John	2020	PRAGNALL, Alan	2020
HUGHES, Michael	2020	REASON, Terry	2020
HUGHES, Ron	2020	ROGERS, Paul	2020
HUNT, John	2021	RUSSELL, Carol	2020
HUXLEY, Glenn	2020	RUSSELL, Peter	2020
IRVING, Dianne	2020	RUTLEDGE, Allen	2020
JANSON, Ken	2020	RYMAN, James	2020
JOHANSEN, Michael	2021	SCOTLAND, Jim	2020
KENNY, Dean	2028	SHINE, Christopher	2020
KIRKHAM, Jim	2020	SLEE, Marlene	2023
KOOL, Shaun	2020	SMEATON, Jock	2020
LANG, Anna Maria	2020	SMILEY, Graham	2020
LEE, Dennis	2021	SMITH, Barry	2020
LESUEUR, Peter	2023	SMOCK, David	2021
LIEBEN, Gerard	2020	SOLOMON, DAVID	2020
LONERGAN, Michael	2021	SUMNER, John	2021
LUSCOMBE, Kerry	2022	SVENSSON, Garry	2020
MACDONALD, Blair	2020	SWAIN, Mark	2021
MADIGAN, George	2020	TAWNS, Hugh	2020
MARKI, Imre	2020	TAYLOR, John	2021
MARTIN, Raymond	2020	THOMPSON, Gordon	2020
McGEOCH, Gordon	2020	THURGOOD, John	2020
McGRAVIE, Gary	2020	TOWERS, Rosalyn	2020
McMASTER, Robert	2020	TOWERS, Russell	2020
McNAMARA, Ted	2020	WAHLEN, Deborah	2020
McNULTY, Anthony	2020	WAHLEN, Gary	2021
McPHERSON, Roger	2020	WAHLEN, Mark	2020
MILKE, Peter	2020	WARD, Rob	2020
MILLER, Eric	2020	WARE, Stu	2021
MITCHELL, Shane	2020	WATSON, Keith	2020
MOFFITT, Darren	2020	WEARING, Bruce	2020
MOORE, Allan	2020	WEIDNER, Ted	2020
MUIR, Graeme	2021	WEIDNER, Glenda	2020
MULFORD, Barry	2020	WHITE, Garry	2020
MUNRIGHT, Terry	2020	WHITTAKER, John	2022
MUNSON, Peter	2020	WILLIAMS, John	2020
MURPHY, Peter	2020	WILLIAMS, Melva	2020
NICOLAI, Joyce	2020	WOLFF, Mark	2020
NICOLAI, Nick	2020	WOODERSON, Geoff	2020
O'BRIEN, Danny	2020	WORLAND, Trevor	2021
OLIVER, Steve	2020	YOUNG, Ian	2022
PAPWORTH, Graham	2021	ZAFFINO, Zeek	2021

If you don't see your name on this list and believe it should be, or if you think these records are incorrect, please send an email to memberships@adaa.net.au. For those of you that were financial until the end of 2019, a reminder has been sent to you by email that payment of \$25.00 is required to maintain your membership until the end of 2020. You had until 30 April, 2020 to pay your dues. Payment options are included in the Treasurer's report.

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Interest

2020 International Air Dispatch Reunion Wrap Up

Sailing on the Calamity (Ruby) Princess

Submitted by Nicko

Well, it's over and done for another 2 years, and again, the Aussies led the way in numbers; 23 out of 37. On the whole it was a great holiday, being able to catch up with our international brothers and sisters; although it was cut short by two days.



Ron and Cecilia in happier times

Things started to fall apart before the cruise began with Cecelia McCaffery injuring herself after falling in Singapore on the way to Sydney. Ron managed to get her down to Sydney where she was hospitalised and told by the doctors that she would be unfit to travel. It was probably a blessing they were not allowed.

Cecelia was discharged from hospital on Saturday 7 March, the day prior to the cruise, and was required to rest for about ten days before being able to fly back to the UK.

We had a pre-cruise dinner on the Saturday night and a few of the Poms, living in Australia, caught up with most of the Kiwis, John and Patsy Cusick (US), George and Cindy Hilliar (UK), Joyce and myself and Jim Prien at Cyren Restaurant in Darling Harbour. The food as always was very good and the company was great.



L - R Russ Wood, George and Cindy Hilliar and Patsy Cusick



L to R Ted Henningham, Cindy Hilliar and Bill Hayes at Squires Landing

Sunday, 8 March 20. We made our way to Circular Quay and sat around at Rossini Restaurant watching with interest the goings and comings of Sydneysiders and travellers. We also met up with Lonna Opie (our widow) and her daughter Alanna. Two others who were part of our gang were Deb Lumsden and Jordan Ragget who were travelling for Dave Cooper.

The earliest load commence was supposed to be at 1200hr but the NSW Dept of Health held up boarding time until about 1830hr, so between those times, most of us headed down to Squires Landing to partake of the ale, wine, coke and anything else we could drink. During that time, we caught up with another ex-air dispatcher we haven't seen in ages, Ted Henningham. At 1830hr, we lined up and

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boarded where we could. Unfortunately, one of our members (no names) left his passport at home and was not allowed to board. (He ended up meeting the ship in Dunedin.)

At 2330 hr, we slipped our moorings and headed down the harbour leaving the lights of Sydney in our wake. Well at least we were underway.

Monday/Tuesday, 9/10 March 20. At sea for two days it was a little bumpy but bearable. You could feel the sea change after we cleared Sydney Heads. Harry Hordern recced the area and found the "Wheelhouse Bar" a convenient watering hole. Some people had gained their sea legs and were taking the bumpy sea conditions in their stride.



Leaving Sydney Cove and the night lights of the harbour city



Milford Sound in the early morning

Wednesday, 11 March 20. The ship entered Milford Sound. Apart from the stillness of the water and the cool air, the thing that was noticeable was the wind tunnel effect the steep walls of the Sound had. It seemed we had headed into a gale coming down the gorge and it was blowing about 40 knots. The scenery of the Sound was magnificent and the steepness of the ice carved cliffs quite spectacular. The ship turned around and headed back to the open sea then ventured into some of the fiords and channels as we snaked our way through the southern passages towards Dunedin.

Thursday, 12 March 20. This was our first land day and, as we entered the harbour, we saw that the wharf was partitioned off with shipping containers. Some people opted to take tours whilst others preferred to walk around town. Harry, Karen, Lonna, Alanna, Joyce and I opted for a train ride from the port through Taieri Gorge to Pukerangi, a distance of about 60 km each way. The train is 3ft 6in narrow gauge, the same as Queensland and Tasmania, the carriages are restored from the early – mid 1900s and although narrow compared to NSW trains, well preserved and functional. The trip took us through some very steep cuttings and across some interesting cast iron bridges (as opposed to steel). Again, spectacular scenery and an interesting commentary from the tour guides. There was a small open-air market at Pukerangi and as always, the ladies had to have a look at what was available (I



Karen Austin, Harry Hordern and Nicko at Pukerangi



Larnach Castle and grounds, Dunedin

think we came away with some knitted goods). Back down the mountain and we were delivered safely to the main Dunedin railway station where we were picked up by bus and taken to Larnach Castle, which has a commanding view over Dunedin, the port areas and the coastline. An interesting place with somewhat sad and disturbing background but a true story of the "phoenix rising" and now a successful tourist venue and wedding reception establishment. Back on board, we were reunited with our

long- lost air dispatch brother who left his passport at home. Finally, we were all together again and sailing overnight to Akaroa.

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Friday, 13 March 20. A sheltered harbour surrounded by hills and a small town with a big French influence. One side of the town is decidedly British with English street names such as Beach Road and on the other side of the town around French Bay, names such as Rue Benoit and Rue Balguerue. It

should be noted the Akaroa has the only Police/Gendarmerie Station in New Zealand. Some of us had booked a bus ride up to Hilltop some 500 metres (16,500 feet) above

sea level. The view again was spectacular. This day was particularly sombre, as it was the 12-month anniversary of the Christchurch massacre; Christchurch being only 80 km from Akaroa. Back to the ship and on to Wellington. That evening, a message came over the PA from the Captain. "Despite the news of the worsening Covid-19 situation, we were going to finish our cruise on time as planned and would return to Sydney on Saturday 21 March".



The Police/Gendarmerie, Akaroa

Saturday, 14 March 20. We berthed at Wellington and moved down the gangway to our bus. Today, the Kiwis, who hosted the reunion, had organised a bus tour and all 37 of us were eager to see some more of the place.

We got on the bus but the bus wouldn't start. No electrical power from the battery to the starter at all. Ummm. All those with some knowledge about newer vehicles gave their "five bob's worth" but to no avail. Eventually the driver called the depot and requested assistance. A mechanic arrived and gave the motor a few hits and it started. Linkage problems from the automatic not registering "Park" or "Neutral", so vehicle wouldn't start. After a lengthy time before getting off the wharf, we went up to the top of the hill and visited the Wellington Botanical Gardens and in particular the Lady Norwood Rose Garden.

Although the weather had

started to get cooler and some of the flowers were stunted, the scent and colour of some were quite exquisite. We headed down the hill and out to the Porirua RSA (RSL) for lunch. A very welcoming club with a good meal and friendly members. From there to the Mt Victoria lookout which overlooks the harbour to the left and the airport to the right and we made sure some great photo opportunities. The National War Memorial was next on the tour and we noted a number of sculptures and pavilions relating to New Zealand's and Australia's commitment to a free world. Some of the more adventurous headed out to explore more of Wellington but others headed back to the "Wheelhouse Bar", drinkies were calling. About ten of us were in the bar and the Ruby Princess quietly slipped her moorings and headed for Napier.



*Wellington wharf waiting for the bus to start
L - R Harry, Bill and Lucy Hayes, Yagi Hanson (NZ),
Grant and Christine Foster*



*Reunion Group at Wellington National
War Memorial*

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Some of the tourist vehicles and architecture in Napier

Sunday, 15 March 20. Napier - a world-renown Art Deco city which was rebuilt after a major earthquake in 1931. Art Deco was the style at the time and a lot of the buildings and houses still have these designs. We boarded our bus for a tour and noted that at 0900hr you could have fired “Fleshette” down the main street and not hit anything or anyone. We wandered around for about an hour or so looking at the designs which made Napier famous. There is a very good museum in Napier, that features a good display of the earthquake which devastated the town almost ninety years ago. Back onboard mid-afternoon and now sailing for Auckland, or so we thought! The Captain had another important announcement for us about 2000hr. “It has been decided our cruise is to be cut short and we will be returning to Sydney

immediately”. Ummm why? Well, obviously because of COVID 19 even though there were no reported cases on board the ship. Oh well, best we start self-lubricating, err, I mean, hydrating, because we only have two days left to make a hole in the alcohol supply.

Monday, 16 March 20. Yes, the ships TV network showed we had made a U-turn during the night and headed back into the Cook Strait and towards home. This probably pissed off some of the Kiwis because most of them

came from around the Auckland area and it would have been easier to get off there instead of going back to Sydney. We hadn’t had a formal dinner for the reunion, so we made arrangements for a formal dining night the following evening. And then it was back to the “Wheelhouse Bar”



The voyage route and the U turn



The Wheelhouse Bar L - R John Cusick, Mark Wahlen (obscured), Gerry Lieben in background, Joyce, Kiwi Lieben, Ros Towers and Patsy Cusick (back to camera)

Tuesday, 17 March 20. We had cleared Cook Strait and were back into the Tasman Sea but surprise, surprise, the sea surface was like a millpond. Nothing like we had experienced on the way over. We did our normal daily routine, meeting in Horizons for brunch then down to the “Wheelhouse” for afternoon catch up. We had organised two photo shoots for that evening; one in our association attire and one for the formal night. Dave Cooper and his Carer, Jordan Ragget, were booked on this trip and with Dave’s early passing in February, Deb Lumsden a friend of Dave’s took his place. She brought a photo of Dave, which we ensured was in our first photo shoot. After that, the formal shoot and dinner. For some strange reason, there must have been a breakdown in communication, because the Kiwis, our hosts, were not there. This did not deter us so off we went for our formal dinner in the Da Vinci Dining room.

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The Aussies, Deb Lumsden holding the photo of Dave Cooper



The Reunion Group minus the Kiwis

Wednesday, 18 March 20. Because of the sea state, we were able to speed up a bit, which put our arrival time into Sydney about 0100hr on 19 March. That didn't bother us as we were not due to disembark until sometime later, like about 0800hr. Basically, a restful day at sea with the culmination of the ukulele group presentation and the choir group presentation, featuring our own Denis Foster. Both groups did really well and the choir was outstanding, singing songs from the 50s and 60s. They also did a great rendition of "Do You Hear the People Sing" from Les Misérables.

Then to the "Wheelhouse" for last drinks and farewells.

Thursday, 19 March 20. Apparently, the ship berthed about 0100hr and, unbeknown to us some people, who were identified as having flu-like symptoms, were off loaded. We got up about 0600hr, had breakfast, said our final to those that were there, finished packing and congregated in the departure lounge. They called our discharge code and we were off loaded without any hitches.



Sydney, Circular Quay, 19 Mar 20

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The Aftermath. Nobody on board the vessel were notified that there were suspected cases of COVID-19 on board the ship. This may or may not have been a good thing. We were all told we were required to self-isolate for at least 14 days. This was interesting because some people were allowed to go direct to the airport and railway station to make their way home. The crew from Penrith had a mini bus come and pick them up while John and Patsy Cusick came back to our place for the beginning of their self-isolation period, before their flight back to the US which was due in three days.



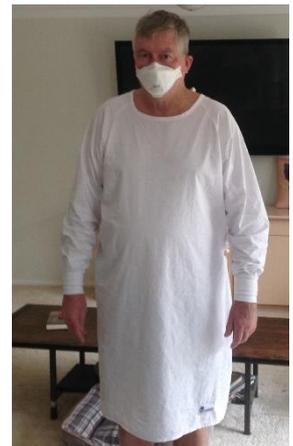
Nicko, John and Patsy at Sydney Airport

Joyce and I dropped John and Patsy off at Sydney Airport for their flight. They were originally booked with Delta, but Delta cancelled their flights so luckily Qantas were still flying the US. They had visions of staying with us for a few months.

We then headed into Circular Quay to pick up Bill and Lucy Hayes who were staying in a hotel in the Rocks. If you have to self-isolate, it is easier to do it in a house with a yard, as opposed to a hotel room. On the way home we swung by St Vincent's hospital to get checked for the virus. Bill and Lucy got checked but because Joyce and I did not have any symptoms, they refused to check us, so back home with two more refugees.

It was about this time, people in our group started to come down with flu like symptoms and eventually, Bill Hayes was one of them, so we took him down to Wollongong Hospital, where he spent another 14 days in quarantine. Bill was finally released from hospital on Good Friday and then had to self-isolate for another 10 days from Lucy, Joyce and myself, lucky we have a self-contained unit downstairs. Bill and Lucy finally got back to Darwin just before ANZAC Day.

Since leaving the ship, we have had over 130 passengers (this number will probably rise), including our association members test positive to the virus. We had 12 out of 23 Australians and 6 of the 10 Kiwis test positive for COVID -19. Of the Aussies, four were hospitalised and unfortunately, we lost Janet (Kiwi).



Bill gets home from hospital

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And so, the 2020 International Air Dispatch Reunion on board the “Calamity Princess” will go down as one of the most interesting in the International Reunion 20-year history. In hindsight, the cruise was fine and no different to any other cruise we have been on.

“Would I go on a cruise again?” In a heartbeat.

“Would I travel on the Ruby Princess again?” In a heartbeat. It will probably be the most sterile ship afloat by the time this fiasco is over.

To those who attended the Reunion, I hope you enjoyed the cruise. Let me assure you not every cruise finishes like this. We still don’t know what the US Redhat Chapter has planned for 2022 and this will be relayed as soon as we know.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Janet (Kiwi) Lieben



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Cruise to New Zealand

My Name is Lonna Opie, widow of Ray Opie a former air despatcher. I was lucky enough to be chosen to accompany a small group of Air Despatchers on a cruise on the Ruby Princess to New Zealand for their bi-annual reunion. My daughter Alanna accompanied me.

Despite the fact that we were delayed significantly to embark on our journey, and the rough Tasman sea crossing, and a little bit of sea sickness, we weren't disappointed with the cruise and the company we kept. Every night at 4.30pm we would meet at the Wheelhouse Bar and catch up with everyone on our trip.

After 2 sea days, we arrived at Milford Sounds and cruised into the Fiords. This was magnificent. It is hard to describe the magnificence of the mountains that enclosed the Fiords. They made the ship feel very small. Waterfalls cascaded down the sides of the mountains and seals basked in the sun on the crest of what looked like a little island in the middle the water. Dolphins gave us a show as we cruised out of the Fiords. This was our first calm and sunny day.



Photos just didn't do it justice.

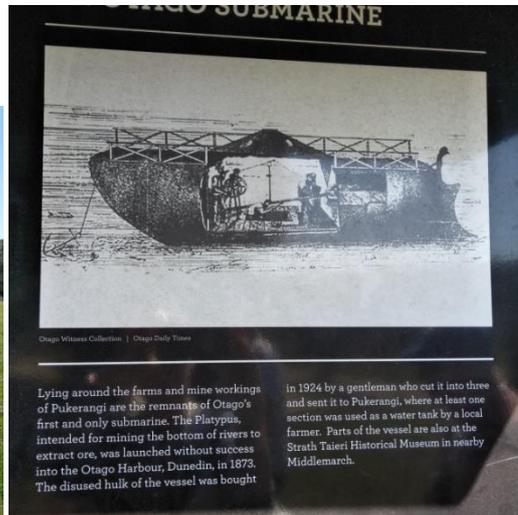
The last time I went on a cruise to New Zealand which left from Brisbane, we went around the top of the North Island and got as far as Dunedin. The weather was very rough and too dangerous to continue to Milford Sounds, so we had to sail back north and through the Cook Straights back home to Brisbane. So I missed this wonderful experience.

We then sailed onto our next stop which was Dunedin. We opted to take an excursion on the Taieri Gorge Railway which took most of the day. We left from the magnificent Dunedin Railway Station.



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We were supplied with morning tea, lunch and plentiful wines to drink. The commentary was excellent, the views were magnificent and at the end of the journey when we reached Pukerangi, all the locals came and set up a market stall of all their homemade wares.



At Pukerangi

We swapped seats and sides on the journey back so we could get another view of the scenery and sipped on more delicious wine until we arrived back to Dunedin and back to the ship. We met some lovely people from other countries on this trip. Below are some photos of the train trip.



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Our next port of call was a little French town called Akaroa. It was the only French settlement in New Zealand and has lots of historical buildings of the era.

This has been the port of call since the earthquakes in Christchurch, and if you wanted to go to Christchurch, you needed to catch a shuttle which took about 1hr 20 min to get there.

We opted to take the shuttle bus which took us over the mountains onto the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch. This place which has been devastated by 2 huge earthquakes and is where urban regeneration and heritage thrive. (A view back at Akaroa on our trip to Christchurch)



We took a tram trip through Christchurch and we were so glad we did. The commentary was great and we wouldn't have realised what was being rebuilt and how, and what was finished since the earthquakes. It was just incredible.



Back to the ship and we are on our way to Wellington where the New Zealand Air Despatchers organised a tour and lunch at the RSA. Lunch at the RSA was beautiful. It was so lovely to have a home cooked meal. Again a beautiful day was had in Windy Wellington as it is called due to it being so windy of course. But as with all our other days on shore we were blessed with lovely sunny days on this trip.

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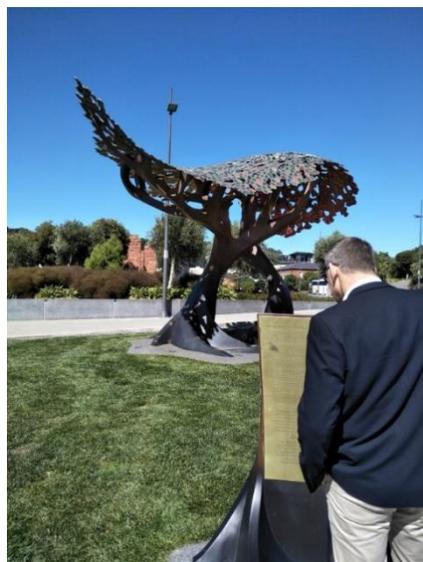
On our way back from the RSA our driver took us up to the lookout where we climbed the stairs and saw the wonderful 360 degree view of Wellington well worth the walk up the stairs.



We then visited the war memorial; the inside was closed however the gardens surrounding were wonderful.



English Memorial



Australian Memorial

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Our next stop was Napier. This is a beautiful Art Décor City. We walked around the city and then caught a Tram we booked and did this journey. The tram was built by the driver's father and himself, both of whom are farmers. They used a tractor, which was all decked out to look like a tram to pull the carriages.



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On our trip we saw the three sisters houses which we were told once sat right on the water line however when the big earthquake happened that raised 75% more land the houses moved further away from the water well at least the land rose.



Even after having walked around the city in the morning, we learnt more on this tram trip about the art décor buildings, about the wine region, the food production etc. Napier grows so much food, that the country cannot consume it all, so they do a lot of exporting and canning. The driver was full of information and we ended up at a little museum that he and his wife are trying to build up about the region. We saw a map of what it was like before the 1931 earthquake and what it is now. It was an incredible visit.



THE CLIPPED WINGS

We never did make our next port of call at Tauranga. Half way there in the middle of the night, we were advised that the Australian Government wanted all cruise ships to return to their point of demarcation.

So we did a "U" turn and headed for the Cook Straits and returned to Sydney.

So endeth our cruise.

We had a great time getting to know our group and although disappointed that we could not see the rest of the sights we really enjoyed spending our last days sailing with everyone.

On our last sea days, we played cards and games with Deb and Jordan and we had great fun with them, we also enjoyed lovely meals with the group. Thank you so much for a wonderful journey and for the friendship shown to us.

Now we are all in isolation with some members having come down with the virus and others not. We so far have been lucky, but it is only 7 days into isolation time. I guess we will all see how we go. To all that do have the virus, please look after yourselves.

A Quick Note from Alanna

Hi, just wanted to pass on my thanks to everyone on the trip. Seeing all you debonair gentlemen together reminded me what Dad lost when he got out of the army that mateship that you all share is wonderful and to your beautiful wives and partners you all do an amazing job. Once again it was wonderful to meet you all.



THE CLIPPED WINGS

David McDonald NX 153281

Submitted by Nicko

My father, David McDonald who was one of the original 'Biscuit Bombers' will be turning 100 on 9th July 2020.

He was born in Lismore NSW 9th July 1920.

He was the second of 10 children – 4 boys and 6 girls. All four boys served in the armed forces (3 in WW II and one in Korea).

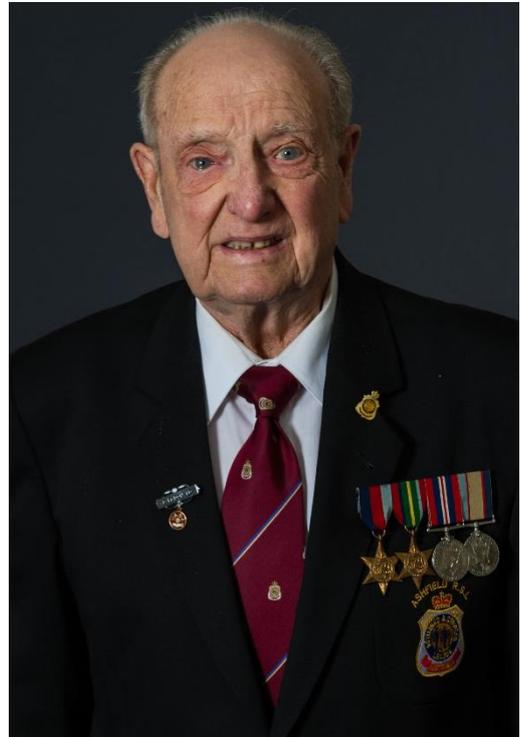
The family came to Sydney when he was about 5 years old and they initially lived in Milsons Point in the shadow of the Harbour Bridge which was being built at the time. His father (who was at Possiers during WW I) worked as a rivet catcher on the bridge.

He initially tried to enlist in the Air Force, but later went into the CMF (Citizens Militia Force). He enlisted in the Army on 5th January 1942.

He trained at Greta and went to New Guinea on the SS Taroona. He landed at Port Moresby in May 1942 as part of the deployment of the 3rd, 36th and 55th Battalions.

The 55th amalgamated with the 53rd after losses from both during battles. They were referred to as 'That Mob' mostly due to being considered as 'chocolate soldiers' (Choccos) as they were CMF not AIF – bit of a stigma. They were sent to New Guinea barely trained and poorly equipped. In June 1943 they became part of the AIF. They were also referred to as 'The Mice of Moresby'.

Soon after they arrived in Moresby, they set up barbed wire along a beach (called "Bootless Bay") with wooden machine guns at either end as they didn't have real guns!



Mr David McDonald



MV Macdhui, sunk in Port Moresby Harbour

He recalls that he was near the wharf at Port Moresby when the supply ship, the MV Macdhui was bombed by the Japanese on 17th June 1942 while it was being unloaded. They tried to move the ship over towards Hanuabada on the other side of the bay, but it was bombed again on its way there. The Macdhui bombing was the start of Japanese 'pattern' bombing. They used to come in every afternoon and drop about 8 bombs around the port.

1st 2nd and 3rd Air Maintenance Companies were formed to ensure supplies could get through to troops on the front line as the 'roads' (mud tracks) became impassable as the Australian forces

advanced north through New Guinea, pushing the Japanese troops back. He was in 3rd Air Maintenance Company.

The Air Maintenance Companies were known as the 'Bully Beef Bombers' and later 'Biscuit Bombers'.

THE CLIPPED WINGS

They used modified Dakota C47s crewed by Americans. The plane door was removed to allow loads to be pushed out of the plane. He was part of a four man Drop Crew. The other members of his drop crew were

- 'Wally the Wog' (Wally Frier) from Newtown,
- 'Skinny' (Stan Haining), and
- Archie Kemp - a professional boxer who was later killed in the ring by Jack Hassan in 1949.

They usually flew at tree top height for drops in order to minimize damage to the dropped loads. He recalls that the American crews were reluctant to fly that low.

He was based at Nadzab and his mate, Colin Larsson was in the 1st Air Maintenance Company based at Salamoia. He and Colin remained good mates until Col passed away around 2010.

They worked out of Dorabodura Airfield and also used Poppendetta airstrip. Their drops covered Lae, Buna, Gona and North Coast.

They used parachutes for the more delicate materials such as medical supplies, which went out first then they kicked out the free drop loads. They would approach the drop zone, sometimes marked with an "X" on the ground and then a green light would indicate to drop the loads.

They were not secured in the plane and he recalls that on one occasion a journalist joined them for a drop and was horrified that they were not strapped in and tried to grab hold of them as they were pushing the loads out of the plane. He also recalls that on more than one occasion, men fell out of the plane as they were pushing the loads out. While posted at Nadzab he ran a two-up school, played in the softball team against the Americans and they also made a boxing ring from palm trees.



L to R Dave with Vince and Vic Lawrence



Nadzab airfield, 1942

They would take the rope from parachutes used for their supply drops, strip it down, plait it and make grass skirts to swap them for 'moonshine' made by the Americans. While based at Nadzab, he helped build a road between Nadzab and Lae. It was very hard going, muddy and steep. He recalls some jeeps were lost over the edge of the road, and others bogged. The Americans had big trucks loaded with sand and gravel to make the road over the river. One of the trucks sunk in the river as it was trying to drive across, so instead of trying to retrieve the truck, they built the road over the top of the truck.

THE CLIPPED WINGS

While on a drop mission, near Dunpu they got shot at, so the American crew hurriedly landed the plane, the motor stopped, but the propellers were still going. The Americans then ran out of the plane without a word to the drop crew. So the drop crew decided, if the Americans were abandoning ship then they should too. So they went out and hid behind pile of crates only to find out later it was a stack of bombs and ammunition.



Air resupply PNG 1942

Three planes were on that mission and one got shot down.

As well as the 'routine' drops, he also flew on occasion to Finchhafen on the north coast of New Guinea. This was more dangerous as it was well into Japanese held territory

At one stage they wanted him to train as a spotter. Spotters worked in small groups to observe the

Japanese and report back to HQ. He went on one mission to drop supplies to three spotters forward in the lines around Rabaul, north of New Guinea and the capital of New Britain (as it was known then).

For this drop they used an armed American bomber, the Flying Fortress (B17). Mostly they used unarmed Douglas Dakota C47s.

On the spotter drop he saw huge bomb craters on the shoreline of New Britain.

On the way back from the drop the crew fired the belly guns to demonstrate their power to the drop crew. Dad was allowed to fire the machine guns. They had a blister-like protrusion in the side of the plane where the gunner sat.

He recalls that the Japanese had been using mounted guns to fire down on them from Ioribaiwa Ridge, so the 14th Field Regiment stripped a 25 pounder gun and carried it up through the mud past Ioribaiwa Ridge, reassembled it and blew up the Japanese mounted gun. Grueling and arduous but effective!

On the push back north, they also went through to Buna and Gona and found tunnels built by Japanese at Sananda.

The Japanese advance stopped at Ioribaiwa Ridge, just 30 miles from Moresby. If the Japanese had made it to Pt Moresby it was then just a short hop to mainland Australia.

Despite daily atabrine tablets, he contracted malaria whilst in New Guinea. Dave was discharged on 8 July 1946

THE CLIPPED WINGS



Dave seated in a Jeep for ANZAC Day March

After the war he was heavily involved with Ashfield RSL and was a board member for many years including stints as Vice President. He is Life Member number 2 of that club and attended 66 consecutive Anzac marches held by the club.

He married his wife Phyllis in 1951, had two children, David William and Lee Marie. He worked as a carpet layer for about 40 years. They lived in Ashfield for about 50 years before moving up to Coal Point near Toronto on Lake Macquarie (not far from the former Catalina base at Rathmines).

Phyllis, his wife passed away in 2015 and he was living independently until he had a fall at home in 2017 which fractured his skull and resulted in

him having to go into residential care. He was still driving until he was 96.

He had another fall in October 2019 and fractured his hip. He came through the surgery better than anyone expected. He just keeps on keeping on and I hope he continues to do so for sometime to come.



Loading supplies, Eight Mile, Port Moresby

Happy 100th Birthday Dave from the Air Dispatch Association of Australia

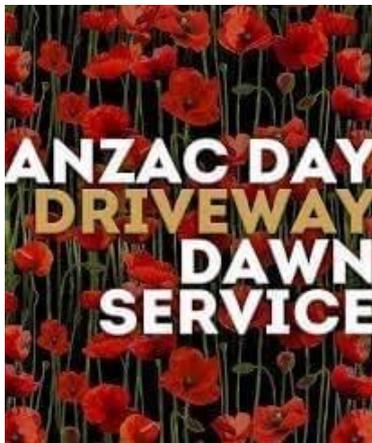


THE CLIPPED WINGS



Submitted by Nicko

Australians all commemorate ANZAC Day on 25th of April every year, but this year the world would change and the ability to march with our mates was removed. But the idea of conducting a personal commemoration service was mooted and the majority of Australians supported it. The proposal was to stand at the entrance to your driveway at 0600 hr and remember those who had given so much. There were apps that could be downloaded, and the ABC also arranged to play the Last Post, a minute's silence, the Ode and Reveille.



And so, about 0515 hr we arose, showered, dressed, made a cup of Duty Coffee (black with rum) and headed to our driveways. We had the radio to the ABC and stood by waiting for 0600. Across the road, our neighbour brought out a portable fire pit and lit a fire. Our neighbour from next door came down and stood nearby. On the side road, I could see three generations of one family, all standing in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, holding candles; the little ones asking, "why are we up so early". One of the local ladies who makes candles, made a number of small candles in a glass vase with the words "Lest We Forget" printed on the outside and left them in peoples letterboxes the day before. Our little village was ready for ANZAC Day 2020.

At 0600, I stood fast and listened to the Last Post, honoured the minutes silence, and I recited the Ode and waited for Reveille. From there we ventured across the road to our neighbour's driveway and had another Duty Coffee and a chat with our neighbours, keeping in mind "social distancing", before heading back home for breakfast.

For Joyce and I it was a very special type of ANZAC Day and it will always remain in our memories and I am proud that I was able to pay a small tribute in my own way.



*Joyce and I after the service
Otford, NSW*



*Grant and Christine Foster
Penrith, NSW*



*Geoff Cutts
Sale, Vic*

THE CLIPPED WINGS



*Rusty and Ros Towers
Cambridge Park, NSW*



*Harrison and Anthony
Eddie
Jordan Springs, NSW*



*Dick Filewood, Dean and Liam
(wearing grandad's slouch hat)
Airlie Beach, Qld*



*Dan Cochrane and Angie
Haggarty
Cranebrook, NSW*



*Bill and Lucy Hayes
Karama, NT*



*Gary Cole
Toowoomba, Qld*



*Chris and Peta Folkes
Stawell, Vic*



*Ray Frankel
Wynnum, Qld*



*Bruce Wearing
Barmedman, NSW*



*Ross Martin
Bilambil Heights, NSW*



*Paul Rogers
Caringbah, NSW*

THE CLIPPED WINGS



*Linden Fracaro
Melbourne, Vic*



*John Whittaker
Far South Coast, NSW*



*Keith Hancox
Oberon, NSW*



*Steve Bleuel
Albury NSW*



*Lex Booth,
Willow Vale, NSW*



*Linc Downward
Perth, WA*



Unknown

Thank you one and all for paying tribute to our servicemen and women in your individual ways

LEST WE FORGET



THE CLIPPED WINGS

ANZAC Day with John Whittaker

In our Retirement Village there is a gentleman by the name of Rod Nicholl, who served in 40 Air Supply Platoon - 1 AASO at Randwick in 1966. Jerry Lieben sort of remembers him as he was in 40 in 1963. After our village ANZAC Day Dawn Service that I organised I had the pleasure of presenting him with a maroon Air Dispatch cap. He was so proud and humbled he was near tears after I presented it to him and placed it on his head.



John presenting Rod with his AD cap

Rod is that sort of bloke one would do anything for and he was surprised with the presentation.



JW, unknown and Rod Nicoll

He's in a motorised chair unfortunately but still has a big heart. You may choose to use it in the next magazine if you wish. He hurt his legs while in Randwick and was later posted to 1 RTB as a Recruit Drill Instructor, CPL and on completion of his posting was went to 1 TPT COY at Holsworthy or Moorebank he's not real sure.

This is Rod's Story

Hi there,

My name is Rod Nicoll No 214465. Having 12 months experience with 39 Air Supply CMF Randwick, I joined the Regular Army January 1962. During my service, I served with Mortar Platoon, Support Company 1 RAR, Holsworthy.



Rod Nicoll, ex 40 Air Supply

I then got a transfer to 101 Transport Randwick where after a short time I was invited to join the formation of 40 Air Supply. We were stationed at Richmond where we did our training, until I had an accident and damaged my cartilage and ligaments.

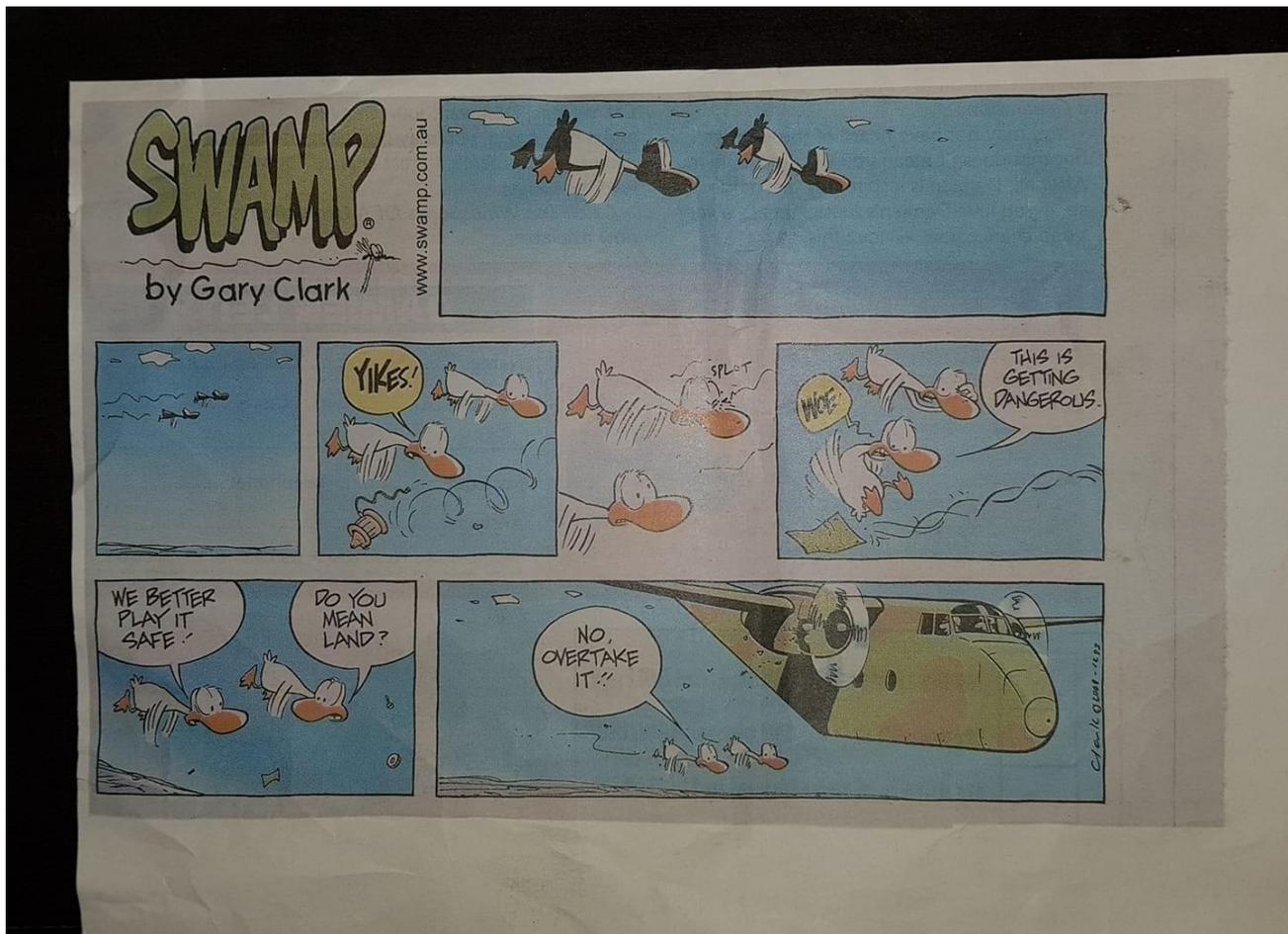
After three months at Ingleburn Camp Hospital I was able to have the knee repaired and was transferred to 1RTB Wagga Wagga as a driver at the Camp Hospital. After rehab, I was able to transfer back to infantry to become an RDI where I finished my time.

I would like to hear from anybody if you remember me my contact number is 0410182616.



THE CLIPPED WINGS

Downloaded from Facebook



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Merchandising

MAKA's Shirts

Tony McNulty (AKA Maka) has done many things in his life, apart from being a digger in the squadron and AMTDU. One of the things he has embarked on is the production of Tee Shirts with a definite air dispatch military theme. Earlier this year, he donated a number of shirts to the squadron but with changes to Army policy, sub- unit tee shirts were not allowed, even at PT sessions. Maka, also donated a number of shirts to the ADAA, which we were proud to wear at a few of our sausage sizzles. Now is your opportunity to give Maka a hand. Below is some of Maka's designs. The cotton is good quality and they are great if you are working around home or helping us with sausage sizzles.



If you would like to assist Maka, these tee shirts are available from him directly, they cost \$20.00 plus postage. Contact Maka at Email: tonymcnulty66@hotmail.com or phone: 0448 459 634.

Let's support another digger!



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Vale

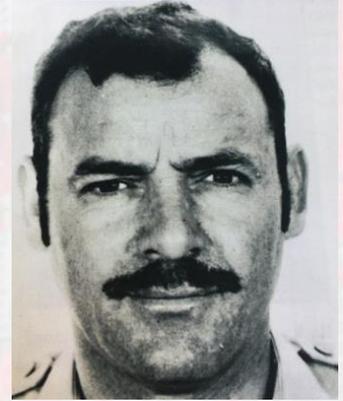
Vale Ken Smyth

Ken Smyth was born in England on 8 March 1940 and moved to Adelaide when he was young. Prior to his passing Ken was in hospital in Adelaide; he moved back to Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, SA, where he passed away on 8 March 2020, his 80th birthday, after a long battle with cancer.

He served with 2 Fld Amb, 42 Amphib, Ships Army Staff (HMAS Sydney) and 5 Tpt Coy. Ken was also the RSM 1 ATSR from 1977–79

When he retired from the Army, he was the manager of Nepean Soccer Club for some time. He and his wife, Margaret moved to Kangaroo Island, in about 1990.

His funeral was on 12 March 20 and he is buried at American River, Kangaroo Island.



Vale Graeme O'Brien



Graeme O'Brien was born on 11 April 1955 and grew up in Seven Hills, NSW. Obie was one of our State Reps in Western Australia and served in both the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) and the Army Reserve from Sept 1974 till Jun 1977. Obie and Shane Mitchell were responsible for putting together last year's WA Christmas Function at Port Kennedy RSL. Graeme and Jenny moved to Western Australia some years ago and he joined the WA Police Force in 1995, working with the WA Police Camera Unit.

Graeme passed away on 29 April. A private funeral was held for him on 18 May at Fremantle Crematorium.



Graeme is second from the left., This photo was taken at last year's Christmas function at Port Kennedy RSL

THE CLIPPED WINGS

Vale Chris Felkin

Christopher Ivan Gus Felkin 6 Aug 1941 – 21 Mar 20



Chris was born in London, during the Blitz. His father was a doctor and his mother, a nurse. Both were tragically killed 3 weeks after Chris was born. Chris was adopted by Gus and Beatrice Felkin and brought up as their own. Growing up in Post War London was difficult but the family pulled through

Chris join the British Army in 1958 at the age of 17. He did his Air Dispatch course in 1959 at RAF Watchfield where all training flights out of RAF Abingdon were on Hasting aircraft dispatching SEAC PACKS (South East Asian Command Packs) Compacts. Chris served in Nairobi and Malaya and reached the rank of Corporal.

He decided to become a “Ten Pound Pom” and immigrated to Australia; arriving in Perth in 1969. He worked in Wagin for six months before the promise of better things called and he and a mate got a VW Kombi van and drove across the Nullarbor, eventually ending up in Melbourne.

Chris started work with QANTAS in Flight Catering, and did three years with them, then Air Niugini, then back to QANTAS.

Chris married his lovely Rosa in 1975.

He transferred to TAA/Australian Airlines and in 1993 took a redundancy package as TAA/Australian had been taken over by QANTAS. He also worked part time for Air Nauru and finally retired to the farm in Maleny.



Chris was not a fan of technology and did not have a computer, mobile phone or credit cards.

In this current situation of COVID 19, and the limits on those who could attend funerals, it was somewhat ironic that we were able to follow Chris’s Requiem Mass by video link.

THE CLIPPED WINGS

Vale Bernard (Pommie) Birtles



Bernard (Pommie) Birtles passed-away on 28 March in Cooktown, QLD from an aggressive brain tumour which he was only diagnosed in late February. Pommie was fondly remembered by his mates as a likeable bloke and a bit of a wheeler and dealer with a dry sense of humour. On detachments to Townsville, Pommie would buy a car and the boys would have the use of it for a month or so then sell it before they returned to Walgrove or Penrith. Pommie had family in Adelaide, England and France. He was cremated and a service was held for him on Friday, 8 May, His 75th birthday. Pommie's ashes are expected to be partially distributed in Cooktown and the remainder returned to his sister in England.

The following is from Bernie's twin sister, Barbara, in London

Dear Nick, many thanks for your interest in my brother Bernard Terrance Birtles, I will not be able to make this short as my brother deserves to have a eulogy worthy of a difficult and yet challenging life in Australia.

I have a love/ hate relationship with Australia, I love my family members and there are many but hate the distance that takes me to see them.

Bernard and I were born on 8 May 1945, V.E.day, an important day as it meant freedom and peace to the world, after 8 years of millions of lives lost, cities destroyed we were to experience a difficult time of hardships in the years to come, and it was under these circumstances that my parents decided to send Bernard at the tender age of 14 to Australia.

This was under the auspices of 'The Big Brother' movement where after the war hundreds of children were sent to Australia, my parents were led to believe that as there were 7 children Australia could take my brother and give him security and a training for his future, little did they know that he would live a lonely and harsh life miles away from other children on a farm in the outback, this would be the beginnings of a mentally and difficult future that would shape his life.

As he turned 18 'Australia Call up' in the 60s was beckoning for all youngsters to join the forces, this gave him the opportunity to get off the farm and live a few years of happiness with travel and new friends and where he was to meet his future wife.

He did have a family of whom he loved, two beautiful girls and in those few years he was able to have a life and forget the past but this was not to last and after 6 years chose to go as you say in Australia 'Walkabout'

For many, many years he disappeared out of our family's lives and after contacting many organisations we finally tracked him down and in 2001 arranged a meeting in Adelaide with all brothers, sisters and one of his daughters, this was full of emotion and recriminations that it took so long for this meeting to happen only for him to go into the outback again.

His daughter had managed to contact him in his final years, but this was made difficult as his move to Cooktown was not easy from Adelaide and as she had a young family and a busy job never able to get the time to visit, but in his final weeks was able to be with him but not at the end, something we all as a family feel as incredibly sad.

The person my brother was is difficult to put here, he was shaped made aware by Australia and the shy boy that left England was never angry or disappointed with the life given to him.

THE CLIPPED WINGS

I could write so much more but with only the first fourteen years of our life together it remains to say that I can still remember the smile on his face as each birthday we were given a small coin and we would rush to the corner shop for sweets, he was a wonderful soul that Australia got the best of.

Most grateful for letting me write this short letter, yours Barbara Basham



THE CLIPPED WINGS

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