

NO 77 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



SUMMER 2011 NEWS LETTER

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NOTICES

Association Two Monthly Luncheon

The schedule for the two monthly luncheon is:

- 9 December 2011 – Special Christmas Lunch at the Sydney Junction Hotel.
- 10 February 2012 - Sydney Junction Hotel - Hamilton.
- 13 April 2012 - Sydney Junction Hotel - Hamilton.
- 8 June 2012 – Sydney – venue TBA

Arrangements - table service - after lunch the staff will present itemized bills to each table. Please settle the account with the person delegated to collect cash at your table.

Normal bar service, i.e., order and pay for wine/beer/soft drink/fruit juice/coffee/tea, etc, from the bar. Do not try and put drinks onto the bill otherwise we finish up with a great cock-up.

Foregather at 1115 for drinky poos - go into lunch at 1230. If you wish to bring a friend, ex RAAF or otherwise, please do so. However, please ring (J the T) on 02-49603549 by the Wednesday PM preceding the lunch so that numbers can be established for catering purposes.

Information Request

Mr Jason Dallman. A request for information has been received from Mr Jason Dallman. Mr Dallman would like to make contact with anyone who knew his father, Corporal Derek Dallman, who passed away in 1997. Corporal Dallman served with the Squadron in Korea.

Mr Jason Dallman lives in Perth. He is the Assistant Head of Hale School, Hale Road, Wembley Downs, W.A. His phone number is 08 93479713. Can anyone help please.

Mr Rob Joy. Mr Rob Joy is a relative of Korean Veteran and long serving RAAF member Brian Joy now deceased. Brian Joy would be well known to many members of the association.

Mr Rob Joy is anxious to find out more about Brian and his RAAF career to pass on to his family so that he can take a rightful place of honour within the Joy family tree. Mr Rob Joy can be contacted at – robjoy@internode.on.net

No 76 Squadron Association Christmas Lunch

An invitation has been received from the 76 Squadron Association for the members of the 77 Squadron Association to join them at a Christmas Luncheon to be held at the Hornsby RSL Club (across from Hornsby station) on Friday 18th November 2011 beginning 11.30 (drinks) /meal 12.30pm.

Menu:

Roast Turkey and Baked Ham roast with roast vegetables, steamed greens & gravy accompanied with apple and cranberry sauce.

Warm dinner rolls, butter also provided

Steamed Plum Pudding with a brandy custard.

Tea and coffee.

Cost is \$30 person a **minimum of 30 is required to obtain this price.** Drinks at membership prices

Looks good – please contact Graeme Holm on 02 99831159 or graemeholm@optusnet.com.au to confirm attendance.

ASSOCIATION MATTERS

2012 - 70th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin and the Formation of No 77 Squadron

Bombing of Darwin. The following e-mail was received from the President of the Defence Force Welfare Association NSW Branch, Air Commodore Ian Scott AM, on 6 September 2011.

“The 19th of February next year is the 70th anniversary of the first bombing raids on Darwin which killed 250 people.

The Darwin City Council will mark this with a two-week commemorative program of events from 11 to 26 February. The program will include both local activities in Darwin and surrounding areas as well as a number of national activities aimed at building awareness of the event. The council firmly believes that this is the last opportunity for this commemoration to include those veterans who served in Darwin 70 years ago. Full details of the program can be found at www.frontlineaustralia.com.au

It is understood that each capital city council has been contacted about holding a local activity and that so far the Brisbane City Council has agreed to host a Freedom of Entry parade on 19 February 2012.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has approved funding of \$80,000 from the Commemorations Program administered funds budget to support a range of activities proposed by the Darwin City Council.

Enquiries are being received by local ESOs from interstate veterans about the program of events for February next year and I am now seeking your help in promoting the "Frontline Australia" website as the primary source of information”

Following receipt of this e-mail I contacted the Darwin City Council on 6 September. The role played by No 77 Squadron in the Air Defence of Darwin and the fact that the only enemy aircraft that has ever been shot down over the Australian mainland was shot down over Darwin by the CO of 77 Squadron, Leader R.C. Cresswell DFC, was explained.

It was put to the Darwin City Council person that, as a result of these facts, the No 77 Squadron Association had a special interest in the commemorative event and would appreciate being included in the mailing list for receipt of information. I duly received a copy of Newsletter I, dated October 2011, relating to the commemoration.

The event has been named “Frontline Australia” and will be conducted by the Darwin City Council from Saturday 11 to Sunday 26 February 2012. Dedicated web site www.frontlineaustralia.com.au

Program

At this time the following program of events is planned:

- A special 70th Anniversary football match between Darwin and Nightcliff on Saturday 11 February at 5.30 pm
- The Frontline Australia Film Festival: a series of original newsreels and documentaries screened throughout the two-week program
- The Frontline Australia Black-tie Ball on Saturday 18 February - Local historic tours and special events
- Government and community arts events including a theatrical performance and choral events
- An exhibition of the winners from an NT Schools Art Competition
- Commemorative service, Cenotaph, Esplanade, Darwin on Sunday 19 February from 9.30 am.

The Commemoration is a public event with all members of the community invited to attend.

Vetaran/Survivor/Evacuee Program

The Newsletter advises that the Darwin City Council will be hosting tours of Darwin and surrounds for Veterans, Survivors and Evacuees. Each Veteran, Survivor or Evacuee may be accompanied by one companion (wife, partner or carer). The tours will run from Monday 20th February until Wednesday 22nd February 2012.

Additional family members should refer to the Frontline Australia website (frontlineaustralia.com.au) for a program of tours with they may wish to participate. Alternatively contact Territory Discoveries - www.territorydiscoveries.com/specials/darwin-heritage or call 13 31 01.

Tours for the Veterans/Survivors/Evacuee will be a trip to Adelaide River War Memorial Cemetery with lunch at the Adelaide River Inn and tours of the museums and WWII locations in the area.

A program will be sent in Newsletter 2 once a person has confirmed his/her attendance. Please make sure you complete the attendance sheet included as an enclosure to this newsletter to ensure you receive further Newsletters and updates.

If you have any questions as to your eligibility please phone Maxine Dowley on 08 89300684 or email m.dowley@darwin.nt.gov.au

Planning a Trip

Territory Discoveries have a number of tour packages available for February 2012. In addition, they can arrange flights and accommodation needs. For a group of 10 or more, Territory Discoveries Groups can plan a special itinerary.

Formation of 77 Squadron. The following e-mail was sent to Air Force Headquarters on 10 August 2011- inter ala:

“My purpose is to inquire, on behalf of the membership of the No 77 Squadron Association, whether Air Force Headquarters has any plan in mind to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the formation of the three, 70 series, RAAF Kittyhawk Fighter squadrons which occurs in March next year.

The formation of the three Kittyhawk squadrons marked a major military turning point in the Pacific War. The Japanese no longer ruled the sky’s, un-opposed, over New Guinea and the Australian mainland. This enabled Australian and American ground forces to operate relatively free from air attack.

It is also widely acknowledged that the combined efforts of No 76 and No 75 Squadrons was a major factor in the Allied victory at Milne Bay. A significant achievement as Milne Bay marked the first defeat suffered by the Japanese and stopped their further movement south.

Thus, the 70th anniversary of the formation of the three, 70 series RAAF Kittyhawk Fighter Squadrons, is an anniversary of great historic significance for Australia.

With this in mind a number of RAAF Veterans, who served in the three Kittyhawk squadrons during the Second World War, and subsequently, are most anxious to ensure that the anniversary is marked, with due reverence, as an important **national** event.

Please be assured that in what ever arrangements are made you have the full cooperation of the No 77 Squadron Association to assist in what ever way we can to bring the historic significance of March 2012 to public notice”.

The following reply was received from Air Force Headquarters:

“Thank you for asking about a national commemoration. It was something we considered, however we believe the focus for all 70th anniversary activities should be the local squadron

This will allow an opportunity for associations to make links between the past serving members of the squadron with current serving members, and allow those very important heritage links to continue.

However, this does not preclude association members from traveling to the event, or invitations to VIPs by RAAF including Senior Defence and Federal State and Local Government members.

The squadrons do an excellent job of organizing their events, and Air Force Headquarters will be reviewing-their arrangements to ensure they appropriately include, and remember the contributions of, previous squadron members. I will also make sure that appropriate media attention is given to the event”?

Squadron Arrangements. At the October Association Lunch Wing Commander Beck informed me that he is planning a Squadron Open day and evening function for Friday 16 March 2012 (the 16 March 1942 is the day the squadron formed). At this time no firm plan has been formulated as Wing Commander Beck has to obtain various approvals, etc.

However, he has asked me to request association members to **reserve 16 March 2012** for attendance at a very special event.

Membership

I am pleased to report that ex serving member, Squadron Leader Sean Lacey (Retd) has joined our ranks since the publication of the Spring 2011 Newsletter. In addition, the committee has approved an Associate Membership application Mr Robert Joy.

Welcome aboard Squadron Leader (Retd) Lacey and Mr Joy.

Sick Parade

Nil stocks as far as I know - which is a good thing.

Passing Parade

Walter H. Bowles (Wally) – passed away in July aged 80. Although he was not a member of the 77 Squadron Association Wally Bowles he would be well known to many members of the association. Wally had the distinction of being a member of the first post-war apprentice course. A bunch of lusty lads who terrorize the young female population, and their parents, in the fair City of Wagga Wagga and the surrounding rural district in the late 1948 early 1950 period.

He subsequently transferred to aircrew and trained as a pilot on No 11 Flying Course which he topped graduating as a Sgt Pilot in 1953. He left the RAAF after completing his return of service obligation and

went to DCA as an Air Traffic Controller serving time at Bankstown and Sydney. He later joined Adastra Aerial Surveys and spent some years as a pilot flying Hudsons in New Guinea. He later became a Safety Inspector with DCA specializing in accident investigations.

Representational

Battle for Australia. Elizabeth and I represented the Association. The ceremony was held at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney on 7 September 2011.

Battle for Britain. Vice President Tacey Seaver represented the Association and laid a floral tribute of wattle at the 71st Commemoration of the Battle for Britain at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney on 15 September 2011.

Annual Squadron Trophy

At the August Annual General Meeting a decision was made to provide an annual trophy, open to all ranks and musters, to the Squadron called:

77 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION ANNUAL PROFICIENCY AWARD

A metal "Grumpy Monkey" crest has been purchased, a polished, fancy, wood shield has been selected and the finished project should be ready in a few weeks. The arrangement is that the CO will set up a selection process. After which a representative of the 77 Squadron Association will present the shield to the nominated person at the end of each year at Christmas lunch function.

Fighter Squadrons Branch Financial Assistance

On 1 August a cheque for \$210 was received from the Fighter Squadrons Branch (FSB) of the RAAFA. The cheque represented the annual financial assistance we, and the other Fighter Squadron Associations, are now receiving from the FSB. The amount is based on the number of financial members of the RAAFANSW Division who identify with an Association. In our case the figure is 42.

A letter of appreciation has been sent to the President and Committee of the FSB. Their help means a lot and is greatly appreciated.

INTERNET

77 Association (RAAF) Web Page - <http://no77.squadronassociation.org/>

RAAF cloth badges - <http://www.lukus.com.au/>

Aviation Historical Society - www.ahsa.org.au

77 Squadron (RAF) Web Page - www.77squadronRAFassociation.org.uk

Web address relating to Australian MIAs in Korea - www.ausmiakoreanwar.net.au

FOR INTEREST

From Association Member Don Smith in the UK

What follows might help the Association members understand how the world has got into its current state!

Oxford University researchers have discovered the heaviest element yet known to science. The new element, Governmentium (symbol Gv), has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called pillocks. Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected, because it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

A tiny amount of Governmentium can cause a reaction that would normally take less than a second, to take from 4 days to 4 years to complete. Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2 to 6 years. It does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places.

In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes. This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as a critical morass. When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium (symbol Ad), an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium, since it has half as many pillocks but twice as many morons.

Armstrong's Secret

On July 20 1969, as Commander of the Apollo 11 lunar module, Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the moon. His first words after stepping on the moon, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," were televised to earth and heard by millions.

But, just before he re-entered the lander, he made the enigmatic remark "Good luck, Mr Gorsky". Many people at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet cosmonaut? However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs.

Over the years many people questioned Armstrong as to what the 'Good luck, Mr Gorsky' statement meant, but Armstrong always just smiled. However, on July 5 1995, in Tampa Bay, Florida, while Armstrong was answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26 year old question. This time he finally responded, explaining that Mr Gorsky had died so he felt he could now answer the question.

In 1938, when he was a kid in a small mid-western town, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit the ball, which landed in his neighbour's yard by their bedroom window. His neighbours were Mr and Mrs. Gorsky. As he leaned down to pick up the ball, young Armstrong heard Mrs Gorsky shouting at Mr Gorsky. "Sex? You want sex? You'll get sex when the kid next door walks on the moon!"

77 SQUADRON GALLERY PROJECT

Trust Account - Since publication of the Spring Newsletter:

Donations - Nil
Bequests - Nil
Government Grants - Nil
Sponsorship money - Nil
Overs from 14 October 2010 Lunch - \$53
Money Held in the Trust Account - \$2588.41

331 SQUADRON AAFC

On 30 August a mail bag arrived containing two small photo albums full of photographs of 331 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets engaged in their parades and other activities. The two photo albums were taken to the October Association Lunch.

In my book the Air Force Cadet squadrons are worthy of our support. They do much to build character and instill discipline, loyalty, and a sense of values in our youth. Much needed qualities sadly lacking in many young people today,

In this regard one can only be impressed with Flying Officer Deborah Hoiles and her team at Coffs Harbour. Accordingly, we are looking to support them by producing a 77 Squadron Association Annual Award to be awarded to "The Most Outstanding 331 Squadron AAFC Cadet".

NO 77 SQUADRON (RAF) ASSOCIATION





77 Association (RAF) Nickel Leaflet No 47 May 2011 came to hand a few weeks ago. I have reproduced the following which applies to the RAAF in equal measure and is food for thought for all of us who are fortunate enough to wear an aircrew brevet.

Mike Varley writes:

The operations on a wartime base could never have been carried out without the loyal and dedicated support of the 1,000 to 1,500 ground personnel, consisting of both men and women. They out-numbered the aircrew by more than ten to one.

Whilst not engaged in combat duties they were required to work long unsociable periods of duty in unpleasant conditions. Ground personnel were associated with a squadron for a much longer period of time than aircrew.

Regrettably the important role played by ground crew was overlooked when the government awarded campaign medals after the war and their service has never received any specific recognition.

However, they may be assured that their role will always be remembered by the aircrew they supported. It was always recognised to be a combined effort.

SWIFT TO DESTROY UPDATE

The “Swift to Destroy” up-date is coming along very well Secretary Lesley Gent has put a lot a time and effort into the project. A copy of the Hard Cover Book has been produced in “Word“format. Correcting the original text is well advanced with final checking about to start. Input from the squadron is expected very soon.

I am also pleased to be able to report that a letter has been received from the Minister for Veterans Affairs indicating that he has approved our application for a grant of \$3000 under the “Saluting Their Service” arrangement.

The production cost to produce 1000 books is \$15,751.30. The Committee propose to meet the cost as follows:

Contribution from Boeing held 77 Squadron Bank Account	\$6,700.00
Saluting Their Service Commemorative Event Grant -	\$3,000.00
Loan from 77 Squadron Association Inc Working Account -	\$6,051.30

Book Sales

It is proposed to sell the 1000 books @ \$25.00 per copy to realize \$25,000.00. After repayment of outstanding loans and the donation of books to the value of \$1000 to Legal Deposit, Australian War Memorial, 77 Squadron Headquarters, Association Archives, University Archives, Office of Royal Australian Air Force History, schools etc. to be distributed as follows:

- 40% to Legacy
- 40% to the 77 Squadron Gallery Trust to be used to further develop the
No 77 Squadron Gallery at Fighter World, RAAF Williamtown.
- 20% to No 77 Squadron Association.

KOREAN VETERAN MATTERS

This little ditty, written by a Brit Korean Vet, was sent to me by an Australian Army bloke. It says it all.

"KOREA"

We didn't do much talking,
We didn't raise a fuss,
But Korea really happened,
So please-remember us,

We all just did our duty,
But we didn't win or lose,
A victory was denied us,
But we never got to choose,

We all roasted in the summer,
In the winter, damn near froze,
Walking back from near the Yalu,
With our blackened, frozen toes,

Like the surf the enemy kept coming,
With their bugles in the night,
And we fired in to their masses,
Praying for the morning light,

All of us just had to be there,
And so many of us died,
But now we're all but half forgotten,
No one remembers how we tried,

We grow fewer with the years now,
And we still don't raise a fuss,
But Korea really happened,
So please-**Remember** us

Minister for Veterans Affairs October Visit to Korea

On 17 July I fired off an e-mail to the Korean Veteran e-mailing list detailing information I had received from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Commissioner, Major General Kelly, regarding a proposed visit by six Korean War Veterans to Korea with the Minister in October 2011. Veterans, who were interested, were required to undergo a medical assessment by their Local Medical Officer and fill out a "Nomination Form". The 77 Squadron Association was required to nominate each applicant.

In the e-mail I indicated that the 77 Squadron Association would not set up a "selection" process. Rather, all applications would be sent to DVA. In the event two people came forward and were duly nominated.

Last week John Seaton advised that DVA had informed him that there will be:

One RAAF representative – Group Captain Milt Cottee AFC,
One RAN representative,
One civilian next of kin of an Army MIA Veteran, and
Five Australian Army Veterans including an Army Nursing Sister. **NB:** The selection of an Army Nursing Sister is great but I wonder if our RAAF girls were included in the selection process?

SQUADRON HISTORY

60 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 1951 & Jan 1952)

Over the period the squadron operated Mustang aircraft from Bofu in Japan. The Commanding Officer was Wing Commander G. H. Steege DSO, DFC

November 1951

On 1 November 1951 the Squadron was awarded the Korean Presidential Citation for "Exceptional Meritorious Service and Heroism" on behalf of the Republic of Korea. Seven days later it was announced that Squadron Leader Dick Wilson had been awarded the British Distinguished Flying Cross.

On 11 November the squadron was returning from an aborted fighter sweep along 'MiG Alley' when SGT D. Robertson (A77- 959) suddenly broke formation and collided with A77-587 piloted by FLGOFF K. Blight. Robertson's aircraft entered a spin and crashed deep inside enemy territory, with the pilot failing to bail out.

Blight's Meteor also entered a spin but due to the pilot's quick reactions the aircraft was brought under control. On close scrutiny, Blight found that four feet of his port wing had been torn off. It was only by flying with full left rudder and adjusting the power settings so that the starboard engine was at idle and the port engine was at maximum revs was he able to maintain level flight. The effort involved in trying to keep the damaged wing up and prevent the aircraft from entering another spin was considerable, and twice Blight thought it best to bail out. However, he was still too far behind enemy lines to ensure his survival and he continued on.

On the second occasion Blight had got as far as jettisoning the cockpit canopy when the base Radio Controller at Kimpo bluffed him into believing he was nearly home and that he should keep going. The base eventually came in sight and Blight began to throttle back in preparation for a wheels-up landing. Unfortunately every time he eased back on the port engine the Meteor began to roll violently and tried to enter a spin. To maintain control the air speed could not be dropped below 180 knots. Accepting the inevitable, Blight held the control column with his knee and grabbed the ejection handle above his head with both hands.

He regained consciousness finding his legs flopping in the breeze, quickly collecting his wits he released himself from his seat and deployed his parachute. Blight returned to base unharmed except for a pain in his backside that he experienced whenever he sat down.

As for A77-587, its wreckage was found in a paddy field with the body of a Korean farm labourer lying close by!

December 1951

77 Squadron finally achieved its first confirmed MiG-15 'Kill' on 1 December 1951 when twelve Meteors were engaged by over 50 MiGs in an epic dog fight over Pyongyang. In the opening attack two Meteors were damaged with one, A77-559, flown by FSGT Bill Middlemiss, being forced to return to Kimpo. FLGOFF B. Gogerly (A77-17) latched onto the tail of one of the enemy jets and watched excitedly as cannon rounds from his Meteor sent pieces flying from the Migs fuselage, sending it crashing to the ground in a ball of flame. Several other Meteor pilots managed to get in shots at Migs, and another aircraft was seen to crash into the ground. The squadron was credited with the kill, as a whole, as in the confusion of the battle it was not sure as to who had shot it down.

A radio check was called and all the Australian pilots answered in. However, ten minutes later when the order was given to break contact and head for home three Meteors were found to be missing. It is assumed they were taken by surprise as they turned for home. Of the three pilots, two were captured after having ejected from their aircraft; SGT B. Thompson (A77-29) and SGT V. Drummond (A77-251). The other pilot, FSGT E. Armitt (A77-949), was killed when his aircraft was shot down. The squadron had its first Mig kills, but had paid a high price.

With the arrival of a second USAF Sabre Wing in the area it was apparent that the role of the Meteor would soon be changed. The air battle of December 1, with the loss of three Meteors, showed the superiority of the Russian fighter and that it would be foolish to continue using the Meteor on the fighter sweeps into 'Mig Alley'.

A song often sung in the squadron at the time summed up the situation aptly, "All I want for Christmas is my wings swept back". Thus in January 1952, 77 Squadron was assigned the role of area and airfield defence for both Kimpo and Suwon, leaving the Sabres to patrol the skies over North Korea.

January 1952

During January, the squadron also adopted the role of ground attack and it was in this role that the Meteor was finally able to find its niche in the Korean conflict. The squadron flew its first ground attack sortie on the 8th of the month when four Meteors rocketed a water tower near a communist held town. Ground attack missions demanded that the Meteors be flown low over hostile territory and the accuracy of the enemy anti-aircraft weapons were soon realised when two of the four aircraft on that first mission were hit by light flak.

FLTLT V. Turner had a lucky escape from serious injury on 24 January when his aircraft, A77-741, suffered an engine failure and crashed whilst turning to make its landing approach. Although the Meteor was totally written off, Turner managed to escape the wreckage with only minor injuries.

27 January 1952 was to be a sad day for 77 Squadron, with the squadron losing two pilots within an hour of each other. Two sections of six Meteors attacked enemy positions in the Haeju area in what must be described as atrocious weather; ten tenths cloud, a ceiling of only 2500 feet and light snow. During a strafing run, FLTLT M. Browne-Gaylord (A77-559) was hit by light flak knocking out his Air Speed Indicator and Altimeter. His flight leader, FLTLT W. Bennett attempted to inform Browne-Gaylord of his correct height but received no reply. It is assumed that A77- 559 crashed into rugged terrain inland from Heaju whilst being flown 'blind' in the bad weather. Less than an hour later SGT B. Gillan (A77-726) was hit by flak in the starboard wing while strafing an enemy water tower. Gillan probably ejected from his crippled jet although no parachute was seen by his wing man. It remains a mystery as to how he met his death.

Accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire was becoming a major problem for the Australian pilots.

50 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 1961 & Jan 1962)

The squadron operated Avon Sabre aircraft from RAAF Base Butterworth. The CO was Wing Commander J.W.Hubble DSO, DFC.

Swift to Destroy reports that normal squadron routine continued uninterrupted into the New Year. However, bad weather and airstrip unserviceability did cause problems. On 15 January 1962 a lot of excitement was generated when a poisonous Viper snake was found in the wheel well of an aircraft. The snake was soon rendered unserviceable with the aid of a CO2 fire extinguisher and a heavy ladder.

40 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 1971 & Jan 1972)

The squadron operated Mirage 1110 aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown. The CO was Wing Commander W. H. Simmonds.

During November, the squadron hosted a visit by Mr John Hodgkinson. Mr Hodgkinson was a foundation member of 77 Squadron. He served with the squadron in the Darwin area and New Guinea until January 1944 and then joined 3 Squadron in the Middle East.

While flying a Mustang on operations over Italy he was shot down and became a prisoner of war in Germany for three months. He reached the rank of Flight Lieutenant and was awarded the DFC.

During his stay Wing Commander Simmonds took him for a ride in a Mirage. This was a rare honour as comparatively few civilians were given the opportunity to go up in a supersonic Jet Fighter. He described the flight as "out of this world" and a far cry from the war days when he flew Kittyhawks and Mustangs.

In November, SQNLDR Jim Treadwell flew his 1000th Mirage hour, the first for the squadron. On 4 December the squadron fired off its allocation of three live sidewinder missiles. Firings were at 30,000ft, 15,000ft and 1500ft. All three missiles hit the target.

The Christmas period saw a complete change over of the Squadron's Executive staff. The appointments were Commanding Officer, three Flight Commanders, and Senior Engineering Officer. WGCDR R.W. Bradford took over from WGCDR W.H. Simmonds who was posted to Headquarters Williamtown.

Also during the period Squadron pilot strength was increased to 18 pilots.

30 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 1981 & Jan 1982)

Over the period the squadron operated Mirage 1110 aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown. The CO was Wing Commander G.R. Gent AM.

On 30 November eight Mirages departed for Ohakea, New Zealand to participate with 75 Squadron RNZAF in Exercise Willoh 81/4. Exercise sorties flown from Ohakea consisted of HiLo navigation and pairs strike missions to various bombing ranges. 75 Squadron Skyhawks provided an occasional 'bounce' however no tactics missions were flown due to the impracticality of reconfiguring the aircraft during such a short exercise period. On 9 December the aircraft departed Ohakea for return via Auckland and Noumea

20 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 1991, Jan 1992)

The squadron operated F/A18 Hornet aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown. The CO was Wg Cdr W.M. Johnson.

November 1991

After returning from exercise Churinga the squadron stood down from 1-4 November. Operations resumed on 5 November when three 2V2 air to air missions were flown. Air to Air training continued throughout the month.

Also during November a large number of fleet support missions associated with a Fleet concentration off Nowra where flown. On 16 November CRU training started for a Navy controller's course using a stepwise approach to bring the students up to full Hornet operations. On 25 November 2SQN RNZAF arrived at Williamtown to conduct a DACT training program with the squadron.

The month finished on a high note when the President of the Kittyhawk Association, Mr Alwyn Quoy, presented the Kittyhawk Trophy to the squadron at a parade held on 29 November. During the parade the CO presented FSgt Roles with a DFSM clasp for 20 years service and Sgt Grieves with the AFSIM for 15 years service. A barbecue was held after the parade in the smoko area.

December 1991

Live missile firing was conducted in the first week of December at Beecroft Live Firing range off Nowra. It was planned to fire three AIM -9s on Monday 2 December, three Aim -7s on Wednesday 4 December with Tuesday, Thursday and Friday as spare days. In the event two missiles were successfully fired when the surveillance radar at Nowra went U/S.

On 3 December the Nowra radar was declared serviceable and FlgOff Smith fired an AIM-9 with SqnlDr Frawley and FltLt Stockert acting as Range Safety Officers. Unfortunately, the shoot scheduled for 4 December had to be cancelled because the target towing Jindivick went unservicable.

However, all was well on 5 November when FltLt McKenzie successfully fired an AIM-7 followed by live bombing at Singleton Range. The bombing pass was filmed by a local TV crew and shown on the news. The second AIM-7 was not fired due to a station failure; however, a third missile was successfully fired by FltLt Woodland.

An end of year Squadron barbecue was held on 6 December 1991.

January 1992

The year started with trade training for the maintenance staff. The training was part of a Technical trade restructure which heralded a year of change for the RAAF. Flying did not start until Monday 20 January 1992.

Flying operations started with eight OF/IF missions to get pilots up to speed after the long break. On 21st flying started in earnest when a four ship fleet support mission was flown. In the evening six IF intercepts against Lear Jets were flown. This flying pattern continued to the end of the month. On 24 January a squadron sports day was held.

10 Years Ago (Nov, Dec 2001 & Jan 2002)

The squadron operated Hornet aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown. The CO was Wing Commander B. J. Edwards.

November 2001

At the start of November F/A -18 operations focused on preparing for a pending deployment as part of "Operation Slipper" to the British Indian Ocean Territory of Diego Garcia. The mission was to conduct air defence operations. Before departing the squadron received visits from the Air Commander Australian and the Chief of Air Force.

An advance party departed Williamtown on 7 November 2001. The advanced party traveled to Diego Garcia via RAAF Pearce arriving on 8 November 2001. The main party departed on 13 Nov 2001 and traveled via LMO to arrive on 14 November 2001.

The Detachment assumed Operational responsibility at 0600Z on 16 November 2001. Air surveillance and command and control was provided by USS Vincennes. The squadron was placed on a 24 hour fifteen minute alert status. At this time intercept training was also conducted on other aircraft types working out of Diego Garcia. These included KC-10, B-1, B-52, P-3, and C-5 aircraft.

On 29 November 2001 USS Vincennes was called away from Diego Garcia on Search and Rescue duties. When this happened the squadron provided Combat Air Patrol surveillance overhead the island until USS Vincennes returned. The Commanding Officer, Wing Commander B. J. Edwards, noted the following in the official Squadron History: "To be selected as the **first fighter Squadron** to be deployed on an **operation since the Korean War** is a great honor for 77 Squadron.

December 2001

Operations associated with the air defence of Diego Garcia continued. Fifteen minute alert status was maintained at all times. On 30 November 2001 Command and Control was handed over to USS Russell from USS Vincennes.

USS Russell was found to be very professional and very eager to conduct mutual training. This included Air Intercept training using Link-4 tracks, and Air-to-Surface Maritime strikes versus the Russell itself.

Over the period seven scrambles were cancelled prior to aircraft taxiing. Combat Air Patrols over Diego Garcia were flown on two occasions when the Surveillance radar on board USS Russell was switched off during re-supply operations.

On 18 and 19 December the Air Commander Australia, AVM J Kindler AM AFC, visited the deployed squadron element at Diego Garcia. During the period numerous sporting and social function were held.

This was the last month that Forward Air Control Flight (FACFLT) will be part of 77 Squadron. On 1 January 2002 an organisation to be known the Forward Air Control Development Unit (FACDU) stood up as a new RAAF unit under the control of the newly formed Air Combat Group (ACG).

January 2002

The PC0/A (F) element transferred out of the squadron to form the Forward Air Control Development Unit with effect 1 January 2002.

In Diego Garcia air defence operations continued. Three scrambles were initiated during the month but cancelled prior to take-off. The Chief of Army, Lt General Cosgrove, visited the deployed units on 3-4 and 11-12 January. The USS Russell departed on 31 January 2002 handing over air surveillance duties to USS Ford.

Squadron Activities July to September 2011

The squadron operated F/A18 Hornet aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown. The CO was Wing Commander G. Beck.

In July squadron personnel were scattered all around the country and as far as Alaska to participate in numerous exercises. A number of squadron pilots augmented 3 Squadron aircrew in Alaska for a 4 week period during the annual Red Flag Exercise. Seven pilots were sent to Darwin and Tindal to operate with 75 Squadron and for mission planning duties associated with Exercise Talismans Sabre. In addition, a number of pilots were located in Canberra for the exercise.

The pilots who participated in Talisman Sabre were involved with F/A-18 E and F model Hornet aircraft from the USS George Washington. In addition, they also flew against USAF F-15 C Eagle aircraft operating out of RAAF base Darwin.

The pilots involved in Red Flag in Alaska participated in both Air to Air and Air to ground missions including dropping live weapons.

During August the squadron conducted Basic Fighter Manoeuvring in preparation for exercise Thai Boomerang and Elang Ausindo. On Monday 19th of August 8 aircraft began a transit to Korat in Thailand for Exercise Thai Boomerang 2011.

The transit route was via Darwin to Payaliba to refuel then on to Butterworth for an overnight stay and then on to Korat Air Force base. The support crew went from Darwin direct to Korat in a C-17 aircraft.

Exercise Thai boomerang was a two week bi annual exercise hosted by the Thai Air Force in Korat. It provided Air to Air combat training against RTAF F-16 aircraft. It also provided maintenance personnel with valuable training operating out of a foreign base.

The relationship between the RTAF and the RAAF proved to be very strong throughout the two weeks. Numerous social events were held. In addition, the squadron managed to raise \$3000 for a local orphanage.

At the end of August, after a busy two weeks in Thailand, the squadron deployed to Bali for Exercise Elang Ausindo. Exercise Elang Ausindo was a week long visual manoeuvring exercise with the Indonesian Air Force's F-16s. Each pilot flew at least two sorties flying against the F-16's

Squadron members were able to enjoy a well earned rest in Bali after working hard in Thailand. A formal closing ceremony of Elang Ausindo was carried out on the 9th of September, with the Indonesian Air Force participating in beach volleyball and soccer.

The Squadron redeployed on 10th of September accompanied by a C-17 which flew direct to Williamtown.

During the rest of September the Squadron enjoyed a week off before conducting a two week 2vX intercept program. The program focused on preparation for an East Coast Air Defence Exercise. It also provided an opportunity for junior pilots to progress through the category upgrade process.

77 SQUADRON WAR MEMORIAL INTERVIEW SERIES

This is the first extract of an interview with Korean Veteran and former Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Jake Newham AC, by Dr Chris Clark on 18 July 2002 at the Australian War Memorial.

Air Marshal John William Newham AC

Air Marshal Newham was born on 30 November 1930 at Cowra, New South Wales. He was educated at Cowra High School and trained as a pilot at Point Cook in 1951. After active service with 77 Squadron in Korea in 1952/3 he was posted as a replacement pilot to 78 Fighter Wing in Malta. He served in Malta until 1955. He later flew with 3 Squadron in Malaya (1958-1960) and was CO of that unit in 1967-1968.

Air Marshal Newham's appointments include: Officer Commanding RAAF Base Laverton, Officer Commanding 82 Wing, Director of Personal Services (1971), Senior Operations Officer at Headquarters Operational Command, (1975) then Senior Administrative Staff Officer (1976-1977), Director General of Operational Requirements at Air Office (1979), Chief of Air Force Operations (1980-1982), Head of the Australian Defence Staff in Washington (1982-1984), Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (1984-1985), and finally Chief of the Air Staff (1985-1987).

Dr Clark - Can I ask what makes a boy from Cowra think of joining the RAAF five years after the Second World War?

AM Newham - Well, I guess it came with all the glamour events and the impact of World War II and what we saw there. A lot of people from Cowra flew in the air force and some of them were decorated, some of them were my friends, and many more became my friends afterwards, of course.

There is a limit to the jobs that one can undertake as a young guy in a small country town. I entered for cadetships for all sorts of things - chemical engineering with BHP, and the Commonwealth Bank, and Duntroon and the air force college. I particularly wanted to fly. An unusual thing was that I was accepted - I think I was accepted for Duntroon, but I was initially accepted for the RAAF College and kicked out because I'd broken my leg playing football the year before. I'll never forget the letter I got which said that the X-ray reveals a latent form of osteoarthritis that will affect you in later life.

So I sat on it for a couple of years and I rejoined through the FTS system. I neglected to mention that I'd had a broken leg, the second time around.

Dr Clark - And never became an issue?

AM Newham - No, it didn't become an issue and it certainly didn't affect my career progress. I do regret that I didn't do the college though because I did feel the educational lack, the tertiary level. But then again, I'm a great believer in Voltaire's philosophy of Supreme Options: everything that happens for the best. If I'd done the other thing something worse would have happened.

Dr Clark - So it wasn't family influences?

AM Newham - No. My father wanted me to go into the Commonwealth Bank, and I did for a little while, because during the depression it was a traumatic period for a young bloke. I was a child in the depression, my father lost his job - he was just a labourer really. He wanted me to go into the bank because the bank people didn't lose their jobs. But I found that stifling.

Dr Clark - At what stage would this have occurred? You were twenty-one when you went into the air force finally.

AM Newham - Yes, I was twenty - I turned twenty in November that year. I decided, after a couple of years, that I'd had it, I was tired of the bank, and I went and helped a friend of mine establish a soldiers' settlement block up in the Narrabri-Moree area. It was a very important part of my life as it turned out. We did everything from the boundary fencing in - put up telegraph lines and things like that. They were soldiers, sailors and airmen, some of them had come from well-to-do backgrounds - it was a spread, I suppose, a social spread. It did help me grow up.

Dr Clark - This particular friend you were helping, was he ex-air force?

AM Newham - No, he was ex-army. He is still alive. I went up recently - he's been ill - to Port Macquarie to see him. I attended a couple of reunions they've had, of those soldiers in that old Enteroy Estate. A very important time in retrospect, I value the experience of working with those guys.

Dr Clark - Was there any particular thing that prompted you to actually apply for the air force at the point that you did?

AM Newham - Let me put it another way, I didn't apply for two years because I was scared they'd find out about the first (application).

Dr Clark - Understood.

AM Newham - But you see, in '47 I'd done an interview at Bradfield Park and I was a bit worried about the psych (psychological) exams, the intelligence tests that we did, because in comparing answers with the other blokes, who were city guys, I thought I'd done rather badly. I mentioned this at the psych interview and he said, 'You've got the least need to worry.' Then, at the final interview, I was told that I was in the short list of seven from New South Wales with a total intake of twenty-five. So I went home feeling pretty confident and I was shattered, of course, when I got this letter.

And, of course, all sorts of people wrote - my school, and they said he'd been in the first eleven, and the first this and that, and athletics, and other achievements, and the leg didn't seem to be a problem. But I just got another short note back saying 'hard luck'. The Mayor of the town and other people weighed in, I had a lot of support. A few people were trying to push me to the army, but I didn't want to go there, I really wanted to fly.

So I decided to quit the bank when Harry Hutchinson was looking for somebody to help him. I went up there to Narrabri and worked a year. It was from there I did my interviews and medicals, and all that business.

Dr Clark - The Korean War was under way.

AM Newham - Yes, at that stage. It wasn't a factor, the opportunity to fly operational. It was there, but I did realise that I could be fired in other directions. Most of our course was pointed towards - not most, I suppose about ten of us out of twenty-six who graduated were pointed towards Korea.

Dr Clark - So when did you actually go into Point Cook?

AM Newham - February 1951.

Dr Clark - February '51 - and there were twenty-six of you?

AM Newham - No, there were eighty-four.

Dr Clark - Eighty-four, okay.

AM Newham - That's a pretty good attrition rate. Some of the education levels were very low, but that included navy - and twenty-six total, including navy - I think about four navy graduated. I think about ten of those twenty-two - ten or eleven - went to Korea with 77 Squadron.

Dr Clark - When did you graduate - the end of that year?

AM Newham - No, June or July 1952. We did the last all-through course - eighteen-months' course - at Point Cook, and then training was shifted up to Archerfield (ITS) and Uranquinty (BFTS).

Dr Clark - So some members of your course went straight on to Korea?

AM Newham -Yes.

Dr Clark- What did you do? What happened to you?

AM Newham - Oh, we started about six weeks later, that's all. We were split into two groups.

Dr Clark - But, I mean, where were you posted when you finished your flying training?

AM Newham - To the OCU (Operational Conversion Unit).

Dr Clark - Basically you knew you were going to Korea at that point?

AM Newham - Oh, yes. Well, people had already gone to Malta and there was a fighter squadron - 3 Squadron was still at Canberra flying Mustangs. I could have gone there, I could have been posted to one of the City squadrons, I guess. I didn't think about it. Even our OCU training was all focussed on Korea - the GLO's (Ground Liaison Officer) briefings, the Intel briefings, the material we had to read, all of that stuff was all Korea so I don't think we ever questioned it.

Dr Clark - What did you think of the standard of preparation you were given?

AM Newham - Pretty good - there were some problems with some of the wartime instructors; a couple were very good, some were pretty lazy with it. I never felt confident that I could go as a very young sprog and ask them what it was like, and questions like that, because there was an attitude - I realised later on there was a pervasive attitude, of course, that shooting a line was the most terrible crime you could ever commit, and they never, ever did it, and you didn't feel confident. But when guys who had been on earlier courses - 5 Course, 4 Course - would come back as instructors, and they were much more open and you could sit down and talk with them. I got a lot more from those people than I did from the more senior people.

Dr Clark - When did you actually start your process of getting ready to go to Korea?

AM Newham - When I started the OCU - that was in August, I think - no, September. I had a break, I had a flying accident which held me up about six weeks, and I didn't go up there - I think I got there in February - yeah, I got there in February '53, and a fairly short Meteor conversion course at Iwakuni - I think that was less than twenty hours - which included all the things that you'd do in the Meteor - weapons work and night flying, that sort of stuff.

Dr Clark - Your training at OTU (Operational Training Unit) had been on what?

AM Newham - Vampires - Mustangs first, then Vampires. There's was no logic in flying the Mustangs, but they were there and you built up a bit of air experience. It was good experience, it was a great fun-aeroplane to fly, it was a delightful and very exciting aeroplane.

Dr Clark - And what did you think of the Meteor when you got your introduction to it at Iwakuni?

AM Newham - Oh, lovely it was good, a good aeroplane to fly, and the Mk 8 particularly - the Mk 7 was like a lot of trainers in those days, it was badly instrumented and bad pressurisation, it was noisy and didn't have some of the aids - not that the Mk 8 had any aids. It was just not as nice an aeroplane to fly. It had a different tailplane and fin, and it had a nasty habit of sliding into the ground if you did things wrong and turned on to fight.

Dr Clark - By the time you got to Iwakuni though we are talking about the third year of the war. It was a pretty well-established system by that stage.

AM Newham - Oh, yes. Well, the first two phases of the war were over in the first six months. The rest of the time it was static, and by the time we'd got here, of course, there was air supremacy, maritime supremacy, there was no passive, or little passive, defence measures taken on our base, whereas the Korean targets were all hidden and very difficult to find.

Dr Clark - So when did you actually get across to 77 Squadron? If you got into Japan in February?

AM Newham - I went across in March. I flew my first mission on Friday 13 March.

Dr Clark - Auspicious date.

AM Newham - I've been very fond of Friday 13 ever since.

Dr Clark - How soon was that after you arrived did you actually join the squadron? Was it the day after you arrived?

AM Newham - Just about, I think - probably fooling around, there wasn't much to do beside find a bed - I don't think there was much special equipment we had - we got that pretty quick, with a few briefings. Then it was a matter of getting a couple of aeroplanes, and we did two area reces, one up the east coast, one up the west coast, in which we would just look at the lie of the land and didn't engage in any combat. My second trip was with an RAF guy called Mike Whitworth-Jones whose dad was the Air Member for Supply and equipment in the Royal Air Force - we had six RAF pilots on exchange at that stage.

I found out later he had a reputation of being a bit of a 'tally-ho yoicks' guy of the Biggles mould, I suppose. On the way back, very late in the afternoon, he announced that he could see a couple of trucks off a bend in the road and could I see them, and I couldn't. Anyway, he dove in on them - and because of the ammunition load we carried I can see the strikes - we are using SAPHE (sabot armour piercing high explosive) and HEI (high explosive incendiary) - we weren't carrying incendiary, but you could certainly see the strikes on the ground.

Anyway, I stood well back, and I remember the attack was into the west. It was very gloomy, a lot of dust around, there was no significant sort of sunset to distract from this. So I was able to queue up and fire at these two black lumps that were on the ground. I was pretty pleased with myself actually, and I was pulling up and looking around for him. All hell broke loose - 'flaming onions' started to go over my cockpit - I've got to call 'flak' - we'd been briefed on it. So I pushed the button and my voice broke, and it sort of went out (with high pitch) 'flaaak!' and this very pucker Pommy voice said, 'Call-sign and clock code?' See, I'd omitted all of that classic call, but I didn't have time for that. What I've just told you took place in a twink.

Dr Clark - Sure.

AM Newham - I'd seen him pull off to the left and I was able to pick him up a bit later and in less than half a turn I found him. He did the debrief and didn't mention this attack, although we'd consumed ammunition. Speck Taylor, a very wise guy, said to me afterwards, 'Hey, Jake, what went on? I could see by the look on your face there's something.' And I said, 'We had a go at a couple of trucks on the side of the road, but I didn't see any sparks or fire, or anything like that, as you usually do with trucks.' He said, 'The so-and-so, he know's very well we are not allowed to attack isolated trucks that are there. The oldest trick in the book is to grab a wreck and throw a tarpaulin over it and put a few guns around it. It's a classic flak trap.' So that was my introduction to it and I wondering afterwards whether this happened ever day.

Dr Clark - This was your second flight?

AM Newham - Yes, which is supposed to be a cosy flight, not below 8,000 feet, in fact - or perhaps occasionally you could go down to about 3,500 - 3,500 puts you above the 12.7 (millimetre anti-aircraft fire).

Dr Clark - So Whitworth-Jones was a bit known for this sort of thing, was he?

AM Newham - Yes. Well, I found out (later) - he got a DFC though anyway, but his claims were considered to be a little lavish, let me put it that way.

Dr Clark - This would have been 14 March? If you first flew on the 13th this would have been the 14th, and what I'm leading up to is, I've read somewhere that you were one of the pilots involved in beating up that massive convoy of 140 trucks up near Pusan. That would have been two days after this.

AM Newham - Oh, yes, only a few days, yeah ... yeah, things happen - March was a very busy month, very active month.

The second extract of the Interview with Air Marshal Newham will appear in the Autumn 2012 Newsletter.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be the Autumn 2012 edition with a planned distribution date of mid February 2012.

Be of good cheer – merry Christmas all – best wishes for a happy, healthy, 2012.

J the T
MMSOB
Encl:

1 November 2011

Frontline Australia:
Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin

Please fill out this Attendance Sheet and return to Maxine Dowley at Darwin City Council

Postal: GPO Box 84, Darwin, NT 0801
Phone: 08 8930 0684, fax: 08 8930 0699
Email: m.dowley@darwin.nt.gov.au

I plan to attend the Commemoration for the 70th Anniversary
of the Bombing of Darwin - Yes/No

I served in the Defence Forces in Darwin between 1939 – 1945 - Yes /No

I am a Survivor/Evacuee that lived in Darwin between 1939-1945 - Yes/No

I would like to take part in the Veterans program
(details to follow next newsletter) - Yes / No

I am not a Veteran/Survivor/Evacuee but wish to attend
the 70th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin activities - Yes / No

Name:.....
Name of Unit :.....
Address:.....
.....State.....Postcode
Phone Number :.....
Email address :.....