

# The RAM.

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The Magazine by and for Ex-RAAF People – and others

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## In Memory Of.

### Alfred “Ted” Ilton.

Sadly Ted Ilton (Wng Cdr retired) passed away early on Saturday morning, 25th October 2014 at the aged care facility on the Tweed in which he had been living for the past couple of years (aged 87). Ted had been fighting cancer for some time but recently it took hold and it was sad to see an active and fun loving man regress so rapidly. Ted was born in 1927 and joined the RAAF in October 1947 as a Teleg and in 1953 was commissioned, eventually reaching the rank of Wing Commander. He discharged in March 1976 after 29 years' service.



I first met Ted several years ago when I gave him a hand with his life story (which you can read [HERE](#)) and at all times I found him a charming and caring man, with a great sense of humour. Ted would have been 18 at about the same time as I was learning to walk so the Air Force he joined would have relied heavily on pistons and propellers, at a time when valves ruled, and we'd often sit and talk about those days. I used to love our little "chats" where he would sometimes "unload" and we'd talk about all sorts of people, of events and of things long gone. He had a wonderful memory and no doubt, he had enough material in that knowledgeable head to put down several more books, it was a shame we didn't get onto it earlier.

I found it a pleasure to work with him.



Some years earlier, Ted had asked his old friend, Chaplain (Air Commodore, retired) Clive King to officiate at his funeral, should circumstances dictate. Ted and Clive had been mates for many years and unhappily as it turned out, Clive had to keep his promise. Click below to see video of part of the ceremony.



I lost a good mate, Australia lost a true gentleman.

## Rex Raph.

Rex Ralph, an ex Warrant Officer communicator and one of the founding members of the Djinnang Association, passed away on the 4th October, 2014. His funeral was held on the 9th October 2014 at Mt Gravatt (Qld).

Born in Brisbane in 1928, Rex lived at Coopers Plains. As a young man he enjoyed employment in the rural industry in western Queensland, however, this was not to be his forte. He joined the Royal Australian Air Force on 30 June 1947 where he had a distinguished career as a Telegraphist, Signals Operator and communications supervisor and rose to the highest rank possible in that mustering, that of Warrant Officer.



In this, his chosen profession he had no peer as an operator of Morse code, the main means of communication at the time. Noted for both his speed and accuracy in all forms of communications his promotions were quick and regular. Unassuming and sincere, he gained easily the confidence of all with whom he came into contact.

Because of his personal qualities and competency in his profession, he was one of only three telegraphists chosen to join the RAAF contingent to go to Onslow for the period of the Atom Bomb tests carried out on Monte Bello Island in 1952. He was also chosen for a post at a dedicated communications facility on Manus Island.

Rex had numerous other postings during his career, including Woomera, Malaya, Thailand and Headquarters Operational Command at Glenbrook. His Long Service and Good Conduct Medal coupled with his Operational Command "Certificate of Outstanding Service" were justly earned.

Rex loved operating Morse code. Such was that love that on retiring from the Air Force, he became an Amateur Radio Operator where he continued with Morse code almost on a daily basis. Far above the standard required in that sphere he was a much sort after contact over the radio spectrum. Always immaculate in dress and easy in manner, coupled with his high professional skills, Rex gained the respect and confidence of all who knew him.



Ernig Gimm says, "I met Rex some 45 odd years ago when I was posted to RAAF Darwin as a Flight Sergeant to commission the first computerised message switch the world had known. This was affectionately known by some as FRED. FRED was short for many things; some favourable but most VERY unfavourable. It was during this period that, through Rex, blokes like myself and Johnny' Renfrew etc., maintained our sanity. Rex could always manage a smile when things were not going right and this often saved the situation.

My last 12 months as a single man was served under Rex and we lived in adjoining rooms in the Sergeants Mess. We managed to fit a lot of socialising in during that time and I well remember a footy bus trip from Darwin to Kununurra which we barely survived. I was nominated as a line umpire but my main job was to keep the coldies up to the players.



Rex was the CMC of the Darwin Sergeants Mess during this period and presided over some of the best dining-in nights I have ever encountered. He had the knack of getting the best out of people and his sense of humour was always the highlight of the evenings. His physique portrayed his love of good wines and food and Darwin was not short of either.

Rex was a gentleman of vast knowledge, wisdom and empathy. During his Service career, he mentored many troops who would not be where they are today, were it not for Rex's guidance.

A founding member of the Djinnang Association, and as a good friend, he will be missed.

## **Donald Joseph Gray.**

Ernie Gimm advises that Don Gray died unexpectedly in hospital in Canberra on 4 Nov 14. He was 83. He is survived by his wife Peggy and three children. Don had been in poor health for several years, but he always retained his acute sense of humour and fund of stories. His funeral service was held at the Norwood Park Crematorium (ACT) on Friday 14th Nov 2014 then later at the Canberra Bowling Club. Don joined the RAAF as a Radio Apprentice on No 3 course in Feb 1949 and was commissioned from No1 Fellowship Diploma Course in January 1954. He served at No1 Tx Stn Laverton, 1AD, Williamtown and Edinburgh. While at Edinburgh he was offered a position with Dept of Supply at a space communications facility at Woomera. Later he became the director of the Tidbinbilla facility. He continued in this role until retirement, through the early years of manned space missions, development of satellite communications and remote sensing operations. He was considered an authority in the latter field. I will miss the frequent telephone conversations with him over the past several years.

You can read an interview given by Don to Catherine Rayner, back in December 2001 [HERE](#).

## **Alan Ronald Grant.**

Alan was born in August 1944. He joined the RAAF in 1963 and was on 70 Teleg course and then [22 Telsop Course](#). He served in Vung Tau, in Vietnam from April 1971 to November 1971, then had two tours of Butterworth. He was discharged in 1986. Alan had been poorly for some 3 years and eventually succumbed to Pneumonia and Lung problems on the 29 September 2014, aged 70. He was buried on Wednesday 08 Oct 2014.



## **Norman Clyde Cuell.**

Harry Seymour advises that has recently saw a notice in the Melbourne Herald Sun advising the passing of Norman Clyde Cuell aged 86. Norman died on the 15 October. He was a Teleg and a great help to all who were posted to OPCOM back in the early 1960's. Harry says he was a big gentle giant and he's sure a lot of people would have known him from his time in the RAAF.

## John Robert Dart.

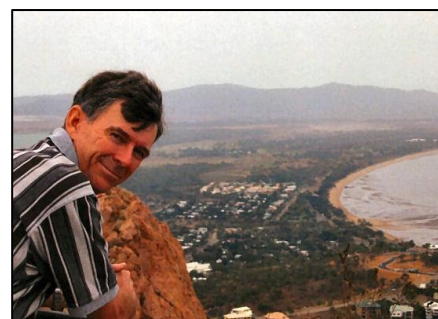
John “Jack” was born in Feb 1939 and joined the RAAF in June 1957 at the age of 18. He was on [43 Telegs](#) and served at Pearce and Hong Kong. He took a discharge in June 1963. In later life he did a tour of the Antarctic.

Jack passed away peacefully, from a brain haemorrhage, which resulted from a fall, on the 1st October 2014 aged 75. He leaves behind his wife Wendy, daughter Sonya, son in law Jon and grandchildren, Matthew, Christopher and Kirsty. His funeral was held on the 8th October 2014.



## Liam Nicholas Rossiter.

Liam was on 51 RMC in 1964/65. We don't have many details except that he lost his life in an aircraft accident in PNG on the 20th September, 2014. Liam had spent many years flying in PNG, rotating back to Townsville on his days off. His funeral service was held on Tuesday 7th October in Townsville.



## Denis Minon.

The Djinnang Association in the West advise, with sadness, the passing of Denis Minon, Teleg, ex member of 3TU, served overseas at Hong Kong and Vietnam. Ex Rads 67 Telegs. Denis's funeral was held on Tuesday 25th November at Simplicity Funerals, Kelmscott WA.

## Bob “Snow” Doyle.

John Sambrooks advises the passing of Bob (Snow) Doyle. Bob succumbed to the clutches of cancer, after a very short and brave fight. He was nursed and cared for by his loving wife Liz and our sincere condolences go out to her. Bob's funeral was held at the Melaleuca Memorial Gardens in the Tweed Valley on Monday 24th November 2014.

## Graeme John Montgomery Smith

Group Captain Graeme John Montgomery Smith, CSC, known to all his mates as “Monty” was born at Randwick on the 4th December 1944 and sadly left us on the 13th November 2014, just a few weeks before his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday – far too young!!



Laurie Lindsay knew him well, he says "I first met Graeme Smith at Richmond in 1971, when he was on a short visit with the Basic Equipment Officers' Course. I can recall attending the Richmond RSL in his company and we were doing so badly on the pokies that he stood on his hands and pulled the lever with his foot. It did not work; we still lost. I thought then, that this was a different person and somebody I could get along with. The Air Force decided that anybody with a middle name, Montgomery, would wear that moniker indefinitely.

Monty was appointed to a commission in the RAAF on the 20 April 1970 in the Equipment Branch (now termed Logistics Specialisation). His postings included:

- No 1 Stores Depot, Tottenham VIC
- No 2 Stores Depot, Regents Park NSW
- Base Squadron Darwin
- RAAF Washington
- No 5 Airfield Construction Squadron
- Headquarters Support Command Melbourne
- Air Force Headquarters Canberra
- Headquarters Air Command Glenbrook
- RAAF Butterworth, Malaysia
- 303 Air Base Wing Richmond NSW

Monty and Jill met in Darwin in 1974 shortly after Cyclone Tracey. They were married on 26 January 1980 in the USA during his posting to Washington and Philadelphia.

On the 29 January 1998, Monty transferred from the Permanent Air Force to the General Reserve and then from the General Reserve to the Active Reserve on the 1 June 1998, where he was appointed Officer Commanding Combat Reserve Wing. He held this position until 2 February 2006. Monty was also Deputy Chair of the Defence Reserves Support Council (NSW) for three years following his appointment as Officer Commanding Combat Reserve Wing.

Monty retired from Air Force on his 66th birthday (the 4th December 2010).

His decorations include:

- Conspicuous Service Cross (for his performance as OC 303 Air Base Wing) awarded on Australia Day 1998
- Defence Force Service Medal with 2nd Clasp
- Australian Defence Medal
- Air Commander Australia Commendation for service as Officer Commanding Combat Reserve Wing

Maureen Kerr was the Warrant Officer Caterer at Glenbrook when Monty was President of the Mess Committee. She recalls that he never ordered her to do anything. He would always ask, and make it seem like a big favour if she could possibly find the time to carry out the task. Monty had the knack like many great leaders of being able to give an order without it sounding like an order. He only broke this rule once and the order was: "Jill get here now!"

Jill was a nurse and the order was to save the life of a friend who had had a heart attack. (See [HERE](#).)..



A Certificate of Appreciation being presented to “Monty” (left) by the Commander of Combat Support Group, Air Commodore Mark Gower.

Monty had the thickset build of a rugby prop and that was his position. I played with him at Combined Services in Melbourne in the 70s. In 1985, I attended the Golden Oldies Rugby Festival in London and the gentlemen from MARS (Middle Aged Rugby Side) from Philadelphia were anxious for news of him. They all knew and remembered Monty.

Monty left this world on Thursday 13 November 2014. He is survived by Jill, his wife of 35 years; his brother Doug, sister-in-law Lorraine and their family. He was a gregarious, kind and generous man with a mischievous nature. He will be greatly missed by his family and his many friends”.

(The assistance of Maureen Kerr, Chris Grohovaz, Del Gaudry and Carl Schiller in the preparation of this obituary is greatly appreciated)

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