

3 Sqn Association.



Earlier this year, blokes and their ladies from the Queensland Branch of the 3 Sqn Association got together at the Redlands RSL Club at Cleveland.



The Association gets together twice a year, mid-year in Brisbane and towards the end of the year at the Caloundra RSL on the Sunshine Coast.

3 Squadron is one of the Air Force's oldest. It was formed at Point Cook during WW1 on the 19th September 1916 and was one of four operational squadrons of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC). Its personnel were members of the Australian Army. Shortly afterwards, in September 1917, the unit sailed to England for training before becoming the first AFC squadron deployed to France. It was equipped with the R.E.8 two-seat reconnaissance/general purpose aircraft. To avoid confusion with the British 3 Squadron RFC, it was known to the British military as "No. 69 Squadron RFC". This terminology





was never accepted by the squadron or the Australian Imperial Force who continued to use the AFC designation regardless and in early 1918, the British designation was dropped.

After moving to the Western Front, the squadron was initially based at Savy. In November 1917, it was assigned the role of a corps reconnaissance squadron and allocated to I Anzac Corps, which was based around Messines, and established itself at Bailleul. 3 Squadron would remain with I Anzac for the remainder of the war and participated in bombing, artillery spotting and reconnaissance missions supporting ANZAC and other British Empire ground forces. Its first air-to-air victory came on 6 December 1917; by the end of the war its aircrews had been credited with another 15 German aircraft and a total of 10,000 operational hours.

In early 1918, the collapse of Russia allowed the Germans to concentrate their strength on the Western Front and launched a major offensive. As the Allies were pushed back, the squadron's airfield at Baileul came into range of the German guns and it was moved first to Abeele and then, as the Allies were pushed back further, it moved again to Poulainville. During the offensive, the squadron operated mainly in the Somme Valley, providing artillery observation. In April 1918, the squadron became responsible for the remains of the "Red Baron", Manfred von Richthofen, after he was shot down in its sector. Shortly before the end of the war, the squadron began converting to the Bristol F.2 Fighter.



Following the end of hostilities, the squadron was engaged briefly in mail transport duties before being withdrawn to the United Kingdom in early 1919. It was disbanded in February and over the course of the next couple of months its personnel were repatriated back to Australia. Casualties amounted to 32 killed and 23 wounded, of which the majority were aircrew; the squadron lost 11 aircraft during the war.



In 1925, the squadron was re-formed as part of the fledgling independent Royal Australian Air Force. It was based initially at Point Cook and then at Richmond, operating a variety of aircraft including [S.E.5As](#), [DH.9s](#), [Westland Wapitis](#) and [Hawker Demons](#). Upon the outbreak of World War II, the squadron was one of 12 permanent RAAF squadrons and it was assigned to the 6th Division as an army co-operation squadron when it was deployed to the Middle East in mid-1940.

After deploying from Australia without its aircraft the unit sailed to Egypt. The squadron first saw action in late 1940, operating obsolete Gloster Gladiator biplane fighters against the Italian Regia Aeronautica which it encountered while conducting reconnaissance and ground attack sorties. It also operated some Westland Lysanders and Gloster Gauntlets, before briefly being converted to Hawker Hurricanes and then flew P-40 Tomahawks and Kittyhawks from 1941, often engaging in intense air battles with the German Luftwaffe, as well as Vichy French pilots during the Syria–Lebanon campaign.

3 Squadron's longest-serving commanding officer (CO) during the war was Squadron Leader Bobby Gibbes, whose tour lasted from February 1942 to April 1943. Gibbes was replaced by Squadron Leader Brian Eaton, who led the unit until February 1944. 3 Squadron took part in the Allied invasions of Sicily and Italy. It re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs in November 1944 and continued to operate in Italy and Yugoslavia until the end of the European war in May 1945.



3 Squadron's record of 25,663 operational flight hours and 217.5 enemy aircraft destroyed made it the highest-scoring RAAF fighter squadron.

At the end of the war, No. 3 Squadron returned to Australia and disbanded at Point Cook on 30 July 1946. It was re-formed at Fairbairn in Canberra in early 1948 when No. 4 Squadron RAAF was renumbered as No. 3 Squadron. Equipped with Mustangs, CAC Wirraways and Austers, the squadron served briefly as a tactical reconnaissance and close support squadron before disbanding again in 1953. The squadron re-formed on 1 March 1956 at Williamstown. It operated CA-27 Sabres out of Butterworth, from 1958 engaging in warlike operations associated with the Malayan Emergency and Konfrontasi.

As Australian involvement in the Vietnam War intensified, 3 Squadron returned to Australia and re-equipped with Mirage IIIO fighters at Williamstown in 1967. The CO, Wing Commander Vance Drummond (right), was killed during air combat manoeuvres at No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit in May. He was succeeded by Wing Commander Jake Newham (later Chief of the Air Staff). After training in air-to-air and air-to-ground roles, the squadron deployed to Butterworth in February 1969, detachments were also deployed to RAF Tengah and Paya Lebar Air Base. During this period, the aircraft became known as "lizards", in reference to their camouflage paint scheme and low altitude operations. The frill neck lizard was adopted as an informal squadron insignia.





After 15 years deployed to Malaysia, 3 Squadron returned to Williamtown and after transferring aircraft and personnel to No. 79 Squadron, on 29 August 1986 No. 3 Squadron became the first operational RAAF unit to receive F/A-18 Hornets.

In February 2002, during the Afghanistan War, elements of 3 Squadron were deployed to Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean, to relieve 77 Squadron, providing air defence for the Coalition base there. 3 Squadron personnel also participated in Operation Falconer. In April 2016, 3 Squadron deployed to the Middle East during Operation Okra as part of the military intervention against ISIL, taking over from 77 Squadron.



On 8 December 2017, 3 Squadron ceased F/A-18 flight operations, followed by the disbandment of the squadron on the 14th December 2017 and subsequent re-establishment of the squadron at Luke AFB in Arizona. All of its Hornets and most of its personnel were transferred to 77 Squadron. In February 2018, 3 Squadron began to be equipped with Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning IIs.

3 Squadron has operated the following aircraft:

- [Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8](#) (1917–1918)
- [Gloster Gauntlet](#), [Gloster Gladiator](#), [Westland Lysander](#) (August 1940 – January 1941)
- [Hawker Hurricane](#) (January–May 1941)
- [P-40 Tomahawk/Kittyhawk](#) (May 1941 – November 1944)
- [P-51D Mustang](#) (November 1944 – July 1946)
- [CAC Sabre](#) (1956–1967)
- [Mirage III](#) (1967–1986)
- [F/A-18 Hornet](#) (August 1986 – December 2017)
- [F-35A Lightning II](#) (2018 – current)

The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the bread.

Ex-members of 3 Squadron are proud of their involvement with the Squadron and regularly get together with their ladies to reminisce and chat about old times.

Those present at the recent get together, which was organised by Blue Farrell, were:



John Kane, Blue Farrell



Jan and Geoff Partridge



Blue "Breather" Ingles, Hap Prior, Barry Roberts, "Deefa" Millar, Blue Farrell.



Jim Hall, Janet Thompson.



Keith Beardsmore, Barry Roberts.



Lyn Inglis, Lisle Pryor.



Max Lollback, Roger Clarkson, Jim Hall.



Mick Terakes, Keith Beardsmore.



Ray Maher, Grant Small.



Scott and Leslie King.



Sheila Millar, Margaret Small, Barbara Kane



The ladies were smart – they got the comfy seats.



Later in the afternoon, everyone sat down and got a wonderful lunch.

The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.



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