

East Sale Reunion.

Over the weekend, (2 - 4 Nov) the people who served at East Sale held a reunion at the old Rathmines RAAF Base. For those who are unfamiliar with Rathmines, it is situated on Lake Macquarie, a few kilometres south of Newcastle. (Click [HERE](#) to see our earlier story). That weekend also coincided with the Catalina Festival which was also held on the now defunct Base and which drew thousands of people to see the HARS restored Consolidated PBV Catalina which flew up from Albion Park, landed on the Lake and taxied onto the Hardstand.

The reunion was the 4th held by the Ex-Salers. It started out as a “Box-Packer” reunion in 2006, but like all good ideas has grown to include anyone who served at East Sale – even ex-Radtechs are invited these days..... The first reunion was held at Sale, in 2008 they got together on the Sunshine Coast, in 2010 it was Adelaide’s turn and this year Rathmines. If you were at Sale the next reunion will be held in 2014 and if you served at Sale at any time in your career you had better be there or you’ll need a chit. Watch this space for details as the time gets closer.



As normal, all the organisation and planning was done by Harry Allie. We had the pleasure of meeting Harry for the first time over the weekend and what a remarkable man we found him to be. Harry comes from Charters Towers and is a descendant of the Kudjula Tribal group. After a short stint with the PMG, he joined the RAAF in 1966 and spent 23½ years at various Bases, including Butterworth, Sale and Laverton before retiring in 1989 with the rank of W/O. After discharge he stayed on in Defence then joined the Aust Public Service and finally pulled the pin in 2009.

During his Public Service career he was involved in many Indigenous programs and issues. He has been an influential voice in shaping the national government policies on Indigenous Employment, Education and Community Engagement and sits on various committees including:

- Chairperson - ATSI Advisory Committee Bankstown City Council
- Committee Member - Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Board Member - Bankstown Community Resource Group
- Committee Member - Nangahmi Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation
- Committee Member - Coloured Diggers Projects.

"Uncle" Harry was recently appointed as the first Air Force Indigenous Elder and will represent the RAAF on official occasions, advise on ways to increase indigenous participation in the RAAF and increase the RAAF's appeal as an employer of Indigenous Australians.



Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO meets with "Uncle" Harry at the [Badanami Centre](#) on the 22 October, 2012.

The reunion events were held in the old Rathmines Officers Mess, which is now the Rathmines Bowling Club and started with a “Meet and Greet” on the Friday night. Those present included:-



Bob and Jenny Eising.



Bob did his 20 years with the RAAF, part of which was spent in the Middle East on detachment to the UN and now retired, he and Jenny have settled on the Cooloola Coast in Qld. About 18 months ago he was recalling his time spent overseas and how, while there, he missed the little ‘every-day’ things which were not available. He and Jenny decided they would try and do

something for the blokes and blokettes serving in Afghanistan to make their time away from home more enjoyable so they started putting together and sending the troops “parcels” containing such familiar items as Arnotts biscuits, Golden Circle juices, Cadbury’s chocolates, Smiths crisps, Colgate tooth paste and of course, the perennial favourite, Vegemite. They fund this by setting up and selling sausages at a “sizzle” at the local Woolworths every second Saturday morning. Jenny said they cannot thank Woolworths enough as they provide all the ingredients FOC. People are only too eager to bag Woolies but as Jenny said perhaps they should stop and think a little first. Without their huge support, sending these parcels would not be possible.

To date they have sent over 380.

Virginia and Ralph Faber.



Ralph was at Sale from 1969 to 1972 as a Clerk Supply. During that period he also found time to coach the local footy team.

Bev and Harry Allie.



Bev was a West Ozzian and joined the RAAF in 1968 and was posted to Sale in the Clerical side of things. It was there that she met and was swept off her feet by a young and fit debonair young bloke from the bush. In 1969 she and Harry were married and due to the stupid law that was enforced at the time, she had to resign. Today they live in Sydney.

Marg Birrell and Jenny Hawryluk.



Marg joined the RAAF in 1966 as Margaret Goodland and was posted to Sale as a bright eyed and bushy-tailed Clerk G where she ran into the dashing Jim Birrell who persuaded her that

being married to him was a far better choice than living in the WRAFFery. She and Jim were married in 1968 and she too was forced to resign.

One can only wonder at the stupidity of such a law and imagine the huge number of dedicated, well trained and experienced girls that were denied to the RAAF during that period.

Mick and Jenny Hawryluk



Mick was at Sale from 1966 to 1978 as a Clerk A and it was there that Jenny, a local, caught his eye and he decided that he should stay on as long as he could so he could eventually persuade her to change her surname. Whenever a posting came up, it was easy for him, being in the Admin game, to replace his name with someone else's, allowing him to stay put until he had accomplished his mission.

There has to be a lot of blokes wondering why they were posted to Sale for only a week before being posted out again – well, now the secret's out!

Paul and Gerry Nannes.



Paul, being a Radtech, brought a bit of couth and culture to the reunion and it was more than one person who complained to us that even though they thought he was a nice bloke, they couldn't understand the three syllable words he spoke.

Harry and Vicky Wyatt



Harry met Vicky, who at the time was Vicky Wooley, at Sale in the period 1971 – 1981 when they were both East Sale-ites. Vicky was in the catering business and there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that the amount of scotch fillet, lobster, caviar and Grange Hermitage usually found at her place went down when she discharged.

Ray and Rose Martin



Ray was also in the catering game and once again, there is not a skerrick of truth in the rumour that the amount of scotch fillet at his house increased when he and Rose married – but he did have the reputation of putting on the best bar-b-q's in the street.

Because I'm a man, I must hold the television remote control in my hand while I watch TV. If the thing has been misplaced, I may miss a whole show looking for it....though one time I was able to survive by holding a calculator.....

David and Pam Coldie.



Pam was a clerk medical at Sale in 1966 when and where she met David. It is not a widely known fact (but we believe true) that Pam sneaked a couple of litres of chloroform off the base and when David regained consciousness he found he was married.

Errol and Mavis White.



Errol joined the RAAF back in 1961 (is anyone that old) and was a Clerk Supply and had two runs at East Sale, first time was in 1961 and then back again in 1970 where he stayed until 1975. The RAAF are still trying to work out why they needed a kitchen table and 6 chairs, 3 beds, a lounge suite, 2 door fridge, washing machine and dryer on a DC3.

Keith Kershaw.



Keith started life as a Sumpie at Sale but didn't like the oil under his finger nails so in 1973 he headed for Richmond and transferred into a Flight Engineer on the E Model Hercs – a change he's never regretted.

Pamela Pointon and Merv Reece.

Although not an ex-Saler, Merv and his lovely daughter Pamela were welcomed into the get-together when it was discovered that Merv was an ex-Framie and had been posted to Rathmines and worked on the Catalinas back in 1943. We were told that someone, we think it might have been John Broughton, suggested that with a daughter like Pamela, Merv would be welcome anywhere. Could well be!!



Merv joined the RAAF in 1942, just after his 18th birthday, (that puts him at a respectable 88 today) and did his rookies in Sandgate, a northern suburb of Brisbane. During the war the RAAF occupied the property known as [Eventide](#) and used it for one of their recruit training bases. After rookies, he was transferred down to Melbourne and billeted at Ascot Vale, where the Melbourne Show Ground is today, and it was here that he was taught his trade. From Ascot Vale, it was back north to 3 OTU and Rathmines and his first glimpse of the remarkable Catalina. Merv recalls that at one time there were a total of 42 aircraft moored at the base.

Click the pic to see Merv (arrowed) with his mates in Hut 12 in 1943

With the war drawing to a close, he was posted to the UK and 461 Sqn which flew the Sunderlands and while there the aircraft in which he was crewing, participated in the capture of a German submarine and then escorted it back to a port in the UK. Then, after Mr Hitler had met his maker, it was off to Germany to work on the Spitfires with 453 Sqn. In 1946, at Easter time, it was onto the freedom ship and back to Oz for de-mobbing.

It was great talking with Merv, he could vividly remember his time at Rathmines and it was good hearing his first-hand account of what went on. He had travelled down from Queensland and after all that time was looking forward to seeing the aircraft again on the following morning.



The Catalina arrived at Rathmines mid-morning Saturday and taxied up onto the hard stand and was immediately mobbed by thousands of people. The HARS people, who own and operate the aircraft, had arranged for Merv and about 15 or so of his contemporary mates to have the first look over the aircraft, a gesture they really appreciated.



Also on display were small sport float planes, like the Petrel (left) lots of old military equipment, food, drinks, information tents, things for the kids and a bunch of wonderful old vintage cars for the dads to check out.

The organisers had gone to a lot of trouble to ensure that apart from the Catalina, there was something for everyone.

You can see a program of events [HERE](#).



Back in 2008 an Alan Cameron completed a 1:350 scale model of the base as it was back in the war years and he had it on display for all to see, Click the pic above for a bigger and better view along with an index to show what's what.

Because I'm a man, you don't have to ask me if I liked the movie. Chances are, if you're crying at the end of it, I didn't. And, if you're feeling amorous afterwards, then I will certainly remember the name and recommend it to others.

The amusement area, where the general stores used to be – click the pic for a better view.



Saturday night.



On the Saturday night, everyone gathered at the old Officers Mess for a sit down dinner. This was too good an opportunity to waste and it quickly morphed into a “pay-out” on poor old Harry who took it on the chin and having a very good memory was able to toss back a few embarrassing barbs of his own.

Jim Birrell (left) led the charge on Harry recalling a few amorous moments they shared with some of the local Sale-ettes.

Once Jim had finished, the floodgates opened and it seems everyone had a story to tell about Harry and his juvenile exploits.



Harry Wyatt (above left) and Neil Short also opened up on Harry who at one stage went from dark to a bright red.



When Katrine McCann stood up to tell her story, we noticed Bev Allie look at Harry with an air of expectation but Harry was safe, Katrine either didn't know of any of Harry's exploits or wasn't saying – but the same can't be said of Steve "Paddy" McCormick who recalled quite a few humorous moments after which he gave us all his blessing – Dominus Vobiscum!



And as all this was going on, Peter “Moe” Mowlam sat back with his cold schooner and a big grin on his face and really enjoyed the evening.

Because I'm a man, I think what you're wearing is fine. I thought what you were wearing five minutes ago was fine, too... either pair of shoes is fine. With the belt or without it. Everything looks fine. Your hair is fine. You look fine. Can we just go now?

The group – click the pic for a bigger view.



Front Row (L-R): Rosemary Martin, Kay Short, Julka Shaughnessy, Gerry Nannes, Bev Allie, Harry Allie, Errol White, Mavis White, Jenny Hawryluk.

Second Row L-R: Katrine McCann, Pam Simpson, Jenni Eising, Pam Condie, Jackie Kershaw, Marg Birrell, Saron Warton, Jenny Mudie

Third Row L-R: Ray Martin, Bob Eising, Vicki Wyatt, Ros McCormick, Paddy McCormick, Marie Roberts, Virginia Faber, Harry Warton, Mick Hawryluk.

Back Row L-R: Ray Martin (Obscured), Bob Eising, Harry Wyatt, Vickie Wyatt, Paul Nannes, Ian Shaughnessy, Jack Simpson, Barry Roberts, Keith Kershaw, Graham Poole, Jim Birrell, Ralph Faber, David Condie, Phil Mudie, Peter Mowlam (Obscured).

And click [HERE](#) to see table views.

And then it was time to go, a lot of the die-hards were fronting again in the morning for sick parade and breakfast, to recall the events of the past two days, to say their good-byes and to promise each other they would be at the 2014 event.

Just one single fact can ruin a good argument.

Fighter World – Williamtown.

If you fly into Newcastle and you've got an hour or so to spare, you should turn left at the T junction and have a look though the Fighter World museum.

Located adjacent to the entrance to Willytown, Fighter World is a museum housing most of the fighter aircraft flown by the RAAF and is definitely worth the visit. It is a relatively new facility having been officially opened in 1991. Since then it has had an active relationship with the RAAF and the Newcastle and Port Stephens Tourist Associations, being recognised as one of the area's most popular attractions.



Fighter World will soon take another step forward with the expansion of exhibition and retail areas including the very latest in interactive multi-media technology adding another dimension to the overall visitor experience.

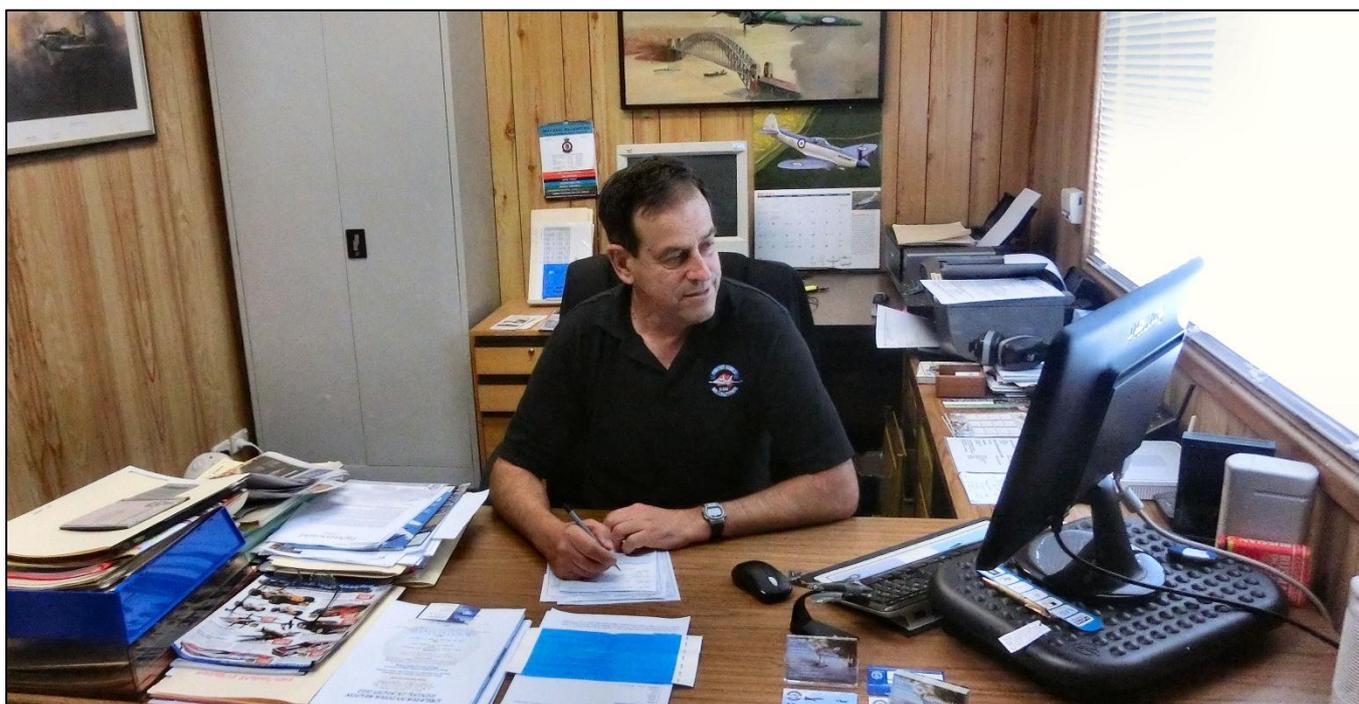
The Museum is open every day from 10.00am to 4.00pm - except for Christmas Day. Admission charges are:

Adults	\$12.00
Child/Pensioner/Senior	\$10.00
Family	\$35.00
Group Rate (16+ people)	\$10.00 per person
School Groups	\$6.00 per person

A very good "Cafe Fighter World" is attached to the main museum complex and this caters for both takeaway and sit-down meals.



The museum is easy to find, with the old SURAD antenna out the front. Terry Wells, the Museum's manager was kind enough to show us through the exhibitions and give us the run of the place for an hour or so.





Part of the many aircraft on display in the Museum.



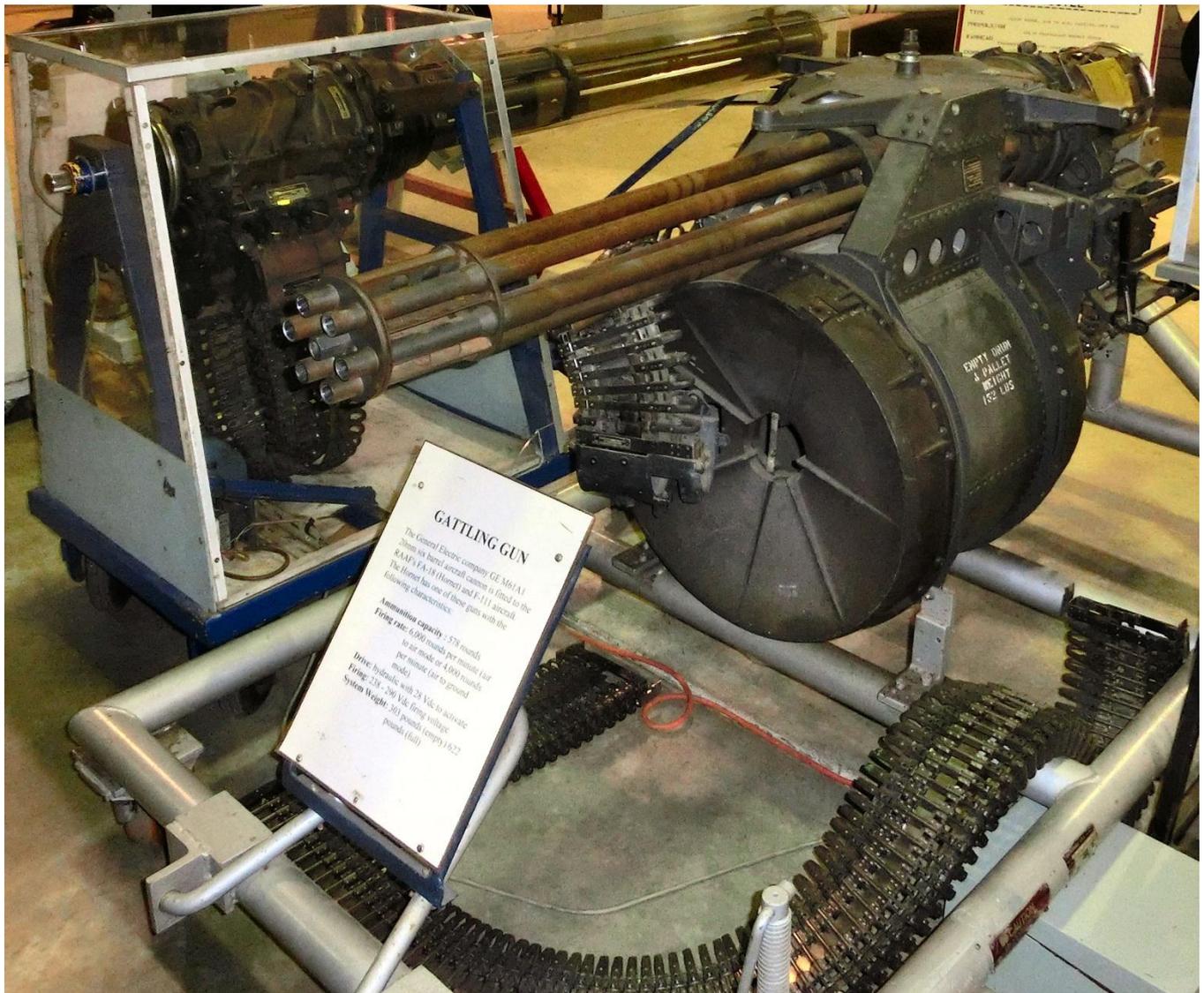


Part of a Mirage in which you can sit – these aircraft were obviously designed for people who are on the lighter side of average as there is not a lot of room in there. A slight problem for the pilots would be watching the knees if one ever had to bang out, normally when seated the knees are below the instrument panel and unless you tucked them up under your chin there is the very real possibility that you would leave them in the aeroplane when you exited.

Another obvious observation is to see how “old” the gear is now. The RAAF started to take delivery of the aircraft back in 1964, that puts them at nearly 50 years old and even though the airframe still looks good, the gear inside definitely belongs to yesterday.

The radio/nav/radar gear was in black boxes placed all over the aircraft – wherever there is/was a spare spot and you needed 3 elbows to get at it. Until now I didn’t appreciate how easy it was working on A model Hercs.

The multi-barrel gun (below) was fitted to the F111 and is now fitted to the FA-18. The belt holds a maximum of 578 rounds and is capable of firing 6000 rounds a minute in air to air mode and 4000 rounds a minute in air to ground mode. If you pressed the tit and held it down it would empty the belt in just over 5.5 secs.



Terry says the Museum occasionally clears the section in the middle of the display (see pic above) and people have rented the museum for various celebrations, wedding breakfasts, celebratory dinners, 21 birthdays etc which are held in an aviation atmosphere.

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.