

Fairbairn.

Recently we were in Canberra and someone had suggested to us that Fairbairn had changed a bit so we thought we'd take a look. Having never been posted there we didn't know what it was like previously – but we knew a bloke who would. Paul Spackman had spent some time there with 5 Squadron after he'd done a stint at Vung Tau with 9 Squadron, so we contacted him and asked if he would give us a tour – and after we'd passed over the required 3 cartons, he agreed.



Paul said most of the time he spent at Fairbairn was a bit of a blur but he said he'd do his best.

We've included a Google map of the base (below) and added letters which will correspond with each photo so you know from where each photo was taken. These pics are sure to bring back a lot of fond memories for a lot of people.

You can click some pics for a bigger/clearer view.



A



First thing you notice is there is now no restriction on entering. The guard house and the boom are still there but the guard house is empty and the boom is always up. You can now just drive in – which we did.

B



The Base Sqn Fireys used to park their big red trucks at the back of the guard house, but no longer.

It doesn't look like it's used at all these days, probably could be a store room or something.

They say you burn off as many calories having sex as you do running for 8 kilometres.
Garbage!!! Who can run 8 kilometres in 30 seconds??

B

C



The brick 'blocks' which used to house blokes from Base and 34 Squadron are long gone and in their place are now new buildings housing the Department of Defence.

D



The little Base Squadron building maintenance hut, with the new Airman's Mess behind. Base Sqn Firey's hut just visible to the right of the mntce hut, to the left of the two pines.

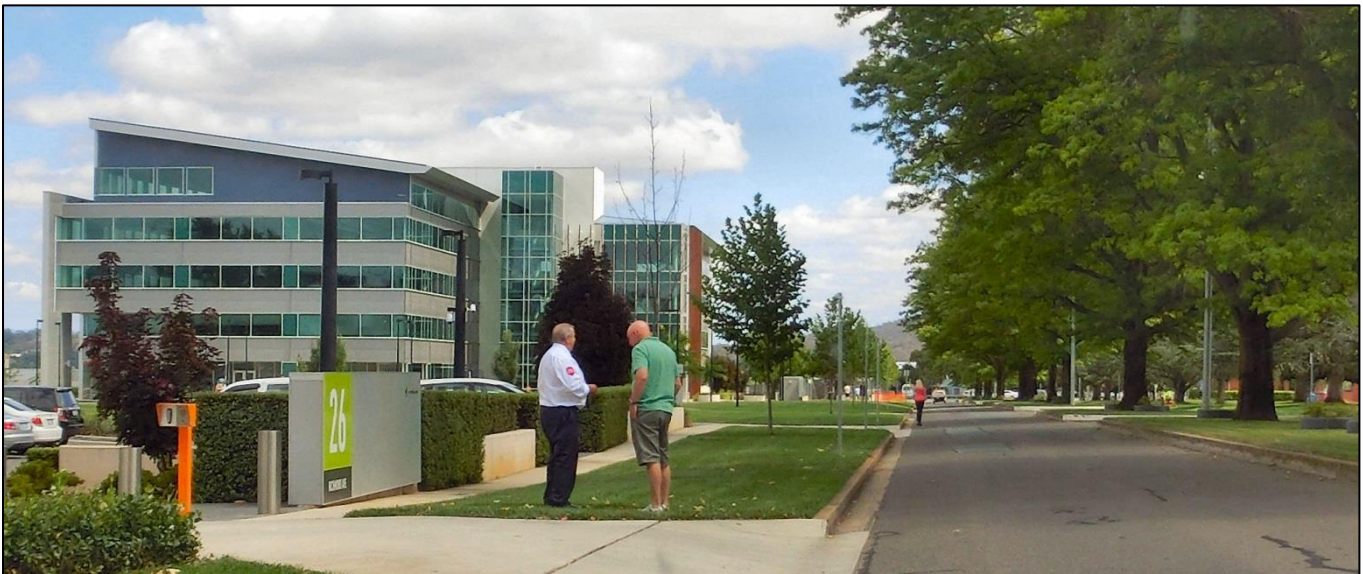
While shopping for holiday clothes, my husband and I passed a display of bathing suits. It had been at least ten years and twenty pounds since I had even considered buying a bathing suit, so I sought my husband's advice. 'What do you think?' I asked. 'Should I get a bikini or an all-in-one?' 'Better get a bikini,' he replied. 'You'd never get it all in one.' He's still in intensive care.

E



The new Airman's Mess.

F



G

D



This corner, just inside the front gate, is the site where 5 Sqn personnel used to live and also the site of the old transit huts.

H



E

H



This is the site of the old Airman's Mess and the “new” Airman's Boozer – now also gone. Paul said he might be a bit hazy about other sites but he can remember this one quite clearly.

H



Directly opposite the previous pic, this is the site of the old Airman's “Boozer” – which was demolished about 1966.

F

I



The old ASCO shop and theatre. Today this building is used as a child minding centre for kids of the people who work on the base.

F



The old ASCO shop and theatre

G

J



The old Base hospital, now the ACT offices of the Cancer Council.

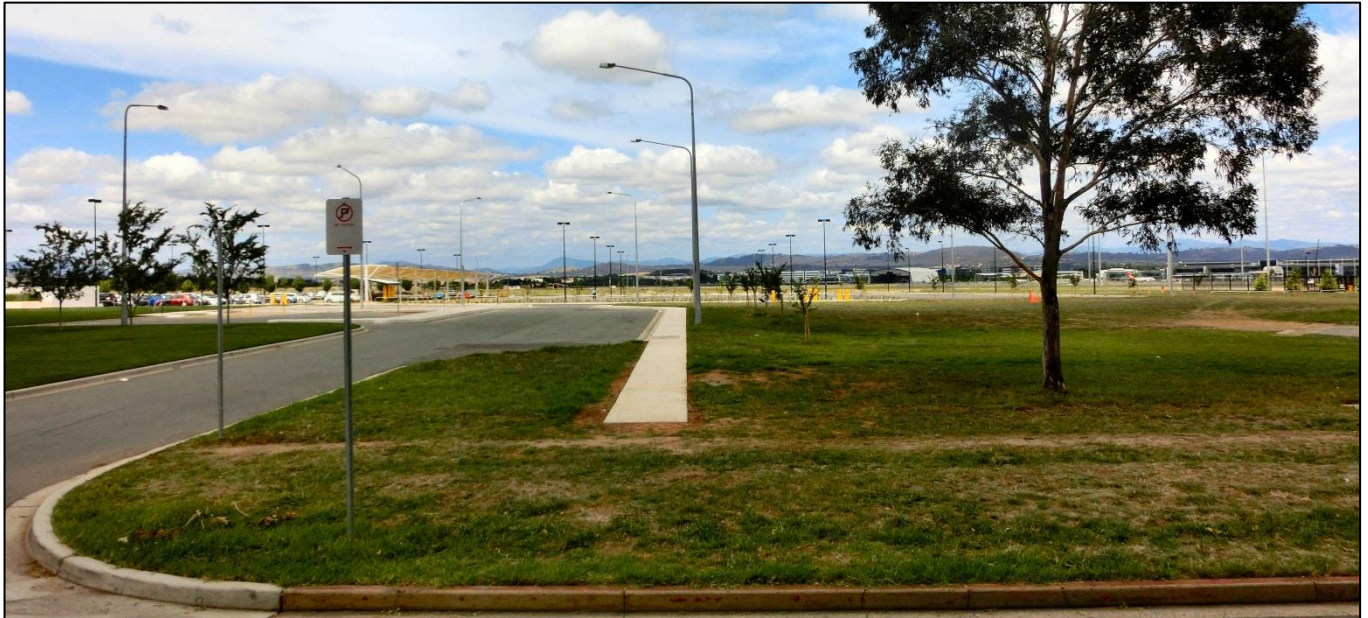
J



Over the road from the old hospital, where once stood the old Base Squadron Headquarters, is now part of the Department of Defence.

H

K



Where once was the 5 Squadron hard-stand.

L



The old Parade Ground, now put to good use – as a car park. The small building on the left is the guard room at the entrance to what is now a much smaller RAAF Fairbairn.

L



The “New” 34 Squadron hangar.

N



Old Maintenance Hangar

Whoever said "laughter is the best medicine," has obviously never tasted Scotch!

J

O



“Old” 5 Squadron Hangar

P



5 Sqn workshops, Queer Trades upstairs, downstairs, Framies on the left, Sumpies on the right.

K

Q



Old 34 Sqn hangar.

R



Experience is the thing you have left when everything else is gone.

L

S



Belman Hangar

S



Looking to the left, with the Belman Hangar on the right, the tree in middle of the pic is where 5 Sqn did their engine runs.

M

S



Turning 180 degrees, from the picture above. Canberra airport today, with the old 34 Sqn hangar at left.

T



The old Sgt's Mess.

N

U



Old Sgt's Mess

V



This area is where the WRAAFs used to live, the buildings have long gone and all that is left is this open ground.

W



Old married quarters. These houses are still being used.

X



There are times, when you wonder if people think with their back-sides.
Then there are the times, you are sure.

P

Edinburgh.

After we left Avalon, after the air show, we decided to return to Brisbane via the great circle route, tracking coastal via the Great Ocean Road and Rocky McGregor's wonderful city, Mt Gambia.



Then it was on to Adelaide and parts north and as we had a few days in Adelaide, in our opinion, a much changed city and definitely worth a visit, we rang and asked whether we could have a look over Edinburgh. We went through rookies in Edinburgh back in 1965 and we expected a few changes – but nothing like what we found.

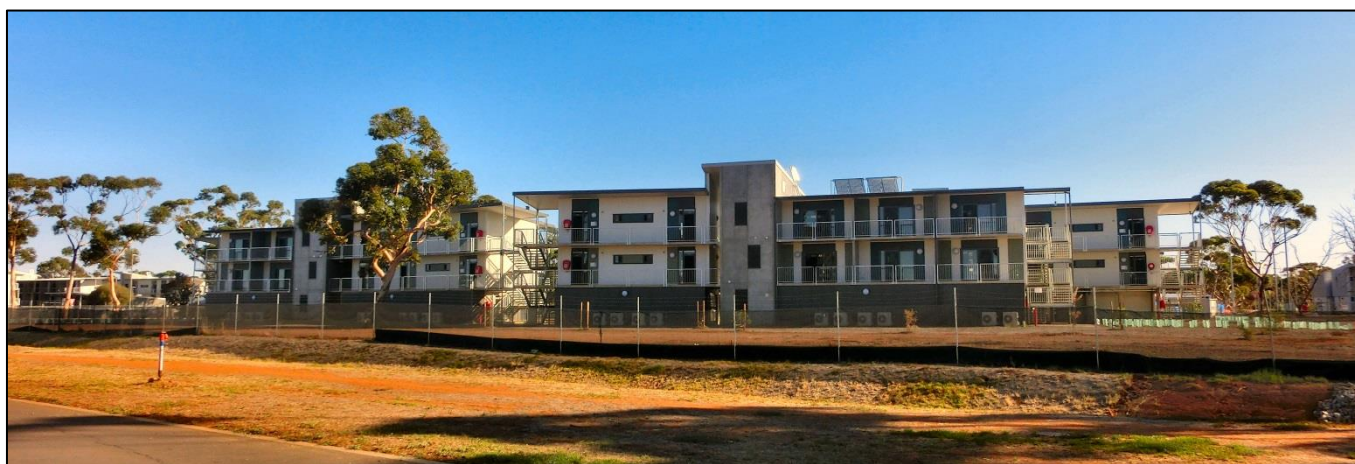


Above, the tram stop in Victoria Square, Adelaide.

Wng Cdr Rick Subotkiewicz was kind enough to give up some of his day and show us around the base and we thank him for that but unfortunately, when we got to the base we found our camera battery was not as full as we thought and it ran out half way through. We took a bunch of photos but not all wrote to disk. We'll have to go back!!



Only one of the old rooky airman's block buildings (above) remains and it is no longer a living area, these days it is used to house the Airbase Command Centre which is the co-ord centre for the Base.

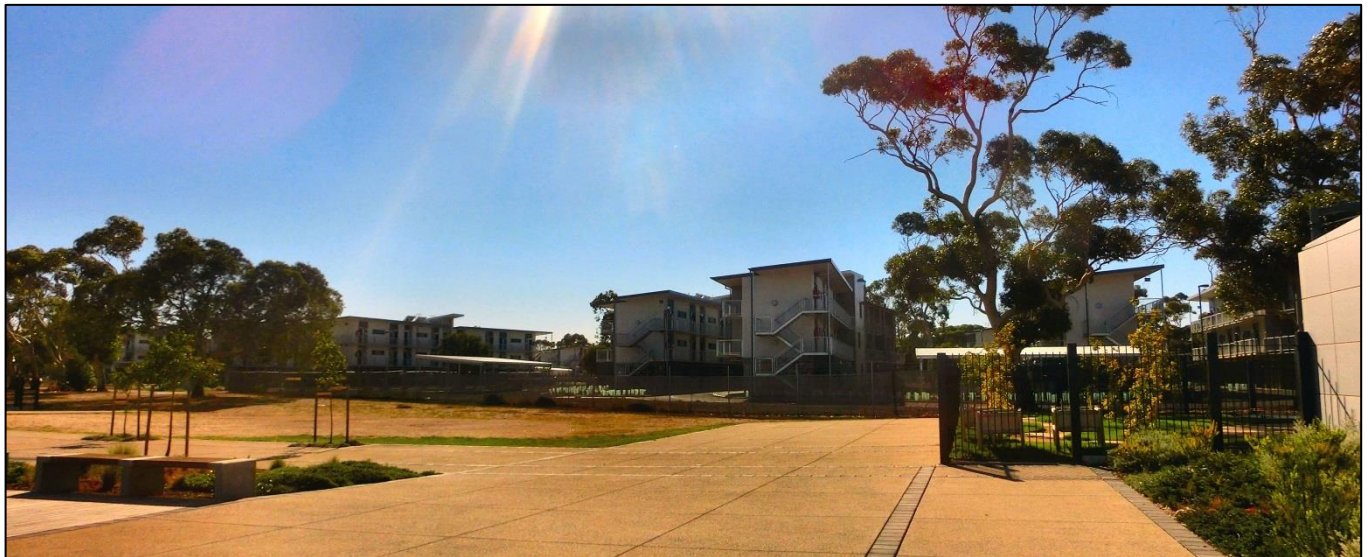


In their place are the modern buildings above. No more 4 persons to a room and a walk down the open veranda to the ablution block, these buildings are akin to a modern unit block anywhere in a city.

Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.



The first impression you get when entering the base is one of importance and professionalism. Everything is new and fresh. It gives the impression of proficiency, it just looks like something important and hi-tec is being done there by highly trained people. You don't see groups of people aimlessly marching from here to there in baggy old overalls, instead the people you do see all look fit and if not working usually have towels around their necks and are either heading to or leaving the base gym.



The first myth of good management is that it exists.



The new Base gymnasium, this facility is available for use by all persons on the Base when ever they desire and is also used as a rehab centre.



More of the Base gymnasium complex. This section contains the full length Olympic pool.

If Diamonds are a girl's best friend.
and a dog is a man's best friend,
which is the dumber sex?



The building above is the Airman's Mess section of the Base Messing complex. Similar to what we found at [Gallipoli Barracks](#) in Brisbane a few months back, the Officers', Sergeants' and Airmans' Messes are built around a common kitchen with the one kitchen supplying the food to all messes. This is a much better and efficient method of providing food to the troops and one wonders why it has taken so long to implement it.



The pic above is the current example of what we used to call ASCO. As well as the retail shop (on the left above) this little centre also houses the Base Post Office, credit union and of course the Base hair dresser. It also has the Airman's "Boozer" which looks like it is hardly used. No longer is it "compulsory" to have the half a dozen coldies every day after stand-down. It seems drinking on a base, after hours, has gone the way of smoking, what was once the accepted 'norm' is now very rare and possibly frowned upon. This photo was taken about 10.30am on a normal work day with not a person in sight.

For every action there is an equal and opposite Government program.



Another huge change on Edinburgh is the addition of the Army. The building above houses the 1st Brigade's headquarters.

In 2006, the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, part of the [1st Brigade](#), along with subunits from the 8th/12th Medium Regiment, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment and 1st Combat Service Support Battalion was moved to Adelaide, where they are now based at Edinburgh. The 1st Brigade comprises the First Armoured Regiment and operates the Army's main Battle Tank.



Air Movements at Edinburgh now resembles a busy freight terminal at a capital city airport.



The “new” base hospital would be the envy of many a small town.



Although the modernisation of the Base is clearly evident, not everything old has been discarded. This solid building was built and used during WWII as a munitions storage bunker. It has been retained and sits about half way between the main gate and the aircraft tarmac area. It will probably outlast us all.

Q. What did God say after making Adam?
A. I can do better.



The Base Parade Ground has also been retained, but these days the area where the salute is taken has a roof to protect the salutor from the sun. We don't know how often it is used but you can bet it is not every day as it once was.



The Base Cinema is still there and still shows movies, but it seems its days are numbered. It still shows movies the "old" way, via celluloid film and a lamp projector as the equipment has not been upgraded to show the current digital media. It seems funds are available for lots of

other things but not to bring the Base Cinema up to speed and as most movies these days are provided in digital format, it is finding it hard to attract patrons.



We remember, from our time at the Base back in 1965, that the only time we were allowed off Base was after 3.00pm on a Friday and we had to be back by mid-night Sunday. And, as South Aust was in the grip of 6.00 o'clock closing back then, as soon as we were stood down, showered and cadged a lift, most of us raced into the nearby town of Elizabeth to sample some of SA's famous Southward in a 'civilised' atmosphere. The Rookies Boozer back then was a room, a trestle table, a keg and a pluto gun – really sophisticated.

If we got a surprise at the changes at the Base, we found the changes to the Elizabeth Shopping Centre were just as momentous. Long gone is the supermarket and little group of shops and in its place is this monolith.

It was great to see it all again and a pity the camera didn't record everything.

Q. Then what did He say after creating Eve?

A. Woops, guess, I was wrong.

Brief History of 1 RTU

Prior to the formation of 1 RTU the training of recruits was performed across a number of training units across Australia. With the establishment of 1 RTU on 2 August 1954 at RAAF Base Richmond the training of recruits was centralised to a single unit. The unit then relocated a number of times, firstly to RAAF Base Rathmines on 28 April 1958, then to RAAF Base Wagga on 30 November 1960. RAAF Base Edinburgh on 27 March 1964 and then back to RAAF Base Wagga in 2008.

In 1950 the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) was established. Training of WRAAF recruits was undertaken separately to male recruits entering the RAAF. Early training of female recruits was undertaken in several locations until a WRAAF Recruit Training Flight was eventually incorporated into 1RTU on 21 July 1965. With the absorption of the WRAAF into the RAAF in 1977 the function of training female recruits was transferred to Women's Training Unit (WTU) in Tottenham on 13 June 1976. After a second move to RAAF Laverton from January 1977 until January 1981 WTU was disbanded and the responsibility of training both male and female recruits was vested in 1RTU at RAAF Base Edinburgh.

In 1975, Her Majesty The Queen approved the unit badge and motto 'Across the Threshold' with the two headed Roman god 'Janus' the god of gateways and the protector of all beginnings. A motto considered most appropriate to the function of 1RTU.

On the 4th October 1989, His Excellency, The Honourable Bill Hayden, AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, presented the Governor-Generals Banner to 1 Recruit Training Unit. The presentation of the Governor-Generals Banner is awarded to recognise the achievements and service of non-operational units that are ineligible for Squadron Standards but which have completed 25 years service.

The awarding of the Governor Generals Banner to 1 RTU was a positive recognition of the contribution of the unit to the effectiveness of one of the world's finest Air Forces. The 1RTU Governor Generals Banner is now regularly paraded on graduation parades throughout the year