

The RAM.

Vol 48

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

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REOA.

The RAAF Engineering Officers Association (REOA) is a group of mainly (but not exclusively) retired RAAF Engineer Officers who meet on a regular basis in Melbourne.



The purpose of the REOA is to foster a common interest group to provide long term, ongoing contact and support to past and current serving RAAF Engineer Officers and their partners. They hold regular lunches at the Batman's Hill Hotel which is on the corner of Spencer and Collins Streets in Melbourne and on Thursday the 6th November 2014, we were lucky enough to sneak in on their last one.



The Batman's Hill Hotel, Melbourne.

Rick Toholka, an ex radio brat from 19 Appy, who gave up the overalls and became "sirred", is the current President and he and everyone else made us feel very welcome, we thank them all for that.

Some of the people who were at the luncheon include: (you can click each pic for a bigger view.)



Past and present Presidents.



L-R: Kevin Leslie, (inaugural President) Rick Toholka, (current President), Rod Ledingham (immediate past President).

Kevin was the inaugural President of the REOA. He joined the RAAF in 1956 as a radio Appy on 13 Appy and retired many years later as a Wng Cdr. Rick is the current President, he joined as an Appy (19 Appy) in 1965 and eventually retired as a Sqn Ldr and Ron, who is the immediate past President, also joined as an Appy (18 Appy) and he also retired with the rank of Sqn Ldr.

Must have been something in the water at Appy-Land back then. We reckon it would be an interesting exercise to see how many brats, from both Laverton and Wagga, went on to a commission, as compared to blokes from Thick-Land. My guess the brats would win hands down!!



Early in the afternoon, before the troops got settled, President Rick read them the riot act, advising them to conduct themselves as gentlemen at all times as this was, after all, a civilian establishment and management would not take too kindly to their normal boisterous behaviour.

There was to be no jumping on tables, no throwing of plates and definitely no shedding of costumes.



L-R: Dion McDonald, Don McDonald, Bob Brackin. Dion was a guest of his dad – Don who started life as an electrician, was commissioned and retired a Wng Cdr. Bob was also an ex-Bratt, starting his career in the electrical game before retiring as a Wng Cdr.



L-R: John Baker, Carol Gould.

John joined in 1964 as a Diploma Cadet, graduated as an EngAero and went on to retire as a Gp Capt.



L-R: Brian Livingston, Colin Giles.

Brian also started life as a radio brat, back in 1956 (10 Appy) and retired a Flt Lt. Col joined in 1965, as a Diploma Cadet and graduated as an EngAero. He retired as a Wng Cdr.



L-R: Laurie Baldwin, Ken Henderson.

Laurie Bratted through Wagga, in 1964, and retired a Wg Cdr. Ken started his career at the Academy in 1971, was commissioned as an EngAero and retired a Wg Cdr.



L-R: Laurie Lindsay, Don McDonald, Bob Brackin.

Laurie was Frognalised on 14 Appy, was commissioned and retired gracefully as a Wng Cdr. Don and Bob are both from Wagga, both were commissioned EngElecs, Don retired a Wg Cdr, Bob a Sqn Ldr.



L-R: Peter Jupp, Geoff Schmidt.

Peter Jupp was a Radio Brat (15 Appy) then eventually advanced to wear the funny hat badge. After a successful career he retired a Sqn Ldr.



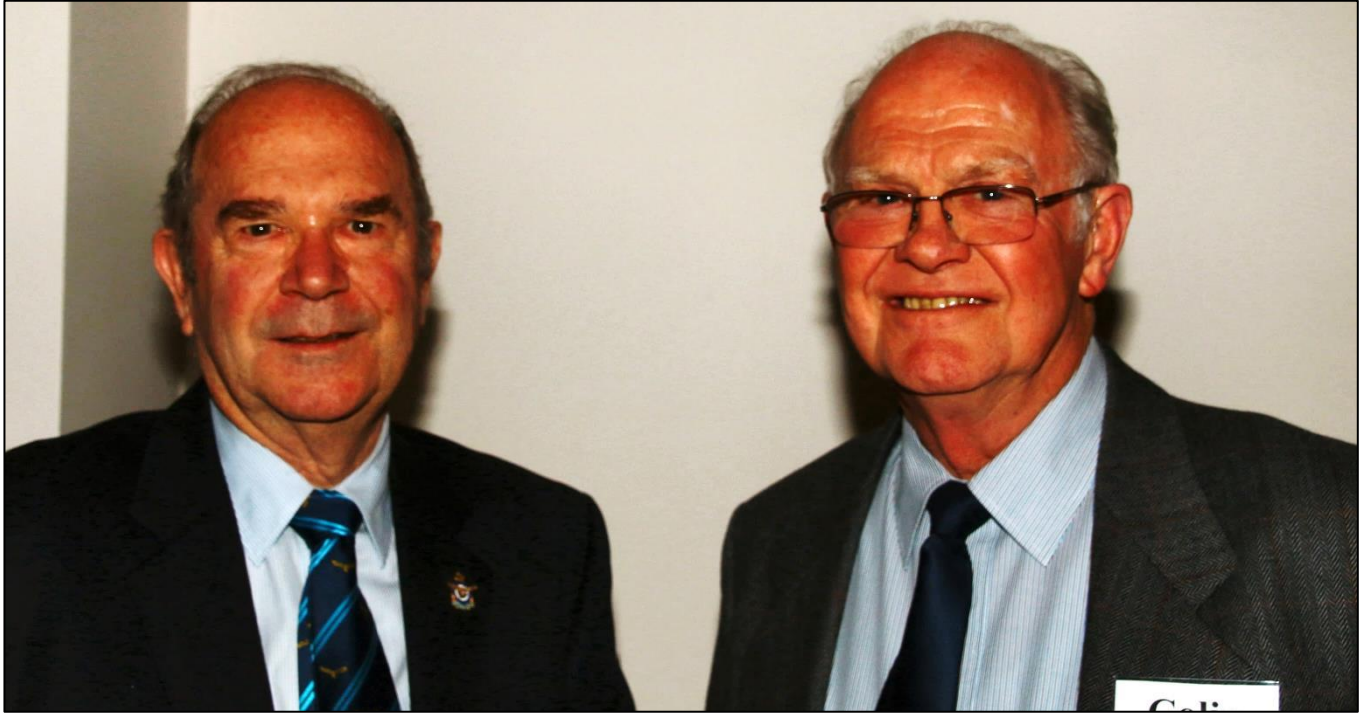
L-R: Val Robinson, GarryThomsen.

A lot of people would remember Val, all with fond memories too we would suggest. Val, one of the few who didn't start life as a brat, joined the RAAF in 1964 and was posted to Radschool at Laverton to study as a Telsmech. After graduating he went west for a few months then back to Laverton for his conversion to a Tech – then back to Pearce again. Then it was up to Darwin for a couple of years and where he got his Cpl hooks. In 1974 he was posted from Darwin down to 1AD at Laverton where he got his third. With the third on his arm and sick of the overalls, he applied for and was successful in obtaining a commission.

In 1978, as a Flt Lt he was off to Butterworth for 2 years as the OIC GTE maintenance then back to Aust and as penance spent a year at HQSC where he got his Sqn Ldr's. In 1983 it was back to 1AD at Laverton as the OIC then chief engineer of the radar branch. From 1985 to 1990 he had various postings and duties, some in Canberra, others back on St Kilda Rd, during which time he was promoted to Wng Cdr. In 1990 he was posted back to Laverton, this time as the CO of Radschool, a job he stayed at and loved until 1992.

After Radschool, until his retirement in March 1998 as a Wng Cdr, life was spent at various HQ buildings around the country, this involved a lot of travelling and meeting and greeting various people.

Garry was on 19 Radio Appy and after graduating in August 1967, was eventually commissioned and retired a Sqn Ldr.



L-R: Richard Orr, Colin Lacey.

Richard joined as a Radio Brat (10 Appy) and retired a Wng Cdr.



L-R: Bob Bennett, Carol Gould, Glen Gould.



L-R: David Jamison AM, Rick Toholka, Rod Ledingham, Alf Jaugietis.

David is the National President of the Defence Force Welfare Association and was the guest speaker at the function. He had a career in the Army and retired as a Colonel in 1997 (Group Captain in the old money). He is a graduate of the Officer Cadet School at Portsea in Victoria, after which he obtained a Corporate Director's Diploma at the University of New England, an Advanced Certificate in Public Administration (RMIT) and completed the Logistic Executive Development Program at Michigan State in the US and also at Monash Uni.

David served in Vietnam with the Ordinance Corps as a Lieutenant from May 1966 to May 1967,

As well as being the National President of the Defence Force Welfare Association, he is also an active advocate for serving and former ADF members. He is consulted by federal parliamentarians of all persuasions and has worked to bring about a more coordinated approach among the national leadership of ESO's. His efforts towards improving conditions for serving and former members of the ADF have led to a greater public recognition and awareness of the issues impacting service men and women and have resulted in beneficial changes to both the Government and Opposition policy platforms. He has been an RSL member since 1967 and once held the position of the Secretary of the Washington, DC RSL Sub Branch. He is currently the President of the Ringwood (Vic) RSL Sub Branch.

Having completed his tenure he relinquished the appointment of Honorary Colonel RAAOC (Victoria / Tasmania) in November 2009. He is a life member of the Australian Army White Water Association.

He is a former Senior Fellow of the Corporate Director's Association and Member of the Australian Institute of Management.

David was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1997 for exceptional service as the Army's Director of Capital Procurement at Army Headquarters.

Alf Jaugietis is an Executive Director of the Defence Welfare Association.



Standing L-R: Garry Jarvis, Rod Ledingham, Rick Toholka
Seated L-R: Bob Hood, John Clarkson.



L-R: Bob Fretwell, Margaret Pollett, Jack Pluck, Bernie Pollett.

The Balloonist.

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted: 'Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago but I don't know where I am.' The woman below replied, 'You're in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You're between 35 and 40 degrees south latitude and between 145 and 150 degrees east longitude.'

'You must be an Engineer,' said the balloonist. 'I am,' replied the woman, 'how did you know?' 'Well,' answered the balloonist, 'everything you have told me is probably technically correct, but I've no idea what to make of your information and the fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all. If anything, you've delayed my trip by your talk.'

The woman below responded, 'You must be in a senior Officer in the Air Force.' 'I am,' replied the balloonist, 'but how did you know?' 'Well,' said the woman, 'you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are, due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise, which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my bloody fault.'

3 Squadron.

3 Sqn was formed at Point Cook in September 1916 and moved to England on HMAT Ulysses for training on AVRO 504 and BE-2e aircraft. This training lasted for eight months before the Sqn deployed to France the following year. It was initially designated 2 Squadron but on the 31st March 1917 (in England) it was redesignated 69 Squadron (Australian) Royal Flying Corps (RFC) then again on the 20th January 1918 it was finally designated 3 Squadron AFC. During WW1 its aircraft were used for bombing and reconnaissance missions in support of British, Canadian and ANZAC forces and, by the end of hostilities, the unit was regarded as the best allied reconnaissance squadron in the war.



One of the most unusual incidents of World War I occurred in December 1917 when a No 3 Squadron RE8 was attacked by six Albatross scouts. After bringing down one enemy aircraft, the gunner was mortally wounded by a bullet which passed through his chest before striking the pilot in the head, killing him instantly. Although damaged, the RE8 continued to fly by itself until it ran out of fuel and landed relatively intact in a snow drift some fifty miles from the scene of the combat. The Albatross brought down in this engagement was presented to Australia as a war trophy and is now on display at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. (See [HERE](#))

No 3 Squadron was involved in another unusual event on 21 April 1918 when two of its aircraft on a photographic mission were attacked by four German fighters led by Baron von Richthofen, the famous Red Baron. Despite the fact that these German pilots were the elite of the German Air Service, the lumbering Australian reconnaissance machines drove them off. Looking for easier pickings, the Red Baron made the mistake of descending to low level over the ANZAC front line, where he was shot down and killed. The Red Baron's body was subsequently recovered by No 3 Squadron and buried with full military honours. No 3 Squadron held the remains of his crimson red tri-plane in custody until they could be handed over to the authorities. Several components from the Red Baron's aircraft are now on display at the RAAF Museum.

After the commencement of World War II, No 3 Squadron sailed for Egypt, where, despite being heavily outnumbered, they provided air support to the 8th Army during the ebb and flow of the desert campaign. No 3 Squadron later participated in the liberation of Italy and Yugoslavia where the squadron was well regarded for its highly accurate attacks against enemy shipping. With a score of 217 enemy aircraft destroyed, No 3 Squadron remains the highest scoring fighter squadron of the Air Force.

After deploying to Malaya in 1958, No 3 Squadron Sabres and later Mirages, operated from Butterworth as part of the five-power defence arrangement. Following its return to Williamtown in 1986, 3 Squadron received its first Hornets and, with these state-of-the-art aircraft, the

squadron continues its role as one of the nation's most vital defence assets. In early 2002, No 3 Squadron performed air defence operations from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean as part of the coalition in the International War Against Terrorism.

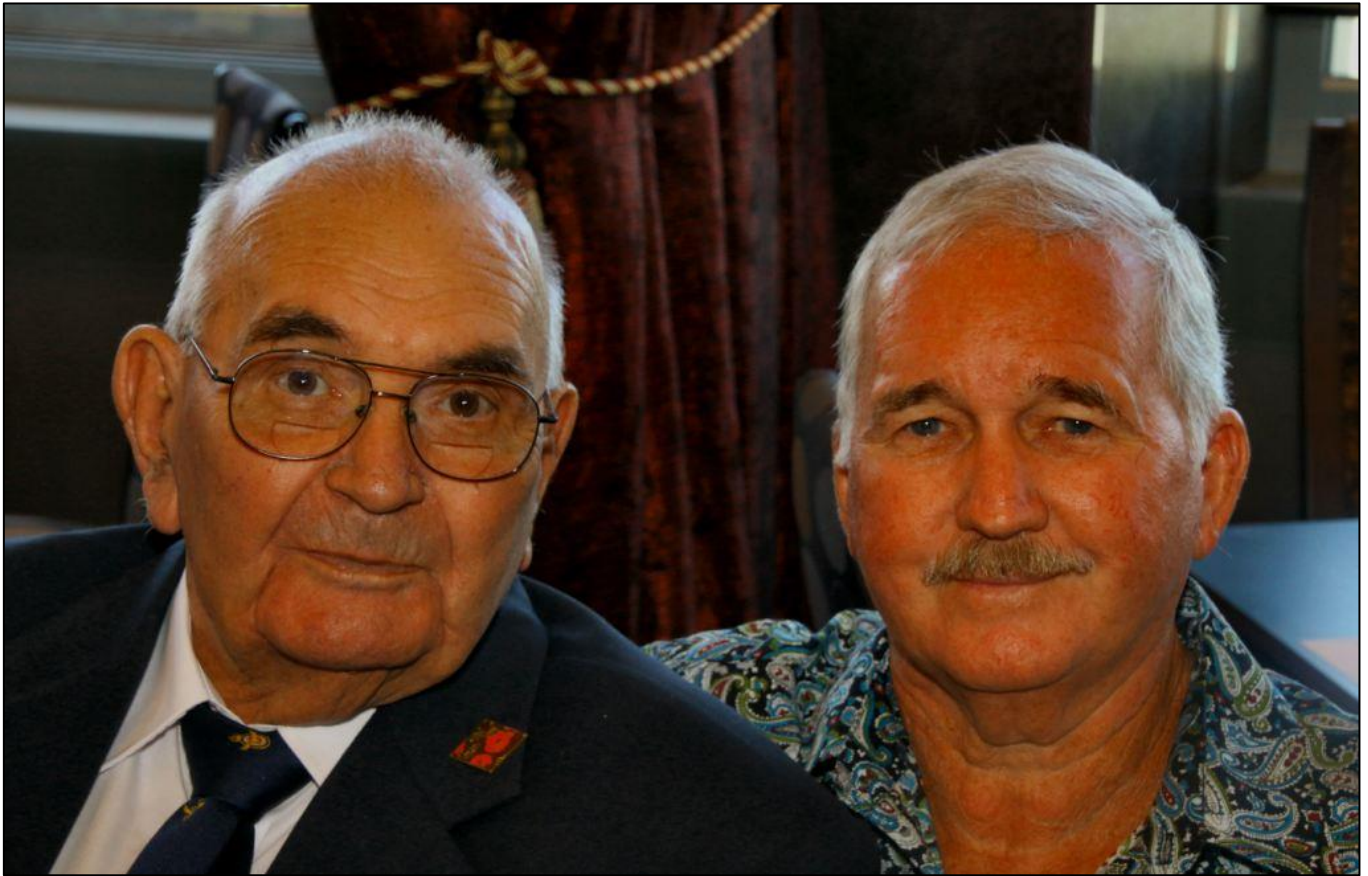


3 Squadron people, both past and present are a proud bunch, a lot of past members regularly hold social get togethers where people come from all over the country to meet again old friends, to share a good meal and a few drinks to relive the old days which seem to get wilder, bolder, more dangerous and funnier each year.

In November (2014) they met at the Caloundra RSL for lunch and some quiet refreshment and we went along.

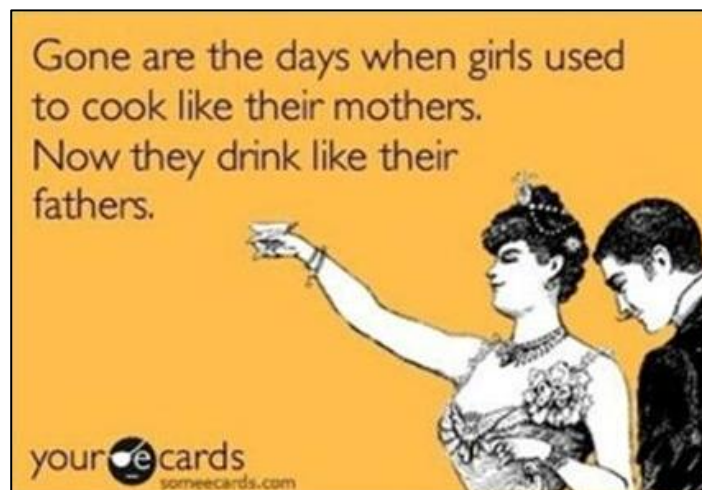


Those at the get together included: (All pic named Left to Right)



L-R: Ted Plant, Noel Sullivan.

These days Ted is not fairing too well, his kidneys aren't doing the job as well as they should and he needs the daily assistance of a dialysis machine to keep the old bod serviceable. Ted lives up in Bundaberg (about 300klms north) and it's a measure of the man and of his fondness for his old Squadron and the mates he made while working under the banner that, despite his condition, he made the effort to "suit up" and make the trip down to Caloundra to be a part of the reunion. Tell that to your civvy mates – they won't believe you!!





Allen Chisea, Mal Jamieson, Irma Chiesa, Lois Jamieson.



Bob and Irene Auld.



Brenda Vogelzang, Meg Sanderson, Sheena Miller.



Brian Hart, John Porter, John McDonald, Jeannette McDonald, Kay Hart, Pauline Porter.



Carol Hall, Graham Sutcliffe.



Dick Jones, Lisle Pryor.



Jean Newman, Barry and Marie Roberts, Pedro Newman.



Jeff Latter, Annie Jones. Jeff is the Secretary of the Queensland Branch.



Jim Hall, Gus Winen. Jim is the President of the Queensland Branch.



John and Barbara Kane.



Keith Beardsmore, Chris Cooper.



Leslie Farrell, Geoff and Jan Partridge, Bill Farrell.



Leslie Farrell, June Handley, Chris Cooper.



Keith Beardsmore, Ted Plant.



Maxine Winen, Marie Latter.



Neil and June Handsley.



Pat Rowell, Jan Partridge.



Sue and Ray Maher.



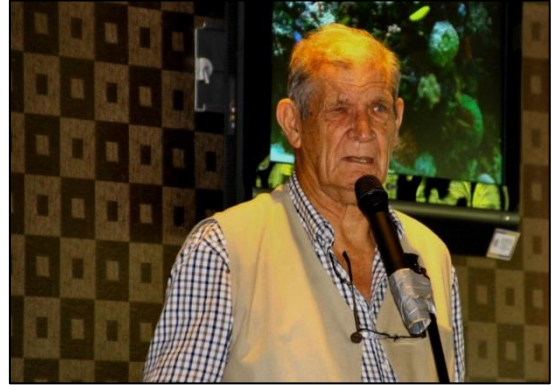
John and Jeannette McDonald.

After everyone had eaten a hearty lunch, it was time to head back to the private “Members Only” bar area where everyone was entertained by “Long John” Best.

For those that don’t know John, he’s an ex 3 Squadron armourer and a more laid back and laconic bloke you have to look hard to find. He was born in England in 1938 and migrated to Australia in 1948 and joined the RAAF as an appy in 1954 and spent the next 15 years as an Armament Fitter which included two years, (from 1958 to 60) at that paradise up north, Butterworth. He discharged in 1969 and had a number of jobs including working with people with disabilities. He’s a late comer to Bush Poetry and initially he performed other people’s material but eventually he took up writing his own material and although success was a bit slow catching up to him, perseverance prevailed and in 2001 he started to win some championships - Bundaberg, (three times) Millmerran, North Pine (twice).

He won trip to the US in January 2003 courtesy Qantas Waltzing Matilda Competition at Winton which he says was a wonderful experience. He has performed regularly in Nursing Homes and Service Club functions also at the Tamworth Festival, many Gympie Musters, Beef Week Casino, Many Caravan and Camping Shows, (in Brisbane), Woodford Folk Festivals, Ingham's Australian Italian, Chinchilla's Melon Festival and many State and Local Government functions.

He won the Australian Championship Traditional section in Charters Towers in 2006 and judged and entertained at Australian Champs Charters Towers, Corryong and Oracles of the Bush Tenterfield 2005.



If you've got a "DO" coming up and you're looking for some great entertainment, give him a call, you can email him [HERE](#).

You can hear a sample of his wit and excellent delivery [HERE](#).