



## 3 Squadron Knees up.

3 Squadron held another of their regular get togethers at the Currumbin RSL on Saturday 30 July.



3 Squadron people, have a lot to be proud of. Formed at Point Cook in September 1916, during WW1, it moved to England for training before deploying to France the following year. Squadron 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. (You can read the Squadron's history [HERE](#))

3 Squadron was one of twelve permanent Royal Australian Air Force Squadrons in existence at the beginning of the Second World War. In the first months of the war the squadron adopted an operational alert status, absorbed new personnel and intensified its training, prior to being identified to accompany the 6th Division of the Second AIF overseas as an attached army co-operation squadron.



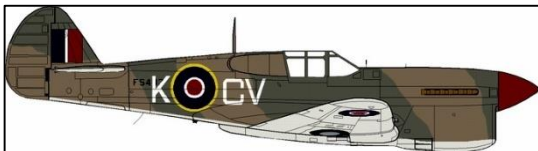
Leaving its aircraft behind, 3 Squadron sailed from Sydney on 15 July 1940. Arriving in Egypt on 23 August 1940, the squadron was placed under the command of the Royal Air Force's



Middle East Command and organised a three flight army co-operation squadron: two flights were equipped with Gloster Gauntlet (below) and Gladiator fighters and the third with Westland Lysander utility aircraft. It commenced active operations in support of British Commonwealth land operations in the Western Desert on 3 November 1940.

During the next four and a half years, 3 Squadron became one of the most active squadrons in the RAAF, quickly becoming a jack-of-all-trades. In addition to the conventional reconnaissance and ground attack roles of an army co-operation squadron, it defended ground forces and bombers from enemy aircraft, and conducted strikes against enemy shipping. The squadron was involved in the first Allied campaign in Libya between November 1940 and April 1941, and played a critical role in the invasion of Syria in June and July 1941. In September 1941 it returned to the see-sawing war in North Africa, which finally ended with the defeat of the Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943. Operating from Malta initially, the squadron supported Allied operations in Sicily between July and August 1943. Sicily was a stepping-stone to Italy, which became 3 Squadron's principal area of operations for the rest of the war.

By January 1941, 3 Squadron's original aircraft had been replaced by Hawker Hurricanes but for most of the war its principal workhorse was the Curtiss P-40, with which it was first equipped

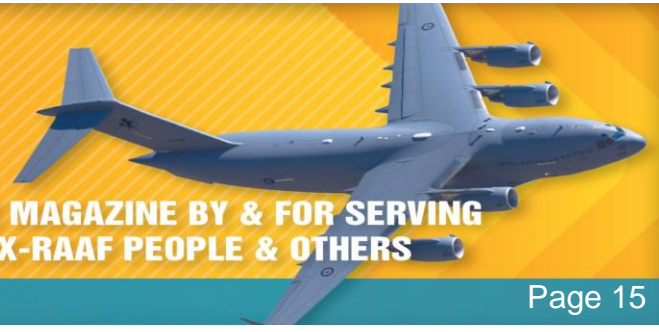


in May 1941. Two successive variants of the P-40, known as Tomahawks and Kittyhawks (left), were employed by the squadron before they were finally replaced by North American P-51 Mustangs in November 1944. In Italy, the squadron adorned its

aircraft with a southern cross painted on the rudder, a practice which has been continued by more modern incarnations of 3 Squadron to the current day.

During WW2, in terms of both numbers and operational impact, the P40 Kittyhawk was the most important fighter aircraft flown by Australians. When it entered mainstream service in March 1942, the RAAF possessed few modern aircraft and Japanese bombers were already attacking targets in Australia's north. It was armed with six .50 calibre machine guns and had the ability to carry 650 kg of bombs. In all, 13,738 P-40s of all variants were produced between April 1940 and December 1944. In the Middle East and then Italy, Kittyhawks were operated primarily in the fighter bomber role by 3 Sqn. The end of the war effectively marked the end of the Kittyhawk's service with the RAAF and the last examples were retired in March 1946.

3 Squadron's war was brought to an end by the surrender of German forces in Italy on 2 May 1945. Since November 1940, the squadron had been responsible for shooting down 217 enemy aircraft, making it the highest scoring British Commonwealth squadron in the



Mediterranean theatre of operations. It destroyed another 29 aircraft on the ground in addition to 709 motor vehicles, 28 water vessels of varying sizes, and 12 locomotives and today remains the highest scoring fighter squadron of the RAAF. It sailed from Egypt for home on 27 September 1945 and was disbanded at Point Cook in Victoria on 30 July 1946. 3 Squadron was, however, destined to reform in 1948.

In 1958 it was deployed to Malaya with its Sabres and later was equipped with Mirages. It operated out of Butterworth as part of the five-power defence arrangement. Following its return to Australia in 1986, 3 Squadron received its first Hornets and continues its role as one of the nation's most vital defence assets. 3 Squadron is expected to introduce the [F35 strike fighter](#) to RAAF operational service in the year 2020.

Members of the 3 Sqn Association regularly meet several times each year to get together, swap yarns, continue friendships , have a drink or two, tell a bunch of lies and relax in each others' company – as only ex-service people can.

One such reveller was Gus Thomson, below. Gus, now 95 years old, served with 3 Squadron from 1941 to 1943 as a gunny on the Kittyhawk. He was discharged as a Flight Sergeant at the end of the war and was made to feel most welcome by the “younger” association members at their most recent get together..



Sandra, Gus and Chris Thomson.



Other party goers were:

(All names left to right, click each pic for a HD view which you can download/print)



Anne Lollback, Judy James

As usual, organiser of the event was Jim Hall, the Association's hard working Queensland President.



Carol and Jim Hall.

# THE RAM

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Grant Small, Max Lollback, Mick Terakes.



Ellen Marston, Diane Terakes.

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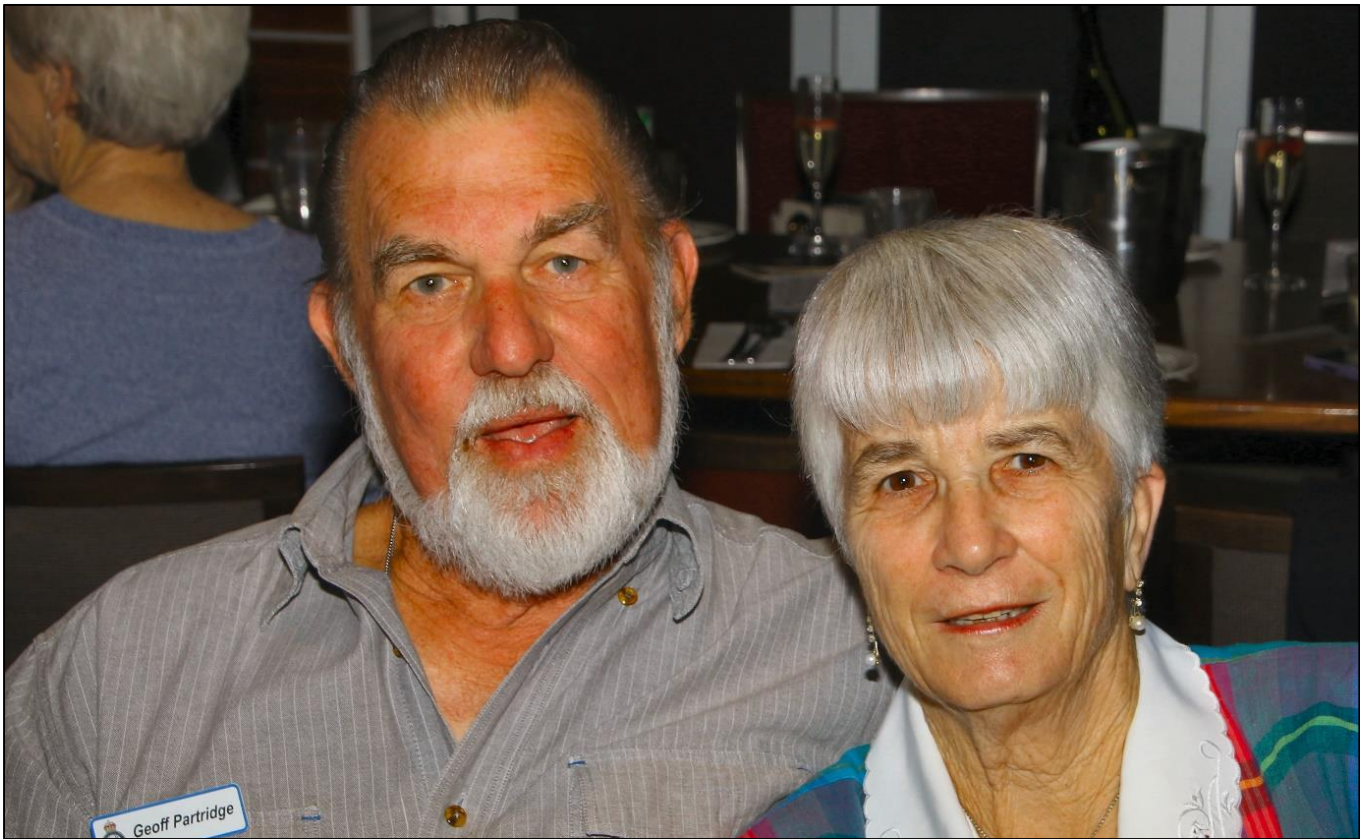


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Damon Taylor, Margaret Taylor, Carol Hall, Jan Robinson.



Geoff and Jan Partridge.

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"Hap" and Lisle Pryor.



Carol Hall, Jan Robinson.

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Keith Beardsmore, Lorraine Stafford, Roger Clarkson, Theresa Hart.



Les and Leslie Harrison.



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Pat (Pedro) and Jean Newman.



Warren Neil, John Kane, Ray Maher.



And of course, these 3 fun loving girls, who definitely need no introduction.....



Brenda Vogelzang, Marie Roberts, Sheena Millar.

Next event Caloundra in November, - put it in your diary!!