



IN MEMORY OF

Michael Clements.

Kev Rosser advises: "Some time ago when I was on my travels, I arrived in the Lockyer Valley in time to see the departure of Michael Clements. I first met Mick in Townsville in 1973 when I was posted to 10 SQN. Later, in 1985 - 1988, Mick was one of the Technicians working in 75 SQN radio Darwin when I was SNCO I/C radio.

Later, after I had departed the RAAF and joined QUEENSLAND RAIL and was working as a technician based in Hughenden in 1996 - 2003, I once again met Mick while he was working as a technician with NDC.

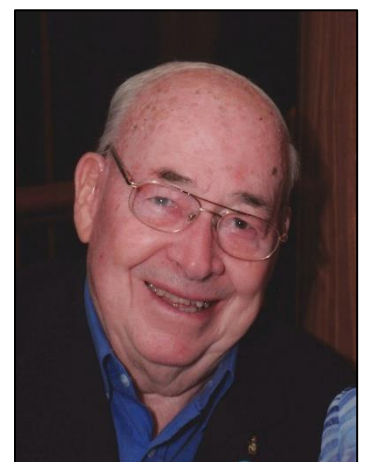
His wife Lillian, told me he had the last laugh as he has donated his body to the Queensland University!

Mick died in the Laidley Hospital on the 15th April, 2016. He was 78 years old."

Harry Kirkland.

Kerrie Damen, the daughter of Harry Kirkland advises: "I would like to let you know of the passing of my father. He was a Cinema Operator in the RAAF. He started his service career in the Navy in 1946 but then joined the RAAF and attended Radchool at Ballarat in 1947. He served at Point Cook (x2) Darwin (x2), Sale and Wagga. He finished his career at Support Command in 1976 as a Flight Sgt. He was instrumental in bringing 70mm movies to the RAAF cinemas.

He passed away on New Year's Eve at the Werribee Mercy Hospital. His wife Win and Granddaughter and Grandson were by his side.



He is survived by his wife Win, daughters Judith and Kerrie (both who married Rad Techs) grandchildren Mathew, Dale, Justine, Katie and Anthony and 6 great grandchildren. Much respected grandfather in law of Brad, Pete, Stephanie and Jacqueline.

The following article appeared in a local newspaper some years ago"



Films Are His Business. After years at RAAF Base Point Cook as a cinema operator, Cpl Harry Kirkland has been posted to Darwin. Known for his initiative, Harry will be missed at Point Cook where he could always be relied upon to provide a bright film program. Some of the methods he used to attract "customers" to the cinema were:



A veteran Ford car, gaudily painted, which he used to drive around the base to display his advertising hoardings. Printed programs, paid for by advertising from local traders wooden cut-outs of an airman, dressed either in winter or summer clothing, pointing the way to the cinema.

He made personal contact with the film companies with such success that he often showed major films at Point Cook at the same time as they were running in Melbourne theatres. Many of his ideas were incorporated when the old cinema was replaced and he has since built in many refinements to improve the cinema.



Harry's old Ford.

He will be sadly missed.

Cyril Wetherall.

Col Hingston advises us of the passing of Cyril Wetherall on the 31st December 2016 (DOB 16Jul40). Cyril's funeral was held on the 6th January at St Chad's Anglican Church, Highgate in SA. He had been ill for some time. All who knew Cyril say he was a lovely man, very competent and professional and an absolute pleasure to know.

Cyril graduated as an Engineer from the NSW Uni then in 1959 joined the RAAF and attended OTS at Pt Cook. After graduation, he was posted to 2AD at Richmond then to 478Sqn at Butterworth. While there he was posted between 77Sqn and 3Sqn and we believe it took a crow-bar to get him to eventually leave Butterworth.



On his return to Australia, it wasn't long before he had to pack the bags again, this time off to the US to learn the F111. In 1973 he was selected as one of the first engineers to undertake an exchange posting to Nellis AFB to develop key relationships with the USAF. He remained in the US until 1975.

He returned to Australia, with a posting to Amberley to work in an engineering and logistics capacity on the F111 and served on four boards of inquiry into Mirage and F111 crashes.

In 1977 the RAAF identified the need for a maintenance squadron at Edinburgh to service and modify the P3's. Cyril was posted to Edinburgh as the inaugural CO of the new 492 Mntce Sqn where he reorganized Orion maintenance operations to improve efficiency and also managed the introduction of the new 10 Sqn P3-C aircraft into RAAF Service.





Inaugural 492SQN CO, WGCDCR Cyril Wetherall, formally opens 492 Arm Section.

In 1978, 10SQN had 'traded in' its venerable Neptunes and was re-equipped with P3C Orions, and as part of the reorganisation it also moved to Edinburgh from its long-time bolt hole at RAAF Garbutt, in Townsville. The new 492Sqn initially comprised of the former members of 11SQN maintenance but grew quickly as the maintenance facilities at Edinburgh were expanded and upgraded to cater for ten new aircraft.

In 1980, after three years with the Orions, he was posted into a management role for the F111.

In 1982 Cyril felt it was time to leave the RAAF and he took a discharge from the Permanent Air Force but signed on with the Active Reserve and settled in the Adelaide area. He took a job with BAE as a Project Engineer.

He left the Reserve in July 1995.

After 8 years with British Aerospace, he was enticed back into Public Service as the inaugural Civvy Chief Engineer at ARDU (which had moved from Laverton to Edinburgh in 1977) where he became the Chief Engineer for the MPLM Sqn (Maritime Patrol Logistics Management) for about five years which was responsible for managing logistics support to the P-3 and its systems across the board (eg including such things as spares provisioning and so on) as well as for anti-corrosion and surface management of the Orion Aircraft. When MPLM transformed into MPSPO (Maritime Patrol Systems Program Office) about 2001, the powers that be decided the Chief Engineer had to be uniformed. Cyril then left ARDU.



He was also a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) and in 1999 was elected President of the Australian Division. One of his key achievements was the establishment of a Biannual Aeronautical Conference in Melbourne that coincides with the Avalon Airshow and he introduced an annual Student Prize for Undergraduate Aviation Students and agitated for a local conference or symposia, on the matter of UAVs/Drones. Always the innovator!

In his “spare” time, he was also a lecturer at the SA University.

John Mager

Sean Mager has advised us that that his father, John Mager, passed away on the 8th January. John was a Sigsop at 3TU in the 70s. A memorial ceremony was held on Tuesday 24th January, at Seasons Funerals in Redcliffe, WA.

Nev Middleton.

Noel Hadfield advises the sad news that Nev Philip Middleton (DOB 17th April 1940) (Air Commodore – retired) was admitted to hospital on the 12th January and, sadly, passed away overnight. (Nev's middle name comes from his family's association with the [Burns Philp Trading Company](#). His Grandfather was the Philp in that company). Nev has been fighting lung cancer for some time (see [HERE](#)) and was at the stage of receiving palliative care. Unfortunately, there was nothing more that the medicos could do for him.



Nev was a graduate of [11 Radio Apprentice Course](#) (Frognall in 1957-1959) followed by a final year (1960) at Ballart to complete an Engineering Diploma Course, the forerunner to Engineering Cadet Squadron. Nev was one of the 1st apprentice group from Ballart to be commissioned and was on the last course at Ballart with Radio School moved to Laverton in 1961.

In 1968, the Queensland division of the RAAFA obtained a propeller from a Neppy and decided to erect a memorial at Bundaberg's Hinkler airport to commemorate the airport's RAAF history. The memorial is now situated on the tarmac outside the domestic terminal. Air Marshal David Evans was invited to unveil the plaque but was unable to attend so Group Captain Neville Middleton, CO 3 AD at Amberley did the honours (see right). The plaque which sits by the memorial was constructed by 3 AD at Amberley.



Nev's RAAF career included:

- Enlisted in RAAF at Frognall 11th February 1957 on No 11 Radio Apprentice Course
- Graduated from RMIT and RAAF School of Radio (Ballarat) November 1960
- Commissioned early 1961
- 1961 – 1970; various postings, including 1 CRU Brookvale, 2 CRU Darwin, HQSC - Tel Eng Division (various appointments)
- 1967 - posted to the UK for Hubcap training (the Plessey "Hub Cap" automated air defence system utilised Westinghouse radar and Marconi computer programs. This was never used, as it proved to be too large and too heavy. Instead the RAAF incorporated the Westinghouse AN/TPS-43)



- 1971 – 1974; Maintenance Control, No 1 Joint Communications Unit, Woomera.
- 1974 – [RAAF Staff College](#)
- 1975 – 1976; Air Force Office Tel Eng 3
- 1976 – 1977; Communications Engineering, Joint Communications Electronics, Defence HQ Canberra
- 1978 – 1980; Staff Officer Communications Electronics, Washington USA
- 1981 – 1982; RAAF Reorganisation Implementation Staff Air Force Office
- 1982 – 1984; Staff Officer, SO Tel Eng HQSC Melbourne
- 1985 – 1987; Director Telecommunications Engineering, Canberra
- 1988 – 1990; CO 3 AD, Amberley
- 1990 – 1991; Director Systems Engineering B, Air Force Office, Canberra
- 1991 Promoted Air Commodore and posted to Director General, Joint Communications Electronics.
- Retired 16 Apr 1995.

Nev's Funeral Service was held at 2 PM on Friday 20th January at the Duntroon Chapel followed by a Committal Service at Norwood Park Crematorium.



He will be sadly missed.

Hugh Mullins.

Grant Mullings advises that his father, Hugh Mullins, died on the 20 January, 2017. Hugh spent 21 years in the RAAF as a metal basher and served in Vietnam with 35 Sqn from Sept 1967 to Sept 1968. Hugh survived prostate cancer 18 years ago and has done it tough ever since. His wife passed away back while he was having surgery and about 9 months ago Hugh suffered a heart attack and several small strokes. At the same time he was also diagnosed with stomach cancer of which he lost the battle early on the 20th.

Ronald Phillip Hennings.

We have been advised that Ron Hennings passed away on the 04th January, 2017 after suffering from cancer for some time. He was 81 years old. Ron emigrated from the UK with his mother in January 1937. He was one year old at the time. He joined the Army in 1955 and did a tour of Malaya with the 2nd Battalion, RAR after which he joined the RAAF and came out of Wagga as a sumpie and in May 1970 was posted to 35Sqn in Vietnam. He returned to Australia in May 1971.

Ron was buried on the 12th January at Tewantin on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Allan John Pinches.

Arthur Rennick advises us of the passing of Allan Pinches (DOB 09 Oct 1929) on the 26th January at Ipswich – aged 87.

Allan was on 7 Rookies course in 1947 which was the second rookies course to be held at Laverton. He became a navigator and was posted to Canberras and in 1970, as a Flight Lieutenant, was posted to 2 Squadron in Phan Rang.



On the 14th March, 1971, Canberra A84-228 was preparing to bomb a target 80 kilometres west of Hue, South Vietnam, when it was struck by two surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). Although the aircraft, crewed by Wing Commander John Downing (the unit's Commanding Officer) and Flight Lieutenant Alan Pinches, was at 14,000 feet, it was also more than 600 kilometres from its home base at Phan Rang. Realising that the bomber had suffered critical damage and was at



risk of breaking up, the two men were forced to eject. Both landed by parachute on a steep mountain ridge, from where they were rescued by an American helicopter late the next day. While both required hospitalisation for injuries sustained in the ejection or parachute landing, they had survived the only time that a RAAF aircraft has been confirmed as shot down by a SAM.

John Downing suffered a fractured kneecap and Allan Pinches had fractured vertebrae in his lower back and a broken wrist. After being transferred to a hospital at Da Nang and later Back Beach hospital in Vung Tau and 4RAAF in Butterworth, they returned to Australia for an extended convalescence.

Allan was buried on the 3rd February 2017 at the Centenary Memorial Gardens, Sumner Park, Qld.

Alf Bridle

Jim Dunn reports that sadly, Alf (Hoss) Bridle had passed away somewhere in the SW. Alf was on 57 Telegs (15 March 1960 - 23 December 1960). He has no record of habitat details for Alf as he has not been a member of 3TU Association for as long as Jim can recall but he was well known to many.. RIP, Hoss.



Francis Albert Robertson.

Geoffrey Robertson QC, regrettably reports the death of his father, Francis "Frank" Robertson, (December 1921 - February 2017) who was one of the last surviving World War 2 combat pilots from 75 Squadron. He was 95 years old.



F/O Frank Robertson flew for 75 Squadron, 1943-4, in Port Moresby, Morotai, Biak and throughout the islands north of New Guinea. After his tours of duty, which included flying as wingman to Les Jackson and leading some of the Squadron's assault missions, he was sent to Point Cook to instruct on Spitfires.

At war's end, he married Joy Beattie, the WAAAF Officer he had met in Townsville and their marriage lasted 73 years; she died on Christmas Day 2016, and he could not go on without her.

He inspired his son, Geoffrey Robertson QC, to make the ABC documentary "44 Days" in 1992, which told the story of the formation and early success of Australia's first fighter squadron.

You can see that video [HERE](#).

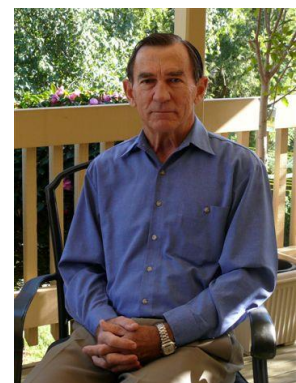
Frank's funeral was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on Saturday 11th February at 1.00pm, with refreshments afterwards. All welcome.

Bon Voyage Frank Robertson
Good and True Australian

LEST WE FORGET

Brig (Retired) Neil Weeks AM, MC.

Neil Weeks, who was born in Mackay, Qld on the 21st September 1945, passed away on the 6th March, 2017 - aged 71. Neil was a teacher and when his marble was drawn from the barrel he was Nasho'd into the Australian Army. He served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, RAR from 17Mar68 to 10Dec68 as a Platoon Commander, where he was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for gallantry. After his two years' engagement was up, he remained with the Battalion for its tour in Malaysia and Singapore during 1969-1971. He subsequently served in postings in Papua New Guinea and Malaysia and retired after 31 years in the Army, three of which were spent in the Reserve.



Brigadier Weekes was the Patron of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (Townsville Branch), Patron of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia (Townsville Branch) and Patron of the Townsville Branch of the RSL. He is also the Chair of the North Australian Military Heritage Association.

For many years Neil had been a staunch supporter of veteran's rights and has fought tirelessly for just and equitable DFRB/DFRDB payments to veterans.



Phil Thuel.

Ted McEvoy has advised us of the passing of Philip Henry Thuel at the far too young age of 74. Phil was a gunny and peacefully passed away on Friday 3rd March 2017. He lived in Waikiki in West Australia.

Sorry – we have no further details.



Gary Martin.

After a long illness, Gary Martin, one of the original RTFV unit pilots who flew the Caribou into Vietnam on 8 Aug 1964, passed away peacefully on 16 March.

Gary went to Mona Vale (Sydney) hospital 16 February with an infection from the donor site of his skin graft on his thigh. He was treated with 2 lots of IV antibiotics and then oral antibiotics over a 2 week period. He was discharged from Mona Vale but not considered a suitable candidate for a rehab facility. He went to Minkara Nursing home who had a physio to assist with regaining mobility, but he gradually became weaker and palliative. He was surrounded by his family and his daughter from USA arrived in time to be with him. He fought his disease over 16 years with grace and courage.



Funeral arrangements are for Friday 24 March at 12 pm at Anne Wilson Chapel Cnr Barrenjoey Road and Darley Street Mona Vale 2013.

Amongst many other achievements, Gary will be remembered for easing the overcrowded accommodation at Vung Tau when he located the Villa Anna, which enabled all the officers to be relocated. This move eased the overcrowding in the Ngoc Huong and pleased everyone immensely.

Later, during a Caribou ferry and an engine failure, Gary and John Lindner flew the aircraft on one engine for 7 hours on the leg Hawaii to Fiji.. This was an unbroken record for Caribous. As the fuel burn was higher on one engine Gary had to divert to Canton Island.

THE RAM

THE MAGAZINE BY & FOR SERVING
& EX-RAAF PEOPLE & OTHERS



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L-R: Villa Anna Residents 1964/5 Tony Young, Don Jordon, Chris Sugden, Dave Henry, Gary Martin, John McQueen, Don Pollock.