



## –Amberley Associations’ Day.

The OC of 82 Wing at Amberley, GpCapt Robert Denney AM, invited EX-RAAF Bomber Squadrons Association Members to the Base on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> September, for the annual Associations’ Day Presentation Ceremony, this to be followed by a sumptuous luncheon in the Officers’ mess and tour of the Aviation Heritage Centre.



You only have to be asked once – it’s always a great day.

The event commenced at 10.00am with a Welcome to Amberley, followed by a Memorial Service which was held at the Memorial Garden at Amberley, outside the now main gate and where Canberra 201 has sat on guard for many years.



GpCapt Robert Denney AM welcomes everyone to the Ceremony,  
with Chaplain Craig Boettcher looking on.

The day brought together more than 100 current RAAF and Association members to reflect on the traditions of some of the Air Forces' oldest and most distinguished bomber squadrons.

After the Welcome, various Association members were invited to lay a Wreath.



Following the Wreath Laying Ceremony, Fl Lt Steve Finch OAM played the Last Post and the Rouse.

Steve is the secretary of the RAAF Amberley Brass Band and is called upon whenever a professional trumpet player is required to officiate at such functions. The Band of which he is the Secretary, made its first public performance back on ANZAC day 1943, when it led the annual ANZAC day parade through the streets of Ipswich. This occasion was the first of thousands of musical engagements undertaken by the band all over Queensland and New South Wales over the following 75 plus years.

Over this period, the band has been through many highs and just as many low points when, due to funding difficulties or a shortage of competent musicians, the band had been reduced to not much more than a handful of players and a drum corp.



FI Lt Steve Finch OAM.

Today the RAAF Amberley Band is a strong and viable musical entity. It consists of serving members, retired Air Force and Army personnel, spouses and dependants of serving members and civilian members from the Amberley community. New uniforms have been designed and purchased and the band is once again regularly performing at official Air Force ceremonies, and in support of local community functions.

It receives no direct funding from the Commonwealth and is predominantly self-funding with the capacity to charge for performances which are not in direct support of official Air Force functions.

The band currently consists of approximately 30 competent musicians and on average performs two to three times per month throughout South East Queensland.

I was visiting my daughter the other night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper. "This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century" she said, "We don't waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad. I can tell you ...that damn fly never knew what hit it."



At about 11.00am, with the official Memorial Ceremony concluded, GpCapt Denney invited everyone to hop aboard the little white buses for the short trip to the Officer's Mess for morning tea followed by presentation of trophies to members of 82 Wing for their outstanding performance in the previous twelve months.



This wing, which today is under the control of the RAAF's Air Combat Group, includes No 1 Squadron which operate the F/A-18F Super Hornet multirole fighters, No 6 Squadron which operates the new [EA-18G Growlers](#) and No 4 Squadron which operates the Pilatus PC-9 forward air control aircraft.

I just swapped our bed for a trampoline, my wife hit the roof.



People gathered in the conjoined Officers/Sergeants Messes for morning tea and the presentation of trophies.



As is the case at a lot of ADF bases throughout Australia, the three Messes at Amberley surround a common kitchen, obviously done for efficiency and to keep costs down. All Messes now receive the same menu, the only difference being the presentation of the food. The Officers and Sergeants Messes are normally separated by a sliding partition door which can be opened to produce a large area for special events.

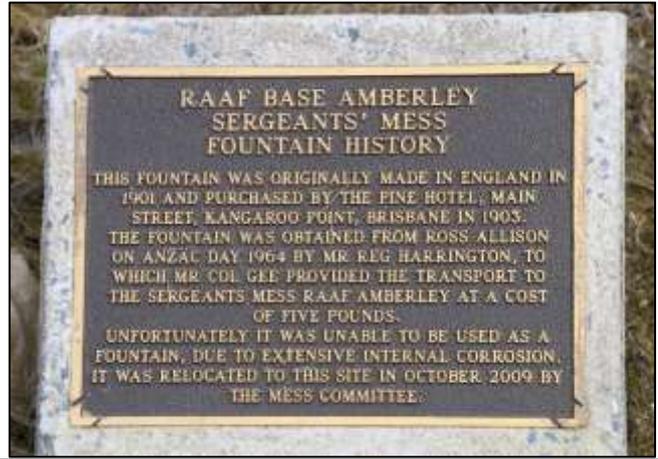
The Airman's Mess is a lot larger and is separate from the other two but still backs onto the central kitchen.



We did notice the opening hours for the Airman's Boozer – things have certainly changed there, once upon a time a trip to the boozer after work was practically compulsory. Today the hours are:

**Mon:** Closed  
**Tues & Wed:** 1700 –2000  
**Thurs & Fri:** 1600 – 1800, then 1830 - 2200  
**Sat:** 1600 - 2000  
**Sun, Pub Hol:** Closed.





This poor old fountain, which sits outside the Sergeants' Mess, is in dire need of some TLC. (Click the pic at right to read the plaque.)

After everyone had morning – tead themselves, it was time for the presentations. MC for the morning was, of course, the very professional Paul Lineham.

Trophies are awarded to Serving Personnel from various combat related Squadrons with recipients being chosen on their operational proficiency, demonstrated excellence in general service attitude and or their support of their Squadron's responsibilities both in the air and on the ground.



## 2 Squadron Association Award.





**Left:** Gary Olsen (2 Sqn Treasurer), FLTLT Laura Haws (winner of the Trophy), FLTLT Jack Marshall, and Arthur Rennick (2 Sqn Secretary).

Laura was handed her award by FLTLT Jack Marshall (right) who is the 2SQN Personnel Capability Officer (what we would call the ADMINO). Jack flew up from Williamstown to be present at the Awards.



The 2 Squadron Association trophy is awarded annually to an officer of technical or non-technical categories who has made the most significant contribution to 82 Wing's operational proficiency including demonstrated excellence in general service attitude, dress, bearing and proficiency in category.

FLTLT Laura Haws, Electronic/Electrical Officer (ELECTR), this year's winner, is a proficient and enthusiastic junior engineer within the 1SQN Maintenance Executive. Laura joined 1SQN in early 2018 and was soon tasked with coordinating the [OKRA](#) welcome home ceremony in January 2018. This involved liaising with many external base agencies, establishing parking positions at Air Movements, coordinating the provision of flight line maintenance support to both F/A-18F and F/A-18C aircraft and arranging for the six returning F/A-18F aircraft to be towed to 1SQN lines.





This was a considerable undertaking for a very junior FLTLT who had only been at the unit for three weeks. Since taking on the Fleet Maintenance Officer (FLMO) role WEF June 2018, Flight Commanders have commented very positively on the competence and accountability exhibited by Laura in the role. She has implemented numerous written and face-to-face initiatives to improve communications between the FLMO office and 1SQN flying execs and has simultaneously displayed strong competence in all the technical aspects of the FLMO role. Laura has displayed strong adherence to all Air Force values, most particularly Excellence and Initiative.

## **Beaufighter Association Award.**

The Beaufighter Trophy is awarded annually in commemoration of the formation of the Beaufighter and Boston Association to encourage excellence in junior non-commissioned officers and airmen. Eligible recipients are chosen from members who are employed in non-technical combat support duties which are in support of air combat related activities. The OC of 82 Wing selects the most worthy recipient from those nominated.

Winner of the Beaufighter and Boston Association Trophy was the lovely LACW Izabella Mytkowski



Izabella is currently posted to 1SQN as a Personnel Capability Support person (was that a Clerk Admin??). She won the Beaufighter and Boston Association Trophy which was presented by Mr Eric Cavanagh, OAM - President of the RAAFA Logan City Branch (they are custodians of the Beaufighter & Boston Association Trophy).



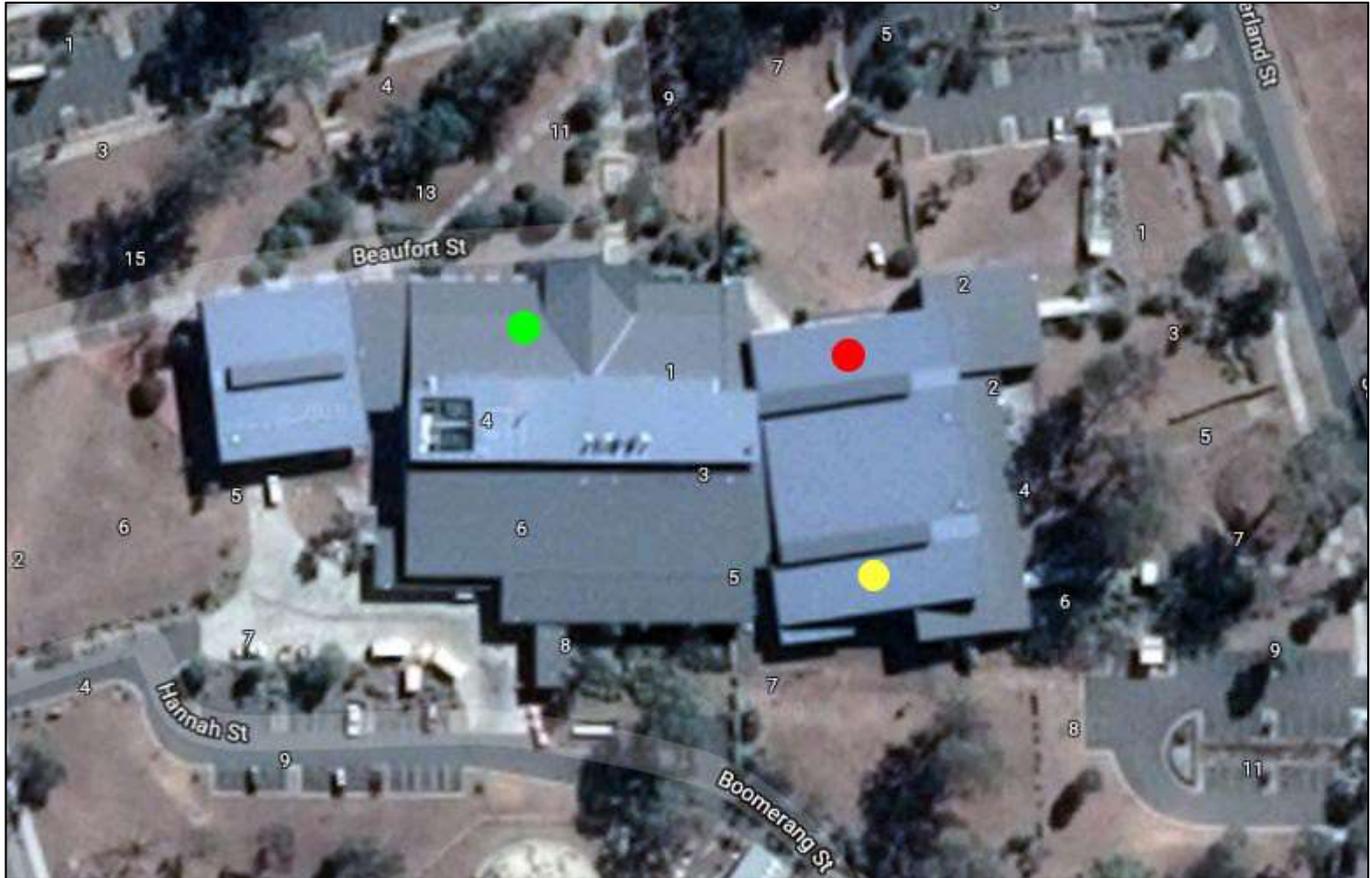
AIRCDRE Micka Gray is the President of the Path Finder Force Association and he travelled up from Canberra to attend the day.

Micka Gray, a very experienced RAAF pilot, presented both the Path-Finder Force Trophy and the Path-Finder Force Association (QLD) Trophy in conjunction with Mr Gary Vial, who is the son of the Path Finder Force Association (QLD) Life President (Mr Allan Vial, DFC, OAM, Chev L.H. (Fra), OPR (Pol) COM (Pol). Click [HERE](#) to see an interview with Micka Gray and some great shots of aircraft at Pitch Black, Darwin.

With the official ceremonies concluded, everyone had a few minutes before being called into the Mess area for lunch. Sambo and I had a walk around. If you haven't been to Amberley in a while, you wouldn't know the place. It was bit, now it's bloody big! There's construction going on everywhere and the Messes and the new living quarters are now "up on the hill" away from the noise. The pic below, which is available on Google earth, shows the Messing complex with the Officer's Mess (yellow dot), the Sergeant's Mess (red dot) and the Airman's Mess (green dot).



The Airman's Boozer is the building to the left of the Airman's Mess.



The bar was open and in the interests of science, we had a look at the prices which are still as cheap, comparative wise, as they used to be. Costs are:

XXXX Gold stubby	\$4.10	Corona stubby	\$5.30
Boags premium stubby	\$5.80	Glass of red or white	\$5.50
Nip Bourbon/Scotch	\$5.70	Can of coke/	\$2.00

If you want the rainbow, you have got to put up with the rain.

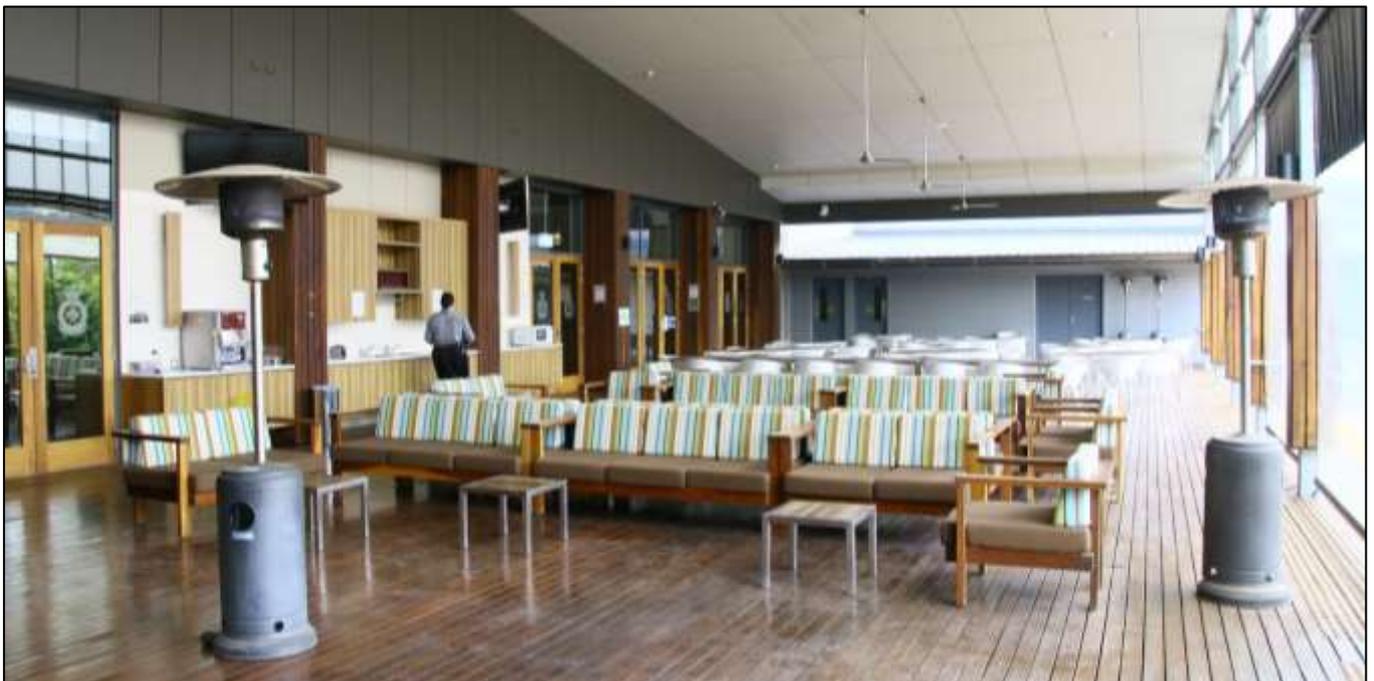


## Officer's Mess end.



## Sergeant's Mess end.

The Sergeants occupy the northern (and best ??) end of the complex





Lunch was then served in the normal ADF manner, everyone lined up in an orderly queue and filed past the stewards and made their selection from the menu displayed – and what a choice there was. This menu would have been quite at home in any 5 star restaurant.

Click the menu at right to see what was on offer.

Meals aren't "free" like they used to be, once upon a time the cost of your meals and accommodation was included in your salary and if you went off base for a few days you could claim that cost back – it was called "Subsistence Allowance". Today that has done a complete 180, today if you wish to eat on base you pay as you go and for what you get it's damn cheap.



Meal costs are:

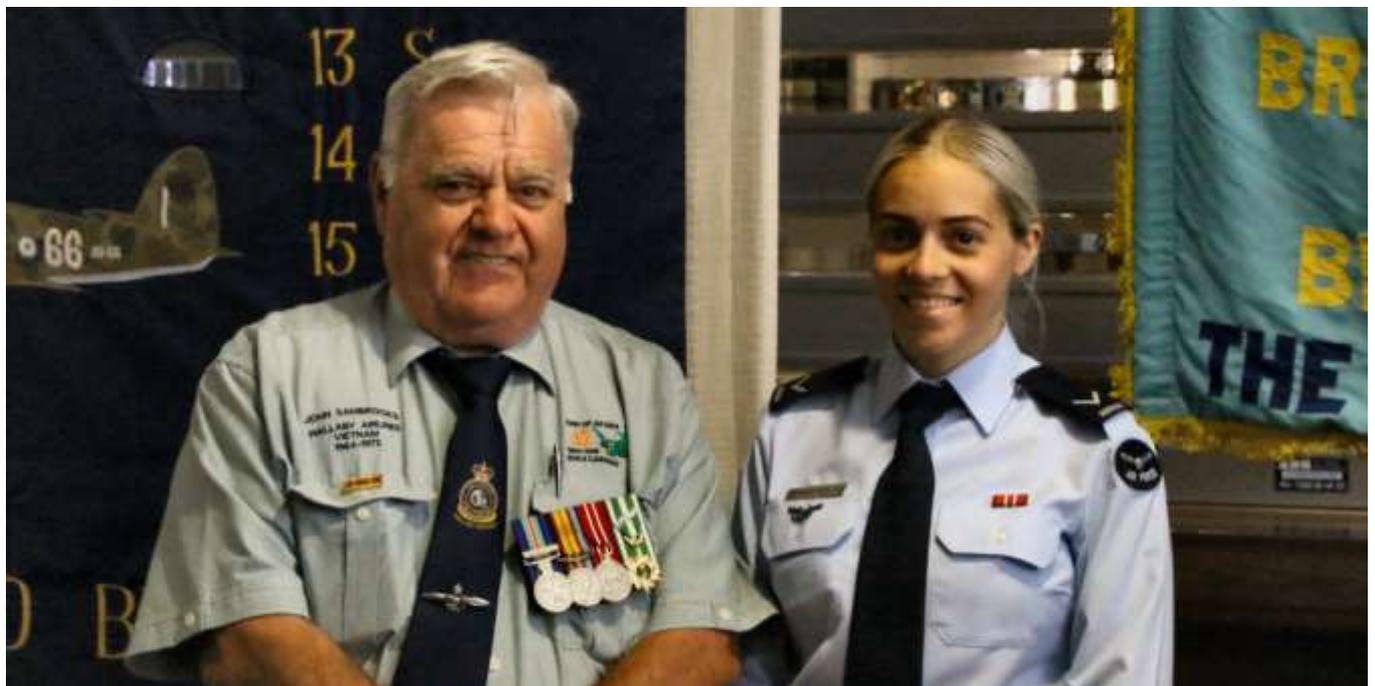
<b>Meals for ADF and APS personnel.</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Meals for non-ADF/APS personnel.</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Breakfast	\$5.00	Breakfast	\$14.00
Lunch	\$7.50	Lunch	\$14.00
Dinner	\$7.00	Dinner	\$25.85



Lunching.



2 Sqn Association personnel enjoying lunch.



Sambo and Kelsey MacDougall,  
Kelsey is what we'd call a "box-packer" with the Growler squadron and like the other people  
with whom we spoke, just "loves her job".



We must thank FSgt Susan Mallett (below) who organised the whole affair and who invited us along. Susan comes out of retirement every year and spends a whole month organising these events and does one helluva job. She should get an award too.



After everyone had lunched, the little white buses were once again made available and shuttled those that wished down to the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.



**RAAF AMBERLEY**  
AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

For those that haven't been to the Museum, you are missing something, put a visit on your bucket list. Public Open Days are always free of charge and occur on the third Sunday of each month, January - November, except for public holidays. Opening hours of the centre are 9am - 3pm, however base access ceases at 2pm to enable visitors to park and have sufficient time to view the displays before closing.



For entry to the Base, download the [Public Open Day Application](#) fill it in, make sure you include the full name of everyone who is in your car, bring it and photo ID (for those who are 16 and over) and present them to the guard room.

Public Open Day queues can sometimes be long as open days usually attract up to 1000 people, the easiest and fastest way to access the Base on open days is to have a completed application ready to go and on hand.

Pets, trailers and caravans are not permitted on Base and smoking is not permitted within the Heritage Centre precinct.

The Museum has a number of complete aircraft, including:

Boston Bomber  
F-111  
Pilatus Porter  
Sopwith Camel

Canberra  
Iroquois  
Sabre  
Winjeel

Caribou  
Mirage  
Bell 47  
Boomerang



The mighty Winjeel.



The Boomerang.

When Japan entered WW2 in 1941, the RAAF had no front-line fighter capable of defending Australia. A new aircraft had to be quickly designed and manufactured. Using only parts that were readily available, including many from the Wirraway, production of the Boomerang, nicknamed the "Panic Fighter," was achieved in just 16½ weeks from drawing board to initial test flight. Another truly remarkable feat from its designer, Lawrence Wackett.

It was powered by a 14 cylinder R-1830 Twin Wasp engine, the same engine that was used in the B-24 Liberator. It had a top speed of 490km/h, a service ceiling of 34,000ft and 250 of them were built. It wasn't in the same class as the Japanese Zero but in some areas its performance was equal or superior to the Kittyhawk or the much maligned [Airacobra](#). It wasn't used as a fighter as originally envisaged but did perform well as a ground support aircraft.

This particular aircraft served with 83 Sqn which was based at Strathpine, a northern suburb of Brisbane and at the end of the war was sent to 6AD, which was at RAAF Oakey, for storage. It was then written off and subsequently disposed of and fell into disrepair.



In 1990 it was restored by local enthusiasts at the Darling Downs Aviation Museum in Toowoomba and then put on display at the Museum of Australian Army Flying in Oakey, Queensland. On the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2018, it was moved to its new home at Amberley.



Pilatus Porter.

This particular aircraft arrived at the 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment, which was situated at Amberley, in May 1971. It saw service overseas in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. All the Army's Porter aircraft were delivered to Amberley and were operated from there until the move to Oakey in 1973. RAAF personnel were posted to 16 ALA and 1 Aviation Regiment and were initially involved in servicing the aircraft and training Army personnel.

The Australian Army ordered a total of 19 Porters between 1967 and 1969. The first four arrived at RAAF Amberley in February 1968 with the last four arriving in April 1970. In October 1992 the Porter was retired from Army service.

This one's for my old mate Don P!!

Don, you can click it and get a much bigger look – I know you'll want to download the big pic and hang it over the fire place in the lounge room.



They say it's a small world and we can't now argue with that. We were walking around the aircraft, having a good look when we heard "Hello!".



Turning around we spotted Maeve Tennent, an old WRAAF friend from our days at Richmond, who back then was Maeve Cooper. We haven't seen Maeve since we left in 1971 and it was great catching up again



Maeve is one of those tireless volunteers who give of their time to make Museums like the one at Amberley a success. She lives about 75kms from Amberley and does the round trip once every week to help in the uniforms' section of the museum and when she's not doing that, she sells raffle tickets raising money for the museum. We parted with a few dollars but didn't win anything.

Without dedicated people like Maeve, a lot of Australia would grind to a halt.

Maeve spent a million years in uniform, half a million in the permanent Air Force, the other half in the reserves. She certainly has a story to tell and we'll bring it to you next issue.

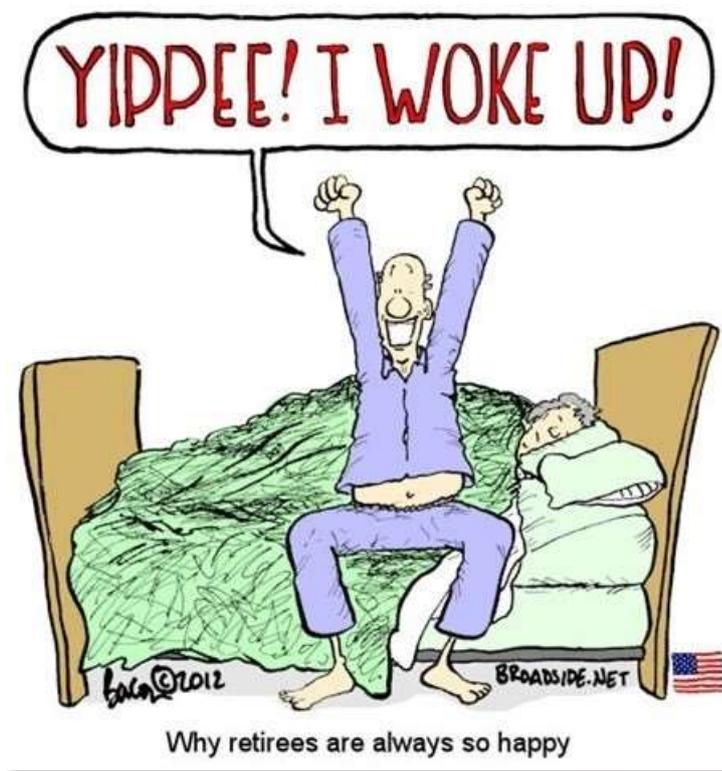
Then it was time to catch the little white bus and leave Amberley and while we were out that way, Sambo begged for a small diversion on the way home.



Seems while he was posted to 3 AD at Amberley all those years ago, there was this establishment not far from the base where a lot of blokes held prayer sessions, sometimes during lunch. When we got there we noticed Sambo had a tear in his eye and insisted on popping in for a few Hail Marys.



He said things had changed a lot in the 40 something years since he has been back, the insides were a lot bigger, a lot newer, nicer even, but it brought back a heap of good memories.



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## Sydney to Brisbane.

Recently I had to drive from Sydney back to Brisbane and I must say there has been a lot of work done on the Pacific Highway. It won't be long before it's two lanes each way all the way from Brisbane down to Melbourne.

There are a thousand pieces of machinery working on the stretch from Grafton to Ballina, which at the present is an 80 Km/H bit but when that's finished the drive will be a breeze.

We stopped of at the Golden Arches at Raymond Terrace for a snack and to catch up with an old mate, John Broughton, then we hit the road again.





Next stop was Coffs Harbour, through which you still have to drive. There are plans to eventually by-pass it (see [HERE](#)) this won't happen tomorrow, but the funds have been allocated.

Back in 1972, I used to work in Coffs and I decided to have a look to see if the old Flight Service Unit was still there. Back then Coffs was an AFIZ, an uncontrolled airport and everything was done from the little dark blue building below. 2 Flight Service blokes looked after a huge number of aircraft in a huge area of air space which stretched from half way to Brisbane, way out west down to half way to Sydney and up to the moon.



Several Friendships a day would drop and pick up passengers from the old terminal which was to the right of the building above. Today Coffs is a controlled airport, a huge Control Tower building was built and the Air Traffic Controllers now look after a miniscule amount of airspace ([Class D](#)) which extends up to 4,500ft and out to a radius of 22 NM from the tower.



Progress!!!

Today the building above is home to the local flying school.



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