



## Student visit to Amberley.



The Kedron Wavell RSL Sub-Branch has, for many years, taken a number of local High Schools under its wing and provided students from the schools with financial support and backing in a variety of ways.

Over the years many students, singularly and in groups, have had their sporting needs subsidised, had sporting and ceremonial excursions fully funded, both interstate and on occasions overseas, had clothing provided and been escorted to many and varied functions.

The schools are Padua College, Kedron State High, Craigslea State High, Wavell State High and Mount Alvernia College and each school provides liaison students from year 12, who attend the monthly meetings of the Sub-Branch and bring everyone up to date with school events. It's a wonderful initiative of the Sub-Branch and is the envy of all other Sub-Branches.

On Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> May, John Lunn, the Sub-Branch's assistant school liaison officer (John is an Ex-Framie from 12 Sqn – takes the RAAF to organise things) arranged, for a number of the liaison students, a tour of the Aviation Heritage Centre and 35 Squadron's facilities and aircraft (at Amberley).

Unfortunately, due to the Naplan (National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy) tests that were being held at all schools in Queensland at that time, a few of the students had to pull out at the last minute, but the 7 that did come enjoyed the experience and the ADF look like gaining one as a recruit in the near future.

Several Sub-Branch members were "volunteered" to accompany the students, to act as mentors and to answer any questions they might have. Everyone assembled at the Kedron Wavell Ex-Servicemen's Club at about 8.00am for an 8.30am departure. The Sub-Branch made available two of their 12 seater buses and with everyone one loaded it was off to Amberley.

Paddy thought his new girlfriend might be the one but after looking through her knicker drawer and finding a nurse's outfit, a French maid's outfit and a police woman's uniform he finally decided "If she can't hold down a job she's not for me"



**L-R:** Andreas Siasios (*Kedron State High*), William Pembroke (*Padua College*), Samuel Malone (*Kedron State High*), Maggie-May Hornigold (*Wavell State High*), Emily Morley (*Wavell State High*), Eloise Pean (*Craigslea State High*), Cooper Maher (*Craigslea State High*), John Lunn about to board the bus.

After being met at the front gate at Amberley, and having names checked off, it was onto one of the RAAF's 22 seat buses for the drive to the Heritage Centre where volunteer staff were on hand to show everyone around.



One of the Centre's immaculately presented exhibits - the little Bell 47.



Checking out the F-111 escape module.



With the famous Vietnam War workhorse - a troop transport, "dust-off" chopper, gun-ship, supply vehicle and search and rescue machine, the Bell Iroquois.



After an hour or so at the Heritage Centre, it was lunch time and being young, fit and healthy, the students were in dire need of a refuel, so it was off to the AAFCANS café (successor to ASCO) for lunch, after which it was back onto the 22 seater for a windscreen tour of the Base.

Wing Commander Ben Poxon, the CO of 35 Sqn, had graciously agreed to allow the students a tour of his facilities and aircraft and after a look through the hangars and seeing one of the Squadron's C-27 Spartans under deep maintenance, it was out onto the tarmac and a chance to hop into and look over one of the Squadron's aircraft.



This was a bit of a shock for the students as their experience with aircraft so far had been restricted to the nice, quiet shiny comfortable ones operated by Qantas, Virgin etc. They think they now know why the RAAF called this particular one the Spartan – as, compared to what they were used to, it certainly was. A complete lack of carpet, instead trip-hazard runners on the floor, side-saddle seating, no nice little windows to look out while aloft, no in-flight entertainment, no where to stow their carry-on luggage. It was a huge shock!

I went for a run but came back home after 2 minutes because I forgot something.  
I forgot that I'm fat and can't run for more than 2 minutes.



But, once they were shown all the bits and pieces and instructed on their use, it all made sense. If given the opportunity, all would gladly give up their next flight in a 737 for the experience of a trip in the Spartan.



Then, as 3.00pm approached, it was time to head home again, it was one last look over the mighty F-111 at the main gate, then onto the buses and back to the Club.

Thanks to the RAAF for making the day possible.