

35 Sqn Association Day.

On Friday the 9th August, a bunch of old RTFV-35 Sqn blokes, with their ladies and friends, were guests of 35 Sqn at Amberley. A total of about 70 people met in the car park next to the F-111 at the 'new' front gate to the Base at 10.00am. Jarrod Phillips from 35 Sqn then checked everyone off on a roll, reminded everyone of the requirements for entering the Base and outlined the 'follow me' procedure for getting to 35 Sqn HQ.



Jarrod headed off onto the Base in the RAAF's Z car, followed by a convoy of everyone in their private cars and we all ended up in the new multi-story car park – with a lift. Can you believe that?? – different world.

From the car park, it was only a short walk to the Sqn HQ where we were ushered into the Sqn briefing room and met by the CO, Wng Cdr Ben Poxon who welcomed everyone to the Sqn and gave a 30 minute informative talk and PowerPoint presentation on what the Squadron has accomplished with its new aircraft and also where it was headed.



After the briefing and because of the large number of visitors, we were split into 4 groups, each with a minder and we then headed off to look through the hangars. First thing you notice, when compared to the facilities we had and used in years past, is the different mind-set taken by the RAAF. Today safety is most definitely top of mind, it always was but has been ratcheted up to the Nth degree, the once favoured tarmac uniform of shorts and T-boots has long gone, no more sun-burnt troops, today it's fully covered clothing with hi-vis vests, no longer do blokes and blokettes use vehicles or ladders or open-top stands to work on aircraft, today it's a far different ball-game. Today blokes and blokettes have safe and secure work platforms on which to work, hangars are well-lit with smooth and thoroughly clean floors. No trip hazards there. Move your mouse over the pic at right to see the in-hangar work platforms.

We also noticed that 35 Sqn do their own deep cycle maintenance – bit like the old E servicing a lot would be familiar with. We consider this a fabulous step in the right direction, for some time now the RAAF has been out-sourcing its heavy maintenance and it's good to see it coming back in-house. Blokes and





blokettes were becoming refuellers and marshallers and leaving the RAAF with not a lot of maintenance experience under their belt. The new 35 Sqn has decided to continue with the practice used by the old 35/38 Sqns which used to service their Caribous up to D. With aircraft that spend a lot of time away from Base, in a lot of instances, in the bush, it's imperative that its ground crew have the smarts to be able to fix the aircraft if and when it goes bung.

As well as that, it's nice to end the day with the knowledge that you've fixed something.

After a good look through the hangars it was time to hit the flight line and check out one of the aircraft.



Anne Peck, right, up close and personal with the Spartan.





Jeremy Spackman getting his first up close look at an Air Force squadron.



A lot of people had never been inside a RAAF aircraft and they were amazed at the frugality of the interior. No soft comfy seats, no overhead lockers, no carpet on the floors, no pretty hosties to direct you to your seat – just a great big padded tube with bits hanging off it everywhere.



Sorry we didn't get a name, but a big thank you to the RAAF bod who was super patient with everyone and who went out of his way to explain things.

He even showed how quickly you can open the door – see [HERE](#)



One of the aircraft was about to head off somewhere on a job – and while most people had been in an aircraft before (civvy) not a lot had stood on a tarmac and see one depart. (Click the pic to see it go.) The day was organised by John “Sambo” Sambrooks and WO Ralph Clifton, who was not well and couldn't front up on the day and although the old ex-35/38Sqn blokes didn't see anything to write home about, their friends were fascinated and got an insight into the way an airline works. They would have gone away with fond memories of the day and will tell all their friends what a great time they had - events like this can only be good PR for the RAAF.

After our tour of the hangars and tarmac area, it was into the brew room, once called the smoko room, for one of the RAAF's famous barbecues and to meet with some of the PAF blokes and blokettes.





Current 35 Sqn personnel hard at it on the barbecues.



The current 35 Sqn buildings – facilities these days are fabulous, run your mouse over the pic to see the building which housed 38 Sqn many years ago.



We must thank the CO, Ben Poxon for allowing the day to go ahead. A bunch of old buggers like us invading his domain always upsets the normal running of the squadron but Ben and his team were most accommodating, went out of their way to make us feel welcome and we thank them very much.



Brent Peck and Ben Poxon.

We did notice another change – the ADF is now the ADO – Australian Defence Organisation. Can't offend anyone, what next, plastic bullets??

