



## 55 Years and Still Counting.

Twelve members of Number 19 Radio Apprentice Course gathered in Canberra on Friday the 27th February, 2020, 55 years after 35 boys arrived at Radio Apprentice Squadron Laverton to start their careers in the RAAF. Twenty-seven young airmen graduated 32 months later.

They had planned to hold a reunion on the second weekend of January this year, on the anniversary of our enlistment, however the bush fires on the eastern seaboard intervened and the event was postponed. The reunion was also an opportunity to dedicate the 19 Radio Apprentice Course plaque at the RAAF Memorial Grove. (Click it for a bigger view).

[Julian De Ross's](#) widow and two of their children joined them for some of the weekend's activities.

On Saturday morning they 'paraded' at the RAAF Memorial Grove to dedicate their course plaque. Following a welcome and introduction by Allan George, 'Padre' Rolf Roelfsema gave an address in memory of Big Julie who had passed away in December 2019. Rolf followed this with a prayer for the dedication of the plaque.



L-R: Chris Robins, 'Rolf' Roelfsema, 'Suds' Purcell, Allan George, Paul Hewitt, Garry Thomsen, Rick Toholka. AVM 'Mac' Weller AM, Arnie Vereschildt, Barney Jones, Kevin Smith, Stew Deans, Dave Lugg OAM.

They were then honoured to have Air Vice Marshal 'Mac' Weller AM (retired) dedicate their plaque. AVM Weller of Number 12 Engineering Apprentice Course (Wombats)) through his long



and distinguished career, had an in depth understanding of the apprentice scheme and its history; this was reflected in his outstanding dedication address. An extended lunch at the Ainslie Football Club followed.

Food, drink, frivolity was in abundance at Saturday night's reunion dinner. Sunday afternoon saw them on a conducted tour of the Australian War Memorial, including attending the Last Post Ceremony where Allan George and Arnie Vereschildt laid a wreath on behalf of 19 Course. An obligatory dinner and celebratory lemonade concluded the day's activities.

On Monday morning they toured the Canberra Deep Space Communications Station at Tidbinbilla, before the group dispersed to all corners of Australia. Planning is underway for a 2025 reunion in WA.

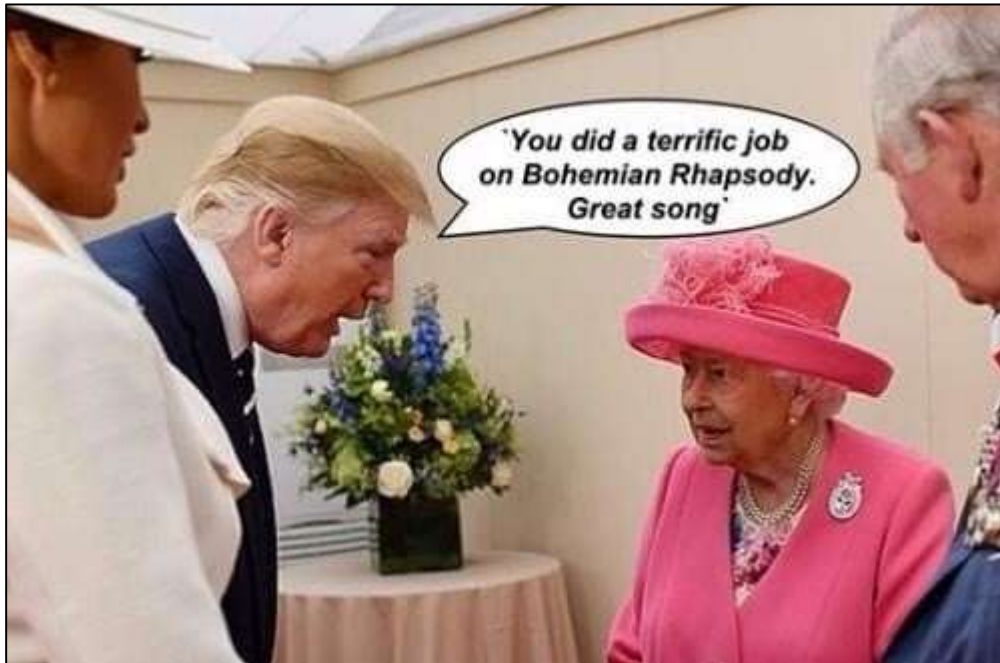


**L-R:** Chris and 'Suds' Purcell, Jane George, Stewart and Dianne Deans, Allan George, Marilyn and Arnie Vereschildt, Barney and Kim-Marie Jones, Dave and Wendy Lugg, Joel De Ross, Chris and Lin Robins.

The Reunion group visited the Canberra Deep Space Communications Complex where the 'groundies' were very impressed at the size of some of the hardware. The 'earthlings' are pictured



in front of the 70m Deep Space Communications Antenna (the largest satellite antenna in the southern hemisphere).



## Avalon Airshow.

The Avalon Airshow, which was to be held in Feb 2021, has had to be delayed due to the Corona Virus. After extensive consultation and review, it became clear that the impacts of COVID-19, including lengthy logistical lead times and uncertainty about availability of international travel, would pose unacceptable risks to AVALON 2021, should it continue with its original February dates so a later date was settled on. Trade days will now be from Tuesday 23rd Nov to 2PM on the 26th Nov and Public days will be from 2.00pm on the 26th Nov to the 28th Nov.

That year the Airshow will feature and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the RAAF.



As one of the world's great air shows, AVALON is the most spectacular and the most comprehensive aviation, aerospace and defence event in the Indo Asia Pacific region. It is Australia's largest combined business exposition and public entertainment spectacular.

It will be a spectacular not to be missed, put it on your bucket list

## **Delivering the RAAF's Centenary Commemoration.**

On 31 March 2021, the Royal Australian Air Force will mark 100 years as an independent service. 2021 will be an important time to reflect on our enduring contribution to the security of Australia.

Air Force is planning a national series of events and initiatives that will honour the sacrifices and service of the last 100 years, demonstrate today's highly capable force, and foreshadow our continued evolution into the future. The Centenary program will be one of the most comprehensive public engagement program ever undertaken by Air Force. It will include the largest air show conducted in Australia and activities likely to involve a member of the Royal Family.



Air Force established the Air Force 2021 Branch, dubbed Air Force 2021, which will deliver the commemoration activities of the Royal Australian Air Force's centenary during 2021. The AF2021 team is headed up by Director-General Air Force 2021, AIRCDRE Andrew Elfverson. Andrew leads a small team of five groups who report to him. Operations and Plans led by WGCDR Rosemary Johnson, Strategic Communication led by WGCDR Ivan Benitez-Aguirre, History and Heritage Coordination led by GPCAPT Ernie Walsh, Community Engagement and Base Liaison Officers led by WGCDR Tammy Dyson and Industry and Youth Engagement headed up by GPCAPT Ross Jones.



Working from sites at Defence Establishment Fairbairn, ACT and Defence offices in Raymond Terrace, NSW the team is working hard to deliver the centenary commemorations, while working around the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that is affecting every public activity in Australia. Crucial to the success of the commemoration are Base Liaison Officers (BLO) who will enhance a local focus on activities at RAAF bases. Bases will conduct their traditional Air Force Birthday events prior to 24 March 2021 to allow support, as required, to the major event in Canberra on March 31.

BLOs will be critical in coordinating local activities during 2021 to be celebrated as part of the centenary range of events. Another primary role for BLOs is to enhance communication with base personnel and local RAAF Veteran groups to keep them informed of activities and planning as Air Force heads to its 100th anniversary.

Don't wait until your deathbed to tell people how you feel.  
Tell them to piss off now.

## Wallaby whisper.

35 Sqn out at Amberley, which now operates the Spartan aircraft, continues the tradition started when 35 Sqn operated the old Caribou from Vung Tau back in the 1960s. 35 Sqn when operating in Vietnam, operated under the name of [Wallaby Airlines](#) and now with the new aircraft it has decided to continue with the name.



The Sqn now issues a regular newsletter called the "Wallaby Whisper" and you can see the latest version [HERE](#).



## DFRDB Update May 2020.

Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) for updates.

Those of us who only served a short while in the ADF and are not relying on DFRDB to put bread on the table, really have no idea of the huge injustice that those that do have been dealt. In our society, it's unimaginable that a Government would deliberately lie to and steal from its people, but that it seems is exactly what has happened.

Have a look at [THIS](#).

In February of this year, Ken Stone wrote to the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, (see the letter [HERE](#)) asking for the PM to intervene and to remedy the injustice immediately.



As yet he hasn't received a reply.

Perhaps it's time we all started to write to our MPs declaring our disgust and demanding this DFRDB injustice be remedied.

## Coroner calls for Department of Veterans Affairs to be subject to independent audit of veterans' complaints.

A Victorian coroner has recommended the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) be subject to independent audits of its handling of veterans' compensation claims following an inquest into the suicide of Army veteran Jesse Bird.

Key points:

- Coroner recommends DVA be subject to independent audits of handling veterans compensation claims.
- The coroner was investigating the death of veteran Jesse Bird, who had lost a permanent impairment compensation claim.
- Mr Bird suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder and alcohol abuse.



Coroner Jacqui Hawkins called for the role of National Commissioner for Defence and Veterans Suicide Prevention to be dramatically expanded to allow for broader reviews of DVA processes, and investigations into complaints about the Department made by veterans.

Coroner Hawkins found that DVA had acted contrary to policy and legislation and that it handled Mr Bird's permanent impairment claim without compassion or empathy, leaving him devastated. She included several recommendations in her report, amongst them was:



### **Recommendation Three:**

I recommend that the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel take the necessary steps to harmonise the legislation governing the veterans' compensation and rehabilitation scheme to:

- 1 ensure that the claims system is 'fit for purpose', reflecting the needs of veterans now and into the future;
- 2 reduce complexity in the compensation system by streamlining and simplifying the claims process;
- 3 remove inconsistencies between the Acts to ensure fairness and equity ineligibility and benefits; and
- 4 ensure the legislative framework reflects veteran centric practices.

This recommendation is very relevant when you consider the difference in benefits provided to those on VEA and to those on MRCA. (see [HERE](#)). We can only hope her recommendations are taken up. We have written to the Minister asking if the Government intends to accept the recommendations, we'll let you know when we get a reply.

You can read the full report [HERE](#).

## **Planet of the Humans.**

Michael Moore, that dashing, debonair and very controversial producer of documentary films, recently released a movie which, in a nut-shell, says that green energy cannot solve the problem of society's expanding resource depletion unless we all start to use less, which is by definition unsustainable given that the Earth is finite - (whatever that means!!).

The film argues that renewable energy sources, including biomass energy, wind power and solar energy, are not as renewable as they are portrayed to be. The film has generated controversy and been criticized as partially outdated and misleading.





It's not everyone's 'cuppa tea' and we'll probably get a heap of hate mail for including it here but it's a point of view that perhaps should be considered.

The film was temporarily taken down from YouTube on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020 in response to a claim of copyright infringement. The take down was challenged and, twelve days later, YouTube removed the restriction, allowing the film to be viewed again on Moore's channel. The filmmaker responded, "There is absolutely no copyright violation in my film. This is just another attempt by the film's opponents to subvert the right to free speech."

You can watch it [HERE](#).

## Appy Reunion, Wagga, April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

All Appies are invited to attend a reunion/celebration in Wagga next year to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the RAAF. Costs for the event have yet to be finalised but they will soon be made available on the Appy website ([HERE](#)). At the moment the site says that Registration is closed, read that as not yet open, once things are finalised everything will be made available and you'll be able to register.



Following are the events that are being planned:

### Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 Time TBA

Meet and Greet at the Range Centre 308 Copland Street Wagga - cost TBA

### Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Time TBA

Bus trip to Temora Aviation Museum (and hopefully a flying day at the museum) - cost TBA

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021 ANZAC Day

- Dawn Service for those wishing to attend at either Kapooka, RAAF Wagga or the main Wagga Cenotaph which is located in Baylis Street next to the lagoon.
- 1000 Hours - Main Anzac Day March from location TBA to the Wagga Cenotaph

### Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

- Time TBA - Tour of RAAF base Wagga and Heritage Museum (subject to approval)
- Time TBA - Celebration Dinner at the Range Centre - cost TBA

More later when things are finalised.

Why is it that at reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?





## Protests in Melbourne.

There's a bloke in Melbourne called Avi Yemini who is of the Jewish persuasion. He is a very right wing bloke and gets himself into quite a bit of trouble – mainly because of his right wing views. It's funny but you can have the most way out left wing views and that's acceptable, but go a little bit to the right and you're classified as some sort of a nutter who doesn't have a clue about anything. One way or the other, the left will pursue you vigorously and try and crush you, sometimes viciously.



Surely the sensible thing would be to look at the message, not the messenger - wouldn't it? Doesn't seem to work that way.

Recently Avi took his microphone to the streets to interview people out protesting for "black life matters." Some of the comments are interesting. You have to wonder where those thoughts are coming from - is it the schools? universities? the media? - why are people thinking that way? - it's sad really.

You can watch his interviews [HERE](#).

The rain was pouring down outside O'Connor's Irish Pub There standing in front of a big puddle outside the pub was an old Irishman, drenched, holding a stick, with a piece of string dangling in the water. A passer-by stopped and asked him, "What are you doing?" "Fishing" replied the old man. Feeling sorry for the old man, the gent says, "Come in out of the rain and have a drink with me". In the warm ambiance of the pub, as they sip their whiskies, the gentleman, being a bit of a superior smart ass, cannot resist asking, "So how many have you caught today. "You're the 8th", replied the old man.

## Costco.

Costco has offered a reduced membership to members of the Radschool Association. Instead of paying \$60 per year for normal membership, as members of the Radschool Association when you join you pay only \$55 but this entitles you to two cards and you will receive a Welcoming Voucher, right - (click it to get a bigger view) which is redeemable for items or savings in store. Total value of the offer is \$128.00 - take them all up and your membership is virtually free. The second





card is available for someone over the age of 18 and who lives at the same address as you, so take your wife, your husband, boy-friend, girl-friend, son, daughter - who-ever, and both of you can be members for the one \$55 fee. (This is an annual fee but you'll find it worthwhile as Costco provide little membership "perks" each year.)

To join you must prove you're a member of the Radschool Association (only one of you), and seeing as how we don't yet have membership cards, if you wish to join, just let us know (you can use the [Contact Us](#) link on every page) and we'll email you a confirmation of membership. You and your partner, friend, mate etc, then take this to the membership desk at Costco, tell them you both want to join as a business members under the RAAF Radschool Association - pay your \$55 and you're members.

You'll be surprised what you can buy at a Costco store, the range is enormous and at the savings are huge - have a look [HERE](#).

This is where the stores are:

**Queensland**

17-39 Cook court  
North Lakes

1 Wood St,  
Bundamba

**NSW**

17-21 Parramatta Rd  
Lidcombe.

20 Parks Farm Place  
Casula

10 Langford Drive  
Marsden Park

**South Australia**

404-406 Churchill Rd  
Kilburn

**ACT**

39-41 Mustang Ave  
Majura Park  
Canberra Airport

**West Australia**

142 Dunreath Drive  
Perth Airport

**Vic**

381-383 Footscray Rd  
Docklands

29 Bond St  
Ringwood

60 Deveny Road  
Epping