

The People I meet.

As most people know, the 31st March 2021 was the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Australian Air Force. Soon after its formation, it applied for the “Royal” prefix and King George V approved the prefix in May 1921. The Australian Air Force became the Royal Australian Air Force on the 31st August, 1921, or was it the 13th August 1921? Depends on [who](#) you believe.



Whichever is correct, a lot of people have accepted the 31st as being the date and as March was lock-up time in most of Australia, some organisations decided to celebrate on the 31st August instead. The Air Force Associations of Nambour and Kawana Waters, on Qld’s Sunshine Coast, had planned a celebration in March but like everyone else, they had to defer until August. Gary Patrick, the President of the Kawana Waters branch got the troops together and invitations were sent out.

We were lucky to get one – but we foresaw problems.

Normally when I associate with other mortals unless I thoroughly mask the Radtechitis that naturally emanates from my person, I am in danger of being swamped by people who, unable to resist the temptation, need to wrap themselves on my person to soak up some Radtechitis. I find the attraction is much stronger with the female species and I’ve found unless I was vigilant, I could be swamped by hundreds of heavy breathing females. Eminent scientists from around the world have studied this phenomenon for some years but to date, none have been able to determine why.

On the morning of the 31st, I rose at 3.30am, as per normal, donned the tight fitting lycra jump suit and pink swim cap, strapped on the dog, and completed my 25klm run. I’ve found the lycra suit and swim cap successfully mask the Radtechitis and I’m usually safe pounding the pavement at that early hour. But – one can’t wear lycra and swim caps to a formal gathering, people would talk, so I usually make other arrangements. On that particular morning, after my brief run, I had a scalding shower followed by an ice bath to close the pores, then I applied a liberal full body coating of Vaseline which I normally keep in the top drawer in my bedroom. It was then on with the suit, grab the camera and note pad and head for the door.



I jumped into my trusty 62 VW beetle, which I’d filled with super the night before and backed out the drive heading for Caloundra. My trusty beetle, which has only done a mere 956,875 kms, has never let me down, it has only had 3 engines, two gear boxes and 15 sets of tyres and I have full confidence in it – if there was a road you could drive it to the moon. When VW built these marvellous cars they ensured the average man could afford them so they didn’t build them with a



heap of un-necessary accessories that other manufacturers fill their cars with. They knew that a radiator filled with water just adds un-necessary weight to a car so didn't add one and if you don't have water you don't need a temp gauge – so there was a saving there. And to keep the inside of the car as quiet and comfortable as possible, they put the engine at the back of the car and as everyone knows, that effectively leaves the noise behind while travelling forward. Brilliant.

With the engine at the back, there was no room for the fuel tank, so they put it up front where it is easy to get at and if it's easy to get at, why not put a 10 foot diameter filler pipe into the tank, then if you want to know how much fuel you've got all you have to do is open the bonnet, which is actually the boot, unscrew the cap and look in. Someone at VW obviously had some brains, he/she figured if it was so easy to check the fuel level who needs a gauge, so they didn't add one – another saving.



So, at 6.00am, I headed north along the Bruce Highway at a steady 75 km/h, in third gear, it only does 70 km/h in fourth, and religiously keep in the right lane. There's quite a number of signs telling trucks to stay in the left lanes, and being the considerate person that I am, I don't want to hold them up. Other motorists approve of my consideration as they give me a toot in appreciation as they go by.

As there was not a lot of traffic at that hour, I had a quick trip and covered the 80km to Caloundra in a little over 2½ hours, parked the car at the Qld Air Museum, sat through the celebration ceremony then joined everyone else and headed for the Caloundra RSL Club for lunch. Being a war veteran hero, I have a handicap sticker which allows me to park in the blue spots, which of course I did and when getting my walker from the bonnet/boot, I scraped my arm on the spare wheel. I realised immediately that a tiny amount of Radtechitis might have escaped while my skin was bare, but I covered the bare spot with more Vaseline, gathered my belongings and headed inside, hoping for the best.

Little did I know but a considerable rad of Radtechitis has escaped and was drifting north, carried by the Caloundra anabatic wind.

Far to the north, the lovely Maria Suarez was running up Mt Coolum for the third time that afternoon. Determined to keep fit, she had her nap-sack, in which she'd placed 5 bricks, strapped to her back and as she does most days, was half way through her five ascents of the mountain. This day though was going to be different.



As she neared the top, that whiff of Radtechitis overtook her, she stopped immediately, dumped the nap-sack, spun around two or three times and finally determined the alluring whiff was coming from Caloundra and possibly from the RSL, a mere 38 km away. Being a mere mortal and unable to resist, she bolted down the mountain, jumped into her trusty 1938 Fargo ute and sped off down David Low Way heading for the RSL.



She screeched to a halt in front of the RSL, raced inside and bolted across the room and draped herself upon my person, threatening everyone with mass annihilation if they came anywhere near her as she was determined to drag as much Radtechitis from myself as she could.



I allowed this to continue for 53 minutes and eventually I had to extricate myself from her clutches, she thanked me, then with the biggest smile, left the club, hopped back into the Fargo and returned to Coolum.

Maria joined the Air Force in 1988 as a trainee SigsOps and was trained at the Defence School of Signals at [Cabarlah Army Base](#) near Toowoomba. Upon graduating, she spent time at 3 TELU at Pearce, Shoal Bay in Darwin, Russell Offices and ended her RAAF career in 1999 instructing new recruits in the Sigs mustering.

After discharge, she ran for and was elected to the Sunshine Coast Council and is responsible for Division 9 which contains such areas as Coolum Beach, Marcoola, Maroochy River, Peregian Beach and Yandina Creek.

We think they are lucky to have her.

Who can drink 20 litres of petrol and not die? [Give in?](#)



Associations Day Amberley – 2021

The 82 Wing at Amberley, which is the strike and reconnaissance wing of the Air Force, has under its wing 1 and 6 Squadrons (F/A-18F Super Hornets) and 4 Squadron (PC-9).

Formed in August 1944, 82 Wing operated B-24 Liberator heavy bombers in the Southwest Pacific theatre of World War II. Initially comprising two flying units, Nos. 21 and 24 Squadrons, the wing was augmented by 23 Squadron in 1945. After the war its operational units became Nos. 1, 2 and 6 Squadrons. It re-equipped with Avro Lincolns in 1948 and, from 1953, English Electric Canberras. Both types saw action in the Malayan Emergency during the 1950s; the Canberras were also deployed in the Vietnam War from 1967 to 1971.



Between 1970 and 1973, as a stop-gap pending delivery of the long-delayed General Dynamics F-111C, Nos. 1 and 6 Squadrons flew leased F-4E Phantoms. No. 2 Squadron continued to fly Canberras until it was disbanded in 1982. After taking delivery of their F-111Cs in 1973, Nos. 1 and 6 Squadrons operated the type for 37 years through numerous upgrades, augmented in the mid-1990s by ex-USAF G models. The forward air control unit joined No. 82 Wing in 2002. In 2010, the wing retired its F-111s and replaced them with Super Hornets as an interim force until the planned entry into Australian service of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter. Twelve Boeing EA-18G Growlers joined the fleet from 2017.

Every year, Covid permitting of course, the Wing hosts an Association's Day Memorial Service at the immaculate Memorial Gardens at Amberley, followed by a presentation of trophies to members of the Wing in recognition of their meritorious service over the previous 12 months and followed again by a sumptuous morning tea.





This year, about 75 members from various Associations associated with 82 Wing gathered at the top gate on Hansen Rd where they were issued with a pass then bussed to the Memorial Gardens where Canberra A84-201 has stood guard for many years.



People began assembling under the familiar blue marquees from about 9.30am in readiness for a 10.00am start however that had to be delayed for several minutes as the RAAF's noise makers had decided to take to the air at the same time.





Then, at about 10.15am, with the noise makers on the way to somewhere, Chaplain Dan Bigg declared the commemoration open and introduced GpCapt Hinton Tayloe, the OC 82 Wing.



Chaplain Dan Bigg.

Hinton Tayloe was born in Hollywood in the USA and as a young bloke joined the US Navy as a pilot. He ended up flying F-18 Hornets in the US for 8 years before heading to Australia to join the RAAF. He came to 82 Wing via a circuitous route, being the CO of 6 Sqn, then OC of 42 Wing at Williamtown before taking up residence in Amberley.

Although being in Australia for more than 20 years, when he speaks there is no denying his origins.



Hinton Tayloe.

GpCapt Tayloe welcomed everyone to Amberley and to the ceremony then after recounting the history of 82 Wig, handed the baton back to Chaplain Bigg who called for those who so wished, to lay a wreath in memory.



AirCdre Micka Gray laid a wreath on behalf of the Path Finder Force Association.



Ms Michelle Chapman laid a wreath on behalf of 467/463 Squadrons' Association (Qld).



Rob Wilson, representing Ted Mildren, the President of the RAAF Association Qld Division, laid a wreath on behalf of the Air Force Association.

Rob Wilson is the Secretary of the RAAFA Qld.



After the laying of the wreaths, and the recitation of the Ode, SqnLdr Steve Finch, as he has done for about 30 years, faultlessly played the Last Post followed by the Rouse.



Steve Finch.



Chaplain Bigg then led everyone in Benediction after which he invited everyone to hop on one of the RAAF's little white buses and head down to the Heritage Centre for the presentation of trophies and for some refreshments.



A number of people took the opportunity to have their photo taken in front of old reliable.



L-R: 2 Sqn Association Secretary Arthur Rennick and Roy Conomos, ex 2Sqn Framie. Roy is the Managing Director of [Aeropower](#) in Brisbane.





82 Wing had set up adequate seating for everyone, and provided complimentary water on entry.



As he has done so now for many years, Paul Lineham was the MC for the presentation ceremony.

A number of people were presented with their trophies.



WOff Dave Hooper, Rob Wilson.

On behalf of the RAAF Association, Qld Division, Rob Wilson presented Sgt Craig Rands of 6 Sqn with the RAAFA trophy in recognition of the superior leadership, dedication and technical acumen he had displayed in the conduct of aircraft maintenance, coordination and management over the previous 12 months. As Craig Rands was not available to receive his award, it was accepted on his behalf by WOff Hooper.



Eric Cavanagh, FSgt Susan Mallett.



Eric Cavanagh OAM, is the President of the Logan City branch of the AFA and he presented LACW Jillian O'Reilly with the Beaufighter and Boston Association trophy as a reward for demonstrating superior performance as a Personnel Capability Specialist (we called them Clerks) through excellence in judgement, decision making and administrative support. As Jillian was not able to attend, her trophy was accepted by FSgt Susan Mallett.



FltLt Sam Gladman, AirCdr Peter Growder (Ret'd).

On behalf of the Sunshine Coast Aircrew Association, Peter Growder presented Sam Gladman with the Aircrew Association Trophy which is awarded annually to a junior officer who, during the year of the award, was employed with air combat related training activities and had demonstrated excellence in ground and/or flight instruction, training development and innovation in training.

Peter Growder, as a FltLt, was the navigator on one of the first F-111s that were delivered to Australia in June 1973.

While in New Zealand in 1978, Peter and WgCdr Dave Rogers were flying over the Hauraki Gulf, to the south east of Auckland, when they experienced an onboard fire. They ejected using the escape module and were picked up by a fishing trawler which then towed the module to shore. It was later discovered that the fire was caused by the failure of a 16th stage bleed air duct.

Later, as an AirCdr, Peter was the CO of the Strike Reconnaissance Group from Dec 1997 until March 2000.



After the presentation of the trophies, everyone was invited to avail themselves of the magnificent spread that had been prepared and laid out beside the Centre's C-47.



No-one needed a second urging,

Some of the people at the Award presentation day.









Susan Mallett and yours – I was half asleep dreaming of getting a plate or six of the delicious food on offer and wondering how I'd get a doggie bag off the Base.

A friend suggested putting horse manure on my strawberries.....
I'm never doing that again, I'm going back to whipped cream.





RAAF Williamtown Freedom of the City of Raymond Terrace, 1976. Boyd Orr far left, Charles Geddes centre, Jack Khan far right.



Nick Nicola and John "Trackless" Millson – playing Caribous somewhere.

September 2021: Pretty much the same as September 2020 except now we have toilet paper.

Some pics of Wagga.

If you haven't been to Wagga recently, there has been some work done at the front gate.









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