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AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – TOWNSVILLE BRANCH

FLIGHTLINE

Volume 20 No. 2

Next Branch Meeting

Sunday 19th April 2020

1000 Hours

Townsville RSL

Next Branch Event

29th March 2020 - RAAF 99th B'day
Hervey Range Tea House

25th April 2020

ANZAC Day Dawn Service
ANZAC Day Parade

Please let us know if you want to see something specific in this newsletter. If you have a short story you'd like included or maybe even a joke or advertisement, send it to raafatvlsectr@gmail.com

★★★★★★ This publication relies on you for its content ★★★★★★

★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

On behalf of all members, we wish the following members a very Happy Birthday.

April

1 st April	Michael Beil
2 nd April	Barbara Bower
12 th April	Margaret Heferen
12 th April	Trevor Beams
14 th April	Tony Jones
17 th April	Pat Mildren
24 th April	Noelene Melrose

If we have missed anyone, please forgive us and have a Happy Birthday.

WELCOME to three new members:
David O'Sullivan, David Shaw & Toni Woodhouse.

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MEMBER PROFILE

Learn some interesting facts about your friends with this insightful probe into a member's life.

Trevor Beams



Where were you born?

Carlton Vic, however bought up in Traralgon Vic

Where did you go to school?

Grey St State School, then Liddiard Rd State School from grade 3 (newly built school) then Traralgon High School for matriculation then RMIT in Melbourne (full time after joining RAAF)

What are your interests/hobbies?

Aircraft. Wood work. Fishing but boat has not been in the water for a few years. Attempting to learn Scottish Country Dancing

Do you have a favourite book/movie/song?

Any book or movie with SCI FI. Most songs from the 60s and 70s

When did you join the military?

Jan 15th 1970 (4 years in Air Training Corps before this) Transferred to reserves 11th Apr 2010 Medically discharged 11th Apr 2017

Where was your favourite posting?

All had their highlights. Townsville was the most challenging work wise. Solomon Islands was also very rewarding

What is on top of your bucket list?

Get the caravan out of the back yard!

Get the tinnie back in the water!

What do you like about Townsville?

Shorts all year round. Cannot think of anywhere better

THOSE WERE THE DAYS . . .

About 1970 - 10 Squadron Townsville was heading for an exercise at RAAF Richmond. We were to fly out at about 1600hrs, but there were problems with the Hercules and we didn't end up leaving until around 2000 hrs. Whatever the reason for the delay, I know the canteen was open and the boozier was also. While waiting for the aircraft to become serviceable, married men with their wives and kids were saying their goodbyes and drinking milk and generally behaving themselves. Us young single men however, were dropping the grog as fast as we could and making a general nuisance of ourselves.

The time for departure had come so we all sat buckled up in the Herc waiting for take-off. Up in the air and we're away! Up at cruising altitude someone decides to be sick. We thought it was one of the drunks....no,no, no!! It was one of the marriedies who had done the right thing by drinking milk with his family. He was sitting opposite me and we knew it wasn't far away. He reaches for his ration pack under the seat to use as a catcher. Too late! he lets fly. Now he throws his hand over his face, but the fingers are spread and he hits everyone within a meter radius.

Now the smell of milk at that height sends a funny feeling through everyones gut. All the drunks are almost dry reaching. He didn't help matters when he reached into his ration pack for his knife and started scraping it off his clothes. Man that was tough work. It was a scramble for the flight deck for fresh air! Yep those were the days!!

Thanks to Eddy Albert for this contribution

History in the Townsville Area

The latest wartime historical information involving the RAAF in the Townsville area produced by member Bruce is now posted on the website. If you are unable to access it please let us know & we will get a hard copy to you.



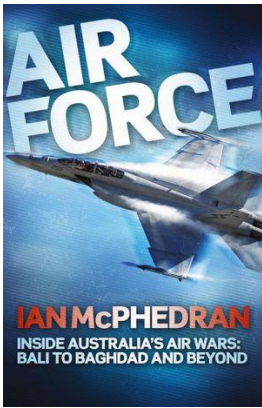
ANZAC DAY



As in previous years, ANZAC Day celebrations will be held in the city and in Thuringowa. Dawn services will be held at ANZAC Park at 0530 and at Thuringowa Cenotaph, Riverway Parklands at 0540. Parades will step off from Strand Park at 0900 and from Weir State School at 0945.

The Branch will be participating in the Strand march. Members wishing to participate will need to be at Strand Park at 0815.

A BOOK IN REVIEW



Air Force tells the action-packed, inside story of the modern Royal Australian Air Force, from East Timor and the Bali bombings to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Award-winning journalist and best-

selling author Ian McPhedran brings us gripping personal accounts of fighter pilots' bombing raids over Iraq, spy planes over Afghanistan, the operational nerve centre of the Middle East war and the delivery of humanitarian aid in world trouble-spots.

This compelling narrative of the RAAF's aircraft, leadership, traditions and personalities comes at a time of rapid change, as technology propels it into the next generation of air power and the futuristic era of stealth.

(Available from QBD, Willows Shopping Centre for \$24.99)

Welfare Workshop

Earlier this month Trevor, Lindsay & Bas attended a workshop convened by the RSL at the Townsville RSL. Presentations by the RSL, Morleys Funerals, The Public Trustee, Open Arms and DVA were the focus of the day.

The following is a summary of some of the content:

- Funeral Directors - Planning Ahead – Bereavement/Loss & Grief how to get help – What you need to do when a person dies at home – Arrangements – Process after death, things you must do – What documentation. Arrange Poppy Service for Veterans
- Public Trustee Wills / Power of Attorney
- DVA - Providing Financial Assistance, Grants
- Open Arms – Eligibility Criteria, Services, available Courses, services for remote locations and group programs

The importance of making a will and the consequences of not having a will were of much interest as was the options around funeral costs and payment

FALL OF SINGAPORE

On 15th February 1942 Singapore fell to the Japanese army after an assault that was characterised with speed, ferocity and surprise. It was considered to be one of the greatest military defeats in the history of the British Empire.

The Japanese progression down the Malay Peninsula was thought to be the limit of their advance because of the British perception that the Singapore defences were impregnable. The British had confidently predicted that the Japanese would attack from the sea. This explained why all the defences on Singapore pointed out to sea. It was inconceivable to British military planners that the island could be attacked any other way - least of all, through the jungle and mangrove swamps of the Malay Peninsula. But this was exactly the route the Japanese took.

The attack on Singapore occurred almost at the same time as Pearl Harbour. By 9th December 1941, the RAF had lost nearly all of its front line aeroplanes after the Japanese had attacked RAF fields in Singapore. Any hope of aerial support for the army was destroyed before the actual attack on Singapore had actually begun. On 8th February, 1942, the Japanese attacked across the Johor Strait with 23,000 soldiers. Many Allied soldiers were simply too far away to influence the outcome of the battle. They advanced with speed and ferocity. By 14th February the Japanese had captured Singapore's reservoirs and pumping stations. The bombing, fighting and heavy shelling continued. Hard fighting continued but on 15th February the British commander in Singapore called for a ceasefire and made the difficult decision to surrender. He signed the surrender document that evening at the Ford Factory on Bukit Timah Road. After days of desperate fighting, all British Empire troops were to lay down their arms at 8.30 that night.

The Japanese took 100,000 men prisoner in Singapore. Many Australians had just arrived and had not fired a bullet in anger. 9,000 of these men died building the Burma-Thailand railway. The people of Singapore fared worse. Many were of Chinese origin and were slaughtered by the Japanese. After the war, Japan admitted that 5000 had been murdered, but the Chinese population in Singapore put the figure at nearer 50,000.

On 15th February this year the Townsville RSL conducted a commemorative service for the Fall of Singapore. The Air Force Association participated with State President Ted and Branch President Trevor laying books in memory of those from this campaign who have now passed on.

(Information sourced from the Kokoda Historical website)

AVIATION HUMOUR



Mitigating circumstances

The passengers watch nervously as two men wearing pilots' uniforms and dark glasses use canes to feel their way into the cockpit. The plane starts barreling down the runway, and the passengers begin to get scared as the water at the end of the airstrip nears. With only a few metres left, everyone screams, but the plane lifts off just in time. The passengers think it was all a joke, while in the cockpit, the pilots high-five.

"You know," says one pilot to the other, "one day they're gonna scream too late, and we're all gonna die." ..

Padre in the Sandpit Part 1

I got a phone call from the OPS room saying that I needed to go out to the flight line because a C-130 had just landed after a close encounter with a ground to air missile and the crew were very shaken up. When I got there the usual Aussie "black humour" had already taken hold and I was greeted with "what are you doing here padre, nobody is dead." Someone had rummaged in the rag bin and found a pair of white jocks, splashed some brown paint on the rear of them, and placed them on top of a pole near the aircraft. An American officer came wandering past, pointed at the pole and asked: "what's that?" "It's a near-miss flag sir" replied one of the Aussies. The American looked at it for a bit longer and said: "why is it painted brown?" "Just think about it for a bit longer sir, I am sure the reason will come to you" said the Aussie. Americans *do* have problems understanding our sense of humour.



Although amusing, there is an important point here about the role of the chaplain – to be available to provide care, help, support, and advice to those who seek it. But that is not just the role of the chaplain, it is something that all of us need to do. I often say to units: "I am your chaplain and all the rest of you are my assistant chaplains" That also applies to our association.

Wayne Melrose, Townsville Branch Chaplain

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(Waiting for YOUR story!!!)