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AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – TOWNSVILLE BRANCH

FLIGHTLINE

Volume 20 No. 3

Next Branch Meeting

Sunday 17th May 2020

0945 Hours

Video Conference
(Bluejeans)

Next Branch Event

To Be Advised

(Depending on COVID-19 Restrictions)

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.

May

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 4 th May | Kevin Sloan |
| 12 th May | Eddie Albert |
| 13 th May | Noel Butler |
| 19 th May | Neil Cameron |
| 20 th May | Ray Eastham |
| 22 nd May | Matthew Harvey |
| 24 th May | Doug Millican |
| 29 th May | Toni Woodhouse |
| 31 st May | Pamela Gebran |

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

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MEMBER PROFILE

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

Doug Millican



Where were you born?

Townsville

Where did you go to school?

West End State School & Pimlico State High School

What are your interests/hobbies?

Family, Reading, Exercise

Do you have a favourite book/movie/song?

Book...Weapons of Choice by John Birmingham and Roving Mars (about the Mars Rover), but I read mostly anything. Movie...Star Wars (all of them). Song...really don't have a favourite, I like all styles of music.

When did you join the military?

1967

Where was your favourite posting?

Fairbairn, except for the cold

What is on top of your bucket list?

Canada or Vietnam.

What do you like about Townsville?

Laid back lifestyle, although it is changing

World war at our doorstep as Townsville almost became Australia's Pearl Harbor

HISTORY tells us that the Japanese attack on the Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii 78 years ago was a devastating act of aggression that shocked the world and forced the US into World War II. What history hasn't told us is that Townsville was next. Only a comedy of errors and an overstretched enemy force saved north Queensland from becoming Australia's Pearl Harbor. Just two months before enemy planes bombed Townsville in a scaled-down air raid in July 1942, Japanese commanders had been planning a major attack on the city, it has been revealed.

"The reconnaissance missions over the city in March 1942 were for an air raid much larger and more destructive than the July attack," Townsville historian Ray Holyoak said. "There is evidence they were planning major attacks from somewhere off Innisfail - that is, a major carrier-based air raid." He said Japanese forces were planning to "neutralise" Allied forces operating in northern Australia and disrupt supply routes to New Guinea.

He said that the enemy force had thankfully underestimated just how overstretched their capabilities had become. But that did not stop them from planning a major air raid. Japanese planes began conducting reconnaissance over the garrison city on March 21 and 22 in 1942.

(continued on page 3)

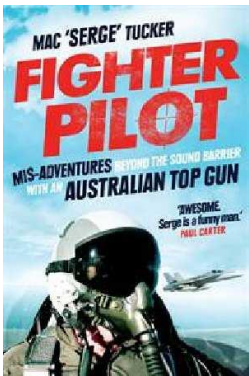
HERITAGE CENTRE's LATEST ACQUISITION



Dassault Mirage IIIO, A3-55 has been repainted and prepped for its road transport to Townsville RAAF Base to be displayed at the Heritage Centre.

This aircraft will join the recently acquired PC-9. Both aircraft will be displayed once construction of suitable stands have been completed.

A BOOK IN REVIEW



Mac Tucker, or 'Serge' to use his callsign name, is one of an elite group of men trained to fly F-18 jets. Now, for the first time, Serge takes you behind the scenes of the fighter pilot world to reveal what it's really like.

Find out how it feels to be shot at by SAS snipers, to be lost in a \$50 million jet over Northern Australia with nothing but car lights to guide you home, to rupture your sinuses while flying, to inadvertently bomb a yacht and to face death on an almost daily basis. Relive the adventures of a real-life Top Gun and find out what it takes to become part of this elite force.

(Available from QBD, Willows Shopping Centre for \$12.99)

NEW DVA SUPPORT SERVICE

A new service hosted by Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling (Open Arms) has been commenced – the Safe Zone Support. Safe Zone Support is a free and anonymous counselling line, available to veterans and their families by calling 1800 142 072 (available 24/7). This service provides immediate access to specialised counsellors who have an understanding of military culture and experience. The service offers care without the need for individuals to identify themselves or be concerned that their call will be recorded.

Safe Zone Support has been created for vulnerable cohorts of veterans and their families who might not otherwise seek mental health care, and is targeted at those veterans and families who no longer have access to mental health supports through Joint Health Command, or the Defence Community Organisation.

Initially, Open Arms are undertaking limited, targeted advertising of the support line as they are piloting their processes and utilising a duty phone system after hours. Open Arms have worked closely with Legal Services and Security teams, to ensure the support line's processes meet privacy and duty of care requirements.

Bombing Townsville Continued from page 2 . . .

The first hint the city was a target came just after midday on March 21 - less than 16 weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack. Enemy surveillance aircraft had been reported off Kissing Point. The following day, another unidentified aircraft was seen near the city around the same time.

"Those midday sightings meant no shadows. No shadows from mountains or buildings so they had clear vision of potential targets," Mr Holyoak said. "There were more missions over Townsville in (following) days which were the preliminary reconnaissance for an air raid far larger than the July attack on the city. He said documents showed that a large raid planned for Townsville was cancelled on April 30, just 48 hours before the Battle of the Coral Sea. Mr Holyoak said Japanese forces had planned to conduct an air raid on Townsville using more than 120 aircraft launched from two of Japan's largest aircraft carriers. They were to be supported by two cruisers, six destroyers and an oiler.

In July 1942, smaller-scale air raids by Japanese flying boats went ahead. Five raids were planned but only three were carried out. On July 25-26, enemy aircraft had been seen in the region with the first bombs dropped near the port at 12.40am. Six bombs were seen falling on the eastern side of the harbour but only four craters and one unexploded bomb were discovered. The all-clear was given 35 minutes after the first bomb was dropped. Townsville had just had its first frightening taste of life at war.

The second raid was on July 28. Allied aircraft were scrambled and shells were fired at the enemy planes which dropped their bomb loads near Many Peaks Range. "A few trees, a few craters, one rock wallaby - that was the extent of the damage," Mr Holyoak said after examining army surveys following the raids. They had missed their targets. Both times."

The final air raid on July 29 was more significant. Allied aircraft made contact with enemy planes, a bomb was dropped much closer to a populated area and the episode was captured by local radio broadcasters.

The ABC broadcast, which was not aired at the time, captured the sound of the enemy and allied planes overhead, the sounds of shells being fired from the ground and bombs being dropped. It was 12.25am. Seven bombs fell in Cleveland Bay and one in a paddock at Oonoonba. The only casualties of Townsville's "most significant raid" were a fence post and a palm tree, Mr Holyoak said. "If the reconnaissance missions and air raids were designed to attack the morale of Allied forces stationed in north Queensland, they failed miserably," Mr Holyoak said.

*Extracts from an article by Samantha Healy, The Sunday Mail (QLD)
11 March 2012*

AVIATION HUMOUR

OOPS!!!



Fred and his wife Edna went to the state fair every year. Every year Fred would say, "Edna, I'd like to ride in that airplane." And every year Edna would say, "I know Fred, but that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

One year Fred and Edna went to the fair and Fred said, "Edna, I'm 71 years old. If I don't ride that airplane this year I may never get another chance." Edna replied, "Fred that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

The pilot overheard them and said, "Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say one word, I won't charge you, but if you say one word it's ten dollars." Fred and Edna agreed and up they go.

The pilot does all kinds of twists and turns, rolls and dives, but not a word is heard. He does all his tricks over again, but still not a word. They land and the pilot turns to Fred, "By golly, I did everything could think of to get you to yell out, but you didn't." Fred replied, "Well, I was gonna say something when Edna fell out, but ten dollars is ten dollars."

Padre in the Sandpit Part 2

On Anzac Day 2005 I was on deployment to the Middle East. Our enemies knew the significance of the day and we had to increase our security in the lead up to the day that put extra stress on our already busy personnel. Nothing nasty happened. I guess they realized that attacking Australians on this special day might not be a career-prolonging move.

Amongst the solemnness, some interesting and funny things happened. A few days before I received a parcel marked "chaplain supplies." I expected that it would contain a supply of "ginger gummy bear" lollies (dentist would not allow us to give out minties), but to my surprise it contained two large bottles of Bundy rum. We were serving in a "dry country" where the import of alcohol was prohibited. We had obtained a permit to import small amounts communion wine, but certainly not rum. I phoned our logistic support back in Australia and pointed out that I could have spent a very long time in jail if the parcel had been intercepted, only to be told: "that's why we marked it chaplain supplies, we didn't think they would open that."

Then came the service itself. The USAF lent us a bugler who tried his best to play the Last Post but, ended up playing "Taps" instead. I have no idea what he played after the minute's silence, but it was rousing! Breakfast was at the USAF mess. We had requested cold milk with a little bit of the before-mentioned rum, but we got hot black coffee with rum (yuck) and these funny Australians like their meat pies cold don't they? We did get a bit of our own back. We taught them (sort of) to play two-up and won a lot of money. We had 150 on our parade in a supposedly safe area but scattered across the operational area we had small groups of Aussies, often directly in harm's way, who also celebrated Anzac Day in their own special way.

Reminds me of last Anzac Day. The danger we face is not bullets or bombs, it is a virus, but had to adapt the way we do things and support each other in the way that Aussies, and in this context, RAAFies always do. Another important thing about those scattered mates in the MEAO was that they were sometimes reluctant to seek or accept help, preferring to "tough it out." That is another Aussie, especially male trait that is not helpful, and took a lot of effort from me to try and change it. To all those who are reading this, your mates in the RAAF-A are here to help. If you need it, please ask for it.

Padre Wayne Melrose, Townsville Branch Chaplain