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AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – TOWNSVILLE BRANCH

FLIGHTLINE

Volume 20 No. 4

Next Branch Meeting

Sunday 14th June 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.

June

17 th June	David Shaw
19 th June	Les Coxhedge
21 st June	Chas Van Hulsentoprt
23 rd June	John Hopwood

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.

Paul Howard



Where were you born?

Birmingham UK (British by design, Australian by choice).

Where did you go to school?

Birmingham UK (...graduate from the school of hard knocks and the university of life).

What are your interests/hobbies?

Golf, golf and golf when I fit it in, when not playing golf ...hiking (related to golf to a certain extent) and reading.

Do you have a favourite book/movie/song?

The Double Helix by JD Watson/The Blues Brothers/Freebird by Lynard Skynard.

When did you join the military?

RAF 1984-1996, RAAF 1996 – present.

Where was your favourite posting?

RAF - RAF Lossiemouth North Scotland, RAAF - RAAF Butterworth, Penang Malaysia.

What is on top of your bucket list?

Not to start a bucket list until I reach 100 yrs of age.

What do you like about Townsville?

Everything including the wet season.

RAAF Neptunes & the Vietnam War

On 29th April 1965 the Australian Government announced its decision to commit ground forces for service in Vietnam. The deployment would be achieved using a QANTAS Boeing 707 and HMAS Sydney(III), the former aircraft carrier that had been converted to service in the Royal Australian Navy as a fast troop transport.

At this stage of the war, Sydney was a high-value asset of the Australian defence forces in that she had a unique sea-lift capability, and a successful attack on her would seriously delay or possibly cancel Australia's commitment to the war. Sydney and its cargo had to be protected at all costs. Based on this assessment, the decision was taken in the Defence Department to provide multi-layered protection for the deployment, with both sea and land-based air power playing a major role in the operation.

At that time, the RAAF's maritime patrol force consisted of two squadrons of Neptunes: 10 SQN based at Townsville, and 11 SQN based at Richmond.



On 21 April, WGCDR Geoff Michael AFC, the CO of 10 SQN, was briefed about Operation TRIMDON—the deployment of 1RAR to Vietnam—and ordered to begin planning the air support required. There was no specific threat identified, however the worst case scenario would be an attack on Sydney by a submarine of a nation that was allied or sympathetic to North Vietnam. The tone of the briefing was reflected in the RAAF Operations Order which stated 'a wartime situation is to be assumed throughout the operation'. Continuous air support was required all the way to the destination, the Vietnamese port of Vung Tau. All Neptune aircraft involved in Operation TRIMDON would carry live torpedoes and depth charges on all sorties. Aircraft captains were briefed that attacks were authorised on any target that 'was acting in a hostile manner' – although what constituted a 'hostile manner' was not defined.

(continued on page 3)



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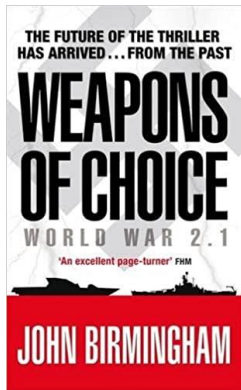
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A BOOK IN REVIEW

(reviewed by Doug Millican)



I have read, a couple of times, a book by Australian author John Birmingham called **Weapons of Choice World War 2.1**. It is part of a trilogy but book one is infinitely better than the following two books, even though they were highly entertaining and enjoyable.

The contact between the future and the past thoughts, ideas and actions is well executed and proved to be a focal point of this story. When you are talking about the morals and attitudes of male dominated 1942 and the free flowing pace of 2020 and beyond you can just see the clash building.

His blend of alternative history and future fantasy was difficult to resist. It appears to be well researched and detailed but still lots of fun. It was fast-paced with a conclusion that makes you want to continue with the next book..

The synopsis:

A near future military experiment thrusts a multinational armada back to 1942, right into the middle of the U.S. naval task force speeding towards Midway Atoll – and what was to be the most spectacular Allied triumph of World War II.

The 21st century sailors are a shocking spectre for these veterans of Pearl Harbour - men who have never seen a helicopter or a nuclear weapon, and who have never encountered an African American Colonel or a female Australian submarine commander. But they respect the armada's awesome firepower, and what that may mean to the war.

Initial jubilation is quickly doused by a shocking realisation – other ships may have made the trip, and may be in the hands of the Japanese. What happens next is anybody's guess ... and everybody's nightmare.

The Sunday Age wrote "a hugely readable adventure story that unleashes forces into a world that have the potential for change beyond anything ever seen" John Birmingham is the author of "He Died with a Felafel in his Hand", which was made into a movie, plus the award-winning history "Leviathan".

RAAF Neptunes & the Vietnam War continued from page 2 . . .

On 28th May 1965 5 Neptunes from 11SQN were deployed (3 to Townsville & 2 to Lae in PNG) to support Operation TRIMDON. On the same day support personnel were deployed to Lae by C130A. On 29th May a 10SQN Neptune joined the others in Lae.

These aircraft shadowed the Sydney task group during passage through the Coral Sea, around the island of New Guinea and through the Vitiaz Straits between New Guinea and New Britain. At least one Neptune remained on station at all times approximately 200 km ahead of the task group. Passive sonobuoys dropped in the water listened for any submerged submarines while the Neptune crews used radar and visual lookouts to detect any submarine on the surface or at snorting depth.

On 4 June, the Sydney task group rendezvoused with the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne and its two support ships for the next part of the voyage. During this most dangerous stage, Melbourne's air assets were deployed in a screening role while the Neptunes kept up the deep field patrols day and night.

As Sydney approached the coast of Vietnam on the night of 7-8 June, a Neptune kept watch for any hostile small craft that tried to approach the ship. With Sydney safely arrived and unloading at anchor in the port of Vung Tau, the last Neptune headed for RAAF Butterworth, which was the closest military airfield outside of Vietnam. Their mission over, the Neptunes returned to their home bases by 12 June, and support crews were flown home from Sangley Point and Agana by two RAAF C130A aircraft soon after.

The result of Operation TRIMDON was that 1RAR arrived in Vietnam on time. No attacks on Sydney were attempted and no hostile vessels were observed. Were the resources used in protecting Sydney and her cargo justified? Certainly the countries that were supporting the communist side in Vietnam had conventional submarines that were capable of interfering with the Australian deployment. Perhaps the presence of an aggressive, in-depth defence deterred any potential aggressor. Of more lasting importance, however, was the recognition that any expeditionary force deployed from Australia required the provision of a comprehensive layered defence to provide warning and weapon coverage against air, surface or underwater threats.

HMAS Sydney and the Neptunes have gone but the requirement to maintain sea control remains. Ships such as the new Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) give the ADF the capability to deploy an expeditionary ground force over long distances and then sustain it during operations. However, such an expeditionary force will need protection from air, surface and sub-surface attack. Networked air power provided by sophisticated attack aircraft, air defence ships, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and ship-borne helicopters will be a major component of this protection in the future.

Source: Air Power Development Centre - Pathfinder Bulletin Issue 83, 2008 and the Australia War Memorial archives

AVIATION HUMOUR



OOPS!!!

Allegedly, while taxiing at London's Gatwick Airport, the crew of a US Air flight departing for Ft. Lauderdale made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727. An irate female ground controller lashed out at the US Air crew, screaming: "US Air 2771, where the hell are you going?! I told you to turn right onto Charlie taxiway! You turned right on Delta! Stop right there. I know it's difficult for you to tell the difference between C and D, but get it right!" Continuing her rage to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically: "God! Now you've screwed everything up! It'll take forever to sort this out! You stay right there and don't move till I tell you to! You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about half an hour and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you! You got that, US Air 2771?" US Air 2771: "Yes, ma'am," the humbled crew responded. Naturally, the ground control communications frequency fell terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air 2771. Nobody wanted to chance engaging the irate ground controller in her current state of mind. Tension in every cockpit out around Gatwick was definitely running high. Just then, an unknown pilot broke the silence and keyed his microphone, asking: "Wasn't I married to you once?"

Padre in the Sandpit Part 3

One of my duties whilst deployed, was to fly as supplementary aircrew on RAAF C-130J aero-medical evacuation flights into Iraq to collect sick and wounded from the field hospitals, and bring them back to the main base for further treatment, or transfer to hospitals elsewhere. My job was to provide support, comfort, and Christian ministry during the flight, and provide another pair of hands to help load and unload the aircraft. It also gave me a chance to meet RAAF air movement, medical and air traffic personnel stationed at the airfields across the country.

On one occasion we were tasked to evacuate a group of American soldiers who had been caught up in fierce fighting for about ten days. I had never been in direct contact with troops who had just been in combat and was shocked by their haggard, grimy appearance. They had not showered in days and their toilet was the hole they were occupying, so you can imagine what they smelt like, with cordite fumes and blood thrown into the mix. Some had the classical "thousand-yard stare" seen in war movies, but this was not a movie. They were incredibly lucky to be alive.

A sergeant looked at my helmet, saw the cross' and said: "Chaplain, don't you dare talk to me about God. If he does exist, he must be a complete idiot to let crap like this happen." The actual words he used were much more colorful and expletive. I am sure he expected me to give a counter argument about his opinion about God, but I said: "I am with you. I have no idea where God is in this mess, but I know he is here somewhere." He was talking about the terrible war he was fighting, but he could have been talking about Covid-19. Hundreds of thousands are sick, thousands have died, businesses have been ruined, jobless queues are getting longer. People are saying, and have said to me, where is God in all this? I must be honest and say that I don't have a ready answer, but the bible says this about God : *Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my strong right hand* (Isaiah 41:10).



Padre Wayne Melrose, Townsville Branch Chaplain

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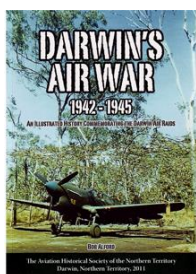
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DFRDB UPDATE

The following is an update from the *Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.* These updates and other informative documents/emails can be found on the ADFRA website. If you are a DFRDB recipient you may be interested in joining this association (free) to keep informed of the latest information on the battle for fair DFRDB payments.

“DFRDB UPDATE - MAY 2020

Introduction Due to COVID-19 and related factors, this will be a brief update.

CDDA Application Last month, Herb submitted a General CDDA application to extend his initial claim beyond the scope of Ombudsman's investigation. The essence of the claim is that:

1. The sponsoring Department (Defence) and the responsible Ministers misled the Parliament over the commutation provision during the introduction of the DFRDB Bill in 1973 and the pension increase

amendments in 1977.

2. The resulting legislation has indirectly reduced our retirement pay and invalidity pay entitlements, conferred by the originating 1973 Bill.

3. Misleading the members of the DFRDB scheme, as determined by the Ombudsman, was a deliberate act to conceal that deception.

There has been considerable correspondence and discussion over this claim, and that is still ongoing. The Directorate of Special Financial Claims official charged with assessing our CDDA claims has been quite open and reasonable. Still, we are under no illusion and are aware that his task is to defend Defence against the allegations. We know that one or more of the 30 odd CDDA claims have already been formally rejected, but do not despair, once we get a decision we will advise how to proceed.

Legal Action We believe we have now found a basis for a legal action to test the validity of the indirect reduction of our retirement pay and invalidity pay entitlements. We have addressed the matter to a Barrister but are yet to receive a reply. We are also investigating avenues for funding a legal action, should it have to go to the Federal or High Court.

Donations Thank you to those who have donated to ADFRA. Again, our apologies for not being able to thank each of you personally. With a legal case on the horizon, your generous donations will cover our travel and ancillary costs. Again, for those who asked for our Bank Account details, they are:

Account Name: Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

BSB Number: 640 000

Account Number: 111 280 106

We prefer electronic funds transfer, but if you do make out a cheque, please make it payable to Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

ADFRA Membership Membership of ADFRA is free. If you have not yet registered with ADFRA, then please do it today. To be a force in representing you, we need the numbers.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) We have had many Ex-Service Organizations (ESO's) sign up to our MOU, including some state and regional bodies that are subordinate to National groups, and we thank each one of them. However, we still do not have the critical mass we need. If you are an ESO, we ask you to give some thought to signing up to our non-binding MOU. You can download the MOU by clicking on this link:

https://adfra.org/docPDF/ADFRA_Memorandum_of_Understanding_1.pdf

Support for our Middle East Veterans I have been critical of our major ESO's in that I had not seen any evidence of support for our Middle East Veterans during the ongoing saga of alleged battlefield misconduct. However, I have since found that RSL National is on the case and has made formal contact with the Minister. I thank the RSL for their action.

Jim Hislop President”

The following article is an insight into the workings of Disaster Relief Australia, previously known as Team Rubicon Australia – I hope you find it interesting – ED



FIRST CHAPTER

Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) was launched in 2020, after a tenure as Team Rubicon Australia, which was founded in August 2016. Our first disaster relief operation was launched in 2016 in response to the devastation wrought by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. This operation, dubbed Operation Dunlop, after WWII Surgeon Sir Ernest Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, saw DRA deployed to the hard-hit town of Proserpine in North Queensland. For over three weeks 62 volunteers worked tirelessly to help the greater Proserpine community recover from the disaster. As importantly, we proved that military veterans are ideally suited to conduct this type of work.

OUR JOURNEY

The journey to Proserpine started in 2013, when a model of disaster relief utilising veterans was tested in the United States. The model was imported and contextualised to the Australian backdrop. Subsequently, a commitment was made that has now become our Mission Statement:



In 2020, we took the step to become a truly unique Australian organisation. Since 2016, we have grown from the fledgling efforts of two stubborn veterans to a

nationwide movement. With over 2500 members and 6 fully operational Disaster Relief Teams (DRTs) in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Townsville, Adelaide and Canberra DRA represents a significant capability. We have proven that capability on 20 disaster relief operations both domestically and internationally, helping thousands of disaster survivors. Over the next 4 years DRA will expand from 6 to 12 DRTs around Australia.

In the spirit of WWI veterans returning to build the Great Ocean Road, DRA has reinvented the idea that veterans are some of most highly trained civic assets, with skills and experience to be harnessed. They are anything but victims, they are Built to Serve.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

Our mission is to unite the skills and experience of military veterans with emergency services specialists to rapidly deploy disaster relief teams in Australia and around the world in the wake of natural disasters.

WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Our vision is to be the pre-eminent disaster relief organisation in the Asia Pacific, and in doing so, change the narrative around what it means to be a veteran in Australia.

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

By preparing for and responding to disasters, Disaster Relief Australia provides veterans the opportunity to grow beyond their military service. Disaster relief has proven to be a powerful tool to help veterans transition back into society and their local communities.

WHAT ARE OUR VALUES?

Disaster Relief Australia is a professional disaster relief organisation with a unique culture and history. We are dedicated to the service of communities in need and to each other. DRA is governed values that place a high value on servant leadership, maturity, integrity, teamwork and determination. We believe that veterans have unique skills and experience that can be harnessed to assist disaster affected communities. We also recognise that veterans have an ongoing desire to serve others and that through service they can grow beyond their time in the military.

The following values underpin our organisation:

Global Citizenship – We are impartial, apolitical, and non-religious. DRA's identity transcends geographic and political borders, and serves to foster cross-cultural understanding.

Servant Leadership – We serve with humility, deference, and respect. We place the needs of others ahead of our own – always. We serve without expectation of personal gain, recognition, or reward.

Professionalism – We strive to deliver the highest standards of quality in disaster relief. We place transparency, accountability, innovation and efficiency at the center of our processes and operations.

Grit – We are accustomed to austere conditions, thrive in chaos, and face adversity head-on. We are determined to deliver aid to those in need, wherever and whomever they are.

Humanitarianism – We are driven by our commitment to relieve suffering, restore human dignity and promote well-being in the wake of natural disasters.

OUR OPERATIONS



Since 2017 DRA has conducted 12 major operations in Australia including "Operation Gordon" in response to unprecedented flooding in Townsville from 30JAN19 to 09MAR19.

For more information go to the DRA website

www.disasterreliefaus.org