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AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – TOWNSVILLE BRANCH

FLIGHTLINE

Volume 22 No. 2

Next Branch Meetings

Sunday 13th February 2022

(Monthly Meeting)

1000 Hours

Bolton Clarke Community Centre, Rowes Bay
&

Sunday 13th March 2022

(Monthly Meeting & AGM)

1000 Hours

Bolton Clarke Community Centre, Rowes Bay

Next Branch Event

Branch Welcome to RAAF Families

27th March 2022

(details TBA)

★ “Look back and be grateful. Look ahead and be hopeful. Look around and be helpful.” ★



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

February

- 2nd Tony Murray
- 9th Michael Surman
- 15th Mel Dundas-Taylor
- 16th Wayne McCarthy
- 17th Steve Cox
- 27th Earle Murray

March

- 1st David Cowie
- 6th Paul Gebranth
- 8th Colin Gardner
- 11th Edward Preston
- 16th Ron Cooper
- 16th Michael Hartley



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MEMBER PROFILE

CAN YOU FILL THIS SPACE?? If you have not already appeared in the "Member Profile" section, PLEASE answer the questions below and send them, with a smiling headshot, on an email to tvsec@raafaqld.org.

[name]



Where were you born?

Where did you go to school?

What are your interests/hobbies?

Do you have a favourite book/movie/song?

When did you join the military?

Where was your favourite posting?

What is on top of your bucket list?

What do you like about Townsville?

Do you have a story to tell, a joke to make us smile, a poem, an event you want to tell us about or anything else you think our readership would be interested in? Then send it to tvsec@raafaqld.org with the subject line "NEWSLETTER ARTICLE"



Boeing 747 "SCA"

The following is a quick "trip report" from the pilot of the 747 that flew the shuttle back to Florida after the Hubble repair flight. A humorous and interesting inside look at what it's like to fly two aircraft at once.

Well, it's been 48 hours since I landed the 747 with the shuttle Atlantis on top and I am still buzzing from the experience. I have to say that my whole mind, body and soul went into professional mode just before engine start in Mississippi, and stayed there, where it all needed to be, until well after the flight...in fact, I am not sure if it is all back to normal as I type this. The experience was surreal. Seeing that "thing" on top of an already overly huge aircraft boggles my mind. The whole mission from takeoff to engine shutdown was unlike anything I had ever done. It was like a dream... someone else's dream.

We took off from Columbus AFB on their 12,000 foot runway, of which I used 11,999 feet to get the wheels off the ground. We were at 3,500 feet left to go on the runway, throttles full power, nose wheels still hugging the ground, co-pilot calling out decision speeds, the weight of Atlantis now screaming through my fingers clinched tightly on the controls, tyres heating up to their near maximum temperature from the speed and the weight, and not yet at rotation speed, the speed at which I would be pulling on the controls to get the nose to rise. I just could not wait, and I mean I COULD NOT WAIT, and started pulling early.

If I had waited until rotation speed, we would not have rotated enough to get airborne by the end of the runway. So I pulled on the controls early and started our rotation to the takeoff attitude. The wheels finally lifted off as we passed over the stripe marking the end of the runway and my next hurdle (physically) was a line of trees 1,000 feet off the departure end of Runway 16.

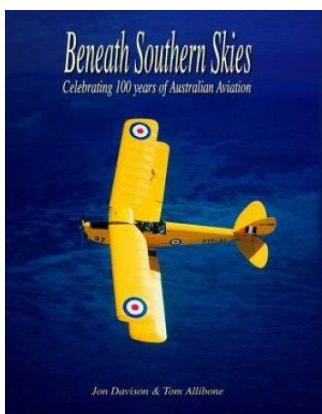
All I knew was we were flying and so I directed the gear to be retracted and the flaps to be moved from Flaps 20 to Flaps 10 as I pulled even harder on the controls.

I must say, those trees were beginning to look a lot like those bushes in the drive through car washes so I pulled even harder yet! I think I saw a bird just fold it's wings and fall out of a tree as if to say "Oh just take me".

Okay, we cleared the trees, duh, but it was way too close for my laundry. As we started to actually climb, at only 100 feet per minute, I smelled something that reminded me of touring the Heineken Brewery in EuropeI said "is that a skunk I smell?" and the veterans of shuttle carrying looked at me and smiled and said "Tyres"! I said "TYRES?? OURS??" They smiled and shook their heads as if to call their Captain an amateur; okay, at that point I was. The tyres were so hot you could smell them in the cockpit. My mind could not get over, from this point on, that this was something I had never experienced. Where's your mom when you REALLY need her?

(continued on page 4)

A BOOK IN REVIEW



Authors
Jon Davison &
Tom Allibone
ISBN
9780734405739
Published
02/11/2003
Binding
Hardcover
Pages 300

QBD Price: \$24.99

2003 marked the centenary of powered flight with the Wright brothers' flight into history in December 1903. *Beneath Southern Skies* is a visual celebration of the important role that aviation has played in shaping Australia.

The world's largest island, Australia was still in its infancy when powered flight emerged and began to change the world. Australia owes much to the early pioneers of aviation who, in their fabric-covered wooden flying machines, paved the way for Australia's airlines, mail runs, mining ventures and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

This book explores the development of Australia's aviation industry through the eyes of the people whose lives depend on its existence.

Illustrated throughout with breathtaking photography, '*Beneath Southern Skies*' is a must of all aviation enthusiasts, young and old.

Have you read a good book lately that you think other members may enjoy? Then write a brief review and send it in for inclusion in our newsletter

2022 Townsville Australia Day Awards

The 2022 Australia Day Awards recognise Townsville's unsung heroes. The awards pay tribute to the special people in our community who have gone above and beyond to help improve the lives of others and contribute to a diverse, friendly and strong community. The Townsville Australia Day ceremony held this year saw a number of locals receiving acknowledgement for their contribution to our community.

One of those recognised is RAAF Association member and Branch Vice President Doug Millican. Doug was awarded the "Citizen of the Year" and is recognised as a person who "has made an outstanding contribution to the community & has been an inspirational role model for the community". An extract from the citation says:

"Doug has been an integral part of North Queensland Legacy for the past six years. In that time he has mentored many legatees and currently supports 12 beneficiaries ranging from 12 to 90 years of age. He has worked hard to develop the club and its volunteer capacities, as well as incorporating Ingham, Charters Towers and Bowen into the North Queensland branch. He is also active within the RAAF Association as a regular face at meetings and local commemorative events.

Doug has provided selfless and generous experience and mentorship to the wider community for many years. It is on this merit that Doug is the 2022 Australia Day Citizen of the Year."

CONGRATULATIONS Doug on this outstanding achievement.



Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

NATIONAL CABINET MEDIA STATEMENT- Extract re RAT.

"Up to 10 Rapid Antigen Tests over three months (a maximum of 5 in a month) will be made free through pharmacies to people holding the following cards:

- Pension Concession Card
- Commonwealth Seniors health Care Card
- DVA Gold, White or Orange Card
- Health Care Card
- Low Income Health Card"

Local supply numbers are not known so contact your local pharmacy for availability.

AVIATION HUMOUR



From Ken Bailey - above are couple of 'toons which appeared in some of the newspapers during the pilot's strike of the 1980's. I know they are not "news", but I thought it might bring a smile to some faces who may not have seen them before. As I was a Loadmaster with 36sqn at the time I found them quite amusing.

Boeing 747 "SCA" – continued from page 3

The flight down to Florida was an eternity. We cruised at 250 knots indicated, giving us about 315 knots of ground speed at 15,000'. The miles didn't click by like I am use to them clicking by in a fighter jet at MACH .94. We were burning fuel at a rate of 40,000 pounds per hour or 130 pounds per mile, or one gallon every length of the fuselage. The vibration in the cockpit was mild, compared to down below and to the rear of the fuselage where it reminded me of that football game I had as a child where you turned it on and the players vibrated around the board. I felt like if I had plastic clips on my boots I could have vibrated to any spot in the fuselage I wanted to go without moving my legs...and the noise was deafening. The 747 flies with its nose 5 degrees up in the air to stay level, and when you bank, it feels like the shuttle is trying to say "hey, let's roll completely over on our back"...not a good thing I kept telling myself. SO I limited my bank angle to 15 degrees and even though a 180 degree course change took a full zip code to complete, it was the safe way to turn this monster.

Airliners and even a flight of two F-16s deviated from their flight plans to catch a glimpse of us along the way. We dodged what was in reality very few clouds and storms, despite what everyone thought, and arrived in Florida with 51,000 pounds of fuel too much to land with. We can't land heavier than 600,000 pounds total weight and so we had to do something with that fuel. I had an idea...let's fly low and slow and show this beast off to all the taxpayers in Florida lucky enough to be outside on that Tuesday afternoon.

So at Ormond Beach we let down to 1,000 feet above the ground/water and flew just east of the beach out over the water. Then, once we reached the NASA airspace of the Kennedy Space Center, we cut over to the Banana/Indian Rivers and flew down the middle of them to show the people of Titusville, Port St.Johns and Melbourne just what a 747 with a shuttle on it looked like. We stayed at 1,000 feet and since we were dragging our flaps at "Flaps 5", our speed was down to around 190 to 210 knots. We could see traffic stopping in the middle of roads to take a look. We heard later

that a Little League Baseball game stop to look and everyone cheered as we became their 7th inning stretch. Oh say can you see...

After reaching Vero Beach, we turned north to follow the coast line back up to the Shuttle Landing Facility (SLF). There was not one person laying on the beach...they were all standing and waving!"

What a sight" I thought...and figured they were thinking the same thing. All this time I was bugging the engineers, all three of them, to re-compute our fuel and tell me when it was time to land.

They kept saying "Not yet Triple, keep showing this thing off" which was not a bad thing to be doing. However, all this time the thought that the landing, the muscling of this 600,000 pound beast, was getting closer and closer to my reality. I was pumped up! We got back to the SLF and were still 10,000 pounds too heavy to land so I said I was going to do a low approach over the SLF going the opposite direction of landing traffic that day. So at 300 feet, we flew down the runway, rocking our wings like a whale rolling on its side to say "hello" to the people looking on! One turn out of traffic and back to the runway to land...still 3,000 pounds over gross weight limit. But the engineers agreed that if the landing were smooth, there would be no problem."Oh thanks guys, a little extra pressure is just what I needed!" So we landed at 603,000 pounds and very smoothly if I have to say so myself.

The landing was so totally controlled and on speed, that it was fun. There were a few surprises that I dealt with, like the 747 falls like a rock with the orbiter on it if you pull the throttles off at the "normal" point in a landing and secondly, if you thought you could hold the nose off the ground after the mains touch down, think again...IT IS COMING DOWN!!! So I "flew it down" to the ground and saved what I have seen in videos of a nose slap after landing. Bob's video supports this!

Continued next page

Boeing 647 "SCA" - continued

Then I turned on my phone after coming to a full stop only to find 50 bazillion emails and phone messages from all of you who were so super to be watching and cheering us on! What a treat, I can't thank y'all enough.

For those who watched, you wondered why we sat there so long. Well, the shuttle had very hazardous chemicals on board and we had to be "sniffed" to determine if any had leaked or were leaking. They checked for Monomethylhydrazine (N2H4 for Charlie Hudson) and nitrogen tetroxide (N2O4). Even though we were "clean", it took way too long for them to tow us in to the mate-demate area. Sorry for those who stuck it out and even waited until we exited the jet.

I am sure I will wake up in the middle of the night here soon, screaming and standing straight up dripping wet with sweat from the realization of what had happened. It was a thrill of a lifetime. Again I want to thank everyone for your interest and support. It felt good to bring Atlantis home in one piece after she had worked so hard getting to the Hubble Space Telescope and back.

In case you haven't seen the Shuttle Carrier Aircraft, below is a link to a video of this flight... a lot of fascinating history as well ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcI1e4KiDv0>

(Article supplied by Doug Bower)

Padre's Piece

Moral injury part two - In the previous newsletter I wrote that moral injury occurs when somebody carries out an act, or orders others to do so, that is "legal" according to the "laws of war" or "rules of engagement" but is contrary to the person's own personal moral code, especially if those have been falsely identified as enemies and turn out to be innocents, or if innocents, especially children, are killed during a legitimate attack on the enemy. Guilt, shame, disgust, and anger are some of the hallmark reactions of moral injury. So is repetitive self-interrogation. What if I had done this or that, or said this or that, would it have made a difference? Many make the statement that they cannot forgive themselves for what they have done.

So how can we help? Never say "it's not your fault, you were only following orders" or "it was either them or you" – they have already rejected those ideas. Gently talk about the problem with "what ifs." Point out there is no real way of answering what if questions. What if the pilot I mentioned in part one, had waited a bit longer before taking off? Maybe he would have saved more people, but the delay could have given time for the aircraft to get hit by a missile killing all on board. The need for forgiveness is extremely important and this is where, as a Christian minister and chaplain, I believe that faith and faith-based rituals can play an important part, because the bible says very clearly that God can forgive us even when we cannot forgive ourselves. For example: In John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us all our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

SGT G told this story to his unit chaplain. He was the commander of a check point when a car kept driving towards it ignoring hand and light signals to stop. There was no time for warning shots, and he ordered the gunner to fire a burst into the car. It was an innocent family. The parents were killed, and two children were wounded and orphaned. He knew that they had no choice but to open fire, but he found out later that the sun was shining in the drivers' eyes, and he could not see the warnings. After returning home SGT G told the padre: "Every time I look at my kids or any other kids, I see the faces of those two in Iraq. Padre, I don't know whether God really exists or not, but can he send an angel or something to find those poor kids and tell them I'm sorry?" The padre encouraged him to write a letter asking God and the children to forgive him and place it on the chapel altar. After a week SGT G and the padre burnt it. SGT G said, "I feel a weight off my shoulders, I do feel forgiven, I feel like living, not dying." He had already written a suicide note. It to, was burnt.



*Padre Wayne Melrose,
Townsville Branch Chaplain*

UPCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

Branch Annual General Meeting



The Branch AGM is getting closer. The AGM will immediately follow our normal Monthly Meeting planned for 13th March at the Bolton Clarke Community Centre. A light lunch will be provided at the conclusion of the meetings. So, get your thinking hats on and nominate who you would like to see as your executive committee for 2022. Nomination forms for the executive positions were forwarded with the formal notification of the AGM. Nomination forms must be returned to the Secretary NO LATER THAN COB on 25th February.

Branch Welcome to RAAF Families

A tentative date of 27th March has been allocated for the Branch Welcome to RAAF Families. This is an opportunity to get to know current serving members and their families in a fun and relaxed atmosphere and to promote the Association. Your participation in this event is strongly encouraged. Details on location, timing and activities available will be advertised when planning for the event is finalised.

