



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter May 2020



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Newsletter Editor
Noel Hutchins

COVID-19 AND CONTINUING NEED FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS

With social distancing requirements very likely to be with us, I believe, for a very long time yet, it is most unlikely that we will be able to resume our normal Monthly Social Luncheon Meetings for some considerable time. There is no way that we could meet social distancing requirements with that type of meeting with the number of members who attend even as restrictions are eased to allow larger numbers of people to gather socially under social distancing requirements.

With this in mind and with it becoming apparent that some members appear to be in need of somewhere to have some social activity, I made contact with appropriate Victorian State Government MP's requesting 'some guidance' in respect of smaller social gatherings for our members.

I have received the following advice :

The following principles have been developed to guide in the lifting of restrictions around recreation activity.

Recreation activities can resume if:

- you can keep your distance (at least 1.5 metres apart)*
- you are doing your activities in a public space; and*
- you can do them with a maximum of 10 people.*

In the case of recreation activities that are also exercise, you can resume these activities if:

- you are not participating in an organised competition; and*
- it is a non-contact activity and you can keep 1.5 metres between yourself and others; and*
- you do not participate in the activity for an unreasonable period of time.*

The *Collins English Dictionary* defines "Recreation" as :

- 1. refreshment of health or spirits by relaxation and enjoyment.*
- 2. an activity or pastime that promotes this.*

Since receiving this advice announcements have been made further easing restrictions from 1st June that :

**Libraries, youth centres, and community clubs can reopen from June 1,
with no more than 20 people inside at a time.**

With this information at hand I will make myself available to open our Airport Hut 48 rooms four times a week, (*until the end of June and then review*), for "Mini-Gatherings" with a maximum, to start with, of ten members at any one time in attendance while we see how we go with our social distancing within our 'space' and then consider moving to maybe a twelve maximum. This will be open to any member and his or her partner, **but you must contact me, 0439 929 322, to notify your wish to attend the rooms so that we can ensure that we do not exceed the set controllable maximum of persons at any time.**

Openings will commence Saturday afternoon 30th May with openings : Tuesdays (2), Thursdays and Saturdays.

OPENING OF AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION BALLARAT BRANCH ROOMS MAY AND JUNE 2020

The opening of our Airport Hut 48 rooms until the end of June as per the dates at right will give all members an opportunity to attend the rooms, with or without their partner, where they will be able to just sit and chat over a cup of tea or coffee, read a book from the library, exercise or dance to music or watch others doing that.

Tea/coffee/biscuits will be provided with disposable cups and teaspoons used. Hand sanitiser plus food handling and other gloves will be available. The tea and coffee arrangements will be set up in the Committee Room. **Tea and coffee drinks NOT to be taken into the central meeting room.**

Chairs so spaced allowing for social distancing measures will be available in the meeting room where music will be played to which members will be welcome to exercise or dance to. ...Or you can sit and relax and watch. Social distancing to be maintained with **no physical contact other than between a member and his/her own partner.**

Books will be available from the library to read on-site but not take away. Gloves supplied **MUST** be worn when handling books.

There will be a charge of \$5 per person to cover costs of tea, coffee, milk, biscuits, gloves, hand-sanitiser etc.

Members **MUST** contact me, (0439 929 322), and advise me that they wish to attend so as to enable me to ensure that numbers are managed.

On arrival, each attendee should use the hand sanitiser that will be provided inside the entry before using one of the pens available to enter their name and phone number on the attendance sheet and to note a Yes or No as to whether they have downloaded the Covid Safe App made available by the Federal Government...and don't forget to pay your \$5.

If only four or five come to some sessions, no problem. It doesn't matter how **few** attend, but the opportunity is there for members, with four separate times available each week. Come on, these openings are for you, come and join in.

So these openings are for Air Force Association members and their partners. **Do you know anybody who would like the opportunity to attend? No problem, direct them to me and I will provide a membership application for them, \$25 for the rest of the year is pretty good value.**

These openings will continue beyond the end of June if members properly adhere to the requirements as above. (NH, Pres)

DISPLAY CABINET DONATION

We have been most fortunate in receiving a donation of this pictured display cabinet that has come to us via Janet Bates.

The cabinet has been donated to us by Mrs Alison Weatherall.



The cabinet is pictured beside the uniform of 1WAGS trained WW2 Navigator Flight Sergeant Charles Newall whose log book and other items are now located in the cabinet. Than you to Alison Weatherall and to Janet & husband Peter for delivering the cabinet to our rooms.

Twelve months ago Maurice Turner addressed our May meeting with a small example of the large number of WW2 model aircraft that he subsequently donated to us and

which is now a major feature in our meeting room including the larger models flying from the rafters. Maurice is now a member of our branch. When I called Maurice and asked how he was filling in his time during current restrictions he said, "believe it or not, I have gone back to building WW2 model aircraft, I ordered another 4 kits today". He said he is making another one for where there is a spot in our cabinet, I think one of the Messerschmitts. He said that the others he is making he will bring to a meeting when we are up and running again and see if any of our members are interested in them.



Saturday 30th May:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 2nd June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 2nd June:	7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Thursday 4th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Saturday 6th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 9th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 9th June:	7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Thursday 11th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Saturday 13th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 16th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 16th June :	7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Thursday 18th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Saturday 20th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 23rd June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 23 June:	7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Thursday 25th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Saturday 27th June:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 30th Jun:	2 pm to 4 pm
Tuesday 30th June:	7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

1 WAGS REPORT

The 1 WAGS website 1wags.org.au continues to receive browsers with over 4,000 since the February launch 2020. There have also been 29,556 Spider visitors, i.e : sites such as Google accessing the website. Apart from Australia, the country with the most browsers so far are the United States of America. Other countries include Germany, France, Greece, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Netherlands, The United Kingdom and more.

The most popular sections of the website are 1 WAGS PEOPLE [2,086 visitors] ,the HOME Page [5,098 visitors].

The HOME PAGE leads on to accessing other areas of the site. The April FEATURE STORY found on the home page and in INFORMATION is - **ANZAC Day 2020**. The photos and articles are from the AFA Ballarat Branch newsletter including the Virtual ANZAC Commemoration hosted by Bruce Roberts [son of Tom and Penny Roberts] and The Last Post video from AFA Victoria. 25 browsers had already looked at this Feature Story at time of writing this report late April.

The new addition of 1 WAGS Prisoners of War, to be part of the MEMORIAL section, is under construction by UBC Web Design. This will list the 210 1 WAGS who were P.O.W.s during WW2 with 79 dying in captivity.

Currently a 1 WAGS article, including photographs, is being put together for The Mechanics Institute of Ballarat initiative " My Story" which will give 1 WAGS greater exposure in Ballarat and district.

We encourage members to view 1wags.org.au and LIKE and SHARE on the 1 WAGS Memorial Facebook page... ..

..... come on, have a look. (Janet Bates, Website coordinator)

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## QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS FROM APRIL NEWSLETTER

How did you go with answers to the quiz questions in the April newsletter? Or, better still, how did you go **before** doing any research? If the questions got any members to do any thinking or research, then the exercise served it's purpose.

Well done to Stan White who quickly sent in his answers where he scored a great 8 out of 10, with the other two "pretty close".

### Answers :

**1. Popular name given to the C47 Dakota Aircraft ?**

**Answer : The Gooney Bird"**

**2. During WW2 Australians first inflicted defeat on the Japanese Army at ?**

**Answer : Milne Bay.**

Just before dawn on 1st September 1942, following fierce battles against the invading Japanese, the enemy began to retreat towards their invasion base, all the while pursued by Australian infantry. By the end of the Battle of Milne Bay the battle had taken the lives of 167 Australians, 14 Americans and "about" 750 Japanese.

**3. Later to be Australian Prime Minister, who crashed several fighters during WW2 and was badly burnt?**

**Answer : John Gorton.** (later Sir John Gorton)

(Before entering politics, John Gorton served as a pilot in the RAAF during WW2. Twice forced to crash-land his aircraft, first at Singapore and then in New Guinea suffering facial burns, he then also survived the sinking of his rescue ship when it was torpedoed.

**4. The rifle that replaced the .303 in the RAAF ? ( full name, not abbreviation).**

**Answer : Self Loading Rifle.**

Or to be more specific the **L1A1 Self Loading Rifle**, generally simply referred to as the SLR. The Australian L1A1 rifles were produced at the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow, NSW with approximately 220,000 L1A1

rifles produced between 1959 and 1986. The Australian L1A1 is a local adoption of the British L1A1 SLR (a development of the Belgian FN FAL). It is described as a reliable weapon which has proved itself in all conditions and is regarded as one of the most successful battle rifles ever produced.



**5. The aircraft that replaced the Sabre for service with the RAAF in the 1960's.**

**Answer : Mirage**

No 75 Squadron, based at that time at Williamtown NSW, was the first RAAF Squadron to be equipped with the Dassault Mirage III fighter in December 1964.

**6. What was the name of the Australian Navy Aircraft Carrier that served in Vietnam.**

**Answer : HMAS Melbourne**

*HMAS Melbourne*, a Majestic-class light aircraft carrier, formerly the Royal Navy's *HMS Majestic*, reportedly never fired a shot in anger during her service career. She was purchased by Australia in 1947 for service with the Royal Australian Navy before which she would be fitted with new aircraft carrier technologies and an angled flight deck, but delays in construction and changes resulted in her not being commissioned as HMAS Melbourne until 1955.

Come the 1960's Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation and Vietnam War she had only peripheral, non-combat roles. So while her service during the Vietnam war was a non-combat role, she **was** an aircraft carrier and she **did** serve in the area.

Yes, *HMAS Sydney* also served in the Vietnam War but she was a **former** aircraft carrier which was brought out of 'reserve' and recommissioned as a 'fast troop transport' on 7th March 1962, and **she certainly played a major role in the Vietnam war, but as a troop carrier.**

**7. For how many years was Australia involved in the Vietnam war?**

**Answer : 10 .**

3rd August 1962 to 2nd December 1972.

**8. Full name of No 1 WAG who completed Course No 2 and is a member of our branch of the AFA.**

**Answer : Jack Bell.**

(Jack is currently in Cabrini Hospital in Melbourne. Cheers Jack, all from Ballarat Branch wish you a speedy recovery).

**9. RAAF Base WAGGA is located in what area of that town?**

**Answer : Forest Hill**

**10. In the early days of settlement, a fort was built on Pinchgut Island in Botany Bay, to deter which country?**

**Answer : Russia**

In 1853 a Government Committee on the Defence of Port Jackson recommended harbour defences be upgraded immediately in view of the threat of an European war with Russia which escalated into the Crimean War (1854-56).

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A special cheerio to our members in Aged Care facilities. Sadly I am unable to hand deliver your newsletter and say hello during our current restrictions, but I would think that the newsletters get delivered to your rooms promptly when they are delivered to your location. Please give me a call if you are able, 0439 929 322 (NH, Pres)

Vale ~ Mr Ivan Kerr

Sadly, very belated advice has been received that our member Ivan Kerr passed away on 18th March 2020 as a result of a farm accident, presumably at his farm where he lived at Linton. Ivan attended our last held meeting on 3rd March.

May He Rest in Peace

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**STOP PRESS ~ REMINDER : Yes, the first of our limited attendees room openings is this coming Saturday 30th May. This is before the 1 June further easing of restriction so will be limited to ten attendees ..... So Call 0439 929 322 ASAP if you wish to attend this first opening. This first opening will give us a guide as to whether we can comfortably increase to 12 or more attendees for the subsequent openings.**