

Newsletter December/January 2019~2020

President: Noel Hutchins - 0439 929 322 **Vice President: Leigh Harvey OAM** Junior Vice President: Peter Schoutens Secretary: Rob Petty - 0407 891 281

Chaplain: Rev. Keith Lanyon - 0411 512 160

REGULAR **COMMITTEE MEMBERS Janet Bates Stephen Brown** Michael Lake Ken Marsh **Bob McDonald**

ELDER STATESMEN DrTom Roberts OAM Gordon Jarvis Tom Jobling Keith Pitman Stan White

> Newsletter Editor **Noel Hutchins**

MONTHLY SOCIAL MEETINGS

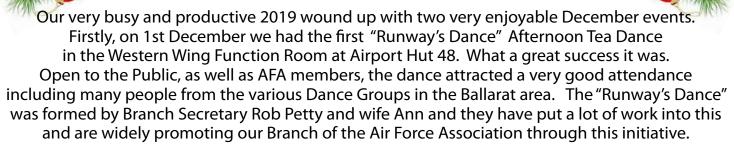
Our Social Luncheon Meetings are held on the FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, (except January), with **Arrival time by 11.45 am for a 12 Noon commencement**. All meetings are held at our rooms at Airport Hut 48, Airport Drive, Mitchell Park (ie: Ballarat Aerodrome).

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETINGS

Our **Business Meetings**, open to all members, are held at 3 pm on the second Tuesday of each month. These meetings immediately follow a monthly Committee meeting enabling members to be promptly aware of decisions taken by the committee, enabling members to ratify, or otherwise, decisions taken.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Our final Social Luncheon Meeting for the year on Tuesday 3rd December, at which our very good friends, the Sing Australia Choir, entertained us with some Christmas songs and carols, rounded out our year.

I will not cover here any of the events/happening of the past year as they were all amply recorded in the monthly newsletters throughout the year.

I take this opportunity to thank members of our committee who have worked with me to deliver what I believe has been a very well managed year for our Branch of the Air Force Association.

I had been considering conducting an end-of-year "satisfaction survey" of members; however, the overwhelming messages of support and thanks received from members, including from the majority of our Elder Statesmen individually conveying messages of thanks and support shows that such a survey is not needed. Thank you all for your messages of thanks and support.

To each and every member I wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Wonderful New Year.

Noel Hutchins, President/Editor



RUNWAY'S DANCE 1ST DECEMBER 2019

The pictures tell the story.

What a great afternoon.

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"When is the next one"? was the question asked by many at, and after, the dance.

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The answer?

Watch this Space



# **DECEMBER 2019 CHRISTMAS SOCIAL LUNCHEON MEETING**



Our very good friends, Sing Australia Choir Ballarat, entertained us with Christmas songs and carols



Members got involved in a most enjoyable Christmas Story item provided by members of the Sing Australia Choir



Santa Clause popped in and very cleverly continued to use the Audience involvement theme set by Sing Australia when telling his own Christmas story. Many thanks to Elder Statesman Tom Jobling for arranging a visit by Santa once again. Thank you Tom.

And thank you to each and every member of the Sing Australia Choir that made our day very special.

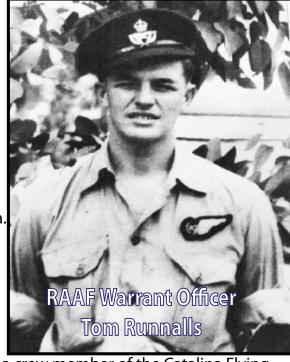
**EX RAAF Warrant Officer Tom Runnalls** was a special guest at our December Christmas Social Luncheon meeting and it was thanks to Janet Bates' husband Peter who provided transport from, and return to, the

John Curtain Hostel at Creswick for Tom to be able to be with us on the day. Tom is an ex 1WAG.

Tom Runnalls was born on the 9th July 1924 in Bodmin, England. By 1929 his family had emigrated to Australia and settled in the Bendigo area. After leaving school Tom secured an appointment with the Commonwealth Public Service as a Junior Clerk. His first position was with the Wartime Department of Munitions at the Ammunitions Factory at Footscray followed by a transfer to the Ordnance Factory at Bendigo. Here the major manufacture was to be 4 inch naval guns for the RAN.

Tom joined the local ATC [Air Training Corps] and later after the outbreak of WW2 at the age of 18, enlisted in the RAAF. After completing his Initial Training at No.1 ITS Somers, Tom was posted to No. 1 WAGS at the Ballarat aerodrome. He completed Course 32, November 1942 to April 1943, finishing 4th in his Course. He then travelled to No. 2 BAGS [Bombing Air Gunners School] to complete the gunnery section of his course. Tom fully expected to be posted to Bomber Command in the U.K; however, with the threat from the Japanese to Australia, he was held back and posted to No. 2 ANS, (Air Navigation School), at Cootamundra. Here Tom belonged to staff WAGS manning the wireless equipment installed to receive and send messages and in doing so guide pilots home. After a stint at No. 2 Transit Depot at Bradfield Park, Sydney, Tom was posted to No. 3 Operational Training Unit Rathmines for training on Catalina Flying Boats. Due to the complexity of training, Tom spent 5 months at





Rathmines. Tom was then posted to No. 20 Squadron in Cairns as a crew member of the Catalina Flying Boats. During the early critical months of the Pacific War, Catalina Flying Boats of RAAF No 11 and 20 Squadrons played a significant part in slowing the initial Japanese advance. Armed with bombs, depth-charges, mines or torpedoes, The Catalinas flew to the Solomons, New Britain, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies and eventually to the Palaus, the Philippines, Formosa and China. From all Australian Catalina operations in the South West Pacific sector 320 airmen failed to return. Operations that Tom's crew were involved in were to mine Japanese harbours in the Caroline Islands. His plane and crew were based on a US Navy Sea plane Tender "USS Tangier" moored off Manus Island NE of New Guinea. By 1944 Tom was posted to Darwin to continue crewing in Catalina Flying Boats with further mine laying operations and served with No. 43 Squadron in the N.W Area from July 1944 until May 1945. Tom was discharged on the 19th September 1945. *Thank you for your Service Tom and for joining us at our Christmas function. (Thanks to Janet Bates for transmitting Tom's story for inclusion in this newsletter)*.

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JANUARY GET-TOGETHER Tuesday 7th January 2020: As has been the practice, our January get-together will be in the form of a BYO picnic lunch in the Rotunda adjacent to the larger children's playground at Lake Wendouree commencing at **11.30 am**. As usual, some of us will need to get down there early to secure the rotunda before others get in there. Bring a plate to share. The Association will provide cold soft drinks and sweets on the day. There is a Bar-B-Que facility there for those wishing to bring BBQ items to cook for themselves.

FEBRUARY SOCIAL LUNCHEON MEETING Tuesday 4th February 2020 will also act as our Annual General Meeting. Arrive by 11.45 am for a 12 Noon Start. Please see separate AGM Meeting Notice with Committee Nomination form accompanying this newsletter.