



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter March 2020



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REGULAR
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Janet Bates
Stephen Brown
Ken Marsh
Bob McDonald

ELDER STATESMEN
Dr Tom Roberts OAM
Gordon Jarvis
Tom Jobling
Keith Pitman
Stan White
Newsletter Editor
Noel Hutchins

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS EMAILED TO MEMBERS WITH EMAIL ADDRESSES ON 17TH MARCH PRIOR TO THE GOVERNMENT'S MORE RECENT FURTHER RESTRICTIONS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS AND IS REPEATED HERE FOR MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE INFORMATION

SUSPENSION OF BALLARAT BRANCH ACTIVITIES

Considering the age group of members of our branch of the Air Force Association, along with advice from Federal and State governments and health authorities in respect of the threat of the further spread of Coronavirus,

ALL MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES OF OUR BRANCH ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

I will continue to put out our monthly newsletter and keep members informed as to when our activities will be able to start up again. General administrative running of our branch will continue to be attended to by the Executive Management Committee of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

Please take extra care of yourselves and loved ones during this viral outbreak.

KEEPING IN TOUCH : With the very tight but necessary restrictions on visits to aged care facilities and the advisability of limiting physical closeness with the more aged and frail in the community, it is imperative that email and/or telephone contact be maintained between members and also between members and the Executive Committee.

We need to be aware of any member in distress or in need in any way. To this end I request that members make telephone contact with those other members who they have been close to in the past and have contact details for.

I have been, and will continue to make telephone contact with each member to check on their situation and for a general catch-up. **Some member's numbers I call I do not get an answer.** I therefore request that **each and every member who has not had a telephone contact from me by Sunday evening 29th March to text or telephone me to check that their contact details held by me are in fact up to date. Here are my contact details, no excuse not to call if you have not heard from me.....**Noel Hutchins, President, Phone : 0439 929 322 Email : noelhutch@bigpond.com

1WAGS WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE

Hopefully plenty of members have had a chance to have a look at our new 1wags.org.au website. Lots of people from all around the World have been. Thank you to our 1WAGS website coordinator Janet Bates for the following report :

1 WAGS Memorial Website

*It has been just over a month since the launch of the 1 WAGS Memorial Website – 1wags.org.au and I am very excited to share with you how well the website is being supported and viewed, not only in Australia but world-wide. The **Site Statistics** give an overview of the number of 'browsers' each day and which countries they come from. To date there have been 1,590+ Browsing Visitors from many countries – Australia, United States, France, Italy, Greece, United Kingdom, Virgin Islands - British, Netherlands, Turkey, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Germany, Sweden etc. There have also been 10,255+ **Spider Visitors** which are search engines and other automated programs, such as Google, that take information to be shared by other sites for research.*

All of this in a little over a month!

*There is a good coverage of browsers in all **MENU PAGES** from the website, particularly **The MEMORIAL ROLL, 1 WAGS HISTORY, the HOME PAGE, 1 WAGS COURSES and GALLERY.***

*It is very pleasing for the 1 WAGS Research Team to know that our website is unique as it is the first to **List all Courses and Commemorate** those RAAF 1 WAGS trainees who served during WW2. It is a site to be viewed by grandchildren and great grandchildren and further generations of 1 Wag trainees for many many years to come.*

*We have also had interest from No. 3 Wags in Maryborough Queensland as to how we developed this wonderful website and we have been publicised and supported on their facebook page – **Maryborough Military Aviation Museum.** Many thanks.*

*We also have our own Facebook Page – **1 WAGS Memorial** where our support base is growing.*

If you haven't jumped onto the website and facebook page as yet we urge you to do so and share these sites with your family and friends.

It is intended that the 1 WAGS Website will be a working site with more names and information added as it becomes available.

To further enhance the content of the site we are asking for any information, photos etc regarding the W.A.A.A.F. [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force] that served at 1 WAGS during WW2. At its peak we had 159 WAAAF's at 1 WAGS. Janet Bates Website Coordinator

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**VALE ~ :** Sadly, we record the passing of former member Mr Ray Magilton

**MAY HE REST IN PEACE**

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GET WELL SOON :Members Keith Lanyon and Ken Curnuck each had a health event recently. On behalf of all members I wish Keith and Ken a speedy recovery from their respective situations. (NH, Pres)

98 YO WWII BOMBER COMMAND VETERAN

BILL COOK was a most interesting guest speaker at our March Social Luncheon Meeting. Bill was among the first group of RAAF ground crew members to head to England for WWII duties. Arriving in England in 1941 he first served with 456 (RAAF) Squadron, a night fighter squadron stationed at Valley, North Wales. After a time there he was posted to 460 (RAAF) Squadron stationed at Binbrook, Lincolnshire. Serving at 460 Squadron as an Electrical Fitter he serviced Lancaster Bombers including the famed **'G for George'** which is now a very much viewed exhibit at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Hearing Bill's story was made all the more interesting in that it was decided that we would do an *Interview type* presentation of Bill story using the talents of Branch Secretary Rob Petty. Before 'interviewing' Bill, Rob first showed a most interesting DVD **"Lancaster Legend"**. If you have not seen that, I would suggest you look it up. Very much worth a look.

Rob did a great job as the interviewer bringing out some very interesting stories from Bill covering his pre-war period, his enlistment, time with both 456 and 460 squadrons, "G" for George, his marriage in England and his post-war period back in Australia.

When things get back to 'normal' following our current coronavirus lock-down, I would suggest that AFA Vic consider taking both Rob and Bill down to Melbourne for a Meet-a-Mate presentation.



Branch Secretary Rob Petty looks on as WWII RAAF Veteran Bill Cook addresses the meeting

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## BUS TRIP TO B24 HANGAR AND WERRIBEE MANSION AND GARDENS

Members' positive response to the proposed trip to the B24 Hangar at Werribee and the Werribee Mansion and gardens was great to see. There is only four seats on the bus still available, so if you haven't yet booked and paid your \$15, you had better get in quick.

**We will still proceed with making booking arrangements for this trip scheduled for Tuesday 19th May SUBJECT TO CHANGE should our current suspension of activity still be in force.**

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AFA GEELONG BRANCH MEMBERS were hosted by our Branch at an afternoon tea in our rooms at Airport Hut 48 on Thursday 5th March. Our visitors were given a tour of our facilities and also given a rundown on the research of and 1WAGS records and the development of our 1WAGS website.

Our audio/visual technician Peter Schoutens was able to bring up the website in large format for our visitors to see, and our 1WAGS website coordinator Janet Bates gave a very good talk about the development of and the features of the website.

Member Allan Penhall who is the Curator of the Friends of the Anson Museum then offered to open the museum for our visitors to see before heading home. (NH, Ed)



Geelong AFA Branch President John Delia and Ballarat Branch President Noel Hutchins with branch members behind

The Tom Roberts Library continues to be developed with Senior Librarian Stephen Brown hard at work. Stephen has catalogued over 200 books to date and delivered and shelved them in our library. In time, the library will be available at designated times for members to visit and sit in our rooms and read or alternatively sign a book out on loan.

Stephen intends to write a user's guide to the collection to advise how the collection is arranged and how it can be accessed.

Stephen also intends to donate to the library a laptop computer with the library collection spreadsheet and documentation.

Thank you Stephen for your continuing work on this. *(NH, Pres)*



Committee Member/Senior Librarian Stephen Brown at work in the library

WOULD ANY MEMBER HOLDING BOOKS BELONGING TO AFA BALLARAT NOW MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE THEM DELIVERED TO OUR AIRPORT HUT 48 ROOMS TO ENABLE THEM TO BE CATALOGUED ASAP

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**BASIC PROTECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST CORONAVIRUS**

**Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with hand sanitiser or wash them with soap and water. When you are out touching items previously touched by others, e.g. supermarket trolleys, fuel pump hose handles when refuelling your car etc, remember to sanitise or thoroughly wash your hands at the earliest opportunity.**

**Wash your fruit and vegetables before use....many hands have handled these before you picked them up.**

**Maintain social distancing as recommended by health authorities.**

**Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth....Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.**

**THINK OF THE PROTECTION OF OTHERS**

**Stay home if you feel unwell.**

**Practice respiratory hygiene : This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.**

**TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF**

**If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.**