



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH



Newsletter April 2019

President : Noel Hutchins - 0439 929 322
Vice President : Leigh Harvey OAM
Junior Vice President : Peter Schoutens
Secretary : Rob Petty - 0407 891 281
Treasurer : Josie Reasons
Chaplain : Rev. Keith Lanyon - 0411 512 160

REGULAR
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Ken Marsh
Brian Reasons
Michael Lake
Janet Bates

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

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held on the **FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, (except January)**, with **Arrival time by 1145 hours for a 1200 hours Commencement.** Meetings are held at our rooms at Airport Hut 48, Airport Drive, Mitchell Park (ie : Ballarat Aerodrome).

FROM THE PRESIDENT: At our March meeting it was proposed that we change our monthly social meeting day, however, we find that such a change would have a serious effect for one of our most senior members, **THEREFORE OUR MONTHLY SOCIAL MEETINGS WILL REMAIN ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH**

PREPARING FOR THE OPENING OF OUR ROOMS



Stephen Brown & Rob Petty



Rob Petty & Janet Bates



Tom Nunn



Stephen Brown & Ann Petty

**THIS IS WHY THE OUTSIDE OF AIRPORT
HUT 48 LOOKED SO GOOD FOR
THE OPENING OF OUR ROOMS**

OFFICIAL OPENING OF OUR NEW ROOMS AT AIRPORT HUT 48



WWII Veteran, (and No 1 WAG), Jack bell, was the guest speaker at the official opening of our rooms at Airport Hut 48 on 28th March.

Although a resident of Melbourne, Jack is officially a member of our Ballarat Branch. Jack completed Course No 2 at No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School RAAF Ballarat in 1940 before heading to Evans Head for the Gunnery side of his training prior to embarking for his WWII service in the Middle East where he was posted to RAF 216 Squadron equipped with Bristol Bombay transport aircraft.

On 23 January 1942 during an operation approaching Msus, Eastern Libya, the Bombay aircraft in which Jack was a crew member was hit by an 88mm shell. The cockpit was extensively damaged and the aircraft caught fire.

When the aircraft crash-landed Jack sustained severe burns to his head and arms, a lacerated scalp and significant abdominal wounds with a bowel perforation. Jack spent three years and three months as a prisoner of war.

Now this part of Jack’s story was delivered to the audience by Air Force Association Victoria Board Member Chris Hudnott who then introduced Jack to continue the story. When Jack got to the lectern his first words were, “I’m just a bloke”.....and from there, Jack talked at length about compassion. The compassion that the German people at the field hospital had for him, and also that of Italian nurses during a period when he was in their hands, and he spoke, with the use of detailed stories, of tolerance and respect that came to him via the prison camps.

“I leave you with this message, Jack said, “compassion, tolerance and respect, please remember that”.



Secretary, Rob Petty & President, Noel Hutchins look on as Jack Bell delivers his address



Margaret and Trevor Bennett, Widow and Grandson of WWII RAF Pilot and former President of our Ballarat Branch A. J. (John) Bennett pictured with our honour board listing John’s name



LEFT: Secretary Rob Petty, AFA Vic Board Member Chris Hudnott & Ballarat Mayor Cr Samantha McIntosh
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**RIGHT:** Heather Gordon, Dorothy Nunn & Ann Petty were three wonderful volunteers who prepared and served afternoon tea





Using records researched originally by Tom Roberts and later joined by Peter Schoutens, and more recently by Janet Bates, this display of each 1WAGS course list, framed and displayed by Peter Schoutens, was an item of interest to many of our visitors on our opening day. With different numbers on various courses, this resulted in some gaps between the frames. However, this was a blessing in disguise as this gave us an opportunity to display some of the beautifully knitted and crocheted poppies supplied to us by the ladies of the "Ladies' Craft Group" of the York Street Church of Christ, Ballarat. Thank You Ladies.



Branch President Noel Hutchins, Guest Speaker Mr Jack Bell and AFA Vic Board Member Mr Chris Hudnott.



Immediate past President Dr Tom Roberts OAM pictured beside the sign to The Tom Roberts Library, so named in recognition of Tom's many years of service as President.



**Above :** Jack Bell and Noel Hutchins chat with Margaret Wood.  
**Left :** Jack Bell poses with "Sam the Pilot", on loan from Dave Wright Militaria for the day...thank you Dave.  
**Right :** Ballarat Mayor Cr Samantha McIntosh chats with Heather Gordon from the York Street Church of Christ Ladies.



## **ANZAC DAY ARRANGEMENTS ~ THURSDAY 25 APRIL 2019**

**0545 hours : Dawn Service at the Ballarat Cenotaph in Sturt Street, followed by Gunfire Breakfast at Midlands-Ballarat RSL Sports and Services Club until 0930.**

**• 0900 hours at Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial : Vice-President Leigh Harvey OAM will lay a wreath on behalf of our Branch of the Air Force Association**

**• 1000 hours : Form up in Lyons Street South for a 10.30am ANZAC Day March from Lyons Street South to Ballarat Cenotaph.**

**LET US SEE IF WE CAN HAVE A GOOD SIZED MARCHING GROUP THIS YEAR**

**1045 hours : Wreath laying at Ballarat Cenotaph  
President Noel Hutchins will lay a wreath on behalf of  
our Branch of the Air Force Association**

**• 1100 hours : Commemorative Service at the Ballarat Cenotaph.**  
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“BALLARAT HERITAGE WEEK” ~ WEEKEND 25 AND 26 MAY 2019

The 25th and 26th May is the weekend part of the annual Ballarat Heritage week and we are organising things for our rooms at Airport Hut 48 to be open to the public. What an appropriate time for us to open our WWII RAAF heritage listed building to the public and promote ourselves.

There will be more information coming as we put things together, but just letting you know well in advance to put the dates into your diaries.

We will be operating on both days, with possibly an additional attraction on the Sunday. On both days our neighbours, the "Ballarat Engine and Machinery Preservation Group", will have vintage engines operating on the large grassed area to the side of our building.

Supporting us will be the Western Region Branch of the Military Brotherhood with their \$20,000 Bar-B-Q trailer with a "sausage sizzle". Our Secretary, Rob Petty, has been very busy arranging with several different Classic and Vintage car clubs who will be displaying some of their vehicles on our car park/parade ground, while there will be some military vehicles on display.

We will be making available to the public tea/coffee and a biscuit for probably about \$2.50 each, plus we are considering having other refreshments available at a price. No Alcohol.

I am about to open discussions with the "Sing Australia Choir" about them putting on a concert of WWII/1940's songs on the Sunday afternoon and I am hopeful that this will come to fruition.

The Council is extremely happy about this and will promote it in their "Heritage Week" publicity as well as preparing a poster covering all the things coming together for this Heritage Week Airport Hub Activity. We will be preparing a poster as well as a smaller promotional handout.

Our Secretary Rob Petty and his wife Ann who did so much work with our rooms opening event are going to be away travelling for a full three months, May/June/July, and will not be here for the event, but Rob is putting in a lot of time helping to bring this together. So we are going to need some members to put their hands up to assist with this promotion of our existence as a Branch of the Air Force Association.

So let me know if you want to come on board to assist in the running of that weekend. (NH, Pres.)

PRECIS OF MINUTES, APRIL SOCIAL MEETING

Date: 2/4/2019

At Lakers Club Rooms

Attendance: As per the Attendance List (28 attendees). Apologies: Bob Bennett, Stan White, Ron & Dorothy Douglas, John Harley, Stephen Brown, Bill Mitchell, Steve Carter, Margaret Wood, Stan Pickford, Fiona Andrews, Dianna Peacock and Penny Roberts.

1210 Introduction

- a. Meeting opened by Branch President & welcome to new members/guests
- b. Total of six new members over last two months.
- c. Ode & National Anthem.
- d. Quiz winner from last month & new quiz paper competition.
- e. Grace led by Branch Chaplain.
- f. Lunch
- g. Birthday recognition for Alby Watson 93 today.
- h. Peter Dowling presentation of Sunderland picture to AFA Ballarat.
- i. Margaret Bennett presentation of husband's and father's Air Force effects to AFA Ballarat and her nephew read out her Letter of presentation.

Peter Schoutens segment

- a. Photos of AFA commissioning of new AFA Rooms.
- b. Update on 1 WAGS data base development and identifying one member who flew with Guy Gibson of Dam Busters fame..

Treasurers Report : As per her report

Welfare Report : As per agenda listing

General Business

- a. Relocation to Airport Hut 48 for May and future meeting discussed and agreed by all.
- b. Idea to move to 2nd Tuesday of the month to allow visits by State & Federal AFA Presidents/Assist Tresurer ~ Later reversed due to serious effect on a very senior member.
- c. Taxis to be ordered for senior members in need of assistance to attend meetings
- d. Question on fire suppression adequacy for Hut 48. To be followed up with council..

D-Day "Operation Bodyguard" DVD Presentation by Secretary Rob Petty.

Raffle held and meeting closed.

(Rob Petty, Secty)

NEXT MEETING AT AIRPORT HUT 48 ON TUESDAY 7TH MAY~ARRIVE BY 1145 FOR 1200 COMMENCEMENT

MEMBERS REQUIRING TAXI TRANSPORT TO AND FROM MEETING SHOULD PHONE NOEL HUTCHINS (0439 929 322) NO LATER THAN 1100 HOURS ON THE DAY PRIOR TO THE MEETING

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**WELL DONE JANET BATES**

**The many hours of work by Janet Bates in completing our application for funding for the establishment of a website listing all 1WAGs trainees, including a Memorial Page listing each of those 1WAGs that were killed in action, has paid off. Notice has been received that our application has been successful. This was a very complex and time consuming job that Janet very efficiently carried out. It is not a simple process. The success of this funding application ensures that all the effort put into researching 1WAG records by our Immediate Past President Tom Roberts and the efforts of Peter Schoutens and Janet Bates in that task as well, is electronically available to the wider public and an everlasting tribute to every WAG that passed through No 1 Wireless Air Gunner School, Ballarat.**

**Our appreciation of these funds being made available to us through the Ballarat City Council's Grants Program will be appropriately acknowledged. (NH Pres)**

## PREMIER'S STATE LUNCHEON ~ ANNIVERSARY OF ANZAC DAY

I was honoured to receive an invitation to attend the 2019 Premier's "Anniversary of Anzac Day Luncheon" at the Sofitel, Melbourne, on Wednesday 17th April.

AFA Ballarat member Jack Bell was the guest speaker and he gave his speech to a packed Sofitel Grand Ballroom. At the conclusion of his talk, Jack was given a long standing ovation. (NH, Pres.)



L to R : National AFA President Carl Schiller, National AFA Secretary Peter Colliver, AFA Vic President Max McGregor



L to R : Guest Speaker Jack Bell, AFA Ballarat President Noel Hutchins and Premier of Victoria, Hon. Daniel Andrews MP

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THE WINNER OF THE MARCH QUIZ WAS : Tom Roberts with a great 8/10
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## PROPOSED POPPY CLUB OUTING

The "Poppy Club" is a Ballarat RSL initiative which has been 're-invented', in a co-operative effort between Ballarat RSL Support Services Officer Lynne Redman and AFA Ballarat President Noel Hutchins, as a social club for any member of any Ex Service Organisation in the Ballarat Region.

2018 saw a couple of outings arranged as a bit of a trial of this initiative and it is now hoped to make the existence of the Poppy Club more widely known and to provide an interesting outing or event 'now and again'.

One such outing is planned for Saturday 11th May at the **Wellwood Organic Walnut Farm** at 97 Westcotts Road, Wallace, just 900 metres past the well known Wallace Hotel. We need to get some 'numbers' to determine if there is enough 'interest' in this outing.

Arrangements will be **Saturday 11th May ~ Arrive 1030 hours** at 97 Westcotts Road Wallace for an **outside morning tea** at AFA President Noel Hutchins' cottage which is at the entrance to the farm.

Following morning tea our hosts, Phillip and Patty Farnell, will show attendees the **Operation of an Organic Walnut Farm** which involves a lot of work to get the various walnut and by-product products to the market.

There is also a Chestnut orchard and there will be **Chestnuts on the Ground** for anyone interested to **'harvest their own'** and purchase from the farmer, what they collect. If you think you might like to do this, **bring a pair of protective gloves.**

On completion of our farm visit, for all those interested, we will adjourn to the close-by well known and respected Wallace Hotel for those wishing to purchase a drink and/or lunch and continue with some 'socialising'.

To attend this outing please advise your intention to attend to either Lynne Redman, Ballarat RSL on 0458 477 414 or email : lredman@rslvic.com.au or to Noel Hutchins, AFA Ballarat on 0439 929 322 or email to noelhutch@bigpond.com and provide your email address or, if none, your 'phone number.

### IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, THE OUTING WOULD CHANGE TO :

Arrive 1030 hours at the Wallace Hotel for a morning tea provided by the Ballarat RSL and AFA Ballarat Branch. For those wishing to stay on for awhile, why not stay and purchase lunch at the hotel