



# AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter November 2020



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Secretary : Rob Petty - 0407 891 281  
Treasurer : Brian Drennan  
Asst Secretary / Asst Treasurer: Peter Dowling  
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Stephen Brown  
Ken Marsh  
Bob McDonald

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



## Christmas Meeting

### Tuesday 15th December 2020



With Covid-19 restrictions easing sufficiently for us to resume our meetings in a covid-safe way, we will now be able to hold our December Christmas meeting.

A quick recent email survey of members with email addresses raised a proposal that our December meetings be held **NOT** on the first Tuesday of December but on **the Tuesday closest to the middle of December** making our annual Christmas meetings a little closer to Christmas. The first Tuesday in December this year falls on the first day of the month whereas the Tuesday closest to the middle of the month this year is the third Tuesday of the month. **Thank you to the many members who responded.** There was not one response against the proposal which means **OUR 2020 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING IS ON TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER**

The meeting will be held while observing all Covid-safe protocols/restrictions existing on the day. Attendees will be required to bring a mask with them, use the supplied hand sanitiser on arrival and sign in with their details. As normal, attendees will pay \$5 on entry. Don't forget, members may bring their non-member partner with them. Bring something to eat for your lunch. Some hot pastries will be supplied as will Christmas sweets, tea, coffee etc.

Don't forget to bring some gold coin or other cash to purchase raffle tickets for your chance to win some of the great prizes available. **Our Federal Member of Parliament, Catherine King MP**, has kindly offered the donation of a Christmas Hamper for which I have expressed appreciation on behalf of all members. This hamper will be the subject of a separate major raffle to be drawn on the day ..... so don't forget that extra cash.

Please arrive from 11.15 am, **but before 11.45am**, for a 12 noon commencement.

Hopefully restrictions will be sufficiently eased before the day to enable those members living in aged care facilities to attend. **FOR THE MORE ELDERLY OR FRAIL MEMBERS NEEDING TAXI TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE MEETING, PLEASE ADVISE NOEL ON 0439 929 322 AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.** (NH, PRES)



**MAGPIE 91** : In last month's newsletter I made a request for some members to attend the 50th anniversary commemoration of the loss of two RAAF aircrew officers in Vietnam with the crash of Canberra bomber A84-231, Call Sign 'Magpie 91'. The result was myself and three passengers travelled to Phillip Island for the commemoration.

As will be seen from the following letter, our AFA Vic President Max McGregor was most appreciative of our attendance. Personally, I was a little disappointed that more of our members did not attend, but I do acknowledge a couple of members who would have loved to attend were unable to for medical reasons. *(NH, Pres)*



## AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – VICTORIA

**PATIENCE**

*Her Excellency, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria*

*and*

*Mr Anthony Howard AM QC*

Mr Noel Hutchins  
President  
Ballarat Branch  
AFA-Vic

Dear Noel,

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to you and the Ballarat Branch members who attended the commemorative service at Phillip Island on November 3 for the loss of Magpie 91, Canberra Bomber A84-231 in South Vietnam in 1970.

I had been led to believe that Melbourne members would be granted an exemption to attend this event, and when the final decision of the Victorian Minister for Veterans turned out to be in the negative to say I was disappointed would be a significant understatement. With Melbourne members banned, this meant that our numbers would be significantly reduced. The fact that you and three other members were prepared to travel from Ballarat to Philip Island and return added to our numbers attending and helped significantly in making the event a success.

Thank you for all your efforts in this matter, and I would be grateful if, at your next meeting that you convey my thanks for the effort made by Ballarat members. What you and your members did on November 3 epitomises the true spirit of the Air Force Association.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Max McGregor'.

Max McGregor  
President  
AFA-Vic

26 November 2020



*Ballarat Branch Senior Vice President Leigh Harvey OAM, Secretary Rob Petty and Major Neil Leckie RFD Manager of Ballarat Ranger Military Museum attend the Magpie-91 50th anniversary commemoration at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum at Phillip Island.*

Some photo's from visit to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum Phillip Island on 3rd November 2020. I have chosen not to include any other photographs of the service as I expect that the service will be covered in the next issue of **CONTACT**. (NH, Pres)



45 Years of Operational Service ~ If only she could talk ..... this old girl Caribou would have a few stories to tell



**Above :** Leigh Harvey and Rob Petty loved the opportunity to look over the Caribou outside the National Vietnam Veterans Museum. **Below :** The inside cargo area of the Caribou with fold-up seating. **Right :** A volunteer pictured working on the Canberra Bomber aircraft being set up inside the museum. Difficult to get a photo of the Canberra at this stage as it is currently surrounded by other things being stored inside the museum.



**Bringing back memories :** Rob Petty pictured observing the S2E/G Grumman Tracker anti-submarine patrol aircraft on display at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum. Rob served in the RAN before transferring to the RAAF.



**In Rob's words :** *"I have been an aircraft maintainer on these aircraft. I have worked on all our Trackers including this one, Tracker 855. The two squadrons equipped with these aircraft were*

*VS 816 Squadron (front line operations) & VC 851 Squadron (training second line). VS 816 Squadron was embarked in HMAS Melbourne aircraft carrier and both squadrons were home based at HMAS Albatross naval airfield at Nowra NSW".* Thank you Rob.

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## **1wags.org.au FEATURED STORY**

The latest featured story added to our 1wags.org.au website by our hard working website coordinator Janet Bates honours **WING COMMANDER CHARLES OSBORNE FAIRBAIRN O.B.E, AFC.** Wing Commander Fairbairn was the Commanding Officer of No. 1 W.A.G.S. Ballarat from the 22nd of April 1940 until he was transferred to the RAAF Reserve of Officers on the 24th October 1944.

Other than that this man also served in World War One, I will not include anything more here. You can simply log on to our 1wags.org.au website and read for yourself the amazing stories of this man and the Fairbairn family, "the flying Fairbairns" ..... Do yourself a favour .... have a look.

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## **YOUR 2021 SUBSCRIPTION ~ DO IT NOW**

AFA Vic Head Office has sent out the renewal notices for 2021 memberships which are **due by 1st January.** Don't wait till then. **DO IT ASAP.** I was a bit stunned by the dilly-dallying this year of many members still not getting around to paying their subscription until well into the year .... I needed to keep asking Barb for updated lists of "unfinancials" to determine who had paid their subscription since the previous list of "unfinancials". In 2021 there will not be any "unfinancial" members. If you haven't paid your subscription renewal then you are simply "not a member".....**Its only \$25.**

I believe that many members find it difficult to pay their renewal using the renewal options made available, so if it is easier for you, **BRING YOUR RENEWAL NOTICE TO THE DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING** together with your payment and the Treasurer will issue you with a receipt and we will have your payment paid into AFA Vic bank account and AFA Vic advised of your payment ... there is no excuse not to have your renewal paid on time.

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### **The trustees of the Australian ex-POW Memorial in Ballarat have advised that :**

The Annual ex-POW Memorial Anniversary Service scheduled for 14th February will not proceed in its normally physical form. However, the Trustees, with the assistance of Bruce Roberts (Master of Ceremonies and WIN TV News presenter) and Jeremy Bannister (President of Ballarat Legacy), have agreed to present a 'Virtual POW Service' for 2021. Guest Speaker Megan Spencer from South Australia has agreed to participate in the Virtual Service. The Navy Band has agreed to participate in the Virtual Service via video link.  
Go to [www.powmemorialballarat@gmail.com](mailto:www.powmemorialballarat@gmail.com) for more details.

### **70 YEAR MILESTONE**

Member Annette Lloyd celebrated her 70th Birthday at the Wallace Hotel on 21st November together with her family and also friends from her dancing activities and some from the Air Force Association Ballarat Branch

