



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter August/September 2021



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Social Luncheon Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month commencing at 11.45 am

(December meeting held closer to Christmas) **Committee Meetings** are held on the third Thursday of

each month at 1 pm followed by a **General Business Meeting** at approx 2.15 pm to which all financial members are welcome to attend to ratify or otherwise the actions of the committee on that day and raise other matters.

THE GOOD NEWS IS 😊 : since our June/July newsletter, we were able to have both our July and August Social Luncheon Meetings.

Our July meeting featured a very interesting Guest Speaker in Victoria Police Senior Sergeant Barry Jenks who presented a great talk on how he conducts tours along the Kokoda Track, **(Photo at Right)**, and he gave us some very enlightening information. The members' interest was clearly shown with some really great questions seeking even more information about the various WWII battles along the Track of which Barry has a very good knowledge.



Our August meeting was also one which provided us with lots of interesting information in the form of an excellent presentation relating to the history of No 1 Wireless Air Gunners School from it's formation in Ballarat in 1940. Using very well put together information prepared by our 1wags.org.au website coordinator Janet Bates, the trio of Janet, Secretary Peter Dowling and Committee member Sue Alexander developed a most interesting Power Point presentation which was presented by Secretary Peter Dowling RFD, **(Photos Right and Below)**.



There are so many individual stories within the information recorded on our 1wags.org.au website and a couple of those stories were included in the presentation which stirred some emotions and a few tears flowed. Peter is looking at taking this Presentation to other Community Groups which will be good exposure for our Branch of the Air Force Association and our 1wags.org.au website.



Thank you Janet, Peter and Sue.
Very Well Done.

NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS 😞 : State Premier Daniel Andrews has stated that the current Covid-19 situation will not allow lockdown to end as scheduled on Thursday 2nd September, so we can assume the extension of lockdown for **at least** one week to Thursday 9th September which will necessitate

THE CANCELLATION OF OUR SCHEDULED 7TH SEPTEMBER SOCIAL LUNCHEON MEETING.

It was intended to devote that meeting to a presentation on, and the remembrance of, the Battle of Britain. In a consequence of that meeting not being able to proceed, this newsletter will carry recognition of Battle of Britain Day which falls on 15th September each year. (NH, Pres)

THE FLAG FAIRIES : Leading up to our August meeting I called out to the rooms and was surprised to find that the Flag Fairies had called and decorated the meeting room with lots of **Air Force 100** flags, (including in **Air-Force-blue** paper cups as table decorations as well as looped along the rafters). I know that our members enjoyed and appreciated what they saw when they arrived for the meeting. Thank you to Janet and Peter Bates. Well Done. (NH, Pres)



RESCHEDULING OF OUR ~BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA/AIR FORCE 100~ WEEKEND

It is unfortunate that it has been necessary to reschedule both our Battle for Australia/Air Force 100 events. The weekend events have been rescheduled for the last weekend in September. **The Ball will be on the Saturday night 25th September and the morning Commemorative Service and afternoon Airport Hut 48 activities will be held on the Sunday, 26th September.**

BATTLE OF BRITAIN CHURCH SERVICE : The Skipton Street Uniting Church has advised that with the intended extension of Victoria lockdown, it is not possible to proceed with the Annual Battle of Britain Church Service this year.



Branch member, (and Army Aviation Vietnam Veteran), Tom Jobling, is selling up in Ballarat and moving to Metropolitan Melbourne together with wife Sandra. Tom has very kindly donated some items to our Branch including his large Spitfire aircraft model, (Pictured above). I have given Tom a formal **Letter of Appreciation** on behalf of the Committee and members. We wish them well in their new location. (NH, Pres)

BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY 15TH SEPTEMBER



There is absolutely no doubt that World War II in Europe would have taken a totally different course had not Britain's RAF Fighter Squadrons defeated the might of Germany's Luftwaffe in the more than three month long battle in the skies over Britain from July to October 1940.

The 15th September was chosen as the day on which to remember the significance of the Battle of Britain as, on that particular date in 1940, it was a day of extremely heavy aerial combat. Alerted by British coastal radar stations of a formation of German bomber and fighter aircraft advancing toward Britain, RAF Fighter Command scrambled 24 fighter squadrons to intercept them, putting 300 Hurricane and Spitfire aircraft into the air.

While the Battle of Britain would rage on until 31st October, it was that massive air Battle over Britain on 15th September 1940 that was the turning point which enabled Britain to maintain air superiority which in turn ensured that Hitler's intention of a sea-borne invasion of England could not proceed.

No RAAF aircraft took part in the Battle of Britain, RAAF fighter squadrons were not operational in Europe until mid-1941. However, there were Australians who took part at some point, flying with RAF fighter squadrons. It is recorded that thirty-five Australians flew combat operations during the Battle of Britain of whom ten were killed in action. One of those men was Pat Hughes from Cooma NSW who had joined the RAAF pre-war in 1936 as a 19 yo but who, in January 1937, sailed to the UK on volunteering to transfer to the RAF. In March 1937 he was granted a five-year short-service commission in the RAF. Having had only basic early flying training in Australia, Hughes continued with advanced flying training with the RAF.

As one of the RAF's Spitfire pilots in the Battle of Britain, Pat Hughes became one of the top-ten "scoring aces" and the top 'scoring ace' of the Australians who took part. On 15 August 1940, Pat Hughes claimed a double victory of two Messerschmidt Bf110 heavy fighters which earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was killed less than three weeks later, on 7 September 1940, intercepting a large formation of Dornier bombers and their escort of Messerschmidt fighters over Kent. He was just 22 yo.

On Wednesday 15th September 2021 give a little thought of thanks to Pat Hughes and all who contributed to Britain's victory in the Battle of Britain. Without them, who knows what the world would have looked like post WWII. (NH, Pres)

POSSIBLE REGIONAL VICTORIA EXIT FROM LOCKDOWN

At the time of nearing completion of this newsletter on 1st September, State Premier Daniel Andrews indicated that Regional Victoria may exit lockdown "next week", but with some restrictions still in place. It will depend on 'which day' next week and what restrictions remain in force as to whether we can proceed with some activities at Airport Hut 48. I do not expect sufficient easing of restrictions to take effect at an earlier enough time/date for us to proceed with our September Social Luncheon Meeting on Tuesday 7th; however, if it happens that they are, we will look at reversing the cancellation as stated on page 2. Members will be contacted in the event that we can proceed. Assume that the meeting is cancelled unless you are contacted to advise otherwise.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES With so much unknown in respect to lockdown lifting and remaining restrictions, we cannot assume anything in respect to what we may or may not be able to do during September and October. Members will be advised when any activities are to take place. Our October Social Luncheon Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 5th October, let's hope we are able to proceed with that. Take care. (NH, Pres)