



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter



June/July 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Following an invitation by Mark Pilkington, President of the Friends of the RAAF Point Cook Museum to the aerial display and soft re-opening of the museum, BAFA was pleased to host a contingent of "Friends" for lunch during a museum visit day on Saturday 22 July.

40 visitors from Melbourne and as far away as Echuca made the journey to Ballarat and took in visits to the Avro Anson and Ballarat Aviation museums.

We were proud to host a lunch for the visitors in the Long Room at Hut 48, displaying the Hut as it would have been used during the war years.

I also took the opportunity, supported by 1WAGS Co-ordinator Janet Bates, to repeat the talk I recently made at the Ballarat BMI Twilight Talks on the History of 1WAGS. I was intrigued to be approached by one of the Friends who specialises in Military History Research and Podcasts and who was astonished that he had never heard of 1WAGS. I am liaising with him and our plan is, in due course, to make a podcast of the 1WAGS history.

We enjoyed an informal dinner at the Lakeview Hotel with those visitors who were able to stay on after the museum visits.

Peter Dowling
President



IMPORTANT DATES COMING UP

Social luncheons are held on the second Tuesday of each month

Hut 48. 11:45 for 12



Tuesday August 8

Jonathan Willsher, Ballarat Airport Commercial Manager acknowledges the historical importance of 1WAGS and talks about the future of Ballarat Airport.

Tuesday September 12

50 years following the end of the war in Vietnam and 70 years on from the Korean War.



BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA BALL

7:30 PM Saturday 26 August

Brown Hill Hall

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS—TRANSPORTATION

If you have a medical condition preventing you from self-driving or accessing transport, please contact Peter Dowling on 0418281775 to arrange transportation assistance.

LUNCH WITH FRIENDS OF THE RAAF MUSEUM



Clockwise from top L: Friends of RAAF enjoying lunch in the Long Room; Mark Pilkington President; Janet Bates IWAGS Co-ordinator responds to questions; an appreciative audience (1); an appreciative audience (2)

SOCIAL LUNCHEON

JUNE 13



During the June luncheon, we firstly had a short presentation from the President, Peter Dowling, on the 70th Anniversary of the crash-landing of the Sunderland N461 on the beach of Praa Sands in Cornwall on June 3 1943.

Peter and Sue had the honour of being invited to the memorial at Praa Sands erected for the 60th anniversary.

The significance for Peter is that his uncle Bill Dowling of 461 SQN was first pilot (one of three) on the flying boat. The incident preceding the crash landing achieved fame as a war story, as the Sunderland survived attack by 8 Ju88s over the Bay of Biscay.



Peter Dowling and Sue Alexander beside the memorial erected for the 60th anniversary of the crash landing of N461 on the beach at Praa Sands (above) and the wreckage of the aircraft June 3 1943 (below)



The luncheon then featured the stories of the nine 1WAGS trainees who were born in Ballarat and did not return from active service, as flagged in the last newsletter.

The luncheon finished with a film on Living in Ballarat 1901-1941, featuring amazing archival footage of people, places and events significant to the development of the city of Ballarat.



1 WAGS REPORT

Sponsored by APCO Alfredton



As of the end of July our 1WAGS website 1wags.org.au has had 98,624 hits from Australia and world wide.

Many thanks to Mark Pilkington from the Friends of the Aviation Museum Point Cook for providing additional images of Wackett aircraft which have been added to the History section of the website.

Janet Bates - 1WAGS Co-ordinator

SOCIAL LUNCHEON

JULY 11



The July luncheon celebrated 460 SQN.

First we welcomed Jane Shennan, researcher for the Anglesea and District War Memorial website. Jane's father, RAAF Flying Officer Richard Ellison Shennan, was a 1 WAGS trainee who did 31 operations with 460 SQN flying as a rear gunner in the Lancaster bombers. He was discharged in 1945.



Flying Officer

Richard Ellison Shen-



Pilot Officer

John Ewart "Jack" Norris

Another 1WAGS trainee was John Ewart "Jack" Norris, who flew as a pilot officer in 460 SQN. His story as told in his own words before his death in 2016 aged 92 was viewed via a YouTube article. We then viewed the story of the famous G for George, the Australian Lancaster that flew over 90 missions for 460 SQN.



Members of 460 SQN on G for George in August 1943

WACKET TRAINING AIRCRAFT

- A PHOTO EXPOSE

Article courtesy of Mark Pilkington

President, Friends of RAAF Museum Pt Cook

The image of the 4 Yellow Wacketts led by A3-77 (below) isn't really relevant or appropriate to the 1 WAGS wireless/air gunner training school at Ballarat as these are all early "Dual Control" Wacketts being flown as elementary flying trainers in their original form, likely over Bacchus Marsh from 3EFTS.

Wacketts basically had two forms or uses, regardless of their paint schemes, ie pilot training with the EFTS schools, or wireless / radio training with the WAGS schools and, in that second role, they are immediately identified or distinguished by the presence of the radio antenna mast directly in front of the windscreen.

WAGS Wackett photos that may be of interest, include the one of the last Wackett A3-200 over Melbourne (top right) and 1WAGS Wacketts taken at Ballarat (middle right).

The final photo of camouflaged Wacketts without engines fitted (and also without radio masts, below right) is of dual control 'pilot training" Wackett Trainers stored at Ballarat during the war and used as spare parts to maintain the radio trainers being operated by 1 WAGS.

(photo via Alan Penhall)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

VIC1595



BALLARAT AIRPORT—DID YOU KNOW?

There are many buildings at Ballarat Aerodrome still in use today that are historical wartime buildings. The information below has been compiled by Mark Pilkington, President Friends of the RAAF Museum Pt Cook.



BALLARAT AERODROME HISTORICAL WARTIME BUILDINGS

APRON / TAXIWAY AREA

Modern #	BLDG Type	Role / Purpose / Tenant	Historical RAAF #	Wartime Role / Purpose
8	P Hut	Ballarat Aviation Museum	190 + 191	Operations & Crew Room
11	P Hut	Ballarat Woodworkers Guild	141	Parachute Hut
12	P Hut	Field Air	189	Woodwork, Fabric, Dope & Paint Shop
13	P Hut	Field Air	188	Mechanical Workshop
15	P Hut	Ballarat Woodworkers Guild	133	Maintenance Workshop
17	P Hut	Field Air Office	181	Petrol Bowser & UG Tank
19	P Hut	Country Fire Authority	177	Inflammable Store
20	P Hut	Toilet Block	183	Canteen (Store)
23	P Hut (Joined)	Ballarat Model Auto Racing Club	138	Equipment Store
24	P Hut (Joined)	Roland Wade	139	Equipment Store
25	P Hut (Joined)	Ballarat Rovers Motorcycle Club	140	Equipment Store
H4	Bellman Hangar	Ballarat Aero Club	131	Bellman Hangar
H4A	P Hut	Ballarat Aero Club Club room / Flight Office	182	Flight Office
H5	Bellman Hangar	Aerovision	180	Bellman Hangar
H5A	P Hut	Field Air Flight Office	142	Flight Office
H6	Bellman Hangar	Field Air	132	Bellman Hangar
H7	Bellman Hangar	Field Air	130	Bellman Hangar
H8	Bellman Hangar	Ballarat Aviation Museum	N/A	Bellman Hangar (Post War relocation to Ballarat)

BUILDING / ACCOMODATION HUT AREA - RHS (EAST) OF AIRPORT ROAD

Modern #	BLDG Type	Role / Purpose / Tenant	Historical RAAF #	Wartime Role / Purpose
82	Ground	Stay Up Motorbike School	316	Sports Ground
59	P Hut	Ballarat Drag Racing Club	234	Radio Hut
N/A	Ground	(Unlisted Ground north of #60)	173	Parade Ground
60	Large Hut	Ballarat & District Model Railroad Society	170	Station Head Quarters
N/A	Small Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to the RHS of #60)	171	Latrine
N/A	Ground	(Unlisted Ground north - west of #62)	173	Sports Ground
62	P Hut	Fuellers	20, 30 & 61	Sleeping Huts and Ablutions
64	Large Bldg	Friends of the Anson	154	Gymnasium
N/A	Small Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to the RHS of main road)	73	Laundry
N/A	P Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to right of #64)	134	Barracks Office & Store
N/A	Small Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to right of #64)	136	Barracks Store
N/A	P Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to right of #64)	144	Latrine & Charge Room
N/A	P Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to right of #64)	268	Dept of Works Plumbers Shop
N/A	Small Hut	(Unlisted Bldg to right of #64)	277	Salvage Shed

BALLARAT AERODROME HISTORICAL WARTIME BUILDINGS (cont.)

BUILDING / ACCOMODATION HUT AREA - LHS (WEST) OF AIRPORT ROAD

Modern #	BLDG Type	Role / Purpose / Tenant	Historical RAAF #	Wartime Role / Purpose
N/A	Water Tank	(Unlisted - Water Tank)	150	Elevated Water Tank
28	P Hut	Ballarat Polo Crosse Club	211	Temporary Married Quarters
29	P Hut	Kids Foundation	210	Temporary Married Quarters
-30	P Hut	(Unlisted empty Bldg to be renovated)	213	Temporary Married Quarters
31	P Hut	Ballarat Amateur Radio Club	212	Temporary Married Quarters
34	P Hut	Ballarat Road Rodders	126	Store
81A	P Hut	Ballarat Light Car Club	107	Sleeping Quarters
39	P Hut	Ballarat 4WD Club	112	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
40	P Hut	Ballarat & District Early Holden Club	113	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
41	P Hut	City of Ballarat	116 / 117	Sergeants Ablutions / Latrines
42	P Hut	Victoria Police	122	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
43	P Hut	Victoria Police	125	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
44A	P Hut (Joined)	Central Highlands Dart Club	111	Sergeants Mess
44B	P Hut (Joined)	Ballarat Billiards Association	111	Sergeants Mess
44C	P Hut (Joined)	Rotary	111	Sergeants Mess
46	P Hut	City of Ballarat	121	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
47	P Hut	Boxing Gym	124	Sergeants Sleeping Quarters
48	P Hut (Joined)	U3A Ballarat / Ballarat Air Force Association	110	Officers Mess
52	P Hut	Ballarat Engine Machinery	207	Laundry & Drying Room
53	P Hut	Toilet Block	118 / 119	Officers Ablutions / Latrines
54	P Hut	City of Ballarat	120	Officers Sleeping Quarters
55	P Hut	City of Ballarat	123	Officers Sleeping Quarters
56	P Hut	Ballarat Morris Minor Club	196	Officers Sleeping Quarters / CO's Married Quarters
58	P Hut	Cameron Wright	233	Radio Hut
58A	P Hut	Field Air	232	Emergency Power House



1WAGS Ballarat during WWII