



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH Newsletter



October/November 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

We look forward to celebrating the end of another year with our Christmas function coming up on December 12.

Our monthly social luncheons have been very successful with a steady number of members in attendance. Our audio-visual equipment has allowed many enjoyable presentations in addition to our invited speakers. Our IWAGS sponsor APCO has generously contributed to the catering for our lunches and we enjoy an enviable spread each month.

Additionally, we held a very successful Battle for Australia Ball at the end of August, with a great attendance and a lot of enjoyment from our Elvis impersonator.

On a sad note, just recently we lost our member Leigh Harvey. A tribute to Leigh follows on later pages. As a regular luncheon attendee and life member, he will be greatly missed.

I wish you all and your families the best for the festive season coming up and look forward to seeing you at the Christmas lunch and our regular lunches next year.

Peter Dowling
President



IMPORTANT DATES COMING UP

Tuesday December 12

Christmas Concert & Luncheon



Ballarat North Sports Club - 10:15 to 2:15

Arrive by 10:15 for the concert, 12:15 if you are coming for lunch only.

Make sure to bring \$5 for the Christmas raffle.

Tuesday January 9

New Year BBQ

12 midday

Rotunda near Pipers, Lake Wendouree

Everything supplied - please advise attendance for catering purposes.



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.

VALE LEIGH FRAZER HARVEY OAM



While Leigh was both a shy and private man, he was always willing to get into the spirit of Christmas. This photo was taken at our Christmas function in 2022.

Sadly, he will not be with us this Christmas and following is a little of his story.



In September of this year, Leigh received his medal commemorating 50 years since the end of the Vietnam war.

Of his three years' army service in the AMF, Leigh spent time doing initial military training, infantry training, overseas service in Malaysia and intense jungle warfare training back in Australia before spending 361 days as an infantryman with the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Vietnam.

No 8 RAR took part in a reconnaissance operation in early 1970 in the Long Hai area. Named Operation Hammersley, this operation began on 10th February and on 18th February it captured a large bunker complex after the Vietnamese Communists defenders withdrew following air raids. The huge success of this operation resulted in No 8 RAR being awarded the South Vietnamese Government's Meritorious Unit Commendation, including Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.

Back home and a civilian again after his three years' service, Leigh spent from 1973 to 1995 in Western Australia. For the first two-and-a-half years he was in Dampier working in the mines industry, followed by various other remote WA locations, including with the Paraburdoo Volunteer Fire and Safety Service where he was a lieutenant and Relief Fire captain.

He finally headed east where he became a much valued member of our Ballarat Branch of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association. He was also a member of the Returned Services League and the Vietnam Veterans Association.

In the years since returning from Vietnam, Leigh has been a 'giver'- giving of his time to support and/or help others.

Over a period of twenty-one years, the Government received no fewer than eight separate recommendations for Leigh to be awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, the OAM. In the Queens Birthday Honours list in 2016, Leigh was listed for this prestigious award and was presented with his Medal by the Victorian State Governor, Linda Dessau AC, at a ceremony at Government House in Melbourne.

In addition to "For service to veterans and their families", some of the organisations/commitments mentioned in Leigh's citation were, Paraburdoo Volunteer Fire and Safety Service, Red Shirt Association, Volunteer Anzac and Remembrance Day fund-raising RSL of Australia and Legacy, Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia and Ballarat Branch, Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

Leigh also became very involved with Ballarat Community Health helping with such programs as "SecondBite", providing emergency food relief, and also for breakfast programs in schools and food supply for other community help programs such as the On Track Foundation's Soup Bus, an after-dark meal service for Ballarat's homeless and less fortunate.

Leigh ultimately gave great service, both to the military and to the community.

He has lived a quiet life for many years on his farm at Wattle Flat and is survived by his sister and niece.

At his behest, he wanted "no fuss" and was privately cremated with his ashes scattered under his favourite tree. While many in the organisations of which he was a member and in the community where he generously gave his time would have liked the opportunity to remember and pay their respects to him, as his family said: "We are not doing what we think should be done - we are doing what he asked us to do."

SOCIAL LUNCHEON

OCTOBER 10



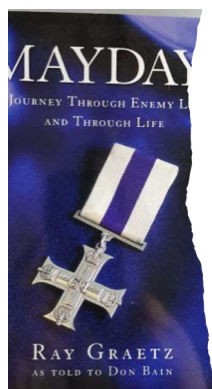
Flying Officer Raymond Arnold Graetz completed 1WAGS Course 30 and subsequently served in 100 SQN RAAF in New Guinea.



ALLIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Raymond Graetz -far right

Ray survived 8 days on the run from the Japanese and detailed his experiences in his book “Mayday”.



Flying Officer Ray Graetz’s story can be found on the 1WAGS website as detailed below.



1 WAGS REPORT

Sponsored by APCO Alfredton



As a follow-up to the October Social Luncheon the FEATURE STORY pays tribute to -RAAF FLIGHT LIEUTENANT RAYMOND ARNOLD GRAETZ [MC].

Raymond Arnold Graetz completed 1 WAGS Course 30 and served with RAAF 100 Squadron in the Pacific. While on a bombing mission at Wewak New Guinea on 20 May 1944, Beaufort A9-571 [with eight other Beauforts] was shot down by enemy ground fire and ditched. Two crew members were killed by ground fire after the ditching, one was last seen swimming away to sea and the fourth crew member was rescued by a USN patrol boat. Flying Officer Graetz who survived the crash, evaded capture behind enemy lines for 10 days, was rescued by a PT boat and returned safely to his unit on 30 May 1944. For his exploits he was awarded the Military Cross for his 'outstanding courage, initiative, and complete disregard for his own safety. His devotion to duty is worthy of the highest praise.' Ray was one of only seven awarded the Military Cross to RAAF servicemen during WW2.

READ MORE on 1wags.com.au

Article Sydney Morning Herald November 11, 2023

By Damien Ractliffe

‘Missing airman’s ID tag found in Egyptian desert, 81 years after crash’.

The identity tag of an Australian airman has been found in an Egyptian desert, more than 80 years after a plane he was on went missing over the Western Desert during WWII.

Royal Australian Air Force sergeant John Campbell Daley was 30 years old when the plane carrying him, Victorian soldier Ian Aubrey Baines and five other Allied airmen, is believed to have crashed over Egypt on August 3, 1942.



Sgt John Campbell Daley died in WWII when his plane crashed over Egypt in 1942. His ID tag was discovered in the desert last week.

Neither their bodies nor the wreckage were ever found, and they were declared dead in 1948.



Items found last week in an Egyptian desert, including the ID tag of Sgt John Campbell Daley.

But a week ago, two Egyptian tour guides came across a metal tag in the desert in El Alamein, identifying the lost Australian soldier days out from Remembrance Day.

Both Daley and Baines trained at 1 WAGS. Daley Course 1 and Baines Course 7.

Janet Bates - 1WAGS Co-ordinator

SOCIAL LUNCHEON

NOVEMBER 14



At the November social luncheon, we watched a video detailing the extraordinary life of Sister Vivian Bullwinkel.

In 1941, wanting to enlist for service in WWII, Bullwinkel volunteered as a nurse with the RAAF but was rejected for having flat feet. She was, however, able to join the Australian Army Nursing Service. In September 1941 she sailed for Singapore.

As Japanese troops invaded Malaya in December 1941 and began to advance southwards, Bullwinkel and 65 other nurses boarded the SS Vyner Brooke to escape.

Two days later, the ship was sunk by Japanese aircraft. Bullwinkel, 21 other nurses and a large group of men, women, and children made it ashore at Radji Beach on Banka Island.

In an action that later became known as the Bangka Island Massacre, Japanese soldiers came and killed the men, then motioned the nurses to wade into the sea. They then machine-gunned the nurses from behind. Bullwinkel was struck by a bullet which passed completely through her body, missing her internal organs, and feigned death until the Japanese soldiers left.

Bullwinkel got back to the now empty beach and with a wounded British soldier from another massacre hid out for 12 days. Eventually, she surrendered again to the Japanese and was interned with other nurses enduring a further three years of hardship and brutality before her release enabled her to tell her harrowing story.

After the war Bullwinkel was active in military and civilian nursing. She was involved in veterans' affairs and with philanthropic committees. She married in 1977.



Vivian Bullwinkel (1915–2000) has appeared three times in the Archibald Prize, in portraits by Graham Moore (1955), Reshid Bey (1960) and this one by Shirley Bourne, which is now in the collection of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

At the time this portrait was painted, Bullwinkel was matron of Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in Melbourne, Victoria. She was the sole survivor of the Bangka Island Massacre in February 1942. Among the many honours she received during her lifetime was the Florence Nightingale Medal and being made an associate of the Royal Red Cross (ARRC) in 1947, a member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1973 and an officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1993.