



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH

Newsletter December/January
2019~2020



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

REGULAR
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Janet Bates
Stephen Brown
Michael Lake
Ken Marsh
Bob McDonald

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

MONTHLY SOCIAL MEETINGS

Our **Social Luncheon Meetings** are held on the **FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, (except January)**, with **Arrival time by 11.45 am for a 12 Noon commencement**. All meetings are held at our rooms at Airport Hut 48, Airport Drive, Mitchell Park (ie : Ballarat Aerodrome).

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETINGS

Our **Business Meetings, open to all members**, are held at 3 pm on the **second** Tuesday of each month. These meetings immediately follow a monthly Committee meeting enabling members to be promptly aware of decisions taken by the committee, enabling members to ratify, or otherwise, decisions taken.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Our very busy and productive 2019 wound up with two very enjoyable December events.

Firstly, on 1st December we had the first "Runway's Dance" Afternoon Tea Dance in the Western Wing Function Room at Airport Hut 48. What a great success it was.

Open to the Public, as well as AFA members, the dance attracted a very good attendance including many people from the various Dance Groups in the Ballarat area. The "Runway's Dance" was formed by Branch Secretary Rob Petty and wife Ann and they have put a lot of work into this and are widely promoting our Branch of the Air Force Association through this initiative.

Our final Social Luncheon Meeting for the year on Tuesday 3rd December, at which our very good friends, the Sing Australia Choir, entertained us with some Christmas songs and carols, rounded out our year.

I will not cover here any of the events/happening of the past year as they were all amply recorded in the monthly newsletters throughout the year.

I take this opportunity to thank members of our committee who have worked with me to deliver what I believe has been a very well managed year for our Branch of the Air Force Association.

I had been considering conducting an end-of-year "satisfaction survey" of members; however, the overwhelming messages of support and thanks received from members, including from the majority of our Elder Statesmen individually conveying messages of thanks and support shows that such a survey is not needed. Thank you all for your messages of thanks and support.

To each and every member I wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Wonderful New Year.

Noel Hutchins, President/Editor



**RUNWAY'S
DANCE
1ST
DECEMBER
2019**

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The pictures  
tell the story.  
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What a great
afternoon.
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"When is the  
next one?"  
was the  
question  
asked by many  
at, and after,  
the dance.  
~~~

The answer?

**Watch
this
Space**



DECEMBER 2019 CHRISTMAS SOCIAL LUNCHEON MEETING



Our very good friends, Sing Australia Choir Ballarat, entertained us with Christmas songs and carols



Members got involved in a most enjoyable Christmas Story item provided by members of the Sing Australia Choir



Santa Clause popped in and very cleverly continued to use the Audience involvement theme set by Sing Australia when telling his own Christmas story. Many thanks to Elder Statesman Tom Jobling for arranging a visit by Santa once again. Thank you Tom.

And thank you to each and every member of the Sing Australia Choir that made our day very special.

EX RAAF Warrant Officer Tom Runnalls was a special guest at our December Christmas Social Luncheon meeting and it was thanks to Janet Bates' husband Peter who provided transport from, and return to, the John Curtain Hostel at Creswick for Tom to be able to be with us on the day. Tom is an ex 1WAG.

Tom Runnalls was born on the 9th July 1924 in Bodmin, England. By 1929 his family had emigrated to Australia and settled in the Bendigo area. After leaving school Tom secured an appointment with the Commonwealth Public Service as a Junior Clerk. His first position was with the Wartime Department of Munitions at the Ammunitions Factory at Footscray followed by a transfer to the Ordnance Factory at Bendigo. Here the major manufacture was to be 4 inch naval guns for the RAN.



L TO R : PETER BATES AND TOM RUNNALLS

Tom joined the local ATC [Air Training Corps] and later after the outbreak of WW2 at the age of 18, enlisted in the RAAF. After completing his Initial Training at No.1 ITS Somers, Tom was posted to No. 1 WAGS at the Ballarat aerodrome. He completed Course 32, November 1942 to April 1943, finishing 4th in his Course. He then travelled to No. 2 BAGS [Bombing Air Gunners School] to complete the gunnery section of his course. Tom fully expected to be posted to Bomber Command in the U.K; however, with the threat from the Japanese to Australia, he was held back and posted to No. 2 ANS, (Air Navigation School), at Cootamundra. Here Tom belonged to staff WAGS manning the wireless equipment installed to receive and send messages and in doing so guide pilots home. After a stint at No. 2 Transit Depot at Bradfield Park, Sydney, Tom was posted to No. 3 Operational Training Unit Rathmines for training on Catalina Flying Boats. Due to the complexity of training, Tom spent 5 months at Rathmines. Tom was then posted to No. 20 Squadron in Cairns as a crew member of the Catalina Flying Boats. During the early critical months of the Pacific War, Catalina Flying Boats of RAAF No 11 and 20 Squadrons played a significant part in slowing the initial Japanese advance. Armed with bombs, depth-charges, mines or torpedoes, The Catalinas flew to the Solomons, New Britain, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies and eventually to the Palaus, the Philippines, Formosa and China. From all Australian Catalina operations in the South West Pacific sector 320 airmen failed to return. Operations that Tom's crew were involved in were to mine Japanese harbours in the Caroline Islands. His plane and crew were based on a US Navy Sea plane Tender "USS Tangier" moored off Manus Island NE of New Guinea. By 1944 Tom was posted to Darwin to continue crewing in Catalina Flying Boats with further mine laying operations and served with No. 43 Squadron in the N.W Area from July 1944 until May 1945.



RAAF Warrant Officer
Tom Runnalls

Tom was discharged on the 19th September 1945. ***Thank you for your Service Tom and for joining us at our Christmas function. (Thanks to Janet Bates for transmitting Tom's story for inclusion in this newsletter).***

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**JANUARY GET-TOGETHER Tuesday 7th January 2020 :** As has been the practice, our January get-together will be in the form of a BYO picnic lunch in the Rotunda adjacent to the larger children's playground at Lake Wendouree commencing at **11.30 am**. As usual, some of us will need to get down there early to secure the rotunda before others get in there. Bring a plate to share. The Association will provide cold soft drinks and sweets on the day. There is a Bar-B-Que facility there for those wishing to bring BBQ items to cook for themselves.

**FEBRUARY SOCIAL LUNCHEON MEETING Tuesday 4th February 2020** will also act as our **Annual General Meeting**. Arrive by **11.45 am** for a **12 Noon Start**. Please see separate **AGM Meeting Notice with Committee Nomination form** accompanying this newsletter.