



# AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH



Newsletter August 2020

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## COVID-19 AND CONTINUING NEED FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS

**AS PER THE PRESIDENT'S UPDATE DATED 2ND AUGUST 2020, ALL MEETING  
AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

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How different our August activity this year would have been had it not been for Covid-19 and the resulting restrictions. We would have had a Celebratory Function for the 75th Anniversary of VP Day on the 15th as well as supporting our Vietnam Veterans at their Vietnam Veterans Day Service on the 18th of this month and we would be very much entrenched with arrangements for the planned Battle for Australia Commemoration at the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial on Sunday 30th and a Battle for Australia Afternoon-Tea Dance on that same day as well as making arrangements for a commemoration at the Sebastopol Cenotaph on Sunday 13th September to mark the 80th Anniversary of The Battle of Britain. As well as these, I would have been preparing to attend, as a member, the annual National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association (NMBVAA) commemorative service at the Melbourne Shrine as well as representing our Branch of the AFA at Victoria's Battle for Australia commemoration at the Melbourne Shrine on Wednesday 2nd September. As things have turned out we have/and will recognise these military anniversaries somewhat differently.

It was good to see the Ballarat Times Group give a good coverage of the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War Two and VP Day in the Ballarat Times, albeit with some error. My contact with the editor re the use of the term VJ Day rather the correct VP Day was acknowledged with him explaining that his WWII digger Grandfather always referred to it as VJ and he had always understood that to be the correct term. I have heard some other criticism of the coverage in the Ballarat Times but they certainly outshone the Ballarat Courier where there was not a word of it in the Ballarat Courier issue ON THE DAY, Saturday 15th August. The Editor of the Times News Group has been very supportive in respect of our activities and all military commemorations of which I am most grateful.

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### MAURICE TURNER GIFT RECOGNISED WITH BRASS PLAQUE

We finally got it done. A brass plaque has been affixed to the display cabinet holding our gifted collection of World War II model aircraft acknowledging the donation of both the cabinet and the collection of model aircraft gifted to us by Maurice Turner.



Thank you to Asst Secretary/Asst Treasurer Peter Dowling for meeting me out at the rooms to assist with affixing the plaque to the cabinet. The images of course do not show the full range of the model aircraft with the larger models flying from the rafters. (NH, Pres)

With the 75th Anniversary of VP Day, effectively the end of World War Two, well recognised in the media this month, let us remember that there are other August military anniversaries such as Vietnam Veterans Day and also the Malaya-Borneo/Indonesian Confrontation services. So in this month's newsletter I would like to revisit a couple of previous stories around **two of our own Vietnam Veterans** in Senior Vice-President Leigh Harvey OAM and Elder Statesman Tom Jobling. Both Leigh and Tom are Australian Army Vietnam Veterans, but we also have an RAAF Vietnam Veteran in Junior Vice-President Peter Schoutens and I asked Peter if he has any photographs from the time that he served with RAAF No 2 Squadron in Vietnam and he has kindly supplied me with some, so

**Let us Remember and Acknowledge the Service of all Vietnam Veterans  
as we have a look at our own three.**

When I first got involved with the Air Force Association on joining the Ballarat branch in 2018 I soon noticed one of the members who was one of the real *workers*, Leigh Harvey. Having undertaken to do a monthly branch newsletter, it was in the November 2018 newsletter that I included an article about Leigh. Several of our current members were not with us at that time so with this Vietnam Veterans recognition article I want to include a reduced version of that original article.

**Leigh Frazer HARVEY O.A.M ~ No Ordinary Guy ~**

**Ordinary : Adjective = *Commonplace*    Extraordinary : Adjective = *Remarkable***

Of his three years service in the AMF, Leigh Harvey was to spend some time doing initial military training, infantry training, some overseas service in Malaysia, followed by intense jungle warfare training back in Australia before spending 361 days as an infantryman with the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Vietnam during that prolonged war.

Initial recruit training was completed at Kapooka, NSW and this was followed by infantry training at Ingleburn NSW, following which Leigh was posted to No 8 Royal Australian Regiment which, at this time, was located at Camp Terendak, Malacca, Malaysia.

No 8 RAR's role during its time in Malacca was predominantly military exercises and the battalion was returned to Enoggera Qld in April 1969 where its men were to undergo five months of intensive jungle-warfare training in preparation for its involvement in the Vietnam war. This training consisted of many facets including specialists weapons, 'chopper' familiarisation, infantry tactics & armor training etc.

On 17 November 1969 Leigh, one of a total of 540 men of No 8 RAR, boarded the 'fast troop carrier', *Sydney*, which departed that day for the journey to South Vietnam. The *Sydney* was escorted by HMAS *Duchess* for the entire journey. Records of the escort ship show that both the *Sydney* and escort ship HMAS *Duchess* entered Vung Tau harbour at approximately 0400 hours on 28th November 1969 and by 1200 hours, No 8 RAR personnel and equipment had been unloaded by barge and helicopter and No 9 RAR personnel and equipment were loaded and both the *Sydney* and the *Duchess* were leaving for the trip back to Australia with No 9 RAR personnel getting home for Christmas. For those that are interested, No 8 RAR's arrival at Vung Tau was filmed and is available on line both at the Australian War Memorial item F04409 and also distributed on YouTube. Film runs for about 8 minutes.

Following disembarkation, Leigh and the others passed through 'checks' and then boarded trucks for the 15 mile trip north to the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province.

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.

The main task for 8 RAR in Vietnam continued to be participating in, and supporting, *pacification* operations in Phuoc Tuy which involved patrolling the area and conducting ambushes in order to engage the enemy and prevent them from making contact with the civilian population. And *engage the enemy* they did; however, I am not going to go into detail here in respect of Leigh's *engagement* with the enemy. Suffice to say that Leigh has enlightened me such that he has confirmed my own imagining of what jungle warfare must *really* be like. Considering what Leigh and others of 8 RAR were involved in, that any one of them could return home with their sanity intact is a miracle in itself. At the end of its Vietnam tour, 8 RAR had lost eighteen men killed in action and 108 wounded.

Back home and a civilian again after three years service, Leigh was to spend quite a few years in Western Australia, from 1973 to 1995 in fact, the first two-and-a-half years 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 before finally heading east where, all these years later, we have Leigh as a much valued member of our Ballarat Branch of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

Now all these 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 Federal 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. Leigh 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.

After all this time, Leigh is still *giving*. As well as now being the Senior Vice-President of our branch of the AFA Leigh is very much involved with Ballarat Community Health in relation to helping with such things as "SecondBite", a program to provide 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. **Right now, during our current Covid-19 pandemic, Leigh is out there assisting the "SecondBite" program and other programs assisting those in need.**

**Extraordinary : Adjective = Remarkable = Leigh Frazer Harvey OAM** (NH Ed)

**Tom Jobling and The Battle of Binh Ba :** At our July 2019 Social Luncheon meeting I did a presentation on a significant Vietnam battle, *The Battle of Binh Ba*. This presentation was done both to 'tell the story' and to also recognise the service of another of our Vietnam Veterans, Elder Statesman Tom Jobling. Tom served in Vietnam for more than a full year with 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight, (i.e. an Australian Army aviation unit).

Following my presentation, Tom gave a talk about his own and his unit's involvement in the Battle of Binh Ba. Tom was an Australian Army Sergeant and the part that he played and what he saw from the 'choppers' was most interesting to hear. Details of the presentation including several photographs were published in our July 2019 newsletter and I would encourage members to go and have a read of that article. There are two ways that you can read our newsletters on-line. If you go to our [1wags.org.au](http://1wags.org.au) website, click on "Events", (just to the right of our Air Force Association Crest at the top of the page), and this will take you to a page where you can select a year, 2019, 2020 etc. Click on 2019 and this will make every newsletter for 2019 available to you. Same for 2020. Alternatively, if you go to our State AFA website at [afavic.org.au](http://afavic.org.au) click the drop-down menu for "Branches", click on "Ballarat" and there you can access our newsletters as well. Simple. So go and have a read of that July 2019 article.

(NH, Ed)



**Peter Schoutens at No 2 Squadron RAAF in Vietnam :**

**As previously mentioned, we also have an RAAF Vietnam Veteran at our Branch, our Junior Vice-President Peter Schoutens. All photos used have been supplied by Peter.** During his RAAF service Peter completed a full year with No 2 Squadron in Vietnam from 9th April 1968 to 9th April 1969. Based at Phan Rang Air Base in Ninh Thuan province in South Vietnam, No 2 Squadron, flying the Canberra Bomber, became part of the United States Air Force 35th Tactical Fighter Wing and between April 1967 and June 1971, the Canberras flew approximately 12,000 sorties. The squadron was awarded the Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation and a United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Commendation for its service in Vietnam.



Peter

Peter Schoutens pictured with 2 Squadron members from the Electrical, Instruments and Radio Sections. Photo taken at Phan Rang on 4th January 1969.



Peter Schoutens up on the wing refueling

Fuel in and Bombs ready to go

Might I direct readers to some reading in respect of No 2 Squadron in Vietnam. Go to our National Air Force Association website at [raafa.org.au](http://raafa.org.au) and click on "Special Topics" in the left hand side menu below the AFA Crest and you will see listed there : "2 Squadron Canberras in Vietnam", an excellent article written by somebody who was there, Lance Halvorson, a Navigator who served with No 2 Squadron at Phan Rang in 1967. Also listed under Special Topics is another article relating to 2 Squadron, "MAGPIE 91 - Missing in Action", relating to the loss of a 2 Squadron Canberra and its crew of two, the last two ADF members Missing in Action in Vietnam to be found and their remains returned home to Australia. (NH, Ed)



Peter chats with aircrew before they head off again

**GET OUT THOSE PHOTOGRAPHS** In coming issues of the newsletter I would like to feature some members' photos in two separate sections : (1) MEMBERS IN UNIFORM and (2) MEMBERS SERVICE TIME PHOTOS. So will members with military service **please send me some photos**, say, 3 or 4 of yourself in uniform and/or photographs from your time in the service with a bit of a story to go with them.

**I will start off with these of my own:**

**SOME PHOTOS DURING MY RAAF SERVICE**

As a young Corporal I was fortunate to receive a posting at the completion of my 5ACS 'tour' in Darwin to be the NCO in charge of the No 75 Squadron Orderly Room at RAAF Williamtown. 75 Squadron at the time were flying Sabre aircraft and was selected as the RAAF Squadron to be involved in the opening and closing ceremonies at the 1962 Empire Games in Perth along with RAF Vulcan Bombers and this gave us over two weeks at RAAF Pearce. It sure is a long trip to Perth and home again in a Hercules, but it was GREAT. If you Google 1962 Empire Games, there is a British *Pathe* newsreel video where you can see this flypast still today, in full *technicolour*.

**Photos at Right : Top :** An aerial view of RAAF Base Pearce WA with the British RAF Vulcan Bombers situated there waiting for us. **Bottom** image shows the three RAF Vulcan Bombers leading nine No 75 Squadron Sabres in the flypast. **Noel Hutchins**

