



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA BALLARAT BRANCH Newsletter



October/November 2022

PRESIDENT: Noel Hutchins

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Sue Alexander

Email: Ballarat.afa@gmail.com

SECRETARY: Peter Dowling

Phone 0418281775

Email: ballarat.afa@gmail.com

FROM THE PRESIDENT

What an enjoyable outing it was at the Lunch-at-the-Movies at the Regent theatre. Lovely comfortable surroundings in our lounge area for us to gather and to meet-and-greet before moving into the theatre to enjoy our provided boxed lunches while we watched the movie 'Elvis'. I very much enjoyed the movie and I hope that all who attended on the day enjoyed it as well. I would think that after our enjoyable experience on the day that more outings to the Regent would be on our future outings agendas.

Our outing at the Regent was one day prior to my leaving Ballarat on what is an extended period of interstate travel followed by an intended 'extended-period' in Thailand. So I am writing this from a holiday resort at Tomakin, near Batemans Bay, on the NSW South Coast. My travels will include stays at Newcastle, Grafton and Cabarita Beach NSW before travelling to Maryborough QLD to spend time with my sister-in-law and brother.

Considering my extended absence from Ballarat I am withdrawing from taking any active part in the day-to-day operations of our Branch of the Air Force Association. Branch Secretary/Treasurer Peter Dowling will be handling all administrative matters through until our scheduled Annual General Meeting in February 2023 and I thank him for stepping up to do that. Thanks also to Sue Alexander for taking on the Newsletter Editor's role. Sue is putting out this and future issues of the newsletter.

I will be back in Ballarat for a 3 or 4 week period from the middle of December prior to leaving for my trip to Thailand in the New Year.

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Janet Bates, Noel Hutchins, Sue Alexander and Peter Dowling saying farewell and safe travels to Noel.

IMPORTANT DATES COMING UP

Tuesday November 8

Monthly social luncheon at Hut 48 featuring audio-visual presentations for Remembrance Day and WWII fighter planes. 11:45 for 12.

Tuesday 13 December

Special Christmas Lunch for members to be held at Ballarat Golf Club. See separate invitation or contact Peter Dowling



Tuesday 10 January

Picnic in the park to welcome the New Year. Bring your sandwiches or something to BBQ to the rotunda next to the children's playground and Piper's Restaurant. 11:45 for 12.

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On return from Thailand I am intending to relocate to Maryborough, so I will not be re-standing as Branch President at the February AGM

I will remain a member of the Ballarat Branch of the Air Force Association going forward. The Air Force Association has been a very special part of my life since April 2018. It was where I 'bounced to' following the passing of my wife Janet in December 2017. Finding myself quickly involved in our Ballarat Branch and also AFAVic in Melbourne played a major role in helping me through the difficult times following my wife's passing. I have met some very special people and made some great friends due to my membership of the Air Force Association and I thank each and every one of them for the opportunity to get to know them.

Thank you all for your support .

Noel Hutchins, President

The next FEATURE STORY on the 1wags website features :

Warrant Officer FRANK WINDMILL

Frank Windmill enlisted on the 12 September 1941 in Melbourne Victoria and completed his Initial Training at Victor Harbour South Australia. On the 13 November 1941 Frank commenced training at No. 1 Wireless Air Gunners School Ballarat Course 20.

In August 1942 Frank sailed for England to take up his posting to the Heavy Halifax Bomber 102 Squadron RAF. On his twelfth operation on the 22 September 1943 Frank's Halifax crashed near Hanover Germany after a night bombing raid. One crew was killed and the rest including Frank were captured and for the next twenty months became POWs at the hands of the Germans.

Frank survived this ordeal and at the age of twenty-three became one of the many RAAF airmen repatriated back to Australia a changed man.



Read more of Frank's story on:

www.1wags.org.au



1 WAGS REPORT

The 1 wags Memorial website continues to grow with over 70,000 hits from all over the world.

VALE

Warrant Officer TOM HODGE
RUNNALLS

9 July 1924-16 September 2022 Age 98

Tom Runnalls 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 was eventually posted to No. 20 Squadron in Cairns as a crew member of the Catalina Flying Boats. 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.

Tom was discharged on the 19 September 1945. Warrant Officer Tom Runnalls was the guest at the launch of the

1 W.A.G.S Memorial Website on the 11 February 2020.

At the age of 95 he represented all 1 W.A.G.S trainees who served in the RAAF during WW2. Those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who returned to their families.

Nineteen of the ninety-two trainees in Tom's Course 32 were killed.



LUNCH AT THE MOVIES: "ELVIS"

The movie provided an interesting perspective on the life and career of Elvis Presley as told through the eyes of his manager, Colonel Tom Parker.

On March 24, 1958, Presley was drafted into the United States Army at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. His arrival was a major media event. Hundreds of people descended on Presley as he stepped from the bus; photographers then accompanied him into the installation. Presley announced that he was looking forward to his military stint, saying that he did not want to be treated any differently from anyone else: "The Army can do anything it wants with me."



Between March 28 and September 17, 1958, Presley completed basic and advanced military training at Fort Hood, Texas, where he was temporarily assigned to Company A, 2d Medium Tank Battalion, 37th Armour.



On October 1, 1958, Presley was assigned to the 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 32d Armor, 3d Armored Division at Ray Barracks, Germany, where he served as an armour intelligence specialist. On November 27, he was promoted to private first class and on June 1, 1959, to specialist fourth class. The Army introduced Presley to karate, which he studied seriously. It became a lifelong interest, which he later included in his live performances. Fellow soldiers have attested to Presley's wish to be seen as an able, ordinary soldier, despite his fame, and to his generosity.

He donated his Army pay to charity, purchased TV sets for the base, and bought an extra set of fatigues for everyone in his outfit.

Between his induction and discharge, Presley had ten top 40 hits, Presley was promoted to sergeant on February 11, 1960. He returned to the United States on March 2, 1960, and was honourably discharged three days later with the rank of sergeant.



SOCIAL LUNCHEON 13 SEPTEMBER

Ryder-Cheshire Support Group

Dianne McGrath OAM, President of the Ballarat Ryder-Cheshire Support Group, provided an insight into the local and global activities of this group dedicated for the relief of suffering without discrimination.

The founders of the group were Group Captain Lord Leonard Cheshire of Woodall and Baroness Lady Sue Ryder of Warsaw.

Leonard Cheshire was a highly decorated British Pilot, one of the "Dam Busters" and was awarded a VC. He was a British observer of the bombing of Nagasaki and found this experience life changing.

Sue Ryder was in WWII Special Operations, in the Secret Service in Poland.

They met in 1955 and finding they had similar interests, married in Bombay in 1955.



There are now 400 Ryder-Cheshire, Ryder and Cheshier Homes in over 50 countries, including two in Australia, at Ivanhoe and at Mount Gambier.

The Ballarat Support Group was established after a visit to Ballarat by Leonard Cheshier in 1964 and the group specifically supports two of the homes, Raphael in India and Klibur Domin in Timor Leste.



Noel Hutchins, Dianne McGrath and

Members of the Ryder-Chesher Support Group

The support group raises funds through sponsorships, donations, fund-raising events, grants and bequests. Every dollar raised goes to the homes as all members are volunteers. People can assist by becoming a sponsor, volunteer, member or supporter.

AFA Ballarat is proud to support the Ryder-Chesher Support Group in their annual meeting at Hut 48 in May 2023.

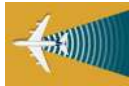
You can find out more about this group:

website: ryder-chesher.org

Facebook: Ryder-Chesher Australia

Email: ballarat.ryder.chesher@iinet.au

Dianne McGrath 0411874756



SOCIAL LUNCHEON 11 OCTOBER

The CAC Wackett Trainer



Mark Pilkington,

President, Friends of the RAAF Museum Point Cook

Mark Pilkington provided members with a fascinating overview of the history and role of the Wackett aircraft in Australia.

Sir Laurence Wackett was one of just 21 officers who formed the RAAF in 1921. He had a Bachelor of Science Degree from Melbourne University and had 2 years of advanced training in aircraft design.

His first design, the Warbler, won second prize in the 1924 Low-Powered Aeroplane Competition.

By 1937, the Air Board was considering local manufacture of an elementary trainer. Laurence Wackett became the Chief Designer.

The Wackett achieved its goal as a basic pilot trainer serving at several air force training bases during WWII but was superseded by the low cost Tiger Moths.

The Wackett Trainer then became a Wireless/Radio Trainer at 1WAGS, 2WAGS and 3WAGS.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AC0150



Noel Hutchins and Peter Dowling thanking Mark Pilkington for his extensive and exciting history of Wacketts, training aircraft and history of design and manufacture of these aircraft in Australia.