



RAAF ASSOCIATION (N.S.W. DIVISION) INC



Honour the Past – Support the Present – Act for the Future

THE RADAR BRANCH BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2015

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Please Note

RADAR BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Gallipoli Legion Club, Hamilton on Saturday 28 March 2015.

(I) Date: Saturday 28 March 2015 – 1045am

(II) Venue: The Gallipoli Legion Club, Hamilton, Newcastle NSW 2303 (Phone 02 4961 2430)

(III) Travel: The Gallipoli Legion Club is a short 50 metre walk from Hamilton Railway Station on the southern side of the railway tracks near the corner of Hudson and Beaumont streets.

The AGM will call for nominations for all office bearers and elect the Executive and Committee members. Existing office bearers are welcome to stand for re-election. All positions will be declared vacant and nominations can be made in writing to Secretary or at the meeting. Members are encouraged and welcome to participate in the election of your committee and executive. The first committee meeting of the Branch elected officers will follow the AGM.

Those wishing to attend and nominations for office are requested to be sent to The Secretary (details above) or e-mail to contact@raafradar.org.au. **Please Note: All Members and Friends are most welcome.**

RAAF BIRTHDAY SYDNEY COMMEMORATION 2015

This year activities to celebrate the 94th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Australian Air Force will take place as follows:

Commemorative Service 1100am Tuesday 31st March 2015, Cenotaph Martin Place Sydney

There will not be a luncheon cruise following the Cenotaph Service this year. For details contact: Bruce Weekley RFD, State Vice President, RAAF Association (NSW Division) **PO Box A2147, SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235** or email bweekely@optusnet.com.au

ANZAC DAY 2015

Note Change to Order of March

All RAAF and WAAAF Veterans and serving members are invited to assemble on Thursday 25th April. This year, the organisers have changed the Order of March for the special occasion of the centenary of ANZAC. The order has been published as follows:

March Leader – Governor of NSW

Senior ADF Officers and VC Recipients
RSL State Council
New Zealand Veterans
WWII RAN
WWII Army
WWII RAAF
British Commonwealth Occupation Forces
Post WWII RAN
Post WWII Army
Post WWII RAAF
Civilians in Support of Australian Troops
Descendants of Veterans
British and Commonwealth Veterans
Allied Veterans

WWII veterans will again be in the leading elements which will step off at 0900. Please contact the Secretary or log on to: www.rslnsw.org.au for details of the timings and final order of march closer to the event.

The main party will march with approx 50-75 uniformed personnel from RAAF Williamtown, behind our new banner. Our meeting point will be on Elizabeth Street, opposite Market Street, as usual. Please arrive by 1030, although step off time is likely to be unpredictable as usual.

Therefore, again this year, we will be accompanied by a contingent of serving members from Surveillance and Response Group (SRG), RAAF Williamtown. SRG includes Nos 41, 42 and 44 Wings which were also active in WWII as radar units. We are extremely grateful and delighted that serving RAAF members can once again join with us on this important day.

Please contact secretary@radar.org.au if you wish to participate in the WWII leading contingent or require a wheelchair or to ride in a vehicle during the march.

ANZAC Day Banquet Lunch - \$55 Per Head

ANZAC DAY 2015 VENUE: The Emperor's Choice Restaurant, Corner King and Castlereagh Streets, Sydney

The EMPEROR'S CHOICE RESTAURANT has once again graciously agreed to host our annual lunch following the Anzac Day March. Lunch will commence 1230pm to 3.00pm. The restaurant would not normally open on a Saturday but host Eric and staff has again willingly accepted our booking in the spirit of ANZAC Day for which we are most grateful.

The cost will be \$55 per head. Please fill out the slip included in this bulletin and return to the Secretary by **Friday 17th April 2015**. Payment can be made by cheque accompanying the slip or at the restaurant on the day.

The Joe Ulett Memorial and Pither trophies will be awarded at the luncheon to the recipients from Surveillance and Response Group. Both of these trophies are sponsored by the Radar Branch and are awarded annually to the airman or airwoman who has made exemplary contributions in their field. The Wing Commander Grant E.S. Stuchbury award will also be presented to a member of 44 Wing.

DID YOU KNOW

20 April 2015

The Australian Flying Corps Half-Flight embarked for service in Mesopotamia

The Mesopotamian Half-Flight, or Australian Half-Flight was the first Australian Flying Corps (AFC) unit to see active service. At the start of World War I, the air forces of the Allied forces were small and primitive. Most of the available aircraft and pilots were assigned to the Western Front. This meant that the Indian Army, which was attacking the Ottoman Empire in Mesopotamia, had no air support. On 8 February 1915, the Australian government received a request for air assistance from the British Government of India. The AFC was still in its infancy and could provide enough aircrews and ground staff for only half a flight: the unit therefore became known as the Mesopotamian Half-Flight, or Australian Half-Flight and Captain Henry Petre was appointed commander. The Australians were to be augmented by personnel from the Indian Army and New Zealand. The AFC contingent sailed for Bombay, and on 20 April it left for Basra.

The half-flight's aircraft were to be provided by the Indian Government, and on its arrival in Basra on 26 May, two Maurice Farman Shorthorns and a Maurice Farman Longhorn were handed over. These three biplanes were of a "pusher" design, so-called because the propeller faced backwards, behind the cockpit. The planes were already obsolete and were not suitable for the desert conditions.. The Longhorn was a second-hand aircraft and had persistent mechanical problems, meaning that it spent a lot of time being repaired. After arrival, the aircraft were immediately put to use on reconnaissance missions. Shortly afterwards, the Indian Army captured the town of Amarah, and the half-flight moved there on 9 June.

On 4 July, the half-flight's equipment was augmented with two Caudron G.3 aircraft. On 30 July, one of the Caudrons was forced to land in enemy territory due to mechanical problems. It was later reported that the crew — Lieutenants George Pinnock Merz (a medical doctor and formerly of the Melbourne University Rifles) and W. W. A. Burn (a New Zealander) — were killed by armed civilians after a running gun-battle over several miles. They were Australia's first air-war casualties.

20 March 1917

First Victoria Cross holder in the RAAF



Painting (1924) by H. Septimus Power; McNamara, c.1942

On this day, Lieutenant Frank McNamara landed to rescue a fellow airman forced down behind enemy lines in Palestine and facing imminent capture by Turkish cavalry, even though himself suffering serious wounds sustained by the premature explosion of a bomb he dropped while attacking a Turkish train. His great bravery on this occasion resulted in him receiving in June the only Victoria Cross awarded to a member of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) in World War I. McNamara joined the Royal Australian Air Force on its formation in 1921 and served until 1946 when he retired with honorary rank of Air Vice-Marshal. The whole of his World War II service was spent outside Australia—as representative for the RAAF in London until 1942, then on loan to the RAF while commanding British forces in Aden until 1945. Retiring from the RAAF, he lived in England until his death in 1961.

