



# THE RADAR BRANCH

RAAF ASSOCIATION (N.S.W. DIVISION) INC ([www.simplesite.com/raafansw](http://www.simplesite.com/raafansw))

**Patrons:** Air Commodore D. Bowden AM (Ret'd)  
Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar AO (Ret'd)  
**President:** Air Commodore T.C. Delahunty AM

**Radar Branch Website:** <http://www.raafradar.org.au>  
**Email:** [contact@raafradar.org.au](mailto:contact@raafradar.org.au)  
**Phone:** 02 4322 1505  
**Correspondence:** Secretary Radar Branch, 2 Preece Close, Springfield NSW 2250

## BULLETIN JULY 2009

### FUTURE EVENT

#### THE 69<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN LUNCHEON

- (I) **Date:** Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> - September 2009 – 1200 for 1230 (RSVP Monday 7 Sep 09)
- (II) **Venue:** NSW Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney
- (III) **Dress:** - Jacket and Tie (medals may be worn)
- (IV) **Cost:** \$65 per Person

**A Commemorative Service at the Cenotaph, Martin Place will be held at 1100 prior to the luncheon.**

The luncheon provides Branch members with the opportunity to get together in a splendid venue. RSVP by 7 Sep 09 and request to be seated with Radar Branch members. Members wishing to attend should complete the form included with this bulletin and send with payment details to:

**Mr Bruce Weekley RFD, Vice President, RAAF Association (NSW Division) PO Box A2147 SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235.**

**Please Note:** The Battle of the Coral Sea in May and The Battle for Australia 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2009 are another two Commemorative Services which RAAFA support and attend.

#### No 2 CONTROL AND REPORTING UNIT 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION

It's not too late to join the activities in Darwin on **19 to 26 SEPTEMBER 2009** for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of No 2CRU. The unit was formed in September 1959 and arrived at Lee point, Darwin shortly thereafter. It had a very active life due to the Malaysian Emergency and Cyclone Tracy.

Whilst 2CRU has folded, Darwin is now the home of No. 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit. No 114 was formed as No. 114 Mobile Fighter Sector HQ at Camden (NSW) on 23 May 43 and deployed to Goodenough Island (PNG), where it became operational on 27 June 43 under the control of 71 (Fighter) Wing. After the end of World War II, 114 returned to Australia and reduced to a nucleus-basis, with locations at Deniliquin, Schofields and Williamtown. The unit was re-activated on 12 Mar 1956, at Dubbo NSW and given its current title - No. 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit. As part of the formation of a British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve to be based in Malaysia, Headquarters RAAF Butterworth was established on 23 Jan 1958 and 114MCRU deployed to Butterworth as part of the RAAF component to provide surveillance for the arrival, from Australia, the first No. 78 Wing Sabres (3Sqn). The unit became fully operational on 1 Dec 1958, assuming area control and reporting responsibility from 487 Signals Unit RAF. Throughout the next eight years, 114MCRU played an important role in the operational life of the Butterworth area. It took part in a variety of Air Defence exercises with elements of the RN, RAF, and RAAF, and controlled RAAF Sabres and Canberras engaged in "Firedog" operations against the Communist Terrorists during the closing stages of the Malaysian Emergency.

On 1 Apr 68, 114 reformed at Amberley equipped with the "Hubcap" Air Defence System. Re-equipped with the AN/TPS-43 radar in 1979, 114 then operated as a highly mobile Control and Reporting Post, developing the deployment techniques and battlefield operating procedures that have established 114's reputation as a tactical unit. In May/June 97, the unit was relocated to RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern

Territory, to occupy the Northern Region Operations Centre (NORTHROC) facility. The unit was relocated to a new facility on RAAF Base Darwin Dec 99.

As members of 41Wing, 114MCRU personnel have been deployed in Afghanistan since 2007 with their modern TPS-77 Air Surveillance Radar with the mission of providing the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) at Kandahar Airfield. The CRC has been exemplary as the lead command and control agency responsible for air surveillance and air-battle management in Afghanistan. They have handed over the mission to the US Air Force and will return to Australia soon extremely proud of their efforts. Branch members making the trip to Darwin may get the opportunity to meet some of the men and women of 114MCRU and 41 Wing who deployed as part of the CRC detachments and performed with distinction.

Members of 114MCRU recently provided an Honour Guard at the Darwin Cenotaph on Thursday 3 June 2009 for the unveiling and dedication of the Darwin Radar memorial Plaque. A plaque commemorating No 12 Squadron, the first to be permanently based in Darwin in 1939, was also unveiled at the same ceremony. Mr Alex Culvenor, President of the Victorian RAAF Radar Association spoke of the testing conditions that were experienced on RAAF radar stations in the remote areas of North Western Australia during WWII.

For further information on the 2CRU 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion email: [2cruaware@gmail.com](mailto:2cruaware@gmail.com) or check for updates on [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com). Please be aware that our Secretary, Howie Campbell will be in Darwin for the reunion from 11 to 28 Sep 09 and not contactable on his home number.



TPS-77 Air Surveillance Radar operated by 114MCRU at Darwin

## PAST EVENTS

### **RADAR BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009**

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Defence Plaza, Pitt Street Sydney on Tuesday 3 March 2009. The Office Bearers and Committee members were elected as follows:

President:	Terry Delahunty
Vice-President & Treasurer:	Tony Rogers
Secretary:	Howard Campbell
Committee:	Cec Blumenthal, Mal Le Bas, Stan Burge, Shirley Brettle, Bette O'Donnell, Ray O'Donoghue, Tim Chubb, Terry Meyrick, Ed Simmonds (passed away see Vale), Alex Culvenor (Victoria), Paul Ogden (Honorary Auditor)

The Branch is fortunate to retain Bob Treloar, Dave Bowden and Walter Fielder-Gill as Patrons. We look forward to their continued counsel and companionship.

The committee expressed sincere appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing treasurer, Stan Burge for his outstanding contribution to the Branch. Stan has agreed to stay on as a committee member and we look forward to his continued participation and advice.

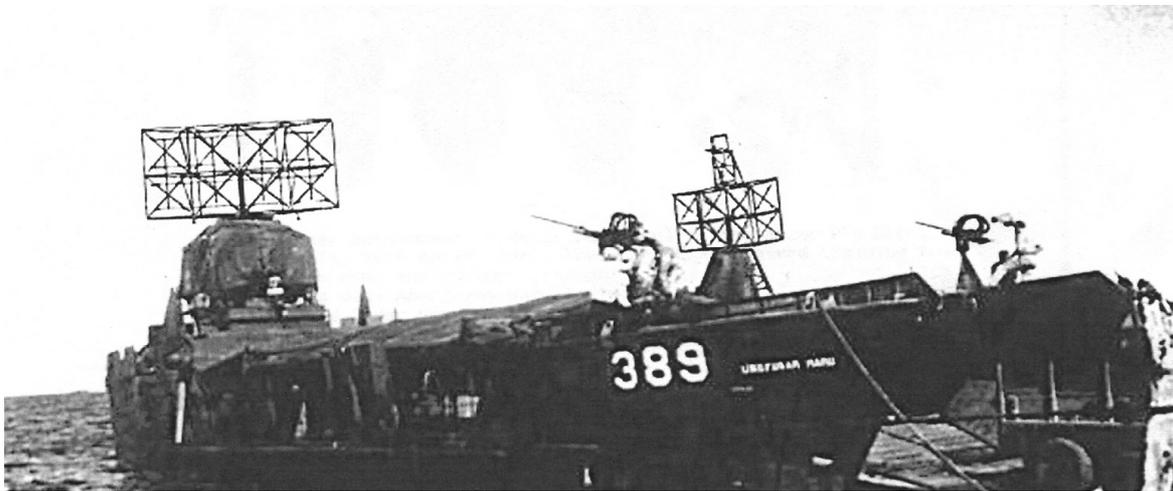
Phil Loh regretfully had to resign from the committee and sadly passed away in late July.

Members are encouraged and welcome to apply for vacant committee positions. Please contact our Secretary or email to [contact@raafradar.org.au](mailto:contact@raafradar.org.au) if you are willing to contribute to running the Branch in any capacity.

### **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Branch welcomed Alex Culvenor, President of the Victorian RAAF Radar Association, to the meeting held at Defence Plaza, Sydney on Tues 7 Jul 09. Alex made a day trip from Melbourne to be at the meeting and informed that the RAAF has given approval for a commemorative plaque at the RAAF Base Point Cook Memorial that will recognise the role played by No1 Signals School during WW II. Alex was able to join committee members for lunch. We greatly appreciate his involvement in our Branch and the expert knowledge and advice on RAAF Radar he consistently provides.

Alex described how during WWII, No 1 Signals at Point Cook played a little known but critical role in the secret war of radar by providing training for wireless mechanics and operators, radar personnel and other musterings such as WAAAF Wireless Operators who relieved a large number of male operators for forward operations. Many of the wireless mechanics went onto further training at No 1 Radio School at Richmond NSW. Amongst those trained were some hundreds of US Army Air Corps radar mechanics and operators who also received specialised training to operate Australian made LW/AW early warning radar equipment that was mounted on landing barges for seaborne mobility (see picture below).



LW/AW radars on a landing barge in New Guinea WWII

At this stage, the ceremony is planned to be held on 8 November 09 in conjunction with the RAAFA Pilgrimage to Pt Cook and full details will be provided in the October 09 Bulletin and on the website at [www.raafradar.org.au](http://www.raafradar.org.au)

**Victorian Members Note:** On 27 August, the Victorian Radar Association will hold a luncheon at the Rosstown Hotel situated at the corner of the Princess Highway and Koorang Road, Carnegie (see Melway 68 J3) and only 100 meters north of the Carnegie railway station.. The luncheon will start at 1200. Cost for the lunch is at own expense and a donation of \$10 would be greatly appreciated to assist with Branch costs.

### **ANZAC DAY MARCH AND LUNCHEON SYDNEY**

Branch committee member and WWII veteran Mr Cec Blumenthal led the Radar Branch contingent once again magnificently supported by serving RAAF members of No 41WG from RAAF Williamtown which included members returned from active duty in Afghanistan. The march got off to a slow start for Air Force due to the large number of marchers involved and may lead to a reassessment of timings for next year to avoid a repeat of the delay which caused great discomfort to many.

The Branch luncheon was held at the Emperor's Choice Restaurant and attended by members of No 41 WG.. Awards were presented to the winners of the Branch trophies which are sponsored by the Radar Branch and have been awarded annually since 1997. The Joe Ulett Memorial trophy and \$200 cheque is awarded annually to the airman or airwoman who has made the most positive contribution to operations of No 41 Wing. AirCdre Dave Bowden (Patron) presented the Joe Ulett trophy to Corporal Deb Dunbar from 41WG HQ. The Pither Trophy and \$200 cheque is awarded to the airman or airwoman who has made the most positive contribution to 41WG in the technical field. Officer Commanding No 41 WG, Group Captain Daryl Hunter received the Trophy on behalf of Flight Sergeant Martin Johns from No 3CRU.

The support from Surveillance and Response Group, RAAF Williamtown in the Sydney march is greatly appreciated and a highlight of ANZAC Day and the luncheon for all participating members. We look forward to their continued support and comradeship. A special thanks to Flying Officer Casey Byron from 3CRU for her assistance in organizing the March and luncheon.

### **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

Last year we had a very successful annual Christmas Luncheon in a private room at the Tattersals Club in Sydney which included serving members from RAAF Williamtown. However, whilst the lunch was enjoyed by all, the attendance just covered the cost of the function which was a set cost for a minimum number of attendees. It is now the norm for clubs and restaurants, including those in RSL clubs, to cater for private functions on a minimum cost basis of between 50 and 60 people. As Christmas bookings have to be made well in advance, we would like to get expressions of interest to attend the annual luncheon from Branch members so the committee can decide whether to commit Branch funds to secure a private function at Tattersals or another suitable venue. The alternative may be a luncheon in a public room at Tattersals or another venue that would be charged on a per capita basis.

Accordingly, we seek your cooperation with expressions of interest to attend the annual Christmas luncheon in Sydney so that the committee can make a responsible financial decision on members' behalf. I have no doubt that we will have an enjoyable time whichever way arrangements are made.

**Please pass on expressions of interest by mail to the Secretary (address on front of Bulletin), email to [contact@raafradar.org.au](mailto:contact@raafradar.org.au) or phone message to 02 62598351 or 0437 459128.**

---

---

### **NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new members to the Radar Branch:

John Close, St Georges Basin NSW, WWII Radar

William (Bruce) Carpenter, Epping NSW, Post WWII radar technician

Clint Huxley, Fern Bay NSW, Serving Member

Rebecca Carpenter, Kingston ACT, Serving Member

Alesha Whitehead, Boat Harbour NSW, Serving Member

John Godden, Pennant Hills NSW

Diane Taylor, Terrigal NSW

**Welcome to Radar Branch and we look forward to meeting you at the Christmas function in December**

**Enclosed with this bulletin is a membership form to pass onto potential members. Remember, the future of the Association depends on new membership.**

---

---

### **VALE**

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mr Ron Bowra of Castlecrag NSW. Ron passed away on 24 April 09.

Also with deep regret we sadly announce the passing of two long standing members of the Branch and committee, Mr Phil Loh and Mr Ed Simmons.

Ed was also the Branch historian and was well known and respected as an authority in his field. His funeral was held at the Crematorium at Port Macquarie on 5 Aug 09.

Phil, was a professor of mathematics at Sydney University and a dedicated committee member. His funeral was held at Waverley Cemetery in Sydney on 3 Aug 09.

We offer condolences to families and loved ones and give thanks for their lives.

---

---

## DID YOU KNOW?



*(Courtesy Australian War memorial)*

The Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) was formed in March 1941 after considerable lobbying by women keen to serve and by the Chief of the Air Staff who wanted to release male personnel serving in Australia for service overseas. The WAAAF was the first and largest of the World War II Australian Women's Services. In February 1941 the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) received approval to create the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). Recruiting was slow until Japan entered the war in December 1941. By the end of 1941 some 1500 were serving. This number grew to a peak strength of 18,667 officers and airwomen by October 1944. They served in all states of Australia, from Cairns in Northern Queensland to Geraldton in Western Australia.

Airwomen were accepted into 73 different musterings (trades), including highly skilled technical employment on aircraft, medical, transport, catering, equipment, signals and radar fields of employment. Over 700 women held commissioned rank and commanded units in operations rooms, at General Douglas MacArthur's Headquarters in Brisbane dealing with intelligence matters, at Operational Units, in RAAF Hospitals, Aircraft Depots, Radar Stations, RAAF Bases. Every WAAAF, like the men of the RAAF, was a volunteer. Listed at the Australian War Memorial are the names of 57 WAAAF who died while serving.

Approximately 27000 women saw service in the WAAAF between March 1941 and July 1947 when the last member was discharged from the Force. They proved, together with the women of the Navy and Army and those who worked in munitions factories, the aircraft manufacturing industry, on the land and in all areas where women had been manpowered to replace men, that women could fulfil tasks and roles previously undertaken solely by men.

The WAAAF was the first Women's Service to be formed in Australia (excluding the Nursing Services) and members were greatly disappointed that, other than several official visits made by a few to New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Northern Territory, they were not permitted to serve outside Australia.

The value of the work and the skills of the WAAAF during a period when thousands of men needed to be released for operational duty overseas and Australia itself was at risk, encouraged the formation of the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) in 1951. This branch of the RAAF was disbanded in 1977 when its members became an integral part of the RAAF.

During 1977 all members of the WRAAF were transferred to the RAAF and women could contest promotion and training without discrimination. Today, approximately 22 per cent of the Permanent Air Force (PAF) are women, with 97 per cent of all jobs, including combat flying, open to them, except airfield defence guard.

The first women pilots were enlisted in 1987 with Robyn Williams and Deborah Hicks being the first to graduate. The first female to attain an air star rank was Julie Hammer CSC, a graduate in electronics engineering from the University of Queensland, who was appointed Air Commodore on 16 December 1999. In 2003 she was promoted to Air Vice Marshal, remaining the highest ranking female in the RAAF until her retirement in 2005.

**The RAAF is currently attempting to attract young women to consider a flying career in fast jet military aviation as pilots of front line fighter aircraft and this revisit of the heritage of women in the RAAF in the bulletin may hopefully find its way to an aspiring women aviator.**

## Special Feature

This Bulletin we continue with profiles of the leadership of the Air Force



### **AVM Mark Skidmore**

#### **AIR COMMANDER AUSTRALIA (ACAUST)**

Air Vice-Marshal Mark Skidmore was born in Kowloon, Hong Kong and joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1977. He successfully completed Number 113 Pilots Course and was posted to Number 1 Squadron, RAAF Base Amberley to fly F-111s.

Following his tour on F-111s, Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore undertook the United States Navy Test Pilot School Fixed Wing course in 1985. At the completion of the course he was posted to the Aircraft Research and Development

Unit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, where he flew F-111, Mirage, MB-326H, CT-4A and Dakota aircraft.

In 1989, Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore returned to RAAF Base Amberley and completed tours at Number 1 Squadron as the Operational Flight Commander and Number 82 Wing as the Operations Officer. This was followed by a posting as the Flight Test Director on the F-111C Avionics Update Program in California, USA. Returning to Australia in 1996, he served as the Staff Officer Operational Systems at Headquarters Air Command, RAAF Base Glenbrook, before resigning from the RAAF in March 1998. Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore joined Aerospace Technical Services in 1998 as the Senior Test Pilot and Business Development Executive, positions he maintained following the company's acquisition in 1999 by Raytheon Systems Company

Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore rejoined the RAAF in 2000 and completed the Defence Staff Course at Weston Creek before being posted again to the Aircraft Research and Development Unit, this time as the Commander. From 2003 he was Director of Operational Requirements for the New Air Combat Capability project.

Prior to assuming the position of Joint Force Air Component Commander in 2005 he attended the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian Defence College, Weston Creek. During 2005 he was deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations where he served as the Director Combined Air Operations Centre. For this service he was awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in the 2007 Australia Day Honours List.

Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore was appointed to his current position as the Air Commander on 27 June 2008. In this position he provides specialist air advice on raise, train, and sustain issues to the joint environment.

Air Vice-Marshal Skidmore is married to Caroline and they have two children, Nicole and Thomas

**BATTLE OF BRITAIN LUNCHEON RSVP & PAYMENT ADVICE**

**Please return by 7 September 2009 to  
Bruce L Weekley RFD  
Vice President  
RAAF Association (NSW Division)  
PO Box A2147  
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235**

MEMBER'S NAME.....(PLEASE PRINT)

BRANCH.....Radar Branch NSW Division.....

Will be attending the RAAF Battle of Britain Luncheon at Parliament House, Sydney on Tuesday 15 September 2009

I will be accompanied by.....

And if possible would like to be seated with.....Radar Branch NSW Division.....

**Disabled Parking. Regrettably we have been advised that parking is no longer available at Parliament House. We believe the closest parking stations are at Sydney Hospital and The Domain.**

**METHOD OF PAYMENT FOR LUNCH**

**Cheque**

I enclose a cheque (made payable to RAAF Association NSW Division) for \$..... for..... persons at \$65 per head (GST Included)

**Credit Card**

I approve the RAAF Association (NSW Division) to charge my

VISA / MASTER CARD (Please circle)

\$..... being payment for .....persons at \$65 per head (GST Included)

**NAME ON CREDIT CARD:** ..... (please print)

**CREDIT CARD NO:**.....

**SIGNATURE:**.....

**EXPIRY DATE:** .....MONTH. ....YEAR

No receipts or notification will be sent unless you miss out, in which case you will receive a full refund

