



Combat Supporter *Summer 2016*

President's Report

Greetings members! Half way through April and the year is off to another flying start. The *Combat Supporter* has been slow in publication this year due to editorial complications but these have now been resolved. I welcome back to the desk Graham O'Brien (Obe), our former Editor. We thank Stewart Cameron for his efforts after taking over from Obe whilst he was absent travelling. As we all know, Stew has a massive workload as State president of the RSL.

Late last year, I, along with the Commander CSG and in the presence of ACAUST presented the 2015 CSG *Airman of the Year* Award to LAC Luke Burns of 19 Squadron, RAAF Butterworth. The winner of the CSG Award is then nominated as a finalist for the AVM BA Eaton RAAF *Airman of the Year* Award. Luke's dedication and technical mastery proved successful by being awarded his second award *RAAF Airman of the Year*.

Fundraising for the year 2015 promoted an increased interest in Veteran support. This was mainly due to the TV advertising in relation to the 100 year commemoration of the Gallipoli Landings. As we lead into ANZAC DAY 2016, I am not convinced the same enthusiasm for financial support will be evident. Never the less, we, as CSA fundraising members will exhibit that enthusiasm in an endeavour to raise much needed funds to support our welfare programs.

Association activities remain to continue on an organised and managed path. Members receive, via electronic means, notification of upcoming events and, in particular, the CSG/CSA Liaison BBQ's. These events are organised not only to recognise the efforts of serving CSG personnel but also to promote the excellent work performed by the Association. Association members are invited to attend all events.

At present, membership remains at a constant number. My conversations with CSG personnel indicate that we, as an Association, are relatively unknown. I would like to suggest that for the year

2016, every Association member recruit a new member. One is not too much to ask for. Let's build this Association into an effective organisation to further support veterans both serving and retired.

Rob H. Wadley, President



Above: Rob Wadley congratulates the CSG Airman of the Year, LAC Luke Burns, 19 Squadron, at Butterworth on 14 October 2015.

Below: (from left) Rob Wadley, WOFF Rob Ettes Exec WOFF CSG, LAC Luke Burns, Air Commodore Scott Winchester Commander CSG. LAC Burns was recently awarded the AVM BA Eaton award as RAAF Airman of the Year.



ANZAC Day Brisbane 2016



- ❖ Form Up William Street, 0845
- ❖ Step off 0930
- ❖ Afterward Platform Bar, Grand Central Hotel, Ann Street

See Hon. Secretary's recent email of 12 April

ANZAC Day Badge Selling

Volunteers are needed to help raise funds through badge sales at suburban shopping centres over the coming week as follows:

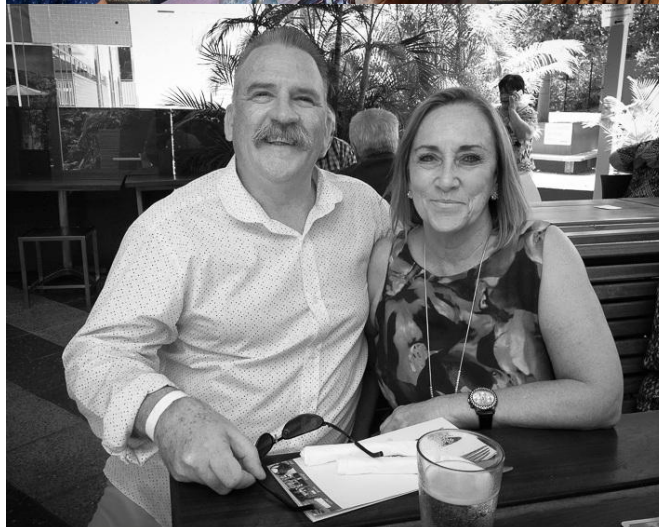
- ➔ 16 - 24 April at Lutwyche
- ➔ 22, 23 April at Redbank Plains
- ➔ 24 April at Yamanto Bunnings

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you can help, or check his email sent on 14 March 2016.



A RAAF KC-35A refuels a USAF F-35A Joint Strike Fighter at Edwards ADB, California, September 2015. (*f35.com September 29, 2015*)

Christmas Luncheon 2015



Rob Wadley delivers a Christmas message (above, top), happy couples Ross & Robyn Wadsworth (middle), Cheryl & George Hartley (bottom)

From the Editor

There's a bit of back to the future in this edition, with my return as editor to *Combat Supporter*. I'm more than happy to be back and pass my thanks to Stew, for his effort these past few years. It hardly seems that long, but time has flown.

Which reminds me that I haven't progressed my book on the fall of Singapore very far, but I have advanced my research considerably. So please bear with me if articles in coming editions on the Far East far outnumber other topics.

Previously as editor I relied heavily on RAAF and Defence websites for current news articles and images. Now I notice that they have largely disappeared, at least in a format friendly for our use. If anybody can help with current news or perhaps contribute a regular update of RAAF and CSG general interest news, please contact me (grahamobrien@hotmail.com) or contact the secretary if you'd prefer.

I hope you enjoy the couple of articles in this edition. I have spent a lot of time researching individuals through the official records, particularly on the DVA and national archives websites. It's tedious and time consuming work but occasionally you find a gem, like some of the information I've used in the *Sandakan* article below.

Oddly, I've found a few errors in the records. One name (first name) on the AWM Roll of Honour was wrong, and the DVA nominal roll has several units wrongly listed. I think it was largely a poor misunderstanding of RAAF terms that led to the errors, particularly unit names. Some Australians who served with the RAF were also wrongly listed as RAAF. But I have found, to their credit, that DVA, the AWM and the Commonwealth War Graves are very responsive and cooperative in fixing these errors. They want to accurately reflect the record as it is recorded in the archives.

One aspect that has annoyed me is the *Honours and Gallantry* entry on the DVA WW2 nominal roll; it does not list MID.

The MID is of course an old Imperial award, not used in Australia since 1975. But in WW2 many heroic deeds were awarded MID. Indeed, because only the VC and the MID could be awarded posthumously, the MID was often awarded for courage under fire.

But because it has no post nominal and no medal (it is worn as an Oak Leaf on the War Medal) it has no place on the nominal roll; no matter the act of courage undertaken to gain the award. It's an issue I feel strongly about and hope to pursue when time permits and circumstance is right.

The Book Reviews and the short article on Battlefield Tours are reprints from an early edition, in 2008, but I hoped they might be relevant for ANZAC Day. Both the books relate to the same Private Lynch, an infantryman in WW1 in France and are worth a read.

I'll leave a picture of Pilot Officer Rawdon Middleton's grave in England. He is one of only four RAAF recipients of the VC and is buried in Beck Row, outside RAF Base Mildenhall near Cambridge, UK. Although it looks a little dirty, it was late winter. Beck Row is a tidy churchyard cemetery and the graves are well kept and frequently visited.



Pilot Officer
R.H. Middleton V.C.
Royal Australian Air
Force
29th November 1942
Age 26
True to the end
(Ed pic, 15 March 2016)

You can click on and enlarge the image, or any of the images in *Combat Supporter*, but take care as it will change the format. Judicious use of the undo button may be needed, or drag it out to enlarge and peek, then drag it back.

As always, please consider writing a short article for the newsletter, or give us some feedback, positive or otherwise, and your thoughts on what you would like to change. Suggestions are always welcome.

Ed.

Sandakan

The Australian War Memorial website describes Sandakan as the greatest single atrocity committed against Australians in war, and the numbers show why. Of the approximately 2430 Allied prisoners of war who remained at the Sandakan camp after most of the Officers were removed in August 1943, only six survived.

Australian prisoners, from the AIF's 8th Division captured at the fall of Singapore, arrived at the Sandakan camp, in north Borneo (Sabah), in July 1942. Among them was Warrant Officer John Kinder, WOD 1 Squadron.

John was hospitalised in Singapore and subsequently separated from his squadron and the RAAF in the confusion of the last days before surrender. He was with 1 Squadron at Kota Bahru on 8 December 1941, when the initial Japanese landings occurred, and was known to have worked particularly hard during the squadron's land move back to Singapore in their withdrawal from the north of Malaya.

He suffered from malaria and other complications but was removed from the seriously ill list in late January, still an inpatient. By then though, 1 Squadron had moved to Palembang, Sumatra. While some of his friends reported his whereabouts in those final days, reports are conflicting and his true movements are not recorded. He was sighted at a Reinforcement Depot just east of Singapore city on 16 February, the day after surrender, having been released from hospital, perhaps armed and dispersed a few days earlier.

There were no RAAF or RAF forces to speak of, left on Singapore at the surrender, and so it is no surprise that Warrant Officer Kinder would join with the AIF at Changi, and be part of an AIF work party transported to north Borneo. Officially it was called B Force and it left Singapore in July 1942.

His Sandakan story was told to the RAAF Casualty and Reporting Section in December 1945 by Lance Bombardier William (Bill) Moxham, who he befriended.

'I knew John Kinder from July 1942 until June 10th, 1945 when he died at Ranau, Borneo,' Bill said. Describing the march to Ranau from February 1945, *'he (Kinder) was then in reasonably good health. He was in charge of the party during the marches and at Ranau,'* meaning, most likely, one

of the nine groups of about fifty prisoners formed for the march from Sandakan to Ranau.

'He did a good job right through and got several bashings from the Japs for protesting about ill-treatment of the men.'



Sandakan Memorial, AWM Canberra. AWM.gov.au

'About 15 April Kinder became sick with dysentery. He recovered but was in low condition. Later he suffered from malaria and subsequently with dysentery again. Whilst suffering from both diseases he died on June 10th. I was with him when he died and buried him myself. I put a cross on his grave and marked his name on it.'

'When Kinder died' he said, 'there were only 35 survivors of the original party of 470. We all suffered from malnutrition and bad treatment generally. Only one other man and myself survived ultimately.'

Two more marches followed the first group from Sandakan to Ranau, a distance of about 260 kilometres on jungle tracks, in May and June. None of those left behind survived at Sandakan. Of those in the death marches to Ranau, only John Kinder has a marked grave, now at the Labuan War Cemetery. Bill Moxham, and the five other survivors, escaped his captors and evaded them with help from local people. Sadly, Bill could not live with the memories and committed suicide in 1961.

That only one RAAF member was sent to Sandakan is quite remarkable, not just because their job was to build an airfield, but more so because nearly half of the 650 (approx.) British prisoners at Sandakan, none of whom survived, were RAF. They came from Java where the RAF squadrons contained a large number of RAAF members, mainly aircrew. Not so lucky though, many of them were sent north instead, to build the Thai-Burma railway.

Remember Sandakan this ANZAC Day.

Ed. (Sources: NAA A705 casualty report Kinder, Sydney Morning Herald, April 10, 2007 [A war widow's long fight.](#))

Welfare Corner

New Deputy Commissioner at DVA

In Apr 16 the DVA will get a new Deputy Commissioner, Leanne Cameron. Leanne was working at DVA Queensland then moved to be DC NT then SA and now back to Queensland. I think that Leanne will be a staunch supporter of the Veteran Community.

DVA

There has been a lot of 'DVA bashing' in the press and social media including a call for a Royal Commission. If one is to believe the random surveys that DVA do of their clients, a large majority are satisfied with the performance of DVA and the services on offer. Unfortunately, other surveys by people with an axe to grind will reflect the opposite. If anyone hears how bad DVA is, they need to take a deep breath and then if they are concerned, try to find out facts because the full facts are rarely reported and in most instances the reasons that cause angst are outside the control of DVA. For example:

- Some people are not satisfied with provisions of the respective acts DVA operate under. This is not DVA's problem; they have to work within the acts or they are breaking the law.
- Complaints are made about the time to process claims. While it is acknowledged that DVA can be slow, but often incomplete or poorly completed claims create delays.
- The Vietnam Veterans Federation said during a Senate Inquiry that they have 80% of their claims go through first time. This is not an indication of a department in crisis.
- People, through ignorance, do not follow due process and that can delay the processing of claims.
- People wait until they are in crisis before they seek help and then are critical if they do not get help immediately.

The lesson to learn is that if you are putting in a claim with DVA, seek someone who understands their processes and knows how to fill out a claim. Secondly, do not wait until you are in crisis before you seek help.

The Combat Support Association is affiliated with the Ipswich and District Veterans Support Group (IDVSG) to assist in the compilation of claims for members; their contacts are at the end of the Combat Supporter. The IDVSG provides a free service.

Defence Housing Authority

DHA has been in the news. The CEO was asked to leave and a senior Department of Finance official was parachuted into that position.

There is a Senate Inquiry into DHA and most recently Department of Finance has asked the AFP to investigate DHA. The conspiracy theorists believe that this is a precursor to selling DHA however the Minister for Finance Mathias Cormann has stated that the government does not intend to sell this asset. It will be interesting to see the outcome of both the Senate Inquiry and the AFP investigation. The link to the senate Inquiry is below:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Defence_Housing

Senate Report on the Mental Health of ADF Personnel

The Senate Report on the Mental Health of ADF Personnel has been released. A quick scan of the recommendations shows that family issues are only mentioned in one of the recommendations. Considering the family are on the front line when it comes to mental health issues this is becoming a bit of a worry. If you want to read the report:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/ADF_Mental_Health/Report

Veteran Suicide and Homelessness

Some people are bandying around figures on veteran suicide and homelessness. Could I ask that they be taken with a grain of salt?

They say there are some 3000 homeless veterans nationally but when people go looking for them, they cannot be found in these numbers. In Queensland Stew Cameron, as State President of RSL Qld, went looking in Brisbane and could not find any. The same happened when the VVF at Nerang went looking in the Gold Coast. Any suicide is tragic, and while it is acknowledged that there are some 260 veteran suicides since 1986, to blame them on a

single cause (DVA), as some are trying to do, is not appropriate without detailed examination of the circumstances, which so far has been lacking. The figure also pales into insignificance when one considers that in 2013 (the last Australian Census) some 2600 Australians took their lives in one year. While both these issues are important we should avoid getting caught up in the hype.

Post ADF Support

I had the opportunity to present on this subject at the HQCSG induction days. Post ADF support is not something that will be needed some time in the future. You need to be aware of it now so you can prepare yourselves and also so you can assist your family and friends who have already left the ADF and may be going through a rough spot and not knowing how to access help.

In the ADF, health is a push system. Outside it is pull. There is a significant amount of help available but you:

- need to be aware of it,
- need to know how to access it, and
- you have to ask for it

When you leave you become the support system for your friends, partners and families, and they become your support system. Become aware of the significant amount of support available and prepare yourself NOW.

If you are transitioning (particularly for medical discharge) try to make sure all DVA/COMSUPER issues are sorted before you actually leave.

To make your dealings with DVA easier:

- seek advice from the DVA On Base Advisory service (OBAS)
- Get conditions recognised as service related prior to transition.
- **DO NOT PUT IN A CLAIM YOURSELF**
It is a complex procedure and unless you enjoy reading all the statements of principles and making sure your claim meets all the requirements, get help.
- There is no need for Qualifying (War) Service to get some assistance.
- How do you get help?

- ✓ See your friendly Ex-Service Organisation for help, it is free.
- ✓ Combat Support Group is allied with the Ipswich and District Veterans Support Group. Their details are found at the back of the Combat Supporter.
- ✓ Word of mouth.

Rob Shortridge WELFO



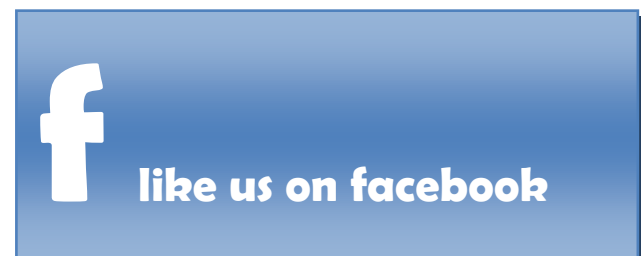
*Combat Support Association
of Australia FB*

Currently we have 60 facebook members.

Essentially, the FB Group is for paid up members of the Combat Support Association, those who we think will benefit from the information that is being posted on the page and some people who we wish to give exposure to Combat Support Association activities. It is now a public group so anyone can see the posts but only members can post and anyone wanting to join the group needs administrator permission.

The intent of the page and the posts is to get information 'out there' as we tend to become the support network for those who have left the ADF so please feel free to share widely. One issue that is continually identified by the ex service community is that ex service personnel have little idea of the support that may be available to them. This is one way we can all do our bit to get the message out.

Rob Shortridge



On the Record

There's a wealth of personal information on veterans of the two World Wars on the internet, for family or professional research. The base source of Service information is of course an individual's Service Record, or P File as the RAAF called it for many years.

DVA maintains a separate [Nominal Roll](#) of veterans from each of the major conflicts, including Korea, Vietnam and a preliminary roll for the Gulf War 1990-1991. They differ in content but all contain the basic Service details.

Name	SMITH, JOHN
Service	Royal Australian Air Force
Service Number	82129
Date of Birth	25 Jan 1922
Place of Birth	BEVERLEY, WA
Date of Enlistment	22 Sep 1942
Locality on Enlistment	NORTHAM
Place of Enlistment	PERTH, WA
Next of Kin	SMITH, MARY
Date of Discharge	5 Feb 1946
Rank	Leading Aircraftman
Posting at Discharge	7 A CON SQUADRON
WW2 Honours and Gallantry	None for display
Prisoner of War	No

Extract from the DVA WW2 nominal roll

Personnel files, including service records, casualty reporting files and some other ancillary personnel files, are held by the National Archives of Australia (naa.gov.au). Only a relatively few files are available on line although NAA is slowly digitising their records and more appear daily. Their search function is user friendly but of course you do need some fundamentals to start, like that available in the DVA nominal rolls. There are many John Smiths and service numbers were rarely unique, but you can quickly refine a search or choose a result with an initial or a place or date for example.

NAA has a summary page on line for every file, so even if you can't view a particular personnel file, you can view a brief summary of its content and order a copy if you think that's the one you're after. Cost is about \$20 for a standard digital file, or alternately if you're in Canberra you can pre-order to view records in their *Reading room* at Parkes, ACT, and photocopy what you need.

The Australian War Memorial [website](#) is another source of information, although the AWM does not hold complete nominal rolls of all ex servicemen. Rather, they maintain specific nominal rolls like the Roll of Honour for those who have died at war, a roll of honours & awards recipients and a list of Army WW2 prisoners of war. Frustratingly, they do not have a list of RAAF PW. Care needs to be taken with their search site as the numerous rolls can only be searched separately. Helpfully, you can also search by unit or other fields, so finding a squadron Roll of Honour, for example, is easy.

Another useful source for family research is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission ([CWGC](#)), which maintains an extensive data base of all burials and memorials world-wide, from the two World Wars. The CWGC does an excellent job in maintaining graves and group memorials (for those who have no known grave) around the world.



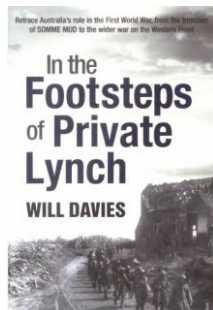
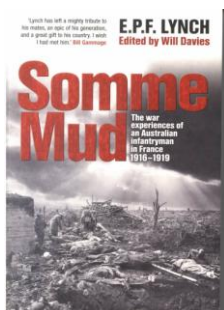
Did you know? All veterans are entitled to have their service emblem inscribed on their private memorial.

For copyright reasons, you must first obtain permission from the Office of Australian War Graves. A letter of permission can be printed from the DVA nominal roll website, of your own if you are listed on the website, or maybe you want to help out an older veteran or their family.

A simple web search will reveal numerous other sites that add to the data available from these official sources. One that I have come to respect and contribute to whenever the opportunity arises is the [RAAF Casualty Database](#). Run by an academic, it is slowly building a photograph record and other information of RAAF war graves around the world. It's worth remembering in your travels.

Graham O'Brien Ed.

Book Review



Somme Mud, E.P.F. Lynch (Random House); *In the Footsteps of Private Lynch*, Will Davies (Vintage Books) As the author and title names indicate, these two excellent books are closely related. *Somme Mud* is an edited account of Private Lynch's story written in 1921, recently discovered and polished for publication. Edward Lynch was a digger who served in the AIF on the western front during WWI. His narrative is a story, not a diary account, and covers, through the eyes of his main character Nulla, many of the major battles involving Australia in France and Belgium. His style is lively, direct and honest with no pretensions of understanding the bigger picture, just his part in the war which, for much of his time, is as a runner for his Company commander. Will Davies (also editor of *Somme Mud*) puts Lynch's account into perspective in his novel *In the Footsteps of Private Lynch* by following Lynch's account with commentary based on more official sources and pitched at a more strategic level. Davies is high in praise for Lynch's accuracy. He includes descriptions and some 'then and now' photos of the battle sites, making it a useful companion for the battlefield tourist.

Both books are easy to read. *Somme Mud* in particular, will appeal to the reader looking for a first-hand account of the Western Front and wishing to avoid the drudgery of official accounts, or the thoughts of Generals and Field Marshals out to right their reputations.

Both books are available from most reputable bookstores still, for around \$20 and \$35 respectively, for soft cover editions.

Touring the Western Front

Interest in the Western Front battlefields has grown markedly in recent years, as more Australians become aware of our World War One presence. There are two options for touring the Western Front, self-guided DIY or take an organised tour group. Tour groups originate in Australia or somewhere nearer to the battlefields, such as London or Paris, or even in the smaller cities on or close to the battlefields. Many of the accommodation houses also offer local short tours in their nearby areas.

Some tour operators will focus their itinerary to meet your particular interests, especially the local operators who pretty much go wherever you want in their region. Costs obviously vary depending on numbers and duration. Most tour operators (not all) have a web presence and tour in groups of about ten, although there are many bigger tour groups.

A self-guided tour suited me, a while back now and that's all the more reason to think about it again.

From the UK by train to Lille and then self drive, I based myself for a few days at Ieper (Belgium) and then at Corbie (Somme), booking everything on-line. Of course you need a lot of help if you DIY; a good guide book and a decent map for starters. Mat McLachlan's *Walking with the ANZACs* is still one of the best guides for Australians with detailed maps, history and hints, but you'll also need a broad view for planning and orientation, only available from a small scale map. Buy one at a bookstore or roadside from a service station in France if you forget.

The internet is another powerful planning tool, but be careful not to be misled by the overload of information peddled on some websites. Keep your plan simple, plan to see what interests you and be prepared to change your plan when you see what you missed. Read a few books before you go.

The major Australian memorials worth seeing are the Australian national memorial (Villers-Bretonneux), the Australian memorial park (Le Hamel), the Cobbers memorial at Fromelles and the five Divisional memorials. There's much more which you'll see on the way, which is why I suggest you be flexible, but if you do see those you won't have missed too much.

Ed.



YOUR AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

On Sunday 5 June 2011 the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre officially opened. Dignitaries, former and current servicemen gathered to see the unveiling of the first stage of the Centre. The Heritage Centre is designed to tell the story of the Air Force, but more importantly the Air Force at Amberley from 1940 right through the war years until now.

The previous Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mark Binskin AO initialized the program to celebrate the relationship between the RAAF and the community by establishing heritage centres to be run through a partnership between Air Force and the community. The current Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown AM as Deputy Chief was the Chair of the RAAF Heritage Advisory Council and was instrumental in our formal establishment.

The RAAF has also embarked on a program of rejuvenating its static display aircraft that have been suffering the effects of outdoor display. This has already paid off with an increase in morale within the service.

The RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre display includes:

- Australia's first Canberra bomber A84-201,
- English Electric Canberra A84-125 built by English Electric and delivered to Australia in May 1952,
- General Dynamics RF-111C A8-126, delivered to the RAAF 1 June 1973,
- Bell Iroquois A2-771 UH-1H # 67-17573 9771 which was delivered to RAAF 9 SQN in Vietnam in 1968. Returning to Australia in December 1971.
- Bell-47G Sioux A1-738. The Sioux was the first rotary aircraft operated by the Australian Army. A1-738 was the last Sioux to be flown in Vietnam on the 13 September 1971,
- Douglas A-20G Boston 42-86786 'The Hell 'N Pelican II', and
- DHC Caribou A4-236, a combat veteran that also saw humanitarian service in PNG, Indonesia, Pakistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

Volunteers at Amberley have a long history of restoring aircraft, having completed the Boston and Catalina for the RAAF Museum. The restoration of these aircraft was completed whilst an annex of Point Cook was located at RAAF Amberley. They will now work on aircraft that will remain at the Aviation Heritage Centre including Canberra bomber A84-242, one of the last Canberra aircraft to return to Australia from Phan Rang, Vietnam.

The Centre is currently based in two hangars that were used for F-111 maintenance. Next year a portion of the administration building will have displays and a Gift Shop.

The RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre is open every Tuesday and Thursday for Community Groups of 10 or more, in their own coach or bus. For more information please contact RAAF Amberley Public Engagement Section on Ph: (07) 5361 1245 or e-mail AMB.PES@defence.gov.au. The RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre is also open on the second Sunday of every month with public parking at the RAAF Amberley Bowls Club car park, where a shuttle bus service will depart for the Centre every 20 minutes.



Recognising the Aviation History of RAAF Base Amberley



*IPSWICH & DISTRICTS
VETERANS SUPPORT
OFFICE*

MEMORIAL HALL
CNR NICHOLAS & LIMESTONE Streets
IPSWICH
PH: 07 3812 3822 MOB: 0430 166 070

The Ipswich and Districts Veterans Support Office is open Mon – Fri, from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm. We offer assistance to all service and ex-service personnel and their dependants, with all Department of Veterans Affairs claims and applications, including VEA, MCRS, MRCA, Service Pensions and Appeals. Trained pensions / welfare officers and advocates are able to offer assistance in our office, hospitals, your home and on a Thursday morning at RAAF Base Amberley. All claims consultation is by appointment.

This office is run under a Memorandum of Understanding and represents the following Ex service organisations. The office is sponsored by Combat Support Association Inc; Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association; Ipswich RSL Sub Branch; Ipswich Railway RSL Sub Branch; Ipswich Legacy; Incapacitated Servicemen and Womens Association; Ipswich Naval Association; RAAF Association, Ipswich Branch; Rosewood RSL Sub Branch; and Moreton District RSL.

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