



# Combat Supporter Summer 2016-2017

## President's Report

I am honoured to have been elected as the President of the Combat Support Association and would like to thank Rob Wadley for his leadership as former CSA President for the past six years. George and Cheryl Hartley too for their tireless efforts with merchandising and welfare fund raising.

All Ex Service Organization are only as effective as their membership and we have a responsibility to each other and our wider Defence Family which adheres to our CSA Charter in providing services to our collective membership and their families. The current ESO welfare environment is complex and multifaceted. No single organization can provide all the services its membership may require however through the partnering of other like minded organization we will be able to achieve our aim.

My intent for the next couple of years is to grow CSA Nationally and develop enduring relationships with like minded ESO's in providing services to our membership and their families. Increasing the presence of CSA at Amberley will come as part of that growth, to become an integral part of the local defence community.

Congratulations to our new executive, recently elected by our members at our Annual General Meeting. For the information of all, here is your new CSA executive:

President: Ross Wadsworth  
Secretary: David Pepper  
Treasurer: Clive Wells  
Welfare: Rob Shortridge  
Merchandising Officer: Rob Wadley  
CSG LO: WOFF Lisa Sheridan

I encourage you all to support our executive wherever possible.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish all of our CSA members a very merry Christmas and a successful 2017.

*Ross Wadsworth*

## Secretary's Coordination Notes

Please address all correspondence to the Secretary - [secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au](mailto:secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au)



## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Saturday, 10 December 2016 at 11.00 am

**The Ship Inn Southbank**

➔ **RSVP** to the Secretary, asap please



## Meetings

- ✚ General Meetings usually held at the RSL South Eastern District, 42 Oxlade Drive, New Farm
- ✚ Date & venue are confirmed prior to each meeting
- ✚ Tentative date for the next GM is 23 March 2017

**Membership Applications** Introduction of new members is a task for all of us. A membership application accompanies this issue.

**CSA Polo Shirts & Jackets** CSA polo shirt (\$40) or CSA jacket (\$55) please contact the Secretary for an order form. We hold limited stock of common sizes. We can also supply on order a Bisley collared shirt embroidered with CSA logo (\$35).

You can follow us on Facebook and at the CSA Website

<http://www.combatsupportassociation.org.au/>

[secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au](mailto:secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au)

## Mentoring Program – Combat Support Association

As part of a new initiative for Combat Support Association, the recent AGM agreed to trial a mentoring program for Combat Support Association members.

The mentoring program, to be led by Bruce McCleary, a CSA member who has been active in mentoring programs for both big business and the AIM for a number of years, is focused on helping those CSA members who require additional mentoring support to help them in either their transition from their respective Service career and/or their work in the civilian workforce. Bruce is a former RAAF SQNLDR Logistics officer whose most recent role was looking after most of the operational support activities in PNG for Oil Search, an ASX top 30 company.

The mentoring program will provide 'Mentees' with an experienced business person (Mentors) who will work with the Mentees. It is expected the program for each Mentee will continue for a minimum of 12 months and will provide both a sounding board and support role to improve the Mentee in their new environment. Mentees can be expected to either meet face-to-face with their mentors or via skype on at least a monthly basis during the initial 12 month program.

People **interested** in participating as either a 'Mentee' or 'Mentor' are asked to initially contact Bruce on [brucemccleary@icloud.com](mailto:brucemccleary@icloud.com) or via telephone at 0401-194-294. Any email requests to also be copied to the CSA Secretary [secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au](mailto:secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au). Positions will be limited by the number of Mentors that are available.

This is a free service and will be managed by Bruce with regular updates back to the Combat Support Association executive and this newsletter.



Nine years after it was announced in 2007 as the preferred type to replace the AP-3C Orion, the RAAF's first P-8A Poseidon, A47-001 arrived in Australia to much fanfare in mid November 2016. Based on the Boeing 737-800 airframe (but notice the different wingtips), the P8-A will be operated by 11 Squadron out of Edinburgh. Read all about it in *Air Force (news)*. Ed. Images from [airforce.gov.au](http://airforce.gov.au) (above) and [australianaviation.com.au](http://australianaviation.com.au) (below)



### AIR FORCE (NEWS) GOES MOBILE

Air Force has launched an official FREE app for viewing current and past editions online. The app is available through iTunes for iOS smart phones and tablets, and Google Play for Android devices. Simply search 'Air Force News Australia' in either the Apple store or Google Play



like us on facebook

## Hell Ships

It's hard to imagine an experience worse than that suffered by the prisoners of war employed on the Thai-Burma railway during World War Two, but the movements of POWs on transfer between camps invariably reached that same base level of mistreatment, much worse for many.

Rail was used to move POWs from Singapore to Thailand initially, but sea was the only means possible between most camps, to Japan and around the Pacific. Many RAAF members travelled and several died on these cruel sea journeys, including some combat supporters.

The Hell Ships, as they're called, were old and rusty cargo ships, some war trophies, converted by the addition of wooden platforms in the cargo hold, allowing barely a metre of vertical space for the prisoners already crowded three or four per square metre of floor space. No standing and impossible sleeping on weeks long journeys, often after days at anchor waiting for a convoy.

POWs were allowed periodic breaks on deck for personal relief, and to get away from the stench and bad ventilation below. Food typically was three-quarters of a cup of rice three times daily, more often cooked in sea water. Fresh water was limited; one personal bottle refilled every second day. Toilets hung out over the sea from the deck, but given the diseases rampant among the men below, dysentery and cholera foremost, they were unreachable and of little use to many.

With no markings to identify their load, the Hell Ships were easy targets for Allied submarines seeking to strangle Japan's resupply routes.

*Tamahoko Maru* and *Rakuyo Maru* were two Hell Ships sunk that we should never forget, though there were many others, not all sunk. The worst maritime disaster of World War 2 was the sinking of *Junyo Maru* by British submarine off Sumatra in September 1944 with the loss of more than 5,600 lives, over 4,000 of them Javanese civilians. Maru simply indicates merchant ship.

ACs Charles Potts and Max Buchhorn were ground radar technicians who perished on *Tamahoko Maru* on 20 June 1944 near the end of their journey, 60 miles from Nagasaki. Both Potts and Buchhorn survived the Thai-Burma railway after their capture

in Java. Potts, from a well known SA

winery family, was the sole survivor of his Radio Maintenance Section in Java when their road convoy was ambushed on 28 Feb 42. He suffered a gunshot wound to the thigh and a bayonet through his left wrist which he was using to protect his chest. He was left as dead by the Japanese.

Over 560 other POWs died on *Tamahoko Maru* (pictured) including fourteen RAAF (seven technical staff of 1 Squadron and five aircrew members attached to the RAF). Another 220 prisoners, three RAAF among them, were rescued by a Japanese whaler the next day and transferred to Fukuoka POW camp.



LAC Ernest Toe, Clerk Stores, survived the sinking of *HMAS Perth* in the Battle of the Java Sea, and he survived the Thai-Burma railway. He survived the *Rakuyo Maru* too,

initially. Posted to 9 Squadron on *HMAS Perth* for air support, LAC Toe was in a very bad way after two days in the water. Clinging to a raft, flotsam tossed overboard by the desperate but organized POWs, and nursed by his mates, he was drinking sea water and became delirious on the third day. He disappeared with his AIF mate on that third night.

CPL Ted Myers, a 23 year old Service Policeman was not seen in the water and is presumed to have died aboard *Rakuyo Maru*.

Luckier was Storekeeper, CPL Albert McKay who was picked up by one of the Japanese escort ships and, with 500 other survivors, remained incarcerated in Japan for the rest of the war.

Another 150 survivors, including LAC Noel Day of 1 Squadron were rescued by US submarines (picture above) four days and on after the sinking and were returned to Australia. You can see a video of the [rescue here](#) (survivors are covered in grease, US submariners are clean) [and another here](#). Ed. (Sources: National Archives of Australia A705 Series, Australian POWs WW2 website, Britain at War website, pictures AWM PO.2018.326 (middle), and Australian-pow-ww2.com (above)).



***From the Editor*** A warm summery welcome to Ross as the CSA president and to his new executive committee; congratulations and thanks to each of you for volunteering for these roles, which we all know can be quite thankless at times.

Ross's profile is below, and I look forward to publishing other committee members' profiles in future editions, as their time allows.

December and moving quickly to Christmas certainly makes you ask 'where has the year gone already?' I feel a little comfort with the numerous corrections that have been made to the records of some WW2 veterans on the AWM's electronic Roll of Honour and DVA's Nominal Roll. It's only right that their details should be displayed accurately. Just in the last few days the AWM has accepted about thirty changes I've suggested, mostly place and cause of death entries. DVA has made maybe a hundred changes through the year, with prompting, to correct individual's Units mainly.

The National Archives of Australia (NAA) haven't helped; they've raised the price for a copy of a Service file by over 300%, from \$20 to just over \$70 which will slow outside researchers (like me) down. But in fairness to them, more of their records are slowly being digitized every day.

You may recall that DVA does not record MID as an award on the WW2 Nominal Roll, for reasons that are rather obtuse and, quite frankly, insulting for veterans and their families. They recently agreed to look into it as the opportunity arose with a software upgrade for their data base. The AWM already displays MID on the Roll of Honour.

Records of many of the veterans who died in the Hell Ships (article above) are incorrectly displayed by the AWM and DVA. Place and cause of death especially, are commonly wrong.

I hope you enjoy that article. We hear surprisingly little about the POWs who died in the Hell Ships. I at least was unaware until I started researching the Far East, and now much regret that I didn't know about them when I wrote *Always There*.

I will try to include an occasional brief bio of a WW2 Combat Support veteran in future editions.

*Montevideo Maru* is the best known of the ships sunk by Allied submarine, in her case on 1 July 1942 carrying 845 POWs from Rabaul including two RAAF members as best I can tell, and 200 civilians,

mainly Australian. All lives were lost but as a troop carrier, *Montevideo Maru* is not strictly a Hell Ship. Awareness is kept alive by the Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* Association, and through a permanent Memorial in the grounds of the AWM. The Hell Ships tend to be packaged more generally with the Japanese POWs, which is reasonable. We should try to remember AC Charles Potts though, and his fellow POWs who died on the Hell Ships, on commemorative days and whenever we enjoy a wine from the Potts Family winery.

There's no summary of USAAF major accidents in this edition, as promised in the *Winter Edition* because I feel that Jack Wong Sue's story (below) is a better fit for now. Sadly, after Jack Sue's death an investigative historian questioned some of the claims he made in his war memoirs, *Blood in Borneo*, forcing his son Barry Sue to fight to protect his father's good name.

While the historian has previously done some good work uncovering some fraudulent claims of military records, she is surely misguided here. Barry commissioned an [Independent Inquiry](#) which pointed to the horror, the fear, stresses, trauma, post stress disorder, debilitation, multiple tropical diseases, war weariness, trepidation and other suffering Jack Sue experienced on Borneo and throughout his life as a result, and noted that Jack had also acknowledged his failing memory in the book he wrote late in life. The Inquiry suggests there may have been some beneficial publicity for the historian with her own book sales, and forthrightly concludes that *there appears to be absolutely no justification for calling Jack Wong Sue OAM DCM JP, a loved and respected Australian icon ... a liar*.



I say, read his Citation, not written by him but about him as an official record of his wartime history, and respect him. Although he would obviously associate more closely with Special Forces, we can reasonably claim him as a RAAF combat supporter. Rest peacefully Jack Wong Sue.

I wish all of our readers a peaceful and joyous Christmas and much success in 2017. Feedback as always is very welcome to me or to the secretary.  
Editor ([grahamobrien@hotmail.com](mailto:grahamobrien@hotmail.com)) (Google pic)

## LAC Jack Wong Sue OAM DCM JP



Jack Wong Sue was barely 18 when he joined the RAAF in September 1943. He'd been a Sea Cadet for seven years and a merchant seaman for another but the Navy rejected his application; his father was Chinese. In any case, his mother was Australian and he could answer Yes to Question 6 on the

'RAAF Application for Enlistment' form, 'Are you a British subject?' So he sought a career as Motor Boat Crew in the RAAF's Air Sea Rescue role.

Jackie Sue listed piano with his sea experience and languages, Chinese, Malay and some Japanese, when asked about his special qualifications on enlistment. That, no doubt, and his Asian knowledge and appearance attracted the attention of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB), the wartime agency responsible for special operations and intelligence collection behind enemy lines.

Within six months, following initial training, Jack was attached to Air Force Headquarters; CAS's office with an unreadable annotation on his record but quite obviously his time with the AIB had begun. By the end of 1944 he was granted acting rank of Sergeant and from March to August 1945 he operated with Z Special Force in occupied Borneo, gathering intelligence in preparation for the Allied invasions to come.

He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, a very rare award for RAAF members. His citation, in part, reads:

*Sergeant Wong displayed leadership, gallantry and cold-blooded courage of the highest order.*

*On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1945 he was a member of a small party of four officers and three NCOs who entered British North Borneo well knowing:*

- (a) That there was a large price on the head of the leader of the party ...*
- (b) That having left the submarine there was no chance of withdrawal.*
- (c) That the coast was strongly held by the enemy and continuously patrolled by land and sea....*

*The landing was made by rubber boat and canoe midway between two strong enemy posts ... 3 miles apart. Owing to the hostility of the natives, 250*

*miles were travelled by canoe at night...*

*While in the interior, Sergeant Wong did magnificent work in gathering intelligence, organising native guerrillas and harassing the enemy, capturing considerable quantities of Japanese equipment and killing numbers of the enemy.*

*In addition, on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1945 this NCO was extracted by Catalina with his party leader and ... volunteered to enter Borneo again ... On 31<sup>st</sup> May ... in a particularly daring operation ... SGT Wong entered Bongowan railway station which was staffed and guarded by Japanese, and in broad daylight extracted (the Chinese station*

*master) from the station for the party to interrogate. During the next 8 days (he) checked the information ... and at great personal risk watched hundreds of Japanese move down the railway line. The information thus received and passed on was of the highest importance ... (to the subsequent invasion).*

*From 29<sup>th</sup> May to 7<sup>th</sup> June 1945 ... (he) operated in the heart of the most strongly held area in British North Borneo...*

*On 7<sup>th</sup> June ... (he) was extracted by Catalina and a few weeks later returned to the interior of Borneo where his work continued to be of great value and earned the highest praise...*

He discharged post war in December 1945 at his substantive rank of LAC. In civilian life Jack Sue opened a dive shop and dive school in WA and was well known locally for his music. He acted as a guide on Borneo tours and advised SASR on jungle training. He wrote two books, one his war memoir and was awarded the OAM in 2006 for his service to the community.

Jack Wong Sue died aged 84 in November 2009. He was honoured with a private ceremony at Campbell Barracks, Swanborne WA, and in nationwide media. *Ed. (NAA Series A9301 P file, defmag 9/2009, Courier Mail November 19 2009)*



*Opposite, Jack Wong Sue enlistment photo (NAA Image), and in Borneo, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left (Google image).*

## Member profile Ross Wadsworth



My entire working career has been within the health industry either in the public sector or within the Australian Defence Force. After obtaining Registered Nurse qualification in 1982 I was employed at the Repatriation General Hospital Greenslopes in Brisbane holding the position of a general ward nurse, then after obtaining a post graduate Diploma in 1988 was employed as Nursing Unit Manager until Jun 1990. Commissioning in Jul 1990 as a Flying Officer Nurse in the Royal Australian Air Force has provided a diverse range of personal and professional experiences during the past 26 years.

Following a 10 year civilian nursing career, where I was employed at the Repatriation General Hospital Greenslopes in Brisbane from 1982, as a general ward nurse, then as Nursing Unit Manager, I was commissioned into the RAAF as a FLGOFF in July 1990. Following the usual initial officer training, I was posted to 3 RAAF Hospital where I completed aeromedical evacuation training and gained trauma management qualifications, and gained operational experience on major joint exercises. I was posted to Operational Health Support and Training Flight in 1993 where I instructed on aeromedical evacuations courses and was responsible for the management and deployment of RAAF operational health assets.

During 1994 I supported a veteran pilgrimage to France, and again I had that honor in 2001, to Greece and Crete. The veteran pilgrimages were most memorable given the special needs of the participants. In 1996, while I was posted as the senior nursing officer at RAAF Townsville and appointed as the Base occupational health and safety advisor, I deployed with an ADF health contingent on Operation Shepherd to the Solomon Islands, a precursor to more operational deployments later in my career.

I completed the RAAF Basic Staff Course in 1998 prior to promotion to SQNLDR and posting to Defence Health Services Branch in Canberra in 1999. That same year I completed the Joint Health Planning Course which prepared me for the latter part of my career. I was posted as a staff officer to Headquarters 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing in Townsville in 2000. Whilst at CSG's then operational wing I deployed on OP WARDEN/OP HIGHWAY and the veteran pilgrimage to Crete. I also developed expeditionary combat support plans for RAAF involvement in operations and exercises, held the position of Wing OPSO and in May 2003 was granted temporary WGCDR rank to perform Wing executive officer duties as WGCDR PLANS and latterly WGCDR OPS.

As CSG's operational health capability developed, I was posted to Headquarters Health Services Wing in 2004 as Staff Officer Health Operations where my responsibilities included health planning and resource management of Wing capabilities in support of Operations. I was subsequently posted as the Chief of Staff and Staff Officer Base Health Services at Headquarters Health Services Wing where my primary role was developing and implementing clinical governance policy across the Wing. In early 2010 I was posted as CO 1

Expeditionary Health Squadron responsible for the delivery of health services at Amberley and Townsville and the generation of operational health capability in direct support of operations and exercises. I proudly deployed as the JTF636 Commander OP PAKISTAN ASSIST II from 20 Aug – 08 Nov 2010. The team deployed as part of the whole of Australian government response where the Australian Medical Task Force treated 11,375 local nationals and refurbished one school.

My final posting 2014, prior to discharge in July 2016, was as the CO of Joint Health Unit South Queensland and was responsible for the provision of Garrison Health Services to the military dependency at Amberley, Enoggera,



Oakey, Cabarlah, and Canungra. The last two years in service was the most professionally rewarding and challenging. My team and I dealt with the complexities of post deployment injuries, rehabilitation and transition. Central to the treatment of the injured is a well supported and informed family.

I look forward to the opportunities ahead of me in the veteran and family welfare. Particularly I look forward to spending more time with my long suffering wife Robyn who has been my best friend, supporter, confidante and buddy. Plans for the future include travel, camping, fishing and enjoying the grandchildren.

*Ross Wadsworth*



*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.

**ALL SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE**



## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply for membership of the (air force) Combat Support Association Inc. as an Ordinary member.

### (Category 1) Ex Service/Serving Member:

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Served from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Decorations \_\_\_\_\_

### (Category 2) Dependants of Ex Service/Serving Member:

Name of Relative: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Details of Relative: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare the above information to be true and correct. I hereby agree that, if admitted, I will abide by the Rules and By Laws of the Association. I enclose \$10 as my initial subscription, or \$100 to join as a Fully Paid Up member.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We declare that the applicant meets the membership criteria detailed in the Association Rules and By Laws.

Proposer: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconder: \_\_\_\_\_





## **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.

Former 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. Another former CAF, 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](mailto: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**