



Combat Supporter Summer 2018

President's Report

The Association finished 2017 with a small gathering of members and partners at the Ship Inn on Saturday the 09 December 2017 which was enjoyed by all who were able to attend.

During the break three (current and ex serving) members of Combat Support Group required welfare support provided by the association in partnership with Defence Welfare Association and Veteran Support Services RSL QLD. The association provided advocacy, financial support and information on community services and other Ex Service Organisation services that could be accessed by the individuals and families.

Combat Support Association has written to the Alliance of Defence Service Organisation (ADSO) seeking membership to the alliance. This will provide mutual benefit to our organisations and we are awaiting a response.

This year the association will be focusing on establishing a CSA Coordinator network in NSW, VIC, NT and hopeful SA and WA. Volunteers required.

Identifying a reliable VOIP service provider that can support the conduct of general meetings via skype or other means to allow those members who are unable to physically attend meetings be given the opportunity to participate. If any member has any suggestions on a reliable service provider, please advise a committee member.

To all members, can you please ensure that your contact details are up to date. Please send amendments to secretary
@combatsupportassociation.org.au or advise a committee member.

Thanks for your continued support.

R Wadsworth

Christmas lunch at The Ship Inn



Secretary's Coordination Notes

CSA Meetings 2018

Management Committee Meeting (MCM)

18 Jan 18	09:00	RAAF AMB
12 Apr 18	09:00	RAAF AMB
16 Aug 18	09:00	RAAF AMB
15 Nov 18	09:00	RAAF AMB

General Meeting (GM)

15 Feb 18	11:00	SED New Farm
21 Jun 18	11:00	Coffee Anda, Ipswich

AGM 18 Oct 18, 17:30 Jets League Club, Ipswich

Current Contact Details

Please ensure that your contact details are up to date.
Any changes should be sent to the
secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au

Christmas Lunch The Ship Inn, Southbank
December 8, 2018 from 11:30

Fundraising

Volunteers are required for badge selling prior to ANZAC Day. Shopping Centre locations and dates (inclusive) are:

Yamanto	18 - 24 Apr 18
Springfield Fair	18 to 24 Apr 18
Redbank Plains	18 to 24 Apr 18
Orion	18 to 24 Apr 18
Bunnings West Ipswich & Springfield	14 -15 & 21-22 Apr 18

POC is Rob Wadley, by mobile or email
robhwadley@yahoo.com
or contact

Secretary@combatsupportassociation.org.au

Dave Pepper
Secretary CSA



RAAF Museum static displays, clockwise from top right; SE-5A (WW1); F-4E Phantom (below); at bottom left behind wing of Cessna Bird Dog is Avro 643 Cadet, GAF Jindivik, Hawker Demon, Avon Sabre and (at far rear) the hull of PBY Catalina; outdoors at centre left is C130A and Bristol Freighter in left background; at top left is CAC Boomerang (behind tail of Cessna Bird Dog), DH-84 Dragon at rear, two fire vehicles and Sikorsky S-51 Dragonfly helicopter. Pictures by Editor at RAAF Museum, Point Cook, December 2017. It's well worth a look.



This Letter Has Taken a Lot to Write

LAC Edward (Ted) Myers, Service Police, was posted to RAAF Sembawang, Singapore with Station Headquarters in 1941. Aged just 18 when he enlisted in July 1940, Ted was still only 22 when he died at sea as a Prisoner of War, in September 1944.

Ted moved from Singapore to Sumatra in January 1942, and then to Java with 1 Squadron in February, when Station Headquarters returned to Australia. There's no record of his whereabouts in the final days before the surrender to Japan but he would very likely have been with the main body of 1 Squadron at Bandung, in central Java, and remained with them when they moved south to the coast, in hope of a late rescue that never came. He's not mentioned in any of the last-minute attempts to escape Java, many of which were desperate and doomed to fail.

He was simply listed as missing; *'not included in the list of personnel who were evacuated from the area, or who have reported to any RAAF or RAF unit ... not necessarily killed or wounded'* was the formal advice to his mother in Cairns, delivered six weeks after the fall of Java.

Casualty reporting was impersonal in WW2, by telegram through the Post Office and followed up with a formal letter signed personally by the Secretary, Department of Air. Personal contact, other than the Postal employee, was not part of the process.

'I desire to extend to you the sincere sympathy of the Department in the anxiety you are suffering', the Secretary concluded in his letter to the Myers family in June 1942.

Informal reporting and casual rumors that circulated among those who did return often made a desperate situation worse for grieving or hopeful family. Airmen who returned safely from Singapore commonly visited families of those who had not returned, a comfort but sometimes they brought false hope. Visitors to the Myers home were well intentioned but they had all left Java early and no one had seen their son since February in any case.

On Christmas Eve 1942, Ted's name was heard in a Japanese broadcast, in a list of POWs. Ted's mother began writing to him through the Red Cross and held hope as none of her letters were returned. Ted was also listed in April 1943, in another Japanese



broadcast intercepted by a ham radio operator. And again, his family's hopes were raised although RAAF authorities suggested caution when they changed his official status in May from 'missing' to 'believed to be a prisoner of war in Japanese hands'.

Great relief came in August 1943 when the International Red Cross listed him as having sent a

POW card, which duly arrived but said very little, not even a location. Then another card, this one from Burma in December by which time Ted's official status had been upgraded to 'reported to be a Prisoner of War in Japanese hands'. Officially, for the first time in over two years, he was confirmed alive.

Nothing more was heard for a year, and then the saddest of news. An enemy transport, Rakuyuo Maru, had been sunk by Allied submarine on route to Japan on 12 September 1944. The few survivors, POWs rescued by the Allies, knew Ted Myers and they saw him aboard the transport, but not after the sinking. They held little hope for his survival.

LAC Myers was now recorded as 'missing and believed to have lost his life'. But a mother's love would not let go. 'He's been misplaced with the British', she wrote to the Secretary in reply, but her concluding words were full of resignation, 'this letter has taken a lot to write'.

Cruelly, three months later in December, Ted's voice was heard in a radio broadcast from Saigon, wishing his family and his girlfriend well. Pre-recorded his mother was warned, but then she heard, third hand, that her son was one of the 'healthy ones' aboard the ship transport, he may have survived.

But it was all to no avail. The Red Cross confirmed Ted was among the missing, according to Japanese records, in February 1945. In March 1946, LAC EG Myers was officially presumed to have lost his life on 12 September 1944.

Ed. (ref: National Archives of Australia A705 Series, Myers casualty report file; pic AWM PO8663.001). Note the photo shows CPL Myers, but he reverted to LAC rank on posting to Singapore.

From the Editor

Welcome to our Summer 2018 edition of *Combat Supporter*. There's some important messages from the President and Secretary, a Welfare update from Rob Shortridge that's pertinent not just for the retired, but particularly for serving members, some wartime history articles and our normal advertising.

If you have any concerns with content or any suggestions for improvement to our newsletter, or requests please don't hesitate to contact me directly or contact the Secretary if you'd prefer. Your feedback is always welcome.

Ted Myers story (above) is typical for POWs under the Japanese. Communications with family or Service was non-existent, unlike in Europe, and information on prisoners, officially through the International Red Cross, was rare.

Next of kin were kept as well informed as the RAAF could, but the RAAF often knew very little. Many cases were complicated because casualty reporting was an RAF responsibility for those serving on RAF squadrons, and with the rapid deployment of reinforcements to Singapore, the RAAF was not even aware that some who had become prisoners of Japan, were in Singapore.

In rare cases, the RAAF's first advice of a casualty came from the family who had themselves been contacted by friends of the missing airman.

Sadly, Ted Myers was killed in the 'hell ships', which featured in our *Summer 2016-17* edition. They were the sea transports used to carry POWs to Japan, more so after the Burma railway was completed in 1944. Also killed at sea on these 'hell ships' as POWs were several aircrew survivors from the Endau raids (story below).

Some of them were captured by the Japanese after the fall of Java. SGTs Brian Toohey and Jim Barnes were on the same crew at Endau and they flew together on a similar raid on the main Japanese convoy invading Java on 1 March 1942. Aircraft numbers were fewer on the Java raid (than Endau) and it was at night, but they used bombs again, not torpedos. Toohey and Barnes dropped their bombs but suffered fuel starvation and crashed in a field. Both survived, only to be captured a few days later.

PLTOFF Wallace Chisholm was another Observer on both convoy raids, at Endau and off Java. He flew with his new CO, recently promoted replacement for



those killed at Endau. They were shot down and neither survived. The third CO of an RAF Vildebeest squadron lost in just over one month.

John Green was another survivor of Endau, and the Burma railway too. In September 1944 he was on route to Japan aboard a 'hell ship', with Brian Toohey and Jim Barnes when they were torpedoed by US submarine.

Barnes and Green, with the other RAAF POWs, were asleep in a hold on the first deck below when the explosion happened. Water poured in and Barnes floated to the top, escaped and was rescued. Green stood beside him in the hold but was lost. Brian Toohey was asleep on the deck hatch but wasn't seen in the water and is assumed to have died in the explosion.

Searcher teams post war found several of the Vildebeest that crashed on the Endau raid. Some remains were recovered and interred, in common graves with fellow crew but most have no known grave and are commemorated on the Singapore Memorial at Kranji. Ted Myers too, has no known grave and is also commemorated on the Singapore Memorial.

The use of the antiquated Vildebeests as operational bombers, even in 1942, was inviting disaster and represents all that was wrong with the Singapore saga. The whole campaign is a sad part of our history and is often dealt with summarily in RAAF histories. Gallant is perhaps the best word I've heard to describe the Endau attacks. Suicidal is equally accurate. But I'm sure you'd agree that those who took part should be remembered as heroes. Lest we forget.

I'll be overseas in February/March but hope to release our Autumn edition in time for ANZAC Day.

Editor. (Picture courtesy Wikipedia, sources as per articles above and below)

Endau, 26 January 1942

The battle for Singapore was all but lost by mid-January 1942. Japan had controlled the air almost immediately from landing on December 8, and their ground forces moved quickly down the Malay peninsula toward the Causeway.

By January 26 they were in the southern State of Johore, forcing British and Australians to cross the Causeway back into Singapore. Bombardment of the airfields had already caused the RAF and RAAF to move from Singapore, to Sumatra.

When a Japanese fleet was sighted off Endau, near Mersing about 100 miles north-east of Singapore, it was assessed as the long-anticipated invasion force. The Air Commander ordered an immediate strike, which was delayed necessarily by shortages and the high demand on air assets.

The torpedo bombers, antiquated Vildebeests and Albacores of the RAF, would lead the strike but due to the shallow waters at Endau, they would drop bombs, not torpedos. Fighters would escort the bombers, Buffaloes and Hurricanes, and some Hudsons would also be used in the strike role.

The first wave of twelve Vildebeests, with thirteen RAAF crew members among the Observers and Wireless Air Gunners, arrived over the target at about 3pm. Met by Japanese fighters, some reported up to fifty but more likely around fifteen, the Vildebeests maintained their formation and tracked for their priority targets, the troop transports.

All of the Vildebeest were damaged but five were shot down and ten crew members killed, including RAAF SGT Maurice Proven. Fellow crew member, SGT Graeme McCabe survived the crash and met up with friendly locals who cared for him for several weeks but eventually he was captured and became a POW for the rest of the war.

SGT Charlie MacDonald was the sole survivor in his crew when they crashed onto a jungle road. Charlie managed to evade capture for seven days and made his way back to Singapore with an injured arm that he was lucky not to lose. PLTOFF Elwood Cummins was another who survived, with his RAF pilot when they were shot down and crashed at sea. With the help of some RN survivors whose ship had been sunk the preceding day, they found their way to Singapore and then Sumatra.

The next wave, nine Hudsons of 1 and 8 Squadrons RAAF, attracted the Japanese fighters away from the

Vildebeests. The Hudsons acted independently, rather than maintain formation, and evaded the fighters in cloud, or at low level. Still, FLGOFF Dave Hughes co-pilot and SGT Edmund Silk, wireless air gunner, were killed by a Japanese fighter. Their pilot, FLTLT Jack O'Brien was wounded but returned safely to Singapore. Another Hudson pilot, FLGOFF Stew Bothroyd, was also wounded but returned safely.

The third wave of 9 Vildebeest and 3 Albacores arrived ahead of their escorts in clear weather which made it difficult to avoid the Japanese fighters. Six were shot down and the other six badly damaged. Seventeen crew members, seven RAAF, were killed. Of the 16 RAAF aircrew in the third wave, 13 were casualties.

PLTOFF Arthur Turner, and Sergeants Neil Gill, Philip Hay, John Henderson, Gordon Howiss, Joseph Lockhart and Eric Nodrum were all shot down and killed.

SGT Hugh Kelly bailed out unnecessarily and became a POW. PLTOFF Tom McKellar survived a ditching after his Albacore was hit by A/A fire from a destroyer, and with help from locals, made his way back to Singapore. Five others were wounded, two seriously with SGT Gil Sharp losing both his legs, injured by an explosive shell that struck his knee. Later, Gil Sharp became a POW.

SGT John Smith lost an eye but SGT Ivor Jones was perhaps the luckiest. With a fire on board and wounded crew, they decided to bail out. Ivor was first but he hadn't unclipped his safety harness and remained attached to the aircraft, hanging in mid-air. By the time he'd been retrieved his NZ pilot, SGT Doug Buchanan had decided to try for home; and they landed safely at Singapore. Unfortunately for Ivor, he was captured in Java two months later and as a POW spent time on the Burma railway. In 2003, Ivor said that Doug Buchanan rings him every year from NZ, on 26 January.

The fourth wave of RAF Hudsons recovered to Singapore. Two crashed on approach at dusk, with no survivors.

In all, 37 lives were lost including two RAF Unit Commanding Officers, for little gain. Two transports and three battleships were hit, 13 aircraft claimed destroyed and five probables. RAF lost 18 aircraft.

Editor. Sources: Gillison, RAAF 1939-42; Wigmore, The Japanese Thrust; ER Hall, Glory in Chaos.

Welfare Corner

Much of this report is on DVA. There are no apologies as DVA supports ADF personnel after they transition. How well is often debated but the option of not having them does not bear considering. The belief is that DVA are changing, government is providing funding and that there is a genuine desire at all levels to provide a better level of support.

New Minister for Veterans Affairs

Veterans Minister Michael McCormack is the first DVA Minister to append the VVCS emergency contact information at the foot of his Ministerial Offices mail without prompting.

This is a good indicator it will be seen if this continues.

VVCS

DFWA wrote to the minister questioning why the word 'families' is not included in the VVCS acronym.

'The VVCS does hugely important work but the acronym's origin appears to be a 'hangover' from times past. The missing - but vital word - Families. Certainly, once VVCS is opened, 'Families' are recognized. *But isn't it time for the Families to be incorporated in the acronym?* Families should be acknowledged as the lifeblood and stabilizer of Military life. Should not this acronym read VVFCF?'

From the minister:

'An important issue, as you have raised, is that the current acronym does not encompass the eligibility for the cohort. The Minister's National Advisory Committee (NAC) on VVCS has also identified the need for an evolution of the VVCS name and brand to more effectively connect with families, as well as other cohorts such as contemporary veterans.

Work is underway to refresh the VVCS branding to be more reflective and inclusive of the wider veteran and ex-service community.'

The Vietnam Veterans fought very hard to get VVCS and it would be disappointing if they fought against changing the name to incorporate the families.

The DVA Transformation ([this links](#) to a chart that describes where DVA are going). The ADF is

extremely fortunate as it has a whole government department to support them after they transition. No other employment group in Australia has this. Has DVA been cumbersome and bureaucratic? Yes. Have there been some 'shockers'? Yes, but these have been recognised and funding has been provided to fix the issues.

\$58.6M has been allocated to mental health

\$186.6M has been allocated to improve systems and processes

\$33.5 allocated to expand Non-Liability Health Care

The cynics will say nothing will change but consider the option of not having a DVA, that would be a nightmare.

DVA's MyService – Digital Client Engagement

www.dva.gov.au/myservice

The intent is to redesign DVA's complex paper based claims process. It is smart phone optimised and features three to five questions instead of the 36 on paper based forms.

Available at this stage to all personnel who have/had a PMKeys number. The reason it is believed that it is limited to those with a PMKeys number is that the records of those with the old number are not computer based and extracting the required data is difficult, but DVA are working to include all past members in this scheme.

It is decision ready claiming, where DVA identified opportunities to streamline the acceptance of certain conditions based on a client's ADF service and rank, removing the need for clients to provide subjective evidence. There are eight conditions which have a pre-determined evidence base, requiring only service and diagnosis confirmation, and more are coming soon.

Conditions currently approved are:

- Lumbar Spondylosis
- Thoracic Spondylosis
- Osteoarthritis of the Lower Limb
- Intervertebral Disc Prolapse
- Shin Splints
- Rotator Cuff Syndrome
- Iliotibial Band Syndrome
- Patella tendinopathy

Those who have used My Service have generally experienced a significant reduction in processing times for their claims.

If you are at all interested check out their web site.

Comprehensive post transition GP Health assessment

This assessment is available to all former serving members of either the permanent or reserve forces. It is funded under the health assessment items 701, 703, 705 and 707 on the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

One of the key objectives of this assessment is help GPs identify and diagnose the early onset of physical and/or mental health problems among former serving ADF members. In supporting this, DVA has worked with Flinders University, Discipline of General Practice to design a specific ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment Tool.

In mid-2019 members will be entitled to a GP health check annually for five years.

Gallipoli Medical Health Research foundation has a program to educate GPs and they intend to make a list of GPs who are interested in Veterans issues available.

Automatic issue of a white card

Anyone who has served for more than one-day CFTS will be entitled to treatment for any mental health condition for the rest of their life, the Government has committed to the automatic issue of a white card on transition. Watch this space.

DVA – Who are Australian Veterans

The [spring edition of VetAffairs](#) has a very interesting article on ‘Who are Australian Veterans’. The interesting issue is that while many complain about the lack of attention to the ‘younger veterans’, they in fact only represent 25% of DVA’s client base and the ‘younger’ veteran by definition is ‘under 50’.

Royal Commission into Banking and Superannuation

Whilst the management of industry superannuation funds are included in the Terms of Reference for the forthcoming Royal Commission into the Banking, Superannuation, and Financial Services Industry, it is appalling to learn the current Draft ToR specifically **exclude** the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) and the Department of Finance and Deregulation who manage the politicians, judges and magistrates’ superannuation schemes.

The ToR state that:

***All Australians** have the right to be treated honestly and fairly in their dealings with banking, superannuation and financial services providers.*

More particularly, the ToR include a direction for the RC to inquire into the management and practices of financial services entities that fall below community standards and expectations or are not in the best interest of members.

The ToR also define a financial service entity as *an entity (other than a Commonwealth entity or company)*

This definition excludes the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation from examination by the Royal Commission, thus making it the only superannuation entity in Australia not examined along with all others. The statement in the ToR is incorrect, it should read **All Australians with the exception of the 700k personnel, both veterans and public servants whose defined benefit and accumulation schemes are managed by CSC.** These 700k personnel whose superannuation is administered by the CSC deserve to be heard and should be heard by this Royal Commission.

DFWA have taken this to the minister and there have been many individual representations to local Members of Parliament.

Rob Shortridge

WELFO CSA



*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. 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