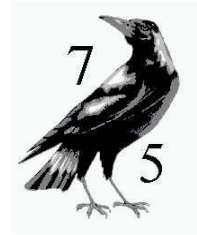




75 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Patron: Air Vice-Marshal Mel Hupfeld, DSC



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Vice President:	Ms Patricia Jackson	0409 897 707
Secretary:	SQNLDR Peter Nelms (Retd)	0468 456 760
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NEWSLETTER No 1/15 – April 2015

President's Report

Greetings fellow Magpies, it's been busy since last December's newsletter. Once again our squadron is on operations, with a detachment of six classic Hornets in the Middle East as part of the multinational coalition against Islamic state terrorism. Our thoughts are with squadron personnel and their families at this challenging time.

Last month I attended the funeral in Canberra of AVM Jim Flemming, a 75 Squadron legend. The funeral was a full official Air Force send-off, attended by CDF and CAF in a packed Duntroon chapel. A photo montage and career summary are included below. Although Jim flew with many units, he twice commanded 75 Squadron. On the second occasion, in 1966, he led the squadron with its brand new Mirages to Butterworth on Operation 'Fast Caravan'. It was also Jim Flemming who designed the current magpie unit crest. He was indeed the first magpie.

Jim Flemming was also the founding President of the 75 Squadron Association in 1993, serving for three years. Although the Association was not then incorporated, its constitution was remarkably similar to today's. I was the inaugural secretary, and I well remember our first meeting in Sydney, starting with a totally clean slate. Allan Taylor succeeded me as secretary after a year, and both he and Jim lived in Canberra and worked hard in those early days to establish the Association.

Most of you would have received the Anzac Day flyer from the Fighter Squadrons Branch. For any who didn't, go to the FSB website – www.fsb.raafansw.org.au – and click on the first sidebar topic for all information. Please note the new luncheon venue, and the 15 April cut-off for bookings. Attendance at the lunch is strictly limited to 180.

This year we will finally have a new 75 Squadron Association banner. The old banner has served us well for many decades but was showing its age. The new banner is being produced at Tindal using squadron resources, from a design developed jointly by squadron personnel and Association committee members. A contingent from Tindal will bring it to Sydney and take it back home.

From time to time, military Service Associations develop bonds based on shared wartime experience. These bonds can be cross-Service, and may be formal or informal. During 75 Squadron's historic defence of Port Moresby in Mar - April 1942, Moresby's ground defence was conducted by the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion. During this momentous battle, the fortunes of both units were inextricably linked. 39th Battalion losses were as proportionately heavy as those of 75 Squadron. Our respective Association committees are therefore

exploring the possibility of establishing an informal reciprocal arrangement. After Port Moresby, the 39th Battalion fought on the Kokoda Track, and is one of the most famous fighting units in the Australian Army. A detailed proposal is attached.

While we're talking about Port Moresby, our Air Force representative in the Australian High Commission there is FSGT Aaron Reynolds. Aaron recently contacted us about aircraft wreckage detected in a swamp near the present international airport. Initial indications are that it may be the Kittyhawk flown by Barry Cox, shot down on the 28th April 1942 in the same action in which John Jackson, 75's CO, was lost. Barry Cox's aircraft was seen to hit the ground vertically with no parachute. At that stage of a crucial air battle recovery action wasn't possible, and further evidence is necessary before Air Force HQ can formally commit valuable resources to the project. Aaron advises that local efforts are continuing. Ideally we'd like to solve an old wartime mystery and formally lay Barry Cox to rest.

At our committee meeting in Townsville last October, Richard Deane-Butcher raised the idea of having an Association award to recognise a significant contribution to the greater Squadron community. The CO suggested the award could be along the lines of the Ross Fox Memorial Trophy but eligibility could be broadened to include, for example, the dependents of Squadron members. Although recent operational priorities have obviously constrained progress in this regard, Richard has developed a proposal for committee deliberation.

On Tuesday 28 April, John Jackson's diaries and letters will be officially handed over to the Australian War Memorial by Arthur Jackson, John's son. The date is significant as John Jackson died in aerial combat on the 28th April 1942. The ceremony will be attended by our Patron, AVM Mel Hupfeld, and our Secretary, Peter Nelms.

Fighter Squadrons Reunion. This is long range notification of a Fighter Squadrons Branch (FSB) plan for an all ranks function for current and ex-members, and wives/partners, on Saturday 12th September in the Nelson Bay area, or at Williamstown. An attempt to hold a similar function last year had to be cancelled due to other events and lack of support. Although it's still five months away, the FSB is asking for expressions of interest, including numbers of guests, to be sent to <HonSec@fsb.raafansw.org.au> Refer to the FSB website. All costs and other activities will be notified later if the event is to proceed.

Finally, our 2015 AGM will be held in July, either in Sydney or Canberra. Details of the date, time & place will be advised nearer the time.

That's it. Looking forward to a good roll-up in Sydney behind our new banner.

Bill Evans

CO's Report

Greetings from the desert. Thanks to Bill for the kind words and for representing the Association at AVM Flemming's funeral - once a Magpie, always a Magpie. The deployment to date has been going well and we have taken over RAAF Strike operations in supporting the Iraqi people and the Coalition to fight the Daesh. They are a particularly cunning and barbaric enemy which cannot be allowed to exist anywhere. We are well supported both here and by our loved ones at home, which allows us to concentrate on the job at hand.

While it is with some regret that we cannot be united as a unit and Association on ANZAC Day, there is no doubt that this ANZAC Day will be an particularly significant – the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, commemorated by 75SQN and the Association in Sydney, Katherine and the Middle East on operations. I trust that the commemorations in Australia are well attended and provide an opportunity to reflect on all who have served this country and our fine unit.

VALE AVM JAMES HILARY FLEMMING AO AM (Retd)

4 Dec 1926 – 11 Feb 2015

Aged 88 years

It is with great sadness that 75 Squadron Association marks the death of Air Vice-Marshal Jim Flemming. We mourn the passing of such an inspiring man whose professional life spanned over 40 years. He leaves behind his wife Pat and three children, Peter, Geoffrey and Terese.

Career

Joined RAAF 1943, trained under EATS in Aust. & Canada, graduated as Sgt Pilot 1944 and based in New Guinea and Darwin;

Converted to Mustangs 1946, then served with 78 Sqn;

Flew Mustangs in Japan 1948;

First RAAF mission in Korean War 1950;

Commissioned 1950 (MID, US DFC & Air Medal);

Served with 3 Sqn 1951;

Flying Instructor Course 1955;

CO 75 Sqn 1956,

Formed Meteorites (first official RAAF aerobatics team);

CFS 1957;

Exchange posting with USAF 1958, flying F-100 and F-104;

Chief Flying Instructor 2 OCU;

CO 76 Sqn;

RAAF Staff College 1962;

Director Operational Research;

Led Operation Fast Caravan 1967 (Deployment of Mirages to Butterworth)

CO 75 Sqn (Mirages) Butterworth, Malaysia, 1966-68;

OC RAAF Contingent Ubon, Thailand, 1968;

Principal Staff Officer & Senior Admin Staff Officer, HQ Support Command 1969;

OC RAAF Williamtown, NSW, 1973-75;

Royal College of Defence Studies 1975;

RAAF Director General Tactical Fighter Project, 1976-77;

Commander IADS 1977;

Chief of Air Force Ops. 1981-82, Retired RAAF 1982;

Director Australian War Memorial 1982-1987



PROPOSAL FOR INFORMAL RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE 75 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION AND THE 39th INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

Background

The 39th Battalion was an infantry unit of the Australian Army. Originally raised in 1916 for service in World War I, it was disbanded after the war and re-formed as a single unit in October 1941. Two days after the Japanese attack on the US fleet at Pearl Harbour and the British in Malaya, the battalion was ordered to New Guinea. Along with 75 Squadron, its task was to defend the strip at 7 Mile outside Port Moresby.

Ironically, it was 39th Battalion troops manning anti-aircraft guns who mistakenly fired on the first group of Kittyhawks landing at Moresby on the 21st March 1942. The troops were understandably nervous, having been bombed and strafed since the 3rd February by Japanese aircraft with red circles. Despite a pre-arranged arrival procedure, and never having seen Kittyhawks before, they were confused by their white and blue roundels with a solid red centre. All five aircraft in the leading section were damaged, two terminally. A bullet missed the head of the section leader, SQNLDR Peter Jeffery, by inches. The red circles were promptly removed, and from that time roundels on all Allied aircraft in the SW Pacific theatre were blue and white.

Both 75 Squadron and the 39th Battalion fought alongside each other for the epic '44 days' defence of Moresby from March until May 1942, and both suffered high casualties.

Later that year, the 39th, along with other militia units, played a key part in the battles of Kokoda and Gona-Buna to the north of Moresby. At the same time, 75 and 76 squadron played a crucial role in the battle of Milne Bay to the east of Moresby. Both these battles were part of a coordinated campaign by the Japanese to capture Port Moresby.

Although the 39th Battalion was disbanded after WW2, its involvement in the fighting around Kokoda became a key part of the narrative surrounding the Anzac legend and Australia's emergence as a modern nation. However, the Battalion name lives on. In 2006 it was re-formed as the 39th (Personnel Support) Battalion, a small unit of about 50 personnel based at Randwick, NSW. It provides personnel support to deploying forces from all three Services, including providing cultural and language training for soldiers deploying to Africa as part of UN peacekeeping operations.

75 Squadron, of course, continues as an operational front line squadron in the defence of Australia.

Proposal

In order to recognise and solidify the wartime bond between 75 Squadron and the 39th Battalion, it is proposed that the two unit Associations develop an informal reciprocal relationship. This type of informal reciprocity is not unusual between units with shared wartime experience, irrespective of Service.

Implementation

Committee members and families of originals from both Associations have already had informal, preliminary discussions on implementing such an arrangement. The most practicable way would be by routine exchange of newsletters via the web, with members of respective associations attending each other's selected functions and activities.

Recommendation

A shared wartime bond in Australia's darkest hour is worth preserving. Indeed, the 75 Sqn Association would have much to gain and little to lose from an informal reciprocal relationship with the 39th Battalion Association. There would be no financial obligation. The main advantage is a broadening of the base of both associations through shared common history, which in turn strengthens the future survival of both associations. Reciprocity would also provide a wider geographical base, with the 75 SQN Association in NSW, SEQLD and the NT, and the 39th Battalion Association based primarily in VIC.

