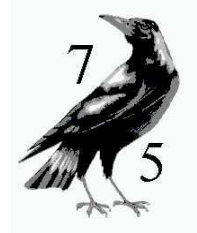




75 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



Patron: Air Vice-Marshal Mel Hupfeld, DSC

President:	Bill Evans	0448 699 728
Vice President:	Daryl Pudney	0407 200 558
Secretary/Treasurer:	Peter Nelms	0468 456 760
Commanding Officer:	WGCDR Mick Grant	(08) 8973 7500
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NEWSLETTER No 1/16 – July 2016

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings fellow Magpies, as mentioned in the last newsletter, Patricia Jackson retired as Vice President in July last year and was replaced by Daryl Pudney. Daryl is now replacing me as President in July this year. Daryl is an ex Hornet pilot and was posted to 75 Squadron at Tindal as a 'boggy' fighter pilot in 1996. He deployed to Iraq in 2003 with the squadron where he received a CAF commendation for leadership during combat operations. His final tour was as XO 2OCU before retiring from the Air Force in 2006 to study medicine. He currently works as a GP/Anaesthetist in the Upper Hunter Valley.

It's been a privilege to have served as president. My aim has been to keep things moving along as productively as possible. However, with medical issues now resolved, it's time for me to resume my life as a tropical expatriate. I wish Daryl all the best, I've no doubt he'll do a fine job.

The squadron is re-deploying to the Middle East (ME) in August this year for its second six month rotation. Mick Grant has more in his CO's report.

In the last newsletter I highlighted the administrative challenge of access and management of our membership database. I floated the concept of a closer relationship with the Fighter Squadrons Branch (FSB) of the RAAFA. We've moved partly in that direction, whilst maintaining our status as an independent association. The membership database has been prised from the Defence Restricted Network and now resides on the FSB website, with suitably controlled access. A more collaborative, cloud based arrangement will greatly facilitate administration. However, there are still problems as the database is not fully up to date. Pete Nelms, our secretary, has more in his report.

This year's Anzac Day march and lunch in Sydney was a great success. Patricia Jackson's report is enclosed.

Next year sees the 75th anniversary of the squadron's formation at Townsville on 4 Mar 1942. As the squadron returns to Tindal from the ME only a few weeks beforehand, an in-principle decision has been made to commemorate it on 4 Mar 17 at Tindal, not Townsville. Some may be disappointed, but there's plenty of precedent. 76 and 77 Sqn were formed at Archerfield in QLD, and Pearce in WA, respectively, and neither is going back to their original home locations to celebrate their 75th. In October this year, 1, 2, 3 & 4 Sqns are celebrating their centenary at

Williamstown, which of course didn't exist 100 years ago. At this stage that's really all I can say about this event. Planning will firm up later this year.

Another significant event is being run at Port Moresby next year, as close to Anzac Day as possible. A new international terminal is being built, and the PNG National Airports Corporation, in conjunction with the PNG government, is sponsoring and funding a memorial 'space' to John Jackson, after whom the airport is named. The PNG Prime Minister is giving the dedication address. The date most likely is the 24th April 2017, the day before Anzac Day, but this is to be confirmed.

This event is not on the same scale as the back to Milne Bay event in 2012. Consequently, we envisage only a modest delegation from Australia, comprising our Patron, AVM Mel Hupfeld, and the CO, WGCDR Mick Grant, both probably in an official capacity, accompanied by the presidents of the 39th Inf Bn Association and the 75 Sqn Association, and naturally Patricia Jackson and other members of the Jackson clan. However, other members of the association are welcome to attend on a self-funded basis. As the local Moresby RSL sub-Branch is coordinating and assisting with logistics and administration, and is expecting several thousand at the Bomana War Cemetery on Anzac Day, please notify Pete Nelms, our secretary, if you are thinking of attending. At this stage we can't be more specific with cut-off dates. More details will follow as planning firms up.

Arrangements for Anzac Day in Sydney next year remain unchanged. A detachment from Tindal will bring the banner down as normal.

Cheers and au revoir
Bill Evans

SECRETARY'S REPORT

As Bill mentioned in his President's report above, we have been dedicating considerably effort to validating our membership database after its transfer out of the Defence network at the Squadron. We have experienced some irregularities in the data due to a number of unavoidable circumstances such as the Squadron's deployment to the Middle East last year, postings of Squadron personnel and the fact that some applications for membership came directly to me and some went to the Squadron. Hopefully the procedural issues have now been overcome and it is just a matter of verifying individual membership status. I would be happy to receive queries from members who wish to clarify their financial status – it would also help me purify the database.

Attached to this Newsletter is the current Application Form which is also available on our website at: <http://no75.squadronassociation.org/site/upload/ApplicationMembershipNov16.pdf>
The form also includes our bank account details for the payment of fees.

Due to a posting from the Squadron, the Treasurer position on our committee is currently vacant. If you have an interest in this position or would like more information please get in touch with me. The role is not particularly onerous and it does provide an insight to the workings of an Incorporated Association.

Regards to all,
Peter Nelms

COMMANDING OFFICER'S REPORT

G'day Magpies, the first six months of 2016 have been action-packed and nothing short of fantastic. We've started the year extremely strongly, achieving plenty in both the domestic and international arena, and are looking forward to a few weeks of well-deserved R&R in July. I must acknowledge that a majority of our early success this year is because the Squadron was in such good shape when I inherited it from Mav. The second half of 2016 is set to be as equally challenging as the first, kicking-off with Exercise Pitch Black as soon as we return from leave. Given the current level global uncertainty, we're constantly maintaining a high degree of operational preparedness to ensure we're ready for whatever the future holds.

We returned to work on 04 January and nine days later we were packed into freight containers and airborne heading to Las Vegas for Exercise Red Flag. We took six jets, a KC-30 tanker, plus a C-17, and hopped across the Pacific via Guam and Hawaii; transiting close to some historical sights of significance. Unfortunately all of the military accommodation was booked out, so we had to rough-it in hotels en route. The transit went extremely smoothly, no issues due to well-prepared aircraft, in-fact by the time we arrived in Las Vegas many of the newly posted-in members back at Tindal had not even showed for their first day at work. The Exercise itself was a huge success. Red Flag is the premiere training exercise and environment in the world, and the Magpies represented exceptionally well. Of note, our maintainers, suppliers and armaments staff delivered a 100% serviceability rate, resulting in 100% mission achievement; the most successful Red Flag deployment for 81WG and ACG to date thanks to our dedicated Magpies on the ground. Amazing efforts and teamwork! Much to the disappointment of a handful of maintenance, logistics, administration staff and aircrew, none of jets broke-down in Hawaii or Guam on our way home, so we were unable to extend our hotel stays whilst 'waiting for spares'; it's a small price your pay for keeping the jets in such great condition throughout the exercise.



Deployed at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, for Exercise Red Flag – 16 Feb 16

We arrived home from Red Flag in late February, with just enough time to unpack before acknowledging JP's 19th anniversary and to celebrate the Squadron's 74th birthday. For the 74th, we assembled the entire Squadron for a barbeque, complete with unit history presentations, a huge cake, and to ensure it went off with a bang we dusted off the Squadron cannon and let it rip (I always get a little nervous when the gunnies stand to the very back of the crowd when it comes time to fire it). I note the cannon history sparked much discussion amongst many association members after I emailed out a few birthday images to Patricia and Bill. I don't recall if we did determine the true origin of the Squadron cannon, perhaps something we'll explore further prior to the 75th. Nonetheless, the birthday event was a great afternoon, and our Operations Officer, FLGOFF Krystal Blanch, was chosen to cut the cake as she also celebrates her birthday on 04 March (just not 1942). We have many proud and dedicated members both young and old currently at the Squadron, who are keen to keep the history and traditions of 75 Squadron alive and well for many years to come.



Cutting the Cake at the 74th Birthday Barbeque – 04 Mar 16

For ANZAC Day we participated in couple of events across the top-end and in Sydney, including a small informal association catch-up on the Sunday 24th. In Tindal there was a great dawn service on-Base, followed by a street march in Katherine lead by SQNLDR Tim Ireland. 75 Squadron also lead dawn services in other remote NT locations including Tenant Creek and Tomato Island (Roper River), and we serviced eight different NT locations including Darwin with timely flypasts. Public feedback from top-end communities about our pro-active organisation and participation of dawn services has been extremely positive; I was extremely proud of all voluntary contributions made by our members this year. A small Squadron contingent was also rewarded with a trip to Sydney to meet association staff, attend the dawn service, carry the banner and to march proudly with a strong contingent of past and associated Magpies. Had I known seven former COs were going to be present, I probably would have thought through the drill a little better (and yelled a little louder), nonetheless the parade was highly rewarding and our junior technicians were blown-away with the entire Sydney experience. I note the association members who were able to make it along to the Fighter Squadron Association luncheon after the parade, were in fine form as per usual, and it was great that ACAUST acknowledged the strong 75SQN presence and commitment during his guest of honour speech.



ANZAC Day March in Katherine – 25 Apr 16

Exercise Arnhem Thunder and exercise Classic Cannon kept the Squadron on its toes throughout May and June. These planning and weapons exercises, along with an advanced air-to-air concentration period in-between, stretched us to our training limits last month, however by doing so we generated several category B pilot upgrades; one of the highest accomplishments our young fighter pilots can achieve. On the 22nd of May 75 Squadron opened its doors to the entire Tindal Base including families, for an open day. There were displays by the search and rescue helicopter team, police dogs, security forces, as well as simulator, aircraft, weapons, and support equipment demonstrations, plus a superb flying handling display at the end. The day was primarily focused upon our families and kids, but between you and me, I think many of the 17 Squadron staff from the other end of the Base just wanted to be a Magpie for a day!

On 03 June we crushed 17 Squadron (by two points) during the annual 17 Vs 75 Squadron Rugby League game. The match was played in great spirits, and whilst the Magpies prevailed through sheer determination, it was extremely close and certainly one of best I have seen at Tindal over the years. The event is now a charity match held in memory of former Magpie, CPL Jason Ruhan, and this year between 17 and 75 Squadron, we raised approximately \$10,000 for the Cancer Council; a fabulous effort for such a small RAAF Tindal community. I must thank CPL Conner O'Neill for his on and off field leadership and involvement over the past six years, plus all those involved behind the scenes who volunteered and made the game possible.

It was great to be back at Darwin supporting the V8 Supercars at Hidden Valley Raceway last weekend. We hosted two of the drivers (Fabio Couthard and Scott Pye) and their respective racing team members at RAAF Darwin whilst there for exercise Classic Cannon. We gave them a close look over one of our Hornets and we conducted a thrilling handling display overhead the large crowd just prior to the main race commencing on 19 June.



75 Squadron Rugby League Team – 03 Jun 16

During the past six months several staff changed-over and I hosting several visitors at the Squadron. First and foremost, SQNLDR Mike Sciberras (SENGO) departed in April and was replaced by SQNLDR Aleisha Broadhead. Sincere thanks to Mike for his contributions over the past few years, and a warm welcome (literally) to Aleisha who has relocated from Canberra. LtGen Chris Bogdan (USAF), head of the F-35 JSF Program, dropped-by in February to catch-up and experience Tindal. I worked for LtGen Bogdan in the US between 2012-15, and I can assure you he wants our transition to the F-35 at the end of 2021 to be successful. During his visit, LtGen Bogdan said he's been to remote places, he's been to places with dangerous animals, and he's been to places with extreme weather, but never in his life has he been to somewhere like Tindal that has all three happening simultaneously! I really like what LtGen Bogdan is doing for the Australian F-35 Program, and despite anything you may have read in the tabloids, the F-35 is a truly amazing capability. In March I was pleased to host former CO 75 now Commander Air Combat Group, AIRCDRE Zed Robertson. AIRCDRE Robertson flew BFM with us for a few days and addressed the entire Squadron. It's always great to host guests who know their way around the Squadron, and who understand the unique challenges of Tindal. Our Minister for Defence, Senator the Honourable Marise Payne, visited in May to gain an appreciation of what it's like to be living and operating at Tindal. She was visiting three Bases across the top of Australia, Amberley-Tindal-Learmonth, to compare the challenges of each location; I think (hope!) she enjoyed our hospitality.

In summary, it's been a busy but highly rewarding start to 2016. I'm immensely proud of the current Magpie team, what we've achieved in the past six months, and the current direction we're heading. Our reputation domestically and internationally is second-to-none; I only wish I could slow down the clock to enjoy each day at this magnificent Squadron a little longer. Many thanks again to all Magpies, past and present, for making my transition into command of 75 Squadron seamless; your ongoing efforts and support of 75 Squadron are well known and greatly appreciated.....Once a Magpie, Always a Magpie.

Regards,
Mick G

ANZAC DAY MARCH IN SYDNEY 2016

This year the route had been changed as George Street was in upheaval through “tram works”. This meant that we could not march down Martin Place and past the Cenotaph. Instead, we met up in Castlereagh Street, turned into Hunter and then down Elizabeth Street. It was a shorter route but felt longer because we had no pauses, except to make an “eyes left” and salute to the Cenotaph in Hyde Park.



The contingent from Tindal came with our newly reinforced Banner, held by two burly sergeants. We got separated from 3 Squadron by the Navy but were with 76, 77 & 78 Squadrons. 75 Squadron was lead by the CO, WGCDR Mick Grant, Bill Evans, our Association President and our lone veteran, Joe McGrath (91). Just behind the Banner, strode AVM Mel Hupfeld, our Patron, Dr Daryl Pudney, our Vice-President with Patricia Jackson, Richard Deane-Butcher and Jonathan Andrews lagging a bit behind.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the formation of Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 Squadrons.

The weather was perfect and the crowds friendly and appreciative. Dick Smith showed his “Thanks” card as always.

When we finished the march and broke ranks, we were glad to walk across Hyde Park to the hotel where the Fighter Squadron Branch, RAAF Association (NSW Division) had organised a luncheon. We milled about for quite a while chatting with old friends and making new ones. It was surprising to see so many ex-COs of 75 Squadron here, some still serving in other positions in the RAAF and some retired – seven in all. The best any other squadron could do was three.



**Major Goodno, his wife
Dunia & Patricia Jackson**

It was interesting meeting Major Alexander Goodno and his wife Dunia. He is with the US Marines and deployed to 75 Squadron for 2 years ending in December.

After a few hours of camaraderie helped by a few beers and glasses of wine, we said goodbye and wove our different ways back from where each of us had come.

Regards, Patricia Jackson

AMBERLEY EVENT – 27/5/2016

Although it does not involve 75 Squadron directly, it seemed to me an important story to be told.

It was in honour of Len Waters who was the only Aboriginal fighter pilot in WWII. An incredible feat as he started as a mechanic in 78 Squadron and rose up to become a pilot. However, when he was demobbed after the war, he was treated very badly – he wasn't even a citizen. In the end he descended into alcoholism. I met Gladys in 2001 at a big reunion of all Fighter Squadrons to lay plaques at the War Memorial. We have been friends ever since. She is an inspiration to everyone – a wonderful person in every respect with a great sense of humour. She spent part of the War driving for the Americans in Townsville. She also worked as a cleaner at the Australian Hotel in St George and for the Police in Brisbane. Her life would have been very different if Len had been treated properly after the war. Gladys has worked hard all her life and well respected by all who have come to know her.

The event had been organised by the RSL in Sydney. The Super Hornet was flown by AirCdre Steve Robertson (Zed) from Williamtown the day before. The aircraft had Len's name, rank and length of service on the side and an Aboriginal design on the tail. Zed was in charge of our group for the few hours we were there. It was great to catch up with Zed again. We were so well looked after by all the Amberley people. We had a good look at the aircraft – some



managed to climb up the stairs to the cockpit where Haggy explained how to fly it and answered questions. Two Aboriginal Elders flew up from Sydney as well as an RSL representative. Some of Gladys' family were able to be there. I felt very privileged to be asked to join them.

We were then taken to 1 Squadron Mess for morning tea. I was able to talk to some of the 1 Squadron pilots – Fuzzy, Woody and Haggy and two others. They only use their nicknames on their flying suits for security reasons. Chaps was off flying somewhere so I did not meet him. Haggy was a bog rat at Tindal when I visited in 2002. Zed made a short speech and presented Gladys with a replica of a Hornet. She then told a very funny story about how she got the job driving for the Americans.



Regards,
Patricia Jackson
Editor, Newsletter

