

Your say!



Dick Tracy, who is the secretary of the Melbourne Area Ex-Apprentice Committee, wrote. He said: “Howdy, we organise a reunion each year in the Melbourne area. All RAAF Ex-apprentices and their partners are welcome to attend. The next reunion is to be held on Saturday 24th January 2009 (not long now) from 1300 to 1700 hrs at the Werribee RSL.

Access to the RSL is easy by rail or road (vehicle access from Princes Highway). Entry fee is \$10.00 which covers the cost of venue and snacks. Drinks at own cost. Dress is to be neat casual”

For further information please contact Dick Tracy on Phone: 03 9324 6821 or use this [e-mail address](#).



Col Hill wrote, he says, “G’day, re Vol: 25 Page: 8, in Randall Kingsley’s photograph of the AN/FPS/802 famil course at the top of the page, “Ron Ramsay” (3rd from the left, back row) is in fact “Ranald Ramsay” - he was a General Fitter at the time at 1AD at Laverton.

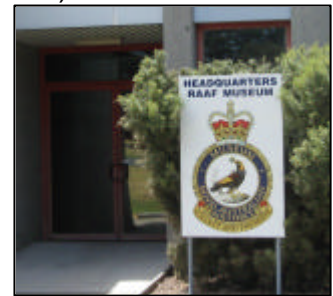
I believe he may also have worked on maintaining the mechanical aspects of the Surad radar at 1AD. He is now retired and lives in Balaclava in South Australia. Thanks for the great effort put into this magazine”.

Ken Hunt wrote, he says, G’day, we have just returned home after being on a cruise, Auckland back to Sydney, which included a day in Melbourne. (It’s the first time I’ve needed a passport to get into Melbourne).

"Now the big question arose, just how do you spend a day in Melbourne"? We decided we'd like to see the old base again (I started my Nashos at Pt Cook and haven't been back since) and also have a look through the RAAF museum, so, we spent the day getting from Station Pier to the Point Cook Museum by public transport. Getting past the Main Gate at Point Cook was more complicated than in 1955 and certainly worse than any airport immigration etc.



I 'snuck' a few photos while there and hope they are of some use to you (sure are, thanks Ken)



When we left the ship at Station Pier, we were well advised on how to get to Point Cook, (the last time I went there I was inside the back of a RAAF truck and the driver looked after the navigation bit). We were told to get the tram and go to Swanson St (I remembered Swanson St because that's where Young and Jackons was) and to get further details from the Railway Information Bureau. But, being an old hand, I decided we'd go straight to Spencer St station (hasn't that changed??), but, of course, the train was 20 mins late which meant we missed the connecting bus from Laverton Station.



So we asked for directions from a local real estate agent who advised the only way to get to Pt Cook was to grab a taxi - \$18 each way. Finally, we arrived at the main gate, to be met by security blokes who wanted more info and signatures than if we were trying to get into Russell Offices.

The Museum is really 4 buildings on the edge of the hard stands with the entrance building housing a manned info desk with tons of brochures etc. It's like any other hanger type museum, it has a number of aircraft in different stages of 'finish' with some things well signed, while the restoration hanger has a bunch of stuff that is hopelessly signed. You are able to get up close and personal with the aircraft but a lot of other stuff is wisely behind glass.



When we'd finished our tour, we tossed up whether to call a taxi again or try and bum a lift to the station, I spotted a truck that had just unloaded enough A4 paper to run an air force, the driver was good enough to drop us off at Hoppers Crossing and we were back on the ship in time for "sips at six."

All the old temporary buildings at Point Cook have gone. I couldn't find where our hut had been or even the mess hall, but I did recognise the HQ building. One thing we did notice though, there is no food or drink available on the base, so if you intend spending a while at the museum, take your own.

The trip bought back a lot of memories though, did any other course (of course we all did), charge an electrolytic capacitor to about 200 volts, carefully fold the leads then drop it into someone's overall's hip pocket. The victim naturally puts his hand in quickly, discharges the capacitor and invariably jams his hand in the pocket, great joke at the time, though these days workplace health and safety would probably put you in jail for assault and battery.

I recently bought an electrician's kit (screwdrivers etc, it had a small test lamp) for my grandson (16). I was showing him how to take care when testing voltages and I put it into 240ac. It used to be a 12volt test lamp. Not now.

Could you get 10 amps out of a D cell torch battery. I said no and lost 10 shillings to the AWA Service Manager (Fred Lane). An AVO on Amps and watch the meter quickly, it doesnt last long.

We heard from **Ian Nicholson**, he writes: "Thanks for once again a great magazine. I found the article of Ted McEvoy's, explaining how [DVD burners work](#), very interesting and have often wondered how they worked. I find Ted's stories are always both funny and informative. I'm an ex Sumpie, and have been reading your magazine for a while and really look forward to it, keep up the good work."

Thanks Ian – you're not Ted's brother in law, by any chance, are you?? - tb

John Elliott writes, howdy, I didn't see my name on the membership list so filled out another form. I'm still working in Malaysia but starting a rotation assignment that will see me in country for 28 days and home for 28 days. I was lucky enough to go to the dawn service on the Burma (death) railway last ANZAC day. It should be a must on every veteran's calendar. Also a bit cheaper to get to than Turkey (I cannot spell Gallipoli). If you keep reminding me I'll remember to send you some pics and a write up of the event. (Here's a reminder John – tb) I worked with [Phil Greggor](#) at Operational command and bunked with him at the living quarters in Penrith while he worked at AIRTELU ???. I remember him having a car accident in the RAAF transport that ferried workers between Richmond and Penrith. Another one of life's gentlemen.

Tim Zahn writes, Hi, many thanks for providing a RadSchool Association and website. I've only just heard of the site via course mates and tutors, who are looking to organise a twenty year reunion. I was at Radschool from 01Jan90 to 17DEC92 as a Technologist's Apprentice on 9TAC course, service number A133485. I discharged from the RAAF in September 2000 and am now living and working in Brisbane. I would appreciate if you could add me to the association's membership list. (Consider it done Tim – tb)

Laurie Lindsay writes: Howdy, Frank Alley made a comment in his column about a mirage breaking the sound barrier over the base at lunchtime, when he was at Laverton. The pilot was Hugh Hopkins (right). Hugh was stuck down at Avalon with the mirages and ate sandwiches for lunch, whilst the rest of us sat down to a four course meal in the Laverton Officers Mess for \$0.35. This really pissed Hugh off, so he would make sure that he was flying at lunchtime and he would come over the Mess and start a vertical climb with full afterburner.



Hugh became my boss at Flight Inspection Australia (CAA Flying Unit) in the early nineties. Hugh was an inspirational leader and was just what we needed, because we were under siege from a Dick Smith led CAA. Smith thought that the flight inspection role should be privatised and many in the CAA agreed with him (he did a lot of stupid things and I'd say no-one in ATC or FS agreed with him – tb).

I have always had a theory about leadership in the defence forces. There are peace time leaders and wartime leaders. Those that get promoted in peacetime are very good administrators. They know how to write reams of bullshit and never make a wrong decision because they cannot make a decision. That is why when a war breaks out, so many generals get sacked, until they find a leader capable of thinking for himself.

Hugh was a wartime leader. He would rather fly than sit at a desk writing crap. He was not afraid to make a decision and always had his staff at the Flying Unit right behind him. Unfortunately, he was eventually sacked for making decisions that Airservices Australia did not agree with. At this stage, the CAA had split into CASA and Airservices Australia. The hierarchy in Airservices Australia knew a lot about air traffic control towers and ground navigation aids, but virtually nothing about aircraft. Hugh's replacement was a clerk, who was a peacetime leader and his job was to close the Flying Unit down. (I equated him to a certain war time Norwegian prime minister)

The Flying Unit used to calibrate the navigation aids of New Zealand and the Pacific Islands and also do airport inspections in Papua New Guinea. (I have lots of passenger hours in the old Aztec while in PNG, with Ken Wooten as driver and Rick Hall as ADI - tb) There were several one-offs every year – we flew to the Philippines and Nepal at one stage.



This all stopped when Airservices Australia privatised flight inspection and closed down the best flight inspection organization in the world.

Frank Alley wrote: G'day, how interesting, now I understand why the booms had to occur at lunchtime. I think I recalled in the article flying myself and seeing the Mirage on its way to Laverton, going in the opposite direction, incredible closing speeds.

There would have been a lot of jealousy of real pilots from the amateurs. I remember many flights from Chongqing to Chengdu in China, not a long flight. At the beginning of each flight, the pilot's record would be revealed to us, and all were ex-military (Chinese air force) with thousands of flying hours. I always felt I was in good hands.

Ralph Dix wrote: Howdy, re [Volume: 6, Page: 17](#), a Dennis Riebelt from 23 appies left a note asking for contacts. It just so happened that recently Skippy (Alan Skipworth) contacted me to see if I would like to be involved with a reunion. I was on 23 Appy and we started 9 Jan 69. I had been at an annual Base Radio (Pearce) reunion in Dec07 and had spoken with Pat Hall

(21 RAC) and he spoke about their reunion held the year before. This all prompted a reaction so I surfed and found the 21 web site which directed me to your site. I complement you on its presentation. Skippy sent an email to Frank Daly, Peter Pick, Brian Sollers, Malcolm Hawley, Ash Wakefield and myself. So out of the 36 graduates we have 7 probable starters. Now, as you know, the fun begins - trying to located others. Stay happy Dixie. (Good luck Ralph – tb)

We heard from **Paddy O'Brien** – he says, Howdy, I am a 'slacko' but was at last trying to download the magazine when I was amazed to see a photo (right) in [Vol25](#) of a young Paddy O.Brien out at Charleville. (Paddy is second from the left, in the front row – tb) To Bevan Greenwood, thanks for the photo and the memories it recalls. To Frank Alley, thanks for the kind words. I know most of the faces but can not put names to the blanks, except that the 5th one standing looks like Tom Clancy (Rad Tech), but I can't recall him going on that trip. Incidentally he is in Townsville but not faring well at all. I turn 80 tomorrow and Alma and I celebrate our 59th wedding anniversary today; I'm still going strong playing tennis and golf and wood-turning in my spare time.



Thanks for the memories.

(Happy birthday to you Paddy for 6th Nov and congratulations to you and Alma from all of us on that wonderful achievement, who said service marriages don't last?? - tb)

We heard from **Peter and Jill McAndrew**, they say: We have finally decided to call it time on our European adventures. We came over for 2 years, 8 years ago. How the time has flown by. We have seen so much but of course there are places we still have to visit. So there is always an opening for us to come back in the future.

We both finished work on the 14th November. We will then finalise removals, selling things, etc. and get out of the house. We then go travelling for 3 months making our way back to Oz by end of Feb 09 for Jill's sister's wedding. We will be visiting Morocco in Dec for 2 weeks, have a white Christmas in Slovenia/Austria – just for one more time and then Egypt for 2 weeks in Jan. We will be coming back into the UK for a few days between trips (staying with friends). We will then head to Dubai for the month of Feb. During this time, we will catch up with many of our friends there and also fit in a trip to the Seychelles and Oman, just because we can!!

While we're down in Salamander Bay for the wedding, we are thinking of staying a bit longer to look up friends and relatives in the Sydney / Canberra area. This will depend on when our shipment arrives as we have to be present for customs, particularly as I'm bringing my shotgun back home.

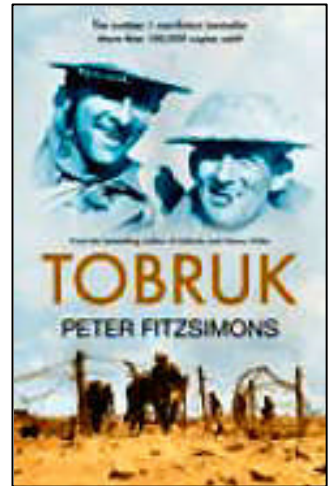
We have not exactly decided where we are going to live, so it will depend on where we can get work. But at this stage it will be either Brisbane or the Sunshine Coast, but we'll see once we

get there. We will be living up the Sunshine Coast when we first get there, as our friend's house will be vacant, so we can rent this until we sort our lives out.

Laurie Lindsay wrote again, he says: I have just finished reading Tobruk by Peter Fitzsimons, which proves that not all second rowers are illiterate.

He tells a great yarn about a British artillery captain who wanted to familiarize himself with the front line. Peter takes about three paragraphs to describe him ie knife like creases in his shorts, spit polished shoes, baton and a batman who did all the work.

He came upon a mob of Australians who were digging trenches. He walked up and down for a while and nobody took the slightest notice of him. Finally he said "Aye say, I know you Orstralians are an undisciplined lot, but don't you know you should salute an officaar." Whereupon, one Australian turned around, leaned on his shovel and stared directly at our pommy captain. He then put his shirt on, where to the pom's horror, he found that he was addressing a major. Our major said "I am their CO and they never salute me, however, you will." The captain then threw a magnificent boner and the major said "Now piss off"



In 1964 my boss at Maintenance Squadron East Sale was the late Peter Silcock. He was in charge of a maintenance detail accompanying a navigation exercise and one of the Dakotas got stuck in the mud. People who knew Peter, would not be surprised that he was the first to grab a spade. Yes mate, that is Pete. He died of liver cancer about five years ago.

He was a terrific bloke. He joined the Air Force in 1959 on 13 Apprentice Course with Alf Smith.

Nev Williams wrote, he says: Well we were successful in getting a DVA Grant to enlarge the www.allappys.com web site. Hopefully work will begin next week. as the idea is for one site to cater for all apprentice intakes web sites. They can park their sites here but still have full control over them. They will be given an ftp address, user name and password and they can upload their web page etc. Currently we have no size restrictions. I think I have given you an outline of the makeup of the site. Public area, members area Passworded access, intake areas. password access again. should be a good focal point.

There will be an ex-apprentice re-union in Brisbane Sat 24 Jan at the Holiday INN Roma St. Thanks