

Support, friendship, values - sharing a love of Air Force and aviation



# RAAF ASSOCIATION

## [ACT DIVISION]

### WELCOME

To our last newsletter for 2018 and on behalf of our Committee Members I would like to wish you all

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MEMBERS AND FAMILIES

AND A HAPPY, SAFE AND PROSPEROUS 2019.

John Webster  
Hon Treasurer & Memberships Officer.

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIVISION PRESIDENT

*Judy Webster – Life Member (RAAFA)*

#### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Wow, where did the year go and what a lovely way to celebrate our final function for the year with 65 members and partners attending our Christmas & Awards at Ainslie Football Club on the 26<sup>th</sup> November.

I hope those who attended had an enjoyable day especially as many hadn't seen each other for many years.

We welcomed our National President Carl Schiller who had kindly accepted our invitation to attend, presenting certificates to those who were able to come as well as giving us an overview of where the Air Force Association Ltd is and future aspirations. A letter from Carl is enclosed with this newsletter for your perusal.

Congratulations to Arthur, Gwen and 20 other members who received certificates.

A letter will be sent out to those of you who couldn't attend for arrangements to be made for you to have them presented at the AGM in March, 2019.

#### Awards Explanation:

In previous times Divisions awarded certificates of membership to those members who had continuous 15yrs, 25yrs, 35yrs, 45yrs, 50yrs & 60+yrs in that Division

As we are now the Air Force Association Ltd recognition between states has been introduced as members move about our country. Whilst this is a good idea, it has created a few problems as the information from each state doesn't accompany the member.

However, we have started this process and are now asking you our members to help us achieve this goal. If you have had continuous RAAFA membership anywhere else other than the ACT, would you please send me this information so that our records can reflect this and correct certificates can be presented accordingly. Hopefully I have explained this satisfactorily otherwise please feel free to contact me for further information.

Activities I have attended on your behalf as well as the Air Force Association Ltd:  
65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean Armistice Memorial Service HMAS Canberra  
Vietnam Veterans' Day VVCS Regional Meeting  
Cadets Rifle Shooting Competition & Presentation Dinner  
Battle of Australia Ceremony Defence Women's Inaugural Dinner  
315 AAFC Squadron Dining In Night 2 Day Transition Seminar  
Centenary of Armistice Commemoration at Point Cook Directors' Meeting  
Gala Dinner at Government House "A Night To Remember" 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Armistice  
Remembrance Day at the Australian War Memorial

I would like to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, look forward to catching up with you in 2019.

Judy Webster  
President

Below. Award recipient's with Carl Schiller AFA National President and President Judy RAAFA ACT taken on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at Ainslie Football Club.



Dear Colleagues

## Open Letter to Air Force Association Membership

I have always believed every disaster provides at least one opportunity. The catastrophic Great War gave rise to the need to create the Australian Flying Corps Association to support AFC veterans and provide them with mateship opportunities. The legacy the Association provided has served our Air Force veterans and their families through subsequent conflicts. And it is clear, there will continue to be a need to support our former and current serving Air Force colleagues into the foreseeable future.

The Air Force Association aims to be the leading voice for the Air Force family during and after their time in uniform through its pillars of advocacy, fellowship and perseveration of Air Force history and heritage.

My observation is that we are good at fellowship and preserving Air Force history and heritage. Each Division has a strong focus on fellowship especially at branch level where members have an affinity based on unit, geography, Service employment stream, operation, or some other commonality. Commemorations show our support of Air Force history and heritage, provide the opportunity for mateship and demonstrate our membership's acknowledgement of service and sacrifice. However, I believe the Association has drifted away from one of the most important reasons for its existence, which is providing support to our veterans and families.

Earlier this year the National Board agreed to actively assist the RAAF Firefighter Group in its long-term bid to obtain recognition and health care assistance relating to exposure to toxic chemicals during training and employment. Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Association have an arrangement that involves the Association case managing claims submissions for ADF firefighters who experienced toxic exposure on duty. An Advocacy & Entitlements Committee reporting to the Association's Vice-President (Advocacy & Entitlements) has been established to deal with this matter and other class litigant type cases.

Very recently, the National Board endorsed a proposal to establish an Air Force Association National Advocacy Service to assist veterans and families. This will comprise a salaried and volunteer advocacy workforce that will include Wellbeing Support Officers and Compensation Advocates. The Board recognises that the veteran community has shrunk in size compared to the pre-Timor Crisis era when large footprint operations eventually placed many operationally experienced veterans into the community. Volunteers have always comprised a small percentage of the population so it's not surprising a smaller veteran population has a reduced capacity to provide volunteers. Moreover, many TIP trained welfare and compensation officers who have delivered years of selfless service are aged and some do not wish to be upskilled in a new advocacy training program. Consequently, the Association must adapt to meet the changing veteran landscape.

The National Advocacy Service will be managed and funded by AFA Ltd, and be administratively supported by WA Division that has a substantially developed business infrastructure and IT support system. The National Advocacy Service must provide veterans and families with a consistent, highly professional service. Client outcome and the Association's reputation as a valuable not-for profit veteran support agency are at stake. The service would be available to any veteran regardless of service or membership of the Association, and will require significant funding that needs to be sourced outside of the membership. An AFA Ltd Board sub-committee has been established to source funding for the National Advocacy Service and other support

The Association with well-developed support services at times will not be able to meet the needs of all veterans. Consequently, it will be important we cultivate and nurture working relationships with other ex-service organisations who may at times be in a better position to assist those who might be outside our reach. There are more than 3,000 ex-service organisations and other support agencies in Australia, which have support resources of various kinds. There is no room for 'turf protection' among ex-service organisations because demarcation can deny veterans and families the support they require. We must all work towards building these working and mate-support relationships.

This increased focus on veteran and family support is about reinforcing a core objective. However, this doesn't mean a reduction in focus on our other pillars. Fellowship is central to our being. We developed as air force people understanding the importance of team work and mutual support. However, fellowship is not a priority for all air force people, but it is likely many may wish to belong to an association that has a high reputation for delivering quality veteran support services and have noble ideals.

'Wings', the Association's official periodical, will soon be published by RAAFANSW Publications Pty Ltd that publishes 'Welcome' magazines for several Air Force bases. The decision to change publishers after three decades was influenced by a profit-share arrangement between RAAFANSW Publications and AFA Ltd. The earnings will go towards funding the Association's veteran and family support programs.

The Air Force Association needs to ensure it is a relevant, contemporary service organisation, and not just an ex-service organisation. We are, generically speaking, airmen for life and need to demonstrate we are a unified organisation speaking with one voice that has consistent policies and processes and can deliver a professional standard of support services to veterans regardless of where they reside. Distracting from this image is the existing array of membership categories, different Division titles, multiple databases and websites, and varying subscription fees and policies. I very much appreciate 'the association' has grown from different roots and each Division developed differently. Smoothing out these wrinkles will be a challenge but not an insurmountable one providing we all share the vision and stand together.

The Association has tremendous potential to be a leading ex-service organisation through its veteran and family support activities. We must look for the opportunities to uphold our ideals, meet the challenges along the way, and preserve the legacy left to us by the Australian Flying Corps Association. I look forward to your support in further developing the Air Force Association.

Your truly



Carl Schiller, OAM CSM  
National President

## **AIR FORCE NEWS**

For those members who would like to read The Airforce News (RAAF NEWS) on line then you can by going online and use this link on

[www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews](http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews)

## **AGM MEETING.**

The proposed 2019 RAAFA ACT Div. Inc`s Annual General Meeting is called for Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 11.30 hrs at the Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie ACT.

This will be followed by a Luncheon with a guest speaker yet to be advised.

## **RAAF 100th ANNIVERSARY 2021**

The RAAF is celebrating its 100th anniversary throughout 2021. We will keep you all informed of RAAF, RAAFA and ACT Division planned activities and major events.



## **SUBMISSIONS**

Submissions or requests for discussion topics for the Newsletter are to be sent direct to The RAAFA ACT Div Inc. Newsletter Editor John Webster at [johnnw@inet.net.au](mailto:johnnw@inet.net.au) .

We are particularly interested in personal stories and anecdotes (with pictures preferably) from members service and/or personal histories. So please send me items or even if you would like to see something explained or detailed just let us know.

## **RAAFA (ACT DIVISION) MISSION.**

To foster friendships based on sharing Air Force and aviation experiences; to support commemorative activities, heritage and records of history; and to provide for the welfare of members through advice, liaison and representation.

- ⇒ **Patron:** Air Marshal David Evans AC DSO AFC (Retd)
- ⇒ **President:** Mrs Judy Webster

## **INFORMATION**

For membership and general enquiries please contact:

- ⇒ RAAF Association (ACT Division)  
Secretary  
Mr James Elsbury  
Email: [secactraafa@bigpond.com](mailto:secactraafa@bigpond.com) Mobile: 0428 622 105

### CONTACTS

#### **President**

- ⇒ Judy Webster - [actraafapres@iinet.net.au](mailto:actraafapres@iinet.net.au)

#### **Secretary**

- ⇒ James Elsbury - 0428 622105 - [secactraafa@bigpond.com](mailto:secactraafa@bigpond.com)

#### **Vice President**

- ⇒ Vacant

#### **Treasurer**

- ⇒ John Webster - [johnnw@iinet.net.au](mailto:johnnw@iinet.net.au)

#### **Newsletter Editor**

- ⇒ John Webster

#### **Committee**

- ⇒ Mac Cottrell - [macthefac@tpg.com.au](mailto:macthefac@tpg.com.au)
- ⇒ Arthur Skimin - [12/1-5 MacNaughton St, HOLT ACT 2515](#)
- ⇒ Allan George [ahgeorge19@gmail.com](mailto:ahgeorge19@gmail.com)
- ⇒ Bob Weight - 0412 427 346 - [bob.weight@bigpond.com](mailto:bob.weight@bigpond.com)