



**June 2011**



# MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

*Welcome to the Museum of Australian Army Flying Newsletter*

## Chairmans Chatter Jon Martlew



## Fellow Members

It is an absolute pleasure to congratulate Helen Bawden – one of our longest serving Volunteers and MAAF Board Stalwart, on behalf of everyone associated with our museum on the award of an OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List on 13 June 2011.

The award read *"For service to the community of Queensland as a volunteer with a range of social welfare, historical and women's organisations."*

Helen has been a volunteer with the Museum for 20 years – she began with administrative work, became Minute Secretary for the Board and then in 2007 she was elected as a member of the Board and our official Secretary.

Over the past four years Helen has taken on the lead role for public relations and marketing, and general communications for the Museum - she produces this newsletter (normally over the weekend) which is a substantial contribution in its own right. Helen also currently sits on the Board of Management for Toowoomba Golden West & South Burnett Tourism and is Vice President of the Cultural Heritage Network - Toowoomba Region. Her influence and efforts in the promotion of our Museum is second to none (see Cobb & Co story!!). She is also a key member of the organising team for the annual Fly-In...

For those who are not aware, Helen has also been involved with the facilitation of the Oakey Carers Support Group, for 17 years, helping to organise functions for fellow carers in the Oakey area. She has done many courses to help her support carers and their needs.

Helen's other volunteer interests include facilitating Arthritis Self Help Courses, she is the past President of the Central Downs Rural Women's Network, Oakey Lions Club and she is presently on the Oakey Community Committee that organises the Australia Day and Anzac Day functions and she represents the Museum at the Oakey Chamber of Commerce and Industry Meetings.

I have no doubt you, like me, were thrilled to see Helen receive this award – it truly recognises 'great' service...

The other activities/issues that I would like to bring to your attention are included later in the newsletter.



**Helen Bawden OAM**  
Photo taken by Bob Bell

## Opening of the MAAF display at the Cobb & Co Museum

On 9 June, our MAAF display at the Cobb & Co Museum in Toowoomba was formally opened by Councillor Ros Scotney, from the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC), in front of 23 special guests, who included the Honorable Ian Macfarlane MP, Federal Member for Groom and Patron of the MAAF, BRIG Neil Turton - AAAvn Head of Corps and new Director General Aviation, Forces Command Army, BRIG Bill Mellor (Ret) President of the Australian Army Aviation Association, Mayor Peter Taylor (TRC), LTCOL Murray Coward – Chief of Staff, Army Aviation Training Centre, and representatives from the following organisations - Toowoomba Golden West & South Burnett Tourism, the Cultural Heritage Network – Toowoomba Region, Cobb & Co Museum, Main Roads Museum and of course members from our own museum – directors, volunteers, friends and management.

Councillor Scotney holds the portfolio of Cultural, Heritage and Facilities Services in TRC and is the representative for the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF), which provided funding for the display.

Following the opening, she was thanked on our behalf by Mr Macfarlane who spoke about his pride in the growth of the MAAF from a collection in a room many years ago to the professional tourist attraction that it is today.

The MAAF Display was the result of an initiative - the Heritage Treasures Launch - of the Cultural Heritage Network - Toowoomba Region, supported by the RADF, which is a Queensland Government and TRC partnership to support local arts and culture. Our display will be in location for six weeks, so if anyone is in Toowoomba, please take the time to visit the Cobb & Co Museum and see the fantastic effort that our volunteers (especially Peter Ford) have done to put the display together.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of HQ 16 Aviation Brigade for providing ARES days – and WO2 Lloyd Bowles – in order to develop a “Museum Significance Assessment” that was required to access this opportunity. The Significance Assessment will continue to be developed and maintained as a key document required by any modern museum.



**Board member and Volunteer Peter Ford with Vicki Warden, Museum Development Coordinator, Museum Development Officer for Southern Inland Queensland**

## New opening times for the MAAF

As of 1 July the MAAF will no longer be open seven days per week. The decision has been made to close the MAAF on Mondays and Tuesdays (our quiet days) so that the staff will have the opportunity to complete necessary administration and management of the museum. Most of you will be aware that we have only one full-time staff member who is supported by a dedicated group of reservists and volunteers – this has proven insufficient to maintain the museum open for seven days per week.

Bus and tourist companies have been notified of these changes and should they wish to visit on either Monday or Tuesday we will make the effort to open for them as we will do for any tour group who book in advance.

Additionally, the MAAF will open for the full 7-day week during Queensland school holidays and on Public Holidays.

## Strategic Planning Meeting

The Board held a MAAF Strategic Planning meeting at the Bellman Hangar on Sunday 26 June. At this time we reviewed the vision, mission and major tasks of the Museum. It was a very useful opportunity to review the good work done to date and our plan for the future.

It also provided an opportunity for the Board to visit the Bellman Hangar and be briefed on the plans for this great asset (thanks Gary), and to see first-hand some of the work being conducted by our volunteers.



Following the meeting, a BBQ lunch was held with the volunteers – thanks to Helen for providing the food.

### Visit by the Capability Alignment Conference/ AAAvn Corps Committee

On Wednesday 29 June, I hosted the attendees of the Army Aviation Capability Alignment Conference (LTCOL to BRIG and SNCO – from Army, Capability Systems Group, DMO, Forces Command, 16 Avn Bde, AAAvnTC and all of the operational units) during a visit to the Bellman Hangar and to the MAAF and provided them with a brief on the Museum and our major issues and requested their help where possible. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the senior serving officers and NCO and their desire to support the museum where possible. Helen and Scott took the opportunity at morning tea to recruit new members and garner further support.



I also attended the AAAvn Corps Committee meeting on Thursday 30 June and provided a short update on the Museum. MAJGEN Jim Molan, AO DSC - the Honorary Colonel AAAvn, chaired the meeting and was very supportive and appreciative of the efforts of the MAAF as was BRIG Neil Turton – Head of Corps and BRIG Greg Lawler – Commander 16 Avn Brigade.

MAJGEN Molan indicated that he had discussed manning levels for the MAAF at Army Headquarter level but, due to staff cutbacks for all of the Museums in the Army Museum Network over recent years, he had been advised that it would be very difficult to justify an additional full-time position. Nonetheless, he remains one of our staunchest allies.



The annual AAAvn Corps Dinner was also held in Oakey on Thursday 30 June and I attended as the MAAF's representative. Well done to WO2 Downs for the historical display that he set up at the Officers Mess for the dinner. The Dining-In Chairman WO1 John Phillips OAM, RSM AAAvnTC, thanked Scott and the MAAF for the display.

### Congratulations to COL Scott Benbow

On behalf of everyone at the MAAF, I would like to congratulate COL Scott Benbow, Deputy Chairman of the Board, for his promotion to Colonel at the Corps Dinner. COL Benbow has been a member of the board for three years and has been a wonderful advocate for the ongoing development of the Museum. As one of the two serving members of the Board he has provided outstanding support to me and to the museum during his time as a Director.

### Welcome to new Manager

It is my pleasure to welcome Major Nick Sanders into the MAAF Manager position commencing 1 July. With some additional ARES days provided by Army History Unit, Nick and Paul Schrodter (who put in a sterling 150 days last financial year) plan to provide significantly more management coverage throughout the year.

Nick has previously served in Oakey in both the 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment, as Adjutant, and in the School of Army Aviation, as 2IC, and is well respected by all.

### Managers Musings

#### WO1 Paul Schrodter



Visitor numbers have been fair the past month.

As suspected the cooler weather we have had lately has slowed down the mice we were having a lot of trouble with in the previous month.

On 1 July, MAJ Nicholas Sanders marched into the Museum as the Manager and in the next Newsletter I will make sure that he introduces himself. I will be staying on as the Assistant Manager for a while, however I will be taking a holiday for most of July and all of August. I will be travelling to the warmer parts of North Queensland.

There has been some very good progress made over the past month in regards to reorganisation of storage hangars as we now have a forklift to assist.

Also due to some extra funding from the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) we have been able to get some work carried out in Building C23 which is an annex to the Bellman Hangar. This building is to be used as our conservation and preservation facility and will bring the majority of our work areas closer to Bellman and assists us greatly with our supervision and safety responsibilities in regards to our volunteer workforce.

## Curators Corner WO2 Scott Downs



G'day Everyone

Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was unable to get a report in for the last newsletter so this one will be a fairly lengthy article. I hope you will bear with me!!

Firstly, an update on the C-23 conversion to the Conservation Centre is in order. Work has very much started and the contractors are pushing ahead nicely. Air conditioning has been fitted to what will be the Library and also to the Textile and paper room. The toilets have been refurbished and we now actually have both Men's and Lady's facilities in the workshop precinct. The old NDI wash room has been stripped, and this will become the freezer/wash/dry room for

textiles, and will also be where Bobby will be able to store film and negatives in a cool dry environment. AAHU has come to the party with the purchase of the white goods for this area which is an excellent result for us. There is some time pressure to have all the work completed by the end of the financial year, but this is in the hands of the contractors and we have nothing to do but wait, and keep our fingers crossed!!



The procurement of the three replica aircraft from Victoria is progressing well. Pete Ford, Pete White and Daryl Richter travelled down to assist with the pack up of both the aircraft and the many sundry items that have been donated to us. The aircraft are two SE5a and a Sopwith Camel. Both types were flown by the AFC in WW1 and in fact the AFC's highest scoring ace, Harry Cobby, DSO DFC, flew Camel with No 4 SQN. Though Cobby's final tally for the war is often given as 29 aircraft and 13 observation balloons destroyed, claim-by-claim analyses of his victories credit him with 24 aircraft and five balloons, for a grand total of 29, making him the highest-scoring member of the AFC, as well as the service's only "Balloon Busting" ace. His proudest boast however, was that as a flight commander he never lost a pilot over enemy territory. Cobby

was also a main character in the Second World War, and was heavily involved in the Morotai Mutiny, but he was a RAAFie by then so we can ignore that!!! I am hoping that we can present our Camel as Cobby flew his in 1917/18. This will become a major project in the latter half of 2011.

**Photo left shows the Sopwith Camel after it arrived Wednesday 29 June from Melbourne**



The museum continues to receive donations from various sources, and the curatorial and library staff were recently delighted to take the possession of over 150 aviation themed books and many hundreds of magazines. This is the Kay and Kevin Clarke collection. Kev tells us he began collecting the books just after the Second World War, so it is an extremely good reference source for the evolution of post war aviation. The MAAF would like to express our deep thanks to Kev and Kay for their contribution. Margaret Ford almost had a bad turn when she realised that as our librarian she will have to catalogue all these items!!!

On the subject of Donations, the CO 5 AVN REGT has donated the enemy weapons the REGT is currently holding in their armoury to the Museum. The arrival of these weapons coupled with the arrival of new display cabinetry and some discussion with 32 Security Section in Enoggera will hopefully lead to the Museums first display of captured weapons. The weapons from 5 AVN REGT are all from the capability's modern era, and include items from Cambodia, Timor and Afghanistan. Additionally, the Acting RSM of the REGT has furnished the MAAF with a painted unit sign for display in the main Hangar. It is hoped the other units of the capability will now "come to the party". I feel these outcomes are the direct result of face to face meetings with the officers and soldiers of the REGT and hope that I will be able to visit the other units of the capability during the next financial year.

**Kevin and Kay Clarke after delivering their collection of books to donate to the Museum**



The Museum made a huge step forward with its creation of the travelling display for the Cobb & Co Museum exhibit. Aply led by Peter Ford, a small group created a wonderful small exhibition that will become a permanent fixture upon its return to the MAAF. The most pleasing aspect of this exhibit is that the largest part of it describes the modern, post Vietnam era. The display contains items that in the most part have been donated to the MAAF by current serving members of the capability. I heartily recommend that if you are local or are passing through Toowoomba that you drop in and see the Cobb & Co Museum, and spend a few minutes at the MAAF exhibition.

Many other small projects continue to roll forward, and I would like to thank Gary Watson and the volunteers for untiring work on the continued re-organisation of the Lysaght hangar spaces. We are almost at the stage that we can actually see most of the collection.

Well, that brings me to the end of this report and it really only highlights the last several weeks. The museum really seems to have some traction forward at the moment, so once again I ask all of you to encourage anyone with items that may be of interest to contact the museum. Our soldiers are making history as we speak, the only ones that have to be convinced of that are the soldiers themselves.

Scotty

**The MAAF Spanner Bangers (MSB) Club  
WO1 Gary Watson**



***“Go get your marbles and put them in the house, tear down your castles in the sand”***

Jack Frost and his mates have returned with your typical Oakey Winter freezing the pipes and joints of many of our MSB workers. Of course the tell tale sign for our volunteers (apart from the smell of Deep Heat) is when the rodents take refuge in the fridge, presumably because it is warmer. But one of the great things of working for the MAAF Curatorial Staff (aside from never a dull moment) is the whip keeps cracking which in Winter at least ensures the crusties keep moving and don't seize up. In the words of the **“Delltones”** *‘We gotta lotta big plans and a lotta hard work to be done’*. As we crack (there's that whip again) the half way mark for the year, the MSB has just passed through the 4,800 man hour mark. Keep moving team!

It has been a rollercoaster toaster this month (without the four poster bed) with megastars and safety issues both surfacing within the workshop. With a visit from **Dame Edna (AKA Helen Bawden)** blessing the workshop with her presence and newly acquired OAM. Now that is a huge wow factor! It was red cordial time (we don't have any red carpet) and time for photographs with the MSB crew cueing for a photo opportunity. Well **B Squared** and **Little Bob** were kept busy anyway. Although we have issued the occasional DCM (don't come Monday) to some of the MSB crew, we have nothing to compare really. Well done Helen, the Gladies are on the way!

It was also time to take stock of our unblemished safety record with a review of our machinery and safety systems in preparation for the Army Safe Team visit in July. With antiquated machinery (matches the workers) and buildings the challenge is to somehow match modern standards with equipment never designed to accept it. In any case the audit is welcomed by the MAAF and serves as a good reminder to ensure we are complying (to the best of our ability) with current OH&S legislation and safety requirements.

The refurbishment of our spares inventory hanger (C38) is well on the way to completion in so far as removing unwanted crates of stuff and replacing them with relevant and significant items. The old unsecured shelving has been

removed and replaced with secure parts cages, which was a bit of a challenge, due to different sizes and shapes. A bit like a game of Tetras (do kids still play that?) there is only so many ways you can flip a huge steel parts cage. With some floor space regained it was time for the two Peters to commence bagging and tagging a plethora of pallets and crates of that famous stuff.

The carpentry shop (C39) also copped a workout this month with a huge purge of stuff exiting the building, although it mostly went to other hangars. With more timber product that even "**Paul Bunyan**" couldn't knock down, we now have a serious well equipped timber workshop full of big boy's toys. With the smell of wood shavings and PVA glue purveying the hangar, the race is on to construct the timber platform for the Bleriot aircraft. Additionally we have now regained some hangar space to receive one of our next projects in the form of a partially constructed Sopwith Camel. Which by the way has now arrived from Melbourne.

Finally work has now commenced in earnest on the textiles and tech library section (C23) with disused ducting removed, air conditioners in, and the floor coverings about to be laid. In the words of "**Walt Disney**" (and no he is not one of our volunteers although I do have a couple living in Disneyland) "*All your dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them*".



Ken, ably assisted by Neil working on the new stand for the Bleriot.

This month another shady character of the workshop comes to mind. When it comes to bumping your gums **Kenny (ava chat) Matuszczac** leaves them all for dead. A self-confessed, gun totalling, cordite sniffing, red neck, there is nothing Ken loves more (apart from a good chat) than shooting the stuffing out of anything of the four leg variety. Known for his ability to squeeze the odd bodgie or two into his (not so) hectic work schedule and also for his poor judgement of measurement when asking for a little bit of material for home tasks (a few inches normally equates to several yards) Ken has one of those senses of humour which is infectious (makes everyone want to run away). He can always be relied upon to rock up late for brief with the standard excuse he was held up by traffic lights in Oakey. So if you have anything that needs to be put out of it's misery (I can think of a few around the workshop) give Ken a call. Although be prepared for a lengthy discussion prior to anything happening.

That wraps it for another month as we prepare to hit the Queensland Air Museum (QAM) with another travelling road show. So if you happen to be in sunny Caloundra (it usually rains) over the weekend 02-03 July call in at QAM and say g'day. It is an awesome museum and well worth a look. (**Editor's note: Unfortunately the newsletter is being compiled after "the event", we will have photos of the travelling road show next month!**)

So until next time, keep bangin those spanners!

WOIC MSB

### Tourism Queensland Film Crew

Wednesday 29 June we welcomed a crew of photographers from Tourism Queensland who are visiting tourist attractions on the Darling Downs doing photo shoots to update their data base of members of Toowoomba Golden West & South Burnett Tourism. An exciting couple of hours was spent with the film crew with "lights, camera, action" and we look forward to seeing the new promotional photos when they have been edited. WO2 Downs was kept busy and "starred" in many of the photos.



**Sir Reginald Swartz KBE MBE ED**  
**Honorary Colonel AAAvn Corps 9 Jan 1969 - 30 July 1974**

### **Family visit**

The afternoon of Thursday 30 June we welcomed the Swartz family to the Museum. Chairman Jon Martlew gave them a quick tour of the Museum with assistance from COL Peter Steel.

The family are very much impressed with the Museum and enjoyed their tour.

### **Retiring the Last Huey**

The story below was sent to me by a member of the MAAF and I felt it fitting to share with you all.

#### ***This is the speech given at Fort Rucker when they retired the last Huey on 17 May 2011***

As a Vietnam Veteran Army Aviator, I would like to thank everyone for coming to this special occasion, on this to be honest...very sad day, the end of an era. An era that has spanned over 50 years. The retirement of this grand old lady "OUR MOTHER" ... the Huey.

I would like to thank, MG Crutchfield for allowing me to speak at this event and try to convey in my own inadequate, meagre way, what this aircraft means to me and so many other Vietnam veterans.

First a few facts: It was 48 yrs ago this month that the first Huey arrived in Vietnam with units that were to become part of the 145th and the 13th Combat Aviation Battalions; both units assigned here at Ft Rucker today. While in Vietnam, the Huey flew approximately 7,457,000 combat assault sorties; 3,952,000 attack or gunship sorties and 3,548,000 cargo supply sorties. That comes to over 15 million sorties flown over the paddies and jungles of Nam, not to include the millions of sorties flown all over the world and other combat zones since then ....what a amazing journey.... I am honoured and humbled to have been a small part of that journey.

To those in the crowd that have had the honour to fly, crew, or ride this magnificent machine in combat, we are the chosen few, the lucky ones . They understand what this aircraft means, and how hard it is for me to describe my feelings about her as a Vietnam combat pilot.... for she is alive... has a life of her own, and has been a lifelong friend.

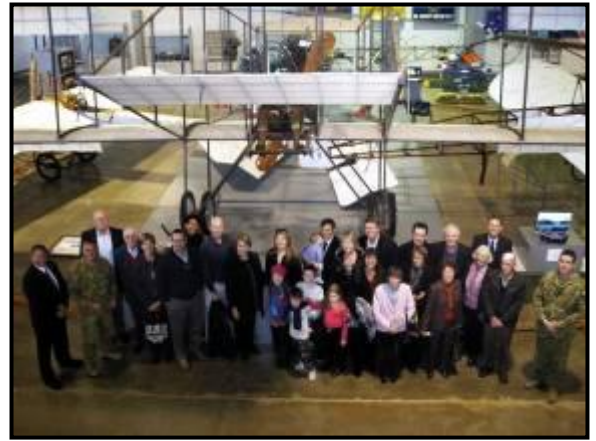
How do I break down in a few minutes a 42 year love affair, she is as much a part of me, and to so many others as the blood that flows through our veins. Try to imagine all those touched over the years ...by the shadow of her blades.

Other aircraft can fly overhead and some will look up and some may not; or even recognize what they see but, when a Huey flies over everyone looks up and everyone knows who she is... young or old all over the world she connects with all.

To those that rode her into combat... the sound of those blades causes our heart beat to rise... and breaths to quicken... in anticipation of seeing that beautiful machine fly overhead and the feeling of comfort she brings. No other aircraft in the history of aviation evokes the emotional response the Huey does... combat veteran's or not... she is recognized all around the world by young and old, she is the ICON of the Vietnam war, U.S. Army Aviation, and the U.S. Army. Over 5 decades of service she carried Army Aviators on her back, from bird dogs and piston powered helicopters with a secondary support mission, to the force multiplier combat arm that Army Aviation is today.

Even the young aviators of today, that are mainly Apache pilot's, Blackhawk pilot's, etc., that have had a chance to fly her will tell you there is no greater feeling, honour, or thrill then to be blessed with the opportunity to ride her thru the sky... they may love there Apaches and Blackhawks, but they will say there is no aircraft like flying the Huey " it is special". There are two kinds of helicopter pilots: those that have flown the Huey and those that wish they could have.

The intense feelings generated for this aircraft are not just from the flight crews but, also from those who rode in back ...into and out of the "devils caldron". As paraphrased here from "Gods own lunatics", Joe Galloway's tribute to the Huey and her flight crews and other Infantry veterans' comments: Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades?? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war...the lullaby of our younger days it is burned in to our brains and our hearts. To those who spent their time in Nam as a grunt, know that noise was always a great comfort... Even today when I hear it, I stop...catch my breath...and search the sky for a glimpse of the mighty eagle.



To the pilots and crews of that wonderful machine ...we loved you, we loved that machine.

No matter how bad things were...if we called ... you came... down through the hail of green tracers and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. Â I can still hear the sound of those blades churning the fiery sky ....To us you seemed beyond brave and fearless... Down you would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin skin - chariots ...into the storm of fire and hell ...we feared for you , we were awed by you. We thought of you and that beautiful bird as "God's own lunatics"... and wondered ...who are these men and this machine and where do they come from ..... Have to be "Gods Angels".

So with that I say to her, that beautiful lady sitting out there, from me and all my lucky brothers, that were given the honour to serve their country, and the privilege of flying this great lady in skies of Vietnam - Thank you for the memories...Thank you for always being there...Thank you for always bringing us home regardless of how beat up and shot up you were...Thank You!!!!

You will never be forgotten, we loved you then..... we love you now... and will love you till our last breath ...

And as the sun sets today, if you listen quietly and closely you will hear that faint wop wop wop of our mother speaking to all her children past and present who rode her into history in a blaze of glory ...she will be saying to them: Â I am here... I will always be here with you. I am at peace and so should you be ... and so should you be.

### Editors Edits



As you can see June has been an extremely busy month at the MAAF, hence I am late in getting out the newsletter. I have purposely waited till now, so as you could get all the latest news. It is unfortunate that the "snail mail" members will not receive their newsletters for another three weeks as we do not have a person working the printing office on the base at Oakey at present and all our printing requirements are done at Amberley with a 21 day turn around period. Until this situation is rectified, please bear with us, or if anyone can help with a solution, please contact me, we would appreciate it.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other five members of the Australian Army aviation community who were recognised in both the civil and military lists in the Queen's Birthday Awards on 13 June. They are Frank Benfield, Brian Huddleston, Warrant Officer Class One John Phillips, Major Terry Johnson and Warrant Officer Class Two Vivian Anderson. Of the six of us, four are members of the Museum of Australian Army Flying!

For me it is an honour and I am proud to be a recipient of the award. I would also like to thank all those who have contacted me with congratulations messages it has been very much appreciated.

### Membership of the MAAF

I am still conducting a membership drive for the Museum. Many of you who are already members of the Museum must know of, or are in contact with many who are not as yet members of the MAAF. We would like to see many more serving military members as part of the MAAF family. This is your Museum and with your help and input we can obtain a comprehensive coverage of the ongoing history and heritage of Army aviation.

There is over 100 years of history out there, many have helped us with memorabilia and photos; but there must be so much more that we still need to collect and with your help we can gradually reach our goal.

# ROTORS, WINGS n WHEELS

## FLY-IN

# 1 - 2 OCTOBER 2011

Museum of Australian Army Flying

Army Airfield, Oakey, Qld 4401. Phone 07 4577 7666

Open 10.00am to 4.00pm Wednesday to Sunday. Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day  
Admission: \$5.00 adults, \$12.00 family (2 adults and up to 3 children) and \$2.00 children.