



# MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

*April 2008*



**Dear Members**

*March was another busy month. We hope you all had an enjoyable safe Easter. This months' newsletter is packed with "happenings" and stories. I hope you enjoy*

## **MANAGER'S MUSINGS – Major Barry Skinner**



Welcome to this month's newsletter. Easter has come and gone and the school holidays are all but upon us and it will not be long before we are into October (weekend 18-19) with the Fly-In. The Fly-In organisation is progressing slowly but surely and we have already received a \$2,000.00 donation from Dick Smith and \$100.00 from Advanced Theory of Flight Centre at Maroochydore. We have written to many war bird operators, local car, motorcycle and model clubs inviting them to attend and to date we have had positive responses.

The MAAF has been on a recruiting drive and to date we have received eight new members. It is pleasing to see new Life Members join and thanks go to COL Anthony "Hector" McWatters, LTCOL Chris Hadzi, MAJs Terry "Sandles" Johnson & Mark Wharton. New yearly memberships from MAJs Andrew "Ned" Kelly & Geoff Coulter and LTCOL Neil Monaghan who is now the sixth Aviation Corps member currently serving who is a member of the MAAF. Well done Sir, I look forward to many more Aviators joining the MAAF. RAEME membership is so much stronger!

As many would know I spent much of the last two years, along with the assistance of the Board Members, rewriting the MAAF's Operating Agreement and Constitution. They are both now finalised and the Board Members are now actively assisting in rewriting the MAAF's Strategic Plan (SP) and from that we will update and rewrite the Business Plan. We have now had two working groups and our SP is coming along. Mr Brian Manns (Deputy Head of Army History Unit) attended our first working group and provided much needed assistance and advice. Our Vision and Mission have been revamped and we are now working away identifying the MAAF's Short, Medium and Long Term Goals. I am also involved in writing the MAAF SOPs.

Back on 17 Jan this year we had the Isdale family visit the MAAF from Brisbane. We received an email from Bill Isdale that I would like to share with you:

*"I visited the museum yesterday with my wife and 4 teenage children. We have been to the RAAF museum at Point Cook only a week or so ago and noticed some significant differences.*

*Your facility was particularly appealing because the exhibits are in such superbly presented condition; not a speck of dust or corrosion was to be seen. Being able to approach them closely and to look inside was particularly satisfying. The open doors and access hatches allowed us to get a real appreciation of the working parts of the machinery. I couldn't help feeling that we were in a hangar where operational aircraft were ready to roll out and fly. This made us feel that we were looking at a remote exhibit, behind glass, so to speak, but at the real thing. It helped that the aircraft were mostly on the same level as us; that gave the impression of being a part of it all. We came away impressed with Army aviation. I have no doubt the value of the Flying Museum to the public understanding of the Army would be significant.*

*The lounge chairs were a thoughtful touch and much appreciated.*

*Thank you very much for the excellent experience that you have made available for us to enjoy.*

*One of my sons has an interest in learning to fly a helicopter so the experience was particularly enriching.*

*I wish you continued success with your very worthwhile project*

*Best regards*

*Bill Isdale*

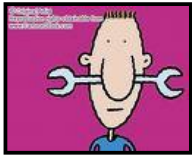
*Brisbane"*

This is your museum and all the thanks go to the volunteers who assist every week in keeping the exhibits to the standard described above.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> Mar the Museum had a tour group attend from Cross Country Tours. On the tour group were two old and bolds. The one and only SGT Ed Trickett (Retd) (now 69 years young and looks really well) who was running

the Sheet Metal Shop back in 5 Base Workshop Days of 69-83 and SSGT Bob Bass (Retd) who was the QM in 161 South Vietnam from Apr 68-Apr 69. It was great to catch up with both gentlemen.

## THE MAAF SPANNER BANGERS (MSB) CLUB WO1 Gary Watson



Not all the aircraft of the MAAF Museum are on display some are either in storage or undergoing restoration. This is the first of a four part series to advise readers of the tremendous work being undertaken by the MAAF volunteer aircraft restoration and maintenance crews in actively restoring three separate aircraft types. This is in addition to the ongoing maintenance required of the various storage and display aircraft held in numerous hangars and buildings throughout the museum complex. Affectionately known as the MSB Club (at least it is now) these "Trojans" of work form the backbone of the project and preservation work required to keep the MAAF Museum as a national attraction within Australia.

Currently the MSB Club is currently restoring a PC6 Pilatus Porter (A14-704) a CA-25 Winjeel Trainer (constructing one aircraft from two available fuselages A85-449 & 406) and an MKVc Trop Supermarine Spitfire (A58-27). All work is being conducted in the Bellman Hangar (for the olds and bolts 5BW Heavy Repair Shop) on Base at the Oakey Army Aviation Centre. Whilst the hangar is as old if not older than some of the aircraft undergoing restoration it provides a more stable environment and better facilities to enable work to be carried out, than previously achieved in the Lysart Hangars. It is hoped that soon we will be able to conduct extended tours from the MAAF Museum (Display Hangar) to the Bellman Hangar to allow visitors to see the work that is being carried out by the maintenance teams. This would also allow the opportunity for visitors to learn about the history of the Bellman Hangar (in itself dates back to 1943).



With around twenty-two active MSB members (AKA museum volunteers) divided into the three separate aircraft types the race is on to see which aircraft roles out the hangar first. There is a slight advantage for both the Porter and Winjeel crews as they at least have a fuselage and wings to work with. In the case of the Spitfire Crew they are essentially building the aircraft from scratch, which is an absolutely amazing task!

Logistic support to these mammoth tasks is vested in the "Three Amigos" a group of crusty semi retired or soon to be retired Army WOs. With WO1 Paul Schrodter providing stores, tooling and (at times) sustenance to the eager volunteer workforce. He cooks up a mean BBQ! WO2 Greg Beard provides the Q Store element and in typical Q fashion obtains things that you would not believe possible. It is amazing what units do not require anymore (or so he tells us). The team is rounded off with WO1 Gary Watson who looks after the technical side of the house. An over possessive WO who wants to own anything and everything the Museum owns pertaining to aircraft maintenance and nothing else. When he is not building Rocket Stoves and other camp cooking paraphernalia he is actively guiding the MSB workforce to the many tasks provided by the Museum Curator and Inventor of work Mr Brian "Bung" Reardon.

In the next part of this series we will take a look at the MKVc Spitfire rebuild project indicating some of its history and also cover the restoration crew (MSB Members) undertaking this labour of love.

So until next time, keep bangin those spanners!  
WOIC MSB



Photos show Volunteers at a recent BBQ  
Breakfast held at the Bellman Hangar

## UNINVITED VISITOR – As explained by Len Avery

On a Thursday afternoon recently a certain 'visitor' entered the Museum at Oakey and refused to pay his admission fee and when he was asked to leave the 'visitor' objected strongly and attempted to take out his aggression on two of our valuable volunteers (Bert Pullen and Barry Bawden).

The visitor was not interested in talking about the rules and regulations regarding dress and bearing or legal access to the Museum therefore our two volunteers had no choice but to take matters into their own hands and beat the crap out of unwanted visitor before throwing him out of the hangar.

Fortunately there were no other witnesses to the incident therefore in regards to the question of the level of force applied to eject the uninvited, aggressive visitor, it would be his word against the two volunteers, and fortunately he is not talking.

I am quite confident that there will be no future claims for compensation or medical expenses by the ejected visitor. I have it on good authority that he will not be returning to the Museum however, the same can not be said for members of his family or close relations, who may feel it is their duty to check out the Museum from time to time.

I dare say that all staff members and volunteers at the Museum will be made aware of possible visits by similar non friendly visitors to the Museum and that suitable training will be carried out to ensure that any future 'uninvited guests' are not allowed free access to the Museum.

As you can see he was brown and rather large, five to six feet. As you can imagine he was not impressed when 'asked' to leave the hangar and it is easy to imagine that his middle name was 'aggression'.



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Barry Bawden



Barry Bawden was born in Adelaide 09 March 1945. After completing High School at Seaview Downs he started a five-year apprenticeship as a Radio Technician with the then Department of Civil Aviation. He was also a member of the CMF (now known as Ares).

It was always Barry's main aim in life to fly and after he knew he had been conscripted for National Service he applied to become an Army Pilot. He entered the Army on 09 February 1968, did his basic training at Puckapunyal and then Officer Training at Scheyville.

He attended 2/68 Course at Officer Training Unit at Scheyville, where he was awarded the Skill at Arms Prize on graduation on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1968.

From Scheyville while awaiting pilot training, he was posted to Singleton for six months. His tenure at Point Cook on 3 Army Pilots Training Course commenced in March 1969 and eventual graduation (the first on Porters) was held at Amberley on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1970.

On graduation, Barry was posted to 171 Air Cavalry Flight Holsworthy and before he could commence that posting needed to do a conversion back to the Cessna 180 which he flew until 18 months later when Porters arrived at 171. After three years at Holsworthy Barry commenced No 54 Instructor Flying Training Course at Central Flying School, Sale in Victoria and was then posted to Point Cook as a Flying Instructor for three years.

After Point Cook Barry finally had his first posting to Oakey at 173 General Support Squadron, where he had two tours in Indonesia on Operation Cenderawasih in 1976 and 1977. At the end of 1977 he began a Nomad Conversion Course and was then posted ARDU at RAAF Edinburgh where he was a Nomad Test Pilot, followed by 12 months at Keswick Barracks "flying a desk", before leaving for Lae, Papua New Guinea in March 1980 where he spent three years.

January 1983 saw Barry as a student at Command and Staff College, Queenscliff in Victoria and on completion, two years in Canberra as Staff Officer to the Chief of Army Reserve.

Other than flying, Barry's other main hobbies included steam engines (both rail and road), Australian History, visiting historical buildings, bike riding and photography. During his posting in Canberra he competed in many bike rides to raise money for various charities and rode his bike to Russell Offices from Fadden every day rain, hail or shine. After his refresher course back onto Nomad in Oakey in late 1985, he rode his bike back to Canberra for

Christmas (it took him 5 days), an uplift and consequent travel to Oakey to his new posting as SFI AFTW at the School of Army Aviation commencing in January 1986.

In August 1986, whilst in Canberra on weekend stand down Barry had the opportunity to travel on a steam train tour to Goulburn and it was whilst on this tour he sustained severe brain damage in a fall. The initial prognosis was that he would not be coherent, have severe memory loss and will have no taste, smell or sense of hunger or thirst. He would need to endure many months of rehabilitation to be able to live some sort of "normal" life again. After several weeks in Canberra with his family by his side constantly, he was flown back to Queensland where he spent twelve months at the Brain Injury Unit at Baillie Henderson Hospital in Toowoomba. During 1987 and as part of his rehabilitation, his wife Helen started bringing him out to the Museum of Australian Army Flying once a week for a few hours so he could be around aircraft and the military system to try to help him remember his old life.

Barry was medically discharged from the Army on 30 October 1987, and around that time Helen brought him home to live with the family again. His ongoing rehabilitation was speech therapy and days at the Museum when Len Avery would pick him up and take him there for the day. Once Barry was able to drive again, he started visiting the Museum on a more regular basis. It was around this time he began doing the Lions Mints for the Oakey Lions Club, to get him out into the community and learn how to communicate with people and give him confidence again.

Twenty-two years on the Museum of Australian Army Flying is Barry's home away from home. His dedication to the Museum, the staff, the aircraft, delivering brochures all over the Darling Downs to Motels and Information Venues is to be commended. His memory is not good at times; but he can remember every thing about the aircraft he flew and the knowledge he imparts to visitors is invaluable. In his endeavours to be "normal" he has conquered tasks he was never expected to.

**Editors Note:** Barry takes the majority of photos shown in each edition of "Museum Happenings". You must agree he certainly did not loose his photographic skills.

#### **RAEME TO THE RESCUE – A bit of humour**

An Army Sergeant saved the life of an Officer during a horseback riding mishap in Townsville on 17 March 2008.

An Army Captain narrowly escaped serious injury recently when he decided to try horseback riding, even though he had no lessons or prior experience. He mounted the horse, and the horse immediately sprang into action.

As it galloped along at a steady and rhythmic pace, the Captain began to slip from the saddle. He grabbed for the horse's mane, but could not get a firm grip. He tried to throw his arms around the horse's neck, but he began to slide down the side of the horse anyway! The horse galloped along, seemingly impervious to its slipping rider. Finally, losing his frail grip, the Captain attempted to leap away from the horse and throw himself to safety. Unfortunately, his foot became entangled in the stirrup, and he was now at the mercy of the horse as his head struck against the ground over and over and over.

As his head was being battered against the ground and he was mere moments away from unconsciousness, to his great fortune an Army Sergeant shopping at the Kmart saw him and quickly unplugged the horse!!

Close call hey!!!!

#### **DIARY DATES**



The Australian Army Band Brisbane will perform in Toowoomba at the Empire Theatre on Thursday 4 September at 11am. Proceeds from this event will aid the Museum of Australian Army Flying at Oakey.



The Museum of Australian Army Flying **Fly-In** will be held 18-19 October 2008.

We always welcome more helpers/workers. If you would like to volunteer time and skills to the Museum it would be most appreciated. Please contact the staff on 46917666.

Army Airfield, Oakey, Qld 4401. Phone 07 46917666

Email: [AustArmy.FlyingMuseum@defence.gov.au](mailto:AustArmy.FlyingMuseum@defence.gov.au) Web Page: <http://www.army.gov.au/history/museums.htm>

Open 10.00am to 4.00pm daily. Closed Good Friday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day

Admittance: \$5.00 adults, \$12.00 family (2 adults and up to 3 children) and \$2.00 children.

Concessions available for Pension Card Holders and Group Bookings.