MONTHLY MEETINGS
Our monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, (except January), commencing at 1200 hours at the Lakers Football Club Rooms in Wendouree. Due to some redevelopment/construction works, entry is currently off Dowling Street through the previous car park.

Centenary of Armistice Commemoration
Australian Flying Corps Memorial
RAAF Base Point Cook ~ Sunday 4th November 2018

Ballarat was very well represented in respect to the Air Force Association of Victoria's 2018 Pilgrimage to the Australian Flying Corps Memorial at Point Cook in the form of Centenary of Armistice Commemoration.

Branch members Squadron Leader (Chaplain) Keith Lanyon (Ret’d) was Commemoration Chaplain, Barry Turner wrote the Armistice Timeline story, Noel Hutchins was part of the Commemoration Organising Committee and Ms Marion Nunn of Ballarat was one of the Armistice Timeline story speakers.

Above: AFC Memorial with backdrop of a beautiful Poppy Wall gifted to the Air Force Association by the “5,000 Poppies” ladies.
Right: Vintage Harvard aircraft from RAAF Museum Point Cook provided flyovers.
Below: Memorial Guard Bob Roberts from the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance in his “Rest on Arms Reversed” position.
Ballarat turned on superb weather for the 2018 Remembrance Day Commemoration at the Ballarat Arch of Victory.

A very busy day for the Roberts family with our President Tom and his wife Penny at the Arch where their son Bruce conducted the Remembrance Day Service as MC.

Then it was off to the ex-POW Memorial for Tom for a service there where Tom recited the ode ... (Photo at Left)

Not a lot of time left then for Bruce to share a meal and have just a little bit of time with Mum and Dad before flying back home.

Famous Military Quotes

“Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake”. Napoleon Bonaparte

“We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us.”
Winston S. Churchill
FUTURE BALLARAT BRANCH
AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION ROOMS
The future rooms for our Ballarat Branch of the Air Force Association at the Ballarat aerodrome continue to come along nicely, as these photographs show. The photograph at right shows our smaller room fully complete with carpet, strip fluorescent lighting and reverse cycle air-conditioning. The bottom two photographs show the larger room looking to each end of the room. Bottom left photograph looks to the end with the door to our smaller room. Bottom right photo looks to the other end with return-wall either side forming alcove areas which may well be suited to memorabilia displays in the future.

A little bit of humour

LEFT
Commercial pilot on way to his aircraft

RIGHT
Oops, wrong way, didn’t see that big hangar there

Air Force Association Victoria
Christmas Function
29th November 2018
commencing at 1200 hours
24-36 Camberwell Road
East Hawthorn

Ballarat Branch AFA
Christmas Meeting
4th December 2018
commencing at 1200 hours
at our usual meeting Place.
A big turn out would be good.
Of his three years Army service in the AMF, Leigh Harvey was to spend some time doing initial military training, infantry training, some overseas service in Malaysia, followed by intense jungle warfare training back in Australia before spending 361 days as an infantryman with the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Vietnam during that prolonged war.

Initial recruit training was completed at Kapooka, NSW and this was followed by infantry training at Ingleburn NSW, following which Leigh was posted to No 8 Royal Australian Regiment which, at this time, was located at Camp Terendak, Malacca, Malaysia.

No 8 RAR’s role during it’s time in Malacca was predominantly military exercises and the battalion was returned to Enoggera Qld in April 1969 where it’s men were to undergo five months of intensive jungle-warfare training in preparation for its involvement in the Vietnam war. This training consisted of many facets including specialists weapons, ‘chopper’ familiarisation, infantry tactics & armor training etc.

On 17 November 1969 Leigh, one of a total of 540 men of No 8 RAR, boarded the ‘fast troop carrier’, Sydney, which departed that day for the journey to South Vietnam. The Sydney was escorted by HMAS Duchess for the entire journey. Records of the escort ship show that both the Sydney and escort ship HMAS Duchess entered Vung Tau harbour at approximately 0400 hours on 28th November 1969 and by 1200 hours, No 8 RAR personnel and equipment had been unloaded by barge and helicopter and No 9 RAR personnel and equipment were loaded and both the Sydney and the Duchess were leaving for the trip back to Australia with No 9 RAR personnel getting home for Christmas. For those that are interested, No 8 RAR’s arrival at Vung Tau was filmed and is available online both at the Australian War Memorial item F04409 and also distributed on YouTube. Film runs for about 8 minutes.

Following disembarkation, Leigh and the others passed through ‘checks’ and then boarded trucks for the 15 mile trip north to the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province.
No 8 RAR took part in a reconnaissance operation in early 1970 in the Long Hai area. Named Operation Hammersley, this operation began on 10th February and on 18th February it captured a large bunker complex after the Vietnamese Communists defenders withdrew following air raids. The huge success of this operation resulted in No 8 RAR being awarded the South Vietnamese Government’s Meritorious Unit Commendation, including Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.

The main task for 8 RAR in Vietnam continued to be participating in, and supporting, pacification operations in Phuoc Tuy which involved patrolling the area and conducting ambushes in order to engage the enemy and prevent them from making contact with the civilian population. And engage the enemy’ they did; however, I am not going to go into detail here in respect of Leigh’s engagement with the enemy. Suffice to say that Leigh has enlightened me such that he has confirmed my own imagining of what jungle warfare must really be like. Considering what Leigh and others of 8 RAR were involved in, that any one of them could return home with their sanity intact is a miracle in itself. At the end of it’s Vietnam tour, 8 RAR had lost eighteen men killed in action and 108 wounded.

Back home and a civilian again after three years service, Leigh was to spend quite a few years in Western Australia, from 1973 to 1995 in fact, the first two-and-a-half years in Dampier working in the mines industry, followed by various other remote WA locations, including with the Paraburdo Volunteer Fire and Safety Service where he was a lieutenant and Relief Fire captain before finally heading east where, all these years later, we have Leigh as a much valued member of our Ballarat Branch of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

Now all these years since returning from Vietnam, Leigh has been a ‘giver’. Giving of his time to support and/or help others. Over a period of twenty-one years, the Government received no fewer than eight separate recommendations for Leigh to be awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, the OAM. In the Queens Birthday Honours list in 2016, Leigh was listed for this prestigious award. Leigh was presented with his Medal by the Victorian State Governor, Linda Dessau AC, at a ceremony at Government House in Melbourne.

In addition to “For service to veterans and their families”, some of the organisations/commitments mentioned in Leigh’s citation were, Paraburdo Volunteer Fire and Safety Service, Red Shirt Association, Volunteer Anzac and Remembrance Day fund-raising RSL of Australia and Legacy, Vietnam Veterans’ Association of Australia and Ballarat Branch, Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

After all this, Leigh is still giving. Here at our branch where we see him as the worker, setting up our meeting room, collecting the funds paid at the door, running around with the ticket bucket for the drawing of the raffle, packing up etc. But, it doesn’t stop there. Leigh is very much involved with Ballarat Community Health in relation to helping with such things as “SecondBite”, a program to provide emergency food relief, and also for breakfast programs in schools and food supply for other community help programs such as the On Track Foundation’s Soup Bus, an after-dark meal service for Ballarat’s homeless and less fortunate.

So how good was it to see Leigh Harvey OAM, presented with Life Membership of the Air Force Association at our October meeting.

Pictured with Leigh are the ‘nominators’ for Leigh’s AFA life membership. Pictured L to R are: President Tom Roberts, Leigh Harvey, Rev Keith Lanyon and Stan White.

Next time you see Leigh, shake the hand of a far from ordinary human being.

Congratulations from all of us Leigh, and thank you for your service, both military and community.

(NH Ed)

Ordinary : Adjective = Commonplace
Extraordinary : Adjective = Remarkable = Leigh Frazer Harvey OAM
Presidents Report of Ballarat Branch AFA MEETING Stan White-Hall. November 6 2018

Present: Peter Allen, John Furness, Heather Gardner, Shirley Gribble, John Harley, Leigh Harvey, Noel Hutchins, Keith Lanyon, Lachie McBean, Bob McDonald, Penny & Tom Roberts, Peter Schoutens, Stephen Waddington, Albie Watson, Stan White, Margaret Wood, plus new inductees Tom Nunn, Rob Petty and Brian and Josie Reasons

Apologies: Jenny & Pat Askwith, Matthew Chester, Bruce Clifton, Brian Drennan, Gordon Jarvis, Tom Jobling, Michael Lake, Bill Mitchell, Dianna Peacock, Stan Pickford, Keith and Sue Pitman, Barry Turner and Glen Wesley.

The meeting began with the usual formalities. These were followed by a special event with the three nominators of Keith Lanyon, Stan White and Tom Roberts presenting Leigh Harvey with his well deserved certificate and badge of Life Membership of the Association.

The new members were then welcomed and invited to give a short summary of their service backgrounds. A card was circulated for signing to be forwarded to our former Chaplain Rev Bryan Nicholls who currently most unwell.

Following the meal, the feature for the day was a video presentation of the Time Teams dig, compered by Tony Robinson, searching for the remains 92 Squadron Spitfire I P9373 in which SGT Paul H Klipsch was killed near Dunkirk on 23/5/1940. On that day the Squadron lost five aircraft one of which was flown by the Squadron C O Roger Bushell (Big X of the Great Escape) whose history had been detailed at our last meeting. Of the 14 aircraft lost on that day four pilots were killed, four wounded, and five taken prisoner. In view of criticism directed at the RAF at that time, losses of up to 30 aircraft, and many pilots each day, prior to the Battle of Britain was unwarranted. The happenings were particularly apposite with the imminence of Remembrance Day.

Reports detailed included a Welfare Report by Penny Roberts with emphasis on the current hospital admission of Past President, Bruce Clifton, the excellent Victorian Branch Remembrance Centenary Commemoration at Point Cook in which Noel Hutchins had played a part on the Organizing Committee and Rev Keith Lanyon as the Chaplain. The Turners, Pitmans and Roberts had also attended.

Reminders were issued regarding the November 11 Remembrance Commemorations in Ballarat and the November 29th Final Quarterly and combined Christmas celebrations at Victorian Headquarters on November 29th in which our centenarian member, Jack Bell, will be the Guest Speaker. The Christmas Meeting will be held on Tuesday December 4 at our usual venue.

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Douglas DC3 Dakota (The Gooney Bird)

What an amazingly long-lived aircraft was the DC3 Dakota. The ‘DC’ actually stands for ‘Douglas Commercial’ as the DC3 was initially produced, in the early 1930’s, as a commercial airlines aircraft and it revolutionised commercial air travel.

At the outbreak of WWII many of the DC3 aircraft in production in the United States for ‘American Airlines’ and other commercial airlines around the world were redirected, by the United States government, for Military use.

Civil production of the DC3 ended in 1942, with military versions being produced for American and Allied Air Forces and it came into service with our own RAAF.

How amazing then that many years later in February 1957 when I arrived at No 86 (T) Wing at RAAF Fairbairne, Canberra, on my very first RAAF posting following my recruit training course, that it was the DC3 Dakota that was still in service with my very first unit.

On just my second day at my first unit, and having just turned 18 years of age, I was privileged to have my very first flight in that wonderful aircraft and met some wonderful men that crewed that flight. (To be continued) (NH Ed.)
We welcome to our Branch some new members:

David Plunkett, John Williams, Tom Nunn, Brian Reasons and Rob Petty. At least one of these members is still in the workforce with a business to run, so will not be in a position to often attend our lovely monthly social meetings.

With many people staying in the workforce to later in life than previously, I think that is something to consider for the future that some other AFA activities should be considered for outside of normal business hours.

Maybe that is something that any new committee that forms from our 2019 Annual General Meeting might consider. It would be good if members gave some consideration as to whether they would be able to nominate for committee positions at the AGM so as to spread the load of responsibility and work to carry this Branch of the Air Force Association into the future. (NH Ed.)

VALE ~ Bruce Alfred Clifton

It is with much sadness that we record the passing of valued Ballarat AFA Branch member Bruce Clifton. It was only in last month’s newsletter that a compressed account of Bruce’s WWII service was included. It was an honour for me to meet Bruce and to spend some time with him at his home and I was privileged to personally hear his story. Sadly, my more recent catch-ups with Bruce have had to be in his hospital room. While my own period of knowing Bruce was so short, I feel honoured to have known him at all.

I am sure that members who have know Bruce much longer than I will also be much saddened by his passing.

The funeral service for Bruce was held at Ballarat’s St, Patricks Cathedral and, while a very sad occasion, was a beautiful service. Our President Tom Roberts was one of two who spoke a eulogy. (NH Ed.)

Bruce was a long serving member and past-President of our Branch of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.

Per Ardua Ad Astra Bruce
May you Rest in Peace.