History of Bundaberg and District Branch

BRANCH EXECUTIVE

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Meetings
Vietnam Vets Hall
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2nd Sunday 1130 for 1200

BRANCH FORMATION

Two Ex Victorians who retired from the RAAF and who chose to settle in their wives’ home town of Bundaberg were among the more recent retirees keen to see a branch of the RAAF Association formed in Bundaberg. John Carlile arrived in Bundaberg in 1978 and John Wilson in 1980. John Wilson had taken a great interest in the existing social committee and in 1984 relieved some of the burden from long time Secretary of that committee, Les Tait. Both Johns had attended the Annual Reunions but their enthusiasm for forming a RAAF Association branch abated when they discovered a general lack of interest among other ex Air Force colleagues. However, in 1986, when John Carlile was President of the Bundaberg Air Force Social committee and John Wilson still its Secretary, they realized, with the influx of recent retirees and through conversation with some of these persons, that the potential nucleus of a viable branch was available in the district.

A letter was forwarded to the RAAF Association in Sydney by John Wilson. In this letter John asked what steps should be taken in order to form a branch of the RAAF Association in Bundaberg. The Federal Secretary, Mr P C Alexander referred the Bundaberg request to Mr M Walker, Queensland State Secretary. Mr Walker, in his reply, outlined the basic qualifications of membership and suggested if Mr Wilson had ten interested persons and wished to form a branch, he may obtain a few helpful tips by writing to Mrs Fran Bridger as Mrs Bridger was recently involved in forming the Pine Rivers and District Branch.

After ascertaining that there were sufficient keen ex RAAF and ex WRAAF in Bundaberg, John Wilson wrote to Mrs Bridger in early November 1986. Unfortunately the letter arrived when Mrs Bridger was away and a reply was not received until 5th January 1987. Fran Bridger supplied guidelines which were most helpful and after corresponding with State Secretary Ron Taylor, 18th February 1987 was selected as the date for an inaugural meeting in Bundaberg.

The meeting which was held at 7.30pm at the RSL, was attended by 24 Bundaberg men and women and by State President Fred Cottrall AM, State Secretary Ron Taylor and Vice Presidents Jerry Crispe and Ron McDonald. Mr Cottrall opened the meeting and he and the other Queensland Division representatives addressed the intending members, outlining the aims, objectives and functions of a branch. The Branch is to be known as Bundaberg & District Branch and a committee was elected with the position of President going to John Carlile, Snr Vice Eddie Bragg, Jnr Vice Russ Anderssen, Secretary John Wilson, and Treasurer Mike Kennavan.

Some time later Fred Cottrall presented the Branch with its Charter.

MEETINGS

The first ordinary meeting was held on Friday 27th February 1987 and regular monthly meetings commenced on 10th March that year. Attendance at these meetings during the Branch’s first year of operation averaged 14. Membership grew by eight during the year and a total of 25 renewed members in March 1998, along with another 8 new members.

FUNDS

After forwarding $240 to State Division, the Bundaberg Branch was left with $60 to cover costs which included purchase of stationary for the Secretary and the Treasurer, publication of a newsletter and purchase of a book to be placed on the Soldiers Memorial on ANZAC Day. It was decided at the April meeting to apply to the Department of Justice for registration as an Approved Association in order to hold minor art unions. This was obtained and the fund raising commenced aided by many donations from members.
SOCIAL

Social activity was also high on the priority list and the first get together was a BYO BBQ hosted by Max Walters and Eunice Minton on Friday 3rd April – it was a great success and there were many more to follow. Members’ homes were the venue for some and others were held at the various beaches and parks around Bundaberg. Generally these were in the form of BYO BBQs.

Rosalee Carlile, Carol Uprichard & Di Noffke, Sep 87

FUNCTIONS

Two major functions took place during RAAFA Bundaberg’s first year. The ex Air Force Reunion Dinner was organised and held in September following the traditions of past years. Sixty eight attended the dinner and these included many friends from previous years; also Sqn Ldr Dave Collie of No 23 Squadron, RAAF Amberley – Dave came as Guest Speaker, State Vice President Jerry Crispe and Lorna Crispe of WAAAF Branch. A donated flagon of Port complemented the usual Rum Raffle.

In November the association was approached to organize another dinner. Mr Mike Carlson, who was making a documentary film of a Beaufort Bomber which had been located on the sea bed off Bargara, had arranged for the crew of the bomber, Flg Off Ron Grieve, Flg Off Ken Poulson, Flg Off Alan Corrie and F/Sgt Bill Parsons and also Air Marshal S D Evans AC DSO AFC, former CAS and their wives to be part of the dedication ceremonies and monument unveiling. The ‘Dedication Dinner’ was held on the 18th December, at the RSL with Air Marshal Evans and the crew as special guests.

In conjunction with the “Beaufort Bomber” Dinner a plaque was to be placed at the crash site and the HMAS Townsville was in Bundaberg to take part. Unfortunately it was a wet day and the actual placing of the plaque did not take place, however a ceremony was held on HMAS Townsville in the Burnett River and a wreath was thrown into the water. Later in much better weather Air Marshal David Evans together with the crew and Woongarra Shires Cr George Campbell unveiled the memorial cairn at Bargara.

ANZAC DAY 1987

Bryan Carpenter came to the rescue with an Association ‘banner’ manufactured in limited time and designed to let Bundaberg know the Branch existed come ANZAC Day. Members were still pondering how to carry the large heavy sign when rain forced abandonment of the Citizen’s Parade and the service moved indoors to the Civic Centre. Quite a few members had turned up for the parade wearing uniform, they included John Wilson, President of the RSL Sub Branch and RAAF Association Secretary and Andy Atkenhead, ex F/Sgt who wore his World War Two uniform. Ex RAAF FSgt Bill Davis, Immediate Past President of the Bundaberg Sub Branch of the RSL was Guest of Honour for the ANZAC Day Citizen’s Parade.
Another year passed before the RAAF contingent took to the streets. Led by Davin Carlile, son of the President who was home on leave from Amberley, a good size flight took their place in the Citizens’ Parade, again several wore uniform from different eras. Davin proudly carried a new, much smaller RAAF banner and RAAFA members were joined by other Air Force personnel behind the RAAF crest.

In lieu of wreaths, books were placed on the Memorial on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

**AUSTRALIA DAY 1988**

Australia Day 1988 was celebrated with a BBQ at the Wilson’s residence. Streamers, historic prints, flags and period costumes worn by the Carlile family, Max Walters and Eunice Minton set the mood for the day but the monster kite which was to take the Australian flag aloft over the river remained grounded while designers contemplated excusable reasons for their lack of success – Mother Nature’s windy breath took the credit for the kites many crashes into the river and neighbouring yards. Finally the kite was hangared in a Woongarra Shire Council wheelie bin.
The Carlile Family showing their convict heritage.

AN ACTIVE BEGINNING

Willing members took up positions on many sub committees such as for the difficult task of Fund Raising or the tedious job of examining constitutions. Publicity became the job for Max Walters and the very important position of Welfare Officer was filled by Rosalee Carlile in 1987 and Jock McConnell in 1988.

The President, Secretary and Treasurer were returned unopposed at the first Annual general Meeting, Eddie Bragg also continued as a Vice President and Max Walters became the Senior Vice President.

Involvement with Bundaberg RSL and kindred Bodies came very early in the new Branch’s life. Two couples represented RAAF Association at the Naval Reunion Dinner March 1987 whilst others attended as drink waiters. The National Reunion, 7th Division AIF Association was held in May and in August the Bundaberg Vietnam & South East Asia veterans held their Annual Dinner and the T&PDS Annual luncheon was in November. RAAFA Bundaberg was represented at all of these functions.

Our July meeting was attended by Country Vice President for our area, Jerry Crispe. Jerry addressed the meeting and later enjoyed an informal chat with members.

Ex WAAF, Joan Rogers presented Bundaberg members with two books, 'The Fire Was Bright' and 'Verse and Valour', whilst the Air Force Social Committee's subscription to RAAF News was renewed by Bundaberg RAAFA for circulation among members. Rosalee Carlile is in charge of the Branch Photo Album and Leone Wilson, the Branch History.

Mike Kenavan was our man on the spot when a judge was required for the Wide Bay Burnett District judging of the RSL Girl in a Million Quest which was held in Bundaberg in July 1987.

FUTURE

The enthusiasm of members has continued well into our second year and proposals which have received much attention by executive and sub committees should, when finalized, lead to favourable acceptance by the Air Force community and Citizens of Bundaberg.

It is noted that at this time the Bundaberg Branch has been given the responsibility to update the Queensland Constitution.

ANNUAL REUNION DINNERS

Bundaberg Branch appreciates the achievements of the Bundaberg Air Force Social Committee who, for many years, catered with outstanding success, to the districts needs with the annual reunion dinner. However, social changes over the past few years and the arrival in Bundaberg of more recent retirees has prompted a canvassing of all known ex Air Force personnel in the area to ascertain the majority feeling for any updating of the annual dinner. The main two points for consideration being a change from Battle of Britain week in September to Air Force Week in April and from RAAF/WAAAF/WRAAF only to mixed.

RAAF STATION BUNDABERG
As the result of a suggestion from Basil Ford, a sub committee was formed to examine the possibility of siting a propeller at Bundaberg’s Hinkler Airport as a memorial to the existence of RAAF Station Bundaberg from 1941 to 1946. Basil chairs this sub committee and Mike Kenavan is its busy Secretary.

Locating a suitable propeller became a major task. Assistance was received from the RAAF and from Wg Cdr Roy Betteins (R’td). Wg Cdr Betteins who is an author and historian, was able to supply RAAFA Bundaberg with a copy of his comprehensive history of RAAF Station Bundaberg and the RAAF are hopeful of supplying a propeller. All businesses contacted by the Memorial Sub Committee have also offered their support in the construction of the memorial and the Bundaberg City Council has viewed the project favourably.

Mike Kenavan eventually secured a Neptune Propeller from the RAAF Museum at Point Cook and with the assistance of the Bundaberg City Council, a Stewart & Sons crane, Smith's Concrete and Don Dummer of Queensland Aircraft Repair and Maintenance and other community businesses, the propeller was assembled and mounted on the tarmac side of the Airport Terminal where it stands today.

Air Marshal David Evans had been invited to unveil the plaque donated by the Bundaberg Foundry but was unable to attend so Group Captain Neville Middleton, Commanding Officer of No 3 Aircraft Depot at Amberley attended and unveiled the plaque provided by 3AD, on the 19th of November 1988. The RAAF Assn Bundaberg Branch annual dinner was held that evening at the Bundaberg RSL Club.

**RAAFA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

Two delegates and three observers attended the Queensland Divisions eleventh Annual Assembly of Delegates in Toowoomba in May 1988. Having previously discussed in committee, all aspects of the agenda, Bundaberg’s delegates confidently voiced their members’ opinions at the conference. Our representatives enjoyed the opportunities offered by the Assembly to meet the Queensland Division Executive and members of other State Branches.

Bundaberg & District Branch was honoured by being invited to host the 1989 Assembly of Delegates. An enthusiastic reaction was received from members at a special meeting called during the May social BBQ. This meeting elected John Carlile and John Wilson, the 1989 delegates, to head the special sub committee formed to co-ordinate the planning for the Assembly.

Bundaberg Branch was congratulated on its expertise in hosting the event. John Carlile was elected as the Central Area Vice President.
OTHER 1989 ACTIVITIES

The February 1989 BBQ was held at Lake Monduran and the following month at the AGM Carol Russell was elected as Treasurer as Mike Kenavan had moved to Brisbane, Leone Wilson and Jock McConnell were elected as the Vice Presidents. It was noted that the annual subscription is $15 which includes $3 for ‘Wings’ or $12 without ‘Wings’

The July BBQ was the first of many to be held at the Bundaberg Aero Club whilst the evening meetings continue to be held at the RSL. The September BBQ was a country affair taking place at Smith’s Crossing on the Kolan River just off Bucca Road whilst the October BBQ was held at the Oaks Beach, Burnett Heads and December’s was hosted by Max & Eunice Walters at their Bargara home.

THE NINETIES

1990

The first BBQ for 1990 was held on Australia Day at the Wilson’s, Port Bundaberg and many members traveled to Burnett Heads after lunch to see member Bill Davis receive the City of Bundaberg Citizen of the year award. At the 1990 AGM Carol Russell stood down as Treasurer and John Wilson took over that role in addition to that of Secretary. The Branch annual dinner was held at the RSL on the 31st March and Guest Speaker was Sqn Ldr Mal Hurman from No 6 (F-111) Squadron at Amberley. Fred Peacock was the unlucky recipient of ‘The Order of the Digit’ and State President Fred Cottrell belatedly presented the Branch Charter to John Carlile. The Annual Assembly of Delegates was held in Brisbane.

On Sunday the 2nd of December the Branch hired one of ‘BARB-B-Q’s AFLOAT’ boats for a river outing and late afternoon BBQ. There were later comments regarding the skipper’s expertise in boat handling. The cruise started off on the wrong foot as we found that the BBQ gas cylinder was empty. Fortunately the secretary had the keys for the ELGAS depot in his pocket and was able to take the cylinder in and fill it up.

1991 – Welcome new neighbour

The attendance at the 1991 AGM was disappointing and with John Carlile away, Vice President Leone Wilson chaired the meeting. The election of officers saw Noel Condon elected as the second Vice President in place of Jock McConnell. It was also decided that in future the monthly meeting would be combined with the monthly BBQ. The annual dinner was held on the 6th April. Visitors and guests included, State Snr Vice President Maurice Johnson and wife Thelma, State Treasurer, Mike Walker, Police Inspector Ernie Billing and wife Bronwyn, Ald Gwen Coulthard representing Bundaberg City Council and Cr Paul Petrie, Chairman of Woongarra Shire and wife Lyn. The Guest Speaker was Fit Lt Jenny Le Vaillant,
Administrative Officer, No 82 Wing, Amberley. The annual award of the Digit for Faith and Blind Hope went to Perc Bamsey for one of his less than better days on the golf course.

On the 7th April President John Carlile and Rosalee and John and Leone Wilson traveled to Hervey Bay for the presentation of their charter. At this point the Bundaberg Branch members living in Hervey Bay and Maryborough transferred to the new Hervey Bay Branch. At the Annual Assembly, held in Ipswich, John Wilson was appointed as Queensland’s second National Councillor and he will be required to attend the biannual National Conference held at RAAF Richmond. The next conference will be held in August 1992.

A typical ANZAC Day Citizen’s Service in Bundaberg saw Branch Secretary and RSL Sub Branch President, John Wilson, in RAAF uniform taking a leading part in the service with a number of other RAAF uniforms also evident.

At the July meeting, held at the Carlile’s home, it was decided that Wally Adams would be the appropriate person to handle the Tailgunner’s job of meting out fines to those members not wearing their Association badge. The Bundaberg and Hervey Bay Branches decided to have combined outings and on the 29th September the first one took place with a social get together at Apple Tree Creek.

The November issue of the Newsletter saw the introduction of a “Members Profile” and the first to appear is that of President John Carlile. Andy Aitkenhead was welcomed as a new member and it was discovered that Andy joined the RAAF with two other members, Harold West and Elliot Hannay.

1992 – Last traditional dinner

For 1992 the Secretary has advised members that there is a rise in membership subscriptions up to $14 plus $3 for ‘Wings’. The AGM saw another change in Vice Presidents with Max Walters replacing Noel Condon and the Guest Speaker at the annual dinner held on the 21st March was Sqn Ldr Bob Kemp from Amberley. The Guest of Honour on ANZAC Day was RAAFA member Perc Bamsey. The Annual assembly was held in Townsville. It was about this time that interest in the annual dinner had waned and it was decided not to hold a dinner next year. Meeting barbeques continued with the December event being hosted at Phyl and Wal Adams home.

1993 – Variety of activities

The 1993 AGM saw another change with Stan Woods replacing Max Walters as a Vice President. Leone Wilson reported on the Annual Assembly at Maroochydore and repeated the following story. The Navy and Army representatives spoke on their respective services and both in turn thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to speak before the RAAF, which, after all, “is the Cinderella service”. On receiving the invitation to speak, Air Cdre David Rogers AM, remarked that he did not know much about Cinderella except that she had two ugly step-sisters! August 1st members attended a get together with members of the Hervey Bay Branch at Apple Tree Creek which has been reported as ‘a successful festive occasion’.

The May meeting was held at the McConnell residence at Burnett Heads and Clem Campbell MLA for Bundaberg, attended and presented the Branch with a Queensland flag. The July meeting was held in Norville Park and was it cold. There was a good breeze blowing and the Secretary had quite a job controlling the paperwork. Norville Park has a fitness course and some of our members were seen to be discreetly attempting some of the programs. The August meeting was held at the Bundaberg Aero Club and after the meeting members were given a tour of the Jabiru factory and then a tour over the QAS Cessna Titan air ambulance.

Sunday 17th October was the date for the Bundaberg Air League Air Show and Bundaberg RAAF Association members volunteered to assist on the day manning a BBQ stall. Unfortunately the weather was not perfect but the only casualty on the day was the RAAF Balloon which could not be inflated because of the excess wind. As at the end of 1993 the Bundaberg Branch had 42 members, 17 of whom are over the age of 70.

1994 – We go bush

At the 1994 Annual Assembly in Brisbane, John Carlile stood down as Central Area Vice President to allow retired State Secretary/Treasurer Mike Walker to take on that role. Mike has been transferred in his job from Brisbane to Monto and is now a member of the Bundaberg Branch.

On the 29th May the Branch held its meeting at Sharon Gorge which is at the back of a small park situated on the Gin Gin-Bundaberg Road but hidden from view by bush. The traffic noise was difficult for hearing the business of the meeting but discovering the Burnett River via the gorge walking track made the outing worth while. Bundaberg members met with Hervey Bay members at Apple Tree Creek on 13th November.

1995 – RAAF’s early birthday

It was noted that membership subscriptions have risen for 1995 to $18 plus $7 for ‘Wings’.

For some unknown reason the Bundaberg Branch of the RAAF Association celebrated the 75th birthday of the AFC/RAAF with a dinner at the Old Bundy Hotel on Saturday the 18th of February 1995. It was a great night and perhaps because of that numbers were down at the monthly meeting at the Aero Club the next day. Be it the 75th or the 74th is incidental because it also happened to be the 8th birthday of the Branch. The May 1995 Annual Assembly of Delegates was hosted by Bundaberg Branch and it was decided to hold a pre Christmas function at the Bargara Surf Club on the 9th December.

Included in the National “Australia Remembers” commemorations, Bundaberg hosted a greyhound race day with each race being dedicated to a WW2 event or theatre of war. The event was held on the 22nd July and our race was named “the RAAF Flying Handicap” with Alf Keen representing our Branch and presenting the prize to the winning owner. The story has been told that the Ex Servicewomen were eventually awarded a race named “The Ex Servicewomen’s Stakes” (for bitches only).
The September meeting was held in Queen’s Park and following the meeting Elliot Hannay was speaking on a recent trip when he was rudely interrupted by the arrival of the purple ELGAS 1961 Chevy Impala which had been a competitor in the Variety Club Charity Bash and was now touring ELGAS centers on its way back to Victoria. Branch Secretary John Wilson who was the ELGAS driver for the weekend had just collected it from the Agro Trend Grounds where it had been part of a motor show.

1996 – Newsletter and Airport milestones

The January 1996 edition of the Branch newsletter was the 100th for the Branch and was Max Walter’s last as editor. This task was taken over by Keith Kinch whose first edition (number 101) was produced in February and Keith asked for suggestions for a name for the newsletter.

The March issue came out as “Hangar Doors” and was numbered Volume 2, No 1. The AGM saw yet another change in Vice Presidents with Rosalee Carlile and Max Walters now holding those positions. The ANZAC Day Guest of Honour was RAAFA member, Owen Baker. At the AAD at Ipswich, John Carlile was re-elected as Central Area Vice President.

On the 20th of May 1996 the Bundaberg City Council Mayor, Nita Cunningham, unveiled a new plaque at Hinkler Airport commemorating the existence of RAAF Station Bundaberg. The plaque has an etched plan of the base plus outlines of the three aircraft types used on the base.

The September meeting was held on the coach on the way to the Waterfront Resort, Bli Bli where our Branch members were meeting with the Sunshine Coast and Hervey Bay Branches for lunch. The Branch continues to support the RFDS with financial donations.

The presentation of two trophies to the Air League (one each to the Boys and Girls squadrons) for Dress and Bearing was initiated and the first were presented on the 6th December at the Presentation evening parade at the Squadron HQ at Hinkler Airport.

1997 – Hosting Battle of Britain Lunch

At the 1997 AGM Rosalee Carlile stood down and was replaced by Harold Cooper as Vice President and Leone Wilson took over as Treasurer.

At the AAD held at Redcliffe, John Carlile was elected as State Senior Vice President. On the 14th September, the Bundaberg Branch hosted the annual Battle of Britain lunch, State President, John Burgess with his wife Jill attended as well as twenty two from Hervey Bay and thirty six from the Sunshine Coast Branches. The pre Christmas lunch was held at the RSL on the 7th December.

1998 – National Certificates for Carlile & Wilson

At the January 1998 meeting John Carlile and John Wilson were nominated for the award of a National Certificate of Merit. The AGM saw Max Walters and Harold Cooper remain as Vice President’s but Peter Goodrich stood down from Committee leaving Rosalee Carlile, Keith Kinch, Bryan Nelson and Don Bissett from the old committee and two new committee members, Doug Ellacott and Ian Games.

In March 1998 the prospect of purchasing white polo shirts with the RAAFA badge and the purchase of a committee board were discussed. The AAD was held in Toowoomba. It was not very comfortable as the hotel had been caught out by an unexpected cold snap and changing over the air conditioning from summer to winter would take most of the weekend – sitting in a conference room did not help the blood circulation.

The April 1998 meeting was held at the Coopers residence in Evergreen Drive. On the 12th July 1998 Bundaberg members met with Hervey Bay members for a BBQ at Apple Tree Creek which was also a surprise birthday get together for Hervey Bay’s President, Earl Shiels.

John and Leone Wilson attended the RAAF Assn National Conference at RAAF Richmond in August. Then on the 6th September 1998 Branch members attended a Battle of Britain lunch at Hervey Bay RSL. The committee board was completed and as the Branch was short of ready funds the cost was donated by Leone and John Wilson. At the September meeting congratulations were extended to President John Carlile and Secretary John Wilson on their award of a National Certificate of Merit. Presentation of their award occurred at the Queensland Division Christmas Lunch which was held at a Chinese Restaurant, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane.

The 20th September meeting was held at the Ellacott’s. During October the Battle for Australia Commemoration Council was set up in Melbourne with the commemoration to be held in the first week of September. The Branch pre-Christmas lunch was held at the 'Across the Waves Club' on the 6th December with a bring and buy that generated much hilarity as items donated by wives were bought by their husbands, at great financial gain for the Branch. Maybe this is ‘junk-laundering'.

1999 – Searchlight acquired

At the January 1999 meeting Max Walters was nominated for a Division Certificate of Merit and at the AGM Keith Kinch replaced Harold Cooper as a Vice President. At the March meeting State President John Burgess and his wife Jill were present and the State President presented Max Walters with a Division Certificate of Merit. March was also Keith Kinch’s 34th and last issue of ‘Hangar Doors’, Max Walters with the assistance of John Carlile would be the stand in editor for three months. The RAAF Association led the Bundaberg march on ANZAC Day and the Guest of Honour was Gp Capt R J (Dick) Sargeant MBE, Commanding Officer of 501 Wing, Amberley. The AAD was this year held in Hervey Bay.

The old cloud searchlight that had been in use at the airport was acquired by the branch and was placed ‘on loan’ with the Bundaberg Aero Club.

Doug Ellacott took over as ‘Hangar Doors’ editor for the August edition. With the death of Wally Adams in June 1998 it was agreed that Basil Ford would take over the role of "Tailgunner" and Basil was presented with a certificate of office by Branch President John Carlile. The August 1999 meeting was held at Lyle and Margaret Williams home in Hussey Street and Paul Neville came along to present "Their Service—Our Heritage” certificates to several of our members.
The annual Battle of Britain lunch has had a name change to the Battle for Australia lunch and was held on September, 5th 1999 at the Nambour RSL. Also in September, Leone Wilson suggested that the Branch apply for a DVA Joint Venture grant to aid the Branch with bus trips. Leone was given the go ahead to make enquiries.

October's meeting was held at the Aeromodellers Club airfield at Coonarr. Before and after the meeting members were able to watch a large variety of models going through their paces. The pre-Christmas lunch was held at the 'Across the Waves Club' on the 4th December and featured Ian Games and Ray Manwaring doing their stuff at the Bring and Buy. The December edition of Hangar Doors" advises that membership subscription for 2000 is now $20 and "Wings" is $10. A new century is ahead.

NEW CENTURY 2000 - 2006

2000 – Branch adopts a school

At the AGM in February 2000, we had two new Vice Presidents, Ray Manwaring and Don Bissett. On the 10th of March the exchange of 'Adoption' certificates between the Bundaberg Branch of the RAAF Association and the Bullyard State Primary School took place. The ceremony was conducted during morning parade at the school grounds and followed the inauguration of the school captains by Mr Doug Slack MP, State Member for Burnett. The exchange of certificates was conducted by School Captain Leah McCormick who accepted the Branch's certificate from Vice President Ray Manwaring whilst Secretary John Wilson was asked to respond to Leah's speech and accept the presentation of the certificate made by her on behalf of the school. Ray was congratulated for his excellent presentation speech which was his maiden speech for the Branch. This exchange of certificates had been arranged by Keith Kinch and will be particularly active in the weeks before ANZAC Day when our members will visit the school for their ANZAC service and on ANZAC Day when students will carry the RAAFA banner in the Bundaberg march.

The Branch was on parade for the RAAF Birthday march and service in Brisbane 2nd April 2000 with four Bundaberg members marching, Bill Jenkins, Ray Manwaring, and John & Leone Wilson, whilst also in attendance were John & Rosalee Carlile and Hazel Docksey.

ANZAC Day 2000 our RAAF Association banner is carried by uniformed RAAF persons, Davin and Phadrea Carlile proudly followed by their Dad, John Carlile heading the ex-RAAF element of the Bundaberg Citizens' Parade.

At the AAD held in Townsville John Carlile stepped down as Central Area Vice President and John Wilson was elected to this position. Members were advised that membership subscriptions for 2001 would be $22.00, "Wings" would remain at $10.00. John and Leone Wilson attended the RAAF Association National Conference held at Gerringong NSW on the 3 and 4th November.

Pre Christmas lunch was held at the 'Across the Waves Club' on the 26th November and included the usual very popular 'Bring & Buy'. ‘Members were asked to bring along a good clean joke and to be prepared to get up and deliver it’.

2001 – More awards & memorial planned

The February 2001 meeting was held at the Coonarr Aero Modelers airfield. The AGM in 2001 saw another Vice President change with Ian Games replacing Don Bissett. The Treasurer put forward the suggestion that the Branch submit an application for a grant from the ANZAC Day Trust. This has been successful and has each year since contributed substantially to Branch funds. In March Doug Ellacott produced his last 'Hangar Doors' and Leone and John Wilson took over as editors with the April edition.

The RAAF 80th Birthday march in Brisbane was attended by six members from the Bundaberg Branch. Dignitaries attending the march and service were the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Errol McCormack, National President of the RAAF Association, Air Cdre Geoff Michael (R'td), Air Cdre Julie Hammer and the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Bruce Scott.

Branch barbeque meetings continued and on the 22nd April 2001 the Branch held its meeting/barbeque at 'Erin Hill', Ian Games residence at Sharon. On the 10th May 2001 the "Guardian" Newspaper ran an article on the Bundaberg Branch of the RAAF Association featuring a photograph of members Stan Hodge, Keith Kinch, Ray Manwaring, Doug Ellacott, John Wilson, Don Bissett, Leone Wilson and Terry Hurford.

At the AAD in May, held at the Riverside Hotel at Southbank, Brisbane, Rosalee Carlile and Leone Wilson were nominated for the award of a National Certificate of Merit. On the 30th June the RAAF Association hosted a table at the RSL Kindred Bodies Centenary Federation Dinner. Bundaberg Mayor Kay McDuff proposed the toast to the RSL and John Burgess, Deputy Chairman of RSL War Veterans’ Homes responded. John was accompanied by his wife Jill and was also able to wear his new hat of State President of the RAAF Association. On VP Day 11 members and four wives attended a service at the Bullyard State School where the students provided musical items and School Liaison Officer Keith Kinch spoke to the gathering about the significance of VP Day. The Hon Warren Truss MP then presented each student with a Centenary of Federation medallion. At the October meeting it was resolved that the monthly newsletter would be mailed out to every financial member of the Branch.

At the November meeting a small sub committee was formed to co-ordinate the task of establishing an RAAF Memorial in Lions Remembrance Park. It was noted that membership subscriptions are going up again, this time to $25.00 for 2002. The pre-Christmas lunch was held at the RSL Club on the 25th November following the Branch meeting.

The Division Christmas party was held at the Bronco’s League’s Club in Brisbane on the 18th November and our two lovely ladies Rosalee and Leone were presented with their National Certificates of Merit by State President John Burgess.

2002 – New Branch President
The 2002 AGM was held at Ian Games residence on Ten Mile Rd, Sharon and was notable in that John Carlile stood down after 15 years as President and Ian Games was elected in his place. With a change to the constitution Ray Manwaring was elected to the new position of Deputy President. The second Vice President position being abolished.

On the 11th March, Secretary John Wilson represented the Branch at the planting of a ‘Lone Pine’ on the invitation of the Coral Coast Naval Assn, in the Burnett Shire Administration Memorial Garden.

**Visit by 32 Squadron RAAF**

Branch members were able to meet with members of No 32 Squadron RAAF when five flew into Bundaberg in a Beechcraft King Air 350 on Saturday 2nd March whilst commemorating the time that a flight of No 32 Sqn was stationed at Bundaberg during WW2. During WW2 several RAAF squadrons were based at Bundaberg flying mainly Tiger Moths (12 EFTS), and Avro Anson’s, (8 SFTS, 71 and 66 Sqs). The Tiger Moths were used for training whilst the Anson’s were used for training and also for operations, mainly anti submarine patrols. A flight of 32 squadron Beaufort’s were stationed at Bundaberg between May 1943 and September 1944 particularly to fly anti submarine patrols. The visiting King Air 350 is appropriately serial numbered A32-002 and the type has replaced the HS748 as the RAAF’s Navigation Trainer.

After lunch the five crew were taken to Bargara to see the cairn that had been erected to commemorate the ditching of Beaufort Bomber A9-322 on Christmas Eve 1943 off Bargara. The original crew who survived that ditching returned to Bundaberg in 1988 for the commemoration service in memory of the accident.

Visit by 32 Squadron RAAF

The pre-ANZAC service at Bullyard School was especially noteworthy due the unveiling of their new Memorial Wall. Don Bissett and Alban Bock were two of the members who attended and spoke with students on the day. Two students from Bullyard School reciprocated and carried our banner on ANZAC Day in Bundaberg.

The AAD was held at Wondai hosted by the recently formed South Burnett Branch. At our meeting held 26th May 2002 Basil Ford brought along a hand crafted cushion that he has donated for a raffle prize. The cushion shows patriotic colours and features two RAF Mosquito’s in flight.

Division Award for Basil & Grant approved

On the 25th August, Basil Ford was presented with a Division Certificate of Merit by Branch President, Ian Games. The October meeting was held at Woodgate and lunch and fellowship were enjoyed with members of the Hervey Bay Branch. Members were advised that a $1,430.00 grant had been approved from the ‘Their Service– Our Heritage’ program from DVA for the AFC-RAAF Memorial to be constructed in Lion’s Remembrance Park.

The November meeting was held at the ‘Old Bundy Tavern’ and was followed by Christmas lunch. The December issue of “Hangar Doors” advises that John and Leone Wilson had attended the RAAF Assn National Conference in Canberra in November and they also were in attendance at the Re-dedication of the refurbished RAAF Memorial on ANZAC Parade. The new look memorial includes three black marble walls containing photographs spanning the history of the RAAF and the RAAF Battle Honours have been etched on the back to enhance the memorial.

**2003 – A year of Firsts**

**Air Force Cadets for Bundaberg**

Following a conversation with Tony Lee from the Air Force Cadets at Brisbane after the RAAF Birthday March 2003, Branch secretary John Wilson commenced proceedings to establish an Air Force Cadet Unit for Bundaberg.

**Dedication of our Memorial**

On the 5th April the big day arrived and Air Marshal Errol McCormack AM (R’td) unveiled the AFC-RAAF Memorial in Lions Remembrance Park with RAAF Reserve Chaplain Sqn Ldr Mike Donaldson dedicating the memorial. Other guests for the service were Bundaberg Mayor Kay McDuff, Paul Neville MHR and Mrs Christine Rose from DVA, Maroochydore.

**Members recognised**

The April meeting was held at Barry Whebell’s Coral Coast Flying Academy and with the occasional aircraft taxiing past or flying overhead we were reminded of our Air Force days when we were often interrupted by the sound of aircraft. At the close of the meeting, Max Walters offered his congratulations to Leone and John Wilson on their award of Centenary of Federation Medals.

**John Carlile State President**

At the AAD held at Nambour in a shock election, John Carlile was elected as State President and he was also nominated for Life Membership of the RAAF Association. It is interesting to note that of the new State Executive for 2003 there are only two out of six of the 2002 executive remaining and they are John Carlile and John Wilson.

The Queensland Division Executive are: President, John Carlile; Deputy President, Bruce Newman; Northern Vice President, Doug Bower; Central Vice President, John Wilson; Sunshine Coast Vice President, Graham Burgoyne; Secretary, Judy Webster; and, Treasurer, Graham Woodward.

**New venue for meetings**
The July meeting was held at the VVAA centre in May St and as it is centrally located with all mod cons it was resolved to continue to use it as the main venue for meetings.

**Division Certificate and Life Membership awarded**

Ray Manwaring was awarded a Division Certificate of Merit. Branch members agree to purchase an artificial wreath for use at regular Kindred Body commemorations. John and Leone Wilson represented the Branch at the Battle for Australia lunch at Maroochydore on the 7th September where around 130 members and partners from nine Branches attended the lunch hosted by the Kawana Waters Branch. Guest speaker was Major Pat O’Keefe OAM who is Queensland President of the Battle for Australia committee. Prior to the close, National Councilor John Wilson presented State President John Carlile with his Life Members badge and certificate.

The pre-Christmas lunch was held at the RSL on the 14th December and the Branch annual raffle had as 1st and 2nd prizes a half hour flight with Ian Games in his Cessna 150.

**2004 – AAFC still not approved**

Concern has been voiced at the long delays being encountered in the formation of the Bundaberg squadron of Air Force Cadets. Ron Harris has taken over the bulk of the work associated with the formation of the unit and he advised members of some of the problems that have been encountered up to now. It is now at the stage where we will be contacting Paul Neville MHR to ask for his assistance. In May a comprehensive submission for the establishment of an Air Force Cadet Unit was completed by Ron Harris and the Secretary.

With the departure of Ray Manwaring from Bundaberg to Nanango, Basil Ford was elected as Deputy President at the AGM in February 2004. ANZAC Day 2004 we were honoured to have LACW Anita Whereat carry the RAAF Ensign for us. She is a Middle East veteran. And in May the AAD was held at Hervey Bay.

John Carlile and John and Leone Wilson attended the 2004 National Conference in Adelaide held at the Torrens Drill Hall which is utilized as an ex service organizations HQ with several ESO’s having their offices in the complex. The Battle for Australia lunch at Nambour was held on the 11th September and was the first of our DVA funded Joint Venture bus trips.

The second bus trip was to Monto for the October meeting which was a great success with Alex Craig driving from Miriam Vale to attend. Harold ‘Spook’ Ware, a Monto resident member of the Branch was proud to show off his vintage motor car. Another Monto resident member is past State Treasurer Mike Walker who attended in the dual role of member and Manager of the Monto RSL Club where we held our meeting and enjoyed lunch.

The Christmas lunch was held at the RSL on the 19th December.

**2005 – Regal occasions**

The 2005 Annual Assembly of Delegates was held earlier than usual to combine with the RAAF march which was held on Sunday the 3rd of April. The Assembly commenced on Friday afternoon at Government House where we were guests of our Patron, Mr Michael Bryce and his wife, Governor Quentin Bryce. The Carlile’s and Wilson’s and Branch President Ian Games and partner Gwen Curtis were among the many Division members attending. Many of the guests were suitably impressed with the informality of our Patron but still aware of the protocol required in the presence of the Governor.

The RAAF birthday march was marred by the news of the Sea King accident in Indonesia which took the padre away from the service to other duties. State Treasurer Graham Woodward stood in for the padre whilst Rosalee Carlile and John Wilson each presented a scripture reading.

A tip to Woodgate was enjoyed by members on the 30th April and there we met up with a crowd of RAAF Assn members from Hervey Bay. A further bus trip to the South Burnett and a Murgon winery was undertaken on the 28th May. On this occasion we were able to catch up with Ray Manwaring who is now President of the South Burnett Branch of the RAAF Assn, Secretary Frank Basstein and his partner Thelma also joined us.

Our August meeting was held at Childers in conjunction with the Victory in the Pacific 60th Anniversary Celebrations held on the 14th. We held the meeting at the Isis RSL Sub Branch rooms in Childers starting at 11.30am and the meeting was followed by our BYO lunch. The Victory march started at 1.30pm outside the Post Office and finished at the Childers Cultural center where a ceremony was held. The ceremony was followed by a concert and then afternoon tea was served. Our bus hire was covered by a grant that had been received by the organizers of the Victory march.

2005’s Battle for Australia lunch was held on the 17th September at Maroochydore RSL hosted by Kawana Waters Branch. September is Super Saturday Raffle month for the Bundaberg RAAF Association at the Bundaberg RSL Club, an opportunity to bolster funds.

The October meeting was held at Barry Whebell’s Coral Coast Flying Academy at Hinkler Airport and most members took the opportunity to check out the aircraft that are hangared in the building including a ¾ Spitfire which is being restored.

On the 26th November we boarded Stewarts and Sons coach for the trip to Maryborough where we were delivered to Evans & Deakin’s Industries, EDI Rail. On arrival we were issued with safety glasses and ear plugs and Bernie Phelan was given a pair of trousers – it appears his long shorts were not up to it but the lady in the short pants was OK! EDI Rail is co-located with PAC Foundry and between them comprises what is left of Walker’s Engineering which over the years has been a main stay in Maryborough’s heavy industry. We looked through one of the West Australian Suburban Trains which are being constructed at EDI Rail and also saw the damaged Cairns Tilt Train which went off the track near Lowmead following a higher than recommended speed on approach to a curve. A sight not welcomed by its manufacturers who, following completion of investigations, have the task of rebuilding the damaged engine and carriages. Ian Games was also able to guide us around parts of the city known to him and to polish off a great visit we lunched at the Carriers Arms Hotel.
The pre-Christmas lunch was held at the RSL Club on the 18th December. A number of items were donated by members as prizes for the Christmas raffle.

**2006 – More awards & a Fairways meeting**

The RAAF’s 85th birthday was celebrated in Brisbane on Sunday 26th March 2006 with a parade and service, Governor Quentin Bryce wore her Honorary Air Commodore uniform and took the salute in George St. There was no fly over this year because of the Caribou commitment in assisting those hit by Cyclone Larry. The march was followed by a light lunch at Government House which was hosted by the Governor and her husband Michael Bryce who is the Patron of the Queensland RAAF Association.

On the suggestion by Ted and Margaret Plant the 14th May meeting was held in the Recreation hall at ‘Fairways’ RSL War Veterans Home in North Bundaberg, the meeting was well attended by members and guests from the Retirement village. The meeting was followed by a sausage sizzle provided by Ted and Margaret and John and Leone Wilson. Chief sausage sizzler was Ted’s brother who came along to help out for the occasion.

The Annual Assembly was held in Cairns in May and the Branch nomination of Life Membership for John Wilson was approved. The annual Battle for Australia lunch was held on the 19th August at the Caloundra Power Boat Club and was hosted by Kawana Waters. During the lunch John Wilson was presented with his Life Membership of the RAAF Association by State President John Carllie. At the September meeting the Branch nominated Leone Wilson for Life Membership of the RAAF Assn.

Tuesday the 6th of December the Branch held its pre-Christmas lunch at the RSL. Whilst it was only a small gathering the meal was great and all who attended were given a small gift which would be a memento of the day.

**OUR THIRD DECADE BEGINS – 2007**

The striking of a new medal which had been subject of a number of RAAF Association motions from Branch to National level was approved and on Wednesday the 24th January 2007 a presentation of the Australian Defence Medal was made with Bundaberg President of the RAAF Association, Ian Games, and 19 other ex-service persons who received the medal in recognition of their service in the Australian Defence Forces from the Federal Member for Hinkler, Mr Paul Neville MP.

**20th BIRTHDAY**

On the 9th February the ‘Bugle’ newspaper published an article announcing the 20th anniversary of the formation of our Branch. This birthday was celebrated with an informal lunch at the RSL Club on Tuesday the 20th February and attended by 20 members, 7 family and 11 friends, including two past members and one prospective new member. The food was excellent and the only complaints heard were from those who said that they ate too much.

Basil Ford won one of the prizes at the Birthday lunch and as the prize was a print of an Iroquois helicopter in RAAF markings, Basil reckoned it needed a good home and what better place than the Vietnam Veteran’s Drop in Centre where we have the majority of our meetings. Basil presented the print to the Vietnam Veterans Association Sub-Branch President, Roger Keegan.

The AGM held on the 11th February 2007 held no surprises with the same team re-elected for another year with Ian Games as President, Basil Ford Deputy President, Leone Wilson Treasurer and John Wilson Secretary.

**BUNDABERG MAKES HISTORY**

The long awaited approval for the formation of an Air Force Cadet Squadron for Bundaberg had been received and evidence of the new No 228 Squadron AAFC was first seen by the public when, on Saturday the 3rd of March the Nuship Bundaberg was commissioned as HMAS Bundaberg at Port Bundaberg and 228 Squadron’s new instructors Con Chatham, Ron Harris and Bob Bland attended in uniform. A great day for Bundaberg.

Sunday the 25th of March 2007 saw several Bundaberg Branch members in Brisbane for the RAAF Birthday march and service. The march was headed by serving personnel from RAAF Amberley and included a fire truck. 1st April, also a Sunday, was the occasion for the ‘Rats of Tobruk’ to hold their commemoration service at Lion’s Remembrance Park in Bundaberg. President Ian Games represented the Branch.

**228 SQN AAFC**

Our first encounter with Bundaberg’s own Air Force Cadets came on Monday 24th April, when members of No 228 Sqn AAFC were given the opportunity to inspect the P-51D Mustang and three Iroquois Helicopters which were at Hinkler Airport in readiness for their flypast duties during the Bundaberg and District ANZAC Day services.

The next day, for the first time in Bundaberg, a cadet from each of the three services made up the flag party for the city’s ANZAC Day Citizen’s Parade and Service. The cadets taking part were AAFC Cdt Kevin Lillman, ANC Cdt CPO Josh Evans and ACU Cdt Sgt Daniel Hampson. The weekend of 11/13th May 2007 saw another first for Bundaberg with a combined three service cadet bivouac at the Naval Cadet Training Ship T/S Bundaberg.

The bivouac provided the Army and Air Force Cadets with a better knowledge of that strange language that the Navy uses where various parts of the grass can be on-board and others ‘overboard’. All the boys and girls regardless of their uniform joined in for a fun weekend. The units’ fleet of sailing and power boats were very well utilised and we understand that one cadet had the misfortune to harm Ma’ams boat. Took the bowsprit right off.
Saturday 19th May 2007 our Branch delegates, Ian Games, Rosalee Carlile and Leone Wilson attended the RAAF Assn Annual Assembly of Delegates at Redcliffe. John’s Carlile and Wilson were also there in their Division Executive roles. The State executive were returned unopposed: President, John Carlile; Deputy President, Graham Burgoyne; Area Vice Presidents Doug Bower, John Wilson, Dixon Bishop and Graham Thomas; Secretary, Judy Webster and Treasurer, Graham Woodward; At the dinner on Saturday evening Leone Wilson received her Life Membership badge and certificate from Patron, Michael Bryce. The Assembly was well attended with only three Branches not being represented.

On Sunday the 15th July we had our second meeting in a row at Barry Wheelbells Coral Coast Flying Academy and afterward adjourned outside to soak up the sunshine of a beautiful day. As is normal prior to these meetings, a number of members wandered around the Hangar and inspected the variety of craft housed there.

Several RAAF Association members attended the Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch’s inaugural lunch for WW2 RSL members held on Wednesday the 15th August the Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch. There were just over 200 veterans and their partners/carers in attendance.

During the month of September when our Association runs the RSL Super Saturday raffles we made use of the cabinet amongst the memorabilia in the RSL Club’s downstairs foyer. It had been agreed with the Club and Sub Branch to allocate one cabinet for use by the Kindred Body whose month it is for the Super Saturday raffles. The Ex Servicewomen were first to get in for their reunion month of July and their display continued over their month of raffles in August. Branch secretary John Wilson stripped the cabinet at the end of August and had the RAAF Assn display ready for our first raffles on the 1st September.

September’s monthly meeting was held in the RSL Care “Fairways” Community Centre, and once again it was organized and hosted by Ted and Margaret Plant who provided the eats and refreshments. Remembrance Day 2007, President Ian Games and others attended the Bundaberg City service whilst four members attended the Burnett Heads service.

**AAFC Sucesses**

Sunday the 18th of November has been a milestone in Bundaberg’s and our history. Four years ago in April 2003, John Wilson, as Branch Secretary, commenced enquiries regarding the formation of an Air Force Cadet Unit in Bundaberg. In the 3 and a half years to late last year we struggled against bureaucracy and so called ‘no funds’ until the green light was eventually given and the squadron began early this year. Today we attended the Squadron’s first graduation parade at the Bundaberg Aero Club building at Hinkler Airport. Several of our members attended the first annual presentation of trophies for No 228 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets and it was great to see the enthusiasm that radiated within the cadets themselves.

Parade Reviewing Officer was RAAFA State President John Carlile and he was accompanied by the CO Flt Lt (AAFC) Ron Harris for the inspection of the parade. As all of the cadets had successfully passed the years examinations they were reclassified as Leading Cadets and their rank slides were presented to them on parade. Bundaberg RAAF Association President Ian Games presented LCdt Robert Atkinson with the award of Cadet of the Year. Other trophy winners were Academic Dux (John & Leone Wilson Trophy) LCdt Kered James, Most Improved Cadet (RSL Trophy) LCdt Samantha Cameron.

**Christmas in Childers**

Sunday the 9th of December 2007 dawned fine and 17 of us assembled at Stewart & Sons Bus depot for the trip across to Childers where we met up with another nine who made up the 26 who sat down for lunch at the Isis RSL Club. But on arrival in Childers our first stop was Allan Baker’s Military Museum where we spent time looking over some 24,000 items from all over the world and not only specifically military but also the emergency services.

A couple of members also looked over the Isis Shire War Memorial Room where local enlistees are remembered. Max Francis was on hand to give an informative talk on the room which is unique and very worthy of a visit next time you are in Childers. Another unique memorial in Childers is the ‘Palace Backpackers Memorial’ where the front façade of the old hostel has been rebuilt and commemorates the 15 backpackers who perished in that disastrous fire. The upstairs memorial is serviced by a lift and the ground-stairs area serves as an information centre.

Members were left in no doubt that we were all welcome in Childers. Doug Munro, Sub-Branch Secretary Max Francis, the catering and bar staff of the Isis RSL Sub-Branch gave us a warm welcome and the set up for our luncheon could hardly have looked more festive with bright red table cloths, green serviettes, bon-bons, candy sticks, Christmas trees, tinsel and lights. Alex Craig drove down from Miriam Vale for the function and Ian Games brought along his guitar and Santa hat.

Whilst we were all made to feel special, the event of the day was a presentation of Division Certificates to two special members, Ian Games and Shirley Watson. Ian joined us in 1996, became Vice President in 2001 and has been our President since 2002. Always the willing worker, Ian has also been a great ambassador when ever representing our Branch. Shirley joined in 1998 and was elected to committee in 2001 working officially as our fundraiser at the meetings but unofficially is our stand in Secretary/Treasurer and always ready to assist the Branch and its members. She is renowned for her special touch at functions.

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