



South Australian Division

Presidents Report 3/2008

Greetings fellow member, well the big news in this report is the establishment of our own website. I mentioned briefly in my last report that it was in progress. As promised it is a highly professional production, thanks to brothers Vern and Mick Loeckenhoff. The site can be viewed at: www.raafasa.org.au, should anyone have suggestions or recommendations, please let me know so that I can pass them on to our webmaster.

In May the Association, in conjunction with David McFarlane dedicated a plaque on the Pathway of Honour to the memory of the Dam Busters, in particular those members who originated in South Australia; David Shannon, Robert Hay and Frederick Spafford. A number of relatives of those men attended the ceremony and enjoyed light refreshments in the Combined Mess afterward. The plaque was dedicated by our National President AVM Roxley McLennan AO and blessed by Rev Brenton Daulby OAM. Also later in the month I was privileged to be able to attend the Bomber Command Dedication at the War Memorial in Canberra; this memorial was dedicated by our previous Governor General and a great number of guests were suitably impressed by his friendly and down to earth nature.

I spent an enjoyable day as the guest of the Catalina Club (SA Branch) at their annual BBQ at 11 Sqn Edinburgh in mid September. The relationship the club has with 11 Sqn is a credit to both groups and it is great to see the old and the new maintaining contact. I consider this to be one of the main aims of our association and should be encouraged at every opportunity.

Our membership continues to fluctuate, unfortunately, this is the reality of age and history. The Association is presently conducting a recruiting programme aimed at raising our profile with current members at RAAF Edinburgh. With this in mind I will be attending a morning parade at 24 Sqn in the near future, where I will explain the aim of our association and hope some members will see the advantage of membership and boost our numbers. Letters have also been sent to all Squadrons/Units on the base advising of our presence.



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Of concern to our members is the apparent lack of interest regarding the observation of the Battle of Britain anniversary, while this action is perceived as a RAF only involvement, in actual fact there were a number of Australians (RAAF) involved, of whom about 75% did not survive the battle one of our own, SqnLdr Bob Cowper DFC and Bar Legion of Honour (France) is one of the very few survivors. Public awareness, despite overtures to local media has been almost nonexistent in the past but with persistence I hope to have positive results for future anniversaries of this very important event.

Until our next newsletter, stay healthy and be happy. Regards

Dave Helman