



## South Australian Division

### President's Report #7 2019

**Meetings and Functions.** Parliament House meeting with Minister for Health and Member for Elder 19<sup>th</sup> of June; receipt of Lyne Skinner's uniform from Sue Walker 24<sup>th</sup> of June; visit David Leicester and Ted Lynch with Bill Denny 25<sup>th</sup> of June; meeting with ESO reps and Nicolle Flint MP 28<sup>th</sup> of June; launch of Vickers Vimy mural at SAAM 3<sup>rd</sup> of July; AFA Board video-conference, and DEW management meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> of July; Minister Speirs, Parliament House, 4<sup>th</sup> of July; ESO meeting with Kel Ryan, President DFWA, 9<sup>th</sup> of July; Afternoon tea with Mrs Le 10<sup>th</sup> of July; RVN Air Force Veterans' Association Dinner and speech 13<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Lyne Skinner's uniform** and cap. Dave has had these items dry-cleaned. GPCAPT Rogers will collect them for display at EDN. Photographs have also been offered.

**Bill Denny's** care for our WW2 RAAF veterans is acknowledged. Do we have a visiting programme? Bill, whose father served in 452 SQN has applied for membership.

**The AFA Board** meeting by video included discussion on project High Eagle and the Veterans Advocacy Support project. The former, to which we agreed "in principle", is for discussion today. Greg Weller has accepted nomination to join a steering committee. Change to our name and "harmonisation" should not concern us; becoming a CLG may; constitutional amendment may need to emphasize our "charitable" status. The latter advocacy project is for future development and will be affected by Government response to the PC report (v.i.). Its promised donor organisation is KPMG.

**Vickers Vimy mural.** This event went quite well, and our Association contribution was noted. Many Councillors attended and enjoyed the SAAM hospitality. Distant family members of Keith Smith and Wally Shiers were present. Greg commented that local and SA government representatives were absent, a disappointment. The mural itself is superb; with a night-time video it is better still. The Rolls Royce Merlin sound effects were marvellous.

Dave Helman (see his report) represented us at the TPG **management committee** during the AFA Board teleconference. He felt that our new landlords would be good to work with; rent will not rise significantly; the new manager is Jacek (pron. Yaatseck) Gniadek. He and other DEW staff, Bev Voigt, Kirsty Nield and Christine? called to meet Annette after the meeting.

The final report from the **Productivity Commission** is now with the Government for consideration. It is depressingly similar to its earlier draft. Objections that we had to it and that are still retained include: to abolish DVA and replace it with a Veterans Service Commission; that Defence pay an annual levy to finance the "Workers Compo" system; that Gold cards will not be awarded at 70 after qualifying service; that MRCA SRDP be abolished; that widows of severely affected veterans (TPI, EDA, etc.) will not automatically receive the Widows Pension and Gold Card.

**Nicolle Flint** met the Consortium of ESO reps at the Avoca Hotel in the electorate of Boothby, which also includes many ESO branches. She was receptive to the following concerns about which she was later sent a detailed letter from Bill Denny: "Gap" payments; establishment of the Repat Hub, and slow progress with health services; inequity is SA's BEST grants cf "Eastern Seaboarders"; Commutation inequity with DFRDB; Veteran suicide, and its cost, prevention and our ambiguity re a Royal Commission.

**Kel Ryan** is National President of the Defence Force Welfare Association. He spoke to a small group of reps from VVFA (Mal Thiele), RSL (Cheryl Cates), RAAFA (myself) and DFWA (local Pres and Sec, Lee Bowes and David Lyas). He is well represented at ESORT, ADSO, writes for both, with RAAFA VP Richard Kelloway and for the magazine "Camaraderie". His message is that we need one voice, outlined why we have hundreds of ESOs, springing largely from the RSL's exclusion of successive waves; the "non-returned"; the "non-wars", Korea, Vietnam; and serving members themselves. Hence the origin of DFWA. His main concern is about suicide: with all the Governmental inquiries and reports and money spent on programmes, why do we need a Royal Commission and another three-year wait?



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On Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of July **Mrs Rosemary Bonner**, whose father was ex-RAAF, visited us in the TPG office to hand over three scrap books, together with an index, of Air Force historical events and people, from Air Marshal down! She and her late husband (ex-RAF) had maintained a remarkable historical record for our interest. She also donated a caterpillar badge awarded to a survivor by parachute.

**Mrs Le's** afternoon tea at GH. It was pleasing that many of our Council, with partners, and Annette and her mother, were able to attend the gracious and generous hospitality of our dignified Governor's wife. Mrs Le was generous in her thanks "to the Air Force" and had an Air Force childhood, memories of which she shared. She appreciated Lee's expressed pleasure in the Governor's two-year extension. Bob's operation was underway as we visited Government House. The **Dinner with the RVNAFVA-SA** on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> will be another cultural awakening. At the request of its President Dang-Thao Nguyen, graduate of the Saigon Conservatory of Music, I was asked to give a speech which will be translated into Vietnamese for projection on the screen. No such translation into English was promised for the other speeches by, for example Hon Jing Lee MC, Phung Nguyen President of the Vietnamese Community or Dinh Ninh, President of the Vietnamese Veterans' Association SA. My talk, referring to the RVNAF's impressive 20-year history is available for anyone interested.

**Wings and Plane Connection.** I congratulate those responsible for the recent editions of these publications. They are superb. Many thanks to Bill for the latter, and to Greg who, with Lainie Anderson, contributed to the former in a serial account of the EFC.

**Association Awards.** An "awards committee" of Life Members in the Council has met on a number of occasions to research several members of our Association, and to write citations for National and State awards. We have submitted to the National Secretary four names for Life Membership; one for a Certificate of Merit; and one for a Testimony of Appreciation. The names are to remain confidential until ratified for presentation. We have also recommended six for a Division Distinguished Service Award.

Robert Black  
15<sup>th</sup> of July 2019.