



## South Australian Division

### President's report to Council 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2020.

**Meetings and Functions.** 28<sup>th</sup> of January AAT hearing; 30<sup>th</sup> SA Health interview re the Repat; 31<sup>st</sup> Mitcham Council and meeting with Hon Tony Piccolo et al; 3<sup>rd</sup> of February Division Council Strategic planning and budget meeting (see report by Greg Weller); VAC Premier's reception; RAAF planning meeting for Adelaide 500 at TPG; 7<sup>th</sup> of February DCO welcome event at Zoo; 12<sup>th</sup> of February Launch of Michael Herbert Bursary etc. at Sacred Heart Assembly; Mitcham RAAFA future planning committee; (14<sup>th</sup> National Servicemen's Assn Arthur Jeeves); 16<sup>th</sup> Bangka Day 78<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; 17<sup>th</sup> Flinders University Military Academic Pathway Programme Veterans at University Symposium (and DC reception with Commissioner Don Spinks at new DVA address and rededication of Blackburn Room); 18<sup>th</sup> meeting with Greg Weller and RSL President Cates to formulate plans for 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE and VP Days; 19<sup>th</sup> of February Mess Lunch with Rick Baker; transport to Race track to set up; 20<sup>th</sup> Adelaide 500 attendance; 24<sup>th</sup> VHAC meeting.

The Shadow Minister, **Hon Tony Piccolo**, wished to hear advice about a motion to support a Royal Commission into veteran suicide.

**The DCO welcome event at the Zoo** with Warwick Raymont was good fun. 1500-2000 attended. There was a lot of interest; many copies of our brochures, of "Wings", of "Edinburgh" and of the EFC were taken; the video attracted attention; a few enrolment forms were taken. It was a lot of effort, but worthwhile.

It was good to see our Minister/Premier at the (ex) **VAC reception**. But I learned of the two new Veterans appointments later from Tony Piccolo. Practising surgeon COL Susan Neuhaus CSC MBBS PhD FRACS FAMA (retd) is to replace BRIG Laurie Lewis AM as **VAC Chairman**. **New Director of Veterans SA** will be former South Australian, ex-RAAF Intelligence Officer and DVA HR Officer Catherine Walsh. I have written to Susan offering my congratulations and best wishes. I also wrote to Chantelle Bohan thanking her as acting Director and expressing my wish to meet Ms Walsh soon after her arrival in April.



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**The Assembly at SHC** included presentations to students for academic achievement, but these did not quite overshadow the recognition of 2 SQN Canberra pilot Michael Herbert whose body had been returned to Australia after MIA for 39 years. Both the Governor and Bill Denny gave superb, relevant and touching addresses.

**The Bangka Day Memorial Service** at the SA Womens' Memorial Playing Fields Trust Inc. grounds at St Marys was again well attended. Regrettably Greg Weller was ill, and Arthur Jeeves too busy. But I was able to deputise for Arthur who had sent the tribute to the service. I attended as the Division President after all. I met the Repat Commissioner Don Spinks AM with DC Janice Silby. It was essentially an Army show, as the massacred nurses and those who perished in the Viner-Brooke sinking, were Army and so also was Nurse Raymont who died in captivity. But eight of twelve others who died in WW2 service were Air Force. It was pleasing that RAAF Chaplain Patrick Garton conducted the service. MAJGEN Kathryn Campbell AO CSC gave a splendid address.

**The Flinders MAPP Symposium** was excellent. Recently retired SGADF AVM Tracy Smart AO, a Flinders graduate, gave the Keynote Address, pointing out the major efforts that have already been made for those transitioning from the ADF, particularly with respect to lifetime duty of care, mental health: fit to fight-fit for life! Others outlined the MAP Programme, its successes and challenges, the changed entry requirements at FU of "the old 8 Unis" which still require a year 12 score. I learnt of a new ESO: the ASVA, Australian Student Veterans Association. Three of their members gave a most impressive presentation. President Matthew Wyatt-Smith has a Churchill Fellowship.

It is pleasing to see that Association members will be present at our stand at the Adelaide 500 event over the next few days. We are blessed in this respect, by very energetic support from RAAF serving members especially FLT LT Nieuwhoven, and by the collaboration of kindred ESOs eg Legacy.

Robert Black President RAAF SA 19 February 2020.