



South Australian Division

President's Report #6 2018

November 19, 2018

Meetings and Functions. Merkx funeral 5 October; 602/622 SQN AFC Woodside 20 October; RSL Armistice breakfast 1 November; Point Cook Centenary of Armistice service 4 November (vi); Road Home breakfast 9 November; GH Garden Party 7 November; Premier's State Dinner 10 November; Repat Chapel Remembrance Day Service 11 November, but not at West Terrace Cemetery; Baker-Gordon Cricket match 18 November.

National Council meeting Melbourne 5-6 November.

This was a learning experience and a chance to meet a number of members who are doing much for our Association, eg President Carl Schiller OAM CSM, Secretary Peter Colliver, Treasurer Robbie Robertson, Advocate Richard Kelloway OBE and Editor/VP Lance Halvorson MBE. Over the two days I learnt that I was both a member of the National Council (Incorporated in NSW, and scheduled to become defunct) and a Director of the Board of AFA Ltd.

Centenary of Armistice Commemoration and Reception Pt Cook, Sunday 4 November. AFAVic President Max McGregor hosted the event with the Pt Cook PMC; a good co-operative effort between RAAF and the Association. A Museum based WW2 Harvard performed a spectacular flypast (or several) as a video and readings from WW1 were read and shown. The outside service was conducted at the AFC Memorial or Cenotaph, opened in 1936 by Richard Williams, with a curtain backdrop on the wall of 5,000 knitted poppies.

The Agenda, for the next one and a half days, was full, including the following:

A National Advocacy Service. President Carl had told us at his recent visit that he is determined to make changes to the way in which we support members. Kelloway, as a member of ADSO has made a comprehensive (70 page) submission to the Scoping study on Advocacy. Further details of the proposal will become available in 2019.

Name changes. WA had changed name from RAAF Assn to AFA at its AGM (attended by 200) , when it gained a new President Clive Robartson AM, previously President of the WA LGA. Tasmania, also with a new President, has resisted the change, as have we! But we are a little lonely in this respect.

Governance. The different duties between a Council member and a Board Director are perhaps the most fundamental. I may need to read the Constitution of AFA Ltd! We were informed by Bob Bunney (WA) that at the AGM of AFA Ltd next May the 27th we will need to send "Members' representatives" rather than Board Directors. Nominations for those representatives will close on Anzac Day. How such reps are to be elected, or simply appointed by our Division Council, is a question to be pondered.

RAAF Centenary birthday 2021. Director of "Air Force 21" AIRCDRE Andrew Elfvortsen and others gave a report of plans for this significant year, with historical, strategic relationships (RAF NZAF RCAF) logistic and other potential problems, eg who will be PM, CAF, CDF. It may depend on there being no overseas tsunami or earthquake on 31/3/2021. "Then, now, always" will be the catch cry. Demonstration of Air Power: Fly pasts and Air Shows will occur in many places, so Base Commanders



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will need to be informed of plans. A new Royal Standard will be presented, possibly on Remembrance Day by the Queen (or King?) In my SA Division report I pointed out that SA will be preparing next year for the Centenary of "The Great Air Race", won by SA's two country lads Keith and Ross Smith. Peter Colliver pointed out that the four aviators were entertained in Victoria at Scots Hotel, on the 26th of February 1920. It was there that the idea of forming an Australian Flying Corps Association was suggested and agreed. Perhaps this date is the birthday of our Association, and our Centenary is coming up.

Other matters discussed were: DFRDB Pensions and commutation; Furies, PFACs and the RMA; changes to publisher of "Wings"; the Veterans' Covenant, Veterans' card and tie pin; Corporate membership and "Ambassadors for the association; rankless and diversity policy; and the budget.

A question was raised about capitation fees, payable by Divisions on the basis of their membership numbers. It was thought that SA had paid for only approx. 100 of its 300 or so members. After Annette checked the figures and payments sent to the National Treasurer, the matter appears to have been resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

With respect to the DFRDB debate I note that there have been recent letters to the Advertiser, with polarised opinions. The National Council/ Board minutes of 19 September recorded agreement that "the Association not contribute funds to the proposed initiative", that is an initiative aimed at "influencing the Government". SA was a little more generous.

Premier's/ Minister for VA's address next week at the TPG Drill Hall. This appears to be an open meeting hosted by Veterans SA which will commence at 2.15 pm immediately after the Combined Services Mess Christmas luncheon. I would encourage attendance at the address, by replying to VeteransSa@sa.gov.au, but be warned. It will be followed by a presentation from the Mental Health Commissioner on, inter alia, "language used when speaking about Mental Health". If Rob Manton's campaign to "drop the D in PTSD" is promoted, there will be a strong opposing view from myself, together with members of the RSL, VVA and VVF.

Robert Black 12 November 2018.