



## South Australian Division

### President's report to SA Division Council 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2020

**Meetings and Functions.** After our “Cisco” facilitated Council meeting last month almost all group discussions have been conducted at a distance. Constitution working group 29<sup>th</sup> of April (Cisco); telephone call from Mrs Lan Le 30<sup>th</sup>; Mitcham committee (Zoom) 1<sup>st</sup> of May; Discussion re Bomber Command commemoration 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> by teleconference; AFA 2021 teleconference 6<sup>th</sup>; VE Day 8<sup>th</sup>; Mitcham awards committee pm 8<sup>th</sup> (Zoom); meeting with Veterans SA Director Catherine Walsh 14<sup>th</sup> at TPG; VHAC later today.

**Anzac Day.** The Dawn services were all cancelled except for a drastically diminished size and number of official commemorations. We “lit up the dawn” in our driveways, listened to radio or TV broadcasts, or to distant buglers. On behalf of the Division I laid a tribute on North Terrace at 11 am. Con Maros kindly laid one for us at the Henley and Grange service. I later submitted a protest, as had Greg Weller, on the ABC web site, for ineptly and insultingly shortening the TV broadcast from Adelaide. I also wrote a letter to The Advertiser and was a signatory in the “Consortium” letter to ABC CEO, Ita Buttrose.

**The Constitution Working Group** (Councillors Weller and Raymont, with Mitcham Secretary Kevin Gogler and myself) has made further modifications to the amendments discussed at last month's Council meeting. It has examined subsequent submissions and now asks the Council to debate several matters as separately suggested. (In brief the matters are: Social membership; Oath of Allegiance; By-laws in addition to Constitution; need for two VPs and/or staggered Councillor appointments; and expulsion of “wannabes” etc.) The working group has also flagged several matters on which the opinion of either the National AFA Board or JBSG might be decisive.

**Mrs Lan Le.** The Council members will have seen my email following the gracious and flattering telephone call from our Governor's wife. Her interest in the welfare of our members is obvious as is her gratitude for care of our members. She has an Air Force background and upbringing. I was surprised to learn that she is a regular reader of Greg's daily postings on our Facebook page.

**AF 2021.** Greg and I have now “met” for a third time with a score of people representing groups interested in commemorating 100 years of Air Force next year. Greg will report separately on developments. We intend to meet each



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month. It is fair to say that from Veterans SA and History SA and kindred ESOs to country groups especially in the birthplace of Sir Richard Williams, Moonta, there is enormous and most gratifying interest.

**Bomber Command** will not be overlooked this year. But a small group of less than 10 will commemorate its service on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May at 11 am. It will involve a small number of persons similarly selected to those that commemorated **VE Day** on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We were unrepresented on that occasion. It is alleged that the Premier's speech sadly and incorrectly acknowledged Australian soldiers and neglected the more important contribution from, and sacrifice of, our airmen. It was pleasing subsequently to see a major description of Bomber Command's raid on Lille in the Virtual War memorial web site.

**Association Awards.** The branch panel at Mitcham met on the 8th. It has not put forward any nominations for State or National recognition. A Division panel will meet in due course. Councillors and Officers of other branches should consider names of members worthy of recognition.

**The VHAC** will have its first meeting for three months this afternoon in this building. Among matters on the agenda is the choice of a name or names of veterans that might be appended to the Repat Veterans' Wellbeing Centre and/or other sites there.

I will have met Catherine Walsh, **Director, Veterans SA** on Friday afternoon the 14<sup>th</sup> with Greg Weller. Our main reason to meet her so soon after her commencement last month was to discuss recent and future commemorative events, and particularly AF 2021, about which she has expressed her enthusiasm. But also on the agenda will be recognition of Siam/Thailand and representation on VAC.

Robert Black

President, SA Division, May 2020.