



Winter 2022 Newsletter

Hello Members and supporters,

On behalf of the committee, our thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership. We value your ongoing support.

There have been several comments that indicated the renewal by Pay Pal was not 'straightforward' and also a few members expressed that they do not use Pay Pal or in fact choose not to have an account. We will ensure that an alternative is available next year.

Whilst on the subject of members...we have looked at sending out invitations to join us for morning tea at the aircraft. The logistics of this are pretty time consuming... So...I extend an invitation to you all, to be our guest for morning tea and a look at the project. To arrange a day and a time, please phone or email me and we will find a suitable day. My contacts are at the end of the newsletter.

Memorial Irrigation.

I have been in touch with the contractor, and he apologises for the delay but has been plagued by the ongoing rain events and materials shortages. The materials for our job are now in hand and he hopes to be on site in a couple of weeks.

Walkway fence Grant:

I am advised that this round of grant applications closed in late July and results will be announced in October!

Restoration matters.

Terry Fahey requested to stand down from his role as the Restoration Coordinator. His personal time constraints were frustrating him from doing the job to his standard. Terry will continue as a volunteer, with a focus on the replacement blisters, but also as a valuable 'go to' person because of his accumulated knowledge.

On your behalf I thank Terry for the many hours he has devoted to the aircraft. We asked our volunteer Steve Wenban if he would take on the role and he has kindly accepted. Steve has a wealth of knowledge in aircraft sheet metal work and as we see each week, a very high work ethic.

WAHC...Williamtown Aviation Heritage Centre

Our talks and meetings continue with the management of Fighter World (FW) and Air Force History and Heritage (AFHH). In brief there is planning underway for upgrades and improvements at FW. We are not involved at this point but the meetings help to keep everyone in the loop.

You may recall that the AFHH Director General, AIRCDRE John Meier retired in mid-May. His replacement is AIRCDRE Rob Lawson and we were privileged to meet him in mid-July. He arranged to visit us on site and five of the committee were present for the couple of hours, which included a range of discussion items and a walk around the aircraft.

AIRCDRE Lawson was able to advise that 'you have very strong in principle support' from the Deputy Chief of Air Force (DCAF) and suggested we continue to formulate a working MOA that will cover et al, our RCA volunteers to work on 'Our Girl' once relocated. We are attending to this.

Grants

A recent grant of \$3000 with a focus on our memorabilia collection has now been fully acquitted. Numerous items were purchased including several mannequins (uniform display) and fit for purpose cardboard boxes (storage boxes).

Penny and Laraine have recently spent many hours sorting cataloguing and packing parts of the collection. A tireless job! Given the recent winter temperatures, a heater was set up in the back office and it was no surprise that some of the men found every reason to 'drop by for a chat'.

General matters

Our Treasurer, Phil, has completed the end of year accounts and sent them off for audit. BPC accounting completed this job last year and have accepted this year's audit. We thank them for their support and well done to Phil. It is planned to call the AGM as soon as the audit report is complete.

Our 15 y.o. student Lachlan has stayed with us for a 3rd term, and we are all delighted to be able to assist with this facet of his education. Congratulations to him also, as he has applied and been accepted into the Air Cadets at 316 Squadron. He already knows the 24-hour clock and the phonetic alphabet, pardon the pun, but Lachlan is off to a flying start.

VP (Victory in the Pacific) day falls on August 17th. RCA will lay a wreath and if you wish to be involved please contact me.



Group tours - Toukley Vietnam Vets - and - Scenic Travel group



Vintage ARMY vehicle visit - Base Tour - Sausage sizzle for the Resto Team

Our website is undergoing a few changes and updates with the help of our Secretary, Graham Streeter. Our website is the home of our membership data base...if you change your contact details please ensure that you let us know.

Not least will be an addition to include the option of a morning tea to outside groups at the aircraft and a walk around the project. Several groups have already taken up this option as the photos show.

The base tour bookings are slowly increasing and for the FY 2021-22 we have hosted 214 folk at the aircraft or on a Tour.

As always, my best wishes and thanks for the support.

Bill

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RESTORATION UPDATE AUGUST 2022

Considering obstacles created mainly by Covid & the latest flu bug, good progress has been made on all fronts of the Cat restoration. Brief outline not necessarily in any order.

Warren still busy cleaning up & painting various components from the fuselage & centre wing, these include components removed for repair & replacement sheeting, stringers etc. When preparation work is completed in the blister & engineer's compartments, these will be painted the standard interior colour.

Many thanks go to Warren E & Steve Wenban for giving up a weekend recently to get high areas around the tail & empennage repaired & prepared for painting at a later date. Note that this work was carried out using a cherry picker & safety harnesses. We make every endeavour to work as safely as possible.

The bow turret area is now dismantled & Steve & Co are now refitting the turret infrastructure after it has been repaired & painted. The interior of this area will be painted before resheeting. More on the bow turret later.

The interior walkway areas of the fuselage are being fitted with aluminium chequer plate for increased safety, seems to be working out quite well. There is only one more compartment to be completed. The chequer plate is part of a donation so cost is minimal.

Henk, Dave & Matt are still toiling on the centre wing main spar, fair way to go but they are producing great results. The engine oil tanks & nacelles have had to be removed as part of the repair process but this has allowed them to be repaired & painted ready for refitting later.

Crash is doing some excellent air frame work replacing corroded stringers in the forward hull area. Very labour intensive but will be a great end result. Next area for attention is inside the cockpit.

Rod, John & the other Dave are still battling away on paint preparation work in the blister & engineer's compartments, fairly thankless task but they are producing outstanding results.

Earlier this year four of our group were invited to visit Amberley RAAF base, we specifically spent most of our time there in the History & Heritage restoration section plus the adjacent museum. Very interesting setup manned by some very talented volunteers who can turn their hand to just about any type of aircraft repair. The volunteers are supervised overall by W/O Darren Whitford who indicated that he could organize the moulding of all of or Cat's blister perspex sections. This is a very generous offer that has taken a huge amount of work off our hands.

The latter part of our visit was spent touring the museum which also gave Bill time with senior History & Heritage people.



W/O Whitford (above with Terry) also committed to visiting the RCA restoration project in late June this year, we spent more valuable time together during which Darren also offered to completely refurbish our recently purchased bow turret. The very generous offer was accepted & our sincere thanks to Darren & his team. Somewhat of a relief for Terry Fahey also, he has devoted numerous hours working on blisters & the bow turret.

Terry Woolard