



# THE SPITFIRE ASSOCIATION

*“Keeping the memory alive”*

**Patron; Air Vice-Marshal Mark Skidmore (Ret'd)**



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## NEWSLETTER No 5 – July 2019

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Fellow Members,*

*ANZAC Day this year marked a significant occasion, being the first time none of our former Spitfire pilots could attend and with Jack Anastas attending a function elsewhere we were without any members from World War 2. We also lost long time stalwarts, Nat Gould, Joe Barrington and Colin Pursehouse.*

*This year brought sharp focus to the work your committee is doing to keep the Spitfire Association growing and increasingly relevant despite the diminishing trend other WW2 Associations are following. ANZAC Day saw the largest luncheon gathering in years, just short of 100 people. Our faithful supporters were joined by new members who made up almost 40% of the attendance and who had never been members or attended our luncheon.*

*Thanks go to Air Commander Australia, AVM Steve (Zed) Robertson AM who gave an excellent talk on the readiness of the RAAF and also presented SMDF Certificate to 2019 winner Dr. Elena Sitnikova; congratulations Elena.*

*Leading up to this year's AGM we will provide a special update to Members outlining plans I announced on ANZAC Day, including the Lysle Roberts Memorial Luncheons, tours for 2020 and some very exciting news as we continue our efforts to support the Defence of Australia.*

*As always, a big thanks to my committee for their continuing hard work!*

*Cheers,*

**Geoff Zuber**

*President*

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### DEPARTED COMRADES

It is with great regret that we have to report the parting of the following members of the Association, who have served admirably in the defence of their country;

Joe Barrington	3 October 2018
Colin Pursehouse	30 April 2019

It is also with great sadness that we have to report on the recent passing of Sirenne, The wife of the late CMDR Nat Gould, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Sirenne, who was in her 101<sup>st</sup> year, was a very elegant lady

and a great supporter of Nat and the Spitfire Association.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members are reminded that membership renewals were due on 1st July and are presently \$35 per annum which is discounted to \$25 if paid before the end of August. These fees can now be paid online at the new modern website; [spitfireassociation.com](http://spitfireassociation.com)

There are many benefits of membership of the Association, including regular member updates and news items, gatherings and events including the ANZAC Day Luncheon and the Lysle Roberts Memorial Luncheons, a range of Spitfire merchandise and of course, the Spitfire Memorial Defence Fellowship.

### ANZAC DAY 2019

Sydney put on it's best weather for the ANZAC Day march this year with veterans and supporters marching under the Spitfire Association banner. Following the march, the luncheon was held at the Sydney Boulevard Hotel and as reported by President Geoff Zuber, had the largest gathering in years. The guest speaker this year was AVM Steve (Zed) Robertson, the Air Commander Australia, who gave a very informative presentation to the guests.



*AVM Steve Robertson with our President Geoff Zuber and our Patron AVM Mark Skidmore (Ret'd) at the luncheon.*

The President also spoke on some of the future developments of the association, including the proposed memorial luncheons and the Spitfire Memorial Defence Fellowship.

The Association's newly appointed historian, Adam Lunney has just published a book "Ready to Strike", a history of 453 Squadron RAAF during World War 2 and copies were made available after the luncheon, which were personally signed by the author and our Patron.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in Sydney in late October and an Information Bulletin, giving full details of the date and location will be forwarded to members closer to the date. The meeting will table reports on financial matters and the elections of the Committee for 2019

## UPDATED WEB SITE

The Spitfire Association website is undergoing a major overhaul following some problems with access to the site and making payments for membership etc. You can now access the updated site and pay your annual fees at; [spitfireassociation.com](http://spitfireassociation.com) The site is undergoing further development with a range of other features.

## THE LYSLE ROBERTS MEMORIAL LECTURE

This is the first of a series of lectures to be presented by the Spitfire Association and the guest speaker at this first presentation will be the recently retired Chief of the Australian Defence Force and Patron of the Spitfire Memorial Defence Fellowship, Air Marshal Mark Binskin (Ret'd). The date will coincide with our AGM in late October and further information will be included in the Information Bulletin to be issued closer to the date.

## BATTLE OF BRITAIN TOURS 2020

The Association is preparing to host specific historic aviation tours to Europe in 2020. These tours will be hosted by Geoff Zuber and the Association's Historian, Adam Lunney and may include aviation museums in Germany and the United Kingdom with visits to some of the major airshows during the UK summer. Further details including costings will be provided to all members in an information bulletin to be issued in August.

## D-DAY COMMEMORATIONS WILLIAMTOWN

At the request of WNGCDR Peter Hartley (CO 453 SQN), The Spitfire Association was represented at RAAF Williamtown for a memorable dinner at the Mess. Members Jack Anastas and Ron Elliott flew the flag for our Newcastle Coast with Sid Handsaker unable to attend but much missed and recognised by the CO. Our President secured John Laffan (RAAF WW2 Spitfire pilot who flew with 603 SQN) as guest speaker and John regaled the audience with many wonderful recollections, including a joint Op with 453 SQN and 602 and 603 SQNs. Thanks go to the RAAF for organising a King Air to transport John and his family to and from the

event and in particular SQNLDR Michael (Mick) Evans XO of 453 SQN for his tireless efforts in coordinating the event and our participation.

It was an evening filled with much recollection, story-telling and laughter. To all the RAAF pilots who flew in the European Theatre and those of 453 SQN; We owe you an enormous debt of gratitude. "Lest we Forget".



Group photo at the dinner with Jack Anastas and Ron Elliott in the front centre.

## SPITFIRE RESTORATION

A Spitfire Mk IX, MH415 is one of two Spitfires being restored to flying status at Vintage Aircraft restorations at Scone NSW. This Spitfire is particularly interesting as it has a combat history during WW2 and was one of the Spitfires flown in the iconic "Battle of Britain" movie in 1969. It was later acquired by well-known warbird enthusiast Connie Edwards and stored at his ranch in Texas for 45 years until purchased by Ross Pay's company and shipped to Scone in 2014, where although a complete aircraft, it is undergoing a full restoration to flying condition.



Spitfire MH415 in storage at Connie Edwards ranch in Texas We look forward to seeing this Spitfire flying at airshows in the future. Further details and photographs of the restoration work can be seen at; <https://www.vfr.net.au>

*The Spitfire Association*

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