

Saturday openings

The CSU Regional Archives is currently extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of the month. This initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives on weekdays during normal business hours. The next Saturday opening will be on August 3, 2013, from 10am to 3pm.

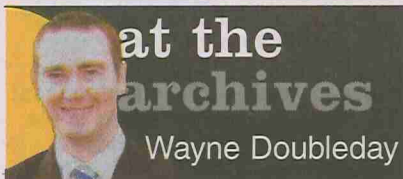


These unknown RAAF Apprentices (left and below) were captured by Tom Lennon's camera for *The Daily Advertiser* some time between 1955 and 1972 [RW1574].

A look at Wagga's Forest Hill RAAF beginnings

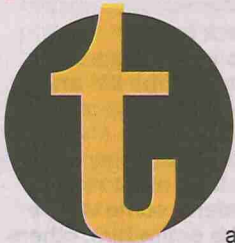
what you need to know

The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue. Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour including copying and postage. For further information, phone 02 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au, or visit our website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



The Wagga Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base is a significant part of Wagga's history and present, yet not many know how

or why it began, and what has gone on there since.

Take-off

THE Forest Hill Base was always intended to be permanent, so when construction began in January 1940, the buildings were constructed out of brick. Though there were some temporary buildings erected during World War II, they were gradually built to last.

In July 1940, the Number 2 Service Flying Training School began using the Wirraways and Ansons that were operated out of the Forest Hill Base.

This school was replaced in April 1942 by Number 5 Aircraft Depot, which handled the major maintenance work on 1686 engines and 602 aircraft, including famous types such as Beauforts, Ventures, Beaufighters and Mitchells. Number 5 Aircraft Depot was disbanded after the war.

During World War II, the Number 31 (Intruder) Squadron (an American unit) also operated out of the Forest Hill Base.

Appies

AFTER Number 5 Aircraft Depot was disbanded, the base became a training



school. Following World War II, a nucleus of servicemen from Number 1 Engineering School in Ascot Vale moved to Wagga in January 1946 to form the basis of the RAAF Ground Training School, which was formed on March 4, 1946.

On December 1, 1952, the school's name was changed to become the RAAF School of Technical Training (RSTT) and so, RAAF Base Wagga began.

It comprised of headquarters Wagga, the school, base squadron and Number 1 Recruit Training Unit (which was later moved to Edinburgh, near Adelaide).

The Apprentice Training Scheme was launched in February 1948, and both adult and apprentice training continued through 1972. By November 1, 1972, there had been 21,039 adults and 2686 apprentices who had completed courses at RAAF Base Wagga.

Throughout the base's first 32 years, the servicemen living on-base and their

families off-base have all been associated, in some way, with many community efforts around Wagga.

RAAF members were accepted by the citizens of Wagga and district, and helped Wagga when flood and fire had threatened life and property. This helped to build the strong friendship between servicemen and citizens.

The Freedom of the City was granted to the base officers and airmen on July 29, 1961, to mark the anniversary of 21 years of foundation.

The Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck presented the RAAF School of Technical Training with the Queen's Colour on November 19, 1971.

This was the first RAAF unit to be honoured so. This honour was in recognition of training thousands of servicemen in a wide range of specialties.

The RAAF School of Technical Training's symbol was a torch and pinion and the motto was "Staunch" meaning characterised by firmness or steadfastness.

The apprentice code of conduct was: "The Royal Australian Air Force engineering apprentice brings honour to Her Majesty's Forces by his loyalty, industry and devotion to duty.

"He brings honour to his school and himself in that he does not lie, cheat or steal or accept among his associates anyone who violates these precepts.

"He honours his obligations as a citizen, remembering that any excess could bring dishonour to himself and the Royal Australian Air Force.

"He honours his obligations to his fellows and their privileges by reporting his own dishonour of the code."

Appies pranks

THE apprentice intake names were suggested by the senior apprentices and then approved or denied by the hierarchy. The senior apprentices began trying to spell inappropriate words with the initials of the names. They got to A, R and S before the hierarchy stopped their dastardly plan. They did however, sneak in three risqué words before the authorities caught on and used the initials to spell things like horses and stallions.

The senior apprentices also hosted what they called "rumbles". This meant they turned the rooms of younger apprentices upside down by taking apart the steel beds and leaving everything in an absolute mess. To the new apprentices, the rumbles were incessant and seemed to last for months.

If you were new to the game, you would make the mistake of putting everything back the way it was and tidying up the room, only to have them come through for another rumble.

Compiled by Erin Griffin
References: *Us Appies* by Phil Jones (2008); *RAAF Base Wagga, Information Booklet* (c.1972); Tom Lennon Collection [CSURA] RW1574/240/773 and RW1574/233/714.

SEARCH HISTORIC NEWSPAPERS ON LINE

Trove ... then visit www.trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper for your Treasure Trove of Riverina history

The Daily Advertiser Wagga Wagga City Council

Charles Sturt University

Wagga and District Historical Society

