



# Outlook

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# AHSA News

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Photo: State Library of Victoria

Newsletter of the  
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Outlook AHSA News is the quarterly newsletter of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

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AHSA Melbourne meetings are held at 7:30pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month (except December and January), at the RAAF Association offices in Camberwell Road, Hawthorn. Visitors are welcome. Meetings are also streamed online with Zoom.

Membership of the AHSA Inc. for the 2026 calendar year costs \$65 in Australia and \$75 for the rest of the world. A membership application form can be downloaded from our website: [www.ahsa.org.au](http://www.ahsa.org.au)

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the AHSA Inc. This publication contains no AI-generated content.



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## President's Comment

Greetings to all AHSA members,

A while since the last newsletter so now into full swing.

For a start it is distressing to see the demise of the newsagent. For the last century we have enjoyed buying or having the newspaper delivered. Now that is almost history. The decline in buying a newspaper and the increase in instant news reading via way of the internet or the media has seen the decline of the newsagent. The newsagent was also the source of other sales items but now a lot of those items including papers are sold at the petrol servo or the supermarket. The newspaper has long been the source of historical aviation material but now we will have to work a bit harder to get that information.

AI. What a subject. While AI has been around for more than a few years we are seeing AI get into our everyday working. Want to know something? Then tap into AI for a possible answer. It will take a few years for AI to settle down but in the mean time I expect to see AI rear its head in the field of aviation historical information and almost certainly into writing articles.

Airshows and air museums. We see that the former RAAF Base of Point Cook is being put up for sale. To date there is not enough information on just what is to be preserved but one has to wonder about the future of the RAAF Museum and the base of 100 Squadron RAAF. Will the main runway become Main Street and the cross runway Second Avenue? Time will reveal more. There is a lot of Heritage listed buildings at Point Cook. Will they survive? Again only time will tell.

That then brings us to the subject of airshows and museum aerodromes. Temora has for years been to place to go to see a great airshow. Now Temora has advised that the October Warbirds Downunder Airshow has been cancelled. The Showcase Days in May and September are still scheduled. One cannot but feel that the large warbirds airshow scheduled for Scone on March 28-29 has taken the shine off Temora.

Enjoy this newsletter.

Regards,

*Dave Prossor*

President, AHSA Inc.

## Editor's Comment:

It has been over a year since our last edition of the Outlook newsletter, but the good news is that it is back. I am your new editor, Jarryd Cripps. I have been involved in the AHSA for several years now, having joined the committee at the end of 2023. During this time, I have been involved in a few smaller projects, including the development of the AHSA polos for the Avalon Airshow in 2025.

I am passionate about aviation history, and you will usually find me buried deep in a book or researching some unusual aviation event. My main interest is aviation from 1914 to 1945 (particularly both World Wars). Perhaps then, unsurprisingly, my all time favourite aircraft is the Supermarine Spitfire. Although the CAC Boomerang and Bristol Beaufigther are not far behind.

Anyhow that is enough about me. I look forward to working on this publication and hope you enjoy this newsletter and the ones that follow it.

Best regards,  
*Jarryd L. Cripps*  
Editor, Outlook



## AHSA News and Updates:

### Membership renewals due:

It is now a new year, which means that membership renewals are now due! Renewal is easy and simple through the AHSA website. A reminder that as voted upon at the last AGM, membership prices have risen to \$65 for Australian members and \$75 for overseas members.

### The search for a new Secretary:

At the February 2026 committee meeting, our current secretary, Derek Buckmaster, announced his intention to step down in June as secretary of the AHSA. Derek has been secretary since October 2023 and done a terrific job of keeping the AHSA running efficiently. In preparation for this change, the AHSA is seeking a volunteer to take on the role of secretary. If you would be interested please send through your interest to the following email: [secretary@ahsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@ahsa.org.au)

### Upcoming AHSA Meetings:

Date:	Speaker:
25 March 2026	TBA
22 April 2026	TBA
27 May 2026	TBA
24 June 2026	TBA

All meetings are held in person at RAAF Association Building, 24 Camberwell Road, East Hawthorn VIC 3123. Alternatively, the meeting are live streamed through Zoom.

### Monthly Meeting Recaps:

As we have not had a newsletter in over a year, there have been quite a few monthly meetings that have happened. I could recap all the speakers across the past year; however this would be quite a time-consuming task. It would also make for a long newsletter. As such, we will start anew and focus on the meetings that have occurred so far in 2026.

As the AHSA does not have a monthly meeting in January, so far this year we have had only the one monthly meeting.

### February Monthly Meeting:

The first AHSA meeting of 2026 was held on Wednesday 25 February 2026, at its usual spot, the RAAF Association Building in Camberwell. The meeting featured a very interesting talk from Tony Green about his book, A Mouse At Moresby. A Mouse At Moresby, recounts Tony's father, Irvine Green's, experiences as an RAAF photographer during World War II. Tony's talk discussed Irvine's career, wartime activities in Papua New Guinea and post-war assignment and included letters, diary entries and rare photographs from Irvine's service in Papua New Guinea. A small number of books were available for sale to AHSA members after the meeting. The talk was well received and enjoyed by those in attendance.



Above: Tony Green (left) with AHSA Secretary Derek Buckmaster (right). Photo courtesy of Derek Buckmaster.

### AHSA Events Recaps:

Since the last edition of this newsletter, there have been a number of noteworthy events:

#### Avalon Airshow:

Back in March 2025, the AHSA was once again represented at the Avalon Airshow's three days of public entry. The airshow was quite successful for the AHSA, with many people stopping by the table to have a chat, purchase back copies of Aviation Heritage, and even on occasion sign up as members. The addition of AHSA member Mark Pilkington's de Havilland Moth fuselage next to the AHSA stand generated much interest from those passing by. A big thank you to Mark for offering his fuselage for display and for the AHSA members that volunteered their time across the three days.



Above: AHSA member Mark Pilkington's de Havilland Moth Fuselage on display next to the AHSA stand at the Avalon Airshow. Photo courtesy of Phil Vabre.

#### DC-3 Flight to Ballarat:

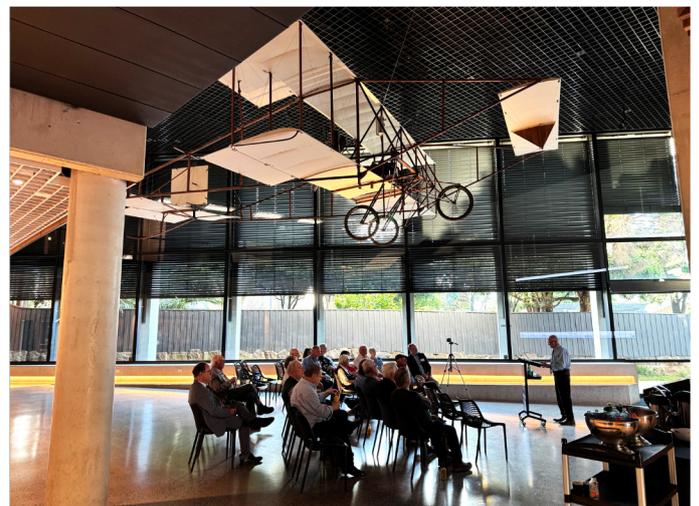
As part of Ballarat Heritage Week, during May 2025, the Ballarat branch of the Air Force Association (BAFA) chartered the Shortstop Jetcharter Douglas DC-3 VH-OVM to operate a number of return flights from Essendon to Ballarat. To help fill the flights, the AHSA sold tickets for the event, offering a special discounted price for members.

With flights occurring on Saturday the 17th of May and Sunday the 18th of May, the offer was taken up by a number of members. Once at Ballarat, passengers had the opportunity to look around the airport, which had a number of events occurring to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the formation of No. 1 Wireless Air Gunnery School. While this editor could not partake, the feedback from those onboard was overwhelming positive, and everyone seemed to enjoy the trip to Ballarat.

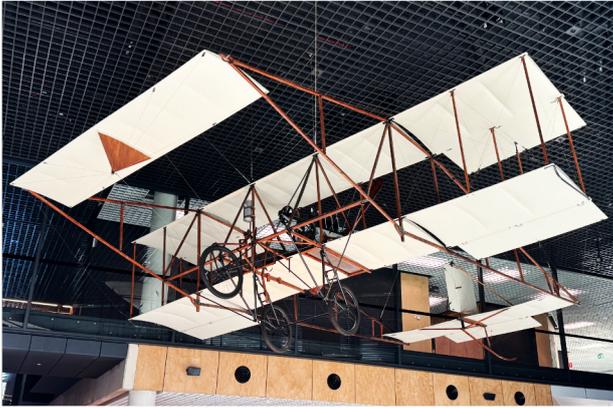
#### The Duigan Memorial Lecture's new look:

At the end of 2025, the AHSA once again hosted the annual Duigan Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by Michael Smith, who recounted his experiences of recreating the first flight around Australia by Wing Commander S.J. Goble and Flying Officer Ivor McIntyre in 1924. Mr Smith had undertaken the recreation to mark the centenary of the flight. The lecture was well received and enjoyed by those in attendance.

However, the 2025 edition of the Duigan Memorial Lecture looked a little different from previous iterations with it being hosted at the newly opened Duigan Centre at Brighton Grammar School. With a replica Duigan biplane hanging from the foyer ceiling, the Duigan Centre offered a fitting backdrop for the annual lecture. The AHSA would like to thank Brighton Grammar School for offering the space, and plans are already being drawn up by the AHSA committee to host the 2026 lecture at the centre.



Above: The 2025 Duigan Memorial Lecture underway at the Duigan Centre, Brighton Grammar School. Photo courtesy Phil Vabre.



*Above: A close look at the replica Duigan Biplane hanging from the ceiling in the foyer of the Duigan Centre, Brighton Grammar School. Photo courtesy of Phil Vabre.*

### **AHSA end of year BBQ:**

At the end of 2025, the AHSA committee put on the annual AHSA end-of-year BBQ at Morrabbin Air Museum. The weather may have been a little wild, but that did not stop a great lunch. Thank you to those members that helped put together the BBQ, including the preparation and cooking of the food.



*Above and below: AHSA members enjoy their BBQ lunch! Photo courtesy of Derek Buckmaster.*



## **Aviation History:**

### **90 years on from Ansett's first flight:**

February 17 2026, marked 90 years since Ansett Airways made its first commercial flight.

On February 17 1936, Ansett Airways operated its first commercial flight. Using a Fokker F.XI Universal that Reginald Ansett had bought at the end of 1935, the first flight took off from Hamilton, Victoria, before landing at Essendon Airport, Melbourne. The Fokker was piloted by Vern Cerche and onboard were 7 passengers, including Reginald Ansett. Later the same day a return trip was made back to Hamilton, with two passengers and freight on board. This first flight marked the start of a regular round-trip service between Hamilton and Melbourne that operated daily from Monday through to Friday. Later in 1936, the fledgling airline would expand operations, purchasing an eight-seater Airspeed Envoy and commencing flights between Hamilton and Sydney. The following year, on the 14 of April 1937, Ansett Airways Limited was floated on the Melbourne Stock Exchange for £1 per share.

According to a newspaper article published in February 1937, in its first year of operations, Ansett Airways had made 328 trips from Hamilton to Melbourne, flown over 100,000 air miles, and carried 2,517 passengers.

The 90th anniversary of the first flight was marked with a special celebration at the Sir Reginald Ansett Museum and Hamilton Airport on Sunday 15 February 2026.



*Above: Passengers prepare to board Ansett Airways' first flight. Photo courtesy of the Sir Reginald Ansett Museum.*

## Boomerangs in Action:



The cover photo for this month's newsletter comes from the State Library of Victoria and is titled *The Boomerang goes to war*. Unfortunately there are few details accompanying the picture, but there are a few interesting things that can be spotted in the image.

Firstly, both Boomerangs are missing their propeller spinners. Early on in production, some Boomerangs did fly without their spinners due to the spinners; backing plate cracking. Without a propeller spinner, these Boomerangs did suffer a drop in performance, as they had to be flown with their cooling gills partly opened. This was to ensure the Twin Wasp's cylinder head temperatures were kept within the necessary limits. The only other Boomerangs to fly without spinners were the first three Boomerangs off the production line.

The other intriguing thing in the above photo is that the cannons seem to be absent on the wings of both Boomerangs. Apart from the one-off experimental CA-14A Boomerang, I can find no evidence of a Boomerang flying without cannons installed. This, in conjunction with some off-grey colourings on the wing, leads me to believe that the cannons have been covered up due to wartime censorship.

So, there is a little further information on this newsletter's cover image. I have attached some additional photos of the Boomerang to this page for your enjoyment.



Above: CAC Boomerang aeroplanes in flight, State Library of Victoria.



Above: New "Boomerang" Australian made fighter, State Library of Victoria.

## Aviation Heritage News:

### Upcoming Aviation Events:

Event:	Date:
Tyabb Air Show	1 March 2026
Warbirds over Scone	28-29 March 2026
The Art of Flight Festival Benalla Region	6-12 April 2026
Beverley Airshow 2026	11 April 2026
AAAA National Fly-in	16-19 April 2026
ANZAC Weekend Airshow	18-19 April 2026
Temora Showcase Day	2 May 2026
Wings over Shellharbour 2026	16-17 May 2026

### Changes to 100 Squadron RAAF

Some of the biggest news to come from Australia's aviation heritage scene in recent months was the announcement by the RAAF to retire eight of their historic aircraft from flying duties. Those being retired include the CAC CA-27 Sabre, Cessna A-37B Dragonfly,

CT4A, DH-115 Vampire T.35, English Electric Canberra, Gloster Meteor F.8, RE 8, and Ryan STM-S2. Notably, many of the aircraft being retired are jet aircraft. This is perhaps not surprising considering the more complex maintenance, limited parts availability, and higher costs associated with flying them when compared to piston engine aircraft. The A-37B Dragonfly, CA-27 Sabre, English Electric Canberra, Gloster Meteor, and Ryan STM-S2 will be returned back to the Temora Aviation Museum, while the other three will be considered for static display. The Department of Defence has issued the following statement about the retirement of these aircraft:

*“The Royal Australian Air Force will withdraw eight heritage aircraft following a comprehensive review of technical and airworthiness factors to ensure 100 Squadron remains safe, sustainable, and connected to Air Force history.*

*Streamlining the fleet will allow 100 Squadron to maintain quality heritage displays, engage communities, and protect the long-term viability of Air Force’s heritage capability.*

*Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC, CSC, OAM, said the review was essential to balancing heritage preservation with operational safety.*

*“Our heritage fleet holds deep significance to Air Force and the Australian public,” Air Marshal Chappell said.*

*“While withdrawing aircraft is never easy, this step ensures we preserve aviation history responsibly. By transferring these aircraft to museums and heritage organisations, their stories of service and innovation will remain accessible for future generations.”*



Above: The Gloster Meteor of No.100 Squadron in flight. Source: Department of Defence, Crown Copyright.

*As aircraft age, upkeep becomes increasingly complex,*

*especially for flying displays. Reducing the fleet will allow 100 Squadron to focus on operating a select group of historic aircraft for ceremonial duties and flying displays, maintaining a living connection to Air Force traditions.*

*The withdrawn aircraft – DH-115 Vampire T.35, Gloster Meteor F.8, Cessna A-37B Dragonfly, Ryan STM-S2, English Electric Canberra, CA-27 Sabre, CT4A, and RE8 – will be transitioned with dignity. Five aircraft originally transferred from Temora Aviation Museum will return there, while the remaining three will be considered for static display at approved institutions.*

*Air Force will continue to operate 11 heritage aircraft: the Mustang, Harvard, Winjeel, two Tiger Moths, Sopwith Pup, Hudson, Spitfire Mk8, Spitfire Mk16, Boomerang and Wirraway.*

*Heritage operations will be reviewed over the next 12 months to ensure sustainability and continued public engagement.”*

No doubt this decision has been met with mixed reactions, and for many will be disappointing. For some it may be unsurprising considering the complex costs of operating such machines and the current economic conditions Australia faces. But hopefully these decisions will enable 100 Squadron to continue regular flying activities with the rest of the fleet.



Above: The RE.8 of 100 Squadron. Source: Department of Defence, Crown Copyright.



Above: The English Electric Canberra will be retired from 100 Squadron, RAAF. Source: Department of Defence, Crown Copyright

### For sale: RAAF Point Cook

During February the Federal Government announced plans to sell off 68 properties around Australia belonging to the Department of Defence. Among those listed was a number of historic properties, including the selling of RAAF Base Point Cook. While some sites will be only partially divested, it is important to note that RAAF Point Cook is planned to be fully divested. The decision to sell Point Cook has not been met with much happiness, particularly among the aviation history and heritage community. Not only is it the birthplace of the RAAF, but Point Cook is also home to a number of historically significant buildings and hangars as well as the RAAF Museum. It remains unclear how the decision to sell will impact these buildings (some of which are heritage listed) and the museum.

### Two-seater Spitfire takes to the air

In late January, Supermarine Spitfire Mk. IX BS548 took to the skies around Duxford, England, for its maiden post-restoration flight. BS548 is owned by Pay's Aviation, and following further testing will be shipped out to Scone, Australia where it will be based. During an extensive restoration, BS548 was converted to a two-seater aircraft and once in Australia, Pay's Aviation plans on offering passenger flights in the aircraft. Exciting times ahead!



Above: Spitfire BS548 takes to the skies for its maiden flight. Photo courtesy of Pay's Aviation.

### Warbirds Downunder 2026 Grounded

At the end of February, Temora Aviation

Museum announced that Warbirds Downunder 2026 was cancelled. As one of the largest Warbird gatherings in the Southern Hemisphere, this no doubt will be disappointing news for many. The Temora Aviation Museum will now focus on delivering two showcase days this year, the first on May 2 and the second on September 19. Temora has not ruled out hosting big events in the future, leaving some hope that we may see some form of Warbirds Downunder return.

### New Aircraft for HARS

On the 10th of February 2026, a new aircraft was added to the HARS Aviation Museum's collection with the arrival of Network Aviation's Fokker 100, VH-NHO. Network Aviation are a Western Australian-based subsidiary of QantasLink. The Fokker 100 was flown from its base in Perth to Parkes New South Wales, where it was handed over to the museum. The first of its type to be delivered to Network Aviation, VH-NHO has been flying with Network Aviation since 2008 and, according to HARS, had completed more than 43,000 flights and carried 1.7 million passengers during its time with the airline. The aircraft was donated to the museum, as QantasLink looks at updating and modernising Network Aviation fleets, which consist of a variety of Airbus A320s, Airbus A319s and Fokker 100s.

In comments that appeared in Australian Aviation, Mark Dal Pra, QantasLink chief executive, said:

*"The F100 has been the cornerstone of Network's fleet for nearly two decades, supporting the incredible growth of Western Australia's mining industry over that period."*

*"Over this time it's safely carried hundreds of thousands of passengers across Western Australia, and we're proud to be gifting this aircraft to HARS for visitors to enjoy."*

*"With our fleet renewal program underway, it's a great way to preserve a piece of Australia's aviation history as we Network enters a new chapter."*



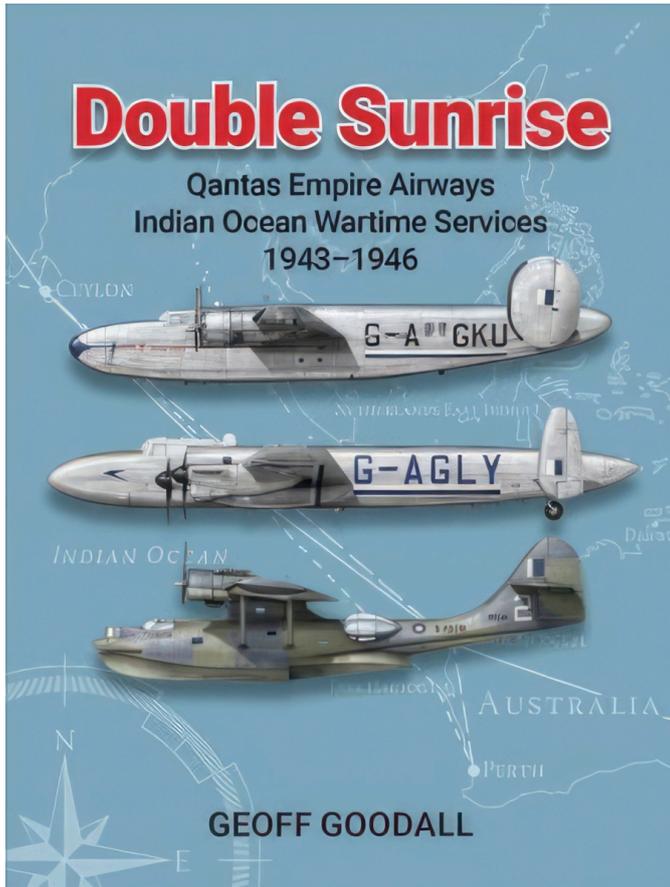
Above: VH-NHO on approach to Perth Airport in 2022. photo by Bahnfreund, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>>

## Members' Contributions:

### Book Review:

#### **Double Sunrise: Qantas Empire Airways Indian Ocean Wartime Services 1943-1946**

*Written by Geoff Goodall. Review by Phil Vabre.*



The long-awaited, and substantially revised and expanded, edition of Geoff Goodall's book about the wartime Qantas Indian Ocean services has arrived.

The original version was, since its original publication in 1979, the first and only significant work detailing this important, but top secret, wartime airline service. Geoff Goodall and co-author Barry Pattison had the benefit of being able to interview some of the participants who were still alive at the time. Sadly they are all gone now, and for health reasons Barry Pattison was unable to collaborate on this new edition, but nevertheless with the benefit of 45 years of additional research it is full of new and revised information.

For those unfamiliar with the story, in 1942 the Japanese conquest of much of south-east Asia severed Australia's air connection with Britain and the British Empire, with

whom we were still closely linked at the time. At the urging of Qantas Empire Airways, the British and Australian Governments approved a bold plan to operate an air service to transport microfilmed mail and a very limited number of VIP passengers between Perth and Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where a connection to British airline services could be made.

The top secret service commenced in June 1943 using a small number of Catalina flying boats provided by Britain. It was the longest regular air service in the world and, in terms of duration, remains so. The route distance covered 3,500 miles with an average flight time of 27 hours - the longest trip being 32 hours! Hence the name 'Double Sunrise' for the service. Five months later the service was extended to Karachi (then in India, now in Pakistan), an additional 1,490 miles.

In mid-1944 Qantas introduced much faster converted Liberator bombers to operate on a shorter route from Exmouth Gulf to Ceylon. The year after that Lancastrian conversions of Lancaster bombers were introduced.

The services were masterpieces operational planning and technique, and operated accident-free throughout the war period. Unfortunately, this record was blemished when a Lancastrian vanished without trace during one of the final Indian Ocean flights in March 1946. Shortly afterwards, with peace brought again to the world, services reverted to the pre-war route via Singapore.

This new edition of the Indian Ocean Service book covers all of the Catalina, Liberator and Lancastrian operations in detail, with all three types illustrated in colour profiles by the inestimable Juanita Franzi. Black and white photos throughout complement the text. As a final bonus, the complete daily movements of the Qantas Catalina and Liberator fleets during this period can be downloaded in tables prepared by Paul Sheehan from Geoff Goodall's website [goodall.com.au](http://goodall.com.au)

Highly recommended and a vital reference for anybody interested in this operation.

Softcover, 280 x 210mm, black and white, 132 pages.

Available from Avonmore Books [avonmorebooks.com.au](http://avonmorebooks.com.au) for \$34.95 plus postage

*Disclosure: Phil worked closely with the author on this revised edition.*

### Letters to the Editor:

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to all our readers, giving you a chance to share your opinions and stories. In each newsletter I will publish a number of letters written and submitted by members. Letters can include anything Australian aviation-related, from stories about your career in aviation to comments on a certain aviation topic, or maybe you would like to point out an error I have made in a previous publication. It just must be Australian aviation-related. Letters can be sent to the following email: [outlook@ahsa.org.au](mailto:outlook@ahsa.org.au)

As this is our first newsletter is sometime there is no letters to publish.

### Research Requests:

*If you are researching a particular topic, let the editor know and we can share your request here!*

*Note that many folks are also placing research requests directly on our Facebook Group. With more than 12,000 participants, requests are often solved very quickly:*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AHSAust>



*Above: Members of the 2nd Australian Lines of Communication Postal Unit, unload air mail at Batchelor Airport, Darwin. Photo courtesy of Australian War Memorial*



*Above: Passengers embark Catalina G-AGFM "Altair Star" while in Karachi. During World War II G-AGFM was used by Qantas Empire Airways on Indian Ocean services. Photo courtesy of Phil Vabre.*