RAAF ASSOCIATION VICTORIA

ATC/AAFC BRANCH

ABN 96 091 342 304

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Issue No 62
February 2017

President's Message

Well, here we are again into the brand New Year 2017 and I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and safe time over Christmas either with their families and friends or wherever else they might have been.

The Branch Christmas Luncheon was, by all reports a huge success again this year and on behalf of the Committee I thank all members who attended and made the day such an enjoyable one. My thanks to Shaun Young who assisted by voluntarily stepping into the breach and conducting the raffle due to my ailing voice.

With this being the year of the Avalon Air Show, planning is well under way for the Air Force Association's display stall. The show consists of three Trade Days which are Tuesday 28th Feb. to Thursday 2nd March and the 3 Public Days, Friday 3rd March to Sunday 5th March with a night show on the Friday, so if you're going to attend on one or any of these days, drop by the stall and say hello.

Last Saturday the 21st January, I had the pleasure of attending the Graduation Parade of the 4WG AAFC Promotion Detachment 01/17 at Laverton and meeting up again with a number of our AAFC Branch members and friends of earlier days. The Cadets' standard of uniform and drill was commendable and my thanks to Branch member, FLGOFF (AAFC) Sarah Gulam who officiated as MC for the parade and afterwards kindly supplied me with the details of the Awards presented on the day.

Office	Holders
President	Laurie Bell
Vice President	Peter Wilson
Secretary	Hugh Tank
Treasurer	Tony Synhur
Delegate	John MacDonald
Branch AAFC Liaison Officer	WGCDR (AAFC) Shaun Young
Newsletter Editor	Ian Cohn

Please send your contributions to
scsiac@bigpond.com
Or
Box 486, Mt Beauty, VIC, 3699

Deadline for next issue - 23MAR17

Welfare

If you are aware of any member who is unwell please contact Hugh.

Branch Welfare Officer, **Hugh Tank** on 03 9877 3424

President's Message (continued)

Our Branch's first Friday of the month luncheon at Box Hill RSL will be at 12pm on the 3rd of February and we look forward to seeing those who are able to join us with visitors and friends being welcome.

VALE: Once again it is my sad duty to report the passing of Arnold Kopp MBE DFC, another of the ATC/AAFC Branch's long serving members. Our deepest condolences to Betty and the family at this time and my personal thanks to both Betty and daughter Jennifer Furtiere for making Arnold's war record notes available. (See later in this newsletter).

Laurie Bell.

Editorial

New year greetings from your Editor. Since I took over from Hugh Tank as Editor of your Newsletter in June 2014 we have published Newsletters 46 through to this one number 62. I want thank all members who have contributed material and those who have given me feedback on our efforts. If you would like to see particular items included please put your thoughts to the Editor.

Just a reminder, this is your newsletter and to make it a success we need to get your contributions. If you have any news or material that would be of interest to other members of the ATC/AAFC Branch please send it to the Editor's address either by email or by post. Material of interest includes pictures of past/present ATC/AIRTC/AAFC activities, and reminiscences of ATC/AIRTC/AAFC activities and RAAF/RAAF Reserve service. Letters to the Editor are also welcome.

As Hugh Tank has noted *"Right from the beginning, it was suggested that Newsletter articles don't necessarily have to be defence related, or even RAAF. Rather it could also include interesting articles of a personal nature"*. Current editorial policy is, however, to have an emphasis on Air Cadet activities past and present. So if you have any stories or pictures that would be of interest to other members please send them to the Editor.

This month we have a story on Steve Bekker's experiences at Test Pilot School especially in relation to flying the U-2. Steve is currently engaged on introduction of the PC-21 advanced training aircraft to RAAF service. Steve is a true total aviation enthusiast and a fellow member of Mt Beauty Gliding Club. I can remember that as a Melbourne University Squadron Officer Cadet in 1962 I witnessed operation of early model USAF U-2s out of RAAF Base Laverton. From memory they flew fairly slowly for a military jet, climbed very steeply after take-off, and made a lot of smoke and noise. We hope to get more stories from Steve on his illustrious aviation career for future newsletters.

The Editor

AAFC News

12DEC16 from Facebook

12DEC16 - CPL (AAFC) Anne Robinson 418SQN (Point Cook) was promoted on parade by OC 4WG as part of the 404/ 418SQNs combined end of year parade and presentations. Well done to Anne who has been very active in SQN, Wing and National activities.

AAFC News (continued)

4WG Jan17 Promotion Courses at RAAF Williams

2017 4WG AAFC Promotion Courses Top Cadets

Air Vice Marshal Wrigley Sword of Honour for the Dux of 49 Cadet Under Officer Course was won by CFSGT Meg Goulding 402SQN.
Warrant Officer Ron Douglas Shield for the Dux of 34 Cadet Warrant Officer Course was won by CFSGT Timothy Miles 408SQN.
Flight Lieutenant V.P. Daly Award for highest mark overall in Instructional Technique was won by CFSGT Meg Goulding 402SQN.
Flight Lieutenant Ack Loveless Memorial Award for the highest mark overall in Leadership Practical and Theory was won by CCPL Eliza Lincoln-Price 401SQN.
Flight Lieutenant AIRTC Edward A. Grimshaw Memorial Award for the candidate displaying fair play and commitment on the Cadet Under Officer or Cadet Warrant Officer Courses was won by CFSGT Ryan Adams of 408SQN and 4WG HQ.
SQNLDR Albert Lindner PSM Shield for Overall Dux SNCO was won by CCPL Eliza Lincoln-Price of 401SQN and 125 SNCO CSE. The runner up was CCPL Grant Bradbeer of 401SQN and 124 SNCO CSE.
Ross Watson Memorial Shield for Overall Dux JNCO had two equal winners being LCDT Breannon Keizers of 403SQN and 220 JNCO CSE with LCDT Roger Truong of 405SQN and 222 JNCO CSE. The runner up was LCDT Eloise Lee of 401SQN and 221 JNCO CSE.

4WG AAFC Promotion Courses Graduation Parade

CFSGT Meg Goulding of 402SQN Watson receives the Air Vice Marshal Wrigley Sword of Honour as DUX of 49 Cadet Under Officer Course as well as the Flight Lieutenant V.P. Daly Award for the highest mark overall in Instructional Technique across the 4 Wing (Victoria) promotion courses. Group Captain Frank Grigson, Deputy Director General Cadets – Air Force, who reviewed the 4WG promotion graduation parade, congratulates Meg on her achievements.

CFSGT Timothy Miles of 408SQN is congratulated by the Deputy Director General Cadets - Air Force on winning the Warrant Officer Ron Douglas Shield for the DUX of 34 Cadet Warrant Officer Course.

CFSGT Ryan Adams of 408SQN was the winner of the Flight Lieutenant AIRTC Edward A. Grimshaw Memorial Award for the candidate displaying fair play and commitment on the Cadet Under Officer or Cadet Warrant Officer Courses. Ryan is congratulated by former Wing Commander John McCrystal Commanding Officer Victorian Squadron Air Training Corps and current Board Member of the Royal Australian Air Force Association (Vic).

LCDT Roger Truong of 405SQN is congratulated as DUX of 222 JNCO Course and LCDT Breannon Keizers of 403SQN is congratulated as DUX of 220 JNCO Course by OC 4WG. They were also joint winners of the Ross Watson Memorial Shield for Overall Dux JNCO Courses.

Albert Lindner congratulates CFSGT Meg Goulding of 402SQN Watson as DUX of 49 Cadet Under Officer Course.

4Wing AAFC Cadets March past the reviewing officer Group Captain Frank Grigson, Deputy Director General Cadets – Air Force,

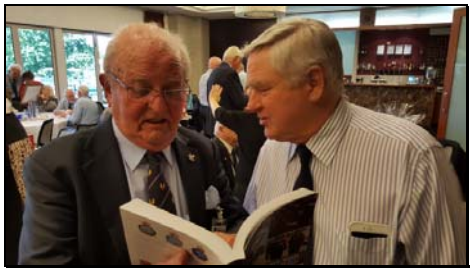
4 Wing Promotions Courses graduation parade Photo Credits - WOFF Don Kenny

Coming Events - 2017

Friday, February 3rd	Monthly meeting , Box Hill RSL
Friday, March 3rd	Monthly meeting , Box Hill RSL
Friday, April 7th,	Monthly meeting , Box Hill RSL
Saturday, April 22nd	Branch AGM, Upton Room, Box Hill RSL
Friday, May 5th	Monthly meeting , Box Hill RSL
Sunday, May ??th	AAFC Annual Drill Parade, Point Cook.
Friday, June 2nd	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Friday, July 7th	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Sunday, July 2nd (?)	Reserve Forces Day March & Service at the Shrine.
Friday, August 4th	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Friday, September 1st	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Friday, October 6th	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Saturday, October 14th	Branch General Meeting, Upton room, Box Hill RSL
Friday, November 3rd	Branch Luncheon, Box Hill RSL
Sunday, November 12th 1100 hrs	Combined Service of the RAAF Association's Annual Pilgrimage to Point Cook & the RAAF Nashos' Memorial Day
Sunday, December 17th	CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON Upton Room Box Hill RSL.

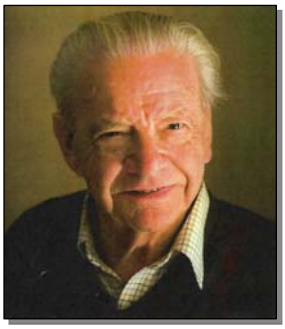
Please note :- Dates and times to be confirmed. Please transfer these dates into your diary.

Christmas Luncheon December 2016



Vale: Arnold Robert Kopp MBE DFC (18/4/1923 – 21/12/2016)

Information kindly provided courtesy of Jennifer Furtiere (nee Kopp).



Arnold turned 18 years of age in April, 1942, and almost immediately applied for aircrew with the RAAF. He was enlisted on 16th of April, 1942.

He received "rookie" training at Docklands, Victoria from the 15th of May to the 7th of June, 1942, then became a guard at Point Cook until called up for training in September, 1942.

Training included studies such as Meteorology, Algebra, Mathematics, Aircraft Recognition, Theory of Flight, Engines etc. for the purpose of determining the applicant's potential as a pilot or air gunner.

Having been selected for pilot training, Arnold was instructed on and flew Tiger Moths, soloing on the 4th of January, 1943 after 7.5 hours dual. He recalled being very nervous when the Instructor sent him off alone and he sang at the top of his voice all the way around the circuit, being pleased that no-one else was able to hear him.

Students who then appeared to be the most suitable were then sent to No. 1 Senior Flying Training School to do further training on the two-engined Airspeed Oxford. On completion of this training Arnold received his "Wings" and shortly afterwards he travelled by train overnight to Adelaide, embarking on the 4th of August, 1943 bound for England aboard the ship "Denbighshire".

He was stationed at Brighton, a popular seaside resort, until he was posted to the Advanced Flying Unit at Weston in February, 1944, and promoted to Flight Sergeant. Arnold celebrated his 21st birthday in England at "Moreton in the Marsh" under the watchful eyes of his selected crew, comprised of:-

Arnold:	Pilot and Captain.
John Bails:	Navigator.
Bruce Stevens:	Bomb Aimer.
Dick Harvey:	Wireless Operator.
Melwyn (Taffy) Wells:	Mid Upper Gunner.
Frank Walker:	Rear Gunner.
Joe Averill:	Engineer.

Arnold, (now with the rank of PLTOFF) and his crew, arrived at Driffield in Yorkshire in August, 1944 to join 466 Squadron, RAAF which was part of RAF Bomber Command. Arnold completed 37 operational trips which was twice the average as he did two tours instead of just one. His aircraft was a Halifax Mk3, a four engine bomber named "Roger's Lodger". This was the aircraft in which he did most of his missions, some by day but mostly by night. He also flew Wellington bombers but the Halifax was his main aircraft.

An item of interest, taken from "A History of 466 Squadron, RAAF" reads**:-**

On November 2nd / 3rd the Squadron attacked Dusseldorf. It was during this attack that (now FLGOFF) A. Kopp's crew were hit from above by a load of incendiaries. Although the Halifax was badly damaged, it returned to England. The following day an unignited incendiary was discovered in one of the fuel tanks.

A comment by the Chief of Bomber Command 1947 reads:-

"There are no words with which I can do justice to the aircrew who fought under my command. There is no parallel in warfare to such courage and determination in the face of danger over so prolonged a period. It was, moreover, a clear and highly conscious courage, by which the risk was taken with calm forethought……

Such devotion must never be forgotten. it is unforgettable by anyone whose contacts gave them knowledge and understanding of what these young men experienced and faced".

Arnold left England in May, 1945 for Australia and immediately recommenced with the Commonwealth Public Service and University studies in 1946, achieving a Bachelor of commerce (Honours) in Statistical Methods and qualified as an Accountant. In later years he was awarded a M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire) for his contribution to the Social Security Department.

Veteran fighter pilots celebrated at Great Eastern Fly-In

From ABC North Coast By Samantha Turnbull Posted 9 Jan 2017, 6:12pm

The man responsible for bringing F-111 bombers to Australia and one of World War II's best fighter pilots were among the veterans at summer aviation celebration the Great Eastern Fly-In. The weekend event featured hundreds of aircraft and aerial displays, but it was the stories of war-time pilots that captivated many of the aviation enthusiasts at the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome on the NSW north coast.

Buying F-111s for Australia

Retired group captain Milton Cottee, of Canberra, became chief test pilot for the Royal Australian Air Force after flying Mustangs in Korea. He also spent much of the 1960s and 1970s in the US where he was tasked with purchasing a fleet of F-111C bombers for Australia. "What made them special was their performance, their ability to fly very fast and for long distances and to carry a fairly decent bombload over a long distance," Mr Cottee said.

"It had a very accurate attack on targets, and it was a potent aircraft. "If it was still flying today it would be hard to find a better one." The Australian Government ordered 24 of the aircraft and Mr Cottee delivered the last of the fleet to home soil in 1974. They were never used in combat and were retired in 2010. Eight of the fighter planes are on display throughout Australia, including one at the Evans Head aerodrome.

"I still consider the F-111s as my babies," Mr Cottee said. "I tried to be present at the time they were first powered up electrically in the factory, because I considered that as their birth and I extend that to thinking that each of the F-111Cs is one of my babies."

WWII pilot's love of flying continues

Sydney veteran Ronald Houghton, 92, took his first flight in a Grumman Mallard seaplane at the Great Eastern Fly-In but said nothing could compare to the Spitfires he flew for the RAAF's Fighter Command at the end of World War II.

"It was just the manoeuvrability of them; to me it was just a great airplane," he said. Dr Houghton said he was given the Fighter Command role after flying in 33 operations with the Bomber Command throughout the war. He said he was almost killed on seven occasions. "On each one of those, we dove left or right and we could see when a Luftwaffe pilot was chasing you he could only do so much until after a while he would get tired and find something easier to pick up," Dr Houghton said. "One time we had a running fight with one Luftwaffe and I rolled the airplane so that both gunners were having a shot at him and I don't know whether we knocked him down or not, but we certainly gave him a fair bit of lead."

Dr Houghton was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross in 1945 for "skill and fortitude against the enemy" and in 2014 was one of seven Australian World War II veterans flown to France to receive the French Legion of Honour.

He said he enlisted in the military at 17, after lying about his age, and carried that bold attitude throughout his service. "All I wanted to do was stay alive, pretty much," Dr Houghton said.

"Today it would be quite different, but when you are young nothing can stop you. "To me, there was no fear in it, and I don't think my crew had fear in them either."

Dr Houghton went on to become a commercial pilot for Qantas, Air Lanka, and Philippine Airlines. He officially retired "well over 65" and then completed a PhD in engineering at the University of Sydney.

"I just like flying airplanes," he said. "And the bigger they are, or the more difficult they are, the more I like it."

Internet Links of Interest

Modern Glider design – the JS3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8UmGiBrJ7o

Thunderstorms and Tornados by Mike Olbinski

https://vimeo.com/197854878

https://vimeo.com/174312494

2016 Oshkosh Photographs –
http://talk.newagtalk.com/forums/thread-view.asp?tid=656700&mid=5523936#M552

RAAFA ATC/AAFC Branch page raafavic.org.au/branch-information/atc-aafc/

AIR FORCE
Vol. 56, No. 15, August 14, 2014 The official newspaper of the Royal Australian Air Force

Air Force News - www.airforce.gov.au/News/Air-Force-Newspaper

Australian Air Cadets Alumni Network www.aircadetsalumni.org.au

Friends of the RAAF Museum **www.friendsraafmuseum.org.au/**

AAFC/AIRTC Historical Items

Please send in any of your old ATC/AAFC photographs with a small explanation of the circumstances. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Heard of the Air Training Corps/AAFC Memorabilia Collection? Located at Benalla Aviation Museum at Benalla Airport in Victoria, this display is highly recommenced for a group visit.

See more at www.benallaaviationmuseum.org.au/

15 year old CdtCpl Nick Cohn on Channel 7 TV in 1988 explaining the VICAIRTC gliding program.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mriFkiiFc90

Steve Bekker and the U2

Extract from AirForce News 7th June 2012

SQNLDR Steve Bekker was taken to the limit by the US Navy's test pilot school, writes Andrew Stackpool.

He had the time of his life last year, and in the process would have become the envy of many pilots - but it was no easy ride. SQNLDR Steve Bekker of the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), attended the US Naval Test Pilot School course at Naval Air Station in Patuxent River, Maryland. He joined 35 students from the US Finland, Israel and Italy for the intensive 48 week course, which prepares students to meet the requirements of flight test, research and evaluation activities by US and foreign air forces. At the time of selection to the highly competitive course, SQNLDR Bekker was the Chief Flying Instructor at Central Flying School, RAAF Base East Sale, with extensive experience on the C-47 Dakota, C-130E Hercules and CT4 and PC-9 aircraft.

He said course highlights included departure testing of the F/A-18F Super Hornet, supersonic stability and control testing of the T-38C supersonic training aircraft, flying qualities evaluation of the MiG-I5 jet fighter, air-to-ground weapons deliveries in the F-16 Falcon jet, and an advanced flight controls evaluation of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter simulator. "The F-35 is a real game changer, not only in terms of capability but also with respect to the types of skills we need to train our pilots for, SQNLDR Bekker said. "There were also those flying experiences you just won't forget, like landing a twin-engine flying boat on the Hoover Dam, soaring a high-performance glider in a thermal with eagles, or flying a WWII bomber."

The course involved intensive theory and classroom work, ranging from statistics and calculus to aerodynamics and propulsion systems, which was then put into the practical environment. "We flew helicopters, gliders, single and multi-engine aircraft, old piston engine trainers and fast jets," SQNLDR Bekker said. In total, we flew 18 different aircraft types and four different simulators over the duration of the course. He said despite its intensity, the course began in true Navy fashion -with the US Navy's swim test. This involved the students spending seven hours in the pool using every type of safety equipment that they could expect to be fitted with during the course. "We were dropped from platforms, dragged by overhead wires, turned upside down in mock cockpits, and then finished by having to swim two laps in flying suit and steel-capped boots, followed by five minutes of treading water," he said.

He said the best flying experience was his end-of-course capstone project, which involved a full evaluation of an aircraft of choice, using all the knowledge and techniques he had acquired. He was selected to fly the Lockheed U-2 high-altitude strategic reconnaissance aircraft. -"This was a unique and fascinating aircraft." he said. "Because of the high altitudes at which this aircraft operated (more than 70,000 feet), a space suit was worn in case of depressurisation and this complicated even simple tasks as movement and the field of view were very restricted. "When it was designed in 1955, the U-2's handling qualities were compromised to minimise weight and maximise performance. "The space suit and poor handling of the U-2 made it so difficult to land that a chase vehicle followed the aircraft along the runway, calling aircraft height and alignment over the radio." SQNLDR Bekker returned to ARDU in January after an "amazing year". "The professional contacts and life-long friendships will remain the ultimate highlight," he said. "I look forward to ensuring that ADF personnel operate the safest, most efficient platforms and equipment possible.

ARDU CO WGCDR Ross Bender said SQNLDR Bekker's results were outstanding. "He achieved the highest academic and flying results for the course as well receiving the prize for the best end of course thesis:" WGCDR Bender said.

The Police Air Wing - Essendon Airport

From Tony Synhur

At the invitation of John MacDonald I recently had the opportunity to visit the Police Air Wing now housed in premises built some eight years ago at a cost of $29 million. This well appointed complex incorporates hangers, admin offices, class rooms and even isolated sleeping quarters for the pilots. It is shared on one side by Vic Civil Ambulance who have recently acquired their own specific needs helicopter and the one previously shared has been returned for solely Police use. This gives the Police a total of four rotor craft, three of which are always “on deck” – no fixed wing yet for fast transport service, but on the cards for the near future.

It is beyond the scope of this article to list the details of the conducted tour by our member, John MacDonald, which encompasses the history of the Wing, the various aspects of the staff training (very full on as these officers do all but fly the aircraft) and duties which not only include crime fighting support, search/rescue etc.

For anyone interested in aviation it would be advisable to attend on a Tuesday as you then get a chance to visit the Airways Museum run by the Civil Aviation Historical Society whose well versed, experienced volunteer staff take you through the history of Australian air control from the earliest primitive beginnings to current state equipment and its capabilities.

Very interesting day and recommended to the point that given a chance, I will do this again as part of one day is just not enough.

Anyone interested in visiting the Police Air Wing should contact John MacDonald on 03 9879 4698.

Gene Cernan, the third astronaut to walk in space and the last to leave his footprints on the moon

Gene Cernan, the US astronaut who has died aged 82, became famous as the last man to leave his footprints on the moon on December 13, 1972, when he climbed the ladder of the lunar module of Apollo 17, having previously made a vital contribution to the space program on the Gemini 9 and Apollo 10 missions.

Cernan made his debut aboard Gemini 9 in 1966, when he became the third person (and second American) to walk in space, a mission which very nearly put him into permanent Earth orbit. Cernan was attached to the spacecraft with a long "umbilical cord". But the cord kept getting in the way of his manoeuvres and his spacesuit did not appear to be cooled.

<<- Gene Cernan in Canberra last year. He admitted to struggling to adjust to normal life after his time in space. *Photo: Jamila Toderas*

Cernan spent two hours and seven minutes outside Gemini 9 and was supposed to make his way from the front of the capsule to the rear. But as he got hotter, his heart rate increased dangerously and his helmet fogged up. As a result, he was unable to complete his walk and did not have a chance to test a new jetpack. But the lessons learnt brought improvements that have made spacewalks from the International Space Station almost routine.

Cernan's first Apollo flight was as pilot of Apollo 10, commanded by Tom Stafford, in May 1969 – a dress rehearsal for Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin's Apollo 11 moon landing two months later.

During the flight, Cernan and Stafford tested new procedures for the rendezvous between the lunar module Snoopy and the command service module piloted by John Young. They tested the landing radar and photographed the proposed inaugural landing site in the Sea of Tranquility, travelling to within 1.3 kilometres of the lunar surface.

NASA legend has it that Snoopy carried half the fuel that would have been required for a landing in case the two astronauts were tempted to cheat the Apollo 11 team of the headlines. Among other things, Apollo 10 broke the record for the highest speed attained by a manned vehicle after the command module reached 39,897km/h during re-entry.

By 1972, when Cernan finally got the opportunity to walk on the moon, public interest had waned. NASA was turning its attention to Skylab and the space shuttle and showed every sign of wanting to get Apollo 17 over with. As commander of the mission, however, Cernan was determined to make the most of it.

Cernan, Jack Schmitt and Ronald Evans left Earth on December 7, 1972. Four days later, as Evans orbited the moon in the command module, Cernan and Schmitt descended to Taurus-Littrow, a rugged mountain valley, aboard the lunar lander.

<<- This undated photo provided by NASA shows astronaut Eugene Cernan. In 1976 he retired from NASA and the military but had no appetite for a desk job. *Photo: AP*

During daily moon walks over the next three days, the two astronauts gathered soil and rock samples, conducted seismic experiments and set several records, including the moon's speed record when Cernan drove the lunar rover at 18km/h.

As the outing drew to a close, Schmitt clambered into the lander while Cernan parked the rover about two kilometres from the spacecraft so that a video camera could record their lift-off on December 14. As he climbed from the vehicle, he bent down and traced the initials of his nine-year-old daughter, Tracy, in the dust.

Gene Cernan on the moon in 1972. He made the most of his time, gathering soil and rock samples, conducting seismic experiments and setting several records. *Photo: act\matthew.raggatt*

"As I take these last steps from the surface for some time to come," he said as he mounted the steps to the lander, "I'd just like to record that America's challenge of today has forged man's destiny of tomorrow."

He had intended to convey his belief that America should not turn away from what it had started with Apollo, but as the lander blasted off the then president, Richard Nixon, sounded the death knell for the program: "This may be the last time in this century that men will walk on the moon."

"We went to the moon and somehow forgot to keep going," Cernan reflected.

Eugene Andrew Cernan was born on March 14, 1934 into a working class family in Chicago. From Proviso Township High School in Maywood, Illinois, he took a degree in electrical engineering at Purdue University, Indiana, in 1956, after which he joined the US Navy and trained as a pilot.

After taking a degree in aeronautical engineering in 1963 from the Naval Postgraduate School, he was one of 14 astronauts selected by NASA to take part in the Gemini and Apollo space programs. As well as his space missions, Cernan was a back-up crew member for the Gemini 12 and Apollo 7 and 14 missions.

In 1976, Cernan retired from NASA and from the military; and aged 42, he was the youngest captain in the US Navy. He had been offered a job at the Pentagon, but the prospect of a desk job did not appeal. Instead he became a petroleum company executive and founded his own aerospace technology and marketing consulting firm. He also bought a ranch in Texas and later became a campaigner for space exploration.

In a memoir, *The Last Man on the Moon* (1999), he admitted struggling to adjust to normal life after his time in space, putting a strain on his first marriage, which was dissolved in 1981.

His memoir inspired Mark Craig's 2014 documentary of the same name, a nostalgic look at the era of space exploration in which footage showing the glamorous lifestyle of America's space heroes of the 1960s and 1970s was juxtaposed with shots of Cernan walking around a rusting launch site. It provided a touching insight into the life of a man for whom the excitement of the space race had never dimmed.

"A half-century ago Americans were walking on the moon," Cernan said. "Today we've been told it's going to take a trampoline to get us back to our own space station. That hurts, quite frankly."

The Daily Telegraph, London

Member Profile

This is your opportunity to tell us about your career or the story of other notable members in the ATC/AirTC/AAFC/RAAF as a Cadet and/or Staff member. Send us a one or two page story about your illustrious progress, preferably with pictures. Send it by email text or as an attachment in ***.txt*** or ***.doc*** file format to scsiac@bigpond.com or mail it to the Editor. Any print pictures received will be scanned and the originals returned to the owner.