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# history of the apf



By Claude Gillard

## ASM: How did the APF come about?

In the very early days of recreational parachuting there had been two fatal accidents and a low opening incident involving Lord Casey's son.

The Department of Civil Aviation requested assistance from the RAAF to investigate these accidents and Bob Milligan was loaned to the Department to carry out these investigations.

Bob Milligan was a Warrant Officer in the Air Force and had been Chief Instructor of Sydney Parachute Club and was then Chief Instructor of New South Wales School of Parachuting at Camden.

It was obvious that the Department was having problems dealing with every parachuting matter without having an overall national body to talk to.

Bob conveyed this to his parachuting club contacts up and down the east coast and as a result; the first meeting of the APF was held on Sunday 23rd of October, 1960 at the Camden Inn Hotel, Camden.

Those present were; Robert Milligan NSW, Brian Murphy NSW, Keith Bulleid Vic, Alan McDonald NSW, John Philp NSW, and Reginald Carsburg Qld. Reg Carsburg was elected President and Bob Milligan Secretary.

The following year Reg Carsburg remained president and Tom Nicol was elected Secretary.

About this time, Bill Molloy and I wrote to the APF asking when Australia was going to affiliate with the Federation Aeronautique

International (FAI) and when would we introduce a licensing system. As we received no answer we took it for granted that nothing was happening and we started a campaign to achieve these reforms and for good measure threw in the outline for a State Council System to bring the Federation closer to the grass roots jumpers.

Unknown to us, Bob Milligan had enquired of his contacts in Britain how Australia would go about affiliating with the FAI. Someone in the British Parachuting Association (probably Bob's contact) told Bob that we must join through the BPA and discussion about this went on for a long period.

Back in Melbourne, we had contacted FAI and had been put in touch with the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia and we thought that the Federation was just being slack and I went to the third AGM of the Federation thinking I would have to sell our ideas to the Meeting.

Immediately the Meeting was opened for General Business, Bill Johnson moved that the Federation accept the suggestions we had put forward and that I be elected Secretary to bring a new constitution to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Federation. It was immediately seconded and carried unanimously.

At the Extraordinary Meeting the Constitution was accepted, Charl Stewart was elected President and I was re-elected Secretary. That was the beginning of my heavy involvement with the APF.

1960s



## A LICENCES

- A 001 M. (JACK) STEVENS
- A 002 ROBERT MILLIGAN
- A 003 GRAEME GRIGG
- A 004 KEITH BULLIED
- A 005 WARREN HUTCHINGS
- A 006 ANDREW CASE
- A 007 LOUIS JOHNSTON
- A 008 BOB THOMAS
- A 009 TOM DARLINGTON
- A 010 CLAUDE GILLARD
- A 011 HANS MAGNUSSON
- A 012 STEVE FILAK
- A 015 NIELS ASCHE
- A 016 BILL MOLLOY
- A 017 DON MCKERN
- A 018 JOHN O'ROURKE
- A 019 NOEL COMELY
- A 020 TED HARRISON
- A 021 PETER MCDONALD
- A 022 CATHY WILLIAMSON
- A 023 ALISON BAXTER
- A 024 RICK MEEKIN
- A 025 GEOFF DRINKWATER
- A 026 JIM MCLEAN
- A 027 COLIN PARSONS
- A 028 LEN HUNTER
- A 029 TREVOR BURNS
- A 030 GEOFF HUNTER
- A 031 JOHN KIRK
- A 032 BARRIE MCDONALD
- A 033 FRED STEVENS
- A 034 KATHY HENDERSON
- A 035 TED CROWTHER
- A 036 BRIAN BROWN
- A 037 LISBETH WRIGHT
- A 038 PETER LYNCH
- A 039 LYLE SCHULTZ
- A 040 MARY DUNCAN
- A 041 FRED MARSH
- A 042 MAX DOBELL
- A 043 MICHAEL STEWART
- A 044 TOM ENNIS
- A 045 JOHN ROBERTSON
- A 046 MICHAEL SOPH
- A 047 BOB PALMER
- A 048 IAN CARVER
- A 049 MALCOLM BOYD
- A 050 ROBERT ROSE
- A 051 JAMES MOIR
- A 052 COLIN KING
- A 053 DENNIS KEENAN
- A 054 CHARLES LAXTON
- A 055 PETER BELT
- A 056 LAURRIE TROTTER
- A 057 GEORGE REEMAN
- A 058 GLEN RAMSAY
- A 059 JOHN SCHULTZ
- A 060 JOB DUIVENVOORDEN
- A 061 RON PEARSON
- A 062 DAVID CALVERT
- A 063 GEORGE JACKSON
- A 064 BOB LANG
- A 065 KEN BATH
- A 066 FRANCIS BUFFONI
- A 067 GLEN READ
- A 068 GREGORY BLACK
- A 069 NORM MCDILL
- A 070 PAUL BUESNEL
- A 071 DONALD SAUNDERS
- A 072 CHRISTIAN DAVID
- A 073 PETER BLACK
- A 074 PHILIP WILSON
- A 075 JOHN SMITH (DAWSON)
- A 076 HELEN SEAL
- A 077 BARRY EVERS
- A 078 DAVID SHARP
- A 079 BILL GULLY
- A 080 BOB CAWSE
- A 081 IAN ALEXANDER
- A 082 MARSHALL POWER
- A 083 JOHN PATMAN
- A 084 DAVE MILLARD
- A 085 JOHN TURNER
- A 086 JOHN PUGH
- A 087 GARRY LOBB
- A 088 BILL KENNY
- A 089 ALESE JENSON
- A 090 PHIL EDWARDS
- A 091 TREVOR BAKER
- A 092 GERRY BECKETT
- A 093 JOE FINTA
- A 094 BARRY ARAVANDINO
- A 095 JEAN BOU
- A 096 BRIAN CLARK
- A 097 GORDON MUTCH
- A 098 JOHN MCMEEKIN
- A 099 WILLIAM WALKER
- A 100 JAMES MICHAEL

### ASM: What motivated you to stay so involved?

Parachuting was so new and out of the ordinary back then and every new thing you did gave you a feeling of achievement and I was lucky enough to have a flare for it. Every jump was a new adventure and I loved the sport so much I lived for the next time I could jump out of an aeroplane.

Back then you had to be prepared to spend long hours on the drop zone to make a jump. When I began, the Victorian Parachute School had only one or two parachutes and the Instructors would be at the drop zone to make a manifest list at first light on the one day of the week that they jumped.

The Victorian Parachute School was controlled by the partners Graeme Grigg and Keith Bullied and as it needed to be; it was regimented.

Those of us who were qualified paratroopers did not take long to reach the stage where we could organise to make unsupervised jumps but this involved us in heavy paper work to get permission for each and every jump from the Department of Civil Aviation.

The quick progression through the ranks kept me interested. I was a foundation member of 2 Commando Skydivers and was an instructor by then and when Southern Cross Skydivers was formed I became a Chief Instructor. One could hardly look for more motivation.

### ASM: How did you qualify as an instructor?

The Department of Civil Aviation made an edict that to instruct it was necessary to have 50 jumps and obtain its approval.

You will often hear a quote, "They only needed 50 jumps to be an instructor" and that just is not true. It was not easy to get the approval of DCA and very hard to get approval to act as Chief Instructor. Also, 50 jumps back then could not be compared with 50 jumps now. It was difficult to get more than one jump each jump day and my 32 civilian jumps in my first year was probably a record. The only person I can think of who may have done more was Bill Johnson in Sydney.

On that subject, very few recreational jumpers before 1962 had 100 jumps and there were a number of jumpers who gave up at 100 because they felt that was as many as anybody was entitled to.

### ASM: Was the lack of jumps a brake on advancement?

If you consider the small size of the sport, it went ahead in leaps and bounds from 1962 to 1964. In 1962, the first Australians competed in a World Championships; Kathy Henderson, Don West and Bill Molloy jumped in the 6th WPC at Orange Massachusetts. In 1964 Australia had a full team in the 7th WPC at Leutkirch, Germany, plus both South Australia and Western Australia joined the Federation over that time.

### ASM: Did implementing Parachuting Certificates (Licences) make a difference?

Yes it did. In the beginning, it served to make it clear who had experience and who did not. In an industry that was heavily involved in safety and had little written guidance, experience was an important factor.

The FAI licensing requirements were very basic; if an Australian had the required number of jumps he or she would certainly fulfil the other requirements.

Fortunately the FAI rules allowed member nations to impose more stringent requirements. We rewrote the APF requirements to set skill goals for the applicants. In practice it was very successful, neophyte jumpers were proud of every licence that they earned. So much so that many of them wore their highest licence number on the sleeve of their jumpsuit. (They had a lot more time between jumps).

The APF Licensing System came to have the highest requirements in the world and Australian jumpers were very easily accepted on foreign drop zones.

We had little experience of foreign licensing requirements and so we accepted the FAI

system in its entirety from A to F. Canada, USA and the United Kingdom only issued licences A to D.

When the APF was negotiating with DCA about the size of display landing areas, the Department was happy to accept the internationally accepted FAI/APF Parachutist Certificate as part of the requirements to jump into the different display areas.

In the 1990's when the nations that issued only A to D Certificates put forward at the FAI International Parachute Commission that the range of the FAI Certificates be brought in line with their systems they were successful even though I pointed out to them that in Australia it would take an act of Parliament to change the Australian Government Operational Regulations and E and F licences were required for some operations. However I was able to have them allow member nations to continue to issue the E, F & G licenses should they want to.

Australia has never issued G Licenses. It was discontinued by the Board because a number of F License holders indicated that there was no interest in obtaining the G as the F allowed them access to the tightest display drop zones anyway.

## F LICENCES

- F 001 ANDY KEECH
- F 002 PETER DAWSON
- F 003 ALLEN JAY
- F 004 CLAUDE GILLARD
- F 005 BILL JOHNSON
- F 006 COLIN KING
- F 007 BRIAN BROWN
- F 008 STEVE FILAK
- F 009 LEN HUNTER
- F 010 JIM COX
- F 011 LAWRENCE TROTTER
- F 012 ALLEN JAY
- F 013 BILL KENNY
- F 014 DAVID LOCK
- F 015 DAVID MILLARD
- F 016 DENNIS CLARKE
- F 017 JOHN MAHAFFY
- F 018 JOB DUIVENVOORDEN
- F 019 BOB STAFFORD
- F 020 JOHN FRASER
- F 021 ART LITTLEMORE
- F 022 BOB RANNEY
- F 023 SERGE WITTE
- F 024 PETER FRICKE
- F 025 BOB MORRISON
- F 026 JENNY STAFFORD
- F 027 GEOFF THOMAS
- F 028 PAT CAHILL
- F 029 PHIL WHATMORE
- F 030 JOCK MOIR
- F 031 FAYE COX
- F 032 CATHY BURROW
- F 033 GENE BERMINGHAM
- F 034 LOUIS JOHNSTON
- F 035 DANNY WRIGHT
- F 036 JOHN MIDDLETON
- F 037 DEREK DOUL
- F 038 DAVE MCEVOY
- F 039 BOB BARRY
- F 040 GEOFF BINGHAM
- F 041 RON LAW
- F 042 BRUCE BRAMHILL
- F 043 JURGEN WRIEDT
- F 044 TONY CURL
- F 045 KERRY TUCKER
- F 046 DICK COYNE
- F 047 BRUCE TOWERS
- F 048 DOUG IRVIN
- F 049 ROD WHYTE
- F 050 COL HOLT
- F 051 MARK WALTERS
- F 052 PETER NOBBS
- F 053 JIM CZERWINSKI
- F 054 NIGEL LONGHORN
- F 055 JOHN STANDRING
- F 056 ROY MARKER
- F 057 TONY DALE
- F 058 MIKE DEAKIN
- F 059 GRAEME WINDSOR
- F 060 SEAN LLEWELYN
- F 061 JOHN MCEVOY
- F 062 KATHY SILVESTRI
- F 063 BILL ROBINSON
- F 064 JIM HESSON (USA)
- F 065 GEOFF COWIE
- F 066 NOEL LOURIE
- F 067 ROY TAYLOR
- F 068 COLIN TREZISE
- F 069 RAY WILLIAMS
- F 070 JOHN DASH
- F 071 JOHN FRISWELL
- F 072 ROSS LOUGHTON
- F 073 GRAHAME HILL
- F 074 GEOFF CARR
- F 075 IAN HANDLEY
- F 076 BRIAN KILPATRICK
- F 077 JOHN BLAIN
- F 078 IAN SWINBOURNE
- F 079 HILTON TRENT
- F 080 DAVID TAPP
- F 081 HARVEY HUTCHINSON
- F 082 NOEL RATH
- F 083 ROD WILSON
- F 084 TONY DUCKWORTH
- F 085 TONY LEE
- F 086 DAVE OPITZ
- F 087 LAURRIE SAMS
- F 088 PETER EADIE
- F 089 RAYMOND MAKIN
- F 090 RAY FOSTER
- F 091 BOB CANTRIL
- F 092 MAGGIE GRAHAM
- F 093 MARSHALL POWER
- F 094 TONY EDWARDS
- F 095 MARY SKI
- F 096 ROSS DAVIDSON
- F 097 RORY HATCHETT
- F 098 STUART MCPHERSON
- F 099 ANNIE SWINBOURNE
- F 100 GREG GRAHAM

1960s



Bob Morrison



Dave Millard



Hans Magnusson



Australia's first large dedicated skydiving aircraft - Joint Effort exiting from Bruce Towers' Navajo



Bruce Towers



Ian Leslie & Bill Kenny



Claude Gillard

**ASM: What do you think were your personal achievements?**

Mostly my involvement in the development of the APF. There were many times that I had to overcome heavy opposition to put new developments in place. It was difficult to get agreement to make the change allowing students to advance by ability. The original training was very military and largely geared to the lowest common denominator; you were taught as a group and progressed when every member of the group had learned the skill.

Convincing the Executive that we should have a building fund and put a percentage of our income into it was touch and go. Many of the Executive Members could not see far enough ahead to see the need for owning real estate.

When we had enough money to put a deposit on a building and advised State Councils that it was possible to implement the plan; one of them had a meeting and answered "If we have \$30,000 we should jump it out".

And convincing the Department of Civil Aviation Officers that the APF was not a bunch of cowboys took a couple of years. Then it was a long hall to where the Department handed control of the sport to the Federation.

**ASM: What had you worked at prior to parachuting?**

I ran away from college, went picking grapes and found it hard work. It was wartime and I took a job with the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service as a projectionist and became a Camera Boy. When the war ended I did not want to go and work in Indonesia so I went to sea, around the Australian coast and overseas, then I got married. I worked for a while as a Waterside Worker and a number of other things until I joined the Victorian Railways. There I worked as a porter, an Assistant Station Master, a Shunter and a Guard. If I had stayed with the railways I would have been retired as a fat cat long ago.

Once I became involved in parachuting everything else took second place. I had never taken a day off sick day in ten years at the Railways. I had an unbelievable amount of sick pay entitlement.

I was secretary of the Federation and started taking time off on my sick leave to handle the ever-growing work load. The Railways didn't like it and the Roster Clerk made a deal with me. "I'll book you on "Stand By" every night provided that anytime that you are off sick and I run out of "Stand By" Guards and there is a train that will not be manned; I phone you and you will come regardless of what else you are doing" I agreed to that and by using it judiciously I was able to donate my services to the Federation for more than a year. If I was at work; I sat doing Federation work in the stand-by room.

My wife Jean ran a Milk Bar/Sandwich Bar in Richmond and having imported a couple of rigs for myself, I started to import and sell parachuting equipment, became a parachute rigger and Southern Cross Parachutes was born.

I built an office in my back yard and used it as the first purpose built APF Office. It became a way of life for me. Even later, when I was not so involved, I would buy equipment for the Federation if it could not afford it. It was what I wanted to do, developing the organization I always believed it could be.

**ASM: What were the most pressing problems faced by the Federation?**

The biggest problem was that we were restricted by regulations, there were Department of Civil Aviation Officers who saw parachuting as an unnecessary use of air space and of course the Department had to protect itself from being blamed for anything bad that happened. These two factors coupled with people who didn't understand what we were doing left parachutists with the impression that the Department was obstructionist.

In the first two years of my involvement it was not unusual for every parachute club and school in Australia to receive a

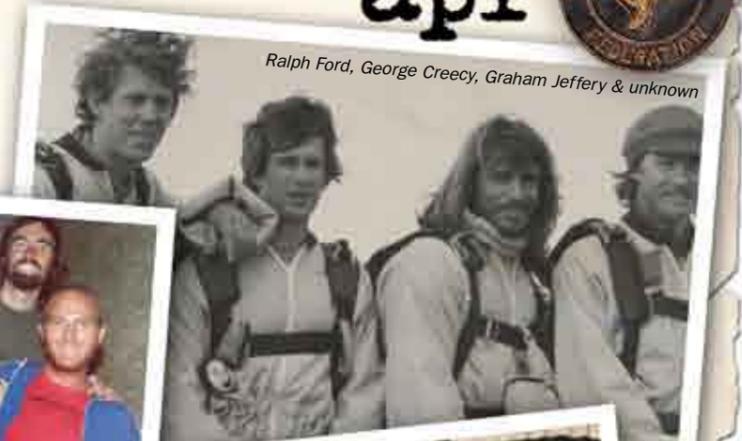
telegram from the Department of Civil Aviation with a message decreeing that all civilian parachuting must cease forthwith. One of these barred all jumps where the parachutist stood on a step or a wheel to exit the aircraft and only aircraft in which the jumper could exit in military fashion were to be used.

I phoned and asked to come and discuss the matter. I was ushered into a room with a very long table and seated at one end of it. The table was filled with official looking gentlemen and they all had serious expressions on their faces. After the preliminaries I asked "Could you explain the reason for this decision?" A lot of paper was produced and one of the officers indicated that these are the reports from three fatal parachuting accidents and all three of them contain the words "the jumper left the wheel and went unstable". I spent some time explaining the technicalities involved and explained that paratroopers did not assume the stable freefall position and that it would be more difficult to obtain the freefall position than for a person exiting from the step or the wheel because he only had to extend his arms and legs to be in the stable position whereas stepping out of the door requires him to turn his body into the direction of flight while assuming the stable position. They removed the edict and we only lost one weekend. None of the fatals had been caused by instability.

That must be seen in the light of the thinking at the time. The Departmental Officers were mostly ex Air Force and it was difficult for them to come to terms with the fact that parachuting was being conducted without military supervision.

Gaining the respect of the Department and having them hand over control of the sport was one of the most important steps in the Federations development.

**history of the apf**



Ralph Ford, George Creecy, Graham Jeffery & unknown



Bruce Towers, unknown and Dave McEvoy



WELCOME TO THE SOUTHERN CROSS SKU DIVERS 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Richard Stuart, Rod Barber, Alan Tricky & Tony Jackman

**1970s**



Making the Winfield advert



First 8-way Baton Pass, at Commandos



VH-CAN getting pushed down the strip after landing with an engine failure.



Top - Harvey Hutchinson, Faye Cox, Doug Irvin Bottom - Col King, Jim Cox, Claude Gillard, Ron Law



19-way over Pakenham



Andy Ski, Gave Conlon, Graham Williams & Dave Smith



Ian Hunter performing Australia's first nude run



Harvey Hutchinson with son Martin



Bruce Bramhill

**ASM: Why did the Federation move to Canberra?**

The most obvious advantage of having an office in Canberra was the proximity to government departments and politicians. Because you were close, you could discuss problems with the relevant Department as they arose and in many cases head off unwanted action before it occurred. You could also maintain a personal relationship with those people in government whose decisions can most affect you and usually stay well informed of their intentions before they actually make the decisions. It is sometimes not appreciated by sporting organisations that government officials who are not aware of the organisation's needs, will normally talk to an informed source before acting, provided there is a source within easy reach.

Personal contact with politicians was the most successful way to bring about political change. No doubt another way to make that contact was through the local members for each electorate. However, you must be aware that this course relies upon many people in your organisation getting off their backsides and making the effort to approach local members. Even when they do, you cannot be sure that they will make a favourable impression on the local member. Sadly, the few times that you will get members to make this effort are when it is too late and damage has already been done to your organisation. The only other way to be in contact with all of the politicians is to have someone on site at the seat of government, somebody who actively cultivates personal relationships with politicians.

An instance of where the local member approach can backfire was the Department's decision to approve an application for an aviation training organisation to take over an airfield that was already occupied by an established sport parachuting club. The Club went to the local member who happened to be a member of the opposition and he brought the subject up in parliament and embarrassed the Minister. The Department dug its toes in and went to great lengths to defend the Minister.

There were also internal reasons why the Federation needed to be based in the ACT. State rivalries can decimate an organisation. In the years prior to the shift to Canberra, I spent untold wasted hours having to deal with objections to progress because they might happen in a particular State and members in other States allowed their partisan feelings to overcome their desire for progress. Being based in the capital city overcame most of those rivalries and placed a national character on the actions of the organisation.

The Federation has recently moved the office from Canberra to Brisbane. I have every confidence in the Board so I am sure they have good reason for doing so.

**ASM: What were the previous APF Offices like?**

In 1962 the APF Office was the back room of my house in Doveton. I carried the whole filing system in a large leather brief case. The Federation fee structure took a small sum of money from each member club and that went on office supplies. I supplied the office furniture and equipment.

It can be seen in the photo that the office shelves were made from packing cases but the typewriter was state of the art.

As the Federation grew in size I had a purpose-built bungalow erected in my back yard. At first I manned the bungalow three days and four nights a week and as the load grew I was augmented by other volunteers three or four nights a week.

Amongst the most active volunteers were: Tony Hillman, Bob Courtenay and Andrew Kerr.

The Federation introduced an individual membership fee and along the way Anne Jessop was employed three days a week and eventually five days a week to help out.

The Federation eventually outgrew my bungalow and a larger office was rented from the Royal Victorian Aero Club on Moorabbin airport. Ruth Martin-Levorsen replaced Anne Jessop and by the time that the Federation outgrew that office it was able to enter a contract to buy its own office building in Mentone.

Later there was land available from the Federal Government in Canberra at a greatly reduced price and the Mentone building was sold to enable the purchase of the land in Canberra and the building of the Canberra APF Office.

By now the Federation had grown into a sizeable sporting body and was seen by the government as a role model. While in Canberra, the Federation grew to be staffed by seven people.

The Federation has recently moved to Brisbane to continue its growth.

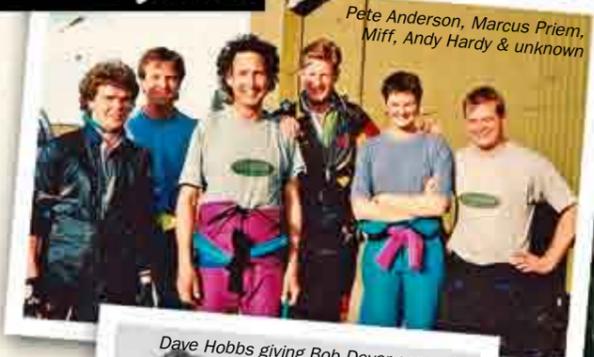
**history of the apf**



**1980s**



Geoff Bingham Landing at the Aratula Pub



Pete Anderson, Marcus Priem, Miff, Andy Hardy & unknown



Bully Bailey & Adam Hoppe



Dave Hobbs giving Bob Dever some tips



Dickie Drieu, Michael (Kimbles) Hughes, Bluebaker & Ray Palmer



Monkey, Brandon Van Nie Kirk, Doug Stewart & Mark Brody



Brad Turner and the team at the new Brisbane APF Office



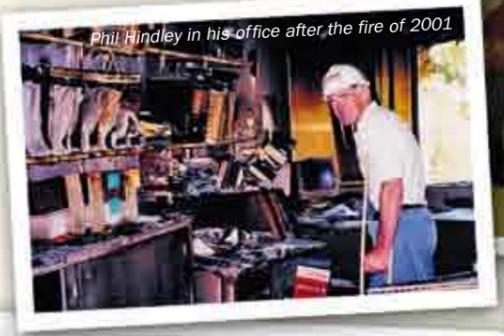
L-R Back: Shane Dunn, JTW, Carl Michaels, Miff. Front: Shane Struddy



Lower Light DZ



Barry Lewis



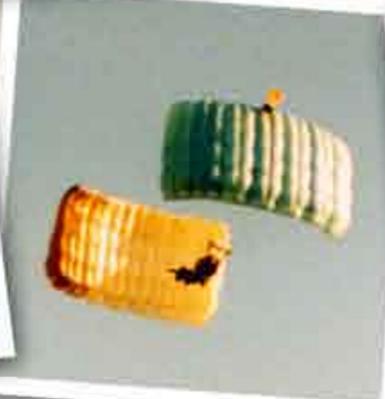
Phil Hindley in his office after the fire of 2001



The first APF building



TM John Friswell



Claude Gillard, Clive and Jean Smith



Above: The new APF building. Right: Official Opening, Peter Lloyd OBE, Claude Gillard OAM, Perry Crosswhite Aust. Sports Commission.

**Long Serving APF Staff**



Graham Windsor



John Chapman



Phil Hindley

**ASM: What about the structure of the Federation?**

I copied the original structure from the Memorandum and Articles of the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia, which was a Company Limited by Guarantee.

I included a Collegiate Voting System (The AGM was made up of two persons elected by each State Council). The alternative was that the AGM be made up of delegates from all of the member clubs and schools. There two reasons for the choice; the cost of travel was high back then and the possibility that control of the Federation may have centralised in the State with the largest number of clubs and schools. (There were instances of where this had happened in other sport aviation bodies)

I also had a mind set that we needed a structure that gave those at the top a feeling that their position had some importance. The Constitution had a company feel to it; the representatives were called Directors. But the lack of resources was no doubt the perceived reason.

My reports to the Board in the seventies commented on the need to introduce individual membership. It was quite some time later that this happened.

Along the way Collegiate Voting became unpopular with corporate affairs office and it would not approve constitutions that contained it. We have

gone through a few different structure changes since then but have been able to keep the Board members coming from the Council Areas.

There was good reason for changing the structure along the way and there maybe those who want to change it now. My comment on that is that during the whole time that I was involved with the Federation, there was never a time that if a member, club or individual, put a submission in writing explaining why it should be acted upon, that it would not have been given due consideration by the Board.

Most of the complaints that I experienced as president were based on personal differences between members or a belief that the Federations funds should have had different priorities in how they were spent. Many of these claims were based on self-interest or lack of knowledge as to the costs of the different expenditures.

**ASM: What do you think of the Federation of today?**

I think it is an excellent organisation. I know all of the Officers and many of the Board Members and I respect them all. I look back on my time with the Federation with great affection for all of the people who took part in its development. If ever there was a band of brothers we are it.

I know that from the salutation I am received with when we meet and the deepness of the bond I have with those I spend a lot of time with.



**APF Presidents**

Reginald Carsburg 1960/62

Charles Stewart 1962/64

Andrew Case 1964/65

Warren Hutchins 1965/66

Claude Gillard 1966/2000

Tony Edwards 2000/2008

David Smith 2008/2010



Warren Hutchins



Claude Gillard



Tony Edwards

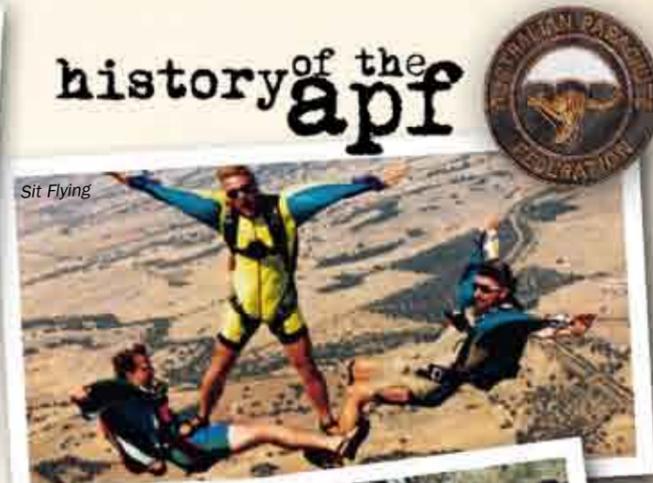


David Smith



Caravan load

1990s



Sit Flying



Aircraft of the time - DC3 & Twin Otters



Successful team HIGH 5



Mr Bill jumps



The Porter



Night Star Cresters



Olympic Rings demo



# Claude Gillard

## 5-way baton pass

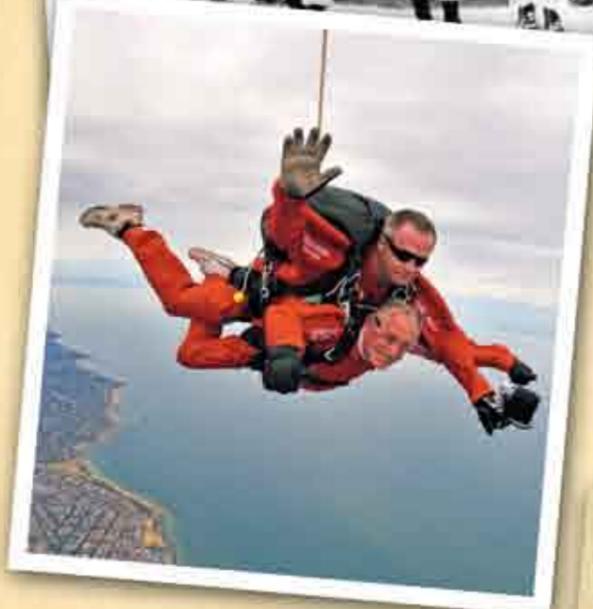
Claude and his mates set a "World's Best Performance" 5-way Baton Pass at Pakenham on the 30th of January, 1964. The only previous 5-way Baton Pass was performed by the US Army Golden Knights, from 35,000 ft with the last pass at 90 seconds from exit.

L-R: Beryl Blakemore - Len Hunter - Andy Keech - Colin King - Claude Gillard - Bill Molly

Commandos Founding Member Claude Gillard in freefall over Melbourne on a grey evening in February. The weather held out just long enough for this jump, which marked the start of the one year countdown to the Commando Skydivers golden anniversary. It was jump number 5,000 for TM David Boulter, with Shane Sparkes on camera.

The Countdown Party was designed to kick off the big year of celebrations and fundraising efforts for the club's 50th birthday. 80 members, past and present, gathered to look at photos, cheer for Claude and tell old war stories on a fantastic informal night.

The main celebrations for Commando's 50th anniversary will be a big Friday night formal dinner on February 4th 2011, with a birthday boogie weekend at the DZ.



If you want to jump and have some fun  
Head your car south along Highway One  
Turn off at Labertouche  
There's a nice drop zone in the Gippsland bush  
The target area's nice and neat  
It's easy on the eye and soft on the feet.  
And if you're lucky you could get to meet  
The King of the Air.

I don't need no flash P.C.  
Crossbow systems are not for me  
I'm doing fine on my old C9  
And I'm King of the Air.  
Don't need an ultra low  
Just green fields down below  
A ten metre sawdust pit  
And a little white disc I'm gonna hit  
I got a 10 sec series flat  
Dead centres are just old hat  
In a ten man star I'll be there every time  
'Cause I'm King of the Air.

I don't need no French jumpboots  
Bubble goggles or twin-zip suits  
As long as I've got my two parachutes  
I'll be King of the Air.

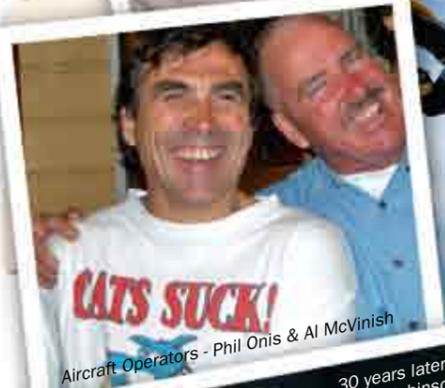
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NQ Tandem DZ Operators - Todd Gerrard and Col King



Aircraft Operators - Phil Onis & Al McVinish



30 years later - Martin & Harvey Hutchinson



Atmonauti's



Airtite 4-way team Tunnel Training



Foosball



Friends & Fun Times



Hybrids



Buwias



High Performance Canopies & Swoop Ponds



Funny Farm Boogie



Wingsuit Rodeos



Earth Leakage