

A black and white photograph of a P-51 Mustang fighter plane on a runway. The plane is dark-colored with a white nose and wingtips. It features a French flag on the tail and a roundel on the wing. The number '273' is visible on the nose. The background shows a grassy field, trees, and hills under a blue sky. A teal overlay covers the entire image, and white text is superimposed in the center.

RAAF WILLIAMTOWN DINNER MSA NSW 22 July 2026

BACKGROUND

After last year's excellent dinner at HARS, two of our members – Pam Paff and Rod Smallwood – who live in the Hunter region, suggested having this year's event in Newcastle. They pointed to its many excellent restaurants and facilities.

Separately, I was keen to try to encourage an increase in attendance, as last year's represented a dramatic fall from those of previous years.

Last ANZAC day, Curly Ware was walking around Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, where he encountered a lady painting a "lakescape". In the conversation that followed, the artist turned out to be WGCDR Naomi Forryan, who is on the staff at RAAF Base Williamtown. She is a former 10SQN Maintenance Officer, having served in that role from January 1996 to December 1999.

Curly explained our interest in holding an MSA Dinner, and asked if the Officers Mess Williamtown might be a possible venue. Naomi immediately undertook to explore the prospects.

Over subsequent weeks, the further the investigation went, the more plausible the idea became. One attraction was the likely attractive cost to our members. Another was the chance to be on a RAAF base once again.

Member responses to the idea were positive, and attendance numbers proved to be an advance on last year's.

I was able to set the cost per attendee at \$75, a big reduction compared with previous years.

We ended up with sixteen members/partners, despite one member – Alek Miller - having cancel due to being diagnosed with COVID.

Here are some images of the lead-up, and the dinner.

The ANZAC Day Encounter





















CO 2SQN WGCDR Glen "Chetts" Chettle discusses his squadron's role, and fields questions





Dinner survivors about to retire for the night

MY PROFOUND THANKS

I wish to express my gratitude to all who made this event such a resounding success:

- Those of our members who were able to attend
- The RAAF Williamtown Officers Mess Manager and his staff, who did an outstanding job
- CO 2SQN, for his participation and informative address
- Curly Ware, for his decision to wander around Lake Burley Griffin last ANZAC Day, and his subsequent initiatives
- Most of all, WGCDR Naomi Forryan, for her outstanding organizational skills and attention to detail

Dave Charles