

# Fire Board

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With just over 16 weeks till the Hobart reunion there's still time to join us in Tasmania, but it is running out fast. The rain seems to have run out here. I do remember we had a week of rain 50 years ago over the New Year period from what was the remnants of Cyclone Tracy. The difference in communication when looking into Tracy was startling. Made even more so while gathering the info for the DVA section of this Fire Board. From the other side of the state and the other end of the country I had answers to the questions I was asking. Thanks to Steve & Keran.

I had some success reclaiming email addresses last time, so I will try my luck again. Can you help with contacting the people below?

Allan Arthars, Mark Best, John Addicoat, Malcom Black, Phil Faint, Duncan Fraser, Paul Healy, Bob McMaster, Keith Pointon, Paul Atkins

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Vale. - I must apologise for not including this in the last edition of Fire Board. – Page 10

## Facebook sites.

[RAAF Fires](#)

[RAAF Fire and Rescue](#)

[RETIRED RAAF FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION](#)

**Web** [THE R.A.A.F FIRE SERVICE \[OBJ\] \(georama.com.au\)](#) hosted by Chas Adlard. It is Chas's site where you can find back issues of "Fire Board" and back issues of Pat's Newsletters back to 2011. There's a wealth of information there. Adelaide Reunion - [2022 Reunion - Adelaide \(georama.com.au\)](#)

Info on the Hobart reunion and copies of all Fire Board issues are at [raaffirereunion.com](#)

- [Defence newspapers | News & Events | Defence](#)
- [Australian Defence Force \(ADF\) Firefighter Scheme | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)
- [Advocacy Support — RSL Australia](#)

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**ADF Mental Health All-hours  
Support Line**

**1800 628 036**

Call Lifeline on [13 11 14](tel:131114)

[Beyond Blue | 24/7 Support for Anxiety, Depression and Suicide Prevention](#)

1300 22 4636

Glen Anderson

0438635159

Po Box 185, Mole Creek, Tas. 7304

[glen@raaffirereunion.com.au](mailto:glen@raaffirereunion.com.au)

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## DVA

### Skeletal Claims, SOP's

Nothing came to my notice this quarter so with some assistance from the “brains trust” I will revisit Pat Mildren’s Skeletal Claims list.

First and foremost, when making a claim YOU NEED AN ADVOCATE.

[Advocacy Support — RSL Australia](#)

Also, from Pat’s Newsletter 3/2020 - I quote “Also please remember to endorse the first page on any claim in bold letters, “DEFENCE FIREFIGHTER”. DVA have requested this.”

Some thoughts from the brains trust

“My recommendation would be to get any problems diagnosed via x-ray , CT scan etc. then go on the internet and download the SOP (statement of principles) for example OA knee SOP. The SOP lists what is required to gain approval. For example, it may say you must have lifted more than 20 kg for so many hours over a period of 10 years. You would then add that info on your claim. Most advocates would have a list of what weights were carried during service.

There is an SOP for all conditions.

For example, hearing loss , you would use the text in the sop which would say something like “ I was exposed to more than 140db of noise during firing small arms, explosives etc.

If someone has any skeletal conditions go and see an advocate.”

The DVA site is both of wealth on information and a maze. Even the above advice needs some knowledge to read. The “OA” as above is osteoarthritis if you look up knee replacement you will get some answers but a completely different set of answers for a “OA” search. This is where an “advocate” can be of great assistance.

The 3 links below are to demonstrate the DVA maze from a search for DVA SOP’s you still have to work your way though.

[Statements of principles | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

[Introduction to the RMA – Repatriation Medical Authority](#)

[SOPs – Repatriation Medical Authority](#)

Another Link that may be of interest to you.

[Laws that cover claims | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

Pats “Skeletal Claims” file is on the next page, as well I have attached it separately

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## DVA

### SKELETAL CLAIMS

TASK	WEIGHT	PRESSURE	DYS YR	TOTAL W	TOTAL P
Carrying rolled 4inch (10 cm) fire hose	15 kg		260	3900	
Hold and manoeuvring charged 4inch (10cm) fire hose		80 psi	40		3200
Carrying rolled 6inch (15 cm) fire hose	25 kg		260	6500	
Holding and manoeuvring charged (foam filled) 6inch fire hose		80 psi	180		3200
Carrying full Fire Extinguishers	7.5 kg		260	1950	
Carrying extension Ladders	25 kg		40	1000	
Carrying 20 litre drums of foam compound	25 kg		260	6500	
Manoeuvring 200 litre drums of foam compound and chemicals	125 kg		180	22500	
Wearing of breathing apparatus	7.5 kg		40	300	
Carrying gas cylinders	12 kg		180	2160	
Fireman's shoulder carry of person at least own weight	80 to 85 kilo		40	3300	
Carrying suction Hoses	20 kg		20	400	
Manoeuvring trailers		80 psi	40		3200
Manoeuvring Suction Pump trailers		80psi	20		1600
Carrying Portable suction Pumps	30 kg		180	5400	
Carrying Rescue Equipment	50 kg		260	13000	
Changing over CO2 Gas cylinders	150 kg		40	6000	
Unloading stores	100 kg		180	18000	
Fire drills manoeuvring charged fire hose		80 psi	180		14400
Fire drills manoeuvring charged fire hoses up ladders		80 psi	90		7200
Fire drills manoeuvring charged fire hoses through buildings		80 psi	90		7200
Cleaning and hanging fire hoses to dry	30 kg		260	7800	
Operating manual controlled aircraft barriers		70 psi	10		700
Changing vehicle tyres	75 kg		40	3000	
PT Training		80 psi	260		20800
Using/Carrying Knapsack Sprays	25 kg		40	1000	
				102710	61500

**DEC72 TO APR78 - 5.33 Years**

**Total Lifting - 547444**

**Total Pressure - 327795**

**GRAND TOTAL - 875239**

TASK	DAYS Year	RUNGS	TOTAL
Climbing rungs of extension ladders - No load	90	30	2700
Climbing as above with load, (Fire equip, rescue, etc.	90	30	2700
Climbing stairs - Fire inspections,	90	12	1080
Climbing stairs - Watch rooms, Control rooms, Plant Rooms, etc.	280	12	3360
Climbing Vehicle side ladders	280	16	4480

**GRAND TOTAL PER YEAR                      830            100            14320**

**5.33 YEARS                                      4424           533            7326**

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## Cyclone Tracy

Destruction was not in short supply after Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin Christmas morning 50 years ago this year. Historical notes abound today, and I am sure the media will have plenty of stories for you later next month. So I will skirt the edges of Tracy and let you ponder where you were when you heard the news.

Sky News will have a special program at 8PM on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

Communicating the news was the first hurdle for those in Darwin as all communication was knocked out. That is hard to believe in the present day with email and video chat in your pocket. I cannot remember hearing about Tracy till the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Today a satellite would watch the cyclone's path for days prior to land fall, with a TV crew flown in with a portable satellite uplink in a suitcase. Satellite phones would be pulled out of pockets & a Starlink dish would search the sky for one of those flying dustbins to connect to the world in minutes. Generators to power these things and more, are common today. The lack of communication is the most startling difference that stood out, from today when researching for this.

One mother in Adelaide wrote a letter to her 2 children in Darwin to see if they were still alive. It took a while for it to sink in that the address on that letter may not have existed anymore. An e-mail can be retrieved by the recipient from any computer, that letter had to be hand delivered. The kids rang a week later by the way.

\*The first communication link reestablished in the aftermath was via HF Radio sourced from a [Connellan Airways de Havilland Heron](#) that had been hastily stored in an empty hangar at [Darwin Airport](#) the night before, being anchored to towing equipment and weighed down with 350 kg of beer cartons. From this aircraft, pilot David Fredrickson contacted the Katherine Flight Service Centre by mid-morning to convey news of the disaster. He then spent much of the day relaying messages on behalf of emergency services, Navy personnel and airport staff until additional communication links were established later in the day.<sup>[24]</sup>

The stories of how the residents survived would fill volumes. I found this snippet,-

“..... Joan Allridge, Vice President of the Red Cross who spent the hours of the cyclone under her kitchen table with two other adults, six children, one cat, four kittens, one dog and three birds. ....”

RAAF Base Darwin was not immune from Tracy's destruction.

\*\*After Darwin was devastated by Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Eve of 1974, the RAAF led the effort to go to the city's relief. Although the RAAF Base had not been spared in the destruction, as soon as the storm abated its personnel immediately set to work clearing debris from runways to allow limited operations to be restored. The first aircraft to use the airfield was a RAAF Dakota which had been flown south the previous day to escape the cyclone. Meanwhile, a C-130 Hercules configured for medical evacuation had been dispatched from Richmond, NSW, during the mid-afternoon. After diverting to Mount Isa, Queensland, to collect an official party that had got that far by RAAF BAC-111, the flight reached Darwin at 10 pm and landed on the runway marked only by flares 'under extremely marginal conditions using the aircraft's radar'

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## Cyclone Tracy

Some members shared memory's when I asked on [RETIRED RAAF FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION](#)

Bill Woolrich Admin Top contributor

I was in TVL when it hit and was involved in assisting Air Moments with the evacuations from Darwin.

Chris Christopher Deavin was there and I believe it wiped out his MQ. Chris was in TVL before that when cyclone Althea hit there and wiped his MQ out there as well. I think that's why he was living in Menzies all those years. No where near the coast or tropical storms.

1d Haha Reply

5

Jock Hill

I was duty fire crew at Pearce having Xmas lunch in the mess, served by officers, when the OC came in and said cut the beer and finish lunch. You might be going to Darwin tonight!

1d Like Reply

2

Christopher Deavin

I lost just about everything, me and the lady I was with were staying in a flat in casuarina.

Wouldn't like to go through it again.

1d Care Reply

2

\* [Cyclone Tracy - Wikipedia](#)

\*\* [Cyclone Tracy's destruction of Darwin | Air Force](#)

Additional reading with good photos [Cyclone Tracy | National Museum of Australia](#)

Some quick stats.

- wind gusts reached 217 km/h before the anemometer was destroyed
- gales extended to about 40 kilometres from the cyclone's centre
- there was a storm surge of 1.6 metres in Darwin's harbour; an estimated 4 metres at Casuarina Beach
- 255 mm of rain fell in 12 hours overnight, 145 mm in the two half-hour periods on either side of the eye of the cyclone
- 66 people were killed
- 145 people were seriously injured; more than 500 received minor injuries
- about 70 per cent of houses suffered serious structural failure
- the total damage bill topped \$800 million.

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## R.A.A.F Fire Fighter Reunion 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 Hobart, Tasmania

The list of organizations that think March 2025 is the time to be in Tasmania keeps growing. Along with us, the WRAN and The Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games, I find out now that the 2025 Australian Rowing Championships will be held at Lake Barrington starting on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

We will need firm numbers by the end of January 2025. With all the other activities going on booking flights & accommodation now would be advisable. Wrest Point no longer shows up in an accommodation search, but there were other options in the Sandy Bay area.

Members Attending so far, most with partners. If you think you have paid and are not on the list, please contact me ASAP.

Glen	Anderson	Peter	Hayes
Trevor	Box	Gary	Helman
Lionel	Carr	Kevin	Hughes
Keran	Carsburg	Jarrad	Jeffer
Danny	Clark	Noel	Lee
Jim	Dent	Mark	Limana
Simon	Doherty	Andrew	Mashall
Sandy	Eastcott	David	Pentland
Darren	Evans	Gordon	Potter
Brett	Franklin	Shane	Shambrook
Dave	Gray	Wayne	West
Terry	Greenhill	Grant	Wilson

## Program

### Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Welcome Drinks** -1800 to 1930 – Boardwalk Gallery/ Green Room Bar

Cost is \$40.00 per person. Food will be provided. Drinks will be available for purchase at the bar.

### Friday 21st March 2025

**Peppermint Bay Cruise** - 10.30 from the Wrest Point Pier - \$170.00 per person

### Saturday 22nd March 2025

**Reunion Dinner** – 1800 to 2200 - Boardwalk Gallery.

This will be a buffet. – Cost \$100.00 per person with a cash bar.

Dress is formal or neat casual. Tie and jacket optional. Medals encouraged.

### Sunday 23 March 2025

Will be an informal lunch at the Boardwalk Bistro, for those still around.

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## New Fire Trucks for the RAAF

Thanks to Pete McGraw for posting this on [RETIRED RAAF FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION](#) Facebook site. I include this for those that are not on Facebook. The link below is to the Defence site. Which also has more photos.

### [New red-hot firefighting capability | Defence](#)

By Corporal Luke Bellman

Air Force firefighters will be able to respond to aircraft incidents with enhanced safety, efficiency and effectiveness following the acquisition of a new type of fire truck that is the first of its kind in Australia.

Nineteen new Rosenbauer 'Panther' fire trucks will replace the current fleet. They are equipped with a high-reach extendable turret that enable firefighters to pierce fuselage and deliver firefighting agents into hard-to-reach areas within burning planes.

The Panther has an advanced thermal camera that can quickly identify hidden hot spots, and its turret can extend to heights of 14 metres.

The delivery of the new fire trucks was coordinated by Squadron Leader Craig Adams and Warrant Officer Stephen Johnstone, the senior Air Force Firefighter, in collaboration with the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group and Army Headquarters.

'It will be easier for trainees accustomed to gaming.'

Squadron Leader Craig Adams said the fire truck's systems provide greater capability and protection during emergencies.

"They are a game changer for Air Force in terms of how firefighters respond to aviation fire events on an airfield," Squadron Leader Adams said.

The Panther can deliver F3 foam streams from distances of up to 90 metres. F3 foam is PFAS-free, environmentally safer and complies with modern safety regulations. It also features improved situational awareness tools, enhanced cabin protection and upgraded joystick controls that allow precision handling of the turret.

Sergeant Glenn Mason, an instructor at the RAAF Security and Fire School (RAAFSFS), believes it offers significant improvements on its predecessor.

"The old one has a fixed-roof monitor, just moves left, right, up and down. This one does that as well, but now you've got the turret that can be extended from the truck with a telescopic boom," Sergeant Mason said.

He added that the Panther is more complex to operate.

"But it will be easier for trainees accustomed to gaming," he said.

RAAFSFS received the first three fire trucks in August, with Air Force instructors undergoing a train-the-trainer course. From January next year, these instructors will use the new fire trucks to deliver the basic firefighter course.

Current firefighters will participate in a conversion training program with the Panthers also from January.

The full suite of Panthers are expected to be received by April next year, with the firefighting units fully operational by July 2026. RAAF Base Amberley will have nine Panthers (including five for training), with four going to Williamstown, three to Richmond, and three to Tindal.



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## Vale

Wayne (Dusty)	Miller	27/05/2024	1972 Course 28
Hilary (Tex)	Killmier	29/05/2024	1969 Course 22
Doug	Wood	4/06/2024	1969 Course 22
Bruce	Karger	3/07/2024	1969 Course 22
Keith	Cavill	11/08/2024	1974 Course 33
Russel (Legs)	Lister*	?/?/2024	1978 Course 43
	*I have not been able to 100% confirm the identity of this notice		
Dave	Thewlis	21/11/2024	1979 Course 46

The number of comments I receive on the passing of a member varies greatly. Age, length of service, number of postings, number of fire fighters at the time of service, all have an effect on how many people we knew. As such I don't post all comments I receive, but do forward them on to the family if I can, usually I can't. The following is a reply to a email to a member I regularly correspond with.

"I said exactly the same thing – Dave was one of the good guys. In reply to a email tonight.

I have to say that reaction to this news is on a par with that for Pat Mildren. Considering Pat was well known for the "PCK Chem saga" reunions etc. it says a lot about the high regard people had for Dave."