

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

October 2026 Edition



**1 Commerce Ave, Armadale, WA 6112
PO Box 697, Armadale, WA 6992**

Ph: (08) 9497 1972

email: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Social media: [Facebook](#)

General Meetings:

Second Sunday of each month at 1100hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armada Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Mike Fairweather
Vice President	Mr Bob Giles
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Vacant
Membership Officer	Ms Carol King
Committee	Mr Ken Beven
Committee	Mrs Lois Davis
Committee	Mr Keith Northcott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

At the Armadale RSL Sub-Branch:

Monday: by appointment only

Thursday: between 0900 - 1400hrs

Weekday Contact Details:

Mobile: 0407 449 150

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for October

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	4 th	Social Committee Meeting	1130
Tuesday	6 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	11 th	General Meeting	1100



Sherman DD tanks of 'B' Squadron, 13th/18th Royal Hussars supporting commandos of No. 4 Commando, 1st Special Service Brigade, on the Rue de Riva-Bella as they advance into Ouistreham, Sword area, June 6, 1944

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

VFF Grant implementation is in full swing and ongoing.

Thanks to those who have taken on positions for the ensuing year, your contribution is very much appreciated. I look forward to working with you all.

We are now taking names for the Poppy Appeal stalls which will be held on 5th, 7th and 9th November. This is an extremely important initiative in raising much needed funds to keep the Sub-Branch open. If you can spare a couple of hours to help, it would be very much appreciated, the Roster is now on the board.

We have been fortunate to contract the Midnight Angel Duo for entertainment on Sunday 15th November. I hope members will support this event by attending.

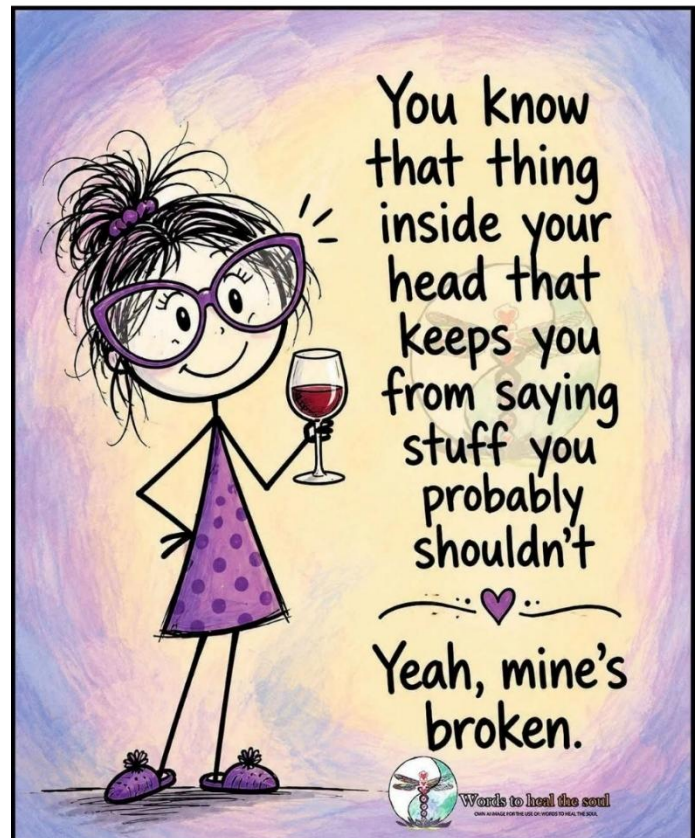
The President is hosting a Members luncheon on 22nd November. Bookings are essential. We will post a booking form at the bar from next week.

Best regards as always,

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Members,

The Veterans Facility Grant implementation is ongoing with minimal interruption to our members so far. Electrical upgrades are complete, new Ovens are in, and the office carpeting is complete. Heaps more to go though !

Thanks so very much to Pete and John Brokas, for helping us out with the "grunt" to move furniture during our carpet replacement. These Social members have been so integral in maintaining our critical path for the upgrades, we can't thank you both enough.

At the Management Committee Meeting on 8th September it was decided that from A-Z Draw No.87 onwards the prize will be \$200.00.

We extend a warm welcome to Ken Beven and Lois Davis who have both joined the Management Committee following the recent AGM. Thanks to everyone who has taken on positions for the ensuring year.

That's about all from me for now,

Mike Fairweather

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch

Ph: (08) 9497 1972. M: 0403 980 290

1 Commerce Avenue Armadale WA 6112 | PO Box 697 Armadale WA 6992

e-mail: president@armadalersl.com.au



Where the hell did they bury the rest of him?

Membership Update

As at 30th September 2026:

Service Members:	119
Affiliate Members:	42
Social Members:	<u>84</u>
Total:	<u>245</u>

- *Our Membership has increased by 9 over the month - 2 Service, 2 Affiliate and 5 Social Members have been accepted.*
- *The RSLWA reconciliation against my records showed 1 Service and 1 Affiliate discrepancy which have now been resolved. Interesting that the Sub-Branch records were correct and those of Head Office were not. I'm now hoping that we can keep both sets of records aligned.*

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Carol King

Tel: 9497 1972

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au





October Service Members:

Abboud	Mr	Ali	02/10	Claudius	Mr	Clive	14/10
Errington	Mr	Brenton	10/10	Hughes	Mr	Anthony	19/10
Jackson	Mr	Brian	17/10	Johnston	Mr	Kenneth	03/10
Karsten	Mr	Michael	12/10	Marsh	Mr	Alistair	30/10
Miller	Mr	Domenic	10/10	O'Rourke	Mr	Patrick	27/10
Playle	Mr	William	05/10	Rundell	Mr	Shane	05/10
Walker	Mr	Robert	13/10				

October Affiliate Members:

Craige	Ms	Pamela	29/10	Smith	Mr	Martin	30/10
Symonds	Mr	Kim	03/10				

October Social Members:

Edwards	Mrs	Sharon	11/10	Gilroy	Miss	Lorraine	08/10
Jakso	Mr	Laszlo	06/10	Jolly	Mrs	Anita	22/10
Watterson	Mr	Neil	16/10	Whitaker	Mrs	Jo	06/10

If there are any errors or anyone has been missed off the list, please advise

The Secretary (Membership Officer)

These members may collect a free drink of their choice during the month

We hope you have a very special Birthday

Established in 1921, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is the second-oldest independent Air Force in the world

Early History and World War I

Military aviation came of age during World War I when airships and early aircraft were principally used for reconnaissance. Australia's eight Australian Flying Corps (AFC) squadrons were part of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and were attached to larger British Royal Flying Corps / Royal Air Force formations.

During World War I, 800 officers and 2,840 men served in the AFC and 175 lost their lives. Many AFC veterans helped to lay the groundwork for the future Royal Australian Air Force and after the war others would enter industry to make significant contributions to civil aviation.

In January 1920, the AFC was replaced by the Australian Air Corps, which in turn became the Australian Air Force on 31 March 1921 with the King's consent to become the Royal Australian Air Force on 13 August 1921.

World War II

In World War II, Australian air and ground crews fought in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East; over the North Atlantic, the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Mediterranean; India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, China, the Netherland East Indies, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines and Borneo. They also fought over Australia, its territories, and its approaches.

In late 1944, the RAAF peaked at over 182,000 personnel and 6,200 aircraft in 61 squadrons. In 1945, Australia had the fourth-largest air force in the world (after the USA, USSR and UK). Over 215,000 men and women served between 1939-45, and 9,870 RAAF personnel lost their lives. Over 55 per cent of these deaths occurred in the air war against Germany over Europe.

Recent Conflicts and Peacekeeping

Air Force personnel have since served with distinction in Korea, Malaya, the 'Confrontation', Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

We are also very proud of our role in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions throughout the world, including Bougainville, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Somalia and the Sudan, in which many hundreds of RAAF personnel have been involved.

Since 1945, over 60 RAAF personnel have lost their lives in conflict or through accidents during operations. Globally, Air Force has between 500 and 700 people on operations each day, contributing to coalition operations, peacekeeping and humanitarian and disaster relief.

Bar Manager's Report

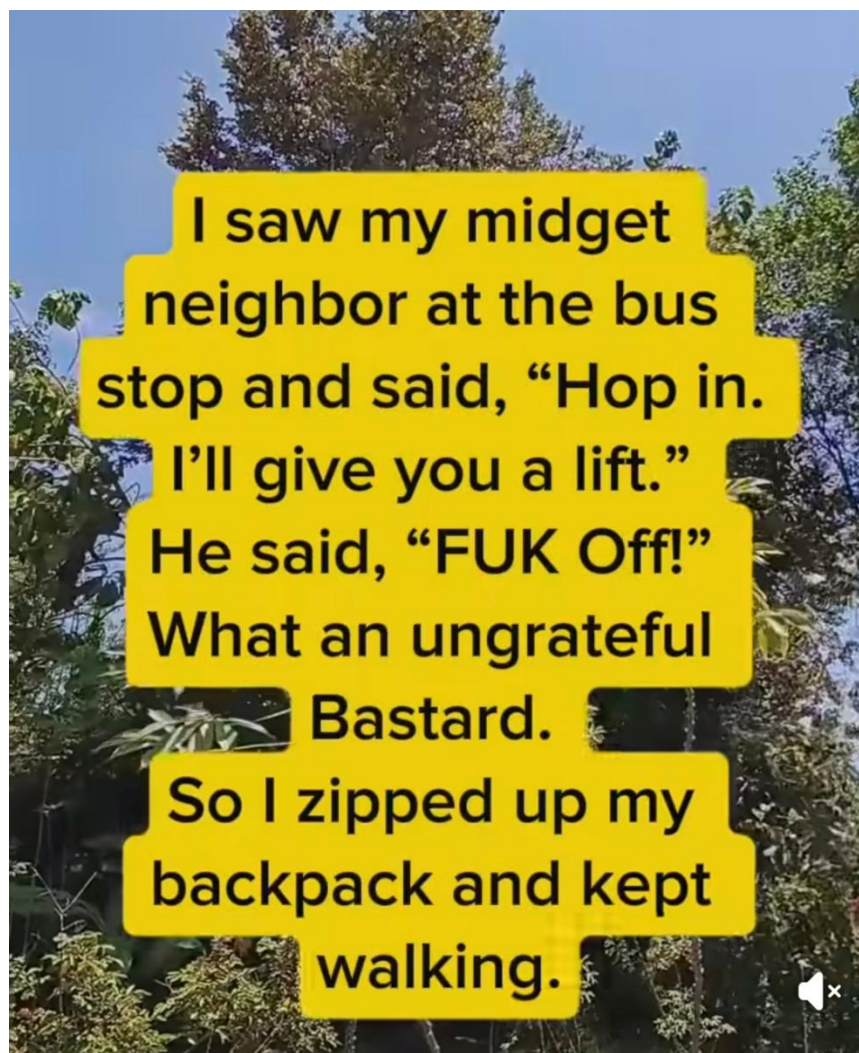
G'day All,

Bar takings have been pretty dismal over the month of September, however Sunday 27th was pretty good. If the Sub-Branch only relied on the bar to raise revenue, we would already be closed.

We can only ask that Members encourage their mates to come in and patronise our bar.

Cheers for now,

Stormy



MEMBERS LUNCHEON

Sunday 22nd November, 2026

(1230 hours)



Roast: Beef or Pork

***Dessert: Sticky Date Pudding
Apple Crumble Pie***

FINANCIAL MEMBERS ONLY

\$15

Book and Pay by Close of Business 8th November



Royal Welch Fusiliers cleaning their rifles before the attack at Évrecy, Normandy Campaign 1944



HMAS Torrens (DE 53) steams at speed during fleet operations as a River class destroyer escort of the



You have two 7.7mm machine guns right in front of your face in the Japanese Zero!



A Hawker Hurricane shot down in the Western Desert in 1941

A person wearing a red shirt is shown from the chest up, with their right hand raised towards their face. The background is slightly blurred.

**Once in Las Vegas
I lost half of my life's
savings in just 30
minutes and it still
hurts.**

**To this day I won't
drive anywhere near
that wedding chapel.**

A man wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt is shown from the chest up, holding a white cup with a colorful design. He is looking slightly to the right.

**Just caught
my pecker in
my zipper.
God it hurts.**

**No more zip up
boots for me.**

"Look At Those Australian Idiots": The Mistake That Haunted The US



It was the single most embarrassing radio call in the history of the Vietnam War. In March 1968, a veteran US Green Beret captain stood on an airstrip at New Dot and openly laughed at his allies. He watched a team of Australian SAS soldiers taking hacksaws to their rifles, literally sawing off the barrels of high precision military weapons in a dusty garage.

To the Americans who prided themselves on firepower and technology, it looked like insanity. The captain turned to his men and said, "Look at those idiots. They won't last a week." He was wrong. Dead wrong. Because just 6 hours later, that same American captain wasn't laughing. He was pinned down in a jungle ambush, surrounded by the Vietkong, screaming into his handset for help. And the only people coming to save him were the idiots with the sawn-off guns. But what happened next didn't just save his life, it humiliated the entire American military doctrine and forced the Pentagon to rewrite its manuals. To understand why, we have to go back to the garage where the sawing began.

On the 14th of March 1968, an American intelligence officer stepped off a Huey helicopter at the Australian base in New Dat and immediately covered his nose. The smell was biological, layered, and aggressive. It suggested decomposition, stagnant water, and something his brain could only categorize as advanced human neglect. The officer had spent 18 months in Vietnam. He had visited field hospitals, burning villages, and mass graves. None of those experiences prepared him for what was emanating from the Australian soldiers preparing for patrol 40 meters away. His first assumption was logistics failure. His second was disciplinary action. Surely no professional military would permit soldiers to reach such a state of filth voluntarily. He approached the nearest Australian lieutenant to offer assistance with hygiene supplies. The Australians response carried an edge that the American would remember for decades.

**DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'VE NEVER
WADDLED ACROSS THE HOUSE TO GET
A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER WITH YOUR
UNDERWEAR AROUND YOUR ANKLES**



I told my wife our neighbour died. She said, "Who? Ray?"



I said, "It's way too early to celebrate like that."



M2A2 Experimental 105MM Auxiliary Propelled Howitzer



Experimental Light "D" Tank. Experimental tracks fitted to Overland Chassis

**When I Was A Kid,
They Didn't Call It
Behavioral Disorders.
They Called It Being A
'Little Brat.'**



**Hey, I told you
I was part Chihuahua!**

**Yeah, but you
didn't say that part!**





In 1944, the Australian 7th Division (7 Div), defeated the Japanese at Shaggy Ridge in New Guinea.

The Australians cut the main Japanese routes through the Finisterre ranges with the capture of Shaggy Ridge, north west of Lae, after days of heavy fighting.

The Australian effort to gain the position was renewed as the 15th and 18th Brigades arrived to relieve the 21st and 25th Brigades. They subsequently launched Operation Cutthroat, aimed at securing the Kankiryo Saddle at the northern end of Shaggy Ridge, joining Faria Ridge, Shaggy Ridge, and the two Protheroe features.

The 2/2nd Battalion Pioneers began exploiting the area to the north-east of Prothero II and subsequently managed to install itself in a position on the eastern extremity of Kankiryo Saddle. To the south, the 2/9th Infantry Battalion carried out reconnaissance around the area in front of their position around Green Sniper's Pimple, and located several Japanese bunkers. Deciding on an indirect approach, an Australian patrol was sent to the flanks and under the cover of heavy artillery, they scaled the steep sides of McCaughey's Knoll to take the position with the element of surprise.

Earlier, the 2/10th Infantry Battalion had taken several attempts to secure Cam's Hill, including an unsuccessful assault on the Japanese rear with a flanking move through the Faria River. Throughout the night, the Japanese launched several unsuccessful counter-attack attempts, but these were repelled.

**NO MATTER HOW GOOD
THE HAND SOAP SMELLS,**



**NEVER WALK OUT OF
A BATHROOM SNIFFING
YOUR FINGERS**



**THIS IS A FOR SURE SIGN IT'S
GOING TO BE A GOOD DAY FISHING.**



Australia Day !

The Australia class were the only heavy cruisers in Australian History. Both were replacement for much older light cruisers.

They were ordered in 1924, based on the Kent class (first of the County class). HMAS Australia and Canberra were probably among the most battle hardened Royal Australian Navy (RAN) large vessels.

They were also the only ones launched in Scotland in 1927 and completed the next year, both transferred to Australian waters

Ever wondered what Lois, Irene, Cheryl and Carol are crocheting?

We make single blankets and donate them on behalf of the Armadale Sub-Branch to Advocare who give them to those in need.

Advocare supports older adults, their families and representatives to navigate and resolve issues with aged care services. They help people find the information needed to make informed decisions, to express their preferences, and to stay connected to their community

Advocare are a not-for-profit organisation and independent from aged care providers. Their services are free, unbiased and confidential.

Advocare is also the Seniors Peak Body in Western Australia



**KNOW WHAT THE CHEAPEST
MEAT TO BBQ IS?**



**DEER BALLS.
THEY'RE UNDER A BUCK.**



The Soviet Night Witches

What was one the most horrifying sounds a German soldier on the Russian front could hear in the dead of night – a sound that would turn his heart to jelly? The soft “whooshing” of the wind off the struts of a “Night Witch” jerry-rigged biplane bomber; described as the eerie sound of a witch’s broom as it quietly glided in to drop its payload of bombs





Members of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment, nicknamed the “Night Witches,” lined up and receiving orders for a bombing mission taking place later that evening

Who were these Night Witches?

They were the all-women pilots of Russia’s 588th Night Bomber Aviation Regiment. In World War II, American women such as the WASPs supported the war by ferrying and testing planes. But the Night Witches were the first women military pilots in the 20th century to directly engage an enemy in combat. The pilots weren’t the only women in the 588th. All the members of the 588th were women, including the navigators, ground crews, and support staff.

The Night Witches were organized by Major Marina Raskova, who was essentially Russia’s equivalent to our Amelia Earhart. Women pilots, though, weren’t unusual in the Soviet Union. Flying was popular in the 1930s and thousands of women belonged to flying clubs. But when Germany invaded Russia in 1941, Russian women weren’t allowed in the Soviet Air Force even though they were allowed on the front lines in the army. Raskova received a slew of letters from women protesting the prohibition. After all, if women were allowed to fight alongside men on the ground, why not in the air too?



Marina Raskova, pictured above, was instrumental in the creation of three air regiments for Soviet Women

Joseph Stalin was one of Raskova's admirers. She showed him the letters and convinced him to have the Soviet Air Force accept women as combat pilots. Women rushed to enlist. Some were integrated into regiments to fight alongside male pilots.

Stalin also authorized the creation of three all-women fighting groups:

- 586th Fighter Aviation Regiment
- 587th Bomber Aviation Regiment
- 588th Night Bomber Aviation Regiment

Thousands of women enlisted. Around 400 were accepted for each regiment. Most were university students in their late teens to mid-twenties. They spent an intensive year training, learning not just how to fly, but to navigate and maintain the aircraft too – training that normally took several years to complete.

Because the Soviet Air Force had no females up until then, the women were given old men's uniforms. The clothes were often too large and baggy. And the boots were sometimes so oversize that the women tore up their bedding and stuffed it in their boots to make them fit better. Some also cut their hair short to appear like men, but painted flowers on their planes and used navigation pencils to color their lips to add a feminine touch to the war. Officially, the women were treated just like their male counterparts – except they were given more soap.



A decorated member of the 588th studies flight information with her plane in the background

After the training, the pilots deemed most qualified were assigned to the 586th Fighter Aviation Regiment; the second most qualified to 587th Bomber Aviation Regiment; and the least qualified to the 588th Night Bomber Aviation Regiment. But in a unique twist of fate, the “least qualified” became the most feared and famous.

Unfortunately, there weren't enough modern planes to go around. So the 588th was given out-of-date Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes that were primarily used as crop dusters and training planes. The pilot sat up front and the navigator, who also was the bombardier, sat in the rear.

The plane was like a death trap waiting to spring. Some Night Witches likened the rickety Po-2 to “a coffin with wings” because the plane was made of plywood with canvas stretched over it. If a tracer bullet struck the plane, it could easily burst into flames. The plane's top speed was 90 miles per hour, and it could carry only two bombs, one under each wing. The weight of the bombs and crew forced the plane to travel low, which allowed it to be spotted easily by the enemy. Because of those handicaps, the planes could only fly at night, under the cover of darkness.



A surviving example of the Polikarpov Po-2 biplane similar to those used by the Night Witches during WWII

The Night Witches carried no parachutes because they flew so close to the ground and parachutes also added extra weight. They also had no modern instruments and had to rely on maps, compasses, stopwatches, pencils, and flashlights to find their way to their objectives.

Because the cockpits were open, the pilot and navigator were exposed to the elements, including rain and freezing wind. In extremely cold weather, they could get frost bite. If they put their bare hand on the fuselage, the flesh might come off when they pulled their hand away. The Night Witches also carried pistols to use if they crashed, but would save the last bullet for themselves so they wouldn't be captured alive.

The Po-2 did have some advantages, however. Its light weight made it more maneuverable than the German planes, which made them harder to shoot down. Being made of wood and canvas, the plane didn't show up on German radars or infrared indicators. And the top speed of the Po-2 was slower than the stall speed of German fighter planes, making it hard to engage from the air. The biplanes also could take off and land almost anywhere. That quality was essential because the 588th had to operate very close to enemy lines, constantly moving operations during the day so the women could fight at night. Because of their combat schedule, the women slept and trained during the day and flew during the night. Understandably, they didn't get a lot of sleep...but neither did the German units nearby that had to be prepared for nighttime air raids. The psychological effect of the Night Witch raids took a toll on the German troops.

Because their planes could carry only two bombs, the Night Witches flew multiple bombing sorties –from eight to eighteen – in a single night. They'd drop two bombs, return to their temporary base, refuel and take on two more bombs, and then fly off on another sortie. Each sortie lasted between 30 to 50 minutes. Sometimes the Night Witches would return with planes riddled with bullet holes. Nadezhda Popova, one of the most famous Night Witches, once returned from a sortie with 42 bullet holes in her plane as well as in her helmet and map. Another pilot lost the bottom of her plane to enemy fire but kept on flying.



Nadezhda Vasilyevna Popova (standing) and sister Night Witches

Each sortie was extremely dangerous because the Germans surrounded what they thought would be likely targets with concentric circles of searchlight and flack guns that the Night Witches would have to fly through to reach their targets. But the Night Witches devised a strategy to foil the Germans. They would fly in groups of three. When they neared their target, two planes would fly through the circles and then veer off in different directions, which caused the searchlights and flack guns to target them. Then the pilot in the third plane would fly toward the objective. When the navigator tapped her on the shoulder, she would kill the engine and drift in near-silently toward the target, with only the faint “whooshing” sound of wind through the struts signaling the

impending attack. Then the navigator would drop her bombs and the pilot, hopefully, would restart the engine and fly off. The three planes would switch places until they'd dropped all their bombs and then return to base for more.

The ground crew – Night Witches all – would repair any damages, refuel the planes, and load more bombs for the next sortie.



Night Witches preparing to inspect their Po-2 biplanes

The Night Witches accomplished their mission, which was to disrupt the Germans' sleep (and therefore, morale) while bombing important targets. The women were referred to by the Germans as "*Nachthexen*" – Night Witches – meant as a derogatory term, but one which the women of the 588th adopted with pride, and for good reason. From June 1942 to October 1945, the unit flew approximately 23,672 combat sorties, collectively logged 28,676 flight hours, and dropped over 3,000 tons of bombs and 26,000 incendiary shells. They damaged or destroyed 17 river crossings, 9 railways, 2 railway stations, 26 warehouses, 12 fuel depots, 176 armored cars, 86 prepared firing positions, and 11 searchlights. Plus, they also made 155 supply drops of food and ammunition to Soviet forces.



Irina Sebrova, who flew 1,008 sorties in the war, more than any other member of the 588th regiment

But life was difficult for the Night Witches for another reason: they often faced discrimination from male pilots. The men viewed them as inferior and showed them little respect. The Night Witches weren't given similar equipment such as radios and machine guns to protect themselves from German fighter planes.

The discrimination strengthened their determination to succeed. Eventually, because of their high performance, many men did grow to respect them. But the women worked hard to get it.

Thirty-two Night Witches, including Colonel Raskova, died in service. Eighty-nine Soviet women won their country's highest honor, the Hero of the Soviet Union award in WWII; twenty-two of those were Night Witches. After the war, the Soviet Union held a massive victory parade, but the Night Witches couldn't participate in it – because their planes flew too slow.



Members of the 588th discussing details of an upcoming mission in 1943

After World War II, Soviet women were once again largely kept from combat roles and eventually the Night Witches' achievements faded from memory until few people knew about them. But in February 2019, author Kate Quinn helped revive interest in the Night Witches when she published her novel *The Huntress*, in which one of the main characters, Nina Markova, becomes a Night Witch and fights the Germans.

Let's hope these intrepid women remain in public memory for a long, long time!



A group photo of Night Witches

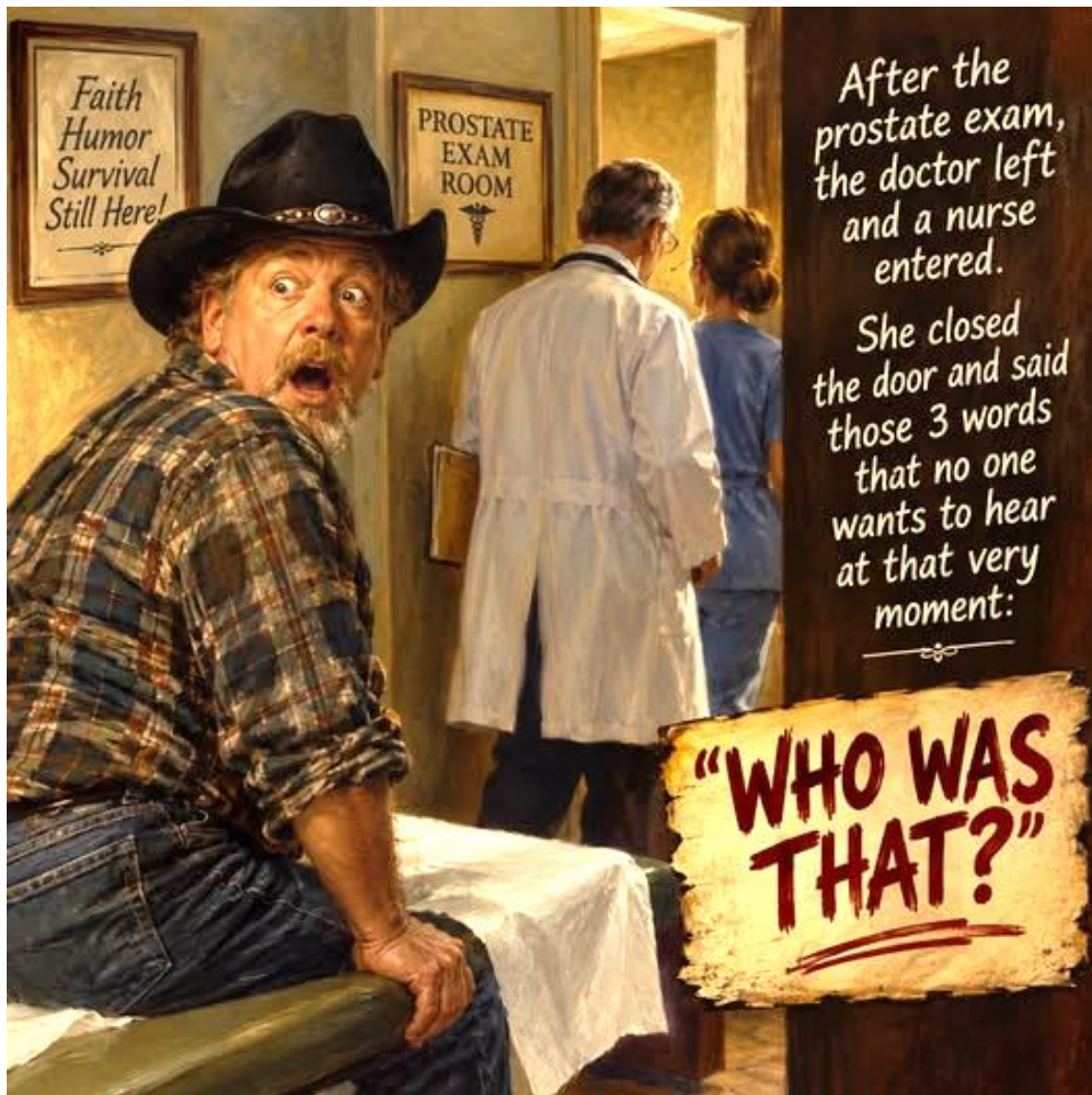
**HHC 3-7-199TH ets
12-21-1968**



**My Commute to Work
1968**



The Crewie!





RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH

Your RSL