

David Grierson – Guest Speaker – Thursday, 22nd April 2021.

Born in Melbourne and a long- time resident of North Balwyn, David joined the RAAF, graduating in 1963.

He flew Caribou aircraft in the Vietnam War and, returning to Australia, was commanding officer of Number 33 Squadron, including as passengers, six prime ministers and three generations of the Royal Family.

David displayed a number of First and Second World War medals awarded to various members of his family and explained their origins.

To mark the importance of observing Anzac Day, he discussed the Gallipoli campaign commencing on 25th April 2015 but concentrated on the pivotal battle of the Somme when, on 25th April 1918, the Australian 1st Division, playing a lone hand, repelled the German advance. This action prevented the German Army from driving through to the Belgium coast, which, had it been successful, would have given Germany absolute control of Europe.

David gave a detailed and vivid picture of the progress of the battles with the British Expeditionary Forces in retreat to the west and the French Army in retreat to the east. The action of the Australians in the centre effectively prevented the German Army from driving between the two armies, and put the German Army into retreat. This action signalled the turning point in the Second World War.

David then commented on his transporting of the Royal Families and rated his opinion of the six prime ministers in order of their courtesy towards the air crews.

A most detailed and interesting address, and a most appropriate way to mark the significance of celebrating Anzac Day.