

“MISSING MAN”

“Missing Man” was a nine aircraft formation of five Cessna and the Beech formation made up of four low wing aircraft. Chief Pilot, and Sam Merlo, lead the planned formation over the Hobart Cenotaph to time into the Hobart Anzac televised ceremony.

“The main thing is good planning, you have to take into account quite a few pilots with different formation experience and different aircraft types. You need to organise the aircraft into the formations that match their speed and climb performance best and likewise the pilots position in the formation from their skill perspective.” Sam said.

The aircraft departed using two runways, a system that allows for the faster low wings a bit more space and it is a quicker stream as you have the aircraft split into two groups. Thanks to Hobart Tower who helped with the Club’s operations fitting in the formation around their regular RPT commitments. Thanks Guys.

“Formation flying improves your accuracy at flying, you become quite disciplined. You are in a tight close group with the other aircraft, so you need to be able to react quickly to situations, make quick decisions, it makes you accurate which is good for your overall general flying.” Sam said.

“It was very pleasing to see the amount of people who came out to Cambridge to watch and take photos. We had nine aircraft, each aircraft carried an observer, it was nice to see people getting involved. So next year if you want to go as an observer get in early and book yourself a seat.” said Sam.



Ed ten Broeke flying the Victa with Andrew Johnston



A: Mal Steane flying the Beechcraft Musketeer FWU. B: The five Cessnas in formation. KOT & DEX lining up. B: The smile says it all ! Don Prairie in the Cardinal EKR



CFI Sam Merlo addresses the Formation teams

Interested in learning Formation Flying? Call Sam - takes around 5 hours for the endorsement.

Stan Tilley performed the Missing Man maneuver in his Victa MTL (encircled) breaking away from the Beech formation team. Flying in the observers seat was a fellow Airtourer owner, **Andrew Ronald** from Albury.

“The Missing Man formation has been an Airforce tradition throughout the world for many years.” said Stan. “Many of our early Aero Club pilots were returned servicemen, some of them would not talk about their wartime history, but some of them had incredible stories that eventually came out after keeping it bottled up for years. It is an emotional moment when the aircraft breaks away from the formation, remembering all the air-men who didn’t come back.” said Stan

Stan has lost count of how many Anzac Day formations he has flown. “I started flying in the mid sixties and have flown most Anzac Days and been able to proudly participate in this tribute.” Stan added

