

**ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE DECOMMISSIONING OF
THE AERIAL COMPONENT OF THE MCKAY PATROL**

Welcome

Rev Garry Hardingham

Opening Statement of Beginnings of the Aerial Patrol

Rev Bob Heathwood

This Statement (A JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE) is available as a separate printed sheet including recollections by Amanda Thomas (Rev Dennis Robinson's daughter) and some of Bob's stories.

Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

Rev Rhonda Heathwood

A Time for Everything

3 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

- ² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- ³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Reading from the Gospel of John 12

Rev Rhonda Heathwood

Jesus Predicts His Death

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a

request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Prayer

Rev Garry Hardingham

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

For the inspiring of those who were the visionaries and initiators of the Aerial Patrol.

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

For the worship, fellowship and service of the Church extended faithfully to remote people proclaiming the story of your redemptive purposes from the beginning of creation.

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

For your continued protection and blessing of the hours of safe flying put in by the Bush Chaplains who flew the aircraft; for their dedication to providing ministry and pastoral care to remote families and individuals often knowing periods of separation from their loved ones.

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

For the generosity of the people of the outback who received the Bush Chaplains into their homes and donated to the costs of operation of this ministry.

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

For the contribution made by the Bush Chaplains in the interests of the welfare of the people of NW Qld adding to the historical story of the Australian outback.

ALL: We give thanks, O Lord

Record of Service

Rev Bob Heathwood

The 50 years service to the people of North West Qld given by the following Bush Chaplains of the Presbytery of North Qld / Carpentaria of the Uniting Church:

The late Rev Dr Dennis Robinson 1974- 1979 (Established the Aerial Patrol)

Rev Robert Heathwood – CHAP(SQNLDR) Rt'd 1981-1988

The late Rev Don Kube 1989-1996

Pastor Len Wilmington 1997-2003

Rev Garry Hardingham 2004-2013

Rev David and Jeanette Ellis 2014-2022

Pastor Michael Chapman 2023-2024

A Statement of De-commissioning

Rev Christy Allen and
Rev Bob Heathwood

Rev Christy Allen

This is a bittersweet moment. The achievements of the Aerial Patrol ministry would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Bush Chaplains who flew the aircraft. The pastoral care offered to the people of NW Qld was invaluable and unsurpassed in times of drought and flood and fair weather. Couples were married; children were baptised; loved ones were buried; counselling was given and practical help was given in a myriad of ways.

It gives us time to reflect upon where our aircraft has taken us, what we have done in ministry to remote people, and importantly, where we are going into the future.

Rev Bob Heathwood

The decommissioning of the Aerial component of the McKay Patrol brings together the men and women who have served and the people who have been served in this great enterprise over 50 years of operational life.

We now enter a time when there will no longer be the unique ministry of a bush chaplain in the air. Ministry will be provided by a land patrol.

Thus, with thankfulness to God, after 50 years, we hereby declare the end of the aerial component of the McKay Patrol and observe its decommissioning. The aircraft, Beechcraft VH-DYA and Cessna VH-MJZ are remembered as good and worthy vehicles. These, and the engineers who serviced them are recognised in this decommissioning.

May our Lord God lead us to new horizons of ministry, service and care to the people of NW Qld.

Prayer for the Future of the McKay Patrol

Led by Rev Lind Hanson

Queensland Synod

Almighty God, through your Son, Jesus, you inspired us to a singular goal and purpose in life: the sharing his life and example to the world.

We give thanks that the worship, fellowship and service of the Church, faithfully proclaiming the story of your redemptive purposes from the beginning of creation.

We give you humble yet sincere thanks for the blessings granted to the bush chaplains who operated this flying ministry with courage, loyalty and dedication.

We pray for the future ministry of the McKay Patrol. Although limited to a land patrol only, we ask for your blessing on the chaplains who serve in it and the people to whom they minister. May they keep that singular goal and purpose in view of following and serving Christ the Lord who, as we will celebrate in a few weeks born as Immanuel, God with us always.

In his name we pray.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Blessing

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit descend upon us and all who were touched by the Aerial Patrol ministry and remain with us forever. Amen