

MICHAEL MARTIGNOLES



Alec Michael Martignoles (known as Michael) was born in 1948 in England to Phyllis May Worthington and Robert Victor Martignoles. Michael's older brother was Robert James Martignoles who was born in 1938. The Worthington ancestry goes back to 1856 in Lancashire in England. Phyllis May Worthington married Robert Victor Martignoles in 1933. His parents were Alec Martignoles and Mary Ann Nicholson who were from Plimco, London. The family emigrated in 1955 through an assisted passage under the United Kingdom and Australian Government Agreement and arrived at Melbourne per RMS Oronsay in June 1955. The family settled pretty quickly into McArthur Avenue, St Albans. At first they were in a little half-house, then in 1957 they moved to their bigger home at 5 McArthur Avenue, near a few shops on the corner of Main Road East. Michael was a student, Robert James worked as a clerk, Robert Victor worked as a factory hand, and Phyllis May was the traditional homemaker.

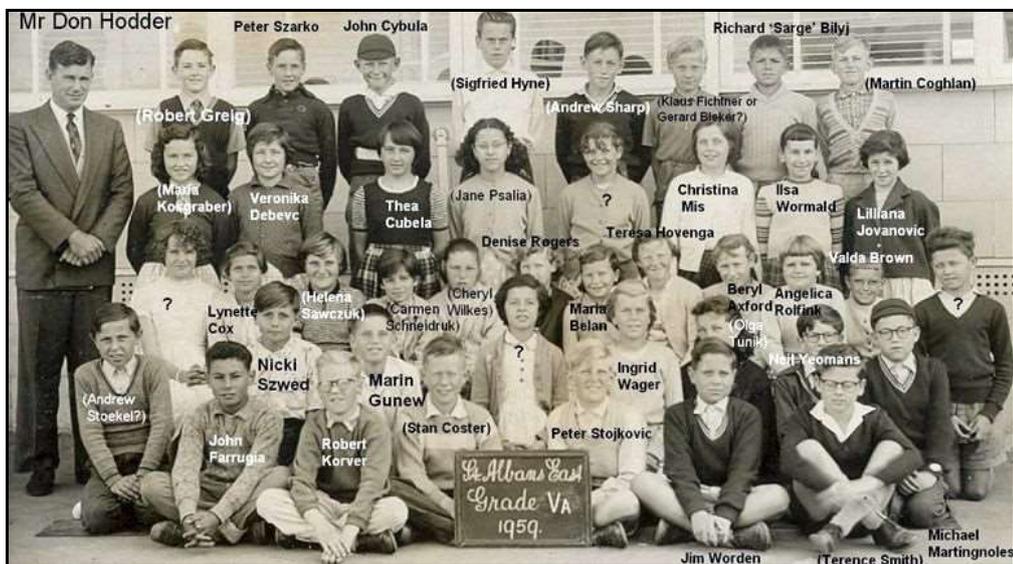
Michael started at the old St Albans State School in West Esplanade in 1955 and moved to the newly opened East St Albans State School in 1956. His mother Phyllis joined the East State School's first Mothers' Club as Secretary, so she's in the history books as a Foundation Member. She probably helped in the canteen and baked cakes for school and church fetes.

Michael later described how it was a pleasure to be one of the very first pupils at St Albans East - the early days were happy days, just having arrived from England, starting a new life and forming long-lasting friendships:

"Going to this school the day it first opened was a great experience for me. I had just arrived from England in 1955 when the new school was just starting up. We were at St Albans State School in West Esplanade and we all walked down to the new school, bright, clean and excitingly new. The Head Teacher I remember was Mr Pruden ... the Lady Senior Teacher was Mrs Bartholomew, feared by most girls at the time. I was in the Fife Band from day one, I played Fife, Piccolo, Bass Drum, and Side Drum. I thoroughly enjoyed playing and performing. I did up to grade 6 then went to St Albans High School in 1961."



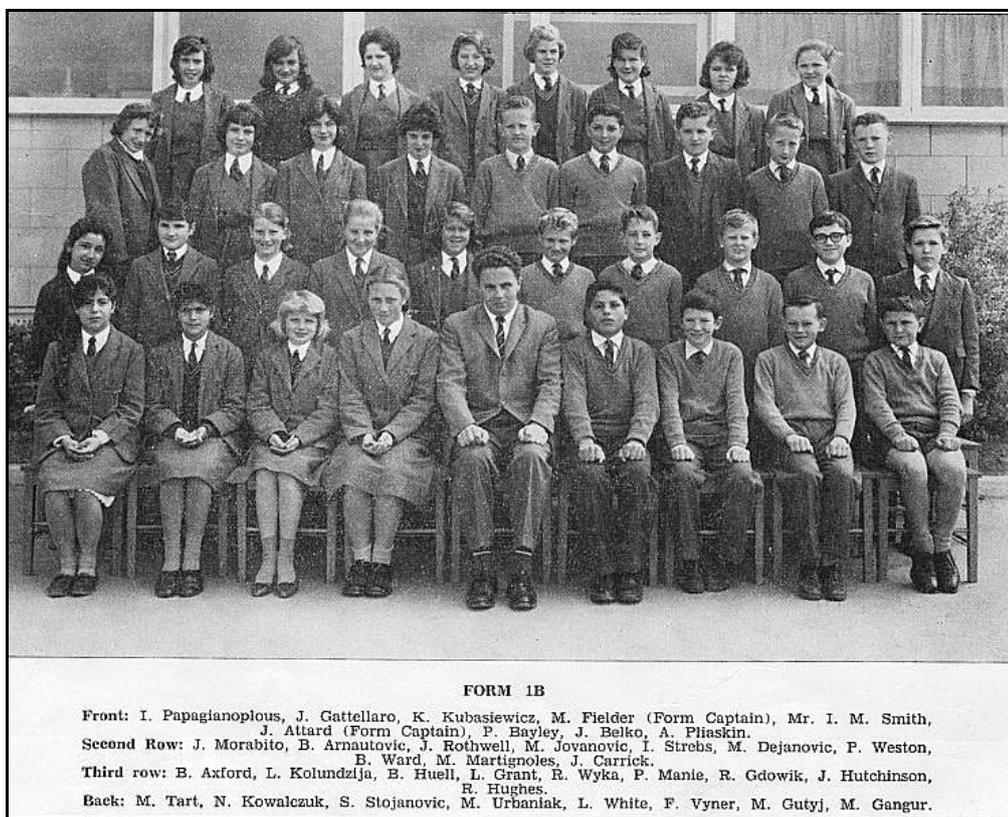
St Albans East Fife Band with Mr Carney.



Michael Martignoles in Grade 5A 1959.



Michael joined the local St Johns Ambulance group with some of his schoolmates, such as Nicholas Szwed. William Knowles of St Albans had started the group and also the local Drum Band. Nick recalls that: "Michael and I were leaders in the St Johns Ambulance Cadets. We both had the rank sergeant. Bill Knowles who was probably in his early 20s, and probably a member in the Sunshine or Footscray group, organized this group in St Albans. I think we may have been in the first group he set up." Michael later joined the RAAF Cadets in Footscray.



FORM 1B
 Front: I. Papagianopoulos, J. Gattellaro, K. Kubasiewicz, M. Fielder (Form Captain), Mr. I. M. Smith, J. Attard (Form Captain), P. Bayley, J. Belko, A. Pliaskin.
 Second Row: J. Morabito, B. Arnautovic, J. Rothwell, M. Jovanovic, I. Strebs, M. Dejanovic, P. Weston, B. Ward, M. Martignoles, J. Carrick.
 Third row: B. Axford, L. Kolundzija, B. Huell, L. Grant, R. Wyka, P. Manie, R. Gdowik, J. Hutchinson, R. Hughes.
 Back: M. Tart, N. Kowalczyk, S. Stojanovic, M. Urbaniak, L. White, F. Vyner, M. Gutyj, M. Gangur.

Michael Martignoles, St Albans High School Form 1B 1961.

Michael attended St Albans High School for three years. He started in Form 1B in 1961 with Margaret Fielder and Joe Attard as Form Captains and Mr Smith as Form Teacher. Michael would have

progressed to 2B with his classmates, but there is no class photo available. Unfortunately, there was no annual school magazine produced in 1963 so there is no information about his participation in sports, etc. He left the High School in 1963 and started working at the St Albans Post Office.

Michael became a cadet with the RAAF in 1960. He remembered the fun times with the lads and lasses: "... as you go on in the cadets you enjoy many good times at the General Service Training camps. I was in what was called Victoria Squadron in the early 60's our GST camps were held at RAAF Base East Sale, home of Central Flying School, School of Air Navigation, and School of Air Gunnery. Fantastic rides in the old Dakota aircraft. Loved it."

He was with Air Traffic Control from 1963 to 1965. In May 1965 at age 17 he joined the Royal Australian Air Force as ground staff and served with them for 23 years "in the most wonderful career ever". In the mid-1980s, 'Flight Sergeant Mick Martignoles' served some of his time in Catering Training. He was also known to play the piano at some catering events such as the Wagga RAAF Officers Mess, so his musical skills had been expanding.



Michael Martignoles with catering team 1984.



Michael must have had a fascination with the pageantry of marching bands. He wrote that when he was aged four in England he wanted to join the Grenadier Guards but his parents emigrated to Australia. He joined the pipe and drum band at St Albans primary school: "I was in the Fife Band from day one, I played Fife, Piccolo, Bass Drum, and Side Drum. I thoroughly enjoyed playing and performing. I loved it that much that I became a Musician in the Royal Australian Air Force ... thanks for the start St Albans East Primary School, and Mr Carney."

After he retired from the Air Force, Michael continued his musical parades. He had been with the RAAF and the Illawarra Pipe Band, but it took him 20 years to get to Warrant Officer in the RAAF Central Band. In later years in Tasmania he marched with the Burnie Highland Pipe Band.



Michael Martignoles leading the Illawarra Pipe Band.

After leaving the RAAF, Michael took up two new careers. He studied at Macquarie University and became a TAFE teacher in New South Wales. He later trained in health services, possibly at Deakin University. He graduated as an ear specialist and was working at Tasmanian Hearing Services in Burnie.

In his retirement he was cooking and providing food for the less fortunate. He and his partner Michelle Murray had established "Mike & Michelle's Kitchen". In 2023 they were offering meals at the Somerset Vinnies Community Hub.



Michelle Murray and Michael Martignoles. Photo by Eve Woodhouse.

During 2025 Michael Martignoles was being treated for cancer at the Burnie Hospital, and passed away in December. The Burnie Highland Pipe Band reported that: "It is with sadness we announce the death of life member and long time Drum Major Mike Martignoles OAM. Mike came to us from the Illawarra Pipe Band and RAAF. Larger than life, full of mischief, enthusiastic and loyal, he loved life and his music ... not to mention cooking! Our sincere condolences to his family circles and those close to him. Vale, Mike."



RAAF medals of Michael Martignoles 1965 to 1987.



Mrs Phyllis Martignoles and grandchildren.



Michael Martignoles (bottom right) at Don Hodder reunion 2010.

Article written by Joe Ribarow from information published by Michael Martignoles on Facebook.
Family photos from Michael Martignoles archives.
School photos from Nick Szwed archives.