



Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (NSW)
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May 2010

ANZAC DAY MARCH SYDNEY 2010

The day started for most of us with the traditional dawn service at various locations around the city and suburbs. In Springwood the rain held off for the dawn service then fell softly on the departing attendees.

A person commented after the service. "It was like tears for the fallen."

We assembled at our usual spot at the corner of Hunter and Bligh Streets, and apart from jumping the queue at the start of the march and pushing in front of the infantry, then suffering the jibes of the other marcher's plus the indignity of tramping through the police horses manure, we returned to our designated starting position for a second start to the march. (There may have been a plot to beat the rain like we did two years ago)

After the AGM Frank Fisher led us on a route march to the Macquarie hotel via Elizabeth Street (Never trust a surveyor to lead) apart from this the day went well and we enjoyed a drink, a chat and a catch up.



Once again the Geomatic Wing of the Engineers turned out in force to fill our depleting ranks. The wing provided six smartly dressed members to carry the banner there was no honour guard as in previous years, and seventeen members looking smart in suits.

Banner carriers from the Geomatic Wing



Spr Steven Neate Spr Trent Forbes Spr Stewart Cox Spr Ben Wolinski Spr Emily-Kate Goeman Spr Stuart Wade
From Left to Right

This year only two (2) World War 2 veterans and twelve (13) ex Survey Corps personnel marched in the ANZAC Day March.



Bernie Cain Mac McKenna WW2 John Lymbery WW2

Ted Hunter gave his apologies; he was unable to attend due to recuperating after a stay of two months in hospital. Frank Gould gave his apologies as he was away down the South Coast of NSW.

The purple berets drew comments from the marshals this year, and the Survey Corps contingent drew loud claps and cheers from the crowd as we marched past. (We think it is the purple berets that excite the crowds)



Trevor Marsh Andrew Wardle Phil Bannister Glen Norrell



John Siddons Richard Jackson-Hope Rob Hunter



Robyn Marsh Rob Hunter Trevor Marsh Bob Kay OLD Bruce Grisdale

Ex Survey Corps Association attendees;

Phil Bannister, Andrew Wardle, Trevor Marsh, Mac McKenna, Peter Tierney, Rob Hunter, Bruce Grisdale, John Lymbery, Frank Fischer, Richard Jackson-Hope, Bruce Williams, John Siddons, Bernie Cain Bob Kay.

Geomatic Wing;

Glen Norrell , Vassilios Freoderikos, Justin Falla, Tony Smith, Kelly Hall, Michael Snelders, Stuart Leslie Folkard, Patrick Windred, Nathan Baker, Daniel McCulloch, Emma Littlewood, Rowan Wade, Stuart Cox, Ben Wolinski, Emily-Kate Goeman, Derek Hawksworth, Daniel Hawksworth, Trent Forbes, Stephen Neate, Nathaniel Kenyon, Karen Jones, Casey Langley, Daniel Murphy.

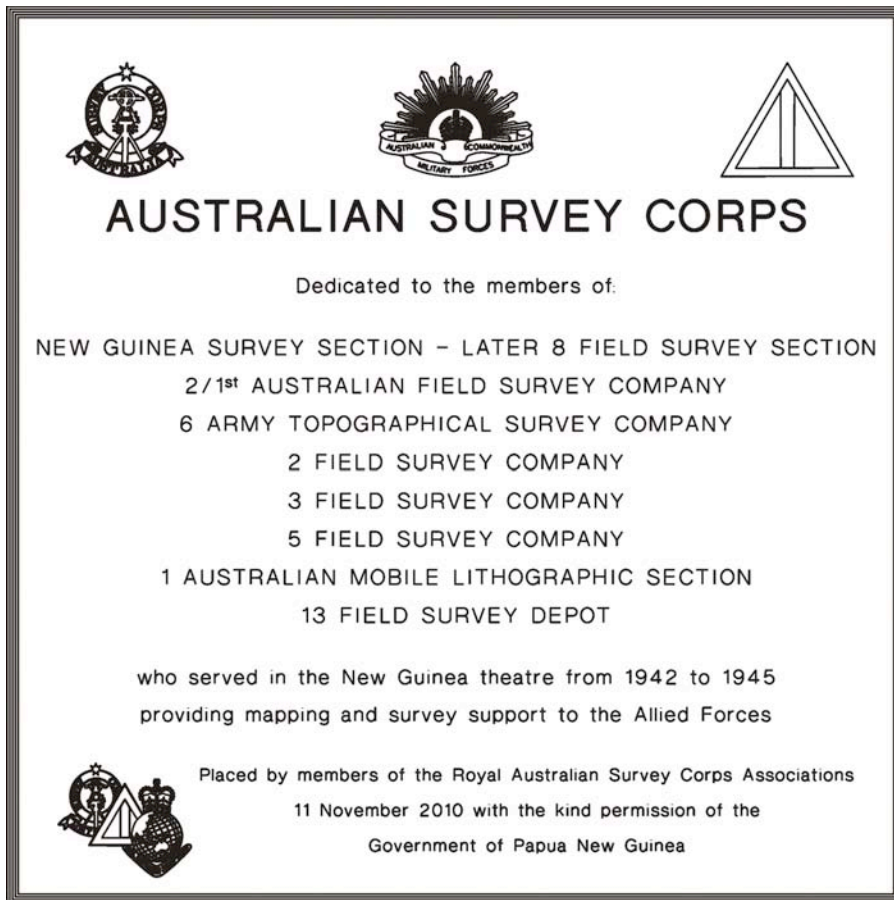
Annual General Meeting

We had our usual annual meeting out of the rain under the Morton Bay Fig tree near the Red Cross tea stand. The President thanked all the members and Geomatic wing for their participation in the ANZAC Day march. The treasurer gave a report on the income and expenditure for the past twelve months. The NSW Association has \$1558.48 in the account after the transfer of \$500.00 held in trust to the Queensland Association as the NSW Association's contribution to the Papua & New Guinea Plaque. As usual there was a rush to fill the positions of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor. Needless to say the status quo for all positions is the same as last year.

Papua New Guinea Plaque

It is wonderful that the State Associations have been able to fulfill the wishes of the WW2 Veterans with the installation of plaques in various locations in Australia and New Guinea to recognize the contribution members of the Survey Corps made to the war effort.

It is anticipated the plaque will be installed around October 2010 with a dedication on 11th November, 2010.



Inscription on Papua & New Guinea Plaque

Woy Woy Members on ANZAC Day



Members attending the Woy Woy ANZAC Day Dawn Service and breakfast
Front Ken Shaw Racquel Boyd **Rear** Alan Shaw, Dave Thomson, Len Cunningham Bill Boyd

The Last Post

If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which The Last Post was played; this brings out a new meaning of it.

We have all heard the haunting song, 'The Last Post.' It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, you may be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing.

The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate.

But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

1st Verse	2 nd verse	3 rd Verse
Day is done.	Fading light	Thanks and praise
Gone the sun.	Dims the sight	For our days
From the lakes.	And a Star	Neath the sun
From the hills.	Gems the sky	Neath the stars
From the sky.	Gleaming bright	As we go
All is well.	From afar	This we know
Safely rest.	Drawing nigh	God is high
God is nigh.	Falls the night	

Remember Those Lost and Harmed While Serving Their Country.

Remember Those Who Have Served and Returned; and for those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

Dungog Plaque

The photograph on the next page was sent in by Robyn and Trevor Marsh, they were interested in the origins of the plaque and why it was placed at Dungog. John Hillier's name appears on the plaque and a request was made to John to give the history of the plaque, which he has done.



There was/is an error made with the date (noted) on the occasion when it was unveiled, and obviously not corrected, (as requested at the time, might have been too difficult?)

The commemorative stone harks back to the greatly improved resources devoted to military mapping required to merge the permanent pre-war Survey Corps into the enlarged WW2 Corps organisation.

"Lebanon to Labuan" by Col Fitzgerald pages 36 and 37, "Australia's Military Mapmakers" by C.D. Coulthard-Clarke, Chapter 7 "The Home Front" 'Clews " Memories of 2 Aust Field Svy Coy 1940-1944. page 8, 41, and "Royal Australian Survey Corps , 1915 -1990," Clem Sargent, 1995 provide information that relates to the raising and training needed for the newly formed 2 Fd Svy Coy in N.S.W. to be properly trained to speed up mapping. The 2 Fd Svy Coy was the first of 4 Coys to come into existence.

Capt .H.P.G. Clews in Routine Order 1A, 2 Fd Svy Coy, RAE. Eastern Command of 19 Oct 1940, stated that the Coy was formed by seconding No.3 Sec, Aust Svy Corps [Permanent} and Fd Svy Unit [Militia], along with civilian personnel enlisted at earlier possible dates.

While the HQ was temporarily located in disused Council Chambers at 217 Lambton Road, New Lambton, a suburb of Newcastle, the camp at Dungog showground's was retained and became known as Command Survey Depot, used to train and equip personnel recruited to fill establishment of the new unit totaling twelve (12) Officers and two hundred and eighteen(218) O.R.'s, three (3) Officers and fourteen (14) [W.O.'s, Sgt.'s and a Cpl of 3 Sec, Aust Svy Corps, along with one (1) Officer, twenty three (23) W.O.'s, Sgt's,Cpl's and five (5) Spr's of Fd Svy Unit, RAE, Militia, were transferred to 2 Fd Svy Coy, RAE.

The showground at Dungog used by the Militia unit was retained for some months into 1941 for training and equipping personnel recruited to fill the new Coy's establishment, Twelve (12) Officers and two hundred and eighteen (218) O.R.'s.

The residents of Dungog were proud to "host" the unit, and the members of the Coy responded on a lot of ways to their friendliness so that they all belonged to the community in many respects. This was why the 50th Anniversary was such a successful celebration.

A search for larger quarters in the Sydney area led to a move to the Dr. Dill Mackay Memorial Protestant Orphanage in Albert Road, Strathfield, and a 2 Storey building in about an acre of grassland suitable for erecting tents.

The unit moved from Strathfield to Kyogle early in 1942.

It has brought back memories of a great week end.

Trust that this has been useful Corps history.

John Hillier

Survey Corps operation with early Army Aviation group

(As told to ARMY by Maj. Charlie Miller, AAAvn (RL))

Upon reading Kit (Breaker) Denton's recollections of a brief period spent with "Survey soldiers" in the Kimberlies during the late 50's and his gift of a map to Army Survey museum (ARMY, 20 Sep 1984), I reached for my log books and took a nostalgic trip back some 25 years. I too, had a relic appropriate for the Survey museum so dug it out for that purpose.

I recalled that in 1958 Australian Army had no aircraft of its own, though it had an aviation unit, namely 1st ARMY AVIATION COY, based at Bankstown aerodrome. I was one of only a handful of pilots on strength and it became my lot to fly a civil Auster in support of W. Comd. Fd. Svy. Sect, which was working throughout the Kimberlies in the dry season, collecting data for map-making.

I note from my log book that year I had met Kit Denton at Wyndham and flown him to the Survey base camp at Halls Creek.

Several days later I had uplifted him from Turkey Creek together with the late Lt Col. Bill Springer and flew them to the remote Kalumbaru Mission near Drysdale River in far NW Australia. Here we rendezvoused with Capt. Dick Hannigan SAS and party and the remains of a Studebaker truck which had taken weeks of grinding and bashing its way through uninhabited bush, crossing rivers, flailing over rocky 'jump-ups' and through sand, clearing heli-pads for survey use as they proceeded, finally to emerge in tatters at Kalumburu for a well-earned rest. Such was the state of the vehicle by this time that it was pronounced beyond repair, fenders had been carried away, springs broken, steering damaged, canopy destroyed and the cabin only a shadow of its original self.

The journey had been somewhat of a nightmare in more ways than one, with among other things snakes seen dropping out of trees into the rear of the truck among the stores and fuel drums, thus avoiding detection. This discouraged the 'super soldiers' from camping in the truck and put them on the ground among the leeches and scorpions. Upon seeing the vehicle, priests at the mission suggested a visit to a grave-yard of military vehicles left behind after W/W2 at RAAF Base, Truscott, located on the tip of NW Australia and only accessible by sea. To investigate the prospect of obtaining vehicle parts, one Pte. Smith complete with toolbox, Dick Hannigan and I flew to the long-abandoned Truscott. Its wartime runway had completely gone back to bush following the removal of the perforated steel planking, thereby preventing any hope of a landing, but at the base of the derelict control tower was a gravel tarmac through which nothing had grown so we were able to land on this. We then set about removing vital parts from the many and varied vehicles left strewn about. In all, we made three trips into Truscott during which we removed much of the shrapnel which had earlier rained onto the tarmac, posing a risk to our tyres. This was a parting gesture by RAAF when all. H.E. was detonated on evacuating the base at the end of WW/2. The remotest of all Army vehicles on the mainland was thus eventually able to make its way back with the aid of long-forgotten wrecks and SAS dedication and determination.

Helicopter support for Survey that year was provided by TAA, using an early model Hiller chopper, which had a bad habit of fouling spark plugs, causing it to make forced landings, commonly into dried creek beds. One of many tasks was to fly to Darwin and collect a fuel additive called TCP, which magically reduced plug fouling and no doubt extended the life of the Helo pilot hitherto threatened by accident or heart failure. Kit Denton made mention of the Helo pilot, claiming he was "as mad as a cut snake". I feel sure the poor fellow won't mind me disclosing his name as he would have long since retired from TAA. He was Capt. Gordon Hill and his behaviour in the bush could well have been attributed to his nervous state I'd observed when flying in the Hiller with him. Although normally captain on DC6 airliners he claimed he had done a conversion course onto choppers in one day. This became a reality soon after conversion when he totalled a Hiller while working in the Gulf country. Despite the absence of helicopter training organizations in those days Gordon Hill survived and made a significant contribution to Army Survey in 1958.

Air Support using civil aircraft was also provided by 1 Army Avn. Coy. to Adelaide-based Central Command Fd. Svy Section which worked each dry season through out the Northern Territory. Before helicopter operations could commence in 1959. Drums of avgas had to be parachuted into six locations deep in Arnhem Land. With Maj. Frank Buckland as navigator on 18 June we departed Mainoru and made rendezvous with an RAAF Dakota to the south and directed it onto the first DZ. where dispatcher's proceeded to push out 44-gallon drums

of avgas. Then it was north to the second DZ to await the Dakota and the same procedure followed, then still further north to the third DZ where the last of the load was dispatched. The Dakota then returned to Darwin and we rendezvoused the next day to direct fuel drops into DZ.'s 4, 5, and 6. The civil helicopter was then able to operate throughout the season, its first task being to recover all parachutes.

Places survey support took me that season ranged from Mitchell River Mission, Cape York,, Doomadgee Mission, Gulf or Carpentaria, Borrooloola, Groote Is and all islands off NT, most missions and cattle stations in the top-end and Kimberly's. The most unusual place visited was lonely Troughtin Is. off north WA. which was manned solely to provide a beacon for shipping from Perth to Darwin, A strip had been built of coral for emergency use by the flying doctor; but he had refused to land there. A visit with GOC W. Comd, therefore was a noteworthy event for the two forgotten families there, who lived just out of sight of Australia and so understandably asked us to describe the nearest coastline in detail to them.

Also involved in Survey Support off WA and NT were RAN minesweepers, long since extinct. I occasionally dropped mail onto uninhabited beaches for the ships company, for which a small boat would be sent ashore to retrieve.

A mammoth task by SAS in 1958 was the clearing of an airstrip for survey in uninhabited country between Gibb River and Drysdale River, WA. The only opportunity to use SASFIELD as it was named, came in 1959 when I delivered an urgently needed part from Darwin for a helicopter in that area, so justifying the SAS sweat and hard-living there the previous 'dry'. It is likely that little sign of that work would now be visible, due to re-growth.

The final survey sortie I flew in 1959 was the most pleasurable. As my regular aircraft was grounded in Darwin for servicing, the only way I was able to get urgently needed supplies, mail and documents to surveyors at Lake Finnis, east of giant Adelaide River NT was to hire on behalf of the Army the only flying machine available in Darwin at that time - none other than a venerable Tiger Moth, And so it happened that way, with back-loading to Darwin being one Sgt. Bill Mitchell, who had been waiting return to civilisation and I feel sure would have volunteered to sit on the wing had it been necessary.

Like Kit Denton, I hold fond memories or my attachments to Army Survey field teams. I've always claimed them to be a special breed, working unceasingly, despite hardships, shortages, discomforts, airsickness, unserviceabilities, losses of equipment (due to sinking), being stranded on unabated islands with no helicopter available to recover them. These and more were taken in their stride so that they must surely be the greatest improvisers and producers while the least whingers, of the entire peacetime Australian Defence Forces.

Happy Birthday Royal Australian Survey Corps 2nd to 4th July 2010

The Ex Fortuna Survey Association is hosting the 95th birthday celebrations to be held on Corps Day in Bendigo between the 2nd and the 4th July 2010.

The venue for the main function is the "All Seasons Quality Resort" on Saturday 3rd July starting at 1900hrs. There are other activities arranged at other locations within the City of Bendigo during the weekend.

The address for the "All Seasons Quality Resort" is 171-183 McIvor Road Bendigo Telephone 03 5443 8166 Dress for the dinner is Neat Casual the cost of the dinner is \$50.00 per head.

There will be minimal formality at this sit down table service dinner.

There is no seating plan and seating will be round table parties of about eight (8).

Accommodation bookings for the full range of accommodation is being coordinated by Tourism Bendigo Telephone 1800 813 2153. Let them know you are part of the Ex Fortuna Function Group.

The "All Seasons Quality Resort" is also offering a discount of 10% to attending members.

RSVP Tracy Phillips 03 5449 5689 (Wk) 03 5449 6330 (Ah) email phipsys@tpg.com.au

Survey Corps Museum

Phil Bannister and Frank Fischer have returned to working at the museum and it was due to Phil & Frank we were able to find the article "The Ultimate in Job Satisfaction – To Work with Survey."

Many thanks to Bruce Williams for proof reading this news letter.



School of Survey Classroom Balcombe 1958



School of Survey Balcombe 1958



Accommodation School of Survey 1958



Accommodation Survey Regiment 1958



Road to Bourketown 1960



George Constable Aviation wing Camooweal 1960

Note on George constable

George Constable was the pilot attached to the Survey Corps from the Aviation Wing of the Army during the 1960 field trip to Northern Australia. He was a wonderful pilot. He had a reputation for frighten the day lights out of the Road Train Drivers on the Mt Isa Highway. At the end of a barometer survey sortie George would sometimes fly along the highway at about 20 feet and if there was a road train travelling towards Camooweal George would lift the aircraft up over the top of the road train then drop down in front of the road train. Needless to say the drivers needed a beer at the Post office pub in Camooweal to clear their shaken nerves. Sadly George killed in Vietnam during that conflict.