
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch



BULLETIN

ANZAC EDITION

APRIL 2002

ANZAC DAY

*March with your Association on Thursday 25th April 2002 in this year's Anzac Day parade in the city. At the time of writing I do not have the details of the order of march, however, I assume that the forming up area will as usual be outside the Treasury Casino in Elizabeth St between George and William and around the corner in William. The Sappers in their 100th anniversary year are leading the post WW2 Army component of the parade this year and with other Engineer formations we will be there with them. Our icon theodolite carried at the slope will distinguish the Survey Sappers from those other Sappers. **We need a volunteer to carry the theodolite.** Brian Cosford will lead the march this year. Members of the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron (RAE) will be banner carriers and we expect to have some serving members marching with us.*

After the March: *Again we are invited to join the Sapper Association for drinks and BBQ at the Jubilee Hotel in St Pauls Terrace Spring Hill. Cost at the door – not very much.*

Dawn Service: We are participating in the Dawn Service at the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER) 7 Sqn Cenotaph at Enoggera Barracks adjacent to Samford Road. The ceremony commences at 5.00am. Our President, Peter Bates-Brownsword is laying the Association wreath. 1st Topo Svy Sqn (RAE) participates in the ceremony. Following the service will be the 'Gun Fire' breakfast served at the 2 CER Sportsman's Club.

CORPS BIRTHDAY DINNER

To celebrate the 87th anniversary of the formation of the Australian Survey Corps, the Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner will again be held at the United Service Club, this year in the evening of 27th June 2002. The Royal Room has been booked. Timing is 1900 for 1930. Bring your partner and join your comrades in this pleasant, less than formal, regimental occasion. Dress for gentlemen is lounge suit and 'after five' for ladies. Total cost per person is in the vicinity of \$60.00. (Sorry, we can't avoid GST this year.)

Please advise Bob Skitch of your attendance by phone (3265 1370), email (bobskitch@msn.com) or by letter to the Association box number.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2001 saw the celebration the Centenary of Federation and with that the centenary of a number of federal entities that came into being at that time. Such an entity was the Australian Military Forces formed from an amalgamation of the various state militias. A year later in 1902 the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) was raised; now one of the Army's oldest Corps. Thirteen years after that in 1915 the Australian

Survey Corps formed from the RAE Survey Section. This year, 2002, the RAE celebrates its own centenary and on Anzac Day we join with our comrades from the Sapper Association at both the Anzac Day Dawn Service and in the main City march where the RAE will lead the post WW2 contingent as a mark of their Centenary. Survey will march behind its own banner (and our 'icon' theodolite').

President's Message (continued)

Anzac day is the time when Australians gather to show their respect for the men and women of the armed services who have served their country during the conflicts of the last century and since. Some did not return but paid the supreme sacrifice; others served in theatres of war and returned and others were simply prepared to do so. All served their country

on land, on sea and in the air in those times of need. Now we are involved in a war of a different kind – the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. It is also a day for us to recognize the contribution of our Corps in these great conflicts. It is our Nation's day of remembrance – ***Lest we forget.***

Peter Bates-Brownsword

COMMITTEE

Patron *Lieutenant Colonel EU Anderson MBE* (Ph 3408 9179)

President Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001)

Past President Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)

Vice President Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)

Secretary & Asst Treasurer Mary-Ann Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026)

Treasurer Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970)

Functions Member Alex Cairney (Anzac Day, Reunion) (Ph 3397 7583)

Bulletin Editor Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)

Membership Records Kim Weston (Ph 5445 6927; mob 0427 377 226)

WW2 Veteran Member Hal Jones (Ph 3395 1404)

Squadron Liaison & Welfare Jim Gill (Ph 3264 1597)

Member (unallocated) Michael Knight (Ph 3278 8331)

Squadron SSM WO1 Barrie Craymer (Ph 3332 7564)

Note: Refer Veteran's Affairs matters to Peter Bates-Brownsword and Stan Campbell

Association address: **PO Box 5784; Stafford Heights 4053**

NOTICES

AN HONOUR BESTOWED

A mark of honour has been bestowed on our Association in the appointment of our President, Peter Bates-Brownsword as Deputy Honorary Colonel Commandant – RAE, Queensland. This can be seen as another act of friendship from our parent Corps, RAE, to our Association.

Congratulations Peter from all Association members.

AN ASSOCIATION BADGE

Most have seen it and are aware of it so this is a **reminder**. It is a neat job, comprising a miniaturized version of the overlapping Corps badges featured on the front page of this bulletin and most other bulletins/newsletters produced by other state and unit associations. It is suitable for wearing on a lapel or as a tie-tack. The price is \$7.00 – inquiries to Mary-Ann Thiselton.

Don Swiney advises that the Fortuna Survey Association has lodged an application with the Victorian Government under the Local History Grants Program (Round 3). The outcome is expected in April and Don remains optimistic that they will be successful and the History will be printed, but probably not for a formal launch in July 2002. The Queensland Association has offered to pre-purchase ten copies at \$50.00 each to assist in the project, however, Gary Warnest advises we should hold off until the Grant is approved.

REGIMENT HISTORY

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH DRINKS

This regular informal event continues at the Gaythorne RSL. There is ample parking at the Club. When is it? The last Friday of the month of course. Check with Rock Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026) to be sure.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2001 – 2002

Keep in touch with you Survey Corps mates by being a paid-up member of your Association.

Our financial year runs from September to September. Subscription is but \$10.00 per year. We encourage you to pay three years in advance (or more if you wish). Some have already done this.

We consider all past members of the Corps to be members of our Association, however, our Bulletin can only be posted to those members who are fully paid up or not more than 12 months in arrears. New rules apply to our veterans 75 and over that in effect waive the payment of annual subscriptions.

Annual subscriptions are traditionally collected at our Reunion but don't wait till then – **pay now if you are in arrears.**

RESULTS OF THE RAFFLE

Remember the raffle for which tickets were being sold at the September reunion? First prize, a framed print of the School of Military Survey by Duncan Brimson was won by WO2 Bunney of 1 Topo and second prize, a batik 'cap', that is, a stamp used for batik printing, of the RA Svy badge was won by Sgt Dianne Souter also of 1Topo.

Duncan Brimson, an ex RE soldier, served with 2 Fd Svy Sqn and after leaving the Corps developed a reputation for his bird drawings.

Congratulations raffle winners!

INCORPORATION

Our application for incorporation seems to have become lost in the mechanisms of government and we have been asked to re-submit. We were not sorry for the delay because it has given your committee time to consider the liability insurance implications of incorporation. No doubt all members are aware of the hikes that have taken place in liability insurance premiums since the tragic events of September 11th.

Although only indirectly related to that event, the collapse of HIH Insurance and the fact that we have become an increasingly litigious society has caused liability insurance premiums to rise by an average factor of three. Over two recent committee meetings the issue has been discussed and debated at length and the out come is that we will certainly proceed with incorporation, - we can't afford not to. The issue of insurance will be taken up once our incorporation is through, by which time the insurance situation will be a little clearer.

PASSING PARADE

VALE – Phillip Armstrong

It is with saddnes that we advise the passing of our esteemed Association Padre, Father Phillip Armstrong. Phil died on Tuesday 12th March in the Sylvan Woods Nursing Home on Old Cleveland East Road, Birkdale. Phil was admitted to Greenslopes after a minor stroke and then to Mount Olivet before entering Sylvan Woods which is not far from his Wellington Point home. Phil remarkably completed the Anzac Day march last year and attended our September reunion at the Gaythorne RSL. He celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination into the Anglican Church last year, a big event in his life. He is survived by his wife Ann and his family.

A more comprehensive obituary will be published in our August Bulletin.

VALE – Francis Bernard Houlihan

Long time member of the Association and World War II veteran Frank Holohan passed away on 11 October 2001, aged 81.

Frank served as a draftsman in 5 Aust Field Survey Company (AIF) for just 5 years. He was a member of No 1 Section under Captain Alex Yeates. He saw service in mainland mapping operations on the Queensland coast and Cape York, in Merauke (then Dutch New Guinea) and at Moratai and Balikpapan.

On being discharged Frank was initially employed in the Commonwealth Survey Office. He married Ruth in 1949 and soon after joined the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau where he remained until he retired.

In early October Frank suffered what was described as a mild stroke and was admitted to Greenslopes Private Hospital. He remained there until his final passing.

Frank is survived by his wife, Ruth, his four sons and one daughter and grandchildren.

WW2 comrade and Association friend, Jim Houston attended his funeral at St John the Baptist Catholic Church, Enoggera, on behalf of the Association.

VALE – Bob Roche

Bob would be remembered by some of our Queensland Association members as a cartographic officer at the Army Survey Regiment and the Bonegilla Detachment. Bob also served as the SO2 Survey in Port Moresby in 1980/81.

Don Swiney of the Fortuna Association advised that Bob passed away on 17th August 2001 after a long battle with leukemia. As with many sufferers of leukemia, at times Bob seemed to be on top of it and in good spirits but then there would be relapses and finally after admission to Peter Mac's, Bob died.

I remember Bob Roche as a competent and reliable officer well liked by his colleagues and those who served under him. His quiet sense of humour was his trade mark. In retirement Bob's great loves became golf and four wheel driving. He is survived by his wife Val and children.

VALE – Jim Corless

Jim Corless, known to many who at various times passed through the portals of the School of Military Survey where he was Senior Instructor during the late 70's, passed away in Perth in early January 2002.

Jim was one of three officers who transferred from the Educational Corps to Survey, in all cases after serving at the School as maths and physics instructors. Jim subsequently completed a degree in surveying in Western Australia before being posted back to the School as Senior Instructor. From that appointment he moved to Survey Directorate as SO1 Personnel and from 82 to 84 as Deputy Director. In 1985 Jim returned to the School as Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor. In 1987 he was posted non-Corps to Western Australia in the appointment of CO of the District Support Unit until his retirement in 1990.

Jim was a training technologist and played a big role in re-shaping the courses at the School of Military Survey into the Army's Training Systems approach.

Jim's health had been precarious for some time and during 2001 he had had recurrent bouts of pneumonia. It was the last of these that finally led to his passing. He is survived by his wife Nola and children Shaughan, Rowan, Micael, Cindy and five grandchildren.

SICK PARADE

Kevin Walsh continues at Little Mountain, Caloundra, maintaining his house and garden, his two dogs Annabelle and Radigar, his birds and his computer friends. He acts as a ginger person on the estate body corporate and at times with the Caloundra RSL. Kevin's health is not good and his indomitable spirit keeps him going. Kevin enjoys a visit and a yarn, but give him a ring before dropping in. His phone number is 5491 9793.

DVA COLUMN

This is a new innovation to our Bulletin and is at the suggestion of Stan Campbell who with Peter Bates-Brownsword is an RSL Counsellor and well versed in Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) matters. DVA publish frequent news sheets called *DVA Facts* and from time to

time a specific subject appears of particular relevance to our Survey Association members.

Records Relating to Veterans

We all know that our service records are held by that organization we used to know as CARO. In fact army service records of all soldiers discharged after 1952 are held now by the Historical Records Section of the Soldier Career Management Agency, GPO Box 393D Melbourne. Medical records are held by the ADF Health Records Office – Army, GPO Box 932R, Melbourne. DVA holds all WW2 service and medical records for those discharged before 1952 in the veteran's State of discharge. The National Archives of Australia hold all WW1 records.

Pension Rates

The *DVA Facts* dealing with Pension Rates, Limits and Allowances is quite lengthy so here are a few of the more common ones – current from 1 Jan 02 to 20 Mar 02.

Service and Age pension, per week –	
single rate	\$410.50
couple rate (each)	\$342.60
Disability Pension – 100%	\$273.80

Additional Disability Pension for specific disabilities ranges in amount from \$448.20 for items 1 to 6 to \$22.70 for items 12 & 13.

War Widow(er)'s pension is \$435.50

Other details in the Facts sheet cover income support supplement, orphan's pension, pharmaceutical allowance, rent assistance, remote area allowance, telephone allowance, family tax benefit, recreation transport allowance, vehicle assistance scheme, attendant allowance, clothing allowance, veterans' children education scheme, decoration allowance, income limits, assets limits, gold card income and assets limits, health card income and assets limits.

TPI – very complicated and the benefits are numerous. If you are internet linked, go to website www.tpinsw.net/concessions.

For more information contact either Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970) or Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001).

Clasps issued with the Australian Service Medal (ASM) 1945 – 1975 and the ASM (1976 onwards)

This is a complex document with only the PNG and SE Asia sections relevant to most ex RA Survey personnel. Some RA Svy and RAE (Survey) who may have served in East Timor, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and other theatres of non-warlike service may be eligible for appropriate clasps. Contact Peter or Stan for more detailed information. Gazettal Notices have not yet been promulgated in this document for post 75 Gading and Cendrawashi survey operations.

PERSONALIA ITEMS

Brian Murray of the New Guinea Survey Section continues to forward his remarkable newsletter, containing always the latest bulletin on his own health. I envy his thespian skills and should his health deteriorate further his snippets of information and anecdotes will be greatly missed. Brian is in and out of intensive care and in his own words, has periods of 'non compis' due to conflicts in medication. His condition was described as 'delicate' which Brian assumes must mean he is 'pregnant' – an example of Brian's delicious humour. I have a couple of Brian's reminiscences to publish and one of these is on pages 10 and 11 of this Bulletin. The header to Brian's newsletter states "*No matter how many years have passed or our physical conditions have altered, the memories and mateship remain*" – *RL Roche, one of the 1942 Colac Volunteers*. Perhaps that should be our ANZAC message.

Pat O'Connor continues to live at Labrador with wife Patricia. Pat is now 76 and neither he nor Patricia is in good health. In a Christmas note, Pat says that travel is difficult and they do not venture far from home. Nevertheless, he enjoys our bulletins and keeping up with comrades of past.



1ST TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY SQUADRON

Derek Chambers Award

In 2000 RASvy Corps Association presented the Squadron with an award to be presented to a young soldier within 1st Topographical Survey Squadron who had made a substantial contribution to 'Esprit de Corps'. The prize honours the memory of Derek Chambers who is remembered by all those who knew him for his good humour, in particular in difficult circumstances.

The winner for 2001 was Corporal Chris Pearse. Chris met the criteria for the award through his dedication to duty, good sense and the ability to communicate at all rank levels, through an infectious enthusiasm for the task at hand and his easygoing personality. Chris has subsequently decided on discharge from the regular army to try his hand in another profession. A soldier with both skills and dedication that will be missed, Chris has joined the General Reserve and may either serve at the Squadron or at the Army Combat Arms Training Centre in Puckapunyal.

Squadron Activities

With the new year well underway 1st Topographical Survey Squadron has a busy calendar ahead. As this article is written, the unit has a detachment assigned to Operation Guardian II (CHOGM), and backup Geomatic support to the Joint Task Force HQ. Other activities/operations which the Squadron is involved with are a series of Command Post Exercises, operational deployment to East Timor (current and future manning rotations), exercises supporting 1, 3 and 7 Brigades as well as the Deployable Joint Force HQ.

No major exercises have been planned this year and the Squadron will focus on internal development to allow members to attend promotion courses and refine their skills. Project TOPOSS has provided new equipment and hardware to our deployable capability and this year will

provide a settling in of these relatively new operational procedures.

In January a series of Squadron exercises were conducted involving all ranks. These exercises led to the Squadron's direction for the year from the OC's intent. Each troop was given its goals and objectives and workshopped these during the exercises to ensure all members understood their own role for the year. This is only the second time these exercises have been conducted and their worth is in focusing all members on the common goal at the same time allowing input at all levels to initial planning.

A manning and equipment review of the Squadron was conducted in February to consolidate our current and future growth and capabilities. There were a number of changes made to bring the Squadron to an operational level to ensure the Squadron could meet the demands for rotational deployments.

Mid year the Squadron will deploy into the field on a Squadron exercise to test the full spectrum of its capability. This will primarily be a technical exercise, however, a number of military skill sets will also be tested. In the second half of the year, it is planned to have an engineer exercise where the unit receives refresher training in basic engineering principals.

Section competitions will be run continually throughout the year in both military skills and sporting events. So far the obstacle course at Canungra and a swimming carnival have provided keen competition. Upcoming events include the Weapons Training Simulation System and an athletics carnival.

WO1 Barrie Craymer, SSM

'GRANDPA'S WAR SERVICE' by R.J.C.
Senior – reviewed by Bob Skitch

There is no doubt those few years of World War 2 service, mostly five or less, had a lasting impact on the subsequent lives of those who took part. Not surprising either. This has been the principal theme of the recently completed series *Changi* on the ABC and those who watched might forgive the occasional military inaccuracy if they allowed themselves to be absorbed in the main game.

Our WW2 survey veterans had a different experience, far less extreme than *Changi* of course, but nevertheless one that has lived on in their lives over the years since. It is this shared experience, the camaraderie, the mateship, that has brought them together year after year across Australia on Anzac days and other reunion occasions. It would be unrealistic, even foolish to imagine that the whole of the experience was a good one although there is a tendency in retrospect to view through rose-tinted glasses. Some men enjoyed the company of others, the rough humour, coarse language and general lack of living etiquette. Others did not. For them the days might pass painfully slowly, the longing to be home rarely absent from their mind. They were the loners who through no fault of their own did not easily make friends. In the company of men it often doesn't pay to be different. And yet they all contributed towards a goal that often seemed less than clear. It might well be said that there were as many war experiences as men and women participating. It is this that has impelled so many to commit to paper their wartime experiences.

After many years, and having achieved a senior position as an accountant in the Victorian Public Service, R. Jeffrey C. Senior put pen to paper to record his wartime experiences *'for the information, benefit and understanding of my grandchildren in an endeavour to answer the question 'what was it really like?'*. The resulting volume has the title *'Grandpa's War Service'*. It is a painfully honest account of Jeff Senior's personal experience and possibly represents 'the other side of the coin' from the more

glowing optimism so often reflected in unit histories. We may not all share his views, but that makes them no less relevant, nor, for that matter, less honest. Jeff maintained a detailed diary throughout those years and together with his pay books and service dossier provided by the Central Army Records Office, Jeff has provided a valuable near-chronological and detailed record of his wartime experiences. It is interspersed with his views on those who served with him, both cohorts and of more senior rank, from the lance corporal 'tent commander' in his first introduction to army life to junior and senior survey officers. His views often are not flattering.



Corporal R Jeffrey C Senior - 1946

Corporal Jeff Senior enlisted on the 10th October 1941 at Surrey Hills Victoria and was posted to the 5th Battalion Victorian Scottish Regiment on the 5th November based at Frankston where the young Jeff undertook his recruit training. In his own words... *"Introductions to tent mates began.....My first impressions were not good, in fact, having been brought up in gentler circles I wondered what I'd struck"*. During those uncertain times, Japan having entered the war, the protection of Western Port Bay appeared a priority and to this somewhat remorseless task Jeff's unit was assigned. Jeff, however, had a Victorian Leaving pass from secondary school and in March 1943 he was posted to AHQ Survey Directorate located in a

three story mansion at 242 Kooyong Road, Toorak, the previous home of Essington Lewis, then chairman of BHP. Jeff was employed as a general dutyman and kitchen hand. Soon after he was posted to No 2 Geodetic Survey Section based at Taralgon Victoria for survey training. This was sporadic and depended on the availability of survey officers resting at the Taralgon camp after field duties. In April 42 the unit moved to Queensland by rail, initially staging at the Hamilton Town Hall and then by Queensland rail to Yarram and by army truck to Nanango arriving on the 12th May. Jeff was employed as a light keeper on triangulation using the battery operated Lucas light at night and a heliograph for daylight observations. As the war situation worsened it became obvious that first order triangulation was a luxury the army could no longer afford and the Geodetic Survey Section was disbanded and Jeff was posted to 5 Field Survey Company then based at Gladstone.

Jeff continued with 5 Coy throughout 1942, 43 and 44, working their way up the Queensland coast on a combination of triangulation and mapping. Many hills were climbed and many base camp moves occurred with occasional home leave. Jeff's account is peppered with anecdotes. His trade grouping changed to driver which by and large he enjoyed. On the 25th March 1945 a Detachment of 5 Coy departed from Cairns on the US Liberty Ship the *Charles M. Russell* for New Guinea and beyond, initially to Morotai and finally to Labuan off Brunei. It was in Brunei that Jeff Senior was involved in a skirmish with beleaguered Japanese. On the 13th June 1945 Det 5 Coy under Captain Noonan was given long awaited orders to move to Brunei. In Jeff Senior's words...

We moved quickly along the road towards Brunei until stopped on the road by a very large L.A.D. truck (Light Aid Detachment vehicle) and crew. A native Malay had come out to the road, stopped the L.A.D. vehicle and explained in broken English that three Japs had invaded his house for food and hot water and a rest. The L.A.D.

personnel under a WO waited for an officer before taking action; it being an offence to fire on the enemy without the permission of an officer.

Cpl Cooper who could speak Malay, questioned the native and as his information appeared genuine Captain Noonan agreed to take charge. Cpl Cooper led the way with his L.M.G. (Bren gun) pressed into the back of the native having first warned him that in the event of a trick he would be the first to die. Following Capt Noonan was Sgt Fitzpatrick with an Owen gun and self with a rifle followed by five rifles and three Owen gun personnel from the L.A.D. and other vehicles, leaving the drivers behind to guard the vehicles.

In a matter of a few yards down the track all views were blocked out by the very tall grass type growth. After close to a quarter mile this gave way to a small green grassed valley and several native houses. No women to be seen but men swarmed out of the houses all jabbering and pointing excitedly. The native band led us down to a high bank overlooking a bend in a heavily timbered little creek. Looking round we could see nothing but from all the native yelling we got the message. The Japs had moved out from the house and were resting in a shallow recess below the high ground on which we were standing.

Capt. Noonan was just about to abandon the search when there was a splash and the head and shoulders of a Jap soldier appeared out of the water. Cpl Cooper was standing beside me with his Bren gun on his side. I drew my rifle up to my shoulder but before I could sight it Cooper squeezed his right hand (possibly from fright). The Jap was hit from the first short burst from the machine gun but was able to climb out on the opposite bank where he dropped dead from another short Bren gun burst.

There was silence for a short time. One of the lads approached the edge of our bank and peered over. A Jap officer sword was

jabbed up at him as he jumped back looking pale. Captain Noonan whispered to me – “Keep a watch on everyone's back” – which seemed wise advice.

The second Jap jumped into the water – over three feet deep. He was hit by a single rifle bullet and screamed. Cpl. Cooper rushed to the spot and fired. All I saw was a pool of blood on the water surface. The scream of that dying Jap, the like of which I had never heard before or since, remained with me for many years. In the first few years back in civilian life I would hear it again when lying awake in the middle of the night. Although it has diminished I can never forget it.

Capt. Noonan started to call us off but the natives persisted that there were three Japs. Throughout the Japanese occupation the inhabitants had been obliged to learn and speak Japanese. Cpl Cooper, speaking Malay, ordered one of the natives to shout out an offer of surrender. There was no response.

One of the L.A.D. lads had got into the creek and dropped the third Jap with one direct shot. Several other lads then got into the water, pumped more lead into the visible bodies and came back with a Japanese officer sword, a haversack and a water bottle containing hot water evidently boiled for purification. The haversack contained a cut throat razor, no soap or mirror, a broken wrist watch and personal papers including a photograph of a wife and son. These were later handed in to Army Intelligence.

There was much shouting of joy on the part of the natives, much hand shaking and bowing as we took our leave and went back to the road all feeling much relieved. Proceeded on our way to the 2/12th Field Regiment Headquarters.

Later in the narrative Jeff states:

Our movement order came through and as we loaded up again a Captain of the 2/8th Artillery Survey Battery came out to our jeep and made a little speech. He

congratulated the ‘Fighting 5th’ for disposing of three Japs and shook the hands of those who took part, at the same time expressing a wish to blood his unit and expressed a personal wish that “I’d love to get me a Jap”. I must say I felt no elation for the congratulations or handshake.

Jeff Senior records later that same Captain got his wish. He was involved in a similar skirmish some days later but tragically lost his life in the incident.

Det 5 Coy moved to Labuan Island and Jeff records again:

It was on our first night ashore on Labuan Island that someone rigged up our unit wireless and we listened to the only radio station powerful enough to reach the area. This was Radio Saigon then controlled and operated by the Japanese. In the news bulletin the female announcer gave a fairly accurate detailed listing of all the Australian Army units ‘endeavouring’ to land on North West Borneo.

It was quite weird to be sitting around the radio on Labuan Island and to be told that the 5th Australian Field Survey Unit had been thrown back into the sea and destroyed.

Det 5 Coy continued on Labuan Island and North West Borneo carrying out sporadic survey work and generally just filling in time. Hostilities ceased with the surrender of Japan on 15th August 1945. Filling in time became the order of the day and it wasn't until 16th December 1945 that Jeff finally disembarked from the HMAS Manoora in Brisbane and was posted to the LHQ Cartographic Company at Bendigo to await demobilisation. This finally took place on 12th April 1946 and he returned to his position as a junior clerk with the Accounts Branch of the Education Department of Victoria.

Jeff expresses some disillusionment with his war service and has difficulty in seeing that his 1620 days of service contributed anything of significance to the war effort. No significant products eventuated. The

work in Queensland continued long after any real threat to Australia had passed. Of course, did we really know that at the time? Perhaps not and perhaps it is simply being wise after the event. Evan Coulthard Clark recognises that most times Survey during WW2 was too little too late.

THE CASUAL AUSTRALIAN DIGGER IS NO MYTHor

A day in the life of a fieldman in the New Guinea Survey Section.

by Brian Murray

It was to have been just another two-man compass traverse in Kanga Force's extensive operational area. But it was also the first time in the jungle for my young sapper, a recent reinforcement, and the Mubo Track was not the kindest of introductions. When it became clear that he would never make it, I sent him back to Wau and continued on to see what terrain information I could obtain from the 2/7th Independent Company's 'I' Section.

It was nearly last light when I arrived at The Saddle, a narrow feature where two 3.7" howitzers of the 1st Australian Mountain Battery were located. Oval brass plates showed that they had been made in India in 1922 and 1923, making them older than most of the gunners. It had been a long day so, after a short chat with my hosts, I made myself comfortable on a low platform between the guns – there was a dearth of flat ground – and was soon asleep. Some time later, Japanese mountain guns opened up, but the rounds were falling comfortably short of us. The commandos warned that a Jap patrol was out, and may be headed our way. Then, as if on cue, the line went dead. The gunners stood to with their rifles; they had been without ammo for their howitzers for several weeks. However the rest of the night was uneventful, any hopes the Jap patrol may have had of locating the battery's position by its gun flashes having been thwarted by Kanga Force's precarious supply lines.

At first light I breakfasted with my hosts on iron rations – bully and biscuits, washed down with strong black tea – and sought

directions to the 2/7th. It was, the gunners assured me, 'dead easy': just follow the track until I reached a kunda (bamboo) bridge over the Bitoi River and, a little further on, I would see the turn-off to the commandos. A battery sig would accompany me part of the way to locate and repair the break in the signal line.

The track dropped away sharply from the Saddle through tall trees. Their foliage completely hid the sky, creating the familiar half light of the jungle. There was little undergrowth, on which we would normally rely for concealment, heightening my sense of vulnerability in what was, to me, completely unknown territory. The silence was total, the walking easy and the climate mild. In other circumstances it could have seemed idyllic. But not in New Guinea in 1943.

The break in the signal line having been located and repaired, my companion headed back to the Saddle, and I went on.

Some time later, I came upon a dead Japanese lying across the track. He was dressed, incongruously, in an Australian Army greatcoat from which two-toed rubber boots protruded. His was not, I was pleased to note, a particularly new body. I stepped over him and continued on. Somewhere ahead there was a brief exchange of fire, then the silence returned. Never warm and friendly, it now seemed increasingly ominous. It was not that I was feeling lonely; lonely would have been good. Rather, it was the increasing possibility that I was not alone which was exercising my mind.

It was at this moment that I saw the kunda bridge that the gunners had told me about. And also, closer to me, a weapon pit. It was round, neat, new, and very Japanese. There was no immediate sign of its owners, but this brought me- no great peace of mind.

Drawing my .38, I proceeded unheroically forward, crossed the bridge and continued along the track. Here, beside the river, the vegetation was thicker, and no turn-off was visible. I was therefore reassured when I saw a digger standing by the side

of the track. His Owen was slung for action, his forearm resting lightly along it, but this was normal in forward areas, and rang no alarm bells. We exchanged laconic g'days as I plodded past. I had almost reached the next bend in the track when he called softly and beckoned me back. "Where did I reckon I \was going?" He pondered my reply before explaining that there was a woodpecker (a Juki MMG) around the next stretch of track. It had killed his mate, and other commandos were coming to help him recover the body. Anyhow, I had had come too far. He explained how to find their H.Q. and, leaving Australia's one-man front line, I retraced my steps.

The commando's 'I' Section welcomed me as a visitor from the outside world, only recently from the fleshpots of Wau. Lunch – iron rations again – was a cheerful affair, and I was beginning to relax a little; whoever said that it was better to travel hopefully than to arrive had clearly never served in Kanga Force.

After lunch, the commandos showed me their maps. Working in two-man parties, like us, and using oil float compasses and signal wire 'chains', as we did, had produced first class local maps which would save us weeks of work. The maps exceeded all my expectations, and I made careful tracings for our draftsrmnen back in Wau.

The return journey was without incident, but one never knows this when starting out, and I did not relax until the Bitoi and its environs were well behind me. Now able finally to reflect on my day, I became increasingly ill-pleased with the Owen gunner who had nearly let me walk into the Jap woodpecker and with the gunners for their cheerfully inadequate directions; the turn-off to the commandos had been invisible to the naked eye; my naked eye at least . I should have been grateful that the Owen gunner had been there at all, but I was in no mood to be reasonable. When, therefore, my hosts enquired politely about my day, I replied in somewhat blunt terms .The gunners clearly thought me unreasonable, pointing

out that 'the commandos don't want to make it the (the turn-off) too obvious y'know'. Then seeking to placate me further added: 'Anyway, you were lucky not to get your arse shot off crossing the Bitoi, because the Japs keep the bridge under observation.'

The casual Australian digger is certainly no myth.

However the gunners understood my feelings and we parted the following day on friendly terms. The next time I was going through their area, my mate and I were using a compact, light-weight 10,000 metre rangefinder – the first in Kanga Force – to take distances and bearings of features off the track (the usual practice of triangulation was very rarely possible in New Guinea). We took a day off to do some battery survey work for the gunners who, not wholly in jest, invited us to remain with them for the duration of the campaign. It was tempting; ours was a somewhat lonely life; their iron rations were more certain than ours when we were away from main force areas, and we would no longer be at risk from friendly patrols, as had happened to us in the past. But, of course, reality won out. As the gunners were out of ammo again, we were not able to see the result of our labours before moving on to continue mapping. We were never to meet them again.

– as recalled by Brian Murray, Christmas 2001

PROUD PARENTS

Rock and Mary-Ann Thiselton have good cause to be proud. Number one son Matthew was selected for the Federation Guard, a tri-service special guard called together for important ceremonial events.

The guard turned out on Sunday afternoon 3rd March at Southbank, Brisbane and Rock and Mary-Ann were the proud parents witnessing the event. Oh yes, the Queen and Duke were there and Rock and Mary-Ann happened to see them also!

Not only that, but number two son Geoffrey graduated from Kapooka into the Army Reserve (yep! – ARes recruits go to Kapooka these days). Geoffrey has chosen Sigs Corps (since there is no Survey) and is posted to 7CSU (Command Sig Unit) at Enoggera for training as a Combat Systems Support Operator. (I think they were Radio Ops in our day) Rock and Mary-Ann were at Kapooka to witness the graduation; a nostalgic trip for both I imagine!

ANOTHER PARADE

Talk of Kapooka graduation brings to mind one's own. Mine occurred in June 1955 at a somewhat different Kapooka than the one of today. The graduating squads were assembled on the oval, a rather uneven piece of turf for marching upon and in boots AB black without the crunch of hobnails on the gravel of the bull-ring it was rather hard to keep in step which caused the somewhat bull-necked red-faced RSM to become even more so. I think we were threatened with another week of training! Anyhow, barking out the order – *Par.....ade Atten,,,,shun* – two glistening objects projected from the gentleman's mouth to come to rest on the grass in front of him. Fair dinkum! His false teeth! There they lay until I presume the parade was over. His subsequent orders were slightly lispng.....**Bob Skitch.**

FROM MARY-ANN'S KITCHEN

Mexican Layer Dip

Ingredients:

250g Cream Cheese

3/4 of a 200ml tub Sour Cream
1 Lemon
Tabasco Sauce
Chilli Sauce
1 Clove Garlic
1/2 Bottle Ragulleto (Onion, Herbs & Spices)
250-300g grated Cheese
5 rashes of Bacon
1 Large Avacado (may need two)
Salt and Pepper
Olives - Black or Green (as many as you require)
Shallots - tops for garnish

Method:

Mix Cream Cheese, Sour Cream, Juice of 1/2 Lemon, 2 or more dashes of Tabasco, 1 to 2 teaspoons of Chilli Sauce, and Garlic, add Salt and Pepper to taste.

Dice Bacon and fry until crispy.

Mash Avacado and the rest of Lemon juice and 1 to 2 teaspoons of Chilli Sauce (if you wish to make it spicier add a dash of Tobasco Sauce)

Mix the Ragulleto Sauce with 2 to 3 dashes of Tobasco and 1 Teaspoon of Chilli Sauce

Layers:

1. Cream Cheese Mixture
2. Sprinkle of Grated Cheese
3. ½ of Avacardo Mixture
4. ½ of Shallots
5. Sprinkle of Grated Cheese
6. Tomato Mixture
7. Bacon
8. ½ Avacardo Mixture
9. Top with Grated Cheese, Shallots and Olives

Make about 4 hours before required (can be made the night before).

Refrigerate. Serve with a sliced French Stick or Corn Chips.

AN ALBUM OF PHOTOS from Noel Sproles

Noel arrived in N Comd Field Survey Unit as a 2Lt in late 1962. The Unit was still at Victoria Barracks but moved out to the converted 1 BOD warehouse at Gaythorne soon after. Noel was soon immersed in field operations, always equipped with his camera. Noel has been checking through and cataloguing his collection of photographs and here are a few....



Grant Small on the Paroo 1964

- we were observing LaPlace on the Burketown – Charleville Tellurometer Traverse



Ross McMillan at Schoalwater Bay 1964

Control was established for the Schoalwater Bay 1:100,000 Special produced by N Comd Fd Svy Unit from compilations using a stereo-template assembly (possibly the only time stereo-templates were used in the Corps) and printed in a single sheet of paper. The Schoalwater Bay Training Area acquired in 1963 covered an area larger than the ACT. An outline map was produced by the Unit with the Training Area superimposed on the ACT – to

show those 'shiny-bums' in Canberra how big it was. Kev Walsh had a big role in the whole process. Jim Stedman was OC and DAD Svy.



At Bullaganang with Ross McMillan and Sammy Watson – about to dismantle a well maintained cairn, pole and disc to convert it into a rock annulus for tellurometer direct measurement. The era of trig was over – EDM traversing was in.

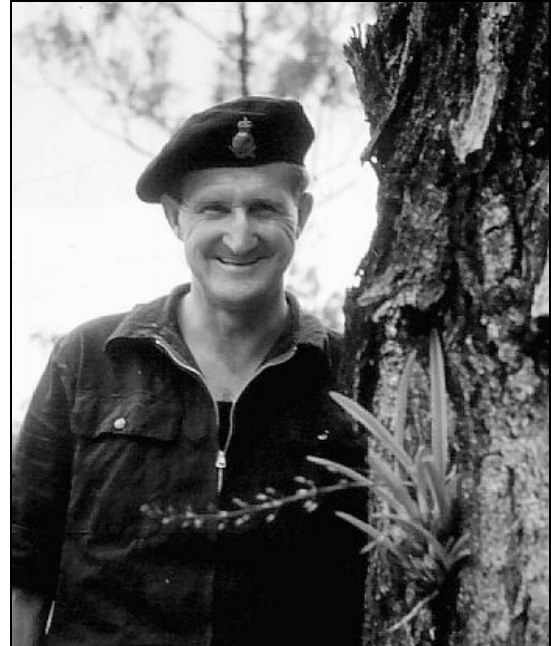


Bullaganang after conversion to a rock annulus. Note the white painted tar paper over the surface of the annulus for identification photography – F234 camera from a Cessna aircraft. Who is that soldier?



Sam Chambers at Cape Flattery in 1963

What were we doing there – am not too sure! Kev Walsh says checking some of the EDMs through the 1st order trig net.



Garney Cook our transport NCO – a good one; at Tin Can Bay in 1964.

What were we doing there? We were always doing something at Tin Can Bay. That was the year the Armoured Regiment took their Centurion tanks to Tin Can Bay – first time ever out of Puchapunya – during the wet. One became hopelessly bogged and had to be left there till the following dry and then excavated with a dozer.



Kevin Walsh at Garbut Airbase, Townsville inspecting the camera configuration of a RAF Valiant Bomber equipped for aerial photography. The RAF had been attempting photography over TPNG without much success. They had more success over some of the SW Pacific islands. The Valiant weight 40 tons unloaded, 80 tons with fuel. It had an 8 hour endurance. A fan of cameras, high and low obliques and a vertical mapping camera, were mounted in the bomb bay.



The famous Sioux Helicopter – the flying bubble at a cleared station on the Gowrie – Somerton EDM traverse. Noel tells me it is Bob Skitch and Pilot Murray in the cockpit. I'll take his word for it!

The Bell Sioux helicopter played an important role in survey operations during the 50s and 60s – until superceded by the Kiowa (initially called the Kulkadon – remember? Peter Bates-Brownsword came across one recently that had been well known on survey operations. He will tell us a little more about the Sioux in the next bulletin.