

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS  
ASSOCIATION  
Queensland Branch



**BULLETIN**

PO Box 5784 Stafford Heights 4053

REUNION EDITION – No 20

AUGUST 2004

**EVENTS**



**REUNION AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2004**

Our **traditional reunion** event will take place in the **Lighthouse Room at the Gaythorne RSL**. Bar opens at 11.00 am with lunch served at 12.30 pm. The AGM will follow lunch. The cost this year has had to increase to \$30.00 per person for a two course dinner with tasty nibbles served before the meal.

**RSVP** Alex Cairney on 3397 7583 (Mobile 0418 196 566) before 31 August 2004 or send in the slip at the bottom of the detailed notice at the back of this Bulletin. Especially we want to see our WW2 veterans. **Transport** can be arranged for those who may need it. Simply tell Alex of your need.

**MILITARY MAPMKER'S DINNER – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2004**

All are invited. Again this year the dinner will take place on neutral territory. Cost will be about the same - \$35.00 (to be confirmed). The band will be in attendance and it will be a grand night. All further inquiries and advice of your attendance to Mary-Ann Thiselton on 3353 1026.

**DEREK CHAMBERS AWARD PRESENTATION – November/December 2003** A BBQ lunch at the Squadron following an escorted tour of the Squadron's technical areas. Details to be advised later.

**TONY AND LORETTA GEE'S BBQ – Sunday 8th August 2004**

Tony and Loretta have again this year extended the hospitality of their home to Association and other ex-Survey Corps members from 12.00 midday. BYO drinks. The Gee's address is 50 Bibimulia St, Bellara, Bribie Island. RSVP Mary-Ann Thiselton before 30 July.

**OUR HISTORY PROJECT – What did we do over all those years – 1946- 1996?**

Some information has come in but no where near enough. Noel Sproles has contributed and so has John Bullen. I am working on mine and I have had a couple of entries from Alex Cairney. Clem Sargent is working on his. We need input from other Associations. How about it Darby (SA) and Brian (WA)? It is important that we keep at it. With the passing of years our memory dims. It is not just we old blokes who need to contribute but also the younger members, who served during the '80s and '90s. I don't need it in any particular format – reasonably legible handwriting is OK and it need not be tabulated. The following example may assist....

YEAR	UNIT	OPERATION PROJECT	DURATION	LOCATION	NATURE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN	PERSONS TAKING PART	OTHER INFORMATION
1956	N Cmd Fd Svy Sect	No name	On-going	Qld – Macrossan, Charters Towers, ....	Control for 1" to 1 mile mapping - 4th order triangulation, Intersection, resection, (plane table) baro heighting	Capt EU (Ed) Anderson OC, WO2 Blue Hunter, Sgts Snow Ralston, Jeff Lambert, Garney Cook, Cpls Ted Miller, Geoff Helsham, Sprs Sam Chambers, Brian Berkey, Bob Skitch.	Arrived May at Macrossan. Sect had not returned to Brisbane since sometime in 1955. Xmas in the field.....

## OUR SURVEY MEMORIAL PROJECT

Our plans for installing RA Survey memorial plaques at both Rocky Creek out of Atherton and on the Caloundra Memorial Walkway are well underway. We have just received advice from Veterans Affairs that we have been allocated a grant of \$620.00 for the Rocky Creek Memorial. Because the unveiling ceremony takes place on VP Day, 14<sup>th</sup> August each year, our memorial will be placed and unveiled in 2005. We are progressing with the Caloundra Memorial. The contractor has been directed to produce the plaque and the unveiling and dedication will take place on **11 November 2004**. A photograph of each of the proposed sites is in our Photo Gallery. **This is an important date and we would like as many as possible to attend on 11 November. Further details will be advised later in a separate notice.**

## COMMITTEE

<b>Patron</b>	<i>Lieutenant Colonel EU Anderson MBE (Ph 3408 9179)</i>
<b>President</b>	Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001)
<b>Past President</b>	Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)
<b>Vice President</b>	Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)
<b>Secretary &amp; Asst Treasurer</b>	Mary-Ann Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ross Smithwick (Ph 3356 5786)
<b>Functions Member</b>	Alex Cairney (Anzac Day, Reunion) (Ph 3397 7583)
<b>Bulletin Editor</b>	Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)
<b>Membership Records</b>	Kim Weston (Ph 5445 6927; mob 0427 377 226)
<b>WW2 Veteran Member</b>	Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)
<b>Squadron Liaison &amp; Welfare</b>	Jim Gill (Ph 3264 1597)
<b>Member (unallocated)</b>	Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970)
<b>Squadron OC</b>	Major Adrian Harding
<b>Squadron SSM</b>	WO1 BL (Barrie) Craymer (Ph 3332 7564)

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

## NOTICES

### PNG MEDAL

It's been said before – we continue to try. Our letter to Commander PNG Defence Force failed to produce a response so another similar letter has now been sent the PNG High Commission in Canberra. Maybe something will come of it.

### LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH DRINKS

This regular informal event continues at the Gaythorne RSL from about 5.00pm. There is ample parking at the Club and the new entrance to the Club is from the car park. Last Friday in May was held in the Murray Bar at 1 Topo. Mary-Ann reports the OC kept the troops back until about 1640 hrs and then welcomed those of us who were present at the time. Many arrived later due to work commitments. Ian and I had to leave early but I believe all had a good time and many stayed on. The list of members attending: Alex Cairney, Ian Fitzgerald, Brian Cosford, Ross Smithwick, Barry Lutwyche, Jim Gill, John Hook, John Ashby, Derek Stanmore, Ian and Mary-Ann Thiselton. Wally Chilcott and Bruce Bowers turned up at the RSL, obviously Wally didn't read his bulletin, and Bruce is just back from travelling.

### \*\*\*\*\*MAPMAKERS OF FORTUNA\*\*\*\*\*

Copies may be purchased from the Ex-Fortuna Survey Association (PO Box 865 Bendigo 3552) at \$60.00 plus postage of \$11.50 including cost of a padded postal bag.

### BERETS TO WEAR ON ANZAC DAY

The Western Australian Association have adopted head gear in the form of a 'baseball cap' in very smart black with purple peak and trim and a woven Survey Corps badge on the front with the words 'Royal Australian Survey Corps' all in gold. The feeling here is that this style of head-dress is somewhat American and we should adopt the beret – the dark navy blue one we were authorized to wear with of course the brass Corps badge. Many of the other Corps Associations wear something on their heads for the march – some baseball type caps, some berets of various hues. What do you think?

### ASSOCIATION BADGE

Mary-Ann is still holding a few Association badges of the new variety, finished in 'antique gold', a bronze like finish. Place your orders with Mary-Ann and we will try to satisfy them.

### VIETNAM – A TECHNICAL TOUR by Bob McMillan-Kay.

Your Association holds now only one copy of this very worthwhile publication, available at the cost of \$36.00 including postage. Further copies can be obtained from Bob McMillan-Kay. We commend this highly successful book of Bob's Vietnam experience.

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2003 – 2004 & 2004 - 2005**

***'Don't go to sleep on your membership!'***  
**Keep in touch with you Survey Corps mates by being a paid-up member of your Association.**



Our financial year runs from Sept to Sept. 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.

Subscription is waived for veterans 75 and over who have been standing paid-up members of our Association.

**COLONEL ALEX LAING MEMORIAL DINNER – Celebrating the 89th Anniversary of The Royal Australian Survey Corps....**

**by Sally Cattell**

It was during the 89th Birthday of the RASvy Corps dinner that I had an occasion to be standing outside on the front patio of the United Service Club in down town Brisbane (as some of us do) and look across the road. Right opposite was a monstrous apartment building under construction. To its left was an enormous vulgar crane reaching into the sky and to its right the blue lights of the IBM building. Traffic whistled down the road and two lovers weaved their way along the pavement.

Turning around I was aware of the stubborn box hedge enclosing the front boundary; the carefully laid tiles under my feet, the solid round wooden tables and chairs, five dimly lit encased glass chandeliers, and the pristine brass handrail installed for those needing assistance as they negotiate the front steps. The green starboard and red port light on either side of the front door, a gleaming USC brass plaque, and a late night telephone all created a welcoming ambience.

Re-entering the lobby I was struck by the peace and tranquility within due in part to its solid walls and carpeted floor. Looking down on us mere mortals were portraits of illustrious names and faces. It felt like hallowed ground. One could imagine a ghost on those creaking stairs and balconies above. This treasure defiantly standing amidst the chaos of the city seemed to say, 'I am still here for my family. Come and see!'

Twenty four of us sat down to celebrate; the tone of the evening gracious as usual, until Mr President in his enthusiasm to quieten us down for the toasts forgot he was tapping a glass instead of a drum!! Replies to the toast were nothing more than inspirational. A silver haired gentleman regaled us with a story about a truck too high and a bridge too low. Another admitted that 'Wild Bill' was not the owners real name; this he discovered five years after their meeting! And, of course, there was 'Emu' (another white haired gentleman) who in an impassioned and impromptu response to the Corps toast spoke of the family of the Association rooted in the tradition and history of the Corps itself. Amidst anecdotes of further nicknames much hilarity ensued.

Similar experiences re- counted about offspring' toing and froing , from the family home, exhaustion created by grandchildren and where is so and so?; came replies from all quarters, none of whom seemed to be suffering from the dreaded disease 'Craft'.

The dinner was appreciated by all, the service discreet, something which cannot be said about the situation where gentlemen after the main course were to move two places to their left. As retired surveyors this should have been a doddle, however, in this instance much confusion arose climaxing in a glass of water almost landing in the lap of the lady to the left of the suave gentleman with silver hair!

From then on the situation deteriorated as all family occasions do – relaxing. We ended the evening by singing Happy Birthday to Bob Skitch who turned 70 the following day. A truly memorable dinner in the Royal Room of the United Service Club. Where else would it be for our Royal Corps?

By the way; it is worth staying the night for those who have far to go. The rooms are comfortable with large en-suite and every modern convenience. There are reading rooms and desks on which to pen that 'must do' letter, computers and enough reading matter to last for months. The breakfast was all inclusive and the choice excellent – real marmalade, strong coffee, and the best bacon. What more can anyone want?

## PERSONALIA AND OTHER JOTTINGS

**John Gilbert** told me in a phone call from Toowoomba (where he lives) that he has been sparked by our call for information on 'what did we do over all those years' and intends to put to paper (or CD ROM) some of his recollections and many of his photos, now in slide form. Should make interesting reading from what he told me on the phone. John will certainly fill in a few gaps. Joining the Corps in 1971 he served in 5 Sqn for five years then 8 Sqn at Wewak where he and a few others were thought to have been guests of the Indonesian Government (but it wasn't really like that) and four years with 2 Sqn where he saw service on some of the Indonesian operations. He finished his twenty years service with eight years at Fortuna. On leaving the Army in 1990 he worked awhile with Stuart Parkinson's survey practice in Toowoomba, Stuart of course being a 2/1<sup>st</sup> man and a consistent member of our association. John's retirement was occasioned by ill health and he now continues to live quietly in Toowoomba with his wife Robin and one daughter at home. Their home is on the 'better' side of Toowoomba, the eastern side not far from the escarpment. John has been to one or two of our September reunions but his precarious health means that he is not able to decide whether he is up to the somewhat hazardous drive down the range until the day of the event. I have told John that we can take him on at an hours notice or no notice at all – just turn up.

**Ed Anderson**, our Patron, continues to lead a quiet life at Banksia Beach on Bribie Island. Ed proudly wears the pink ribbon and medal of an MBE but now can boast that he is an 'OBE'. Ed remarkably doesn't show his age retaining the stature of the younger man we all knew in years past, but he tells me he gets a few back twinges and has to take care. Although living on his own he is kept under close surveillance by his daughters and especially Margaret who lives at Buderim. Playing safe, Margaret with the support of Ed and the rest of the family is having built a stand-alone self-contained annex (Ed doesn't like the term 'granny flat') on their rather large block of land that Ed can occupy when he visits and perhaps when life at Bribie is no longer tenable. Plans have been approved and building should commence shortly.

Ed attended our Corps Birthday dinner at the United Service Club and in proposing the toast to the Corps and the Association he recounted in typical Ed fashion an amusing tale of his Indonesian experience where a loaded army truck simply wouldn't fit beneath an overhead bridge. Having considered the options of unloading the truck or letting its tyres down, a bright young Indonesian corporal quietly suggested the truck take an alternative route and circumvent the obstructing bridge. This they did. Ed believes the corporal was definitely officer material! Well – when Ed told it, it was quite funny!

**Bill Harvey** is reported by Kym Weston to be not at all well. Kym and Faye called on Bill and Phillipa in Canberra during their recent southern excursion. Kym is going to provide a complete account of his tripping shortly – probably after he gets on top of his now overgrown garden and the inevitable household chores one has after a period of being away. The story follows later...Ed

**John Hillier** and Joy have moved from their home at Bonegilla, (close to where the old School of Military Survey was), to a retirement village in Wodonga. John maintains an active interest in local history or perhaps geography and the bush in general. This is attested in a report in the City of Wodonga news sheet. John has been awarded the March 'Eagle Award', a community award that recognises 'those quiet achievers who make a difference and put others before themselves'. The citation reads *'Mr John Hillier has made a substantial contribution towards developing, managing and marketing the 'High Country Rail Trail' including tasks such as planner, recruiter, working bee coordinator and gaining sponsorships and grants for the project. More than \$392,000 worth of volunteer time and donated materials has been invested over the past two years in the establishment of the Trail. Much of this has been negotiated by John'*. John – you never fail to surprise!

**Ken Shaw** reports: Had a great ANZAC Day - Bill Boyd picked me up from home and drove me to the service at Woy Woy Cenotaph. Unfortunately, Dave Thompson was unable to be with us due to another commitment. After the service, we went into Gosford to the Gosford RSL Club and partook of some ales

and rums (**very** watery!) and an excellent gun fire breakfast. It was great talking about old times with Bill. He delivered me safely home again after the meal – I can't thank him enough. He looked after me like a son! **Ed** – Well done Bill – looking after us oldies. I am not sure whether Ken has joined the OBE brigade; perhaps not. Ken's early military experience is featured later in this Bulletin – how an infantryman became a cartographer.

**Jock Kay** reports that his operation (medical, not survey) has been successful and that very important part of his anatomy is now fully functional again. Jock's wife Barbara continues to undergo chemo-therapy for her cancer requiring trips across to Traralgon every five days; a 200 k round trip. Jock and Barbara have a grandchild living with them at the moment so all in all, Jock's life and that of Barbara's as well, has its complications. Jock says "the final irony is I am on some heavy medication at the moment which prohibits alcohol during medication and for two months afterwards (might buy a new car)". Jock never loses his sense of humour! Seriously though, we in the Association in Queensland convey our hopes and wishes to you and Barbara that Barbara's treatment will be successful and she will make a full recovery from that scourge that has hit so many of our members and or their partners over these past few years.

**Lloyd Twine** phoned recently to talk about his writing of the WW2 history of 5 Coy. Lloyd, of course, was in from the very beginning under Charlie Martin at Kilcoy and stayed with the Coy until its final demobilisation. Lloyd (known to his mates as 'Stringy') is keen to see recognition of the survey units that were based on the Atherton Tableland during WW2 at the Rocky Creek Memorial Park which has become quite a tourist attraction. Lloyd is arranging to have a photograph of the park and of one of the memorials sent to me as an example of what our intended memorial will be like. In the meantime we are waiting on advice from DVA as to whether our application for a grant for the installation of a survey memorial at Rocky Creek has been successful.

**Dawn Laing** planned to be with us for our Corps Day Dinner at the USC but had UK friends to whom she was obligated arrive the week of the dinner; so maybe next year.

Dawn is keeping in good health and leading an active life. She wishes us well.

**Percy Long** is still recovering from his eyelid skin graft which limits his activities somewhat especially at night. But he continues to work, two or three days a week and those who know Perc also know he would have it no other way. Perc tells me that he has boxes of personal records, old op orders, reports and diaries that we would be welcome to access for our Corps history project. I suspect that to do so would be quite a challenge but maybe it is a challenge that should be accepted.

**Stan and Helen Campbell** have arrived back from further touring. We expect a report for the Bulletin, Stan.

**Kevin Walsh** has settled into his new home in the Bellvista Estate at Caloundra. Kevin enjoys a visit from old comrades but phone first. His number is (07) 5438 1710

**Frank Thorogood** Frank continues to recover from a traumatic year and maybe we might see him at the September Reunion, although it might be a little while before he is driving again.

**Ken Lyons** at the time of emailing was in India. That is the nature of Ken's internationally based enterprise in spatial information.

**David Hebblethwaite** has returned from the Solomons where he is involved in a 4 year contract to rebuild and computerise the Solomon Islands' land tenure system. David spends chunks of his time in Honiara developing software and its installation. Imposing western style systems of land tenure on developing tribal based nations is no easy task, especially when the Westminster system of government installed by a departing colonial power has collapsed. David – we are sure you are just the man for the job!

**Noel Sproles**, a frequent contributor to our Bulletin dropped me an email and commented: "Did you see tonight's (Monday 19<sup>th</sup>) 7:30 Report on the ABC concerning the opening of a new gold mine in Bendigo? They are investing \$150 million in it and have dug an exploratory tunnel several kilometres long and it goes well over 800 metres

*underground. It is nearly twice as deep as the old diggings and they have uncovered an enormous quartz reef that they are going to extract mechanically. Complaints about the mullock heaps are now starting up once more it seems. They intend it to be a ten year operation. An interesting programme”.*

Noel has sent in an interesting story titled ‘*Arduous times with Adastra*’. Noel opens his story with... *The 60’s have been called the Age of Aquarius, but for some of us they were also the age of Adastra. Anyone who, from the mid 60’s to the early 70’s, was in any way connected with aerodist, the airborne profile recorder (APR), or aerial photography will remember Adastra as the contractor who provided the lumbering Hudson aircraft that allowed us to deploy these various items.* The full story will appear in our next Bulletin....Ed

**Kevin Moody**, a paid-up member of our Queensland Association and now a resident of Torquay, Victoria, visited with wife Myrie recently. I had the pleasure of their company for a few days. Myrie attended her ‘56’ old girls celebration and Kevin and I yarned of old times over a few beers. Kevin, a previous contributor to our Bulletin, (remember the Corporal and the Colonel story) is writing his recollections of Project Cutlass, the New Ireland mapping survey of 1956-57 and much of our discussion centred on that singular event of 15 months duration. We will see extracts of Moodoo’s story in future Bulletins.

**Bob and Wendy Skitch** depart for the UK on 19 August 2004 and will be away till late October. Bob’s only regret is not being able to attend the Reunion on 4 September and the Map Makers Dinner on 15 October this year. But he will be back for the dedication of the Memorial at Caloundra on 11 November 2004. Bob and Wendy are looking forward to their UK sojourn, the first they have ever undertaken and at nine weeks, probably the last. Bob turned three score and ten on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July and guess what his children gave him for a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday present! A pre-paid tandem sky-dive from 20,000 feet at Caloundra. Wendy won’t let him do it until after the UK trip. What’s that about there being no fool like an old one?

## **Kym Weston – The Westons on Tour**

Well as many of you know the Westons acquired a motorhome early this year and so in April after several local excursions we headed South for a month. Originally our trip was to look at buying some form of transportation but having bought the motorhome we now had time for a more relaxed tour. Well apart from Faye’s family history tour of a dozen cemeteries looking for dead relatives.

First dead stop was the Beachworth areas where we added Bob Skitch’s request to photograph Vances grave (featured in our last Bulletin), but not satisfied with one cemetery we had another three in the area. Anyway we were going well so we cut across to Bendigo and spent the night at Don and Glen Swiney’s place/farm. Both are well and confessed to looking for a small van to do some touring. If Don can stop dabbling in some of his part time jobs as well as looking after his deer we may even see them north of the Victorian border one day.

After Melbourne we toured down to the Mornington Peninsula to see some of Faye’s school friends. Much of the Peninsula was unrecognisable but some things had not changed. It was during school holidays and Rosebud was full of refugees from Melbourne camping on the foreshore. Also on a drive down from Arthurs Seat the Dromana Valley looked much the same - for a moment I thought about the joys of plane-tabling but then I remembered the days of sleety rain.

We travelled north along the coast, visiting another four or five cemeteries around Foster Victoria. We travelled slowly covering about 200 or so km a day until Batemans Bay where we tried unsuccessfully to see Don and Sue Rooke who had obviously escaped for the holidays. On to Canberra – where unfortunately we did not know that the Keeleys ran the post office at Braidwood on the way.

In Canberra we stayed in Peter and Marylyn Ralston’s front yard. Both are well, with Marylyn still working at CASA. Peter was about to turn 55 and while still working at Defence was contemplating his future. Also caught up with Bill and Philippa Harvey - Bill has not been well but a recent email from Philippa was hopeful things were improving although Bill had some way to go before they can resume a normal life.

On our last night we caught up with Paul and Chris Pearson together with Peter

and Helen Bion. Both Peter and Paul run a consulting firm together and Paul had just returned from France and the USA looking at helicopters as part of Defence's next generation purchase. All were well but unlike most of those of us in Queensland who no longer work, they showed no signs of slowing down.

On the way home we spent a night camped on the foreshore at Coogee Beach quite near Alex Cairney's second Sydney home - the Coogee Bay Hotel. Actually to be fair, there were may other ghosts of 2 Fd Svy at Randwick loitering around the Coogee Bay Hotel.

Another lazy week saw us home after an enjoyable month away and already planning our next few trips. – Kym and Faye.

**Westlink – the Bulletin of the Western Australian Association edited by Brian Mead.** Unfortunately space does not permit extracts from the July issue of Westlink to be included in this Bulletin, interesting though they are. Eric Clutterbuck recalls early days at Alice Springs (1950) with some excellent photographs and Joe Mazzarol provides two amusing anecdotes. Westlink also reports the passing of 4 Coy veteran, Cec Locke. More of Westlink in our next Bulletin.

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## VALE

**Hal Jones** passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 at the age of 88. Unfortunately the Association had no knowledge of Hal's death and were not represented at his funeral. Hal, a 5 Coy man, was a staunch member of our Association and a regular attendee at our reunions and some other functions. He was an early supporter of our Anzac march and led our contingent at least once in during the 1980s. Hal also designed and made our Royal Australian Survey Corps Banner, proudly carried since by bearers from 1 Topo on each of our marches. Hal's health deteriorated over the past three years and he moved into a nursing home a couple of years ago. Finally pneumonia took over and Hal had a peaceful death. We will always remember Hal's humour and his cartoons – 'Stanley the Surveyor Soldier', and the sayings of 'Halee Jones'. Hal was a much loved member of our Association and his passing is a sadness to us all.

Hal's adopted granddaughter, Kirrili Bradshaw, phoned me recently and told me a

little of Hal's past. Hal never married and spent his life looking after Kirrili's 'Nanna' with whom he lived at Carindale. Nanna passed away some years ago and in 2001 Hal moved into Cazna Gardens, an RSL retirement home for veterans. ('Cazna' is 'Anzac' backwards). Hal had prearranged his funeral some years before and it was conducted quietly with family attendance just before Christmas. Hal's occupation over the years after the war was in teaching art at the Queensland College of Arts, later TAFE. Art was Hal's life and Kirrili tells me that she is holding a box full of his drawings and paintings. Hal's great passion was in painting and, in Kirrili's words, tinkering. Hal loved to mend things; make them work. He would never throw away anything.

Perhaps the best obituary one could give Hal would be to include a selection of his drawings and cartoons in this Bulletin.

## MORE COUNTRY DIRECTIONS – Kevin's story...as told to Bob Skitch

Perhaps inspired by Jeff Lambert's 'Country Directions' in our last Bulletin, Kevin Walsh recounts his own experience. If I've got it right it is something like this.....

Northern Command Field Survey Section was working on Cape York Peninsula sometime in the late'50s. Kevin driving a Jeep (yes – we had them in those days) and Garney driving a GMC were heading north from Cooktown to Coen with a load of MT gas and decided to detour to Marina Plains on Princess Charlotte Bay, about where the Annie River enters, and catch a feed of fish. Travelling cross-country they found themselves heading into a scrub fire that was heading apace towards them. The GMC being a lumbering old beast, they decided to run through the fire front since it looked as though it would outpace them anyhow. With a load of MT gas Garney had some misgivings but Kevin persuaded him it would be safe enough. In the Jeep resourceful Kevin made a track by running forward and back over a distance of fifty yards to be the track Garney was to follow through the smoke once the fire reached them. That happened soon enough and Kevin bored his Jeep through first and then Garney in the GMC but in the process striking a low and somewhat solid stump that pushed the tandem duals back a few notches. Two hours later after a lot of hard work with jacks and saplings in the dust and with the friendship becoming decidedly frayed at the edges, they were on their way again. Heading north again they found the horse mounted fire-lighter meandering through the bush striking wax matches and throwing them into the

scrub. On inquiring not too politely what the dusky gent was up to he responded “the boss told me to do it Boss”. Deciding that line of inquiry was fruitless they then asked “how much further to the Marina Plains track”? The response – “seven mile Boss”. That seemed reasonable so they asked “how far then from where we’ll hit the track to Marina Plains?” “That seven mile too Boss” was the certain reply. Thanking their informant they proceeded on the same bearing – due north – pleased they had not too far to go. Hitting the west to east track leading to Marina Downs close to the stated distance of seven miles established their confidence in their informant – they would reach their destination before much longer. They passed the seven-mile point and drove on and on and on, their confidence ebbing with every passing mile. Well past the turn back point they drove on into the late afternoon finally hitting the Annie River some thirty seven miles from where they entered the track. They made camp with sufficient daylight left to throw in a line or two and pull in a couple of medium size barras for dinner. The next morning the ‘boss’ turned up and their first enquiry was “what was that bloke back there doing throwing lighted waxies into the scrub”? Boss with a grin said “oh that was old ‘Seven Mile’; I told him to burn off the back boundary”. All was explained!

Kevin recounted his experience to quite a few after that – beware of bush directions. The story served Harry Berger well. Further west he was doing a spot of 250,000 annotation. Main boundary fencelines were important but not internal paddock fences. Harry arrived at a soundly constructed fence and was pondering its length when a ringer rode up. Harry asked “how long is this one mate”? “It’s a long one mate” replied the ringer; “I reckon it’s all of fifty miles”. Harry looked again at his photos while the ringer looked on quizzically. Finally Harry, with Kevin’s warning in mind, looked up and asked “how long would you take to ride it?” The ringer thought for a bit then said “I’d be home in twenty minutes – it’s the homestead paddock”. There you go!!



## 1<sup>st</sup> TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY SQUADRON –

It has been a busy half year in the Squadron. Some of you may not be aware that the Squadron is now one sub-unit within 6<sup>th</sup> Engineer Support Regiment (6 ESR). This came about through Army’s initial experiences in East Timor, and the problems encountered in providing Engineer support to the deployed force. 17 and 21 Construction Squadrons round out 6 ESR, and provide Divisional and Deployed Joint Force Commanders with quick response engineer construction and geomatic (ie, survey) support.

In line with these changes 1 Topo has requested an addition to the current logotype of

the stylised “1” and unit colour patch symbol used by the unit since its inception. A competition was held last year to find an image that best epitomised 1 Topo and provided a unit symbol similar to 17 Construction Squadron’s ‘Bear’, and 21 Construction Squadron’s ‘Rooster’. The winning entry provided by Sapper Tony Curtis is the ‘Powerful Owl’, which represents the wisdom and ability to provide visualisation of the terrain. (*Ed...What will Staff College think?*)

On 1 Jul 04 the unit celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> birthday with a parade to present a number of awards and promotions. Recent promotions include Sergeants Diana Soutar and Ian Baldwin to Warrant Officer Class 2 and Corporal Brenton Bailey to Sergeant. Corporal vacancies are slowly filling with a number of sappers stepping up to meet the challenge, and for a number of them their efforts have been recognised with recent promotion to Lance Corporal and Corporal. Following the parade a morning tea was conducted attended by the Commanding Officer and RSM of 6 ESR. The CO recognised that not only was it the unit birthday, but also the RAE, RASvy and RAAOC Corps birthdays and the first birthday of the formation of 6 ESR.

In each newsletter I would like to look at a particular section or troop within 1 Topo. You will recognise that some things have changed to meet technology, and I am sure you will see that other things haven’t changed.

Development and Training Cell was raised to meet the highly technical nature of our operations and provide continuation to a number of projects to ensure we provide best practice in geospatial support to commanders. Members of the cell include Captain Jason McCarthy, Lieutenant Karen Joyce, WO2 Terry Purdey, WO2 Ian Read, and Sergeant Tony Jackson. All of these members have high levels of technical skills developed through military geomatic training and long term schooling in a geospatial science to post graduate level. WO2 Ian Baldwin and Sapper Wadsworth have recently joined the section, and provide their own skills and knowledge to specific tasking.

Development and Training Cell not only provide continuity to ongoing projects, but also provide project management at unit level as new capabilities are introduced. Project TOPOSS (Topographic Operational Support System), introduced purpose designed pods to provide a deployable and ruggedised work environment for our computer hardware. Though the project has been completed, ongoing work within the cell will ensure that TOPOSS meets future operational requirements. Current projects include the introduction of Rapid Geospatial Support Systems (RGSS), which provide lead geomatic elements with man portable computer equipment. Commanders are able to access geospatial support in a layered response from RGSS for



initial response, through a TOPOSS detachment of two pods to sub-unit and unit deployments.

Another area that the section has been heavily involved in is the introduction of the Airborne Digital Sensor which has replaced the aerial camera. The sensor provides the unit with a digital visualisation capability that generates 3 dimensional imagery in the same time previously taken to capture aerial film. The Australian Army is the only Defence agency to have this equipment, and it is already proving its worth through the acquisition of imagery for both military and civil emergency uses. Development and Training Cell is responsible to ensure that the sensor is utilised to provide maximum benefit to commanders with near real time three dimensional imagery.

With a widening geospatial community the Cell maintains external contacts through both military and civil agencies. Recently WO2 Terry Purdey and Captain Jason McCarthy returned from the US after attending the Consolidated Army Topographic, Terrain Analysis and Multispectral Imagery Conference. This is an annual event centred on tactical level topographic field support and technological developments, and included liaison visits to both Canadian and US military and government agencies. (What a great trip!...Ed)

**NOT ALWAYS A CARTOGRAPHER –  
Ken Shaw's Story**



**Ed:** I always knew that Ken Shaw had an interesting start to his military career and I have pestered him in recent times to commit it to paper – at least this paper. Finally, overcoming computer mishaps and all those things that happen to we writers, Ken has met the challenge and here it is.

**Ken – Rabaul, April 1946  
37/52 Aust Inf Bn AIF**

**Part 1 – Rabaul**

January 1946 – I was aged 18 and one of about 1500 infantry and support troops on the troopship *Duntroon* as it sailed into Simpson Harbour, Rabaul, New Britain. Our task was to supervise and control some 12,000 Japanese soldiers held in the area who had surrendered when Japan capitulated in September 1945. They

would be gradually repatriated to their homeland as Japanese ships became available.



**Jap Generals in Rabaul War Crimes compound awaiting trials, Mar 46**

The War Crimes Commission was also located in the area and tried many infamous Japanese generals including the one responsible for the rape of Nanking in China.



**The Mother Volcano, Rabalankair Crater, South Daughter, and Matupi Crater, Apr 46.**

We dropped anchor well out from the shore not far from two rocky protuberances which we found were called The Beehives. The minefield the Japanese had sown in the harbour was yet to be cleared by the RAN. We disembarked in full equipment by means of cargo nets slung over the sides of the ship into waiting landing barges which ferried us to shore through a cleared lane through the minefield marked by buoys. We were to hear the muffled explosions of detonating mines for many weeks to come as the RAN minesweepers plied back and forth clearing the harbour.



**The beachhead, Mar 46**

As we approached the shore, the utter devastation wrought by the bombing by the RAAF

and USAF soon became apparent – the entire shoreline was a twisted mass of sunken and destroyed shipping of every description for as far as we could see except for one small area that had been cleared to form a beach-head for the unloading of stores and troops. There were even aircraft wrecks in the shallows, one in particular caught my eye, a huge Japanese *Mavis* flying boat, its back broken and partly destroyed by fire.

We were to see even more extensive damage when we explored the area later.

Initially, we were under canvas crammed into the 22nd Aust Inf Bn (AIF) area.



**5 platoon tentlines, 26Bn, Talili Bay, Jun 46.**

This unit contained the New Guinea General Details Depot responsible for postings /transfers etc. Throughout the week the fresh troops were gradually posted out to the various units already in place around the Rabaul area. I was posted to the 37/52nd Aust Inf Bn (AIF) as an infantry signaller where I got on-the-job training! Our battalion was located in Kurabambangul Plantation some kilometres out of Rabaul. Our signals platoon was employed in establishing telephone lines throughout the area and to provide communication to some of the huge landing barges that came into our beach-head. We also manned switch boards and fiddled with cumbersome field radios which rarely worked due to the wet and humidity. Switchboard duty was much sought after. You did four days straight in 24 hour shifts then had 3 days off. Alternative to that was maintaining the signals equipment and phone lines or being in charge of a Japanese work party.

As this was a roster system, we all had our share. I seemed to get the same work party every time and had a Japanese army captain who spoke perfect English as my interpreter. He was a woolbuyer before the war and spent a lot of time attending wool auctions in Australia. He liked to talk about Young and Jackson's pub in Melbourne and the famous painting of Chloe over the bar, Flinders Street Station, Circular Quay and Sydney Harbour and so on. The work parties cleared wreckages, built piers and jetties and dug wells along the shoreline, a treacherous task which resulted in many cave-ins and injuries. The wells

were our only source of water as far as I know. All water was treated with chlorine tablets; it always tasted foul. All Japanese had to salute all Australians, no matter what rank, as our POW's had to salute them during the war.



**Sentry at HQ of the Chinese unit, Talili Bay, Jun 46 wearing Aust. jungle greens and armed with Jap rifle, bayonet and leather equipment.**

We obtained a Japanese generator from the Q store and installed lighting

throughout HQ Coy and the tentlines, one globe to a tent, a great improvement on the kerosine pressure lamps we were using! There was one drawback; there was no way to turn off an individual light until 'lights out' as removal of a globe would cut the current flow and cause power surge blowing the other globes still alight.

Our rest days were filled with swimming, sailing, exploring and sleeping. We hitched rides now and then. We visited Rabaul which was just flattened ruins with the jungle already reclaiming it. Another time, we climbed Matupi Crater, took some photos over the edge of the crater and took some more of the Mother volcano and the South Daughter. We went out to the airfield and found literally hundreds of shattered aircraft bulldozed off the runways; not a single Japanese aircraft remained whole. We went out to the Vulcan volcano and explored the tunnels of Tunnel Hill. We found one that had some fine wires strung around it so we called in the Engineers. Sure enough, it was booby trapped and they destroyed it! No more tunnel exploring for us!

Swimming was hazardous, too. We discovered that coral snakes often inhabited the shipping wrecks we swam around and dived from. It didn't stop us, just caused one helluva scatter when ever one was sighted. Sea urchins sometime rolled in with the tide stabbing the feet of unwary swimmers with their oversize spikes. I was a casualty just once; the feet become extremely painful and the poison works its way up your legs and lodges in the glands in the groin causing them to swell painfully, lasting usually a week.

Our battalion acquired a clumsy wooden work boat which we converted to sails. We would sail around Simpson Harbour, sometimes visiting newly arrived shipping. Once we got stuck by our mast under the curved stern of a Brit ship. They eventually pushed us off after dropping some cold beers down to us. This was a real treat; we got

two bottles of hot beer issued to us each week with two ounces of tobacco or sixty cigarettes. Non-drinkers and non-smokers used to sell off their rations at exorbitant prices.

The battalion mounted roving guards each night. One night I was on guard duty prowling past the mess hut when there was an unearthly scream! I switched on my torch and saw a huge python draped across two mess tables about to grab a large rat paralysed with fear! I dropped the torch, cocked my rifle then groped around until I found the torch again. I turned it on only to find both snake and rat were gone!

New Britain, and particularly Rabaul, is on a fault-line and the area was subject to numerous earth tremors. We got used to these but they were particularly irksome when on switchboard duty. We operated a Japanese 100 line switchboard which dropped shutters as calls came in. Tremors caused these shutters to fall all over the board causing alarms to buzz continually. All you could do was to keep pushing the shutters back up saying "switch, sir" ( just in case an officer was actually calling on a line!) and trying to hold the switchboard upright whilst the earth tremor was bouncing it around! The worst one I remember wrecked our tent lines, mess huts, latrines and caused many tunnels around Tunnel Hill to collapse. We rushed out into the open on all fours unable to stand and stared at Matupi crater which just continued smoking serenely away; thank goodness! Simpson Harbour all but emptied exposing mud flats and more wrecks. The tide came in some 3 hours later returning the shoreline to normal!

The 37/52nd Bn was recalled to Australia for demobilisation; I was posted to the 29/46th Aust Inf Bn (AIF) signals platoon where my trusty old .303 rifle was handed in and I was issued with an Owen gun. I fired a few hundred rounds on our crude weapons range nearby to refamiliarise myself with the weapon.

We took 'atebrin' tablets as malarial suppressors and slept under mosquito nets. I was awakened by a blood curdling scream followed by a burst of Owen gun fire. Everyone grabbed their weapons and rushed towards the firing. Seems a rat had got under a mosquito net into some bloke's bed. He rolled over on it and it bit him! His stretcher, bedding and net were a mess - so was the rat!

Signal duties in the 29/46th were the same as my last battalion, so we still had a lot of leisure time. Entertainment came weekly with a film screening at our open air theatre nearby. We'd rarely miss a screening although often sitting out a movie in torrential rain. We had visits by two army concert parties which put on live artist shows; they were great. One night a massive explosion followed by many more lesser ones, disrupted our movie. Flames, exploding shells and tracer ammunition flew high into the air lighting the whole of the Simpson Harbour area even though it

was happening the other side of Tunnel Hill. A former Japanese ammunition dump had caught on fire! Apparently a fire break was being made around it and it got out of hand. Didn't hear of any casualties although exploding ammunition continued throughout the night.

After each show or screening, the area would suddenly burst into life with every gambling game imaginable- black jack, poker, racy acey, queens, two up and so on. Lighting came from pressure lamps making the area bright as day. The games were run by individual soldiers for their own profit (or loss!). It was amazing how much money changed hands!

In January 1946, the Rabaul Army Racing Club was formed using former Japanese mounts. April saw the final meeting on the old Rabaul racecourse. Although a 'dry' day, much fun was had by all. Each race was 'called' over a PA system; the jockeys wore coloured vests and caps; each horse was named and numbered; there were bookies and we even had programs printed by our own army newspaper, *Guinea Gold*. The band of the Papua New Guinea Infantry Battalion provide a selection of musical items. This battalion was the forerunner of the Pacific Islands Regiment.

A new hygiene corporal arrived in our battalion from Morotai. Amongst other things, he and his Japanese work party were responsible for our two latrines. These were the deep trench type which were burnt off on alternate weeks. Wood was tossed into the trenches, range fuel poured over the contents, ignited and left to burn. This particular day, we were startled by a horrific explosion. We all rushed towards the sound and found the corporal and his party staggering around a gaping crater which had been our No.1 latrine. They had blackened faces, singed hair, tattered clothing and covered in unmentionable matter. "She's right, mates" mumbled the corporal. "She's apples!" It seems he used high octane fuel instead of range fuel for the burn off!

It was soon time for the 29/46th battalion to return to the mainland but not before the last of our Japanese prisoners was repatriated. They were crammed into a very rusted and battered Japanese aircraft carrier amidst much waving and cheering (from them).

My next posting was to the 26th Aust Inf Bn (AIF), this time as a rifleman, actually an Owen gunner, as the signals platoon was full strength. This unit was located over the other side of Tunnel Hill on the shores of Talili Bay. With no prisoners to supervise or carry out the necessary tasks to keep an army running efficiently, it was back to cookhouse and general duties! We actually had battalion parades! I found out that a Chinese unit was situated just down the track from us. They were armed with Japanese weapons and equipment. Apparently they were Chinese soldiers captured early in the war and shipped to Rabaul to prepare defences and dig tunnels. Soon they

too were shipped out back to China. We had the job of sweeping through the area and burning everything in sight. It was not to include a mountain of brand new tyres but, of course, some idiot just had to set them on fire!

On my last battalion parade, I collapsed and awoke in 118 Army General Hospital suspected of contracting deadly cerebral malaria. During a week of tests and lying in bed with clean, white sheets with nurses fussing around, I had my 19th birthday. I was diagnosed as having dengue fever but now fit enough to return to my unit. Parades had ceased and we started clearing the area and packing gear and equipment.



**The last day. Troops embarking on the assault landing ship HMAS Kanimbla, Sunday 7am 30 Jun 46.**

On the 30 June 1946, we were trucked back over Tunnel Hill to the restored Burns-Philp Wharf where we embarked on the landing assault ship *Kanimbla* bound for Sydney. So ended the Rabaul saga!

## Part 2 – Back in Aussie



August 1946 - I had just finished 18 days leave on my return from New Britain. Reporting back to the General Duties Depot, Royal Park, Melbourne, I found I was posted to 3 Aust Army Disposals Depot, Fisherman's Bend where I would spend my remaining army service until my discharge points came up.

**Ken – at home in Bendigo - 1947**

My employment consisted mostly of unloading surplus stores and equipment as it arrived on trucks and loading contractor's vehicles with any items they had purchased.

Apart from odd occasions, my weekends were free and, as train travel was still free to

servicemen in uniform, I would get away from the depot on a Friday early enough to catch the 5pm train for Bendigo at Spencer Street Station. Bendigo was my hometown from where I had enlisted. My parents also resided there as did most of my friends. I would return by train on Monday morning arriving back at the depot by 9am, which was the normal start work time.

I soon tired of the mundane duties and the hassle of train travel so I investigated the possibility of getting posted closer home. In the months following the cessation of hostilities, a scheme was introduced whereby soldiers awaiting their discharge points to come up, could apply for transfer to any unit near their home town; such applications were almost always approved. So I decided to apply for a transfer to AHQ Cartographic Company, a survey unit located in Bendigo at *Fortuna*, a pre-war millionaire's estate. One weekend, I presented myself in uniform to the guard at the gates of *Fortuna* and asked to see the duty officer. I was directed to the main building where I was met by Captain Harry Raisbeck. After I had given him my smartest salute, he led me down the stairs to the officers mess, invited me in and commenced interviewing me. Well!! Pte Shaw, late of the infantry, had never been in such a hallowed place before and started to wonder what sort of a unit was this where private soldiers were invited into the officers mess! Anyway, all went well, particularly as I had 18 months training as an architectural draughtsman at night school at the then Bendigo School of Mines prior to enlisting. AHQ Cartographic Company claimed me and in August 1946, I was transferred, becoming a Sapper and began on job training as a cartographic draughtsman. My discharge points came up shortly afterwards but, by then, I found I liked the unit, the worthwhile work of producing maps and the many friends I had made, so decided to remain in the army in Survey. In December 1947,



I joined the Regular Army and was reposted to the AHQ Cartographic Company.  
**Ken – at home in Gosford – 2002**

**And that, is how I came to join the Survey Corps!**

# PHOTO GALLERY

**AUGUST 2004**



Caloundra Memorial Walkway now contains the individual plaques set in the footpath of hundreds of veterans who have passed away. Some units also are memorialised and RA Survey has been allocated this site to the right of the existing unit plaques shown in the photograph.

## **PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITES**

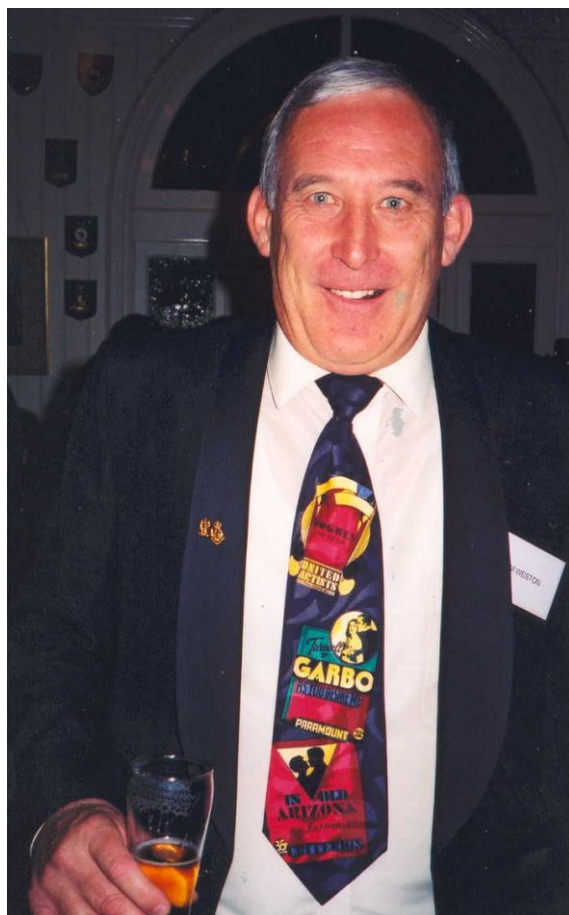


Rocky Creek War Memorial Park north of Atherton: To commemorate the Survey Corps units that passed through the Atherton Tableland from 1943 to 1945. Rocky Creek was the site of the largest field hospital in the Southern Hemisphere.

# COLONEL ALEX LAING MEMORIAL DINNER - 1st JULY 2004



Sally Cattell and Barbara Bates Brownsword at pre-dinner drinks



Kym Weston - look at that tie! Not a Corps one either



Faye Weston and Ailsa Moorhead at pre-dinner drinks



Loretta and Tony Gee



Dell Osterhage and Brian Partridge at pre-dinner drinks



Brian Cosgrove and Jackie Doyle



L to R - Alex Cairney, Ed Anderson, Brian Partridge, Loretta Gee, Tony Gee, Beth Small



L to R - Brian Cosgrove, Jackie Doyle, Barry Lutwyche, Veronica Brooke, Col Moorhead



Peter Bates-Brownsword addresses the gathering and Tony Gee ??



Ed Anderson proposes the toast to the Corps Association - with a tale or two



John and Sally Cattell, Tony Harder, Kym Weston (Bob Skitch missing - taking the photo)