

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch



BULLETIN

PO Box 5784 Stafford Heights 4053
Website: www.rasurvey.org

CHRISTMAS EDITION – No 33

DECEMBER 2007



Peace to the World

*MAY THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON BRING
YOU HAPPINESS AND JOY AND MAY
YOUR NEW YEAR BE ALL YOU WOULD
WISH*



KILCOY – 11 NOVEMBER
- 2007

Bob Skitch, Ross
Smithwick, Michael
Bryce, Jock Kay,
Stuart Parkinson, Artie
McClure, Hank Opdem,
Rock Thiselton, Barry
Lutwyche, Neville
Fisher, Kym Weston,
Peter Bates-
Brownsword, Jim Gill,
Colin Moorhead, Alex
Cairney, Percy Long.

The Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (Queensland) acknowledges the generous sponsorship and support of Pioneer Surveys Pty Ltd

CALENDAR FOR 2008

16 Mar (Sun)	Bribie Island Barbecue at Tony and Loretta Gee's home.
25 Apr (Fri)	Anzac Day – Dawn Service; city march; Gaythorne RSL
4 Jul (Fri)	Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner at United Service Club
6 Sep (Sat)	Reunion Lunch and AGM at the Gaythorne RSL
October	Mapmaker's Dinner
November	Derek Chambers Award

First function of the year – Gourmet Barbecue at the Bribie Island home of Tony and Loretta Gee – 50 Bibimulya Street, Bellara. 12.00 midday. BYO refreshments. Bring a salad or deserts. RSVP Secretary Barry. Liaise directly with Loretta on salads and deserts (Ph 3408 8467)

COMMITTEE

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Secretary	Barry Lutwyche (3264 2191)	email barrylutwyche@hotmail.com
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& web site manager	(mob 0427 377 226)	
North Qld representative	Dennis Gregor (Ph mob 0409 648 026)	email psurvey@bigpond.com
1 TOPO SVY SQN		
Squadron OC	Major David Sapparth	
Squadron SSM	WO1 Peter Coles (Ph 3332 7564)	

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

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

I continue to canvass support for this worthwhile project. Our collective memory can fill in many gaps but it is fading with the passing of years. It is ten years since the disbandment of the Corps we as individuals served, the Corps that gave such outstanding service to our nation for eighty-one years. We need to record what each of the units did over the fifty years following the end of WW2. It really is a simple exercise. I have had responses from Clem Sargent, Noel Sproles, John Bullen, Charlie Watson, Alex Cairney, Percy Long, Richard Jackson-Hope, Ted Laker, Ross McMillan, Barry Lutwyche, Kym Weston, Graeme Baker, Arthur Hensen, Peter Jensen and Roger Rees in Defence (DIGO) The major gap area is after 1980. The following is the preferred format but I am just as happy to receive your input listed down the page – pen and ink is OK. Please give this matter some thought. Every bit helpsAlternatively, you can enter your data on our website – www.rasurvey.org

YR	UNIT	OPERATION PROJECT	DURATION	LOCATION	NATURE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN	PERSONS TAKING PART	OTHER INFORMATION
19 56	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 Berkeley, Bob Skitch.	Arrived May at Macrossan. Sect had not returned to Brisbane since sometime in 1955. Xmas in the field.....

NOTICES

VIETNAM – A TECHNICAL TOUR by Bob McMillan-Kay.

Copies can be obtained from Bob McMillan-Kay at a cost of \$36.00 including postage. We commend this highly successful book of Bob's Vietnam experience. Bob's address is 14 March Lane, Maryborough, Qld, 4650.

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 which includes cost of a padded postal bag.

ASSOCIATION BADGE

Association badges are still available from the Ex-Fortuna Survey Association. Place your orders with **Barry Lutwyche** and we will try to satisfy them.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS

PLAQUE: The Ex-Fortuna Association has purchased some of the original RA Svy plaques. These are available from Ex-Fortuna Secretary Tracey Phillips, 03 5442 0263; 03 5449 6330 (AH); email phipsys@bigpond.com. Price on application.

ASSOCIATION TIE or SCARF

Cost is \$20.00 and \$7.00 postage for each. We suggest you place your order directly with the Ex Fortuna Association, Tracey Phillips, email phipsys@bigpond.com or phone Barry Lutwyche.

RA SURVEY ASSOCIATION PLAQUE

Magna Carto advises that the plaque has been finished and is ready for distribution. The final design incorporates the three badges overlapping, the theodolite badge of pre-WW2, the wartime colour patch and the Post WW2 RA Svy badge. The cost of the plaque is \$50.00 plus postage. Place orders with our Secretary, Barry Lutwyche.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2006 – 2007

'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). Subscription is waived for veterans 75 and over who have been standing paid-up members of our Association. **Pay-time was at the AGM 1 Sept 07 – but it is not too late now!**

LAST FRIDAYS

Last Fridays continue at the Gaythorne RSL with increasing patronage. Pop along and have a beer or a softie with your mates.

ARMY COMBAT BADGE

I refer to the statement on page 3 of our August Bulletin concerning our possible eligibility for the issue of the badge to Survey Vietnam Veterans. I must confess that what with seven weeks in South Africa, my son's wedding and a number of commitments since arriving home on the 3rd November I have not been able to pursue the matter with the appropriate authorities. I hope to give it my attention early in 2008.....Bob Skitch

ACT STREET NAMING – Peter Jensen

You may know that street names in the ACT are named after notable Australians, who may or may not have a direct link to the ACT. Some of you may also know that there have been occasions when the Directorate of Survey - Army (DSVY-A) and some of the Corps historians were involved in the early stages of identifying military surveyors and mappers who might be included in a submission for recognition by the ACT Place Names Committee (PNC). To the best of my knowledge the latest work done was in 1995/96 when the ACT did offer to consider names of military surveyors and mappers for street names in the suburb of Taylor. (Note that normal ACTPNC protocol is that only those deceased for at least 12 months are recognised in this way.) The main reason that a proposal was not pursued at that time was simply that with the Army restructure, including the RASvy/RAE integration, the staff effort needed to complete the proposal was not available. Clem Sargent and John Hillier did provide very valuable input at that time.

I have always regretted that we couldn't follow through with the proposal of 1995/96 and that individuals who warrant recognition have been denied such an honour. I recently wrote to the chair of the place names committee seeking advice as to whether a revived submission would be considered favourably by the committee. The committee responded positively. Information about proposed development in the Molonglo valley downstream from Schrivener Dam and before the confluence with the Murrumbidgee River is at http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/topics/programs_projects/planning_studies/molongolo_planning_study In relation to timings I did mention the Corps centenary in 2015 in

my letter. More info on the ACT place name process is at http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools_resources/maps_land_survey/place_names/place_name_processes . and http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/actlic/places/search/originsSearch_new.htm

What now, and the purpose of this email. I believe that such a submission should have national input from all RASvy Associations with the blessing of Army, probably through Head of Corps Royal Australian Engineers. The work behind the submission would need to be coordinated for the various phases such as: scope and selection criteria, research of names against the criteria, research of biographical information required by ACTPNC. Most of this by volunteers, perhaps through a working party of Association members, with Army endorsement for some phases, perhaps scope and selection criteria, list of names. I am now asking for your comments, suggestions and advice on this proposal including whether your Association would endorse the project and indeed if there would be any volunteers for a working party if such was to proceed.

I look forward to your replies.....**Peter Jensen**

Ed: The Association Committee has responded to Peter offering support. We have requested a listing of the names proposed in the original submission.

PLUTONIUM CLEAN UP AT MARALINGA

During February/March 1979, the late Maj (then) George Gruszka led a group from 4 Field Survey Squadron, including several attached support personnel, on Operation Desert Walk to Maralinga to upgrade mapping in the area. The QMS at the time was WO2 Bob Broadbent, who assisted in the initial insertion of the group and subsequently organised weekly re-supply runs from Keswick to the operation area, generally by road transport except for one re-supply run by light aircraft, during a rainy spell. Also during that period, the British Government was involved with Australian authorities in collecting soil contaminated with plutonium, from a previous unsatisfactory bomb test.

Bob noticed when on the airstrip at Maralinga, that three RAF C130 aircraft were parked there being loaded by RAE personnel, with quantities of the contaminated soil for return to who knows where and disposal later. Bob later assisted in the withdrawal of the group back to Keswick, and claims that neither he nor any

other member of the group were cautioned on the dangers of being exposed to plutonium radiation, especially with field equipment being returned directly to the Q Store. Protective clothing was not issued for use, and members were not advised to shower and change clothing before returning home.

Bob's frequent but short trips to Maralinga meant that he returned all his soiled field clothing to his wife Eileen, for washing at home on each occasion. In July 1980, Eileen was diagnosed with aggressive leukemia and died 14 days later from the condition, so Bob is certain that there is a direct link between his possible exposure and her death. As a matter of interest, George Gruszka died in hospital many years later, while being treated for leukemia.

Bob is now pursuing the matter at a federal level, not only for his sake but also for anyone who served at Maralinga during the period. History records held show that D. Maxwell, John Scharber, Ray Skuse, Barry Richardson, Butch Winterflood, Peter Dunn, Rob Langley, Harry Mai, Bob Quinlivan, Danny Smans, Ken Talbot-Smith, Peter Elverd, John Phillips, Mark Lander and Rob Warsing were on the operation with Bob. Bob's address is H.R.Broadbent, 22/60 Rocky Street, Maryborough, Qld 4650.

Ed: I believe the Corps had members at Maralinga during the atomic tests – late '50s, early '60s

KILCOY – Dedication of 5th Field Survey Company Commemorative Plaque

The weather on the 11th November 2007 looked less than promising as a number of our Association members set out from Brisbane and other nearby locations for Kilcoy for the dedication of a plaque honoring the members of the 1st Field Survey Company (later redesignated the 5th). As a militia unit they trained there in 1940 and on this same day in 1940, the 11th November, marched with bayonets fixed from their showground location and down the main street of Kilcoy. The squally weather turned into bright sunshine and the proceedings at the cenotaph went very smoothly. It was of course Remembrance Day when the tragedy of WW1 finally came to an

end with the signing of the Armistice at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month 1918.

At 10.45 the Remembrance service was commenced by the RSL President outlining the participation of the Australian forces in that war to end all wars and the tragic loss of life incurred. Pastor Doug Baigrie led the prayers, the Last Post was played by a young lady and the president of the RSL called for the two minute's silence followed by the Reveille and the Ode then wreath laying at the very fine cenotaph commenced. Alex Cairney placed a traditional wreath on behalf of our Association. A piper in traditional dress played a lament during the wreath laying. The catafalque guard on the cenotaph provided by the soldiers of the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron was dismissed. The remembrance service concluded at 11.15 and our Survey Dedication service commenced.

Our plaque had been mounted on a rough hewn block of local granite atop a concrete plinth to one side of the cenotaph and looked quite grand. An Australian flag cleverly rigged by Alex Cairney obscured it from view until the moment of unveiling. Our Survey service commenced with Percy Long giving a reflection on the circumstances that brought the militia unit, the Northern Command Field Survey Unit, to train at Kilcoy in September 1940 so cementing a relationship with that city to this day, a relationship that is now continued by the Enoggera based 1st Topographical Survey Squadron RAE. Following this our plaque was unveiled by Percy Long and Artie McClure and Pastor Baigrie gave a very fitting prayer of dedication.

The service over and numerous photographs taken by all those with cameras and the official photographer from the Kilcoy Times we all repaired to the RSL for refreshment and fellowship and a barbecue lunch provided by the RSL ladies' auxiliary.

Our Association was honoured to have present at the dedication ceremony Mr Michael Bryce, son of Tom Bryce (deceased) member of the 5th Field Survey Company. Michael Bryce is the husband of Ms Quentin Bryce, Governor of

Queensland. It was also our pleasure to have our honorary member Mr Bill Kitson who as curator of the Queensland Museum of Mapping and Surveying has taken a great interest in the history of Queensland's own, the 5th Field Survey Company AIF.

Dedication address by Pastor Baigrie

This stone which we dedicate here today is a memorial to the continuing relationship between the past Royal Australian Survey Corps, its present Associations and the community of Kilcoy our Nation and our God, a tradition continued by the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron RAE, members of which are present here today.

This memorial plaque is a covenant serving to remind the personnel of the Royal Australian Survey Corps Association of their commitment to serving God and the Nation. It serves as a poignant reminder of, not only those who now serve but also those who are departed. The Kilcoy community is greatly honoured and proud to have had such an intimate part in the history of the Royal Australian Survey Corps, especially since the original survey unit which became the 5th Field Survey Company AIF was based in the Kilcoy and the Sheepstation Creek districts during World War Two.

It is indeed a great honour for our Kilcoy community and district to host such an important event. This memorial therefore serves also as a reminder to our Kilcoy community, our nation and visitors alike that we covenant to love and support the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron with prayer that they may fulfill their calling in continuing to keep our great nation of Australia secure and peaceful.

*To this end, in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we dedicate this memorial to the glory of God and in deep gratitude we all remember those who have paid the full price with their lives, injuries or illnesses. We also remember with thankfulness and encouragement all those members of the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron RAE who continue to serve our nation. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit...**Amen.***

The Corps Prayer follows....

The Prayer of the Royal Australian Survey Corps
Almighty God, in Your wisdom You have established order in all creation, and through Your laws provided a path for us to follow on the chart of life.

We, the members of the Royal Australian Survey Corps (Association), seek Your help to see Your purpose in our lives, and be prepared to follow Your path.

Grant us Your guidance and direct our activities, so that we may assist in the security and development of our country in peace and war through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Roll Call

Michael Bryce
Peter and Barbara Bates Brownsword
Alex Cairney
Barry Lutwyche
Ross Smithwick
Percy and Dell Long
Artie McClure and Anne Innes
Stuart and Harley Parkinson
Nev and Narda Fisher
Bill Kitson
Bob and Wendy Skitch
Hank Opdem
Kym and Faye Weston
Jim and Marie Ann Gill
Ian Hutchings
Jock Kay
Col Moorhead
Rock and Mary-Ann Thiselton

From the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron

Catafalque Party

Cpl Casey Bourke (Commander)
Spr Ryan Flanders
Spr Renee Gaudion
Spr Tony Smith
Spr Adam Eagle

Capt Stephen Clark
Lt Christopher Johns
Lt Liam Townley-Jones
WO2 Peter Coles (SSM)
WO2 Joshua Andrews
Sgt Terry Malone
Sgt Penny Knott

ADDRESS by Percy Long

It is an honour to be asked to present this brief reflection on the connection of the Royal Australian Survey Corps with Kilcoy which commenced in September 1940.

At the outbreak of World War 2 in September 1939 mapping in Australia was very limited. Although the Australian Survey Corps had been raised in 1915 to carry out mapping in Australia and under the banner of the Royal Australian Engineers serving in France and the Middle East, the task of mapping Australia was too huge for so few. During the years between the wars only limited mapping could be undertaken using plane table aided by aerial photography.

In early 1940 militia survey units were raised in each of the Australian States to become Companies as they achieved full strength. A Queensland unit initially under the command of Captain Sam Ward who had seen service during World War 1 was raised in January 1940. It consisted of surveyors and draughtsmen enlisted from various departments of the Queensland Public Service; Lands, Main Roads, Forestry and the Brisbane City Council. As a part time militia unit it undertook initial training at the Kelvin Grove Drill Hall and on being called to full time duty it moved to Kilcoy, setting up camp on the showground in September 1940 to undertake three months training in military skills and surveying. On the 11th November 1940, sixty seven years ago to this day the unit of 70 personnel marched with bayonets fixed through the main street of Kilcoy, an event recorded in the Kilcoy newspaper. In January 1941, now based at the Hamilton old town hall, the militia unit was taken onto the order of battle of the Australian Army as the 1st Field Survey Company. The camp at Kilcoy remained in use for the training of survey recruits in military and mapping skills.

Throughout 1941 the 1st Field Survey Company carried out mapping in south eastern Queensland. Following Japan's entry into the war in December 1941 the Company moved further north to locations along the Queensland coast undertaking mapping and associated

surveying. In October 1942, based then at Townsville and co-located with the 2/1st Topographical Survey Company, recently returned from the Middle East it was re-designated the 5th Field Survey Company, AIF. Mapping continued on Cape York Peninsula and sections of the Company were deployed to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea and then in 1945 to Morotai, Labuan and Balikpapan.

Following cessation of hostilities in August 1945, with general demobilization taking place 5 Company deployed to Sydney and in a peacetime role sections undertook early exploratory surveys for the Snowy River Project and to Spencers Gulf in South Australia.

In post war years through the 1950s and 1960s the now Royal Australian Survey Corps carried out extensive mapping through northern and central Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the South West Pacific. In 1966 a Troop was deployed to Vietnam in support of the Australian Task Force where it remained until the withdrawal of the Task Force in 1971.

In 1996 the Royal Australian Survey Corps was disbanded, however, in its place the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron was raised as a unit of the Royal Australian Engineers and its presence here today reinforces the continuing Survey link with Kilcoy.

End Note

It had long been a long held plan of the Association to install and leave in appropriate places permanent memorials to the Royal Australian Survey Corps, its units and members. To this end plaques and similar memorials have been placed and dedicated in the Hamilton Old Town Hall where wartime units of the Corps were based from 1940 to 1944; on the Caloundra Memorial Walkway, at the Rocky Creek Memorial Park on the Atherton Tableland and now at Kilcoy. Some are directed to specific units because they have a particular association with the location and others to the Corps over its 81 years of serving the nation in war and peace. The organization involved in each installation is considerable, involving correspondence, site visits, liaison with authorities, plaque design, and liaison with the foundry. For the Kilcoy plaque Barry Lutwyche and Alex Cairney made repeated visits to Kilcoy, liaising with both the Kilcoy council and the RSL with our President Peter Bates-Brownsword overseeing the operation. Frequent meetings took

place, some formal and others informal. In this Bulletin we record a vote of thanks to those who made it happen.

END OF YEAR FUNCTIONS

to be reported upon in the April 2008 issue of our Bulletin – they failed to make the deadline for this issue – are:

Military Mapmaker's Dinner – Sat 17 Nov.

Jazz picnic at Shady Glen – Sun 3 Dec.

Derek Chambers Award – Fri 7 Dec.

VALE

Ted Laker – Eulogy by Damien Laker

Ted died in Manly Hospital on Saturday 18th August 2007, after a decade of battling congestive cardiac failure. His funeral took place at 10:30AM on Thursday 23rd August, at St. John's Catholic Church in Narrabeena.

Ted's son Damien described some of the things that made Ted unique in a brief eulogy.

Dad was born on 5th November 1921. He grew up in Croydon Park, which was almost a rural area during those days. He left school aged 15, and proceeded to work in the grocery business. During the Great Depression, things were tough. Dad supplemented his income by selling chickens to a delicatessen in the city.

Dad joined the Army on 20th November 1941. Of course, in those days, a Japanese invasion was entirely foreseeable. As luck would have it, he was assigned to the 2 Field Survey Company. This kind of work seemed to suit him, because he stuck with it for the rest of his working life.

Mum and Dad met at a dance during the war while Dad was on leave. He asked to visit her at her family home in Long Street, South Strathfield. He eventually married Mum during his next period of war leave and they ended up living in that same house, at 60 Long St. South Strathfield, until 1996. During the war, Dad's overseas service started on 15th December 1943. He was involved in making maps of New Guinea, Bougainville, and the British Solomons. Based on the stories he's told me, this was not a pleasure cruise.

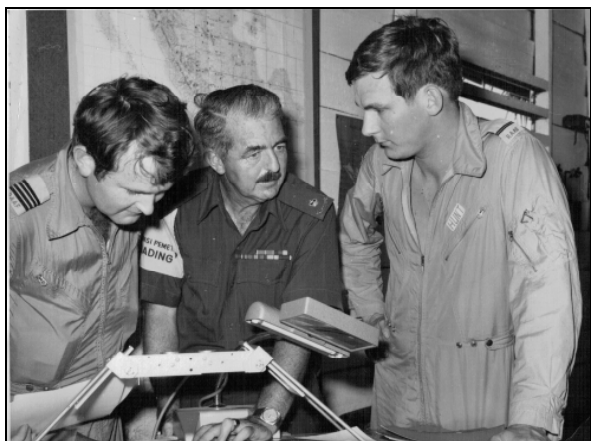
After returning from the war, Dad surprised all his mates by saying that he wanted to stay in the army. After his precarious existence working in a grocer's shop, a regular pay-cheque seemed like a great idea. He ended up spending a total of 35 years in the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Having started

at entry level, he had achieved the rank of Major by the time of his retirement in 1976.

The army was a valuable resource in planning the Snowy Mountains dams. During the period 1946 to 1948, Dad covered a lot of territory in the Snowy Mountains. He had some wonderful stories about wide-ranging expeditions conducted on horseback. During the late fifties and early sixties, Dad was involved in an extensive control mapping project in Arnhem Land. For this work he was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

During 1968-70, the family went to Barton Stacey in the south of England, while Dad served with the Royal Engineers. As children, we were oblivious to the details of what Dad did at work. He did tell me later that he surveyed the first landing field used by a prototype of the Concorde – the new supersonic airliner required a very flat runway. Dad did some work in Libya and Northern Ireland.

On returning to Australia in 1970, Dad was appointed OC of 2 Field Survey Squadron. Notable activities during this period were two six-month trips to Indonesia: Operation Gading One (1971) and Gading Two (1972). They mapped the entire island of Sumatra. Dad had a number of aircraft and helicopters, along with about 120 men, under his command. He did lots of liaison with the Indonesian armed forces, and was able to indulge his taste for spicy food at some of the joint celebrations to which he was invited.



Ted briefing RAAF officers on Gading 2

Over the years, Dad earned ten military medals in all. During the funeral service, they were displayed on his coffin. They have now been entrusted to my son Isaac. The MBE, of course, takes pride of place. I can remember when we were kids during Dad's military posting to England. Mum and Dad went to Buckingham Palace for a Garden Party with the Queen. Another of Dad's medals is for Long Service and Good Conduct. When asked to explain

what that meant, he simply said "not getting caught".

Dad liked rules and regulations. He liked it when people followed orders; particularly when he was the one giving the orders. But, a couple of times Dad told me stories showing that he had a particularly Australian disregard for superiors who gave orders he considered unreasonable.

An example was when Dad was captaining a cricket team on the oval at Victoria Barracks. Dad's team was bowling, and they only needed a couple of quick wickets to win the game. There was some light drizzle. Some General, who obviously didn't appreciate the importance of cricket, sent a messenger out onto the field with instructions that play should cease immediately, to avoid damage to the playing surface. Dad's response to the messenger was that he would be coming off the oval very soon, after the game had been won.

To those of us in younger generations, who hadn't experienced the Great Depression, the Second World War, and decades of military service, some of Dad's attitudes were hard to understand. We are all very proud of his military service, and we will treasure his medals as a reminder of him."

Ted's ashes have been interred at Rookwood cemetery, with the remains of his beloved wife, Heather.

Eric and Cedric Clutterbuck

Brian Mead emailed this sad news.....

'It is my sad duty to inform everyone that both Cedric and Eric Clutterbuck have passed away in the early hours of this morning.

Eric Clutterbuck - aged 82 died at 12.30 am Sat 3 Nov 07.

Cedric Clutterbuck - aged 87 died at 3.40 am Sat 3 Nov 07.

Both gentlemen were very proud of their period of Service with RA Svy Corps. Cedric (WW2) and Eric (Vietnam).

"Young" brother Noel is quite devastated at this time and our thoughts are with him and all the Clutterbuck families and relatives.

Brian Murray

Charlie Watson (Canberra Association) emails.....It is with deep regret that I advise of the passing on 20 Nov 2007 of Brian Murray.

VX 116124 Cpl Brian Murray, New Guinea Survey Section was born in Hobart on 27 Dec 1922. Brian was educated at Kyneton Vic. Prior to enlistment he was a public servant working at AHQ (in

Melbourne in those days). I gather that he was in the CMF before enlisting in the AIF. Brian was one of a group of 33 volunteers who transferred to the 8th/NG Svy Sect from 3 Fd Svy Coy stationed at Colac, Vic in May/June 1942. Brian served in the Wau area from Mar – Oct 1943 as part of Kanga Force. The enemy was very active in this area. He also served in the Kokoda campaign. Mount Murray near Uberi is named after him. After PNG service Brian transferred to the RAAF (air crew). After the war Brian gained a Master of Commerce from Melbourne University and served in a number of senior immigration appointments in Australia, UK and Scandinavia. Brian worked tirelessly for the NG Survey Association and for the establishment of a 'Carriers Memorial' at the Canberra Services Club, Manuka "in tribute to the carriers who served with us and the people of PNG who gave us their support.

John Bullen has emailed an extra comment on Brian Murray.....Those outside the ACT may not be aware of the full extent of Brian's Anzac Day involvement several years ago.

Due to failing health, the New Guinea Survey Section was having increasing difficulty in mustering a contingent to march in Canberra on Anzac Day. Assistance was sought from, and most willingly provided by, Radford College, a high school in Canberra.

At first Radford College only carried the NG Svy Sec banner, but when age and poor health took its toll to the extent that no members of the NG Svy Sec were fit enough to march, Radford College took over fully.

Each year, for many years now, Radford College provides a contingent of four – always the male and female School Captains and Vice-Captains. Each Anzac Day this impressive quartet does its usual fine job on behalf of the NG Svy Sec. It has become a regular occasion of great pride for Radford College and this is very nice to see.

At the unveiling of the Survey Corps plaque by the Governor-General and Clem Sargent at the Australian War Memorial on 9 July (a normal school day) this year, the NG Svy Sec banner was proudly paraded by the two Radford College School Captains. The Radford College History Master was also present and he confirmed that the association between Radford College and the NG Svy Sec is important to the College and is certainly permanent.

To his great disappointment, Brian Murray was not well enough to attend the ceremony at the War Memorial on 9 July, but he was absolutely delighted to be told all about it afterwards and to receive his

own copies of the official programme and of the Governor-General's address.

Sadly, Brian has now died. However a very fine legacy of his lives on - and will last!

Charlie adds...Brian was privately cremated. On behalf of the Canberra Survey Corps Association I will write to Brian's wife Glenis to offer her our sympathy.

Ed: Many of Brian's fascinating accounts of his New Guinea experience have been published in past issues of our Queensland Bulletin. They, together with his '*Long way too much*', his tale of the NG Survey Section, belong to the annals of the Royal Australian Survey Corps.

PERSONALIA and other jottings

LVJ (Les) Smith reports an enjoyable lunch on 11th July he had with some of his mates of past years. Previous Bulletins have reported the camaraderie that exists between members of the 3/52 Basic Course; a camaraderie that brings them together each year for lunch, a few beers and the inevitable reminiscence. The group comprises Jock Campbell, Jeff Lambert, Len Davies, Dennis Cox and Mike (Mack) McCarthy. LVJ is not of that basic course but the group was assigned to his tender care and indoctrination in Southern Command Field Survey Section upon graduation. In years past this mini-reunion has taken place at a Gold Coast venue (Dennis Cox lives at Coolongatta) and somehow that location is seen to be fairly central if one stretches a point or two. Mack McCarthy lives in Tasmania, Len Davies in Bendigo, Jock Campbell in Mount Isa and Jeff Lambert at Traveston south of Gympie. This year the reunion took place at Gilhoolies Pub in Fortitude Valley with just three of the comrades present; Jeff Lambert, Mack McCarthy and Dennis Cox. Len Davies is convalescing from a cancer operation and Jock couldn't make it. LVJ was the invited guest and was regaled by the others of his indiscretions of that time serving under Warrant Officer Fraser Matthews.

On a more serious note LVJ is suffering a great deal of pain from a bugged back that seems to be beyond the ability of the medical profession to fix.

Richard Jackson-Hope as part of his revitalization of the NSW Association has introduced a very smart name badge. He emails... 'We in NSW have had a nice badge made and I am sending you a sample. It has your name on it with the thought that the Queensland members might like to purchase a badge'. Sample received and it is nicely done but of course it has NSW Association on it. Perhaps Richard could have some made with QLD on it if members are interested.

Ian Hutchings is a new member of our Association. Ian was a two year national serviceman in RA Survey in 1967 and 1968. Having a cartographic diploma he was allocated to Survey after recruit training at Singleton, posted to the School for tech training but then sent off to Melbourne to do a three month clerical course???? Following this he was posted to 1 Topo Survey Troop in January 1968 where he completed his national service time at Randwick. Ian has been aware of the Association for some time but more or less thought that because he was 'only' a national serviceman and a clerk at that he would not be eligible. Stan Campbell disabused him of that notion and now Ian is an enthusiastic new member.

After NS Ian returned to the Qld Dept of Lands Survey Office to resume his career as a cartographer.

Bob and Wendy Skitch arrived home from South Africa on the 3rd November after being in that fascinating country for seven weeks. Well, not just South Africa but also Zimbabwe for Victoria Falls and Botswana for the remarkable Chobe wetlands national park. From the awesome magnificence of the mighty Zambezi River crashing into the deep gorge that constitutes the Victoria Falls to the quieter delights of the Kruger National Park, the gracefull giraffes, the zebra, the big cats, the lumbering hippos and rhinos, the magnificent elephants and the beautiful antelopes of every variety and finally Cape Town and that remarkable feature, Table Mountain, it was all a mind-blowing experience.

But it was more than just beautiful scenery. The people of South Africa are themselves an

experience – blacks, whites, coloureds (their terms), the Afrikaans, an incredible mix of races and cultures. Does it work? Bob says it seems to be working. Bob says it is hard to get over Africa and he still watches out for Impala when driving through the Australian bush.



Bob and a Zulu lady (Wendy took the photo)

Neville Fisher is another new member, an original 5 Field Survey Company man whom we met at the Kilcoy plaque dedication service. Neville lives at Kilcoy with his wife Narda. He was quite unaware of our Association until seeing a pre-dedication feature in the local Kilcoy newspaper. Neville is a youngish looking 83 year old, moderately fit but has ocular degeneration that limits his vision. We hope to see something of Neville and Narda at some of our 2008 functions.

Alex Cairney is congratulating himself. He saw the following entry on Ebay...
WW2 AIF Survey Corps Colour Patch Original
Sale price AU \$ 14.99
Quantity 1
 Alex jumped in and is now the proud owner. What are you going to do with it Alex?

Ken and Nance Shaw: Ken emails.... Yes - it's me after all these months of silence. Many things have happened preventing me from enjoying and sending my emails. Firstly, on 18 May 2007 at about 4pm, Nance misjudged stepping down from our folding kitchen steps falling heavily on her left leg breaking the leg (femur) midway between her knee and hip joint and cracking the knuckle in three places. I was down the back in the garage and didn't hear her cry out - It was 3/4 of an hour before I

came up and found her on the floor extremely distressed, suffering shock and in dreadful pain. The ambos were quick to respond and injected morphine then whisked her off to Gosford Hospital ER. It was five days before they balanced her blood and could operate). A steel rod was inserted in the femur and held in place with four screws. A painful week followed only partially eased by injections then she was transferred to Woy Woy Rehab Centre where she had physio and hydrotherapy in their heated pool. All this covered nine weeks during which I visited her each day driving to and from the hospitals, did her washing (and mine), prepared and cooked my meals, washed dishes, shopped, dealt with everyday "admin" etc. etc. By the time nightfall arrived, I was deadbeat so I had to close down. Then - one week after Nances' fall - a phone call that was to change our lives forever! Peninsula Retirement Village had a two bedroom unit vacant and available - did we want it? Yesssss!!! The "Village" caters for self care retirees - people who look after themselves in all aspects although 5 star meals can be purchased and delivered to your door at nominal charge. Then there's hostel accommodation for people who are unable to completely care or cook for themselves. There is dementia accommodation for those who need it and even hospital accommodation and care when needed.

The grounds are beautifully kept with lush tropical plants, garden ponds with fountains and little waterfalls, a swimming pool and bowling green.



Ken and Nance Shaw enjoying a bottle of 'red'. Stan Campbell being the waiter

So, I've been a busy boy for all these months but Nance is now back cooking her beautiful meals and walking using a stroller of sorts when away from our unit (now our home - the old place is referred to as "120"). At home, she is allowed a walking stick - but all this is only temporary and it won't be long before she's back to her old sparkling self and bowling again in a couple of months.- don't know about tennis though!!

Bill Jeffrey: Clem Sargent phoned to tell me that Bill Jeffrey is now living at Caloundra. I wrote to Bill some months ago but somehow the letter was misplaced so at Clem's prompting I phoned Bill.

Bill Jeffrey came into the Corps in the late '50s. He was an older bloke – older than all us young fellows – having had WW2 service with the 2/5th Commandos in New Guinea, Borneo, the Celebes and Macassar. He was demobbed in November 1946 and soon after took a job in a hardware store at Lockhart where he was required to handle asbestos fibro sheeting, a material used extensively in home construction at the time. Bill took on house painting and that often involved sanding down sheets of fibro asbestos. Not much was known at the time about asbestosis and it was perhaps inevitable that in later life Bill would develop that chronic and life-threatening disease – long after he left the army. Bill spent much of his time in the Corps with the Army Survey Regiment in Topo Squadron and I remember him very well on the 1960 telle traverse from Camooweal to Borroloola and later on 1:250,000 mapping from Georgetown. The previous year he had been on the Borroloola to Mount Hensman traverse and then in Cape York Peninsula with Clem Sargent. Bill was a great bloke to have in a field party. He finished his time in the Corps as a warrant officer in Survey Directorate.

Bill told me that in recent years living at Wagga Wagga he took on the task of sponsoring a recruit platoon at Kapooka.. This involves spending time with the platoon, talking to them and inspiring them with warries. Bill did this so well that he received a commendation from General Cosgrove.

Bill, now 83, remarried about a year ago to Edith, whom Clem calls 'his old love' apparently from school days. He has sold his

Caloundra home at Golden Beach and on the 19th December moves to Kawana Island north of Caloundra.

Asbestosis has nearly cost Bill his life and at the time of the Fortuna book launch he was very low indeed. He has had something of a reprieve but he is on chemo therapy again. Bill wants to keep in touch with his old Corps mates (he asks after Stan Campbell) and I have sent him some past copies of our Bulletin.

Dave King would be remembered by at least some of our Queensland members – those who served in the '50s and '60s and especially those who were in Vietnam 66/67. Dave was on the 7/55 Basic Course in the draughting stream and was my sergeant cartographer in Vietnam. Dave, one of the more sartorial members of our Corps (I recall he wore a dinner suit to our Basic Course break-up party), is not in the best of health these days. He emailed me as follows:...

It has been almost 4 months since last we communicated. I was feeling proper poorly at the time so I've waited until mother nature settled things down. I'm now 80% fit and won't be any better as I have COAD or COPD whichever!! Putting it in a nut shell, I can't walk more than 10 yards without getting out of breath so Veteran Affairs are looking after my needs very well.

Thanks very much for your interesting notes on past members...they brought memories. I live 20 yards from Tony Slattery and wife. He was Topo for 6 years. I was best man at T's wedding and vice-versa at mine and have kept up a solid friendship ever since. In my weak old state I'm very fortunate to have Julieanne around as she gives me the RO's for the day as I tend to get a bit lazy. She does all my shopping and keeps me on my toes.



David at home

I'm still learning about this computer so here's hoping the attached photo gets to you. I am approaching my back door with T&J's villa in the background. The retirement village is absolutely fabulous. Everything you could possibly want is here and I'm wrapped.

Peter Cross: Peter's wife Carol has developed a malignant brain tumor, the onset of which was sudden and dramatic. Carol has undergone two operations in the past six months. The tumor redeveloped within weeks of the first operation necessitating the second. Carol is convalescing at home and undergoing radiation treatment, itself a very unpleasant and debilitating process. Carol is very ill and the prognosis is not good. Our thoughts are with Carol and Peter and their family during this testing time.

From Magna Carto

The Ex Fortuna Survey Association reports in *Magna Carto* that **Peter Cates** has dropped a quick note to update on his situation and travels. He has taken a volunteer role for two years with Australian Volunteers International and the AFL to help develop AFL in PNG. Peter first taught young children to play AFL on Daru Island in 1974 as a young 2nd lieutenant and now 33 years later he is dining it nationwide. Peter's youngest son has just been posted to 4 RAR in Sydney. His other two sons are also serving, one with the SAS Regiment and the other at Duntroon.

The June issue of *Magna Carto* contains a longish letter from **Jim Jeffries**. Jim works in Albury as Corporate Data Supervisor with the Albury City Council. Jim lives at Bethanga and one of his great interests in life is the sundial he created in his back yard in the year after he left the Corps. Jim's letter tells in detail how he made his sundial, established its exact position in order to calculate gradations and standard time offset. The completed product gives time to and accuracy of half a minute (when the sun is shining that is). A photo of Jim standing next to his very impressive sun dial shows him sporting a luxuriant white beard and looking very fit indeed.

The Fortuna Association attracted a large contingent of marchers on Anzac day this year,

some 40 in all including **Keith Barbour** in a wheel chair.

Items from the South Australian Association...

Coincidence

While staying for a few days in Bendigo, on his return to Adelaide from the plaque ceremony in Canberra, Alex Munro was having dinner at the RSL Club with his daughter, when a hand wave caught his attention at a nearby table where Bob and Anne Hayden were also having dinner, and to cap it off there was Roger Rees only a few tables further on. Roger had dropped in for a meal, while driving enroute from visiting his mother in Geelong back to home base in Canberra. A pleasant interlude to catch up with old friends.

Tom Sawyer

Tom and Pauline were recently in Adelaide for two days only, to attend the funeral of Pauline's uncle in Murray Bridge, before returning home to Perth, by air.

Alex told Tom about a current list of former Corps members who had served in Vietnam, and who were now deceased, mainly because his name is on that list, very obviously wrong. Although Alex didn't actually see Tom but only spoke to a voice on the phone, but he is sure it was him---just joking. Tom was also joking when he reckoned that a few people might be disappointed if he wasn't on that list.

Maj Fred Brown

Late on a recent Friday afternoon, Alex visited the Officers and Sergeants Mess at Keswick for a social drink with friends, when an officer in uniform called to him by name. He was a bit surprised, although the face was vaguely familiar anyway; it turned out to be Fred Brown showing signs of a good lifestyle, since they first met at Fortuna in the early seventies. Besides time at Fortuna, his career was mainly spent in Perth, mostly in Army Reserve positions and over a period of about forty years has only been out of the service for eight years. Although now aged 59, he reckons that under present regulations he might remain in service for another five years, reinforcing what Peter Jensen claimed about the Army holding on to experienced soldiers. Fred also did a stint in East Timor, as a defence attaché at the Australian Embassy, offered out of the blue but why look a gift horse in the mouth.

They spent a very pleasant hour reminiscing, before Alex had to leave, a pity because Fred was only in Adelaide for one night.

Peter Jensen

Peter's last Corps posting was in Capability Development Knowledge System as Deputy Director Imagery and Geospatial Intelligence. In that capacity he sponsored new capability acquisitions - everything from the national/strategic level to the tactical level - through the government/defence approval process ie. getting the money. After hogging that job for 5 years he was posted to help establish a new office of the Inspector-General ADF (IGADF) to provide the Chief of the Defence Force with an independent view of the health and effectiveness of the military justice system. Peter was posted as the reasonable person amongst a bunch of lawyers. There he project managed the development of a performance measurement system and developed and ran a unit audit program where a small team would visit units of all types and Services for a day or two to look at unit arrangements for military justice including discussions with CO's, ADJT's, RSM's etc, focus groups with all ranks and document audits. Of course the justice system is very different to what it was 20 years ago, but sailors/soldiers/airmen still see the need to exercise their right to complain, much as they have since the Articles of War in 1752. Peter transferred to the Standby Reserve in April 2006 and in that capacity has been working from time-to-time with IGADF mainly on performance measurement and unit audits. Peter is a Queenslander and Jenny is a Victorian, so Canberra is where they will stay, at least for a while. No real plans for other employment as it would not fit with their travel plans.

Rene van den Tol

After retiring from the Army, Rene studied at a Lutheran Seminary and is now a Pastor at parish in Naraweena in Sydney.

Stu Symonds

Stu still lives in Bendigo and is a member of the DIGO team

Mark Heinrich

Mark retired from the Army a few years ago after working in Materials Branch in Canberra for a number of years and has taken up a civilian position in the same area.

Bill Black

Bill joined the Victorian Lands Department after taking his discharge and spent some 30 years working there. He specialised in Survey Records in the later years. Bill now splits his time between travel and part time surveying. The gas company sends a sophisticated robot along the pipes and it analyses the pipe quality and identifies potential weak points. From the data gathered by the robot

Bill and his partner survey in those weak points for the repair crews. Bill recently passed through Adelaide calling in to catch up with old friends.

John Bateman

John was a printer in Litho Squadron for 20 years and joined the Queensland Government Printer when he left the Army. A couple of years ago he decided to join the grey nomads and is taking his time seeing Australia in his Mitsubishi Pajero and caravan. A few weeks ago John was in Adelaide catching up with Laurie Sutton, Dennis McCarthy and Allan Adsett. When he was in Eden on the south coast of NSW recently, John met a couple from Adelaide and when he said he was ex Survey Corps was amazed to hear that they were friends of Allan's. Just proves it's a small world.

NOW I'M THE OLD CRUSTY by WO2 Peter Coles – SSM 1 Topo Svy Sqn

It does not seem that long ago that I was standing on a parade in 1981 at the then 1 Field Survey Squadron and having the SSM WO1 Alex Cainey giving me a serve for having "a disgusting beret" and thinking 'who is this old crusty?' (I must admit Alex was right my beret was shocking). Now, only the other day I was serving it up to one of our new Sappers about the state of his slouch hat and I looked him in the eye and said "you can think it, just don't say it" to which he replied "what Sir". Yes you have guessed it I'm now the SSM.

As to the title of the article "Now I'm the old crusty", one must first understand the requirements to be an Old Crusty within 1 Topo Svy Sqn. These are:

1. Ex Royal Australian Survey Corps – check;
2. Been in the Army more than 20 years – check;
3. Be at least the rank of WO2 – check;
4. Be of an age where you could easily be the Sappers (and some cases the Corporals) Father – check;
5. Be able to brag about some significant event no one knows or cares about – BIG CHECK.

So I'm an Old Crusty, and scarier is that I am also a founding father of the trade these people and I at 1 Topo Svy Sqn belong too (number 5 above). I may be wrong, but at the time of writing this article I am the last serving member of that intrepid team who went to Darwin in

1989 and formed the MGI Pilot Project which was the fore runner of the Technician Geomatic Trade.

As a well travelled soldier who started his IET's in 1981 as a Cartographic Technician to now being a Technician Geomatic in 2007, I have noticed many changes in the Army, The Corps and the Trade. To compare the technical requirements of a Carto Tech to those of a Tech Geo is like comparing chalk and cheese, but to compare the quality of people from 1981 (my time) to 2007 (still my time) it is a carbon copy. The people who came to both trades possessed the same high intelligence, imagination, can do attitudes and a willingness to contribute that has allowed us to maintain a reputation as quality and professional soldiers within the Australian Defence Force and internationally.

I decided to write this article for the Association to not give an update on the Squadron but to give comparisons between those who have gone before and those who now carry the mantle. I would like to make it quite clear to all that the members of 1 Topo Svy Sqn Svy Sqn are a highly trained team of soldiers who can stand shoulder to shoulder with some of the biggest armies in the world and not only out perform as technicians but as professional soldiers (in my opinion this has not changed since 1901).

We who worked in the Field Squadrons in the 80's were known for our work hard and play hard attitude to soldiering. This did not mean that we were any less professional because of it. On many occasions members would spend eight months to a year on Operations in Australia and Overseas and come back having made a significant contribution to the Nation. The soldiers in 1 Topo Svy Sqn today spend up to six months on Operations overseas and the array of tasks that are undertaken are staggering in their breadth and diversity. In the last five years 1 Topo Svy Sqn technicians have covered humanitarian operations, peace keeping operations, peace monitoring operations (there is a difference), stabilisation operations, law enforcement operations, national extraction operations, rebuilding operations and disaster relief operations. The

Australian Tech Geo can now be found working on Operations in Australia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Fiji, Solomon's, Timor Leste and Central Australia. They can be found supporting major exercises and civilian activities not only in Australia but also overseas.

The cry of technician first and soldier second that we have all heard over the years to me is just a myth. All of the people I have worked with in my 26 years of service have always thought of ourselves as soldiers first (that's because this skill keeps you alive). You would get no better example of that than understanding the requirements of one of our overseas operational positions where the individual in the office is a Tech Geo but in the field he is expected to be a quality soldier and many rely on him to protect their lives while they do their job. Although only having been back in the unit for nearly two years I am always filled with a sense of pride at the letters of high praise we receive on the soldierly qualities of our deployed personnel and these also extol the high quality of their technical capabilities as well. These letters not only come from Australian units but also many other nations' armies receiving our support.

So where to now for the members of 1 Topo Svy Sqn? In the 80's we had five Field Survey Squadrons to not only look after Australia but all overseas requirements as well, today we have one. The army in the 21st Century is moving towards an army of two's and a Hardened Network Army. 1 Topo Svy Sqn will grow by a third of its current size and incorporate a Reserve element to not only support Geospatial requirements at 1 Topo Svy Sqn but to also augment manning for deployment overseas (this is expected to be achieved by 2014). It would be nice to think that we could grow by another Squadron but with the amount of training required to grow a Tech Geo this would be unachievable before 2030. It has been muted that to speed this up training could be adjusted and shortened, but gladly many in the trade stood up and jumped on this right from the start.

I feel that as long as we get quality people coming into the trade we will always have quality soldiers. My time is nearly over but I

look around the Squadron (as probably Alex did) and I know that there is a great potential for the future of the trade and I will be only too happy to hand over the reins to the next potential 'Old Crusty'.



**1ST TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY
SQUADRON – RAE**

Report culled from the Sapper

Association Newsletter 3/2007

Another year for 1st Topographical Survey Squadron is almost over – but not without a large ongoing effort in operational and other support to the Division. The role of the Squadron has changed subtly from in 2006 supporting Army to supporting the 1st Division as the main effort.

The Sqn has maintained between 10 and 20 soldiers deployed on operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor Leste, and on domestic operations. These have included the first overseas deployment of the Squadron's air camera, and the deployment of five members to Afghanistan with Reconstruction Task Force 2. Our members have often been the only Sappers on these operations.

The Squadron commitment to exercises has mirrored the high rate of deployment. The most notable exercise commitment for the year was Exercise Talisman Sabre, where over 40 Squadron members gained experience working alongside US survey technicians and RAN hydrographers in a large joint effort. Members were spread from RAAF Williamtown, to Shoalwater Bay and Bradshaw Training Area where they were embedded with all levels of command from the CTF HQ down to battle groups as part of amphibious maneuver forces. The Squadron also carried out a number of overseas visits to Canada, USA, Malaysia, and the UK most recently.

In addition to providing 'good support' overseas and on military exercises, our Sappers put in a good showing at sporting events and a military skills competition. 1 Topo Svy Sqn turned a few 6 RAR (and 6 ESR) heads as the surprise winner of the 2007 Gallipoli Barracks Obstacle Course Competition 2007. A contingent of

Squadron members competed as part of an Australian Defence Force team placed well in the international biathlon championships in Austria and Switzerland in January and the Squadron turned out in force to help 6 ESR win the 2007 Gallipoli Barracks King of the Hill race to the top of Mt Enoggera.

Since 2005, the Squadron has been providing support to the Combined Explosive Exploitation Cell based in Baghdad, Iraq. This involves one Geospatial Analyst working within a multinational team. His job is to plot, collate, manage and analyse geospatial information and intelligence related incidents involving Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). This role is to extract technical intelligence on IED location and distribution to identify bomb-making trends in space and time. This analysis can then provide support both offensive and defensive counter-IED operations by Coalition Forces.

Army has successfully deployed and operated its airborne image acquisition system on its inaugural overseas deployment. The Aerial Digital Imagery Acquisition System (ADIAS) deployed operationally to Timor Leste is operated by geomatic technicians aboard an aircraft flown by Army Aviators.

1949 MINER'S STRIKE....LVJ (Les Smith)

On the 15th August 1949 a national coal strike by Australian miners ended after Labor Prime Minister, Ben Chifley used the army to break the strike. The strike commenced on the 27th June and was seen to be Communist inspired. The miners had been demanding a pay rise, a shorter working week and better conditions in the pits. Two days after the strike began the Federal Labor Government passed legislation making it illegal to give financial support or credit to striking miners and their families. On the 5th July 1949 union officials were ordered to hand over union funds and the next day the headquarters of the miners union and the Communist Party of Australia were raided. Several union officials were sentenced to jail terms. Chifley said "the Reds must be taught a lesson" and at the beginning of August he sent the Army, labelled 'scab labour' by the unions, into the coal fields to break the strike. It was the first time during peace time that the

Australian Military Forces were used to break a trade union strike. That unique assignment lives on in the memory of many of our older members who as young soldiers were caught up in this not universally popular strike-breaking event. Regardless of where they might have stood on the issues of the day, they did their duty. This is LVJ (Les) Smith's recollection of that period away from survey duties. (adapted from an article by Alex Miller)

LVJ's story.....

While I was at the RA Survey Corps' School of Survey on the 5/49 Basic Surveying Course (designed to standardise the Corps' survey procedures) those of us with army driving licenses were taken off course and posted to a temporary transport unit. There we found ourselves in the company of the holders of army licenses from all units of the Army. The temporary transport unit was raised to undertake coal cartage within the mines and to and from the loading terminals. The Government's purpose was to break the miner's strike, said to be communist inspired.

Most army units had their own transport sections but the Survey Corps required all field personnel to hold a license and although we were one of the smaller army units we had the greatest number of people in the unit.

Valuable friendships were made with other units, particularly from the CMF cadres and when the first CMF survey units were established in Sydney and Melbourne I was able as the first surveying instructor at the 2nd Topographical Survey Company to contact staff from existing CMF units and obtain very handy advice about the overall operation and administration of our brand new unit.

One of the first jobs allocated to our temporary transport unit was the cartage of coal from the collier Haligonian Duke at the Melbourne docks to the power generating stations. Each army driver had a policeman riding shotgun; each convoy had motorcycle escorts and outriders. We were then transferred to the open cut coal mines in the Newcastle area driving all types of tippers from the coal face to the mine 'grizzly' where the coal was dumped for further processing. The 'grizzly' was square shaped

with discharge points on three sides of the square with a tipping guide whose job it was to guide the reversing tip truck into position then to undo the tailgate fastener and yell out to the driver that it was OK to tip. There was a lot of noise associated with this operation and one driver who thought he had been given the OK started his tipping operation only to find that his truck's front wheels had left the surface and pointed skywards. A very puzzled driver peered out of his window and was told that he had heard the OK for one of the other trucks. A very delicate operation brought his truck back down to earth.

For the first couple of days we learnt the procedure and got stuck into the job. If I remember correctly on the third day we equalled the normal daily output of the mine and on each succeeding day we beat the previous day's record.

After about a fortnight the strike folded and we were reassigned to the Ingleburn army camp outside of Liverpool. A 'grateful government' gave us all a bonus for our efforts and on the Friday night a bunch of us Survey types went to have a look at the notorious Ziegfield's (Ziggy's) night club. Alex (Puddles) Pond, Acker Strahan and myself had a table on the outskirts of the club and watched with amusement some of the 'entertainment' that was going on including a noisy but relatively injury free brawl involving Sammy Watson. One of the 'lady entertainers' discovered that we were there only as observers so she and her colleagues would come and have a drink and a chat with us in between clients. When the club closed for the night she gave us a key to her flat in a nearby suburb so we had a bed for the night before heading back to camp on Saturday morning.

On the following Sunday morning one of the warrant officer drivers from a CMF unit asked me to accompany him on a mission to bring back to camp an army jeep that one of the troops had taken for a joyride into Liverpool on Saturday night where he had collided with a power pole. We had to use a six wheel left hand drive breakdown truck with twin hoists and an unusual gearbox.

When we located the damaged jeep we got into position to hoist the vehicle to be towed back to camp. On inspection of the tool box we found no tools, no steadying bars or shackles. We winched the jeep with front wheels clear of the road by using the winch on the left hand side of the truck. The two winches were held in together by a spring loaded locking pin. As there was no steadying bar my colleague asked if I would mind riding on the back of the truck and keep the hoist cable away from the back of the truck.

By this time it was about 10.30AM and a lot of traffic was heading south from Sydney. The driver had been driving very cautiously initially and once we were clear of the built-up area he stuck his head out of the side of the truck and yelled out to find out how things were going. I yelled back OK but he couldn't hear so I let go of the cable and scrambled along the side of the truck up to the cab to tell him he could travel at a normal speed whereupon he pressed the accelerator heavily causing the truck to jump forward. The jolt dislodged the boom locking pin allowing the left hand hoist to swing free where it pivoted out into the left hand area along side the truck. Then as I turned round to go back to the rear of the truck I was struck in the chest by the boom, fortunately my arms were raised and I quickly threw them over the top of the boom which swung out at right angles to the truck where abreast of the driver and I screamed out 'STOP THE FRIGGIN TRUCK (or words to that effect). I could see the horrified look on the faces of the people in the car behind us but as there was a lot of traffic heading towards Sydney no one was able to overtake our truck to warn the driver. After what seemed an eternity my warrant officer mate looked out of his window to see yours truly dangling in space in line with his door. He immediately hit the brakes causing my support to swing forward and then bounce back a couple of times like the proverbial yo-yo. When we had recovered our composure we re-hitched the boom with some scrap wire we found and continued onto Ingleburn without further mishap.



For the next week things were relatively quiet in Ingleburn. We were told that the graduating class of Duntroon cadets would be planning the logistics for the return of 200 odd vehicles ranging from jeeps to a motley of other types including 4x4 three tonners and 6x6 left hand drive trucks and semi trailers.

On the Sunday before departure we had to refuel the convoy which was parked on one side of a sloping clayey field with a perimeter of bitumen roads. The fuelling point was in the centre of the park area on the bottom road. The procedure was to drive your truck to the top road, turn left and follow the bitumen to the refuelling point. Having fuelled up we were supposed to turn left and proceed up hill to our parking spot. Unfortunately just as the operation started it had begun to rain and by the time a few vehicles had turned onto the clay the surface deteriorated rapidly to a very gooey mess. The warrant officer in charge of the fuelling operation was not a very pleasant type under normal circumstances and having been called away from his home on a Sunday caused him to become very shitty livered. Vehicle after vehicle slithered away from the fuelling point until a 4x4 three ton Blitz truck got stuck just clear of the road. The driver had engaged low range four wheel drive and all four wheels were spinning merrily and going no-where. The shitty-livered warrant officer roared out to the warrant officer driver of the truck

:

Sh/L WO "Get the bloody truck out of here."

Driver WO "That's what I'm trying to do."

Sh/L WO "Give it the herbs man; for Crissakes give it the herbs."

Driver WO (disgustedly) "What the fuckin hell do you thing I'm giving it - Chocolates!"

Eventually the refueling was completed and peace reigned again.

We set out with the smaller vehicles leading, gradually increasing in size with the semis bringing up the rear. The cadets in their enthusiastic way interpreted a 30mph speed limit for the convoy to cover 30 miles in one hour. Those of us near the middle of the convoy had to get up to 70 mph at times in order to maintain our position resulting in a lot of very irate motorists and truckies trying to overtake our extended convoy directing their ill-will towards us.

We eventually got back to Melbourne and were dispersed back to our previous units which for quite a few of us were the courses at the School of Survey, Balcombe.

And that, dear reader was one bloke's contribution to the Great Coal Strike of 1949.

LVJ Smith

PHOTO GALLERY



December 2007



Plaque Dedication at Kilcoy on 11th November 2007 - honouring the WW2 members of 5 Field Survey Company



Our draped memorial



1 Topo Catafalque Party



Percy Long delivers address



Memorial unveiling by Percy Long and Artie McClure

*Plaque Dedication at Kilcoy on 11th November 2007
- honouring the WW2 members of 5 Field Survey Company*



Percy and Artie present our memorial



Percy and Artie



Artie and Neville Fisher (5 Coy veterans)



All of us - L to R - Bob Skitch, Ross Smithwick, Michael Bryce, Jock Kay, Stuart Parkinson, Artie McClure, Hank Opdem, Rock Thiselton, Barry Lutwyche, Neville Fisher, Kym Weston, Peter Bates-Brownsword, Jim Gill, Colin Moorhead, Alex Cairney, Percy Long.



Michael Bryce, Bob Skitch, Stuart Parkinson



Ian Hutching, Michael Bryce and Bill Kitson