

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch



BULLETIN

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

MID-YEAR EDITION– No 35

June 2008

OUR NEXT FUNCTION – COL ALEX LAING MEMORIAL DINNER – to take place at the United Service Club on Friday the 4th July 2008.

The dinner celebrates the 93rd anniversary of the formation of the Australian Survey Corps on the 1st July 1915. It is conducted in the very comfortable and appropriate surrounds of the Royal Room, of the United Service Club, Wickham Terrace, Brisbane. The dinner carries the title Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner because it was Alex who inspired the first dinner on his visit to the Association in July 1997, only a few months before his untimely death. Alex's wife Dawn attends the dinner whenever she can make the trip from Canberra. **All past members of the Royal Australian Survey Corps and their dependants are welcome and encouraged to attend.** Rank held on leaving the Corps has no bearing on who may attend. The dinner is conducted along regimental lines but informality prevails. Port is passed at the conclusion of the meal and a toast is offered to her Majesty the Queen, our late Colonel in Chief, Diana, the Princess of Wales and the Royal Australian Survey Corps Association. The Association meets the cost of all beverages consumed both before and during the dinner. The meal is three course, excellently prepared and presented. Meal cost is in the vicinity of \$ 60.00.

Dress: Lounge suit or reefer jacket ensemble (with tie) is preferred; ladies 'after five'. Miniatures may be worn.
RSVP: direct to Bob Skitch by phone (07 5438 0550) mail (PO Box 1039 Caloundra 4551) or email (bob.skitch@runbox.com)

CALENDAR FOR 2008

4 Jul (Fri) Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner at United Service Club
6 Sep (Sat) Reunion Lunch and AGM at the Alderley Arms hotel
October Mapmaker's Dinner
November Derek Chambers Award

OUR HISTORY PROJECT – What did we do over all those years – 1946- 1996? Email your contribution direct to Bob Skitch on bob.skitch@runbox.com or enter your data on our website – www.rasurvey.org . Our website will soon contain state summaries of what we have compiled so far. There are plenty of gaps – have a go at filling them in!

YR	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 Berkery, Bob Skitch.	Arrived May at Macrossan. Sect had not returned to Brisbane since sometime in 1955. Xmas in the field.....



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

COMMITTEE

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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

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.

RA SURVEY ASSOCIATION PLAQUE

Magna Carta 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.

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.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2007 – 2008

'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 but numbers attending have dropped away. Pop along and have a beer or a softie with your mates.

ARMY COMBAT BADGE

Bob has written to the RAE Head of Corps presenting a case for the issue of the ACB to those who served with the Detachment (later A Section) 1 Topographical Survey Troop in Vietnam. The text of his letter is later in this Bulletin.

CHANGE OF VENUE

It will be noted that our committee meetings have moved from the Gaythorne RSL to the Alderley Arms hotel on Enoggera Road. Also our Annual Reunion and AGM this year will take place at the Alderley Arms. You would be right in thinking that this move reflects a level of dissatisfaction with the Gaythorne RSL. Certainly the level of support that the RSL provides to the Association has fallen away over the past few years. It is time to move on!

COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 17 APRIL 2008

Ed: Future Bulletins will carry a brief report of committee meetings conducted since the previous Bulletin. This is the first.

The meeting was held at the Alderley Arms Hotel and was attended by Peter Bates-Brownsword, Alex Cairney, Barry Lutwyche and Ross Smithwick. Principal points covered by the meeting were:

- The September AGM and Reunion luncheon will this year be held at the Alderley Arms Hotel. A separate function room catering for up to 40 people can be provided. A good selection of menu items can be provided at a better cost and quality than at the Gaythorne RSL.
- National RA Svy Association: negotiations are in hand with other State Committees for the formation of a National RA Svy Association. Such an Association would need to be incorporated and should this happen a Patron of national significance would be appointed.
- The Treasurer reported that the Business Account balance stands at \$3988.09 and the Premier Investment account with the bank of Queensland balance is \$5549.07.

ANZAC 2008

RA Survey Associations across Australia participated in the Anzac Day city marches with between 30 and 40 marchers in Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth hitting the streets. Yes, there were some marching in Canberra as well.

The Association's Anzac observance in Brisbane commenced at 0530 with the Dawn Service at the new RAE memorial at Enoggera. For the early attenders there was the traditional Gun Fire breakfast at 0415 and then the service started at 0520. Several of our members attended and Jim Gill placed the wreath on behalf of the Association. Jim reports that the service following the RAE tradition of past years was very well conducted. The service was followed by a good army breakfast of fried and scrambled eggs, bacon, sausages and baked beans and of course a beer or two for the already thirsty.

This year it was a case of make your own way to the city and most took the option of the train from either Gaythorne or Enoggera Stations.

Brisbane turned on a beautiful day; clear skies, bright sunshine, not hot with a cooling breeze. The crowds behind the barriers were huge – how many? I suspect at least 100,000, maybe more. It was the largest Anzac day turnout of Brisbane people I have seen. The city march commenced at 1015 led by the RAAF, then the Navy and finally the Army. We stepped off at 1130 and at least to some extent order gradually developed from the apparent chaos at the FUP in George Street. Marshals were notably absent for some reason – so were bands! No bands were within ear shot of our Survey contingent and it was difficult to maintain the step. It was start-go all the way along George Street and even in Adelaide Street we had frequent pauses. Our light breeze, as so often happens in George Street turned into a sudden blast that nearly took our banner and with it our two stalwart carriers into the crowd but after a brief wrestle they managed to recover. Brian Johnson did an excellent job as our march leader and his orders of eyes left and eyes front were crisp and clear. Wally Chillcott bore our 'great

theodolite' which seemed to become greater and greater with every step of the way.

But there was a fine touch as we passed our State Governor Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce on the saluting dais. In past years we have had marching with us one of the grandsons of Tom Bryce of 5 Company. This year it was not possible for any of the three boys to join us so the Governor's husband Michael Bryce (Tom Bryce's son) advised that the Governor had given permission to give a wave of special recognition. Great theodolite carrier Wally was duly designated 'Association official waver' and this he did with his free left hand; not only a wave but also a particularly cheeky grin that only Wally can give.

So we progressed down Adelaide Street, right wheeled into Creek Street and again into Elizabeth Street where on the order halt and fall out – we fell out and dispersed.

That was our march through the streets of Brisbane. We made our way then by various means to the Gaythorne RSL for a few beers and a reminisce or two. I headed home at 1515 but I suspect many stayed a good deal longer.

Roll Call

Peter Ball
Allan Virtue and Colleen Mackay
WOI Barry Miller and daughter Eliza
Ian & Rose Read
John Hook
Ian Fitzgerald
Brian Cosford
LVJ (Les) Smith – in a wheelchair
Will Smith (son of LVJ) – pushing the wheelchair
Brett Morris (Allan Virtue's son in law)
Mick McCosker
David O'Shannessy (ex Vietnam vet)
Phil Brookes (ex Regt Chief Clerk)
Rowan Shipley
WO2 Lee Palfrey – in mufti
Don Palfrey (Lee's father)
Sgt Diana Soutar – in mufti
Derek Stanmore
Jock Kay
Ross Smithwick
Bob Skitch
Jim Gill.

Banner bearers

Cpl Bill Frederikos
Sgt Glen Norrell

Our president Peter Bates-Brownsword and Barbara marched and drummed with the National Service band in their Scottish attire and 'Kyber Pass' helmets.

PS: Reliable sources tell me that not only did we give our Governor a very regimental wave she blew back a kiss that was caught by LVJ in his wheel chair at the end of our marching column. Les is sure it was for him and he alone and his ego has swelled somewhat.

THE BRIBIE GOURMET BBQ– 16 March 2008

Tony Gee reports that the event was well attended and the weather was kind. The predicted bad weather delayed for a day and on Monday it was blowing a gale with squally rain.

Members attending were; Alex Cairney, Adrian (Charlie) Creedy, Dave Anderson, Jim & Sandra Beard, Bruce & Ann Bowers, John & Cheryl Hook, Peter & Irene Blaskett, Grant & Beth Small, Stan & Helen Campbell, Jock Kay and Chris, Rock & Mary-Ann Thistleton.

. A selection of photos can be found in the Photo Gallery.

PS. The Gees have requested that the BBQ no longer continue at their home and next year the 'Jazz at the Glen' function will be moved from December to March, becoming our opening event. The Association places on record its appreciation of the generous hospitality Loretta and Tony have provided in holding this popular event over many years. On behalf of the Association Mary-Ann Thiselton has presented a floral bouquet to Loretta in appreciation.

PERSONALIA and other jottings

Les (LVJ) Smith is not so well. Les, who has carried our iconic theodolite on our Anzac Day march on three occasions has worn out his hips and is now facing replacement of one or both. Les says he is close to being wheel chair confined.

Les has sent me a course photo of the 5/49 Basic Survey Course. He tells me that the 5/49 was the first run course for serving sappers,

the previous four course being for new recruits. There were a number of notables on the course as the course photo will attest. The Chief Instructor at the time was the redoubtable Lieutenant Colonel Johnson who was not known for his sense of humour, but neither did he normally lose his temper. That is, except on one occasion.

It was reported to Les from an officer's and NCO's course then being instructed by Captain Bob Hammett that Colonel Johnson ->>

wandered in to pass on a few words of wisdom and following the normal formalities Bob, producing a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and airily said to Johnson "of course we may smoke?" Now if there was any one thing that Colonel Johnson could not abide with it was smoking in his presence and on this occasion he blew his fuse completely, responding in the sharpest of terms "YOU MAY NOT!!" Somewhat denting to Bob's ego who could do little but retire quietly to a corner.

5/49 BASIC SURVEY COURSE



Back Row: LVJ (Les) Smith, Eric Clutterbuck, Blue Hunter, Len Gate, Geof Loan, Des Moore, Norm Vaughan, Ken Shaw.

Front Row: Mick Dwyer, Merv Marks, Bill Shapcott, Bill Sorrenson, Peter Gale, Acker Strahan, Frank Johnston

Les tells of a certain chain and theodolite traverse that had been set out around the paddocks at Balcombe for student training purposes. The 5/49 undertook the measurement of the traverse and in two parties they set out on the exercise using, no doubt, the knee-high chaining technique devised by Johnson for third order traversing. Both parties completed the traverse each party closing it off

to within acceptable limits, however, on calculating coordinate values for the fifteen or so traverse stations there were considerable differences from the DS solution. Now; why would that be? The traverse had been measured by two parties from previous the officer's and senior NCO's course to establish the DS solution. Conventional wisdom might suggest that surely there must have been

some connivance on the part of these 'too wise by half' serving sapper students from LVJ's course. But no – honesty reigned in the student corps and it was revealed that the fault lay with the DS solution. The previous attempt to measure the traverse by the officer's and senior NCO's course seemed to have contained a blunder that had been quietly adjusted back in the office. The students won! So what did the good colonel have to say to the officers and senior NCOs? Les doesn't know but he is sure that Colonel Johnson's temper would have been sorely tested at least one more time.

Our 'iconic theodolite' is a 1930's model 'Cooke, Troughton and Simms' four screw instrument. I notice that it seems to have had a name change to the 'Great Theodolite'. Hmmm! No doubt 'great' might appear to be a more apt descriptive those who have carried it for the length of our Anzac march.

Len Davies was in Queensland on the 18th April visiting his son at Toowoomba. Unfortunately we failed to make contact.

Adrian Rynberk in WA happened to notice something of interest in the newspaper. He emailed Brian Mead with...

"You didn't happen to see Monday's *Australian* newspaper as there was an article about these school kids going to Europe for Anzac day and they were dressed up in period service uniforms. The boy was wearing a slouch hat with a Survey Corps badge on it!"

Ed – Wonder who that was?

Barry Lutwyche and Alex Cairney, stalwarts of past Anzac marches in Brisbane were notably absent this year. However, Noel Sproles emailed: "Our Adelaide Anzac Day parade was hit by the Queensland Mafiosi. Alex Cairney, Barry Lutwyche and co came like snake oil salesmen selling purple berets. They did well as Alex sold out and had to take orders. We had a good turn out with – I believe from Alex Munro's count – of 32. Of course the Mafiosi swelled our numbers"

Peter Mitchell watched the Anzac march from somewhere along the route and was surprised to see our Survey contingent swing past. He caught up with us in the dispersal area as we

fell out. Peter was quite unaware of our Association and we wasted no time in recruiting him for three years and selling him a beret. Now who is Peter Mitchell? Peter was a Portsea graduate allocated to RA Survey in 1981. He served with 2 Fd Svy Sqn, Survey Directorate and then the School before moving into a number of non-corps postings for the remainder of his army service. He retired from the army at the rank of major in 1996. Peter completed a computer science degree while he was in Canberra and is now a consultant in all manner of computer activities.

John Thomas also caught up at the end of the march. John, who led our march a few years ago now marches with his pre-survey corps.

Bruce Bellette from Mundingburra in north Queensland (out of Cairns) was a surprise visitor at our 'after the march' get together at the Gaythorne RSL. Bruce was accompanied by **Leone Hain** (widow of **Hans Kramer**). Leone now lives with her daughter at Caloundra and flies out shortly to Barcelona to catch up with a Mediterranean cruise.

Bill Boyd from Gosford emails: It was as good a service as they have had at Woy Woy. We went to Ettalong for breakfast at the Ettalong Beach War Memorial Club. It was as usual a good event.

The numbers at the Dawn Service were well up on the last one we attended at Woy Woy. Ken Shaw was crook last year, so Racquel and I went to Gosford instead. Woy Woy is closer to Ken and is very flat. Gosford is a sloping site and would not be good for Ken, especially in the dark of a Dawn Service.

Hope your Anzac Day went off well. I was impressed with the Viller Bretagneaux 90th service. Did you see it? Regards to all...Bill

Ray McShea has contacted Barry Lutwyche with the following email: It's Ray McShea here, hope you remember me, I was a Reservist at 1 Topo for just on 25 years, finishing up as a WO2, and have been on the Inactive List since October 2007.

I was speaking to Ian Fitzgerald just before Christmas last and we got on to the topic of Reservists' eligibility to join the Association. As far as I know, I don't know of any Reservist that has joined or indeed if we are eligible to join under the constitution. Could you follow this up and get back to me please?

After 25 years at 1 Topo I take an interest in what the Association is doing by having a look at the website and Newsletters occasionally and see a lot of ex-ARA personnel that I know and would like to catch up with occasionally.

I hope to put together a pictorial history of the Reserve element at 1 Topo based on my own photos and some donated ones, as I began my time there soon after the Reserves were raised in 1981. If you think this may be of interest let me know and I will contact you when it is completed. I have barely begun the process but I hope to have something towards the end of the year.

Ed: Ray is a Senior Spatial Information Officer with the Queensland Department of Mines and Energy, Landcentre, Woolloongabba. His email address is ray.mcshea@dme.qld.gov.au. Needless to say Barry immediately joined Ray up into the Association.

Historical research in WA. Brian Mead from the WA Association is on to an interesting line of research into the WW2 4 Fd Svy Coy, largely Perth based. Because of their service in New Guinea a considerable amount is known of those companies that served in that theatre but little has been written or recorded on 4 Coy. (our own patron Ed Anderson was a 4 Coy man) Brian's email (in part) reads:

I have relocated a typed manuscript by Sgt Ron McCallum, a former 4 Fd Survey Coy man. Ron (dec) was known to Frank Cohen. The manuscript of 36 pages, is dated about 1950's and kept as part of the 5 Fd Svy Sqn Library. I inherited it from Phil Bray - my predecessor as WA Association Secretary. Frank Cohen is to read the text and pass on his comments. Other locals, who come to mind are Eric Brook and Ian McNabb. Also Ray Wilkins in NT. There are some local anecdotes(within the text) but at the same time there are details

of the WA movements of the Coys/Sects. It follows that some members of 4 Fd Svy Coy were transferred to Qld (3 Fd Svy Coy), following passing of the 'Japanese Invasion Threat' to the WA Northern Coastline.

My procedure/s will be to scan the pages and then type up the text, to create a digital copy.I have been given access to Nevis Cherry's personal photos and notes by his widow Betty Cherry. Bob Wood provided some details in his Westlink Articles, dated early 1990's.

WWW.RASURVEY.ORG

Bob Skitch

Have you had a look at our website www.rasurvey.org recently? On it you will find not only our Queensland Bulletins but also Westlink from the Western Australia Association and the recent new format South Australian Association Newsletters – all in full colour the same as ours! The fact is our website is not just 'our' website, it is a website for all of our State Associations should they choose to use it. Current bulletins/newsletters from each of our State Associations are there for all to see and read – interesting stories of past years, the 'doings' of current members and more. The reformed RA Survey Association of NSW is about to come on line.

The Ex-Fortuna Association chooses to stand apart and intend developing their own website. Perhaps we can hyperlink from one to the other. It would be good to have a broader access to 'Magna Carto' since information on 'Fortuna' and the Bendigo scene is of interest to all of us.

Two issues of the SA Newsletter on the website – December '07 and March '08. In them you will find great photos of TJ Wicker's trip to Cape York, Frank Bryant's recollections of the 1957 Darwin field trip (lots of names and happenings are mentioned) First Friday (Thirst Thriday) at the Saracen Hotel, Carrington St; A story 'Thank God for little white pebbles' by Steve Rose; Peter Rossiter's China experience. Allan Adsett and Bob Mills share editorship and they are doing a great job.

There are now six issues of the WA Association's 'Westlink' on the website. The

latest (November '07) promotes the Association website; has extensive coverage of the AWM ceremony dedicating our Corps plaque including the full addresses of the Governor General and Clem Sargent and a reflection on the event by Bob Bruce; 2007 Anzac marches in Perth, Bridgetown (by Terry Linz), Toodyay (by citizen of the year and parade commander Warren Hall); Helen Cole's (nee Clutterbuck) visit to Darwin where in the Memorial Park she found the Survey Corps plaque honouring the 7th Field Survey Section installed by the Institution of Surveyors and the Robertson War Museum; An amusing account of the Great Emu War by Cedric Clutterbuck....and more.

So... www.rasurvey.org is certainly worth a visit. All of our Bulletins/Newsletters look really great in pdf and full colour.

JOHN GREY'S REFLECTION

Ed: I received this letter from John Grey, a 5 Fd Svy Coy WW2 veteran two years ago and somehow it went into my archives and I failed to publish it at the time. In this ANZAC week it seems particularly appropriate to include a reflection on WW2 service. It is an interesting reflection, the little things that happen inevitably in service life and the quite remarkable careers many of our WW2 veterans had in subsequent years. John's letter reads:

During our recent chat I undertook to set out a few recollections of my life during and after the war. So here goes – no guarantee about some of the dates.

I enlisted in Brisbane (aged 18 yrs & 4 mths) on 20/06/1942. After a few days I was transferred by train to Melbourne and into camp at the showgrounds at Burwood. First person I met was a Sgt Pat Boyle. About 17 years later we met again and I discovered his wife and mine were distantly related. Our families became close friends. The Boyles had 8 children and we had 6 and they attended the same schools. I attended his funeral about a year ago.

After three months at Burwood learning military procedures and doing some plane tabling I was transferred to Gladstone with two men who became life-long friends – Jimmy Brock and Neil Clerehan. You had some notes in your last

bulletin about Jim, who, I regret to say died a few weeks ago. My wife and I and Neil attended his funeral. Neil is still practicing architecture in Melbourne. For the past twenty years each March I have spent 10 days in Melbourne playing golf and every year have met up and had dinner with them.

We had quite a time in Gladstone. I recall marching down the main street in full regalia on some occasion to which you referred in a recent bulletin. In February 43 we went to Rockhampton to join the AIF – prior to that time we were in the CMF, ie Chocos. We were now 5 Aust. Field Survey Coy, AIF. About 50 years later Jim and Neil and I revisited Gladstone and the Mayor kindly took time off to show us around.

After Gladstone it gets a bit confused as to the order of events but I do recall being camped at Innisfail, Tully, Jagan (on the Atherton Tableland), and quite a while at Wongabel. Pat Tuxon was in my tent there- a nice guy but I haven't heard anything about him since and Bill Fox who became a close friend also. (Bill died about 2 years ago). The Comforts Fund wireless was in my tent and a lot of betting used to take place there. The unit bookie was, I think, Percy Draheim. I remember having a bet on a filly called Tea Rose but was on guard duty during the race. As I came off duty Percy asked me which race I had backed her in. I could smell a rat and said whichever one she started in. Percy paid up. I think that race is now called "the Tea Rose Stakes".

From Wongabel I remember many occasions getting ready to go overseas – trucks prepared to drive off the landing craft and so on. We would be sent to some port, then after a few days back to another port or even back to Wongabel. I can remember thinking – well, if we are winning the war how bloody hopeless the Japs must be.

Eventually the day arrived (I think about early April 1945) and we got on board and zig-zagged our way to Morotai. I recall the death of President Roosevelt was announced soon after we left port. I must have played 100 hours of Pontoon en route. Then after Morotai it was the landing at Labuan on, I think, June 10th 1945.

This was a brief time of some danger in that we guarded both sides of the road to Brunei as the infantry moved ahead. Also, for a while the nearby artillery kept up a random barrage which was uncomfortable.

A few months later the war with Japan ended. Priority for return to Australia was those with 5 years service including 2 years overseas. Next were those returning to reserved occupations. I had been studying Civil Engineering at night at the Brisbane Technical College whilst working for M.R.Hornibrook. This got me onto one of the first ships home. On board were a number of Australian POWs who had been at Sandakan. They were appallingly emaciated and there were about 5 meals a day in which we all shared.

On return I studied under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme – all fees paid plus 3 pounds 5 shillings a week – the final year's payments were an interest free loan. I matriculated in 1946 and graduated in Civil Engineering in 1950. I won a Gowrie Scholarship for 2 years at the Imperial College in London – 1952/3. I then returned to Brisbane to work in the design office of the Brisbane City Council, designing bridges. I married Margaret and we had our first son.

One day, about three years later, a chap called Tristan Antico came to the office and asked me to join him to start the Brisbane branch of his recently formed company Pioneer Concrete Services Ltd. I resigned from the Council forthwith and spent the next 32 years with Pioneer. So much for my recently acquired Master's Degree. It was an exciting time, Pioneer expanded all over the world in concrete and quarrying; also in cement and mining. It acquired a number of public companies including Ampol, Ampol Exploration, and Queensland Mines.

I retired in December 1988 and am enjoying retirement to the full – golf, swimming, bridge, the stock market and a bit of travel – all 6 offsprings live nearby – all are married and have produced 13 delightful grandchildren. Thankfully my wife Margaret and I enjoy good health.

Some names I remember who were friends: Hal Jones, Percy Peel, Jim Stedman, Jim Alexander, Cliff Bartly. Cliff told me that if Bernborough was ever allowed to race to back him in his first start and to keep backing him until he stopped racing! Also Tommy Sullivan, Doover Cooper and the legendary Les Tagg and Bob Bobroff.

That's about it – hope some of it is useful.
Regards, John Gray

AUSTRALIAN COMBAT BADGE – letter to RAE Head of Corps
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Dear Brigadier,

In consideration of the award of the Australian Combat Badge I write on behalf of soldiers of the Royal Australian Survey Corps who served with the Detachment (later A Section) of the 1st Topographical Survey Troop at Nui Dat, Vietnam from May 1966 to October 1971 and submit that their service meets the eligibility criteria stated in Defence Instruction (Army) PERS 119-1 for the award of the badge.

I base this submission on my own first hand experience as the officer commanding the Detachment 1st Topographical Survey Troop from departure from Australia on the 28th May 1966 until my return to Australia on 13th May 1967.

The Detachment was located for a short period at Vung Tau moving forward to Nui Dat on the 10th June 1966. Thereafter until its final RTA it remained as a sub-unit of the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat. The Detachment strength during the first 12 months was one officer and sixteen other ranks.

The first 12 months of the Detachments deployment at Nui Dat was the period of development in which it established its role in providing both field survey and mapping support to the task force and its units. Within the task force layout the Detachment was located approximately two hundred metres east of the task force headquarters. It is probably unnecessary to describe the working conditions during those early weeks at Nui Dat other than to say they were far from ideal. Appalling would not be too strong a word.

However, my contention in claiming eligibility for the award of the ACB to survey soldiers in Vietnam is not based solely on the harsh conditions of deployment at Nui Dat during those early months nor the somewhat precarious nature of that deployment with regard to security. It is based on the field operations on which the Detachment's soldiers were engaged. Thirty five survey stations were established or occupied by surveyors outside the 1ATF base area (many several times over) and numerous within the base area.

The Detachment's operations fell into two main components – field survey and mapping draughting. While those soldiers of trade classification (at that time) 'surveyor' were principally allocated to field survey duties, due to the small technical strength of the unit others trade classifications (draughtsmen and printers) were often used in a support role to the field surveyors.

Field survey operations fell into several categories:

1. Establishing theatre grid for artillery purposes at Nui Dat in the first few days of occupation. This was done by a process of triangulation and trilateration measuring angles with a theodolite and distances with electronic distance measuring equipment. Each observation required the occupation of three stations simultaneously, generally with a two person party. Night astronomical observations were carried out to establish azimuth. In this way the hill feature 'Nui Dat' was coordinated and from that point (designated AASV 001) position and orientation was extended into each of the 1ATF artillery batteries. Stations occupied were on the hill features at the southern end of the Vung Tau peninsula (an original French trig station of known coordinate value) and one part way up the peninsula. Working in relatively secure areas security protection was simply our own carried weapons – SLR and OMC.

2. Strengthening the control configuration by connecting to other trig stations of known value. One such connection was made to a distant hill feature 42 kilometers north of Nui Dat, Nui Chou Chan that feature being occupied by the US Target Acquisition Battery from Long Binh. Detachment surveyors occupied a knoll feature one hundred metres south of the village of Binh Gia. Security protection arranged by HQ 1ATF was a 'section' of ARVN from the Ngai Giao ARVN compound west of Binh Gia.
3. Theatre grid connections to the five ARVN artillery batteries within Phouc Tuy Province. This task was undertaken at the request of US Headquarters 2nd Field Force Vietnam and involved connections to five ARVN as well as the two US batteries and our own permanent fire support base on the Horseshoe. Connections used a combination of survey techniques; electronic distance measurement, angle observations, chain and theodolite traversing. Insertion of survey parties was generally by Iroquois, sometime by road vehicle and in one instance by APC. Security protection was provided sometimes by our own infantry but more often by ARVN and regional popular forces. We tried to coincide our work with a battalion operation and so gain some level of security. Typically, observations required a surveyor standing tall behind an instrument on a prominent point for periods of an hour or more. Chain and theodolite traversing presented a difficult protection task with two surveyors separated by a chain length (100 metres) moving progressively along a route. An infantry section leader given this task commented to the effect 'how the bloody hell are we going to protect these blokes standing up there like bloody actors'.
4. H & I target connection in Nui Thi Vai hills. In October 1966 taking advantage of 5 RAR Operation Queanbeyan at the

request of HQ 1ATF a connection was made from the coordinated trig station on Nui Thi Vai to the rock fall cave area used as a Viet Cong base in the lower slopes of the hill mass. Two surveyors undertook a compass and chain traverse up and then down the goat track following a north western spur of the mountain to the trig station and a plane table detailed survey of the rock fall cave area. This resulted in eight figure grid references of the salient points of the Viet Cong base area for future artillery harassment fire. A section of infantry provided close protection of the surveyors carrying out this task over a three day period.

5. Establishment of photo mapping control points in villages for the production at Nui Dat of large scale maps. The purpose of these survey control point was to provide scale and azimuth to the air photos used to produce the maps.
6. Field checking of detail plotted from air photography of villages and hamlets. This work was undertaken on foot by small parties of surveyors walking along the winding tracks through the areas of habitation. Protection was provided by a section of infantry, Australian, ARVN and sometimes regional popular forces.
7. Detailed cantonment survey for large scale maps of the ever developing and changing 1ATF Nui Dat base area. When working near the perimeter infantry protection was generally provided. This was an ongoing task. The whole base area was contoured to one metre interval. Similar work was undertaken at the Vung Tau ALSG with support from the engineer construction squadron.
8. Aerial annotation of broader areas mapped, generally not accessible with any degree of safety on the ground. This work was undertaken with both rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft from the Army Aviation light aircraft independent recce flight based at Vung

Tau. On two occasions in 1966/67 the Bell 'Sioux' helicopter attracted ground fire.

Protection provided by an Australian infantry section led by a corporal was of the highest order. The task was undertaken with total commitment, the section leader more or less controlling the movement of the surveyors, sometimes clearing ahead of the surveyors. This was especially the case in village based field checking work. Protection provided by sections or a group of ARVN and more especially by popular force units could amount to no protection at all. On many occasions the ARVN/popular force soldiers melted away and by afternoon could hardly be found. Generally Detachment soldiers found it near impossible to communicate with them. They would laze about listening to their incessant radios. Nevertheless, if nothing else they allowed the surveyors to get on with the job.

Dr Coulthard-Clark in his history of the Royal Australian Survey Corps makes light of the risks undertaken by the Detachment surveyors stating "in the ordinary course of events it was rare that Survey Corps personnel were ever exposed to enemy fire beyond sharing with the rest of the task force the risks presented by occasional mortar or rocket attacks on the Nui Dat base". I can only believe that in making the statement Coulthard-Clark failed to understand the nature of the duties undertaken by surveyors away from the confines of the base. In relation to the target survey undertaken in the Nui Thi Vais he states "throughout this period the pair were never in any real danger". That statement could only be made after 'the pair' emerged unscathed and would gain little support from either the infantry soldiers or engineers involved at the time. It is like saying that an infantry patrol that fails to contact the enemy was 'not at risk'.

I can only speak knowledgeably for those of the Detachment (which was re-designated A Section in about March 1967) for the duration of my own tour of duty as officer commanding, that is, from May 1966 to May 1967. I understand that there was little change in the nature of A Section's operations for the remainder of 1967 and throughout 1968.

Perhaps the field component of the Section's operation diminished from 1969,; at least the tempo may have changed. However, I submit that the technical personnel of the Detachment 1st Topographical Survey Troop and later A Section qualify for and are deserving of the award of the Australian Combat Badge.

I would point out that Annex D to DI(A) PERS 119-1 lists 131 Divisional Locating Battery as being an eligible unit for the award. Up to five

soldiers from the survey section of that unit were detached for varying periods of time to the 1st Topographical Survey Troop detachment to assist in field operations.

I respectfully submit this for your consideration,

RF (Bob) Skitch
Royal Australian Survey Corps Association
(Queensland)

THE LITTLE THINGS THAT HAPPEN!

Ed: The following comment from Colin Cuskelly printed in the last issue of Magna Carto (Ex Fortuna Association) has aroused some interesting comment from two of our senior members. I suspect many of us could recall some interesting incidents concerning nomenclature on maps. A named feature on a map gains an authority in its own right regardless of what may be the case on the ground. There was a mythical lake in central northern Queensland 'named' and even 'portrayed' by no less than the colonial explorer Major Thomas Mitchell that appeared on cadastral maps over the years and then was accepted as 'gospel' and appeared on our first edition R502 series. It took an 'expedition' by the Royal Geographic Society of Queensland to show that the lake was nothing more than a patch of wet land, subject to inundation.



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Nodlaw Island Map 5075 Snake Bay, Series R621 Ed 1 Approx co-ords of Nodlaw Island - 130°34'E, - 11°22'S

This is one of those RASvy urban myths – along with 'crow proof fence', trains on railway lines, initials hill shaded into maps, words/names in reefs, etc. I had heard about this in the mid 70's and immediately knew it to be true. Tony Waldon was field checking this area, found an unnamed island and decided to name it (after himself), the name was approved by the nomenclature board (or whoever) and the rest is history.....**Colin Cuskelly**, March 2008.

John Bullen in Canberra responded: Most interesting to read in the latest Magna Carto of Tony Waldon's successful effort in naming Nodlaw Island after himself. Typical Tony Waldon! I remember him as a deceptively quiet fellow with an innocent manner which concealed a quick and dry sense of humour. Tony's achievement brings back a memory of the late Rod (Lofty) Keene in WA.

W Comd Fd Svy Sec was mapping in the Derby area around 1959 or 1960. The OC (Major Bill Sprenger) got intensely annoyed by the habit of field party members speaking of

every object as a 'hoon' and leaving others to guess which was the object referred to. 'Pass me the hoon, will you. No, not that hoon. THAT hoon!' Bill Sprenger, an easygoing chap, finally got so exasperated that he threatened to charge the next man who uttered the word 'hoon' in his presence. And of course Lofty could never pass up such a challenge, especially where an officer was involved.

Back in the map compilation office at the end of the field season, Lofty commemorated the OC's threat by quietly inserting 'Hoon Creek' onto the map. Not content with that, he added Midgeguna Spring nearby. This latter word

came from the midges/mosquitoes that were particularly numerous and vicious in that vicinity and 'guna', the local aboriginal word for excrement. Despite Bill Sprenger's vigilance in map checking, both names somehow made it through to the printed map.

Hoon Creek can be found today on the Derby 1:250 000 map at Lat 17° 08' S, Long 123° 17' E. It is a tidal estuary on the eastern coast of Dampier Land, NW across King Sound from Derby. Midgeguna Spring, also on the map, is right beside Hoon Creek. Both features are NNW along the coast from the Fraser River mouth and immediately behind and SW from Valentine Island.

These days, Hoon Creek is a well known name in the scientific world because of the ecological studies conducted there. Cheers, John

Don Swiney picks up the 'hoon' incident in the following account:

The practice of using 'hoon' now as an adjective had somehow found its way to Central Command Field Survey Section. I was at Maralinga for all of 1962 and after a fair bit of activity preparing for a test it all suddenly went into abeyance and there was little to do. Somebody (I don't know who) decided that I might be useful at Woomera where a component of the section was engaged in extending the control and photo annotation. I jumped on the 'Trans' train at Watson, got off at Pimba and eventually made my way via Woomera to Mt Eba Station where the Detachment was then based. I arrived mid afternoon and met (for the first time) Tony Waldon, Bill Love and others. Everyone from the OC down referred to hoon landrovers, hoon jiggers and even when I sat down for tea it was 'pass the hoon sauce'. I thought I was amongst madmen!

I was paired off with Tony Waldon and spent the next few weeks sharing a Landrover with him. Another notable was Karl Bratz whose main skill with a few beers on board was to break into a rendition of 'Champagne Charlie' but substituting 'Charlie' with 'Bratzee'. I subsequently heard that after his six years he moved up to Coober Pedy where he spent the rest of his life. I have also heard that if you visit the cemetery there you will find his grave with a beer barrel at its head which was the barrel that was consumed at his wake.

After Mt Eba we moved on to Mirakarta where I was told late on a Thursday that I had to be in Adelaide on the following Monday booted and spurred for an OCS selection board and the only clothes I had was

what I stood up in. The story of how I made it with the help of others is another story..... Don

A LITTLE HUMOUR – this one has been doing the rounds of army emails for a few weeks...Ed

Life in the Australian Army...

Text of a letter from a kid from Eromanga to Mum and Dad. (For Those of you not in the know, Eromanga is a small town, west of Quilpie in the far south west of Queensland, Australia)

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm, - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - nothin'!!

Ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz theres lotsa hot water and even a light tosee what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Ma makes. You don't get fed again until noon and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a 'route march' - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!!

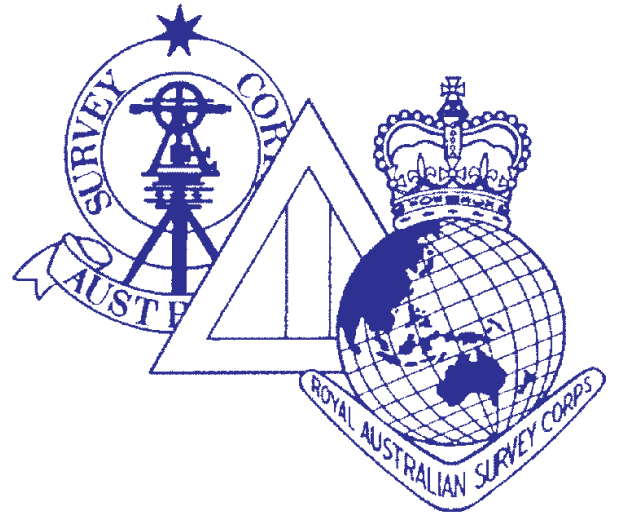
This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil..... I keep getting medals for shootin' - dunno why. The bull's-eye is as big as a bloody possum's bum and it don't move and it's not firing back at ya like the Johnsons did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year!

All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of piss!! You don't even load your own cartridges, they comes in little boxes, and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet,but I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier. I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how bloody good it is.....Your loving daughter, Sheila

PHOTO GALLERY



June 2008

ANZAC DAY



RASVY Assoc banner Cpl Bill Federikos, Sgt Glen Norell



On the March in Queen Street



Wally Chillcott & Great Theodolite



Ross Smithwick Mick McKosker



Rowan Shipley, Jim Gill, Jock Kay, Ross Smithwick



Brian Cosford & Derek Stanmore



Ian Fitzgerald, Ian Read, Sgt Diana Souter, Peter Ball, Wo1 Barry Miller & Eliza Miller



Brett Morris, Colleen McKay & Al Virtue



Bob Skitch & LVJ Smith

Bribie BBQ



Rock Thiselton, Adrian Creedy



Barry Lutwyche, Charlie Creedy, Rock Thiselton



Dave Anderson, Alex Cairney, Blue Blaskett, Stan Campbell



Grant Small and the ladies



Mary-Ann Thiselton, Jock Kay, Chris



Ken Shaw, Racquel Boyd at Ettalong Dawn Service
'No - Ken is not in a wheel chair yet; he is just sitting down!'

Ettalong RSL



Bill Boyd and Ken Shaw at Ettalong RSL