



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch
BULLETIN

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

MID-YEAR EDITION – No 45

JUNE 2011

CALENDAR 2011 (outline)

30 June (Thursday) Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner at the United Service Club.

3 Sept (Saturday) Annual Reunion and AGM at the Alderley Arms Hotel.

November (TBA) Mapmaker's Dinner and Derek Chambers Award presentation.

Other functions may be advised later, e.g. BBQ sometime. Any volunteers?

OUR NEXT FUNCTION: The Colonel Alex Laing Memorial Dinner celebrating the 96th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Australian Survey Corps.

When: Thursday 30th June 2011

Where: The United Service Club, 183 Wickham Terrace Brisbane in the Royal Room.

Time: 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Cost: \$60.00 per head for three course cordon bleu dinner including beverages. The event is subsidised by our Association sponsor.

Maximum seating – 30 persons.

Dress: Men – Lounge suit; Ladies – After five. Miniatures may be worn.

RSVP Secretary Barry Lutwyche (Ph 3264 2191) or Bob Skitch (PH 3350 1550) by Friday 17th June.

This is a premier event in our Association calendar. Run on semi formal lines the port is passed in the traditional manner. This event is always great fun – ask anyone who has previously attended.

Attendees may book an overnight room at the United Service Club if they would prefer not to drive home afterwards.

Dawn Laing is making the trip from Canberra to attend this year

POST OUT OF BULLETIN

At our February committee meeting after considering Bulletin mailout costs and the newsletter delivery methods used by other State Associations, the Committee decided that future Bulletins should be forwarded by email to those members with an email address unless they specifically request delivery by Australia Post. The revised delivery method will commence from this Bulletin, No 45.

BULLETIN FORMAT

With most of our members now taking our Bulletin electronically I have dispensed with the two column format. Two columns are great in hard copy but a nuisance to read on a computer screen. The full page format will also allow greater flexibility in incorporating photos and text together. Photos of course will appear in glorious colour and dispense with the need for the attached 'Picture Gallery' which in the past had to be separately formatted and produced by one of our members and then combined with the hard copy print out before posting – also electronically combined in PDF for electronic distribution and the website. Trust you all approve....Ed

The Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (Queensland) acknowledges the generous sponsorship and support of RPS Group

OUR HISTORY PROJECT – WHAT DID WE DO, 1946 – 1996?

Our 'What Did We Do' project remains open for further contributions. Have a look and see if you can fill a few of the gaps. Email your contribution direct to Bob Skitch bob@skitch.me or enter your data on our website – www.rasurvey.org .

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

NOTICES

BERETS – BERETS – BERETS

Our stocks of our ever popular beret are now nearly depleted. However, stocks are held at Christie's in Sydney. Be distinctive in the RA Survey Association headdress. Contact Alex Cairney email alex.cairney@hotmail.com
Note: Christies can be contacted as follows:
Unit 4D; 1-7 Unwin Bridge Rd, St Peters, NSW 2044.
Phone 02 9519 0784

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 TIE or SCARF & BADGE

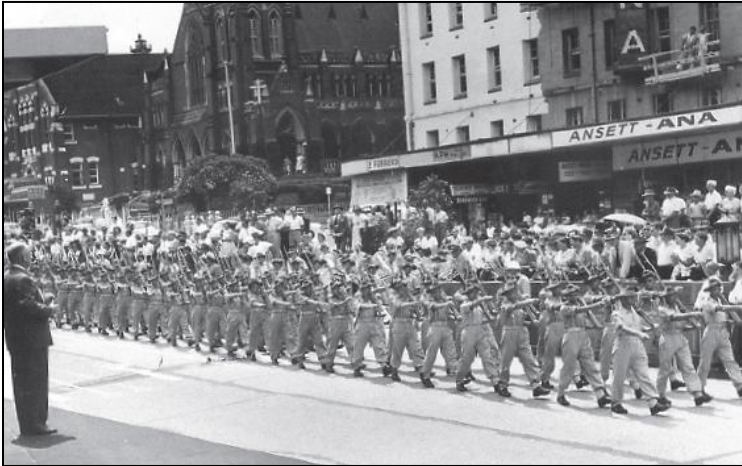
Cost tie or scarf is \$ 25.00 plus postage. Association badges are still available from the Queensland Association. Place your order with the Queensland Association. Phone or email Barry Lutwyche.

THE 1 TOPO CHALLENGE COIN



The coins are for sale to members for \$10 00 each. Orders are to be placed via email to CPL Amanda Iglesias in the 1 Topo orderly room. Email: amanda.iglesias@defence.gov.au.

60th ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL SERVICE – 8 to 11 September 2011



Townsville will host Australia's biggest reunion of National Servicemen with four days of celebrations

Events include Meet and Greet; Public Concert; Dinner Dance; Commemorative Service; Parade; Farewell BBQ.

Costs: National Service 60th Anniversary registration \$50; Dinner Dance \$62.

For more information ...Email

www.townsville.qld.gov.au; Phone: 07 4727 9570. Emailed Newsletters avail from Madonna.Simmons@townsville.qld.gov.au.

AA MEETING– a new initiative

Perhaps as a result of having our committee meetings and various other functions in the very convivial Alderley Arms Hotel some of our stalwarts have initiated a regular get-together lunch there on a fortnightly basis. The principal initiator is Greg Knight and in his words (slightly edited)...*!have you missed your last "AA" meeting? Don't be square, be there!!*

Here is a regular opportunity to catch up on your AA Meeting and also catch up with all your old Survey Corps mates in a convivial atmosphere, have a good lunch while not shelling out a million quid!!!

Every Wednesday fortnight at 1300hrs, the old stagers, Alex Cairney, Ross Smithwick, Barry Lutwyche and Greg Knight have been partaking of lunch and a few coldies at the Alderley Arms. This get-together has become now a regular event known as our "AA Meeting" (Alderley Arms Meeting)...This name can be construed in so many helpful and meaningful ways (i.e. Lies) to assist your attendance.

*The Corps has had a long, proud association with the Alderley Arms. Smithy, Knighty & Kav can remember being thrown out of there over 40 years ago and we'd dearly love to hear from any other members that can join this elite group. Do the right thing. **DOB A MATE IN!!***

Ed: By my calculation from the issue of this Bulletin the meetings will fall on 8 Jun, 22 Jun, 6Jul and fortnightly thereafter. Give Greg Knight a bell to confirmPh 041 4321 827

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2010 - 2011

In the words of Devey – ***Don't go to sleep on your membership! Keep in touch with your Survey Corps mates by being a paid-up member of your Association.*** We have noted a fall-off of paid-up members and perhaps that is because our Bulletins are freely available to all on our website. But we do need your subscription if only because it is the paid up members who represent the true strength of the Association and with that can enjoy the privileges of our subsidized functions. Most of our functions are now to some extent subsidized from our

sponsorship account and while we will never turn away a past member of the Survey Corps it is very appropriate that those Queensland based past RA Survey persons in attending subsidized functions meet their paid-up obligation. Furthermore there are cash costs involved in running the Association – postage, PO box rental, website hosting, bank charges, printing and stationery, ANZAC Day wreath, occasional donations (Red Cross etc) and presentations and awards with associated engraving.

Our financial year runs from September to September. Subscription is but \$15.00 per year. We encourage you to pay three years in advance (or more if you wish). Subscription is waived for veterans aged 75 years and over who have been standing paid-up members of our Association. Pay-up time was at the AGM 4 Sept 10 but it is not too late now.

ANZAC DAY 2011

Stating the obvious – Anzac Day this year happened to be on Easter Monday making a long weekend that extended from Friday to Tuesday incl. Is that the reason our numbers were down at both the Dawn Service and on the city parade? Perhaps it was and some of our regulars were tripping to remote places.



The RAE 2CER cenotaph. Our Assoc wreath there somewhere

The Dawn Service at 2 CER Enoggera lacked some of the panache of past Engineer Dawn Services. There is a Murphy's Law that says 'if it can go wrong it will'. When electronic equipment is the 'it' a degree of certainty comes into play. Engineer Dawn Services usually commence, or at least pre-commence with the screening of a selection of slides ranging from traditional Gallipoli shots to WW2 and on to Vietnam then Afghanistan on a screen erected for the occasion through a video projector. But the gremlins got in and it was well after start time before the first images appeared. But the ceremony finally got underway with prayers, music and addresses. LtCol John Carey, CO of 2CER gave a fine address, a tribute to the original Anzacs; the Gallipoli story – some as young as 16. Col Carey refuted the notion that Anzac Day glorifies war – "There is nothing glorious in killing fellow men"! Australia became a nation in 1901 but it was the Gallipoli legend that drew the nation together he said. The Western Front represented the

absolute horror of WW1 and many of those who survived Gallipoli lost their lives on the Western front.

Association members attending the Dawn Service were our President Alex Cairney, Jim Beard, Greg Knight who place our wreath on the shrine, and Bob Skitch. Our host for the occasion, or more specifically Greg's host since he was our official wreath placer was Lieutenant Cayley Fletcher from 1 Topo. Cayley put up with us old fellows throughout the ceremony and the breakfast with its long queues afterward at the RAE Sportman's Club, a good army breakfast of bacon, eggs, sausages, sav mince and baked beans. Thank you Cayley for your kind attention.

We each made our respective ways to the City and the forming up area in George Street for the big march. Not so many of us this year.



Old soldiers Jim Beard, Alex Cairney, Bob Skitch, Greg Knight



**Our marching mascot Caleb Gibson
No 55**

Those marching from the Association were: Rowan Shipley our leader this year, Bruce Gordon (who carried the 'great theodolite'), Tony Gee, Grant Small, Brian Cosford, Ian Fitzgerald, Stan Campbell, Ian Hutchins, Bob Macmillan-Kay (from Maryborough), Bob Skitch, LVJ Smith in the wheelchair with son William providing locomotion, and from 1 Topo Sergeant Kim Baker with banner men Corporal Brenden Patrick and Lance Corporal Ben Wilinski.. Peter and Barbara Bates-Brownsword caught up with us at the end of the parade, Peter having marched with the National Service Band and Barbara with the WRAAC contingent. Percy Long started with us but needed to withdraw part way along. Percy has had a couple of small strokes in the past twelve months that have made him a little tottery. Wheelchair next year Perc like LVJ. Alex Cairney waved us off at the start (wheelchair for you next year Alex) and Greg Knight had to pull out at the saluting dais when his leg gave up. We had one other marcher with us. I noticed at about knee level to my side in George Street (I was the RH marker) was a young fellow trying to keep in step – quite a challenge as it turned out.

He was from the Boys Brigade and carried our contingent number – 55. His name was Caleb Gibson and he carried out his role with great seriousness, not missing a single beat. For the record I would say that our march this year was little short of shambolic. We had some sort of band behind us who played at anything but a consistent tempo. It was impossible to maintain the step and with that there were frequent stop- starts. Nevertheless, our blokes tried hard and never gave up unlike the mob in front of us!



L to R Bob Skitch, Bob Macmillan-Kay, Rowan Shipley, Barbara Bates-Brownsword (front) Peter Bates-Brownsword (with skerry on head) Tony Gee, Bruce Gordon (no he is not standing on a box), Stan Campbell, Sgt Kim Baker, LCpl Ben Wolinski, Brian Cosford, LVJ Smith, Grant small, Cpl Brenden Patrick, Ian Hutchings, Ian Fitzgerald. Missing in action – Alex Cairney, Greg Knight, Percy Long.

THE PNG PLAQUE

It is all going to happen – at 0730h on Sunday 24 July at the Ela Beach Memorial Park. Mr Mick Pye, recently appointed President of the Port Moresby RSL has taken it strongly in hand and is making it happen. Invitations have gone out from the RSL to His Excellency Mr Michael Ogio, Governor General of Papua New Guinea; Mr Ian Kemish AM, High Commissioner of Australia; Brigadier General Francis Agwi, DMS, OBE, Commander PNGDF; Colonel Mark Shephard CSC, Head of Australian Defence Staff – PNG. The plaque draped with the Australian and PNG flags will be unveiled by the Governor General. And from the RA Survey Association – Percy Long is to place the wreath, Peter Bates-Brownsword and Bob Skitch who will say a few words. A very comprehensive and attractive programme has been created by Mr Mick Pye. It includes a brief (very brief) history of both wartime and post war mapping of PNG. Bob will enlarge on this in his address (no more than 7 minutes).

PS His Excellency Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio, the Governor General of Papua New Guinea has advised that he will be in attendance for the unveiling of the Survey Plaque. Also the Deputy High Commissioner Mr John Feakes representing the High Commissioner who will be absent in Canberra.

REFLECTIONS ON AN AUSTRALIAN TOUR BY A CANADIAN EXCHANGE OFFICER

I received an email from a name that was distantly familiar to me. It said – *Bob, would you be able to share with me a link to your Bulletin? I might be able to hook this up with some Canadian surveyor links. Thanks....Dave.*

I responded with a 'who are you' sort of email and within an hour the 'Dave' replied back with....

Hi Bob. I was the third and last exchange officer at the Regiment from Canada. I must have broken it. Half way through the exchange I asked for something more exciting and I was posted to Adelaide and became George Ricketts' 2IC in PNG on OP Sea King. I am retired but heavily engaged in the history of military mapping in Canada and the national military engineer's association. We just produced our second edition of our history and are about to have a formal handover of the volumes to MCE. The book covers all the exchanges between our outfits and the names like Cattell, Hebblethwaite, and Wilson are featured.

I was at the Regiment from Aug 1973-Aug 1975, detached to 4 Sqn May 74-Feb 75. Don Ridge was CO along with Peter Constantine, John Cattell, Kevin Walsh, Frank Bryant, Derek Evans, Arthur Henson, Tommy Royle, John Winzar, Lofty Mason RAAF, Graham Baker, Terry Edwards, Gary Kenney, Jim Mitchell, Natalie Spry, Barbara Watson, Bob John among others.

I still have the nominal role for 4 Sqn and the Sea King report. I was promoted Major while in Australia and replaced George briefly as OC when he was promoted Lt Col at the end of the PNG trip.

My exchange was a highlight of my career although I did piss off some of your HQ staff in Canberra. Thanks for the links, I will check them out. I still keep regular contact with Terry Edwards, Bob John, Peter Bion, and David (Hebblethwaite). I miss "The Angry Ant" terribly! Dave Carney

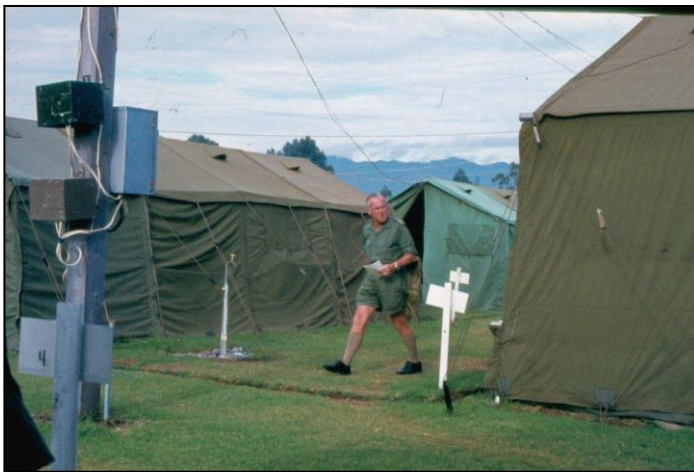
I thought....This 'Dave Carney' must know the John Sinclair that I know, or knew. The one who was featured in Bulletin 41 (April 2010) in the Personalia section with an item initiated by Bill Boyd about John Sinclair – you know, the John Sinclair (Canadian exchange officer who loved us all so much he joined the Australian Army). It was a nice story about how John on his return to Canada took on a history project – 'One Hundred Years of Canadian Military Mapping' handsomely reviewed in the publication 'Niagara This Week'. I made mention of this to Dave Carney and Dave replied

Ha! You are making the same mistake that has confounded us over here for years. There are TWO John Sinclairs. I know them both well. Your John is retired and lives in the Canadian Rockies. Both of his daughters are now married happily and John and Doreen enjoy the grandchildren and a lot of golf.

Our John is the coordinating author of our history and lives in the Niagara Falls area. I have been working with Big John Sinclair, as we call him, on the history project for over seven years now. Our book just went into second printing. I sent a copy to Don Swiney when it first came out. I eventually became Director of our Survey before taking over the Canadian federal mapping programmes.....Dave

I asked Dave to provide a few words on the Sea King Project and he responded with heaps of photographs:...

The Sea King Operation was a highlight of my military career and one that I will always remember. It



An "action" shot of George Ricketts on OP Sea King at Goroka main base camp.

was an excellent demonstration of leadership and team work. Leadership at all levels but mostly led by George Ricketts with his quiet confidence and steady hand on the tiller. The cooperation with Army Aviation, the RAAF, and the soldiers from 3 RAR assisting the Sappers on remote aerodrome and geocover stations, and the security provided by the PNGDF was a model of efficiency. Many years later I managed to discover an AAvn pilot by the name of Bill Mellor serving an exchange post in the US. He was one of the pilots with us in PNG and he told me that by the time he was in the US he had served on a number of operations in support of the surveyors and that, in his opinion, OP Sea King was the best run and gave a deserving tribute to George Ricketts.

I don't want to discredit any other RASvy operation as I am sure most were just as successful and well run as my limited experience but I thought it was a nice thing to say about George many years after the fact. Although George's background was in cartography, he proved to be a very able field surveyor respected by all in 4 Sqn.

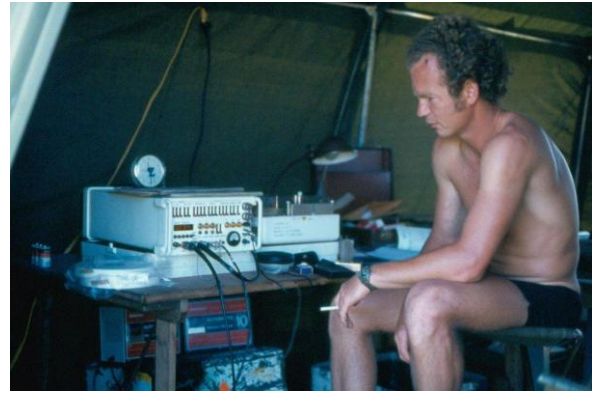
Then there was the Gumi Race... There was an annual floating raft race down the Asaro River that was run by the locals in Goroka called a Gumi Race. Here are some snaps of the participants from 4 Sqn and attachments. One raft contains RAEME staff I think and one 4 Sqn and the other RASigs I think. It was a lot of fun and a great time for the lads to let their hair down on a Sunday.

Best wishes from Canada and the Mapping and Charting Establishment.....Dave



The Gumi Race

Other Sea King photos....



(1) WO2 Charles Kovacs doing computations after the return of field books with aerodist data. He was known during the operation as "Masta Sarley".

(2) SSgt Eddie Schultz checking data on the geociever.

And a couple of social ones....



(1) Jack & Phil Gore and Ruth and Dave Carney

(2) A reunion with friends many years after my exchange with Terry and Julie Edwards and John and Jess Winzar in a restaurant in Bendigo

Dave was married to Ruth at Hahndorf with many RA Svy identities attending. Ruth is Canadian and joined Dave part way through his tour. Dave says....'Our first child was a girl who we named Adelaide Sarah Carney. (Adelaide sounded nicer than Hahndorf as a name!)'. She now has produced our first grandchild and we are very excited about that!

THE 'BRISBANE LINE'

At Caloundra there is a plaque set in a concrete plinth on the headland between Kings Beach and the Centaur Memorial that proclaims *Along the coast Caloundra was the northern most point of the Brisbane line of defence etc.* Did it exist or didn't it? Is it but a myth, a fiction that shocked the public at the time? Fact or fiction there is some truth supporting both sides of the debate. There is a map held by the AWM that depicts what became known as the Brisbane Line, a map of Australia with a straight line drawn from Brisbane to Melbourne. The line was drawn by General Ivan Mackay in February 1942. The circumstances of its drawing are not clear – it may have been a 'doodle' – but one that simply defined the strategically critical area to be defended should Australia be invaded from the north. What was in the good General's mind at the time? Certainly not the withdrawal of all forces to the south and east of that line and applying a scorched earth policy to the remainder of Queensland, indeed, the remainder of

Australia. I have read somewhere that General Macarthur on hearing of it ordered its immediate abandonment; that it reflected a defeatist attitude. If that is true, well perhaps. That the line was drawn is certainly a fact. Its purpose remains in the realm of conjecture. Recent war historians can find no official policy record reflecting the thinking behind it. Nevertheless – here at Caloundra it is marked by a plaque on a concrete plinth.....**Bob Skitch at Caloundra.** (Ref 'Caloundra during WW2)

CLEWSIE – THE 'MAJOR'

Bob Skitch

While in Corryong country (see Personalia item) Bill and Ann Boyd visited the memorial hut of Lieutenant Colonel Clews better known to his contemporaries as 'The Major', or simply 'Clewsie'. Following his retirement from RA Svy, Clewsy worked for the Snowy Mountain Hydro Electric Authority initially as Chief Surveyor (I think) and then in final retirement as some sort of unofficial caretaker and gate keeper. He built a mud brick hut high up on a mountain side and when Wendy and I visited the Major in about 1974 it was quite beautiful, surrounded by just about every sort of geranium ever created. Clewsie was very hospitable and entertained us for an hour or two with cups of billy tea from his indoor smoky fire hobs and stories in his rolling Somerset accent. To visit Clewsie's hut is something of a pilgrimage. Bill comments: *The hut has been maintained by a four wheel drive club as I recall. They and other groups with vested interests in such places of emergency shelter do a great job on these remote structures. I left my name in the visitors' book with reference to my association with RASvy. On the wall was the name of an ex-staff sergeant who the note said in essence, was one of "The Major's" men.*

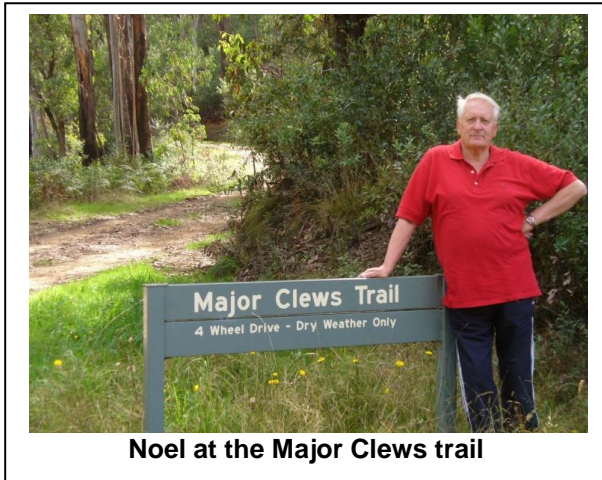
The "Idlers 4 WD Club" of which Ann's sisters and husbands are members was fascinated with the story of "The Major", particularly seeing as they had someone with them who had actually met Clewsie. I spoke briefly with him on one of his visits to the school when I was an instructor. I can recall him saying "These young blokes are much smarter than I ever was".

His memory is esteemed in the high country if the odd local comment is anything to go by.



(1)The Clews Cairn. The plaque reads 'In memory of Lieut Colonel HPG Clews "The Major" 1890 -1980. Royal Australian Survey Corps 1912-1948; Snowy Mountains Authority 1950 -1958

(2) The Clews Hut. Not quite as I saw it in 1974 – no geraniums and no smoky chimney – and a flat roof!



Noel at the Major Clews trail

Bill is not the only one to reflect on Clewsie. The following is adapted from the latest issue of the South Australian Association newsletter (Noel Sproles is the editor)...

Noel and Lynda Sproles headed into the 'high country' and the Kosciusko National Park after attending a wedding in Canberra in March Noel reports in the SA Newsletter 'On our way out of the Park and just seventeen kilometres from Khancoban I spotted a sign that pointed to the 'Major Clews Trail'. Although Major Clews left the army before my time, his was a name that still rang a bell for me. Major Clews was a well know identity in the Corps 'way back when'. He served in the Corps between the wars as well as during WWII. He finished his time in the army in the mid-1950s as a

major and as OC of (then) E Comd Fd Svy Section. He went to work with the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority and eventually settled in Khancoban. He was obviously well known in the area for a trail to be named in his honour. So, if anyone knows more details, we would be interested in finding out the story behind it. I would be happy to publish the story as it would be an interesting addition to our Corps history'.

LVJ SMITH RECALLS:

Ed: *Coulthard-Clark's history tell us that 2 Topo Svy Coy (CMF) was raised in July 1951 to meet the National Service on-going training commitment to provide part time survey training following completion of the 98 days of full time military training. The unit was commanded by Lt Col Kurrle and reached a peak strength of 180 trainees and regular army cadre. With the cessation of that early form of National Service the unit was disbanded in 1960.*

This is where LVJ's story starts: He recalls that he was the Sergeant survey instructor at 2 Topo and Acky Barber the Sergeant carto/litho instructor and at the time both sported substantial moustaches. From their headquarters training base in East Melbourne each intake of Nashos undertook a three week camp under canvas and the first one that LVJ recalls was at Puckapunyal. LVJ organised a schedule of field activities that included plane tabling. The training area fell within the inch to the mile map sheets of Nagambie and Tallarook. For reasons known to LVJ the two map sheets were to be joined along the sheet edge before issue to the students, one joined map to each student. For this purpose the Army provided bottles of Clag glue, but no brushes. The sheet margins were to be trimmed off with a razor blade, one margin remaining, covered in Clag and the adjoining sheet stuck down over it so that the map detail matched. Fifty copies were required and LVJ did about twelve using his finger for a glue brush and left the remainder for the students to complete while he went off attending to other matters. When he returned he found that instead of using Clag they had stuck the maps together with sticky tape. Not good – you can't draw over sticky tape, at least not the sort of sticky tape used in the early '50s.

Question from a somewhat annoyed Sergeant LVJ: 'Why didn't you use the Clag provided – sticky tape is no bloody good?'

Answer from cowering students: "There weren't any glue brushes Sarge!"

LVJ: "How do you think I joined that first lot?"

Answer from one rather cheeky student: "But Sarge, you have a mo."

Engineers at Pucka decided to have a Sergeant's Mess dining night and the survey sergeants were invited – LVJ and Acky. A good night was had by all but LVJ on returning to his tent – his bunk bed was in one corner of it – found some dirty bastard had 'dumped' in the middle of his floored tent. There it was, an ugly repulsive mess with bits of screwed up toilet roll and a puddle of water. LVJ doesn't divulge what his immediate action was but closer investigation showed that the unmentionable was nothing more than a cleverly created and highly realistic paper machete replica.

PERSONALIA

Des Ceruti has read my Vietnam writing from the website and has emailed as follows:

Apologies for not having acknowledged your e-mail but I wanted to finish reading your Vietnam reminisces which turned out to be a rather long winded affair on my laptop, it amounted downloading the appropriate file and waiting about twenty minutes before it condescended to appear on the screen, if it did appear! However I finished on Anzac Day and found the reading most interesting which, of course, led me to reminiscing on various tangents of my own, one of which was the testing of north seeking devices while I was in the Div.Loc.Bty survey section. One instrument was the Girolet the gyro of which used to topple almost by looking at it! Besides which it was a two man carry with handles either side, not too good when in a hurry, made one wonder whoever thought that it could be a tactical device. I am glad that you did commit your reminisces to paper they completed the tale of the Survey Vietnam commitment. If my opinion is worth anything I appreciate the difficulties inherent in what was initially, a rather amorphous posting with floating personnel and finally, and more

importantly, integrating the Corps back into the frontline Army at the hands on level. Best regards. Des Ceruti

Peter Davis is a new non-RA Svy member. Peter served with the Medical Corps (RAAMC)

as an ARA RAP sergeant. He was at Enoggera from 1980 to 1984 during which time he was (in his words) Forward Base Medic/Camp i/c and general Mr Everything – and very good at it! Peter discovered our website and contacted secretary Barry Lutwyche. He has paid his subs and is now an Association member. Peter lives in retirement on Bribie Island at Belara, just around the corner from Tony and Loretta Gee. His email address is peterdavis2@aapt.net.au. Welcome aboard Peter – hope to see you at one of our events.

Peter emailed further.....With regard to future functions, would you be able to organise a team of 24 lawn bowlers to have a social game here on Bribie Island. I belong to the Bongaree Bowls

Club and within that club we have a small band of elite players known as THE PIRATES. We are a very social lot and enjoy a game of bowls with a laugh, a cold beer and a lot of fun. We only play triples because anything else is too hard. There are no women involved either.(how good is that!!!!!!)

Anyway,should you be interested,please give me a call on 3408 6312.or email at the above address.

Regards, Pete Davis **Ed – Anyone for bowls??**

Dawn Laing emails – I have just booked my accommodation at the United Service Club for two nights of 29/30 June because I would very much like to attend the Dinner again this year. I can't believe it is two years since I was last in Brisbane. I enjoy the occasion very much and love catching up with you all. So would you book me a place, please. I also wanted to say how much I enjoy the newsletter and how often it has hit me how much Alex would enjoy it too. In fact it is wonderful to read the newsletters coming out of all the states now. Many names are still familiar to me and I often wish that I could rely on my memory for all the details of non-technical stories Alex used to tell me, especially after a stint out in the wilds of central Western Australia! Looking forward to the 30th. Cheers... Dawn Laing

Bob Williams emails.*I've just been browsing more newsletters. I feel, just like me, there are many frustrated surveyors who feel that our nation has lost an important capability. I have been writing my story in my retirement - of course my 'full story' will never be published. I have attached my story for the period 1965-1991. I hope you find it interesting. It certainly is a unique story. I sent a copy to Gary Warnest some months ago but I don't believe that Gary knows how to handle it. I would be interested in your view or any errors of fact that I might have made.....*Regards Bob Williams

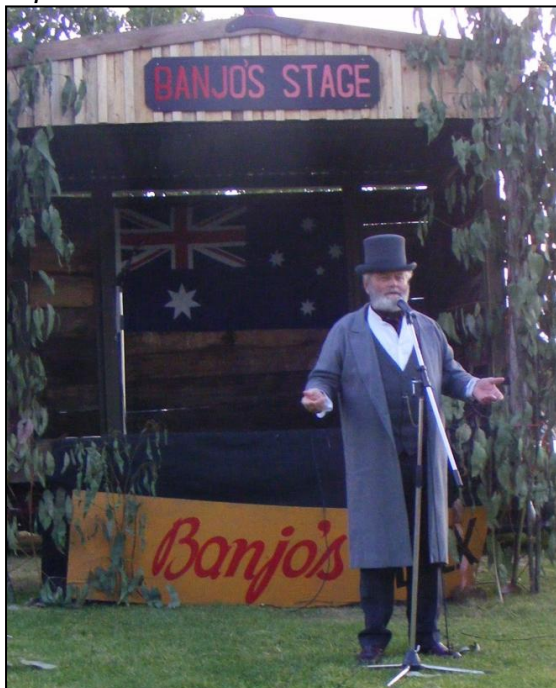
Ed: *I hold an electronic copy of Bob's story and although not at this point having read it in detail I have perused it at length. It is a very interesting and illuminating account. With Bob's permission I would gladly email it on to any who might be interested. Dr Bob was one of several*

very talented people that the Corps developed but finally lost.

Mick Symmons phoned seeking a contact with Lou Sommer in Melbourne. Mick and Lou worked together in the 1958-61. Mick was planning a trip south and checking out old mates. Mick has sold his plant nursery just out of Nambour and has bought a house in Caboolture in an estate opposite the hospital. He finds retired life a bit boring but does some unpaid part time work in a nursery at Burpengary. Mick said his general health is good but has to undergo a 'carpal tunnel' operation. Carpal Tunnel apparently is in the wrist and a nerve within can become pinched by swollen tendons causing considerable discomfort and numbness in the hand with loss of grip. It is caused by over work, especially repetitive hand actions. Mick's phone number is 07 5495 6388.

Ed: In 1958 on the Charters Towers-Tennant Creek tulle traverse Mick Symmons and Dave Owens worked together as a team. They became known as the 'terrible twins'. I think Malachy Hayes first christened them that and even OC Jim Stedman referred to them as such. In fact they were a great combination.

Bill Boyd attended the Corryong week long Poet's Festival reciting both some of his own poems and entering the *Man from Snowy River* recitation competition. Bill emails... *It was an experience for sure. I received two*



encouragement awards and came third in the competition for the recitation of the poem "The Man from Snowy River". I was somewhat of a curio seeing as I was a complete unknown and ended up in the finals of the iconic event of the MFSR recitation. Bill sent me a DVD of his recitations and they are very entertaining as only our Bill can be. The photo is of Bill in full flight...

A Spot for a Plaque?

Bill Boyd in his Corryong-Khancoban ramblings found a plaque *stating the involvement of Corps of Engineer Officers being involved in the Snowy Scheme. What happened to the RASvy Officers, much less the baggy arses? As I understand it RASvy was in at the very beginning.*



You are right Bill. It was 2 then 5 Fd Svy Coys in the late 1940s that undertook the exploratory surveys and mapping of the upper Snowy entering the area on horseback. This is well covered in Coulthard-Clark pages 118 to 121. Clearly there must be a case for a plaque at some appropriate spot – not just for the 'hofficers' but also the baggy arses as Bill so succinctly puts it. One might assume from the wording of the plaque that over a period (1956 - 67) a number of professionally qualified RAE & RE officers were attached to the Scheme no doubt gaining experience they would not get elsewhere. It was after all the largest such scheme ever undertaken in Australia and possibly elsewhere

Who would like to take on the installation of a Survey Corps plaque at Khancoban? It would be an interesting little project. Not far from the ACT Association either!

Dennis Puniard produced a very informative paper for the Mapping Sciences Institute of Australia Conference 2011 – '100 Years of

National Topographic Mapping' on *Australia's Role in the Mapping of Papua New Guinea: from colonial outpost to independent nation*.

In retirement Dennis seems to have left his hi-tech employment behind. He emails:

I am presently in my 5th or 6th career doing a Ph D at University of Canberra (Cycling and Tourism) and some research and teaching across Tourism there. My topic has a fair amount of content in online mapping so has some connection with my lifetime profession.

Most of my family is in Canberra and doing OK. My wife, Margaret (now 20 yrs together) has two of her children in Melbourne so we do get there a bit - especially when the footy is on. Dennis means 'real footy' – AFL!

Peter Jensen's paper *Post-World War II Topographic Mapping by The Royal Australian Survey Corps* for the same conference is another significant contribution to the history of RA Svy. Peter emails:

Ed: Some two years ago Trevor Menzies in Darwin contacted me regarding the Mapping Sciences Institute of Australia Conference 2011 – '100 Years of National Topographic Mapping' asking whether I could produce a paper on the role and involvement of RA Svy. Trevor, never a member of RA Svy but prominent in the Institution of Surveyors, Australia, has been for many years a great supporter. A few years back he caused a commemorative plaque to be installed at the Darwin Cenotaph, Bicentennial Park on the Esplanade. (Bulletin 14 Apr 02) commemorating the contribution of Northern Territory based units of the Survey Corps to the defence of Northern Australia'. I informed Trevor that I was not the man to do that but I felt sure that some of my younger Canberra based colleagues would jump at it. I duly contacted Rob McHenry and the outcome has been the two papers by Peter Jensen and Dennis Puniard. In a word or two – They have done us proud!

VALE

Gordon Haswell It is with sadness that I announce the passing of long time member of the Survey Corps, Gordon Haswell. Gordon was a SSGT in the Survey Regiment Q Store on discharge.

Gary Warnest, Pres ExFortuna Survey Assoc.
For those who knew Gordon well, the

A bit of an epic paper, but I thought it was important to put the Corps' 'national mapping' work in context with everything else that was done post-WWII, and I was asked to include what happened in the 1990s. The paper was well received at the conference with ex-Corps, ex-Natmap and ex-State folk saying they never thought of the big picture of what the Corps was about and appreciated learning of what happened in the 1990s. The paper is not a history in the normal sense, but my views as an insider, perhaps better informed than others in the latter years.

Dennis Puniard's paper also well received. Dennis made the point that there is a project (big) needed to write the history of Army/Survey Corps mapping of PNG before that all disappears in the mist of time - it probably won't be done from PNG ! Peter Raue has asked for a copy for the Engineer Museum Survey Corps Collection.

words of his son the said it all. *'Dad, your suffering is over. So strong willed and bloody minded until the end. Soldier on Dad'.*

Love him or not– Gordon was one of the great characters of RA Survey....Bob

BEACH SURVEYS – Charlie Watson

Ed: *Following on from Jim (Blue) Cullen's account in our last Bulletin I asked Charlie Watson to provide something on what the beach survey project was all about. For most of us engaged at the time on other survey operations we had only a vague idea of what went on on beach surveys. This is Charlie's account:*

There is a little about the start of the Beach Survey in Clarks book P 167.



HMAS MADANG

The JIB had produced a publication which broke up the coastline into sectors and beaches and provided available information on those sectors and beaches and ports.

The general procedure at a beach was for the Divers, SR and Cpl to perform a profile survey at the centre line of the beach, out to 3 fathoms, using an echo sounder with positioning by sextant using a fixed short base line. The profile of the back of the beach was determined by level. The divers would examine any known or clearly visible under water obstructions and examine the nature of the seabed out to 3 fathoms. The surveyors reduced the raw depths to chart datum using predicted tides. They also transferred high and low water heights from the nearest standard port to the local area. The beach profile is critical as it shows whether or not a certain vessel can land at a particular state of the tide without breaching. In a few cases tidal observations were taken to supplement existing tidal data. The mouth of the Sepik River was one location. Blue won't forget that experience or the mozzies.

I worked with the photographer and examined the back of the beach for suitable exits and examined the hinterland for roads and infrastructure and obstacles to movement. We took many Polaroid photos of such things as extremities of beach, panorama of beach, exits, roads, bridges, vegetation types, landing strips, jetties, landing hard's, local plant and equipment, infrastructure (ware houses, hospitals, workshops, accommodation buildings, power generators etc), hard standing areas, obstacles. We sometimes had use of the beach buggy to transport us along the beach if it was going and we could get it ashore in the boat through the surf. Some beaches were quite long and there was often a fair journey to the next beach for the day. Mostly though, we had to hoof it.

I marked up details of the beach on air photos: extremities, length, width, exits, roads etc. I also wrote up most of the final report. A report was also required for each sector. This report contained information about the general suitability of the sector for landings (weather, tides, sea, swell, surf, anchorages, approaches, communications, hinterland) and included details of medical services, missions, local populations and resources available (food supplies, water, timber, stone and gravel). Detailed reports were also required for all ports. There was a list to requirements to be examined and photographed.

We did not have the expertise or resources to complete a full beach survey as per the established doctrine. This would have required an engineer officer and some transport experts plus some equipment to test the bearing capacity for various types of vehicles. We did take a lot of samples of beach material for later testing, and sometimes dug holes in the beach to 24in to see its composition.

The first army team in 1969 was Capt Jim Bownds and Cpl Jock Kay, followed by myself and Cpl R (Chuck) Cooper. In 1970 there was Jim and Jock, followed by myself and Cpl Chris Dalhberg, then 2 Lt Ian Shepherd and Cpl John Dean. I don't know who participated after that as I was in Vietnam in 1971. The survey was completed in a further two to three years.

Keep in mind that the requirement was for a preliminary/ recce survey rather than a full beach survey which neither Defence, or any of the services was prepared to fund. Such a survey would still be going.

The Survey team consisted of a Naval Officer (Clearance Diver), Army officer (RA Svy), Survey Recorder (RAN), Cpl (RASvy), AB(PHOT) and a couple of Clearance divers/ boatmen.

Full Beach surveys were conducted on some beaches in WA (OP Beachcomber) in later years and consumed considerable resources.

In a second email Charlie added....

I forgot to mention the areas that we worked. Jim Bownds started at the boundary with Indonesia at Wutong and finished near Aitape. The US Forces did a big (unopposed) landing at Aitape in WW2 to capture the several airfields nearby. Australian forces took over after the US moved further north. I started at Aitape and finished about Bogia. In the second year (1970) Jim worked the south coast around Daru and Milne Bay as the weather was not suitable on the North Coast. I worked from Bogia to Saidor. Saidor was also the scene of a big US Landing in WW2. Jim was subsequently posted as SO Svy at HQ PNG in Port Moresby.

I should mention something about the RAN side.

HMAS Lorengau was situated on Los Negros Island which was separated from Manus Is by a channel only about 100 yards wide. This channel was filled with old rusted small landing craft. Los Negros was the area of the US Landings on Manus and the scene of some bitter fighting. The wartime harbour off Manus Is was named Seeadler Harbour. It was very large and was swept to about 50 feet by a wire sweep. The Philippines invasion fleet gathered there. It also had extensive naval repair facilities including large floating docks. There were several large airfields on Los Negros which were only visible on the ground by the PSP matting under the vegetation. The current commercial airfield named Momote is also on Los Negros. Significantly most of the Manus Is was defoliated with chemical sprays in WW2. This was supposed to have killed all of the snakes but I can assure you that there are many big ones that survived.

The base commander at Lorengau was CMDR George Halley. The XO was LCDR Boyd Fegan. Coincidentally Boyd's wife and Jim Bownds had grown up in Bethanga (near Albury). The patrol boat squadron comprised four attack class patrol boats, *HMAS's Aitape, Lae, Samarai and Madang*. *Madang* was only nominally part of the squadron as it was tasked for beach surveys (under command for local administration). On completion of the beach surveys it was to become part of the squadron. The senior CO was LCDR Sam Batemen *HMAS Aitape*. LEUT Ken Flindall was CO *HMAS LAE* and LCDR (CD) Terry Jones was CO *HMAS Madang*. I can't remember who was the CO of *Ladava*, except that he was an older chap. Sam Bateman became a CDRE and commanded the Naval Studies Centre for some time. I have met him quite often in Canberra. In his early career he did some recce surveys on *HMAS Banks* around Darwin and Van Diemen's Gulf. Ken Flindall went into computers and I have met him a couple of times in Defence although he lives in WA. Terry Jones was the manager of the maritime museum at Darling Harbour in Sydney for many years. Ken Heynatz, the later commander of *Madang* was last reported missing on his yacht of the coast of Madagascar.

Lorengau was also the site of a SECOR tracking station operated by the Royal Engineers. RA Svy also operated some satellite tracking operations from this site in later years.

Naval abbreviations: CD – Clearance Diver (navy SAS); SR – Survey Recorder; AB – Able Bodied Seaman, ie a fully trained seaman (not a rank). Leading Seaman is equivalent to a corporal.

TRIG STATIONS – Do we need them?

What we commonly call trig stations still grace many hill features around Australia, some bearing a cairn, pole and disc, more than likely in a state of disrepair, others a more permanent looking monument, a pillar, with brass plaque set in its top, some having even become tourist features, marking a lookout with directions to surrounding hills and distant cities but others simply a small plaque at ground level, unnoticed by all but the interested and discerning. Not only in Australia but also overseas in both British and foreign lands. In this age of GPS capable of fixing and spelling out coordinate values to an absolute accuracy of a centimetre (so it is said), the traditional trig station established after years of hard work in harsh conditions, over the past three centuries, seems to have lost both its scientific and

geographic significance. Here are a couple visited by Bob Skitch in his 2009 rambling around Great Britain.....



North Wales – Graig Fawr trig pillar & me



Mount Snowdon direction plaque



North Wales – Graig Fawr, the feature
Yes – I climbed it!



Top of Mount Snowdon & me
I climbed only the last little bit

FROM THE OTHER STATE ASSOCIATIONS

NSW – March 2011

- Anzac Day details
- Museum News – RA Svy instruments on display at AAMME exhibition Nov 10 to Mar 11
- Vales
- PNG Plaque

Victoria – Magna Carto April 2011

- 70th Anniversary of Rats of Tobruk
- The passing of Harry Wright – many photos and a great story

- Anzac Day details 3 Aust Fd Svy Coy AIF in Melbourne at the Cenotaph
- Anzac Day – Bendigo
- Report on visit to PNG Lands Dept by John Phillips and Peter Barrett
- A nostalgic visit by John Collins CBE RE Exchange Officer mid 1970s
- Nominal Roll update
- Sam Chambers and Alex Munro now OBEs
- PNG Plaque
- Bendigo happy Hour now first Friday
- Magna Carto post-out

ACT Association – April 2011

Ed: The following two papers presented at the Mapping Sciences Institute of Australia Conference 2011 - 100 Years of National Topographic Mapping on 29th March this year by Peter Jensen and Dennis Puniard are a significant contribution to the history of the Royal Australian Survey Corps. The abstracts are presented below.

The papers in full have been published as two special editions of the **ACT Newsletter April 2011**. Both Peter and Dennis have 'done us proud' in their research and presentation to an important audience.

POST-WORLD WAR II TOPOGRAPHIC MAPPING BY THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS

A paper by Peter Jensen, Lieutenant-Colonel (ret), ex-RA Svy (pajmjensen@gmail.com)

Presented at the Mapping Sciences Institute of Australia Conference 2011 - 100 Years of National Topographic Mapping on 29th March this year.

Abstract

After post-World War II demobilisation and Army structural changes in 1946/47, the Australian Survey Corps personnel strength was less than 300, being only about a sixth of the Corps' wartime strength. Army was not prepared to diminish this essential capability to the unsatisfactory state of preparedness that existed before the war when there were fewer than 50 members of the Survey Corps. The Corps reverted to its peacetime role of conducting surveys and mapping to meet priority military needs, but it was soon called upon for nation building projects where there was limited capability and capacity in early post-war civilian organisations. From the mid-1950s to the 1980s, Royal Australian Survey Corps elements which were not required for solely military purposes were employed on priority defence areas of the national survey and topographic mapping programs that were approved by Government. By the early-1980s the Corps had largely completed its commitments to the national programs and embarked on a Defence program of larger-scale topographic mapping of Australia. In part this led to a number of reviews in relation to arrangements for mapping for Commonwealth agencies including Defence. Defence had also committed to administrative efficiency programs of its support functions and the Corps' activities were submitted to testing under the Defence Commercial Support Program. This was a major contributing factor that led to decisions to totally reorganise the Army survey and mapping force, with the non-core strategic work being contracted to a new Army agency staffed by civilians, the core land combat and training survey force being augmented and reintegrated with the Royal Australian Engineers in 1996 and the core strategic mapping function transferred to Defence and later Defence Intelligence. The post-war Royal Australian Survey Corps played a prominent and influential leadership role in the survey and topographic mapping of Australia and most nations in Australia's region. This paper addresses the Corps' post-war role, organisation, policies, tasking, achievements, influences in the development of topographic mapping in Australia, legacies and the key decisions that were part of the major reorganisation in the mid-1990s leading to the end of the Royal Australian Survey Corps on 1st July 1996.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE MAPPING OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA: FROM COLONIAL OUTPOST TO INDEPENDENT NATION A paper by Dennis Puniard (puniard@grapevine.com.au) Presented at the *Mapping Sciences Institute of Australia Conference 2011 - 100 Years of National Topographic Mapping on 29th March* this year.

Abstract:

In 1906 Britain passed control of the Territory of Papua to Australia and in 1914, at the start of World War 1 (WWI), the previously German Territory of New Guinea came under Australian control. At the end of WWI, in 1920, Australia assumed administrative control over what is now Papua New Guinea. At the end of World War 2 (WWII), after the Japanese occupation of a large part of PNG during the war, the whole of PNG came under Australian control until PNG became an Independent nation in 1975.

During this period from 1906 to 1975, Australians had responsibility for the surveying and mapping of the whole country. Until the start of WWII the country was virtually unmapped and the efforts of our military forces were considerably hindered by poor mapping through the Kokoda campaign and beyond.

By 1980 (5 years after independence) Australia had completed the 100,000 mapping series for the whole country, which was now better mapped than the Australian mainland.

This paper will explore the role of Australia in the surveying and mapping of PNG from the 1900's through to the present day. The paper will highlight the efforts of both military and civilian cartographers in mapping one of the most inhospitable and inaccessible countries on the planet.