



SURVEY
EX-SERVICEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



NEWSLETTER No. 13
SEPTEMBER 1995

EDITORIAL

We need to apologise for the lateness of the newsletter. Our chief writer Alex, has had a bad viral infection for the past few weeks which created a few problems for the newsletter team and put things a bit behind schedule. Alex is now on the road to recovery.

I recently have purchased a new computer and you will probably notice an improvement with the quality of the text in the newsletter. I've now got the software (computer jargon for computer programmes) to produce better quality and setout for our newsletter.

I'm using the new version of Word 6 for Windows if you're interested and I thoroughly recommend it for word processing.

Don't forget to contact either Alex or myself if you have any articles of interest for the Christmas newsletter as we need to start work on that within the next month or so.

JIM DUNN.

SICK LIST

ALEX LAING

Underwent surgery for the removal of a cancerous growth from the bowel, earlier in the year. To the best of our knowledge, Alex has recovered fully and returned to his job in P.N.G. about July. (Info from Pat Cox)

PAT LONG

Had an operation in May this year, but we have no idea as to what the problem was, except that Pat has recovered OK, or so we hope. (News from Pat Cox).

CLEM SARGENT

Operated on at St. Vincents Hospital in Sydney some time back, but have no idea as to why. Clem has apparently recovered fully and getting around as well as ever. (Info from Magna Carto No. 56)

ELAINE STRACHAN

George Ricketts has reported that Elaine is presently receiving treatment for the cancer condition that was diagnosed over 12 months ago. We all hope for better news.

WINDING DOWN AT KESWICK BARRACKS

4 Field Survey Squadron will disband at Keswick Barracks on 1st May, 1996. Various dates have been reported in the newsletter previously, but this is definite.

The closure of the Army Survey Regiment next year, has meant that the squadron is automatically forced to close as well, after about 45 years at Keswick and other places.

The winding down has already started. All members on strength have been requested to elect an option as to what they wish to do in the future. Options available are voluntary discharge, corps transfer, posting to Brisbane with 1 Topo Svy Sqn., or take up a civilian position with the new Army Topographic Support Establishment (ATSE) in Bendigo.

Unfortunately, those who do not wish to discharge, and are unable to find acceptance in the other options, would become redundant and have to discharge eventually. This situation is not expected but is a possibility. A bit of a shock to anyone who had planned a long term career in the corps, based on former conditions.

Acceptance of preferred options will be known around the end of September this year, and by about mid December, most squadron members will have been processed according to their elected choice, and moved out from Keswick.

Those remaining will be progressively processed until all are gone by April. Major Peter Demaine will probably remain as OC, supervising the clean-up until the end of April, '96.

I'm sure all Association members will join me in wishing all squadron members the very best of health and luck in the future, and hoping everything turns out well for them and their families.

LOST AND FOUND

I had to laugh at the last Anzac Day re-union at Keswick Barracks. There we were all getting our lunch and a few people were asking where George Ricketts and Bob Love were. Someone said they were at the Anzac Day march in the morning and they said they were coming back to Keswick. Being the 50th anniversary since the finish of the Second World War, we thought maybe they had another show to go to. Well, they finally arrived sometime after 1 p.m. and I asked them to please explain.

Apparently, they were waiting, waiting, waiting for the Survey transport to take them back to Keswick, but it went past them without the driver stopping. Well they ended up catching the bus back to Keswick after the long walk during the march.

Well, we can understand them not being missed because they are only our President and Vice-President of the association! Neither were amused.

JIM DUNN

ANZAC DAY MARCH 1995

The day was fine and mild, which was good for the various Dawn Services held. Fourteen of us met in Victoria Square for the march, which was reasonable considering our small numbers plus Sapper Matthew Arnold to carry our banner. Unfortunately with 4 Fd Svy disbanding next year, we will not have a serving soldier to do this in future.

The march started on time, but as usual took about two hundred metres before the various units settled into full stride. We were able to hear the band in front of us about as well as the band to our rear, which at times was bit awkward for marching, but could have been worse.

The crowd was as large and appreciative as always, and the salute was taken by the Governor of South Australia, Dame Roma Mitchell, in front of Torrens Parade Ground.

Included in the newsletter are two photos, one during the march and one after in Pennington Gardens. Bernie Watson missed the march, being ill on the day(now OK), Stan Stevens made the trip down from Port Augusta and Paul Alderson was there for the first time. All Association members are eligible to march in the parade, so how about it next year.



Anzac Day March 1995. George Ricketts leading the push.



L to R Unknown school cadet, Alex Munro, George Ricketts, Allan Adsett, George Campbell-Kennedy, Bob Cooper, Jack Elverd, John Wicker, Bob Love, Spr. Matthew Arnold, Dave Collins, Pat Cox, Stan Stevens, David Bowyer, John Scharber, Paul Alderson.

A HARRY WRIGHT STORY

Tony Ellis was at the Bendigo library earlier this year, browsing through the history of a locally raised infantry battalion, when the name Wright caught his eye. Sure enough, it was an anecdote about Harry Wright and his father at the siege of Tobruk during the North African campaign. A lot of people know Harry was at Tobruk, but I'm not certain if they knew his father was there at the same time.

The story goes that both were sitting in the open and discussing the merits of a German bombardment in their direction, when they were approached by an officer and offered a cigarette. Wright senior accepted his cigarette but refused to let Harry take one, saying that the lad was too young to be smoking, as at the time he was well under the minimum joining age.

Harry claimed he enlisted under age just to keep an eye on the old boy.

Harry's exploits (and stories) at Fortuna are legion, and I reckon he's still a lad at heart, still living at Drysdale down Geelong way.

THE ARMY SURVEY REGIMENT - THE FINAL CHAPTER

To finish a report in a previous newsletter, a recap might help. Some time ago the Federal Government initiated the Commercial Support Programme(CPS), to replace with civilian staff, service personnel not fully occupied in a direct military/combat role.

The scheme is intended to maximise the return from every dollar expended by the Australian Defence Force(ADF), the theory being that it will be much more economical to employ credentialled civilians against the cost of fully training and maintaining service members, in doing the same job.

Unfortunately, all tasks performed within the Regiment were considered suitable for civilianisation. The scenario reported previously, based on the most probable rumour at the time, was that the situation would resolve in a composite organisation of about roughly equal numbers of service personnel and civilians, will not occur.

A completely new organisation has been formed named the Army Topographical Support Establishment (ATSE), consisting entirely and only of about 150 civilians, with perhaps the odd service liaison officer. The new establishment will be responsible for topographical mapping within Australia and to operate its new charter, will acquire

new equipment progressively after starting up, to the tune of several million dollars.

The majority of civilian positions are to be offered to existing serving members on a voluntary basis, to take discharge and become public servants. Those electing to serve on will be transferred to other Corps and trades, if no place is available within what remains of the Survey Corps. For the remainder, who are unsuccessful in obtaining a position with ATSE or do not want one and no longer wish to serve on in another Corps, discharge is the only alternative, which is not the best way to finish a career in the service. Perhaps there are good arguments for the present course of events, but only time will tell.

Organising and staffing the new establishment will start in the latter part of this year with the winding down of the Regiment beginning in earnest in December this year.

Administration and control will progressively revert to ATSE during 1996, until on 1st December, 1996, the Army Survey Regiment will cease to exist - ending the final chapter of the way it was, and starting chapter one of the way it's going to be.

NEWS FROM 'MAGNA CARTO'

Kathy McNeale visited Bendigo earlier in the year from her home in Cleveland, Qld.

Tom Sawyers wife, Pauline, flew from W.A. to Bendigo a few months ago, to visit her mother.

Ace Evans and wife Trudi were seen in Bendigo during a caravan holiday from central coast NSW - I think.

Garry and Jeannie Kenny visited Bendigo from Kapooka, where Garry is the padre at the Recruit Training Centre.

Kalen Sargeant is living in Queensland - don't know exactly where.

Kym and Fay Weston are reported to be living in Buderim, QLD.

Lloyd Binion is working in the security business for BHP at Hastings, but has not lost touch with his former Litho training and dabbles in fine art prints.

Blue Hunter is now Dr. Hunter and works as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne in the Dept. of Geometrics.

Legend dies with a bush pioneer

One of Australia's "last true explorers", Mr Len Beadell, died yesterday, aged 72.

An Outback legend, Mr Beadell, who nearly always wore his trademark baggy khaki shorts, built 6000km of road across some of Australia's harshest country.

He surveyed the sites of Woomera's rocket ranges and the Emu and Maralinga Atomic test sites in South Australia's North-West. His surveying and road building opened up 2.5 million sq km of the Gibson, Great Sandy and Great Victoria deserts.

The grey-haired bushman had a mountain and an asteroid named after him.

His association with the bush started in 1947 when, while with the Army Survey Corps, he was chosen to handle Project Woomera. His work for the next 20 years, with the then Department for Supply, involved continual camping, surveying, exploring and roadmaking in regions where white people had never set foot.

The Anne Beadell, Connie Sue and Gary Highways, and Jacqui Junction — named after his wife and three children — are landmarks in the vast deserts.

Ill-health forced him back to the city in the 1960s. Hepatitis and liver damage were diagnosed as "too long in the bush".

He wrote six books about his exploits. Titles included *Too Long in the Bush*, *Blast the Bush* and *Bush Basher*.

OBITUARY

LEN BEADELL

1923-1995

In 1968 Mr Beadell joined the Defence Department's Defence Science and Technology Organisation based at Salisbury, first as a field assistant and then as a graphic designer.

He retired in 1988, but never lost his love for the bush, taking up with his Outback tour operator mate, Dick Lang, as a guide through the areas he had opened up.

Once asked why he couldn't keep away from the bush, he replied: "Freedom, freedom, freedom, open, room, uncomplicated. You can do what you like. Down here in the city you're just one of a big mob of people who gets pushed around by everybody."

Len Beadell received many honors, including a British Empire Medal, an Advance Australia Award and in May, 1989, he collected an Order of Australia Medal for public service and service to literature.

He is survived by his widow and three children. His funeral will be held at 4.30pm on Wednesday at Trinity College Chapel, Gawler.

- Kym Tilbrook

Deserving the Diggers' ultimate accolade

PERMIT one of his wartime mates to pay tribute to NX 13485 Len Beadell, whose passing is recorded (*The Advertiser*, 13/5/95). Kym Tilbrook rightly refers to Len's considerable post-war achievements but his wartime service to Australia in a little known army unit also deserves to be known.

Enlisting at 18 in December, 1941, Len joined the New Guinea Survey Section, later renamed the 8th Field Survey Section AIF, in New Guinea as a reinforcement in October, 1942.

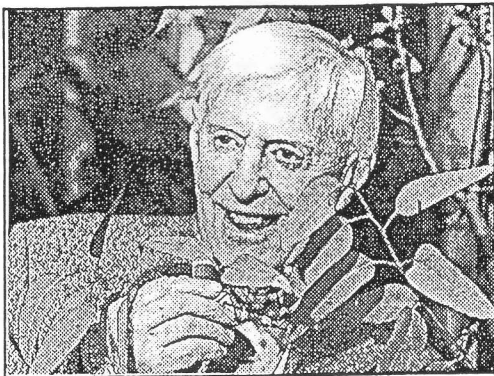
It was the only unit in the Australian Army to serve on the Kokoda Trail (Owers Corner was named after one of its lieutenants, Gerry Owers) and with the Kanga Force which, built around the 6th Division's 17th (Victorian) Brigade, was to become the longest airborne operation of World War II.

One of the roles was to map "future areas of operation" which were, of course, held by the Japanese. As when a six-man party walked into the Markham Valley to map it for the subsequent attack by American paratroops and airborne infantry from the Australian 7th Division. However, mostly they worked in two-man parties, protected only by the jungle.

The only time the unit failed to fulfil the tasks given it was when I was told to blaze a jeep track over the Owen Stanleys to replace the Kokoda Trail and its small, lightly-armed parties were forced back by the Japanese advance.

Commended by General Douglas MacArthur for its work, the unit was disbanded. After home leave, the survivors were posted to larger units, as Len was, or boarded unfit for further active service.

Of the 85 originals and reinforcements, there were recently only 26 known sur-



Len Beadell . . . pioneer of the Outback.

vivors, including Len, and he was looking forward to seeing his old mates for the first time since November, 1943.

Our reunion will be held in Canberra from August 1 and will include wreath-laying ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial and the Carriers Memorial at Manuka, ACT, in tribute to the carriers who served with us and to the people of Papua New Guinea who supported us.

Len would have understood and approved. We shall miss him when the unit's survivors gather at our "last parade". He fully deserves the Diggers' ultimate accolade: "He was a good mate."

BRIAN MURRAY,
Unit Reunion Organiser,
Canberra, ACT.

The Beadell family

HUNDREDS came from near and afar to overflow Trinity College Chapel. We listened to Glenn Miller – Len's favorite music – before and after the coffin was brought in bearing his hat and sand begrimed hobnailed boots.

I sensed his grin and "Crikey" as he walked on stage to his tripod and surveyed us all.

There was gaiety as his family and their padre related their combined families desert treks; former scout mates told us of their days and of the scoutmaster who inspired Len to become a surveyor.

We became part of the Beadell family as his daughter, son and wife played the violin and piano, and a youngster on drums.

The choir sang his favorite hymn and a beautiful rendition of *Amazing Grace* in three different tempos – Len!

His unique humorous books will continue to inspire and educate and we will chuckle at his "Ozzie" rascality.

T. GAVAGHAN,
Salisbury North.

THE Woomera community was saddened to learn last week of the passing of Mr Len Beadell. Len was instrumental in the establishment of the Woomera township, the rocket launching areas, the Maralinga and Emu Field weapons testing sites, and the huge rocket range area (which allowed a rocket to be fired into the atmosphere and retrieved upon re-entry many hundreds of kilometres downrange), that once extended as far as the north-west coast of Western Australia.

His work involved surveying these areas and as such contributed to the selection of various important sites, including the Woomera township. His efforts in the construction of Outback roads allowing access to the remotest parts of the rocket range, including the Gunbarrel and Connie Sue highways, are legendary. Throughout his life, Len maintained a keen interest in the areas where he carried out his trail-blazing work and published several books, cassettes and even a video of his experiences. His achievements are celebrated in displays in Woomera's historical museum, the Heritage Centre.

Woomera remembers his efforts fondly as they constitute not only a major part of the history of our town but that of Australia's entry into the select group of countries pioneering space developments and applications. Len will be greatly missed and Woomera extends its deepest sympathy to his wife, Anne, and family.

ROELOF HOEBEE,
Chairman, Woomera Board.
JOE VAN HOMELEN,
Area Administrator,
Defence Support Centre,
Woomera.



Len Beadell... never gave up his love for the bush.

PEOPLE NEWS (CONT)

PAT COX

Pat and his young brother returned to Crystal Brook a few weeks ago, after a 40 day/16,000 Km tour of the eastern states, travelling to places such as Broken Hill, Wentworth, Batemans Bay, Dubbo, Brisbane, Canberra, etc.

While in Brisbane he visited 1 Topo Svy Sqn., where he marvelled at the new equipment available now, and the technical advances made since he left the service. Pat was thrilled to see that plane tabling has been re-introduced, but not for topo mapping, but as a quick method of drawing up plans of military camps and bases etc. Pat brought back many of the news items included in this newsletter, such as below.

JOHN HILLIER

Still sails regularly on Lake Hume, commuting down to Albury/Wodonga from Canberra most week-ends during the season.

JOHN BULLEN

John has left the Australian War Memorial, after working there for several years, and at the moment is taking things easy at home.

PEOPLE NEWS

ARCHIE HANCOCK (INFO Westlink)

Archie now resides in Geraldton, W.A. Ray Sergeant and Barry Parker called in to see Archie, during their annual 4WD holiday to the Pilbara region from Perth. They consumed more than a jug or two of his home brew and swapped the odd yarn before leaving. Apparently Archie enjoyed the visit, so if anyone is passing that way, call in and see him at the Sun City Caravan Park.

On the down side, his health is not as good as could be suffering from emphysema, also he and Betty went their own separate ways, some years ago.

LAURIE SUTTON

Laurie and Pam Sutton attended the Barossa Wine Festival last April, meeting up with Noel Morrison and Brendon Marshall at Nuriootpa, to sample some of the local produce. Brendon is still in the real estate business in the Barossa region, and Noel and Judy were over from Hastings way in Victoria, where they have a garden shop/nursery business.

PAT GRAHAM

Pat recently underwent surgery to the lower back to correct a condition that would have crippled her in a few years if not found and fixed. She is recovering pretty well and expects to

be back to normal fairly soon. Hope so Pat. It never rains, etc, but son Andrew, now aged 27, had a heart attack in Bendigo not long ago, but apparently is recovering OK. Must have been a trying time for poor old George. Kevin Boehm 'phoned me with the news a few days ago. I'm told Pat and George are now seasoned travellers, going interstate, intrastate and overseas on a fairly regular basis from Bendigo.

JOHN HARRISON

Beside doing the odd survey job around the countryside, John is heavily involved with the Institution of Engineering and Mining Surveyors. He is the convenor for their next National Conference to be held in Alice Springs in 1998 as well as heading three national sub-committees, so is a very busy lad. Anyone wanting information about the conference, ring John on telephone number 261 4610.

CLEM SARGENT

Reported in the Magna Carto that Clem has been honoured with a life membership of the Australian Institute of Cartographers. Congratulations Clem.

BILL & PHILIPA HARVEY

Now living in Canberra, where Bill is employed as a university lecturer.

JOHN BATEMAN & PHIL BATCHELDER

Both former Litho lads at Fortuna, now work for the Queensland Government Printer. John happened to glance into an interstate 'phone book recently at the Brisbane GPO, and on impulse rang Laurie Sutton at work in Adelaide, for their first conversation in about 17 years.

ANZAC DAY RE-UNION 1995

As usual, our re-union was held at Keswick Barracks in the social club of 4 Fd Svy Sqn, as the O.C. had given an invitation to all Association members to join the serving members at their BBQ lunch. 'There's no such thing as a free lunch', says the old saying, but there was on this occasion, so our thanks to Major Peter Demaine for the invitation and use of facilities, as well as providing transport for those marching.

Arriving from around mid-day on, twenty attended the BBQ, which was a reasonable roll-up although down a few on some years. After lunch everyone attended our AGM, held in the unit conference room, after which all returned to the club for drinks and a yarn, before drifting away about 4 p.m., a bit earlier than previous years.

A few regulars, noticeable by their absence were:- John Harrison away in the bush near Broken Hill, Harry Dunn giving his legs a rest at Tarlee and Bernie Watson and Bob Griffin both ill. It was nice to see Harry Brune attend although not 100% of late, and Ron Weinert hopes to attend next year.

Talking of next year we will need a new venue and format for the re-union, but hope to have this sorted out before the next issue.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING '95

Held after lunch in the unit conference room on Anzac Day.

Present were George Ricketts, Bob Love, John Wicker, Alan Adsett, Harry Brune, Alex Munro, Jim Dunn, Bill Love, Ted Bear, Mick Dempster, Mick Hanson, Ken Jeffery, John Scharber, Bob Williams, Pat Cox, John Shepherd, Jack Elverd and John Nathan.

A photograph of the group was taken, which turned out reasonable enough, but did not reproduce very well, so has not been included.

Apologies were received from John Harrison, Colin van Senden, Bernie Watson, Frank McMillan, Dave Cheesman, George Campbell-Kennedy, Bob Cooper, Dave Collins, Bob Griffin, Stevo Hinic, Laurie Sutton and Neville Stone. Apologies to anyone overlooked and not mentioned.

Among general business items discussed were the annual subscription, still set at \$5.00, and a \$25.00 payment to Bernie Watson to off-set to some degree the costs incurred by him in photographing our activities over the past few years. Well done Bernie. The usual 'democratic' election of office bearers didn't take long, as George Ricketts was voted in for a further term as our president. Congratulations George - although he's not sure of that.

The meeting finished after about the usual forty minutes.

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS, 1945 - 1995

The celebrations 50 years on, marking the end of WW2 are now about all over. Memories of those times were rekindled, and previously untold stories come to hand, to add to the history of the period. Everything was passed on to Young Australia through the national media, covering personal interviews, and the many memorial services and parades held throughout Australia and Europe.

The big event in Adelaide was the Victory Parade through the City on 15th August to mark VP day. The crowd in King William St was the biggest I can remember seeing, and the response (certainly at my location) to the WW2 servicemen and women marching in the parade was tremendous, and from the heart. The main remembrance celebrations held by the Corps were the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the old East Burwood Field Survey Training Depot, and the re-union held in Canberra for former members of the old New Guinea Survey Section, later becoming 8th Field Survey Section, AIF.

The unveiling of the Survey Corps Memorial at East Burwood on Sunday 21st May was a fairly grand affair, and the committee are to be congratulated. Among the crowd were Lt. Col. Burns, Col. Swiney and Brig. MacDonald as well as representatives from various groups such as the RSL and Salvation Army, etc. The Corps provided a Guard of Honour and a display of memorabilia, and the Nunawading

Highland Pipe Band provided music for the occasion. The dedication service was conducted by Chaplain Wheeler. A memorable day. Of interest is that the training depot could be considered the fore-runner of the present School of Military Survey.

Fourteen former members of the 8th Field Survey Section attended their reunion in Canberra, on the 1st and 2nd August. George Campbell-Kennedy attended from Adelaide. The main ceremony on the first day was a wreath laying service held at the Australian War Memorial by the grave of the Unknown Soldier. George addressed the assembly, paying tribute to those who served in the Corps during WW2, and presented the booklet "Too far too long" to the memorial administrators. The booklet is an abridged version of the section's activities with the Kokoda Trail and Markham Valley surveys.

The second day started with a visit to the Carriers Memorial at Manuka, to honour the work done by the New Guinea native carriers, and finished with an official dinner that night. A banner was presented to the section by the Canberra City Council, with the council as custodian, to be displayed on Anzac Day and similar occasions.

Three Papua New Guineans attended throughout the reunion, one being the PNG High Commissioner to Australia, (a capable young woman of about 35 years, according to George), her assistant and also a member of the

PNG Defence Force. Some of those attending were Col. John Hillier, Col. Simon Lemon, Brig. Don MacDonald and Wally Gillard. There are only about 25 surviving members from the original number of 85 and ages range from 71 to about 85 years, with Len Beadell being the latest bereavement. Keith Barber was unable to make the trip from Bendigo. Congratulations to Brian Murray for his work in setting up the re-union.



Sapper Matthew Arnold

THE FINAL PARTY AT 4TH FIELD SURVEY

As reported, the squadron will cease to exist on 1st May, 1996, bringing to an end the era of field survey units, as 4 Field is the last one as we knew then. As a result a final Open Day/Re-union has been arranged for Saturday 25th November, 1995.

The programme of events will be:-

- 11.00 am - Inspection of unit areas and memorabilia
- 12 - 2 pm - Auction of memorabilia
- 2 - 6 pm - Refreshments and re-union
- 6 - 7.30 pm - Dinner (Buffet Smorgasbord)
- 7.30 pm onwards - Re-union continues

The all inclusive costs are expected to be about \$10 - \$15 per head, and invitations have been sent out to all former members, if addresses are known. Anyone travelling from way-off can apply in advance for overnight accommodation within the unit, of stretcher, sleeping bag, etc. Probably a bit rough and ready but comfortable enough for one night.

The organisers would like to know final attendances by 30th September, '95, which is a bit rushed with this newsletter running late, but I'm sure later applications will be treated sympathetically.

For further information contact Sgt. Steve McGuiness on (08)305 6408 or Sgt. Dave Longbottom on (08)305 6423.

THE FINALE - 81 YEARS ON

A message was received yesterday(20/9/95) from the Director of Survey, Col. Simon Lemon, with the sad news that as from 1st July, 1996, the Royal Australian Survey Corps will cease to exist, after a proud history of 81 years.

All Corps functions and personnel will revert back to the Corps of the Royal Australian Engineers.

Vale

Our condolences to Garry Drummond. His wife Jeanette died of cancer in early August this year. No other details are known.

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