



**SURVEY  
EX-SERVICEMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**



**NEWSLETTER No 28  
OCTOBER 2000**

## SOCIAL NEWS

### Corps Birthday Dinner

Our annual remembrance dinner was held at the Rob Roy Hotel on the 1st of July last.

I am not reporting the function in as much detail as usual, as the news is getting back a bit now and my memory of events is fading. The dinner was well attended with close to fifty members and guests gathering for a very pleasant evening. President Bob Cooper proposed the toast to the memory of the Corps. During the dinner our secretary Dave Irving read out apologies received, and I noticed that introduction of the GST on that day was often cited as the reason for inability to attend.

Festivities came to an end about midnight, ending an enjoyable function.

### First Friday Drinks

Remember our drinks at 5pm each first Friday of the month, at the Old Queens Arms Hotel in Wright St., city. A few fresh faces now and then would be nice, and as we only stay less than two hours, you'll be home in time for tea and the telly news.

### Christmas Function

To be held at the Rob Roy Hotel on Saturday the 2nd December next. Hopefully the date will not clash with other yuletide festivities, so mark a spot in your diary now. Dave Irving will be posting out a final notice in about two weeks. This is our casual end of year social function, and a great chance to catch up with everyone, so mark the date now.

### Function at Bendigo

The Ex Fortuna Survey Association are holding their usual pre Melbourne Cup get-together over the weekend of the 4th and 5th of November next. Not much warning I know. The traditional venue at Fortuna is now gone for ever, as the local organisers this year were not granted permission to use the premises. Security could be the reason, perhaps.

On the Saturday night there is a casual gathering at the Bendigo RSL Club on Havilah Rd., near the Bendigo Showgrounds, for a bistro style dinner with the main event on Sunday 5th at the Eaglehawk RSL, adjacent to the Eaglehawk Townhall, for a BBQ function. For more details contact our Bendigo correspondent Gary Warnest on

or at home 03 544 60171 or Email

I received two letters about a month ago, one from John and Lea Wicker and the other from Tony and Dell Balkauskas, both couples moving around on the Great Aussie Tour. I have included both letters pretty well verbatim, and hope you find them as interesting as I did. My thanks to both John and Tony, and keep the news coming.

THE GREAT  
AUSSIE TOUR

John and Lea At the time of writing we have been away seven weeks of our eight months trip. Every thing has gone fairly smooth so far and some of the experiences I had in twenty years in RASVY have been helpful, but more so my four years in the Driver Training Wing in the ARES at Hampstead Barracks. I have changed three tyres and repaired two tubes to date and given Lea her first lessons in 4x4 driving, including some small river crossings.

We have met a lot of ex-veterans along the way, all out looking around this fine country before it's too late to get started. We purchased a seventeen foot tandem caravan (a brand new Millar) and a 1996 model Toyota Troop Carrier. The vehicle is completely self contained so we left the van behind on several occasions to head bush and experience some great spots and scenery.

Some of the old guys from 4 Fd Svy would remember field trips to the N.T. and places like Daly Waters. We stopped at the pub there overnight and found that the owner Bruce Caterer and I had joined the ARA only three days apart and were discharged three days apart exactly twenty years later. Bruce was in RAEME and did several trips north with 5 Fd Svy over a few years, and was able to rattle off about half the names of the surveyors that he worked with. Small world. Anyway we had a great night, and in the morning he refused to take any offering for our stay in the caravan park, but I assure you he got it back ten fold over the bar.

Bruce and his wife Andrea purchased the pub, caravan park, four homes and the service station about ten years ago, and are now looking to sell by this coming November. If you have a high six figure bank account you can buy the lot and own the town of Daly Waters.

In Darwin we went to W.O.1 John Phillips discharge farewell at the Darwin Ski Club. He is still happily married to Tracey (nee Beckworth) and they have two children. John felt that 26 years service

was enough and has a job lined up at Fortuna in Bendigo. Also present were Steve and Helen Drummond (nee Hogan of the John Hogan clan); Steve is selling real estate and Helen works as a manager for Target.

Steve Glouster turned up, now employed in sales for Publications North, a division of Nationwide News. Pat Austin was there (his first posting was 4 Fd Svy), and is now a sergeant with fourteen years service. A good night was had by all, and included in the last to leave were yours truly and wife. Tony and Dell Balkauskas moved across from Cairns to Darwin and we had a week together, consuming a whisky or two while solving a few global problems. They are planning to stay in Darwin for about twelve months or so.

We moved back to Katherine from Darwin via the Daly River and other places not visited on the way up, so naturally had to throw a line in and try for a barramundi. I had to throw the first three back in, being undersized, but finally landed a 68cm beauty, so a good start.

On about the 4th of August we leave for Gove by the Toyota only, leaving the caravan behind, a trip of about 800kms through Arnhem Land. I applied for a track permit back in May this year and it was waiting for us when we arrived in Katherine.

We will spend a couple of weeks around Gove before returning to Katherine, to hitch up the van and head for W.A. We intend reaching Broome before the 30th of September, to meet Peter and Lesley Presser who are flying up from Mildura to spend a few days with us, so I guess a few more drinks and a few more global problems solved will be the order of the day.

Then it will be south to Perth, lingering at every possible fishing spot along the way. We might make it in time to attend the W.A. Ex-Survey Association Christmas function with luck.

I am supposed to be back at work in Adelaide on the 29th January 2001, but I have a feeling that is not going to happen, and Lea has already resigned her position.

We will catch up with everyone somewhere around the traps later, and should you be in range I can be contacted on mobile 0419851453. My advice to anyone considering a trip is do it as soon as you can, as this is a great country.

John (T.J.) and Lea.

THE GREAT AUSSIE TOUR.....The other letter from Tony and Dell Balkauskas is set out below.

After running Dalrymple General Store at Stansbury for over eleven years,we decided last November to put it on the market. Luckily,we had a contract on it within ten days,so 'retirement' day for us was February 5th.this year. We had recently purchased a 1995 series 80 Landcruiser,and put an order in for a new Gazal caravan,due to be ready in early February. Unfortunately there were hold-ups in the factory and it appeared that delivery would be delayed several weeks.

We left early in March for Melbourne(without the Gazal)and met up with many friends not seen for years, then to Bendigo to catch up with Ross Hyde. We went on a guided tour of Fortuna and learned so much more about the history of the place than I ever gleaned while working there,and seems ironic to have to pay \$10 to go into the place where I used to be paid to go. Returning to Stansbury ,we waited (and waited) for our caravan to arrive. It eventually came and we packed up and left within 36 hours on the 2nd April,heading east to Mildura where we had a very enjoyable four day stay with Peter and Lesley Presser on their fruit block,as well as helping to paint their shed.

From Mildura we headed across the Hay Plains to Tamworth,Armidale and Dorrigo,then via the very windy narrow road to Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. I do not recommend the road for novices towing a caravan. We then travelled up the Pacific Highway to the Gold Coast,where I phoned Mick Coventry to arrange a meeting in Brisbane. This turned into a three day party in Brisbane with Mick ,Mark Fitzgerald and John Knips coming to see us. We reminisced about our ARA days,drank plenty of beer,ate plenty of prawns and Moreton Bay bugs,and solved numerous problems of the world.

All good things come to an end,so we headed out again going north to Redcliffe,eventually arriving in Ipswich in time for Easter with my son Tony,his wife Kristy and their three sons. Later we left for the Darling Downs where we met up with many of Dell's relations;she has 92 first cousins,so there's no shortage. One had an earthmoving business,so I had an enjoyable few days driving a bulldozer to clear a roadway,while another owned a 1400 acre farm and was about to harvest his cotton crop,so I helped out by operating a module press,something very interesting and new to me.

We then went via Kingaroy to the Sunshine Coast, following the Bruce Highway to Airlie Beach, where we had heard that there was plenty of casual work available, but without luck, as with three recent cyclones and the loss of tourists to the Olympic Games, the tourist numbers were almost zilch. So took off for Cairns and still no work, especially for us 'Mexicans'. Instead we decided to do some of the touristy things while there, such as the Skyrail, Kurunda Train, Barrier Reef trip, etc.

We also flew up to Cape York for a day, landing at Lockhart, Bamaga and spending about four hours at the top before returning to Cairns, via a landing at Musgrave Station, covering about 2000 kms, and flying fairly low for most of the way. We saw most of the Cape during a fantastic trip. Leaving Cairns in early July, we headed west to the N.T., travelling through Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton, Karumba, Clonlurry, Mt. Isa, the 3ways, Katherine and finally Darwin. Here we met up with T.J. Wicker and Lea, and parked next to them in the caravan park for a week. Now mid July, it appears that job prospects are fairly good here, with Dell waiting on an answer to a job interview she had yesterday, and thanks to T.J., I have two very good leads also. We have been on the move for over 120 days, meeting many very interesting people and seeing places we had only read about. The highlights so far would have to be the trip to Cape York, the Barra and Steak Dinner with Floorshow at the old Daly Waters pub which impressed us no end. The only disappointment is after carrying four fishing rods and reels, dozens of fancy lures and spending megabucks on bait, my total catch to date is one 30 cms Sand Whiting, which I accidentally caught at Mackay. The weather is perfect here in Darwin at 31 celcius. We will possibly stay here for about twelve months, as we really love the place and presently are staying at the Malak Caravan Park on McMillans Road. Regards.

Tony and Dell.

Their address is Malak Caravan Park,

## SURVEY CORPS HISTORY NOW ON SALE

### AUSTRALIA'S MILITARY MAP-MAKERS

The Royal Australian Survey Corps 1915-96

by

Dr.C.D.Coulthard-Clark.

The history is now available from the R.A.E. Corps Shop at Liverpool Military Area, Liverpool, N.S.W.2174. Telephone (02)96001721 for all enquiries. An order form and price list of items for sale are enclosed with this newsletter, with the history listed as item number 25, costing \$37.0 . Postage will be \$7.35 .

### THE HISTORY LAUNCH

I attended the launch in company with George Timmins at the Australian War Memorial on Friday 8 September this year at 5pm.

On entering the hall we were greeted by Col Cuskelly handing out copies of the Corps song, which I thought was a bad omen, as I could remember ragged ribald renditions sung on two previous occasions, which had left me unimpressed. Still, better things were to come, with an efficient catering staff handing around a selection of wines, beer and savoury nibbles throughout the function. The cost of catering was borne by former Colonel Commandants of the Corps; a nice gesture. The attendance was very gratifying I thought, with around 150 former members and their partners attending.

Clem Sargent as Master of Ceremonies started the formal proceedings, then introduced Maj. General John Hartley as Deputy Chief of the Army to officially launch the history. During his speech he intimated that he might have been conned into agreeing to the history proposal, but was delighted to do so anyway.

Chris Coulthard-Clark then spoke of the trials and tribulations that he experienced when researching the history.

A pleasant touch to end formalities was the presentation of a copy of the history to Army Staff Cadet Ariane Roseblade, by Brig. Don MacDonald.

Ariane is the great grand-daughter of L/Cpl H.A. Roseblade who was seconded from the Royal Engineers in 1912, to assist in the early military mapping programmes of Australia.

Wandering The King's Highway, as the Corps song, was sung with great feeling and gusto and I am glad to report did add to the occasion. The singing was led by a local baritone with a very fine voice, accompanied by a musician playing a portable keyboard. Arthur Henson shared my copy of the words, both of us trying to outdo the other with some success. The function came to a close just after 7pm and I'm sure all who attended would have enjoyed themselves. The organisers are to be congratulated.

### THE POST LAUNCH REUNION

As the history launch ended, everyone headed to Olims Hotel, about five minutes walk from the Australian war Memorial. A large function room complete with a bar had been booked for the reunion, where a meal could be ordered and enjoyed in convivial company. The place was packed out and at a rough guess, there would have been about 150 in attendance, providing a rare opportunity to catch up with so many.

Former Corps Directors attending were Brig. Don MacDonald, Frank Buckland, Don Swiney, John Hillier, Jim Stedman and Simon Lemon.

I did my best to have a chat with as many old mates as I could in the time available, but as midnight slipped by I was more than ready for bed, leaving a hard core group of about 30 souls to party on. A great night.

### WHO WAS THERE

George Timmins and I combined memories to compile the following list of those who attended, many with their wives, but I know there are dozens we have missed. There must be someone listed that you know.

Jeff Ford, Brian Sloane, Ian Nichols, John Hogan, Michael Hogan, Colin van Senden, Danny Galbraith, Phil Smalley, Gary Warnest, Mark Heinrich, John Bullen, Lyall Camp, Peter Jensen, Roger and Effie Rees, Ian Lever, Rocky Camps, Arthur and Barbara Henson, Peter Presser, Bob Skitch, Noel Ticehurst, Ross and Marie McMillan, Sam Chambers, Steve Cooper, Gordon Haswell, Peter Cates, Peter and Barbara Bates-Brownsword, Graham Baker, Duncan Burns, Peter Crabbe, Les Dixon, Bob Williams, Denis Puniard, Roy Morgan, Paul Pearson, Bill Jeffery, Bill Hook, Dawn Laing, Greg Oaten, Gary Drummond, Peter Raue, John Mobbs, Roger Hancock and so on.

In summary, both George and me agreed it was a great function, and well worth the effort to attend.

## PEOPLE NEWS

### Alex Cairney

Alex has had a few medical problems of late, and because of a specialist's appointment was unable to attend the Corps history launch. He still dabbles a bit in antique furniture whenever an opportunity presents a bargain.

Thanks for the phone call about Jim Stedman, Alex. Anyone wishing to contact the man can do so on telephone 733977583 (Brisbane).

### Percy Long

Now 74 years of age, he lives in Brisbane. Percy is still active turning out angles in the survey profession, and recently worked on a task in the Cairns area.

### Sam Chambers

Sam is still based in Bendigo, and was seen at the history launch in Canberra. He commutes fairly often to QLD. and I've been told he was recently in Mackay visiting relatives.

### Ted Morris

Not much on Ted at all, except that he is still with us, living on the Gold Coast in QLD.

### Peter Davis

Peter has been awarded a long service certificate, after 25 years of continuous membership with the Inst. of Engineering and Mining Surveyors, Aust. Well done Peter.

### Wally Mooney

Wally is still receiving treatment for cancer, but there is a long way to go before the hoped for all clear is given. We are all hoping for the best Wally. His telephone number is 83362693.

### John Showers

John rang recently to advise that he was leaving South Australia. After the sad loss of his wife, John sold up his property in Adelaide and has bought a caravan, with the intention of travelling to QLD. and living with his son in Robina. Eventually he intends to move back to the old stamping ground at Bright, Victoria.

John can be contacted at the following address : P. O. Box QLD. 4226.

### Warren and Maureen Chadwick.

I forgot to mention in the last newsletter that I saw both in Bendigo, looking very well. They have toured Europe and now intend seeing a bit of Australia.

## PEOPLE NEWS

### Simon Lemon

Simon attended the history launch in Canberra, but otherwise has kept a fairly low profile since retirement. Now living in the Clare district north of Adelaide, we hope to see him a bit more often.

### John Hogan

I received a letter from John very recently, and he sends his regards to old pals in Adelaide. He met Roger Rix a few days back, to be told that Bob Roche has been unwell with some form of cancer, and also heard of Ross Hyde's demise. John does not buy the Bendigo Advertiser (skinflint) as he's scared of reading about his own worldly departure, also he reckons that he hears enough bad news without reading about more. He sends a message to Bill Love to please return all the fags you borrowed years ago, and even had the cheek to suggest that I might do the same. Received your cheque John, and thank you. In future though, please send better quality cheques as I had trouble passing that one over the bar for a slab of beer. Nice to hear from you John and hope to see you soon.

### Steve Rose

Received your letter Steve, but I'm not fully convinced yet about the location of the Katherine civil airstrip around 1959. Does anyone out there know for sure, if so, please let me know. Thank you for your subs.

### Mark Heinrich

Since his time in 4Fd Svy, Mark has been promoted to Lt. Col., and is now stationed in Canberra as the Deputy Director Military Geographic Information. Sounds pretty grand. He was at the history launch reunion where I spoke to him to catch up on news. Mark sends his regards to Stevo Hinic and other friends in Adelaide.

### Neale Houston

Better known as Tex, Neale turned up at the Sergeants Mess at Keswick on a Friday night about two weeks ago. He now lives at Hahndorf and since his discharge has worked as a security officer on the Murray Princess, travelling the river out of Mannum. The job entailed being away from home for five days each week, so he had been in town for the day being interviewed for another job with more regular hours.

### George Ricketts

Over a year now since George had his stroke, with the initial recovery rate slowing right down, which he finds a bit of a nuisance, but otherwise is soldiering on just the same.

## TARLEE BASELINE

From John Harrison came an update on progress with the preservation of the Tarlee Baseline. The centre pole and vanes from the East Base has been recovered and is now in storage at the Dept. of Lands depot at Netley. The task was accepted and completed by RAE reserve members, as a weekend exercise. It is intended that East Base will be completely renovated using a replica centre pole, allowing the original centre pole and vanes (4 inches square by 12 feet 7 inches) to be permanently displayed at the Riverton History Museum.

## AUSTRALIAN ROLL OF HONOUR

Recently available for perusal is the book listing imperial honours awarded to Australians between 1952 and 1998. RASVY members rate a few mentions, such as Frank Buckland, the late Frank White and Len Beadell and local lad John Harrison, who received a BEM while serving with 4 Fd Svy about 1964, as many older members will remember.

## HISTORICAL TABLE CLOTH NOW LOCATED

About two newsletters back, Frank Cohen in W.A. canvassed for information on the whereabouts of a table cloth, he and many other members of the Corps signed at Mt. Eba Station about 1946.

Colin van Senden made some enquiries through a few former station owners that he had befriended during his years at Woomera, and was able to obtain the telephone number of the original owner of the tablecloth, Mrs. Florence (Flo) Crombie, wife of the late Bob Crombie who previously owned Mt. Eba Station. Mrs. Crombie is now 93 years of age and lives in Kalgoorlie. Colin passed this information on to Frank, who has not had the chance to follow the tip, but suggested that I might do so.

Mrs. Crombie told me the full story, that in 1946 and later during the early days at Woomera, she invited guests at Mt. Eba Homestead to sign a table cloth she kept as a memento, later over stitching or embroidering those signatures, which ran into the hundreds. Included are those of Len Beadell, Wally Relf, Lindsay Lockwood, Colin, Frank, John Showers and many other former Corps members, but also the signatures of a governor-general, a state governor, and many very senior military officers.

The tablecloth is now in the possession of son Barry Crombie, who also lives in Kalgoorlie.

## VALE

### Colonel J. L. Stedman

Died suddenly of a stroke on the 9th October, at his home in Brisbane, aged 78 years.

Jim spent most of his working life in the Army, joining at about 19 years of age, back in 1941. During WW2 he served in New Guinea and Borneo with 5 Fd Svy Coy, and electing to remain in the service after the war he was commissioned in 1950.

He worked on many of the main geodetic and mapping programmes around Australia, and was involved with the trials of the electronic measuring equipments introduced into the Corps. I can remember back to 1956, when as the Senior Instructor at SMS Balcombe, Jim took a personal interest in helping individual students with their course work..

He was appointed Director of Survey in 1975, and was well regarded during his term, steering the Corps through many advances in survey technology. Retiring in February 1979 after 38 years service, Jim served a term as Colonel Commandant of the Corps, climaxing a distinguished career.

He was cremated on the 16th October, after a chapel service in Brisbane, attended by former Corps members from far and wide to show last respects.

### Ross Hyde

Ross passed away in the Bendigo Base Hospital on 12th September this year, from complications following heart surgery, at the age of 70 years.

Following the operation in mid August, Ross returned home for a few days, then feeling unwell had to return to hospital.

He served in Korea and around Australia, before transferring to RASVY about 1958. Ross suffered severe hayfever, which complicated and made difficult work in field situations, so changed to orderly room administration, firstly with 4 Fd Svy and later at Fortuna, and was highly regarded at his work. He retired after 20 or more years service and settled in Bendigo. Ross was a private but eccentric person in some ways, considered a bit of a character within the Corps, and as a cat lover always had one or more as pets. He bequeathed from his estate, the sum of \$100,000 to the Cats Welfare League.

He was cremated at the Eaglehawk Crematorium, after a service in the chapel, attended by a wide variety of friends.

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