



SURVEY
EX-SERVICEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



NEWSLETTER No 29
FEBRUARY 2001

This newsletter is not an early issue for the new year of 2001, but a late issue for last year, normally reaching you before Christmas, but not this time. However, better late than never, your committee hope that all members and their families had a very enjoyable and relaxing time during the Christmas to New Year period, and wish all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

NEWS ITEMS

News items are urgently required, and without telling anyone how to suck eggs, this newsletter is only as good as the news received. You might know of an illness or injury, or merely wish to pass on regards to all and sundry, or change an address, or even an article on some incident that happened in the bush, the carto office or the printing room, items of historical interest in the Corps, whatever, members are interested in what old acquaintances and friends are doing. So how about it. A telephone call or letter is all it takes. My thanks go to those members who fairly regularly pass on items to me, but unfortunately there are not many.

SOCIAL NEWS

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

Held at the Rob Roy Hotel again, on Saturday 2nd December. The numbers were down a bit on previous gatherings, but not surprising for the time of year with so many other functions on, as indicated by the apologies received. However, 38 merry souls did attend to make a night of it, including George Timmins from Swan Hill and from Bendigo were Brett Van Leeuwin, Mick Davey and John Phillips, and our thanks go to them for making the effort to attend. After drinks in the saloon, everyone moved into the dining room for dinner. I thought the courses served were not as good as some previous dinners there, but very acceptable just the same, luck of the draw I suppose but I must admit that I could only find room for one mince pie with coffee at the finish. During the evening our president Bob Cooper addressed the gathering to wish all present a merry Christmas and a happy new year, on behalf of the Association committee. Conversation at my table was fairly bright all night and must have been the same at the other tables, judging on the noise, although I'm sure the ladies present might have preferred something different to the tall tales from the bush. The gathering seemed to break up fairly quickly by about 11.30pm, which was almost an hour earlier than usual, something I attributed to the night being a bit warm and lethargic. I enjoyed the evening, so hope everyone else did too. A large group went to the Hinic hacienda afterwards, which is almost a tradition now, to partake of Stevo and Pauline's hospitality. I've listed those who attended the function and hope no-one is omitted.....Moina Briggs, Rhonda and Bob Cooper, Mick Davey, Julie and Peter Elverd, Pam and Bob Griffin, Pauline and Stevo Hinic, Dave Irving, Elizabeth and Bill Love, Mary and Bob Mills, Alex Munro, Raeline and John Nathan, Robyn and Darcy Patrick, Jackie and John Shephard, Susan and Dave Stephenson, Dianne and Neville Stone, Lorraine and Ken Talbot-Smith, George Timmins, Margaret and Robin Wilson, Brett Van Leeuwin, John Phillips, Jan and Bill Griggs, Pam and John Harrison, to finish off.

FIRST FRIDAY DRINKS

Our first for the year was February 2nd at the Old Queens Arms, our first in the new century. Not a bad roll-up with Neil [Tex] Houston, Dave Irving, Stevo Hinic, yours truly, John and Pam Harrison and T.J. and Lea Wicker, for a convivial hour or two after 5pm. Hope you can make it along for a couple of occasions in this the first year of the new millennium.

SOCIAL NEWS

BENDIGO REUNION

Held last November on the Sunday before the Melbourne Cup, as usual. For the first time ever, the reunion was not held at Fortuna, as the security of the new establishment there has been upgraded, so the place is out of bounds to social reunions and also weekend tours. Times are changing, as another bit of tradition is now gone.

The function was held at the Eaglehawk RSL clubrooms, opposite the old town hall if you have forgotten where, and proved satisfactory. The BBQ part was done in the back yard. There was a good roll-up of members, although not as many as in some past years, but was enjoyable just the same. The organisers did have one problem in that the sale of liquor was not permitted by local laws. This was overcome by selling raffle tickets to the value of a bottle of beer, and naturally every ticket won a prize, which was a bit devious but seemed to work well enough. If you should be in Bendigo in late October or early November, remember that the local reunion is held on the weekend before the Melbourne Cup.

REGT. HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH

The book launch is well on course for the planned date of Saturday 30th June this year, so mark it in your calendar for a possible Bendigo trip.

It will take place at a formal dinner to be held at the RSL Services Club in Bendigo, situated on Havilah Rd. near the Showgrounds.

I understand that possibly some other function will be planned for the following day. Anyway, more details later, but keep in mind.

LAST FRIDAY DRINKS IN BENDIGO

If in Bendigo on the last Friday of each month, remember that the local Association meets for drinks after 5pm at the RSL Services Club on Havilah Rd., Nth Bendigo. All visitors welcome.

THE GREAT AUSSIE TOURISTS

This is a follow up of the tour around Australia, by Tony and Dell Balkauskas and T.J. and Lea Wicker, reported in the last newsletter.

Tony and Dell are still in Darwin and loving it, with no intention of leaving until at least next August. They have shifted from the caravan park to the grounds of a school, where Tony does an hour or so of ground maintenance, in return for free electricity from the school system.

In addition, both have near full time jobs, which pay the bills for now and allows some cash to be saved for when they move on.

T.J. and Lea are now back in Adelaide, after going all the way around.

Coming down the west coast, T.J. was hailed by a bloke who he recognised after prompting as Kim Reynolds, a former printer at Bendigo who was holidaying with his wife Megan [nee McBurnie], and their three children.

Megan was a former cartographer at Fortuna. They now live south of Perth at Bunbury, where T.J. and Lea visited them, staying for dinner.

While in Perth the local Association arranged a get-together for them at the Carine Tavern in suburban Duncraig, and present were Ray Sargeant, Barry Parker, Frank Cohen, Barry Harmes, Joe Mazzarol, Noel Clutterbuck, Mick and Annette Venn, Phil Bray, Brian Firms, Brian Mead, Rod [Lofty] Keene and Fred Brown. T.J. knew most of them, from his basic course or his posting there to 5 Fd Svy in 1971. He also met up with Mick and Lisa Gillham.

Now back at work, T.J. is expecting a separation package, and when finalised he and Lea are hoping to hit the road again.

PRESSER FILM CORPORATION

Peter Presser shot a video of the corps history book launch in Canberra last September, and while not a challenge to 'Jurassic Park' it gives a good 'warts and all' idea of the overall goings on. Sorry for late acknowledgement of the copy you sent me Peter, but this issue was intended for distribution about six weeks ago.

Anyone wishing to borrow the video, please contact me on

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please remember that annual subscriptions are payable in the period January to December, so if you are not sure whether you paid last year, give Dave Irving a call on Subs are \$10 for ordinary members and \$5 for WW2 and interstate members.

THE EPIC TRAVELLERS

I recently received the following account of the travels of George and Pat Graham, through Kevin Boehm, and although a bit long for our modest newsletter I decided to print it in total, as I found it very interesting and hope you do too. Thanks Kevin. In all the years that I knew George as a camera operator at Fortuna, I never realised that he was related to Marco Polo. Still living in Bendigo, George and Pat during the last two years have also toured Turkey and Vietnam, besides the epics detailed below, so let's read on.

Last year we thought we had done the ultimate trip, but this year [2000] I think we may have exceeded all expectations. Odyssey Travel is a non profit organisation, which arranges interesting educational travel experiences for the active over 50's, both within Australia and overseas, and has affiliations with universities and colleges here and in New Zealand. We chose their 'History and Archaeology of Central Asia' tour, consisting of a 16 day trek into Uzbekistan with particular emphasis on the Silk Road cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. The last five days were spent at the headquarters of the University of Sydney's archaeological site in the Tash-k'-irman Oasis in Karakalpakstan.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is an independent state of the USSR, since 1991, in area about 447000 sq km and with a population of 23 million. The main religion of about 88% is Sunni Muslim. It is rich in natural gas and minerals, with cotton as the main crop. Extensive agriculture and irrigation has depleted the main rivers, causing severe ground salination and the demise of the Aral Sea.

On Monday 23rd May this year our tour group of fourteen arrived at Tashkent airport from Bangkok, spending an incredible hour and a half to pass through immigration, customs and visa control, as no one seemed to speak English with tourism not a big thing. We eventually boarded our 51 seater bus and met our guide Galena, an attractive blonde half Russian and half Tatar, speaking excellent English with that accent I thought was reserved for beautiful Russian spies in James Bond movies.

Tashkent

Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan, with a population of about 2.5 million. It has been populated for over two thousand years. It's history has been one of constant change, with control changing from the Samanids to Genghis Khan to the Russians in the mid 19th century. There is little to show of it's varied history due to a major earthquake in 1966 that virtually levelled the city, but much of the old town was left standing. We were able to wander through the winding lanes, visiting the 15th century Kukeldask Djuna Mosque and the old bazaar.

Tashkent cont.

The mud brick houses are very plain from the outside but are built around ornate central courtyards. As we were on an archaeological tour, we had access to the Dept. of Antiquities museum at the local university, where a Russian professor gave us a very interesting insight to the historical sites and finds in the area. Tashkent is now a modern city rebuilt by the Russians in their typical 1960's style and since independence statues of Tamerlane, the national hero, have largely replaced Russian emblems and statues of Lenin.

Samarkand

A 9am. start saw us on the road for the four hour drive to Samarkand, population about 600,000. This famous Arabian Night's city is the oldest in central Asia, dating back to 200 BC. Genghis Khan almost destroyed the place in 1220 AD. It flourished again when Tamerlane made it his capital in 1369, until captured by the Uzbeks in 1500 and again by the Emir of Bukhara in 1784, and finally by the Russians in 1868 when it assumed importance until the Russian revolution.

The beautiful medressehs in Registan Square are the prime attraction in this city, a medresseh being a religious school or university. The Gur-Emir Mausoleum where Tamerlane is buried along with several sons and grandsons is the most brilliant example of medieval architecture in central Asia, and was the inspiration for the Taj Mahal in India. Samarkand was also an important scientific centre, where Tamerlane's grandson Uleg-Bek built an observatory in 1492 to plot the stars and his charts are still accurate today. The observatory did not survive, but the underground portion of its enormous sextant remains. The majestic Bibi Khamnum Mosque and the majestic of the Sharki Zind necropolis are possibly the best known decorative art site in the East.

As the next day was a free day we hired taxis for a day trip over the mountains to Shakris Abz, the birthplace of Tamerlane. Among the architectural monuments of Tamerlane's time are the remains of the massive portals of the Ak-Sarai Palace which took 20 years to build, but was destroyed by Abdullah Khan of Bukhara in the 17th century. On the way back we stopped at a mountain lookout and sipped warm bottles of a local champagne at \$1.00 a bottle, and it was quite a good drop.

Bukhara

After a 5 hour drive across the desert, we reached 'Bukhara the Noble', a city of some 250,000 people. It still retains the atmosphere of a medieval city with the narrow streets of the old town. At the heart of Bukhara is the Shakristan which contains the Ark, a two thousand year old fortress, and the Registan which is the main square.

Bukhara cont

The Ark was the fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara and contains the barracks, mint, shrine and prison. About 3000 people lived within its walls. Today these buildings are converted into museums. Bukhara may have been founded as early as the 8th century B.C., and was besieged by Alexander in 328 B.C. but continued to flourish. The Ark was constructed about the 7th century A.D. and was captured by the Samaritans and Arabs in the 9th century, and later razed by Ghengis Khan in the 16th century, but recovered again to become famous as a seat of learning.

Near the Ark is a prison containing the Bug Pit and the dark pit of Zindan where two British spies Studdart and Connelly were kept before being executed in the main square in June 1842.

Bukhara is also known for its Mausoleums and numerous Medreses with their splendid blue and white tiled mosaics. The summer palace of the Emirs is built in an eclectic style combining European and local elements, its reception hall is reminiscent of the palaces of Europe

Khiva

About 7 hours across the Kizil-kum desert lies the provincial city of Urgench, a typical Soviet city of blockhouse type buildings, where 7 miles from the outskirts is Khiva, a museum in the open being the only city in Central Asia to have survived in its entirety from ancient times. It was founded in the 5th century and served as a rest stop and fortress on the trade routes from the Aral Sea to Merv. Under Russian rule the local inhabitants were moved out and the city restored to create the outdoor museum of today. Local stallholders sell souvenirs, carpets etc, and the old slave market houses a food market, with a large shopping area in the old Caravanserai selling electrical goods, tools and clothing.

Khiva is entirely constructed of mud brick and features many of the familiar Islamic highlights of Central Asia, Medreses, mosques and minarets, set in narrow mud streets and squares. The high minarets were used as lookouts for invading armies and as beacons in the desert for lost travellers. They also served as a place of execution, where the condemned were dragged to the top and hurled down onto the square below amid cheers from the watching populace.

After visiting Khiva for the day we returned to Urgench from where we crossed the Amu Dariya [the River Oxus of ancient times] by foot to watch the sunset. We drank more local champagne and saluted Alexander who not far from this place speared his father's general for doubting his claimed divinity.

Khiva cont

At Urgench we said goodbye to Galena and hullo to Dr Alison Betts, the senior lecturer in West Asian Archaeology at the University of Sydney who was to be our mentor for the next 5 days.

Chorasmia

We boarded an old Toyota Coaster for the 2 hour trip into the desert to the HQ of USCAP [University of Sydney Central Asia Project]. The research station is a spacious but spartan farmhouse built of pise [rammed earth] coated with lime plaster, its thick walls and high ceilings make it ideal for the climate. There is hot water [sometimes], the electricity is unreliable and the lighting is very dim, with outside toilets of the hole in the floor variety [no seat] over a pit. The meals were quite good, Russian style home cooking. We met Professor Vadim Mikolayovitch Yergodin of the University of Nukkus who together with Alison Betts made the history and archaeology of this remote area come alive. We spent an afternoon inspecting the USCAP dig site at Kazakl'i-yatcan, possibly the first city in Chorasmia, dating back to the 5th century BC. The site is about 10% excavated, parts of the walls showing 3 tiers of archers' galleries, a gate way and a Zorastian fire temple in the centre are quite evident.

The next 4 days were spent in day trips into the desert to visit 9 of the spectacular ruins in the area, and considering they are made of mud brick it is amazing what has survived. This area was once very fertile and irrigation trenches from the River Oxus watered the district in ancient times, when the river fed into the Aral Sea. The Aral Sea is about 20% of its original size, due mainly to over irrigation for the cotton industry. From the high ground it is obvious why fortifications were built in these strategic positions, with the age of the ruins dating from the 4th century BC to the 12th century AD, with some forts having been updated through the ages. There is evidence that Chorasmians were using the labyrinth style gateway well before the Greeks. The ruins are strewn with potshards and slag as evidence of metal smelting, and one of our group picked up a small terra-cotta head of Isis fairly crudely made but showed that these people had contact with the Egyptians.

After 5 marvellous days in the desert we returned to Urgench and flew back to Tashkent and a farewell dinner at our hotel.

Next day we boarded an Uzbek Airways Airbus for Bangkok.

Phuket

At Bangkok we left the group and proceeded to Phuket where we soon adapted from the Hot Dry Desert to the Hot Humid Coast. The monsoon was late this year, so even though it was overcast the weather did not spoil our 4 day stay.

We did a day trip to Phanga Bay and cruised around James Bond Island, visited cave temples and lunched in a fishing village. We later did several short tours and attended the terrific Fanta-Sea show.

This stayover was a \$250 Thai Royal Orchid add on tour and made for a good wind down after our fairly hectic time in Uzbekistan, before returning to Australia.

Out Back South Australia

An Aussie tour this time with an up-market outback tour operator called the Diamantina Touring Company, serving rough camp tucker such as Coffin Bay oysters, fresh salads, green curry chicken, roast lamb, korma curry, cajun swordfish, etc, helped down with a selection of good wines.

And so it was with great anticipation that we met our 18 fellow travellers outside the Grosvenor Hotel in Adelaide on 1st September to start the tour. Soon a Toyota Troopie towing a trailer pulled up followed by two Toyota Land Cruisers and a Nissan Patrol to begin the 'Ultimate Outback Adventure' of a 4wheel drive camping tour, sleeping in tents and swags, showering occasionally, digging your own toilet hole, etc.

Tour guide Andrew, a former restaurateur from Adelaide and Melbourne with a great knowledge of Aboriginal culture and the fauna and flora of the outback, plus the ability to get into little known areas, made this trip a truly amazing experience.

We boarded our vehicles and headed north in pouring rain, however by Port Augusta it was clearing and at Woomera it was fine but windy. We lunched at Narrungar, the former U.S. spy base now being demolished. The first camp was at Lake Mary, a clay pan surrounded by red sand hills and native pine. Here the protocol and procedures of camp life were explained, which made for a harmonious routine for the remainder of the trip. Participants are required to pitch their own tents, collect firewood and do the washing-up.

We arrived at Lake Eyre South after taking on supplies at the modern mining town of Roxby Downs, population of about 4060. The super market and liquor store are subsidised by Western Mining Company.

Our stay at Lake Eyre South was terrific, walking onto the lake and enjoying the prolific wild flowers in the area

We explored aboriginal archaeological sites and shellbed fossil sites. We later visited one of the ancient mound springs, the surface evidence of the Great Artesian Basin, a long chain of mound springs throughout central Australia that served as an aboriginal trade route over thousands of years.

Weapon technology was traded with ochre from the Flinders Ranges and Mother of Pearl from the Kimberly area was traded all the way to the Great Australian Bight. These trade routes held the native civilisations together but they were also responsible for the spread of the white man's diseases such as smallpox, etc, throughout the tribes.

The mound springs determined the route of the Overland Telegraph and the original Ghan Railway used the springs as watering points for the steam locomotives. We followed the old Ghan route for several days and marvelled at the relics still standing, such as water tanks, flocculation plants, stations and residences.

After visiting Roxby Downs and hearing how environmentally responsible Western Mining is, it was interesting to visit the 'Keepers of Lake Eyre' protest camp, where a young feral called Noddy explained the water usage at the Olympic Dam project, currently using about 30 million litres a day but rising to 42 million as production increases.

The 2 billion tonne ore body will over the next 200 years produce around 60 million tonnes of copper, a million tonnes of uranium, 24 tonnes of silver and 5 tonnes of gold. The protest group, most of whom are greenies, hippies and backpackers, have recently cut through security fences and destroyed WMC pumps and equipment. On the other hand WMC has bulldozed the camp on several occasions. I suspect the real protest is not so much about water usage but the mining of uranium. Certainly the excessive use of artesian water has lowered the underground pressure and many of the mound springs have ceased to flow, but whether the water table can renew itself only time will tell.

Moving up the Oodnadatta Track, we stopped at William Creek for a shower, lunch and a very expensive beer, before moving on to camp just outside Oodnadatta. Oodnadatta with its pink roadhouse and pink everything else was our last look at civilisation until Birdsville, about 5 days hence. We continued north through Hamilton Station to our next camp at Junction Bore, and into Witjara National Park with its vast gibber taberlands and spectacular scenery.

We paused at the stone ruins of Dalhousie Station. In the past Afghans had planted date palms around the homestead, and as these had started to die off and become overgrown, the greenies decided to destroy these introduced species by fire, but the result was amazing regrowth making this an attractive oasis in the wilderness.

We stopped at Dalhousie Hot Springs where the desert dust was washed off in bath temperature spring water. Crossing the fabled Simpson Desert, the world's largest dune desert, was an experience of epic proportions. We visited Purni Bore where an uncapped bore of the 60's has created an artificial wetland. We followed an old rig road before leaving the popular route and then followed little used seismic lines to Appodinna Attora Knolls, actually outcrops of flour gypsum. Along the French Line we travelled to the tri-state border point at Poepples Corner. We suffered a severe sandstorm one night in the Simpson, filling the vehicles and swags with sand and flattening the tents. It came without warning, and the flying sand and howling wind was horrendous, so ask Pat who had to go to the toilet in the middle of it, to find what its like to have your bum sandblasted.

At last with great trepidation we approached the Napanerica Dune, the largest sand dune of all, known as Big Red. The Troopie and trailer took the long way around, as we in the first vehicle attempted the climb. It was easy as the heavy dew and the sandstorm had compressed the sand on approach, but as we crested the top the world disappeared, because the wind had cut the back of the dune away. Luckily Steve saw it in time and braked as we bottomed out and came to a dead stop, but fortunately the next vehicle was able to attach a snatch strap and pull our vehicle to safety. By mid morning we were in Birdsville for a well needed shower and a bit of washing. We lunched at the famous Birdsville pub, pretty ordinary fare after what we were accustomed to. Visiting the local working museum, we watched the curator restoring a Cobb & Co coach, most of which were originally made at a factory in Charleville. On the way out of town we stopped at the racetrack and the Burke and Wills tree at camp 76 on the Diamantina Billabong. We had intended travelling along the 'inside track' but Goyder's Lagoon on the Diamantina had plenty of water in it, making the track impassable, so we headed south along the relatively well maintained Birdsville Track, skirting Sturt's Stony Desert and lunched at Mungeranie Station, where we saw an incredible amount of wildlife on the waterhole there, herons, cranes and pelicans to name a few.

Reaching Etadunna Station we camped at Dead Man's Hole, from where we spent the afternoon exploring the ruins of the Bethesda Lutheran Mission [1867-1917] at Lake Killalpaninna. The German missionaries developed an extensive pastoral lease in the area. They constructed 22 substantial buildings including a clay brick church 60 feet long with a thatched roof, and a steeple 40 feet high and 12 feet square.

The mission had mixed success depending mainly on the seasonal flow of Cooper Creek, also most of the natives became entirely dependent on the mission after converting to christianity.

In 1917 the missionaries were interned because of anti-German attitudes during WW1, leaving the aboriginals to their own devices, and many starved or died of disease. The station was taken over by English settlers, but without success, and all that remains today is a lonely cemetery where human remains are uncovered by the wind and buildings are covered by the ever encroaching sand.

An early start saw us in Marree at 1030am for our much anticipated flight over Lake Eyre, not much water or bird life, but we did see the vestiges of Marree Man. Stopping later for refreshments at Lyndhurst at the junction of the Oodnadatta and Strzelecki tracks, we visited the eccentric philosopher Talc Alf and the largest ochre pits in Australia.

We entered the Flinders Ranges and camped beneath river red gums near a little known aboriginal art site with an extraordinary display of petroglyphs [stone chip carvings] on the red walls of a gorge. We travelled through the Gammon Ranges to Mt. Chambers Gorge, a place of awesome beauty, where we did a lovely 2 hour walk through the gorge.

Travelling on through the Flinders Ranges National Park via Blinman, we camped in Parachilna Gorge.

Moving south via Hawker to Port Augusta, we stopped at the Royal Flying Doctor Base and later toured the coal fired power station. After lunch at Port Germein, we arrived in Adelaide somewhat exhausted, at 3pm.

Pat and I relaxed for 4 days with friends, before returning to Bendigo on Sunday 17th September 2000.

Thank you George and Pat for such an interesting account of your trips from May to September last year, epic travelling indeed.

CORPS MUSEUM

The purpose built Survey Corps museum at SME Moorebank, opened about three years ago, is now being enlarged to three times the original area approximately. This new complex will become the RAE museum, and will incorporate the existing survey component. While on a visit up Sydney way, Garry Warnest stopped off at Moorebank to visit the museum and discover about the new developments. I mentioned in a previous newsletter that military training was to be centred at Puckapunyal, and accordingly SME staff will eventually be located there. Most of the barracks area will be sold off to private enterprise, leaving an area containing the museum, the chapel and possibly one or two of the messes, a bit like an historical enclave perhaps, anyway, the museum will remain intact for visitors for many years yet.

PEOPLE NEWS

George Ricketts

George had a small cancer spot removed from inside his lip about three months ago. Very fortunately the small growth was discovered and diagnosed at an early stage, so all being well this will be the end of the matter. Other than having to mumble a bit while the stitches were in place, George has recovered well.

Barbara and Arthur Henson

Now shifted from Echuca to Dalmeny [north of Narooma] in NSW.

No idea of the reason why, but should you be curious, they can be contacted on phone number

Joanne Scharber

Congratulations are in order for Joanne. I heard that a select group met on a recent Saturday night at the Scharber ranch, to celebrate Joanne's 50th Birthday.

John Shephard

T.J. Wicker while on his Great Aussie Tour bumped into John in the main street of Katherine, NT. Shep was in Katherine doing a recce I suppose, as he has landed or is part of a fairly lucrative contract undertaking survey work on the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, providing the project proceeds given the present financial situation. Good luck with the project Shep, hoping all goes well.

PEOPLE NEWS

Bob Cooper

Bob and Rhonda spent a few days in Perth during the Christmas break, mainly to visit Bob's mother who had been in poor health. While there they also caught up with many old friends, including Alan Togood for a long visit. Alan has a job with the W.A. Aboriginal Affairs Dept, but Bob could not remember the actual position he has. Sadly Bob's mother died at the end of January, requiring him to return to Perth once more.

I think I speak for all members in offering our condolences to Bob.

Nick Armstrong

Nick rang me from Port Lincoln, where he was holidaying with his daughter. He was referred to me after speaking to his old mate Alex Czornohalen, to perhaps make contact with old acquaintances.

He attended the 24/64 Basic Survey Course at Balcombe, and then spent about three years at Fortuna. He was also at bonegilla working on the photo proof ranges there and field trips included Thursday Is. and PNG.

In late 1968 he transferred to Artillery in a survey position, remaining until his discharge after six years, about 1970. Looking to utilise his survey training, he went into the earth-moving business, and is still at it. He worked out of Pt. Augusta for many years, before Geraldton and Meekatharra in W.A., but now is centred in Kunnunura. He reckons that he can only work effectively for eight months of the year, taking the other four months off during the Wet season. Nick is looking to contact old acquaintances and can be phoned on [redacted] Australia wide number thru Telstra, but avoid the steep daytime rates.

Ken Talbot-Smith

Ken was diagnosed with a form of diabetes a few weeks back, but is now back to normal health I am glad to report. Ken is still a listed reservist, and is now doing survey tasks part-time for Todd Alexander.

Gordon Haswell

Talking to Gordon last November in Bendigo, he told me that son 'Little Gordon' [now 31y.o.] holds several degrees in nursing and works with the Flying Doctor Service in Alice Springs.

T.J. Wicker

The lad is often in the news lately. T.J. has had an operation on his left knee [I'm told] to repair a torn ligament, with his stay in hospital being only a few hours.

From the BULLETIN for NSW.

The following article appeared in the last newsletter from the Survey Ex-Servicemen's Association of NSW, with my thanks to their editor Bill Montague. I thought it would be of interest to many members.

Brigadier Donald Macdonald, A.M.

Don Macdonald was born in the country town of Traralgon, Victoria on 22nd March 1910, and received his education at St. Patrick's College in Sale.

The commencement of his long career in the profession of surveying began when he became an articled student with Messrs Little & Brosnan of Melbourne. He obtained his Licence in 1931.

After some years in general surveying, he joined the Australian Survey Corps in 1936 and thus began his intimate association with geodetic and topographical surveying.

He was commissioned in 1939 and following the rapid expansion of the Survey Corps on the outbreak of war, was appointed to raise, and command, the 4th Field Survey Company in Western Australia in 1940 with the rank of Major. In 1942 he was transferred to command the 3rd Field Survey Company and later was appointed Assistant Director of Survey at First Australian Army Headquarters.

On 13th January 1944, he was seconded from the Australian Army as Assistant Mapping Officer to the Chief Engineer at General Macarthur's Headquarters in the South West Pacific. Shortly afterward he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel and acted as theatre mapping officer for a period. For his war service he was mentioned in despatches and was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom with Bronze Palm.

In September 1945 he was recalled to Army Headquarters to tackle the many problems associated with the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of the post war Survey Corps and, on the mapping side, was very active in establishing standards and specifications.

After a number of years in the position of Assistant Director of Military Survey, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and succeeded Brigadier Fitzgerald O.B.E. as Director in 1960.

During this period as Director, the mapping operations of the Corps were varied and extensive, covering the more remote areas of Australia and New Guinea. It was during this time that the Survey Corps made an extensive contribution to mapping our continent at 1,250,000 scale, the first time that Australia as a whole had been topographically mapped with an accurate series.

In 1965 he was responsible for the introduction of the Topographic Survey Troop as an integral part of the establishment of an Infantry Division.

The wisdom of this action has been confirmed many times, and the Troop's performance in South Vietnam has been outstanding.

He retired from the active list on 22nd March 1967. He was appointed Colonel Commandant of the Survey Corps and acted in that capacity from 1967 - 1972.

Side by side with his distinguished military career, Brigadier Macdonald has taken an active part in the affairs of the Institution of Surveyors Australia. This can be well demonstrated with a listing of his service on Institution committees:-

Victoria Division Committee member for 13 years
 Councillor for 8 years
 President in 1953

Canberra Division Committee member 1963-1968
 Councillor 1965 - 1971
 President in 1965

The Institute of Surveyors Australia
 Treasurer 1960 - 1965
 Member of Executive 1957 - 1963
 President in 1955
 Honorary Fellow 1971

Awarded the Medal of the Institution of Surveyors, 1972

In the international sphere of mapping, Brigadier Macdonald is widely known and well respected. In this regard, the more important areas were Head of the Australian Delegation to SEATO Cartographic meetings, and Australian Delegate to conferences for the Commonwealth Survey Officers in the United Kingdom.

After his retirement from the Army in 1967, Brigadier Macdonald took an appointment with the Department of Services and Property in the A.C.T. until he retired in 1975. In 1978 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to the Surveying Profession.

Brigadier Macdonald now resides in Sydney and still maintains an active interest in Survey Corp Unit Associations.

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