



SURVEY
EX-SERVICEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



NEWSLETTER No 38
DECEMBER 2004

Newsletter No 38 December 2004

Welcome to our third newsletter for 2004. It only seems like yesterday that we were preparing the 2003 Christmas edition .

Please note—we need news items so advise me of anything by phone, typed script, scribbled note or even by carrier pigeon

Queries to (08) 8277 7074 or email your notes to allan.adsett@flinders.edu.au.

Social News

First Friday Drinks

For those who must have forgotten where and when, we still meet at the **Saracen's Head Hotel, Carrington St, City** at 5 pm on the first Friday each month. The pub has become very popular on a Friday night and noisier than it used to be, but is still a good water-hole.

With everyone still in holiday mood and coming to grips with the New Year, give our January get-together a miss.

First for 2005 will be in February, on Friday 4th

People News

My thanks to kindred Associations for the snippets of news that I have extracted from previous bulletins/newsletters, for inclusion in this publication.

A voice from the past

Late afternoon in mid-October the phone rang, obviously a long distance call, with the caller saying 'This is a voice from the past—know who it is?'. I had no idea at all, until Bob Coulthard enlightened me, the first time we had spoken for around 27 years, when Bob was posted from Carto Sqn at Fortuna to 5 Fd Svy Sqn, in 1977, to finish his service prior to discharge. He had obtained my phone number from Brian Mead.

We reminisced for about twenty minutes on old times and acquaintances in Bendigo, bringing back a flood of memories.

Bob mentioned that after leaving the Service, he took a cartographic position with Alcoa in W.A., a period he thoroughly enjoyed not only with the good working conditions, but also the personal satisfaction he gained in doing the work involved, wishing he had taken the job many years before he did.

He retired from the company after 15 years, receiving a greater superannuation package than he did after 27 years service in the Army. Thanks for the call Bob, it was a delight to yarn again.

George Timmins and Gordon Lowery.

Recently, while watching television and partly into nod-nod land, the phone rang at about 9.30 pm. I'm always suspicious of late night calls (for me) but not to worry, it was George and Gordon reporting that they were on a fishing trip---again.

The mobile phone signal was loud and clear, considering they were camped on the Darling in N.S.W., about 25 kms south from Willcannia and 200 plus kms east of Broken Hill

During the previous two days, they had caught about 70 perch, averaging around 3lbs each, in fishing conditions to dream about. Freezer space had ran out, however, the local station owner in a trade off for fish, had agreed to let them use the freezer in the shearers' quarters, so they were going to fish on.

I suspect the call was prompted by a cosy camp fire and George's port keg, whatever, I surely wanted to be there with them.

A later call reported that they returned home with 80 litres (freezer space) of filleted fish, probably their biggest catch ever, ending a marvellous trip. George also had some good news about his latest cancer test, which proved negative, showing he is still clear of disease.

Roger and Effie Rees

Roger and Effie called in late afternoon recently, to catch up on news for an hour or so. Both had been to Geelong for the past few days, preparing his parents' home for sale, following the death of Roger's father earlier this year, and his mother taking up residence in a retirement home.

I think most will agree that clearing and cleaning the family home for

sale, is both physically demanding and stressful, so they decided to have a few days relaxation, by returning to hometown Canberra via Adelaide to visit friends.

Roger was driving a very stylish late model Ford Falcon, so perhaps distance was not a problem in such a car, especially with Roger behind the wheel. A pleasant surprise visit, that made my day.

John Scharber

A recent letter from John describes a visit with Joanne to Kapooka, to attend the march-out parade of their son James, after completing his basic training. A photograph included shows James in uniform, wearing RAE badges, and far more handsome than John used to be or is it my poor memory. The letter is included elsewhere to revive memories, plus an insight into the way Kapooka is now.

Ross and Marie McMillan

Still living in Wodonga, they were visited recently by George Timmins, who reported both in good health and spirits. Ross uses his spare time renovating old furniture, a profitable hobby he has developed over the years, by attending local auctions, sometimes buying a particular piece that catches his eye, which he then renovates for sale.

Mary Mills

Mary is still recovering after suffering a broken pelvis close to twelve months ago. Because of very restricted movement at the time, it was impossible for her to negotiate the stairs in their split-level house she and Bob had at Seacliff, which meant moving to a single level house at Hallet Cove. She is able to move around much better now, but still requires more time yet, before recovery is complete.

We all hope that's not too far away, Mary.

Graeme Birrell

Graeme and Pauline have been travelling extensively throughout Australia since retirement, indulging their passion for fishing along the way. I had reports of their movement through W.A., after travelling down from the North-West and the N.T., also a visit in Bendigo, so are probably home by now---maybe.

They designed their own van, which has been described by many as customised luxury, easily towed by a top model Toyota Landcruiser.

Stan and Helen Campbell

As reported in a previous newsletter, travelling the Aussie Tourist Route, they have since visited Bruce Cockburn at Boggabri, stayed with Andrew Warwick in Tasmania, met up with Peter and Sue Raue at Bangor and Ken and Nancy Shaw at Umina.

Irene and Peter Blaskett

Normally residing at Golden Beach QLD, they bought an A Van to travel the tourist route, setting off some time ago, probably relaxing in W.A. by now.

Peter Imeson

Since retirement from the Service, Peter has signed up with the ARES, joining Paul Hunter with 41 Bn RNSWR at Ballina, NSW.

Fred Brown

As a major he is currently the OC of the Geospatial Information Section at HQ Darwin, after his stint in East Timor. I thought Fred retired years ago.

Dennis and Joy Marshall

Reported in an earlier newsletter leaving Victor Harbor for Victoria, they now reside at Balnarring Beach near Hastings, on the Mornington Peninsula.

Bob Skitch

Bob and Wendy recently returned from a ten week visit to the U.K, spending time with their son Christopher, meeting up with friends and relatives, plus doing some serious touring in between.

Colin Cuskelly

Colin is now heading the Bendigo office of Intergraph Mapping Services, which has been acquired by Aspect North, based at Lismore. Aspect North is mainly a surveying consortium, and is a panel member on the Geoscience Australia mapping contract.

Frank Thorogood

Frank had a hip replacement earlier this year, with quite a few problems as a result, slowing recovery considerably in the first few months, however, he is now doing much better, although it will be some time yet before a full recovery is expected.

We all hope to hear that you're back to normal fairly soon, Frank.

Kevin Walsh

Kevin has moved into a new home at Caloundra QLD, and has settled in fairly well. He has not enjoyed the best of health for some time now, but still maintains an active lifestyle with his various interests.

Should any old friends like a chat, his phone number is (07)54381710.

Percy Long

Percy had a skin cancer removed from his eyelid, requiring a skin graft, about mid-year. We all expect a full recovery Percy.

Brian Mead

Brian retired (or got tired) in December 2003 to carry on with his many interests, including renovating his home. Have you finished the kitchen you were doing a few months ago, Brian ?. Take my advice on the matter and don't try a take over of the pantry from Annette, and retirement will be a lot smoother. He has been secretary of the W.A. Association for some time, putting in a lot of effort.

Best of luck in retirement, Brian!

Allan Adsett

Allan recently returned from a short trip to Dunedin, New Zealand where he attended a conference of University Computing Support Staff. It was a bit of a shock going from 37 degree temperatures in Adelaide to a maximum of 9 degrees for the day. The Kiwi's proved to be very good hosts.

Max Coletti

Max underwent surgery very recently to remove a cancerous tumour, from his stomach area. The location and size of the tumour, at around 1.5 litres, was considered unusual in Australia and a visiting overseas

expert was consulted for advice.

He is presently recuperating, now waiting to see if all the cancerous growth was removed, with the possibility of chemotherapy in the near future.

Max only went to see his GP initially, to check out what he thought was a strained stomach muscle. We all hope that the outcome is very positive Max, and our thoughts are with you.

General

A Get-together on the Murray

And why not? The idea is for a fishing trip on the Murray, held around the half-way mark between Adelaide and Wodonga, so that Association members from Wodonga, Adelaide and Bendigo, can meet up for at least a long weekend, or preferably longer at a selected camp-site. No matter if you have never been fishing, or even hate the thought of dangling a line, as the fishing bit will not interfere with having fun. Timings would be summer/autumn or spring/summer 2005.

A lot of prior planning would be required, sorting out transport, a suitable location, or whether to camp or use other accommodation, etc.

I'm sure Garry Warnest in Bendigo and Gordon Lowery in Wodonga, would be happy to co-ordinate members from their area, and I'll do the same in Adelaide. At this stage it would only be necessary to have an indication of those interested, not binding now, plus any resources they can contribute, if any.

As you realise some idea of numbers would need to be known very soon, so if you think a get-together on the Murray would be a great idea, let me know now and don't put it off, as you might remember how unreliable memory can be. Call

Bendigo RSL Annual Dinner

I attended the 2004 dinner held on Saturday 20th November at the North Bendigo Club Rooms, and was pleasantly surprised to find a large group of former Fortuna bods in attendance.

Most are still at Fortuna now, working with the Defence Imagery Geospatial Organisation (DIGO).

Pre-dinner drinks started at 6-30pm, just as my bus from Adelaide

arrived at the Bendigo Railway Station, however, I was able to change on the bus before hand and, with my transport, waiting my arrival, I reached the venue only about 15 minutes late.

I can't remember all of the group but present were Rusty Williams, Rhys DeLaine, Bob Garrity, Mick Ellis, Harry Mai, Garry Warnest, Steve Burke, Mark Twist, Mick Flynn, Dave Lambton-Young, Warren Chadwick, and Gordon Haswell, so there's a few names from the past that might revive memories.

Survey Corps 90th Anniversary Dinner

The dinner has been arranged by the Ex-Fortuna Association at the "All Seasons International Hotel" on McIvor Road on Friday 1 July 2005 at 7-30 pm. The envisaged format for the function will be similar to that of the book launch.

A two course meal is planned, with two choices for each course and individual orders taken at each table. Initial drinks will be set out at each table on arrival, and included in the cost of the meal, but additional drinks will be at each guest's expense.

The cost is anticipated at around \$35.00 per head.

A hefty deposit to secure the function venue has been paid, so the committee need to know numbers attending fairly soon.

No money is required now, but if you are likely to attend please let secretary Tracy Phillips know NOW!!, with your contact details :

E-mail:

Phone:

Mail: Ex Fortuna Survey Association, P O Box 613
Bendigo Vic 3555

The PNG Medal

As mentioned previously, eligibility for this medal is still being followed, however the requests to PNG authorities from various Corps Associations, mainly the Queensland Branch, have not been answered.

Bob Skitch is still awaiting a reply to his latest requests to the Commander PNG Defence Force and the PNG High Commissioner in Canberra. The aim is to allow the state associations the authority to contact Christies direct, on behalf of their members, to purchase the

medals.

Please note though, that a serving member cannot wear the medal with those presently recognised and authorised by the Australian Government, but must be worn separately.

This cannot be enforced with civilian members, so if you want to mount the medal with your existing issues, you can, although not strictly correct.

It is now a wait and see situation.

The Australian Defence Medal

Mentioned briefly in our last newsletter, I've now included the entire signal received by Noel Sproles, which will acquaint everyone with full details regarding the introduction and distribution of the new medal. All former members of the Corps who served for a minimum of six years post WW2, should be eligible.

The media release of Saturday 26 June 2004 follows -----

The Howard Government has today announced the intention to establish a new medal that recognises volunteer service in the Australian Defence Force.

All relevant approvals are now being sought to allow the award of this medal.

The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Mal Brough, said those who had served for a total of six years in the Australian Defence Force, regular or reserve, would be eligible and the medal would be backdated to recognise past service.

"The Australian Defence Medal also reflects the fact that when serving in a modern Defence Force, it becomes difficult to discriminate between those who serve directly on operations and those who support those operations. The Australian Defence Medal reflects the fact that by serving in the Australian Defence Force individuals make a contribution to the national interest, whether they served the country on operations, or whether they remained in Australia in a support role.

The war on terrorism has redefined the notions of a frontline or even an

easily definable Area of Operations. Some tasks undertaken by soldiers, sailors and airmen remain invisible to the community at large but are very important to our nation's defence. These may include preparation and planning, intelligence and, indeed, other classified activities that for national security reasons can't be recognised by a specific award.

The Australian Defence Medal will recognise all of these circumstances of service."

Mr Brough said the Australian Defence Medal would be retrospective from the end of World War Two, in order to recognise that many people in the past had served their nation in a variety of forms, sometimes arduous, but had not been recognised by an operational medal. However, those who completed National Service would not be eligible unless they subsequently volunteered and completed the requisite six years volunteer service.

"Six years reflects a length of time that we could be reasonably certain that most people would have completed the requisite training and experience in the Regular or Reserve forces, to be considered fully deployable should they have been called upon," Mr Brough said

"We believe these conditions also give effect to a motion from the Returned and Services League who agree with our desire to further recognise ADF service.

The implementation of the medal will be a significant undertaking and the issue of medals to past servicemen will take time. It is estimated that up to 400,000 ex-servicemen and women may apply for this medal," Mr Brough said.

"It is anticipated that once a design has been finalised and the medals have been struck, the issuing of medals could begin around middle of 2005.

Operational and other demanding overseas service will still be recognised under the current arrangements. Processing and issuing of operational awards will take priority as the new Australian Defence Medal is being implemented.

Memorial Plaque

A bronze plaque to honour the Royal Australian Survey Corps, was unveiled at Caloundra on Remembrance Day this year.

The project was initiated by the Queensland Association, so present at the unveiling were Bob Skitch, Kevin Walsh and Arthur McClure, naturally enough. Extracts from an article by Grant Edwards on the occasion, follows-----WALKWAY PLAQUES A REMINDER-----

Imagine heading into battle with no knowledge of where you were or the terrain. The mapping contributions from the Royal Australian Survey Corps should never be forgotten.

A plaque recognising those who sacrificed, mapped and guided the Australian military was unveiled at Caloundra Headland following the Remembrance Day service on Thursday.

With the motto 'To See is to Prepare', the Corps provided vital data to troops heading into unknown territory. Since being disbanded in 1996, Corps member from 1955 to 1981 Bob Skitch said 'We felt in our association we should leave a few reminders of what the Corps achieved, in places where the public might stop and ponder. There is no better place than this wonderful memorial walkway. You see so many people wandering along there looking at the little personal plaques on the pathway.'

Mapping in places such as the Middle East, Egypt, New Guinea and Borneo, Corps members often lived in harsh conditions and behind enemy lines to research their surveys.

Mr Skitch said 'It was fully operational in both peace and war. When we weren't in direct support of military operations, we were getting about mapping. The maps you make in peacetime are the maps you use in wartime.'

Satellite imagery has now superseded the traditional techniques, and the decision to disband the Corps is regarded by some old members as economic rationalism rather than sound decision making.

Kapooka Revisited

John Scharber

Joanne & I, together with her Mum and our daughter Jenni set off from Adelaide about 1630 hrs for Wagga but the late start and very bad weather forced an overnight stop at Pinnaroo leaving a fairly long drive the next day. We arrived at Wagga at 1600 Hrs the next day and I can

tell you the Hay plain doesn't get any less boring. We stayed at the RSL Club Motel, which I can thoroughly recommend. The motel is rated at 4 stars but is very reasonably priced and adjoins the RSL Club.

The next day was the event that we had driven so far for - our son James was to have his Marchout Parade from recruit training at Kapooka. I was not only looking forward to the parade but to once again have a look at the place that I had spent 3 tortuous months at so many years ago. We arrived at the front gate and though the guardhouse looked somewhat familiar it was manned by civilian security guards (where had all those recruits gone that manned the gate during their week of regimental duties?) The parade ground appeared to be in the same place as I remember but the-head of it was now reversed (I recall it fronting the road.) Lo & behold there are now 3 permanent all weather grandstands and a saluting dais to accommodate all the visiting friends & relatives.

The Army band from Sydney struck up a stirring march and down the hill came the two platoons who had survived the six weeks of basic training. I seem to recall in my day that the whole Recruit Training Battalion used to be on parade. There was our boy (well man now at 26) and we just couldn't believe the transformation! There is still something particularly stirring about the "March in Revue Order" and when the platoons marched past with eyes right Joanne & I felt an overwhelming sense of pride at what he had achieved (when we went into the Recruiting Centre in Adelaide for James' swearing in ceremony the Recruiting Officer had said that of 3000 applicants only two to three hundred had been accepted for training and James had earlier told us that fifteen of the forty starters in his platoon were gone by the end of the second week. The platoon had been topped up from another).

Following the parade there was to be a luncheon at the Edmondson VC Club (now that was a place I remembered). The buses arrived to ferry us from the parade ground to the club and they were driven by.....you guessed it.....civilians. The bus trip was going to be a good chance to get a glimpse of the camp but I'm afraid to say nothing very much rang a bell. Gone were the rows of Nissan huts and red brick buildings had risen in their place. The Officers Mess was now a large brick building as

was the Sergeants_Mess and the recruit accommodation consisted of a number of three story buildings. The Edmondson_VC Club was still in the same place but had been so enlarged as to be barely recognisable as its former self. I was looking forward to standing on the rear deck and looking out across the valley to where I had spent my three months so long ago (I had been in Charlie Company which had consisted of a whole bunch of Nissan huts separated from the rest of the battalion and affectionately known as "Silver City"). Trees at the rear of the club had grown to blot out the view that I recall but glimpses through them told me that "Silver City" was no more and had now become ranges and assault courses.

Well that was my trip back to Kapooka.....I guess nothing stays the same and most changes are for the better.....then again it had been forty years !!!!!

Only one more question to ask - Can the Defence Force handle another Scharber????

Coming back is more than half the fun

Noel Sproles

Whoever coined the expression that 'Getting there is half the fun' probably did not have the trip to and from South Vietnam in the late 1960's in mind, but even in those circumstance there could still be a grain of truth in the statement. For instance, I always envied John Bullen who made the trip both ways on HMAS Sydney. Going up or back by sea would have been cool. While quite a few managed a trip at least one way on the Sydney, the majority of us made it aboard one of Qantas's Boeing 707 'V Jets'. It was like being in a cigar tube as all the partitions were stripped out of the interior making it a 'one class' flight with some 163 economy style seats. While we were served regular Qantas meals, we were disappointed to see that the cabin staff was strictly all male. Because of the need to arrive in Saigon as early as possible to allow people to get to their various destinations by nightfall, the 707 left Sydney in the late evening and waited at Singapore for a while before proceeding to Vietnam. The Singapore government insisted that we did not wear uniform and so we all had to bring along a civilian shirt to wear. I am sure that the sight of a planeload of fit young men with short back-and-sides haircuts wearing boots and jungle green

trousers fooled no-one, but the rules were met and that is what mattered.

Most of us assembled at the personnel depot at South Head direct from pre-embarkation leave and went by bus to Mascot to board the plane. We were a pretty sombre lot on that trip and I remember the bus radio playing the TAA promotional jingle current at the time. I am no Molly Meldrum when it comes to identifying 60's hit tunes but the lyrics were about an eagle soaring up into the sky and I cannot but recall that trip in January 1968 whenever I hear it.

Prior to leaving Sydney we were issued with our personal weapons and it was the second time in my Army service that I had to unwrap a brand new SLR and clean it of its preservative grease. We also had to load two magazines each with ball ammunition. On arrival at Tan Son Nhut airport, in Saigon, we were then given our rifles and magazines direct from the hold of the 707 and proceeded with them to the aircraft, or whatever, that was to take us to our units. For someone brought up on the strict Army peace-time safety regulations governing when and how you handled a loaded weapon, it was sobering to suddenly find yourself free to walk fully armed around the tarmac of an international airport. This awareness of being in a war zone was reinforced by the sight of a USAF C 130 Hercules in a blast shelter just up from our Qantas 707. The Hercules had received a direct hit from a mortar bomb the night before and had caught fire. The section of fuselage from its junction with the wing leading edge up to the flight deck was just a pile of molten metal on the tarmac. The front of the aircraft containing the nose and flight deck was lying neat as a pin, on its side, on the taxiway. Hercules decapitated.

Your time in Vietnam was marked by how many days to go before you went home. It was expressed as so many days 'and a wakie'. The idea was that you did not include the day you left – that was the 'wakie' – and somehow that reduced your time by a day. The logic may be flawed but it helped us so we left it at that. When you first arrived you were 'long' but as the time to go home approached, you were said to be getting 'short'. The opening part of any conversation up there was

usually 'How many days do you have to go?' and if you said that you had just arrived and therefore had 364 days and a 'wskie', the standard response was a look of feigned shock and the statement that 'No one is THAT long!'. Sometimes it was followed by the old soldier's cry of 'You'll be sorry', none of which had a very positive effect on your morale.

But eventually, the time to go home finally came around. I was on my last firebase when that happy day arrived and I had to fly back on the RAAF courier helicopter to Nui Dat to get ready. On the way the pilot thought that he saw something on the ground and said that he was going down to investigate. His announcement was accompanied by my woeful wail of 'Noooooo, don't do it. I am short. I am going home tomorrow' but it was to no avail. As the side gunners cocked their twin M60s I thought to myself that it was just my rotten luck to catch a ride with an aggressive crew. We dipped and weaved and backtracked at tree top level for what seemed an eternity looking for whatever the crew thought that they had seen. Luckily they failed to find anything and we eventually climbed back up to the safe flight level of 1000 feet above ground level where small arms fire, in theory at least, could not get us.

My trip home on the 707 had its moments but not quite as exciting as that experienced by Peter Constantine a year later. His 707 was actually on the runway with engines spooling up having been given clearance to take off when Tan Son Nhut was hit by a mortar barrage. A Vietnamese war bride with her soldier husband was on board and she was already upset following a tearful farewell to her family. As Peter was the senior officer on board, the aircraft captain called him up to see what he should do. Peter asked him if his take off clearance was still valid, and when the captain said that it was then Peter said 'Go' and they took off with mortar bombs exploding around the airport and the Vietnamese bride in near hysterics as she feared for her family back in the terminal.

Our journey back to Oz commenced with a brush with celebrity and fame. The 707 that was to take us home had just brought pop singer Normie Rowe up for his year with the cavalry in Nui Dat. As we sat on the ground waiting to be called up to board the plane, Normie was surrounded by reporters asking questions and taking photographs. Were we envious

of his fame and the attention that he was getting? No way. Trooper Normie had 364 days and a 'wakie' to go and no one wanted to be THAT long!

Unlike the trip up, we wore polyesters for the home journey. When I went to the toilet I was to find out to my dismay that my trouser zipper had deteriorated during the 12 months of storage in Nui Dat and I could not do it up. I asked a flight attendant if they had some sewing kits and he said that they did not carry them on these flights but offered the unhelpful advice of 'Let it all hang out, mate'. These Qantas stewards can exhibit a talent for wit. Not so many years back, I was settling in for the mind and bum numbing trip back from Los Angeles to Melbourne in a Qantas 747. The window seat passenger in front of me called the steward's attention to a loose wall panel next to him. He received not the obsequious and insincere reply one would expect from most airlines but 'Struth mate, we haven't even taken off yet and you are already wrecking the plane!' Any way, back to my broken zipper. After mulling over the problem for a while, I asked my mate sitting next to me to go up the aisle and collect any magazines bound with heavy staples. We then took out the staples and used them to do up my zip and the repair not only lasted the trip but a night stopover in Sydney, the trip by plane to Melbourne the next day and the two hour bus journey home to my parents' place. RASvy style resourcefulness at work yet again but my erstwhile friend, the Qantas cabin attendant, was none too impressed at what we had done to his magazines.

Customs were strict in searching our baggage in Sydney as they were on the lookout for weapons and drugs. At that time, only portable tape recorders were allowed in duty free. This was in the age of the hefty twin reel recorders and most of us had acquired one in Hong Kong or such places on R and R and portable they were not. When I put mine on the counter, the Customs officer asked me what it was and I told him. 'Is it portable?' was his leading question, so I lifted it off the counter and gasped 'I can lift it!' 'OK mate', he said 'it is portable' and he let me through. I don't feel that they were too concerned with what we brought back so long as we left the drugs and guns behind. Another much appreciated gesture was someone's dad who got everyone in the terminal to cheer us as we came out from Customs and

Immigration.

Naturally enough, I can still remember the trip home on our Qantas 'Freedom Bird' quite well. As we climbed out of Tan Son Nhut on a clear sunny day, we passed straight over my last firebase and I looked down, a little wistfully strangely enough, and thought of my colleagues still at it down there. Then we slowly turned to starboard and passed over Cap St Jacques and Vung Tau before heading out over the South China Sea. But the thing that I remember most about the trip home was how everyone received the captain's cabin announcements. He gave us a running commentary as Vietnam slowly slipped away behind us but it did not elicit a response from anyone. We were an audience that the entertainers would criticise as one that just sat on their hands. Our reaction was the same as we were told that we were passing over Borneo (anyhow, all we could see was jungle); when we were handed over to Darwin air traffic control; when we crossed the Australian coastline; when we were passed onto Sydney air traffic control; and to his last announcement as we turned onto finals at Mascot. Not a word or a comment. Eventually the 707 steadied its descent, flared and then came the squeal of the wheels and the shudder of the fuselage as the plane touched down. Without warning, a spontaneous roar broke out in the cabin as every single one of us yelled and cheered at the top of our voices. We were back in Australia. We had made it. We were safe once more. We were home!

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

Held on Friday 10th December at the Keswick Barracks Sergeants' Mess at 7pm.

Held for the first time at the Mess, I didn't know what to expect, considering the economic policies that have been introduced with an all civilian staff, consequently the administration has become very much soldier oriented, so that social activities have lost a lot of their former style and finesse, consequently I was a bit nervous.

It was a breezy affair as 47 cheery souls arrived on time for pre-buffet drinks, to renew old times, before moving into the dining room.

The format was an easy going self service buffet, with table seating anywhere you wished.

The buffet set out lacked presentation to some extent, but the food was varied and well prepared, and went down well, although a bit light on. Cutlery and crockery were a mixed lot but OK, bar glass-ware was not as elegant as in some places, however, most people accepted these minor things easily enough.

The big plus however, was being together with the place to ourselves, able to move around freely, without interference from another group. Another big plus of course was having our own bar, with drinks at Mess prices.

Following the buffet we moved out to the lounge area, for a cheese board, tea and coffee.

With so many members attending other functions, there were 18 names on the list of apologies received, which were read out with any comment that came to mind. I also took the opportunity to wish all attending a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

It was a very pleasant Christmas get-together and I'm sure everyone enjoyed the occasion.

Those who attended the function are listed below-----
Dave Irving and Pam, Dianne and Neville Stone, Pam and John Harrison, Lea and John Wicker, Roz and Bob Williams, Carol and Wally Herbst, Rita and Jim Dunn, Barbara and Arthur Henson, Moyna Briggs, Stevo Hinic and Pauline, Elizabeth and Bill Love, Kay Trueman, Sue and Simon Capp, Joanne and John Scharber, Lorraine and Ken Talbot- Smith, Vicky and Angelo Pantelides, Desi Asaris and Peter, Margaret and Bob Dikkenberg, Bob Mills, Rhonda and Mick Dempster, Julie and Peter Elverd, John Frith, Peter Davis, Neil Houston and Karen, Lincoln Smith, Joan and Alex Munro.

VALE

Barry Richardson

Barry passed away in Adelaide on 8th December 2004, at the age of 54 years, succumbing to cancer which had only been diagnosed six months previously.

The news came as a shock to his friends.

He joined RASVY in 1970, attending the 39/70 Basic Course at Bonegilla, serving for 12 years at the Army Svy Regt, Bendigo, and 4 Fd Svy Sqn at Keswick Barracks, from where he worked on several field mapping operations in PNG, the NT and SA.

He was also highly regarded as a plotter in the photogrammetry section.

Leaving the Service with the rank of sergeant, he worked in Queensland for a time before returning to Adelaide, eventually setting up his own business providing drafting services, which he operated until recent times. He was also a respected member of his local church and community group.

A touching funeral service was held for Barry at the Centennial Park Cemetery on the 13th December, attended by a very large group of family and friends, filling the chapel completely. John Harrison and I represented our Association.

Condolences are extended to Wendy and her family, with their sad loss.

Seen recently at the Indy race on the Gold Coast.



It appears that political correctness has yet to affect the Australian Army Aviation Corps. Seen at 2004 Indy Race on the Gold Coast



The Committee extends the compliments of the season to all members and their families.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas and we'll see you all in the New Year

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
ALEX MUNRO

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS S.A. 5041
Telephone

SECRETARY/TREASURER
DAVE IRVING

ATHELSTONE S.A. 5076
Telephone

ASST. SECRETARY/TREASURER
BOB MILLS

HALLETT COVE S.A. 5158
Telephone

NEWSLETTER
ALEX MUNRO

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS S.A. 5041
Telephone

ALLAN ADSETT

ABERFOYLE PARK S.A. 5159
Telephone

Email