



SURVEY EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION SOUTH AUSTRALIA



President

Alex Munro,
Email:

Secretary

Ken Jeffery,
Email:

Treasurer

Peter Elverd,
Email:

Newsletter

Allan Adsett,
Email:

Newsletter No 49 December 2008

WELCOME

Welcome to the third newsletter for 2008. Thanks again to those members who have sent articles and photos. The Committee would like to wish members and their families a very safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SOCIAL NEWS

First Friday Drinks

At the Saracens Head Hotel in Carrington St CBD at 5pm each first Friday of the month. Why not drop in and enjoy the company of fellow ex-RASvy members.

NEWS ITEMS

Annual General Meeting

The meeting was always held at Keswick Barracks until about 25 years ago, when it was decided to hold it in conjunction with our Anzac Day reunion each year, a move that worked well when suitable venues were available. However, in the last three years as city hotels have become far more popular on Anzac Day with the general public, a venue suitable for both our reunion and meeting has been hard to find in a central location, hence the move back to Keswick to avoid any clash with our reunion.

AGM 2008 in brief

Held at Keswick Barracks in a conference room at HQ 9 Bde, courtesy of the OC. Members met in the adjacent Sergeants' Mess at 7.30pm to socialise before attending the meeting at 8pm on 1st September 2008.

1. Present: President Bob Dickenberg, Secretary Ken Jeffery, Treasurer Peter Elverd, John Nathan, Frank Bryant, Allan Adsett, Graeme Ragless, Peter Cates, Ken Talbot-Smith, Neil Houston, John Whitburn, Alex Munro, Dave Irving.

2. Apologies: Noel Sproles, Bob Cooper, Neville Stone, Bob Ballard, Simon Lemon, Marg Knight, Arthur Henson, Brett Knuckey, Dave Stephenson, John Wicker, Stevo Hinic, Gordon Santo, Neil Armstrong, John Zuringer, Angelo Pantelidis, Rob Langley, Bill Griggs, Max Coletti.

3. Previous Minutes: Circulated to the meeting by the secretary.

Proposed Allan Adsett that the minutes as presented be accepted. Seconded Bob Dikkenberg. Carried.

4. Business arising: (a) Army Combat Badge. Explained by Alex Munro that the matter was still ongoing. (b) 4 Field Survey History (c) Corps Museum, Moorebank. (d) Royal Australian Survey Corps plaque. All items referred to general business.

5. Correspondence In: (a) Thank you cards from the Clutterbuck families. (b) RSL request re Poppy Day appeal (c) RSL info regarding Remembrance Day service on 11th November 08. (d) Approval from DVA for a cash grant to erect a memorial plinth and plaque to RASVY. (e) Approval from the Adelaide City Council to erect a plinth and plaque to RASVY beside Torrens Parade Ground. (f) Approval from RSL HQ for the layout of the plaque to RASVY.

6. Correspondence Out: (a) Condolences to the families of the late Clutterbuck brothers. (b) Request to DVA for a cash grant to construct a plinth and plaque to RASVY. (c) Request to Adelaide City Council to erect a plinth and plaque by Torrens Parade Ground. (d) Request to RSL HQ to approve the layout of a proposed plaque to RASVY. e) Instructions to S D Tillett Stonemasons to construct a granite plinth and cast bronze plaque.

7. President's Report: The president outlined Association activities since the last AGM.

8. Treasurer's Report: The treasurer presented his financial report to the meeting.

Total unencumbered funds held	\$1515.38
Total history project funds	344.58
Donations collected for the RASVY/ PNG Plaque	280.00

Total cash held in bank as at 1 Sep 08 \$2139.96

Moved Ken Jeffery that the report be accepted. Seconded Ken Talbot-Smith. Carried.

9. General Business:

9.1 Future meetings and functions: After a lengthy discussion the following Association activities for each year were agreed to unanimously by those present-(a)Anzac Day parade followed by our reunion and lunch at the Elephant Hotel, (b)Corps Day dinner/buffet at Keswick Barracks, (c)New Year BBQ in late January/early February, (d) The AGM to be held on the first Monday in September.

Details of all functions will be notified in advance by a mail-out flyer.

9.2 RASVY Plaque: Alex Munro advised the meeting that the project was proceeding slowly but surely, that a grant of \$3900 had been approved by the Dept of Veterans Affairs, that all approvals for the erection and location of the monument have been obtained and that monumental masons S D Tillett Pty Ltd have been instructed to proceed with construction. When completed, a date for the unveiling ceremony will be advised, probably in early February.

9.3 4 Field Survey Squadron History:

(a) Still proceeding slowly, mainly by Arthur Henson at the moment but hopefully will speed up in 2009. Arthur reports that he is not receiving the help he would like, when sending out requests for information, and would like the courtesy of being advised even if no help can be given.

(b) Bob Dikkenberg is proceeding with a story board about the squadron, to be erected within the barracks.

(c) The memorial plinth and plaque for the squadron to be erected at the north end of the Keswick Barracks parade ground, has been on hold for some time now but the project should proceed once the RASVY monument is finalised.

(d) Peter Cates hopes to visit the Corps museum at Moorebank sometime soon, with the intention of checking the possibility of acquiring some surplus survey equipment for the Keswick museum.

9.4 RSL donation : Proposed Alex Munro that a \$25.00 donation be sent to RSL HQ toward their 2008 Anzac Day Appeal. Seconded John Nathan. Carried.

9.5 PNG Medals : John Whitburn spoke on the Australian Service Medal (PNG Clasp) and the PNG Independence Medal, and considers that some members with service in PNG are unaware that they might be eligible. Any members wishing to check this can contact John on 8381 2433.

9.6 RASVY National Association: Alex Munro brought to the notice of the meeting the possibility of a national association being raised, the matter being canvassed by the executive committee of the association in Queensland. Apparently a Brisbane based company has offered to sponsor such a national body with large cash donations, to be used in maintaining the Corps museum. A meeting has been proposed before the final BBQ at Fortuna on Sunday 7 September 08, and he has volunteered to represent our Association while attending that function, and report back later.

10. Election of office bearers: The following members were elected to the executive committee.

Position		Nominated	Seconded	
President	Alex Munro	Peter Cates	Graeme Ragless	Carried.
Secretary	Ken Jeffery	Bob Dikkenberg	Graeme Ragless	“
Treasurer	Peter Elverd	Neil Houston	Ken Talbot-Smith	“
Newsletter Editor	Allan Adsett			

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9.35pm.

Closure of Fortuna Villa

After about 66 years of occupancy by both military and civilian organisations, producing mapping for all three services and government agencies, the place is no longer able to provide the necessary work conditions for a modern hi-tech mapping organisation, so DIGO has now moved out into a recently built purpose designed building, on the outskirts of Bendigo.

Commonwealth security staff will remain on site until the premises are disposed of, one way or another. The week-end of Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September was organised as the last opportunity for a “Back to Fortuna Get-Together” before the final closure, with a dinner-dance on the Saturday night and a BBQ at Fortuna on the Sunday afternoon. I had the pleasure of having lunch on Saturday with Barry Lutwyche, Alex Cairney, Ross Smythwick and Bob Skitch at the Rifle Brigade Hotel (familiar pub to many), but did not attend the dinner-dance because of a family function, although I believe it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

On the Sunday Joan and I attended the BBQ held in the former transport compound, which was packed out with ex-Fortuna bods, partners and friends, to an extent that I had never seen before. Someone mentioned that four hundred were expected, but true or not it was certainly well attended, with plentiful supplies of food and drinks available without having to wait too long, when considering the numbers there. The organisers did a really first class job in setting everything up and are to be commended for the work they put in over the entire weekend. Well done.

Regular tours of the villa were conducted during the afternoon, even though the signs of equipment and furniture removal were sometimes obvious without detracting from the tour. Corps memorabilia and souvenirs were also available for sale.

I normally would include a few names of people I had encountered during the function but there were far too many for this, needless to say that the opportunity to reminisce was huge. I really enjoyed the week-end as I’m sure most others did also.

Community Engagement, Defence Site Fortuna

Shown below are extracts from an email received via Brian Mead from Defence Support.

Defence has identified the Fortuna property as surplus to requirements due to the recent relocation of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) to a new purpose built facility elsewhere in Bendigo.

Defence is continuing to engage with Heritage Victoria, the City of Greater Bendigo Council and the community during the disposal process of Fortuna Villa, and there was an opportunity for the public to visit the property at an Open Day at Fortuna on Saturday 6th December 2008 from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Fortuna is a 7.5 hectare property located at 22-48 Chum St, and was entered in the Commonwealth Heritage List in 2004 for its historic heritage values. An investigation into the heritage values of the property should be completed by the end of 2008, as a factor in the disposal process.

The extracts above are in brief, but give the overall picture well enough.

Whoever takes over the property will need a sound and viable economic plan to renovate the property as necessary and maintain the infrastructure, and as I understand, no person has so far. I believe the Bendigo Council would like to be involved but are shying clear of the costs involved. Approximately five thousand visitors toured the villa during the Open Day on 6th December, according to my informant in Bendigo, which shows there is a strong community interest in the place. Alex Munro

Commemorative Plaque for PNG

Bob Skitch recently reported that the Queensland Association as sponsor for the project hope to proceed fairly soon with the task, as approval from the relevant administration in PNG is expected. The process to reach this point has taken Bob about two years of mainly unproductive one way correspondence, but now he is certain that the project will be approved finally. Our Association responded to the original request for funds by raising \$280.00 last year, which has been held in trust since then, but will now be sent on to the project fund.

National Association

The formation of a national body to represent all ex-Corps associations was first mooted a few months ago by the Queensland Association, when a Brisbane based company active in surveying and land development offered to sponsor such a body for around \$20,000 or at least a substantial amount in the first year, for the use of the name on the company letterhead. A meeting was organised for Sunday 7th September at Fortuna at 11am to discuss such a formation, attended by representatives from each association and the company concerned, all later going to the Fortuna closure BBQ.

The matter was discussed as to the organisation, raising and administration of such a national body, and probably raised more questions than answers as not all items discussed were mutually acceptable to the point where the Canberra Association rejected the idea outright. The matter is still ongoing but hopefully will be resolved early in the New Year, so I intend to report the outcome in full in our next newsletter.

Alex Munro

WHAT ABOUT IT? A REUNION For A Section 1 Topo Svy

When: August, September 2009

Where: Brisbane

Why? Most other units have had such reunions, often multiple reunions, A Section because of its small numbers has never had a reunion, and this provides an opportunity for members to catch up on long lost contacts.

How many will attend? Over 130 are on the A Section Nominal Role.

Who can attend? Your name must be on the A Section Nominal Role.

Cost: \$50 - \$60 per head for dinner and BBQ

What is your input? At this stage we need to know if you are interested in the reunion, this will be a one only as far as I am concerned and this is what I have put to DVA who have indicated that will probably provide some funding for costs.

The format would be a evening function for members and partners followed by a afternoon BBQ type function open to any ex RASVY member and family.

Bob Skitch is prepared to organize a venue and I will do the administration what we need from you in a yes or no response is;

1. Are you likely to attend?
2. Will your partner attend?

Spreading the word is up to you, most of us have kept track of someone, so for those of you with email please assist by collecting address and phone numbers of interested members and pass them on to me.

60 interested members will probably give 50 at the dinner which will make it worthwhile doing, however over to you.

Yours

Lloyd

Email:

Wodonga 3690

PEOPLE NEWS

Garran Hill

I received a letter from Garran in late August asking if I could help locate some 9x9 colour photography of Nui Dat that he was anxious to acquire. I made several enquiries to former A Section members, but like me they had never heard of any colour aerial photography of the area, of which I advised Garran. He stated in his letter "I had black and white film, colour film and infrared

film. The infrared was very poor and the colour film was great. I was doing some B&W over one of the towns, then put the colour film cartage in and I asked the pilot to go higher to get the full picture of Nui Dat. I asked the pilot to slow the plane so that I could take about 24 frames at a faster rate.” He thought that Bob Bennett also would have taken 9x9 colour photography over the Dat. Garran had an operation to remove a cancerous bowel section a few months ago in Melbourne, but did not require chemotherapy, however, he had to return to see his surgeon for another check-up in September. He also mentioned that his son Corey now holds a commission in Signals Corps. June and Garran have moved to Wondai in Queensland, where they are presently building a house, not without a few problems it seems. Garran can be contacted on telephone 07 4169 0779 should anyone have information regarding the photography that he is looking for.
Alex Munro.

Graham Kimber

I received an email from Graham the other day saying he was surfing the web and stumbled across the Association Web Site. He was stationed at 4 Fd Svy Sqn from December 1983 - February 1986. After taking his discharge Graham returned to Nursing until 1994. He then undertook some study in Electronics and is now working at the Advertiser. Graham included a photo taken after a formal function in the Sgts Mess. I'm sorry to say I recognised the Sgt but cannot remember his name. Graham passes on his regards to everyone.

Roger Rees

Roger sent me an email recently. His time in Defence is quickly drawing to a close - having finally made the decision to finish work with the Canberra Office of Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) as the Map Research Officer in mid October and taking leave until mid April 2009 when he retires from the workforce.

All going well after that date he hopes to catch up with many fellow ex RASvy members during their travels.

Roger passes on his regards and best wishes to all.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

The Continuing Saga of the 1957 Darwin Field Trip

Some new comments.

John Harrison has rightly pointed out that I had made a mistake in the name of one of our stopping points in the article “Some Reflections ...”. I apologise for this.

However, the choice by John of the title “The **True Story** – Adelaide to Darwin 1957” somewhat surprised me. John is well recognised as a good story-teller hence I assumed that the word “True” meant just that. Imagine my surprise to see a number of errors of fact in “The True Story”. Perhaps some events from the 1958 trip were merged into the 1957 events.

I will highlight just a couple of errors, not necessarily in chronological order, for the record.

In the section of the alternative paper “Day 2 – **Mambray Creek to Copley**” it is stated that “Tpt/Sgt Wally Brownlow, and his assistant Spr Bob Griffin, checked the already **ailing** vehicles”. Firstly, all of the vehicles for the 1957 trip were completely serviced and passed, by WO1 Simpson of RAEME Keswick, as being in first class order and ready for departure. Secondly, Bob Griffin did not join the unit until about September 1957, when he was flown from Adelaide to Darwin. I collected him and his gear from the airport. This can be verified by a quick inspection of the appropriate Roll Book.

At the time of the 1957 trip the unit only had one 1- Ton Truck, not a couple! This vehicle headed the 1957 convoy, and carried food and “Tables-FS” etc. The “WW-II-3 Ton Blitz Truck” was at the rear of the convoy, and carried WO1 Snow Simpson (seconded from RAEME to ensure ready availability of expert support) along with the driver. This was/is the customary position for the “recovery vehicle”. Again, perhaps this is another confusion with events from 1958. A quick phone call to Alex Munro could confirm these points.

Little, if any, of the debacle described when leaving Adelaide occurred in 1957. Therefore, again some of the events described must/may have happened on the 1958 trip. No offence has been taken in this matter, nor is any intended now. Let us just clear it up.
Frank Bryant November 2008

42 Survey Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers.

Pam & I are on a ten-week holiday around the world, and have stopped off in England for six days to catch up with Family and Friends. Yesterday, our friends from Huddersfield, Yorkshire, drove with us to meet my cousin and her family in Poole, Dorset. A pleasant journey of two hundred and seventy miles. Taking four and a half hours driving on and off motorways with a lunch stop in Towcester (pronounced Toaster). Enjoyable evening BBQ, in Sunshine and rain, with memories of my youth around my family.

Today, after browsing around Poole Quay, Brownsea Island (of Baden Powell Scouting Fame) and a little shopping, we headed off on the return trip. Driving north along the A34 past Winchester, a voice from the back seat suggested Lunch. So I took the next turn off, which happened to be the A303 to Andover. On the left was a sign, which read, '*Good food next left*'. So duly following the directions I turned left and entered the village of Barton Stacey. Memories came flooding back with the subtlety of a ten-pound sledgehammer. This was near where I was discharged from the British Army.

On recollection, one can understand how a little thing like a personal disagreement can change ones life. In March and April 1968 I had been in Libya and Cyprus with six other surveyors from the Regiment completing an astronomical survey for the Paratroopers. Towards the end of this project, Lance Corporal Peter Mansell had a stand-up argument with Staff Sergeant Les Morgan. Pete was listed as one of the troops to be sent to Australia in May for a six month detachment, to assist 5 Squadron RA Svy in the Kimberleys and 4 Squadron RA Svy in Northern Territory. On our return to Barton Stacey, Pete's name was removed from the list and mine inserted. During my six months in Australia, several things occurred which influenced my decision to return.

While in Base camp in Oenpelli, the Aussie troops received word of a New Army Pay Scheme, which meant a pay rise for most people. Chatting with Sergeant Alex Cairney, I discovered, his pay rise was the equivalent of my pay as a Lance Corporal. On leaving Adelaide, in December on a balmy 86 degree afternoon, we arrived in Luton, England seven days later to two foot of snow and two degrees below zero. These were the major two reasons for me to return to Barton Stacey, purchase my discharge from the British Army and return to Australia.

So back to today, The pub with the '*Good Food*' was the Swan, where I had spent many an hour around the bar. The food was excellent, but what was even more surprising, was a plaque screwed to a beam along with other memorabilia. The Royal Australian Survey Corps. The current Landlord has no idea who donated the plaque, but would be interested to hear from whom and when. I know several officers and men who had exchange postings to Barton Stacey from Australia and Canada, so if you have any knowledge concerning the donation, please write to The Swan, Barton Stacey Near Andover, Hampshire, England.

By Bob Ballard 1st August 2008

What a Goat



The photograph shown was found by Noel Sproles when perusing an old album, and being of some interest he thought it might bring back a few memories to many of our readers. It certainly did, but there was some head scratching and phone calls before most of the details were established.

The day: It was the 1st July 1976 and thought to be a Wednesday.

The occasion: A regimental parade held in late morning to honour our Corps Day, and to present Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to five recipients.

At the conclusion of the parade there was a lunch held in the old ballroom, to be followed by an indoor sports competition during the afternoon. I have no recollection of this activity because I had leave to attend a meeting in Melbourne.

The goat: Owned by an OR, without permission of the CO at the time, Peter Constantine, and kept mainly out of sight at Fortuna behind the OR's Lines or the Kitchen/Mess complex. On the day the beast apparently became bored with the situation it had and chewed through the tethering rope, before heading off to the parade for some fun.

Who's Who: The WO1 at right of the photo is obviously the RSM, John Hogan, and the officer at left in battledress is thought to be Ian Bootland, newly commissioned and yet to be issued with service dress which was the dress of the day, so he was made i/c medals. The officer apprehending the goat is Noel Sproles, no doubt with caution as goats can be cantankerous if upset. I'm at top left of the photo as SSM of Air Survey Squadron, but there are many more familiar faces.

Memories: I had just led the squadron onto the parade ground, when I became aware of a "clip-clop clip-clop" at my right side, which remained there for the length of the parade ground for all the world like a unit mascot being led on parade, until I gave the order to halt, which the goat disregarded and kept going until it was apprehended. I can only remember three of the LSGCM recipients-Clive Andrews, Ian (Ike)Lever and Gordon Hastwell, although I was a bit chuffed at the time as I was eligible for the medal but had been overlooked. I assume the photo was taken by someone from Litho appointed for the parade but Noel got his copy from a notice board the next morning with the caption ---"CO. Remove that goat. RSM. Which one Sir." There's always some wag.

Alex Munro

The Point Charles – Daly River Coastal Traverse

In my last article I said that we traversed west from Darwin in 1958, it should have read as late survey season of 1959. The purpose of the traverse was to increase the area controlled so that several 1:250,000 maps, outside and including the original 1:50,000 series area around Darwin, could be produced.

We used the Army work-boat plus two aluminium assault craft (two could be butted together at the stern like two hinge halves and a long pin inserted in each side to make a bridge pontoon) plus a Zodiac craft. The Survey Corps team being the: (late) WO Jimmy Bounds, Sgt Bill Mitchell, ORs Vin Sutherland, Steve Rose, Darby Munro, Billy Love, John Harrison, Ted Bear, (late) Jeff Briggs, with (late) Bob Griffin and Ronny Wernert in charge of the two assault boats. The zodiac boat was for emergency use of those on the workboat. We also had a Signaller, Corporal Ernie Hooly (since leaving the Army lives in Darwin rural area) as our base radio operator; while boatswain Cpl Bayliss was in charge of the work boat. This meant that sleeping on the boat was rather crowded; so several of us used to sleep on the solid curved canopy – this meant attaching a rope from side to side to prevent anyone from rolling off. Those who chose the inside option had to sleep on the solid side benches.

While the centre well deck of the boat was filled with sections of a scaffolding tower, a couple of sections of a radio tower for an instrument column, plus steel guy ropes and rods, and a generator to charge the tellurometer batteries, sufficient survey gear for three parties, water and food supplies, jerry cans of petrol in for the generator and outboard motors, there were a few bags of cement, sections of 4' x 2" galvanized pipe for witness posts, survey plaques and a small personal bag and camping gear for each person – the workboat was deep in the water on leaving Darwin Harbour. The traverse started at Point Charles lighthouse and went to a station at the south end of Bynoe Harbour where the tower was erected to see over the mangroves. During WWII, Bynoe Harbour was considered a safe anchorage as in the river inlets deep water goes up close to the river banks. The first night we tried anchoring there it was found that the out going tide caused such a strong current that the workboat's anchor (a plow like anchor) couldn't hold boat and we slowly dragged. Connections were made from the tower to the various islands in the group. One party had gone to Quail Island, the most northern island and the RAAF bombing range. Over night their assault boat

had drifted a way from the island leaving the party stranded until the work boat could retrieve it. At this time someone in Canberra decided that the RAAF planes had to have a bombing exercise and the planes at Darwin, were 'scrambled'. A Lincoln bomber was sent to check the island for any Aboriginals – it being a turtle nesting spot – saw the group and dropped a message tell them to get off the island 'post hast' as it was going to be bombed. Luckily Ernie had just finished his 'net' with Larrakeyah Barracks (on a different frequency) and had just switched to our local net and heard the frantic message from Quail Is, so was able to get back to Darwin, who then got back to RAAF. There were some very pissed off pilots as they had to jettison their bombs before they could land.

To depart Bynoe Harbour and get around the islands and start heading SW down the coast would take a few hours due to shoaly waters north of Quail Is. Bayliss was shown the aerial photographs that indicated a deep narrow passage through the reefs between the islands at the south end of harbour. This would be passable at high tide and would save about 5 hours. I was on the bows swinging the lead line and getting near 3 fathoms of water, when one side of the boat struck the edge of the reef but we did get through safely. Moral: one needs a 'sounder' on both sides in narrow channels, the water was too muddy to see the reef.

From Bynoe Harbour all the way to Cape Ford the traverse stations were all on the coast. The first was on a long narrow sand dune spit that was part of a geological formation that became the islands. Here it was where Jimmy Bounds received the 'curse' – he found a native burial and had to souvenir some bones!

Another interesting spot was Cape Blaze. Here one could land on a nice sandy beach with a grassy sand dune down to the water's edge. The actual Cape was a mile or so up the beach and out onto a rocky reef. During the war a bomber had crashed-landed on this beach and one huge blade of a propeller still stood upright in the sand. A couple of us dug down to the engine – a Ford – it appeared to be in remarkable condition considering being in salty sand for at least 16 years. The heavy framing remained but the metal skin had been broken off over the years and small pieces could be found in the rock pools at the waters edge. It was here that one party lost a set of their instrument legs to a bush fire that came down to the waters edge while they were at the survey station a couple of miles away. Their radio message said that everything was undamaged except the wood was all gone! One bag of slightly discoloured bronze fittings was all that remained. For some unremembered reason while Point Blaze was occupied by one of our teams, there was an emergency air drop of supplies by our Darwin Cessna.

Perron Island, having a hill about 100+' high and relatively near the coast, was used to connect a few photo control points, including one I had put in near the mouth of the Daly River from Mt. Daly the previous year.

While going up the Daly River, which was then almost smooth, it suddenly became rough with almost vertical sided waves – the tide had 'turned' and started going out. The outboard motor got swamped and I had to get the others to quickly grab paddles and keep the boat facing the waves or else we would have been rolled. I have since seen this type of rip happen in PNG while working on the Sepik River. My work boat passed through the area while it was calm, while another river boat, only a couple of hundred metres astern, struck the rip and had waves breaking over the bows and stern. At this period, it was legal to shoot crocodiles, and the Daly River was lousy with them except, as soon as they heard the boat, they raced down the mud banks into the river. Coming down the river it was a slightly different story as the current would carry the boat at a very good speed and you could let the motor idle. Each of the boats had a .303 rifle for emergencies. 'The Great White Hunter' J. Bounds tried shooting a few crocs and missed. So the 'Next Great White Hunter' – Jeff Briggs tried and got one. So there it was up on the mud bank and we were in the boat. Luckily there was a creek inlet close, where we could get the boat in and the croc was about 15-20 feet away.

Jeff had to retrieve the croc as he had shot it. With a rope, he started wading, thigh deep, through the mud towards it. Jeff was about half way, when one of the croc's eyes opened. Someone else had the rifle, just in case, but could not shoot as Jeff was in the line of fire. He had to move down the bank so the shooter could kill it. It appeared that Jeff's shots had hit the top of the skull at a too shallow angle to penetrate and had only stunned the croc.

The croc was retrieved and placed in the bottom of the boat. As the aluminium top of the air chamber (the flat deck) was quite thin, it had been covered by a sheet of sponge rubber in a heavy canvas cover to protect it. J.Bounds. 'had to' open the crocs mouth and cause it to regurgitated the stinking soupy contents of its stomach, all over the bottom of the boat and this cover. The croc was about 9½' from nose to tail and quite wide over its belly.

So that night, back at the base camp, everyone helped to skin it. Unfortunately we had no skinning knives and had to use what-ever was in the mess box. Two of us spent hours sharpening table knives, while the others slowly cut the skin off, blunting the knife and then exchanging it for a sharpened knife. A croc does not have a skin that can be sliced open and then peeled back like most animals, instead every scale is attached to muscles and has to be physically detached.

Luckily, the next day the team returned to Darwin and the skin was rolled up and placed in the rear stinking boat – the two boats were towed one behind the other. (The Zodiac dingy usually rode on the roof.) Off Charles Point and in sight of Darwin, we ran into a storm and increased chop caused the rear boat to nose-dive and sink. It wasn't possible to salvage it then; so the anchor and several empty jerry cans were attached to the tow cable, to act as a bouy, and we then left for Darwin Harbour minus the boat. The next day the work boat went out to retrieve it but couldn't find it. The Army and Navy workboats spent about a week searching. The RAAF Lincoln bomber was also used to search the area and where the current was estimated to have possibly taken it, but no trace was ever found of it. And Jeff lost his croc skin. (These boats were supposed to be unsinkable as space between the deck and hull was a floatation chamber, but we found that it had to be drained every time the boat was on the beach, due to their riveted construction.)

Likewise from trial and error we found that it was also necessary to tie the boat up fore and aft at night– if left on an anchor only, the evening breeze turned the boat side-on to the waves and caused it to swamp. So at night the anchor would be dropped, the boat came ashore to be unloaded, a hole was dug and a log placed in it for the stern anchor, and the boat man stripped off and pulled the boat out on the anchor to where the waves were only forming, and tied-up stern rope and then came ashore.



RAAF Lincoln from the workboat



Possibly Jeff Briggs with Ronny Wernert.(J. Harrison must also be on the assault craft judging by a fishing reel attached to personal camping gear)



J. Harrison and his shark, J. Bounds, Ted Bear, Bayliss, and possibly Bob Griffin on canopy of workboat



S. Rose, J. Briggs, J. Bounds and the Crocodile



The workboat & Bayliss, after the return to Darwin
(checking for damage)



D Munro in Zodiac, possibly Bayliss on up-turned boat
and J. Bounds in water, un-identified rear-end

(If anyone has been missed or incorrectly identified, the memory is getting a bit vague after all these years. Unfortunately the colour slides taken on this trip have been badly affected by fungal mould and fading of the dyes – near 40 years in the tropics and cyclone Tracy has its affects.)

Steve Rose

Editors note: Sorry Steve I had to censor one of the photos.

VALE

Jack McMahon

Sadly, one of the Corps remaining WW2 veterans, Jack McMahon passed away in Canberra on 24 Oct 08. He was 92 years old the previous day. Jack Served with 6 Coy during WW2, most notably in the NT with No1 Sect which was stationed there for close to two years. I don't have to hand further details of his war service. Post war Jack served for many years as a Registered Surveyor with the Australian Survey Office a lot of that time in Canberra. I think that he held the grade of Supervising Surveyor.

Jacks funeral service was held at 2 pm Tue 28 Oct at St John the Apostle Church, Blackham St, Holt, ACT.

Charlie Watson

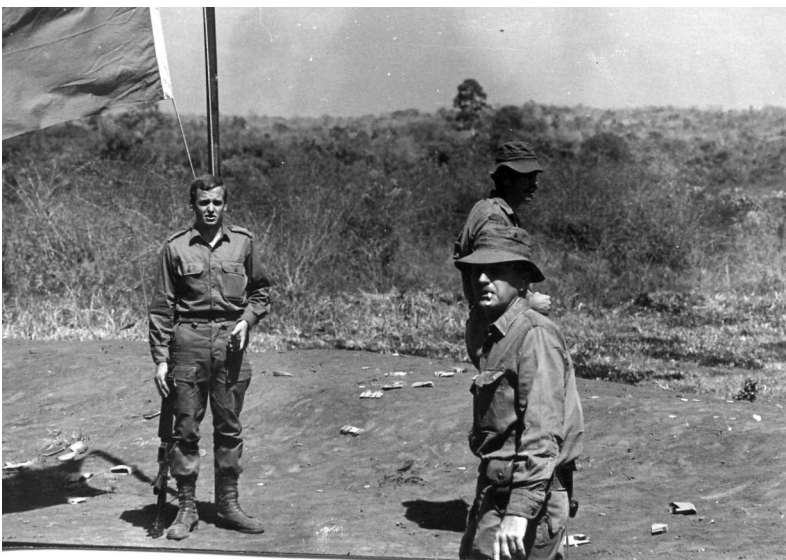
Photo's



L-R - Sgt ??, Spr Graham Kimber, WO1 Geoff Briggs, Spr Dave Lambton-Young, SSGT Alan Brown, CPL Dave Irving



Bob and Pam at the Swan Inn



2LT John Whitburn and WO1 Alex Munro
Nui Dat South Vietnam 1970

In lieu of a Christmas Drawing this year, I have included a Christmas Quiz.



Christmas Quiz

1. According to the poem, which creature didn't stir the night before Christmas?
2. What is the name of the most famous Christmas ballet?
3. What should the halls be decked with at Christmas time?
4. Which king looked out on the Feast of St. Stephen?
5. Which carol sings of the 'holy infant so tender and mild'?
6. Tom Hanks provided the voice for 6 characters in which Christmas movie?
7. Which former Eurythmics singer was born on Christmas Day in 1954?
8. Who was it that stole Christmas, according to Dr. Seuss?
9. According to the carol, who sang 'Glory to the newborn King'?
10. In *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, how many maids a-milking were there?
11. What gifts did the three wise men bring for Jesus?
12. Who sang *White Christmas*, the biggest-selling Christmas record ever?
13. The traditional Christmas carol *Adeste Fidelis* is better known by what name?
14. Which item of clothing made Frosty the Snowman come to life?
15. What plant is traditionally used to gain Christmas kisses?
16. What are the names of Santa's 9 reindeer?
17. What large red flower from Mexico is used as a Christmas decoration?
18. What were the names of the 3 Kings who went to see baby Jesus?
19. In which Rolf Harris song does Santa exchange his reindeer for kangaroos?
20. Who wrote *A Christmas Carol*?
21. On which of the 12 days of Christmas did my true love give me French Hens?
22. What sweet pastry treat is popular at Christmas time?
23. What song starts with the words 'Sleigh bells ring, are you listening?'

PS:

If you need any help with the answers, send me an email.

Allan