



SURVEY EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second newsletter for 2009. The year is passing so quickly I don't know where the time has gone. There is a tinge of sadness as I compile this newsletter as it will be my last as editor. To borrow from a political campaign slogan from quite a few years ago "*It is Time*" to hand the editorial pen over to someone else. I have enjoyed the last couple of years as editor and the few before that assisting Alex. I would like to thank those members whose contributions make compilation and reading our newsletter so enjoyable.

SOCIAL NEWS

First Friday Drinks

At the Saracens Head Hotel in Carrington St CBD at 5pm each first Friday of the month. If you have some time to spare time why not drop in and enjoy the company of fellow ex-RASvy members over a lemonade.

NEWS ITEMS

Anzac Day 2009

Alex Munro

The old urban myth that it always rains on Anzac Day marking the break in the seasons was certainly true this year. Dawn Services throughout the Adelaide metropolitan area were held under threatening rain clouds, but fortunately only a few experienced downpours, and the luck continued on later during the Anzac Day Parade with only minor showers but remaining overcast.

The last time there was any substantial rain during the parade was in 1996, and the only way I can remember that was because the parade was organised to commemorate the fiftieth year since the end of WW2, also, whoever was on my left politely but firmly requested that I reposition my umbrella as he didn't much like his share of the rain but resented worse my share as broolly run-off. We were led that year by the late George Ricketts-- so back to this year.

The Parade

Our group formed up in the usual place near the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney St., and it was good to see so many had made the effort to attend considering the threat of rain, including our group leader Bob Love who had made the long drive from Strathalbyn after attending his local Dawn Service, also Nick Armstrong who had made the much longer drive from North Shields near Pt. Lincoln accompanied by his wife. Michael Strachen (Andy Strachen's son) also marched to represent his late grandfather George Ricketts and our thanks once more to Dave Irving as our

banner bearer. A quick head count just before we stepped off showed there were thirty members marching.

Following the Water Transport (RAE) group moving off ahead of us, Bob Love gave the order 'Survey—Quick March' which we responded to more or less together, until the band ahead of us provided the drum beat we needed to march reasonably well, as Bob gave the order 'Eyes Right' passing the National War Memorial, the South African War Memorial and the saluting base before the Governor of South Australia, Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR.

The crowds of spectators lining the parade route, particularly in the King William Rd. section, seemed as dense as ever and certainly as appreciative of those marching as in previous years. At our dispersal location in Pennington Gardens we again lined up for the usual photographs and a fair bit more catch-up chat, before heading to the marquee and refreshment booths on the Torrens Parade Ground, which is becoming something of a tradition now, and is certainly the place to find old service friends and acquaintances although dampened on the occasion by a heavy shower of rain.

Unveiling of the RASVY Memorial Plaque

At 11.15am members and friends gathered at the flag decked memorial situated on the 'Pathway of Honour' between Torrens Parade Ground and Government House. Originally it was hoped that Colonel Simon Lemon as the last Director of RASVY would be available to unveil the memorial but unfortunately he and Mrs Lemon were booked for a tour of South America. Consequently Bob Love accepted the honour as one of our few remaining WW2 members, assisted by me as President of our Association.

The unveiling was always intended as a short and informal ceremony, perhaps just as well considering the weather and the light shower near the end.

My speech was not intended for print being delivered from numerous notes, but in hindsight perhaps it should have been, however, in essence it was a brief resume of the history and unique qualities of the Corps, and the strong sense of Esprit de Corps and dedication amongst most members, during the eighty one years of service from being raised by an act of parliament on 1st July 1915 until being disbanded with a ceremonial parade at the School of Military Engineering on the 1st July 1996.

I included my thanks to staff at the Department of Veteran's Affairs for the considerable assistance they had provided and to the Parks and Gardens section of the Adelaide City Council as well as the RSL State Branch.

I also thanked staff at S D Tillett Memorials for their help in following the project throughout, beyond commercial aspects.

It was now time for Bob Love to unveil the memorial, which he did with the dignity of a true gentleman, removing and folding the draped national flag and so ending formalities for a permanent memorial to the Royal Australian Survey Corps.

For those in other parts, the memorial is one metre high by six hundred millimetres square, machined from a solid piece of local grey granite with the cast bronze plaque let into a sloping top which can reasonably be expected to last in that location well beyond the next hundred years. Perhaps the high flyers in real estate development might have other ideas, but hopefully the heritage idealists will prevail.

The Annual Reunion

It was only a short fifteen minute walk from the parade ground to our reunion at The Elephant Hotel, for a mid-day start, and most had arrived by that time which was just as well as black rain clouds began to gather.

Around twenty five members attended the reunion which meant there was a good cross section of stories floating around and the usual catch up on the activities of others over the past year, including health matters being mentioned more often now. The menu on offer was mainly pub counter lunch fare which seems to be the preference at reunions. Over the last five years or so more wives have begun to attend our reunion, maybe to act as drivers on the home stretch, but this year Joan was the only one present, however, it seems the threat of wet conditions earlier that morning was the reason. Very sensible perhaps as it was raining heavily at the time.

Evan Allanson dropped in to say hullo and to join us for lunch, as he does every few years. Evan is the president of the local RAE Association and accordingly likes to remain in touch from time to time. Catching up on news, he has diversified his rural activities by giving management of his lavender farm to his son, leaving him the time to acquire a vineyard and become a wine producer, with an excellent shiraz now on offer.

Early afternoon saw the usual move of members to the downstairs bar to watch the traditional Anzac Day game of football televised in Melbourne, leaving a few to chat on for awhile. Chatting to Jon Dean about the slouch hat he wore during the march, he told me he did so each year in memory of his late grandfather, who wore the hat during WW1 where he earned a field commission while serving in France.

It was about the three quarter time in the Melbourne game when Joan and I departed for home, leaving a few die-hards to see the game through, ending a long but enjoyable day.

Seen on the day

Seen around during the day for anyone interested were the following ---from memory--- so probably a few names missing. Ken Talbot-Smith, Peter Elverd, Jim Dunn, John Nathan, Neil Houston, Bob Cooper, John and Pam Harrison, Bill Griggs, Dave Collins, John Whitburn, Alex Czornohalan, Bob Ballard from Goolwa, Darcy Patrick, Bob Love from Strathalbyn, Jon Dean, Stevo Hinic, Nick Armstrong from North Shields (a seven hour drive) and Mrs Armstrong, Dave Irving, Steve and Janet McGuinness, Alex and Joan Munro, Lincoln Smith, Noel Sproles, Anthony Stephens, David Bowyer(ex RE.), Michael Strachen, Allan Adsett, Daryl Miller. Once more, apologies for anyone missed.

Corps Birthday Dinner

A dinner to celebrate the Corps Birthday will be held on Fri 21 August at the Saracens Head Hotel, 82 Carrington St, Adelaide. A separate notice has been circulated to members. Please RSVP to Association Secretary Ken Jeffery.

AGM

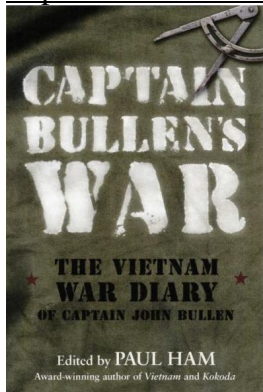
The time for the AGM is rapidly approaching. Please consider nomination for the committee. It is only with the involvement of all members that our association can continue to function. A flyer with details will be circulated.

Military Superannuation

Are you interested in your military superannuation and submissions made on your behalf? Then this web site might be of interest - <http://www.militarysuperannuation.for-our.info/index.php>

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

Captain Bullen's War *The Vietnam War Diary of Captain John Bullen* edited by Paul Ham.



Rob Langley has recently completed reading John's Diary. He thoroughly enjoyed the book and recommends it to everyone.

A review of the book was recently published in the SA Weekend magazine included with the Saturday Advertiser. Davis Bradbury's review sums up the book in a few succinct sentences "*The Vietnam War Diaries of Captain John Bullen, in charge of the 1 Topographic Survey Troop at Nui Dat in 1968 are a refreshing change from academic histories. The first hand account is written with clarity and humour.*"

(If anyone is looking for the book and is having trouble finding it, I purchased my copy from Dymocks at Marion. Ed)

News Article from the Past



From Steve McGuinness

I was cleaning out some cupboards over the weekend and came across this article, which appeared in the Adelaide News in the 80's. My eldest son Shawn on reading it said "Was this bloke a machine?"

I said "No, but I think his parents were".

John completed 88 repetitions of 14 Push-ups, 22 Double Back Arches and 5 Sit-ups for a total of 1232 Push-ups, 22 Double Back Arches and 5 Sit-ups in 1hr 16 min and 29 sec.

Anzac Day Service on the Bank of the Limmen Bight River

TJ Wicker

Last year around August, my brother David talked about a Barra Fishing trip to the Gulf after the rainy season. Dave had been up that way several times and we started to arrange a date and one other person to go with us. I immediately suggested a mate Rob. Rob and his wife Jenny have travelled with up north on three trips with Lea and I.

Dave's old 4 Runner had made the trip several times and was getting tired and I had just sold the Troop Carrier and the new Hilux wasn't set up yet for the outback. Rob's 100 series Landcruiser was well set up and we invited him on condition we used his vehicle.

I wasn't that callous but knowing Rob as well as I did I knew he would jump at the chance. So I rang Rob and he said he was ready to go, let's leave now. Nice try but we did have to do some planning and wait for the wet season to end.

My old mate Peter Presser who gets over to Stansbury fishing with me as often as he can got wind of the trip and asked if there was room for one more. After consideration Dave felt that one back at

camp to look after all the gear wouldn't be a bad idea and you get pretty buggered fishing every day for two weeks and it would split the cost a bit more.

So now it was 4. We planned to leave on Friday 17th April 2009. Three day driving up 13 days of fishing and 4 days home. Dave always plans an afternoon and evening off in Alice Spring to go out for a meal and to wind down.

Dave left Baddaginnie 13 km south of Benalla and went via Mildura to overnight and pick up Peter. Here we have 2 ex WO1 Survey and they had never crossed paths. I had been in the same unit with Dave on two occasions and Peter and I were in Bendigo for a while together and of course joined at the same time so did our Basic course together. Dave had the boat and most of the gear required. Rob and I had the generators and Ingles fridges.

Well all went well and they picked Rob and my self up in Adelaide and we made good time driving from first to last light. Poor Rob had to put up with so many war stories from the 3 Survey guys but it did fill in the time. We turned off just south of Daly Waters at the Hi-Way Inn and drove into the Heartbreak Hotel at Cape Crawford.

The next morning we left early as it is a 5 hour drive to get the 270km into the camp.



The Limmen Bight River comes out into the Gulf of Carpentaria NW of Borroloola and is 100km south of Port Roper.

The fishing was great and we all got our share of Barra, Finger Mark, Sooty Grunter, Cod, King & Thread Fin Salmon plus Jew and lots of Queen Fish.

Rob got on the internet before we left and printed out all the service for Anzac Day and down loaded Reveille and the last Post to play through the car speakers. Where we camped on the River we were 100 meters from a camp of 4 guys from Queensland on one side and a group of 6 from NSW on the other. Rob invited anyone in the area to join us for a Dawn service on the 25th April and we had a total of 14 attend. Rob had brought a flag and we went through the whole ceremony with a fabulous sunrise coming up behind us.



The trip home went well and we had only one flat on the boat trailer just North of Barrow Creek. Peter's wife Lesley came to Adelaide to pick him up but it was a good excuse to see the grand daughter. While all this was going on Lea & Rob's wife Jenny took a 7 day trip to Noosa to do a bit of shopping and look around the area. They are not to keen on sand flies and mossies but they love eating the Barra.

Peter Presser, TJ and Dave Wicker

Our History Project – What Did We Do, 1946 – 1996?

Bob Skitch

Our history project has been updated with substantial entries from Peter Jensen (he's been everywhere man!), Frank Linane, Frank Fisher and Arthur Hensen. Arthur's contribution is from the South Australian Association's own intensive investigation into the history of the RA Survey units located in South Australia. The updated version can now be found on our website, www.rasurvey.org in pdf. You will observe that the SA file now has an entry for every year from 1946 to 1996. SA is the only State to achieve this distinction, although quite a number of the entries are sparse in detail. At least they have a project name and a location and one or two words about what sort of operation was undertaken, eg, tellurometer traversing, map control, field completion etc. It would be nice to have a little more detail such as who took part (at least some names), the field OC or OIC, air support, outline tech information. Peter Jensen has been able to provide a good deal of the latter in many instances. Association members in all States are asked to check the years in which they served on field operations and reflect on who they served with, who their boss was and what they did. The present entries can be used as a memory jogger. Let Bob Skitch know either by using the report format in the history section of the website or by simple email to Bob at

The Army Explained

Dumb civilian, I said to myself, but openly I said, "The system is really quite simple." You see, all people in the Army are soldiers, all privates are soldiers, but not all soldiers are privates. Some are officers who are commissioned, but some are officers who are not commissioned. Obviously if every private was called private it would be confusing, so some privates are called things like trooper, driver, gunner, craftsmen, sapper or signaller. Not all of the drivers actually drive because some of them cook, but we don't call them cooks, for that matter, not all drivers are called drivers – some of them are privates or gunners. Gunners as I'm sure you know are the guys that fire guns, unless of course they are drivers or signallers in which case we call them gunners rather than drivers or signallers just to make it clearer. All gunners belong to the artillery, except that in the infantry we have gunners who are called privates because they fire a different sort of gun, for the same reason we call our drivers and signallers private as well.

A Lance Corporal is called Corporal, unless he is a Lance Bombardier then we call him Bombardier to distinguish him from a full Bombardier, who is just like a Corporal. All other ranks are called by their rank for the sake of simplicity except that Staff Sergeants are called Staff, but they are not on the staff, some Warrant Officers, who are not officers, are called Sergeant Major although they are not Sergeants or Majors. Some Warrant Officers are called Mister which is the same thing that we call some officers but they are not Warrant Officers. A Lieutenant is also called Mister because they are subalterns, but we always write their rank as Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and second comes before first.

When we talk about groups of soldiers there obviously has to be clear distinction. We call them Officers and Soldiers although we know that officers are soldiers too, sometimes we talk about officers and other ranks which is the same as calling them soldiers. I guess it is easiest when we talk about rank and file which is all the troops on parade except the officers and some of the NCOs – and a few of the privates – and the term is used whether everyone is on parade or not. A large unit is called a battalion, unless it is a regiment but sometimes a regiment is much bigger than a battalion and then it has nothing to do with the other sort of regiment. Sub units are called companies unless they are squadrons or troops or batteries for that matter. That is not radio batteries and don't confuse this type of troop with the type who are soldiers but not officers. Mostly the Army is divided into Corps as well as units, not the sort of Corps which is a couple of divisions but the sort which tells you straight away what trade each man performs, whether he is a tradesmen or not. The Infantry Corps has all the infantrymen for example and the Artillery Corps has all the gunners. Both these Corps also have signallers and drivers except those who are in the Signals or Transport Corps. Both these Corps provide a special service and that's why the Transport Corps provides cooks. In fact the Signals Corps is not a service at all because it is an Arm. Arms do all the fighting, although Signals don't have to fight too much, rather like the Engineers who are also an Arm but they don't fight too much either.

So you see, it's really quite simple.

VALE

Ian Lever

With much sadness, I report the passing of Ian on 23rd May 09 at the Hervey Bay Hospital in Queensland.

Perhaps better known as “Ike” to many, he will be remembered with fondness by all his numerous friends.

Ian had suffered bouts of illness in later years, including cancer and leukaemia as well as renal problems, all of which proved too much at the end

He always maintained a good level of fitness, until his health problems began, playing Aussie Rules football and umpiring with local teams in Bendigo and other places, always remaining loyal to AFL side Carlton.

Ian transferred to RASVY in 1954 after service in both the CMF and NS, and received his basic training at SMS Balcombe to qualify as a topographic draughtsman, before being posted to AHQ Svy Regt at Fortuna in 1956.

He was posted back to Balcombe in 1964 as an instructor, and moved with his family to Wodonga when the school relocated to Bonegilla in December 1965, under direction of the OC Lt Col. Harvey Hall, where he remained on staff until posted back to Fortuna in 1967.

Ian served for a year in Vietnam from March 1968 with the Australian Army Training Team, returning to Fortuna in 1969 on promotion to WO1.

With the shortage of working space at Fortuna , a full time detachment of cartographers from Fortuna was established at Bonegilla and Ian was involved working for periods at both locations, until he elected to take his discharge in 1976 after twenty two years dedicated service to the Corps, where his overall regimental and technical ability was always highly regarded. He again enlisted in 1981 to serve part time in the Army Reserve until 1991.

Ian never missed the opportunity for a practical joke, and on one occasion he and Clive Andrews borrowed a tramcar in Bendigo for a ride down the street, leaving the driver and conductor behind to enjoy their tea break.

In retirement he decided to remain with his family in Wodonga for several years, finally moving to the warmer climate of Queensland at Hervey Bay, perhaps because of Ian’s medical problems.

He was an active member of the RSL, Legacy and Vietnam Veterans organisations for many years, until his health began to fail and he was no longer able to participate.

There was a streak of the quiet larrikin in Ian, but over many years of friendship I had always considered him as a gentleman in the best sense. Ian was a committed family man, and will be sorely missed by Betty and family.

Alex Munro

Photo's

Anzac Day 2009



Before the March



Commemorative Plaque



Alex Munro and Bob Love



Members gathered behind the plaque



Graham Kimber sent me this photo of a 4 Fd Svy Sqn BBQ in the South Parklands in 1984. L-R Graham, Bruce White, Dave Irving

While digging through my photo album and slides for the Vietnam Reunion I found these photos.

A Section, 1 Topo Survey Troop, Nui Dat, South Vietnam 1971



Troop HQ



Unit Bunker



Unit Canteen