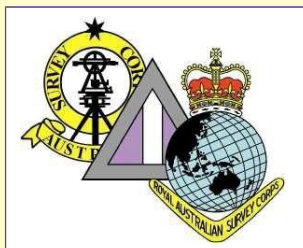


Canberra Survey Corps Association



Canberra Newsletter

In this issue No. 71 – September 2026

From the Editor/President	1
RA Svy Corps Birthday - Canberra Survey Corps Association	2
RA Svy Corps Birthday - South Australia ex-Survey Assoc	2
Vale - we shall remember them (Dave Carney, Bob Skitch, Bill Boyd)	7
Congratulations Major-General Shaun Hoffmann AM	8
WREMAPS-II Airborne Profile Recorder and operational recollections	8
You 'surveyors' know about digits	16
Fading memories of the last Officer Commanding 4 Fd Svy Sqn	17
Tasmania's geodetic origin 1937-1966 - Part 2	21
Good public relations - an Oops Moment	29
Our Association calendar 2026/27	29

From the Editor

Welcome to this September 2026 issue of the newsletter of our Canberra Survey Corps Association. I was intending to finish this not long after the Corps birthday but 'newsletter time' escaped me. So I do apologise to our South Australian colleagues who provided a very full report on their birthday celebrations. I do not think that there would be any challenge to their claim to be the most active of all the 'ex-Survey' groups. Well done the 'Piping Shrieks'.

For this newsletter I especially thank Peter Demaine for his two articles about the WREMAPS-II Airborne Profile Recorder and his time as the last Officer Commanding 4 Fd Svy Sqn. Thank you also to Don Swiney, Ken Talbot-Smith, Rob McHenry, Noel Sproles, Adrian Fairfield for their inputs.

I do continue to get 'advice' about all the things that the Corps and its people did, but which has not been recorded. No one else is going to do that so please spend an hour and put pen to paper. I am especially interested in short stories about what people did, and events, including things which perhaps were not about 'mainstream mapping' but which all added to the rich story of the Corps which was really about the quality and commitment of all who served in war and peace. Photos of people doing things are a good way of story telling.

And I am still asking for a volunteer as an alternate 'contact' for our Canberra Association.

Peter Jensen Editor canberrasvycorpsassoc.pres@gmail.com

RA Svy Corps Birthday – Canberra Survey Corps Assoc

By: Peter Jensen

To celebrate the 111th anniversary of the foundation of the Australian Survey Corps in the Permanent Force on 1 July 1915, eleven of us met for lunch at our regular venue the Kingston Hotel. Maddies Restaurant was booked out for a function so we crowded in with everyone else in the bar-bistro. The 'Kingo', not far from Parliament House, was recently named as a Canberra institution by one of the Queensland politicians so that may have had something to do with it. What has never changed in at least forty years that I know of is how popular it is for lunch. Also that the dirt car park in the next-door lot out the back still has huge potholes filled with water after some rain. A photo was hard to get so a list of those enjoying the reunion has to suffice: Dawn Laing, Steve Hledik, Peter Demaine and Anne Blunn, Roger and Effie Rees, Owen Moss, Steve White, Ross Jenkins, Len Kemp and Peter Jensen. Apologies were from: David Miles, Rob McHenry, Cameron Gee, Keith McCloy, Tony Purton.

RA Svy Corps Birthday – South Australia ex-Survey Assoc

By: Stevo Hinic and Allan Adsett

From Stevo. On Wednesday afternoon we in Adelaide celebrated the RASvy Corps 111th birthday at the Avoca Hotel, Clarence Gardens! Below are the Lunch Photos, Address and Toasts!

A total of thirty-seven (37) ex-members attended the lunch. Apologies were received from: Sue & Andy Capp, Lorraine & Mick Davey, Simon Davis, Rhonda Dempster, Pam Ballard, Julie & Peter Elverd, Bill Griggs, Carol & Wally Herbst, Julie & Rob Langley, Robyn & Darcy Patrick, Kaye & Michael Sarson, Lorraine & Ken Talbot-Smith, Lea & TJ Wicker, and John Zuringer.

The weather in Adelaide on Wednesday to say the least was a cold, very wet, miserable winter day where we had our average July rainfall in one day!. On that note I would like to make special mention and thank those who travelled from Murray Bridge, Normanville, Goolwa, Willunga and McLaren Vale. Also to Peter and Sharon Treble who trekked from Maryborough, Victoria.

I would also like to thank Allan Adsett and Neville Stone for their contribution on the day.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it for our next lunch which is scheduled for **Tue 17th Nov '26** and accordingly you may wish to diarise that day!



L-R: Barbara and Paul Frost, Laurie Sutton, Pam Harrison, Cheryl and Peter Cates, John Harrison, Bob Dikkenberg, Max Coletti, Margaret Dikkenberg.



L-R: John Jones, Peter Hammer, Lyn and Mick Coventry, Gary Petts, Ed Jacobs, Rosie Hammer, Sharon and Peter Treble



L-R: Pauline Mannix, Dianne Stone, Rhonda and Bob Cooper, Sue and Jeff Turner, Neville Stone, Graham Ragless, Stevo Hinic.



L-R: Rick and Mila Grimshaw, Pam and Dave Irving, John Whitburn, Steve McGuiness, (missing Allan Adsett – photographer), Jim and Rita Dunn, Jason Philips

Stevo Hinic's Lunch Address

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to my fellow Survey Corps ex-members, wives, partners, to all those who served with us and friends!

Today marks the 111th year since the Australian Survey Corps was formed as a unit of the then Permanent Military Forces. During our eighty one years of existence from 1915 - 1996 the Survey Corps military and technical contribution in supporting our country in Two World Wars,

Regional conflicts and natural disasters are truly well documented. Our contribution to the realm of military map making speaks volumes.

Some 30 years have now passed since our disbandment and we still gather to reflect on our past services and the friendship forged over those years. We form up as a unit and march on Anzac Day under our Survey Corps banner to honour its achievements and those who served but are no longer with us. That camaraderie to this day is still there; it hasn't diminished and exists amongst us!

The Survey Corps had many members who went on to accomplish much success in a variety of spheres be it military, academic, civil or of a personal nature. Today I propose to reflect on two such individuals and to give some regard to their particular achievements.

The first ex-member I speak of is Capt Reginald TALBOT who during World War Two served in the Corps. He was a non-surveyor who rose from Sapper to Captain in the Survey Corps, a clear thinking and determined man. At the age of 15 was Dux at the Mentone State School, a cross-country and sprint runner and Captain of a Victorian Rugby interstate team before the war. In the period 1940 - 1945 he served with 2/1st Topo Survey Company, 2/1st Corps Field Survey Company and the 1st Australian Corps. This service was in the Middle East and the Netherlands East Indies (now known as Indonesia). In 1946 post discharge he called a gathering of 2/1st Survey Corps men, held a meeting in Kelvin Hall, Melbourne, and formed the 2/1st Survey Association. He set up its constitution, set its high standards and was the President for many years after that. The principles he established were responsible for its very high membership and the development of a wonderful fellowship within the association's members.

A prominent local figure he went on to serve between 1967 - 1969 as the 79th Lord Mayor of Melbourne and holding office during a time of significant development. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in the 1969 Queen's Birthday Honours for his service to the community. After the conclusion of his Mayoral term he remained a City councillor and also continued to run his own well established business.

My second ex-member is Sergeant Dominic Yau who served from 1964 - 1973. As a Sapper Topographic Surveyor, Domenic served in Western Command Field Survey Unit (Perth) from Jan 66 to Jan 67 when he marched out to attend the School of Languages at RAAF Base Point Cook in Victoria. There he studied the Vietnamese language for twelve months before being posted to Aust Force Vietnam Det 1 Divisional Intelligence Unit. Domenic served in Vietnam with Intelligence for two years from Apr 68 - Apr 70 and another six months at Headquarters 1st Aust Logistic Support Group. He departed Vietnam in Oct '70 after serving there for two and half years. Dominic was then posted to AHQ/Army Survey Regiment and remained there until he was discharged in Dec '73.

In a photo from our Faces of the Corps collection, Dominic is seen briefing Mr Justice Kerr (later Governor-General of Australia) on how to operate the Wild PUG4 point transfer device at the Army Survey Regiment in 1971. Justice Kerr was then Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry into Service Pay and Conditions. Electing discharge after nine years of service, Domenic then joined and worked with Division of National Mapping. He later moved to the Dept of Immigration, completed a law degree and was admitted as a Solicitor and Barrister to the Supreme Court of Victoria and the High Court of Australia. Dominic was an Adjunct Associate Professor of Law - Victoria University and co-authored a textbook on immigration law and visa application procedures. For his military service Dominic was awarded the individual Commendation for Distinguished Service (Vietnam). He was also awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry with Federation Star being a member of 1st Aust Task Force (-) in the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral 13 May 68 - 6 Jun 68.

This is the brief narrative of just two individuals who contributed to the progress of our nation as military mapmakers and were part of the 6,300 men and women who served this country in the Royal Australian Survey Corps from 1915 -1996. Their achievements both militarily and civilly reflected the calibre, fibre and resilience of those who wore the Survey Corps badge. Each went on to construct successful careers after their military service and added in their own manner to the fabric of our nation by their endeavors.

May I conclude my address today with our Survey Corps motto “Videre Parare Est” ... “To see is to Prepare”!

Nev Stone proposed three toasts.

Firstly, this toast is to the unsung heroes. I’m talking about our wives, partners or a term I learnt the other day, our significant others. I learnt this term as a part of my wokeism training.

While we were busy working on our careers, going away on courses or survey ops someone had to run the household and raise our children. Some of these separations were lengthy so we should acknowledge their contribution.

Gentlemen, please be upstanding.

Toast: To the wives, partners and significant others.

My second toast is to the Corps. What is it about the RA Svy Corps? Why is the camaraderie so strong?

It is 30 years since the Corps disbanded and we are still able to attract 400 people to reunion in Bendigo and even in SA we can attract 40 people to a lunch, 3 or 4 times a year.

I’m going to steal some words from Colin Cuskelly when he spoke at the last Bendigo reunion. He made the point that many of us moved interstate to our various postings so we weren’t able to rely on our family to help with things like babysitting and running a house. We had to rely on our new friends, we became members of a much bigger family. The camaraderie started. I can remember babysitting for the Gees, the Cuskellys, the Venns, the Flynns and the Glosters, just to mention a few. I am sure everybody here has stories to share.

My thoughts are that we were a Corps with purpose. We had a job to do, we had an important role in the defence of Australia. We didn’t go on exercises, we went on operations which gave us a very high priority when it came to working with other Corps and other Services, ie RAAF and Navy.

I am proud of my contribution to RA Svy and the defence of this country and I am sure you feel the same.

Toast: To the Royal Australian Survey Corps

And finally I would now like to say a few words about the man who organises these lunches and has nurtured this unofficial Ex Survey Association to be the biggest and strongest in Australia. I talk, of course, about Stevo Hinic. Let’s see if I can embarrass him.

Stevo, of course took over from Darby Munro. Stevo is the contact person here in SA and he is the one interstate visitors contact, and he organises a catch-up coffee, lunch, dinner or whatever to make these visitors feel welcome and it also gives us a chance to catch up with them.

Stevo has put in a huge amount of work into the Survey display at the Keswick Museum. I know Stevo also does a lot of work with the Bendigo and Canberra boys with RASvy history.

Toast: To Stevo our Mr Survey

Vale – we shall remember them

Dave CARNEY

Colonel David (Dave) CARNEY, Royal Canadian Engineers, (served in RA Svy units as the Canadian Exchange Officer 29 Jun 73 - 28 Jun 75) passed away May 2026 in Ottawa, Canada. Dave retired from the Army in 1991 as Director of Geographic Operations, National Defence Headquarters, Canadian Armed Forces. He greatly valued his service in Australia especially with Det 4 Fd Svy Sqn in Territory of Papua New Guinea in 1974. In 2024 Dave was presented with the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 by the Military Attache Australian High Commission, Ottawa, Canada, for his service in PNG. In delivering a Remembrance Day address in Ottawa last year Dave proudly wore his Australian Army slouch hat with RA Svy hat badge <https://www.rasvy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/CanbSvyCorpsAssocNewsletter69-Dec2025a.pdf>

Bob SKITCH

Lieutenant-Colonel Robert (Bob) SKITCH (served 14 Feb 55 - 27 Feb 81) passed away 8 Jul 2026 in Brisbane. Bob's service was summarised in the National Bulletin of Survey Corps Associations, Dec 81

LTCOL ROBERT FRANCIS SKITCH

Bob Skitch resigned on 27 February 1981 after 26 years service in the Corps. On completion of recruit training at 1RTB in June 1955, Bob attended the 7/55 Basic Survey Course, obtaining a B pass as Dux of the course. His first posting within the Corps was NCOMD Fd Svy Sqn from April 56-August 56. From the Sunshine State, Bob was posted to the Regiment in August 1956, where he worked on PROJECT CUTLASS under CAPT Clem Sargent, LT Mal Nicholas and the late MAJ Spencer Snow. Bob attended the 15/59 Topo Svyr Course from April to June 1959, and was Dux once again. By June 1960, Bob had moved through the ranks up to Sergeant.

After attending the 25/61 OFFER QUAL course, Bob was commissioned on the 14 July 1961, as Lieutenant in RASVY. Bob moved to Queensland again in September 1961 as 2IC of NCOMD Fd Svy Unit. In September 1965, Bob, now a Captain, was posted to Eastern Command to raise 1 TOPO SVY TP in preparation for service in South Vietnam. Then in June 1966 as the first RA SVY officer in SVN, Bob commanded A Sect 1 Topo Svy Tp on their tour of duty.

During these years in the Army, Bob had been passing all examinations requirements for Surveying by correspondence. To gain his Certificate of Competency as a Surveyor, Bob, on his return from SVN was seconded for 18 months to the NSW Lands Department. Throughout this civil attachment period, he was engaged in Cadastral surveys in country and metropolitan NSW. Once again he passed with flying colours as the Surveyors' Board Report testifies - 'His results in all sections of the Surveyors' Board examinations were excellent and, in fact he gained equal highest marks in the comprehensive practical surveying test .

Bob's next move was overseas, where he served in Singapore, with 84 Svy Sqn, RE and also as DAD SVY HQ, FARELF. In his position as DAD SVY, he was promoted MAJOR on 4 August 1970.

With 12 months course at the Australian Staff College successfully completed, Bob moved to the School of Military Survey in 1972 as Senior Instructor.

The remaining years from January 1975 until his retirement from the Army, saw Bob serve two more years as OC 1 FD SVY SQN and finally as CO of the Regiment from January 1977.

Bob and Wendy now live in Brisbane where Bob took up a position in the Department of Mapping and Surveys.

Bill BOYD

Warrant Officer Class One William (Bill) Ronald BOYD OAM (served 10 Mar 61 - 25 Jul 97) passed early-Sep 2026. Bill was a soldier topographic draughtsman extraordinaire. He set the standard for all who served as a military surveyor especially those who served at Army Survey Regiment including the Detachment at Bonegilla and at the School of Military Survey. He developed and implemented the 'FlexiFlow' workflow system for managing complex cartographic tasks. Bill was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia on 30 Oct 78 '*In recognition of service in the fields of survey production management and quality control.*'

Congratulations Major-General Shaun Hoffmann AM

The Editor

Congratulations to Shaun Hoffmann on being promoted Major-General on 7 August to be appointed Head Land Systems (Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group) to commence in January 2027. Shaun was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (Military Division) AM, in the King's Birthday Honours List 2026 '*for exceptional performance of duty as Director-General Land Manoeuvre Systems*'. His recent posting has been with a UK industry group.

Shaun completed the degree Bachelor of Science in Surveying, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, then being a direct entry officer commissioned Lieutenant in RA Svy in 1991 and transferred to RAE in 1996 when the Corps integrated with RAE. Shaun's survey related postings included Army Survey Regiment, 17 Construction Squadron RAE (RAAF Base Scherger), School of Military Survey, 1 Topographic Survey Squadron including second-in-command and commanding the detachment to INTERFET (East Timor) 1999-2000 and later as Officer Commanding and 13 Topographic Squadron RE serving on Op Resolute, Bosnia. Shaun provided a biography for this newsletter in 2020 <https://www.rasvy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ACT-2020-01.pdf>

We wish Shaun the very best and good luck in his new post.

WREMAPS-II Airborne Profile Recorder and Operational Recollections

By: Peter Demaine¹ with contributions from Rob McHenry, Ken Talbot-Smith and photos from Don Swiney

(Editor: Peter Demaine wrote an article about the RA Svy WREMAPS APR published in the newsletter No.60 Nov 2022 <https://www.rasvy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ACT-2022-05.pdf>. He has now provided another article and both have been merged to create this story. From 1974 to 1985, WREMAPS-II was the Survey Corps' primary equipment for establishing vertical control networks for topographic mapping from air photography.)

¹ **Military Biography** - Peter graduated from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Applied Science, Degree in Surveying in 1978. Peter enlisted in Melbourne on 11 July 1979 as a survey cadet at the Officer Cadet School (OCS), Portsea. He graduated from OCS and was subsequently posted to numerous Royal Australian Survey Corps (RASvy) units; Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham, UK; and various non-Corps postings. Career highlights were: Officer Commanding 4th Field Survey Squadron (Fd Svy Sqn) the last Fd Svy Sqn prior to disbandment of RASvy; Officer in Command of the Airborne Profile Recorder (APR) team 2 Fd Svy Sqn; Operations Officer 4 Fd Svy Sqn; Troop Commander Aerotriangulation Troop. Peter discharged from the Army as a RAE Major in Canberra on 13 July 1999

The first version of the Airborne Profile Recorder (APR) used by the Royal Australian Survey Corps (RA Svy) was a specialized radar altimeter developed in Canada and mounted in Second World War era Lockheed Hudson twin-engine bomber aircraft on charter from Adastra Aerial Surveys. It was initially used in 1962/63 for high priority Defence mapping the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG) side of the land border with then West Irian. Although radar penetrated cloud, APR operations in TPNG suffered the same weather limitations as air photography missions as navigation required viewing the ground. Articles about the Radar APR, technical and operational matters, as used by Adastra are at:

<https://adastron.com/adastra/company/h1aasr-09.htm>

<https://adastron.com/adastra/ops/apr.htm>

<https://adastron.com/adastra/projects/arduous.htm> by Noel Sproles

<https://www.adastra.adastron.com/company/mccarthy.htm>

A Radar APR is in the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering RA Svy Collection at Holsworthy NSW. A report (c1962) about the utility of Radar APR for vertical control for topographic mapping from air photography is included at

<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/678b390f9a12639cd0b6937f> However, Radar APR was not routinely used for scale 1:100,000 topographic mapping with barometric heighting in its various forms mainly by Sioux helicopter was the main technique used by the Corps for scale 1:100,000 topographic mapping in TPNG, Indonesia and northern-Australia until the Laser WREMAPS-II APR was deployed operationally in 1974.)

WREMAPS-I

In 1968 Weapons Research Establishment (WRE), Salisbury SA, commenced development of the airborne laser based Mapping and Profiling System (WREMAPS) on request of the Department of National Development, Division of National Mapping (NATMAP) for terrain profiling for vertical control for the vast national mapping program.

This followed from research led by Fred F. Thoneman into the use of laser technology soon after the discovery of lasers in 1960. The airborne laser terrain profile recorder (APR) that was fundamental to the system was designed by WRE's Mike Penny. NATMAP took delivery of WREMAPS-I in July 1970 and by 1979 NATMAP had flown over 250,000 kilometres of laser terrain profiles for vertical control for medium scale mapping of 2.7 million square kilometres, about one-third, of Australia.²

WREMAPS-II APR Prototype

Developed from 1972 by WRE (led by Mike Penny) for RA Svy, WREMAPS-II was an optical radar (laser) that produced short pulses of green light at a rate of 25 pulses per second. System components were: a mechanically still structure, known as the TRC, consisting of a low power Yttrium Aluminium Garnet (YAG) laser transmitter, a receiving telescope and a 70mm continuous strip camera to photographically track the laser course across the ground; a barometric reference unit (BRU) to establish a height datum at the start of each profile and sense small changes in pressure along the profile; a 2m long static probe on the front of the aircraft for the BRU; a BRU generated display in the cockpit to assist the pilot with level flight at the sample barometric surface; timing equipment to synchronise the laser and 70mm camera; gyroscopes to sense aircraft roll and pitch; UV chart data recorder; a Texas Instruments digital data recorder; and ancillary power supplies and test equipment. The receiving telescope looked at the same patch of ground that the transmitter illuminated and collected an extremely small fraction of the laser light scattered from the ground. When

² NATMAP Technical Report No.26

https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20251017003911/https://www.xnatmap.org/report_tdnm/laser26/laser.htm

the transmitted pulse left the aircraft, a 300 MHz counter was started, and when a reflected pulse was received the counter stopped. The number of pulses counted within this period corresponded to the number of half-metres between the aircraft and ground.

A Wild RC10 super-wide angle air survey camera, not integrated with the APR system, assisted with matching the vertical profiles to mapping photography. The RC10 was located to the rear of the aircraft. All this equipment was fitted to a commercially leased Beechcraft QueenAir aircraft.

WREMAPS-II was a Corps asset issued to 2 Fd Svy Sqn, Randwick, Sydney and allocated for operations as directed by Directorate of Survey - Army. It was maintained by Sydney Workshop Company, Mascot, both in workshops and on operations.

The aircraft crew consisted of a civilian pilot and a RA Svy team of a navigator, APR operator and RC10 air camera operator.

On the ground there was a mobile darkroom with facilities to develop RC10 and 70mm photography. A Texas Instruments digital computer was used to extract APR digital data. Determining the measured laser to ground distance at any particular point was achieved by identifying the time of crossing from the 70mm strip film and then 'breaking out' the value at that time from the paper chart trace. The distance between ground and aircraft was determined by comparing the phase of the transmitted and reflected laser light, which is continuously recorded on the UV chart and digital data recorder.

A production version of the WREMAPS-II APR was never made. In 1973, a stand displaying WREMAPS-II was set up at the Paris Air Show, the first time that Australia had participated in such an event.

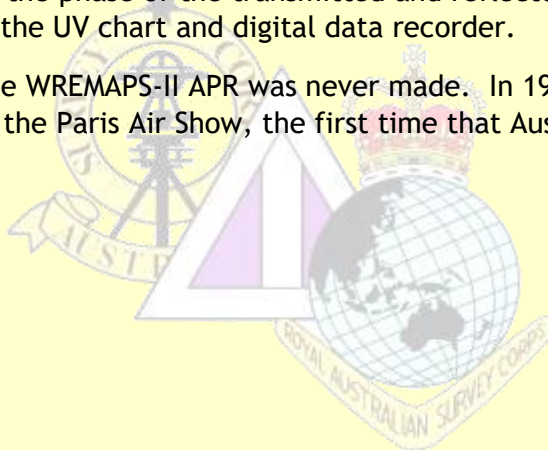




Figure 1 – WREMAPS-II installed in a Beechcraft QueenAir aircraft (VH-RUU) looking forward from the operator's seat near the aircraft door on the left. The laser, receiver and 70mm strip camera with cassette recorder are on the right with camera nearest the operator. The UV chart recorder is the large box on the right in the top rack, the digital tape recorder is the large box on the left in the next rack down next to the two laser tuners on the right and the BRU on the left in the next rack down. (Source: photo Don Swiney with component information from Ken Talbot-Smith)



Figure 2 – WREMAPS-II QueenAir VH-RUU with the static probe for the BRU on the modified nose cone (Photo: Don Swiney)

It was necessary to determine the aircraft height with respect to sea level for the profile plot to yield true ground height information. This was achieved by flying the aircraft along an isobaric (constant pressure) surface using the BRU. Any deviation of the aircraft from this pressure surface was recorded and used to correct ground-height information. If a profile run (typically 120 kilometres) could be made between two points of known height, correction could be made for any slope in the isobaric surface. See Figure 3 below.

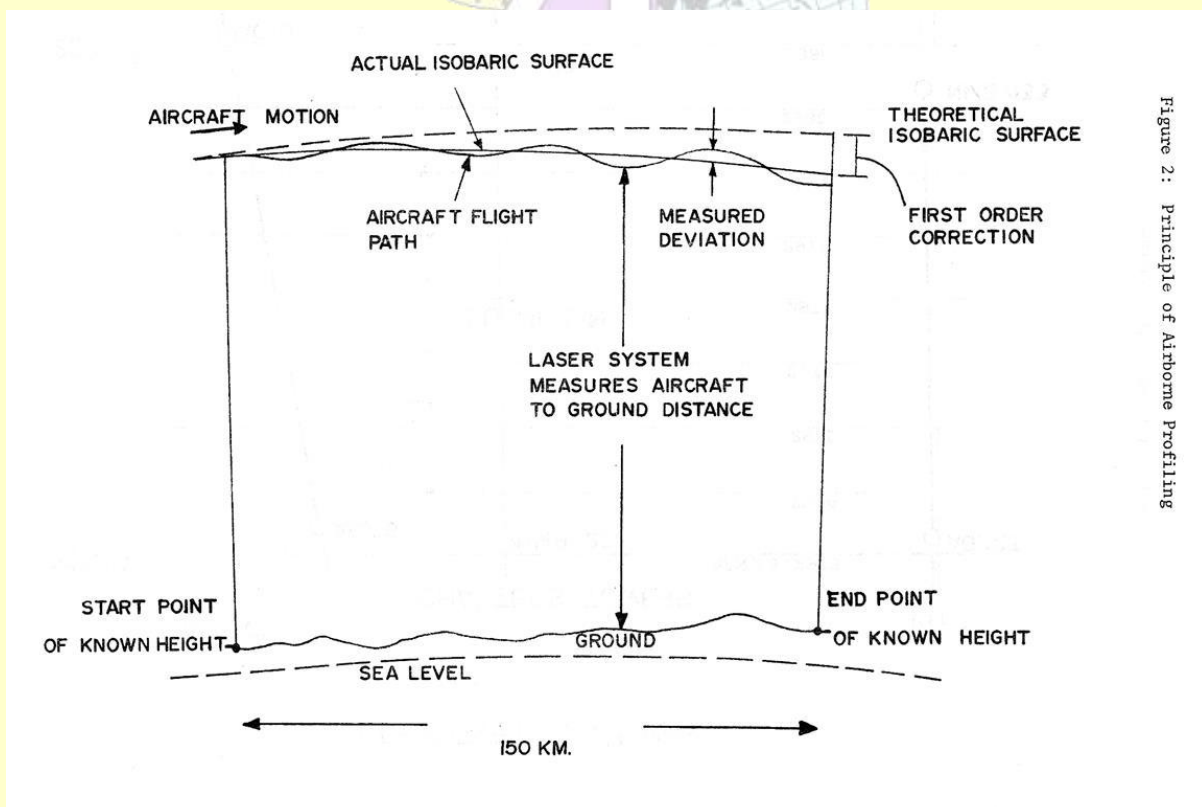


Figure 2: Principle of Airborne Profiling

Figure 3 – from NATMAP Tech Report No.26

Profiling operations

WREMAPS-II was used to provide vertical control for topographic mapping from air photography of Papua New Guinea (mainly 1:100,000 mapping), Indonesia (1:100,000 mapping) and northern Australia (1:50,000 and 1:100,000 mapping). Profiling networks were designed to comply with the needs of the analytic aerotriangulation of the mapping air photography which provided the minor control for the stereographic photogrammetric plotters used to compile the map information.

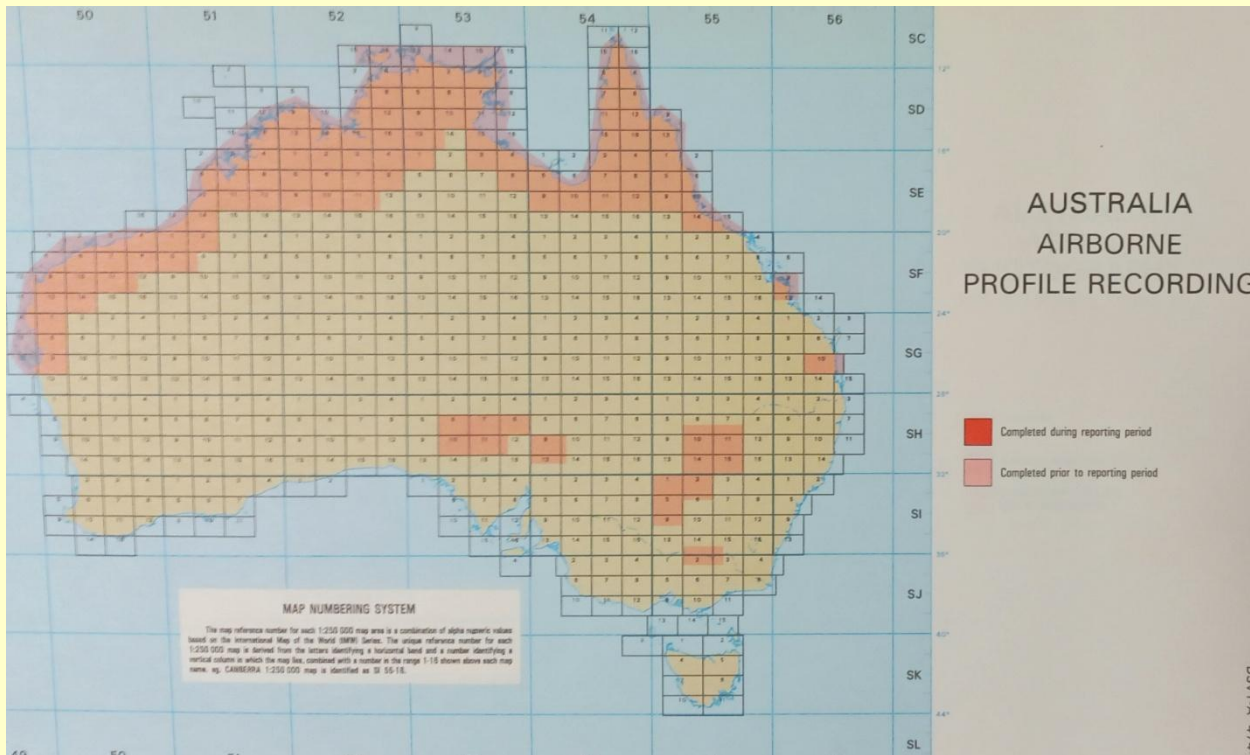


Figure 4 – from RA Svy Annual Report 1989/90

APR was able to measure and record ground profiles from aircraft flying at altitudes up to about 15,000 feet above ground level. In Australia the aircraft flew at a constant pressure height of around 10,000 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) when profiling. The pilot aimed to keep the aircraft at a fixed altitude referencing the BRU, and minimising pitch and roll. Profiling was usually done in the morning, where possible, to avoid turbulence and cloud build up, consequently dry season operations in northern Australia. The aim was to establish a network of North/South (N/S) and East/West (E/W) profiles, covering one or more 1:250,000 mapping areas tied into existing vertical ground control (e.g. centreline vertical road profiles connected to Bench Marks, sea level heights interpolated from tidal gauges, etc.) at each end of the profiles and within profiles. Where possible profiles were over open country avoiding forests so the laser beam could obtain the clearest profile of the ground. Intersection points (IPs) between N/S and E/W profiles were planned in open country.

Profile height differences at IPs were used to calculate errors within the network, and reject profiles causing errors greater than tolerances set in the APR Standard Operating Procedures. The APR navigator directed the pilot to the location of the profiles, kept the pilot on track for the duration of the profile and advised the APR team when nearing IPs. The APR operator, looking down through strip camera, advised when IPs were crossed and the RC10 air camera operator would take a photograph. The RC10 air camera operator also ensured that suitable aerial mapping photography was taken of each profile. After returning to base at the end of profiling each day the APR team ensured that UV charts, digital cassettes, 70mm strip films

and mapping photography were readable and within APR data and mapping photography standards.

Lag between aircraft pitch, roll and isobaric height; and data recorded by the APR system induced errors. Experienced pilots were able to minimise the effects of these errors.

The Lake Hume region was used for training APR teams and calibration of equipment, and at the start of APR operations coastal waters were used for calibration of equipment.

APR equipment and parts had become worn and temperamental by the early 1980's after years of operations in Australia, PNG and Indonesia. RAEME technicians were able to keep the equipment serviceable with spare parts provided by DSTO.

The Wild RC10 cameras were serviced under a commercial contract.



Figure 5 – believed to be a 2 Fd Svy Sqn cartoonist capturing APR Op Cenderawasih 1978 in Irian Jaya. The laser is about to cross the airfield which has a surveyed centreline vertical profile connected to the Geociever Doppler satellite station targeted with a cross allowing the sea level height of the APR crossing to be determined from the Geociever height (Source: Don Swiney)

(Editor: Ken Talbot-Smith recalls a movie (Super 8) production by the Op Cenderawasih 78 APR team based at Sentani, Irian Jaya, titled 'A Day in the Life of the Team'. Certainly not a recruiting or public relations production with their Officer Commanding Major Don Swiney MBE threatening to court martial the lot of them if the movie ever escaped the unit.)

Performance Observations of APR Equipment on RA Svy Operations

APR teams generally consisted of experienced operators and those who had recently graduated from School of Military Survey APR training courses. This approach meant that new

members got valuable operational experience under the watchful eye of seasoned members, and operational lessons learned were passed onto them.

I was very privileged to work with many fine RA Svy APR team members, RAEME technicians and civilian pilots during my career. I got paid to do a job I loved doing and to see vast regions of Australia that I had never seen. I met many interesting characters wherever I was based for APR operations, but they are stories for another day.

Key Personnel

Bob McHenry led APR operations in PNG and possibly Indonesia. Bob was a great font of APR knowledge for me from my days as Troop Commander Aerotriangulation Troop. Others who gave me a deeper understand of APR, vertical control and mapping photography requirements were Mick Dempster, Rusty Williams, Phil Boyle, Don Musgrave and Bruce (Happy) Hammond.

I led three APR operations and assisted in another one. These were:

- a. Op NERVOSE 84 in the Arnhem Land based at Ngukurr, Barkly Tablelands and Elliott regions of the NT;
- b. Op ARIGHT 83 in Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York Peninsula of Queensland based at Normanton;
- c. 1984 operation in Western NSW operation based at Narromine in 1984; and
- d. Assisting Pete Clarke for Op MIZMAZE 83 in the Kimberley region based at Kununurra.

Andy McLeod led the APR course that trained Pete Clarke and I at SMS. Derek Stanmore a member of my APR team at 2 Fd Svy Sqn, was very experienced and helped me better understand the APR operational aspects. I had good APR teams for operations including people like: Doug Gay, Wolfgang Thun, Marty George, Simon (Andy) Capp, Roger Rees, Steve Hill, Hutch Hunter, Neil Jones, Peter (Spoon) Lefel, Steve Gloster and Dave Longbottom. Civilian pilots Keith Meggs and Jim Miller? Apologies to anyone I have missed due to my failing memory.

Operation work taught me a lot about myself and the need to always work as a team. Clear communication between all members of the team and a thorough understanding of the mapping control and photography requirements to be used by Aerotriangulation Troop were essential.

WRELADS - WRE Laser Airborne Depth Sounder

In DSTO development of WREMAPS-II it was apparent that laser profiling could also aid shallow water mapping. Much development was done over the next decade leading to Australian companies building and delivering an operational WRELADS to the Royal Australian Navy Hydrographic Service in 1993.

Videre Parare Est

References:

1. Anticipating Tomorrow's Defence Needs A Century of Australian Defence Science 1907 to 2007 by Peter Donovan
<https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Anticipating-tomorrows-defence-needs.pdf>
2. NATMAP, Department of National Development, Technical Report 26 Laser Terrain Profiler by P J. Wise, Canberra, AUSTRALIA 1979

https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20251017003911/https://www.xnatmap.org/report_tdnm/laser26/laser.htm

3. Wikipedia article titled Royal Australian Survey Corps
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Australian_Survey_Corps#Equipment,_Technology_and_Techniques
4. Dennis Puniard Microsoft power point presentation titled: "From Plane Table to Satellites: The changing role of Technology in Military Mapping over 1... dated 30 June 2015 for the Australian and New Zealand Map Society. <http://www.anzmaps.org/wp-content/uploads/Puniard1b.pdf>

You 'surveyors' know about digits

By: Peter Jensen

Not long after taking over from Chris Mazur in Capability Development Division (Joint) in 1998, I asked at a Branch meeting why one of my sponsorship areas (ownership of the business case of new major capability scope, cost and schedule) was Joint Modelling and Simulation. At that stage there were no joint modelling and simulation 'unapproved' or 'approved' new major capability projects but we did sponsor more than a few Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) research tasks. The simple answer from the Director-General was 'you surveyors know about digits'. Although the Survey Corps was 'no-more', the term 'surveyors' was a popular term for those who had served in the Corps which was well known to have been a leader in the use of and development of new technology. It was also acknowledged that standards were needed to interoperate with otherwise disparate systems and that common environmental (land, sea, air, space, position, time) data was a key component of distributed federated systems.

At that time our office was acting like a policy and operational Directorate for modelling and simulation. This was not our core business, but to shed ourselves of this assumed responsibility we needed a 'strategic plan' and to do that we needed to understand about interoperability including with our major allies. It was at that time that 'strategic imagery and geospatial-information' capabilities were moving closer together and that was the area of my primary responsibility and interest.

There was no standing forum like the Five Nations Mapping, Charting and Geodesy Directors Conference for information sharing and exchange. Together with DSTO we put together an overseas visits itinerary to the US, UK and Germany including Defence modelling and simulation offices, Defence research and development agencies, working and developing distributed warfighting (all levels) simulations, commercial entertainment simulation research and development businesses and geospatial-intelligence agencies. In the event DSTO didn't have the money for their visit so I was sent off by myself.

The most striking finds were:

- warfare is the most complex human endeavour and therefore the most complex to simulate in dynamic rules-based synthetic environments merging live, virtual and constructive simulations
- modelling, simulators and simulations had been used extensively for more than a decade in force structure analysis, defence budgeting, capability acquisition and life

cycle costings, operations courses of action and wargaming analysis and the myriad of training systems to improve effectiveness and to reduce costs and risks

- Defence use of simulations was 90% training and 10% operational and other, whereas civilian use was the reverse of that
- synthetic environments from theatre level to individual soldier were being developed but build time needed to be reduced from months to hours to be credible
- information harvesting was being used to develop artificial intelligence to build dynamic synthetic environments including dynamic terrain and dynamic 'agents with attitude' ie what key people thought, said and did (this was nearly 30 years ago)
- simulation should be embedded in new systems rather than being a 'bolted-on after-thought'
- the entertainment and gaming industry was spending ten times more on distributed simulation research and development than the Defence organisations
- interoperability standards were well developed and being accepted by NATO and in-work as open international standards, for both infrastructure for network interoperability between simulations and a standard way to represent and exchange the data
- DSTO research and development was well advanced and sought after
- the most cost effective policy and development of enterprise wide federated simulations should be driven by one central office

As for the geospatial data representational model and coding, the US driven standard was SEDRIS (Synthetic Environmental Data Representation and Interchange Specification) which was an outgrowth of DIGEST (Digital Geographic Exchange Standard sponsored by NATO driven Digital Geographic Information Working Group) and the FACC (Feature Attribute Coding Catalogue). There was already a translator from DIGEST to SEDRIS to use products such as the VMAP (Vector Smart Map) range which had been adopted by Australia in 1993 having been developed in the Digital Chart of the World project 1989-1992 in which the Survey Corps was actively involved. Indeed, the short timeframe of that project would not have happened had Australia not been involved as the US Congress provided a separate line of funding (non-NATO Senator Nunn amendment) because a non-NATO country (Australia) was involved along with the US, Canada and UK. At that stage the standard for network interoperability was still in work. The US had mandated HLA (Higher Level Architecture) being an open standard, a modular system, would avoid vendor lock-in, would allow reuse of components and was a scalable architecture only exchanging that data which the user had subscribed to.

As a result of all that we sponsored a Modelling and Simulation Strategic Plan through the senior Defence committees to establish the Australian Defence Simulation Office under the Office of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force. That office came into being in 2000.

Fading memories of the last OC 4 Fd Svy Sqn

By: Peter Demaine

(Editor: As a result of a Deputy Chief of the General Staff decision in June 1993 to restructure the Army topographical capability, 4 Field Survey Squadron was transferred in August 1993 from being a sub-unit of Army Survey Regiment under command General Staff Division, to being a direct command unit of Land Command. As a result of the major

restructure of the Royal Australian Survey Corps in 1989/90 the squadron was then the only 'field survey squadron' based in Australia. 8 Field Survey Squadron remained in Papua New Guinea until December 1995).

Since I am not getting any younger I thought it was about time I put 'pen to paper' and record my recollections of being the Officer Commanding (OC) of the last and best Field Survey Squadron (Fd Svy Sqn) to disband prior to integration into the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers (RAE). It just happens to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the disbandment of the Royal Australian Survey Corps (RA Svy).

The longest posting in my Army career was 2 years and 4 months as OC 4 Fd Svy Sqn. It was an honour and privilege for me to be in command of the Sqn. Years earlier I had written and spoken to our Corps Director Colonel Simon Lemon expressing my strong desire for this appointment. Fortunately, for me Simon agreed.

In December 1993, I took over command from Major Andy McLeod, the Sqn had a total strength of 73 personnel including 54 ARA RA Svy, 12 General Reserve (GRes) RA Svy, 5 RAAOC (2 Clerk and 3 Storeman), a RACT Transport Supervisor and an AACC Cook. The Sqn had a small, but extremely professional GRes Troop ably commanded by CAPT Tony Stephens. I instigated with input from key personnel quarterly technical production reports to LHQ and the Army Svy Regt.

I recall the GRes Tp were involved with compiling and field revision 1:50K mapping around the Nowra and Clarence Town regions of NSW under Operation EASTERN REVISE 93 and later EASTERN REVISE 95. Perhaps Tony or other GRes members can shed more light.

The Sqn was heavily involved in photogrammetric work and completing field completion operations Op NERVOSE 94 and Op MIZMAZE 95 in Northern WA and Northern Territory. We also had a small aerial photography team doing operational work Op KUMUL 94 under the Defence Cooperation Programme in two parts PNG.

My OC 4 Fd Svy Sqn Objectives for 1995 (in no particular order) were:

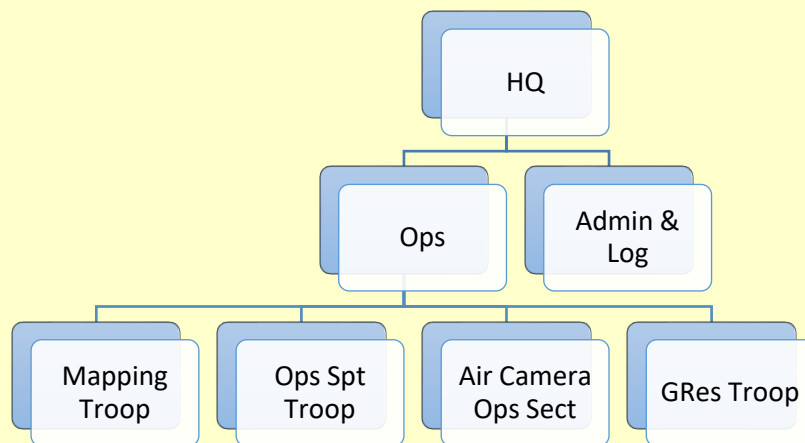
- Ensure the role and functions of the Sqn are carried out in 1995.
- Ensure personnel are trained to successfully carry out their military and technical tasks through an interesting training program and up to date Sqn Aide-Memoires for technical equipment.
- Strive to continually improve Sqn processes through the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles.
- Assist personnel achieve their objectives for 1995.
- Prepare personnel for employment at 1 Topo Svy Sqn.
- Assist 1 Topo Svy Sqn with topographic tasks in support of Land Command units and formations.

My plan for disbandment of the Sqn was in two phases:

Phase One. Completion of technical tasks by 1 December 1995 and handing over of operational capability to ATSE and 1 Topo Svy Sqn.

Phase Two. Posting of personnel, disposal and transfer of assets including stores and buildings by 3 April 1996.

The organisation of 4 Fd Svy Sqn at October 1995 was as follows:



The authorised establishment and posted strength of the Sqn at October 1995 are as shown in this table:

Estab	ARA		GRes		Total
	Offr	OR	Offr	OR	
Authorised	5	75	2	20	102
Posted	4	31	2	14	51

Note: The ARA OR posted strength excludes personnel posted for duty at 1 Topo Svy Sqn.

Sqn key personnel in 1995 were:

- OC - MAJ Pete Demaine
- 2IC - CAPT Rob Carpenter
- SSM - WO2 Peter Hammer
- GRes Tp Comd - CAPT Tony Stephens
- GRes 2IC - WO1 Stevo Hinic
- Ops Offr - LT Peter Davies
- Air Camera Sect Comd - CAPT Rob Gray (Posted out Jan 1995)
- SQMS - WO2 Tony Clark
- CC - SGT Hans Evertz

I knew that the disbandment of the Corps was coming (1 Jul 96), and we were preparing for a unit closure in mid-Dec 96 under direction of Land Headquarters. The date was brought forward to May 96 but I was not advised until I enquired to DSvy who was also surprised. I found out that the Deputy Chief of Army had addressed a group of young Engineer officers that the RA Svy Corps be disbanded and the current functions of the Corps would be conducted by RAE (1 Topo Svy Sqn) and the new civilianised Army Topographic Support Establishment (ATSE). The message came from MAJ Terry Lord who was visiting us and staying in the Keswick Barracks Officers Mess. Terry heard young RAE officers talking about it and told me first thing the next morning, I immediately contacted Simon. After about one hour he confirmed the news. I immediately informed the Sqn.

The Sqn continued to conduct field and office work as outlined above. I tried to keep the Sqn well informed and quell rumours, and we had visits from DSvy, LHQ and SCMA staff regarding the disbandment and integration. Despite a recommendation from a LHQ not to send a team of six on a surveying and adventure training exercise on Kangaroo Island in early 1996, I did anyway led by SGT Pete Hardy. I did have some discretionary power with my annual and disbandment budgets.

My 2IC CAPT Rob Carpenter wrote the Sqn Closing Instruction and got it rubber stamped by LHQ and DSvy-A staff. I sent LTCOL Duncan Burns (CO Army Svy Regt) a copy of our closing instruction, as I knew he had to write one. Rob was posted to 1 Topo Svy Sqn and later transferred to Intelligence Corps. I note that due to their extensive computer knowledge SGT Pete Hardy and SGT Frank Downie Corps transferred to RA Sigs.

We held the first of two closing ceremonies on 25 November 1995. There was a massive turnout of RASvy, other Corps staff, and families from around Australia. The event was organised by SGT Steve McGuiness and SGT Dave Longbottom, ably assisted by all remaining staff. There were speeches from DSvy-A, our Colonel Commandant Colonel Don Swiney MBE and myself. I remember thanking all friends of field survey and those that had made the Sqn, successfully conduct field and office survey work for 44 years. I thanked all the current members of the Sqn for their dedication and support through a difficult transition. I did invite others to speak, but no one did. I did recite a poem written for the occasion, titled '4 Field'.

*Today we spend time to reflect
on days at '4 Field', so we pay respect
to absent friends, mates and old colleagues;
and tell tales of life in basic fatigues.*

*We've toiled on maps, aerial photos and plans
with theodolite, tellurometer and GPS in hand;
to produce a product that's second to none
via compilation, field survey and editing till it's done.*

*Today's not the end of the field survey era
for our knowledge and traditions will not disappear.
The spirit of field survey will live on
with the RAE Tech Geomatic legion.*

People toured the squadron with lots of equipment and photographs on display. An auction of Sqn memorabilia was held and a group photo of all in attendance was taken out the front of the Sqn. Lunch and dinner was provided, and much reminiscing and thirst quenching continued into the wee hours of the following day. I think I got about one hours sleep before breakfast, enough said on that note!

I was allocated a specific budget and schedule to close the Sqn by 1 May 1996. The final troop after the New Year posting cycle was 11 ARA personnel, 6 RA Svy and 5 RAAOC closed the Sqn under budget and ahead of schedule on 3 April 1996. We had the Easter break, which coincided with the school holidays, to absorb leave and other personal requirements. I was very disappointed that DSvy-A and SCMA could not find jobs in the Adelaide region for the remaining RA Svy staff (myself excluded as I was posted to HQ Land Comd Engr as SO2 Engr

Svy) and the continuation of the GRes Troop. I assisted where possible to help them find vacant positions. The RAAOC staff were posted as advised by DOrd-A and SCMA. We held the second and final closing ceremony on 3 April 1996 with DSvy-A and local Defence dignitaries in attendance. The ceremony consisted of a final RA Svy flag lowering with the Sqn on parade, followed by speeches from DSvy-A and myself, and morning tea.

Tasmania's geodetic origin 1937-1966 – Part 2

Editor: thank you again to Adrian Fairfield, Registered Land Surveyor and Director Cohen and Associates, Launceston, for providing this historic letter and other information

The last newsletter (May 2026) included an article about the Aust Survey Corps 1937 geodetic survey in Tasmania conducted by the Corps Officer Commanding Major Vance, Warrant Officer Class One Johnson and Mr Hicks. After that survey, Johnson later Lieutenant-Colonel MBE, corresponded with District Government Surveyor Mr Wilks including this letter (just before the Second World War) after the Geodetic Section (Captain Fitzgerald) had completed the triangulation through Mt Kosciusko to join the Victorian and New South Wales trigonometric surveys to form one contiguous network from Queensland to South Australia.

The letter includes technical details about the latest in geodetic theodolites (Tavistock 5 ½ inch) and the conditions of the survey through the snowy Australian Alps in June 1939. One of the team, assumed to be a light-keeper, spent 42 days on a mountain survey station by himself.

Adrian has been recovering triangulation trigonometric stations and clearing vegetation surrounding the cairns of the 1937 Aust Svy Corps survey. The top photo is Billopp Bluff looking towards the Lochmaben Laplace datum station. The bottom right photo is at Jacobs Sugarloaf. Both are great examples of cairn making withstanding the elements for 90 years. (Photos: Adrian Fairfield)



I am registering this in case
you are moving about.

Aust. Survey Corps,
Victoria Barracks,
Melbourne.
Monday 3/7/39

Dear Mr. Wells,

It was most pleasant to
receive your very interesting letter and I hope you
will excuse my delay in answering. I have been
trying to get hold of the enclosed maps to show
you where we have been working, and couldn't get one.

You must be having a wonderful time and
with your powers of observation I know of no one who
would appreciate it more fully. As you say Eng-
land must be an amazing place with history in
every nook and corner. There will be little of it
left unseen by the way you are going and I should
think your estimate of 12000 miles before you finish
will be a conservative one.

I was very interested in your description of the
C.T.S. workshops and the Ordnance Survey. I would
give something to see over them both. You will have
a rare knowledge of the Districts now and I would
like to have a talk with them when they are

dismantling and assembling them.

As you know we have two now of the $5\frac{1}{2}$ Geodetic ones, 36033 and 38033, the only two I think in Australia, and they are wonderful instruments indeed. No. 38033 has a few small improvements. It is a later model I think, but only slight ones, although definitely better.

Using a face left and right to make an arc:-

00 00 30 ⑩ ⑤ 76 33 46

180 00 32 ⑪ ⑦ 256 33 50

our average on eight arcs, set $22\frac{1}{2}$ higher each time and the micrometer drum split too, is about 3.5 to 4.0. Anything over 5.0 we usually check. I did get a range of 1.2 on eight arcs on one occasion, and 2-3 are fairly frequent.

We are building, wherever possible now, permanent concrete or semi-permanent wooden observing stands, after the American style, and no doubt the English style, instead of the lugs, and with my limited experience I think they are very well worth the trouble.

Our last work was the base net near Benambra on Lake Ouse, and the figure enclosing it - the snow drove us out about three weeks.

3

ago - it was a long fight on those high spots.

After a fall of snow up there, there is always cloud on the lee side of the snow tops, even though it is sunny everywhere else. Kosiushko was the devil - sixteen days it took, with two blizzards in six days with one day's slight respite between them, while it gathered fury for the second one. The road was impassable of course and we had to dig the trucks out to get them down when we left - the snow was within 4" of the top of the cabin of one.

Fortunately we had the Seaman memorial hut to camp in - two miles from the summit and we used to walk up each day, so we were lucky - the wind during the blizzards was an experience to remember.

I used to form on the instrument as we observed some nights and the ground was like iron under ^{an hour after sunset} our feet, if by any mischance it thawed out during the day. It was a cold group by midnight or 2.30 a.m. on the four nights we were able to observe, and the days were little better - still it was a rare experience, 7305 feet is the height. We were there the end of April and beginning of May.

4

On several nights the lights were too unsteady for work at all - having a slow walk right out each side of the wires - it was extraordinary, really with clear rays and all high points, and under those clear, cold conditions. I think the deep gullies, ^{and high ridges} have something to do with it. I watched the clouds sometimes when they were broken and they had very erratic movements, vertical and horizontal.

Our average misclosure in the sixteen Δ^5 we shot was 0".75, the greatest error being 0".60, though I think it would have been improved if the chaining had been finished earlier - it will be in future.

The map enclosed will give you an idea of our base net and the two figures away from it - the two figures are rather impressive ones, I thought - the points I mean.

The trig points are fairly difficult of access and some take several days to pack a light man or the instrument in, so we try and take sufficient food. The chaffin on Beloha was there for 51 days, 42 by himself, and the rest when I came in with the instrument.

5

We had 7 in the party, another w/o and myself, and five men - Major Vance and Capt. Fitzgerald have been very busy with our new personnel - it has just been doubled - and the new base measuring gear - and could not get up, but now our section, the Geodetic Section, has been doubled, the other ^{topo} sections also, and we should cover a lot of ground in future.

Some of the time we used two theodolites but mostly the one - we hadn't the light men, and communication in that country was difficult - the tracks shown are often impassable or rather packhorse tracks only.

We had to use packhorses on quite a number of the hills - the batteries and theodolite and timed food get fairly solid, and some of our charts are seven miles or so - Bogong is 13 miles - we occupy it next time with the instrument.

In about a week we are leaving to measure the bases at Toowoomba and Tamworth, and I am afraid we shall still be there when you come out in November. We have some observing to do in Queensland as well.

I have just returned from a tour of

6

the high country again, Buchan, Delegate, Cooma, Kosciusko, Canberra, Yass, Berriguch, Gundagai, Tumut, Corryong, Omeo, Tallangatta, Albany, ^{Johnnie Weir of course} Tawonga, Bright, Buffalo, Myrtleford, Whitfield, Mansfield, Jamieson, Alexandra, Healesville and Warburton, with my mother.

We were away about 11 or 12 days, not buying at all, and did about 1700 miles, saw plenty of snow and floods and had a very interesting trip.

You mentioned that you saw some of the electrical computing machines. If it would be no trouble I wonder if you could get any pamphlets on them, cost, operation, size, portability, etc. I think it is FitzGerald's idea to keep our conditions down to about 45 or 50 - with frequent bases between chairs - 50 60 or 70 should be our very greatest number. an electrical machine would be very handy for that number though.

Linda and Lynette are both looking well I think, though Linda complains of rheumatism in her left wrist these cold days - we have had a lot of cold, wet weather this winter.

7

I long for the Tasmanian winters - when it rained or snowed and had done with it, and not this interminable cloudy, drizzly weather - it is tiresome.

I am waiting for the gazette of my commission - three of us have just been promoted - to cope with the increased personnel. I hope I can stay with the Geodetic Section - it is great work.

I hope you meet Major Hartine - he is a great authority on all trig work and mapping and must be an exceptionally capable man indeed.

Please remember me to Mrs. Wilks and I hope you both continue to have such an enjoyable holiday.

Again many thanks for your letter and kindest regards from

yours sincerely,
Bill Johnson.

P.S. One of our Corps, Lieut. W. M. Searle, from the Cartographic Section, who will be its O.C. in six months, leaves on Tuesday for 3 or 4 months experience at Southampton - I hope you meet him if you call there again - he is a very capable and a nice chap.

Good public relations – an Oops Moment

By: Noel Sproles

Editor: This article was published a few years ago in a Queensland Newsletter but is a good public relations story. It is also a good example of short stories that we can all write for this newsletter about small but entertaining events in our service which added to the good name of the Survey Corps.

We were driving (1960s) a two-and-a-half-ton Studebaker along one of those outback Queensland roads where you can go for hundreds of kilometres without seeing another vehicle or any sign of human habitation. The country was sandy and the road narrow and dusty. A car came up behind us and had to eat our dust until we could find a spot where we could pull over and leave him enough room to pass. In an overt display of impatience, he accelerated past us, gave a long blast on his horn, jabbed his finger in the air and left us to eat his dust in turn. Nice bloke.

About ten kilometres further on, the road took a sharp turn to the right. As we approached the turn, we could see that our speeding mate had missed it completely. He was standing forlornly by his car amongst the brigalow trees contemplating his situation. Luckily for him, he did not hit anything, but all four wheels of his car were well and truly buried in the sand. As we trundled up, he stayed with his car instead of coming up to the road to wave us down. I reckon that he was having an 'Oops' moment. Perhaps he was considering that a friendly wave a few moments before may have been a better move than the angry finger. Probably the more so when we stopped and walked over to the bogged car as we both towered over him.

However, we did our bit for public relations by using the winch cable to haul him out of his predicament. He promised us a beer in the next town, but when we got there, he was nowhere to be seen. Just as well as I don't think that we would have wanted to drink with him anyway.

Our Association Calendar 2026/27 – the fridge magnet

January - December 2027	Golf Day
Wed 11 th November 2026	Remembrance Day lunch
Thurs 10 th December 2026	Christmas drinks