



THURUNKA

March 2008

Newsletter of the
Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc.

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Coming Events - 2008

Update your diary now

Committee Meeting 2	Wed	26 Mar	1800 hrs	RACA Club
ANZAC Day March	Fri	25 Apr	1000 hrs	City
Signals Reunion	Fri	25 Apr	1200 hrs	City Hotel
Committee Meeting 3	Wed	28 May	1800 hrs	RACA Club
Rhumb Corps Luncheon	Wed	4 Jun	1200 hrs	CTA Club
THURUNKA June edition		Mid-June		
** Reserve Forces Day March	Sun	6 Jul	TBC	Sydney
Committee Meeting 4	Wed	23 Jul	1800 hrs	RACA Club
RA Signals Plaque Dedication	Tue	19 Aug	1000 hrs	AWM Canberra
Battle for Australia Service	Wed	3 Sep	1100 hrs	Cenotaph Sydney
Rhumb Corps Luncheon	Wed	3 Sep	1200 hrs	CTA Club
THURUNKA September edition		Mid-September		
Committee Meeting 5	Wed	24 Sep	1800 hrs	RACA Club
** Eastern Region Corps Dinner	Sat	Nov	1900 hrs	TBA
RA Signals Re-union SA		7-10 Nov		Adelaide, SA
Annual Memorial Service	Sun	23 Nov	1100 hrs	Signal Hill, South Head
Annual General Meeting	Sun	23 Nov	1230 hrs	Paddington RSL Club
Rhumb Corps Luncheon	Wed	3 Dec	1200 hrs	CTA Club
** Committee Luncheon	Sun	7 Dec	1200 hrs	TBA
THURUNKA December edition		Early-December		

** TBA/TBC: Dates and details to be advised or confirmed

NB: Dates and details of events may change but are constantly reviewed in an attempt to advise changes to members in a timely manner.

In this issue

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- Financial Statement

ANZAC Service
Vale / Sick Parade
Vales & service histories
Corps Matters

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- Sigs Reunion Vietnam
- Timor-Leste Command
- 3CSR museum

FYI
Military History

- Bren Gun

Addresses/Search & Find
Letters to the Editor
Tail-end Charlie

- Our turn to serve you

Next Issue

Copy for the next issue of
THURUNKA must be in
the hands of the Editor,
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EMERTON 2770.
Or by e-mail:
thurunka@optusnet.com.au
NO LATER THAN
15th May 2008.

ANZAC Day 2008 March

Royal Australian Corps of Signals



Your Host:
The Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc.



The ANZAC March will follow its traditional format. The form-up point for the Association being the usual location at the corner of Bent and Phillip Streets, Sydney from 1000 hrs. Be early and catch up with your old service mates. All current and former members of the Corps are welcome to join Association members in the march. Spread the word and bring a mate along.

...and the reunion...

The Signals re-union venue is again the City Hotel, corner of King and Kent Streets, Sydney from 1000 hrs. This venue will be closed to the general public until late afternoon and bar snacks will be available. This is the opportunity to get together with old and new, serving and retired, members and friends of the Corps. Relive and Remember.

Association Matters

Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc.

President's Report 27th February 2008

Being our first meeting for 2008, I wish to report the following activities:

- Liaised with 17th Signal Regiment regarding a grant for their first year-book.
- Visited Mike & Dawn Gategood in Manilla NSW 28-29 January 2008.
- Attended 142nd Signal Squadron All-Ranks Mixed Dinner at Cabra-Vale Diggers Club as one of only several official guests on 2nd February 2008.
- Attended 17 L of C Signal Association Darwin Bombing Memorial Service at Bankstown on 19th February 2008 followed by a luncheon to Bankstown RSL Club. 17th Signal Regiment provided the Catafalque Party. CO and RSM also attended. I have agreed to promote the memorial service date (19th February) each year in *THURUNKA* to assist 17 L of C Association, whose numbers are dwindling.

Chris Ballantine

27 February, 2008.

We are now able to give you the Financial Statement for the Association as at 30 June, 2007.

Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc. Financial Statement for the Year Ending 30 June 2007

	Last Year	This Year
INCOME		
Members subscriptions	2095	2495
Sale of Merchandise	162	121
Interest received	518	486
Sundry income	6	41
Contra-Functions	nil	315
Total Income	2781	3458
EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	714	646
Merchandise	nil	282
Admin/Allowances	556	757
Donations/ Wreaths	410	435
Trophy & Presentations	26	333
Depreciation	210	210
ANZAC Function subsidy	436	nil
Banner Equipment	nil	330
Contra Functions	nil	705
Total Expenditure	2352	3698
Operating Surplus (Deficiency)	429	(240)

MEMBERS FUNDS

St George Bank balance 30/6/07	\$13,594
Association Equipment	\$265
Merchandise O/lf <w cost	\$1,088
Receivables	\$390
Total Assets	\$15,337
Less: Cheques awaiting presentation	\$265
TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS	\$15,072
	(2006 = \$14,785)

Chris Ballantine
President
1 November 2007

Errol Hazlewood
Honorary Treasurer
1 November 2007

Annual Subscriptions

Yes, Annual fees are now due and payable.

Again this year we have included a payment slip with your copy of *THURUNKA*. This payment slip is designed to assist you when you make your payment. If any details are in error please advise by correcting the slip with your remittance.

Please keep up to date and make your remittance at the ANZAC Day re-union or forward by post to the President and Acting Treasurer by the end of April.

Mr C.J. Ballantine

**8/62-64 Lynwood Avenue
CROMER NSW 2099**

If you want, you can pay more than one year's fee in advance. You may pay as many years in advance as you want.

If you require a receipt just ask. If you are paying by post and require a receipt; please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your remittance.

Other Events

ANZAC SERVICE
OF
THANKSGIVING AND REMEMBRANCE
COMMEMORATING
THE TRADITION OF ANZAC

Sunday 20th April 2008 at 10am
at
St. Stephen's Anglican Church
(cnr Mowbray Rd & Sydney St Chatswood)

Guest of Honour

Her Excellency
Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO
Governor of NSW

Special Speaker

Rev Graham Wintle
Formerly Vicar of Christ Church
Surbiton Hill, London
Now Rector
St Stephen's Anglican Church, Willoughby

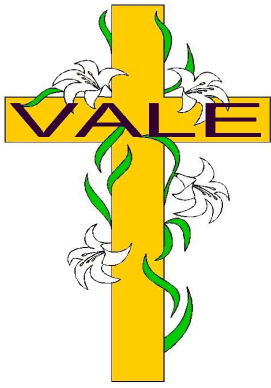
Music by

R.A.N. (detachment)

supported by St. Stephen's Singers.

Morning Tea will be served after the service. Medals to be worn

Rector: Rev Graham Wintle



Vale Colonel Ronald John Stephen McDonald ED

We have been advised by Ian McDonald that member Colonel RJS (Ron) McDonald, late of Noosaville, Qld died in May 2007 at the age of 91 years.

According to Army records, Ron was born in Victoria in 1915 and enlisted in the AIF in 1941. He was discharged in May 1946 with the rank of Captain. His posting on discharge was 88 Aust High Speed Wireless Section. Ron returned to a civilian career with the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC) in Sydney. He was an early member of the CMF and of our Association and was a regular attendee at our functions until his retirement to Noosaville.

Whilst I can only rely on my own records, the following is a snapshot of Ron's CMF service:

Major Ron McDonald, OC 1 AGRA (AA) Sig Sqn, Georges Heights, Sydney serving with the then LT Tony Ballantine and LT John Ballantine (1955-58).

LTCOL Ron McDonald ED, CO 1st Corps Sig Regt, Forest Lodge, Sydney serving with Pat Buckley, Wilbur Wright, Barry Tinkler, Barry Swan, John Ballantine and Peter Stanbridge, to name a few (1958-60).

Ron was promoted Colonel and held senior staff postings prior to retirement from the CMF. His operational experience, command and technical skills were of significant benefit to the Corps and the fledgling CMF in New South Wales.

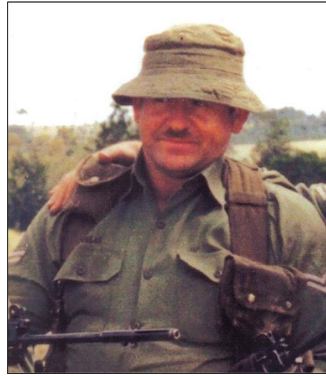
Our condolences are extended to his family.

Chris Ballantine

Vale - CPL Greg Douglas

It is with great sorrow that I have to report the passing of one of our members, Greg Douglas.

I have been advised by his close friend, Gary Wheeler that Greg died on Thursday, 6th December 2007 as a result of a battle with cancer. The cancer was first found in his kidneys, lungs and brain and spread to his liver, spine and ribs.



A National Service inductee, Greg joined RASigs, where he spent many years. Although a Sig he saw overseas duty in Borneo with an RASurvey contingent in his 'nasho' days. He joined the 8th Signal Regiment, when he transferred to the CMF (now ARes). Those of 8 Sig Reg and 142 Sig Sqn, particularly those at Lidcombe, would remember him well, with his positive attitude and friendly demeanour.

He later transferred to 1/19 RNSWR, where he saw out his military life. Greg was 59 years of age.

We send our condolences to his family.

Ken Forway

A few words for Greg.
2792483 CPL Gregory Phillip DOUGLAS was born on 3 October, 1948 and served as a National Serviceman from 23 April 1969 to 22 April 1971 with the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. He re-enlisted in the Army Reserve on 16 January 1973 and served until 30 March 1977. Greg re-enlisted in 1/19 RNSWR on 7 February 1978 and served until discharge on 11 July 1991 with the Signals Platoon, Support Company. Greg was a very loyal and a very professional NCO and one very skilled at helping the new signallers learn the

ropes because of his wealth of experience - a valued and outstanding trait he carried throughout his service. He was renowned for his ability - due to his exceptional signals knowledge and professionalism - to make many of his officers "shine".

Greg served with:

1st Signals Regiment;
8th Signals Regiment;
142nd Signals Squadron; and
1st/19th Battalion, The Royal New South Wales Regiment.

For his service Greg was awarded the: Australian Service Medal 1945-75 with SE Asia Clasp; Reserve Force Medal; Australian Defence Medal; and Anniversary of National Service Medal.

R. J. (Bob) Pink OAM

Honorary Secretary

1st/19th Battalion

The Royal New South Wales Regiment.

Vale - Dick Culliford

It is with deep regret that I advise that Dick Culliford passed away Tues, 12 February 2008 at 1:30 pm.

Dick was a stalwart of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia having served the Association at all levels. His contributions to the Association were immeasurable and he will be truly missed.

Bob Elworthy

President, Victorian State Branch, (VVAA)

Vale - 15647 WO2 (ret) Thomas Charles (TC) Craig,

709 Sig Tp & 527 Sig Tp Vietnam 1965-66

I have just been advised by his wife, Mae that Tom Craig passed away on the 1st July 2007. He was diagnosed with lung cancer in March 2007 and spent some time in hospital.

I am sure there are lot of blokes out there who knew Tom and will be surprised to hear of his death

Regards

Bob Fellows

VALE—35099 Sergeant James (Jim) Meehan

After many years of lingering heart problems, Jim passed November, 2007. He had not long ago moved into a nursing home. Jim's passion was the Signals display at Fort Lytton and although small was really worth a visit. He will be sadly missed at Fort Lytton.

Ron Auburn

Secretary/Treasurer
Royal Australian Signals Association
(Queensland)
07 4124 0558
[E-mail: tourers184@bigpond.com](mailto:tourers184@bigpond.com)

VALE—WO1 Ronald Cooling, RASIGS

DoB 20 February 1931
DoD 8 February 2008
It is with regret that we have learnt of the passing of another valued member of the Corps.
Ron passed away at the Peter MacAllum Cancer Institute in Melbourne 8 February 2008.

We thank COL (ret) Peter Desmond, RAINF, 2 Bn RAR & HQ 1 ATF Vietnam 1967-68, and MAJ Erica Abend, SO2 TRG, School of Signals, for their timely advice.

*Ted Hawkins***Vale -.WO1 Alan Barker**

It is my sad duty to inform all that Rev. WO1 Allan Barker passed away late this past Sunday evening, 6 January 2008. For those who may be surprised, yes, he was a Rev. and a very powerful one at that.

I was able to visit with him 3 days ago and although in very poor health, was cheerful and confident of the reception awaiting him in eternity. A great mate sadly missed.

Laurie Dawson

0418349317
lauriedawson@bigpond.com

VALE - Russell Brooks

I just wanted to let you know that one of my mates from 'nashos' passed away just before Christmas. Russell Brooks

and I were in the 14th intake from Western Australia and we met up at Ingleburn in January 1969.

Russell was in Op Radio and was based in Ingleburn up until his discharge in Perth in October 1970. He was made up to Lance Corporal prior to his discharge.

Anybody who was in 1 Sig Ingleburn from January 1969 through to October 1970 would have known Russell as he was one of those characters in life that can light a room when they enter.

Russel spent the last few years in a WA country town (Tammin) in the wheat belt and only 5 weeks, prior to him having a major heart attack, took on the lease of the Tammin Hotel.

He leaves his wife Julie, son Josh and daughter Kelly. Russel died a few weeks after his 60th birthday on December 3rd 2007.

Thank you,

Geoff Legge

1 Signal Regiment 1969 - 1970

VALE—25365 SGT Roland Edward Mansfield

It is my sad duty to announce the death of:

25365 SGT Roland Edward Mansfield
Born 01 Feb 1934,
Died 09 Feb 2008,
RASIGS 1951 - 1967
BCOF Japan,
Korea.

*Gary Ronald Mansfield***VALE—Nancy Carlson (WRAAC, RASigs)**

It is a very sad time here in WA and I am sure once the news is passed around, this message will be felt by all. I received a call to tell me that Nancy Carlson had passed away in her sleep. We are giving her much loved spouse Fred all the support we can at this stage. If anyone has messages for Fred, family members and friends please send them to me and I will pass to Fred.

Nancy was a great lady; she and Fred were inseparable until this time. Really they will always be together. Nancy and

Fred made many friends over the years both in the Signals Corps and the WRAAC.

From information supplied, Nancy served in Canberra (Duntroon), Melbourne and Perth and was a CSM on retirement.

Our love and prayers are with Fred, family and friends R.I.P. Dear Nancy

Brian Maccauley

Phone: 08 9277 1406
[E-mail: bmaccaul@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bmaccaul@bigpond.net.au)

VALE - 58002 (WX34841) LTCOL Oscar Roland Videan ED RT

WW II, Signals Line of Communications

It is with regret that we are notified of the passing of another WWII Signals veteran.

*Ted Hawkins***Vale - WO1 (ret) Michael (Bones) Costello**

RASIGS and Corps RSM RAAMP Michael was a Linesman with 1 Sig Regt, Ingleburn, before Corps transfer to Military Police. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends in both Corps.

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to his wife, Maureen, via: John Lowe (RASIGS)
E-mail john.lowe7@bigpond.com

*Ted Hawkins***Vale - John (Snitch) Letch**

It is sad that we report the passing of another member of the Signals family. John "Snitch" Letch passed way in Adelaide after a fairly long illness. John was aged about 84 years when he left us. We send our sincere condolences to wife Lyn, family and friends.

John would be remembered by many of the Signallers serving in the 1950's and beyond.

RIP

Brian Maccauley

Phone: 08 9277 1406
[E-mail: bmaccaul@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bmaccaul@bigpond.net.au)

Vale—LT Phil Barker RASIGS

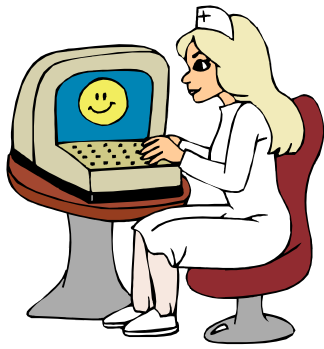
ex OC Port Moresby 1971-72

Sadly, another of our Corps has left the parade ground to report to his Commanding Officer. He finally succumbed to cancer this morning, 1st March, 2008 at 0800hrs at the Townsville Hospital. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends in the Corps. Messages of condolence may be forwarded to his family via Ian Withrington:

[E-mail witho1965@primus.com.au](mailto:witho1965@primus.com.au)

Ted Hawkins

Lest We Forget



SICK PARADE

Leon Sharpe back on the net

“Leon Sharpe is now in perfect health and back on the net. He is now having to eat all the foods he was not permitted to eat prior to his illness so that he can put on some weight. He is as light as a feather and takes off in a breeze”, so reports his old mate Ken Myers.

We pass on our good wishes to Leon and hope that he has finally put this illness behind him....ED.

Jim Stedman and his new knee

Jim reports from WA that he has had his Knee Replacement operation on the 2nd February. It seems to have gone pretty well, “...although I reckon the recovery is worse than the complaint!”

He says that he can get around without crutches although he does use them if out shopping, etc, “just in case”, and he adds that there is: “Still some pain and swelling in the knee but it will go away in time.” And continues, “...especially as I slipped on wet tiles in my bare feet and did the splits. Hell; that hurt”. He concluded by saying that, “The staples at the very top of the wound look very “angry” so I don’t think the splits did that part any favours.”

Sorry to hear about the fall, but glad that it all seems to be coming back together. All the best for your speedy recovery. You might not be able to run for the bus, but you can walk to the local....ED.

VALES & SERVICE HISTORIES

With the increasing demise of many of our friends and serving members, we could find ourselves with a need to give a eulogy or a vale on behalf of our mate. We never gave much thought prior to the event, such as asking our mate to write a one page synopsis of his life’s achievements. No, we never got around to it. We therefore include this article. This may assist those persons or organisations with the procedure in obtaining service records for the purpose of eulogies, etc. Be aware of privacy matters and that family permission in writing might be required. The article is presented as an attachment for easy detachment and filing. Please note that WW2 personnel records can also be obtained from the government website:

www.ww2roll.gov.au.

The information in this article is published in good faith. THURUNKA and the Association take no responsibility in any way for the correctness or otherwise of the information therein....ED.

RASigs Re-union South Australia November 2008

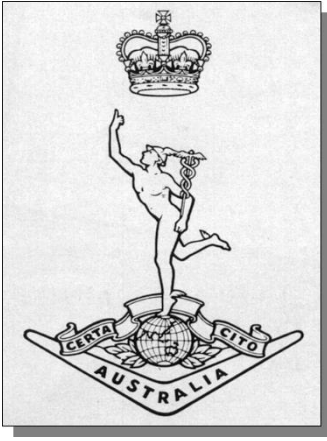
Reminder

Do Not Forget the RASigs Reunion
Adelaide, 7 - 10 November

Are YOU going?
Have YOU registered yet?

Website:

http://www.rasigs.com/html_pages/reunion2008.htm



CORPS MATTERS

RASIGS Corps website: <http://www.defence.gov.au/army/RASIGS/default.htm>

Move meets demand

By CPL Andrew Hetherington
From *Army*, 21 February 2008

NSW signallers have been re-shuffled to meet the demands of the Hardened and Networked Army. A key reform was the 110th Signal Squadron's move from an independent signal squadron to a sub unit of the 17th Signal Regiment.

The squadron now serves alongside 145th Signal Squadron and has a traditional signal squadron role within 17 CSS Bde. The move ends its previous role of providing communications services to Land Command.

MAJ Grant Beer, OPSO, 17th Signal Regiment, said there were two reasons for the integration of the unit into the regiment, and one of them had historical significance.

"The closure of 110 Sig Sqn was required by the Hardened and Networked Army plan ... to support the

growth of the Army in other forms," MAJ Beer said. "In the early 1990s, communications support to force-level logistics was performed by 2 Sig Regt, which consisted of 110 and 145 Sig Sqns. It was in recognition of this that the 110 Sig Sqn title was moved to within 17 Sig Regt."

The previous signals squadron to serve with 145 Sig Sqn in the regiment was 130 Sig Sqn. "At some point in the future 1 Sig Regt will raise their second signal squadron, and this squadron will use the 130 Sig Sqn title", MAJ Beer said.

The former 110 Sig Sqn role of communications installation moved to 17 Sig Regt with the integration of 127 Sig Tp. "17 Sig Regt now has the ability to support operations beyond the standard range of communications services." MAJ Beer added, "17 CSS Bde has a great force-level logistics

support capability and now 17 Sig Regt can also extend our communications support beyond our own formation."

SQUADRON HISTORY

1966-67: 110th Signal Squadron raised and deployed to Vietnam.

April 1992-November 1993: 110 Sig Sqn personnel deployed to Cambodia.

December 1, 1995: 110 Sig Sqn relocated to Holsworthy, 110 Sig Sqn and 145 Sig Sqn established as independent units on the ORBAT.

1995-2007: 110 Sig Sqn provides command level communications support to Army and Land Command, and installation support to most overseas operations.

December 7, 2007: 110 Sig Sqn integrated into 17 Sig Regt.

Proposed RASigs Reunion Vietnam 2009

G'day all,

Some of us who live in Vietnam or are constant visitors, have enjoyed the re-unions in Australia over the years and look forward to the re-union in Adelaide next year (2008) and would like to hold a re-union in Vietnam in 2009. It would mainly centre on the Saigon and Baria-Vung Tau with day tours to local areas.

The purpose of this e-mail is to get a feeling of support from all the Associations and Corps before promoting it via a web site.

I have spoken to several ex sigs and have virtually full support for this event. It would be open to all current and ex sigs, partners, families and friends.

With the lower costs of airfares and the spending capacity of the dollar in Vietnam it should not be as expensive as going to a re-union in Australia. The reunion would last about 8 days. Other tours can be arranged throughout Vietnam if required. Now is the time.

Your early replies would be appreciated.

Keep the faith,

Gregg Dickson

Co-ordinator,

Ex Sig,

Saigon, Vietnam

greggdickson110@hotmail.com

So if you are interested, either contact Gregg Dickson directly or let us on the committee know so that we can pass the info on for you. As Gregg said, "Your early replies would be appreciated", please reply early....ED

Another RASigs officer steps up to command....

Change of Command in Timor-Leste

The Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP today announced that **Brigadier James Baker** has been appointed as the next commander of the Australian-led International Stabilisation Force in Timor-Leste. He takes over from Brigadier John Hutcheson who has held the appointment since July 2007.

Based in Dili, Brigadier Baker is commanding almost 1000 Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed in support of the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations Police. The role of the Australian and New Zealand troops – known as the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) - is to assist local authorities and the United Nations to provide peace and stability in the country following the civil unrest in 2006.

Brigadier Baker takes command of the ISF at a time when security within the country has dramatically improved. The situation is now allowing the ISF to assist communities across Timor-Leste by expanding into other tasks, including regional medical clinics and joint engineering tasks with the Timorese military, while still maintaining a security overwatch.

Brigadier Baker is a signals officer who has operational experience in the Middle East and is a former Commanding Officer of the Australian Army School of Signals. He is also a former instructor at the Australian Command and Staff College and has been on exchange with the US Army.

Mr Fitzgibbon thanked Brigadier Hutcheson for his command and leadership of the ISF over the past seven months.

Under his leadership, the Australian and New Zealand troops in Timor-Leste have worked hard and effectively to build an improving security situation in Dili and the surrounding districts.

The Australian contribution to the ISF is around 750 troops, of which the majority comprise the ANZAC Battle Group based on the Townsville-based 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. Supporting elements include Army aviation, logistics, armour, military police and engineers. About 180 New Zealand Defence Force personnel complete the force, including an infantry rifle company (attached to the ANZAC Battle Group) and Iroquois helicopters from the Royal New Zealand Air Force's No 3 Squadron.

The Minister congratulates Brigadier Baker on his appointment and wishes all personnel deployed in Timor-Leste continued success on their ongoing vital mission.

Brigadier Baker's biography is available at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/opastute/default.htm>

3CSR/103 Sig Sqn Museum

The current CO of 3CSR mentioned at the beginning of this year that he wanted to create a museum in the unit. He had funds available and also a building – late last month we were asked if we could assist, etc.

The unit wants to obtain equipment, photos, publications, stuff, etc that has been used in 103 Sig Sqn since its forming and subsequently used over the years whilst on exercises, deployments to places various, that sort of thing. All the ECNs, not just the Ops, Tech and Line Critters.

I have seen TT4As, PGC1s and AN/PRC47s for sale on EBAY, please stop selling our heritage and donate to the 3CSR Museum.

From the Olds and Bolds side of the fence Derek Webster and I are going to get the ball rolling so to speak. The unit is very enthusiastic; this is

good for the Corps and, of course, the Unit and it allows the Webmaster and myself to keep our skills up.

If you have any of the above and wish to donate it to the unit – proudly displayed with your name or alias, where it came from or where it was found - drag the said pictures, equipment, publications etc out from under your bed. You are never going to use them again and the Museum can make damn fine use of it. Copy/scan your prized pics and send them to us or send us your prized pics and we shall copy them and loose the originals – your choice.

We are still working out the finer points of how we can shift stuff from around Oz to Townsville. Suggestion one is that you, the donator, wipe off all your finger prints and get it out to the nearest Sig unit and get their Q Critters

to move it to Tropical Townsville. As yet there is no Suggestion two.

As I said this is still in the planning/talking stage so even though your wife, mother or whatever may be truly glad that you wish to donate/get rid of your old crap – please curb your enthusiasm till we work out how we can get all the Sig units on side etc.

If you would be so kind and pass it on to your scaly mates it would be truly appreciated.

Spread the word and Good hunting

Loftus the Dipole

September 10, 2007

All comments, replies etc direct to:

WO1 (retd) Geoff 'Lofty' Evans

Phone: 07 4775 1625

[E-mail: loftuse68@aapt.net.au](mailto:loftuse68@aapt.net.au)

FYI

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DISCLAIMER The thoughts and ideas and any views expressed in the articles of THURUNKA are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of The Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc. or the staff of THURUNKA. While contributions are welcome not all of them can be published. Those published may be edited for length and clarity. Contributions are acknowledged as from our source, unless otherwise informed. Contributions cannot be returned unless arrangements are made with the Editor prior to or upon submission of the contribution for publication. We welcome contributions and thank those who contribute to the pages of THURUNKA.

Saigon photographs 2007

From late November 2007 to early January 2008 my daughter Shelly and a friend backpacked through Vietnam and part of Cambodia.

While she was in Saigon, our resident Sig, Gregg Dickson, took her around the town and showed her the Canberra BEQ and the Free World HQ. Shelly, being a good daughter and photographer, took photographs of these buildings which played a significant part in her father's youth!!! Those Sigs who worked or visited Saigon may be interested in her pictures of these buildings as they now appear. If you would like to see the photographs go to:

[http://picasaweb.google.com/bradanne12/;](http://picasaweb.google.com/bradanne12/)

...and then click on the "SVN 2007" album.

The other album, "SVN 1969-1970", has my tired old photos from that era.

As far as I can tell from Google Earth, the area of the FWHQ which held the MRS and Det 110 Sig Sqn in 1969-1970 is now tennis courts and a park!

I would like to publicly thank Gregg for his time and effort spent in showing Shelly and her friend around Saigon. Regards,

Brad Read

bradanne@optusnet.com.au

RUSI Recruits

We have been advised by the Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) that it is conducting a recruitment drive to bolster the ranks to overcome natural wastage. We have included the Institute's flyer 'Top Secret' and an application form for those who wish to join as an attachment to this edition of THURUNKA.

Although it is out of the scope of THURUNKA to promote other organisations, some of our members, including myself, are members of RUSI. I personally enjoy the monthly luncheon presentations. I find it a chance to catch up on the past, the present and the future of the Australian Defence Forces as well as a wider range of topics presented at the luncheons. Oh! and it also gives an opportunity to meet up with old colleagues and be introduced to new ones.

Ken Forway

Seniors' Card

For those Queenslanders on this mailing list aged 60 and over, but have yet to get their Seniors Card, you can apply online at:

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/seniorscard/apply/index.html>

It's worth getting because not all businesses accept the DVA Gold Card.

Regards,

Ted Hawkins

I do not know if the same applies in NSW, but cover your bets. If you do not have a Seniors' Card (NSW) and you are over the age of 60 years of age, work no more than 20 hours a week, are a resident of NSW want one, you can get an application form from your local Council, Library.

Or contact NSW Seniors Card:

Address: Locked Bag 16, Kingsgrove NSW 2208

Telephone: 1300 364 758

[e-mail: info@seniorscard.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@seniorscard.nsw.gov.au)

[Website: www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au](http://www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au)

I got my application form sent out with my 60th birthday card from my local member....ED.

DVA Nominal Rolls

and Ray Pratt MID, 547 Sig Tp Vietnam 1966-67

It seems that Ray was incorrectly listed on the Vietnam Veterans website:

<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au>

as Pay Corps instead of his correct corps of RASIGS.

Thanks to WO1 (ret) Eric Grace's efforts, this anomaly has been rectified.

Please check your own listing and, if incorrect, contact: Dept of Veteran's Affairs

Nominal Rolls

Phone: 1300 780 133

Fax: 02 6289 6571

[E-mail: nominal.rolls@dva.gov.au](mailto:nominal.rolls@dva.gov.au)

You will find them accommodating and indeed welcoming of your personal assistance in what is a huge task.

Regards,

Ted Hawkins

CPA 036/08 Monday, 25 February 2008
**Australian Entertainers
 Depart for Solomon Islands**

The tenth morale-boosting "Tour de Force" concert tour for Australian troops and police based in the Solomon Islands departs today.

The performers for this tour include:

- * John Williamson - Country singer.
- * Ami Williamson - Singer/song writer.
- * Nicki Gillis - Singer/song writer.
- * Jed Zarb - Musician.
- * Mike Goldman (Big Brother) - MC.
- * Tanya Arlidge - MC.

As usual, these Australian performers are donating their time and talent free of charge - a long-established tradition that pre-dates the Vietnam War.

OPERATION ANODE is the name of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) contribution to the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Australian soldiers - along with soldiers from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga - are supporting police from a total of 16 Pacific nations (including Australian Federal Police) as they back up the Solomon Islands Police Force in its task of restoring law and order.

RAMSI began in 2003 at the request of the Solomon Islands Government.

Media note: For more information on Operation Anode, visit:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/opanode/>

For more information on Forces Entertainment, visit:

<http://www.forcesentertainment.org.au/>

Media contact: Rukshan Abeyaratne (Media Liaison Officer): 0404 095 086

Defence Media Liaison: (02) 6265 3343 or 0408 498 664

Issued by Coordination and Public Affairs, Department of Defence, Canberra, ACT

Phone: 02 6265 3343, Fax: 02 62656946

Media Releases are available via e-mail if you register at

www.defence.gov.au/media

Visitors to Vietnam

If you are visiting Vietnam, please take the opportunity to contact Ralph, who will point you in the right direction.

You may like to advise any former VN veterans that they are welcome to contact my wife Nga and me if they are ever visiting Vietnam. We live just outside Nha Trang in south Central Vietnam, 550km north east of Saigon.

Nha Trang is a tourist city undergoing rapid re-development from the ground up. Tourists are welcome, there are good restaurants (Western and Vietnamese), the seafood is the best in Vietnam and the cost of living is considerably below that of Saigon and Hanoi. What is more, the climate is just about perfect, though you might consider avoiding the heat of summer (June to August), unless you like it 'Queensland hot'.

My e-mail address is:

ralph45@tpg.com.au

Ralph and Nga Schwer

ex-2785529

104 Sigs Nui Dat 1968

547 Sigs Nui Dat Oct 1970-mid 1971

HQ Coy Saigon mid 1971-Feb 1972

There are other Vietnam veterans now living and working in Vietnam and their willingness to assist other Australians visiting Vietnam is always offered and welcomed.

Ted Hawkins

Military history



“When the Chinese attacked, we were firing at such a sustained rate that we were swapping barrels and throwing the detached one into the snow to cool”.

That was a description, by an instructor who was a Korean veteran to Nasho trainees at Wacol in the first intake 1958 and the weapon was the Bren gun. In the 1950s it was still the standard Australian Army light machine gun and had proven itself accurate and reliable in WW2 and Korea. For most Nashos it was their introduction, together with the Owen gun, to automatic weapons.

The gun was named after the Czechoslovakian Company, Brno, which developed it and the English Company, Enfield, which originally manufactured the British version. The name is derived from the first two letters of each company. It was selected by the British Army in trials in 1935 and went into service in 1937. It has been manufactured in Australia by the Lithgow Small Arms factory.

A gas-operated weapon, the Bren used the same .303 ammunition as the standard British rifle, the Lee-Enfield, firing at a rate of between 480 and 540 rounds per minute, depending on the mode. Each gun came with a spare barrel that could be quickly changed when the barrel became hot during sustained fire, though later models featured a chrome lined barrel, which reduced the need for a spare.

The Bren was magazine-fed, which necessitated a slower rate of fire and required more frequent reloading than belt-fed machine guns such as the water-cooled 303 Vickers. However, the slower rate of fire prevented more rapid overheating of the Bren's air-cooled barrel, and the Bren was several pounds lighter than belt-fed machine guns. As it was more easily portable, it could be fired on the move and from alternative firing positions. The magazines also prevented the ammunition from getting

light fast-tracked carriers (the Bren Carrier) that acted as scouts and as infantry support, although these vehicles were highly vulnerable to enemy armour and anti-tank weapons.

The Bren had a maximum effective range of approx 600 yards (550m) when fired from a prone position with a supported bipod. Initial versions of the weapon were sometimes considered too accurate because the beaten zone or pattern of fire was extremely concentrated, resulting in multiple hits on one or two enemies, with other enemy soldiers going untouched

More than a few soldiers expressed a preference for worn-out barrels in order to spread the cone of fire among several targets. Later versions of the Bren addressed this issue by providing a wider beaten zone.

In National Service training; we soon learnt it was a very good weapon. Like any other weapon, however, it was liable

to jams that we had to learn how to clear. We also appreciated how easily it could be disassembled, cleaned and reassembled. In action that skill is vital.

The Bren, soldiered on in the British Army up to the Falklands War but was superseded in the Australian Army during the Vietnam era by the GPMG-M60 (General Purpose Machine Gun) which is belt fed has a higher rate of fire and a wider beaten zone.

Ernie Flint and Barry Izzard.

The Bren Gun



dirty, which was more of a problem with the Vickers with its 250-round canvas -belts. The 30-round magazine was, in practice, usually filled with only 28 or 29 rounds to prevent jams and avoid fatiguing the magazine spring, something that is common to other firearms as well.

Care needed to be taken with magazine filing to ensure that the .303 cartridge rims did not overlap tie wrong way, causing a jam. The rounds had to be filled the correct way, each round ahead of the previous round. There was also a 100-round drum magazine for the Bren used in the anti-aircraft role. The Bren was also mounted on

Change of Address

The following persons have advised that they want their new details spread around the Sigs Net.

New E-mail Address for Roy Cassidy

Roy (Cass) Cassidy,
RNZSIGS, 110 Sig Sqn Vietnam
Old e-mail Address: cass@infogen.net.nz
New e-mail Address: casso@slingshot.co.nz
Regards
Ted Hawkins

Change of E-mail Address for David Lowson

CAPT (ret) David Milne (Jock) Lowson,
Det 152 Sig Sqn Vietnam 1968-69
G'day,
I have changed my internet provider and therefore my e-mail address is now changed.
My new address is: jocklowson@bigpond.com
Please delete all reference to my old aapt.net.au address.
Regards
Jock

Change of Address for Alan Pearce

Alan Bertram (Percy) Pearce,
110 Sig Sqn SVN 1968-69 & 1970-71
Please be advised that new contact details are as follows:
Percy & Glenda Pearce
4 Jilgin Way
Ellenbrook WA 6069
Phone: 08 9297 2591
E-mail: percglen@bigpond.com
Regards
Ted Hawkins

New Email Address for Bob Shearing

Hi All,
I have gone wireless and have a new address,
bermi.bob@bigpond.com
Have a Great 2008,
Cheers,
Bob Shearing

Phone: 07 5497 4353
E-mail: dlgoldhardt@optusnet.com.au

Regards
Ted Hawkins

Searching for Brian Schwartz

(Former Adj 7 Sig Regt 1972)
If you have contact details for the above member, please advise, he was the Adjutant of 7 Sig Regt in 1972 and I would like to have a beer with him some time.
Best wishes,
Peter Murray
pmurray@netspeed.com.au

Searching for 1201709 Thomas Arthur O'Donnell

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam 1969-70
Wayne Lamshed, ex 1 Sig Regt is looking for Tom O'Donnell
If you have contact details for the above member, please advise:
Ted (Blue) Hawkins hawkins2@aapt.net.au; and
Wayne Lamshed waynevivvy@hotmail.com
Regards
Ted Hawkins

Searching for LTCOL Alan Stewart

I am trying to get in contact with LTCOL Alan Stewart (RASigs SVN 110 Sig Sqn 1971-2).
If anyone has contact details for LTCOL Alan Stewart, please contact:
Ted (Blue) Hawkins on 07 5499 3704 or hawkins2@aapt.net.au; and/or
Tom Davies on davies33@netspeed.com.au.
Regards
Tom Davies

Searching for Richard (Dick/Mumbles) BAKER,

104 Sig Sqn Vietnam 1967-68
I am trying to locate 43826 Richard (Dick/Mumbles) Baker. Enlisted in South Australia approx 1965, served in SVN with 104 Sig Sqn 1967/68, 5 Sig Regt early 1970, 135 Sig Sqn and possibly other units.
I think he took discharge back in South Australia. His wife's name was Sue and they had at least one child, a boy. His contact details are not on the 104 Sig Sqn data base.
If you have contact details for the above member, please advise:

Geoff Molineaux (104 Sig Sqn Vietnam),
gcmolineaux@hotmail.com; and
Ted (Blue) Hawkins (110 Sig Sqn Vietnam)
hawkins2@aapt.net.au
Regards
Geoff Molineaux

Searching for WO2 (ret) Kevin John Fletcher,

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam 1969-70



Search and Find

Searching for old friends

David Goldhardt, RASIGS 1974-83, 139 Sig Sqn Enoggera, 4 Sig Regt Brisbane and Det 4 Sig Regt Townsville, is searching for old friends who remember him.
His contact details are:
Dave (& Linda) Goldhardt

If you have contact details for the above member, please advise:

Cleon Walters - cleon@internode.on.net

Terry Wilson - tjwilson50@hotmail.com

Ted (Blue) Hawkins - hawkins2@aapt.net.au

At Simpson Barracks late 70's and last heard of up at Yeppoon but he might have sold up and touring Australia.

Regards

Ted Hawkins

Searching for MAJ or LTCOL George O Chester

A friend in Royal Signals from the 1980's is seeking the above member.

If you have contact details for the above member, please advise:

John Ackerley (Royal Signals)

E-mail: john.ackerntworld.com; and/or

Ted (Blue) Hawkins - hawkins2@aapt.net.au - 07 5499 3704

Regards

Ted Hawkins

Searching for 37360 Leslie Stuart Douglas

104 Sig Sqn Vietnam 1968-69

The above member was involved in the Battles of Coral and Balmoral in Vietnam in 1968 and is sought for attendance at the 40th anniversary commemorations planned for Canberra in 2008.

If you have contact details for the above member, please advise:

1 Ted (Blue) Hawkins hawkins2@aapt.net.au; and/or

2 Denis (Rabbit) Hare dhare@au104.org

Denis is the co-ordinator for RASIGS members who were involved in the Battles of Coral and Balmoral.

See the following website: <http://www.au104.com/> click on '104 Notice Board' and then click on 'FSB Coral Vietnam 12 May-6 Jun 68' patch for further details.

Regards

Ted Hawkins

Phone 07 5499 3704



Letters to the Editor

Apology

It was reported in the December, 2007 edition of THURUNKA that Ray Ctercteko had passed away. It is with great happiness and apologies that we report that Ray rang the President to say that his death was grossly exaggerated.

However, there is sad news in that it was Ray's brother who died. We pass on to Ray and his family our respects and sincere apologies in this matter and thank him for his generous attitude shown.

Ray is gracious in his Response!

In his true manner, Ray was gracious in accepting our apology:

Dear Ed,

Many thanks for your e-mail re my "passing". Don't worry about it, It did not worry me one bit, one has to learn that life is more important than trying to finds out the "whys & wherefores" for such situations. I realised straight away that someone knew of my brother's passing and accepted that it must be Ray from the Association. I must admit it caused quite some funny responses from fellow signallers from my unit and also from many personal friends. Don't make a big thing of it in the next copy of THURUNKA - just say; "Sorry Ray, we will wait for the real thing!"

Best wishes,

From "The Living" Ray Ctercteko

Tail-end Charlie

Our Turn to Serve YOU

(By Jenny Bell, with the greatest respect, for all my Vet friends)

I lived, removed for many years, From Veterans and their plight,
I didn't know, that just to live, And to be heard, again they'd have to fight!

I would have thought, their wars were past, and now, in peace they'd be,
Their courage, and their valour, gave, a country, where we're free.

It seems that in my ignorance, I'd believed all that was true,
But now I find, it isn't so, there's more we need to do!

I think of them, and what they did, I'm filled with admiration,
For their courage, valour, sacrifice, in service of their nation.

So now it's time, to give them back, Some part of what they've lost,
For all that they, all gave for us, No matter what the cost!

To those who gave their lives for us, on some forsaken foreign shore,
You gave your all, your life, your heart; you could not have given more.

For those of you, who made it home, from world wars one, and two,
Your country did you honour, we were so proud of you.

You wore your medals proudly, at your "Welcome Home Parade"
There were dinners in your honour, many thankful speeches made.

Now let's move it to "Fast Forward", and see the contrast glare,
Our boys, home from Vietnam, but the "Fanfare" wasn't there!

They didn't ask to go there! To be sent into that fray!
It was our "Chosen Lords" deciding, "ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ!"

It tore this country, coast to coast, burnt flags and demonstrations,
But still they did, as they were bid, and fought hard for our nation!

Horrific battles, fought and won, in jungles, heat, and mud,
In Australia's name, they fought and died, "Kokoda's Spirit", in their blood!

So now the battle's over, of guns, there is no sound.
Their duty done, their battle fought, and they are homeward bound.

So where was all the fanfare? The crowded streets? The Big Parade?
Where WAS this country's "welcome mat", and passionate speeches made?

Their ships berthed in the dead of night, the soldiers were sneaked ashore,
“Now go home lads” and “Shut your mouths” “We’ll speak of this no more.”

No “Ticker Tape “, no grateful thanks, which really was their due,
But cries of “Murderer”, “Baby killer”, we turned our backs on you.

This country stands, forever shamed, for its actions in those years,
To our bloodied, weary, heroes, who’d fought, despite their fears!

They fought for you; they fought for me, with greatest courage shown,
And they say a soldier, can’t find peace, when from war, he journeys home.

For all the horrors, and the deaths, and sad things he has seen,
Play on his heart, and on his mind, he’s not the man he’s been.

His sleep disturbed, with visions stark, the sweats that come and go,
He finds it hard, to cope, and live, with thoughts from long ago.

His mates, are where he finds his peace, they know what he’s been through,
How could we imagine this? It’s not happened to me, or you!

So now in time of need, he turns, to claim what is his due.
From a very “caring government”, who promised they’d be true!

For all his selfless sacrifice, they promised they’d be there,
To lend support, to pay them back, for their courage, give them care!

The soldier’s justice never came, ignored and tossed aside!
Forgotten by his country now, He only had his pride!

So bowed, and bloodied, in defeat, But not by any foe!
His country was his nemesis, delivering the Mortal Blow!!

For the young, who don’t remember, and like me, the old, who can’t forget,
It’s time we showed these diggers, that we, our past mistakes, regret!

So let us fight again together, to give our diggers what is due,
Ignite Kokoda’s Spirit strong, now we will fight for YOU!!