



THURUNKA

September 2007

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

President
Mr C.J. (Chris) Ballantine
8/62-64 Lynwood Avenue
CROMER NSW 2099
Ph: (02) 9972 4957
Mobile: 0431 422 247
cjb47@optusnet.com.au

Secretary:
Mr M. (Mike) McEvoy
13 Mitchell Road
MOSMAN NSW 2088
Ph: (02) 9968 1777
mmcevoy@bigpond.com.au

Editor:
Mr K.W.G. (Ken) Forway
28 Mendelssohn Avenue
EMERTON NSW 2770
Ph: (02) 9628 7511
Mobile: 0402 373 494
thurunka@optusnet.com.au

Coming Events - 2007

Update your diary now

Committee Meeting	Wed	19 Sep	1800 hrs	RACA Club
* Eastern Region Corps Dinner	Sat	03 Nov	1900	Venue TBA – SEE BELOW
* Annual Memorial Service	Sun	11 Nov	1100 hrs	Signal Hill, South Head
* Annual General Meeting	Sun	11 Nov	1230 hrs	Paddington-Woollahra RSL Club
Rhumb Corps Luncheon	Wed	05 Dec	1200 hrs	CTA Club
* Committee Luncheon	Sun	09 Dec	1200 hrs	Venue TBA
THURUNKA December edition		Early-December		

* TBA Dates and details to be announced

* TBC Dates and details to be confirmed

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

Eastern Region Corps Dinner - 2007

Details of the venue are not yet available for the Eastern Region Corps Dinner, to be conducted on **Saturday, 3rd November**. If you wish to attend, please register with a committee member, eg: refer front page, and we will advise you as the details become known to us.

Annual Memorial Service and Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 11th November

AMS at 1100 hrs Signal Hill, Watsons Bay
AGM at 1230 hrs Paddington-Woollahra RSL

In this issue

Coming Events
Reserve Forces Day
Honour to our Member
VALE / Sick Parade
Corps matters

- Sig War Vet Honoured
- RASigs SA Reunion
- RASIGS (ACT) Dinner
- School Of Signals
ANZAC tradition enriched
VC winner
Aussie Vets Help Aussies
Improved 'phone Services
Military History
- Op Aussies Home

Items Misc
Letters to the Editor
Tail-end Charlie

- Return to Malaya

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the next issue of
THURUNKA must be in
the hands of the Editor,
Ken Forway,
28 Mendelssohn Avenue
EMERTON 2770.
Or by e-mail:
thurunka@optusnet.com.au
NO LATER THAN
16th November 2007

Recent Events

Reserve Forces Day March 2007

On Sunday, 4th July, 2007 a small contingent of the Association's stalwarts marched in the Reserve Forces Day Parade in the Sydney CBD. Despite brilliant weather and an impressive parade featuring about 90 mounted troopers in period uniforms, historic armoured vehicles and two VC winners, sightseers were few. Following the march, the dozen or so members enjoyed lunch and drinks at the Ship Inn Hotel, Circular Quay.



From the Reserve Forces Day Committee

Each year a concept is chosen to highlight an important part of Australia's military history which will draw the media's attention and in turn adds to the support for Reserve Forces Day Council and its aim. In 2007 we will celebrate 90 years since the Charge at Beersheba and the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Australian Intelligence Corps. The charge at Beersheba was the last successful charge by horse-mounted forces with a British connection. The heritage of the two regiments in the charge, the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments is currently preserved by the 4th/19th Prince of Wales' Light Horse and the 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, Army Reserve



Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry VC and Warrant Officer (Retired) Keith Payne VC were special guests of honour.

based in Victoria and the New England District of New South Wales respectively.

This year was a really grand parade in Sydney. The parade was reviewed by Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO and the Vice Chief of the Defence Force Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AO, DSC, CSM, The Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP represented the Prime Minister.

The parade featured the Light Horse, with 15 horses carrying pennants with the colours of the 15 Regiments that fought in World War 1, and a further group of horses totalling 90, the number of years since the successful charge at Beersheba. A display by the Armoured Vehicle Collectors Society, the New South Wales Lancers Museum and serving members of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers covered all aspects of the mechanised light horse. The Guidons of the 1st, 12th & 15th Light Horse Regiments were paraded, with members of the Royal New South Wales Lancers Association, 12th/16th/24th Regimental Association (who had travelled down from New England), and one member of the Prince of Wales' Light Horse Association addressed by Her Excellency.

The parade also featured overseas contingents from the Royal Yeomanry (UK), Reservists from the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps and the British Army Intelligence Corps. From the Reserve Force Day website www.rfd.org.au/site/2007.

Ed's note: Keith Payne received the last VC awarded to an Australian, on 24th May 1969, while Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry VC, won his VC in action in Afghanistan.

An Honour to our Member

On the 15th May, 2007 at the Grace Hotel in Sydney, I attended the 65th Anniversary Service and Luncheon of the US Army Small Ships.

Also present was Mr Stephen Smith, U S Consul-General – Miss Maria Therese P Lezaro, Philippines Consul – Mr Allan Griffin, Shadow Minister for Veteran Affairs – LT Heather Pitt, OC, The Training Ship Sydney – Mr John Sadick, representing the Deputy Commissioner for Veterans' Affairs – Major-General Gordon Maitland AO OBE RFD ED (Retd) and Vice Admiral David Leach AC CBE LVO RAN (Retd).

Sister Mary Leahy officiated at the service and said Grace at the luncheon.

Before lunch was served Mr Stephen Smith presented Captain E.A. Flint MBE ED with a Medal and Award for DISTINGUISHED SERVICE in the Merchant Marines.

The Medal Reads:

**AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE.**

A befitting honour bestowed upon a member of our association, and it is the first medal to be issued in Australia.

Congratulations Ern,

Barry Izzard.

Thank-you, Barry, for allowing us to share this memorable honour bestowed upon one of our members. To Ernie, congratulations to you and a fine recognition of your determined efforts and endeavours, especially with regards to your maritime service and the US Army Small Ships, in which you served....Ed.



Correct wearing of Service Medals Encouraged

The Minister for Veterans Affairs and the Minister assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Billson, in a recent media release warned people against posing as war veterans on ANZAC Day, indicating that such behaviour was disrespectful to veteran and Service personnel and punishable by law.

Under the Defence Act 1903 the penalties for the improper use of Service decorations and for impersonating Service personnel include a fine of up to \$3300, six months imprisonment, or both.

“Only the original medal recipient is entitled to wear medals on the left, above the heart. Relatives’ medals may be worn on the right,” Mr Billson said.

“Occasionally a person will wrongly claim to be a returned veteran and wear medals to which he/she is not entitled. This practice is deceitful and disrespectful to our veterans.

“Further, there is a number of unofficial medals which are sold commercially and are not recognised through the Australian honours system. These awards should not be worn at public events on ANZAC Day,” he said.

Recently two people have been found guilty of offences under Sections 80A and 80B of the Defence Act for falsely claiming entitlements to medals. Further cases, resulting

from the wearing of medals for which no entitlement exists, are currently subject to legal proceedings.

Note: Fraudulent wearing of medals is an offence under the Defence Act 1903, an act of the Commonwealth of Australia. Known or suspected cases of fraudulent medal wearing should be reported to the Australian Federal Police (AFP). However the lack of resources and other more serious cases restrict the AFP in its ability to investigate such offences,

The Minister is called upon to establish and resource a section within DVA to investigate such offences.

Information about the correct wearing of medals can be found on the Department of Veterans’ Affairs website, www.dva.gov.au or the Defence Honours & Awards website, www.defence.gov.au/medals

From *The Furphy*. VVAA NSW Branch, Far North Coast (NSW) Sub-Branch, Lismore.



Vale - 610420 **Phillip John Burdon**
Det 152 Sig Sqn, Vietnam
Sadly, we have to announce the passing of another of the old and bolds of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. Many will have known Phil and many will not, but because of his membership of the Corps, we are all

family and our sincere condolences will be expressed to his wife, Jackie, and family at this time and assure them of our on-going support.

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:

Mrs Jackie Burdon
9 Coolangatta Retreat
Hillarys WA 6025
Phone 08 9402 7416
Mobile 0407 886 097
or via Percy & Glenda Pearce's e-mail
percglenda@e-wire.net.au
Ted Hawkins
Phone 07 5499 3704

Vale - 5745 WO2 **Thomas (Mad Dog) McNee**
RAINF, RAA, RASIGS, AATTV

It is with regret that I advise the passing of another former member of RASIGS. 5745 WO2 Thomas (Mad Dog) McNee served the Army faithfully for 26 years in a variety of units and also overseas in Vietnam, Malaya and Singapore. Tom was initially allocated to RAINF, transferred to RAA and finally saw the light and transferred to RASIGS. It is believed that Tom took a rank reduction from WO1 to WO2 so that he could do a second tour of duty in Vietnam with AATTV. Tom was a jack-of-all-trades (as was the norm in earlier times); clerk, demolition, Don R (SDS), switch board op, liney, drill instructor, just to name a few in RASIGS. I am certain that our thoughts and best wishes are with Tom's family at this time.

Messages of condolence can be forwarded to his son, Bob (Crazy Pup) McNee, who is another former member of RASIGS.

Bob & Jan McNee
3 Saddler Crt
Stoneville WA 6081
bob401@bigpond.net.au
Ted Hawkins

Vale - 2786974 **Peter Joseph Quinlan**
104 Sig Sqn SVN

It is with regret that I have to inform you of the passing of another valued member of the Corps. Peter passed away on 27 May 2007 and will be sadly missed by his family and mates.

Messages of condolence may be passed to:

Mrs Denise Quinlan
47 Holly Cct
New Lambton Heights NSW 2305
Phone 02 4952 6676
Ted Hawkins

Vale - 1200414 **Rex Smith**
ex 110 Sig Sqn SVN 1970 on 23rd February, 2007.
From "The Furphy". VVAA NSW Branch, Far North Coast (NSW) Sub-Branch, Lismore.

Vale - **Al Gilbert**

I have just received notification that Al Gilbert has passed away this morning after an early morning run. Al was a reservist in 134 Sig Sqn when I first met him in the early 1990's. Al previously served with 152 Sig Sqn and was one of the most reliable soldiers that I had the pleasure of working with. Our thoughts go out to his wife Rosie and 4 children.

Messages of condolence may be forward to:

Mrs Rosie Gilbert
6 Wales Place
Kings Langley 2147
Best Regards
Andy McCulloch
andy.mcculloch@ericsson.com

Lest We Forget



LT COL **Barry Tinkler** MBE (Retd) has had a recent visit to hospital for a hip replacement. From all reports he is recovering well. However, as he says "...so that will keep me off the golf course for a while." Barry, all the best for a speedy recovery to you and your handicap.

Very Seriously Ill - 36498 WO1 (ret) **Richard Stanley "Dick" Culliford**, 709 Sig Tp Vietnam 1965-66
Here is the latest on Dick from Bob Elworthy.
"I visited Dick Yesterday, he is seriously ill; in typical 'Dick-Speak', he described his predicament thus: "I'm stuffed". Dick has an aggressive cancer that is resistant to treatment. He is due to enter Austin Hospital shortly for surgery designed to assist his blood flow that is being restricted by tumours - the surgery will not reverse the situation. Depending on how he comes through the op. Dick may embark on a radical immune course of some sort to see if that assists. Dick is quite weak, has lost weight and is currently having home palliative care. Should anyone wish to send messages, may I suggest that they send them to the VVAA Victoria State Office and we will send them on to Dick."

End of message.

Any further developments will be passed on as they come to hand...regards...Gary

Gary Fizzell
0418 114 976
02 9625 8573



CORPS MATTERS

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

Sig War Veteran Honoured

The Defence Force School of Signals (DFSS) has re-named its Holding Troop in honour of Ken Clift, DCM.

The sprightly 91 year-old was the guest of honour at the parade, during which he inspected the soldiers of the newly formed Ken Clift Troop and unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion. The re-naming of the troop was proposed by former DFSS RSM, WO1 Leanne Iseppi.

Ken Clift served as a signalman in 16 Bde and saw service in Egypt, Libya, Greece, and Sri Lanka, where he completed a commando selection course. He later deployed to Port

Moresby and fought in the Kokoda campaign.

Cpl Clift was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1941 when he and two fellow linesmen, who were laying line ahead of the advancing troops, took on a battery of Italian field guns which were protected by machine guns. Armed with only pistols, a rifle and a few grenades, the lineys captured about 60 enemy soldiers.

Upon his return to Australia, then Sgt Clift attended OCTU, Adelaide and was discharged from the AIF as a Lieutenant in October 1945.

From *Army* Aug 9, 2007.

RASigs Re-union – South Australia November 2008

Event: RASigs Re-union, South Australia

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

Welcome to our website and the opportunity to join us in the forthcoming Diamond Anniversary being held on the weekend of the 7th to the 10th of November 2008 in Adelaide South Australia. We will be celebrating the bestowment of 'Royal' by His Majesty King George VI to the Australian Corps of Signals on the 10th of November 1948.

It is envisaged that approximately 1000 persons will come to Adelaide in November 2008 to help celebrate the event and reunite old friendships.

A committee of serving and retired members of the Corps is

organising an unforgettable celebration that befits this special date. There will be numerous events surrounding the weekend, including Formal Dinner, a formal parade by the 144th Signal Squadron plus a Family BBQ, side events and memorabilia to remind you of the times spent at these celebrations.

Please take advantage of this great opportunity to get involved in this great event and re-unite with fellow members of the Corps.

See you there,

Bruce Long

President,
Royal Australian Signal Corps
Association (SA) Inc.

Proposed Itinerary:

Friday, 7th November, 2008 - Registration.
Conducted at Keswick Barracks

Saturday, 8th November, 2008 - Family Day BBQ. This includes BBQ Meats & Salads (drinks will be available).
\$20.80 per Adult, \$10.55 per Child.

Sunday, 9th November, 2008 - Parade & Meal. A lunch will be served after the parade (drinks will be available).
\$25.90 per Adult, \$10.55 per Child.

Monday, 10th November, 2008 - Reunion Dinner. This includes a 3 course meal & 5 hours drinking package. The Army band will be playing. \$102.70 pp.

RASigs (ACT) Corps Dinner - 2007

RASigs Assn (ACT) will hold its annual Corps Dinner as follows:

Where: **Canberra Golf Club**
When: **Thursday 1st November 2007**
Who: **All old and young, former and current, Signals persons very welcome.**

Contact/Further Information:

BRIG (ret) Neil Horn

Phone: 02 6161 2706

FAX: 02 6161 2708

Mobile: 0411 129 817

E-mail: nlcmh@webone.com.au

Redevelopment of the School of Signals

I am pleased to announce that a project to provide new and refurbished facilities for the Defence Force School of Signals, at Simpson Barracks in Watsonia, Victoria, has been recommended to proceed by the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Public Works and that this recommendation has been approved by the Parliament.

The proposed project, which is budgeted at \$101.3 million, will

upgrade facilities required to train Defence personnel in communications and information systems.

The project includes the construction of new working and teaching facilities, the refurbishment of some existing facilities and the construction of new living-in accommodation rooms for long-term trainees.

Simpson Barracks is a crucial part of Defence infrastructure and an important part of the local community. The redevelopment will provide a significant boost to the local economy and highlights the Government's commitment to an ongoing Defence presence at Simpson Barracks. It also

re-affirms our commitment to providing facilities to support our people.

Construction is planned to start in early 2008 and is expected to be completed in late 2009.

(There is no truth in speculation that replica heritage listed windy corrugated iron huts with coke boilers, wooden floors, frozen fire-buckets, two-person rooms and single-bar radiators will be provided as an aid to staying alert during protracted winter study hours. - RG)

From Roy Grace.

To all Ex Members of T Comd, 406, 124, 6 FF Gp, 6 MD & 146 Sig Sqns SIGS Reunion in Tasmania – October, 2007.

You probably won't believe it, but this year is the 20th Anniversary of the closing of Signals, as we knew it in Tasmania.

To celebrate / commiserate some surviving members, who are also members of the Sigs Association, believe it is the right time for another Re-union. So as a starting point we looked at the old nominal rolls and started working out who is still around and (hopefully) more importantly, where they live, so we could contact you.

The plan is for the re-union to happen over Signals Commemoration Weekend 13/14 October 2007. Set out below is what we have in mind for what we believe will be a good opportunity for a good get together and look back at what we were and what we achieved.

- Friday 12th October: Meet and Greet 1700 hrs. Venue: Air Force Memorial Centre, 61 Davey Street, Hobart (Rear Entrance).
- Saturday 13th October: Dinner. Venue: TBA.
- Sunday 14th October: Commemoration Day Service followed by lunch. Venue: TBA.

Planning has started but we do need to have some idea of numbers likely to attend. The functions would be open to guests should you wish to bring someone along. What we need from you, and others you may know, is some idea of attendance. So we are asking for an indication from you on attendance at the planned functions. We would appreciate advice about attendance by 31 May 2007 (*disregard—see Editors Note*) to enable us to book suitable venues.

Whilst we appreciate this letter is right out of the blue, we believe this is a unique opportunity to catch up with old mates and at the same time celebrate the work and comradeship of some very special Signals Units.

Contact 1. Dick Goodwin at dgoodwin@kingborough.tas.gov.au

Contact 2. Greg Rawnsley at rawnstey.earthworks@hotmail.com

For those without a computer

Contact 3. Mel Cooper,
9 Seacrest Avenue,
BLACKMANS BAY, 7052
Telephone: 03 6229 2184

Regards,
The Organisers

Editors Note: I have included the application form for the RASigs Tassie re-union as an annex to THURUNKA. If you wish to attend, you are advised to contact one of the organisers QUICKLY as the closing date is about NOW.

The ANZAC tradition is enriched....

The Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association (RSA) is saluting New Zealand's latest recipient of the Victoria Cross.

RSA president John Campbell said SAS Corporal Bill Apiata's actions were courageous and he deserved the recognition he had received.

"His courageous actions, with total disregard for his own safety, saved the life of his comrade and should be saluted by all New Zealanders," Mr Campbell said.

"He deservedly joins the ranks of our heroes who have gone before him."

Corporal Apiata, the first New Zealander to be awarded the Victoria Cross since the Second World War, has said that he was only doing his job. He is to receive the elite award after carrying an injured colleague through enemy fire in Afghanistan.

A clearly overwhelmed Corporal Apiata said he was still trying to deal with the enormity of having received such a prestigious honour. "I was only doing my job and looking after my mates," Corporal Apiata told a media conference in Wellington this afternoon. "It means a lot to me, to my family and the unit itself." Corporal Apiata said he often sees the man whose life he saved. "Whenever I see him we catch up and have a beer. We're good mates," Corporal Apiata said. When asked if he saw himself as a role model, he said: "I see myself as Willy Apiata. I'm just an ordinary person."

Prime Minister Helen Clark said today: "Corporal Apiata carried a severely wounded fellow soldier across open ground while coming under intense attack. He did this despite the extreme danger to himself."

He becomes the 22nd member of New Zealand defence forces to win a Victoria Cross, the first to receive once since WW2, and the first winner of the new Victoria Cross for New Zealand, which was instituted in 1999.

In 2004 Lance Corporal Apiata was part of an NZ SAS patrol in Afghanistan. The troops had put up a defensive formation for the night when they were attacked by a group of around 20 enemy fighters. Grenades destroyed one of the troops' vehicles and immobilised another. This was then followed by fire from machine guns and further grenade attacks.

The initial attack was aimed at the vehicle where Lance Corporal Apiata was stationed, and he was blown off the bonnet by the impact of the grenade. He was not physically injured but another soldier - named only as Corporal D - was in a serious condition.

"I was only doing my job", says VC hero

The soldiers were under constant fire from the enemy and, as they were exposed by the fire from the vehicle, they immediately tried to take cover. Corporal D's injuries were life threatening, and the other two soldiers began to apply first aid. LCPL Apiata took control of the situation, as CPL D was rapidly deteriorating. However, he was in a very exposed position and the enemy fire was becoming increasingly intense. CPL D was suffering from arterial bleeding and so LCPL Apiata came to the conclusion that he needed urgent medical attention or he would die. So without considering abandoning his fellow soldier to save himself LCPL Apiata decided to carry CPL D to the safer position where the rest of their troops were stationed and where CPL D could get proper medical attention. LCPL Apiata then carried CPL D seventy meters through exposed ground and enemy fire - and miraculously neither man was hit. LCPL Apiata then resumed the fight.

Medical evaluation revealed that CPL D would have probably died from blood loss had it not been for LCPL Apiata's bravery in getting him the proper medical attention. CPL D is now back on active duty.

Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Jerry Mateparae, said Corporal Apiata was a humble man who when praised for his bravery had said: "I was only doing my job, boss."

Corporal Apiata was born in the Waikato in 1972 and grew up in Northland and the Eastern Bay of Plenty. He joined the New Zealand Army as a territorial soldier in 1989. From July 2000 to April 2001, he served in East Timor as part of the United Nations operation there. He joined the regular army force in April 2001. In 1996 he had applied for SAS selection but was not successful; however he reapplied and passed in 2001, training with the SAS in 2002.

He becomes one of only 13 living recipients of the Victoria Cross -- the only New Zealander in that group.

Another three, unnamed, members of the SAS received other awards. Details were not being released of their bravery "for operational security reasons", the Defence Force said. "Captain C" and "Corporal B" will receive New Zealand's second highest military honour, the New Zealand Gallantry Decoration (NZGD). "Corporal R" will receive New Zealand's third highest military honour, the New Zealand Gallantry Medal (NZGM).

The Defence Force said: "All four recipients have shown incredible strength of character in adverse conditions and embody the ethos and values of the New Zealand Defence Force."

- NZHERALD STAFF

We of the Association extend our congratulations to these four New Zealand Service Personnel, especially LCPL Apiata....Ed.

FYI

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross dates back to 1856, following the Crimean War.

Queen Victoria decided a medal was needed to reward soldiers of all rank who had an "act of valour". It was first made from metal melted down from captured Russian guns after the Crimean War. Prior to the Victoria Cross, the Order of Bath was the highest honour but it was only awarded to high ranking soldiers.

The Victoria Cross is the Commonwealth's highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy and is worn before all other medals.

The Victoria Cross has been awarded to New Zealand servicemen in both world wars. It was also awarded to a New Zealand militiaman and to 14 Royal Navy and Imperial Army troops during the New Zealand Wars.

A new Victoria Cross for New Zealand was instituted in 1999.

NZHERALD Staff

We of the Association extend our congratulations to these four New Zealand Service Personnel, especially LCPL Apaita....Ed.



Sale of Victoria Cross and other medals

As you might be aware by now, Keith Payne decided to sell his medals to a military museum in Maryborough, Queensland to provide for the well-being of his family. The museum is fortunate enough to acquire the original VC medal group of 23 medals of Keith Payne, who, as a Warrant Officer Class 2, received the last VC awarded to an Australian on 24th May 69.

It would have been a hard decision to make but the man who initiated the military museum has a real passion for veterans. I am sure that the veteran community wishes Keith and Flo well in their coming years.

Regards,

Ted Hawkins

Phone 07 5499 3704



The medals of Keith Payne VC. This is a real coup, not only for the museum but for the City of Maryborough.

WANTED for Research - Ingleburn Army Camp.

I have been approached for help by a request from Lawrie Lucas-Smith, an ex-nasho from 1 Sig Regt at Ingleburn. He writes....

"...A friend of mine from our Nashos Branch is trying to find some history on Ingleburn Army Camp, particularly around the time of his & my National Service (1968/70) and also re the Signals Regiment/Units stationed at Ingleburn at the time. (I was in the 1st Signal Regiment). "Our efforts at local Libraries have not been successful. I have a book about Bardia Barracks but there is very little about that era in it.

"So I was wondering with your Signals experience & knowledge, if you would be able to find any info re this from other sources or advise me where I can get it."

Many thanks,

Lawrie Lucas-Smith

9605 4101

0408 374 457

lucassmith@bocnet.com.au

Should anyone have any info or anecdotes etc that could assist Lawrie and his mate with their research, please do not hesitate to contact Lawrie....Ed.

Following its recent exposure on ABC-TV...

Aussie Vietnam Veteran Helping Aussies

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

If you are able, please take the time to check out the above website which shows Royal Australian Navy Vietnam Veteran Brian Egan and his wife Nerida and the volunteer work they do in the outback.

I spoke to Nerida last weekend and, among other things, we discussed applying for Government grants but she informed me that there were too many hoops to jump through which caused too much stress so they just carry on as best they can (maybe some of the Parliamentarians who receive this e-mail can ease their passage?).

Brian and Nerida Egan established *Aussie Helpers* on 21st May, 2002 to help fight poverty and lift the spirits of those severely affected by drought in the outback. From what they saw around them and what they heard from people in the bush, Brian and Nerida felt that no organisation was doing anything significant to help families suffering the full effects of the worst drought in living history.

Brian, as a veteran of the Indonesian Confrontation and the Vietnam War in the 1960s, lost his own farm in the 1990's from a combination of drought and personal depression. He is no stranger to hard times.

Aussie Helpers has some 25 volunteers and they mainly work via the "Bush Telegraph" to find farming families who are in desperate need of assistance. *Aussie Helpers* works around three words "care, share, respect", which simply means that *Aussie Helpers* cares about people in need and will share whatever assistance it has available, free of charge, and will give the recipients the utmost respect and confidentiality.

Aussie Helpers raises all its own funding and is not aligned to any other charity or religious association. Unlike government funded organisations, *Aussie Helpers* personnel are all unpaid volunteers making a real difference to the lives of real people.

Aussie Helpers Ltd
Australian Head Office
54 Edward St
PO Box 405
Charleville Qld 4470
Phone 24/7 Australia wide
Ph: 1300 665 232
Fax (07) 46542080
Email: admin@aussiehelpers.org.au
ABN: 69 240 182 139
Registered Charity CH-1376

Ted Hawkins

DO YOU WANT TO HELP? Just contact AUSSIE HELPERS! Ed.

From the Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA077 Wednesday 13 June 2007

Improved telephone services for veterans

A new dedicated, nationwide telephone service, the **Veterans Service Centre**, has been introduced to handle the 1.3 million calls received annually by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Bruce Billson, said that the **Veterans Service Centre** began operations in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia on 31st May and will go nationwide later this year.

"The **Veterans Service Centre** will deliver a comprehensive and accurate telephone service to veterans and those who assist them", Mr Billson said. "It will bring together into a co-ordinated network the various telephone support services currently provided for veterans in each of the states".

"The service centre will be staffed by officers specially trained in veteran benefits and services and able to assist callers with most enquiries.

"A new on-line system will enable staff to record and track veterans' enquiries as well as any follow-up action. This means clients will not have to repeat their whole story each time they speak with my Department, saving time and providing veterans with an improved service.

"Veterans will be assured of a consistent and high-quality service no matter where they are calling from".

Mr Billson said the new **Veterans Service Centre** represented the government's response to the changing needs of veterans.

"Mobility and transport difficulties leave elderly veterans heavily dependent on the telephone", he said. "At the same time, the telephone is now one of the most popular forms of contact for younger veterans".

Mr Billson said that over time contact with the Department of Veterans' Affairs would be simplified by consolidating the suite of telephone numbers used throughout Australia. This will be a gradual process and no veterans will be required to change their routines. They can continue to use existing numbers and their calls will be automatically switched to the **Veterans Service Centre**.
Media inquiries: Cameron Hill 0408 239 521

Military history

Incense, praise as Vietnam diggers found

A 42-YEAR mystery about the fate of two Australian soldiers has finally been solved. Lance Corporal Richard Parker and Private Peter Gillson were members of A Company of the First Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, on 8th November, 1965, when it became involved in a fire fight with the Viet Cong in Dong Nai province.

Neither man survived. The Australians withdrew under heavy fire, and the pair were listed as missing in action until this year.

A team of Vietnam veterans, some of whom had known the two men, led an investigation that uncovered shallow graves in Dong Nai.

“Many former comrades have carried the failure to recover these two men with them since 1965 and have been counting the days since,” said a retired infantry lieutenant-colonel, Jim Bourke, who led the recovery team from an organisation called Operation Aussies Home.

The excavation was carried out with the help of a radar scanner, staff from the Australian National University and a team of local labourers.

“Vietnamese workers - without whom we could not have completed this huge task - laid incense and fruit by the grave site and said prayers in a Vietnamese custom which truly touched us all,” Mr Bourke said.

Forensic specialists from the Department of Defence flew to the site last week and were able to confirm the identity of the remains through dental records, bones and artefacts found at the site. Relatives of the two men have now been notified.

Operation Aussies Home says it faced scepticism from Defence bureaucrats when it began its investigations four years ago.

But Bruce Billson, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, provided \$60,000 funding for the project last year. Yesterday he praised the group’s “great vigour and diligence”. “The remains of Lance Corporal Parker and Private Gillson would be repatriated within three to four weeks”, he said.

Four other Australians who served in Vietnam are listed as missing, presumed dead. They are Private David Fisher, an SAS trooper, who fell from a helicopter in 1969, Flying Officer M.P.J. Herbert and Pilot Officer R.C. Carver, whose RAAF bomber failed to return from a mission in 1970, and Lance Corporal John Gillespie, whose body was lost after a helicopter crash in 1971.

News item from *Sydney Morning Herald* 1 May 2007 by Ben Cubby.



David Thomas of OAH, left, assists the Australian Government Team.

18252 LTCOL James Raymond Bourke (Retd) 1 Bn RAR, AATTV, HQ 1 ALSG

As the Vietnam Veteran community would be aware Jim Bourke was instrumental in Operation Aussies Home - <http://austmia.com/> - which made it a mission to identify and return the six missing-in-action servicemen from Vietnam. There has been recent success with the repatriation of the remains of two of the six. The search continues for the other four. 311479 John Essex-Clark, 1 Bn RAR is asking for the identities of the persons in the attached photo, which was taken during 1 Bn first tour of Vietnam in 1966, and which shows Jim Bourke being medevac'd by the dust-off chopper. If you can assist, please e-mail him at essex1@bigpond.com

Regards,

Ted Hawkins

07 5499 3704



A dramatic photo of Jim Bourke being cared for on a stretcher before being carried to the dust-off chopper in the background on LZ Cabbage Patch (US LZ "MARCH") during 'Op CRIMP' on 8th January, 1966.

ITEMS MISCELLANEOUS

Found – "Alive and Kicking"

'Old' Jack White left a message to say that he is "Alive and Kicking" and left his Tele. No. 02 4774 9198

Looking for Ian 'Stretch' Lambert

Hello all,

I am looking for former RASigs WO Ian 'Stretch' Lambert, who discharged a few years ago. He was last heard of living in Thailand. Please respond to Carl 'Sezzo' Sicienieks former RASigs SC on e-mail: carlsezzo@gmail.com

Regards,

Paul Copeland,

National President,
Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker
Veterans' Association Inc.,
P.O. Box 552,
TORQUAY, VIC, 3228
AUSTRALIA
03 5264 8244

"Looking After Our Own"

E: president@peacekeepers.asn.au

W: www.peacekeepers.asn.au

Assistance Required

54931 LT Douglas Kingsley Kent
(deceased)

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam – 7 Jan 69 to 14
Jan 70

All replies direct to:

Don McPherson

Geelong Veterans Welfare Centre

Phone: 03 5222 6003 or 03 5222 8930

Fax: 03 5222 5566

E-mail: dmcp2575@bigpond.net.au

Web: www.geelongvets.org.au

If you served with the above member in Vietnam or after, please contact Don McPherson who is preparing a claim for a War Widow's Pension for the late members' wife.

Regards,

Ted Hawkins

07 5499 3704

For the interest of ECN 266 members

If you were one of the approximately 170 personnel either LCPL or CPL who were affected by the trade restructure between 1998-2003, and

If you were obliged to repay a debt to the Commonwealth for overpaid salary, being the difference between pay group 5 and 4; pls contact me on:

jason.gardner@defence.gov.au

Your debt should have been written off under the auspices of the Trade Pay Review. If it was not, you may have grounds for redress. I was recently successful with an appeal to Chief of Army on this matter, and I know I am not the only member to have been hit with a demand for repayment. Please disseminate this as widely as possible.

Many Thanks

Jason Gardner

J.J. GARDNER

ORD RM CPL

BHQ 5 CSSB

PH: (02) 9316 0122

FAX: (02) 9316 011

MOB: 0401 347 422



Letters to the Editor

Return to Malaya

Dear Ed,

As requested I submit this article of my recent trip to Malaysia.

NOTE: Anyone wishing to visit Camp Terendak or any other Malaysian Defence installations MUST obtain permission at least 3 months in advance by submitting their request through the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Regards,

Bernie Binge

28 (Commonwealth) Bde Sig Sqn,
Taiping, 1957-58
208 (Comwel) Sig Sqn, Terendak,
1964-66.

*Thanks Bernie. I have included
your article in Tail-end
Charlie....Ed.*

RASigs Reunion – SA Nov 2008

Dear Ed,

I have addressed this e-mail to as many associations that I can find in hope that you might be able to help us here in SA promote the next National RASigs Reunion set down for 7th – 10th November 2008 here in Adelaide.

We have established our website at www.rasigs.com and have just started to take registrations and payments for the event. We have established an Attendance List so you can see who is coming. Only being on-line for a short period of time and we already have over 50 persons coming to the event. We are anticipating between 500 and 1000 Ex Sigs to roll up and intend to provide a great weekend for all concerned.

The week-end is made up of Friday Registration Day, Saturday Family Day, Sunday Formal Parade with Corps Banner and Monday Formal Dinner. Adelaide has many attractions and persons coming here would find a great amount of sites to see and taste.

What I would like to ask is that you all please send out the Warning Order in your Newsletters and friends on the e-mail networks and anyone else you can think of to help us achieve a great Reunion here in Adelaide.

A number of places to stay have been placed on the website that are offering attendee's price reductions that are good value. If you need any further information that is not on the website please let me know. If you could acknowledge my e-mail it would be greatly appreciated. I will continue to send updates between now and the event.

Regards,

Bruce Long

President

RASigs Association (SA) Inc

Phone: 08 8342 3012

Fax: 08 8342 3032

<http://www.fivestar.austbiz.net>

Persons interested and wishing to attend the RASigs Reunion in South Australia next year, should contact the RASigs Ass'n (SA) directly. We will include in these pages any further info we receive about this re-union....Ed.

RASigs 'Tassie' Lost List

Dear Ed,

I am wondering if you can help me out. The RASigs Association in Tassie is trying to contact the guy's listed below regarding an up coming Reunion in Tassie and the old signals units 146 and 124 Sig Sqns. If any of one knows how to contact any of the persons listed below could you please let us know. It's a special event that would be good for all concerned. Any help you can give would be much appreciated.

All comments, queries etc to:

Dick Goodwin

RGoodwin@kingborough.tas.gov.au

The List:

Doug Edwards (moving to Cairns we think),
Allan Barker,
Terry Binyon,
Sandy Brill,
Wal Buchanan,
Dennis Buckley,
Peter Duff,
John Eke,
Roy Frost,
Greg Krushka,
Larry Morgan,
Andy Ostromoff,
Trevor Phillips,
John Power,
Tony Roberts,
Alan Seymour,
Bill Shaw,

Lance Townsend,
Adam West,
Tony Wheater,
Ray Wiltshire,
Murray Woodhouse and
Greg Young.

Regards,

Bruce Long

President,

RASigs Association (SA) Inc.

Phone: 08 8342 3012

Fax: 08 8342 3032

<http://www.fivestar.austbiz.net>

Tail-end Charlie

Return to 'Malaya'

One of our members, Bernie Binge, made a recent return to Malaya (now Malaysia) to revisit the past and pay respects to our diggers who did not come back home. I asked him to submit an article for THURUNKA; he obliged. He writes...

On Tuesday, 5th June 2007 a large party of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association (Australia), together with some of their wives, departed Sydney for Kuala Lumpur Malaysia to attend the annual remembrance ceremonies at Batu Gajah about 25 miles South of Ipoh and other cemeteries where Commonwealth Troops and civilian casualties are buried.

We arrived in Ipoh on the 6th June 2007 and checked into the Syuen Hotel. My immediate impressions of Malaya (now Malaysia) as I know it were of total awe and amazement at the tremendous changes in the country as to what I experienced in the late fifties and mid sixties. Roads are excellent super highways (superior to ours) clean, modern buildings and late model cars in abundance and excellent, large department stores in the main towns.

The first few evenings saw us being entertained by our Malaysian hosts at the Royal Ipoh club and Royal Ipoh Golf club. Our group was also invited to a "High Tea" at the residence of the Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) for the State of Perak which was a great honour and in his welcome he paid tribute to the Commonwealth Forces who served there during the Malayan Emergency 1948-60 and Indonesian Confrontation 1963-66.

On Saturday, 9th June 2007 our group departed at 5:30 a.m. for "Gods Little Acre", the cemetery at Batu Gajah and attended an Anglican Church service followed by wreath laying ceremonies by the Australian, British and New Zealand High Commissioners, their Defence staff and other Police, Military and civilian personnel.

As one of our hosts was aware that I was stationed in Taiping late 1957-58 a trip was organised for me to visit the town and also the site of our unit lines. There is nothing to see of the old camp but the most modern barracks and

buildings are now home to a large force of the Malaysian Army and the area has been enlarged.

There are two RASigs members interred in the Kamunting Road Christian cemetery which is just a few miles from our camp and I was able to visit the grave sites of SIG Kevin Jones and SIG Eddie "Tiger" Norris.

After the completion of all events in Ipoh I took a luxurious coach to Malacca and was able to visit Camp Terendak where HQ 28 Commonwealth Brigade and all support units were re-located in the early 1960's. This camp is now home to a Malaysian Brigade composed of mostly paratroops. Most of the original buildings are still there and 208 Sig Sqn HQ and office buildings are easily recognisable, as are the barrack accommodation and also by courtesy of the Malaysian Army I was picked up from my hotel by Army transport and given an Officer and driver to take me on a conducted tour of the camp.

I was able to visit the cemetery which is located within the camp and one of our unit members, SIG Kevin Johnson RASigs, grave is situated there.

This whole experience was made possible by our Malaysian hosts, Lt-Col Yunus Ali (Retd) and Dato R. Thambipillay MBE AO and many other supporters of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association.

NOTE: Anyone wishing to visit Camp Terendak or any other Malaysian Defence installations MUST obtain permission at least 3 months in advance by submitting their request through the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Regards,

Bernie Binge

28 (Commonwealth) Bde Sig Sqn, Taiping, 1957-58
208 (Comwel) Sig Sqn, Terendak, 1964-66