



# THURUNKA

June 2010

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

Patron MAJGEN R.P. Irving AM PSM RFD (Retd)

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](mailto:cjb47@optusnet.com.au)

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

## Coming Events - 2010

Update your diary NOW!

|                                     |                   |                 |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Reserve Forces Day March            | Sun, 4 Jul        | 1030 hrs        | Domain, Sydney          |
| Committee Meeting 4                 | Wed, 28 Jul       | 1800 hrs        | RACA Club               |
| <b>Battle for Australia Service</b> | <b>Wed, 1 Sep</b> | <b>1100 hrs</b> | <b>Cenotaph Sydney</b>  |
| Rhumb Corps Luncheon                | Wed, 1 Sep        | 1200 hrs        | CTA Club                |
| <i>THURUNKA</i> September edition   | Mid-September     |                 |                         |
| Committee Meeting 5                 | Wed, 29 Sep       | 1800 hrs        | RACA Club               |
| * Eastern Region Corps Dinner       | Nov               | 1900 hrs        | TBA                     |
| * Annual Memorial Service           | Sun, 14 Nov       | TBC             | Signal Hill, South Head |
| * Annual General Meeting            | Sun, 14 Nov       | TBC             | Paddington RSL Club     |
| Rhumb Corps Luncheon                | Wed, 1 Dec        | 1200 hrs        | CTA Club                |
| * Committee Luncheon                | Sun, 5 Dec        | 1200 hrs        | TBA                     |
| <i>THURUNKA</i> December edition    | Early-December    |                 |                         |

\* TBA: Dates and details to be announced. TBC: Dates and details to be 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.



**60**  
1950 - 2010

**THE RESERVE  
FORCES PARADE**

**Governor General to  
Review Troops**

The Domain, Sydney on  
**SUNDAY 4th JULY 2010**

**DETAILS INSIDE**

**Battle for Australia  
Day**

**Commemorative  
Service**

**Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney**

**1030hrs for 1100hrs,**

**1<sup>st</sup> September, 2010**

**More details inside**

## In this issue

Coming Events

- Reserve Forces Day Parade
- 'Battle for Australia' Day

Recent Events

- ANZAC Day 2010

Association Matters

- Annual subscriptions
- Items for sale
- Welcome
- Steve Thurlow award

In the Blue Corner

VALE / Sick Parade

Corps matters

- A good news story FYI

- Stories from Vietnam war
- Army combat badge

- New generation

- New memorial

Military History

- Morse signal

- 'Boronia'

- Medhurst telephone

Letters, emails & faxes

Tail-end Charlie

- ANZACs to Afghanistan

## 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](mailto:thurunka@optusnet.com.au)

NO LATER THAN

13<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

# Coming Events

## Reserve Forces Day 2010 Parade

*To Be Reviewed By  
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia  
Accompanied By His Excellency Mr. Michael Bryce AM AE*

It is just over 60 years since the Reserve Forces were reformed after WWII. Since that time Reservists have been serving overseas on operations, United Nations and Humanitarian missions. This year the parade will acknowledge their special contribution of service and acknowledge the essential support from their families and employers.

The Reserve Forces Day parade will be held on one of Australia's oldest and most historic Parade Grounds - the Sydney Domain, a location which in the past has hosted military ceremonial parades from the earliest days of the Colony of New South Wales to the present. All the historic Regiments of the early days paraded for Sydney Town's citizens and dignitaries on this hallowed ground with bands and fanfare, ceremony and circumstance. If you are a serving or former member of the Reserve Forces, Naval Reserve, Militia, CMF/Army Reserve, CAF, Air Force Reserve, Cadre Staff, National Service and forces you are invited to take part in the parade. Please phone your association to register your interest and to find out about the Association after parade re-union - see [www.rf.org.au](http://www.rf.org.au) for more details.

The parade this year will capture the spirit with massed Brass and Pipe military bands, 50 Association Standards and Banners, Armoured Cars and a NSW Mounted Police and Light Horse Vice Regal escort bringing the Governor-General to the parade. Serving, former Reservists, National Servicemen and forces will celebrate their part-time military service.

The Domain is very spectator-friendly and entertainment will commence at 10.30AM with the parade marching on at 11.00AM. We invite you to be present and cheer on the Reservists.

**Date:** Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Timing:** Form up from 1000 hrs  
March off 1100 hrs

**Location:** FUP is in Central Avenue, The Domain (behind Parliament House & Sydney Hospital). Look for our Standard in the 2nd Division Formation. Enter via Art Gallery Road.

**Dress:** Jacket and tie. Corp beret, navy blazer and Corp/Association tie preferred. It has been requested that lapel badges be limited to a maximum of two badges.

**Medals:** Personal officially presented medals to be worn (not miniatures nor relative's medals).

**Serving Members' Dress:** We would like you to wear ceremonial uniform (for officers: less sword). Otherwise please attend in the civilian dress as listed above. This may make it easier for you to attend Association re-unions.

**Format:** This will be a traditional military parade with associations marching on to a parade ground in The Domain, a Review by the Governor General and a march past with salute to the Governor. The Association Banner and Standard will be on parade.

**Theme:** To acknowledge Reservists serving overseas on operations, United Nations and Humanitarian missions, this special contribution of service and acknowledge the essential support from their families and employers.

**Certificates:** Reservists who have served overseas: Serving and former members who as reservists volunteered and served overseas and were Awarded a medal for that service will be eligible for a Governor-General's Commemorative Certificate if they register with the RFDAY Council and attend the celebrations. Eligible members should register via the web site under 2010.

**Morning tea & light refreshments** will be available in the Domain for a gold coin donation.

**Re-union:** Ship Inn Hotel, Circular Quay, following the parade.

Should you have any enquiry either contact a committee member or The Reserve Forces Day Committee information line on 02 9908 1863,

*The Association supports the Reserve Forces Day Parade and encourages members to attend the Parade and then the re-union...ED.*

*Spread the word and bring a mate along.*

*...and afterwards...*

The Signals informal get-together is again the Ship Inn, Circular Quay, corner of Pitt and Alfred Streets, Sydney after the parade. This is the opportunity to get together with old and new, serving and retired, members and friends of the Corps. Light meals are available from the bar.

# Recent Events

## ANZAC Day Sydney, 2010



Despite a damp start to the day, the rain cleared in time for march-off at 1100 hrs, the earliest time to date. Two to three years ago we were not getting away until about midday. The march progressed well with a minimum of stops. The only down-side was the band immediately behind us that preferred dance music to marching music. I had to remember the Military Two-Step dance.

We attracted about 65 members to the march, including visitors from the ACT and Melbourne and about 20 uniformed members from the 8th Signal Regiment which also provided the Banner Party. Our new Banner was paraded for the first time and has been brought up to date with the overseas operations. Our Patron, Maj-Gen Paul Irving AM PSM RFD arrived at the reunion after a quick swap of badges

and tie from his previous Scheyville OTU reunion. Our reunion venue, the City Hotel opened its doors at 0800 hrs for the early birds and the owner/publican was delighted with the general conduct of the day (and the bar sales). He estimated that there were about 300 Corps members and partners in the hotel at any time and at least 450 through put. This is down from our usual 500-600 attendees owing to most of the 17th Signal Regiment being deployed overseas and on

exercise in Queensland. There was a good attendance from serving members from the 8th Signal Regiment, 126th Signal Squadron (2nd Commando Regiment) and the 301st Signal Squadron (1st Commando Regiment) together with those members from the 17th Signal Regiment remaining in Sydney. It was assuring to hear the serving soldiers speak of the reunion as the place to be on ANZAC Day.

Once again we were delighted to host 16 members from the WW2 Line of Communication Signals Association, the youngest of whom is 84 years young. Their members have determined to merge with our Association as they have reached the stage where they find it difficult to manage their affairs. There will be further information appearing in *THURUNKA* in due course about this merger. We were also

delighted to see Wilbur Wright OAM from the WW2 2nd Division Signals Association. Our new Treasurer, Allan (Pee-wee) Johnston, assisted by committee member John Rowlands manned the Association desk at the reunion and reported a steady flow of fee payments, applications from 31 new members and the sale of merchandise. Once again our host declined payment for the beer tickets we issued to members joining or renewing membership which is a substantial donation to the Association. Thank you, owner/licensee Paul Dirou. We look forward to the 2011 reunion at the City Hotel.

*Chris Ballantine*



# Association Matters

Association website: <http://www.rasigs.com/nsw>

## Annual Subscriptions

### A gentle reminder...

If you have not yet responded and paid your annual subscriptions from last month's issue of *THURUNKA*, please remit your subscription now, while it is fresh in your mind. Also, if any of the details on the docket are in error please advise us by correcting the slip with your remittance.

You are requested to keep up-to-date and make your remittance by post by the end of June to the Treasurer.

Mr. Allan Johnston  
PO Box 85  
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

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.

Now you can pay by direct deposit. Simply deposit your remittance to the Association's bank account: Royal Australian Signals Association (NSW) Inc.  
**BSB 112 879.**

**Account No 126 925 501.**

Then advise the Acting Treasurer of the deposit, with your name, date and time of transaction, so that he is able to account for your deposit.

Receipts are available for cash payments. 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.

If you are not sure about your financial status, please contact the Treasurer, Allan 'Peewee' Johnston on tel 02 9319 0893 or by post to PO Box 85 SURRY HILLS NSW 2010.

## Items for Sale

The Treasurer, 'Peewee' Johnston, holds certain Association's items for sale and brings them along to the re-union on ANZAC Day for the convenience of members. But he senses that many members might not be aware of the items he holds for sale. So he has asked us to include the items in this edition of *THURUNKA* and asks members that if you require any items just give him a call and he can make suitable arrangements to send them off to you. We list the items below with the current price, but please note that dispatch costs such as postage or courier costs are additional. Give 'Peewee' a call with your order or for further information on 02 9319 0893

### Items for sale include:

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Association Tie         | \$25 |
| Association lapel badge | \$6  |
| Association plaque      | \$45 |
| Association car badge** | \$25 |

\*\*Limited stock - not able to be re-ordered.

For berets and Corps badges etc., you are referred to commercial retail outlets which deal in military paraphernalia.

## Welcome

Welcome to our New Members listed below. This year we had over thirty new members join us over the previous three months; many joining at our re-union on ANZAC Day. We welcome you all and trust that your membership will be a positive experience to us all.

|                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Lester              | Lovell        |
| Benjamin (Ben)      | Wood          |
| Dean                | Williams      |
| Dean                | Thomas        |
| Brady               | Strickland    |
| David (Dave)        | Southern      |
| Paul                | Quinn         |
| Paul                | O'Donnell     |
| Stephen (Steve)     | Potter        |
| Daven               | Pettersen     |
| Robert              | McFadries     |
| Christopher (Chris) | Mennen        |
| Scott               | Lund          |
| Matt                | Krauce        |
| Stephen (Steve)     | Jordan        |
| Robert (Jordo)      | Jordan        |
| Andrew              | Jordan        |
| Mark                | Hoad          |
| Stuart              | Grant         |
| Tom                 | Ferrill       |
| Clare               | Draper        |
| Rohan (Rohan)       | Cowley        |
| Mark (Clance)       | Clancy        |
| Matthew (Matt)      | Clancy        |
| Brendon             | Civitarese    |
| Philip (Phil)       | Cameron       |
| David               | Buckles       |
| Nathanael (Nathan)  | Boots         |
| Justin (Justin)     | Blacker-Quill |
| Malcolm (Mal)       | Beaton        |
| Warrick             | Bamford       |
| Peter (Churchie)    | Church        |
| Xing                | Johnston      |

## Steve Thurlow Awarded AGSM

### 3/11157 SGT Steve Thurlow (Retd) Awarded AGSM (Korea)

Despite ill-health, our long-term member Steve Thurlow attended the 2010 Sydney ANZAC Day March and Reunion in his wheel chair, assisted by his son Colin. Steve was proudly displaying his recent award of the Australian General Service Medal for Korea.

The AGSM Korea finally recognizes service by members of the ADF who served in South Korea during the post-Armistice period from 28 July 1953 to 19 April 1956. The medal is worn immediately after the Australian Service Medal 1945-1975.

Steve undertook national service in the British Army 1949/51 and saw service in North Africa. He migrated to Australia and enlisted in the ARA in 1952 and saw service in Korea and Malaya with the RAR. He transferred to RA Signals and served with 28 COMWEL Bde Sig Sqn, Malaya 1957/58. His final ARA posting was with 301 Signal Squadron, Lidcombe, NSW, discharging in 1964 at the rank of sergeant.

In 1968 he enlisted in the CMF with 8 Sig Regt, Lidcombe NSW where he served until 1972 when he took his discharge. Steve subsequently stayed in touch with his mates through his membership of the Association.

Steve has also been awarded the Australian Active Service Medal with Malaya Clasp, British General Service Medal with Malaya Clasp, Australian Service Medal with Korea Clasp 1945-1975, Australian Defence Medal and the Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal.

*Chris Ballantine*

*Yes, Steve and his mates have finally been recognised for service in the Korean action some sixty years ago. One got the impression that the fight to get the medal from the powers-to-be was harder than the original action. It certainly took a lot longer.*

*To Steve and all the others who served and have finally been recognised for your duty, a very-well-earned congratulations and WELL DONE!...ED.*

### *In The Blue Corner*

*Blue Hawkins has advised us of the following. If anyone is able to help Blue in any way, or you have your own enquiry, please contact Blue direct....Ed*

Ted 'Blue' Hawkins  
(Keeper of the RASIGS contact dbase)  
23 Belcher St  
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510  
Phone 07 5499 3704  
e-mail: [hawkins2@aapt.net.au](mailto:hawkins2@aapt.net.au)

*Thanks...Ed.*

### **New e-mail address for Dave Hargreaves**

44063 WO2 (ret) Howard David (Dave) Hargreaves  
110 Sig Sqn Vietnam  
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1259622>  
Old e-mail address: [dahargreaves2@bigpond.com](mailto:dahargreaves2@bigpond.com)  
New e-mail address: [david.hargreaves@r2g.com.au](mailto:david.hargreaves@r2g.com.au) (work)  
Please update your e-mail address book.  
To assist Dave to rebuild his e-mail address book, please e-mail him so that he may add you back into his address book.  
Dave welcomes contact from old mates.  
Dave's laptop was stolen so he has none of his mate's e-mail addresses and therefore the old e-mail address is no longer valid.

*Blue*

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Coming Events

### Battle for Australia Day, Commemorative Service, Sydney

The Battle for Australia memorial service is to be conducted at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney on Wednesday, 1st September 2010 commencing at 1050hrs. If you are attending the memorial service you are requested to be at the service at least 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time so that the service can start on time. (Remember...the earlier you get there - the better chance of a good position.)

... *and afterwards* ...

Why not join us at the Rhumb Corps Luncheon to be conducted at the CTA Club, up Martin Place, across Pitt Street, (the mushroom building on the corner of Castlereagh Street). Meet in the Bistro lounge (Level two, one level down from the club's foyer). Just follow the crowd of Signallers.



### VALE - Steve Thurlow

Colleagues,

It is with regret that I advise of the passing of our long term and esteemed member, Steve Thurlow on Wed 9th June, 2010 from a lung infection. He was 79 years of age.

I attended Steve Thurlow's Funeral at the Forest Memorial Gardens, Leppington together with Secretary Mike McEvoy and members Neil Williams, Barbara Edwards, Terry Cunningham and Barry Izzard. I gave a short eulogy that concentrated on my service association with Steve from about 1964 and his membership of the Association. His son Wayne spoke of the other Steve - a pre WW2 founding in the UK, his migration to Australia, a wonderful family man, poet and English language tutor to the Vietnamese community of Cabramatta where he lived. Steve was a private person and many of his friends and colleagues were unaware of his rich life experience.

A member of the Cabravale R&SL Sub Branch conducted the R&SL part of the service and mentioned to me that ten sub-branch members' funerals had been attended the previous week. Steve's wife Dawn and sons Wayne and Colin thanked his friends and service colleagues for their condolences and attendance at the service.

Further messages of condolence may be sent to his son, Wayne by e-mail [wthurlow@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wthurlow@bigpond.net.au) or telephone 02 9620 4645 (home).

RIP

*Chris Ballantine*

---

### VALE - Fred Gunning

We have been advised, by his son John, of the passing in 2009 of one of our own members, WO1 Fred Gunning (Retd).

John can be contacted on:

Phone: 02 6332 9552

E-mail: [golowndesandford@bigpond.com](mailto:golowndesandford@bigpond.com)

John has joined the Association so that he can receive *THURUNKA*. He enjoys *THURUNKA* and feels that it keeps him in contact with his dad's old mates.

*John, we are sorry to hear of your father's passing but are pleased to have you as a member of the Association....ED*

---

### VALE - John Thomson

Qx56509 TX29640 Thomas John Thomson

22.4.1921-25.12.2009

We were saddened to read that another one of our old and respected members passed away. "Thommo" was a member of our brother RASA (Tas) and passed away on Christmas Day. "Thommo" Thomson was born at Ingham in North Queensland and educated at Ingham, Charters Towers and Strathfield. He was married in 1943 and his son Denis lives in Sydney. "Thommo" enlisted in Charters Towers and served at Milne Bay in 1942 as a signalman. He was discharged in 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant with 7 Div Infantry Brigade Signal Section after serving at Madang, Solomon Islands and Bougainville. After his discharge he worked in New Guinea and Townsville and joined the firm of William Adams to eventually become Sales Manager for North Queensland. He and his family moved to Hobart in 1987. He remarried in 1965 and we extend our deepest sympathy to Margaret, Kathryn, Denis and families.

*From 'The Signalman' - RASA (Tas)*

---

### VALE - David Reed

1811448 CPL David Reed

I take this opportunity to notify you of the of the passing of one of ours, Sadly 1811448 CPL David Reed (RASIGS) passed away in the early hours of the morning of 28 Feb 2010 aged 38. David enlisted in 1998 and served until Oct 2008, his operations

included Op Warden, Op Slipper. Timothy Wedesweiler  
SGT  
RASIGS  
[timothy.wedesweiler@defence.gov.au](mailto:timothy.wedesweiler@defence.gov.au)

### From Blue Hawkins

*Blue has advised us of the following.*

#### VALE - Vin Maxwell

3410908 CAPT (ret) Vincent Maxwell (Vin) Good

103 Sig Sqn Vietnam

<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1277950>

Mayor of Cooma-Monaro NSW

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to Vin's wife:

Mrs. Di Good

57 Mittagong Rd

Cooma North NSW 2630

Phone 02 6452 3516

e-mail [wegoods@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wegoods@bigpond.net.au)

---

#### VALE - Ernie Axford

23582 CPL (ret) Ernest Joseph (Ernie) Axford

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam

<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1271740>

Date of Birth 19 June 1930

Date of Death 31 March 2010

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to Ernie's family at:

Lucille and John Hopkins

(Ernie's daughter and son-in-law)

e-mail [hobby57@tpg.com.au](mailto:hobby57@tpg.com.au)

Or

Mrs. Joan Axford

5 Camoola St

Keperra QLD 4054

Phone 07 3351 5758

Ernie served in RASigs for 27 years and very proud of it and was with 110 Sig Sqn in Vietnam and 139 Sig Sqn before his retirement in 1974.

---

#### VALE - Ashley Barkle

CPL Ashley (Sparks) Barkle

104 Sig Sqn 1975-80

Rhodesia

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:

Dick Tummel, e-mail

[dickt@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dickt@ozemail.com.au).

He will collate them for presentation to Beverly and the family.

It is with sadness and regret that we have been advised of the passing of



these valued servants of Australia and the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. They will be sadly missed by families and friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this time.  
Ted (Blue) Hawkins  
Phone 07 5499 3704

### *Lest We Forget*

## SICK PARADE

### John Tate

It seems our old mate, John, is experiencing a long-term bout of ill-health - Guillian Barre Syndrome ('Google' it and you will find many informative websites).

Messages of support may be forwarded to:

215655 WO2 (ret) John Murray

Phone 02 4956 5062

Mobile 0427 565 062

e-mail [johnmurr@tpg.com.au](mailto:johnmurr@tpg.com.au)

John Murray will collate them and present them to John and Alison. John Tate's wife, Alison, gives us an update (as at 28 April 2010).

'He is at the moment doing very well. Has slight movement in arms and legs but is not able to lift them or him-self up at this present time. He has still many months to go!

'A month ago he had a slight setback when they took out his 'trachy' and moved him from ICU to a general ward - after a fortnight, he got slight pneumonia and when they took him back to ICU to put in a 'trachy' he had a cardiac arrest so he was

revived and ventilated once again, so now they have put the 'trachy' back in and won't take it out until they are sure John can breath and cough up any phlegm that needs to be. Thankfully he recovered quickly and is doing really well.

'He will be moved to a general ward next week and probably will be there for about a month to be sure all is well before being transferred to rehab.

'He is still in good spirits, and once he can get his fingers moving he will be able to use his laptop to keep in touch; unfortunately that may be quite a few months away yet.

'I have given him everyone's best wishes and read all e-mails to him. Thanks for your inquiries'.

Alison.

I am sure that we wish John and Alison well in his prognosis on his long journey back to good health.

Regards

*Ted (Blue) Hawkins*

Phone 07 5499 3704

## *In The Blue Corner*

*(Continued from page 5)*

### **Broadband for seniors**

[www.necseniors.com.au](http://www.necseniors.com.au)

The Australian Government is funding computer kiosks so that seniors are not left behind in this computer age. If you are getting this message via e-mail, obviously you do not need the lessons, BUT someone you know just might! If you know someone over 50 and wanting to learn to use a computer, there are great online lessons at this site.

There are also details on how community organisations can apply for a 'Seniors Kiosk', which consists of two broadband computer terminals; they are required to be supported by volunteer tutors who teach seniors to use the computer. All the information is on the site.

When the computers are not being used for lessons, they are available to be used by seniors as a free internet cafe, a great boon to people on a limited income who do not have their own computer! Look under the 'Current Roll Out'

tab to see locations near you that are already in use.

Tutors only need spend two hours a week (more if they wish to!) helping people wanting to learn. Tutors can be anyone who can use a computer competently; an IT expert is not needed.

It might be a good idea to apply quickly if you want to get a kiosk - before the money runs out!

### **Searching for Ned Tindale**

216213 WO1 (ret) Edward Norman (Ned) Tindale

506 Sig Tp Vietnam

<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1268496>

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

Ted (Blue) Hawkins [hawkins2@aapt.net.au](mailto:hawkins2@aapt.net.au)  
and

Dan Connolly [motoroil@activ8.net.au](mailto:motoroil@activ8.net.au)

*(Continued on page 11)*



# CORPS MATTERS

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



## A Good News Story

I caught up with Mal Fergusson on the weekend and he showed me a couple of articles which appeared in the local Port Pirie newspaper just prior to ANZAC Day this year.

The first story and photo was taken at the Long Tan Cross we visited last November 2009 during the Signals reunion. The second story and photo was taken in Port Pirie the weekend prior to ANZAC Day when Mal presented this framed photos and mounted memorabilia to the Port Pirie RSL on behalf of his family.

We should get a bit more info on Mal Fergusson and Geoff Roberts as they were both 104 Sig Sqn seconded to a battalion in Vietnam in 1968 and both fought in the Battle of Coral, the other most significant battle fought by Australian troops in Vietnam but for some reason does not get the same recognition as the Long Tan Battle. Probably because Coral was fought over many more days longer and 26 were KIA. Signals personnel played a significant part in this battle with communication back to HQ for reports on the battle, for more supplies and support as well as to each unit during the battle. There was a major dedication and reunion held in Canberra last year, 40 years after the battle which I know Mal and Geoff attended.

I thought these were worthy of appearing in your newsletter.

*Steve Uppington*



Gordon White, Malcolm Fergusson and Rex Fisher at the Long Tan Cross, Vietnam

*Thanks, Steve. It is good to hear from you again. I have been reading Paul Ham's book, 'Vietnam, the Australian War' and have just read the chapters on FSB Coral and FSB Balmoral. I also have the DVD of FSB Coral, 'They'll come looking for you', {which we promoted in THURUNKA last year}. I also have the DVD 'Long Tan, the true story' and have read the account of the battle of Long Tan in Paul Ham's book; I must concur. Although both battles are significant in their own right, Long Tan may have gained prominence in the public's eye initially because it occurred first and has a memorial on site; has been promoted and has tours to the battle ground. [Dave Sabbin is conducting a tour of the battlefield in October as promoted in the last edition of THURUNKA.] However FSB Coral was a 26-day battle where intense combat caused one of our own officers to call for artillery fire onto his position, to stop the enemy overrunning the base....ED*

## Another Good News Story

*As we stated in the last edition of THURUNKA, the RASigs re-union in Vietnam raised monies for the Loreto Vietnam Australia Program run by Sister Trish Franklin. Among the purchases made from the monies raised by the re-union was push-bikes for the pupils to get to school. The bike purchase went to tender earlier this year and the purchase has now been made. Sister Trish has now sent us more photos of the recipients in proud possession of their bikes. Below are some of these photos.*

*As a participant, I feel some pride that we, ex-members of the Corps, were able to do what seemed so little at the time to have such an impact and do so much for the recipients. But it did not really come that easily; it was through hard work and endeavour from 'those in the middle' that has turned this dream into reality. We must thank all those involved. I know that I should not name anyone, but I will. Thanks to Gregg Dixon and the Re-union Organising Committee, 'Breaker' Cusack, Mal Fergusson and Steve Uppington for their efforts. But most of all to Sister Trish....*

*We were pleased to help in that 'little' way.*

ED

*Sister Trish has written again to us with an update to the project. See writes...*

13th April 2010

Dear Vietnam Vet Friends,

Last Saturday the Loreto Program had the delightful pleasure of visiting the local community in District 9 for our 'Wheels for Education' bike day. Representing you, as some of our sponsors for the bicycles, the LVAP team was honoured to be warmly welcomed by 60 of the poorest children from various schools in the District.

Your simple but indispensable gift for these children means that they are given the gift to be able to ride to school; they now have independence and are freed from the enormous inconveniences in having to walk to and from school in the morning, for lunch and at the end of the school day.



Some of the recipients



We wish to write with our deepest appreciation and warmest thanks for your generous contribution which has made this day possible. The children were overwhelmed with joy and excitement, evident by the lift in their spirits as they made a test drive on their new wheels around the school courtyard, some needing the assistance from their parents as they tried to master balancing!

After the distribution of bicycles, we had the privilege of being invited to visit the homes of two bicycle recipients Kim Ngân and Như Quỳnh and their family. Little Kim Ngân, whose mother sells lottery tickets, had her bicycle in her very small and modest home. It seemed for the first time that she had something new and shiny to relish and to be proud of. These are the kind of families that you have reached out to through your generosity.

I have included some photos of the morning for your viewing along with some stories of children who received your kind gift. Once again, we extend our gratitude to you and your families for your commitment, support and particularly for sharing Loreto's vision. On behalf of the kids we say thank you!

Warmest Regards,

*Sr Trish Franklin*

Program Coordinator

REMEMBER NOVEMBER!



# 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*. Nor are we able to attest to the accuracy of the information so contained. 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 encourage contributions and thank those who contribute to the pages of *THURUNKA*.

## Errata

In the last edition of *THURUNKA* we informed you of the death of James Smith, who we stated served in the 'British Commonwealth Base Signal Regiment Korea'. Please note that this was in error. The British Commonwealth Base Signal unit was not a Regiment, but a Squadron. The correct entry should be 'British Commonwealth Base Signal Squadron, Korea.'

## Army Combat Badge - Updated



**AUSTRALIAN ARMY**  
DIRECTOR GENERAL  
PERSONNEL - ARMY

The Army instruction that covers the authorisation and approval process for the awarding of the Army Combat Badge (ACB) has recently been updated. The new Defence Instruction Army Personnel 119-1 - Army Combat Badge (DI (A) PERS 119-1), was released on 24 August 2009, and in line with the Chief of Army's intent the eligibility criteria has been broadened.

The criteria has been changed to include members who have been physically deployed in the same geographical location as a Combat Team and had the primary role to directly support that Combat Team for a period of either a continuous or aggregate of 90 days service.

The purpose of the ACB remains to recognise service with a combat element in an operational area and not to recognise combat duties.

This broadening of the criteria means that members previously not eligible for the ACB may now be. I encourage you to canvas your members and have them make individual submissions in accordance with DI (A) PERS 119-1, which can be found at the following Internet page:

[www.army.gov.au/dppa/ceremonial.asp](http://www.army.gov.au/dppa/ceremonial.asp).

Alternatively you can write to:

The Staff Officer Ceremonial - Army:

Army Headquarters

R8-9-042

Russel Officers

CANBERRA ACT 2600

(02) 6265 4091

From: The Vietnam Veteran Journal March 2010.

## New generation joining the fight

'Anyone who thinks we can rest easy and expect the next generation of war veterans to automatically receive adequate compensation and benefits is dreaming. And it gets worse. Anyone who thinks existing hard won veterans benefits are guaranteed to remain forever safe is also dreaming. Nothing will be won or even preserved without the veteran community being vigilant and prepared to fight.'

'So we are happy to report our Federation is being joined by the next generation of veterans, who will join us in our vigilance and preparedness to fight. Dominic Pepe is a Vice President of our South Australian Branch. Dominic is a veteran of the Cambodia deployment.'

'For the last four years, Dominic has provided welfare and advocacy services to the veteran communities of South Australia and the Northern Territory. He is widely respected as a successful advocate for those under all the different legislations that now affect our veterans. This valuable integration of the old and new generation of veteran advocates is the way of the future; a combination of years of experience with new energy and an updated knowledge of ADF service and expectations.'

'We hope to see much more of it.'

From: The Vietnam Veteran Journal, March 2010

## Memorial in faraway land to honour fallen soldiers

A memorial will be set up in America to honour fallen soldiers of the First Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment Group attached to the 173rd Brigade, US Army, in 1965 and 1966 of the Vietnam War.

The memorial will be at the National Infantry Museum in Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia, and will be the only one of its kind found in America to pay tribute to fallen ANZAC soldiers, of which it will name 29 Australians and 2 New Zealanders.

Dean Ryder and Frank Gordon served in different sub-units of the 1st Battalion in the 1960's. Dean Ryder was aged 19 and Frank Gordon was aged 20 when they first served in the Army. Frank Gordon says that the experience made them "grow up a lot quicker". Although he says that the memorial should already have been long established, he agrees with Dean Ryder that the memorial is a proud moment.

"It is an honour that America has acknowledged the 1 RAR's contribution to the success of the brigade in Vietnam," says Dean Ryder.

The brigade was the first unit to be comprised of Australian, New Zealand and American soldiers after the signing of the ANZUS Treaty in 1951.

*From The Port Perie Recorder, 21st April, 2010.*

## Stories from the Vietnam War 1

Surgeon Michael O'Rourke's Vietnam service was with 1 Australian Field Hospital in 1971/72.

Extract from Michael O'Rourke chapter titled, 'A Surgeon in Vietnam' in the book, 'Memories of Vietnam' (Random House, 1991) edited by Professor Ken Maddock.

BEFORE FINISHING, I must tell the story of the psychology of survival which I learnt in Vietnam. The story

concerns a young soldier who had major injuries to his lungs, multiple intestinal perforations and injuries to his aorta and vena cava. He was very ill and was sent back to the ward after surgery, with oxygen, nasogastric tube, blood and intravenous lines. Ten hours after surgery, after watching a movie, when the light came on I looked round to see him in the back of the hut in a wheelchair with platoon friends putting beer down his nasogastric tube, urging him to return to normal habits and his mates. Against all post-operative principles he made a rapid and uneventful recovery. His friends had boosted and urged his psyche to a level of non-defeat.

We can all keep learning, Vietnam certainly was a learning experience for me,

*From: The Vietnam Veteran Journal, March 2010*

## *In The Blue Corner*

*(Continued from page 7)*

### **2/57 Basic Radio Mechs Course**

Albert Grulke found this old photo and it brought back some great memories to him. He has identified, he thinks, some but wonders if anybody out there can identify the others.

He also wonders where they all finished up.

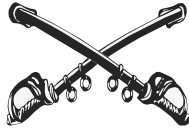
Can anybody help?

Albert Grulke: e-mailto: [agrulke7@bigpond.com](mailto:agrulke7@bigpond.com)



L to R: Back Row – 'Blue' Richards, ?, ?, ?, Tony Fenton, Bill McLachlan, ?, ?, 'Gummy' Gordon, Albert Grulke, Middle Row - ?, ?, Maurie Daniels, Danny Boone, Ray Prussian, Bill Goodwin, Don Luck, ?, Allan Pearce Front Row - WO2 Tom Fitzpatrick, Cpl Jim Messines, Major Morgan, Cpl Fergie Shaw, Cpl Frank Scott

# Military history



## Echo of first Morse signal

By Rosita Gallasch  
From St George and Sutherland Shire Leader

A little-known plaque in Veno Reserve by the side of Princes Highway at Heathcote commemorates the first Morse code signal sent in Australia, possibly the Commonwealth, a century ago. Although military wireless signals were commonplace at sea, it had not been developed on land until engineer Captain George Taylor took on the challenge. On 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1910, Captain Taylor of the Australian Intelligence Corps, with four other military personnel, sent the first signal from near a cave in the Heathcote bush to a defence station.

And now, 100 years to the day after that first signal was sent, Heathcote RSL sub branch with members of the 17<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks commemorated the event with a short wreath laying ceremony.

"It was a very good day; there wasn't a big crowd but those there took an interest in the event," Heathcote RSL sub branch president Wayne Davies said.

Around 25 people attended the ceremony with Sutherland Shire Council deputy mayor Jan Forshaw and local historian John Risebrow, who brought the date to the RSL's attention. From this point on and in the lead-up to World War I, wireless signals in Australia progressed rapidly and official civil wireless stations were built from 1910 onwards. By 1912 a wireless chain had been established to link a number of countries in Europe, Africa and Asia.



A century on: Commemorating the centenary of the first Morse code signal in Australia are (from left) Heathcote RSL sub branch president Wayne Davies, Lieutenant-Colonel Susan Coyle, Commanding Officer 17th Signal Regiment, Warrant Officer Rob Mills, Sergeant Peter Geffert, Sutherland Shire Council Deputy Mayor Jan Forshaw, Private Sean David and John Risebrow.  
Picture: Mike Ellis

# "BORONIA"

HUNTERS HILL SIGNAL CENTRE,  
HUNTERS HILL, SYDNEY, NSW  
DURING WW2

Sir Moses Montefiore Home at 120 High Street Hunters Hill, Sydney, New South Wales was taken over in September 1939 by the Australian Army and became the Hunters Hill Signal Centre "Boronia". Cipher units operated at the Hunters Hill Signal Centre.

A blast proof communications bunker was built on site and still exists today. There is a file in the National Archives of Australia titled "BORONIA Schedule for construction of blast proof shelters and engineering services 20 March 1943".

Ken Thomas, who works at Sir Moses Montefiore home, says that there is a story that Morris West the Author was the Commanding Officer. The WW2 Nominal Roll indicates that Lt Morris Langlo West was with 8 Cipher Sect. Sigs 2 Army when he was discharged on 13th January 1944.

Department of Army operated Morse Services from this Hunters Hill Signal Centre to the following locations:

- Signal office Middle Head;
- Mount Keira, NSW;
- Victoria Barracks, Sydney NSW;
- Liverpool, NSW;
- New Lambton, NSW;
- Jesmond House, NSW;
- Newcastle - Rutherford Camp;
- Bathurst, NSW;
- Burwood, NSW; and
- "Burnside", NSW.

There was also a Telephone-Trunk Line Switching facility from this site to Victoria Barracks. There was also a teleprinter service from Hunters Hill to St Lucia in Brisbane.

The 12th Australian Lines of Communication Signals had a Transport Workshop at Boronia Park. This may have been at this site also. Can anyone confirm?

The site may have also been known as Boronia Barracks. It may have also been known as NSW L of C Main Signal Centre. Can anyone confirm?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Ken Thomas for his assistance with this web page <http://home.modemss.brisnet.org.au/~dunn/locations/boronia.htm>

*Any responses to the Editor...ED.*

## The Medhurst Telephone

Our pre-WW2 Signalmen will remember the Don III Telephone (officially known as Telephone, Portable, D Mark III) protected by ebonite in its leather case, it was almost indestructible. Dating from about 1907 its main features were a buzzer, a Morse key, telescopic handset and with line, earth and condenser terminals that were easily accessible. They were operated by two dry cells (in 1938, some were found dated 1917) providing current at three volts. The success of this telephone defeated the 1906 and later efforts of Medhurst to design an improved field telephone,

Medhurst was born in 1865, the son of the Postmaster at Chobham, Surrey and learned telegraphy by helping his father in the Post Office and then gained some military experience as a part-time volunteer. In 1889 he migrated to Victoria and later moved to Tasmania and joined the Australian Corps of Signallers. He was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1906 as OC of No. 9 Company. Although line was not then a Corps responsibility he designed a telephone and offered it to the Australian Government. The Director of Engineer Services conducted field trials in 1907.

Meanwhile, Medhurst sailed for England to sell his invention to the War Office. It was acclaimed by many officers, especially Lord Kesteven, CO of the Lincolnshire Imperial Yeomanry, but it was not given an official trial because the new British telephone, the Don III, was being developed at that time. Medhurst demonstrated his phone at the School of Signalling, devised a way to lay cable across swamp with a kite and designed a cable trailer for bicycles. He had orders for 40 telephones but made little progress and so returned to Tasmania where he supervised the formation of the Medhurst Portable Telephone Company by his son, Rowland, with the head office at 88 Collins St. Hobart.

The Medhurst telephone had a telegraph vibrator, provision for connection to sounders, high quality speech and long range. It was used over 30 km during the 1905 field exercises and claimed to have a range of 800 km using telegraphy. A serious weakness was the microphone which was so delicate that Medhurst warned customers about it. It also had a design fault that required the user to move a switch before using and then to keep a key pressed. This device was to conserve batteries.

Medhurst's real problem was that his telephone was doomed without War Office approval as Australia followed the British example and concentrated on the Telephone Don III.

When the Corps of Signallers was abolished in 1912 he transferred to the Signal Engineers. He was associated with the Telegraph Department in Tasmania for 22 years which took him to the position of Telegraph and Telephone Inspector.

## Letters, e-mails and faxes

### Assistance Required for ACV Story

Dear Ed

I am currently working on the ACV story for the 104 Sig Sqn Website - <http://www.au104.com/> - on the M577A1 Armoured Command Vehicles (ACV), in two parts:

- a. Part 1 - Vietnam (HQ 1 ATF, 104 Sig Sqn and 547 Sig Tp). Sections on call-signs 85C and 85D.
- b. Part 2 - Post Vietnam to Now (104 Sig Sqn/1 CSR and others Signals units?)

Part 1 is in first draft after lots of research via the old war dairies and Part 2 is in the early stages.

I am still looking for more details for both parts, as follows:

1. Has anyone got any details or photos on the ACV's used by Signals, now, in Vietnam and when first return to 104 Sig Sqn post Vietnam? Photos of any of the HQ 1 ATF vehicles, please!
2. Is 104 Sig Sqn (1 CSR) still using the ACV's? How many, etc and what are their call-signs?
3. What are the ARN of any current vehicles? (We have all the details on the Vehicles used in Vietnam).
4. Are RASigs personnel licensed to drive the vehicles still? Anyone had a license?
5. Any stories on RASigs ACV good or bad driving?
6. Where did the name "CONAN" come from (Post Vietnam)? Do the other vehicles have nicknames?

7. What do the 'tankie's' think of RASigs and their buckets?
8. Any funny incidents?
9. Other RASigs using ACV's post Vietnam? 139 Sig Sqn?
10. Other info that maybe helpful for the web site article that is recording our history?

**If anyone has any details either ideally e-mail me, or call – See phone numbers below.**

For some ACV photos, including the inside, of call-sign 85C (104 Sig Sqn, Sigcen, Vietnam) go to

<http://www.au104.org/Photo4/page4-71.html>

There are other photos in the 104 Sig Sqn photo albums.

Regards

*Denis*

Denis Hare

PO Box 115

Glasshouse Mountains Qld 4518

Ph: 07 5438 7512

Mob: 0419 334 535

e-mail [dhare@au104.org](mailto:dhare@au104.org)

104 Sig Sqn Web Site

[www.au104.org](http://www.au104.org)

104 Sig Sqn National Reunion 4-6 Nov 2011

<http://2011.au104.org>

(All Sigs and Friends welcome)

*Where's Dave Boyd when you need him?...Ed.*

### Col Millington Pushing 60

G'day Mr. Editor,

Doug Lennon, returned vet, suggested I send you the link below.

I am a recoding artist and for the last 35 years have released some 20 CD's. One of my most popular songs is "Pushin' 60", the story of a soldier returned from Vietnam trying to fit back into society. I put together a video clip of the song and put it up on 'youtube'.

With such good response over the last 3 years appealing to Vets, would it be possible to pass the link on to other return vets? It may appeal to them.

My website is; [www.colmillington.com](http://www.colmillington.com).

Kind Regards,

*Col Millington.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4XMPg1Y7tk>

Version: 9.0.819 / Virus Database: 271.1.1/2864 - Release

Date: 05/10/10 04:26:00

# Tail-end Charlie

## ANZACs to Afghanistan

A group of mums from the small wheat belt town of Wongan Hills did what they do best recently and turned on their ovens to bake more than 500 ANZAC biscuits for soldiers in Afghanistan.

An e-mail got the girls motivated and when a local ex-soldier was invited to join the group to share with them the real life hardships of being away from home on the frontline, the idea was born.

Wondering if they were mad, wondering if the biscuits would even make it to the soldiers, the group baked away. Instead of cooking for their families, they produced almost 80 dozen ANZAC biscuits which they packaged beautifully and sent on their way. Here, one of the group, Rita Randell, tells the enlightening story about the unexpected rewards achieved in doing something for others,

The e-mail from the Vietnam vet suggested that Australians wear red on Friday to show support for our overseas troops. When we did this we also decided to invite Brian Donnellan, a local ex soldier who served in Vietnam with 4RAR, to attend our get together. We wanted to hear from Brian what it was like to be away from home and fighting for our freedom.

He said one of the best things he can remember was getting a food parcel from his loved ones especially a fruit cake made by one of his sisters.

This motivated our group to think about taking our support one step further. Through the soldier, contact was made with the army and soon plans were underway for us to proudly uphold an Aussie tradition.

The group got together on their normal Friday and instead of cooking for their families, made 60 dozen ANZAC biscuits. We actually made about 80 dozen, but we burnt some, dropped some and ate the crumbly ones!

The biscuits were wrapped in cellophane and packed into pre loved biscuit tins of all shapes and sizes. Into every tin went bookmarks with the following message:

'We are a group of mums on a tight budget who get together on Fridays to cook for our families. On Fridays we wear red - to remind us of YOU - far from home and putting your life on the line for our safety. These biscuits are full of wholesome Aussie ingredients, country air and sunshine and are made with love and gratitude. We hope you enjoy them as much as we enjoyed baking them for you. God bless you, and bring you safely home.

'Meals on a Shoestring Girls, Wongan Hills WA, June 2009'

The packages of biscuits were posted, with us wondering if they would actually get to our soldiers in Afghanistan as intended. We had to wait nearly five months to find out, but in November the mother of a soldier serving with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan contacted us to pass on the message that her son was over the moon to have received a tin of our biscuits. We were all so excited that the biscuits had made it, and that a soldier liked them enough to ask his mum to thank us on his behalf.

We were very happy with that result and thought that was the end of the story. However, a few days after Christmas and to our absolute amazement, five parcels addressed to the Cookie Ladies arrived from Afghanistan. The parcels contained beautifully embroidered and brightly coloured Pashmina's, cushion covers, rugs and table runners. Shrieks of excitement followed the opening of each parcel.

The generosity and thoughtfulness of the soldiers was beyond our imagination. It turns out that after the biscuits arrived, the troops passed around the hat and went off to the local Afghan markets and shopped hard. Included in the parcels were a certificate and a letter of appreciation from the Commanding Officer.

To our small group a few biscuits seemed such a small gesture to show our appreciation and support to our fellow Australians fighting for our freedom and protecting our way of life. We certainly did not expect to be the recipients of anything more than maybe a thank-you. The last thing on our minds when we set out on our 'ANZACS to Afghanistan' quest was to get back more than we gave. In fact one of the driving forces behind the idea, was to think about how we could reach out from our ordinary lives in our little country town and help others.

To have that boomerang back on us was incredibly humbling. As a group, we learnt that independently we were not able to have much impact, but together we could and as it turns out, did,

*(For more information on how the girls did this, contact the editor of 'The Vietnam Veteran' on 0403 112 758)*

*We are so proud and grateful to be Australian....*

*From: The Vietnam Veteran, March 2010*