



THURUNKA

March 2011

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

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

Including the:
Aust. Lines of Communication Signals Association



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Coming Events - 2011

Update your diary NOW!

Day	Date	Activity	Time	Location
Wed	30 Mar 11	Committee Meeting 2	1800	RACA Club
Mon	25 Apr 11	ANZAC Day March	1000	Sydney CBD
Mon	25 Apr 11	Signals Reunion	1200	City Hotel
Wed	25 May 11	Committee Meeting 3	1100	RACA Club
Wed	01 Jun 11	Rhumb Corps Luncheon	1200	CTA Club
	THURUNKA	June edition	Mid-June	
Sun	03 Jul 11	Reserve Forces Day Parade	1030	Sydney Domain
Wed	27 Jul 11	Committee Meeting 4	1100	RACA Club
Wed	07 Sep 11	Battle for Australia Service	1100	Cenotaph Martin Place
Wed	07 Sep 11	Rhumb Corps Luncheon	1200	CTA Club
	THURUNKA	September edition	Mid-September	
Wed	28 Sep 11	Committee Meeting 5	1100	RACA Club
*	TBA	ER Corps Dinner	TBA	
Sun	13 Nov 11	Annual Memorial Service	1100	Signal Hill Vaucluse
Sun	13 Nov 11	Annual General Meeting	1230	Paddington RSL Club
*	Sun 04 Dec 11	Committee Luncheon	1200	TBA
Wed	07 Dec 11	Rhumb Corps Luncheon	1200	CTA Club
	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 may change but are constantly reviewed in an attempt to advise changes to members in a timely manner.

Please note: Committee meetings now convene at 1100 hours, still at the Royal Automobile Club. And that the AGM and Annual Memorial Service are now on 13th November.

ANZAC DAY 2011

RASigs Assn (NSW) March and Re-union

Sydney city NSW

See inside for further details

We look forward to seeing you there.

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FYI

- Lost Medals replaced
- Wounded digger website
- Looking for . . .
- Digital comms incoming
- Vet's children education scheme
- Military History
- Darwin hit hard in wartime
- Second VC in Afghanistan
- Media releases
- Reserve Forces Day
- Update on naval matters
- Tail-end Charlie
- Visit to Grantham, Qld
- Choops, Sigs unofficial mascot

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@hotmail.com
NO LATER THAN
Friday 20th May 2011.

Coming Events

ANZAC Day 2011 March

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

...and the re-union...

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

Royal Australian Corps of Signals



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



ANZAC SERVICE
of
THANKSGIVING AND REMEMBRANCE
Commemorating
The Tradition of ANZAC

Unfortunately we will not be holding such a service this year as the church has planned alterations to take place in April.

This is a great disappointment to us but please keep us in mind for 2012.

Best wishes

Ray Ctercteko

cterct@bigpond.com

Ph 02 9982 7645

Association Matters

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

Darwin Remembered

Saturday, 19th February, 2011 was the 69th anniversary of the commencement of the 'Bombing of Darwin'. Over twenty members came together on a perfect summer day to remember. Darwin and environs were bombed in 64 raids over the following twenty-one months.

The first raid started at 9:58 am with heavy attacks on shipping, the town and aerodrome by 188 aircraft. There was a second raid by 54 heavy bombers, at 11:57 am. At the end of the day casualties were heavy. Officially, casualties totalled 243 killed, but Mayor J Burton estimated 900 killed, while Army Intelligence estimated 1100 killed. Over twenty allied planes were lost along with eight ships. The Japanese lost 12 aircraft.

The last raid was on 12th November, 1943 at 02:30 am on Power house, 2 1/2 mile, Winnellie, and Adelaide River.

Members of the 'Australian Lines of Communication Signals Association' were joined by members of the RASigs Association and members of 17th Signal Regiment at the War Memorial in Courthouse Reserve, Bankstown to remember and pay tribute to those who died in the conflict. Many of the attendees were in Darwin at the time of the bombings.

Major Rhys Davis, 2IC 17 Sig Regt, in his speech, gave his understanding of the current generation as to the conflict. He said that he found it incomprehensible to imagine the situation and the severity of the impact of the bombing. He concluded by thanking the men and women of the day who fought and passed on to the generations of today the freedoms that we now enjoy.



Associations members Mike McEvoy, Norm McMahon, Walter Spratt and Chris Ballantine

Chaplin Sanderson conducted the service and after prayers and the laying of the wreaths, we stood for one minute silence. It was an emotional time seeing these Veterans standing so straight in memory of the fallen so many years on.

After the service we retired to the Bankstown RSL Club for luncheon and to talk over the experiences of the soldiers so many years ago.

Annual Subscriptions

Yes, Annual fees are now due and payable.

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

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

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 126925501.

Then advise the 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.



Vale - 2238356 WO2 (Retd) Anthony MacLeod (Tony) Staas

DOB: 01 May 1943

DOD: 14 January 2011

It is with great regret that I report the passing of our esteemed member and Vice President, Tony Staas on 14th January 2011.

After completing high school in 1958, Tony took up an apprenticeship with the family printing business, a trade he worked in for life. He was to later purchase other printing companies and was a successful businessman working virtually up to the time of his death, aged 67½ years.

Tony joined the then CMF in 1964 at B Coy, 2 RNSWR Chatswood, NSW. In 1966 the Regiment became 17 RNSWR and B Coy became the Spt Coy. Tony and fellow committee member John Rowlands were posted to the Signals Platoon and Tony progressed to the rank of Platoon Sergeant.

After seeing the light, Tony transferred to 142 Sig Sqn, 8 Signal Regiment, Lidcombe in 1967. He moved into the Q stream as SQMS 142 Sig Sqn and was promoted SSgt in 1972. Tony remained in 8 Sig Regt for the remainder of his ARes service, attaining the rank of WO2 and retiring in 1995 after 31 years of service.

In 1977, not long after the formation of the Signals Association in NSW (in 1974) Tony joined the committee under the Presidency of Ray Lees. Tony stayed on the committee for many years and was appointed Vice President in 1998, a position he held until his death.

Tony was diagnosed with cancer several years ago and, after extensive treatment, appeared to be in remission. Unfortunately, however, a second aggressive form of cancer, a brain tumour, developed that claimed his life.

Tony is remembered as a caring family man, a successful businessman, for his no-fuss efficiency in the Army Reserve and for his wise counsel to the Association committee over 23 years.

Tony is survived by his wife of 49 years, Janice, daughter, Christine and son, Brett. Messages of condolence can be sent to Janice at 8/143 North Steyne, MANLY, NSW 2095.

*Chris Ballantine
President*

Vale from 17 L of C Signals Membership

Norm McMahon has advised us of the following.

Our members are content with the bare information. We have their memories.

VALE

NF453683 Sigwmn. **Curran M.W.**

(Muriel) Nee Baker, 17 L of C Signals.

VX63866 Sigmn. **Sharp L.C. (Les)** 17 L of C Signals.

WX36901 Sigmn. **Lamont A. (Gus)** 17 L of C Signals.

Lest We Forget

Norm McMahon

VALE - LTCOL Edward Bruce Starrett
237525 (NX12422) LTCOL Edward Bruce Starrett (Retd)

The Association has recently become aware of the passing in September 2010, of long term Corps member Bruce (Cloud 9) Starrett at the age of almost 93 years.

Bruce was born in Epping NSW in 1917 and enlisted in the 2nd AIF in April 1940 - RA Signals.

At the conclusion of the war he held the rank of major in the posting of Signals ACS 2 Div. He remained in the Regular Army post war and commanded 504 Air Support Signal Unit at Mosman NSW and then a posting to the 1st Signal Regiment, Ingleburn. He retired from the ARA as a LTCOL and lived for many years at Collaroy Plateau, NSW.

I recall Bruce as the outgoing OC of 504 ASSU when I enlisted there in 1964. My father, Capt John Ballantine, had served as his 2IC at Mosman and my uncle LtCol Tony Ballantine recalls his early service with Bruce at Ingleburn.

The Association extends condolences to Bruce's family.

Chris Ballantine

Lest We Forget

VALE - Jock Maestri

Urbano (Jock/Barney) Maestri
1937-2011

RAF, RASigs, RNSWR

PASSING OF A REAL CHARACTER

It is not often in life that you meet a real character, however during the 1970s I had the pleasure to meet Jock Maestri whose friendship I enjoyed until his passing in January 2011.

The CMF members of 130th Signal Squadron, Mosman during the 1970s will recall a short Neapolitan-looking guy with a wicked grin and a broad Glaswegian accent. Born in 1937 in Glasgow, Scotland of Italian/Scots parents, what he lacked in height was more than compensated by his unique character.

Jock enlisted in the RAF in 1955 as an aircraft instrument fitter and took his discharge in 1960 with the rank of SAC. During that time he saw active service in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula for which he was awarded the GSM.

One may ask what the Brits were up to in that part of the world between 1957 and 1959 and of course you will have remembered the 'Buraimi Crisis' in Oman during that period. An internal rebellion was trying to be suppressed by the Muscat Regiment with assistance from UAR levies. The Brits decided to intervene and support the government of the day and put down the rebellion with two companies of the 'Cameronians' and an armoured car detachment of the British Army and RAF aircraft. Jock worked on the Avro Shackleton heavy bombers.

In 1965 Jock and his younger brother, Bruno (who had completed National Service in Royal Signals) migrated to Australia and settled on Sydney's North Shore. Jock enlisted in the CMF at 130 Sig Sqn, Mosman in the late 1960s and soon earned a stripe as a transport NCO under the watchful eye of SGT "Happy" Cansdell, a WW2 veteran. After a number of years at Mosman he transferred to A Coy (Scottish) 17 RNSWR at Carlow Street Depot, North Sydney.

Some of the old hands will recall the parties on Jock's converted lifeboat

house boat at Northbridge Marina.

Disposal of beer bottles was quite simple - over the side and sent to the bottom with a .303 rifle shot. The shots echoed all around the bay at 2am and not a cop to be seen. His interest in firearms continued up until his death at which time he had quite a collection of rifles and hand guns which he fired regularly in local competitions.

He was a jack-of-all-trades gaining qualifications and work experience as a computer technician, marine diesel fitter, chief marine engineer, and ship's master working on small cargo vessels out of Tonga and on prawn trawlers in the Australian Gulf.

In 1973 I visited Jock in Tonga and was invited to meet his drinking mate at the Royal Nuku'alofa Yacht Club who turned out to be the Crown Prince Tupou Toa (now King George Tupou V). The Prince had been educated in the UK and at Sandhurst RMC and had a very pukka pommy accent, waxed moustache and monocle. He was a great contact who bailed us out of trouble with the local constabulary on a few occasions (e.g. consumption of alcohol on the Sabbath).

Jock semi retired to Queensland and lived in an old caravan at the rear of his brother's property at Boonah when he was not on the road. Apart from shooting, Jock enjoyed to tipple. His first renal failure weaned him off spirits to home brew beer which he brewed and drank in substantial quantities. His liver finally capitulated on 17th January, 2011.

Chris Ballantine

VALE Carmel O'Brien

Loved wife of 3790074 MAJ (ret) Terrence Patrick (Terry) O'Brien

110 Sig Sqn Vietnam

<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1234127>

Dear all,

With regret we must advise the passing of Terry O'Brien's wife, Carmel O'Brien. Terry is a stalwart member of the RASIGS Association ACT, our Treasurer for the past many years and also a Committee member of the Foundation where he is also the Treasurer.

Carmel passed away on Tuesday morning following a long and vigorous fight against the dreaded cancer, a melanoma cancer that came her way only a short two years ago. From the moment Carmel was diagnosed with the melanoma, she fought like a demon to defeat this unworthy foe and did so until last Tuesday morning.

During her fight which entailed many visits and stays in hospital, the many visitors she had all commented along the same lines such as: she is always so cheerful, she is a determined lady, she has a strength and a heart that many would love to have. Carmel truly fought this thing to the end and during her fight consistently put on the bravest face and was ever full of optimism. This despite several setbacks such as when she and Terry investigated new treatments that were genetic specific and she did not fit the bill. Rather than even consider giving up, they both went forward to the next possibility and this Carmel did with Terry's fullest support right up to the last couple of days.

Mid-last year, Terry and Carmel went on a half-world cruise from Sydney to Southampton despite the considerable risk of her being taking ill during the voyage. Neptune smiled upon them tho' and apart from a couple of off days and a trip 'n slip down the ships stairs, the voyage of 4 months and the return journey by air was a complete and rewarding experience for them both and well worth the risk they had accepted.

Carmel is at peace and our thoughts turn to Terry and his children during this difficult time.

I know Terry and family would love to see anyone that wishes attend the Funeral Service.

Regards to all

Bill Wattam

President

RASigs Association ACT

Messages of condolence may be passed to:

MAJ (ret) Bill Wattam

M 0439 828 551

wwattam@bigpond.net.au

...who will collate them and pass them to the family...ED.

From Blue Hawkins

Blue has advised us of the following.

VALE - Alan Bacon

3796959 Alan Laurence (Al) Bacon
1 Fd Sqn Vietnam 1970-71
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1227938>
Date of Birth 27 November 1949
Date of Death 29 November 2010

Al began his Army service with Engineers and later Corps transferred to Signals.

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:

Mrs. A. Bacon & Family
29 Moura Pl
FISHER ACT 2611
P: 02 6288 8964

VALE - David Edward Thompson

11335 (QX58290) SGT (ret) David Edward (Dave) Thompson
WW II - HQ SIGS FXD DEFENCES
<http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=A&VeteranID=456070>
104 Sig Sqn Vietnam
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1258042>
Date of Birth 23 October 1923
Date of Death 15 December 2010

Messages of condolence to Dave's children, Linda, Jennifer, Kay, Joy and David and their families may be forwarded to: waynerose@aapt.net.au

Dave was a dedicated Sergeant Linesman/Rigger and was dedicated to his job and pedantic about safety. He will be fondly remembered by those in the Corps who knew his professional approach to his job and the training of others. Besides that, Dave was just a great friend and a really good bloke!

VALE - Ernie Blocksidge

17607 WO1 (ret) Ernest Francis (Ernie) Blocksidge
103 Sig Sqn Vietnam
Date of Birth 28 November 1936
Date of Death 3 January 2011
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1258262>
Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:
Mrs Chris Blocksidge
284 Victoria Ave
KIPPA RING QLD 4021
Ph: 07 3885 7573

...or, e-mail me and I will collate responses and present them to Chris. Please ensure you include your full name, address and 'phone number because I am sure that Chris will wish to thank you.

VALE - Pete (Pedro) Thornton

RASIGS and SASR

Pete came from the Brit army to 152 Sig Sqn in 1971 and served most of his time there apart from a stint at 135 Sig Sqn. He was in every sense a truly professional soldier and will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:

John Mounsey
mounsejr@bigpond.com

...who will collate them and forward them to the family.

...or

In case people want to send a card:

Mrs Rita Thornton
43-45 Kureelpa Falls Rd
KUREELPA QLD 4560
Ph: 07 5441 4474

VALE - John Jerome Brazel

4720073 John Jerome Brazel
104 Sig Sqn Vietnam
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1280600>
Date of Birth 25 June 1948
Date of Death 21 December 2010
Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:
Mrs Marilyn Brazel
9 Lentara Ct
MAGILL SA 5072

VALE Garth Morris Brown

3411129 MAJ (ret) Garth Morris (Doggie) Brown
547 Sig Tp Vietnam
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1282292>
Date of Birth 19 December 1943
Date of Death 18 January 2011
Messages of condolence may be forwarded to:
Mrs Anne Brown
19 Garro St
SUNNYBANK HILLS QLD 4109
Ph: 07 3344 4873



VALE Peter Vincent Davey
 6709721 Peter Vincent Davey
 104 Sig Sqn Vietnam
 Date of Birth 14 May 1947
 Date of Death 20 February
 2011
[http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/
 VeteranDetails.aspx?
 VeteranId=1235517](http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1235517)

It is with sadness and regret that we have been advised of the passing of another valued servant of Australia and the Royal Australia Corps of Signals. Peter will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Messages of condolence may be forwarded to the family at:

40 Lamont Rd
 McCracken SA 5211
 P: 08 8552 7460
daveypv@bigpond.com

It is with sadness and regret with the passing of these valued servants of Australia and the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. They will be sadly missed by their 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



Ken Myers

(This advice is meant to be humorous and a laugh at my expense.)

After 3 months the big toe still swells up at days end. My GP is unable to accept this situation as given six weeks anything will knit. Do I hear rotten to the bone?

In a moment of genius my GP suggests an X-RAY as up and down motion is OK as it only troubles sideways. The rather radiologist asks 'can you separate your big toe from the adjacent one by muscle control?'

NO I reply. 'Do not worry, I will tape and separate,' she says. My mind thinks 'lift-and-separate'. Sex would be wonderful! After I return home I start to contemplate why the bloody thing now aches.

The x-rays arrive and my GP, with a smug look, says 'it's broken at the first joint, clean through,' and proceeds to tape it to the adjoining toe. I will not share my thoughts with you at this point in time, as I am a gentleman, but she must have broken it again with the toe taped to the x-ray table.

The lesson is 'Sandals for another six weeks and keep it dry'.

Ken Myers

John Wynn-Jones

John's condition has greatly deteriorated over the Christmas break. He is finding it hard to recall simple things and identify objects. He is being well supported by his daughter. His medical condition has been assessed and the family is now authorised to look around and put his name down for some suitable care. The family is in the process of assisting John in these difficult times.

It appears that he is not as socially active of late, either, as his diary is full of empty pages and he does not go on-line to read his e-mails.

We wish John well. ED.

Murray Chamberlain

44098 WO1 (ret) Murray James CHAMBERLAIN

547 Sig Tp Vietnam

On 13th January Murray had a stroke. Fortunately we were able to get him to hospital quickly and within the time frame to have

the stroke medication. At first he lost the use of his left side, was very confused and his speech was slurred.

The following day, I spoke with the neurologist who was pleased with his progress. Within 10 minutes of having the medication the previous night, he was able to move his left arm and still has the use of it today. Unfortunately his speech was still slurred and his confusion had improved slightly. He was monitored over the next 24 hrs to make sure there was no bleeding resulting from the medication.

Murray came home from hospital yesterday. He is doing really well but still has trouble with his speech and a slight droop to his left side of the face. There is also a very minor glitch to his memory/thinking. I noticed this and it showed up in the 'neuro-psych' tests as well.

Hopefully, in time all these problems will improve and he will be back to being the Murray we all knew him. In all, he has been very lucky. Naturally he has "pills" to take now that will prevent this from happening again. It looks like the clot came from the carotid artery in the neck.

We would like to thank you all for your support and best wishes. He will go through all the e-mails when he is feeling stronger.

Janne Chamberlain

17 January 2011

Our thoughts and prayers are with Murray, Janne and their family at this time.

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

John Robert Tate

2784943 WO1 (ret) John Robert (Tatey) Tate

104 Sig Sqn Vietnam

[http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/
 VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1268608](http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1268608)

Good news on John from his loving wife, Alison. John is suffering an extreme case of Guillian-Barre Syndrome:

<http://gbsnsw.org.au/> - and this website will explain how debilitating it is. Alison prints off information for John to read and he appreciates contact from old mates and anyone new if they wish to make his acquaintance (he is one of nature's gentlemen).

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

A bit of news on John from Alison.

John is still improving slowly. His speech is good and his core strength is quite strong for sitting up once he is positioned, but he is

still unable to use his hands or feet. He is able to walk across the therapy pool and back with assistance on wobbly legs. He is in very good spirits and is always trying to wriggle his arms and legs to encourage his nerves to grow.

He knows it is a slow process but he is certainly improving each week. He is still in hospital (14 months) and may be in there indefinitely. The more he improves the longer he will be in hospital because they give him physio twice a day and he has all the facilities there.

The extension on our house has started and it should be finished by the middle of April. The physio's are hoping to send John home on a walking frame so when that will be we are not sure but all is going well for him.

John appreciates everyone's thoughts and best wishes for his recovery. He is determined to get back to his old self.

I believe this time next year John will be up and walking and he will be able to type his own message for Christmas which will be wonderful.

Alison

All replies direct to:
John & Alison Tate
41 Kent Gardens Rd
Soldiers Point NSW 2317
P: 02 4982 7680
tatey1945@yahoo.com

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

Thanks...Ed.

Assistance needed to rebuild e-mail address book

Can you help Ian Godden?

Ian needs our assistance to rebuild his e-mail address book after a serious virus attack and invites everyone to send him, with a tag line subject, to distinguish it from spam e-mails RASIGS GDAY so that he can then add them back into his e-mail address book. Just to 'say again', please place RASIGS GDAY in the e-mail subject line so that he knows it is from the good guys and gals.

All replies direct to:

Ian Godden
M: 0409 610 621
ian.godden029@bigpond.com

Although Ian nominally lives in a retirement village in Toowoomba, he spends much of his time travelling Australia; not bad for an 81 year old! Ian does not have a home phone - he exists on a mobile phone and wireless broadband.

Ian loves catching up with old mates when he is travelling, so feel free to give him your home contact details and he may drop in on you for a cuppa. Ian is always willing to make new friends of RASIGS members and their families and he is one of nature's gentlemen.

Assistance required in the case of Ernie BLOCKSIDGE

Assistance is required in the case of the recently deceased
17607 WO1 (ret) Ernest Francis (Ernie) Blocksidge
103 Sig Sqn Vietnam
Date of Birth 28 November 1936
Date of Death 3 January 2011
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1258262>

ALL replies direct to:

Legatee John Pollack
geko@optusnet.com.au
...and

Legacy Welfare Officer Jo Shorrock
jsh11071@bigpond.net.au

Ernie was a soldier employed in the RASIGS technician stream and succeeded in becoming a WO1 RSTT (Regimental Supervisor Technical Telecommunications).

As all former and current RASIGS personnel will know, technicians worked/work in a wide variety of environmental hazards such as:

- Enclosed Technical Maintenance Workshops;
- Poorly aired Battery Storage, Charging and Maintenance Workshops;
- Enclosed Communications Centres;

Etc

And these environments had such environmental hazards such as:

- Inhaling fumes from troughs full of degreaser and other cleaning liquids;
- Inhaling fumes from cleaners and batteries;
- Inhaling fumes from spray cans of cleaners;
- Inhaling active and passive tobacco smoke; Etc

RASIGS areas of employment, especially pre-1 January 2000 when smoking was actively discouraged, were secure from the outside world and all manner of fumes were contained therein; e.g. smoking was allowed and the smokers took full advantage to enjoy their smokes to the detriment of non-smokers.

The above Legatees are handling the case for Ernie's widow, Christine.

They seek information about:

- Any personal knowledge of Ernie working as a technician and the environment in which he worked;
- The working conditions in which technicians of all ranks would find themselves and which Ernie would have experienced; and
- Any RASIGS technician/operator who may have died from lung-related illnesses.

I thank you in anticipation of your co-operation and e-mails to John and Jo.

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

(Continued on page 16)



CORPS MATTERS

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

WARNING ORDER

RASigs 40th Anniversary Reunion Vietnam

The 40th anniversary of the withdrawal of Signallers from Vietnam falls next year, 2012.

In conjunction with this major event ex members of RASigs are holding a re-union in Viet-Nam for all ex Sigs (Chooks), partners, family and friends, including our friends across the Tasman and the Pacific as well as associated Corps.

The Re-union will commence in Saigon on 15th August then moving to Vung Tau for three nights and then back to Saigon for the remaining two nights. We are having a concert in Vung Tau on the 17th and the next day a service will be conducted at the Long Tan Cross. The 19th will be a day visiting Nui Dat and Long Phuoc. The full itinerary is still being compiled and amended.

Consider this Warning Order a date-claimer to get you thinking of where you could spend your holidays in 2012. There are many special flights as this period is in the low season.

If you're interested, please send all names, including those of any partners, family or friends to rasigsvn@hotmail.com. A Website is not being generated for the Re-union, per se; however everyone will be kept up to date through mail-outs, including the names of those who indicate they will be attending.

A list of 20 people intending to come is already before us and we are thinking realistically that 200 could be the maximum we can handle; (i.e. 5 coaches x 40).

If any of you are looking to book pre- or post-tours, please contact our tour operator in Vietnam, Mr Thai, (who many of you already know quite well) at travel@vietlandholiday.com or go to their website at www.vietlandholiday.com.

Some suggestions for you adventurous types are Sa Pa and/or Ha Long Bay in the north, Nha Trang/Da Nang on the central coast, Da Lat in the highlands, the mighty Mekong and the Cu Chi Tunnels or perhaps Angkor Wat/Siem Riep in Cambodia.

We welcome you to join us in Vietnam for what should prove to be a memorable trip back in time.

Gregg

Gregg Dickson

Committee Chairman

RASigs Reunion Vietnam August 2012

Gregg has now advised us of the following...

RASigs Re-union 2012 Update 1

UPDATE 1

To bring you up to date as to what has transpired since the original e-mail was sent out advising of the reunion we have had the good fortune to have Buddha Winch offer us space on his web site. To keep up to date as names are added to the attendees list and to keep track of updates please go to: http://home.vicnet.net.au/~rasigsau/avietnam_2012_reunion.html

The itinerary is also on the web site and we can advise you the Re-union will be only using one hotel in Saigon and Vung Tau. There are only 2 prices for Standard Room or Deluxe Room. Single supplement will be available.

The Hotel we are using in Saigon is the Kim Do Hotel in Nguyen Hue Boulevard which is in the main street of Saigon right next door to the Tax Centre Building which is just across the road from the Rex Hotel.

In Vung Tau we will be using the joint owned Grand/Palace Hotels which are together and share the same pool.

- Cost per person twin share Deluxe Room: USD\$765.00
- Cost single supplement Deluxe Room: USD\$265.00
- Cost per person twin share Superior Room: USD\$795.00
- Cost single supplement Superior Room: USD\$300.00

Please look below to see what is included and what is not in the price.

Inclusions:

- Transfers from airport to Hotel
- Accommodation in 4 star hotels in Saigon and Vung Tau
- Meals as per itinerary
- Tours and entrance fees as indicated
- English Speaking guide
- Bottled water on coaches
- Functions as indicated including transfers to/from functions as required
- Including some wines, beers and soft drinks at some functions.

Not included:

- Insurance
- Visas
- International airfares
- Some meals
- Gratuities (allow \$3 per person per day)

Payment is not required until early next year.

If you interested in coming please provide the following

information for each person.

- Full name as per passport
- Preferred name
- Contact phone number
- Address
- DOB (Date of Birth)
- Passport Number (for entry to Long Tan and Nui Dat)
- Any information you feel pertinent.

Any queries please send an e-mail to Gregg Dickson at rasigsvn@hotmail.com.

Cheers,

Gregg

Gregg Dickson

Committee Chairman

RASigs Reunion Vietnam August 2012

104 SIGNAL SQUADRON NATIONAL REUNION 4 to 6 November 2011



WEEKEND ON THE GOLD COAST At Twin Towns Services Club (Coolangatta/Tweed Heads)

The 104 Re-union is being hosted by Twin Towns Services Club and Resort on the Gold Coast, celebrating 40 years since the unit returned from war service in Vietnam. This re-union is for 104th Signal Squadron past and present members, their families plus Veterans who supported the Squadron, drank with a Squadron member or would have liked to have been a Squadron member. It would be great to have the guys who worked with us and supported us in Vietnam attend, especially from 110th Signal Squadron, 547th Signal Troop and other Vietnam Signals including the 103rd Signal Squadron guys that dug our original Nui Dat holes. Also, the new 104 and 1CSR Veterans who have and are still serving our country.

Cost is \$125 per person for the three functions which includes administration costs.

Re-union Shirts are available via registration form only.

Other merchandise available at Re-union by SVVA (Qld).

See Re-union Web Site at <http://2011.au104.org>

All Correspondence:

104 Sig Sqn Reunion
PO Box 115
GLASS HOUSE MOUNTAINS QLD 4518

E-mail: reunion2011@au104.org

104 Reunion 2011 Committee

Denis Hare

Ph: 07-5438 7512

Mob: 0419-334 535

Don Sutherland

Ph: 07-3269 8298

Peter Thorne

Ph: 07-3285 4823

Mob: 0409-633 353

John Bertini

Ph: 07-3397 1058

Mob: 0429-491 460

Proudly Sponsored by:

SIGNALS VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION
QUEENSLAND

FYI

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Just in case you know someone affected...

Government to replace medals lost in natural disasters

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Senator the Hon David Feeney, today announced that the Government will relax the policy on replacement of Australian Defence Force (ADF) medals so that medals lost during the Queensland and Victorian floods, the impact of Cyclone Yasi and the Fires in Western Australia can be replaced.

“Government policy for many years has been medals can only be issued to the ADF member who earned them”, Senator Feeney said. This usually means that medals cannot be replaced if they are lost or destroyed after the ADF member has died. Where medals are lost in natural disasters, however, this policy may be relaxed. This was done following the Victorian bushfires in 2009.

“While the Government is committed to maintaining the integrity of our system of military honours and awards, there are circumstances in which the Australian community rightly expects us to show greater flexibility in implementing the existing policy. I believe this unprecedented series of natural disasters is one of those circumstances,” Senator Feeney said.

“I have therefore decided that ADF medals may be re-issued to the next of kin or other appropriate relative of deceased ADF members, if the medals have been lost or destroyed in the current natural disasters. Family members, who have, in the course of these natural disasters, lost the medals of loved ones, may now make application for replacements.”

Unfortunately, however, only medals dating back to the First World War can be replaced. Medals for conflicts prior to this war are no longer in production.

Applicants should use the application form and statutory declaration located on the Defence Honours and Awards website at: www.defence.gov.au/medals

Completed applications should be submitted to:

Directorate of Honours and Awards

Department of Defence

PO Box 7952

Canberra BC ACT 2610

Enquiries may also be directed to Defence Honours and Awards toll free on 1800 111 321.

Media contact: is Lorna Clarke on 0408 345 730

...Please pass on the news.

ADF: The Wounded Digger Website

A great initiative from the Australian Defence Force and not before time!

The ‘Wounded Digger’ website has now been launched on the Internet. The website aims to provide serious casualties and their families with a wide range of information on support organisations and the rehabilitation process. The site is a directory of information that seeks to provide education, interaction and networking for injured or ill members, their families and other key stakeholders.

The Wounded Digger Website was a request made by wounded Army personnel. It became clear at the Wounded Diggers Forum in Canberra on 29 March 2010, that a website was required to assist members and their families to better access support services.

For further information please go to:

<http://www.army.gov.au/woundeddigger/>

Michael O'Brien

Looking for Newton Clive REYNOLDS

I am trying to locate a Viet Vet by the name of Newton Clive REYNOLDS; he was a corporal 3794725 from the provost unit (won't hold that against him). He is also an ex-Victorian policeman. He was born 20/5/48 and probably comes from Victoria. He was in Vietnam 1969-1970

Thanks if any one finds him could they ask him to ring me on 0413 317 335 or give me an e-mail at ian.nichols@optusnet.com.au. The matter is not urgent and is not going to cause him any distress.

Regards,

Niko

Ian Nichols

0413 317 335

ian.nichols@optusnet.com.au

Digital Comms Incoming

The Army newspaper has recently reported that faster, better battlefield communications is on the way with the recent signing of a \$69 million contract with Raytheon to provide new digital radios for the front line forces.

The new radios are touted as being faster and more reliable than current analogue systems, and are expected to allow for better command and control, as well as improved situational awareness on the battlefield.

Under the contract, Raytheon will provide more than 1000 new vehicle mounted radios, as well as portable devices for the troops.

Army newspaper 17 Feb 11

Looking for descendants of...

I am trying to locate a descendant of **Alexander Gordon Stewart** who was an Australian veteran of the Great War. I have his framed Certificate of Discharge and I would love to have it returned to a family member. The Certificate was actually found by a garbage collector in Granville (a Sydney suburb) and delivered by him to the Vietnam Veterans' Federation NSW head office in the same suburb. I am NSW Hon. Secretary of the NSW Branch.

3669 Private Alexander Gordon Stewart served overseas with the 6th Light Horse from April 1917 to June 1919. He was born near Inverell NSW around February 1889 and enlisted for Service Abroad at Narandera. His wife is listed as Victoria May Stewart of Coolamon and his mother Margaret lived on Murphy Street, Rutherglen, Vic.

Last April and May I had ads placed in the Sydney Daily Telegraph and the Melbourne Sunday Herald Sun respectively. I received a few phone calls in response yet none were

related. You are requested to forward this e-mail to all on your list with the hope that it will lead to some positive result. I can be contacted on frankcole57@msn.com or 02 9626 8745.

Let the veteran community try to return this memorabilia to its rightful owner.

Best Regards,

Frank Cole

P: 02 9626 8745.

frankcole57@msn.com

Veteranweb Network

Greg Decker

Secretary

RAR Association (Qld)

0417464251

secretary.rarassociationqld@gmail.com

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

"Keeping the Spirit Alive"

Veteran's Children Education Scheme (VCES) Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme

It is up to you to apply!

All those in receipt of a Special Rate pension (T&PI), War Widows pension and Extreme Disablement Adjustment pension (EDA) who have children **under the age of 25**, who are attending school, TAFE or University are eligible for assistance from the VCES regardless of their income, assets or children's income. Veteran grandparents with custody or grandchildren students who are eligible should also make application for assistance under VCES.

We are aware that a lot of new TPI's/War Widows/EDA's may not be aware of these Education Schemes. You are reminded that the DVA have no details on family members for many that have been granted pensions since 1982. There are several important financial benefits that the VCES has over AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY.

VCES eligibility has been extended to the children or former children of **veterans with Vietnam service**, where the child is

diagnosed by an appropriately qualified professional as having a depressive disorder, or in the opinion of an appropriately qualified professional, is vulnerable. This involves having the child assessed by the local family doctor, the VVCS or another appropriately qualified professional. The assessment is a one question form, asking whether the student meets the criteria.

Once eligibility is confirmed, the student is eligible for the Education Allowance until he or she finishes full-time study which includes tertiary study.

The VCES provides support and counselling for parent and student as well as financial assistance for education and tutorial assistance if required. Education allowance Payable from 1 January 2011 are;

Primary Students: The annual education allowance for primary students is \$234.10.

Secondary/Tertiary Students (fortnightly rates in \$)

Students	At Home	Living away from Home	Homeless
Under 16 years	48.10	364.65	388.70
16 - 17 years	212.70	388.70	388.70
18 years and over	255.80	388.70	388.70

Double Orphans Secondary/Tertiary (fortnightly rates in \$)

Under 16 \$216.00 16 - 20 years \$388.70 21 years and over \$472.10

Note: Secondary/Tertiary Double Orphans (applies VVCS students only)

If you would like more information, phone the DVA National Line on 133254 and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA VAN Office.

Or e-mail: vcès@dva.gov.au

Sheldon Maher OAM is the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association, NSW Branch Inc., representative on the NSW VCES Board.

He can be contacted by phone on 02 6624 4486 or fax 02 6625 2895. Feel free to phone him should you need his assistance. We remind you that **you must** make application for these Education Allowances and get prior approval for tutorial assistance or special financial assistance.

See DVA Factsheet DP45 and MRC32 for detailed information.

Military history



We have a memorable Military History in this edition of THURUNKA, history in the past and history in the making. This year is the 69th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin and we commemorated this with the Memorial Service at the War Memorial in Bankstown. One of our 'Lines of Comm' members, George Debnam, had an article published in the Daily Telegraph here in Sydney. We now include that article here in recognition of our comrades who fought in our northern lands and Papua New Guinea.

History in the making is with the second soldier to be awarded the Victoria Cross in Afghanistan for his actions of valour in the face of the enemy. He is known to us only as CPL Ben VC. We congratulate CPL Ben VC for his gallantry and are proud that he is in the Australian Army.

Darwin hit hard in wartime

I HAD just arrived in Darwin on January 2, 1942, stationed with the 7th Military District and later with the Darwin Fortress Command Signals.

I was called up as militiaman or what we called the 'Chockos'. Originally I was stationed at Canterbury Racecourse. But one day they lined us up in the middle of the racecourse and they asked us questions about our status – were we married or single, did we live with our parents and look after them, could we drive?

Then we were sent out to Darwin. We had no idea where we were going but I was pretty sure we wouldn't be sent overseas. I spent 22 months in Darwin.

We travelled by train to Alice Springs and from there we were put in cattle trucks on a muddy track to Larrimah and then travelled by train again to Darwin.



Bombed: Soldiers in Darwin in 1942

I was quartered at Larrakeyah Barracks, which weren't too bad. We slept on the floor on straw mattresses. In the middle of the room there was a 44-gallon drum, cut in half, in which they burned cow manure to keep the mosquitoes away. Sometimes it kept us away.

At that time of the year Darwin was very steamy and very wet. We weren't used to that and we got very sweaty just walking around. We were drinking what we called lolly water all the time – glasses of cordial with lots of ice.

On February 19 I was walking around the streets of the town just to get a look at the place. I was walking down along the Esplanade, a long street overlooking Darwin Harbour.

The next thing I knew there were bombs and shrapnel flying everywhere. We had no warning; there was nothing we could do. We had no radar back then and the only warning that came was from a missionary on Bathurst Island who had a radio transmitter.

Another soldier asked: "What do we do now?" We only had six rounds of ammunition, and we had been told to fight until we ran out of ammunition. We discussed surrendering, running away or staying to fight.

I would be stationed in Darwin for all of the raids during World War II. There were more bombs dropped on Darwin than on Pearl Harbor and more people were killed than at Pearl Harbor. But many people today still don't know about it.

We still haven't learned the lessons of that day. We should be more vigilant because our troops are overseas and we don't appear to have a backup. It is very similar to back in 1942.

*George Debnam
Daily Telegraph, 16 Feb 2011.
Sydney NSW.*

Second SASR Victoria Cross in Afghanistan

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/battle-that-earned-soldier-a-vc/story-e6fre000-1225991993426>

The two Australian VC soldiers from Afghanistan”



Battle that earned soldier a VC

Ian McPhedran, From The Courier-Mail, January 21, 2011 12:00AM

The brown dust from the departing choppers that carried the SAS squadron south from their base at Tarin Kowt in Afghanistan had barely cleared when all hell broke loose. It was October 2010 and a large Taliban force had established numerous firing positions around several heavy machineguns. More than 24 Perth-based soldiers from the Special Air Service Regiment were under fire.

Realising his mates were in grave danger, a 203cm Australian lance-corporal charged the enemy. Within minutes three enemy guns had been silenced and numerous Taliban fighters lay dead.

A man mountain of a West Australian called Ben, or "RS" to his mates, had taken out three machinegun positions single-handedly. His comrades say it was the most extreme example of gallantry since Albert Jacka VC jumped in to a trench full of Turks at Gallipoli in 1915, killing seven with his rifle and bayonet.

Related Coverage

VC hero back in Afghan action

Her Majesty meets a real Aussie hero

"RS", the biggest man in the regiment, has the courage to match his imposing frame.

"He just tore into the enemy," one of his fellow soldiers said. "He is the epitome of the Spartan soldier. It was only a matter of time before he would demonstrate his true ability."

"RS" joined the SASR in 2002 from 3RAR. He is a specialist sniper and "assaulter" as well as a devoted husband and father of two young daughters. "This guy is a warrior," one of his former colleagues said.

Corporal Ben was awarded a Medal for Gallantry in December 2006 for his courage under fire in Afghanistan's Chora Valley, in the same battle where Sergeant Matthew Locke, who was killed in action during 2007, received his Medal for Gallantry.

His good mate, Rob Maylor, whose book 'SAS Sniper' was released last year, describes him as an outstanding soldier. "He has excelled as an operator in the regiment, and is also an SAS sniper, but his main calling is as an assaulter and he is exceptional," the book said.

At the picturesque headquarters of the SASR above Swanbourne beach near Perth, Corporal Ben, whose identity will be revealed on the day, will join the elite ranks of Victoria Cross recipients.

Ninety-seven Australians have been awarded a VC and only SAS Corporal Mark Donaldson wears the Victoria Cross for Australia that was instituted in 1991 to replace the imperial award.

Governor-General Quentin Bryce will pin the bronze cross forged from Russian guns captured during the 19th century Crimean War with a crimson ribbon, on Corporal Ben's mammoth chest in front of his proud family, mates and national military and political leaders including Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Chief of Defence Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston.

Several other SAS soldiers from Corporal Ben's squadron will also receive gallantry awards.

This is just another example of what we hope and pray that all Australian Defence Force personnel will do when called upon to react to a life-threatening situation. Well done, that man.

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

Media Releases

Here are two MEDIA RELEASES that we received concerning the Reserve Forces Day Council concerning the RFDay 2011. We are unable to include all the content of these releases within the pages of THURUNKA, so what has been decided is to include the relevant media contact details, should you choose to follow them up.

Reserve Forces Day - NATIONAL LAUNCH 2011 and THEME 2011

MEDIA RELEASE - RESERVE FORCES DAY TO HONOUR THE FAMILY IN 2011 NATIONAL LAUNCH 2011 and THEME 2011

We give a very big thank-you to Association members and in particular the Association Standard Bearers. They were the attraction on the day, both on the parade and as the guard of honour for the Recipients and the 39ERs - average age 91 yrs. The significance of the Standards on the Launch is that they represented the units in which the members served and whose wives were receiving the Recognition Medallions. The DVD of photos and music on our web site shows the day well.

The spouses of three 39ERs were presented medallions, either to the husband or in the case of Hon Sir John Carrick AC KCMG, to his daughter who accepted the medallion on behalf of Lady Carrick who was too ill to attend. Lt John Carrick was in SUR before WWII and said he was looking forward to going to the Middle East; instead he was sent with Sparrow Force to Timor and was captured by the Japanese. When he came back from the war he rejoined SUR and served with them when he was married until he became too busy as a Federal Minister in the Menzies Government and went on the Reserve of Officers. His story features in the book 'The 39ERs'.

The Recipients were very thankful for being recognised in such a tangible way. One of the Ladies called it "her medal for 35 years service". They were presented as a thank-you and also by making it possible for the spouse to attend training in turn helping the defence of Australia. A number of the husbands have already had the medallion engraved with their personal words of thanks to their wives.

See the media release following the Launch for the complete story. We hope to have an article in Reveille that may be out before Christmas and we have placed a Sidelines advert in explaining the nomination process. You may get some calls.

MEDIA RELEASE - RESERVE FORCES DAY TO HONOUR THE FAMILY IN 2011

The Reserve Forces Day Council has announced that in 2011 it will pay special recognition to the family and in particular

the wives, husbands or partners who unfailingly supported the people who donned uniforms to serve in the part time Defence Forces of Australia.

At the National and NSW launch of Reserve Forces Day 2011, held at Victoria Barracks on November 27, there was a colourful parade of Unit Associations Standards, led onto the Parade Ground by 30 members of the Manly-Warringah Pipe Band. The Standards represented the units in which the Medallion recipients spouse/partner had served. The first 40 special Recognition Medallions were then presented to family members by the Prime Minister's representative, the Honourable Warren Snowdon MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Defence Science and Personnel and Indigenous Health and the National RSL President, Rear Admiral Ken Doolan AO RAN (Ret'd). The average length of time they supported their husbands/wives in the services was 20 years. Dr Rod Bain represented the State President Mr Don Rowe.

The National Chairman of Reserve Forces Day Council, Sir Laurence Street, in announcing the award, said that it was important that all Australians be made aware of the great sacrifices made by a Reservist's family members when the spouse is away either training for, or fighting a war, or on peace keeping duties around the world.

"This medallion will, in a tangible way, serve to honour their stalwart support of those family members in uniform who chose a part-time military career," Sir Laurence said.

"It is a small token of our thanks and gratitude for the extra work load they embraced in order to release a person who was then able to leave home in order to bolster Australia's defences."

Special guests at the parade, held in brilliant sunshine, were 14 pre-WW2 veterans with an average age of 91 years, who were serving in the part time forces prior to 3rd September 1939. A book about their exploits entitled "The 39ERs" was launched by Rear Admiral Doolan. Copies can be obtained by visiting www.rfd.org.au. The DVA assisted with a small grant for the production of the book.

Among the veterans, with his story in the book, was South Australian ex-Sergeant Charles Short who was hit in the stomach and severely wounded by a Japanese sniper's bullet at Gona, New Guinea while serving with the 2/27th Infantry Battalion. Also included are a fascinating set of photos taken by Lieutenant John Rischbieth VRD RANR who travelled to Germany in 1935 with a group of Senior Scouts and were hosted by members of the Hitler Youth.

The medallions will be presented to wives and partners during Reserve Forces Day celebrations next year. Applications will only be accepted from serving and former Reservists through their Association.

In Sydney, a huge parade and mini-tattoo honouring the families at the Sydney Domain is set down for July 3. Other regional cities holding presentations and celebrations are listed on the Council's web site www.rfd.org.au.

ACTION FROM NOW - MEDALLION NOMINATIONS

Nominations from Associations for the spouses/partners who have supported during your/their service are to be sent to

Assns by the 15 Apr 2011. The Assns will then send a Summary to the RFDC Project Officer by 30 Apr 11 who will then have the Medallions manufactured. The Medallions for some of the recipients will be presented hopefully at a Government House reception or a similar reception, or on the parade. The Medallions are to be physically presented to the recipient; they are not an item that will simply "be put in the mail". The application also has the contact details of the NSW Project Officer.

The nomination form for NSW is now on the web site - see link: <http://www.rfd.org.au/> and on the right hand side see Nomination Form. Also go to "2011 Live" for more details and slideshow of the Launch.

The form also contains the award eligibility. In the case of other States/NT/ACT please contact your local RFDC. Also see the photo of the Medallion. We will send Assns by separate e-mail the Summary form to complete when sending the nominations to the Project Officer for ordering the medallions.

For NSW SYDNEY PARADE - please update your diary to attend our first parade briefing night for the year on Thursday 3rd March 2011 at Defence Plaza. The MAJGEN Gen Sir Charles Rosenthal KCB CMG DSO VD award for the best formation will be presented on the night. In 2009 the inaugural award was won by the 8th Brigade Formation. The Association Awards for the 2010 parade will also be presented.

For NSW Regional Cities - please contact your RFDC Regional CM for details.

ACTION REQUESTED BY ASSOCIATIONS

Please advise your members of the Theme for this year and send them the link for the Nomination Form or print off copies for them. We believe the method of acceptance via Assns will assist your membership.

To all thank you for your support over a busy year.

Regards

John

LTCOL John Moore OAM RFD ED Ret'd
National Executive Officer &
NSW Deputy Chairman
RESERVE FORCES DAY COUNCIL
Ph 02 9983 9387
Mob 0403 160 750
www.rfd.org.au

(Continued from page 8)

In The Blue Corner

Help our fellow ANZACs

New Zealand Earthquake Tuesday 22nd February, 2011

Assistance for **Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association** in Christchurch and surrounding Canterbury region

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/index.html>

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/findrsa/district.cfm?districtID=7>

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/findrsa/listings.cfm?listingID=449>

All replies direct to both:

RNZRSA National Office

PO Box 27248, Wellington New Zealand 6141

(181 Willis St, Wellington, New Zealand 6141)

P: 0011 64 4 384 7994

F: 0011 64 04 385 3325

enquiries@rnzrsa.org.nz

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/index.html>

Donation Form: <http://www.rsa.org.nz/involved/donate.html>; and

RNZRSA Christchurch

PO Box 354, Christchurch, New Zealand 8140

(74 Armagh St, Christchurch New Zealand 8013)

P: 0011 64 3 03 379 9724

F: 0011 64 3 03 377 9661

christchurch.rsa@xtra.co.nz

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/findrsa/listings.cfm?listingID=449>

As you are aware, an earthquake of magnitude 6.3 occurred in the Christchurch region on 22nd February, 2011 and you would have seen the reports of the damage and suffering that occurred.

Our mates in Christchurch and surrounding Canterbury region are doing it tough again with the latest in a series of major earthquakes. As well as the RNZRSA Christchurch building being severely damaged, there will be calls on RNZRSA Christchurch and surrounding Canterbury region to assist their members and their extended families; these service men and women are our fellow ANZACS.

How can we help? We can donate money! I know many of us are suffering donation-fatigue after the Australian floods and fires and the many day-to-day calls on our compassion both in Australia and overseas, but these fellow ANZACS need us and I know that any donation would be appreciated.

Obviously, communications in Christchurch will be erratic for some time so why not donate directly to their national office in Wellington using the Donation Form on the webpage:

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/involved/donate.html>

(Continued on page 17)

An Update on Naval Matters

Australian Ministers Announce Transition Plan to Landing Helicopter Dock Ships

On 1st February, 2011 Australian Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith, and Minister for Defence Materiel, Jason Clare, today announced that HMAS Manoora would be decommissioned and that Defence would develop a new comprehensive plan to transition to the new Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) Ships



HMAS MANOORA

HMAS Manoora will be decommissioned on the advice of Chief of Navy. The Manoora was placed on operational pause by the Seaworthiness Board in September last year.

An examination of the over 40 year old ship has revealed it requires remediation of significant hull corrosion and the replacement of both gear boxes. This work would cost over \$20 million and would take until April 2012 to complete. The Manoora was scheduled to be decommissioned at the end of next year. "That is not value for money for another nine months of service," Mr Smith and Mr Clare said.

LANDING HELICOPTER DOCK (LHD)

HMAS Manoora and the RAN's other amphibious support ships (HMAS Kanimbla and HMAS Tobruk) will be replaced

by two Canberra Class LHDs, the largest Ships ever operated by the RAN.

Later this month (February 18) the hull of the first LHD will be launched in Spain where it has been constructed by Navantia.

The hull will arrive in Melbourne next year for further work to be completed at the Williamstown Shipyard before the LHD becomes operational in 2014. Australia's second LHD will become operational the following year.

The LHDs are bigger than Australia's last aircraft carrier. Each is 230 meters long and can carry a combined armed battle-group of more than 1000 personnel, 100 armoured vehicles and 12 helicopters. Each also includes a 40-bed hospital. "Stepping up to this new capability is going to require a lot of work by Navy," Mr Smith said. "It is very different to the ships we currently operate. One LHD will effectively replace the entire amphibious force we have today. It also has a number of capabilities, such as a floating dock that the Royal Australian Navy does not currently operate. Because of the decommissioning of the Manoora and the age of our other amphibious ships, I have asked Defence to present a new comprehensive plan for the transition towards the new LHDs."

TRANSITION PLAN

"I have asked Defence to present me with options and recommendations to ensure the smooth transition to the LHD," Mr Smith said.

This could include the lease or purchase Ships that would provide a platform to train and prepare for the LHDs, such as a Bay Class Ship from the UK Government. If this option is taken up it could provide for the decommissioning of the HMAS Kanimbla or HMAS Tobruk to be brought forward.

HMAS Kanimbla was also placed on operational pause by the Seaworthiness Board last year. The Kanimbla is not now expected to be available for operations until mid-2012 and is currently scheduled to be decommissioned at the end of 2014.

HMAS Tobruk is currently being maintained at a 48-hours readiness posture in order to meet Australian Defence Force preparedness requirements. The Tobruk will be required to dock this year to replace worn-out support bearings on a propeller shaft. She is due to be decommissioned at the end of 2012.

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In The Blue Corner

So, please download the form, complete it, enclose your personal cheque or a money order from the Post Office and mail it to the RNZRSA National Office who will forward it to Christchurch and surrounding Canterbury region.

Thank you for your time and compassion for our fellow brother and sister ANZACS.

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

Searching for Terry GROSS

48613 MAJ (ret) Terence (Terry) Francis GROSS, HQ AFV Vietnam
<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1278553>

If YOU have contact details for the above member, please advise:
 LTCOL (ret) Roger W. Greene
 M: 0411 431 189
roger@telecon.com.au
 And
 Ted (Blue) Hawkins
 07 5499 3704, 0466 475 080
hawkins2@aapt.net.au
 ...for our RASigs Contact Dbase

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In The Blue Corner

SCAMwatch e-mail alert: Donate wisely

SCAMwatch Alerts

Home Website <http://www.scamwatch.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/693900>

Queensland Floods <http://www.scamwatch.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/818735>

Fake SCAMwatch Alerts <http://www.scamwatch.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/818215>

FYI below – it seems that fraudsters are active and trying to solicit funds off the back of the current Queensland floods – BE ALERT!

You can register to receive automatic SCAMwatch advisories via its website.

Why not register NOW!

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

SCAMwatch is warning consumers to thoroughly check the legitimacy of charities when donating to help flood victims in central and south east Queensland.

Whilst many legitimate charities exist, scammers have been known to take advantage of the public's generosity and kindness in the aftermath of disastrous events. Recent charity scams emerged during the Haiti earthquake crisis in 2010 and the Victorian bushfires in 2009.

Charity scams operate in a number of ways. You may be approached on the street or in your home by people collecting money pretending to be from a legitimate charity. Scammers may also set up false websites which look similar to those operated by real charities. Some scammers will also approach you by telephone or with spam e-mails requesting donations.

Not only do these scams cost people money, they also divert much needed donations away from legitimate charities and causes.

Visit the Queensland Premier's website for information on how to make a donation.

Warning signs for charity scams

- You have not heard of the charity before;
- The scam operates via a fake website which is a very close replica to a legitimate charity site. Scammers may also use replica letters and e-mails;
- A collector makes a face-to-face approach but does not have any identification or has forged identification;
- The collector cannot or will not give you details about the charity, such as its full name, address or phone number;
- The collector becomes defensive over questions about what the charity does and how much of the donation gets taken up by costs;
- The collector asks for cash, won't accept a cheque or asks for any cheque to be made out to them rather than to the charity. Illegitimate online collectors will insist on payment by money transfer;
- The collector does not want to provide a receipt or the receipt does not have the charity's details on it.

How to protect yourself from charity scams

- Approach charity organisations directly to make a donation;
- Do not rely on a 'phone number or website address given by the person who first called, visited or e-mailed you because they could be impersonating a legitimate charity;
- **Never** give out your personal, credit card or online account details unless you initiated contact and it is a trusted source;
- If you are approached out of the blue by a collector ask to see their identification;
- Legitimate charities are registered at the state or territory level—check with your local fair trading agency to see if they are a genuine charity;
- Do not open suspicious or unsolicited e-mails (spam)—delete them.

Report

You can report scams to the ACCC via the report a scam page on SCAMwatch or by calling 1300 795 995.

More information

Explore SCAMwatch to find out more about charity scams. Stay one step ahead of the scammers. Explore SCAMwatch for more tips on how to recognise and protect yourself from scams.

F Troop gathering before the 104 Sig Sqn 2011 Re-union

On the Thursday 3rd November any members of 'F Troop' who would like to participate will be getting together at the Tallebudgera Surf Lifesaving Club for an informal get together.

This is not to take anything away from the main re-union in any manner at all, it is just that quite a number of F Troopers will be in attendance at the Gold Coast and it offers a good chance to catch up.

Any queries can be forwarded to me.

Thanks

Phil Clohesy

pac6@optusnet.com.au

'phone: 07 3801 3602.

Regards

Blue

Tail-end Charlie

A visit to Grantham, Queensland...

...and worrying about Cairns

Dear friends all,

Yesterday was for me a very disturbing day. I spent the day, with fellow Rotary Club members clearing farming fields in Grantham.

Service in Vietnam, where one expects to see destruction, time in Kosovo post the Serbs 'ethnic cleansing' of that poor nation; **nothing** had prepared me for the utter devastation I saw all about me whilst in Grantham. And we are not at war. Mother Nature had done her worst.

Entrance to the village of Grantham is controlled by the Police and only those with an invitation or were local residents were given permission to enter. As we, a small team of 5, four Rotarians and the wife of one of our Rotary mates, were there on an invitation of a mutual colleague and farmer friend, we had no problem of entry and were escorted to the Registration Centre. We all were required to register and provide proof of identify.

Walking through farming fields, boarded by the houses of the small community village of Grantham was indeed sobering. Picking up, computers, fax machines, lawn mowers, sheets of iron, fence palings, radios, electric toasters, LP Records, CD's, cutlery and crockery, photo albums, clothing, children's swing sets, push-bikes, various farm implements, all trashed beyond use, all partly buried in the mud and silt.

We'd walk the length of the field, turn and wonder why we missed so much junk and so repeat the same process again! This cleaning up of debris, resultant of the flood, is going to be an ongoing task for some weeks, but it is necessary as the fields need to be planted as soon so as to provide an income for the local community and vegetables for consumption in the wider area. In many ways the Lockyer Valley is the bread basket of Brisbane and beyond.

As an old military man, I was proud to see the efforts of the Army lads from the Royal Australian Engineers (21 Construction Squadron ~ Combat Engineers) at work, the plant and equipment working flat strap, heavy duty tip-trucks constantly rolling along the road taking junk to a central tip. Graders scraping the roads clear of dried mud, dried mud in many cases well over 4 feet deep. Plant equipment pulling cars that were wrapped around trees, off the trees and onto low loaders then off for disposal.

These young men have my respect. Late last week they were walking the very fields we were clearing of rubbish, walking the fields shoulder to shoulder and during the sweep of the fields recovered well over 1,000 body parts!

Whilst having a yarn with the some of the local people, I

was amazed at the spirit and willingness to want to move forward and focus on recovery. However, I do believe that once the volunteers have moved on and the local population don't have the endless visits from the media, (which is not appreciated), or volunteers working in the assisting in cleaning up, ~ perhaps in six or twelve months, then ~ then is the time when the real assistance will be needed. Listening to one farmer, who had lost two family members, was an experience I would not wish to repeat. My heart still aches for this gent.

For me today has been a rest and recuperation day for yesterday I found so many muscles I had not used for some time!!!! But I would never complain, the sights and story of Grantham, confirm that I have nothing to complain about.

I did have a camera with me and took only half a dozen snaps, all of what is left of one house and our working area. Whilst I had the opportunity to take many other photos, I felt I had no right for indeed I would have felt embarrassed, taking photos of other's misfortune.

The efforts and energy of my colleagues, assisted me in hanging in when I wanted to give up, physically I was tired, but mentally I was most upset and wished myself away - anywhere but where I was, for all I could see was like a war zone. Getting out one's wallet is a great assistance to the almost unending effort, but getting dirt under the nails is also a very rewarding activity.

If I may ask but one thing from you, the reader, please pray for all those who have survived the floods, but with a special thought for the folk of Grantham. THANK YOU.

Kind wishes to you all but with a special focus on those of Grantham, may they have peace and blessings.

Walter Buchanan

Tuesday, 1 February 2011

PS: And now all my wife and I have on our minds is our middle Son who resides in Cairns. Last phone call about 2 hours ago, Robert sounded most concerned, but indicated he was ready as could be!

Thankfully, Cairns was spared the brunt of Cyclone Yasi, and with no reports of deaths or injury, I presume Wal & Margaret's son in Cairns is okay.

Ted (Blue) Hawkins

Chooks...The RASigs Unofficial Mascot

From Joan (widow of MAJ (ret) Bernie Saunders).

Truly something you could print and put on notice boards, fridge doors etc. OR use as an 'I'VE BEEN HERE' notice when visiting other Corps, Units etc when 'borrowing' items on a long-term basis!

Up the Old Red Rooster, and more P155!

Regards

Ted (Blue) Hawkins



Chooks - The RASigs Unofficial Mascot

2010 was a tough year, but we made it! Phew!



Chest out, chin up, stomach in,
Left, right, left, right, left.....

2011, here I come!

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