

The Communicator

Royal Australian Signals Association (Queensland)



APRIL 2015

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PRESIDENTS REPORT



MIA (probably laying a line to Toowoomba)

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Secretary/Treasurer Report

Our next meeting will be Anzac Day, where the usual dawn services will be held haven't heard anything yet about any changes to the Gallipoli Barracks yet but last year there were slight mix-ups with starting times - some at the appointed time and some set for the dawn. Stay tuned for more information as it comes to hand. As for the march in the city the decision has been made to start the parade 30 mins early at 9.30am to allow the ABC who will broadcast the event and then also schedule the showing of events across Europe starting at 12.30. So with Army the first off this year we will need to be in place (same as last year along George St near Charlotte) by about the 9.45am so as to get ourselves organised.

Afters has been organised for the Orient Hotel - new manager, and also available will be a roast of the day for \$10

I will not be at any of the Anzac Day activities as I will be overseas until late May and will see anyone attending the midyear function.

Chris

FROM THE EDITOR

Vales. From this issue on I will post any Vales I receive leaving out funeral dates etc. this is because for the members receiving hard copies by the time of issue some of these vales may be too old to act upon.

Again if members have pc capabilities please send me your E mail address this will ensure you receive up to date info.

Membership dues

Remember. It's only \$5 per year.

You can post them to the treasurer at PO Box 3038 Chermside West Qld 4032 or a bank transfer to Royal Australian Signals Association (Queensland) BSB 638-260 Acc No 11247649 S26

If you have already paid and are financial then skip this bit

Digger



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FYI

DVA Online.

My Account enables you to access many Department of Veterans' Affairs services online.

It's now **much easier to register** for My Account. Call Veteran's Access Network on **133 254 (metro) or Free Call 1800 555 254 (regional callers) during business hours Monday to Friday.**

- **Request a Lump Sum Advance online**
 - **Request a DVA Officer to contact you**
 - **View your payments**
 - **Update personal and financial information**
 - **Request official letters**
- Download popular forms**
Factsheets and publications

Ex members of the RASigs living in Vietnam are organizing their third reunion in Vietnam to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in August 2016.

The reunion tour will include Day tour of Saigon, Mekong River day trip, Dinner on Floating restaurant with cultural show, shopping in Saigon, Day tour of Nui Dat, Pool Party, Concert starring Little Pattie, Lucky Starr, Laurie Thompson and others all of whom performed previously in Vietnam.

The tour will commence on the 15th August 2016 and conclude on 23rd August 2016. Costs at this stage will be around USD\$ 950 for ground content only.

Single supplement will be an extra

USD\$ 350 approx. Registrations for those interested will be opened shortly through Buddha Winch's web site:<http://www.buddhas-place.com> Email address for reunion is : rasigsvn2016@outlook.com

133 Sig Sqn Reunion Planning

If interested, please contact Kelvin Knights kutluch1@msn.com

Stop Press

(From SVVA News letter April 2015)

Army Combat Badge (ACB) – 103 Sig Sqn and 104 Sig Sqn: Submission was sent to Army Office in late January 2014 via the last 104 Sig Sqn, SSM in SVN, Ex RSM Brian Fisher. Brian was assisted by a number of members of the two units and the surviving OC's. *Update (April 2015): Ongoing!*

RA Sigs Coral/Balmoral: A committee has been formed to submit a citation to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) justifying the issue of the Unit Gallantry Citation (UGC) for every unit that was engaged in the battles of FSPB Coral and Balmoral, 12 May to 6 June 1968. This committee is made up of individuals who represent each of the units involved in those battles. The UGC is worn by individuals as a decoration. It is also conferred on the current day unit for the soldiers to wear, as a ribbon, on their uniform.

Update (April 2015): Names researched for the 40th Anniversary Reunion RA Sigs have been passed to the committee.

See <http://coral-balmoral.au104.org/index.html> for name list. Contact pronto@au104.org

133 Sig Sqn Reunion Planning

If interested, please contact Kelvin Knights kutluch1@msn.com

103 Sig Sqn 50th Year Birthday Reunion/Golden Jubilee Program

Detail planning has begun to hold in the last week of Oct 2015 at the unit in Townsville. For more information on the planning, etc contact Lofty Evans loftuse68@optusnet.com.au

WRAAC 65th Anniversary 2016, including RAANC

Should any WRAAC Corps members be interested in attending the 65th Anniversary, please contact administrator@wraacreunited.org to be sent a link and information about the reunion.

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**104 SIGNAL SQUADRON
50th Anniversary Reunion
28th to 30th May 2016
(Saturday to Monday)**

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

The 104 Signal Squadron 50th Anniversary Reunion 2016 is being hosted at the Twin Towns Services Club and Resort on the Gold Coast 28th to 30th May 2016 celebrating 50 years since the unit was raised on the 30th November 1965 for service in South Vietnam. This reunion is for 104 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. Also welcome are the younger 104 Signal Squadron veterans who served in the **Solomon Islands, Timor, Iraq, Afghanistan** and **Peacekeeping missions** plus other members of the **1st Combat Signal Regiment**. It's your time - please attend!

Widows and family members of deceased Ex 104 Signal Squadron members most welcome.

Reunion Program

Saturday 28th May 2016

Register from 10am to 4pm at Visions Function Room (Twin Towns Services Club) and renew old friendships. Bar closes at 3pm to allow room to be prepared for the Meet and Greet function later in the evening.

Meet and Greet function from 6pm in Visions Function Room (Twin Towns Service Club).

Sunday 29th May 2016

11am service at the Twin Towns Services Club War Memorial which is adjacent to the club in Chris Cunningham Park. Medals should be worn. There will be an opportunity for reunion attendees to lay a wreath or other memorial during the service. Dinner function (three course meal) in the Showroom (Twin Towns Services Club) from 6:30pm. Function Bar open at 6pm for pre dinner drinks. Guest speaker, etc.

Monday 30th May 2016

Farewell lunch function (two course meal) in the Showroom (Twin Towns Service Club) from 12pm. Function Bar open at 11am for friendship drinks. Kick off next reunion, committee, etc.

Reunion Admin

Limit on Attendance: Because of venue changes since our last reunion in 2011, this reunion is limited to 350 attendees.

Function Cost: \$160 per head if payed before 11th April 2016 (Early Bird Pricing). \$170 from 11th April 2016. Remember this reunion is limited to 350 because of the venue, so registrations close once the 350 is reached.

Reunion Shirts: Polo and Chambray shirts are \$35 each. No orders after the 11th April 2016.

Time Zones: All timings are Queensland times but daylight saving will not be operating in NSW - so what is the big deal!

Reunion Dress Code: Minimum dress for all functions as per the Twin Towns Service Club rules. Neat, casual and closed shoes. Stubbies, singlets and thongs will not quite meet the standard. We love you but Twin Towns will not let you into the functions!

Reunion Committee 2016

Denis Hare Ph: 07-54387512 Mob: 0419-334535

Don Sutherland Ph: 07-32698298

Peter Thorne Ph: 07-32854823 Mob: 0409-633353

John Bertini Ph: 07-33971058 Mob: 0429-491460

See Reunion Web Site at <http://2016.au104.org>

Reunion Email: reunion@au104.org

All Correspondence

104 Sig Sqn Reunion 2016

PO Box 115, Glass House Mountains, Queensland, 4518

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THE 3RD LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS REGIMENT
(3 L OF C SIG REGT)

LOGISTIC SUPPORT FORCE SIGNAL SQUADRON
(LSF SIGN SQN) Recollection by WO2 George Parker
1959-80

On 9th August 1960, SIG Alfie Donnison, Barry (Yarrab) Barclay, Gino Bolding, Blanco Bradbury, Darryl Croucher, David (Jock) Lowson, Tiger Lyons, Luke Diddsman, Max Godwin, Mal Opie, Marino Palandri, Stan Perejmibida, Paul (Popeye) Sams (ex-RAN), Kevin Schmidt (ex-Nasho), Ernie Schuschuck (Canadian), Paul Simon (ex-U Boat teleprinter operator) Chris Wolfenden (ex-Nasho), Van Sam Beke and myself. We had just completed the 6/60A and 6/60B Basic Operator Wireless and Line (OWL) and Operator Keyboard (OK) Courses (2 Feb-9 Aug 1960). The instructors of our courses were WO2 Eric Belcher, WO2 Ron Boulton, Sgt Fred Broomhead and Sgt Sid Phillips.

We were the first group of Operator Wireless and Line (OWL) and Operator Keyboard (OK) operators to march into the newly formed Logistic Support Squadron (LSF Sqn) (ARA) of the 3rd Lines of Communications Signal Regiment (3 L OF C Sig Regt) (CMF). We had completed a trial course of the upcoming new trade, Operator Keyboard & Radio (OKR). Other members of the courses were posted to 1 Signal Regiment, 1 and 2 Battle Group Signal Troops (Sig Bobby Brammer, Bruce Bridgeman, Max Cowdry, Alan Cutmore, Tanker Hawkins, Doc Orchard, and 101 Wireless Signal Regiment at Cabarlah (Sig John Grace, Roger Harrison, Fred Hawkins, Jock Kinder, Alfie Schaeffer, and Ted Warner.

LSF Sig Sqn was part of the restructuring for the Pentropic Division between the ARA and CMF, whereby CMF Sqns/Coys became part of ARA units and ARA Sqns/Coys became part of CMF units. 3 L of C Sig Regt was formed in 1959 from the Army Signal Regt, which was formed in 1954. Our Sqn was located at the Westgarth Depot (Darebin) and the RHQ was located at Tate Street, Ivanhoe, which was manned by ARA Cadre. The LSF Sig Sqn had a temporary establishment of 75 in those early days of 1960-61, and many trades' people were "shadow posted" from fixed units within Victoria to LSF Sig Sqn that made up the full establishment of our Sqn.

Our Commanding Officer (CO) was Lt Col Harry (One-lung) Dixon, 2IC was Capt Phil (Skeeta Boots) Perman, QM was Capt (Butch) Powell, RSM was WO1 Len (Sparrow) Thompson, and RQMS was SSgt Bones Irvine and Jug-head Johnson (Clerk). The OC of LSF Sig Sqn at Westgarth was Lt Bruce Evans and the rest of the staff Cpl Luke Cherry (OK), Cpl Ron Goolie (Tpt) and Cpl Fred Gunning (OWL). Over next month other men began to arrive: WO2 Les Johnston (SCC), SSgt (Rockspider) Humphries (OKC), Sgt Charlie Hughes (OKC), Sgt Block Howe (Sgt Line), Cpl Rex Wiggins (OK/OKC). These NCOs, were the backbone of our unit, and OR's had great admiration and respect for them.

Later arrivals were Sgt Bert McSweeney (Tpt Sgt), Sgt Kevin (KP) Pearson (Spvr) and Marcus (Tell us another story) Irvine (Spvr), Cpl Bob Fields (OWL) (Ex SAS), Cpl Andy Milton (Dvr), Sgt Les Douglas (SQMS), Sig Blue McEwan (RM) and Sig Hank Stoffels (Tech TG).

In early 1961 Croucher, Lyons, Lowson, Diddams and Van Sam Beke marched out to SAS Sqn Sig Tp.

The squadron had no equipment and it was real excitement when a number of brand spanking new Studebakers arrived, dated 1942, and had only a low mileage on them from Bandiana to Westgarth, brand new TG-7Bs dated 1941, a couple of crates containing brand new Harley Davidson's, and crates of brand new 303's packed in grease.

Cpl Fred Gunning had a Collins receiver set up in one of the rooms at Westgarth and the OWL operators practised Morse receiving by listening into the Police WT Net, receiving at speeds of 18wpm. Fred was a great man and an experienced operator. Fred also made a mark in the unit as he drove a "nipple pink" FJ Holden, which was well known throughout Watsonia area. On our first big exercise in Sydney area with 1 Sig Regt, I can remember Fred sitting in front of a TG-7B working a duplex circuit on the one piece of equipment. Fred was typing blind and sending directly to another terminal, and at the same time it was receiving incoming traffic in page form on the same equipment.

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Later we received our first batch of WS173 (RAAF) Transmitters and more brand new Collins receivers. We had many WS62 sets and a few WS122 sets. We struggled communicating with them as we were working extreme range, and basically these wireless sets were hopeless. WO2 Snow McHugh (Technician) had just marched and he began to use his bush expertise and he design special aerial tuning amplifiers to boost up the output of the 62 sets, which were attached to the aerial mounting outside of the vehicle. The amplifier unit was encased in a jam tin, and to load up the WS you had to firstly tune the WS up, then go outside and tune up the amplifier by holding a pencil about one inch from the aerial. While tuning it, an arc of radiation would jump from the aerial to the pencil tip, and as the arc got brighter, the aerial was considered loaded and tuned. We blew a lot of sets up and had a few nervous operators!

A few months before Exercise Icebreaker (October 1961), our unit received a good quantity of C11/R210s, 42 and 45 sets, including a batch of B70s. Most of our local exercises were conducted in the Dandenong Mountain, as our unit was involved in the restoration work at McKenzie Creek stage of the "Puffing Billy Restoration Project". We cleared the old railway line of blackberry bushes around the McKenzie Creek and installed metal poles for line communications. Other exercises were conducted at Swan Island as Sgt Block Howe's line group was responsible for laying new communications cable throughout the area. The island was being prepared for Special Operations courses. The island was still under the command of the RAN, and we use have a run in with the RAN Commander, he just didn't like Army people. During some of the exercises our OC, Lt Bruce Evans would bring his Morris Minor and speed boat down to Swan Island, and during our leisure hours we went boating and water skiing around the lower part of Port Phillip Bay. Bruce was a great officer.

LSF Sig Sqn was involved in many exercises during 1960, and spent 9 months out of 12 months on exercises in NSW (1961). We left Melbourne on Good Friday (April 1961) and arrived back at Westgarth on Melbourne Cup Day. We stopped outside of Wangaratta to listen to the Cup. During that time we were involved in many shake-up and shake-down exercises pre and post Icebreaker) (Oct 1961).

Prior to Ex Icebreaker our brand new SSM arrived, WO2 Mick (Angry-Ant) Attrill, who later became the RSM of the School Of Signals in the mid-1960. Maj Condor and Capt McGreevy marched in as our new OC and 2IC of LSF Sig Sqn and 2LT Doug Slade as our Troop Comd, replacing Lt Bruce Evans.

Sgt Charlie Hughes (OKC) and Sgt Block Howe (Line Sgt) began a multitude of familiarisation courses on other trades. All members were expected to know basic principles of all other trades in our Sqn. We use to spend a lot of time with Linies, laying cables and doing everything that a Linesman had to do. We erected large sections of antenna masts. We were instructed by our technicians how to maintain our WS62s and 22s sets, by opening the sets up and cleaning all the contacts and dust around the valves, normally the technicians were never called out in those days. They also taught us the three IAs of a WS62 set. First, if the set wasn't working well you would clean the inside of the set; second, if it still didn't work, you would shake the shitter out of it; and if it still didn't work, you dropped it from a foot above the ground. And if it still didn't work, you then sent it to the technician. After the C11s, 42 and 45 sets arrived, we had to forget those three IAs. Our SQN still wasn't at full strength so we were all expected to chip in and do a bit of everything of every other trade, including catering.

Our Tpt NCO, Cpl Ron Goolie was a character, who had a large family and he always said that he kept his kids entertained by throwing a handful of hundred-and-thousands into the wood heap.

WO2 McHugh named all his kids after the exercises he attended.

Sgt Charlie Hughes had a serious accident at Westgarth in mid 1961. We practicing the erection of an antenna mast (Six lengths) and LCpl Buddha Goldie (Linie) were teaching us how to install the sectionised aerial mast. The rigging gear got stuck and we had about 3 lengths up and Charlie climbed up to release the obstruction. As Charlie was wriggling a cable, the whole sections collapsed, Charlie threw himself backwards and landed terribly on his heels. He did terrible damage to his spine, ankles and hips. (I don't think Charlie every really recovered from his injuries.) Charlie was another highly respected NCO.

We were at Ingleburn, camped at 1 Sig Regt, and Charlie had to return some cipher gear back to Victoria Barracks in a hurry, so he grabbed me and a Land Rover and off we went---fast---up the Sydney Road. The traffic was thick, peak hour, and I flew. As I got faster and further up the road, Charlie was curled up in the front seat with his head between his knees in a foetal position. Besides having bad luck in getting me to drive him, I don't think his bad back and stomach endured the trip very well. We just got there in time before they closed the commcen.

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The night before we left for Sydney in April 1961 all the blokes had a break out, boozing up at the Red Tulip and all the other "Dives" in Melbourne. Anyway they brought back to camp two nice, well respected ladies. The first I knew about them was after coming home from my girlfriends place, I walked into our toilet, standing at the urinal---urinating, when these two women walks out of the cubicles, and one of them laughed and then said to me: "Handy gadget you got there, Soldier!" They knew all about these gadgets, as they were accommodating all the boys for ten pound---interesting note the Alfie Donnison and Chris Morrow were the gatekeepers. This one ten pound was shoved under her pillow, as one satisfied customer left; the ten pound was removed and passed onto the gatekeeper to pass onto the next bloke going in. I wasn't involved, and those girls thought they were making a million that night.

Well the party was cut short at 0500hrs, when Lt Evans arrived to get us all moving, these delightful young ladies where still there. It was panic stations in all modes. These two girls were shoved into one of the bloke's wardrobe and locked. Gino Baldwin and Blanco Bradley of our unit were accommodated in Area Comd Holding Tp as they were reposted to Singapore, and they didn't know the events that were going on and girls being locked away in the wardrobe. It wasn't until our unit arrived outside of Albury and Les Johnston was told by the boys what had happened, we drove onto the next town and they phoned the two blokes rang Area Comd Watsonia, and the girls were released at midday.

We had a colourful young character in our unit, Lofty Sneddon, 18 years of age; he was our most potential- potential in everything (operator switchboard, driver electrician, clerk, etc). In those days, because we did not have enough qualified tradesmen, those soldiers who had no trade were made "Potential" and helped out in those trades. I can remember being at Lucas Heights on this preliminary exercise before "Icebreaker" and Lofty was having one hell of a time on the switchboard, he had switchboard plugs everywhere and at this particular time it seemed as though every subscriber wanted to make a call. So Lofty, as quick as a flash removed all the plugs and said, "Righto! You bastards! Start again!" It was said that Lofty had disconnected the Maintenance Area Commander.

We had a technician Santa Sinclair, who belonged to our Radio Relay Tp using B70s and he always seemed to be able to have a supply of grog. Anyway, I was walking past his site this night, it was very dark, and here was Santa sucking on a coldie (26oz bottle) and it was cold. I said, "Were in the hell did you get that from?" Santa, as quick as a flash, leans over the B70s box opening the lid and retrieves a freezing cold bottle. The B70 case was full of ice and grog. Now this was a normal occurrence during the exercise with Santa. Santa had the B70s lying on the ground covered with a ground sheet. Anyway, this evening, in the dark, Lt Slade appeared out of nowhere as the circuit had dropped out, and Santa saw him coming, slipped the bottle back into the B70 box. Lt Slade got stuck into Santa, and he said to Santa: "What are those B70s doing there on the ground?" Santa as quick as a flash: "I'm maintaining them---Sir!" Lt Slade then said: "The circuit is out, get up there and tune it back in!" Santa politely said: "You got to be kidding Sir! I'm not going to climb up that mast! If you want it tuned! You do it! It was then Lt Slade realised that Santa was pissed and he also said to Lt Slade: "You got to be kidding Sir, those bloody rungs wet and slippery and I'm not going to break my blood neck!" Yes, our Santa was quite a character! Lt Slade was fresh from OCS, and he did learn some lesson with these blokes, and became a good officer.

When we were setting up our site at Lucas Heights, we were all set for Atomic Warfare and we belonged to the Pentropic Division and everything had to be underground, and under twenty six inches of cover. Well it was hard work digging in a Long-base Land Rover by hand and after many hours and days one of our radio detachment members ran into his brother-in-law or brother, who was the Engineers, driving a backhoe. He got him to come over and give us a hand to finish the digging. The hole was nearly finished and he hit a water main, and our hole filled up very quickly, and we had go away and dig another hole, working 16 hours a day for two days to finish it. On one exercise, one of our trucks were belting down a hill on the Hume Highway to Sydney and as the driver glanced out of the RH outside mirror (Studebakers are LH drive) he notice his 15KVA had come adrift and was overtaking him. At the bottom of the hill was a one-lane bridge. Guess who got to the bridge first?

We had a Driver Electrician who considered that comms came first at all times and he always refilled his KVAs while they were running. He was always warned to cease such dangerous practice, and to wear his slouch hat. This day I was passing him, standing up on top of the KVA, bent over pouring petrol into the tank, and then whoompa!!, all you could see was this ball of flame with a backside hanging out of it. Thank Mick Attrill that he wearing has slouch hat, as Mick had come along and got stuck into him for not wearing his slouch hat. That hat saved his head from serious burns. Another colourful character we had in 3 L of C was Sig Soda Soderholme. He had a wonderful wit and a great ability in writing songs, something like "--- a four letter word, called S-I-G-S". I always wonder if he was responsible for the Vietnam song we had called "--Ouc Di Lie --- Cheap Charlie".

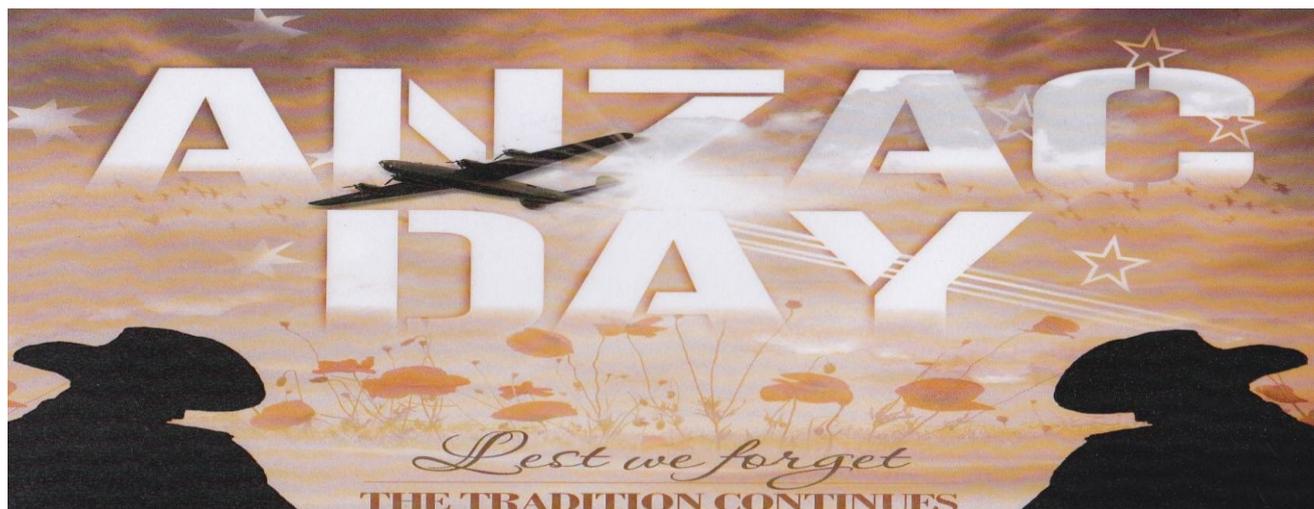
This is about all I can remember of the good times in 3 L of C, they may not be much, but they are fond memories. I could tell a few more but those stories are unprintable.

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VALES

Peter Muir 103 Signal Squadron South Vietnam 14/08/1966 - 05/05/1967	Leonard James BROWN 110 Signal Squadron South Vietnam 05/08/1971 22/12/1971	Donald Richard Kenneth (Tracker) MACKESON 104 Signal Squadron South Vietnam 18/02/1971 18/11/1971	Darryl Leigh MARTIN 110 Signal Squadron South Vietnam 16/09/1971 22/12/1971	Donald ROSS 104 Signal Squadron South Vietnam 08/10/1969 29/10/1970
Robert Malcolm (Bob) FELLOWS Malaya Taiping 1959-1961 110 Signal Squadron 09/09/1971 07/03/1972	Neil John (Jammo) JAMIESON 110 Signal Squadron Vietnam 22/07/1971 29/01/1972	George (Yank) KENNEDY 101 Wireless Regt 121 Sig Sqn		



Anzac Day

The Assn will form up in the usual place in George St near Charlotte St Cnr (of thereabouts). The way it works now is that the Marshalls call in the different services depending on order of march from the cnr of George and Elizabeth streets. This year is Army leading so we'll be off early and as the start is 0930 I think things should happen by 1000 for the Assn.? The RSL has not released the final version of the order.

Afters has been organised for the Orient Hotel - new manager, and also available will be a roast of the day for \$10

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Mid Year Function. 21/6/2015

The Midyear function is to be held at the South Toowoomba bowls club
331- 339 Hume St, Toowoomba, QLD 4350

Cost \$25 per head

Includes

3 course lunch

2 roasts

House wine on the tables (Red or white)

If you are intending to stay a couple of nights here are a couple places of interest.
Both places are close to the bowls club

Contact Cheryl Young (2 kilometers from bowls club)

Jacaranda Place Motor Inn

794 Ruthven St, Toowoomba

Ph 07 4635 3111 ph 1800 073 295 fax 07 4635 3272

Queen standard rooms start at \$120 a night. We can also look at discount prices if there is a bulk booking. We have various styles of rooms. From Standard Queen Rooms all the way through to 2 bedroom apartments.

These places range in price so if you are intending to stay give either a ring

Allan Cunningham Motel, 808 Ruthven St, (New England Highway), Toowoomba. 4350. **24Hr Checkin Kiosk 7 Days a week** - Motel includes Swimming Pool and BBQ Area, 19 Undercover Parks in front of rooms, + extra parking, New Modern Kitchenette Rooms, Microwaves and Fridge in every room, Disabled Facilities, and Free Continental Breakfast each morning of your stay 7 days a week.

0746355466 (2.5 kilometers from bowls club)

Please **RSVP Ken North at kenlinda@optusnet.com.au**
OR Bill Vanroosmalen on 3813 5040 by the

Would members please RSVP by the end of May 2015 thank you



**SEE YA
DIGGER**

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