



"The Messenger"



(Of The Gods.)

Official Newsletter of the Royal Australian Signal Association (SA) Inc. Issue 4. December 2004

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Presidents Report.

I hope that this report finds you all well and looking forward to the Christmas Break. As most of you would be aware we have just completed our celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the RASigs Association. Those of you who did not attend our celebratory annual dinner missed a fantastic evening. The Committee had worked very hard to provide a good night and it was a great success. The meal, which over the past couple of years had been average but this year, it was great. All attending members and guests enjoyed the evening and the cost of \$17.50 per head covering the meal and drinks was very affordable. I would ask you all to make a special effort next year around August/September to attend our next dinner. I'm sure you will be impressed if the standard is as good as was this year.

As part of our 25th Anniversary we made a presentation to Jim Erwin, who has put so much towards the Association and as many know, kept it going. The presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation, signed by The Head of Corps and presented by the Officer Commanding 144 Signal Squadron, Major Steve Halliday was well received by Jim.

For those of you who attended the RASigs Princess Anne Banner Parade on Corps Day at Keswick Barracks would agree that the Squadron put on a terrific display of drill and dress. The firing of volleys was well timed and all members of the Squadron appeared to enjoy the day. The Association presented the Encouragement Award as usual, only this time as a further tribute to Jim Erwin, the Committee decided to add Jims name to the award. This award is now known as the "Jim Erwin Encouragement Award." After the parade the Squadron provided a great meal and fun was had by all.

Everyone is reminded of the up and coming AGM and I would that you make the effort to attend and enjoy a meal and a few drinks with your fellow Sigs. The 2005 AGM will held in early February and all members will officially notified in early January. Accompanying the AGM notice will be a questionnaire for you to fill out and return so that the Committee has an idea as to the needs of our members.

Once again the year edges to a close and we get ready for the Christmas/New Year break. The Committee and I would like to wish our members and families a very safe , Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Regards:
Bruce long.
President RASigs Association.

Corps Day 2004.



Corps Day 2004:

November 7th this year was a memorable celebration of our Corps 79th Birthday, the members of 144th Signal Squadron paraded for nearly an hour the Princess Anne Banner being present having been transported from Victoria for the occasion. Some of the other highlights of the parade was a volley salute and a march past, the reviewing Officer being Brigadier N. Williams RFD ADC Commander of 9th Brigade. The Host Officer was The Colonel Commandant of Central Region Colonel K. Bleechmore (Rtd). The Parade Commander was the OC of 144th Signal Squadron Major S. Halliday.

During the parade awards were presented, Sgt. Dean Hodge being the recipient of the Lionel Matthews Award and Sig. Daniel Parish was the recipient of The Association's Jim Erwin Encouragement Award. Cpl. Carl Birzer received the Squadrons Most Outstanding Soldier Award. Afterwards a pleasant lunch was provided by the Squadron, sadly very few of our able members attended, the bulk of the guests being made up of family and friends of the serving Sigs.

Annual Dinner (Silver Jubilee) 2004.

The fifty plus guests who attended enjoyed what was our third and best annual dinner. Formalities were at a minimum and during the evening our Vice President Jim Erwin received a certificate award from The Head of Corps Brigadier Mike Clifford for his many years of service to the Corps and our Association. The OC of 144 Sig.Sqn Major S. Halliday presented the award to Jim. The usual raffles were run, the first prizes being won by Ivy Winton (Wife of Gordon) and "Curly" Materna. Joy Gibson and Graham Castle (RSL Barman) received the second prizes. Our special thanks to Dean Coclonis, Telstra Team Manager (Mt Gambier) for arranging the donation of four dozen bottles of wine from Cape Jaffa Wines.



Unfortunately at the time of print the above photographs were the only usable one's available. No doubt more will become available as time goes by and should appear in future editions of the "Messenger". If anyone who attended the dinner have usable prints, in particular those of the presentation to Jim Erwin, the Publisher would be grateful for any assistance.

Vale.

Captain, The Honorable Mr. Justice W.A.N. (Andrew) Wells AO. QC. Passed away on the 18th November this year. Another of our WW2 Veterans departs us. Our condolences go out to his Wife Eleanor and Family.

His age uncertain, late 80's probably! His rank may be disputed by some! He had an unusual service record in that it appears he served with "Int Corps" was discharged then re-entered the service with Signals.

He was held in high regard in law circles in Adelaide, where he served as a Justice of the Supreme Court! He will also be remembered for his great interest in, and service to, legal education at The Adelaide University Law School. He served for 16 years as a Member of legacy in South Australia.

Captain T.N. (Napier) Brown. A.M. passed away on the 23rd October last, aged 87 years. Our condolences are extended to his Wife Claire and his children Peter, Quentin, Judy, Nigel, Stephen, Damien, Mark and Lisa. He was the Father-in-law of six and the Grandfather of twenty three.

Napier was a man of the Corps through and through! One of his treasured possessions was the CC75 Corps Plaque.

On his deathbed he expressed the desire for his coffin to be covered by a Corps Flag. Napier's son Damien contacted the 2IC of 144 Signal quadron regarding this and to the unit's credit Sgt Ruth Rountree attended his funeral at St. Ignatius Church, Norwood complete with flag!

Napier spoke sparingly about his service with the Corps during WW2 during which he spent most of his time in the Pacific Operations Area.

The following is unauthenticated! It appears that he spent a considerable amount of time with Commando "Z" Force carrying out covert operations! He spoke of being responsible only to the "Head of Corps", Major General Simpson, which apparently angered other senior officers. There was a hint that he was present at the Japanese "Surrender Ceremony" where McCarthur was representing the USA and Blamey representing Australia.

It appeared that he was responsible for returning "certain documentation" to Australia after that event. As stated none of this could be authenticated however it was obvious that Napier's back round covered a lot of "history" which maybe only he was privy to and he has taken it with him.

John Heard, an Association founding member and former President reports that **Ray Rivett** a former dispatch rider (remember the Harley's) with Central Command Sig Sqn passed away on the 17th November last.

Disabled.

One of our founding members Jean Gray who because of failing eyesight had to move out of her own home into the War Veterans Home. That was earlier this year and she has been declared "legally blind". I am sorry to say that Jean has permanently lost all of her vision and is now totally blind! Our thoughts are with Jean, a gracious Lady, and I would encourage her old friends to keep contact with her.

From Jim Erwin.

Norfolk Island – with Dean and Velma HUDSON.

What was to be a short holiday with Velma's brother and his wife developed into a family reunion. On 1st August we embarked on an 8-day tour of Norfolk Island with her 2 Brothers, sister and partners. Six of the family left our home with a 3.40am taxi ride to the airport for a 6.00am departure. Leaving on time we arrived on Norfolk Island mid afternoon after a 2-hour stopover in Sydney which allowed transfer to the international terminal and a browse of the duty free shops. The time difference from NI to SA is 2 hours ahead.

After settling into our hotel rooms we decided on a short drive down to the "Main Street" in our hired 8-seater van. The area of BurntPine is a short street no longer than North Tee to Wakefield Street but has all the duty free shopping you require with cafes and coffee shops included. Being Sunday, very few businesses were open however in the days to come it was to become a thriving metropolis of locals and tourists.



Our next morning was a pre-arranged familiarity tour of the island and our driver was a direct descendant of the Pitcairn Islanders. He was extremely knowledgeable and delivered an interesting and humorous commentary during the 3-hour tour. In the afternoon we strolled around the "Town" area and after an early tea proceeded on a Light and Sound tour which told us, with the use of locals acting out the roles, of the convict era and the hardships of the early days of Norfolk Island.

Tuesday after another hearty cooked breakfast of local produce three of the family decided to go horse riding. Velma has never been on a horse, nor her Brother or his Wife. Well what a humorous start to the day but eventually they got going on their 2-hour ride as I and Velma's sister and hubby drove down to the Captain Cook memorial-landing site. It was a beautifully clear sunny morning reaching around 19 degrees for the day. That evening we were bussed out to Puppy's Point for the Island Fish Fry. A beautiful meal of local fish (snapper), salads including a couple of traditional Island dishes and sweets. A glass of red (or two) was also appropriate to cleanse the palate.

On Wednesday we relaxed in the morning and then off to the airport to greet Velma's younger brother and his wife who had flown in from Brisbane. So the afternoon was taken up with a visit to the Kingston jetty where unloading of the cargo ship moored offshore was witnessed. This is a real tourist must as the locals have maintained this old tradition of unloading by towing of tenders from the ship to the jetty, whereby pallets are off loaded with a crane and then moved along the jetty by the modern day forklift. These cargo ships arrive approximately fortnightly. We did not witness the incident but we heard that a pallet of shoes was dropped into the water so tourists the following week would have had some bargains on sale.

Back to the hotel for some catching up with family photos and news etc. over a beer or two. That night we did a Progressive Dinner whereby we visited four local families in their homes. One of the homes was an original home of an early settler being over 100 years old and still maintained without any alterations. The second was of similar age but with some improved amenities (bathroom and kitchen) to cater for the dinners. The hosts were extremely hospitable and told stories of their childhood and living conditions during their life on the Island. The last two homes were of modern design with good use of the local Norfolk Island pine timber displayed in their construction.

Thursday we had planned to go fishing but an early storm put paid to that, so we decided to do more touring of the Island and visited the national park and other locations on the Island including Ball Bay where the unloading of fuel is undertaken. Unfortunately we did not see this being carried out as a tanker only visits about 3-4 times a year. A BBQ at the hotel as part of our package was a wonderful way to finish off a casual and relaxing day.

Friday some more touring, shopping and relaxing highlighted with the evenings “Night as a Convict” dinner. We collected our convict suits during the afternoon to dress for the occasion. Fortunately it was just up the road so we walked from our hotel to the venue for this dinner. Well what a fabulous night it was. Fun and laughter with a nicely presented three course meal and drinks. The merest stepping out of line e.g., named as a damper tamper because you have started eating your damper before the soup was served, was likely to get you hauled over the coals by the Sergeant and Private (he was known as Private Parts) and paraded before the Captain. The diners were a mixture of Aussies and Kiwis so you can imagine the rivalry with group activities. A great night of frivolity.

Saturday we undertook another organized tour in the afternoon – the Island Culture tour – and this included a couple of visits to local homes to witness the traditional cooking of local produce, some historical artifacts, a demonstration of basket weaving and the highlight.....learning the language which was conducted by Susan White a descendant of the early settlers. She was hilarious and extremely entertaining for about an hour (was supposed to only be about 30 minutes). A farewell family dinner was arranged for this night and we chose to indulge in the local seafood again.

Sunday morning after packing up our bags we wandered down to the NI Sunday Market and whilst it was only a small display, some of the local artifacts and crafts were attractive and reflected some of the Island humor.

Norfolk Island which is 5 Kms wide and 8 Kms long, boasts 1800 residents, 3200 cars (many hire cars for the tourists which reaches about 40,000 a year). The townspeople, who are extremely friendly, do not pay any rates or taxes but they do pay double what we pay for electricity. Local telephone calls are free but it is \$2.00 a minute to ring Australia. There is no town water supply so each resident has to make his own arrangements and most install a 10,000 litre rainwater tank and this seems to be sufficient as they get a good rainfall (about 3-1/2 times as much as Adelaide). The hotels etc. generally drop a bore down (they call them a “spring” – it sounds better) for water which is quite suitable for drinking.

The Island is under self-rule with an Administrator (Grant Tambling ex Darwin MLA) with Australia providing support. There are 3 police officers stationed on the Island provided by the Australian Federal Police. Teachers are recruited from the mainland under contract, tax free. There is a hospital but it is expensive if you need to attend. The speed limit is 50kms/hr on all roads except in the Burnt Pine area, which is 40kms/hr. Children are allowed to ride motor bikes to school on reaching 15 years of age. Most children have their full license by the time they are 16 years 3 months. There is very little to no unemployment, however many only have part time work.

Two of the most refreshing aspects that I noticed is that you do not see young teenagers walking around with a mobile phone to their ear...they don't work on the Island and the other is that people do not lock their cars, in fact many leave the keys in the ignition with the window down. Oh for the good old days, eh? We departed the Island mid Sunday afternoon thoroughly satisfied that a good time was had by all.

Dean Hudson.

New Medals.

The Australian Defence Medal.



This new medal recognizes volunteer service in the ADF for six years of continuous service with no less than 20 days service in any year. Eligibility begins at the end of WW2 and applies to regular and reserve members. Provision is to be made for personnel who died or became TPI as a direct result of training and so were not able to achieve their six-year qualifying period.



The Afghanistan Campaign Medal



This medal recognizes ADF personnel who were force assigned to operations in Afghanistan and for those who provided support in surrounding areas. The eligibility period is 30 days. RAAF eligibility is based on 30 sorties conducted over a period of not less than an aggregate of 30 days at a rate of one sortie per day.



The Iraq Campaign Medal.



The Iraq Medal acknowledges ADF involvement in and around Iraq from 18 March 2003. This involvement concerns operations Falconer and Catalyst with a specified zone for each operation being identified as a qualifying criteria. Zone 1 is from 18 March to 30 April 2003 eligibility period 7 days and zone 2 from 1 May 2003 onwards the eligibility period being 30 days. For the RAAF elements eligibility is based on 7 or 30 sorties respectfully where those sorties were conducted over a period of not less than an aggregate of 7 or 30 days at a rate of one sortie per day.



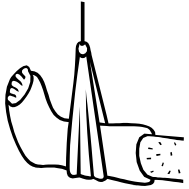
Korean Medal Entitlements.

The Australian Government has been approached by veterans of the Korean War concerning recognition of service following the armistice on 23rd July 1953. Consequently, a working party is to be appointed. 3000 Australians served in Korea after the armistice and until 1957. During that time breaches in the ceasefire occurred and lives were lost. The working party will consult veterans of Korea and investigate the appropriateness of the award of the Active Service Medal and the Returned from Active Service Badge. The Korean War lasted for three years from mid 1950 to mid 1953, 17,000 Australian Servicemen served during that time. This period is recognized by the Australian Active service Medal (1945 – 75) and the British Service medal. From 1953 to 1954 the United Nations Service Medal was awarded.

Important: Warning Order:

It is proposed that the Association's AGM will be held on **Sunday February 6th at 1600 Hrs** at the RSL Clubrooms Bennett Avenue Gilles Plains. Afterwards a meal will be provided. Official confirmation and notification will be received by all members 30 days prior.

RAP List:



Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Louise Sumner who was just recently in hospital for surgery.

Our Secretary Michael Southern is suffering poor health at present and we wish him a speedy recovery.

During 2005. Some dates to ponder over.

The 90th anniversary of Gallipoli. (The Association has a print to unveil.)

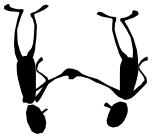
The 80th birthday of the Corps.

Ex Black Swan W.A. Reunion.

Final Wombat River Boat Trip.

60th Anniversary of the end of WW2.

(The Perth Mint has issued a set of coins to commemorate this.)



Welcome to a new member: Darryl Reid has joined our ranks.

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