



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (SA) INC

“The Messenger”

NOVEMBER 2002 ISSUE

of the Gods

Editorial.

I must apologise for the fact that Newsletters this year have been few and far between. It has been a busy year for the committee and involvement in other projects such as the recent Dinner have been extremely time consuming and have pushed “The Messenger” onto the backburner. The structure of this edition may appear rather odd as I find no other option than to work backwards to the last edition which was published pre Anzac Day in April. I hope it all falls into place. *Ed.*

Membership.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members into the fold : Elizabeth (Bitsy) Gill , Norm Harris, George Kennedy, Paul Clancy, Dean Coclonis, Peter Hasse, Ian Wallace, Paul Molineux, Andrew Graves, Peter Amos, Michael Southern.

Corps Day.

The celebration of the Corps Birthday was scheduled for 10th of November with the organisation of the day being left to 144 Sig Sqn. Due to “operational contingencies” the Sqn was unable to spend the necessary time on organising Corps Day. Unfortunately the Association was not informed of this until very late in the piece and it was then too late for your committee to arrange any sort of function to cover the gap in the calendar. It is normal that the “Lionel Matthews Award” and the “Association Encouragement Award” are presented on Corps Day ! These awards are now to be presented at HQ 144 Sig Sqn Keswick Barracks on the evening of the 10th of December at 1900 hrs. This is the Sqn’s last parade night for this year and should not be taken as a substitute for Corps Day; it is a unit function. All members of the association are invited to attend. There will be no food catered for however drinks will be available. If you wish to attend please advise Captain Gerrie Page by telephone prior to the event phone 8305 6661.**(Rest assured that the Committee will ensure that there is a Corps Day “function” next year.)**

Corps Day is normally considered by the Association to be the last official function for the year! As it was a non-event this year the Committee considers that some form of function should be held prior to Christmas. **To that end it has been decided to have a small function at the RSL on Sunday 24th November between the hours of 1600 and 1830.** The best title we can come up with is “Christmas Drinks”. We will provide “nibbles”. All drinks will be available at normal bar prices ! There will be no other costs to members. Sometimes these ad hoc “functions” prove to be as good as those that are “organised” and it is hoped that as many members as possible will at least “drop in” for a quick drink and a natter. No responses are required to this invite.

Remembrance Day

The 11th of November has been and gone. A small group of members attended the service held in conjunction with the Commando and AATTV Associations in front of our respective Memorials at Keswick Barracks. Long-term members should be aware that this service is always held on Remembrance Day and we now draw it to the attention of “newer” members. It is frequently awkward for most members to grab an hour off work but the “retired” group we would like to see attending and bolstering our numbers.

Whilst writing in respect of one “remembrance day” we must think of more recent times and of the Bali Incident. The Association flew the flag at our memorial at half mast, out of respect for all those killed or wounded as a result of the now infamous event. It was flown for the week leading up to and including the official “day of mourning” on the Sunday.

The Inaugural Association Dinner.

This was held at the RSL on Saturday 21 September and this is where the greater part of the committee’s time and energy was spent during this year. The following are a couple of items written by committee members giving their views on the occasion.

Assn Dinner Organisation (Crystal Ball Gazing)

Imagine if you were asked to organise a formal dinner for an unknown number of persons. You had had no previous contact with many of the invited guests. The only thing that you really had was the idea and a venue that could accommodate a response of around 200 if necessary.

Well, that's what faced the Assn Sub-committee putting together the Inaugural Dinner this year.

After attending the annual RSL Dinner in May where members of the sub-committee sampled an evening with similar formalities of previous Corps Dinners. It was decided that we could use the RSL facilities and arrange a function for the "Signals Family" of SA to be held in August/Sept.

The first step was to amalgamate the several lists of persons. The Central Region Corps list containing Officers and Senior NCO's, Current Association members and other former members of the Corps residing in S.A. (The latter drawn down from a data base simply by using postcode 5000.) That provided a total of 224 and enabled each invitation to be personally addressed on a first name basis.

The next step was to meet with the RSL Committee and also their Caterer to talk through our requirements and the associated costs depending on numbers. That was still the unknown and judging by the looks on the faces of the RSL people present there were obviously some doubts.

Several more meetings followed and at last we had a menu and a cost basis which allowed us to keep the price at \$22 per head including drinks. The subcommittee had from the outset decided that this was the figure that would give us the most likely chance of success.

The invites went out and by the RSVP date we had the sum total of 28 positive responses. Our goal had been approx 50. The sub-committee was then faced with calling it off altogether or waiting for a further 10 days or so to see if any late responses came in. We decided that if 28 wanted to come we were going to have the dinner. In the meantime many phone calls and e-mails were made/sent to remind people of the proposed function.

By the end of August the total had improved to approx. 60 and then finally came in around the 80 mark. Things in the "Crystal Ball" now seemed much clearer and the organisation swung into overdrive putting together the finer details of the night. Table decorations, menu place mats, name tags etc.

Throughout the next couple of weeks Stew McWaters and the caterer Wayne Freer from the RSL were extremely helpful in ensuring our wishes for the night were met.

We believe the night was very successful in bringing together members and former members of our Corps to a function that has no doubt become out of reach cost wise at other venues. There is no doubt our President, and the sub-committee breathed a collective sigh of relief at the night's conclusion. But all agreed that it had been worth the effort overall. However when you consider that the total attendance of 80 probably only represented 50 "members" of the Corps we have to ask why was there no interest shown from the other 170 odd who did not even bother to respond to the invitation.

The sub-committee would like to thank Bruce Long and the others from "The Breakfast Club" who assisted with the setting up of the hall and also helped pack up at the conclusion of proceedings.

Improvements can always be made, but the subsequent positive feedback from persons who attended should encourage the Association to make it an annual event.

Brian Melville

From the President

After months of preparation our Association's inaugural dinner was finally realised on Saturday 21st of September. The premises at the Hampstead RSL Club Rooms proved to be an ideal venue. The morning prior to the function was spent arranging, setting up and decorating tables plus establishing a permanent "Signals Wall" consisting of a portrait of our Colonel in Chief. H.R.H. the Princess Royal, the Corps Flag, other portraits and a framed montage specifically created for the 100th anniversary of Royal Australian Army. The latter was presented to the Association by Jim Erwin at the AGM 2002.

Nearly 80 guests attended, their variety of dress together with the table settings provided a colourful display. During the meal messages of greeting from other Signal Associations and the Head of Corps were read, the service of remembrance conducted, toasts proposed and an address given by our Colonel Commandant Keith Bleechmore. Despite the heavy program the atmosphere was relaxed and of good humour. After the meal and formalities there was plenty of time for guests to mingle. We the committee met recently, and concluded that the function was a success and well worth trying again next year. We propose to make some changes and additions plus a streamlining of some of the formalities. Also we intend to hold the dinner a little earlier in 2003, the proposed date being August 16th so please keep that day in mind. It is our hope that this annual function will become an important event in the year by year activities of the association.

I know that you will all join me in thanking the members whom initially instigated the idea, the organising committee, the RSL for their assistance and co-operation, and the younger and newer members of our association who helped us with the setting up on the morning prior to, and the "demolition" after the function was over.

Godfrey Williams

Those are the views of Brian a member of the subcommittee and Godfrey, our President, who is by nature a conservative person, who at times had grave reservations about the manner which the sub committee, which also included Dean Hudson the Treasurer, relentlessly drove ahead. For the sub committee it was pure hard yacka for many weeks. Brian personally printed each individual invitation that went out (200+) which were excellent and presented the image we wished to give right from the outset. As the prime instigator I was determined that "the night" would work and it would be good value and enjoyable. For something like eight weeks I pushed, shoved and badgered people by e-mail and telephone to get the numbers up. I hope that those who I induced to attend were pleased I had hammered them. In respect of the night itself I considered it was a fair effort but cringed at everything I noted going wrong, hoping nobody else noticed. Unfortunately on the night I was as sick as a dog and some of the things that went wrong were my fault. I was not in a party mood and I apologise to all of those individuals who I never spoke to personally. It was great to see that there were people who were prepared to go out of their way to attend. Individuals like Dean Coclonis who came up from Mount Gambier, Harvey Ahrens from Murray Bridge, just to mention a couple. During the evening there were obvious changes noted that need to be made if we are to successfully run again next year. So if you enjoyed this year's event, trust me it will be much better next year. As you are aware we allowed non-members to attend this year as part of a recruiting drive ! If you know those people please put some pressure on them and get them to join! We can not use Association funds and Committee to support non-members in the future. To those of you who were unable to attend or were not interested please note next years date and give it some thought. The committee is still determined to try and gather in the majority of the Signals community living in South Australia under the one umbrella, the Association. **The date for the 2003 Dinner has been set for the 16th of August.**

Jim Erwin

The following is a list of those who attended :

Harvey & Lorraine Ahrens, Neville & Nannette Bergin, Keith & Valerie Bleechmore, Dave Bolton & Ruth Van Boltenste, Bob & Fiona Brightwell, Jim Chaplin, Dean & Toni Coclonis, Peter & Joan Cope, William & Gweneth Dunkley, Drew & Angela Ellis, Jim Erwin, Ian & Cynthia Fletcher, Peter & Lyn Goodchild, Andrew & Alison Graves, Steve & Deborah Halliday, Norm Harris & Coral Jesser, Trevor & Janet Hart, Ian & Pauline Hart, Peter Hasse, Ken & Tonia Hurn, Sue Jarvinen, Frank, Graham & Jaqui Jones, George & Judy Kennedy, Bruce Long & Denise Batt, Richard & Daphne Materna, Brian & Barbara Melville, Bill & Judy McKeough, Phill & Cheryl Mitchell, Paul Molineux & wife, (apology for not remembering the name) Terry Plumb, Graham & Wendy Quayle, Ruth Rountree, Bill Sharp & Linda Barwell, Michael Southern, Brian Stevens, Louise Sumner, Ian & Colleen Wallace, Geoff Walsh & Margie Reilly, Jim Weeks, Godfrey Williams, Gordon & Ivy Winton, Ian & Bev Wilson , Veronica Willett, Luke Debruyn, (Unfortunately Dean & Velma Hudson, George & Helen Mavros, John & Marilyn Brazel all had to bail out late in the piece.)

Still working backwards we now come to Anzac Day.

It is estimated that around 70 marched under our banner this year ! The pity of it is that the greater majority are not members of the Association ! A bit of fun at the start of the march ! The Association Banner had been re-jigged to enable it to be carried more comfortably at waist level and new bearers

appointed to carry it ! Jim Erwin handed over the carriage of the Corps Flag to Bruce Long . Whilst carrying out all the adjustments necessary and briefing the bearers of the banner, and the flag, the group to our front had moved off and were almost around the Grenfell / Pulteney Street corner before our fearless leader Max Lemon got us moving. Not his fault, blame Jim !

The turn up at the RSL after the march was good ! An estimated 50 moved through during the afternoon ! The RSL was extremely pleased to have us join them again and assist in filling their coffers. Mind you we ran a raffle and made \$100. Apparently the only problem was that a certain group of ours wanted to stay Long-er than others. Just kidding!! The RSL assures us they weren't bothered. Once again committee noted some problems and will have to take into consideration next year whether we assist the RSL in providing a better luncheon menu !

Poor old Moss Oates was injured when knocked off his motorcycle prior to Anzac day. He was rotten when after making the effort to get to Adelaide from the Riverland so he could march (we had organised a wheel chair) the doctors down here would not allow him to take part. Not to worry I am told his daughter marched in his place. Moss there is always next year !!!!

Sick Parade

We are told that even now Moss Oates is still in recovery mode , Jim (KI) Browne was not the best around the time of the dinner, Bob Jarret is still confined to his wheel chair, Jean Grey is having serious problems with her eyesight as are Gordon and Ivy Winton who both, for safety reasons, have to use white canes. Jim Erwin still has ongoing problems as does his wife Tess, Dean Hudson, our Treasurer, used some of the funds available (subject to audit) to have a knee replaced and is not yet exactly sprinting around the place but is on the mend. We hope they, together with any others that have not been mentioned, all enjoy better health in the near future.

Vale

Rosemary Boots -Our sympathy goes out to Wally Boots who lost his wife Rosemary earlier in the year!

Pat Buckley – The legendary Corps RSM who recently passed away. Remembered by a lot of members I am sure.

Hugh (Scotty) McClintock. - Sadly passed away on 31 Oct 2002 after a long battle with lung cancer. Scotty served 20 years in RASigs and was in the first group (709 Sig Tp) posted into Sth Vietnam in May 65. He also served concurrently with 527 Sig Tp 65-66. He returned twice with 32 Small Ships Sqn during the period Nov 67 – April 68 and then again with 110 Sig Sqn from 70-71. To wife Lynette and children Kirsty, Greg, Karen and Kathleen we offer our sincere condolences.

Brian Melville sadly suffered a double blow earlier this year when he lost his father in law and his sister.

Godfrey William's mother sadly passed on.

Moving On

This just about completes a wrap up of the year and some of the events. **The Committee looks forward to seeing a lot of you at the RSL on the 24th of November for drinks and a chin wag.**

The address for those that can't remember where they were on the night of the dinner is :
Gilles Plains & Hampstead RSL Bennett Avenue, Manningham.

As we move towards 2003 the President and the Committee wish all members and their families and friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Not wishing to dampen the enthusiasm for the festive season but we can not leave you without warning you that we are swiftly moving toward that event which everyone waits for with bated breath **The Annual General Meeting for 2003. TBA** . We can assure you it will be interesting and a lot of members will have to pull their heads out of the sand and have a good look at where we stand in respect of Committee members. (So what's new?)