



# *"The Messenger"*



*(Of The Gods.)*

**Official Newsletter of the Royal Australian Signals Association (SA) Inc.**

**December 2009.**

Disclaimer: The views expressed in articles in the "Messenger" are those of the writers/contributors and not necessarily those of the "Committee" or "General Membership" of the Royal Australian Signal Association (SA) Inc.



**Seasons Greetings**

**The first function for 2010 is our Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday February 7<sup>th</sup> at 1630 Hrs. There will be a meal after the meeting being free for members/partners and the bar will be open. Full details are enclosed including a return slip which should to be returned via post by January 12th 2010.**



# Radio day at the Squadron.

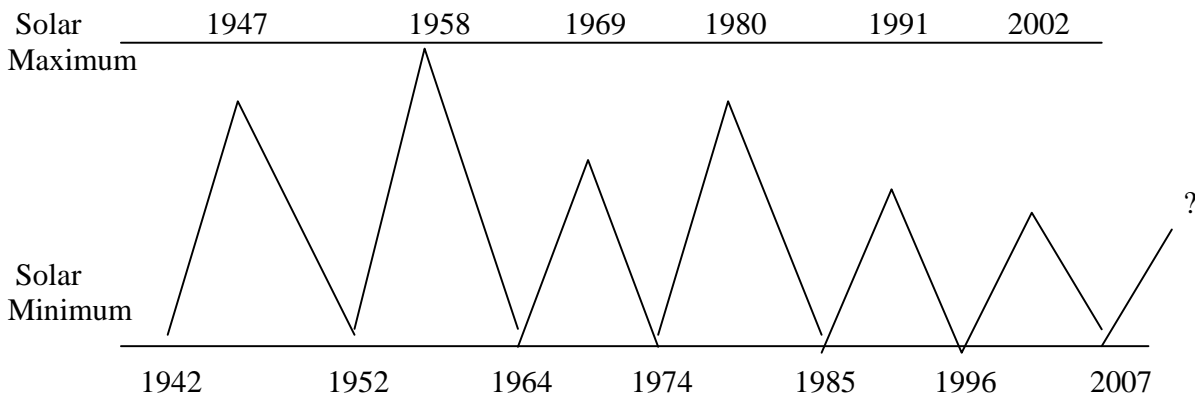


On Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup> last an Amateur Radio day was held in the radio room at 144 Sig. Sqn. The occasion was an annual Remembrance Day Radio Contest organised by the Wireless Institute of Australia. This contest acknowledges the sacrifice made by “Hams” who having entered military service during WW2 subsequently lost their lives in actual conflict.



Then object of the contest is to contact as many other stations as possible exchanging a progress number and signal report. Although radio conditions were poor our station “VK5SIG” managed 66 contacts for the operating period two of particular note being a New Zealand station and a station operating from the Cape Lewelyn Lighthouse (VK6CLL) in Western Australia. Pictured here is the radio crew flanked by the Association’s two resident “Hams” Godfrey Williams and Brian Melville. On the left is Sig. Janine Frost in the middle Sig. Adam Burns and on the right LCpl Clare Milne.

Its surprising how many ‘Hams’ spread around Australia are Ex-Sigs our call sign raising there interest and query as to our station’s origin. Their obvious excitement in making contact with us demonstrating quite clearly that the Signals spirit never dies.



**The highs and lows in sunspot numbers since 1947.**

As mentioned radio conditions were very poor as most contacts were via sky-wave as apposed to ground-wave and so dependant on the condition of the ionosphere and thereby its reflective qualities. The more charged by the sun's radiation the ionosphere becomes the greater the possibility of long distance radio communications exists. As can be seen from the chart the sun has cycles, a commonly known phenomena, these cycles lasting around eleven years from peak to peak or low to low.

It's worth noting that since the very high peak in 1958 the maximums have gradually lessened and currently the solar minimum has extended the sun seeming reluctant to increase sunspot radiation. It appears that the current cycle 2002-2013 could be considerably longer than the usual eleven years. Conversely it could peak in 2013 but that peak will be a very low one. Apparently the measurement of the sun's sunspot radiation has been recorded for hundreds of years and in 1685 it is stated that the sun went into a prolonged minimum one source quoting a length of seventy years another saying it was seventeen years? During this long period of inactivity weather in the Northern Hemisphere changed as such that in Europe they experienced what was then described as a mini-ice age.

There are many, some who are scientists, who believe that sunspot radiation affects the ocean currents and in turn weather patterns. Here in South Australia, possibly the entire nation and the Southern Hemisphere there are some correlations that can be drawn between the solar cycles and weather patterns. The huge peak in solar activity in 1958 roughly coincides with the River Murray Flood of 1956. During the minimum around 1974 we had a very dry winter here in South Australia and since then with the gradual reduction of each solar peak Australia has tended to suffer drought conditions. The suggestion is then, be it somewhat broad and loose and keeping in mind exceptions to the rule, that high solar activity coincides with higher rainfall in the Southern Hemisphere with the opposite possible in the Northern Hemisphere.

Only time will tell what eventuates perhaps the sun will peak on cue in 2013 but the level will be low and perhaps lower than previous years, or it will meander around the for a time, peak later and extend the length of this current cycle.

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### **Vietnam revisited 43 years on.** (Submitted by Brian Melville).

November 3<sup>rd</sup> saw myself and three mates (See Photo) on the plane back to Vietnam for the first time in 43 years. Nothing could really have prepared me for the changes that I would find, the images that I had kept locked in my mind for all of those years were blown away.

Luckily the Old Free World Building still stands in some form and is now the Ky Hoa Hotel (See photo next page) and as it happens we were staying there. Also two of the functions for the reunion



were held in its dining room. I did manage to find the passage way and a door downstairs that I believe was the room where the original comm. centre was located during early 1966.

Everywhere there are buildings being built or modified. The roads are wider in many cases and the streets are so clean Saigon being a vibrant city chock a block with motorbikes.



There is no road rage. When things come to a grinding halt people are tolerant of one another and they find a way out of the problem without aggression. They live in harmony and it was great to find them so happy. From the street sweeper to the millionaire they all do their bit and just get on with life.

For a Communist Country they are embracing capitalism in a most positive way. There is development, roads and infrastructure being built everywhere. The country is a work in progress and

down around Vung Tau the resorts and beach area are quite spectacular.

Our reunion and the subsequent nine day post tour was really well organized and provided something for everyone. No doubt one of the high points was the Remembrance Day Service in the rubber plantation at Long Tan. Mal Fergusson laid a wreath on behalf of the Corps. The trip to Halong Bay where we spent a night on a Junk and the water puppets in Hanoi were also very enjoyable. There is not much to remind the locals of the war. Most of the big bases have been completely cleared and apart from the museums there isn't much to be seen.

I wanted to see the area at Bien Hoa where the 1RAR lines used to be and where I spent 3.5 months but we could not get into the airfield which is controlled by the Vietnamese Army, most of the former base



**The Reunion Group gathered at the Long Tan Cross for the Remembrance Service and at right the rubber plantation where the battle occurred.**

now being a big industrial park. However, we did pay a visit to the museum that holds the original Long Tan Cross. Our guide gave us a great insight into Vietnamese history and culture. Coming back after all this time and being able to re-engage with the people without fear or suspicion was just wonderful and to see them so happy and industrious made the visit quite special.

Congratulations to Greg Dickson and his team for taking the risks associated with putting together such challenging and well organized program and for making it work so well. My only disappointment was the seemingly lack of recognition given to this most significant reunion by our Corps. Oh well you can't win them all !

Brian Melville.

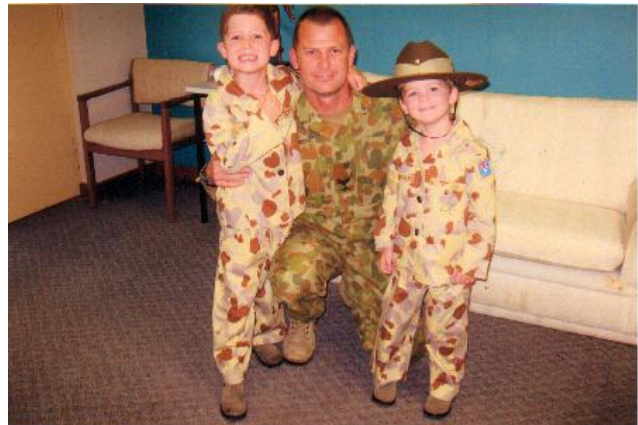
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**A number of our members attended the reunion in Vietnam and we hope to in the new year to record their experiences in subsequent editions of the “Messenger”.**

And Brian further reports:

### **The Lionel Matthews Trophy Presentation.**

The presentation of this years trophy was made at the 144 Sig Sqn Awards Night on 1 Dec 09 by Mr David Matthews (son of Lionel) His wife Sheila also attended.



**WO1 Doc O’Connell (Right) and Cpl Matthew Mangelsdorf shown with David Matthews after receiving their awards and Matthew with his two sons.**

The quality of this years nominees was outstanding and fully tested the selection panel. This was the 10th year since the inception of the award in 2000 as part of the Certa Cito 75 celebrations. The panel could not separate the final two nominees and subsequently decided to have joint winners for 2009.

Both Cpl Matthew Mangelsdorf and WO1 Doc O’Connell have displayed outstanding leadership, personal Integrity and professional excellence for the Corps in Central Region.

These are the very qualities that Capt Lionel Matthews displayed during his service in both 8th Division Signals in Malaya and also during his time as a POW in Sandakan North Borneo during WW2. Our selection further honours the memory of this most highly decorated and respected Australian Signals Officer who paid the supreme sacrifice for his service to his country.

Cpl Mangelsdorf spoke after the presentation saying how proud and humbled he felt and the fact that to share the award with WO O’Connell who had been a friend and mentor over so many years made it really special.

Both winners acknowledged that their peers and the team around them at 144 Sig Sqn had contributed to their success.

They were also presented with a signed copy of David Matthews book about his father titled “THE DUKE”

Cpl Mangelsdorf’s two sons Jackson and Campbell suitably decked out in junior camouflage suits were there to support their dad on the night.

**Footnote:**

During October I visited 410 ACU at Berri and with the assistance of John Lill an Ex POW presented a talk “Our Military Heritage” which was very much appreciated by all in attendance. (See Photo on right)



Brian Melville....



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**Welcome to new members.**

Mark Williams has recently joined our ranks. Mark served in the Army from 1983 to 2000 being in Water Transport and 144 Sig. Sqn.

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## Association and Committee contact details.

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Contributing: News, articles etc. Send via the Secretary or Publisher.

The Association's website address is: [www.rasigs.com](http://www.rasigs.com)

Paypal is available for convenient payment of your Association subs.

Disclaimer: In respect of "Commercial Advertising" which may appear from time to time in the "Messenger" the Committee neither recommends or endorses the goods and or services offered. Any dissatisfaction or dispute arising is to be resolved between the provider and the consumer. The consumer involved is asked to advise the Committee of the matter. The result may influence the Committee in respect of further advertising by the provider involved.

## THE PRESIDENTS AGM REPORT FOR THE 2009 YEAR.

Dear Members,

We have this year tried to encourage new members to the fold by providing social events that meet all ages. ANZAC DAY is always a day when most attend to their different groups and have a great day sharing with friends. ANZAC Day 2009 I think will go down as the one that blew away the day. Windy, Cold and Wet would be good words to use.

This year was the start of the RASigs Car Rally and it proved to be a great day for those who attended. All you had to do was turn up in a car and away you went. We had some great questions and a lot of laughs. At the end of the rally we had a BBQ and drinks and it was a great day. I would like to thank the OC and Members of 144 Signal Squadron for allowing us to host the event in the Sqn lines.

This year we had the Corps Dinner at 144 Signal Squadron and it was a reasonable turn out. A number of squadron members were involved in the 100km march and although they were buggered when they got back some still attended the dinner, thanks to you that made that effort, to those that didn't, I don't blame you at all. This year we used outside caterers and the meal wasn't to bad.

Remembrance Day at the Memorial at Keswick this year was a much better turn out and I would once again like to thank the OC and Members of 144 Signal squadron for attending. To those of us from the Association whom attended well done also. The heat on the day and through out the summer continues to damage our plants around our Memorial so we need to consider a different type that will with stand the conditions and lack of water.

This year we have continued to build our relationship with 144 Signal Squadron and the OC and Staff have supported us very well. I would like to thank in particular WO1 Doc O'Connell and WO2 C Antony for their support throughout the year.

This year has seen the Website [www.rasigs.com](http://www.rasigs.com) continue to grow. Michael Southern our IT & Webmaster has done a great job setting it up. We now have Tasmania and NSW on board and the others are coming. Well Done Michael.

(Continued overleaf)

The current finances of the association are looking good and although membership is still down a little we are encouraged by the support of 144 Sig. Sqn. and the hope that we can gain membership in the New Year.

Sally Napper, our Secretary this year organised a Ten Pin Bowling afternoon the day being enjoyed by those who attended.

We have once again presented the "Jim Erwin Encouragement Award" to a deserving soldier, Sig Curnow, he was nominated by the squadron, please read the details of the award as well as the "Lionel Matthews Award" in the Messenger.

I would like to finish by thanking my committee this year. Almost all are working fulltime and this year work loads have been very heavy and the committee have still made the effort to support the Association. Well Done!! I would like to thank Brian Melville for sharing his experiences with us and joining the committee later in the year, thanks Brian I hope you can continue with us in the New Year. A special thanks to Sally & Sharen for the effort you have shown this year, thank you. To all the committee I hope you can continue with the committee in the New Year as I believe we have a great team to move the Association forward.

In closing I would like to thank you all for your continued membership and loyalty to the Association. If you have any ideas for the future, please approach one of the Committee, we will be only too happy to assist.

Please all make an attempt to attend the AGM in February 2010, we look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of the committee and myself I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Regards**

**Bruce Long**

**President RASigs Association (SA)**



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**Issued by 22nd December 2009.**

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010.**

All Members are hereby advised that the 2010 Annual General Meeting is to be held at the Conference Room of 144 Signal Squadron, Keswick Barracks SA at 1630 hrs on Sunday 7th February 2010.

Bar facilities will be available from 1600 hrs to 1830 hrs. The Meeting will commence promptly at 1630 hrs and should be concluded by 1745 hrs at the latest. Shortly after the conclusion of the meeting a meal will be provided for Members and their spouses / partners. There will be no charge for the meal and drinks will be available at the bar.

Your Committee encourages you to remain for the meal and refreshments and to mingle and have a yarn in a social atmosphere.

Will you please ensure that you complete the AGM return slip, and return the whole page without fail by **12th January 2010**. Please note the Membership fee (\$20.00) for 2010 is now due and payable.

If you are unable to attend the meeting please ensure that you forward the return slip to record your apology and forward your fees with it. For postal recipients an addressed envelope is enclosed for your return mail!

Your attendance at the AGM or your apology is of great importance as it indicates to the Committee your genuine interest in the Association.

Please note that with this notice for your perusal are, the Agenda for the coming meeting, the Presidents Report and the return slip. The Treasurers Financial Report for 2009, which is subject to audit and the minutes of the previous AGM will be available at the meeting.

**Finally, please don't forget the return slip! Due by Friday 12th January 2010.**

Bruce Long  
President

## AGENDA

1. Welcome & Roll Call.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 (Previously circulated).
4. Business arising from the Minutes.
5. Correspondence in/out.
6. President's Report (Previously circulated).
7. Business arising from President's report.
8. Financial Report.
9. Business Arising from Financial Report.

Questions from floor.

10. Election of Committee members for 2010.

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Members x 5

Honorary Auditor

11. Elected President assumes the Chair.
12. Other Business.
  - a) Functions 2010 (Anzac Day, Car Rally, Corps Dinner and Presidents Lunch).
  - b) Subs for 2011.
  - c) National Website.
  - d) Museum.
  - e) Investment.

13. Closure/Next Meeting

**Please complete and return this whole page and the questionnaire to The Secretary, RASigs Assn S.A., PO Box 881, Kent Town, SA 5071. By 12th January 2010**

***ATTENDANCE AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2010.***

Whether you are able to attend or not, please return this form and questionnaire to either indicate your attendance or render your "Apology". For postal recipients a return envelope is included.

**MEMBER DETAILS**

Full Name:

I am unable to attend and tender my apology .(  ) X the boxes (Also see proxy form)

I will be attending (  ) I will stay for the Meal after the meeting (  ) **(The meal is free)**

**MEMBERSHIP (Please action even if not attending meeting.)**

I acknowledge that my annual subscription fell due on 1 January 2010 and I forward with this slip the sum of \$20.00 for renewal of my membership until 1 January 2011. (  ) X Box.

Due to age, life or honorary membership I am not required to pay (  ) X Box.

**NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE (Note that if you are unable to locate a Seconder you may still make a nomination, return this form, and a Seconder may be called for at the meeting.)**

I hereby nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ on the Committee of The Royal Australian Signals Association (S.A.) Inc. for the year 2010.

Proposers Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name in block letters

Seconders Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name in block letters

I agree to accept the nomination for this position. Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date / /

**FORM OF PROXY.(If you have tendered an apology you may appoint another member to vote on your behalf. We will arrange for their agreement signature if you are unable to.)**

I hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to be my proxy at the AGM of The Royal Australian Signals Association S.A.Inc. on 1st February 2010.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name in block letters

I agree to act as proxy for the above. Signed..... Date. / /

**RASigs Data Base.**

I (full name)..... agree to my personal details, Name, Address, Phone number, e-mail address ( Delete any detail you do not want disclosed) being included on the above data base on the understanding that the information will only be released to Colonels Commandant and Signals Association Secretaries in each State/Territory of Australia.

Please advise your e-mail address so we can update records

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Email :