

December 2019

SIGNAL NEWS



CERTA CITO

**Seasonal Greetings to all
Members and your
families**



Official Journal of the
Royal Australian Signals
Association (Tas)

SIGNAL NEWS

December 2019

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Signal News

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Distribution:

March, June, September, December, 2020

2020 "1st Friday" Reunions

Feb 7th, Mar 6th, Apr 3rd, May 1st, Jun 5th,
Jul 3rd, Aug 7th, Sep 4th, Oct 2nd, Nov 6th &
Dec 4th. **All start from 1615**

Committee Meetings 2019:- Meetings start at
RAAF Memorial Centre **at 1515** on 6th Mar, 5th
Jun, 4th Sep & 6th Nov

**End of Summer Lunch:- Wednesday 18th
March 2020.**

Venue/Time TBA

Anzac Day:- Saturday 25th April 2020

Meet at Globe Hotel carpark by 1015 for
transport to the March &/or Cenotaph
Service. *Medals to be worn*

Lunch: at The Globe Hotel from 1245

Mid-Year Dinner:- Friday 19th Jun 2020.

Venue/Time TBA

**Annual General Meeting (74th):- Friday
2nd October 2020.**

1700 at RAAF Memorial Centre

Commemoration Day: Sunday 11th Oct.

Service: 1145 at
Anglesea Barracks
Signals Memorial
Medals to be worn

Lunch: RAAF
Memorial Centre from
1230

**Remembrance Day Lunch: November
13th.** Timing & Venue TBA.

Medals to be worn

Printed by:

The Hon. Will Hodgman, MP,
Liberal Member for Franklin

A much appreciated Community Service

3.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

Welcome to the final edition of Signal News for 2019 The years seems to have passed too quickly for me This has again been our busiest quarter for the year.

We started the quarter with our short AGM in October. Thank you for your confidence in allowing me to continue as President (only nomination). I would like to commend Mel Cooper & Greg Rawnsley who have recently stood down from their respective roles on the Committee. Mel was a very long serving Vice President and committee member. Greg was also our Bar Manager for a lengthy term.

This followed with our Commemoration Day activities on the 13th of October. Our short Remembrance Service was held at The Signals Memorial at Anglesea Barracks despite the access limitations currently operating. Our Padre, Rev. David Lewis delivered the Service. We then adjourned for a very nice lunch at the RAAF Memorial Centre. Our numbers were up this year and a good day was had by all.

Thanks particularly to the ladies for their efforts in the catering and cleaning up on our Commemoration Day.

On the 8th of November we had our Remembrance Day Luncheon at the Cambridge Horse Shoe Inn. A good rollup for a pleasant gathering. Thanks to Richard for organising.

Thanks to Alf and Ray for the social side with the wheel and lucky door' at our regular "First Friday" function and to Richard and Chris for a fine selection of prizes.

We must acknowledge the fine job being done by our bar staff. Thanks Denise and Denis.

Thanks also to our supporters from Clarence We need you to continue winning all the prizes.

I would like to pay special thanks to our printing staff for their support and advice to our Editor of "Signal News" – now in its 68th year of production.

I must not overlook our ladies for preparing and presenting our bar snacks on "First Fridays" Thanks to Chris Goodwin, Bev Andrews, Chris Harcourt and Denise Geeves for your efforts to provide a range of tasty fare.

Our former social secretary David Harcourt has had some health problems but is going quite well. Keep up the good work.

All that is left for me this year is to thank you for your participation and to wish you all the best for the Festive Season and look forward to a happy, healthy and prosperous 2020 and I will see you on the FIRST FRIDAY in February 2020.

Yours in Signals,

Owen

4.

THE TALE OF 2LT B F J SCHONLAND OBE (Mil) - FROM THE LATE 1900's

No Corps of Signals existed in those days. Signalling was very much the province of the Royal Engineers and specifically it's Telegraph Battalion and it was they who attempted to use wireless for the first time in a military conflict during the Boer War in South Africa. But it was not equal to the task and it was left to the Royal Navy to show the way. And show it they did during the blockade operation they were mounting in Delagoa Bay, Portuguese East Africa. Wireless proved itself at sea; it was still to do so on land.

In 1908 the Royal Engineer Signal Service came into being and it was this body of men, plus their horses, cable carts and much other paraphernalia of war that provided the British Army with its signalling capability during conflict that broke out in 1914. Now wireless equipment suitable for use by soldiers and rugged enough to be hauled about on carts and on the backs of men was slowly becoming part of the Army's inventory of equipment. And the officers and men were being trained to use it. Amongst that group was a young South African by the name of Basil Schonland.



During the summer of 1915 he completed Part 1 of the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge & immediately set his sights on serving his adopted country. Even whilst a schoolboy, and then an undergraduate in his home town of Grahamstown in South Africa's Eastern Cape province, Schonland was a loyal subject of the King and, along with many of his fellow South Africans, he saw it as his duty to fight for King and Country.

Schonland was commissioned as a second lieutenant in August 1915 and immediately began training at the Signal Depot in Bletchley. In October he was given command of 43 Airline Section with 40 men, their horses and their cable carts and in January 1916 he led them into France where they joined the Fourth Army then being formed under Sir Henry Rawlinson.

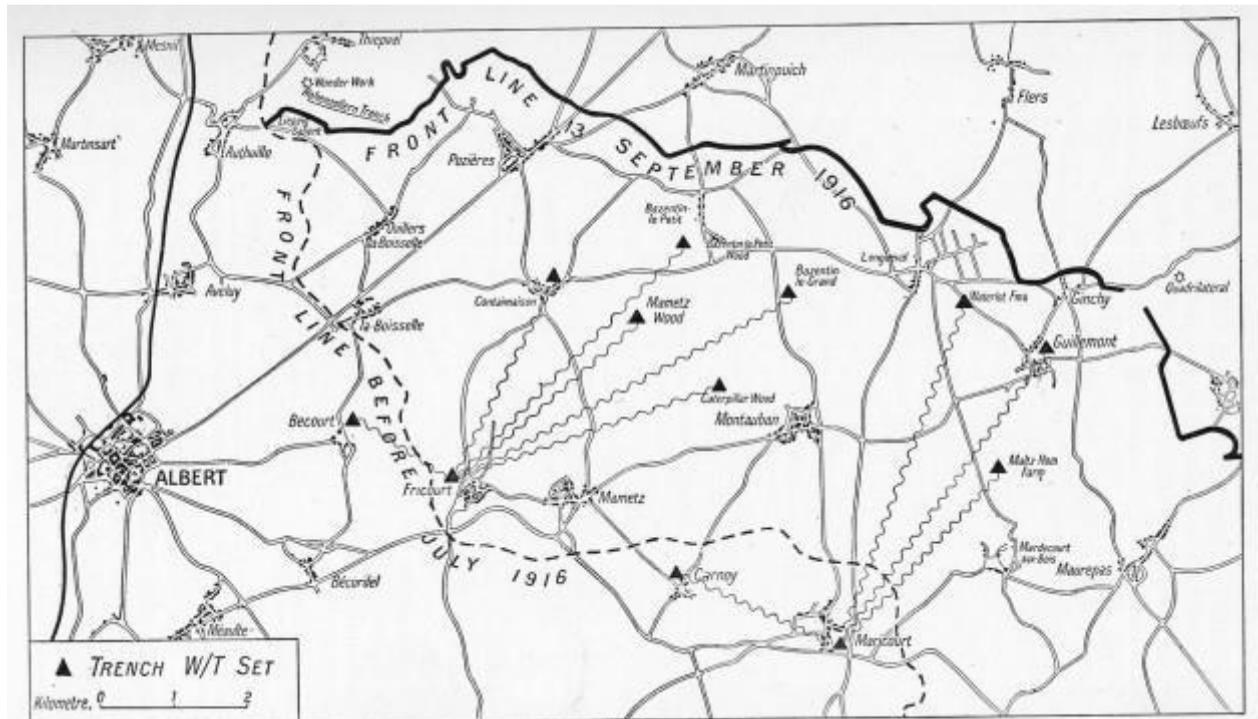
Pictured at Left; Schonland in his 2Lt's Uniform during the Boer War

It was the Battle of the Somme that saw wireless equipment pressed into service in earnest. Though hundreds of miles of telephone and telegraph cables had been laid only those buried at considerable depth had any hope of surviving the onslaught of almost incessant artillery barrages. Visual signalling by flag, heliograph and lamp was perilous in the extreme for the operator who raised himself mere inches above the parapet of a trench: wireless became almost obligatory. And Schonland, whose skills had already been noted, was soon to become a W/T officer in the Cavalry Corps. None was more enthusiastic.

This new technology caught the imagination of a young man for whom science, and especially physics, was of almost overwhelming interest. He threw himself into mastering the wireless equipment and of passing on his knowledge to his men. The three trench sets with which Schonland became so familiar were the BF Set, the Wilson Set and the Loop Set. The 'BF' presumably meant "British Field" but to those who used it in earnest its eponymous letters had another meaning entirely! Like most of the equipment in use at that time the BF set had a spark transmitter and carborundum crystal detector. It radiated signals over a band of frequencies between about 540 and 860 kHz at a power of some 50 watts. The Wilson set was more powerful and used a more sophisticated method of generating its spark.

The frequencies (or wavelengths in those days) that it covered were like the BF Set. Both were used extensively from within the trenches during First Battle of the Somme in September 1916.

(Schonland cont.,)



Map showing the deployment of the wireless sets near the Western Front line in September 1916

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In 1917 a new wireless set was introduced. Called the W/T Set Forward Spark 20 Watt B it soon became rather more familiar by the less wordy name of the Loop Set. The loop in question was its peculiar aerial (or antenna) which consisted of a square loop of brass tubing 1m per side that was mounted vertically on a bayonet stuck into ground. The Loop Set's other great claim to fame was that it was extremely simple to use even for an inexperienced operator. Morse code was the mode of transmission and that skill was fundamental to all who served in the R.E. Signal Service, officers included.

Of importance, especially to the technically-minded such as Schonland, was the much higher frequency on which the Loop Set worked. It could be tuned to transmit and receive between 3.8 and 4.6 MHz and was claimed to have an effective range of 2000 yards. And though the transmitter still used a spark, the receiver contained two thermionic valves – an astounding technological leap at that time. By then Schonland had left the front line and was instructing at the GHQ Central Wireless School at Montreux where he was also promoted to lieutenant.

It was there that he and another South African by the name of Spencer Humby conducted their own 'researches into wireless' which they published in a scientific journal soon after the end of the war. "The wavelengths radiated by oscillating valve circuits" became an important paper in the field of wireless communications that flowered in the 1920s. But Schonland was not only a competent physicist; he also wielded an educated pen and his most lasting contribution to wireless communications during WW1 was his four-part series of articles published in 1919 in *The Wireless World*. They appeared under the title of this article and described the use of wireless in the trenches and were possibly the first such articles to tell how wireless was used during the war by the R.E. Signals Section.

6.

(Schonland Cont.,)

The Boy's Own Paper had nothing on them for verve and excitement! Take this passage in which the young Schonland describes an attack during the battle of Arras in which a key hilltop position had been captured by the British Army. However, the enemy was re-grouping below and a counter-attack was imminent.

"Owing, however, to the speed of their advance our troops were out of touch with the higher command, and the guns behind them. Out of touch, did I say? What is this queer mast affair some sappers are rigging up in the garden of what was once a pretty cottage? Up go the small steel masts despite the shells streaming into the village ... The aerial up, it is not long before they have installed their tiny set in the cellar and are 'through'. R9 signals each way. Just in time too, for the Boche at the foot of the hill shows signs of counter-attack. "Get at the guns, Sparks, get at the guns!". And Sparks bends to his key "

By the war's end Basil Schonland had been promoted as Captain and oversaw all wireless communications of the British First Army. Under him he had thirty officers and more than 900 hundred men, along with over 300 wireless sets. And soon, after the end of hostilities, strenuous efforts were made to retain his services as Chief Instructor in Wireless in the British Army. But Schonland was intent on following a career as a scientist and he returned to Cambridge to work under Lord Rutherford at the famous Cavendish Laboratory. However, he was not lost entirely to the colours for a mere twenty years later he was back in uniform and served throughout the second great conflict with distinction, ultimately as scientific adviser to Field Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group.

About the author

Dr Brian Austin is a retired engineering academic from the University of Liverpool's Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics. Before that he spent some years on the academic staff of his alma mater, the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. He also had a spell, a decade in fact, in industry where he led the team that developed an underground radio system for use in South Africa's very deep gold mines.

He also has a great interest in the history of his subject and especially the military applications of radio and electronics. This has seen him publish a number of articles on topics from the first use of wireless in warfare during the Boer War (1899 – 1902) and South Africa's wartime radar in WW2, to others dealing with the communications problems during the Battle of Arnhem and, most recently, on wireless in the trenches in WW1. He is also the author of the biography of Sir Basil Schonland, the South African pioneer in the study of lightning, scientific adviser to Field Marshall Montgomery's 21 Army Group and director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell.

WRITTEN IN THE SNOW

During his army career Bluey had become friends with an English Lord who made a point of keeping in touch with him in Queensland.

One year the Lord invited Bluey to England to witness his first white Christmas. Bluey went over the next year and had a wonderful Christmas day with Lord and Lady Wotherspoon on their country estate. After a suitable amount of after dinner drinks they all retired for the night.

The next morning, Lord Wotherspoon was awakened by clatter of his Butler bringing him breakfast in bed. "Tell me Jeeves, Is my Australian friend still asleep?" "I believe he is awake, Sir," replied Jeeves. "There are signs that he has been urinating from his balcony onto the snow during the night." "Well, we have all been guilty of that at some time or other Jeeves, so I wouldn't worry about that too much old chap." "Perhaps Sir, but in doing so he has managed to write his name in the snow." "That's not so terrible is it? Said Lord Wotherspoon.

'Not in itself Sir, but it seems to be in Lady Wotherspoon's handwriting.' **(Bob Gray)**

MORE JOKES FROM A REGULAR AND SOME NOT SO REGULAR

CAREFUL MONKEY

One day a guy walked into a bar with a monkey perched on his shoulder. He ordered a beer for himself, but not one for the monkey. The monkey got upset and nicked a ball from the Pool table and swallowed it. As the man didn't have enough money to pay for a new ball he was asked to leave the bar.

The customers were upset about their removal because of the novelty. After a few days the man walked back into the bar, ordered a beer and again nothing for the monkey. The barman not wanting to upset his customers again, gave him another chance.

The monkey pinched a cherry off the bar and stuck it up his bum, then removed it and ate it. The shocked barman said, "Did you see what your monkey just did? He just stole a cherry and stuck it up his bum, then took it out and ate it. The man simply said, "Ever since he ate that Pool ball he's been measuring everything before he swallows it." *Geeves*"

GORDON'S PIZZA (*It may be coming to this sooner than later - big brother Google is watching - Bob Gray*)

Hello! Is this Gordon's Pizza? No sir, its Google Pizza .I must have dialled a wrong number. Sorry.

No sir, Google bought Gordon's Pizza last month. OK. I would like to order a pizza. Do you want your usual, sir? My usual? You know me? According to our caller ID data sheet, the last 12 times you called you ordered an extra-large pizza with three cheeses, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms and meat balls on a thick crust. OK! That's what I want

May I suggest that this time you order a pizza with ricotta, arugula, sun-dried tomatoes and olives on a whole wheat gluten free thin crust? What? I detest vegetables. Your cholesterol is not good, sir. How the hell do you know? Well, we cross-referenced your home phone number with your medical records. We have the result of your blood tests for the last 7 years. Okay, but I do not want your rotten vegetable pizza! I already take medication for my cholesterol. Excuse me sir, but you have not taken your medication regularly. According to our database, you only purchased a box of 30 cholesterol tablets once, at Drug Sale Network, 4 months ago. I bought more from another drugstore. That doesn't show on your credit card statement. I paid in cash. But you did not withdraw enough cash according to your bank statement. I have other sources of cash. That doesn't show on your last tax return unless you bought them using an undeclared income source, which is against the law. **WHAT THE HELL?**

I'm sorry, sir, we use such information only with the sole intention of helping you. Enough already! I'm sick to death of Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and all the others. I'm going to an island without internet, cable TV, where there is no cell phone service and no one to watch me or spy on me. I understand sir, but you need to renew your passport first. It expired 6 weeks ago.

GET OUT OF THE CAR

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car - NOW!"

The four men didn't wait for a second threat. They got out and ran like hell. The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried, and then she realized why.

It was for the same reason she had wondered why there was a football, a Frisbee, and two 12-packs of beer in the front seat. A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down. She loaded her bags into her own car and drove to the police station to report her mistake. The Sergeant to whom she told the story couldn't stop laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale men were reporting a carjacking by a mad, elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed. Moral of the story? If you're going to have a senior moment, make it memorable! (*Bob Gray*)

547 SIGNAL TROOP AWARDED

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation

During 2018, the Minister for Defence Personnel announced Australian Defence Force members who served with the Australian Army's 547 Signal Troop during the Vietnam War had been recognised with the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.

The then Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), had formally approved the awarding of the citation in recognition of the military assistance provided to the former Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) while under the operational command of the United States Military Assistance Command (MACV).

Mr Chester said 547 Signal Troop was raised in 1966 and deployed to Vietnam as Australia's contribution to the United States intelligence network. "The troop's primary role was to locate and monitor enemy radio signals in order to identify their strength, location, capability and future intentions," Mr Chester said. "To achieve this the troop was in direct contact with the enemy forces from the first day that they arrived in Vietnam to the day before all Australian forces departed that country. "Throughout their deployment to Vietnam, the troop was credited with providing early warning of imminent large-scale enemy action against Australian, US and Thai forces, and were directly credited with saving hundreds of lives.

"Due to the extreme secrecy surrounding the troop's operations their presence in Vietnam continued to be a closely guarded secret. Even today the troop does not appear on many maps drawn up by the Australian Task Force or on a model at the Australian War Memorial showing the locations of all Australian units at Nui Dat."

547 Signal Troop was under operational control of the United States Army Security Agency's 509th Radio Research Group and was assigned to the 303rd Radio Research Battalion. The troop's deployment to Vietnam included responsibility for direct support to the Australian Task Force and American units operating under the US II Field Force Vietnam command.

"The extraordinary courage and bravery of this troop is now being formally acknowledged and we hope family members of the deceased come forward to receive this well-deserved recognition." To be eligible for the citation insignia, members must have served in Vietnam under the command of MACV and posted to 547 Signal Troop during the eligible dates, 13 June 1966 to 23 December 1971.

KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT

A guy goes to the supermarket and notices a very attractive woman waving at him. She says, 'Hello.'

He's rather taken aback because he can't place where he knows her from.

So he asks, 'Do you know me?' To which she replies, 'I think you're the father of one of my kids.'

Now his mind travels back to the only time he has ever been unfaithful to his wife. So he asks, 'Are you the stripper from the bachelor party that I made love to on the pool table, with all my buddies watching, while your girlfriend whipped my butt with wet celery?'

She looks into his eyes and says calmly, 'No, I'm your son's teacher.' (*Bob Gray*)

YOUR SECRETARY SAYS

Archiving Project -Missing Copies of “Signal News”

We are ‘missing’ 4 copies of Sig News to complete our lodgement at the State Archives. They are:-

No. 2 of 1956 & No’s 1, 3 & 4 of 1962. If any member has retained copies of those editions, can you forward them to me for scanning & return or, if possible, scan and email me copies please?

A big ‘Welcome Back’ to a former Trg Sgt at the Sqn of 30 odd years ago in **Dallas Stow** of Canberra. Dallas joined up in late October. We are very pleased he has joined us.

UNFORTUNATELY it’s that time again when the ‘little red figures’ have to be entered near a circle at the bottom of Page 16. If you have such an entry in your copy (*please check*) that’s the minimum amount of ‘Subs’ you need to send to the Hon. Treasurer **Mick “Skippy” Farley please**. Please keep him happy over the Xmas break. *You can send more and ‘get in front, of course– many do.* Details of the Association Bank Account for Direct Depositing (*if you wish*) are also provided at Page 16, otherwise please post a cheque or money order made payable to the Assn., to Mick’s home address – see Page 2. **THANKS.**

The latest report we have on **Ken Moy’s** progress with his throat issues is that his Doc has given him the ‘all clear’ and he’s now ‘test driving’ a new ‘*voice procedure*’. Hope to see you again at a ‘First Friday’ shortly Kenny!

Another **call-out request** for those who haven’t provided us with a short “CV”. We need to have some basic details about your lives stored away for the inevitable day for us all when needed for a VALE notice, please. We have a simple pro-forma you can use or just drop me a line (*email or via the post*) if you need a copy.

A reminder to any member who wishes to pre-pay for your name to be included on the **Signals Memorial at Anglesea Barracks**. The cost remains at only **\$20 for our members** – for **all other members/ex members of the Signals Corps, the cost is \$50**. The fee meets the costs of providing and engraving a temporary name plate and then once there are 40 names, to manufacture, engrave and affix a bronze plaque as well as maintenance of the Memorial itself. Contact Treasurer Mick if you wish to be involved.

Many thanks to all who have assisted with the identification of the Tasmanian Signals Corps archives photos and documents, held in our archives or memorabilia collections of various members. The Project Steering Committee would not have been able to progress the work necessary without your assistance.

Owen, Dave Harcourt and I are sincerely grateful for your support and trust everyone enjoys viewing the output.



At left are Peter Polak (L) & Greg Young, formerly Chief Clerk’s at the Hobart Signal Squadron. The popular duo are pictured at Fremantle WA during Pete’s around Australia trip, earlier in the year.

At right are Chris Beauchamp and his Squadron Leader, presenting Chris with a farewell gift. Chris retired from the RAAF recently after completing 10,000 flying hours. Chris is now working as a civil pilot. Chris is a former Sqn Radio Operator.



GRANDAD'S 'DUNNY'

Poor old Granddad's passed away, cut off in his prime,
 He never had a day off crook - gone well before his time,
 We found him in the dunny, collapsed there on the seat,
 A startled look upon his face, his trousers around his feet.

The doctor said his heart was good, fit as any trout,
 The Constable he had his say, 'foul play' was not ruled out.
 There were theories at the inquest of snakebite without trace,
 Of red backs quietly creeping and death from outer space.

No-one had a clue at all - the judge was in some doubt,
 When Dad was called to have his say as to how it came about.
 'I reckon I can clear it up,' said Dad with trembling breath,
 'You see it's quite a story - but it could explain his death.'

'This here exploration mob had been looking at our soil,
 And they reckoned that our farm was just the perfect place for oil,
 So they came and put a bore down and said they'd make some trials,
 They drilled a hole as deep as hell, they said about three miles.

Well, they never found a trace of oil and off they went, post haste,
 And I couldn't see a hole like that go to flamin' waste,
 So I moved the dunny over it - real smart move as I thought,
 I'd never have to dig again - I'd never be 'caught short'.

The day I moved the dunny, it looked a proper sight,
 But I didn't dream poor Granddad would pass away that night.
 Now I reckon what has happened - poor Granddad didn't know,
 The dunny was re-located when that night he'd had to go.

And you'll probably be wondering how poor Granddad did his dash--
 Well, he always used to hold his breath....
 Until he heard the splash!!

(Thanks to Bob Gray; our man in the 'Deep Channel')

THE PORSCHE

A Solicitor parked his brand new Porsche in front of the office to show it off to his colleagues. As he was getting out of the car, a truck came speeding along too close to the kerb and took off the door before zooming off.

More than a little distraught, the Solicitor grabbed his mobile and called the police. Five minutes later, the police arrive. Before the policeman had a chance to ask any questions, the man started screaming hysterically: "My Porsche, my beautiful silver Porsche is ruined. No matter how long it's at the panel beaters, it'll simply never be the same again!"

After the man finally finished his rant, the policeman shook his head in disgust. "I can't believe how materialistic you bloody Solicitors are." He said. "You lot are so focused on your possessions that you don't notice anything else in your life." "How can you say such a thing at a time like this?" sobbed the Porsche owner.

The policeman replied: "Didn't you realise that your arm was torn off when the truck hit you?"

The Solicitor looked down in horror "Bloody hell!" he screamed. "Where's my Rolex?" (*Anon.*)

WHEN I ENLISTED (Part 2)

The 23rd of December 1957 saw me directed from the orderly room (WO2 Ferguson) where I was signed on at T Comd Signal Squadron, with a big red VE (voluntary enlisted) endorsed on the top right corner of my Record of Service (103A), to the Q store (Ssgt Tilyard). We have all been through the process of an initial Q issue and you know the feeling when a gi-normous load of clothing and other clobber is being dumped on the counter before you, so I will not bore you with the details except for one item – my boots!!

I could not believe my eyes when I saw them. I have a fairly small foot and so I must have been a welcome sight to the Q staff, as this particular pair of Boots AB had obviously been on the shelf, unloved and unwanted for decades and they were getting rid of them at last. The soles must have been at least a centimetre thick with the heels two centimetres, they had leather square-cut laces too stiff to thread and they weighed a ton. They were totally inflexible and to walk in them was more of ‘a spaceman waddle’.

They were specially designed never to wear out with huge horseshoes embedded in the heels and toes, while the rest of the soles were covered in large hobnails. Surely not a Signalman’s boots – how did they end up in a Signal’s Q store? But the most striking feature was their colour – they were bright TAN!! The Q helpfully informed me that for my first parade in the New Year they would have to be black and that raven oil would do the trick. Being somewhat overwhelmed by everything and thus virtually speechless, I did not ask for some - I had to buy my own later.

However, the upshot of all this was that I never actually wore those boots - I would go so far as to defy anyone to even try to. Instead, I gave them away to the Salvos if I recall properly, and wore my boots from School Cadet days instead. My first camp will be the subject of a separate tale.

WEST COAST

47 Transport Company was conducting an exercise around the West/North-West area of Tasmania. We had a radio detachment with them to provide a rear-link safety comms back to Brighton Camp – our base station was in the Sig compound at the rear of the camp. They were supposed to give us a daily sitrep of their progress. Something must have gone wrong as a day had passed by without hearing from them and we could not raise them either. It was decided that WO2 Roy Frost (our snr ARA Tech) would drive around to find out what the trouble was and take some spare parts with him. I was lucky enough to be able to go with him.

We were travelling in a Falcon ute (one with the high canopy over the tray) and set off well before breakfast. Some hours later, we had passed through Queenstown and were heading North past Zeehan, when we came around a sharp bend to find not one, but two large kangaroos in the middle of the road. There was no time to stop. Luckily for us, one roo jumped left and the other jumped right and we sailed straight through between them. I hate to think of the damage that would have been done to the vehicle and to us, had we hit them – one can do enough, let alone two and those utes did not have a bull (roo) bar!

We eventually located the convoy in the hills behind Devonport. WO2 Frost fixed whatever was wrong (I cannot remember what it was now).

We set off for Brighton again arriving about 2200 hrs – a long trip but a successful and lucky one!

Capt Ben Digo

MORE HUMOUR FROM THE MEMBERSHIP



THE HOMELESS DEADBEAT

A homeless deadbeat approached a well-dressed business-man for money for a meal. "Have a cigarette", said the business-man. "No, I don't smoke." "Then come into the bar and let me buy you a drink." "No, I don't drink." "Here then, have this lottery ticket." "No thanks, I don't gamble. All I want is some money for a meal."

The business-man thought for a moment. "I can do better than that. Come home with me and my wife will cook you the best meal you've ever had." "Wouldn't it be easier if you just gave me the money?" said the derelict. "Yes", said the business-man, "but I want to show her what happens to a man that doesn't smoke, drink or gamble." (*Geeves*)

SOME THINGS TO PONDER ON THE LOO.

- * If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?
- * If all is not lost, where is it?
- * If God did acid, would he see people?
- * What's the speed of dark?
- * If you're in hell and mad at someone, where do you tell them to go?
- * What happens if you are scared half to death twice?
- * How is it possible to have a civil war?
- * If only the good die young, what does that say about senior citizens?
- * How can you be alone with someone?
- * If corn oil comes from corn, where does baby oil come from?
- * What do sheep count when they can't go to sleep?
- * If it's tourist season, why can't we shoot them?
- * Why do we call it instant credit, when it actually means instant debt?
- * If we're not supposed to eat late-night snacks, why is there a light in the fridge?
- * Why did God create man before woman? Because he didn't want any advice.
- * Isn't it scary that doctors call what they do 'Practice'?
- * If space is a vacuum, who changes the bags?
- * Can a stupid person be a smart-arse?
- * Since Australians throw rice at weddings, do Chinese throw meat pies?
- * How come Superman can stop a bullet with his hand but always ducks when a gun is thrown at him?
- * If tin whistles are made of tin, what are fog horns made of?
- * Can you buy a full chess set in a pawn shop?
- * Why do we wait until a pig is dead before we cure it?
- * Why don't we in Australia call the rest of the world 'Up over'? (*Geeves*)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A QUEENSLAND “HOLIDAY” 50 YEARS AGO (CANUNGRA)

Fifty odd years - seems like yesterday. Those who have savored and enjoyed the delights of JTC (Jungle Training Centre), Canungra, now Land Warfare Centre, will no doubt remember Battle Ridge, Levers Plateau, the dingo proof fence, the Canungra River, the obstacle course, the kind, gentle and understanding DS, etc. The events portrayed happened a long time ago and time heals most bad memories. But not this lot.

As a young and too-soon promoted infantry (Sig Pl) Sgt, I applied to attend a basic Patrol and Navigation course at Jungle Training Centre, if only to acquire the American '57 pattern webbing which was so superior to our '37 pattern stuff. JTC was supposed to be tough but I figured it couldn't be that bad. After all, I had survived a couple of promotion courses including several 'visitations' to Buckland. Naivety is wonderful and time, again, is a surcease to hardship. This was at the height of the Vietnam conflict and everything military was designed to ensure that attendees at JTC (*actually all those destined for a trip across the water*) were prepared as best for service and survival in SVN. In fact, while I was there, one of the battalions was nearing the end of its 6-week stint – next stop, the Vung Tau Ferry.

In the Course Joining Instruction, potential attendees were advised to ensure that they were basically physically fit, and I had tried hard to bring myself up to a suitable level by applying the techniques of the Canadian Air Force 5BX flight crew regime over the previous six weeks, and figured I was pretty fit. (*advised by OC, who was also my OC in civilian mode, thankfully*).

I recall **Day 1** was a stroll around the installation at double-time, full patrol order and rifles at high port of course, followed by some devilish calisthenics designed to toughen muscles. On top of which, twenty push-ups 'plus one for JTC' was the normal award for the slightest breach of military 'etiquette'. A micron of dust in the vented woodwork of your SLR was all it took. And a less than gleaming barrel? Probably some attendees are still doing push-ups for that sin. As a Tasmanian used to a cool climate, the heat was overpowering and debilitating in Queensland February even at 6am, and therefore enervating – exacerbated by the high workload. We were 'introduced' to MAJ Fazekas who was the SI of Battle Wing at that time. Little did I know then that he had been the Commander of the A team in SVN at the action in which WO2 Wheatley won his (posthumous) VC and therefore suffered fools not at all, particularly CMF *would-be-if-could-be's*, who were unfit, stupid and unlikely to go into combat any time soon, therefore a waste of his valuable time & expertise.

Day 2 was a bit of a look, amongst other pleasantries, including first swimming the freezing mountain waters of the Canungra River, naked, with all your worldly goods wrapped in shelters individual and rifle balanced on top, at the wires spanning the river. (*everyone laughed at every-one else's shriveled bits and pieces*). It was a snack to crab-walk back across the wires to the tower on the other side, clothed by this time. But of course the trick now was to get down to water-level again. No ladder. Only one way. Jump. And of course, if you didn't jump, the DS was only too willing to give you a bit of genteel encouragement (*9-6 GP boot in the back, being the accepted method*). And heights and I are not as one. At least there was a scuba-equipped guy in the water, but he didn't seem particularly interested in me and my problems. I suppose after I hit the water and had I spluttered a bit, he might have shown some interest, but I wouldn't have bet on it. Clean SLR and sodden boots after this bit of entertainment.

Day 3 was a live firing exercise. They (the DS) did the live-firing, while we did the advance to contact. The Vickers fired over our heads (*only just, I'd swear*) and the slabs detonated to the sides of the 'safe' lane, showered us with crap. And the noise! Never heard so much noise (*designed to illustrate the difficulty of control of troops in the roar of action*) or thought I could belly-crawl under 6" high barbed-wire until the sound of Vickers rounds 7" high (*or so it seemed*) convinced me otherwise. Lt Col Grey (*the CI of Battle Wing and later MAJ GEN*) seemed to think that we weren't going fast enough, and swung his knobkerrie at recalcitrant troops to hurry us up a bit. OK for him, he'd have probably A4'ed any DS who shot, or at, him.

Forward to the L1A2 bush-range stand, and exhausted, try to control breathing and shaking enough to load a 30 rd mag, cock and fire. I'm stuffed. Could hardly get the butt to my shoulder. 7 or 8 three round bursts nowhere near the fig 13 target. Load a second mag. Same result. Clear the weapon Next detail forward. They're a bit more recovered, but pretty much the same results. End of the torture. Move back to the trucks. Where're the trucks? 'Stroll' back to the lines. Take a breather. What am I doing here? Replenish body fluid, big time.

Day 4. Time for a bit of a shuftee at the obstacle course. Obstacle course? I'd call it a course/series of nightmares concocted by those straight out of an institution of some sort. The physical stress involved would have made those courses depicted in 'An Officer and a Gentleman' or 'Full Metal Jacket' look like a walk in the park. Can't remember how high the scaling wall was, but I do remember the drop down the other side into a bloody great puddle as interesting. Despite my best efforts to protect them, my roley tobacco and papers didn't survive that lot. Hardly mattered, my petrol lighter was water-logged anyway. And then the swing bridge. The Vickers gunner had re-appeared and re-invented himself from somewhere and had found a target of interest on the other side, and seemed determined to obliterate same. I felt like I was in his line of fire. He seemed to have thought so to. But I foxed him – I dived over the side - ten feet down into yet another puddle! I suppose I was lucky the gun wouldn't depress that far. And then a 12k forced march; full battle order. Forced trot, more like.

(Canungra cont.,)

Days 5 to 12. PATROL & NAVEX BRIEFING. MAJ Fazekas conducted the briefing on this. Lt from Prince of Wales's Light Horse asks some apparently stupid question about what we were actually going to do – something the rest of us were all unsure of anyway, but weren't game to ask MAJ F verbally tears him apart and simplifies the whole scenario on a chalk-board, like talking to kindergarten kids. I guess we were anyway, in his eyes. The POW's LH Lt then, with reference to the difficulties of navigation in the dense rain forests, asks if we could mark the track with machete blazes or tree-tape. MAJ F is momentarily non-plussed, ignores him, and moves on - very quickly.

The NAVEX. This was an interesting physical climb up to Levers Plateau, cross-grain among the ridges, to the dingo proof fence (*I thought it'd take a pretty hopeless dingo who couldn't get through that lot*) with everybody taking a turn as section and platoon commander. The inevitable contacts, ambushes and transitions from day to night routine, night harbour, gun picquets, stand-to, clearing patrols etc. Condition normal, with the vicious and tenacious wait-a-while vines adding to the fun in the denser J. But the heat! The POW's LH LT was the first to suffer from the cracking pace and fell by the way side coughing blood. Never saw him again - CASEVAC'd and RTU, I suppose. Thank heavens for 5BX. And then night. If the days were excruciatingly hot, then the nights were excruciatingly cold. The temperature went cracking down to some ridiculous figure, as it does in the highlands in the sub-tropics, and my new you-beaut space blanket was a dripping, sodden, freezing silver-coated nightmare. So much for space-age technology. As for sleeping bags, cool weather. And the rain! When it rains on Levers, it's a torrential down-pour. I suppose it solved the water-bottle resup problem as even the smallest creeks seemed to become raging torrents. End of the NAVEX, and we are all absolutely knackered. But more fun to come. The trucks are to meet us at the top of the feature we had just climbed, and cart us back to JTC. I have to say that one of the most wonderful sounds I have probably ever heard is that of a couple of Stude's in low 3rd, still out of sight but gradually becoming more audible, winding and grinding up the other side of a 6-water bottle gi-normous yama. And then appearing hull-up over the lip like some gargantuan pre-historic monsters, their well-loved and distinctive sloping bonnets finally becoming discernible as they leveled out onto the plateau at the top. (*Those who have driven, or experienced the sounds and smells of these wonderful 6x6 2 1/2 ton, 7 1/2 ton fully laden L-H drive GS trucks with their magnificent huge 5.2 litre L-head 6-cylinder petrol GMC engines, barely muffled, bellowing, roaring and screaming at full-noise in rising and falling crescendos and undulations, delivering their seemingly almost unlimited power under impossibly heavy load through the massive and super-strong straight-cut crash-gear-box and transfer case to diffs and trans-axes that could cope with the heaviest sodden clay and mud conditions, while the driver tries valiantly and repeatedly to double-clutch up or down, will know what I mean*).

But then the omnipresent DS decided it'd be a good idea to do a non-tac run down the hill anyway. Seemed a bit pointless taking the trucks to the top in the first place. More mental and physical torture, I guess. And you can figure who went back down in the trucks. And so back to JTC.

Days 13 -14. After Levers, these days are an anti-climax. Interesting bush-lectures and then confirmatory back-up practice at what had been the subject of the previous exposition from guys who had recently come back (*where I first heard the expressions 'sent home in a telegram', 'hoist this on board', 'switch on, digger' etc*), pepper-potting demonstration withdrawals under simulated fire from the multi-coloured-helmeted (*for identification of gun-group etc*) Demonstration Platoon, spider holes, trip wires, punjii pits and other delights awaiting the unwary.

There was a fascinating session with LT (later Lt Col) Jim Bourke who had been in a contact and shot through the cheek and mouth in SVN while serving with 1RAR, but was now fully recovered – if anyone ever does from such a wound. He said of the incident, somewhat off-handedly, that he saw the rifle come out from behind a bush, but there was nothing he could do about it. You may have come across his name relatively recently as the leader of Operation Aussie Home in which the last Aus MIA's/KIA's were found, recovered and RTA. I remember him talking to us in a group about all manner of things military, one comment or another evoking a bit of laughter from one of us, when a dreaded and feared deep and guttural Hungarian accented voice from 100 metres or so up the track, cracked out 'Mr Bourke, are you instructing or entertaining the troops?' Hard question to answer with a yes or no, as he was actually doing both, so Lt Bourke answers "Sir!" mutters a little under his breath and continues on. After all, he was too much of a professional officer to bad-mouth to us, or backchat, MAJ Fazekas and who in their right mind would have?

Well, if 2-weeks at 'nungra' was hard, how much tougher was it for the battalion grunts who had to endure 6-weeks of this crap? I guess that the basic aim of JTC when first established by Col Serong just after WW11, which was to make it so tough that the physical exertions in the combat area were a soda, more or less, was achieved. Wouldn't know, fortunately.

I can only say that on Day 15 as JTC disappeared into the distance as viewed from the back of a CL bound for Brisbane and home. I never wanted to hear of or see, let alone return to, that hell-hole again. And the '57 patt webbing I coveted? Didn't even manage to acquire a pistol belt. As gravel-voiced Lee Marvin euphonized in that poignant and evocative piece from 'Paint Your Wagon', 'never saw a place that didn't look better looking back'.

(Certa Cito Tas)

ONLY A NAVIGATOR

The passenger steamer SS Warrimoo was quietly knifing its way from Vancouver to Australia. The navigator had just finished working out a star-fix and brought Captain John Phillips the result. The Warrimoo's position was 0 degrees 31 minutes North and longitude 179x 30 degrees minutes West. The date was 31 December 1899. Do you know what this opportunity means?

Mate Payton broke from the intersection of the Equator and the international Date-Line. Capt Phillips was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime. He called his navigators to the bridge to check and double check the ships position. He changed course slightly to bear directly on his mark. He then adjusted his engine-speed. The clear weather and calm night worked in his favour. At midnight the Warrimoo lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International date-line. The consequences of this bizarre situation were many.

The forward part of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere in the middle of Summer.

The stern was in the Northern Hemisphere in the middle of winter.

The date of the aft was 31-12-1899. Forward it was January 1st 1900.

This ship was therefore not only in 2 different days, but two different months, 2 different seasons, 2 different years, but in 2 different centuries, all at the same time. (630211-Geeves)

GOLF - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A guy was playing golf one day and he got lost. He saw a lady up ahead of him and went to her and said "Can you please help me, I don't know what hole I'm on." She told him "You are one hole behind me. I'm on 7; you're on 6." He thanked her and continued playing. On the back nine he got lost again. He saw the same lady and went to her again kind of hole embarrassed.

"I'm sorry to bother you again but I'm lost again, can you please tell me what I'm on." She told him "You are one hole behind me. I'm on 14; you are on 13." Again he thanked her and continued playing golf.

When he finished he saw her in the clubhouse. He went up to her and asked if he could buy her a drink for helping him out. She accepted. As they were drinking and talking he asked her what she did for a living. "I'm in sales." He replied "no kidding so am I. What do you sell?" She said it's too embarrassing to tell. But after he kept pleading to know what she sold she said she'd tell him if he promised not to laugh. He promised. She said, "I sell tampons".

He immediately fell to the floor laughing hysterically. She said, "You promised you wouldn't laugh". He replied "I'm sorry, but I couldn't help it. I sell toilet paper. I'm still one hole behind (*Chris G's girlfriend*)"

IN MEMORY OF THE BRITISH PENNY***The British Penny - European Union Directive No. 456179***

In order to bring about further integration with the single European currency; the Euro, all citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland must be made aware that the phrase "Spending a Penny" is not to be used after 30TH April 2016.

From this date onwards, the correct term will be: "Euronating".

It is hoped that this will be a great-relief to everyone.

If you have any questions, just give us a tinkle. (*Bob Gray*)

Great to report - *Nil Vale's this quarter*

APHORISM

("A short, pointed sentence that expresses a wise or clever observation or a general truth").

1. The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.
2. Money will buy a fine dog but only kindness will make him wag his tail.
3. If you don't have a sense of humour you probably don't have any sense at all.
4. Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.
5. A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
6. How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?
7. Business conventions are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.
8. Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?
9. Stroke a cat and you will have a permanent job.
10. No one has more driving ambition than the teenage boy who wants to buy a car.
11. There are no new sins; the old ones just get more publicity.
12. There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 am - for example, it could be the right number.
13. No one ever says "It's only a game" when their team is winning.
14. I've reached the age where 'happy hour' is a nap.
15. Be careful about reading the fine print - there's no way you're going to like it.
16. The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.
17. Do you realise that, in about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos?
18. Money can't buy happiness but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Cadillac than in a Ford.
19. After 60, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you're probably dead.
20. Always be yourself because the people that matter don't mind and the ones that mind don't matter.
21. Life isn't tied with a bow but it's still a gift. (Geeves)

THE IRISH FURNITURE DEALER

Declan Murphy, a furniture dealer from Dublin, decided to expand the range of furniture in his store, so he decided to go to Paris to see what he could find. After arriving in Paris, he visited some manufacturers and selected a line that he thought would sell well back home. To celebrate the new acquisition, he decided to visit a small bistro and have a glass of wine.

As he sat enjoying his wine, he noticed that the small place was quite crowded, and that the other chair at his table was the only vacant seat in the house. Before long, a very beautiful young Parisian girl came to his table, asked him something in French (which Murphy couldn't understand), so he motioned to the vacant chair and invited her to sit down.

He tried to speak to her in English but she didn't understand. After a couple of minutes of trying to communicate with her, he took a napkin and drew a picture of a wineglass and showed it to her. She nodded, so he ordered a glass of wine for her.

After sitting together at the table for a while, he took another napkin, and drew a picture of a plate with food on it, and she nodded. They left the bistro and found a quiet cafe. It had a small group playing romantic music.

They ordered dinner, after which he took another napkin and drew a picture of a couple dancing. She nodded, so they got up to dance. They danced until the café closed and the band was packing up.

Back at their table, the young lady took a napkin and drew a picture of a four-poster bed. To this day, Murphy has no idea how she figured out he was in the furniture business. (Hodgy)

Sigs Association Bank Account details for Direct Deposits are:

BSB: 067-000 **Account Number:** -28033880 **Account Name:** Royal Australian Signals Association.

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