

December 2020

SIGNAL NEWS



75TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
ASSOCIATION
IN TASMANIA
EDITION



Season's
Greetings
to you all



Official journal of the Royal Australian
Signals Association (Tasmania)

CERTA CITO

2.

SIGNAL NEWS

December 2020

PATRON: John McDermott (Life Member)

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(2021)

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Distribution:

March, June, September, December, 2020

2021 "1st Friday" Reunions

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

Committee Meetings 2021:- Meetings start at
RAAF Memorial Centre **at 1515** on 5th Mar,
4th Jun, 3rd Sep & 5th Nov

**End of Summer Lunch:- Wednesday
10th March 2021.**

Venue: "The Globe" Hotel, 12.30p for
12.45p

Anzac Day:- Sunday 25th April 2021

Meet at Globe Hotel carpark by 10.15a
for transport to the March &/or
Cenotaph Service. *Medals to be worn*

Lunch: at The Globe Hotel from 12.45p

**Mid-Year Dinner:- Friday 18th June
2021.**

Venue/Time - TBA

**Annual General Meeting (75th):- Friday
1st October 2021.**

5p at RAAF Memorial Centre

Commemoration Day: Sunday 10th Oct.

Service: 11.45a

Anglesea Barracks
Signals Memorial
Medals to be worn

Lunch: RAAF

Memorial Centre
from 12.30p

Remembrance Day Lunch: November

12th- Timing & Venue TBA.

Medals may be worn

Printed by:

Nic Street, MHA,
Liberal Member for Franklin

A much-appreciated Community Service

3.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Welcome to the last edition of Signal News for 2020.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASSN

Archives Project

AGM News

Jeff Solomon

Chris Beauchamp

Tony Roberts

Brian Watson - sick list!

CHRIS BEAUCHAMP'S STORY

Recently I was looking through some old photo albums and it gave me the inspiration to write this article.

I was born in Launceston on 1st January 1964 and enjoyed a somewhat sheltered life on the farm and orchard at Rosevears. I attended primary school at Exeter and moved on to high school at Riverside leaving at the end of year 10 in 1979 with very good grades. I started work the following Monday as a delivery boy for a sporting wholesaler in Launceston. I boxed up orders and delivered them to the bus station on a trolley as I was only 15. The excitement of my first job was brief as I was lucky enough to obtain an apprenticeship as an electrician/ technician and also entry to the Police Force Academy just three weeks later.

My father steered me toward the apprenticeship and so in January 1980 I began learning all about traffic lights with the Transport Commission. In January 1981, I transferred to Hobart to further my apprenticeship training and lived in Sandy Bay in a boarding house. I did not know anyone and it was all a bit daunting at the time. Working in a large organisation and studying industrial electronics two nights a week at the TAFE College it was pretty lonely, and I was what I thought then – “a long way from home”.

I was looking for something to keep me busy and Army Reserves sounded like it might be fun. Recruiting had positions at 146 Signal Squadron just up the road so I joined up and unknowingly began a long and adventure-filled career. Tuesday night parades and one weekend a month kept me busy learning new skills and making many new friends. I moved to a flat in De Witt Street, Battery Point and I was able to jump the back fence to be at the Unit within minutes of leaving home. It was also a great place for a late pizza and a few beers after the bar closed.

I learnt RATEL, morse code, the smart way to erect a 292 antenna, how to start a stubborn generator and all about the 77 set. Bar duties were also something new to me and the “boozier” always had a great social atmosphere. Pizzas, beers and movie nights back then was watching the latest VHS rental movies from the video shop in Sandy Bay. Later that year I completed my recruit course at Brighton Army Camp. It was certainly a learning experience at the time but set me up well for later on in my career. One of the highlights was the fully kitted out Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) training and the uncertainty of the stinging eyes and throat when the mask came off. Shooting at the range was fun with the SLR, while stop butt duties kept you busy patching out.

I was lucky enough to be in a government job and was able to have leave without pay to attend Brighton again to conduct General Duties). I actually earned more money in the Reserves than a second-year apprentice electrician at that time! I made a plaque at the front of the Reserve Command Staff Course building from concrete. I painted it black and it had large gold RCSC lettering on it. I made quite a few new friends over the 2 weeks and learnt some new skills too. In 1982, I attended a driving course run by the unit and we set off to Strahan for the weekend.



I have a photo on 90-Mile Beach of a rover beside some dead pilot whales. They smelt pretty bad, but it was all part of the adventure.

A highlight that year was learning rappelling. We practised on the trainer at Fort Direction and then poor weather saw us head off to Hobart airport where a UH-1H Air Force “Huey” helicopter was waiting for us. We were lucky enough to have several goes and it certainly got the adrenalin flowing at the time. Leaning out of a moving helicopter hanging onto a rope and then dropping about 50 feet to the ground. That was definitely something to talk about when I went back to work the next week! One Tuesday night after training, Paul and I gave Trisha Higgins a lift back to her house at Warrane and then we were going back to my place in De Witt Street Battery Point. Coming back across the Tasman Bridge Paul’s car ran out of fuel just short of the top of the bridge. We soon had police on the scene and a tow truck took us back to Paul’s house in West Hobart. I still needed to get home and did not have any money for a taxi so I used his sisters toy scooter to get home. What a sight it must have been.

5.

(Chris Beauchamp's Story Cont.)

I was in a detachment run by CPL Lyn Chaplin and I set about learning all I could at every opportunity. We had some good weekend trips away doing comms checks. One time we went down to the Huon River and managed to get HF comms on the F1 from the middle of the Tahune Bridge with a zig zag type HF antenna tied to the bridge rails. We then headed off to the Hartz Mountains for a very cold night in the hutchie. I think that is where I learnt about Stones Green Ginger wine and its ability to help keep you warm!

In December 1982, I attended subject one for Corporal. It was a good course and I certainly enjoyed all it had to offer. Toward the end of the course we had a navigation exercise and were picked up at Brighton in a Huey and flown to the Buckland Training Area. We then set out on a solo navigation exercise at five-minute intervals with compass and map in hand with me heading off last. I recall passing several of my course mates going in various directions during the two hours it took to complete the task. I arrived at the finish line and wondered where everyone was, and that is when the Directing Staff discovered we had a problem. Quite a few momentarily displaced personnel had to be found over the next hour or so. Looking back, it should have been done in pairs. I had done some orienteering at high school and considered myself very lucky that day not to get lost too!

In February 1983 during an annual camp at Fort Direction, we were lucky to get a trip on HMAS Ardent, a Navy patrol boat and we all went for a quick cruise up the Derwent at maximum speed. That was a lot of fun and I briefly thought about the possibility of joining the Navy Reserves after that day.

After completing Subject 2 for Corporal I was promoted and eventually had my own detachment. On one trip away in the "new" land rover we broke down. Using my limited mechanical skills, I discovered the rotor button in the distributor was broken and proceeded to repair it using a very sticky chewed up minty. Fortunately for me it worked and we made it back to the Unit okay. Another time the accelerator pedal was having little effect as it slipped on a shaft, so I rigged up some hoochie cord and just used it as a hand throttle through the window.

I had my detachment up on Mount Barrow near Launceston doing some Retransmission exercises back to Hobart. The weather was very pleasant and the views were great. The communications worked well and everyone was happy. The ten-man ration packs provided us with some creative ideas and we did not go hungry. Sig Singh was in charge of cooking and did a great job.

In 1984, I was transferred back to Launceston having completed my apprenticeship and joined 12th Independent Rifle Company. We did several trips to Stony Head training area and they had an underground command post that was fairly new at the time. This was very different to "camming up" and operating from the back of a rover.

I was also lucky enough to go to Tully in North QLD for jungle training. We left Launceston in a C-130 Hercules and flew non-stop for about 4.5 hours to Tully. This might seem silly these days, but that was my first plane trip out of Tasmania and I was 20 years old! We were met by a luxurious looking bus and we thought it was pretty good after the long flight. After a short ride we were out on the roadside and off into the jungle for a short route march to Tully Army camp. Over the next 10 days we trekked up and down some very steep hills, got eaten alive by mozzies, had rats eat their way through our packs at night, and were constantly soaked to the skin by sweat or a tropical downpour. We did fixed bayonet fighting drills with SLRs and completed the "longest obstacle course in the Southern hemisphere". It was all very hard work at the time, as I had the 77 set and spare battery in my pack as the platoon signaller with just the bare essentials and a ration pack. But it was all part of the adventure and I am glad I was lucky enough to go there and have the experience.



One weekend the unit ran an escape and evasion exercise. I paired up with my mate Paul from 12 IRC and we were strip searched, put in a truck and driven to Ross in the Midlands. We were set free and had to head for Conara Junction Railway yard. We ran like crazy but headed East then North and evaded the Military police who were out in force. We ended up hitch hiking from Conara to Longford, "borrowed" some clothes from a backyard line and also a car. We spent the night in a covered roadworks trench then swam up a creek line to the objective in Punchbowl Reserve. We were among only a few to make it and it was a fun weekend. Those that did get captured spent the night in a compound kneeling in the cold night air and also being interrogated.

(Chris Beauchamp's Story, Cont.,)

SUBJECT 1 CPL.
BRIGHTON DEC 82

After my apprenticeship, I worked for a while fixing pinball machines and video game consoles for a small company but it was really a dead-end job. I was not sure where I was going in life at that point in time, and I applied for officer training at the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), completed the selection board and was accepted for a start later that year.

One day in July 1984, I walked past Defence Recruiting and then back peddled and went inside. Two weeks later I signed up as a RAAF Radio Technician for 6 years, was sworn in at Hobart Recruiting and off to Adelaide for RAAF rookies course. I found it fairly easy, and everything I had done previously helped make the transition to the RAAF comfortable for me. I got on fairly well with our Corporal and was older than most of the others on the course. He could see that I was no rookie, and I ended up being put in charge of our platoon, and life was pretty good for the rest of the course. I spent the next 18 months at Laverton in Melbourne completing Technicians course. The course had a higher failure rate than the RAAF Pilots course and they were proud of that!

I was posted to Amberley and worked on the F1-11 fighter jet radars and learnt to fix a lot of "modern" 1960's technology. A mate took me for a fly in a little two-seater plane one weekend and I was hooked on flying. Amberley had Huey and Chinook helicopters and I was able to get a few flights in the back, and also get hoisted down onto some mountain peaks on a winch line. I worked on duty crew at air movements section for three months, and managed to get a ride in any aircraft that I could talk my way onto. I soon decided I wanted to be a pilot (something I had always wanted to do but did not have the required education) I joined the RAAF Amberley flying club and flew up to two times each weekend and quickly gained my private pilot's licence.

I took leave without pay and went to night school for 10 months to complete years 11 and 12. At 27 years old, I was the oldest guy sitting the year 12 exams and got some funny looks from the young kids at school. After the exams, I felt I had done well so I went to Army recruiting to see if I could become a chopper pilot as the Army had just taken over all the choppers from the RAAF. I filled in all the paperwork, had my medicals, passed the selection board and waited with fingers crossed! Meanwhile, I was promoted to Corporal and posted to East Sale in Victoria.

Nine months later I was an Officer Cadet at Canungra completing Officer's course and in January 1991 started 52 Army Pilots Course at Point Cook and never looked back. In May 1992

(Chris Beauchamp's Story, Cont.,)

I graduated with wings as a Lieutenant, and was posted to Iroquois gunships at 5 Aviation Regiment in Townsville. Here I was flying Huey helicopters and I even got to do rappelling with infantry soldiers and commandos as the pilot flying this time. Flying the Huey was great, and when configured as gunships was a lot of fun. I learnt from an experienced Vietnam veteran and life was pretty good. I had a blast firing the rockets and the two six-barrel 7.62 mm gatling guns made a great sound as they put hundreds of rounds down range. Every fifth round was tracer and you could literally see your fall of shot. I have some great video footage, and that aircraft now has pride of place in the Army Museum at Oakey.

I was selected to attend Instructors course in 1996, promoted to Captain, and spent five years in Canberra teaching helicopter pilots to fly the Squirrel helicopter at the ADF helicopter School. This was a very rewarding and demanding job and after a while I noticed that my grey hair had begun to multiply! All the while I continued to do some private flying training on small twin engine planes and completed all the necessary theory exams in my spare time to hopefully become an airline pilot.

In January 2000, I was lucky enough to be posted to 173 Surveillance Sqn at Oakey flying the Beechcraft Kingair 200.

One day I even flew Major General Maurie McNam (*ex cadre staff Captain at 146*) from Canberra to a meeting. Not sure he remembered me, but I made myself known to him at the time. Ten years of flying at 173 Squadron took me to many places all over Australia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Pacific islands.

Promotion to Major in 2006 and a Flying Standardisation role had me on a trip to Afghanistan with a Chinook flight to many destinations being a highlight in that country. I was spending parts of each year in the United States conducting simulator training on the Chinook in Seattle, and on the Kingair in Wichita. I was very lucky to be part of a ferry flight of a brand new Kingair 350 from the United States via Greenland, Iceland, London, Corfu, Egypt, Dubai, India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia to Australia. That trip will always be one of the best memories. We had two days off in Corfu and did some exploring. What a great place!

In November 2009, the RAAF retired the Caribou and the Army gave their Kingairs to the RAAF. I transferred to the RAAF as a Squadron Leader and spent 10 years flying and training RAAF pilots on the Beechcraft Kingair 350. I travelled to New Zealand, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga and occasionally flew a VIP role flying the Prime Minister, Governor General and politicians to many functions and meetings throughout Australia. To avoid promotion and a desk job in Canberra I applied for a Specialist Aircrew position that came with a demotion to Flight Lieutenant but a pay rise each year and even a bonus after five years. Those positions were rare but kept the required experience where it was needed at the time. On the 16th of May 2018, I clocked up 10,000 hours of military flying and that was a pretty significant achievement as I have managed to avoid promotion to a desk job for just on 28 years. An event that is quite rare today.

My life has been pretty amazing, and during all my time in the air I have often thought about where I first started out in the military, and all the places it has taken me. I have made a lot of friends along the way, and sadly also lost a few too. It has to be said here that a very supportive wife was the secret to me being able to keep flying for so long as it often required long periods of time away from home. My wife Lynn did a great job with our two boys Robert, now (22) and Matthew (20), and yes, I did miss quite a few birthdays and anniversaries. I still run 10km regularly, exercising 6 days a week and enjoy mountain bike riding and water skiing. In 1981 when I joined the Army Reserve I was looking for some adventure and direction in my life. I certainly found what I was looking for and it has been a great journey.

On the 16th of May 2018, I clocked up 10,000 hours of military flying and that was a pretty significant achievement as I have managed to avoid promotion to a desk job for just on 28 years. An event that is quite rare these days!

Thanks to everyone that has been a part of my life along the way. I left the military on 14 January 2019 after 35 years full time service and three years in the Reserves years. I never thought I would be wearing a white collar and tie to work ha ha!



Chris at the controls of a Fokker F100

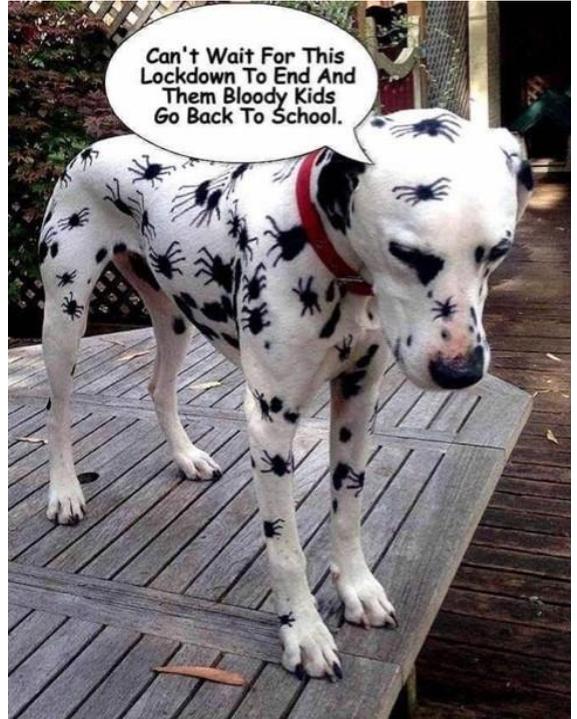
I had a good mental clean-out for five months and I am now flying a Fokker 100 out of Townsville for Alliance Airlines. The view from the new office are great, and I am always happy when I am in the air! Finally, I have found a new fun job outside of the ADF. Drop in if you venture to Townsville. christbc@outlook.com 0402 329835

THE COVID PAGE

I'VE BEEN "SOCIAL DISTANCING"
ALL MY LIFE...



IT'S CALLED GOLF



Recent isolation experiences !!



YOUR SECRETARY SAYS

Archiving Our Records -Missing Copies of “Signal News”

We are still ‘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 copies to me for scanning & return or, if possible, scan and email copies to me please?

FELLOW MEMBERS, it’s that time again when the ‘**little red figures**’ have been entered near a circle near the bottom of [Page 15](#). If you have such an entry in your copy (*please check*) that’s the minimum amount of ‘Subs’ your Treasurer **Mick “Skippy” Farley would like you to send him, please.** Keep him happy over our Xmas break. *You CAN send more and ‘get in front’, of course—many members 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 your Association., to Mick’s home address – see Page 2, or ‘fix him up’ at a “First Friday” evening. **THANKS.**

The following is a recent message from Al Nunn in Victoria:-

“As you know, I have been visiting WW1 & WW2 battle-fields for many years now, this recent trip travelling to the Republic of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Greece (including Crete, Rhodes & other islands) & finally, Turkey.

On our trip in Crete, Heather & I had just disembarked from a ferry at Sfakion, when an Aussie flag caught my attention. Unfortunately, we were in a hurry to catch the last bus back to Chania (a totally mad & chaotic scramble), so unable to pay my respects or read the inscriptions.

We departed the Northern city of Chania to travel South by bus, to eventually demount high up in the mountains for a 18km hike down & through the famous & spectacular Samaria Gorge, following the path of some retreating Allied troops, who had filed through this gorge to reach the Southern tiny coastal village of Agia Rouieli, then onto another village of Sfakion, to wait for an evacuation by the Royal Navy.

I had read many books & articles on this campaign, but having been on the ground, I have nothing but total admiration for the Allied fighting forces in this sector, seriously undermanned, totally outgunned & exhausted, but despite that, I firmly believe that the defending forces could have staved off the vastly superior & elite German attacking forces, if a certain commander had not panicked &/or failed to destroy the vital Maleme airfield in his sector, there-by denying the enemy a successful landing & foothold.



The photo is of the memorial on the Sfakion foreshore & evacuation site. It shows the Australian, New Zealand, British & Greek flags.

I don’t know to what point & detail I should continue or stop with this story. It has fascinated me for years & a huge “what if” question remains. In any event, Hitler cancelled all future airborne invasions as it was too costly in terms of men lost.”

(Thanks Al –enjoyed hearing more of your travel tales. Ed)

Further comms with Shirley Watson, further reporting that hubby **Brian** has undergone further hospitalisation in Launceston. He has been very frustrated in his rate of recovery from very serious surgery.

Also had an enquiry from **Laurie Adland** (nee **Jillett**), a former ARES Unit member until 1987 who now resides with her family in Melbourne.

Nice to receive an email message from former Unit OC **Orion Marriott** advising of his change of address.

Also nice to ‘run-into’ **Brian Marriott** and partner Eva on a recent visit to Cygnet. Brian ‘threatens’ to make an effort to attend a “First Friday” when an opportunity presents.

Welcome to **Jeff Solomon** who joined our Association recently. Jeff resides at Hillcrest on the North West Tas Coast and served with 130 and 155 Sig Sqn’s as well as in civilian appointments in the RAN.

Also, welcome to **Chris Beauchamp** (now residing in Townsville) who was a Det Comd with 146 Sqn in the early 1980’s and provided the “lead story” for this addition – thanks Chris.

10.

AGENT RADIO OPERATING DURING WW 2

During World War 2 the use of clandestine radio for agent communications was widespread. Literally hundreds of agent circuits were operated during the war. On the enemy side they ranged in type from highly organized nets involving German diplomatic installations to single operations in such widely scattered places as Mozambique and isolated locations in the United States. On the Allied side there was no part of Axis territory where we did not have clandestine communications representatives - "Joes," as they were called.

It was almost impossible to tune a communications receiver of an evening without running across signals which were so obviously not what they were trying to seem that you wondered why they were not wrapped up the first time they came on the air. On both sides the signal plans (call signs, frequencies, and times of transmission) and procedures used by agents were for the most part of utmost simplicity. One service was also easily distinguishable from another by their different characteristics. The random contact times and frequent changes in wavelength considered so essential today were represented by uncomplicated regular patterns simple to reconstruct. In many cases the Rota -- the cycle in which the plan repeated itself -- was of only a week's duration. Often only the list of call signs was carried out to a 31-day Rota.

The agent was generally given a reasonably good range of operating frequencies, usually between five and ten, to help protect him from detection and arrest, but he was often his own worst enemy. Certain times and frequencies, because they afforded better operating conditions either radio wise or from a personal standpoint, became his favourites. Almost nothing his base could say or do would convince an agent that he was endangering himself when he abandoned even the simple non-repetitive pattern of his signal plan in favour of the convenience of operating day after day on the same frequency at the same hour. It must be said, in all fairness, that in some cases this practice was almost unavoidable because of the agent's need to live his cover. In others, however, it was stupidity, laziness, or complete incomprehension of the need for good radio security. Security laxness was particularly foolhardy of those who operated alone and without benefit of "watchers" to warn when enemy personnel were approaching.

Four types of agent radio operators can be distinguished -- those who operated in metropolitan areas in concert with well-organized watcher organizations; those who operated on their own in cities; those who were with the guerrilla groups; and those who worked alone in isolated rural areas.

The City Mouse

In cities a variety of techniques was employed to protect the operator. In one case as many as five operators in widely separated areas were geared to function as one station. All had transmitters on the same frequency and copies of the traffic for a given schedule. If the enemy approached the vicinity of an operator, he would stop transmitting when signalled by his watcher, and at the same time another operator in a remote part of the city who had been listening to his colleague would, with hardly a perceptible pause, continue the transmission. As necessary, a third would take over from the second and so on, much to the frustration of the opposition. In another instance long-abandoned telephone lines were used to key distant transmitters, whose remoteness from the operator greatly increased his security? These and other sophisticated devices were employed successfully in target areas where an extensive and highly organized underground was able to create the conditions for them.

In the main, however, a less imaginative but equally effective means of protecting the operator was used -- teams of watchers strategically placed in the streets around or on the roof of the building in which the agent was working his set. When enemy direction-finding trucks or personnel with portable sets were spotted approaching, a signal would be sent to another watcher either in the room with the operator or close enough to warn him to stop transmitting. Usually the warning was enough; but one agent was so intensely anxious to get the traffic off that he repeatedly ignored the warnings of his watcher on the roof above him. A string had to be fastened to this man's wrist, with the roof watcher holding the other end, so that he could literally yank the operator's hand away from the key!

Less is known about the singletons who operated in cities. They lived lonely, frightened lives, particularly tense during their transmissions. Frequently they had the feeling that the enemy was just outside the door waiting for the right moment to break in, and sometimes he was. The most grateful moment in the singleton's day came when he heard the base say "Roger. Nothing more." Sometimes the base operator would impulsively end with the letters GB ES GL -- "Good bye and good luck" - even though he knew it was against the rules. The lone agents who survived owed their lives to a highly developed sense of security and intelligent use of the resources available to them. They went on the air only when they had material, they considered really important and they kept their transmissions short.

They either were or became such good operators that they approached the professional level in skill. Sometimes they were able to change their transmitting procedure from what they had been taught to one which enabled them to reduce greatly their time on the air.

(WW2 Agent Radio Ops Cont.,)

They took advantage of unusual operating locations and moved frequently. In addition, they undoubtedly owed something to good fortune: many who were caught were victims as much of bad luck as of enemy action. One German agent in Italy who had most skilfully and successfully evaded Allied apprehension over a long period was caught only with the casual help of an Italian woman. After watching with curiosity, the efforts of a DF crew in the street for some time, she finally approached the officer in charge and diffidently offered the suggestion, "If you're looking for the man with the radio, he's up there."

Some singleton agents who were unable to live alone with their secrets were spotted because of their inability to keep their mouths shut. Their compulsion to tell a sweetheart or a friend or to draw attention to themselves by living or talking in a manner out of keeping with their covers resulted in their apprehension. And yet they sometimes got by with incredible indiscretions.

There was one case in which the base, having taken traffic from a "Joe" in northern Italy, was about to close when Joe, in clear text, asked if it would take traffic from "George," an agent who had been trained and dispatched from a completely different location. The base operator was flabbergasted, but took down the transmission and then asked the man in the field to stand by for a short message, which was being enciphered, to the following effect: "Where did you get that traffic and where the hell is George?" The answer was prompt and again *en clair*: "From George, he's on leave." For several days Joe continued to send in George's messages, evidently prepared in advance, as well as his own, until George showed up on his own schedule and resumed business as usual. To the best of our knowledge these two agents remained unmolested and free of control; they were contacted regularly until Allied troops overran the area.

The Country Mouse

The radio operator with a guerrilla group came in for his share of difficulties too. First of all, he usually arrived at his destination by parachute. Often his equipment was damaged in the drop. Many times, he had to lug it over almost impassable terrain in a wild scramble to protect it and avoid capture. Sometimes he never got on the air at all, and he and his teammates would be the subject of melancholy speculation on the part of his comrades at headquarters until some word trickled back as to what had happened to them. The radio man was expected to do his share of the fighting when the situation demanded it; and injured or sick, he was supposed to keep at his radio as long as he was strong enough to operate it.

The singleton in the country usually had a specified mission such as the retraining of an already infiltrated agent or the transmission of information being gathered by specific sources. He frequently could use some city-type methods of operation, being protected by watchers as he worked in some lonely spot, or had the advantages of the guerrilla type, in that he was among friendly irregulars or in their territory. Very often he had little privacy, let alone security, of operation, and his sole protection was the good will of the populace of the area through which he was traveling. Frequently he had to meet contact schedules in the open in broad daylight, with interested indigenous bystanders looking on. Given good will, however, this circumstancing was not bad; it provided volunteers to crank the generator and hold up the poles on which his antenna was strung.

The country singleton was usually no worse off than his counterparts in other situations, and sometimes much better off; occasionally he was treated as an honoured guest. But his status varied with the moods and political views of the so-called friendly leaders of the area, and at times he was viewed with suspicion or open hostility. The agent or agents he was supposed to retrain often resented him and added to his difficulties. He developed skills beyond those he had brought with him: equivocation, tact, flattery, subterfuge, and downright dishonesty became abilities essential to the doing of his job. His one thought was to get it done and get out in one piece and on to the next assignment.

Occasionally the agent operator interjected into his otherwise anonymous transmission bursts of temper, displeasure or eloquent disgust. Usually these outbursts were spontaneous profanity, enciphered, directed at the quality of the base signal, the base operator's poor sending, or some other immediate cause of annoyance. They most often came in the agent's mother-tongue, but a certain group of German clandestine agents used to swear at their base operators with great eloquence in beautifully spelled-out English.

Not all such expressions of opinion were sent in the clear. Over the years, enciphered messages have been generously spiked with agent invective and profanity. One such message received during the war, a marvel of succinctness, spoke volumes about what makes an agent tick. The agent in question had been trained as a singleton. It had been planned, with good reason, that he should be dropped several hundred miles ahead of the bulk of his equipment, of which there was a great deal, and make his way to it later. The operation went according to plan except in this respect; all the agent's gear was dropped with him. In due time the base heard him calling, established contact and took a brief but carefully enciphered message, which when decoded was found to consist of one extremely vulgar French word. The agent was never heard from again.

(WW2 Radio Agent Ops Cont.,)

The Ingredients of Partnership

What kind of person made a good agent operator? His special qualifications required that he be young or old, tall or short, thin or fat, nervous or phlegmatic, intelligent or stupid, educated or unlettered. His political views were of no consequence. If he had a burning resentment at having been thrown out of his country, of having lost family or friends to the enemy, so much the better -- or maybe worse: uncontrolled hatred could create security problems. He didn't even have to like radio very much. About the only attributes he really needed were: ability to put up with all the unpleasantness of six weeks of radio training to get at least a nodding acquaintance with the subject; a willingness or desire to go anywhere by any reasonable means of conveyance -- "reasonable" includes dropping fifty feet from a plane into water -- and stay for an unspecified period of time; and the abiding conviction, in spite of feeling constantly that someone was looking over his shoulder, that it would always be the other guy who got caught. In short, he must come to like his work and take, with the well-educated call-girl, the view that he was just plain lucky to get such a good job.

At the base end of a clandestine circuit a good operator was, in his own way, different from any other radio operator developed during the war. And he was proud of it. In the first place he had to learn to live in a world of noise, an experience which occasionally resulted in permanent psychoses or suicide. The agent transmitter was and is a miserably feeble communications instrument, capable under the best of circumstances of putting only very small amounts of radio energy into the ether. Being illegal, it had to compete with jammers, commercial telegraph, and broadcast stations, whose signals often exceeded its power tens of thousands of times.

If the reader can picture himself surrounded by the brass section of a large orchestra playing one of the lustier passages from Wagner while he is trying to hear and identify a different melody coming from a piccolo played by an asthmatic midget in the balcony, he will in some measure approximate the auditory frustrations of the base radio operator searching for and copying some of the typical agent signals.

Yet this small group of men not only took pride in their work, but because they understood the problems of their unseen friends on the other end of the line, went out of their way to make sure that their agents got the best service possible. Frequently they would become so concerned about a certain agent that they would get up during off hours at whatever time of day or night their particular Joe was scheduled to come on, to make sure that he would be properly copied, even though the base operator assigned to that watch was thoroughly competent. And the regular operator never resented this interference with his watch; he probably had done or would do the same thing himself.

The devotion and skill of these otherwise apparently undedicated and average men was equal to almost any demand. Sometimes as many as five operators would voluntarily concentrate on one agent transmission, piecing together the fragments each made out, so the man could get off the air as fast as possible. They learned to recognize the agent's signal as he was tuning up, in order to shorten the dangerous calling time. They managed to make sense of the spastic tapping's of obviously nervous agents and through their own efforts and example frequently instilled confidence in them. If they did not accept with good grace the often-unwarranted criticism levelled at them by the agent, at least they did not reply in kind.

They recognized their special friends by the way they sent their characters and were in many cases able to tell when the agent was in trouble or had been replaced at the key by an enemy operator. In many instances they developed a sixth sense which enabled them to hear and copy signals correctly through prolonged bursts of static or interference, and they developed shortcuts which further reduced the agent's time on the air. Many of these shortcuts became the foundation for more efficient and sophisticated methods of operation.

Their patience was truly marvellous. When necessary, they would sit day after day listening for a man who had never been contacted or who had disappeared for months. That he might be without equipment, drunk, or dead made no difference to them. As long as his schedule was on their contact sheet, he was real and they looked for him. If he showed up, they nearly always established contact.

Not every man assigned as radio operator to this type of base station made the grade. Some tried and just didn't have it. These nobody criticized, and other useful duties were found for them; but those who didn't take the work seriously were not tolerated and soon left the station. The good ones came from all walks of life. Unlike the agents, they were trusted nationals of the country operating the station.

They were draftees, professional communicators, amateur radio operators, philologists; but almost without exception they had imagination, skill, and a deep (if frequently unrecognized) love for both radio and that type of radio work.

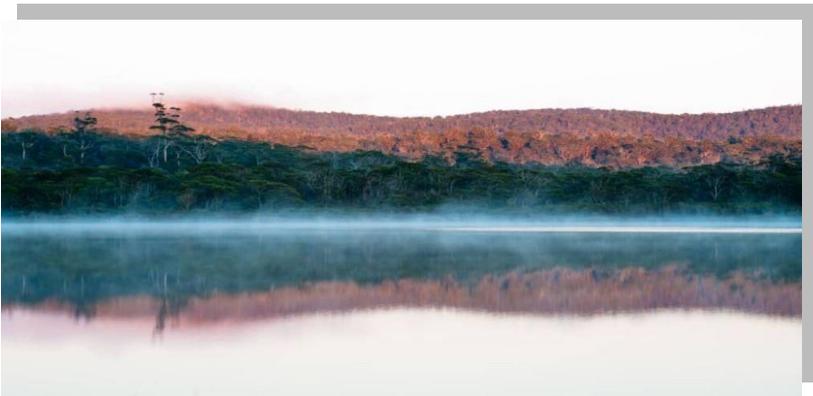
They were in short, a new breed, the clandestine intelligence service radio operator. (*Author - Anonymous*)

13.

MORE PHOTOS FROM OUR MEMBERS AND FORMER SQN PERSONNEL



Sean Freitas' award winning photo below is of Capt Cook Rivulet at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. He has a lovely holiday home near here which he rents to visitors. Enquiries to [facebook.com/adventurebayaccommodation](https://www.facebook.com/adventurebayaccommodation)



Caroline Button's photo captures the Lagoon at Binalong Bay, Tas in the early morning mist.



Julie Paul's photo was taken at Forest Beach, Qld in the early morning. Julie moved there

We are the last ones' - *Article supplied by Ed Snell Whitehorse RSL Sub-Branch*

The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics. In the late 40s and early 50's the country seemed to lie in the embrace of brisk but quiet order as it gave birth to its new middle class. Our parents understandably became absorbed with their own new lives. They were free from the confines of the depression and the war. They threw themselves into exploring opportunities. *We* weren't neglected but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus.

Born in the 1930s and early 40s, we exist as a very special age cohort. We are the "last ones." We are the last, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the war itself with fathers and uncles going off. we are the last to remember ration books for everything from sugar to shoes to stoves. We saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans. We saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available and milk was delivered in a horse drawn cart.

We are the last who spent childhood without television; instead imagining what we heard on the radio. As we all like to brag, with no TV we spent our childhood "playing outside until the street lights came on." We did play outside and we did play on our own. The tack of television in our early years meant, for most of us, that we had little real understanding of what the world was like. Our Saturday afternoons, if at the movies, gave us newsreels of the war and the holocaust sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons. Newspapers and magazines were written for adults.

We are the last who had to find out for ourselves. As we grew up, the country was exploding with growth. Pent up demand, coupled with new instalment payment plans put factories to work. New roads would bring jobs and mobility. They were glad we played by ourselves 'until the street lights came on.' They were busy discovering the post war world. Most of us had no life plan, but with the unexpected virtue of ignorance and an economic rising tide we simply stepped into the world and went to find out.

We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where we were welcomed. Based on our naive belief that there was more where this came from, we shaped life as we went. We enjoyed a luxury; we felt secure in our future. Of course, just as today, not all share in this experience.

Depression poverty was deep rooted. Polio was still acrippler. The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 50s and by mid-decade school children were ducking under desks. China became Red China. Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.

We are the last to experience an interlude when there were no existential threats to our homeland. *We* came of age in the late 40s and early 50s. The war was over and the cold war, terrorism, climate change, technological upheaval and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with insistent unease.

Only we can remember both a time of apocalyptic war and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. We experienced both. We grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better not worse.

MORNING COFFEE AT ST PETERS

Four old Catholic men and a Catholic woman were having coffee in St. Peters Square. The first Catholic man tells his friends, "My son is a priest, when he walks into a room, everyone calls him Father."

The second Catholic man chirps, "My son is a Bishop. When he walks into a room, people call him 'Your Grace'".

The third Catholic gent says, "My son is a Cardinal. When he enters a room, everyone bows their head and says, 'Your Eminence'".

The fourth Catholic man says very proudly, "My son is the Pope. When he walks into a room people call him 'Your Holiness'".

Since the lone Catholic woman was sipping her coffee in silence, the four men give her a subtle, "Well..???" She proudly replies, "I have a daughter, SLIM & TALL, 40 D BUST, 24" WAIST and 34" HIPS. When she walks into a room, people say, JESUS CHRIST"! (Bob Gray)

THE LEPRECHAUN & THE GOLFER

A golfer playing in Ireland hooked his drive into the woods. Looking for his ball, he found a little Leprechaun flat on his back, a big bump on his head and the golfer's ball beside him.

Horrified, the golfer got his water bottle from the cart and poured it over the little guy, reviving him. 'Arrgh! What happened?' the Leprechaun asked. 'I'm afraid I hit you with my golf ball,' the golfer says. 'Oh, I see. Well, ye got me fair and square. Ye get three wishes, so whaddya want?' 'Thank God, you're all right!' the golfer answers in relief. 'I don't want anything, I'm just glad you're OK, and I apologise.' And with that the golfer walks off.

'What a nice feller,' the Leprechaun says to himself. I have to do something for him. I'll give him the three things I would want... a great golf game, all the money he ever needs, and a fantastic sex life.' A year goes by and the golfer is back. On the same hole, he again hits a bad drive into the woods and the Leprechaun is there waiting for him. 'Twas me that made ye hit the ball here, ' the little guy says. 'I just want to ask ye, how's yer golf game?' 'My game is fantastic!' the golfer answers. 'I'm an internationally famous golfer now.' He adds, 'By the way, it's good to see you're all right.' 'Oh, I'm fine now, thank ye. I did that fer yer golf game, you know. And tell me, how's yer money situation?' 'Why, it's just wonderful!' the golfer states. 'When I need cash, I just reach in my pocket and pull out \$100 bills I didn't even know were there!' 'I did that fer ye also.' And tell me, how's yer sex life?'

The golfer blushes, turns his head away in embarrassment, and says shyly, 'It's OK.' 'C'mon, c'mon now,' urged the Leprechaun, 'I'm wanting to know if I did a good job How many times a week?' Blushing even more, the golfer looks around then whispers, 'Once, sometimes twice a week.' 'What??' responds the Leprechaun in shock. 'That's all? Only once or twice a week?'

'Well,' says the golfer, 'I figure that's not bad for a Catholic priest in a small parish. (Certa Cito Tas)

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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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16.



VALE - 28705 Lt Col RTD Anthony Gordon "Tony" ROBERTS - 3 Dec 1935 - 1 Sep 2020

Tony served with the Commonwealth Sig Sqn in Malaya (1959-1961). He attended Army Staff College in 1967 and saw service in Vietnam as OC 104 Sig Sqn in 1971. The latter 2 postings were preceded by an appointment as OC (Captain) 406 then 124 Sig Sqn in Hobart. He retired as a Lt Col. In recent years Tony lived in NSW.

Tony's brother officer Peter Murray wrote: *'A wonderful man and great friend who helped so many people throughout his life. Highly respected by his soldiers and he could get the best out of them. He enjoyed a wide range of friends and was always fun to be with.*

My wedding groomsman so many years ago. We drifted apart through no reason of our own yet Tony will be always in my mind as a close friend, a helpful mate, a loyal companion and an outstanding officer.

Farewell for now mate, I will look forward to joining you in Walhalla one day. Keep my seat'.

Condolences to wife Sue and Tony's children.

R.I.P. Tony

VALE – DAVID WILSON, FORMER TECH ELEC AT THE 124 SIG SQN HIGH POWER RADIO TROOP, BRIGHTON CAMP 1967/68

Our member Dave was attached to 124 Sig Sqn after the 1967 bushfires. Due to a shortage of Army accommodation, he resided with the Geeves family at Glenorchy. That started a life-long friendship with Bob and the family. David and his wife ran STT Systems for many years selling/servicing a range of antennae throughout Australia. David had been residing at Tyabb in Gippsland Victoria, also continuing to work as a Telstra Contractor over recent years. He became gravely ill recently and was admitted to Sale hospital ICU for treatment then returning home before passing.

During the last few weeks, David bravely phoned many of his friends (*including your editor*), to say his goodbyes and was pleased to have the opportunity for a farewell chat.

We last saw David in Tasmania when he attended our 2012 Disbandment of Unit Reunion.

Our condolences are extended to Clairine and the rest of David's family.

R.I.P. Dave

VALE: 41224 WO1 (Rtd) Denis James BUCKLEY. OAM.

Born – 31-10-1934 Adelaide, South Australia. Died – 1-10-2020, Queensland. Aged 85 years

Served – 124 Sig Sqn Hobart as WO2 Comcen Supervisor, Anglesea Barracks, 110 Signal Squadron, South Vietnam 3-12-1969 to 26-11-1970 and a wide variety of Signals units around Australia before retiring and taking on the role of Sergeant-at-Arms, Government House, Brisbane for some 20 years.

Denis was heavily involved as a Rotarian and also a RSL Sub Branch President in NSW & Qld over many years. He and wife Melva attended our 2012 Unit Disbandment reunion in Hobart in 2012 and Denis was delighted to catch up with many of his friends from the late 1960's, especially Ian Beadle.

Our condolences have been passed to Melva on her sad loss.

R.I.P. Denis