

SEPTEMBER 2020

SIGNAL NEWS



CERTA CITO

Official Journal of the Royal Australian Signals Association (Tas)



Max Brett at his 100th
Birthday party at
Lindisfarne RSL

SIGNAL NEWS

September 2020

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March, June, September, December

All 2020 "1st Friday's" of the Month (*excludes January*) **Social Functions** are held at the RAAF Memorial Centre, 61 Davey Street, Hobart. (*Enter via the rear car park*). Starting from 4.15^{pm}

Annual General Meeting (73rd):-Friday 2nd October 2020.5^{pm} at RAAF Memorial Centre**Commemoration Day:** Sunday 11th Oct.**Service:** 11.45^{am} at AngleseaBarracks Signals Memorial *Medals to be worn***Lunch:** RAAF Memorial Centre from12.30^{pm}.**Remembrance Day Lunch:** Fri 13th Nov.

Timing & Venue TBA.

*Medals may be worn***Committee Meetings 2020:-**Meetings start at RAAF Memorial Centre **at****3.15^{pm}** on 6th Mar, 5th Jun, 4th Sep,
6th Nov.**Printed by Nic Street MP,****Member for Franklin****A much-appreciated Community Service**

FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

Greetings for the third time this year. We are now moving into the busiest part of the year. The inspiration for this article was getting a friendly reminder from Secretary Dick to get into gear.

How have you survived the lockdown period? To be able to meet on the 7th August for our First Friday was very successful with 26 Starters.

Our oldest member, **MAX BRETT**, celebrated his 100th birthday on the 10th of August. He is still very alert and the family had a celebration for him on Sunday the 9th at the Motor Yacht Club. Your President, Secretary and Treasurer attended and presented a “trophy” (no presents allowed) for service, a small hand-crafted Huon Pine Box for medals.



At left, Max is extinguishing his candles and above is the box presented by the Association

The next major activity is our AGM on the first Friday in October; the 2nd. As most will know, we don't spend too much time with this activity and we will be having a special price drinks night to follow. How

about offering your services for the Committee? Your commitment will be minimal.

Sunday 11th October, is our **ANNUAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE** day at The Signals Memorial at Anglesea Barracks at 1145 hrs. (if you have forgotten what this means, it is a quarter to 12 noon). We then adjourn to the RAAF Memorial Centre for lunch and a little light refreshment. “The Wheel” will operate. The service venue is still to be confirmed because of access to the Barracks. Details on these activities are included in this newsletter.

Another reminder. Friday the 13th November we have a popular lunch at a venue yet to be decided. This is our Remembrance Luncheon. I will be getting names for this at the first Friday in November.

Dick and David Harcourt are finalising the collection of our memorabilia. They have been digitising it and we are placing it in the State Archives. A big job and a great effort. More to follow. Remember, one day we may cease operation and would need to leave our history recorded with some stories not told.

The Mobility Allowance scheme is still working well. If you need transport to any of our activities, please contact Dick, myself, Mick Farley or Denise Geeves so that we can arrange taxi support.

As we are now back in business on our First Friday's we need to get our numbers up although 26 at our re-start, during winter, was excellent. If you haven't been in for a while come along and bring a mate. You will be very welcome to Denise and Denis as well as other “volunteers” behind the bar and Ray Woolley and Alf Scales on the wheel, and of course, everyone else. Partners are also welcome and we can even have tea and coffee. The ladies bring out the hot pies, etc., and our thanks to them.

That's about all I can remember for this issue.

Best wishes to all and keep healthy.

Yours in Signals,

Owen

AN INGLORIOUS CAREER IN SIGNALS - THE UNDETECTED CRIMES OF MAX BRETT

In 1936, at the age of 16, I joined 4th Division Signals as a Senior Cadet. 4 Div Sigs were located at Albert Park in Melbourne. My first camp was at Bittern on the Mornington Peninsula. My most vivid recollections of that camp are being introduced to drinking and smoking and hiding behind a tent while the Sergeant searched for cadets for kitchen fatigue.

In August 1938, at the age of 18 I graduated into Don Section (the operating section) of 4 Div Sigs. As a civilian my first full time job had been with the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster General's Department in Treasury Gardens as temporary Messenger. I later passed on examination for permanent Telegraph Messenger and worked in the Central Telegraph Office in Melbourne where I learned the Morse code. I later passed an examination for Junior Mechanic and as part of the training worked as a Telephonist in the Central Telephone Exchange Melbourne. Shortly afterwards I passed an examination for Clerk and was transferred to the Department of Trade and Customs. There I met Lieutenant Colonel Bill Jones CO of 4 Div Sigs who recruited me into his unit, no doubt because of my previous experience.

Although attending night school and working to matriculate, I managed to attend NCO classes and passed firstly the examination for Corporal and later for Sergeant. When war broke out (on 3 Sep 1939) I was at Broadmeadows attending an Officers and NCO's course. Lieutenant (later Major of RASA Tas) Frank Cumbrae-Stewart of Melbourne University Regiment was also at the course. About a dozen of the Warrant Officers and NCO's of 4 Div Sigs were selected for commissions and we were promoted in November, 1939.

In October, 1939 we were the first unit to camp at Balcombe. We marched from Mount Martha railway station into camp having an occasional swig of some wine with which I had filled a friend's water bottle. Some of you may remember Jim McCutcheon who latter was a Major in Indian Army Signals. Jim was 'full' when we arrived and was immediately given the task of Orderly Sergeant for the day. There was a photo of our Sergeant's mess in Beaumaris archives for many years. I recall a group of us at 'lights-out' relieving ourselves over the boundary fence of the camp when the Adjutant came up behind to upbraid us. Jim calmly turned round and wet the Adjutant's boots. Our Adjutant was not amused. In November, 1939 Jim and I became instructors at a Regimental Signallers course for a month. Amongst those present were Lieutenant Cumbrae-Stewart. Jim and I ate in the Brigade Officer's Mess and were allowed to exercise the Brigadier's horses. In December, January and February we returned to 4 Div Sigs at Balcombe where I became 2IC of a Brigade Signal Section.

In March, April and May 1940 it was back to work in the Customs Department. Eighth Division Signals A.I.F. was being raised so we volunteered for selection and transfer to the overseas forces. Unfortunately, they did not want us as officers. Later Jim resigned his commission and joined 7 Div Sigs in the ranks. In June 1940, when France fell, I also resigned my commission and joined the A.I.F. at Melbourne Town Hall. A friend who went with me to enlist was rejected as medically unfit. We were separated during the processing and when he raced up to tell me he could not come with me it was too late – I was in. Caulfield race course was where our draft was gathered, then as Signalmaster in charge I took the draft to Seymour where were congregated Sigs 1 Corps, 7 Div Sigs, AA Brigade Signals and the Victorian and Tasmanian contingents of 8 Div Sigs. Lieutenant Keith Stevenson formerly of 4 Div Sigs was in charge and he appointed me temporary unpaid acting Sergeant. Someone in AA Brigade Signals stole the bell from Seymour railway station which caused some bother until the railways eventually got their bell back. Lieutenant Col Reid (late of RASA Tas) was with us at this time.

We next travelled to Liverpool where 8 Div Sigs congregated. I was promoted or demoted to Lance Corporal and put through an NCO's course. Meanwhile I lived in a hut with Alan Morris on the next paillasse. We then to Ingleburn. by this time, I was a Sergeant and posted to G. Section (2/15th Artillery Regiment Signals). Later I was moved to L Section under Captain Ben Barnett of Test Cricket fame and served with Lloyd Phillips.

We spent some time with our 2/27th Brigade training in Bathurst N.S.W. One of our battalions was the 2/29th to which Gordon Hale (former RASA Tas member) was sent as a reinforcement to Malaya. In April 1941 I was discharged at the request of my widowed mother for enlisting under age without her consent.

I am happy not to have made the trip to Malaya with 8 Div Sigs. Like Gordon Hale I would probably have made it into Changi Jail or worse. I recall waiting to be discharged in a N.S.W. depot and being in charge of a kitchen washing up fatigue. The metal plates were covered with rust and we considered them unfit for human use. We bent the bad ones and disposed of them. Fortunately, no one discovered my misdeed. In Melbourne I was issued with an appalling civilian suit and skulked home for Easter 1941.

On Easter Tuesday I reported to my former CO who re-commissioned me into the full-time C.M.F. and posted me to Area Signals, (Albert Park Signal depot), then a move to Geelong race course for training a batch of Area Signals recruits. I was then sent off to 31 Course at the School of Signals Casula N.S.W. where Perc Eddington (later of RASA Tas) helped with my education. Soon after I was posted as Instructor, Southern Command School of Signals Seymour where I helped instruct our John Hall and Merton Potter.

5.

(Max Brett's story cont.)

In those days with some instructors from the Commando Wing of the School we would run a mile or so before breakfast and then hop under a cold shower. For a while the School went into recess and I was temporarily posted to Southern Command Signals at Williamstown race course and then to Olympic Park to Major Cumbrae-Stewart's operating company. I was given about 100 recruits to train. An interesting feature was that they had been given an IQ test and formed into a section of average and above average, and two sections of lesser test results. When it came to sport the top section won hands down as well as being faster learners. Brains beat brawn.

The North Australia Observer Unit was raised and although not a bushman they accepted me because they needed Signals officers. I was given about 100 potential Signalmen to take to an instruction course at A. W. A. Marconi School of Wireless in Sydney. We lived at Randwick Race course and travelled by tram to the school. After this course we joined the rest of the unit at Ingleburn where many of my signallers decided they wanted to be horsemen. We were issued with the first of our FS6 sets which were built by Amalgamated Wireless of Australia for use by the Indian Army on pack horses. They were the same as the 101 set except for a larger transmitter amplifier valve. or an exercise I organized three groups and sent them North, South and West with instructions to wireless back, and if no contact go a further mile and try again. Soon contact was lost with all groups in the skip distance and I chewed my nails for days until they finally reported in from many miles away. The unit second in command had meanwhile ordered me to recall them. The exercise did all of us a lot of good.

Next the advance party was sent North. We picked up our vehicles at Townsville in Queensland and went up through Charleville, Roma, Camooweal to Katherine. In Charleville our fellows captured several Colt automatic pistols from the US Air Force who were flying B17 bombers from Charleville. We held a parade of our party and gave back the pistols. We had a marvellous welcome from the population of Roma. Our lads took over the bars while the officers were entertained by a bachelor Vice President of the R.S.L. whose house was called "Virtue Villa" in big letters with "A Virgin's Retreat" in small letters underneath. A special dance was arranged for us - 'them were the days'.

In Katherine we prepared for the arrival of the main body and when they arrived we sent A Company to the Roper River Area, B Company to North West Australia and C Company to the Gulf of Carpentaria. We had about 120 wireless sets including one 133 set and about the same number of signallers with about 4 officers. Later we got a Signals Captain but he got hold of a bottle of whisky and was paralytic for 3 days. He was then 'bowler-hatted', leaving me in charge of Signals again. Our smallest sub-division was a patrol comprising a mounted infantry Corporal, two mounted infantrymen plus a signaller. We relieved the 2/4th Independent Company who were cut up badly later in Timor and replaced them with our patrols in isolated areas. The signaller often was battling to do five words a minute in Morse code, but we had to send them out where they learnt on the job. To a man they improved and did a most creditable job. At one stage I took a group of signallers from Katherine to Halls Creek to leave them to maintain 24-hour watch on the Flying Doctor pedal radio base. We ran into a puddle on the road which splashed water up and bent the fan which gouged an annular trough in the radiator so we could go no further. Fortunately, I had an FS6 wireless set with me but our security conscious signallers would not answer me as I had no official call sign. After a while I abbreviated my name into a call sign and help was sent and we were towed 56 miles to Wyndham. There I borrowed another vehicle and resumed our journey to Halls Creek. At Halls Creek I noted a high aerial and decided it would do for our FS6 set. The aerial belonged to the radio in the hotel lounge where I set up my temporary headquarters. Unfortunately, our Commanding Officer flew into Halls Creek with pioneer pilot Eddy Connellan. He was livid when he found me, which might be another factor in me never making Captain's rank. We were unable to establish radio contact later without the high aerial.

I was divested of my issue of Luger pistol, double barrelled shot gun and Browning automatic 22 rifle and spent the rest of the war with a jack knife as my only weapon of offence or defence. On returning to Wyndham to reclaim my original vehicle I found the local platoon commander had taken out the engine to install it in a boat they had taken over. This time it was my turn to be livid, by pulling my seniority I got my vehicle back whole. We settled down to a routine with the headquarters signallers on watch 4 hours then off eight hours. When unit HQ wanted to put my men on fatigues in their off-duty hours I had words with the Commanding Officer. Nevertheless, he insisted on over working my fellows and finally I complained up the line in writing to Norforce HQ, which probably explains why I never made it to Captain. I was banished to OC Sig Platoon in C Company at 'Gregory Downs' cattle station Queensland. The CO later tried to promote the former C Coy officer to Captain but I would never allow it, so we never had another Signals Captain.

Before leaving for Queensland I took several of HQ signallers to an Air Force recruiting office which happened to be in Katherine. Eight of my men and myself were accepted for air crew. I then did correspondence lessons relating to flying for many months. I later found the CO had let the others go but would not release me.

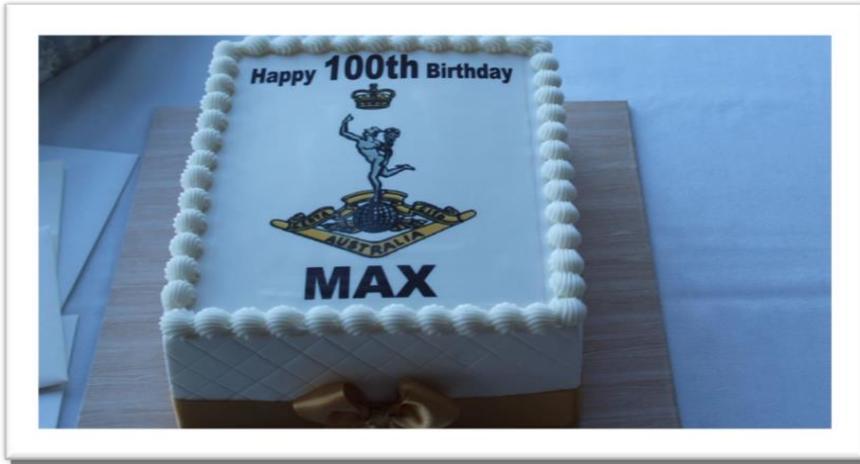
At 'Gregory Downs' I had 3 horses all of whom could throw me and they did. I spent a fascinating part of my life in the Gulf country. We built the tallest aerial in the area. We were working our little FS6 sets about 600 miles to Katherine and we had outstations at Borroloola, Burketown, Normanton and Karumba. Usually we could not get through in the day time particularly on the shorter ranges. When the danger of invasion of Australia reduced, the unit was halved and I was sent South for re-posting. I was divested of my issue of Luger pistol, double barrelled shot gun and Browning automatic 22 rifle and spent the rest of the war with a jack knife as my only weapon of offence or defence.

6.

(Max Brett's story cont.,)

I served for a time at Royal Park in Victoria conducting drafts of troops to put them on trains and finally was posted to the Signal Training Battalion at Bonegilla on the Murray River. I was sent to Sydney for a 3-month Officers Wireless Course at Marconi School of Wireless. Five of us were kept on for a further 3 months Advanced Wireless Course. After this I passed the PMG Broadcast Station Operators ticket exam. We messed in the Governor-General's stand at Randwick race course and attended the races in style. A good day for me was only to lose half my pay - usually I lost the lot on the nags. Back to Bonegilla.

Our 1st Centenarian – Max Brett, turned 100 on 10th August. The Association presented Max with a magnificent “medals” box, made of Huon pine and blackwood, at a function at the Motor Yacht club on the day prior birthday.



(His cake (above) was made & presented by the Lindisfarne RSL Club. Association member & RSL President Chris Parker and Owen Winter made the presentations).

I recall being out night after night in Albury and at least two girl-friends. I remember being OC Guard when so very tired that I 18 months escaped and I was in real trouble. Before I could be court-martialled for dereliction of duty my posting came through to OC 2/10th Aust. Heavy Wireless Station which was attached to 1st Army Signals at Mareeba Queensland. After being at Mareeba for about a month a warning order came for me to prepare my section for tropical service. Less than a week later on a Sunday we got a message to move that day and we had to load ourselves and gear on a train at Kingaroy. We joined 23 L of C Sigs near Brisbane where my new company commander (known as Wally the Pig) tore a strip off me of not having my sets either tropic proofed or even crated for loading on the ship. Harold Boniwell (later Tas RASA) was CQMS in my new company.

We sailed for Hollandia and joined Generals Macarthur and Blamey at Land HQ Lake Sentani. Hollandia harbour had about 1000 ships getting ready for the invasion of Leyte. Norm Neilson and his 37 Heavy Wireless section served here with me.

Later we embarked for Morotai in the Halmahera's where Blamey established his headquarters. Some of my 5 kW diesel generators powered our signal office and I had to do the wiring of lights -fortunately the Jap was interested only in the air field several miles away.

One morning I paraded my section and called for a volunteer to hang an aerial wire on a tall coconut palm. No one would volunteer, so it was left to me trembling with fear and fatigue to put up the aerial. To add insult to injury they asked me to drop them down some coconuts. Finally, the war ended and my section was to be disbanded. They decided to put an older married officer with more demobilization points than me in charge of my section, but as the boat was about to sail, they found I could not have my command taken away in that manner. So, the other fellow came off and I went on board and took my section to Yeerongpilly in Queensland.

After disbanding my men and handing in my equipment I was supposed to report to the Chief Signals Officer. I found another officer in like circumstances so we signed each other's discharge papers and headed for home.

I arrived at the discharge depot in Watsonia Victoria when people with my number of demobilization points were being discharged. Luckily, I was able to escape undetected in time to start an Engineering Course at Melbourne University.

In all my service there was never a red ink entry in my pay book. I was lucky. Inviting me to officer's mess dinners the Corps of Signals now address me as Captain and the Corps of Engineers call me Major. *So is virtue rewarded.*

7.

MORE OF SEAN DE FREITAS' TASMANIAN SUNRISE PHOTOS



Beautiful Cloudy Bay beach on South Bruny Island



South-Esk River, Northern Tasmania



Derwent River at Battery Point, Hobart

MY COMMISSIONING PARADE

During 1963/64, WO2 Basil Apted, Sgt Frank Moore and myself were tutored by the ARA Officer Commanding 406 Signal Squadron, Capt Tony Roberts in the subjects for first appointment. Tony gave up every Thursday night to do so and quite a few weekends as well - we were very grateful to him for his efforts on our behalf. As at 31 July 1964, we had passed all subjects.

The commissions for both Basil and Frank came through ok and when the Squadron went to Annual Camp at Brighton (as 124 Signal Squadron) in February that year, they marched in as Second Lieutenants. My commission went missing somewhere, so I marched in on the advance party as a Sergeant.

Early in the camp we had a shakedown radio exercise and I was to drive a Studebaker (truck 2 ½ ton GS) to the exercise area carrying jerry cans of fuel, enough for gen sets, chargers and vehicles for three or four days. I cannot remember how many there were but most of the tray was taken up with them. The canopy had been removed and I was on the back of the truck filling the jerry cans at the fuel point in Brighton, when Tony climbed aboard and stopped me. He removed my brassard from my right arm and slipped two Second Lieutenant insignia onto my epaulettes and shook hands.

Apparently, my commission had just turned up. I had been discharged from the CMF on 31 December 1964 and appointed Lt (Prob) w.e.f. 1 January 1965. It made no difference to my task however. I continued to fill up the jerry cans and drove out of the camp in convoy as 2Lt Graeme Boscoe with my G2 still reading Sgt Boscoe.

A pretty unique commissioning 'parade' I think.

(Situation would have taken some explaining if the MP's had pulled the good 2Lt up too !! Ed.)

MAYBE WE DON'T HAVE IT SO BAD!

It's a mess out there now. Hard to discern between what's a real threat and what is just simple panic and hysteria. For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900.

On your 14th birthday, World War I starts and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20th birthday. 50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet. And don't try to catch your breath. On your 41st birthday, the United States is fully pulled into WWII. Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

Smallpox was epidemic until you were in your 40's, as it killed 300 million people during your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts. 5 million perish. From your birth, until you are 55 you dealt with the fear of Polio epidemics each summer. You experience friends and family contracting polio and being paralysed and/or die.

At 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn't end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict. During the Cold War, you lived each day with the fear of nuclear annihilation. On your 62nd birthday, you have the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, almost ended. When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.

Think of everyone on the planet born in 1900. How did they endure all of that? When you were a kid in 1985 and didn't think your 85-year-old grandparent understood how hard school was. And how mean that kid in your class was. Yet they survived through everything listed above. Perspective is an amazing art. Refined and enlightening as time goes on. Let's try and keep things in perspective.

Your parents and/or grandparents were called to endure all of the above – you are called to stay home and sit on your couch!!!

(Bob Gray)

THE P51 STORY

We were in Hanger #4 of the Pima Air and Space Museum to view the beautifully restored B-29, when I happened to take notice of a P-51 Mustang near the big bomber. Its name? "Bad Angel". I was admiring its aerodynamic lines and recalled enough history to know that until the Mustangs came into service, the skies over the Pacific Ocean were dominated by Japanese Zeros. Then something very strange caught my eye. Proudly displayed on the fuselage of "Bad Angel" were the markings of the pilot's kills: seven Nazis; one Italian; one Japanese AND ONE AMERICAN. Huh? "Bad Angel" shot down an American airplane?

Was it a terrible mistake? Couldn't be. If it had been an unfortunate misjudgement, certainly the pilot would not have displayed the American flag.

I knew there had to be a good story here. Fortunately for us, one of the Museum's many fine docents was on hand to tell it. In 1942, the United States needed pilots for its war planes lots of war planes; lots of pilots. Lt Louis Curdes was one. When he was 22 years old, he graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe.

He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning. Ten days later he shot down three German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters. A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf-109's. In less than a month of combat, Louis was an Ace. During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitt's before his luck ran out.

A German fighter shot down his plane on August 27, 1943 over Salerno, Italy. Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered. Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

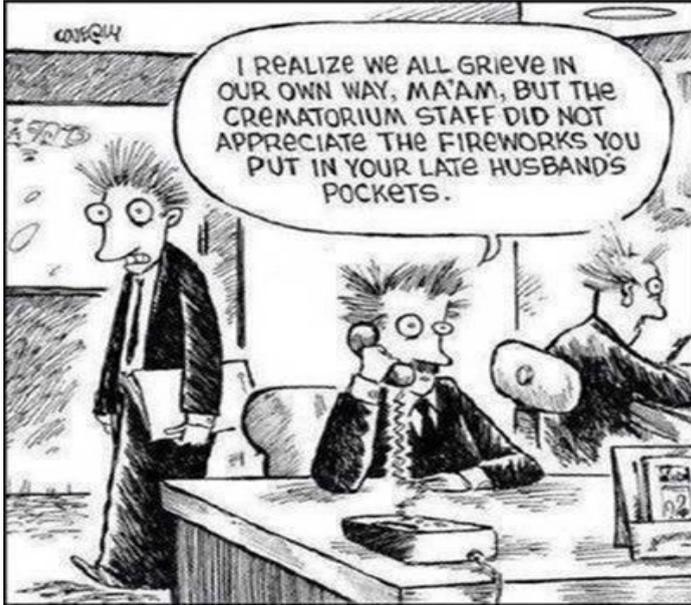
One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he flew P-51 Mustangs. Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theatre, Louis downed a Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa. Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, and Japan. Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter.

While attacking the Japanese-held island of Bataan, one of Louis' wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean. Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived, so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot. It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Bataan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a Douglas C-47 transport with American markings. He tried to make radio contact, but without success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept ahead to its landing target. Apparently, the C-47 crew didn't realize they were about to land on a Japanese-held island, and soon would be captives.

Lt Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives. He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do? Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 calibre machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on toward the Bataan airfield.

Curdes shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean. The big plane came down in one piece about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base. The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PB4Y that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived. Later, Lt. Curdes would end up marrying one of these nurses!

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese and one American. *(Al & Marg King)*

SEE WHERE BEING SANCTIMONIOUS GET YOU !

In ancient Greece (469 - 399 BC), Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom. One day an acquaintance ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about Diogenes?" "Wait a moment," Socrates replied, "Before you tell me I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test." "Triple filter?" asked the acquaintance. "That's right," Socrates continued, "Before you talk to me about Diogenes let's take a moment to filter what you're going to say. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "No," the man said, "Actually I just heard about it."

"All right," said Socrates, "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about Diogenes something good?"

"No, on the contrary..." "So," Socrates continued, "You want to tell me something about Diogenes that may be bad, even though you're not certain it's true?"

The man shrugged, a little embarrassed. Socrates continued, "You may still pass the test though, because there is a third filter, the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about Diogenes going to be useful to me?" "No, not really."

Well," concluded Socrates, "If what you want to tell me is neither True nor Good nor even useful, why tell it to me or anyone at all?" The man was bewildered and ashamed. This is an example of why Socrates was a great philosopher and held in such high esteem. It also explains why Socrates never found out that Diogenes was shagging his wife.

(Keep this in mind the next time you are about to repeat a rumour or spread gossip - Hedgy)

RALPH & EDNA

Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have

Ralph and Edna were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool, Ralph suddenly jumped into the deep end. He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there. Edna promptly jumped in to save him. She swam to the bottom of the pool, and pulled him out.

When the Director became aware of Edna's heroic act, she immediately ordered her to be discharged from the hospital, as she now considered her to be mentally stable.

When she went to tell Edna the news she said, 'Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged, since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of the person you love.

Your act displays soundness of mind. The bad news is, Ralph hung himself in the bathroom with his bathrobe belt right after you saved him. I am so sorry, but he's dead.' Edna replied, 'He didn't hang **himself** - **I put him there to dry.**

How soon can I go home?' (Bob Gray)



An elderly man is stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and is asked where he is going at this time of night.

The man replies, "I am on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies, "That would be my wife."

YOUR SECRETARY SAYS

CV's PLEASE !!

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. We have a simple form you can use for the task. Just drop me a line (*email or via the post or phone up*) & I will send you a copy.

Another reminder to members wishing to pre-pay for your name to be included on the **Signals Memorial at Anglesea Barracks**. The cost is still **\$20 for our members**. For other **Signals Corps members past or present, the cost is \$50** (*or take out RASA-Tas membership for only \$5 and get your name on the memorial for \$25*). The fee meets the costs of providing and engraving a temporary name plate. Once there are 40 names for a permanent bronze plaque; we manufacture, engrave and mount it. The fees are also used for maintenance of the Memorial itself. Contact Treasurer Mick Farley if you wish to be included need a membership application form forwarded.

Some more recent comms with former Assn Auditor and Sqn 2IC in **Graeme Boscoe**, now residing in Bendigo Vic. Nice to hear from you 'Bos'.

Wondering how the new owners of "Beaumaris House" might feel about allowing a RASA visit to their \$3.5M mansion sometime? Copies of the "Mercury" story of the recent sale have been forwarded to former Sqn Cadre staff 'residents'; **Alan & Val Turner, John and Gloria Power (both Qld) & Les & Helene Bourne (SA)**.

A warm welcome to new member **Paul Davidson**, a Squadron member in the late '70's; son of Wally "Shorty" Davidson (*who was our stalwart Assn Secretary in the 1960/70's*). Paul now resides at Opossum Bay.

Ian 'Hos' Hosan recently suffered a stroke & was in hospital. The report indicated Ian was making a strong recovery & would be doing rehab shortly. He attended "first Friday" in August and is making good progress.

Further bad news was received that our former Auditor and Unit operator, **James Lyons** lost his mother who passed suddenly in June. Our condolences have been passed to James.

Latest news on the recovery of **Brian 'Captain Kilowatt' Watson** is that he returned to Launceston in early July after multiple heart treatments in Melbourne and although he had lost is making a slow and steady recovery. Our thanks to spouse Shirley for keeping us informed of Brian's progress.

Nice email from **Julie Paul** recently. Julie has settled in her favorite spot in Qld and wishes all members the best.

DUMMY BLONDE

A young ventriloquist is touring Norway and puts on a show in a small fishing town. With his dummy on his knee, he starts going through his usual dumb blonde jokes.

Suddenly, a blonde woman in the fourth row stands on her chair and starts shouting, "I've heard enough of your stupid blonde jokes. What makes you think you can stereotype Norwegian blonde women that way?"

What does the color of a woman's hair have to do with her worth as a human being? Its men like you who keep women like me from being respected at work and in the community, and from reaching our full potential as people. Its people like you that make others think that all blondes are dumb!

You and your kind continue to perpetuate discrimination against not only blondes, but women in general, pathetically all in the name of humor!"

The embarrassed ventriloquist begins to apologize, and the blonde interrupts yelling, "You stay out of this! I'm talking to that little twirp on your lap." (*Geeves*)

TWO IRISH QUICKIES (*from you know who!*)

Mick decided to join the Irish Police force and went along to the entrance examination. The examining sergeant, realising the prospective recruit was Irish, decided to ask him a simple question. "Who killed Jesus Christ?" he asked. Mick looked worried and said nothing, so the sergeant told him not to worry and he could have some time to think about it. Mick was on his way home when he met Paddy. "Well Mick," said Paddy, "are you a policeman yet?" "Not only that," says Mick, "but I'm on my first case."

A Pom a Welshman and a Scotsman were left legacies by a friend on condition that they each put a 5 pound note in his coffin. The Pom put in 5 quid. The Welshman put in a fiver which he borrowed from the Pom. The Scotsman took out the two fivers and put in a cheque for 15 quid. Three days later he was startled to find that the cheque had been cashed. The undertaker was an Irishman. (*R J Geeves Esq*)

THE MEETING PLACE

A group of chaps, all aged 40, discussed where they should meet for a reunion lunch. Finally, it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Uxbridge because all the waitresses had big breasts and wore very short skirts.

Ten years later, at age 50, the friends once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally, it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Uxbridge because the food and service was good and the beer selection was excellent.

Ten years later, at age 60, the friends again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally, it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Uxbridge because there was plenty of parking, they could dine in peace and quiet, and it was good value for money.

Ten years later, at age 70, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally, it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Uxbridge because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and had a toilet for the disabled.

Ten years later, at age 80, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally, it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Uxbridge because they had never been there before. *See you there... (Bob Gray)*

OLDIES

Old age is coming at a really bad time. When I was a child I thought "Nap Time" was a punishment. Now, as a grownup, it feels like a small vacation.

The biggest lie I tell myself is..."I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

I don't have grey hair; I have "wisdom highlights." I'm just very wise.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Of course I talk to myself; sometimes I need expert advice.

At my age "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Life is great. I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names. I changed my car horn to gunshot sounds. People get out of the way much faster now.

Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.

You know that tingly little feeling you get when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body.

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row I decided to stop calling the bathroom the "John" and renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning (*Bob Gray*)

WHAT WAS AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN THE KOREAN WAR?

Australia was one of 21 nations that joined a UN force assembled in response to a North Korean attack on South Korea in 1950. When armed forces from Korea's North crossed the 38th parallel intent on gaining control of the entire peninsula, many Australians could be forgiven for failing to notice. First, it happened on a Sunday-June the 25th, 1950. Second, the North coast of New South Wales was experiencing disastrous flooding, with two people dead in Grafton & 9,000 others made homeless in the wintry conditions.

Stock losses were described at the time as enormous, and Prime Minister Robert Menzies promised he'd match the State pound for pound in flood relief and assistance. By Monday, the front page of Melbourne's daily "*The Argus*" was reporting the invasion. But it was fighting for space with a report from a weekend Port Melbourne football game where police had to draw pistols and use batons to control more than 1,000 angry supporters rioting after an attack on an umpire.

War-weary Australians were still on petrol, butter and tea rationing, and the prospect of another conflict should have been daunting. But that wasn't quite the response, as Nikki Canning reports. Two days after the invasion in Korea, Federal Cabinet was earnestly discussing plans to hasten the call-up of young men for compulsory military training. However, that same day, the United States offered air and sea support to South Korea, and the five-year-old United Nation; asked all its members to assist in repelling the North Korean attack.

In all, 21 UN nations responded with troops, ships, aircraft and medical teams. For the last time in Australian history, volunteers for an overseas military expedition were called for. "Re-opened recruitment offices were initially flooded with volunteers for Korea" says Melbourne University's Richard Trembath. "It was an enthusiastic response I think Korea. in some ways, especially in its early year, was a war which the Australian population understood a little more clearly than it understood Vietnam. The world response was a lot more united. The United Nation; which was less than five years old – was the one calling for action. So it had the mark of being something right to do. The Korean War is in fact the only time the United Nations goes to war, until the Gulf War of 1991, until the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein."

Dr Trembath says many Australians also saw Korea as an opportunity to fight Communists "Robert Menzies had come to power in late 1949 with a commitment to formally dissolving the Communist Party [*in Australia*] and that theme would run right through Australia's commitment in Korea, that Communism was the great scourge and danger. And I think for Australia it accelerated in 1949 because of the Communist victory in China, I mean, Russia was one thing but China was a lot closer. Menzies spoke several times in the early 1950s that he regarded another world war was only three years away." (Menzies): "Can we doubt that under these circumstances the complete socialist state would be set up in Australia? And that, in consequence, we would have the all-powerful state? How would we like to be living in a country where the state was all-powerful?" Dr Trembath says the other principal motivation was to firm Australia's alliance with the US. "The new conservative government was anxious to improve the relationship with the United States - our participation in Korea would eventually be one of the major factors in the formation of the ANZUS Treaty, which happens in 1951."

Already involved in fighting a Communist insurgency in Malaya, as it was called at the time, Australia was the first country following the US to commit from all three military services to Korea. An Australian Navy frigate joined the Korean conflict on the 29th of June, followed a day later by the Royal Australian Air Force's 77 Squadron. An infantry battalion from the Australian component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan was called in on July the 26th.

We were anxious to be seen as very quick to put our cards on the table; we originally only committed air forces and naval forces, but when it was found out in Canberra that Britain was going to commit land forces, we jumped to beat Britain. We actually beat them by about a day or two to show that we were firm in the alliance with the United States."

(Korean War cont.,)

Pilot Sergeant Milton Cottee was among the Australians of 77 Squadron already in Japan when the invasion happened. He says he had a firm view as to why he should be involved in this war. "There was an overall feeling I suppose of stopping the Red Peril (Communism) coming down to Australia. That was real in those days. We thought we were doing our bit in that regard. I eventually came to a conclusion that many veterans come to in conflicts, I think, by deciding that what I was doing was preserving the Australian way of life for those I might have to leave behind."

As might be expected, the Australian contingent had a variety of ethnic backgrounds, which added another dimension to some events, as remembered in his diary by Private Joe Vczgoff. "We were about a mile forward of the battalion, with the responsibility of racing back when we saw any large troop movement on our front. I, of Russian origin, and George of Chinese, caused some consternation when someone back at battalion headquarters asked who was in the forward outpost. 'A Chinese and a Russian ', came the reply!" The Korean War also saw the rise to prominence of Australia's first indigenous commissioned officer Reg Saunders, from Portland, in Western Victoria. Historian Richard Trembath says while he had been commissioned during the Second World War, he was a high-profile figure during the Korean War. "He came from a military family, in the sense that his father and his uncles and his brothers had fought in both the first and second World Wars. He's the subject of a biography called *'The Embarrassing Australian'*, by Harry Gordon - later editor of the *"Brisbane Courier Mail."*

As a war correspondent, it was pointed out that though Saunders was a much-feted and much treated hero during Korea, and the newspapers and newsreels often featured him. He was very photogenic, very media-savvy himself - his private and civilian life saw the usual disasters that Indigenous Australians ranging from not being served in the 50s, ranging from not being served drinks in the pub to not getting employment and things like that. A fascinating character."

As in other conflicts, the Australians and other UN forces often had a difficult time identifying and isolating the enemy. On one occasion, South Korean veteran Kim Yu Seon was serving as a military policeman in North Korea's Hwanghae province. He says at sunset one day in September, he was with the police commander and saw a number of civilians fleeing South being shelled. [*Kim then translator*] "It's September, the sun is about to set," [*Kim then translator*] "they were in a car and they saw an Australian air plane." [*Kim then translator*] "Oh, and the Australian plane came and they shelled!" [*Kim then translator*] "So many people came down to South Korea so," [*Kim then translator*] "The Australian plane did not know where they were so they just shelled every where." Milt Cottee says such incidents were not unusual. He says UN pilots were often directed to attack groups of people because of fears there were North Korean soldiers among them who would leave the group at night and attack UN ground forces.

"There were many occasions when enemy soldiers would get mixed up with South Korean civilians and the North Korean soldiers would mix in with the South Korean civilians, using them as shields. We would be often vectored on to groups of people like that and it was a very difficult decision whether to shoot them up or not. And when you have American forward air controllers saying 'Hey Aussies, those enemy troops mixed in with those refugees, I suppose you'd call them, they are going to be out after our guys tonight so please do what you can!'"

For the troops on the ground, the going was intense. Stanley Connolly served with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment at the Battle of Kapyong. He and other veterans have told their stories as part of a film archive of Australians at War, curated by the Department of Veterans' Affairs "We charged and we began to get shot down. I remember my good friend Gene Tunny on my right falling in the advance and then my big mate Rod Grey on my left, went down shot through the chest and the bullets were cracking, cracking, you can, as they go past you can hear them cracking, you know, because they sort of break the sound barrier. It's louder than the crack of the weapon firing them. And it seemed to me that there were so many bullets coming that it was like walking or running into a very stiff breeze."

(Korean War cont.,)

Maxwell Veale served in HMAS Murchison during the Han River operation. "But this day we went in and they were waiting for us. And we hadn't turned, we were going up towards the turn and the lookout looked over and said to the Captain, 'Sir, those haystacks are moving'. And the skipper, looking at them with binoculars saw that they were moving, they had anti-tank guns behind them, they were tanks moving. They waited until we stopped then we had to turn and that's when they hit us."

However, historian Richard Trembath says Australia's most controversial Korean War figure was the war correspondent Wilfred Burchett. "He wrote what I think is one of the most enduring pieces of Australian war journalism, at the end of the Second World War: he was one of the first Westerners to look at the consequences of Hiroshima, and that was in a few days of the Japanese surrender. That was an amazing trip, he had a lot of guts." Wilfred Burchett chose to report from the North's side of the front - a decision which immediately cast him in the eyes of his countrymen as a propagandist. "He spoke to a lot of United Nations prisoners of war in Northern camps. Many of them - perhaps most of them - regarded him as a traitor. It served to dam him politically for almost a generation in Australian eyes. He had a great amount of courage but I think he had a large amount of naiveté. I don't think he was working directly for Communist powers but I think it was undoubtedly immature to think that speaking on behalf of your enemies to your own people and expecting a good reaction is probably naive. Some of the prisoners, including a key American, regarded Burchett as helping ameliorate their conditions, which were dreadful in the camps in North Korea." Richard Trembath says there was clearly more to Burchett. "A number of Australian journalists found him an unimpeachable source of facts at the Armistice negotiations at Panmunjom because he had privileged access to a large number of people and as opposed to copied garbage from the United Nations, Burchett could actually tell them what was happening. He saw himself as even-handed: a number of people saw him as a propagandist."

From the 29th June 1950 to 27 July 1953, some 17,000 Australian sailors, soldiers and airmen served in the Korean War. Australian casualties were 339 killed, 1216 wounded and 29 prisoners of war. 43 Australian servicemen are still listed as Missing in Action. Yet Pilot Sergeant Milt Cottee believes it was worthwhile.

"I think we made a pretty good contribution to the war effort even though our losses were very high. I lost two of my best friends. One was shot down in a Meteor (British jet fighter) by a MIG (Russian jet fighter) and my other friend was lost in a mid-air collision with another aircraft. So, one of my best friends is still missing in action in North Korea somewhere". After the war ended with the signing of the Armistice on the 27th of July, 1953, Australians remained in Korea and continued with a peacekeeping force until 1957.

*(From the Australian Federation of TPI Tasmanian Branch Newsletter)***PARKING OFFICERS FUNERAL**

As the coffin was being lowered into the ground at a Parking Officers funeral a voice from inside screams "I'm not dead, I'm not dead. Let me out!" The Vicar smiles, leans forward sucking air through his teeth and mutters. "Too bloody late pal, I've already done the paperwork" .. *(Wayne at RSL State HQ's)*

GEEVES "SHORTS"

What do you call a deer with no eyes. No Idea.

A little boy pestered his dad to take him to the zoo. "So how did it go today?" asked the mother on their return. "It was great." replied the boy. "And daddy liked it too, especially when one animal won at 33 to one."

What do you call a 3-legged donkey? A Wonky.

What do you give an elephant with diarrhoea? Plenty of room.

Did you hear about the hyena who swallowed an Oxo cube? he made himself a laughing stock.



THE MILITARY HISTORY OF MOUNT STUART

Members of the staff of the Sigs Mt Stuart facility in 1944 are:- Top left – Ted Rees.

Bottom left & right – Cpl Stan Donovan & at top right is the radio transmitter

The military history of Mount Stuart covers two periods separated by more than one hundred years. The first period was in the early 1800's, at a time when gangs of roving bushrangers were a threat to the suburbs of Hobart Town. In 1824, for instance, William Shoobridge was shot and injured by a bushranger, during daylight hours, while working on his property near the present Bowls Club in Newdegate Street.

In an attempt to maintain law and order, the military constructed guard houses in the outskirts of Hobart Town on all the main roads. One of these was constructed on the hillside now known as Mount Stuart. This guard house still exists today, as no. 45 Elphinstone Road. Extensions have been added at the rear, to make a comfortable home, but the front is still largely original. It is a well-built stone and brick two roomed establishment, with small lock up cells under the main rooms, which were said to have been used to lock up prisoners, but which today are scarcely large enough for a lawnmower and garden tools. The front door is in the centre, between the two rooms, and a spacious veranda is across the front, from which a guard would have had a good view as far as the Hobart Domain. There are photographs of the Mount Stuart hillside taken from the vicinity of The Friends' School at and just before the turn of the 20th century, showing the guard house as the only building to be seen on the hillside. Why did the military choose this location in Elphinstone Road? What sort of happenings took place? Alas, there do not seem to be any records of this guard house.

The second period of military activity was during WW2, when the army occupied the house in Muir Court 'Eskdalemuir'. There were two activities. The first was the maintenance of radio communication with army headquarters in Melbourne, *(There still remains a radio mast in an adjoining garden which today is used as a base radio station by a local taxi firm)*. This was probably seen as a wise precaution against failure of the telephone lines. At the time, there was one telephone cable across Bass Strait carrying only a few lines. Early in the war years, a radio link was set up with a base on the nut near Stanley. The Mount Stuart base, however, provided a direct link between Hobart and Melbourne. The other activity at 'Eskdalemuir' was the breeding and training of homing pigeons for war service. The pigeons were sent North and performed valuable service in the Torres Strait Islands and in outlying areas of Northern Australia. As part of their training they were sent in special boxes to Fort Direction, to be released for a flight home to Hobart. One Mount Stuart resident recalls that he was in the Army, stationed at Fort Direction, and personally used to release them for their flight home. The present owners of 'Eskdalemuir' still get the occasional visitor from the mainland knocking on their door, wishing to revisit a wartime posting in Tasmania.