

NOTICE TO MARINERS

Newsletter 32 Small Ship Squadron Association Incorporating RAE Tn

Patron: Colonel K L Duncan (RL)

President's Message

When looking back on the plaque Memorial in the Western Courtyard and Country Club on 6 April I can only and their families who attended either who forwarded an apology.

Unfortunately at the last minute Peter unable to attend.



dedication ceremony at the Australian War the 40th anniversary dinner at the Yowani express my appreciation for those members one or both events. Thank you also to those

Caskey and John and Carrol Spindler were

I must make mention that without Major General Steven Gower AO, Director of the Australian War Memorial giving the Association permission to participate in the Memorial's plaque dedication program and the support of Martin Hanson, Ceremonial and Andrew Smith, Plaque Planning and Production together with the military historical section we would never have achieved the final result of having a bronze tablet commemorating the Squadron's service as part of RAE Tn in the grounds of the War Memorial.

It is worth mentioning that the operational service dates for South Vietnam are slightly different to the disbandment date of the Squadron. This was a decision by the organising committee and approved by the Australian War Memorial in recognition to the crew of AS3051 John Monash.

The dedication service was highlighted by the address from General Peter Gratton AC, OBE, the lament by Piper Adam Cameron-Taylor, the Rouse by Sergeant Graeme Reynolds and the blessing by Monsignor Greg Flynn with a special prayer for the Squadron.

Thank you John Merrick for suggesting we have the dinner at the Yowani Country Club. The venue was ideal and the dinner delicious. The RMC Cabaret Band entertained us with the sounds of Manhattan Transfer and other music from our era supported by vocalist Angie Currington.

The majority of the photos in the newsletter were taken by Kevin Morley and others by Jack Peel, Sid Cheeseman and Ian Johnston. I wish to thank Kevin for his impromptu speech in thanking Beth and myself for the organisation of the ceremony and dinner. My response to those present at the dinner was it would not have been possible without the support of Ross McMurray and the Patron, Colonel Ken Duncan.

Ocka

JAMAIS ETRE REMORQUE



PLAQUE DEDICATION CEREMONY

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

On Thursday 6 April 2006, at the Western Courtyard of the Australian War Memorial, a ceremony was conducted to dedicate a bronze plaque commemorating 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE.

It was bitterly cold in Canberra at 10.00 am and with the ceremony to be held in the **Western** Courtyard behind a large grey building we should have known that the sun would not be seen before noon (but we didn't, except for John Bonnet, a local, who sensibly wore an overcoat). However, the ceremony went as planned and started on time with an address by Nola Anderson, Assistant Director of the AWM welcoming us. This was followed by an opening prayer which was supposed to be given by our Association Chaplain, Monsignor Eugene Harley, but he was called away unexpectedly. Before he left however, he organised a worthy replacement, Monsignor Greg Flynn. Our Patron, Colonel Ken Duncan, then delivered the opening remarks and introduced General Peter Gration, AC, OBE, a former Chief of the Defence Force and a Sapper. General Gration then gave the Commemorative Address. He gave a very moving account of the history of the Squadron, from its inception to its disbandment. He must have spent a good deal of time researching the history because what he said was accurate and most appropriate for the occasion. He succinctly covered the three significant aspects of the unit: the ships, the crews and the achievements. The full text of his address is shown below.

Following his address he unveiled the plaque. This was followed by a stirring lament from a lone piper, after which our President, Graham Murray, recited the Ode, followed by the Last Post, Rouse and the National Anthem. Monsignor Flynn said a closing prayer and Ken Duncan gave a short farewell address.

The master of Ceremonies was Craig Johnson of the AWM and musical support was provided by the Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon. Their assistance and cooperation was most appreciated.

The plaque will shortly be laid with others around the garden area of the western side of the AWM. It is now a symbol dedicated to the hundreds of men who served in the unit from 1959 to 1971.

After the ceremony we were taken to The Landing Place Café at the AWM for a warming morning tea. The temperature hadn't changed much outside (still around zero) but it was quite pleasant inside the café where everyone had their hands around a mug of tea or coffee. After we thawed out we were given a special guided tour of the AWM in small groups. This was a real eye opener. Numerous new displays have been added and older ones refurbished and updated. The aircraft display hall has undergone a complete rebuild with many additional aircraft and equipment. As George was the been rebuilt and is an awesome presentation.

The AWM and definitely worth you are in it in the warmer



always, Lancaster G star of the show. It has now accompanied by a u d i o - v i s u a l

your plaque are visiting the next time Canberra. Try and do weather though.



This is the Commemorative Address delivered by General Peter Gratton. AC, OBE

**32 Small Ship Squadron Plaque Unveiling
Australian War Memorial - 6 April 2006**

Introduction Assistant Director Noela Anderson

Mr Graham Murray

Colonel Ken Duncan

Monsignor Greg Flynn

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered here this morning to dedicate this plaque to 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE, and to commemorate the several hundreds of Australian Army men who served in the Squadron. Today 6th April is a particularly fitting date for this dedication as it is the 40th anniversary of the Squadron's first deployment to Viet Nam.

The Squadron

32 Small Ship Squadron was a unique Australian Army unit - unique in that it operated ocean going ships (the LSMs), and even more unique in that of all the countries that bought these ships from the Americans, we were the only one whose Army, rather than Navy, operated them.

The Squadron had a short 11 year life (1959-1971) during which it provided our Army with a very valuable capability to move men, vehicles and equipment by sea, and to land them over the shore if need be. The Squadron gave outstanding service in both peace and war, but particularly during the Viet Nam war, and in its short life developed a strong and distinctive spirit.

I want to speak briefly about three things - the ships, the crews, and what the Squadron accomplished in its short life.

The Ships

the Squadron was formed to operate the four newly-acquired Landing Ships Medium or LSMs of World War II vintage bought from the Americans in 1959/60 – each renamed after famous Australian generals - Harry Chauvel, Brudenell White, Vernon Sturdee and Clive Steele. Some five years later the Squadron also acquired a small 1400 ton conventional cargo vessel, John Monash, from Adelaide Steamships.

The primary reason the Army acquired the LSMs was to be able to deploy our Centurion tanks away from their home base at Puckapunyal for exercises and later for war. Having acquired the ships, they were of course capable of doing many other logistic tasks, and we used them to the full.

A word about the LSMs for those not familiar with them. They were seagoing ships of unladen weight about 500 tons, 62 metres long and a beam of 10.4 metres. They could carry five main battle tanks (the Centurions) weighing about 60 tons each, or twelve 21/2 ton trucks, or about 900 tons of cargo. Their crew was 3 officers and 35, increased later to 4 and 47 for operations in Viet Nam. They were flat bottomed and were intended to beach themselves at speed onto a gently sloping beach and then open their bow doors and drop their ramps door to discharge their cargo of vehicles and whatever, more or less dry shod onto the beach. They were logistic ships, not combatants, and initially were unarmed, although for operations in Viet Nam they were fitted with 40 mm Bofors and several MG for protection.



The Crews

One of the main problems in getting this unique unit up and running was finding the specialist officers and men to take the ships to sea, and in the early years there was chronic undermanning with only two complete crews to operate the four LSMs. This meant hard work at sea, and often members returning from one voyage had to throw their belongings into another ship and depart again in a few days time.

Numbers of the ships' captains were enlisted from the British Merchant Navy because of their sea-going experience and qualifications. They made a vital contribution and without them it would have been very difficult indeed to make and keep the Squadron operational.

Service in the LSMs was very hard, and this produced a camaraderie amongst the crews something akin to that of the RAN submarine service without the "hot bunks". Conditions on board were uncomfortable, particularly in the tropics where it was very hot and humid below decks. Being flat bottomed, the ships rolled vigorously and incessantly in any weather, and the seas pounded noisily against the ships' sides. In extreme weather, crews reported being thrown from their bunks. Living conditions were Spartan, and while each crew member had his own bunk in 6 man cabins, the 35 man crew had to share two shower heads and half a dozen hand basins. Supply of fresh water was always a problem.

The Squadron's Achievements

In the early years the LSMs not only showed that they could move the Centurion tanks around, but supported other Army operations around the northern coast of Australia and in Papua New Guinea (PNG). They moved men, vehicles, equipment and stores to many remote places where access from the sea was the best and sometimes the only way to get there. This included supporting Army survey parties, the construction squadrons at Wewak in PNG, Pacific Island Regiment recruiting tours and many others. In this period Brudenell White under Capt Wally Blumenfeld penetrated further up the mighty Sepik River (350 miles) than any vessel of comparable size, before or since. It was a great feat of seamanship (or perhaps rivermanship?) that in another Service would have earned a gong.

But the LSMs really came into their own during the Viet Nam war, where they made a major contribution both to moving the Australian force to Viet Nam in the first place, and thereafter meeting the urgent logistical needs of both 1AustalianTask Force and the Americans.

Vernon Sturdee and John Monash arrived in Viet Nam for the first time on 6 May 66 carrying personnel and engineer equipment. Vernon Sturdee remained in theatre, amongst many other tasks making 18 hazardous trips along the Saigon River under constant threat from VC on the banks, moving 1RAR's stores and equipment from Bien Hoa to Vung Tau. During this period, Vernon Sturdee under Capt John Bonnet was also required to move heavy engineer plant up the narrow, and difficult to navigate Song Dinh River to where the Task Force engineers were driving an access road to the new base at Nui Dat. LSM was the only practicable way to get the plant to where it was needed. The US Navy had promised an escort and helicopter gunship support, but both were withdrawn at the last minute. The Australian Task Force commander ordered the operation to proceed anyway, through countryside controlled largely by the VC.



This was a really hazardous operation, but fortunately in the event there was no VC interference. Our Intelligence later suggested the local VC were taken too much by surprise to mount the firepower needed to tackle a vessel of such size and appearance. The Daily Telegraph wrote up the incident under the headline “Biggest Bluff of the War”.

At this early stage in the war, the only deep water port in Viet Nam was Saigon, and this was limited. Logistics over the Shore was therefore vital, and the LSMs provided exactly the capability that was needed. In fact it was the only logistic capability that we had and the Americans didn't, and we were able to trade for the many types of support we needed from them.

And to give you the flavour of the thing, the Americans nicknamed Vernon Sturdee the Jolly Green Giant – Jolly because the crew were regarded as the happiest go lucky group of Aussies around, and Green Giant because the ship was painted green, not grey like all the others, and was the biggest small ship in theatre.

And so the LSMs went about their routine operations in Viet Nam for the next five years– ferrying ammunition, tanks, vehicles and general stores for both the Australian and US forces.

Perhaps the ultimate justification for our acquiring the LSMs came when the Clive Steele took the first Centurion tanks to Viet Nam in Jan 1968. Thereafter, the LSMs were used in Viet Nam to off load tanks brought from Australia by the Jeparit and land them over the beach, since the US forces (who had lighliars,iyoudulden, nto off-r”.

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The late Maj Gen Mackay, who was sparing indeed with his praise when it came to RAE, wrote as COMAFV to the E in C in these terms in 1967. He is speaking of LSM Vernon Sturdee, but could have said the same about any of the ships.

“I would like you to know what a magnificent job LSM Vernon Sturdee has done during its tour of duty here. The crew worked very hard over long hours and we got more value out of LSM than we thought possible.”

I am very pleased and honoured to unveil this plaque.

Murray Dawson Fig Tree Pocket Qld.
Lyndy Dawson Fig Tree Pocket Qld
Ray Wilkie (Lyndy's father) CheltTc792(Qld.)TJ22.799 .6.8 TD0.0014 Tc0.0134 TwCo loel KhenDuncaon

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Ian Johnston, General Gratton,
Jerry Davey and Al Parry
- Dedication Ceremony

Right. General Gratton

Below Brian Waites and Jerry Davey



Ken Duncan, General Gratton and Graham Murray



40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

On 6 April 2006, on the evening of the Plaque Dedication Ceremony, a dinner was held at the Yowani Country Club, Canberra ACT to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the deployment of 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE to Vietnam.

At 7.00 pm guests started to trickle into the main bar of the club for pre-dinner drinks. Jack Peel and Ian Johnston manned the front entrance to meet and greet and issue name tags. By 7.30 pm everyone was present and accounted for including the Official Guests, General Peter Gration, AC, OBE, former Chief of the Defence Force, his wife, Ann, and the Commander Land Command Engineers and Corps Director, Colonel Mike Kavanagh. After a couple of warming rounds the diners were piped into the dining room by the piper from the Royal Military College Band. The band also provided excellent dinner music for the remainder of the evening.

Colonel Ken Duncan started proceedings by welcoming those present, and offered apologies from quite a number of members who couldn't be there. He also read out a message from Brigadier Phil Greville, CBE, who was to have given an address at the dinner but unfortunately illness prevented his attendance.

The dinner was excellent. The a la carte menu provided some interesting variations and accompanied by some very good wines and beer. It was a very enjoyable evening in a relaxed atmosphere (as you would expect from a group of people, many of whom hadn't seen one another for a long time). A list of those who attended is shown below.

After dessert and the royal toast General Gration delivered a monumental address. He covered the beginning of the Army Transportation Service in 1942 to the disbandment of 32 Small Ship Squadron in 1971. He recounted many aspects of Transportation and in particular the Squadron, including the purchase and delivery of the LSMs and the John Monash, the relationship with the Navy, and the inevitable demise of the sea-going role of the Army. He concluded his address by offering a toast to the Corps. The text of his address is shown below.

Colonel Kavanagh then spoke of the legacy of Army small ships, and announced that in future presentations on Corps history there would be a significant emphasis on their achievements and the important part they played in increasing the capabilities of the Royal Australian Engineers. He elaborated on the various locations where the Squadron operated in PNG, and what is at these places now. Like General Gration he talked about the friction between the upper echelons of Army and Navy in regard to operating blue water ships. He concluded by outlining the current activities and operations of RAE and how Army watercraft such as LCM8s still play an important role in providing support to the Corps. He then proposed a toast to the Squadron.

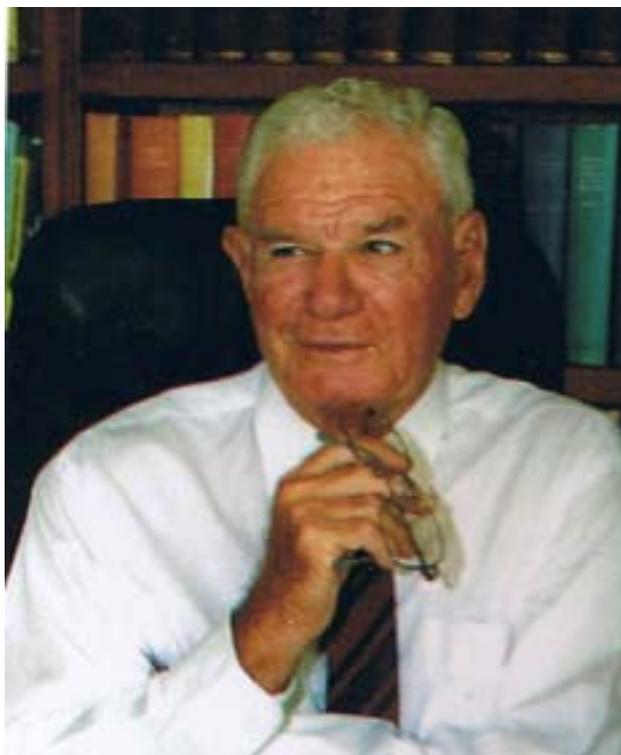
Overall it was a most enjoyable evening; not only for the camaraderie, and friendships again cemented (although that was always present), but also of quiet reflection and memories of times rough and smooth experienced by those many men who contributed to the achievements and success of the Squadron. It was a shame that many of our absent and departed shipmates, including the late Lieutenant Colonel Jim "Haggis" Wilson, MBE couldn't be there to share the moment. He would have enjoyed such fine company and perhaps feel more than a little proud of the unit and its soldiers.



MESSAGE FROM BRIGADIER PHILLIP GREVILLE, CBE

Brigadier Greville and his wife, June, were invited to the Plaque Dedication Ceremony and the Anniversary Dinner where he was to give an address at both functions. Unfortunately, illness prevented him from attending, but he requested that the following message be read at the dinner, and this was delivered by Colonel Ken Duncan:

“June and I thank you for you this evening and we both was very proud of the Australian Engineers. The worth in Borneo and Squadron was deployed in War II until its disbandment, of the four LSMs. Due to imposition on both ships and fully aware of this and tried bring some relief to the your professionalism confronting you. You have me, and my staff, nor of the able to proclaim at every without the Army. We are all back on your service with 32 pride and satisfaction to the Memorial earlier today.”



your kind invitation to dine with regret not being able to do so. I Transportation Service, Royal Service as a whole proved its Vietnam, but 32 Small Ship action from the end of World particularly after the acquisition undermanning, this was a severe crews. As your Director I was in vain for much of the time to situation. I suppose if there had may have been addressed, but overcame most difficulties no idea what a relief that was to pride in your efforts, that I was opportunity to critics within and getting older, but you can look Small Ship Squadron with great ceremony at the Australian War

For those who came in late, here is a short biography of Brigadier Greville, taken from his book, “Paving the Way, The Royal Australian Engineers 1945 to 1972” which is the fourth volume of the history of the Royal Australian Engineers.

Brigadier Phillip Greville was educated at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. He was commissioned in 1944 and after active service in the South West Pacific Area, he attended Sydney University, graduating in civil engineering. He later attended the British Army Staff College at Camberley and the Long Transportation Course at Longmoor and Marchwood, in the United Kingdom.

He served in a variety of engineer and staff appointments with the Second AIF and with the Australian Regular Army. He served with the First Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Korea in 1952, where he was captured. He was a Prisoner of War until his repatriation in September 1953. Among the senior appointments he held were Chief Engineer Eastern Command, Commander First Australian Logistic Support Group, Vietnam and Acting Commander First Australian Task Force, Vietnam, Director of the Royal Australian Corps of Transport and Director General Logistics. He retired from the Army in 1980. At that time he was Commander of the Fourth Military District.

Brigadier Greville was a former Patron of 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE Association.



TOAST TO THE CORPS

This is the address given by General Peter Gratton, AC, OBE, prior to him proposing a toast to the Corps at the Anniversary Dinner.

NOTES FOR TOAST TO CORPS

32 SMALL SHIP SQUADRON RAE ASSOCIATION DINNER

6 APRIL 2006

Introduction

Thanks for inviting me to unveil the plaque this morning and for inviting me and Ann to join you for dinner this evening.

Scope

I will look briefly at the Corps' stewardship of Army Transportation from 1943 to 1972, which reached its peak of achievement during the years of 32 Small Ship Squadron, and virtually ended with the disbandment of the Squadron in Sep 71.

RAE and Tn

Origins

- EinC Clive Steele returning from the Middle East in 1943 foresaw accurately that coastal water transport would play a major role in the war in the Pacific. He proposed that RAE assume responsibility for all Army watercraft. This was agreed, with Navy insisting on the proviso that Army vessels not exceed 300 tons.
- This followed the RE pattern, and was another example of RAE sponsoring an essential service which in time would grow and be hived off as an independent Corps – e.g. Sigs and Svy
- Maj Gen Steele was right and coastal water transport flourished during the war. Three Water Transport Groups totalling 27 units were formed with 1200 to 1400 men involved.
- There was a brief hiatus from Aug 45 to Apr 47 when all RAE water transport was transferred to the new but short lived Aust Army Tn Corps. It soon became apparent that the small post war Army couldn't sustain an independent Tn Corps, and water transport reverted to RAE.
- There were four successive far-sighted Directors of Tn in RAE after the war (Roche, Hussey, Greville and Hallett) who laid the foundations of a very professional Tn service, with the Tn Centre at Chowder Bay, much thought to the ARA and CMF orbats, mobilisation plans, ships and equipment and a training organisation to produce young officers and senior NCOs as tn professionals.

The High Point

- The high point was reached with the decision to buy the four LSMs in 1959/60 and to form 32 SS Sqn to operate them. RAE was then operating sizeable ocean going vessels, that provided an invaluable logistic service to the Army over the next decade in both war and peace, and we used it to the full.
- This morning in paying tribute to the Sqn, I said "600,000 miles steaming without a major mishap." The key word there is "major". I would like to recall a couple of incidents, and I am sure if I asked, each of you could recall a few more.
 - Capt Mike Heale at Yokosuka on completion of sea trials of Vernon Sturdee, approaching the wharf when the engine room telegraph broke with the indicator in the Full Ahead position. A nightmare? Mike ordered the anchor dropped, and the ship veered sharply, narrowly missing several small craft and ramming and dislodging a heavy girder bridge.
 - An incident with Clive Steele in 1969. After replacing a propeller with the assistance of Navy divers, the ship collided with the wharf. It turned out that the starboard propeller had been incorrectly replaced with a port propeller.



The Navy

Some comment on relations with the Navy during the life of 32 SS Sqn.

- I am told that at the working level, the Sqn got on very well with the Navy, but higher up, things were not always so smooth.
- There have always been friction and demarcation disputes between the Services at or near the borderline between their respective domains – in this case the shoreline. Navy in particular has always been fiercely protective of its sea-going prerogatives – hence the 300 ton limit on Army vessels.
- Army only acquired the LSMs instead of Navy through a series of unusual circumstances – ships' main purpose perceived as moving tanks, British offer of an LCT Mk8 withdrawn at last minute, and only available alternative the LSMs, and, I believe, an initial lack of interest from Navy in manning such vessels.
- However as the utility of the LSMs became apparent, together with the huge variety of tasks they were capable of doing and did, using their ocean-going capability, the Navy became much more interested.
- Added to this was the inevitable professional jealousy over seamanship skills and ships. Navy, as the Senior Service and heirs of the Nelsonian tradition, tended to look with some disdain on these rather plain if not ugly little ships and their hardworking crews. Army were not backward in (figuratively) tweaking big brother's nose by demonstrating they were capable of many fine feats of seamanship, despite their unglamorous role as cargo carriers.
- There were as well some other factors that we in Army at least believed tended to make relations difficult. E.g.
 - Navy's long-standing and still unfulfilled ambition to have an assault amphibious capability, and the idea if they could take over Army's well developed logistic amphibious role, it would only be a short step to achieving fully their ambition.
 - Some sensitivity over Navy's relatively minor part in the Viet Nam war, which of course was almost entirely a land battle.
 - Desire to have more command appointments for junior naval officers.

Jimmy Wilson

I loved the story of the late Lt Col Jimmy Wilson and V Adm Becher, FOCAF. I'm sure you have heard it before, but it's worth repeating as it has all the elements of both sides of the argument.

- LSMs Harry Chauvel and Vernon Sturdee were about to sail to Borneo with Naval escort. Still loading engineer plant and equipment when Adm Becher made an unannounced visit of inspection, as the ships would come under his opcon after leaving port. Admiral was unimpressed and criticised everything, including safety. Flotilla commander Wilson put up with this for a while, explaining that they were still loading awkward cargo and all would be well before they sailed. The Admiral persisted, and Jimmy Wilson finally blew his top, saying:

“Admiral, I respect your views on military matters, but when you have been to sea as many years as I have as Master of a ship in war and peace, then I will respect your views on my ships and crews.”
- The Admiral stormed off and rang up the GOC E Comd, who in turn rang the Director, then Lt Col Phil Greville and took him to task.
- That wasn't all. After the vessels left Woolwich, Wilson decided to alter course from that of the sailing instructions, leading to claims of Mutiny from the Navy. Subsequent checking by Lt Col Greville showed that Navy had made a plotting error which wrongly showed the LSMs' position.



High Level Sniping

There was all the while high level sniping going on in Canberra. I remember about 1970 seeing a memo from the CNS of the day to the CGS saying that he had heard that an Army ship was to attempt the run up the Saigon River to Saigon. With mock solemnity and a feigned desire to help, CNS enquired whether CGS was aware that there were both navigational difficulties and a threat from VC on the banks. I am pretty sure, but can't be certain that CNS knew perfectly well that 32 SS Sqn had made this journey many times and knew more about what was involved than Navy did.

The End

- But the end was approaching, and the Navy lobby was strengthening. As the LSMs neared the end of their life, it was agreed to replace them with eight LCH, knowing that these had less capacity for self-deployment and less carrying capacity than the four LSMs.
- The LSMs were disposed of and 32 SS Sqn disbanded in 1971.
- The first LCH Balikpapan was commissioned into Army, but argument was still proceeding apace in Canberra, and Navy won. The remainder of the LCH were hence commissioned into Navy, with a bigger crew than Army intended and with an officer in command.
- Thus Army lost an important logistic capability that we had demonstrated over a decade we could manage and use to the full to support forces in the South West Pacific, Malaysia, Borneo, Viet Nam and PNG. It was a morale destroying decision for the seagoing members of RAE Tn.
- Brig Greville commented on subsequent events in the RAE Corps History:
 - “Within a decade RAN was making no attempt to meet Army needs. Most of the LCH were in storage and those still in commission met the training needs of RAN clearance divers.”
 - “Sadly in the end they succeeded in destroying the Army's capability without in any way furthering their ambitions for an amphibious capability.”
- Finally, as part of the functional reorganisation of the Army in 1972, we followed the British precedent of amalgamating the remaining elements of RAE Tn with the transport elements of RAASC to form the new Corps RACT. Relations between the two Corps were good, and with much goodwill on both sides, the new Corps set about learning and practicing its wider role.

The Toast

Thus RAE's involvement with Army Transportation over 30 years came to an end. We were sorry and disappointed to see Transportation go, but can be proud of our stewardship, particularly of water transport, over these 30 years.

Toast to the Corps

ATTENDEES AT THE PLAQUE DEDICATION DINNER

Pat and Daphne Scott	Al and Kaye Parry
Jack Peel	Frank Poole
Jim Brown and Iris Preston	Ross and Jenny McMurray
Peter and Susan Tierney	John and Margaret McGregor
James and Barbara Wain	Ken and Dawn Duncan
General Peter and Ann Gratton	Colonel Mike Kavanagh
Ocka and Beth Murray	James and Kate McDermott
Brooke and Jacqueline Thorpe	Jim and Kate Curtis
John and Beryce Merrick	Rob and Dee Vickery
Bruce Mansfield and Karyn McKellar	Ian Johnston
Warren and Rosemary Barsley and family	George Stubbs
John and Elizabeth Bryant	Wally and Helen Blumenfeld
John and Elizabeth Bonnett	John and Daphne Brien
Bruce Reilly and Rina Ross	Brian and Val Waites
Doug and Ailsa Wyness	Kevin and Lynne Morley
Mike and Ellen McCartney-Lees	Sid Cheeseman

Royal Military College Band

Sgt Andrew Heron	Cpl Norm Dawson	LCpl Steven Carter
Musn Rouslan Babajanov	Musn Angie Currington	Musn Chris Hudson
Piper – Musn Adam Cameron-Taylor		





The Association Patron,
Colonel Ken Duncan and his
wife Dawn

Ann and General Peter
Gratton



Association President,
Graham Murray and Wife
Beth





Kate and Jim Curtis



Our Treasurer Peter Tierney and wife Sue



Margaret and John McGregor



Kaye and Al Parry



Daphne and Pat Scott

Past Secretary Jack Peel





Ailssa and Doug Wyness



Jane and Bruce Mansfield



Rina Ross and Bruce Reilly





Ellen and Mike McCartney-Lees



Lynne and Kevin Morley

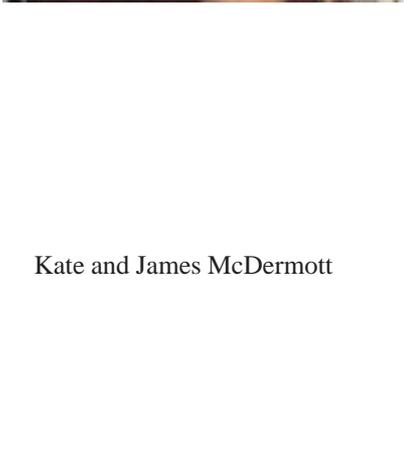


Iris Preston and James Brown





Val and Brian Waites



Kate and James McDermott



Jacqueline and Brooke Thorpe





Colonel Mike Kavanagh



Daphne and John Brien



Elizabeth and John Bryant





Elizabeth and John Bonnett



Helen Blumenfeld and Frank Poole



Helen and Wally Blumenfeld





Wally Blumenfeld and George Stubbs

General Peter Gratton receiving an Association Plaque from President Graham Murray



Colonel Mike Kavanagh being presented an Association Plaque from Graham Murray





Kevin Morley exaggerating the size of the fish he caught at Lake Hume.



Sid Cheeseman and Dee Vickery



Editor Ross McMurray and Jack Peel



Beryce and John Merrick..



Wally Blumenfeld, Rina Ross and Bruce Reilly in front of a couple of gunners in the AWM



Dee and Rob Vickery.



HUNTERS HILL REUNION AND LUNCH

Numbers were down a bit this year but everyone enjoyed themselves as usual. The weather wasn't the best to start with but it eventually cleared up and many people moved outside the hall and enjoyed the afternoon sunshine. It was good to see some new faces and quite a few members from interstate. See the list below. Nobby Boettcher made a welcome appearance from Coffs Harbour as did Ray Curran from Queensland. Mike Priest made it again from Essex, UK and Dave Clarke dropped in from Thailand. That's commitment for you! The lunch itself was excellent, as always, with a good variety of dishes and plenty of drinks to wash it down.

It was great to see Roger MacDonald back on deck after a recent operation to remove a brain tumour. So far he's responding well to the treatment and let's hope he'll make a full recovery. He earned a rest from behind the bar this year, but Anthony Murray and his mate Peter Ward did a superb job with dispensing the refreshments. John Purcell also did a superb job with a bottle of locally produced rum he brought with him. In fact it was so good that I don't remember the last couple of hours of the reunion.

The raffle was a great success and the winners were:

1st Prize – A timber backed 6" bronze ships barometer went to Charles Bednarczyk

2nd Prize – A brass sextant in a timber case went to Paul Quarmby

3rd Prize – A timber backed 3" bronze ships clock went to Allan Reading.

Herb Draper won the door prize of a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label scotch.

Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to everyone who purchased tickets.

ANZAC DAY LUNCH ATTENDEES – HUNTERS HILL

John Bryant, Newport Beach NSW	James Brown, Runaway Bay Qld
Nobby Boettcher, Coffs Harbour NSW	Graham Berry, Darling Point NSW
David Clarke, Thailand	Grant Clarke, Berowra NSW
George Cosis, Leumeah NSW	Judith Cosis, Leumeah NSW
Ray Curran, Algester Qld	Sid Cheeseman, Carlingford NSW
Herb Draper, Loftus NSW	Bruce Davenport, Mosman NSW
Les Dennis, Toongabbie NSW	Ken Duncan, Cremorne NSW
George Fisher, Epping NSW	John Gerber, North Rocks NSW
Lyn Gerber, North Rocks NSW	Ken Hull, Carlingford NSW
Fred Hartnack, Beauty Point TAS	Eric Hale, Mount Pritchard NSW
Ian Johnston, St Marys NSW	Les Muras, Baulkham Hills NSW
Ray Mazurek, Forster NSW	Roger MacDonald, Frenchs Forest NSW
Ross McMurray, West Pymble NSW	Michael McCartney-Lees, Willayra NSW
Ellen McCartney-Lees, Willayra NSW	Norm Mason, Woronora NSW
Joan Mason, Woronora NSW	Luke McFarlane, Woronora NSW
Graham Murray, Castle Hill NSW	Belinda McFarlane, Woronora NSW
John McGregor, North Avoca NSW	Mike Priest, Chelmsford UK
John Purcell, Bayview Heights QLD	Gary Smyth, Westleigh NSW
Martial Story, Maroubra NSW	Ken Shannon, Carlingford NSW
Kaye Shannon, Carlingford NSW	Bruce Reilly, Camden Park NSW
Rina Ross, Camden Park NSW	Peter Tierney, Saratoga NSW
Robert Tait, Kellyville NSW	Rob Weirman, Broadway NSW
Brian Waites, Yarramundi NSW	Val Waites, Yarramundi NSW



NEW MEMBERS

Ken Boyle again joins our ranks. He was a radar mechanic in 32 Small Ship Squadron from 1965 to 1969. He now lives at Springwood NSW.

Vaughn Ruddick served on AV1356 Clive Steele in Vietnam, and also on AV1354 Brudenell White. He now lives at Oak Park, Victoria.

John (Speedie) Sahariv served with 32 Small Ship Squadron. He now lives at Macgregor, ACT.

DONATIONS

Thank you to the following members who made donations throughout the year:

Ken Burchill, Phil Cameron, Mal Campbell, Sid Cheeseman, Ken Duncan, Paul Green, Marcus Blackmore, Noel Norton, George Lambert, Allan Chapman, Bill Bott, Bruce Glossop, Jerry Davey and Ron Cavell. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

SICK PARADE

We recently received an email from **Greg Hope** in SA, and he reported that he had a bit of a scare a couple of weeks ago. He was admitted to hospital for a routine "simple incisional hernia removal" on 3 May 2006 and while they were operating found another hernia. Not only that, seven days later he had a massive infection which resulted in an emergency trip by ambulance to Flinders Hospital for immediate surgery. Over the next eight days he was given large doses of morphine and antibiotics. Luckily, he is OK now and recovering. Greg says it was only some quick thinking by his wife, Marg that he survived.

Les Dennis also has had a few difficulties lately. He has lost the sight of one eye due to a detached retina. The sad news is that because of this he has had to relinquish his association with the Australian Volunteer Coastal Patrol where he was Training Officer and Skipper with the Cottage Point (NSW) Flotilla. Sorry to hear about that Les, and we hope that you're on the mend.

"In the last newsletter I advised of **Roger MacDonald's** battle with a brain tumour. Well, although he's still on chemotherapy treatment he's making steady progress and even managed to continue with the publication of this newsletter. In fact he mentioned that after seeing the mess I made of the last one he would make sure that this edition would be back up to its usual high standard. I'm sure you will agree that he's right. He's done an excellent job with this bumper issue don't you think? Also, he and Gail thank the many people who sent him their best wishes for a speedy recovery. Yes, hang in there, mate and get well soon."

40th ANNIVERSARY OF DEPLOYMENT OF RAE UNITS TO VIETNAM

16, 17, 18 AUGUST 2006

By now everyone should have received details about the 40th Anniversary activities; namely Wednesday 16 August – Registration and Cobbers Night at Campbelltown RSL. Thursday 17 August – Displays and lunch at SME with the semi formal dinner at Campbelltown RSL in the evening. Friday 18 August – Memorial service at the RAE Vietnam Memorial at SME, followed by lunch at the Peeler Club. A Registration Form is attached. Please note that the return address on previous correspondence was incorrect. The correct address to send the Registration Form is:

**RAE Vietnam Anniversary
PO Box 165
MOOREBANK NSW 1875**

Costs for each activity are listed on the form.



VIETNAM AND ASSOCIATED FORCES DAY SPRINGWOOD NSW

The annual ceremony at Springwood NSW to commemorate Vietnam Veterans' Day will take place on **Sunday 21 August 2006**. The parade will commence at 1130 hrs along Macquarie Road, ending with the service at the War Memorial. The Guest Speaker this year will be the Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AC, DSC, CSM.



11 Movement Control Group on parade in Sydney on ANZAC Day



Tommy Moyes and Peter Clisdell.
Thanks Peter for the photos. (Sorry we couldn't use them all)



**VALE – 27051 SERGEANT GEORGE FLINT
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS**

**Born Rotuma, Ellice Islands, Fiji 18 April 1925
Died Sydney, Australia 1 April 2006**

George Flint was a very much valued, respected and loved member of his family, 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE and our Association. He was as large as life, had a wicked sense of humour and had such an open and good natured personality. Dick van Leeuwen penned this obituary...

“George was the son of an Island Chief and joined the Royal New Zealand Navy during World War II. He trained as a radio operator, and this became his passion for the remainder of his service.

During a visit to Sydney after the war George fell in love, deserted the RNZN and got married. This caused some problems with his father who disowned him, but this was resolved when he went home to Rotuma for a visit in 1968. George, to those who knew him, had cousins all over the Pacific and no matter where he went he knew someone there, always saying that he was just a cousin.

When the Korean War started George joined the Australian Army as he thought that this would give him Australian citizenship and would stop the RNZN getting him back again. When he first joined he had hoped to get back into Signals, but when he was asked if he had any experience in this field he had to deny it because he could not reveal his background in the Navy. Thus he was inducted into the Infantry and spent 1953 / 54 with 2 RAR and four months with 1 RAR in Korea as a rifleman (he was not impressed). On return to Australia he finally transferred to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals.

When the Australian Army made the decision to purchase LSMs signallers were required to help man them, and George was then able to reveal his background and was loaned to 32 Small Ship Squadron to which he was later posted to, and served the Squadron with distinction until its disbandment in 1971.

George’s radio procedures stood him in high regard in both the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Army. When the Squadron was put on notice for deployment to Vietnam the Officer Commanding, Major Jim Wilson along with George, went to Canberra for a briefing by an Admiral who was dubious about George’s capabilities, and he had to present himself to HMAS Harman to have his communication skills checked. During this accreditation the training staff were aghast as to “what idiot wanted him checked out”. The checking ceased and George enjoyed the afternoon in the Chiefs’ Mess.

Apart from his family George had two other great loves; he could not resist a game of cards, or go anywhere without his guitar. Music was very important to him.

On a trip to Darwin, just prior to arrival, he announced to the Mess, “We’ll be right, boys – there’s a party on at HMAS Coonawarra when we get in, and we’ve been invited”. However, on arrival he discovered that (for the first time in his life) he had copied the wrong date on the invitation. The base was closed. But all was not lost because the next night it was back on, and George played his guitar for 36 hours non stop. On the return trip from Darwin to Sydney the LSM was not due to get back before Christmas so the skipper, Fred Hartnack, opted to stop at South Molle Island off Queensland where George, along with Fred, provided the musical entertainment for almost three days.

Many stories surround our George. Once, after a Mess meeting at Chowder Bay George wanted to get home and noticed Doug Iffla leaving to go to Frenchs Forest. George told Doug that he knew of a short cut. However, it was via Fairfield where George lived (for those who are not familiar with Sydney, Doug would have gone 40 km further!)



I myself had taken him home many times, but it was always risky because by the time you followed all the pubs he would ask you in for a drink and before you knew it , as always, there would be some visitors there , and a party would always eventuate.

On a trip to Auckland to pick up some Centurion tanks, relations with the RNZN were a little cool, but George noticed the name of the Admiral in Charge was a Sub Lieutenant he knew during his war time days, and he enquired after him, saying that he knew him. The next day George received a signal from the Admiral, saying that due to political duties he regretted that he could not see him. From this moment on the base could not do enough for us.

These are just a couple of stories of a man who was definitely a legend in his own life time.”

Lest we Forget

VALE – CAPTAIN MAURICE VERRAN
Born 1927 – Died 2005

In the last newsletter we promulgated the death of Association member, Maurice Verran. Here are a few more details of his service life.

Maurie enlisted in 1947 and did his recruit training at Greta in the Hunter Valley, NSW. His first posting was to 65 AIB Royal Australian Infantry Corps at Singleton where duties included being an extra in the Chips Rafferty movie, “Eureka Stockade”.

In 1947 he trained at the Army Technical School, Ingleburn as an Army Apprentice, and then to the School of Military Engineering, Casula for field engineer training. This was the beginning of 30 years as a Sapper.

There were many postings from then on, and as an original member of 17 Construction Squadron, he spent time at the Woomera Rocket Range. In the fifties there were postings to Tasmania, 35 water Transport Squadron at Chowder Bay and New Guinea.

In the early sixties he was attached to various civilian companies to gain further qualifications in his trade. In 1965 he was posted to the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra, then to Chief Engineer, Headquarters Eastern Command. This was followed by another posting to 17 Construction Squadron for service in Vietnam. During this time he was detached to the Force Engineer Reconnaissance Group, Headquarters Australian Force Vietnam at Saigon. In 1967 he returned to Sydney and again attached to civilian companies for further training in refrigeration.

From 1970 to 1973 he was posted to Headquarters ANZUK Force, Singapore. On his return to Australia he had several postings as Garrison Engineer; the last at northern NSW.

He resigned from the Army as a Captain in 1977 and moved to Forster in the Great Lakes district of NSW. He built and operated a boatshed at Tiona for about 20 years and became involved in many community projects including the NSW Bush Fire Brigade, State Emergency Service and the Pacific Palms Lions Club. He was a member of the Vietnam Veterans’ Association and helped form the local sub branch where he was trained as a pension’s officer

We thank Maurice’s wife, Mollie for providing these details

Lest we Forget.



ATTENTION !!!!

Any member who receives their Notice To Mariners by email and would also like a hard copy please contact Ocka Murray to be placed on the mailing list.
Back copies are also available.
Changed your email address ?
Let Ross McMurray know.

Disclaimer

Thoughts expressed in this newsletter are those held by the writers and contributors and are NOT necessarily those of the editor or the Association Committee or members.

Committee Members

This committee of the Association meets on the third Tuesday of each month.

President	Graham Murray	(02) 9634 3752	mossaust@bigpond.net au
Vice President	Ken Shannon	(02) 9871 4667	shannon_services@bigpond.com.au
Hon.Secretary	Vacant		
Hon.Treasurer	Peter Tierney	(02) 4369 2616	ptierney@acay.com.au
Hon.Asst./Sec. Treas	Vacant		
Welfare Officer	George Fisher	(02) 9876 4713	
Property Member	Ken Shannon		
Social Member	Vacant		
Committee	Roger MacDonald	(02) 9451 6488	aliceandborice@optusnet com.au
	Ross McMurray	(02) 9403 1456	rossmcmurray@optusnet.com.au
	Ian Johnston BEM	(02) 9623 7948	
Hon.Auditor Lt.Col	Phil Cameron	(02) 9997 4370	
Editor	Ross McMurray		
Publisher	Roger MacDonald		
Chaplains	Monsignor Eugene Harley		
	Reverend Richard McCracken		

Correspondence: P.O. Box 48, Hunters Hill NSW 2110

Property for Sale

Ties.....\$18.00	LSM Badge.....\$12.00
32 Small Ship Sq. Book.....\$30.00	Collar Badges.....\$6.00
Assc. Aniversary Plaque.....\$25.00	Flag Army Afloat..... \$50.00
Assc. Patches.....\$8.00	Ass. Caps (navy).....\$12.00
LSM Badges\$12.00	Assc. Polo Shirts, White, Red
	And Navy To Order. \$25.00

Contact Ken Shannon 02 9871 466

