

NOTICE TO MARINERS

Newsletter 32 Small Ship Squadron Association Incorporating RAE Tn

Patron: Colonel K L Duncan (RL)

President's Message



ANZAC Day is only a few weeks away and the committee and I would like to welcome members together with their wife, partner or family members to join us at our ANZAC Day reunion luncheon. I would be surprised if any other Association could present a luncheon fare including refreshments at the cost.

A number of members see the day as an annual pilgrimage being Fred Hartnack (this year together with his son from Launceston), John Purcell from Cairns, Mike Priest from Essex U.K. and David Clarke now a resident of Bangkok just to name a few.

With the M7 motorway and the upgrade of the Hume Highway the trip from Canberra to Sydney is a leisurely 3 hour drive and from Albury/Wodonga a few hours longer so why not come to Sydney for a couple of days and enjoy ANZAC Day, visit the new marine village at Woolwich Dock or visit Chowder Bay and stop by the refurbished Buena Vista Hotel for a beer or two.

If you attend the reunion luncheon you will be able to view a magnificent scale model of LSM AV1354 Brudenell White crafted by Ian (Frank) Johnson. It is a credit to Ian.

By now I hope most members have received their Australian Defence Medal. I believe the production of this medal is far better than others we have received in recent years. Ribbon colours are certainly significant – “the black and red colour of the Flanders poppy represent the ANZAC spirit of the Australian Defence Force. The white stripes divide the red into three, denoting the three Services. The white stripes also denote peacetime service to Australia.”

Ocka

JAMAIS ETRE REMORQUE



ANZAC DAY ACTIVITIES

HUNTERS HILL MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Tuesday 24 April 2007 a combined community ANZAC Service arranged by the Hunters Hill Council, in conjunction with the Hunters Hill RSL Sub-Branch, will be held at the Town Hall. Prior to the service there will be the traditional evening march to the Town Hall. Members are asked to form up at the corner of Alexander and Woolwich Road ready to step off at 1940 hours. Service medals should be worn. Family and friends can meet at the front steps of the Town Hall at the completion of the march. During the service our Association will lay a book (rather than a wreath) for presentation to a local school. Heavy bar snacks and refreshments will be served after the service at the Sub-Branch memorial Hall.

DAWN SERVICE – SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING

The traditional Dawn Service at SME will commence at 0530 hours at the RAE Memorial. Breakfast will be served afterwards at the ORs Mess

DAWN SERVICE – GEORGES HEIGHTS

The Dawn Service at Georges Heights will commence at 0530 hours. Enter via Suakin Drive (off Middle Head Road). There is ample parking. The service will be conducted by the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch and assisted by the Mosman Lion's Club who will provide breakfast after the service.

DAWN SERVICE – PERTH

Doug Wyness advises that a Dawn Service in Kings Park will be held at the State War Memorial commencing at approximately 0400 hours with an archival presentation of Australia's military history up to the commencement of the service at 0600.

ANZAC DAY MARCH – SYDNEY

Assemble on the corner of Phillip and Bent Streets in front of the Legal and General building by 1000 hours. Step off time is usually around 1100 which will give us a bit of time to renew acquaintances and take refreshment before the hard slog to Hyde Park. The Banner Party has been appointed in advance, and after it has formed up we will fall in behind it in columns of ten. Again, coat, tie and medals please.

ANZAC DAY MARCH – PERTH

A map showing assembly points and timings for unit associations will be published in the "West Australian" on 23 April 2007. The Australian Water Transport Association plus ex-members of 32 Small Ship Squadron usually form up opposite the Trinity Church in St Georges Terrace.

Doug Wyness recently advised that there is planned to be a Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade in Perth on 7 October 2007. We will have some details in the next newsletter.

ANZAC DAY REUNION LUNCHEON – SYDNEY

As usual the reunion will be held at the Hunters Hill RSL Sub-Branch Memorial Hall on the corner of Alexander and Ady Streets. Similar to previous years a good quality buffet luncheon will be served at 1400 hours. The price for this extravaganza will be only \$40.00 per head which includes drinks! It must be the cheapest and best lunch going. Guests are more than welcome; especially the ladies. For those who turn up unannounced the cost will be \$50.00 per head. Do try and let us know if you are attending so we can accurately forecast numbers to the caterer. Drinks, (beer, wine, juice, soft and limited spirits) will be available from noon to 1800. See you there!



ANZAC DAY RAFFLE

The raffle is on again and tickets are enclosed. The prizes are again (by popular demand) ships barometers and clocks in a solid brass porthole style on a timber backing board.

First prize: 3" ships clock and barometer
Second Prize: 6" ships clock
Third Prize: 3" ships barometer

The tickets are still only \$1.00 each so why not buy a book of them for ten bucks

NEW MEMBER

Welcome Aboard to **Jim Mulligan**. As you can see, he has had quite an eventful career. Some of the units he has served in were: 30 Port Squadron, 30 Terminal Squadron, 32 Small Ship Squadron, 11 Movement Control Group, 42 Amphibious Unit, 10 Terminal Regiment, Det 30 Terminal Squadron Vietnam, 71 Transportation Battalion, US Army Vietnam, 4 Transportation Command US Army Vietnam, Maritime Wing Transportation Centre, Liverpool Transport Squadron, ANZAC Support Group Singapore, RAF Tengah, Singapore and RAF Paluda, Malaya.

Ships he has served on include: AV Tarra, All LSMs, John Monash, LCHs Tarakan and Balikpapan, HMAS Sydney, HMAS Supply, HMAS Tobruk, Sir Lancelot and Sir Gaur (Landing Ship Logistic, British Army), LSS John D. Page Vietnam, and US Army Support Team.

I've probably missed a few units or ships there but Jim has sure been busy. He now lives at Evans head NSW.

SICK PARADE

Kevin Morley reports that Charlie Bawden is not in the best of health. In January 2007 he was admitted to Albury Wodonga Private Hospital with congestion to his lungs. He could not breathe properly and had significant respiratory problems. Since then he had improved somewhat and has gone home. Kevin advised that although he is feeling more comfortable (Charlie that is, not Kevin) he is still not well. His brother, Fred, from Devon is staying with Charlie and will remain with him for about three weeks.

Quite a few members who know about his condition have sent a note or card to Charlie. Why not join them and send him a card or phone him cheer him up a bit. His address is:

Charlie Bawden
6 / 8 Russell Street
HOWLONG NSW 2643

Telephone: 02 6026 5347

John McGregor advised that Alf Smith is not travelling well. Alf moved to Gosford NSW some years ago and until recently was a tireless worker for the Gosford City Sub-Branch of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia with his wife, Dot. Unfortunately Dot passed away a few years ago.

Actually John and I visited Alf a couple of days ago and found him to be in good spirits. He is being well looked after by the staff at Hammond Care and also by members of the Gosford City Sub-Branch of the VVA. His niece, Penny, visits him regularly and says that he would appreciate visitors, so if anyone is passing through the Central Coast why not call in and see him. Alf would appreciate visitors, or a card. He is currently residing at:

Hammond Care
286 Railway Street
WOY WOY NSW 2256



Sick Parade Update

This time last year we advised that Allan Reading, Jeff Beach and Roger MacDonald had not been well. Allan and Jeff are now pretty well back on track and Roger is still receiving treatment but has steadily improved over the last twelve months and is continuing to do so.

AUSTRALIA DAY MESSAGE FROM SPEEDIE SAHARIV

On Australia Day this year messages of goodwill were sent to all of us from the Queen, Prime Minister, Governor General, State Governors, Politicians, Local Government Councillors, Defence Force Chiefs and Captains of Industry. Well, we were sent another one – this time by John (Speedie) Sahariv, one of our members who served his country well for over 20 years in both peace and war. Here it is:

“G’day Cobbers, to you and your family,

Today I look around me and see these yahoos who reckon that this wonderful nation of Australia owes them a living...

To them I say, “Go back from whence you came!” and “I care not what you do there!”

Today I look around me and see these all these people who have adopted this wonderful nation of Australia as their own; who work unselfishly to make it a better place; who abide by its laws; who respect its flag; who respect and are grateful to those who gave their lives, and to those who sacrificed themselves to wounds, humiliation and other such degrading things from those who would want us not to exist; and to those who served in all lands, and at home to keep this nation one!

To them I say, “I am one of you. I too came from a war torn country. I adopted this land and I thank my parents for bringing me here. No other place would do!

Today I look around me and see Aussies: here since colonisation; Aussies who I have more love for than for myself; who accepted this little brat into their lives.

To them I say, “Thank you for the privilege and honour for being accepted as one of yours!”

Thank you, **AUSTRALIA!**

Speedie Sahariv

Jeez, Speedie, I didn’t know you came here from overseas. I always thought you came from Melbourne. Well good on yer, mate. What a heartfelt and emotional bit of prose. You said it better than a lot of the other messages that went out. Well done!



CHARLES WATSON, OAM

It is with delight that we report that long serving member, Charles Watson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the last Queen's Birthday List. The citation for the award reads:

“For service to youth through the Scouting movement, to the sport of rowing in NSW, and to the community.”

This is a pretty ‘bare bones’ account of his long and distinguished service in many aspects to the community as a whole. Let's put some flesh on it...

Although Charles had been a scout as a youth (and achieved the Queen's Scout Award in 1954) it wasn't until he was in the Army and posted to 10 Terminal Group as OC 35 Water Transport Squadron that he became a scout leader with 1st Port Jackson Sea Scouts, located at HMAS Penguin. Shortly after he became a group leader. He was later appointed Commissioner Mosman District and five years later as Commissioner to the NSW Branch Headquarters in four different roles over six years (Projects, Development, Resources and Venturer Scouts).

After a ten year break he returned as NSW State Commissioner of Venturer Scouts. At the same time, over the last seven years, he was the Executive Director of ‘Dragon Skin’ which is the largest annual event held in Australia by the Scouting movement, and is a four day activity over Easter conducted in a State Forest. Charles was involved with the scouts for 25 years. A remarkable achievement.

His interest in rowing started when he was 17 years old at the Drummoyne Rowing Club where he competed and served as vice-captain of the club until he joined the Army. Years later his eldest son announced that he was going to join the Mosman Rowing Club but Charles steered him, and his younger brother, in the direction of his old club at Drummoyne where he again became involved. Not content to sit on the bank of Parramatta River he started by coaching and then being Boat Master, Captain, Director, Vice President, Safety Officer, Delegate to NSW Maritime Authority and its two predecessors of the NSW Rowing Association. In all a total of 52 years with the sport.

Charles's service to the community included:

Mosman Chairman National heart Foundation (two years)

President Artarmon and District Progress Association (five years)

Secretary Percheron Association Australia (two years)

Secretary, then President Percheron Horse Breeders Association of Australia (five years)

Flat Tops Rural Fire Brigade (32 years) Recently; President, Deputy Captain and Senior Deputy Captain

Dungog Agricultural and Horticultural Association Show Committee – Chairman Ring Committee 2004 / 05.
Committee Member 2006.

President Dungog Sub-Branch RSL for the last three years

Member Legacy

Public Officer, Reserve Forces Day Committee since its inception in 1998.

The award was presented at Government House, Sydney last September. After the festivities, and a few rounds of champagne, Charles and his wife, Margaret, departed to return to Dungog. As they were approaching the outskirts of Sydney Margaret asked him where the medal was. Yes, he had left it at Government House. I suppose the Governor posted it to him.

Congratulations from us all Charles for the well deserved recognition of your community involvement. Well done!

Waddaya mean you don't know what a “Percheron” is? Everyone knows it's a breed of horse. (actually, I thought it was a breed of fish...)



SEPIK RIVER VOYAGE BY AV1354 BRUDENELL WHITE

In 1964 LSM AV1354 Brudenell White, commanded by Captain Wally Blumenfeld, navigated the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. The following article about this epic voyage appeared in the "2006 National Navigation Logbook", a journal of the Australian Institute of Navigation whose President is Colonel Ken Duncan. Wally has kindly given us permission to use his article. This is his story...

"The Australian Army has a long tradition involving ships and watercraft. Water transport units were formed during World War II and operated in such diverse operational areas as Tobruk in North Africa and Papua New Guinea (PNG) coastal areas.

A need for the movement of main battle tanks by sea resulted in the purchase of four ex-US Navy Landing Ships Medium (LSM), two being procured in 1959 with a further two LSMs joining the Army in 1960.

The LSMs were 62m in length with a beam of 10.5m and a displacement of about 500 tonnes. Its deadweight capacity was 700 tonnes including fuel, stores and cargo, but the usual actual cargo load was between 300 and 400 tonnes. The ships were primarily designed to carry tanks or other vehicles but could, of course, carry munitions, fuel drums or general cargo. They had a beaching capacity usually with a draught of about one metre forward and two metres aft. The ships were powered by two Fairbanks Morse marine diesel engines of 3000 brake horsepower and had a cruising speed of 12 knots.

In 1964 the Army Survey Regiment was engaged in survey operations close to the western border of PNG, employing helicopters. An LSM was the ideal vessel to support these operations, being fitted with a helicopter pad and able to carry a large amount of aviation fuel. The AV1354 Brudenell White was therefore deployed in support of survey operations by navigating the Sepik River. An Army Survey Officer and parties of survey troops were carried in addition to the 38 members of the actual ship's complement. A helicopter pilot and engineer were also an integral part of the survey operation.

A secondary task was a reconnaissance of beaching and berthing sites suitable for LSMs and other types of landing craft.

The Sepik River is one of the largest rivers in PNG. It rises on the Victor Emanuel Range of the central highlands. The Sepik flows north-westwards and then turns east, receiving numerous tributaries draining from two mountain ranges before entering the Bismarck Sea through a delta about 1100 km from its source. For most of its lower course the river meanders through a wilderness of swamps and lagoons with large floating islands of vegetation drifting in the channel. The amount of sediment carried down the channel is so great that the waters of the ocean are discoloured for 30 km beyond the mouth which is about 1.5 km wide. (see map).

The logistics for this task were quite involved as the ship was expected to stay in the Sepik district for a month and there was no opportunity to obtain supplies of any description once the river was entered, especially fuel and fresh water. The latter was obtained from a mission station on Kairuru Island, close to Wewak, where there was a fresh-water spring. Additional water-tanks were carried to catch any rain water from awnings.

The vessel entered the river on the 1st October 1964, the mission being to reach the May River junction if possible. An aerial reconnaissance was carried out beforehand and despite the windings of the river a passage that far appeared to be feasible.

The courses and depths of the river are constantly changing and the daily rise and fall may vary from a few centimetres to one or two metres depending on the rainfall! There were no accurate charts and even if there were, they would need to be constantly amended. However, a map of the river based on maps compiled by two German geographers was obtained from an information source in Australia.



The German maps dated from 1909! A more up-to-date map compiled by a missionary was also obtained from the PNG Administration.

The ship was fitted with gyro and magnetic compasses as well as radar and most importantly an echo sounder.

There were many villages along the river and two Government stations, one at Angoram, 110 km from the mouth, and one at Ambunti, 376 km from the mouth. At first the local people were quite timid when they saw the big green “monster” coming towards their villages, especially when the bow-doors opened and the ramp came down! But by the time the ship returned down the river, they came out in their canoes with hand-crafted bows and arrows for sale. Overall, they were most friendly and would proudly show us their house “Tambun”, which would contain many exquisite carvings and ornaments.

The greatest obstacles to navigation were driftwood and floating islands. The channel usually followed the outside of the bends, and whirlpools and eddies indicated extremely deep water. Some bends were 180 degree turns and one engine had to be reversed to get around. The deepest water was 55m and the shallowest depth recorded was just less than 2m. The current varied between one and six knots. As the ship carried a helicopter to take survey parties out this could be used to ascertain the course of the river ahead at times. But when there was doubt between navigating two channels, the only one reliable way was the time-honoured Captain Cook / Matthew Flinders method! The vessel’s motor launch would be launched and one of the watchkeepers would take soundings with a hand leadline.

The ship would only be on passage during daylight hours, being berthed alongside villages at night. Movies would be shown in the crew’s messroom and crocodile hunting parties were organised although none were ever sighted. At some villages, fresh prawns, ducks and a hen were purchased to supplement the fresh food supply.

The ship also stopped at Pagwi, some 320 km up the river. The PNG Administration had requested that the vessel take some road plant there which was to be further moved by road to Maprik which was some 60 km away and at which there was a Government station. A temporary earth ramp had been built, which was reinforced with logs. Despite some anxious moments with a bulldozer leaning over unsteadily, all plant was successfully unloaded!

The May River junction was reached on 8th October 1964 after a passage of eight days. The ship had successfully navigated the Sepik River for a distance of 321 nautical miles, that is 595 km or 370 statute miles. This was the furthest a vessel of that size had penetrated into the interior.

During World War I two Australian torpedo-boat destroyers had travelled some 350 km up the Sepik breaking the record held by a German gun-boat, the “Kormoran”. These ships were 76m in length. Later it was claimed that two RAN patrol craft had established a new record by sailing 371 km up the river surpassing the record of the “Warrego” and “Parramatta” during World War I. However, the patrol-boats were only 33m in length and their crews used a 1964 Army river survey chart based on information supplied by the “Brudenell White”.

The ship stayed at the May River junction until 11th October 1964 to enable the Army surveyors to complete their task. The return voyage was uneventful and the river was cleared on 26th October. So altogether the vessel was in the Sepik River for a total of 26 days. The average upstream speed was 6.65 knots whereas the downstream speed was 11.02 knots, showing the influence of the current.

In addition to the mapping project and river reconnaissance, the senior deck watchkeeper, Warrant Officer Class 1 Ken “Taffy” Maggs, compiled a running survey chart based on the echo soundings and changes to the shape of the river. Several copies were made, one copy being given to a grateful PNG District Commissioner. An Army river survey chart was later published by the Royal Australian Survey Corps using the information of the running survey.

Some years ago, a British Army “Drake” adventure expedition to the Sepik region was also presented with a copy of the running survey chart for their use.



The ship remained in PNG waters for some further weeks carrying out the usual military resupply tasks to the various Army establishments there, returning to Australia later that year.

On 27th October 1964, the following signal message was received from Brigadier E. Logan, CBE, Engineer-in-Chief at Army Headquarters, Canberra:

“FOR BLUMENFELD AND CREW FROM ENGINEER IN CHIEF. CONGRATULATIONS ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR TASK. WELL DONE.”

Well, what a story. Most of us knew about this trip, but not the details of it. Thanks Wally for a very interesting account of some extraordinary seamanship. For those who don't know him here is his background:

Walter (Wally) Blumenfeld first went to sea in a BHP ship and subsequently served a marine apprenticeship with the Australian National Line. He studied for his First Mate's and Master Mariner's Certificates at the Nautical College in Southampton, UK, and continued to pursue a maritime career in Danish and Swedish merchant ships.

During this time he was also commissioned into the Royal Australian Naval Reserve (Seagoing) and served onboard a destroyer as part of the Strategic Reserve in South-East Asia during the Malayan Emergency. He joined the Royal Australian Engineers in 1964 and commanded Army landing-ships for five years, including service in Borneo and South Vietnam. He left the Army in 1973 and then worked for the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Australian Maritime Safety Authority in various capacities involved with maritime safety services until his retirement in 1994.



At Oumi Village, Sepik River. Wally Blumenfeld is on the left wearing a tee shirt. On the right is Bill Tebb, a PNG government trawler skipper who was a Chief Petty Officer, RN, during WWII.



Unloading road plant at Pagwi village on 3 October 1964



At Ambunti village on 4 October 1964

Gerry Davey and Dave McIntosh, electricians on board AV1354 Brudenell White during its voyage up the Sepik River in 1964.

Photo supplied by Dave Perham



VOYAGE OF AV1354 BRUDENELL WHITE
ALONG THE SEPIK RIVER TO THE
MAY RIVER JUNCTION



Iniok village Sepik River, near the May River junction on 14 October 1964



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REUNION

This notice from John Purcell has just been received. John will provide further details and updates via email and this newsletter. If you are interested in undertaking the “lap of Australia” or parts of it, please liaise directly with him.

“Many of you will be aware that after three very successful state reunions, the next will be in WA in October this year. At the last reunion, some of us discussed the idea of including Perth as part of a round Australia group trip. It aroused a deal of interest.

It seems a long way to go for a weekend of activity and perhaps a group such as ours would enjoy the opportunity to go on an adventure that many of us have been putting off. It will provide security, companionship and support, particularly for our ageing members and others less mobile who may have thought themselves past it.

The concept is that the main body could move along at a leisurely pace on major roads and give others, appropriately kitted, the opportunity to visit the more remote destinations such as Cape York. I am looking at travelling to Darwin on the Savannah Route via the Gulf, Burketown and Kakadu. We would join up at pre-arranged centres along the way.

Those living in towns along the way may offer to organise local tours, discounts at caravan parks, and the mini reunions for those we have not seen for a long time. We would also be welcome to visit 30 Terminal and 35 Water Transport Squadrons in Townsville.

I believe we will need at least a month but for those without that time to spare they could join or leave the group anywhere. We will have our have our web-site to upgrade our locstat.

Further detail and updates will appear in Notice to Mariners. Meanwhile for those wishing more information, my contact details are:

John Purcell
9 Maynard Close
MT SHERIDAN QLD 4868

Telephone: 07 4036 3026
Mobile: 0408 772 506
Email: purcellj@bigpond.net.au

If you wish to be placed on the mailing list, send \$5.00 or deposit directly to WA Trip, Westpac, BSB: 034193 A/C 240419. This will cover postage, website, telephone and incidentals”.

Thanks for that John. I’m sure you will get lots of starters. Maybe someone would like to do it by boat. That would be a first! If you do, always remember to try to keep Australia off the port beam. (Doug Iffla once gave me that advice). Why not buy the Joe Mann. It’s very reliable – only been sunk once.



DAVE PERHAM'S PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY PROJECT

Over the past 30 years Dave Perham has collected many photos, articles, crew stories and related memorabilia about 32 Small Ship Squadron. He has started to put these together in a photographic history book he intends to publish. Much of his collection has been given to him by ex-squadron members and he says that there must be many more photos, slides, stories and memorabilia sitting in duffle bags and boxes that could be suitable for the project. So why not have a look through some of the stuff your wife complains about gathering dust in the shed and send it to Dave. You might think that the things you discover are insignificant but why not let him and his editorial team have a look at them. He would prefer two or three of your best photos; preferably with a description of them with ranks, names, location and date. Also, any brief stories and any other documentation or memorabilia would be welcome. He is particularly interested in photos and articles between 1960 and 1964. Note that the book will not just be about voyages to Vietnam. It will cover the delivery voyages, Papua New Guinea, Borneo, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, Army exercises, Chowder Bay, Woolwich and the many trips that were undertaken around Australia. All photos and articles will be returned to you.

The book will be printed to a high quality "coffee table" standard. It will be hard covered with glossy pages in colour and black and white. Obviously the number of pages will depend on the quality and quantity of material presented to Dave, but it looks like around 200 pages will be achieved. The book is intended to be in a format similar to "Voyages to Vietnam" and "My Vietnam" which were published a few years ago. The cost of the book is not known at this stage and Dave is looking for sponsors who may be willing to assist with the cost of production. Pre-paid subscriptions from members may also be another option of providing "up front" costs. Let us know your thoughts on this. Our Association will support and assist the project. Progress of the project will be given in the next edition of Notice to Mariners.

There are already a number of articles and books written about the history of the Squadron, and these have correctly been documentary type publications. Dave intends to have his version a little less on this aspect and more on the photographic and human interest value – something we can all relate to.

So there it is. Let's give it all the support we can. Please send anything that you would like to contribute to:

David Perham
380 Little Bella Creek Road
BELLA CREEK QLD 4570

Telephone: 07 5484 5736

Email: 32dmp@bordernet.com.au

On the next page are a couple of articles from Dave Perham's upcoming book. As you can see it is still in draft format, hence the poor quality photos and print. Don't worry, the completed book will have these as sharp as a tack.



Right: Lt Colonel James Wilson MBE, long time CO of 32. Board of Trade Master and all round good organiser. It was he who gave the unit it's motto "Jamais Etre Remorque" or never to be towed. Throughout their Army service none of his ships disobeyed.

When, as often happened, miscreant crew were carpeted in front of the Colonel over some misdemeanour the words "It's been brought to my notice" spoken in his high Scots brogue were enough to reduce the toughest to jelly. After all, who knew "what" had been brought to his notice?

Most of the crew found him to be a fair but tough no nonsense bloke with a wry sense of humour. He had a phenomenal memory and knew the names of most his diggers. If you were fair dinkum he was with you.

Around daybreak every working day, Colonel Wilson would arrive at Woolwich in his little green car which looked like something out of Noddy. I think it was the smallest Renault made. Woe betide the duty man if the tea urn was not boiling.

On the quiet he was known affectionately as Haggis which he knew about of course and only seemed to resent the nickname in such cases where a crew members wife would call the unit and ask to speak to Major Haggis.

Out at sea on a long trip: Sapper, "Good morning Sir!
Major Wilson, "If I want a weather report from you, I'll ask for it!"



"When I joined the Army I was given the idea that they wanted me to help out with cabinetmaking as I had been in the game since leaving school. Perversely the allocation process at Kapooka assigned me to the Royal Australian Engineers and SME, where, having completed a thoroughly enjoyable FE3 course and thinking my skills could still be of use in a Field Squadron I was dumbfounded on being posted to Tn Centre for a Seamanship Course. I thought perhaps those making this decision had twigged to the fact that my Mum and Dad had once taken me for a day trip on the Queensport ferry"



Right: Chowder Bay seamanship training aboard AM2833 Mizama. This little ship was an introduction to things maritime for many crew who later went on to join 32 Small Ship Sqn.

Midships: Jim McMahon handing fender and Ken Fletcher in white overalls.

AM2833 Mizama and AM 2834 Fern were the last of the Army's 62' command craft, being disposed of in the late '60s.



AT 2700 JOE MANN – ANOTHER UPDATE

In our last newsletter we mentioned the sighting of ex-AT 2700 Joe Mann on the Georges River at Lugarno NSW. Garry McIvor spotted her and sent in the information. Now Dave Jupp and Col Wright from Queensland sent us this advertisement from “Trade-a-Boat”. I didn’t know the boat had bow thrusters. Anyone interested?!

ADELAIDE STEAMSHIP CO TUGBOAT 56'



(7CP-357-135) 1963.
Vessel in 2C, 2D & 1E
Survey. Twin 6-71 GMs.
Fully fitted out and
ready for work. Bow
thruster, 6 man life raft.
Spares, 22196,
Ph 0428 298 514, NSW
\$250,000



Here’s a picture of Phil Cannane during a visit to South East Asia when he trekked along the infamous Thai-Burma railway of WWII. We are not quite sure of the relevance of the tiger but it makes an interesting picture don’t you think? Phil is the one in the white tee shirt.



AV1356 CLIVE STEELE AND THE SKY CRANE INCIDENT

Shortly after arriving in South Vietnam in January 1968 after delivering bridging and recovery tanks to the armoured unit at Nui Dat the Clive Steele was tasked to deliver pallets of sand and cement to a US Army Engineer unit at My Tho in the Mekong Delta. During the unloading process some of the bags were damaged, scattering their contents all over the place. Oddly, instead of using fire hoses to clean up the mess some bright spark decided to use a bulldozer! This resulted in some of the stuff being cleaned up as well as a number of fuel tank covers on the well deck.

On return to Vung Tau the ship was met with a Sikorsky Sky Crane with a 20 ton container loaded with sand bags slung under it to simulate pallets of 105 mm artillery shells. This was an exercise to see if the helicopter could safely deliver pallets of them to the ship. The idea was that the ship would be used as a floating gun platform off Da Nang. However, after about ten drops the helicopter crew thought it would be easier and safer if the mast (yes, the mast!) could be removed, mainly because the ship was rolling about 30 degrees and the mast was not allowing the helicopter to get low enough to drop the load. The skipper observed that removing the mast was probably not in the best interests of the efficient operation of the ship and declined the recommendation. This put an end to the floating gun platform theory.

However, more excitement was to come because when the ship sailed to Saigon a few weeks later to carry out a 600 hour planned maintenance to the main engines it was noticed that the port engine had deposits of sand and cement in it. It was discovered that the downdraft of the helicopter, whilst delivering the containers, swirled some of the sand and cement left on the well deck from My Tho into the port main engine air intake which unfortunately entered the engine with disastrous results. Engineers had to strip the engine to clear the contaminants. This work included replacing and scraping-in all the big end bearings on the pistons. Although the engine was operational for some months after the repairs, eventually the ship had to go to Singapore for a complete engine refit.

The photo shows the Sky Crane helicopter delivering a 20 ton container to AV1356 Clive Steele. Thanks to Dick van Leeuwin for providing details of this incident. My memory of it was pretty hazy and about the only detail I recall was that I thought the sand came from the slung containers. However quite a few people have since agreed with Dick's version.



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 Sqn. 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 |

Note: Association Ties and LSM Badges are currently out of stock, but they are on order

Contact Ken Shannon 02 9871 4667

