

NOTICE TO MARINERS

Newsletter of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn

Patron: Colonel K.L. Duncan (Rtd)

President's Message

I was saddened to hear of the Hawkins on 8 February. Neil and I original members of the delivery (MV Mara) – he was on the Q side was in the engine room with WO1 Sydney in 1965. He was also a the John Monash to Port Moresby the Brisbane River and loaded a Murray Barracks later that year.



passing of Neil (Hawkeye) became great buddies as we were crew of AS3051 John Monash with WO1 Tommy Royal and I Bob Bennett - from Fremantle to crew member on the first trip of where we docked at Pinkenba on consignment of Lysaght sheds for

Beth and I attended the funeral at Woolahra of Ellza Tanner, wife of the late Lt.Col. Ron Tanner, on 2 February. Ron was the Association's first president from 1973-1976 and later became Patron from 1976-1978. Ellza was born in Mount Morgan in Queensland and lived to be 96 years of age.

On 15 February the following members – Colonel Ken and Dawn Duncan, John and Lyn Gerber, Bob and Jeannette Tait and Beth and I attended the Garrison Church at Millers Point for a commemoration service for The Australian Water Transport RAE AIF. Afterwards we had an enjoyable lunch at The Hero of Waterloo hotel organised by Cec Weekes, President of the A.W.T.A. The Rev. Howard Barnett has been appointed as A.W.T.A. Padre and was kind enough to allow all those attending the luncheon to leave their vehicles in the church grounds thus avoiding parking problems.

Thank you to those members who responded to Mrs. Traci Foro's request seeking information about her late father Corporal David Alan Hansen.

I have received an email from Noel Matson who is a serving member (WO2) and a member of Roma R.S.L. He is seeking information about WO2 Ronald (Snow) Hider on behalf of the family. Noel's email is noelmatson@bidpond.com if anyone can help.

As ANZAC Day falls on a Saturday this year I hope as many members as possible can attend the march through the city of Sydney and the luncheon at Hunters Hill R.S.L. Sub-Branch hall.

Ocka

JAMAIS ETRE REMORQUE



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

ANZAC DAY ACTIVITIES

I'm sure members check the details of ANZAC Day dawn services and marches in their own area so I'll just put in details for Sydney for those who are visiting or attending.

DAWN SERVICE – SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING

A Gunfire Breakfast will commence at 0450 hrs in the vicinity of the RAE Monument. The Catafalque Party will mount at 0510 hrs and the service will commence shortly after. On completion of the service a breakfast will be available at the Other Ranks Mess followed by traditional ANZAC Day activities at the Peeler VC Club.

Note that this service is very popular so if you are attending please try and get there by 0430 hrs. Ample car parking is available.

DAWN SERVICE – GEORGES HEIGHTS

The service will be conducted on the parade ground of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust precinct (Suakin Drive – near the old WRAAC School) commencing at 0530 hrs. Following the service there will be the traditional Gunfire Breakfast for those who require to be fortified by a beverage manufactured in Bundaberg, and also a light breakfast will be provided by the Mosman Lions Club for a nominal charge. Parking is available under the control of the SES.

ANZAC DAY MARCH – SYDNEY

Assemble on the corner of Phillip and Bent Streets in front of the Legal and General building by 1000 hrs. Step off time is usually around 1100 hrs which will give us time to renew acquaintances and take refreshment before the long march to Hyde Park. The Banner Party has been appointed in advance, and after it has formed up we will assemble behind it. Coat, tie and medals please.

ANZAC DAY REUNION AND 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, Hunters Hill. A high quality buffet lunch will be served at 1400 hrs. Again we have managed to keep the cost down to \$40.00 per head which includes drinks. To put it on at this low price we need to know early the numbers attending, so please submit your return slip (included in the Raffle Ticket/Membership renewal mail-out) as soon as possible. Those who turn up unannounced the cost will be \$50.00 a head.

ANZAC DAY RAFFLE

The raffle is on again and your tickets are enclosed. The prizes are:

First Prize: 3" ships clock and barometer

Second Prize: 6" ships clock

Third Prize: 3" barometer

These popular prizes are made of brass and mounted on polished hardwood. The tickets are still only \$1.00 each or ten for \$10.00 (20 for \$20.00).



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

VALE – JIM MCMAHON

It is with sadness that we report the passing of a very notable, well liked and respected member of our community – James Alfred McMahon. He passed away suddenly on 7 December 2008 at Greenslopes Hospital, Brisbane. Although he had leukemia he was progressing well with treatment but it finally beat him.

Jim was born in Birkenhead, Cheshire on 5 October 1927. He was one of seven children and is survived by his brother, Fred and two sisters, Doris and Hilda. He was called up for National Service on his eighteenth birthday and served in Palestine and Egypt as (I think) an armoured vehicle recovery mechanic in REME. It's interesting to note that Jim's best mate (and ours), Vince Mannell served there at the same time but they didn't actually meet until much later in the Australian Army.

After his service in Palestine Jim heard that Australia was looking for British soldiers to enlist and he took up the call and immigrated to Australia and enlisted in January 1951.

Following Field Engineer training at the School of Military Engineering he was posted to 7 Independent Field Squadron and then 17 Construction Squadron. During the late 1950s he was posted to the Transportation Training Centre at Chowder Bay and began his life with water transport where he stayed for the rest of his Army career.

In 1959 he was part of Task Force Krait Two which was the delivery of LSMs *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* and *AV1354 Brudenell White* from Japan, arriving in Sydney on 31 December.

For the next four years Jim honed his seamanship and navigational skills and in 1964 he sailed to Borneo as Third Mate on *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee*. For the next seven years Jim served at the Transportation Centre, 32 Small Ship Squadron (where he sailed on all four LSMs and *AS3051 John Monash* along the Australian coast and Papua New Guinea and on *AV1356 Clive Steele* in Vietnam. He also served on *AV1351 Vasse*, *AV1379 Tarra* and probably all the workboats), Ships Army Staff HMAS Sydney and the Papua New Guinea Training Squadron. He elected discharge in Brisbane as a WO2 on 31 October 1973.

Jim never married, but was “adopted” by Vince Mannell and his family and spent most of his leave with them at their Brisbane home. Jim often returned to the UK to visit his family and friends.

Jim will be remembered for his friendliness and his offbeat sense of humour. He always seemed to be happy, even when the circumstances were grim. He had the unique ability to impart orders and instructions without yelling! A few quiet words usually had the desired effect. And he was always a gentleman, and willing to give young Sappers the benefit of his knowledge and experience. A sad loss indeed.

Jim's funeral was held at Pinaroo Cemetery, Bridgeman Downs, Brisbane and was attended by over 100 people – many from interstate. A large contingent was from the Geebung – Zillmere RSL where Jim was a member. The club also provided the wake after the funeral. Vince Mannell's daughter, Gillian, traveled from Perth to attend the funeral and gave a very sincere and appropriate eulogy and I am indebted to her for providing some of the details in this



obituary. Vince's other daughter, Stephanie, was responsible for attending to details of the funeral and also for looking after Jim's affairs. Again, this shows the sincere affection of Jim from the Mannell family.

Following Gillian's eulogy, Peter Caskey said some fine words about Jim and his Army career. Peter also recited this piece from our Poet Laureate, Speedie Sahariv:

"Vale my Friend,
Vale my Mentor,
Vale Oh! My Warrior,
Vale Jimmy McMahon

Heaven will be a better place,
Jimmy will show 'em the pace,
Mustachios to the fore,
A shaven face no more,
A gentleman will have the floor,
We all will miss him, that's for sure..."

I think you summed him up pretty well, Speedie.

Association members who attended the funeral were: Phil Cannane, Dave Jupp, John Purcell, Bob Modystack, Ross McMurray, Peter Caskey, Al Parry, Arthur Jackson, Dave Perham and Tony Batt, including many of their ladies. My apologies to any that I have omitted.



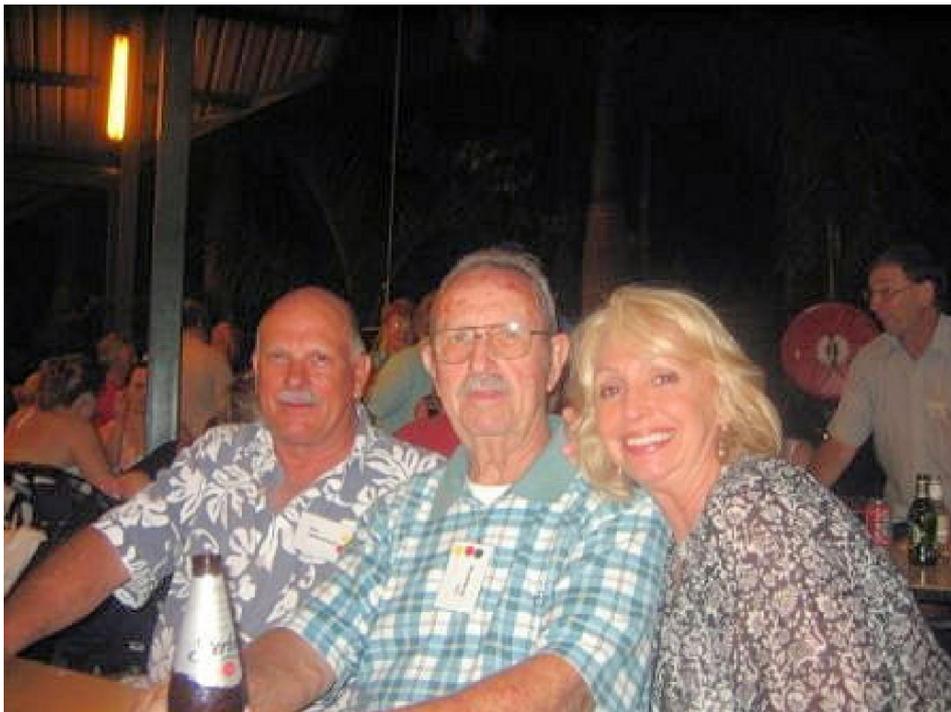
Jim's Funeral

Standing Left to Right, Arthur Jackson, Neal Harris, Doug Bennett, John Purcell, Tony Batt,
Al Parry, Trevor Butler, Dave Jupp, Bob Modystack.
Kneeling, Ross McMurray, Peter Caskey, George Stubbs, Dave Perham.





WO2 James Alfred McMahon



Bob Modystack, Jim and Bob's partner Jan Barret at the Brisbane Water Transport Reunion 2005



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

VALE – DAVID BROMLEY RE and RAE

Lieutenant Colonel David Bromley (Rtd) passed away in Sydney on 17 January 2009 after a long illness. He was 83 years old. Many members would remember him as a Captain Instructor at the Transportation Training Centre at Chowder Bay from 1958 to 1961. He was an exchange officer from the Royal Engineers and known (discreetly) as Brom the Pom. He was promoted Major during this posting.

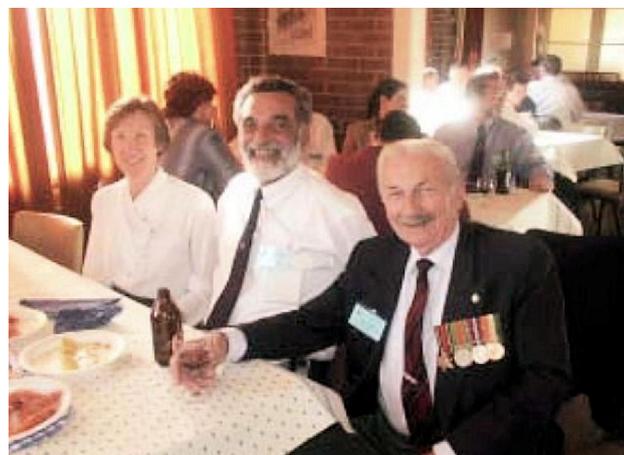
David was commissioned into the RE in 1945 and was posted to India during his early service. One of his projects was to supervise the construction of a cantonment at Cawnpore, a large city in the north of India on the River Ganges where the infamous “Cawnpore Massacre” took place in 1857. The cantonment was a semi-permanent barracks for an Indian Army division of about 15,000 troops. The work included the provision of water supply for this force. This was a massive undertaking for a newly commissioned Lieutenant.

He served in various postings in UK and abroad before taking up his appointment at Chowder Bay. After his tour here he returned to the UK where he was again involved with the operation of Military railways, and water transport including tugs and lighters. A posting to the Ministry of Defence followed but he was a “hands-on” Sapper and did not enjoy the office politics at Whitehall and so resigned shortly after.

David and his wife, Pamela, enjoyed Australia so much that they returned with their two boys in 1970 to live in Sydney. He joined the CMF for a few years but found that his day job was taking up too much time and he resigned in 1974 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was a senior management consultant with the Sydney Water Board and remained working until well into his seventies.

David was a member of our Association and attended a number of functions including ANZAC Day reunions.

Sadly, his wife and his two sons predeceased him. Our condolences go to his daughters-in law and grandchildren. His funeral service was well attended by family and ex-service friends, including our Patron, Ken Duncan and Phil Cameron. Ken gave a very moving eulogy which highlighted David’s military career and his later years in Sydney.



David Bromley with Allan Reading and Margaret Davidson at Hunters Hill Re-union 2005



VALE – NEIL HAWKINS

Many of our members will remember ex-WO2 Neil (Hawkeye) Hawkins who was an SQMS at Woolwich and Chowder Bay. On 7 February 2009 he was traveling to Brisbane from Perth on the Indian Pacific with his eldest son Peter when he died of a heart attack at Kalgoorlie Station. He had a heart replacement in 1996 and he had not been in the best of health for the last few years. He also had diabetes. He was 68 years old.

Neil enlisted in the ARA in 1963 and served in RAE and RACT until 1982. Just before that he served a year in the CMF with 2nd Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment. He served in Vietnam with 21 Engineer Support Troop and on *AV1356 Clive Steele* with 32 Small Ship Squadron. After RAE Tn was absorbed into RACT he served at Maritime Wing, Army School of Transport at Chowder Bay.

Neil's good friend, Jim Wright, gave the eulogy at Neil's service at Karrakatta Cemetery on 17 February 2009. He also provided the following information about the service and Neil's life after the Army:

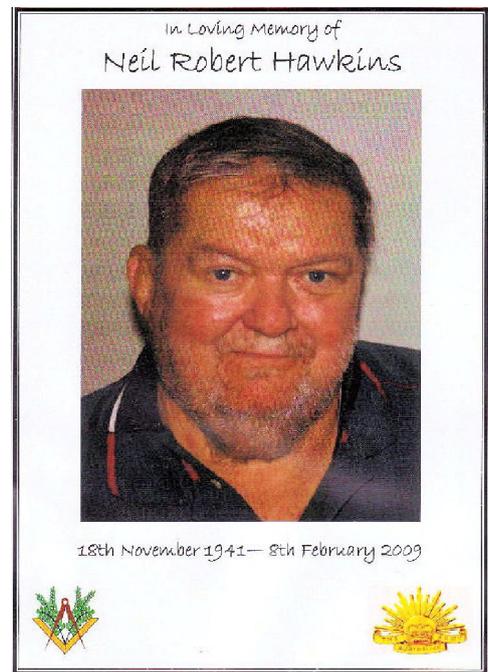
"The service went off very well and there was a good turnout of more than 50. Water Transport was represented by me, Bill Culbertson and Col Symons. There was a large contingent from the Freemasons as Neil belonged to numerous lodges and was pretty high up the ladder. There were also representatives from the TPI Association and also the Heart Transplant Unit at Royal Perth Hospital.

Neil left the Army in 1982 and the following year moved to WA where he worked for Coca Cola-Amatil as the paymaster until 1986. He also became involved with the Boy Scout movement and he continued his long standing involvement with the Masons.

His health deteriorated during this time and it was only the receipt of a replacement heart in 1996 that allowed him the next 13 years. As a result of his diabetes he had half his left foot removed last year and this had just finished healing when he passed away. However, he was not one to let these health problems get him down and I would accompany him on trips to Sydney and Darwin as well as the occasional trip to the south west of the state.

He will be sorely missed by those who knew him."

Thanks for your memories Jim, and we offer our condolences to Neil's wife and his sons, Peter and Mark.



WARDROOM CABINET

Phil Hurren from the RAE Museum recently reported that he had found a timber crockery and glassware cabinet supposedly from the *AV1356 Clive Steele's* wardroom. Further enquiries indicated that it may have been transferred from the ship to SME prior to its disposal. It had even been suggested that Bob Madgwick may have been involved with its transfer. No doubt he'll report back with information on its provenance. (Note: Bob has since stated that it wasn't him, but he does remember it being in the Wardroom when he and Snow Danby conducted a furniture stocktake in Singapore in 1968). I don't remember such a cabinet being in the Wardroom but then I didn't have the pleasure of spending much time there. I would appreciate it if the ex-officers among us could throw some light on it.

Phil Hurren and the Museum workers have tidied it up a bit and it will soon be on display in the Water Transport section of the Museum. He is also in possession of a medical chest from the *Steele* with an identification label which was obviously printed by the late Sergeant Alex 'Doc' Macleod, RAAMC. Anyone who has seen Doc's handwriting would recognise it instantly.



The cabinet is about 1700mm high x 700mm wide x 500mm deep. It has secure storage racks for plates, cups, cutlery and glasses. The bottom rack was obviously used for spirits storage. No doubt a few bottles of our favourite Rhum Negrita were stored there for medicinal purposes.



AV1356 CLIVE STEELE – VIETNAM 1968

Bruce Cameron, An ex-Royal Australian Armoured Corps member is researching the history of tank operations in Vietnam. He particularly would like to get details of the trip to Vietnam by *AV1356 Clive Steele* when it took two Centurion Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARV) and two Centurion Bridgelayers (AVLB). The LSM departed Sydney on 13 January 1968, sailed to Melbourne to load the bridgelayers (it is thought the ARVs were loaded in Sydney prior to departure) and then sailed to Townsville to refuel. It departed Townsville on 29 January and arrived at Vung Tau on 12 February 1968.

Whilst in Melbourne at Williamstown Naval Dockyard a problem was discovered with the port main engine and it took about four days to repair it. The AVLBs were loaded there while the ship was alongside. The armoured vehicles were accompanied by Sgt Ian Goss, RAAC, Sgt Ed Naughton, RAEME and Sgt Sid Russell, RAEME who serviced and maintained them during the trip.

Having said all that there are some differing opinions on the ship's movements and cargo handling during this phase. Perhaps those who were crew members during this trip could remember some of the details. Aspects that need clarification are:

Were the ARVs loaded in Sydney prior to going to Melbourne? If so, whereabouts? Or were they loaded in Melbourne?

Whereabouts in Melbourne were the AVLBs loaded? By crane alongside a wharf at Williamstown or a beach?

Apart from the three Sergeants mentioned above were there any other RAAC/RAEME personnel accompanying the? Names?

Can you remember any other crew members?

After leaving Townsville did the ship steam directly to Vung Tau or did it stop at Labuan (North Borneo). If so, why? Refuel/rations?

Are there any other details about the trip worth mentioning? Such as the Tet Offensive at Qui Nohn in February?

Bruce is also researching the participation of 30 Terminal Squadron and CMF members who were involved with the management of port aspects of the tanks' voyage to Vietnam. Were any other units involved? There were three trips carrying tanks; the *Clive Steele* with the ARVs and bridgelayers in Jan/Feb 68, the *Jeparit* with half the tank squadron in Feb 68 and the *Jeparit* and *Clive Steele* in Aug/Sep 68 with the remainder.

I know that these trips happened 40 years ago and details of it would be a bit blurred but some crew members may have kept a diary or could remember things quite clearly. It's a shame that most of our log books and records were destroyed or damaged, but it's important to try and have



the situations such as this be as accurate as possible. I would appreciate any information you can offer. The ARV and AVLB are shown below:



Centurion AVLB (Bridgelayer)



**AV1356 Clive Steele with Centurion ARV at Stockton? Newcastle.
(Photo: Aust Army Public Relations.)**



MV CAPE DON

Built in Newcastle in 1963 the *MV Cape Don* was specifically designed as a lighthouse tender, to cater for lighthouse technician's specialised work as well as transporting supplies to outlying lighthouses and to transport lighthouse keepers and their families to their new positions. She was decommissioned in the 1980s when Australian lighthouses were automated. Her sister ships, *MV Cape Moreton* and *MV Pillar* have sadly already met their watery graves. The *Cape Don* serviced many lighthouses on the Australian coast, particularly those around Western Australia.

The "MV Cape Don Society" was founded to carry out refurbishment and conservation of the ship as part of the maritime history of Australia and in accordance with maritime heritage guidelines. She is now being restored in Sydney Harbour at the old Coal Loader Wharf at Waverton. Their objective is to restore the vessel to full seagoing condition so it can be utilised as a living museum and working classroom for training apprentices, both deckside and engine room, and possibly serve along the Australian coast and the Pacific region as a hospital or humanitarian relief ship in times of national emergency. The ship is approximately 2000 tonnes; a bit larger than *AS3051 John Monash*, and with a similar British Polar main engine.

The ship currently provides facilities for training Border Protection officers, marine engineering and other university and TAFE courses. The ship restoration is being carried out by volunteers and friends of the Society with some corporate assistance. The work is conducted over a regular schedule of working weekends and the Society is seeking volunteers to help with the restoration. Once restored the *MV Cape Don* will continue to be open as a maritime museum and as a working classroom for apprentices and maritime trainees.

Currently there is some doubt over the future of the ship because NSW Maritime is endeavouring to have it vacate its berth at Waverton and move to a mooring off Balmain. The Society and other organisations are fighting this move and are confident the ship will remain where it is.

Brian Hart, one of our members, is actively involved in the restoration program and wishes to invite anyone else with some salt water still in their veins to join him. Brian and his team now have most of the auxiliary machinery up and running, the main engine is slowly being overhauled and two of the three SSGs are operational. All hydraulic systems are in good condition and they have just received replacement blades for the variable pitch prop. The electrics are well advanced; just waiting on getting the ballast pump motor overhauled (any electrical fitters still out there?). The work is progressing well but there is still much to be done; both in the engine room and on deck. If anyone has a bit of spare time and is interested in doing their bit for our maritime heritage then please contact Brian who will be happy to provide all the details about coming aboard. His phone number is 02 4341 4008 or email him on bbhart33@yahoo.com.au. The Cape Don Society's web address is www.mvcapeconsociety.org.au





MV Cape Don off Port Hedland WA (Photographer unknown)

REMINDER: ASBESTOS MONITORING AND FLU INJECTIONS

There was a considerable amount of asbestos used in Army vessels, mainly as insulation around boilers, engine exhausts and air conditioning. Some of us handled it directly, and most of us were in close proximity to it during our service. If you think you have lung or breathing problems you should register with the Defence Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme. There is no cost involved and the registration is straight forward and painless.

Give the Defence Hazardous Exposure Help Line a ring on 1800 000 655 and they will talk you through the process, and follow up with some literature that will explain what its all about, and how to start the monitoring. The costs involved with x-rays etc are picked up by the Government. Note that this service is conducted by the Department of Defence and not DVA. DVA Fact Sheet DP13 give some more information for ex ADF Personnel.

The 2009 batch of flu injections are now available. These are free to pensioners or anyone over 65.



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

A LETTER FROM JOHN MARSDEN

Thanks for the latest Notice to Mariners. I must apologise for not getting back to you earlier with the details of how a prospective aviator ended up at 32 Small Ship Sqn.....

I had just finished a Marine Engineering traineeship with BHP in Newcastle and decided to join the army to learn to fly rather than go to sea. Whilst at Scheyville we were told there would be at least a nine month delay before we started our flying training as the RAAF were in the process of changing over to the Macchi. The prospect of being posted as a platoon commander to an RTB in the interim, did not appeal at all. During an RAE Corps presentation I found out about 32 Small Ship Sqn and this looked like the ideal place for me to spend 9 months rather than marching/spit polishing/regimentation that an RTB would have bought. I was subsequently posted to 32 Small Ship Sqn.

On arrival in October '68, I was informed that I was to be the Chief Engineer on the good ship John Monash. This came as a shock to me as all my contemporaries at BHP were now serving as 7th/8th engineers on the BHP fleet. I did not hesitate to contact them about my new position. I then started a most enjoyable 8 month period that ended in May '69 with my being posted to RAAF Point Cook to commence my flying training. I was awarded by Army Pilot's wings in Sept '70.

I then spent the next 20 years in Army Aviation flying Pilatus Porters, Nomads and Queenairs among other aircraft in Vietnam, Indonesia, UK, Papua New Guinea, Antarctica, and all over Australia. I joined Qantas in '89 and flew the Boeing 747- 400 internationally up until I retired in May'08.

My time serving on the John Monash was a fantastic way to start a military career and provided me with a multitude of tall tails and true to tell in the years to come. I have yet to meet a bigger bunch of hard working/hard drinking larrikins and thoroughly enjoyed serving with them. I enjoyed the regimentation at 32 Small Ship Sqn MUCH more than I did at OTU Scheyville.

I did re encounter the John Monash again in Sumatra in '72. I was supporting a survey operation out of Palembang, Sumatra when we heard the John Monash would be arriving to re supply the operation. I decided we should make the old girl welcome and met her just off Palembang in the Pilatus Porter armed with flour bombs. We scored several hits before returning to the airfield. (I did note the 40 mm Bofors gun had been removed before I started my bombing runs). After the ship had docked, we went to visit it and the crew then retaliated and scored several hits with their own flour bombs. Tommy Moyes then invited us to the wardroom to sample his recently acquired Royal Navy rum! No more flying was conducted that day, or the next as I remember.

I must thank Bruce Reilly for getting me re- acquainted with the 32 Small Ship Sqn via the Association and look forward to catching up next ANZAC day if not at some function before then.



SICK PARADE

Bob Gunn has been in a bad way of late. He was admitted to Greenslopes Hospital, Brisbane in early February after he had lost a lot of weight and was feeling real crook. After a few examinations and tests the experts could find nothing of major concern but another doctor discovered that one of his kidneys was malfunctioning. He has since had extensive treatment and is currently on chemo therapy after losing about a third of his kidney. However, the good news is that it has appeared to have stabilized somewhat and he's now back home. He's put on a bit of weight and Annie said he's looking much better. He's not out of the woods yet because his immune system has been knocked around with the chemo and he has to be careful of further infection. Gunner and Annie are pleased to have had many calls and messages from his mates and he could do with some more. So give him a call on 07 3245 2292.

Ray Winter is now back home after a few weeks in the John Flynn Hospital on the Gold Coast. He was visiting his doctor having a stress test and when they conducted an angiogram it was discovered that he had seriously blocked arteries. He was immediately admitted to hospital and had a triple by-pass operation. He's now taking things slowly but he has recovered really well. Hang in there mate.

Sid Cheeseman has had an extended stay of over a month in Westmead Private Hospital with major surgery for a heart problem. Mal Campbell has been kind enough to keep us informed of Sid's recovery. Sid is now convalescing at home. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

NEW MEMBER

In our last newsletter we forgot to insert **Jim Fletcher** who is a recent addition to our membership. Most of us know and respect Jim who served in 32 Small Ship Squadron aboard *AV1351 Vasse*, *AV1379 Tarra*, *AV1353 Harry Chauvel*, *AV1354 Brudenell White*, *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee*, *AV1356 Clive Steele* in Vietnam and *AS3051 John Monash*. Other units he was posted to during his 30 year period in the Army (1949 – 1979) were 3 Transportation Squadron RAE, Transportation Training Centre RAE, 784th Medium Boat Company US Army, 4 Water Transport Troop (Fremantle). Jim and his wife, Helen live in Perth WA.

BACK TO MIDDLE HEAD 2009

For those who served at any time at Middle Head (30, 33 Terminal Squadrons?) there will be a reunion during period 13 -15 November 2009. It will start with a meet and greet at the Buena Vista Hotel in Mosman on Friday the 13th, followed by a walk around Middle Head Barracks on Saturday morning with a black tie dinner at Mosman RSL in the evening. Something will be organized for Sunday. This sounds pretty vague but the organizers are still organizing it and will firm things up in the coming months. If you are interested in attending please contact Craig Ingram on 0407 173 321 or craigingram@westnet.com.au and he will send you the details.



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

BORNEO MEMORIAL DEDICATION

In May 1964 AV1343 *Harry Chauvel* and AV1355 *Vernon Sturdee* were deployed to Sabah as part of Operation Granite. They supported the British Commonwealth Forces during the Indonesian Confrontation. Other RAE units who served there were 1 and 7 Field Squadrons and 17, 21 and 24 Construction Squadrons.

On 23 September 2009 it is proposed that a Memorial Plaque be dedicated to those Sappers who lost their lives during this campaign and also to all Sappers who served there. The plaque will be unveiled at the Heritage Precinct at the School of Military Engineering. That night a dinner will be held in the RAE Sergeants' Mess for all Sappers who served in Borneo, and their ladies. These activities are being organized by the RAE Vietnam Memorial Committee who has accepted the task to provide the plaque and conduct the dedication ceremony.

Details of this activity and a registration form will be sent by the Secretary to those members who served on the two LSMs.

ALBURY AMBUSH 2009

Most of us should now be aware of the Albury Ambush, the Water Transport Reunion sponsored by Kevin and Lynne Morley, to be held in October 2009. It will be at the Lake Hume Resort just outside Albury and will be held during the weekend 16 to 18 October 2009. Kevin advised that he has received over 130 replies to the invitation with more coming in every day. He said that a final letter will be sent out shortly, so if you are intending to come to the reunion and haven't yet replied better make it quick because the function room that has been booked has a maximum seating capacity of 300, so first in best dressed.

If anyone has not received a letter providing details of the event, and would like to attend, please contact Kevin or Lynne Morley on either 041 642 5718 or 02 6040 3498 and they will send the details, booking form and accommodation guide to you.

ANNIVERSARY OF LSM DELIVERY

This year is the 50th anniversary of the delivery of the first two LSMs, AV1353 *Harry Chauvel* and AV1354 *Brudenell White* from Japan. It is planned to hold a remembrance ceremony at the Association's plaque at the AWM Canberra on 21 October 2009 followed by a dinner at a suitable venue.

Many members may still be in the area after the Albury Ambush and this would be a good opportunity to visit the AWM and participate in this activity. Planning for this is still underway and further details will be provided in the next newsletter.



March 2009 Notice to Mariners

A LITTLE IRISH MYSTERY

Remember the update on the tugs, *Joe Mann* and *The Luke* given to us by Buster Browne from Throsby Creek in the May 2008 newsletter? (You do, don't you?). Well, here's another gem from him.

“Sitting high and dry on the banks of the River Bandon, near the picturesque village of Innishannon in County Cork, Ireland is a small steel-hulled motor tug that has, by repute, a strong link to the Australian Army Water Transport.

Named *Tulagi*, it is 56ft length overall, and when built had a 4 cylinder Widdop type EMB4 diesel engine developing 200 bhp. It was delivered in 1954 by Richard Dunston Ltd, at Thorne. Tank tests undertaken by the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington developed the boat's straight-line form which was similar to the design of the large fleet of TID Class steam tugs built at Thorne during WWII and were mostly assembled from prefabricated sections manufactured elsewhere.

Tulagi is said to have been ordered by the Australian Army but, for some reason, was not delivered, but taken over on completion by the Ministry of Defense (UK) and delivered instead to the Port Training Regiment of the Royal Engineers for use as a training vessel at Marchwood, Southampton.

Sold out of Army service in 1973 to Pounds Shipbreakers at Portsmouth, it was quickly resold to Doig of Port Talbot, and was allocated a fishery number. Little else is known until more than a decade later when it was operating as a tug at Passage West with a shipbreaker company and re-engined with a 360 bhp Caterpillar diesel. It subsequently passed into private hands and appeared again in 2004, and since then has been regularly offered for sale by numerous brokers.”

Interesting story, isn't it? Note that the tug is of the same length and has similar lines to *Joe Mann* and *The Luke*. See the comparison below.



Tug Tulagi



AT 2701 The Luke



Logistics over the Shore



I'm sure most of us would remember the old Naval Lighterage Equipment (NLE) operated by RAE. Well, this is the US Army's latest version. Here we see soldiers of the 24th Transportation Battalion practice 'stabbing' the beach-head with the initial piece of the Trident Pier at Camp Pendleton, California. The Army Trident Pier Set is one of three piers used during a Logistics Over the Shore Exercise "Pacific Strike", a joint exercise moving 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division equipment to the National Training Centre.

A NLE pontoon raft was built and operated by units of 1 Const Regt RAE (HQ, 17, 21 and 22 Const Sqns) at Shoalwater Bay in Jun 1984. During the exercise NLE pontoons were also used as the landing bay and floating bay pontoons for a floating Bailey Bridge. By this time the old 'tri-part' plywood Bailey pontoons had deteriorated past a usable stage and the NLE pontoons were an ideal replacement.

This may have been the last time that NLE was used by the Australian Army as there wasn't any seen in East Timor, Nauru (asylum seekers camp – LCM8s were used to ferry pers/stores from HMAS Manoora – ex USN Landing Platform Amphibious - to the shore) or Solomon Islands.



Chowder Bay in the '50s

Ken Duncan was recently 'cleaning up' and came across a number of photos from a by-gone era. Can anyone identify the 'unknowns' in the bottom photo? If so, could you let us know?



Chowder bay – 1959

Back Row - Frank THORNE, Jim FLETCHER, John COYLE, Ian JOHNSTON

Front Row - Bill ALLEN, Ken DUNCAN, John HEARN, Beachie SHAW, Bob METCALFE, Len LEWIS



Chowder Bay – circa 1956

Standing - None known, ?last one Tas FRAZER?

Seated – Pat SCOTT, Brownie TAYLOR, Len FITZGERALD. Svd RUFFE. Unknown



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Property for sale

Ties (new stock now arrived)	\$25.00	LSM Lapel Badge	\$12.00
Association Book	\$30.00	Collar Badge	\$6.00
25th Anniversary Plaque	\$25.00	Flag, RAE Afloat	\$50.00
Association Woven Patch	\$8.00	Association Cap Navy Blue	\$15.00
Association Polo Shirt (navy blue only) made to order			\$30.00
Book "Rolling Through 32" (includes postage)			\$45.00

Please contact Ken Shannon 02 9871 4667 or property@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Disclaimer

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Contributions

Contributions are welcome from members and their families of anything that is of interest of members. So, if you would like to contribute it doesn't have to be typed or in electronic form (although that helps). Just send it to the editor at

editor@32smallshipsqn.org.au

or to

32 Small Ship Squadron RAE Association Inc RAE Tn.

Box 33

12 Philip Mall

WEST PYMBLE NSW 2073

Email and Postal Addresses

Please let the Association know if you get a new email address or change your current one. The same goes for your postal address. Remember, we want to keep in touch with you!



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