

NOTICE TO MARINERS

Newsletter of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn

Patron: Colonel K.L. Duncan (Rtd)

President's Message

I would like to thank those and friends who supported this reunion luncheon and all annual ANZAC Day raffle.



members, their wives/partners year's ANZAC Day march and members who supported the

Thanks to Garry Smyth for being commander and David Clarke for that Garry's Defence Force bars (with medal and bars a total of 45 years' service).

this year's contingent being 2IC. I hope you all noted Service Medal now displays 6 Well done Garry.

It was nice to see Shirley Bannister with her son Stephen who was on leave from P.N.G. Thanks again to 8 Combat Engineer Regiment for the Banner Party.

Thank you to Anthony (my son) and Matt Corton (son-in-law) who organised the pre-march bundy/negrita and cokes. Matt copped a bit of a ribbing for joining the Murray clan by Dave Thomas and Bungy Waters.

It was sad to learn about the recent passing of Fred Hartnack, Tommy Moyes and Alf Smith. Their obituaries are in the newsletter. Our thoughts are with their families.

We also need to pause and reflect on the lives of two young Sappers who died on active service in Afghanistan on 17 June 2010. As you are aware Sapper Jacob Moerland and Sapper Darren Smith from the Brisbane based 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment died as a result of wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated during operations in Oruzgan Province. Both soldiers were serving with the 1st Mentoring Task Force. Sapper Smith's explosive detection dog, Herbie, was also killed.

As we go to print news breaks that another Australian soldier, Private Nathan Bewes has lost his life to another IED.

Lest we Forget

Ocka



July 2010 Notice to Mariners

ANZAC DAY MARCH AND REUNION – SYDNEY

We had really good weather in the fortnight preceding ANZAC Day and what happens? It rained during the Dawn Service and march. Not to worry though; a bit of water never scared us (actually, water used to scare us often).

Allan Reading reported a big turnout at the SME Dawn Service where he laid a wreath on behalf of the Squadron. We also had a large contingent at the march. Around 60 or so. This year our banner was carried by six well turned out Sappers from 6 Field Squadron, 8 Combat Engineer Regiment. They did an excellent job and managed to keep everyone in step despite the fact that there were two bands, fore and aft, competing with each other with different timings.

Nearly 70 people attended the reunion lunch at Hunters Hill. As usual the caterers did an excellent job, assisted by Kaye Shannon. Anthony Murray and Ocka's son-in-law, Mathew Corton, kept the liquid refreshments up. And even the sun came out after lunch which made for a pleasant afternoon. A good day was had by all.

Ian Johnston brought along his scale model of *AV1354 Brudenell White*. As usual it was a great draw card and created a lot of conversation and questions to Ian.

A few members who we hadn't seen for a while turned up, such as Don Grace, Dave Thomas, Bungy Waters and Bob Modystack. John Purcell from Cairns was there as usual with his very drinkable home-made rum, and George Lambert arrived from WA. However, Wally Blumenfeld is still recovering from his accident on his Malvern Star and couldn't make it, and sadly, Fred Hartnack, who is usually there with Wally, passed away five days earlier from his long battle with cancer. Ian Johnston said a few good words about Fred and we had a minute's silence remembering his contributions to the Squadron and our Association. Again, a good bloke gone.

The raffle was a great success, as always. This year the results were:

1st Prize: Ticket Number 3218. A 6" port hole style solid brass ships clock mounted on polished timber went to Wally Blumenfeld from Canberra.

2nd Prize: Ticket Number 2178. A 5" port hole style solid brass barometer mounted on polished timber went to Arthur Jackson from Brisbane.

3rd Prize: Ticket Number 2120. A 5" port hole style solid brass ships clock mounted on polished timber went to Jeff Murley from Raymond Terrace.



Door Prize: Bottle of scotch with glasses went to Chris Waites of Yarramundi.

These raffle prizes are very popular and have been the same for the last ten years (if it ain't broke etc, etc). Ocka's son, Anthony, does a very good job of preparing the timber backing and mounting the clocks and barometers on them. So if no one has any better suggestions we'll stick to these prizes.



A few warming rounds before the Sydney march. Left to right: Garry McIvor, George Lambert, Dave Thomas, David Peterson, John McGregor and Bungy Waters.



ATTENDANCE AT HUNTERS HILL, ANZAC DAY 2010

Brian Waites, Yarramundi NSW
Bob Tait, Kellyville NSW
David Thomas, Bellingen NSW
Garry Smyth, Baulkam Hills NSW
Geoff Summergreene, Mosman NSW
Ken Shannon, Carlingford NSW
Kerry Stuart, Lawson NSW
Mort Roberts, Stockton NSW
Ralph Pridmore, Turrumurra NSW
John Pulis, Concord NSW
Norm Mason, Woronora NSW
Les Muras, Dural NSW
Ray Mazurek, Forster NSW
Graham Murray, Castle Hill NSW
Bob Modystack, Murwillumbah NSW
Ian Johnston, St Marys NSW
John Gerber, North Rocks NSW
Don Grace, The Entrance NSW
Gary Everitt, Wangi Wangi NSW
Les Dennis, Tonngabbie NSW
George Cosis, Leumeah, NSW
Sid Cheeseman, Nth Parramatta NSW
James Brown, Runaway bay QLD
Grant Clarke, Sydney NSW
Graham Berry, Bondi Junction NSW
Rick Bannan, Cashmere QLD
Bruce Millar, Rockdale NSW
Bungy Waters, Bellingen NSW
John Bryant, Newport NSW
Ken Duncan, Cremorne NSW
Chris Waites, Yarramundi NSW
Kevin Austwick, Forster NSW
Garry McIvor, Enmore NSW
Bruce Reilly, Camden Park NSW

Val Waites, Yarramundi NSW
Jeanette Tait, Kellyville NSW
Peter Tierney, Saratoga NSW
Fred Seidenkamp, StClair NSW
Jackie Hardie, Mosman NSW
Kaye Shannon, Carlingford NSW
Allan Reading, Engadine NSW
Adam Roberts, Stockton NSW
John Purcell, Mt Sheridan QLD
John McGregor, Nth Avoca NSW
Joan Mason, Woronora NSW
Cheryle Bushnell, Dural NSW
George Lambert, Geraldton WA
Anthony Murray, Silverdale NSW
Jan Barrett, Murwillumbah NSW
Eric Hale, Bellbird NSW
Lyn Gerber, North Rocks NSW
George Fisher, Eastwood NSW
Sue Everitt, Wangi Wangi NSW
Phil Cameron, Bayview NSW
Judith Cosis, Leumeah NSW
Gary Carne, Mt Druitt NSW
Dave Clarke, Ashfield NSW
Carolyn Legge, Sydney NSW
Brian Hart, Woy Woy NSW
John Colborne-Veel, Croydon NSW
David Petersen, Rowville VIC
Ross McMurray, West Pymble NSW
Bruce Davenport, Mosman NSW
Brian Goodes, Hunters Hill NSW
Graham McGowan, Rostrevor SA
Graham Drewitt, Karuah NSW
Keith Devine, Padstow NSW
Rina Ross, Camden park NSW



ANZAC DAY – CANBERRA

Speedie Sahariv reported that numbers were down a bit on previous years but fine weather prevailed after days of cold and wet conditions. Our Association was represented by Warren Barsley, Frank Poole with his grand daughter, Cassandra, John Sahariv and Wal Beckhouse (who is the ACT President of the National Servicemen Association).



Frank Poole with his grand daughter, Cassandra, centre. Speedie Sahariv is in a big hat to the right of another bloke wearing a big hat



Wal Beckouse at the Australian War Memorial.



ANZAC DAY IN THE WEST

Bruce Wiltshire reported that the ANZAC Day march in Perth went very well. The weather was good and there was a huge turnout to watch. After the march the RAE contingent went to the Ryan Club at 13 Field Squadron, Karrakatta for some heavy bar snacks and light refreshments.



The RAE Tn anchor at the RAE Memorial, Karrakatta.



Charlie Deans on the left with the flag before the march in Perth.



VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY

A Vietnam Veterans' Day Commemoration Service will be conducted at the RAE Vietnam Memorial at the School of Military Engineering, Steele Barracks, on Wednesday 18 August 2010 commencing at 1100 hrs. This invitation is for all members of the public, Sappers, ex-Sappers and their guests. It is requested that a lounge suit or a coat, tie and medals be worn. Please assemble at 1045 hrs at the RAE Vietnam Memorial which is located on Bircross Road. Show your driver's licence to the guard at the front gate, turn right at the first intersection and follow the signs to the car park. During the service an address will be given by Brigadier John McDonagh (Rtd) who was the Commanding Officer of the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit in Vietnam in 1967/68.

Following the service a barbeque lunch will be served at the Sportsman's Club for \$20.00 per head. A cash bar will be operating. This will also be a good opportunity to visit the various displays in the Heritage Precinct in the vicinity of the Memorial. If you can attend this ceremony please fill out the form below. If you just wish to attend the ceremony and not stay for lunch there will obviously be no cost.



Yes, I will attend the Commemoration Ceremony/ Lunch on 18 August 2010
 NAME:..... \$20.00
 ADDRESS:.....
 PHONE NO:.....
 GUESTS NAMES\$.00
 Total \$.00

Please make cheques and money orders out to: **RAE Vietnam Memorial** and post to:

RAE Vietnam Veterans Day
PO Box 165
MOOREBANK NSW 1875



WANGI WIPEOUT WEEKEND

Don't forget that Gary and Sue Everitt are planning to have a mini Water Transport Reunion during weekend 15 – 17 October 2010. The venue is at Wangi Wangi NSW, which is located on the western shore of Lake Macquarie, about 20 km south of Newcastle.

Updated details are:

Friday 15th 5.30pm. Meet and Greet at the Wangi Wangi Caravan Park Camp Kitchen. BYO Everything (barbeque food, drinks, chair etc).

Saturday 16th 11.00am. Morning Tea cruise from RSL wharf around Lake Macquarie on the "Wangi Queen" Price: \$28.00 per person (need minimum of 30 people)

Saturday 16th 6.00pm. Dinner at Wangi RSL Club. Three course dinner with tea and coffee. Let us know of special allergy or dietary requirements. Price: \$35.00 per person.

Sunday 17th 10.30am. Gunfire Breakfast at the Wangi RSL Club beer garden. Price: \$10.00 per person.

Accommodation can be found at the following venues:

Wangi Point Caravan Park. Phone 02 4975 1889. There are cabins (but not many so book early), powered sites and tent sites.

Wangi Hotel. Phone 02 4975 5511.

Toronto Hotel. (15 minutes away) Phone 02 4959 4833.

Paradise Palms Caravan Park. (15 minutes away). Phone 02 4959 1271.

To register your interest please email Gary at sueeveritt@bigpond.com or phone him on 02 9997 2648 or his mobile on 0408 414 400 or Sue's mobile on 0407 069 076. Send money as soon as possible. Cheques and money orders should be made out to **Wangi Wipeout Reunion** and posted to:

Sue Everitt
2/4 Darley Street
MONA VALE NSW 2103



July 2010 Notice to Mariners

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome aboard the following new members:

Steve Monk served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam in 1971 aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* and *AS3051 John Monash*. He lives at Tweed Heads West NSW.

Malcolm Brereton served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam in 1967 aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* and in 1969/70 aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele*. He also served on *AV1354 Brudenell White* and *AS3051 John Monash*. He also served with 4 Water Transport Troop. Malcolm lives with his wife, Cora, at Albion Park NSW.

Fred Marshall served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele*. He lives at Redhead NSW.

Kevin Brann served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* in 1967 and *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in 1967 / 68. Kevin lives at Dickson ACT.

Bruce Millar served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AS3051 John Monash* in 1969, *AV1356 Clive Steele* in 1970 and *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* in 1970. Bruce lives at Rockdale NSW.

David Petersen served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* and *AV 1353 Harry Chauvel* in 1970. David lives at Rowville VIC.

John Colborne-Veel served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* in 1968 / 69. He lives at Croydon NSW.

Rick Bannon served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in 1967 and *AV1356 Clive Steele* in 1968. He lives at Cashmere QLD.

Dave Miller served in 32 Small Ship Squadron aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in Vietnam in 1966. He was also on *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* and *AV1354 Brudenell White* in PNG. Dave lives at Port Hughes SA.

Gordon Coulter served in 32 Small Ship Squadron aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* in Vietnam. He also served on *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* and *AV1354 Brudenell White*. He served in 35 Water Transport Squadron on *AT2700 Joe Mann*. Gordon lives at Holbrook NSW.

Keith Brown served in 32 Small Ship Squadron and Tn Centre in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He served on 40 ft workboats, 62 ft Command Craft *AM2833 Mizama*, *AV1351 Vasse*, *AV1353 Harry Chauvel*, *AV1354 Brudenell White*, *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in Borneo and *AV1356 Clive Steele*. Keith lives at Coondoo, QLD.

Gerry Dunn served in 32 Small Ship Squadron aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* and *AS3051 John Monash* in Vietnam. Gerry lives at Jindalee, QLD.

Billy Martin served in 32 Small Ship Squadron aboard *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* in Vietnam. He also served in 35 Water Transport Squadron. Billy lives at Albion Park, NSW.



DONATIONS

A big thank you to these generous folk who made donations (some quite substantial) to our Association:

James Mulligan, Phil Cameron, Mike Priest, Kevin Yesberg, Ken Burchill, Doug Whitwam, Brian Willcock, Wayne Summerhayes, John Sahariv, Pat Scott, Noel Norton, Bob McLeod, Calum MacDonald, Jack Lawson, Mike Heal, Ross Hayes, Don Grace, Keith Ford, Warren Farmer, Les Dennis, Ken Duncan, Jerry Davey, Bob Clarke, Mal Campbell, Brian Clulow, Bill Bott, Jock Balfour, Ross Bland, Michael Priest, Bob Madgwick and Ken Loadman. I hope I've got everyone. My apologies if I've left someone out, but let me know and I'll include you in the next newsletter. This is what makes our Association so great and makes us appreciate the strength of our membership – people like you. Thanks again.

LOOKING FOR DAVE BARNES

Ian Greenland is looking for a cook, Dave Barnes, who served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Vietnam in 1970/71. If anyone knows of him could you please contact Ian on 02 4388 3207 or ian@tumbi.id.au

SICK PARADE

Our President, **Ocka Murray**, recently had surgery to fix a badly torn rotator cuff (I think it's in the shoulder) and is now recuperating between home and work. However, just prior to this his wife, **Beth**, had a bad fall and broke her ankle. After she had surgery the wound failed to heal properly and she had to undergo further surgery to rectify it. Both are not yet fully mobile but are on the mend.

Rob Vickery is in Canberra Hospital with kidney failure. He is on a dialyses machine and is in a serious condition.

Graeme McKenzie has recently had his spleen removed at the Sydney Adventist Hospital but is now recovering at home. John Pritchard advised that he's making a slow but good recovery.

Ian Johnston and **Laurie Graham** are now both travelling well. Laurie has had all his hips and knees replaced and now is back to playing bowls once a week. Ian has had some vertebrae fixed up which I'm told has increased his height by an inch.



VALE – TOMMY MOYES
12 September 1938 – 8 June 2010

It is with regret we report the passing of Thomas Robertson Moyes. Tom was born in Edinburgh. He was one of many “UK Enlistees” who were enlisted into the Australian Army in London because of the shortage of qualified deck officers in 32 Small Ship Squadron in the early 1960s. Tommy enlisted in 1965 and after a short period in the Squadron was posted to HQ Australian Force Vietnam the following year. He was there again with 11 Movement Control Group in 1967/68.

He was posted to Singapore with 11 Movement Control Group as part of the Far East Land Forces from December 1968 to February 1971.

After all this he finally managed to skipper a ship (which was what he originally signed up to do) and took *AS1351 John Monash* to Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines during 1971/72. He resigned from the Army as a Major in July 1973 and joined the Royal Australian Navy.

During his time with the senior service he commanded the Boom Defence Vessel, HMAS *Kimbla* which was later converted to an Oceanographic Research Vessel. He took this ship around Australia and worked mainly around Darwin. He resigned about five years later as a Lieutenant Commander.

From here he signed up with the Australian National Line as a Deck Officer and after about twelve months was elevated to Master in command of bulk ore carriers. He retired in 2003. Tommy’s funeral service was held at Macquarie Park Cemetery, Sydney on 11 June 2010.

Over 100 people attended and eulogies were given by his family, friends, and former RAN sailors who served with him on HMAS *Kimbla*. Ian Henderson and Ross McMurray also attended.



HMAS Kimbla



VALE – FRED HARTNACK
21 June 1938 – 20 April 2010

Justus Frederick Hartnack was born at Port Elizabeth, South Africa on 21 June 1938. Some of his education was with the South African Nautical College in Cape Town.

In 1964/65 he was among two engineers and 16 deck officers who were enlisted in the UK to man our Army ships. This was because there was a shortage of officers serving on the Australian coast and the government at that time did not allow the Army to recruit in Australia.

Fred was the skipper of various LSMs that sailed to Papua New Guinea in 1966/67. They were the ‘normal’ trips conducting resupply of plant, vehicles and equipment to RAE construction units building roads and bridges. They were also called upon to do recruiting voyages for the Pacific Island Regiment around the coast. They were actually called ‘Prestige Patrols’ but no one knew why. They was nothing prestigious about them.

Fred also did two tours to Vietnam – firstly as skipper of *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* in 1967/68 and on *AS3051 John Monash* in 1969. Fred tells an interesting story about an incident with the *Harry Chauvel* in Vietnam in the “Boots ‘N’ All” article in this issue.

After Fred left the Army in 1969 he became Assistant Harbour Master for the Port Of Launceston Authority where he piloted ships for approximately ten years. He then joined the Australian Maritime College as Master of the training ship *Wyuna* as well as being a senior lecturer at the college.

From 1982 to 1984 he served as First Officer with Atlas Offshore Oil Platform providing supply and saturation diving support on the North Australian coast and Bass Straight.

From 1985 to 2002 he was Master with North Western Shipping and Towage providing tug operations in Tasmanian Ports. This was the longest and least favourite position he held until he retired.

Fred’s other love, apart from his family, was a Triumph America “Wedgetail” motorcycle which was the first of its type to be registered in Tasmania. Unfortunately Fred couldn’t ride as much as he would have liked as he became quite ill after he fitted it out. However, he spent many an enjoyable hour working on it in his shed. He was a member of the Wedgetail Outriders Association and the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club.



Fred died after a very long battle with cancer on 20 April 2010. James McDermott and his wife, Kate, attended his funeral in Launceston on 23 April 2010. James reports that the funeral was well attended as Fred had developed quite a circle of friends in Northern Tasmania.

The Vietnam Motorcycle Club provided a guard of honour and the coffin bearers. They also provided a few anecdotes. Fred's motorcycle name was "Fearless"; however on one of his rides his cycle stopped and could not be started. After that incident he was known as "Fuel-less Fearless".

James said that while it was a wet and miserable day, those gathered managed to celebrate Fred's life rather than mourn his departure, for most people realized it was a release.

Reg Hamann, who was with Fred on five LSM voyages, said in a note to Fred's wife, Lois, that "Fred was the best Skipper he served under, was a gentleman and a bloody good mate". I think we would all agree with that.

Our thoughts and condolences are with Fred's wife, Lois and son, Jamie and family.



Wally Blumenfeld and Fred Hartnack ANZAC Day 2009



VALE - ALF SMITH
22 September 1929 – 16 June 2010

Alfred William Smith died on 16 June 2010 after a long period in hospital at Woy Woy NSW. He was 81 years old and had been ill for some time.

Alf was born in Melbourne and at the age of 14 went to sea with the Merchant Navy. He was in London celebrating VE Day marking the end of WWII. He remained a seaman until 1951 when he joined the Canadian Army and served with it in Germany until 1954.

In 1966 he enlisted in the Australian Army and after recruit and Corps training was posted to the Transportation Centre, Chowder Bay to regain his sea legs. After that he served most of his time with 32 Small Ship Squadron in various places including: Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Indonesia and nearly two years in Vietnam aboard *AS3051 John Monash*, *AV1354 Brudenell White* and *AV1356 Clive Steele*. He also served in 1 Terminal Group, 10 Terminal Group and 40 Water Transport Squadron (Heavy).

Alf was a bit older than life experience and was liked and well respected, look up to him as a role worker and set a good follow. He was a keen time in the Army took many were published in publications and books. as a Corporal in eleven years after he would say that he packed period.



most of us, and had a lot of more mature. He was well and younger soldiers would model. He was a hard example for others to photographer and during his hundreds of photos, and both Navy and Army Alf resigned from the Army September 1975 exactly enlisted, but some people a lifetime in that short

After he left the Army he worked as a painter in Melbourne for a few years accompanied by his wife, Dot. They then moved to Coffs Harbour NSW where he became involved with the Vietnam Veterans' Association. A couple of years later saw them move to Gosford and they both worked with the local VVA and the RSL. Sadly, Dot became ill in the late 1990s and Alf cared for her until her death in 2001.

Over 50 people attended Alf's funeral at Palmdale Crematorium at Ourimbah NSW. Our Association was represented by Peter Tierney, George Fisher, Len Martin, Max McClymont, John McGregor and Ross McMurray.



BOOTS 'N' ALL

This story was published in the November 2009 edition of "The Phuoc Tuy News", the newsletter of the RAE Vietnam Veterans' Association, and Secretary Vin Neale kindly authorised us to reproduce it. Captain Fred Hartnack, Warrant Officer Ian Johnston and Sapper Dave Gray provided the details.

According to the ship's log, on the morning of 29th December 1967 a platoon of infantry along with elements from 1 Field Squadron and 104 Signal Squadron boarded *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* anchored off Vung Tau, South Vietnam. *Harry Chauvel* was a Landing Ship Medium (LSM) of 203.5 ft. overall length, basically designed to transport five medium sized tanks. She was a unit of 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE, stationed in Vietnam on logistic support duties for the Australian and United States forces. A total of 46 x Other Ranks and 6 x Officers made up the crew. Five Mk 4 assault boats along with their 40 hp Johnston outboard motors had been loaded the previous day from 1 Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG). These boats were to be crewed by sappers from *Harry Chauvel*. Instructions from 1ALSG to Captain Fred Hartnack, Commanding Officer of *Harry Chauvel* were to determine and investigate the possibilities of beaching an LSM for the purpose of operational logistic support. However, no information was available to Captain Hartnack as to what the infantry task was but it is presumed by the fact that it was only a platoon strength mission its purpose would be reconnaissance.

Harry Chauvel travelled 43 nautical miles up the coast from Vung Tau, placing the area of the recce right on the south east corner of Phuoc Tuy province where the border line meets the coast. Prior to the task nobody from *Harry Chauvel* was aware of any training having been carried out for an amphibious landing other than the normal beaching for the loading and discharging of vehicles and cargo. Certainly the sappers had never had experience or training in this sort of activity. And, although familiar with the operation of small craft this was limited. The only experience of the assault boats was that which they had received along with all sappers who had gone through Corps training doing watermanship at Camp Sapper on the Georges River near the School of Military Engineering.

The tactical command of the task was under the command of an infantry colonel aided by a major, with the ship under the command of Captain Hartnack, RAE. The Executive Officer was Captain Bill Tindale and the Troop Sergeant Major (TSM) was Warrant Officer Ian Johnston. Departure from Vung Tau was at 0800 hrs and the vessel steamed up the coast to the drop off position – a trip of approximately 2 hours.

On making the approach to shore a sandbar was encountered, approximately 400 yards out. Captain Hartnack considered this too dangerous to negotiate, with primary consideration for the safety of the ship and personnel on board. The ship was then anchored in deeper water to seaward of the sandbar. The colonel in charge ordered the operation to continue. The bow doors were opened, the ramp lowered and the five assault boats loaded with all the gear were launched into the water.

Life jackets were provided but were not worn by the troops other than the ship's personnel controlling the assault boats. The wearing of life jackets by the troops would have been an



encumbrance during the actual landing. The jackets however, were placed on the floor of the boats. The launching process was being overseen by Captain Hartnack, his Executive Officer and the TSM. It was observed that the troops were boarding with full combat kit with weapons, bandoliers, grenades, etc. as well as bum packs and wearing GP boots. One of the lieutenants was taken aside and had it pointed out to him the danger of wearing all this gear in such a hazardous situation. To his credit the young officer took note of what was said and went up to the ship's bridge to consult with the colonel. Fortunately permission was given for them to strip everything off except for their actual clothes. However, some of the troops kept the M60 belts and bandoliers on.

The five boats then headed off towards the shore in line abreast and approximately 100 ft. from the ship they encountered the highest part of the sandbar, and that's where disaster hit.

Sandbars are well known to mariners as being very tricky and dangerous obstacles with a seemingly life of their own. They cause many a mishap for vessels of all sorts. When a swell approaches a sandbar from the seaward side it sucks back the water from the sandbar causing a trough. The swell then hits the bar as a wave. It is this wave that causes all the trouble for boats as it comes upon the stern and forces the boat into a sidewise movement and quite often causes the boat to capsize. This is exactly what happened to all five boats at the same time, sending them all into a barrel role.

Everybody was thrown out of all five boats. All equipment weapons, radios, webbing, boots and outboard motors – the lot went straight to the bottom which at this stage was between 6 and 8 feet deep. As well as the equipment those troops wearing the bandoliers and belts also went to the bottom. Realizing that the men in the water had little or no chance of getting to shore not to mention the plight of the men who had sunk to the seabed, Fred and Ian launched two inflatable rafts from the ship's uppers and within a couple of minutes reached the scene of the disaster. The life rafts are circular rubber rafts with a tent like structure on top with two hatches on opposite sides. These rafts are almost impossible to control and are powered simply by paddles. It was a fine day with a fairly stiff breeze and it was this breeze that did all the powering.

In the meantime some troops had managed to cling onto the sides of the upturned boats, some had grabbed hold of the few life jackets that had made their way to the surface, some started to swim to shore and some started to drown. Ian, in his raft, managed to drag five onboard whilst about ten clung to the lifeline around the raft. His raft was then caught up in a rip and they were carried away South about 300 yards and then dumped onto the shore – all safe. Meanwhile Fred drifted over the troops who were on the bottom desperately struggling to free themselves from their weighty gear. This they all managed to do and made their way to the surface. Then, loaded up like Ian's, Fred's raft was blown straight to the shore. Miraculously the only injury suffered during all this was one broken leg.

While all this was happening, *Harry Chauvel*, under the command of the Executive Officer Bill Tindale, was on full alert with all armaments on standby. Orders were given not to fire any weapons for the risk of injuring or killing any of our own troops. The only weapon to reach shore was one Browning 9mm pistol and one SLR which a dedicated digger had somehow managed to get to shore. There they stood, some 50 personnel wet as shags on a rock with nothing but the greens they stood in – not even boots. This was enemy territory and without doubt the enemy were not far away. Apparently there were attempts to get a line ashore by the



ship's cook but to no avail. He was hauled aboard before the possibility of a further disaster. It would seem the Colonel sent some pretty frantic radio messages because about 90 minutes later a Chinook and five Iroquois 'Hueys' arrived on the scene. One 'Huey' picked up Fred and Ian and winched them back onboard *Harry Chauvel*. All troops, assault boats, life rafts and equipment were lifted off and flown directly to Vung Tau.

At 1805 hours, according to the ship's log, *Harry Chauvel* weighed anchor and proceeded to Vung Tau, arriving at 2145 hours. The remainder of the infantry and other units disembarked and the ship's crew reunited. We don't know what happened after that but would loved to have been a mozzie on the wall back at Headquarters 1 Australian Task Force – now wouldn't that have been interesting.

Thankfully nobody lost their life, no doubt in good measure to the quick thinking, bravery and skill of Captain Fred Hartnack and TSM Warrant Officer Ian Johnston – oh, also thanks to a good stiff breeze and an awful lot of luck”.

.....

What an interesting story, and a fitting tribute to Fred Hartnack and his crew of *AV1353 Harry Chauvel*.



Dave Gray on the Bofors on AV1353 Harry Chauvel

Publisher's note: The Navy crew of HMAS Tarakan (L129) had a different way of recovering assault boats. They would lower the bow ramp till it was underwater. The assault boat would approach at medium speed and run up on to the bow ramp at the same time as it was being lifted. The coxswain of the assault boat had to be pretty alert and needed another digger to have his thumb on the kill switch of those useless 40hp Johnson outboards the Army persisted with and be ready to rotate the outboard motor so that it didn't foul the bow ramp. Interesting operation when there was a bit of a swell.



A MEMORIAL TO NATIONAL SERVICEMEN

A National Service Memorial at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra will be dedicated on Wednesday 8 September 2010. The National Council of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia Incorporated and the Council of the Australian War Memorial have approved a fountain set in its own precinct on the Eastern side of the main entrance to the Australian War Memorial. Work began on this project just after ANZAC Day 2009.

The Memorial honours the 212 National Servicemen who died on active service – two in Borneo (both Sappers) and 210 in Vietnam – and commemorates the 287,000 young men called up in two schemes between 1951 and 1972 for service in the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force.

The Memorial will bear the inscription: "Dedicated to all Australian National Servicemen and in Memory to Those who Died."

The funds raised for this Memorial include a donation of \$150,000 from the Federal Government; \$150,000 from businessman Mr Kerry Stokes, AO; donations from State Governments, and local authorities around Australia and contributions from National Service and RSL sub-branches and individuals.

The National Servicemen's Association of Australia undertook the Memorial on behalf of all Australian National Servicemen. All Nashos are invited to the Dedication Parade and Service.

Dress for the event is requested to be coat, tie and medals.

Assembly will commence in ANZAC Parade from 0900 hrs. Step off will be at 1000 hrs. Nashos will march as one group, in companies of year of call up, without regard of Service or Corps.

The Dedication Ceremony will take place in the Eastern Precinct adjacent to the AWM building commencing at 1130 hrs in the presence of Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Full details of this event can be obtained on the National Servicemen's Association website www.nashoaustralia.org.au For those who are not on the net and wish to attend, please contact me and I'll post this information to you. Accommodation information can be found at www.visitcanberra.com.au



July 2010 Notice to Mariners

Property for sale

Ties (new stock now arrived)	\$25.00	LSM Lapel Badge	\$12.00
Association Book	\$30.00	Collar Badge	\$6.00
25 th Anniversary Plaque	\$25.00	Association Woven Patch	\$8.00
Association Cap Navy Blue	\$15.00	Car sticker	\$5.00
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

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor, Publisher or the Committee of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn.

Contributions

Contributions are welcome from members and their families of anything that is of interest to members. So, if you would like to contribute please have it typed (preferably in MS Word or .pdf format) and 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!

DFRDB Article

There are several articles on the web page (www.32smallshipsqn.org.au) about DFRDB Indexation. For those who are not on the net and would like a copy please contact the Secretary and it will be mailed.



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Committee Members

President:	Graham Murray president@32smallshipsqn.org.au	02 9634 3752
Vice President:	Ken Shannon property@32smallshipsqn.org.au	02 9871 4667
Hon. Secretary:	Ross McMurray secretary@32smallshipsqn.org.au	02 9403 1456
Treasurer:	Peter Tierney treasurer@32smallshipsqn.org.au	02 4369 2616
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Vacant		
Welfare Officer:	Vacant	
Property Member:	Ken Shannon property@32smallshipsqn.org.au	02 9871 4667
Social Member:	George Fisher	02 9876 4713
Committee:	Ian Johnston, BEM John Bryant elizabethandjohn@hotmail.com Bruce Reilly bruce@truckalign.com.au	02 9623 7948 02 9979 1197 02 4655 9394
Hon Auditor:	Lt Col Phil Cameron, OAM (Rtd)	
Editor NTM:	Ross McMurray	
Publisher NTM:	Jack Madden	
Chaplains:	Monsignor Eugene Harley Reverend Richard McCracken	
Web Address	www.32smallshipsqn.org.au	

