

# NOTICE TO MARINERS

## Newsletter of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn

*Patron: Colonel K.L. Duncan (Rtd)*

### President's Message

Our newsletter publisher, Jack Madden be leaving Australia for the United Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in with a second Major of Environmental University of Southern Queensland in

The opportunity came earlier this year exchange program and he was approved University of North Carolina, will continue with the satellite remote be able to include subjects that involve off-campus field work.



and his wife, Rosemarie will shortly States. Jack is currently studying a Remote Sensing and GIS Mapping Science. He's doing this at the Toowoomba.

for him to apply for an overseas for a year's full time study at the Greensboro Campus. While there he sensing and mapping but he also will

Greensboro is a town of 227,000 (about twice the size of Toowoomba). It is 500 km south west from Washington DC and on the AMTRAK (rail) route between Washington and New Orleans. It's in the middle of the deep south and bible belt. There's some snow in winter but it is the centre of the tobacco industry with the town of Winston-Salem just down the road. It's almost in the centre of everything. . The Blue Ridge Mountains are just to the west, with historic Virginia to the North and Florida (Disney World) not far to the south.

Jack and Rosemarie plan to rent a two bedroom apartment and they are offering an open invitation for anyone to come and stay with them. The summer break there is from the start of May until the end of August so they will use that time to drive across Canada, go on a Railway Historical Society convention in Nevada and return to Greensboro via the south-west, taking in Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and Georgia.

On 9 July my company (M.O.S.S. Australia Pty. Limited) was granted Part 145 certification by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in addition to our Certificate of Approval as an approved maintenance organisation under Civil Aviation Regulation 30. This has resulted in our company being listed by Switlik Parachute Company in Trenton N.J. U.S.A. as their international aviation dealer and service centre in addition to other United States manufacturers' of aviation life-saving appliances. To help our client base with life-saving appliance components my son-in-law Matt and I are travelling to U.S.A. on a 16 day business trip beginning 25 October in New York City and visiting companies in New Jersey, Washington, Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

On behalf of our committee members I would like to wish all our members a safe and happy Christmas and new year.

Ocka

**JAMAIS ETRE REMORQUE**



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## COOLANGATTA CORROBOREE

The name 'Coolangatta Corroboree' is quite significant. Firstly, 'Coolangatta' is an aboriginal word meaning 'Lookout' and was named after a shipwreck on the beach. 'Corroboree' means a festive meeting of warlike people. There you go.

Bob Modystack gave a briefing on this event at the Townsville Tie-Up in September. He said that it will take place during 31 July - 2 August 2014 and will commemorate the 50th anniversary of AV1353 *Harry Chauvel* and AV1355 *Vernon Sturdee* deploying to Borneo on Operation Granite during the Borneo Confrontation. It will also be a Water Transport Reunion, so everyone is invited to attend.

The program for the week end will be as follows:

- Thursday 31 July 201:** 1700 hrs. Meet and Greet in Billabong Caravan Park.  
BYO everything.
- Friday 1 August 2014:** 1000 hrs. Unveiling and Dedication of 32 Small Ship Squadron Monument near the Point Danger Park near the Light at Lat. 28.10 S, Long 153.32 E. Dress will be coat, tie and medals (if appropriate).  
1200 hrs Official Luncheon at the Twin Towns Services Club.
- Saturday 2 August 2014:** 1730 hrs. Dinner Cruise - departing from the wharf opposite the Boyds Bay Caravan Park on the good ship *Captain Bill*.

**Accommodation.** Below is a selection of reasonably priced caravan parks and motels:

- Caravan Parks:**
- |               |              |  |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| River Retreat | 07 5534 2700 | <a href="http://www.riverretreatpark.com.au">www.riverretreatpark.com.au</a> |
| Colonial      | 07 5524 2999 | <a href="http://www.colonialtweed.com.au">www.colonialtweed.com.au</a>       |
| Tweed Coast   | 07 5523 4111 |  |
| Billabong     | 07 5524 2444 | <a href="http://www.tweedbillabong.com.au">www.tweedbillabong.com.au</a>     |
| Boyds Bay     | 07 5524 3306 | <a href="http://www.tchp.com.au">www.tchp.com.au</a>                         |

- Motels:**
- |              |              |  |
|--------------|--------------|--|
| St George    | 07 5536 1261 | (cheap for ex-military)  |
| Calico Court | 07 5524 3306 | <a href="http://www.calicocourtmotorinn.com.au">www.calicocourtmotorinn.com.au</a> |
| South Tweed  | 07 5524 3306 | <a href="http://www.southtweedmotorinn.com.au">www.southtweedmotorinn.com.au</a>   |
| Twin Town    | 07 5524 3108 | <a href="http://www.twintownsmotel.com.au">www.twintownsmotel.com.au</a>           |

Please make an early booking as it is peak tourist season with a lot of 'southern staters' here.

Bob will send out detailed information including attendance forms, costs, accommodation venues, maps, etc early in the New Year. He can be contacted on 02 6672 5808 or email [tweedrivercruises@bigpond.com.au](mailto:tweedrivercruises@bigpond.com.au)



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## **VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY - SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING**

On Sunday 18 August 2013 a commemorative service for Vietnam Veterans' Day was held at the RAE Vietnam Memorial at the School of Military Engineering at Steele Barracks, Casula. The weather was perfect - fine and sunny and no wind for a change. There was a good turn up with over 120 veterans, families and friends. The service was conducted by the RAE Vietnam Memorial Committee; Jack Peel being the Chairman. The bugler was from the Australian Army Band - Sydney and the piper from the Ingleburn RSL Pipes and Drums. As usual SME did the hard yards by providing spectator accommodation, Catafalque Party, PA system, lunch and the printing of programs. Major Adam Kavanagh, OC of the Initial Employment Squadron gave the welcoming address (I know - it used to be called 'Holding Troop' when we did our FE3 training). Also, a big thank you to the RSM, WO1 David Harvey who made sure everything ran like clockwork.

The Guest Speaker was Lieutenant Colonel John Pritchard (Rtd) who first went to Vietnam in 1966 as a trooper in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps where he was a crew commander of a carrier in 1 Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron. After his tour ended he attended the Officer Cadet School and was allocated to RAE. In 1970 he served with 1 Field Squadron as a Troop Officer. He who spoke about the initial deployment of 3 Field Troop to Vietnam in 1965 and the subsequent deployment of 1 Field Squadron in 1966. He also gave an interesting account of the duties of all RAE units in Vietnam during the period 1966 - 1972.

17 Construction Squadron concreted, leveled, pumped water, constructed buildings, ran power stations, laid roads, and all whilst still trying to build their own lines and maintain equipment and provide construction support to units at Nui Dat.

32 Small Ship Squadron sailed with earthmoving plant, vehicles and equipment from Australia, up and down rivers and the coast, carrying engineer plant to the Baria hardstanding, ammunition to far flung riverine outposts, and tanks in support of the Australian and American combat forces. 30 Terminal Squadron conducted vital terminal operations to ensure that cargo was delivered expeditiously to units. Members of 11 Movement Control Group were in nearly all Australian Army locations controlling the movement of personnel, vehicles, ships and aircraft. 55 Advanced Engineer Stores Squadron provided the engineer stores when required. 21 Engineer Support Troop provided 1 Field Squadron with tradesmen such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, fitters, refrigeration mechanics, painters, welders and fire fighters. John also mentioned the good work of the sappers of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

Members and guests of our Association who attended were: Jack and Carole Peel, Peter and Sue Tierney, Brian and Val Waites, Ross and Jenny McMurray, George and Judith Cosis, Allan and Deborah Hyde, Keith Devine, Ken Duncan, Cec Weekes (President AWTA NSW), and John Sahariv.



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**Peter Tierney, Jack Peel, Brian Waites and George Cosis at the SME Sportsmens Club on Vietnam Veterans' Day.**

### **ARMY MUSEUM- BANDIANA**

We recently received an email from Warren Barsley who requests assistance for a photo of *John Monash* (the ship, not the General). He explains his reasons thus:

"I went for a trip to Seymour and Bandiana to have a look at the Victorian Veterans Memorial in Seymour and the Army Museum in Bandiana. Both worth a visit.

The Army Museum at Bandiana is huge, much larger than when I was last there in 1976. It has a special corner with a video presentation on the life of General John Monash, as well as some memorabilia. It has one of *AS John Monash* nameboards on display as well as the small ship's plaque which I believe was made up during Neil Hurst's time on the ship. I mentioned to the Museum Curator that a colour photograph of the ship would be a wonderful addition to the 'Monash Corner', and he agreed, hence this email.

There is a lot of RAE Tn memorabilia, as well as RACT, in the museum including chronometers, unit signs, plaques etc. I think they were all moved there when the RACT Centre moved to Bandiana and the Tn Centre closed down at Chowder Bay. I also met up with Bob Madgwick for a couple of hours, as he took me to the Bandiana Museum. He is not faring too well but is struggling by.

So, could anyone with a good colour photograph of *AS3051 John Monash*, with either RAE or RACT funnel markings, contact me on 02 6288 8018 or [wbarsley@hotmail.com](mailto:wbarsley@hotmail.com)"





## VALE - BARRY AMOS 1946 - 2013

Peter Atkinson advised the death of WO1 Barry Amos, RAE, RAEME. He died at home in Ballina NSW on 21 October 2013 after asbestosis caught up with him and he finally contracted mesothelioma, collapsing his left lung.

Barry was born in Lismore NSW in 1946 and enlisted in the ARA in 1965. he served with quite a number of units including 32 Small Ship Squadron where he sailed to PNG on *AV1354 Brudenell White* and *AV1356 Clive Steele*. He also served aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in Vietnam in 1967. He served four years in PNG with the PNG Defence Force.

Barry served in the following units: SME, Tn Centre, 32 Small Ship Squadron, 1 Recruit Training Battalion, PNG Landing Craft Squadron, PNG Transportation Squadron, Australian Defence Assistance Group PNG, 1 Watercraft Workshop, 1 Base Workshop Battalion, 3 RAEME Service Unit, Maintenance Engineer Agency, HQ Logistic Command, Defence National Storage and Distribution Centre, Army Materiel Management Agency, HQ Support Command, Afloat Support and Amphibious Class Logistic Office, Maritime Systems Division and Defence Corporate Support Centre Sydney Central.

Barry retired from the Army in 2001 after 36 years service.

His funeral was held at Ballina NSW and was attended by over 100 people including some of his mates from 32 Small Ship Squadron.



So

Some of the attendees at the funeral of Barry Amos : left to right - Dazz Graney, Gary Hooley, Phil Cannane, Dave Thomas, Peter Atkinson and Bob Modystack



**VALE - RON PEFFERINI  
1943 - 2013**

Sergeant Ronald Charles "Pepsi" Pefferini, RAE died on 28 June 2013. He had been diagnosed with cancer ten days before he passed away. Ron spent his early years in Geelong and enlisted in the Australian Regular Army 1961.

During his time in the Army he served in the following units: School of Military Engineering, 17 Construction Squadron, 32 Small Ship Squadron, 4 Water Transport Troop, Army Survey Regiment, Headquarters Northern Territory Command, 31 Terminal Squadron and Albury Transport Unit.

When he was with 32 Small Ship Squadron he sailed to Papua New Guinea in 1964 on *AV1354 Brudenell White* commanded by Captain Wally Blumenfeld when it navigated the Sepik River to the May River junction - a distance of 321 nautical miles (595 km) which is still the furthest a vessel of this size has penetrated into the interior. He served in Vietnam aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* in 1966. He elected discharge in 1976.

After discharge he drove cranes all over Australia, finally settling back in Geelong. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans in Geelong. His father is still alive at 94 and he had two sisters, Louise and Ann. Ron never married. Louise advised that Ron was cremated in Geelong and his ashes were spread under a gum tree on her property. Our condolences to Ron's family.

**VALE - ERNEST BADER  
1930 - 2013**

Richard McKenzie reported that Sapper Ernest Bader RAE died on 10 June 2013. Ernie served at the Transportation Training Centre on workboats and Fairmiles in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Ernie served with 3 and 4 RAR in Korea in 1953 and the British Commonwealth Engineer Regiment in Japan in 1954. He also served with 7 Independent Field Squadron, 19 National Service Training Battalion, Transportation Training Centre and 55 Advanced Engineer Stores Squadron. Ernie lived at Rockingham WA.

**VALE - PETER ALLEN  
1941 - 2013**

Bob Gunn advised that Sergeant Peter Allen, RAE died on 15 August 2013. Peter had emphysema and was on oxygen for a long time. He had a gall bladder operation in July and this, along with other illnesses, made it virtually impossible for him to recover. Peter leaves behind his wife, Gwen who he had married for 48 years, a daughter Gina, son-in-law Andrew, and two grand children.



Peter served in 32 Small Ship Squadron in Borneo on *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* in 1964 and in Vietnam in 1966/67 on *AS3051 John Monash* and *AV1356 Clive Steele*. Units he served with in his nine year service were 4 Field Regiment RAA, SME, Transportation Training Centre, 32 Small Ship Squadron and Papua New Guinea Transportation Squadron.



**Sergeant Peter Allen**

**VALE: JOHN COLBORNE-VEEL  
1945 - 2013**

Kevin Austwick advised that Sapper John Colborne-Veel, RAE died on 25 August 2013. He had interstitial lung disease and Ischemic heart disease, a condition not unlike Asbestosis. He had been in poor health for some years.

John was a cadet seaman, working around South East Asia before being called up for National Service in 1968. He served in 32 Small Ship Squadron and was aboard *AV1356 Clive Steele* in



Vietnam in 1968/69. He was on board when the ship was attacked by enemy rockets and heavy machine gun fire at Can Tho in the Mekong Delta in January 1969. Many would remember John as a good mate and a popular digger.

He had also done some surveying in Melbourne, where he was born, before going to Vietnam. He had played music in bands at local dances around Melbourne.

After completing his National Service commitment he was granted an Army scholarship to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. His weapon of choice was the trombone. John played and toured with numerous bands from Sydney including those of Ray Price and Graeme Bell AO MBE, also the Eclipse Alley Five.

John became a prolific composer who wrote orchestral, chamber, choral, operatic, jazz, ballet, piano and electronic music as well as scores for the film, television and recording industries including arrangements for club shows. Some of his music has been published. He also received acclaim for his religious compositions which included a Festival Jazz Mass, a liturgical dance suite and numerous incidental pieces. He wrote 59 articles of interest about music and history to journals and organisations. John spent a lot of time working with Bill Elliades from the Enmore Theatre. John's musical theatre shows such as Farewell to the Trombone and Spinners Rowe were performed in and around Newtown. He did radio broadcasts from 2MBSFM and 2RDJFM. He was indeed a talented composer and musician.

A Catholic Mass for John was held at St Vincents Church, Ashfield NSW and his funeral service at Rookwood. Ross McMurray, and Graham and Beverly Drewett represented 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE Association.

Our condolences to John's wife, Robyn and their children, Steven, Erica, Andrew and Peter.



**Sapper John Colborne - Veel**





**VALE - ALEX DENNIS**  
**1932 – 2013**

Nobby Clarke advised that Warrant Officer Class Two Alexander Dennis RAE died on 14 September 2013. He lived at Currumbin Waters Queensland.

Alex enlisted in 1951 and served with 1 RAR and BRITCOM Movement Control Group in Korea and Japan from 1952 to 1954. From 1965 until 1968 he served with HQ 28 Infantry Brigade and 11 Movement Control Group, Far East Land Forces in Singapore, Malaysia and Borneo. He served in Vietnam in 1969/70 with 11 Movement Control Group. From 1972 until 1974 he served in Singapore with the ANZUK Traffic Management Agency.

In Australia he had postings with 1 Movement Control Group (Northern and Southern Detachments), Army Headquarters, and Department of Defence (Army Office) Operations Branch.

**VALE - BOB BORLAND**  
**1935 - 2013**

Mike Conaghan advised that Robert Borland, RA Sigs, died on 29 September 2013 and his funeral was at Redcliffe Qld Cemetery on 3 October. Bob was a radio operator with 32 Small Ship Squadron in the early 1960s and wrote a number of articles about life on board and his experiences on LSMs around Australia and Papua New Guinea. We have published some of them and there should be another one in the next newsletter.

Bob was called up for National Service in 1954 and enlisted into the ARA on completion. This followed a two year posting with 101 Wireless Regiment in Malaya and Singapore. In 1964 he served in Borneo on board *AV1353 Harry Chauvel*. He elected discharge in 1965.

Mike Conaghan was also a radio operator with 32 and sailed on *AV1356 Clive Steele* on its delivery voyage from Japan in 1959.

**SICK PARADE**

**Bob Gunn** has been doing it tough for some time with problems with his kidneys, heart and some skin cancers. However, he's always smiling and stoical about it all. Hang in there mate.

**John Bryant** is recovering from an aggressive type of skin cancer. He has just completed radiation therapy and is confident that it has been completely removed.

**Ian Johnston** is recovering after surgery to his right shoulder. He had a total joint replacement and will probably have the same thing done to his left shoulder in early 2014.

**Jim Fletcher** is not well. He has had a stroke last March and is currently in a hospital in Perth. Charles Deans has visited him, and Peter Tierney and Phil Cannane have kept in touch with



Jim's wife, Helen. She visits Jim daily but she is not too good either as she has eye problems. Col Symonds (also not well) has also been in contact with Jim and Helen to assist with a DVA claim.

**Don Saillard** is seriously ill with lung cancer and is currently in the Mater Hospital, Newcastle. His prognosis is not good.

### **NEW MEMBER**

**Nigel Moody** served with 35 Water Transport Squadron as a craft engineer aboard LCM8s AB1051 and AB1053, and with the Freemantle Water Transport Unit on AB1059 and AB1067. he also served with 301 Field Workshop , Townsville. Nigel lives at Harristown QLD.

### **IT DON'T WORK UNDER WATER!**

Here's an interesting story from Ken Meredith who was a plant operator with 17 Construction Squadron when this unfolded...

"The year 1962 wasn't the best in my army career. The Army Task Force had been established and training exercises were being held to bring all units up to standard and into one cohesive force.

As an engineer construction Squadron it was necessary to test out how the heavy earth moving equipment could be transported and a work area set up away from our normal headquarters at Kingsford.

The well known and used area at Gan Gan, just outside Nelson Bay was to be the centre of a large scale exercise using a variety of army units. To add realism an amphibious landing was proposed using the 32 Small Ship Squadron's LSMs to transport the bulldozers, graders, excavators and ancillary plant equipment. Almost twenty years before this method had been perfected by both the American and Australian armies during the Second World War but sorry to say it appears that the expertise was now lost and old lesson had to be learnt anew.

A Landing Ship had none of the good attributes of a normal sea going ship; firstly instead of a nice sharp tapering bow to cut through the sea it has a blunt square huge ramp that is closed in the vertical position whilst travelling. To make the voyage that much more uncomfortable it also boasts a flat bottom like a punt and rather than pushing through the waves it appears to bounce from one to the other. The sole purpose of the vessel is to carry large amounts of wheeled and tracked cargo right up to and onto a beach where the ramp could then be lowered onto the sand and the vehicles driven straight into action.

There was no problem in loading all our plant equipment onto the vessel in the Sydney Harbour base at Woolwich, home of 32 Small Ship Squadron. With the tide at the right level it was an easy matter to drive the trucks onto the ramp which was almost level and into the cargo deck.



The same with the steel tracked bulldozers and even the excavators found little problem in finding their correct position on board. It is a very different matter in slewing a steel tracked vehicle on a steel surface than its normal function in soil or sand. Steel on steel does not grip but rather slides and little can be done once the slide starts.

The excavators, to enable them to fit into the cargo area, had their booms removed and these were stowed separately.

The trip to Nelsons Bay went without any drama other than to prove that Sappers are more at home playing in the dirt than having their heads spin and heaving over the sides of a rocking and rolling steel box.

Beautiful day at Nelsons Bay. Long gently sloping white sandy beach, clear as glass water, smooth seas, at this very popular holiday spot. Down with the ramp, unshackle all the equipment, start engines. The first vehicles manipulated the ramp without any problem; just like the old war time newsreels we all saw that not so many years ago.

I had the pleasure, (or did I draw the short straw?) of taking off the first of the excavators, (Ruston Bucyrus 22RB). It was decided that as the machine had steel flat plated tracks it would be unable to be controlled or steered once on the down sloping steel ramp.

To set the picture the first 22RB to be taken off was a brand new machine, never issued to a unit and was to be used only for the first part of the exercise, the trip to Nelsons Bay and then returned to stores. This was prior to the new generation of excavators that are powered and controlled by hydraulics and instead was operated by dry clutches and cables. Without the boom attached it looked to any sightseers as a large workmen's shed with windows at the sloping front and a big sliding windowed door on one side.

The machine was set in motion and slipping and sliding on the steel decking it was manoeuvred to the edge of the ramp where it was positioned to face in a straight line to the shore. Then with a final touch of the clutch it was sent rattling down the ramp and onto the sand without incident.

With the drive now engaged the machine began its journey toward the sand dunes. Then the problem started, without the weight of the boom in the front the force of gravity took over and the large block of steel that formed the counterweight at the rear caused the 22RB to lift the front of the track, and in the sand the drive chain stretched and snapped. It now stood stranded in the sand - no motive power. The troop's plant fitters took over the recovery and Tony Lewis replaced a new link pin in the drive chain. Fortunately Tony also wedged a piece of driftwood in the channel of the sliding door of the machine so as it wouldn't slam shut when the machine was under repair.

Once the chain was replaced, and the old WW11 lesson now having been learnt, I was instructed to rotate the cabin 90 degrees so that the counterweight was now at the front and the machine would be stable and able to climb the sand.

This would present no problem on a level surface and with a machine that had been used but this one was brand new and the dog clutches were hard to mesh. To slew the cabin it was necessary to take the machine from travel mode to work mode by disengaging the clutches and moving required levers. At one point all the clutches were in the neutral position and the



excavator moved a fraction in the sand but enough to prevent the clutches from now engaging. Slowly at first the machine began backing down the sand but as the weight took over the movement became faster and faster and the cabin began swinging in pace with the momentum. Just like a child's merry go round, around and around we went and rattling and rattling, the engine still revving, down toward the waters of Nelsons Bay. With enough speed up the soft sand at the water's edge didn't slow the whole ensemble down and into the water we went, and down and down.

All the work manuals and documentation on the floor of the cab began to float around, then my jumper joined in the float and still the water rose higher until it was shoulder high and still rising then I determined it was time to leave the sinking machine. Luckily Tony had jammed the door track and wet and embarrassed I swam to the surface to be met with the sight of an amazed LSM crew staring over the side of the vessel.

Swimming ashore I met with our Plant Sergeant, Kev Rapley and when told of the accident, commented, "Well Mother will be pleased".

Wet and be bedraggled we both boarded the LSM and looking over the side we could see the completely submerged 22RB in about 20 foot of clear water with the diesel engine still exhausting. Then it stopped, a real bad sign.

I was taken back to the tent lines to change into dry clothing whilst the recovery of the drowned machine was carried out. Lines were attached and with the aid of two International TD18 bulldozers it was slowly dragged from its watery grave onto firm sand.

My next part in the drama happened with the Squadron Sergeant Major stating that my presence was required by the Commanding Officer. Another real bad sign.

Marched into the office by the SSM and expecting to receive a rocket I was pleasantly surprised instead to receive a sympathetic hearing and a commendation for staying with the machine when it started its mad ride into the sea, and not bailing out. Little did he know, and I wasn't going to say, that I stayed through fright - nothing better.

That wasn't the end of 1962.

I specialised in operating the Le Tourneau LW16 wheeled bulldozer (maybe because no other operator liked the machine). With years of experience I could make the machine do some wondrous things and was called upon when demonstrations and exhibitions were held at the School of Military Engineering to show off the capabilities of the wheeled dozer. One of the showy acts was in demonstrating the turning capabilities at full speed and the turning radius being only the length of the machine.

Back to Gan Gan and with the LW16 travelling down the main sealed road toward a "T" intersection governed by a fully armed and adorned Military Policeman on point duty with his elbow length white gloves and snow white webbing giving the hand signals to keep the traffic flow in order.

What a splendid chance to show this martinet what a Sapper and his machine can do. With a roar from the three cylinder screaming Jimmy turbo charged diesel engine, down shift two gears,





left hand steering clutch depressed, left hand air brake applied, into a slew with the left side of the machine now stationary and the right side driving, a spray of loose gravel. Then the left rear axle snapped and the bloody wheel fell off. Another recovery necessary and a talk to the Plant Sergeant.

The next year, 1963, was better. My period of engagement ended and I decided to give my career in the army a miss".

Ken enlisted at the age of 17 in 1954, went to Kapooka and subsequently SME where he did his FE3. He was then posted to 17 Construction Squadron at Randwick, brought back to SME to do a basic plant operators course and then posted to 8 Troop which was at Moorebank. In 1956 he was attached to 1 Troop, 7 Independent Field Squadron and was in the advance party to go to Maralinga for the atomic tests. There he assisted in carving out roads and tracks and forming various sites necessary for the placement of instruments for the tests. He witnessed four atomic bomb explosions and entered ground zero after each blast to uncover buried instruments and equipment.

Ken left the Army in 1963 and joined the Customs Service working at airports and on the waterfront. He later transferred to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics investigating drug imports.

Later he joined the Australian Federal Police as a Detective Sergeant and rose to Senior Detective Sergeant with the Fraud Squad. At 52 years of age he retired and moved to Wauchope NSW with his wife, where he is active in the RSL Sub-Branch, Senior Citizens and the local historical society.



**Le Tourneau Westinghouse LW16**





**Excavator Track Mounted 22 RB Rigged as a dragline Cikobia FIJI 1983 Jack Madden photo**



***AVI354 Brudenell White with AT2700 Joe Mann at Port Stephens***



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## TOWNSVILLE TIE-UP SEPTEMBER 2013 – REPORT

A very successful Reunion was held during the weekend 6 – 8 Sep 2013 in Townsville. 220 people attended and all States, except NT, were represented.

The first day, Friday, was a capability demonstration provided by 30 Terminal and 35 Water Transport Squadrons followed by a BBQ attended by about 80 members of the Squadrons. Ross McMurray attended and has filed his own report on that event and thanks for coming Ross.

For serving member rationing purposes, the BBQ was an extension of the demonstration so no alcohol was permitted. I noticed several of our members bravely fighting off withdrawal symptoms.

Eddie Edstein gave a short, entertaining address focusing on the history of RAE (Tn).

Saturday was a free day which allowed everyone to visit the local attractions including a Military Tour of museums and areas of military significance. The Reef Aquarium and Magnetic Island were also popular with about fifty travelling on the ferry to the Island.

Thanks to a generous grant from 32 Small Ship Sqn Association, coaches were hired to safely transport members between accommodation and the dinner venue at Ross Island Barracks. We were treated to a fabulous seafood feast supervised by WO2 Slade Muckray which was one of the highlights of the weekend. Slade's father Ian Muckray served with the Termites in 1965.

John Purcell formally welcomed all attendees including Colonels Bill Tindale and Charles Gillman-Wells as well as Lieutenant Colonel Mike Heal, Major Shane Haley, OC, 35 Water Tpt Sqn and Captain Lachy McCallum representing the OC 30 Tml Sqn, Major Ed Hardy. John also thanked those officers and Senior NCOs for the fantastic support received leading up to and during the weekend of activities.

He also made the point that Mike Heal was one of the skippers who brought the fleet of LSMs from Japan and whose name is featured on the Speedie Sahariv History of 32 Small Ship Sqn DVD which was played as a backdrop during the dinner. Bob Gunn provided beautifully presented roses for the ladies (and some of the men).

Framed RAE Afloat ensigns were presented to the Squadrons. The ensign we sailed under was presented to 30 Tml Sqn and the one flown during WW2 with the crossed daggers was presented to 35 Water Tpt Sqn. Major Shane Haley was quite interested in the history of the ensign (included with the presentation) as, coincidentally, it is the one flown by RACT watercraft today. Bruce Reilly also presented a copy of Dave Perham's pictorial history of 32 Small Ship Sqn to the Maritime Wing for display in their museum.



After dinner we all enjoyed the opportunity to mix with senior serving members of the units and it was a mutually rewarding experience. John particularly enjoyed talking to the attractive SSM 30 Terminal Sqn, Vanessa Hickey. Shane Haley was able to catch up with previous Sqn OCs, Max Lockwood and Jim Brown for a photo session.

Sunday included a recovery morning and a Memorial Service in the afternoon. It was a beautiful venue overlooking Magnetic Island at the Cenotaph erected for the recent National Service Reunion. The Service was conducted by Chaplain Kent Willams from 2 RAR. The Force Support Battalion Chaplain, Geoff Trail who was away that weekend has reported from local comment that it was considered a very smooth Service.

Colonel Bill Tindale gave an address that included an update on recent and current deployments that members of the Squadrons are involved in. It is pleasing to note that detachments from both Squadrons are an integral part of just about every activity of our Defence Force. Tony Harris and John Spindler read the names of shipmates passed on and wreaths were laid as follows:

- 30 Terminal Sqn – Captain Lachy McCallum
- 35 Water Transport Sqn – Major Shane Haley
- 32 Small Ship Sqn (RAE) Association – Bruce Reilly
- Water Tpt Association – David Gray

A BBQ followed to round off the weekend and John was able to have his first drink(s) for the weekend. It was a very relaxing evening.

## Thanks

Most of the contributors to the success of the weekend have been acknowledged above but there are a few more that need mention:

John and Carrol Spindler did the artwork, printing and postage of the Notice of Reunion. They have done this job for all of the more recent reunions and their support is greatly appreciated.

Derek Smith provided the on ground assistance and support in arranging venues and other admin matters in Townsville. Derek and Rhonda, as most of you know, support several orphanages in Kontum province, Vietnam and this year travelled to Vietnam and Europe. It was fortunate that Derek was able to fit in the vital assistance that he gave.

Richard Groundwater assisted at the Reception Centre and manned the flag during the Memorial Service. Others who helped at the Reception Centre were Geoff Summergreene and Jacqui, and John's granddaughter Jess from NZ.

Tony Harris, Bob Bailey, Dave Gray and John Spindler and others gave moral support to John and helped in decreasing the workload during the weekend. Their help in frantic last minute fund raising to cover unplanned costs was gratefully received.

Eddie Edstein





**Some Townsville 'Tie-Up' Photos**



**Bill Tindale and Derek Smith**



**Michael and Val Heal**





**Jim McDermott**



**Graham Stenner**







**Brian Clulow**



**Tony and Dalveen Harris**







**Tony Batt**



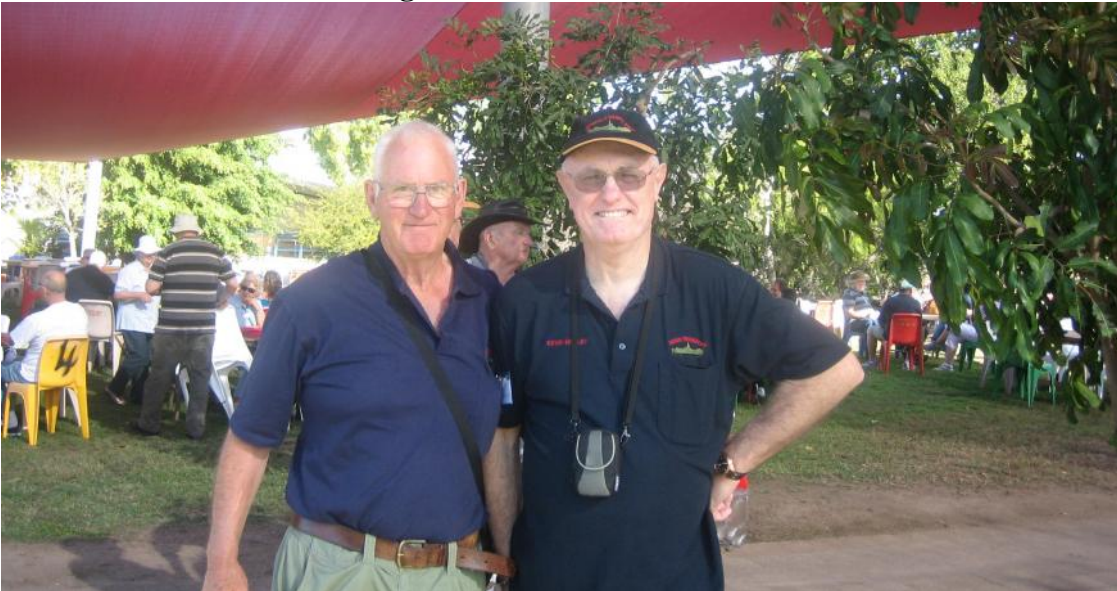
**Jack Madden and Bruce Reilly**







**Vaughn Ruddick and Max Neill**



**Doug Richardson and Kevin Morley**



**Bruce and Elizabeth Levy**







**Paul Green**



**Robert Gaylard**



**Alan White**





**Group at the National Servicemen's Memorial, Townsville. Included are Kerry Stuart, Brian Waites, George Cosis, Geoff Summergreene, Bruce Reilly, Alan White and Gary Everitt.**



**Geoff Summergreene and Rod Cook**



**Nov 2013 Notice to Mariners**



## CHOWDER BAY PHOTO

In the July newsletter we had a photo of students on a course at Chowder Bay - it was probably a fire fighting course. There were only a few of the students identified. Ron Eggleton and Derek Auld managed to put a lot more names to faces. Anyway, here they are:

**Back Row**, left to right: Ray Newman, Victor (PNG), Ron Eggleton, Merv Ballans, J. Auten, John Walker, Bruce Duguid, Tony Filardi, Ian Watt, Max Watts

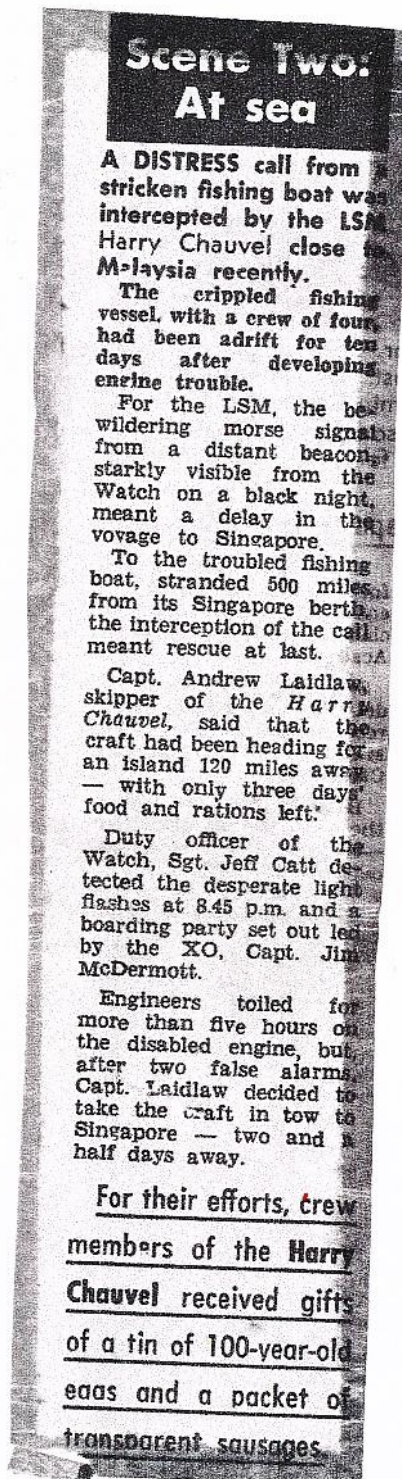
**Centre Row**: Marcus Blackmore, CPL Suarta (PNG), ???, Ken Thomkins, Charlie Picarelli, Kali Kila (PNG), Warwick Evans, Royce Carigg, Derek Auld, SPR Sam Malim (PNG).

**Front Row**: Chris Wright, George Baker, Bruce Davenport, Bevan Guttaumsen, Roy Brittain, Gary Dunn, Doug Holmes.





## A RESCUE AT SEA



Bruce Mansfield sent this newspaper clipping about the Harry Chauvel on its way to Vietnam in 1970. For those who find it difficult to read (like most of us) the story is:

"A distress call from a stricken fishing boat was intercepted by the LSM Harry Chauvel close to Malaysia recently.

The crippled fishing vessel with a crew of four had been adrift for ten days after developing engine trouble.

For the LSM, a bewildering morse signal from a distant beacon, starkly visible from the Watch on a black night meant a delay in the voyage to Singapore.

To the troubled fishing boat, stranded 500 miles from its Singapore berth, the interception of the call meant rescue at last.

Captain Andrew Laidlaw, skipper of the Harry Chauvel, said that the craft had been heading for an island 120 miles away - with only three days food and rations left.

Duty Officer of the Watch, Sergeant Jeff Catt, detected the desperate light flashes at 8.45 pm and a boarding party set out, led by the XO, Captain Jim McDermott.

Engineers toiled for more than five hours on the disabled engine, but after two false alarms Captain Laidlaw decided to take the craft in tow to Singapore - two and a half days away.

**For their efforts, crew members of the Harry Chauvel received gifts of a tin of 100 year old eggs and a packet of transparent sausages".**



## GALLIPOLI VISIT

We recently received this interesting story from Len Ramsay:

"Like most soldiers I'd always wanted to visit Gallipoli but after finding out only last year that my wife's grandfather had served there we took the opportunity and went. The visit was part of another tour and we crossed the Dardanelles by ferry just after midnight and travelled by coach to the site.

After going through security we were each given a gift bag containing a book on Gallipoli and the proceedings for the day, a commemorative pin, a bottle of water and a beanie, which came in very handy. Even though we arrived very early it was very crowded and our group had to search individually for seats. The service was very moving and even though we weren't close to the front we could follow proceedings on two large screens.

After the Dawn Service we walked up the hill to Lone Pine to attend the Australian Service. Some of our group moved on to Chunuk Bair for the New Zealand Service. The Lone Pine service was very solemn but also interspersed with a little Aussie humour. After the service the MC advised that they'd like to pay tribute to all those who had served or were currently serving. He asked if there were any WW2 service personnel present but sadly there were none. He then asked if there were any Korean Vets present and one elderly gentleman stood up and the crowd erupted in applause. He went through each place where Australians had served until he asked for any Vietnam Vets to stand up. They received the biggest ovation with lots of people standing up and the three Vets sitting next to me were a little surprised and overwhelmed at the response I think. I'm not sure if that recognition of all service personnel is paid every year but it was a great way to end the proceedings.

We spent the rest of the day walking around the different sites and on our way out were able to stop at ANZAC Cove. It had been closed for security reasons but the barriers were removed and the beach reopened late in the day so we could spend some time close to the water, each with their own thoughts.

That small piece of Turkey is a pretty special place and I can recommend a visit to anyone who has the opportunity to attend even if it's not on ANZAC Day".



Lone Pine on Gallipoli



## Property for sale

Ties	\$25.00	LSM Lapel Badge	\$12.00
Association Book	\$30.00	Collar Badge	\$6.00
Association Woven Patch	\$8.00	Car Stickers	\$5.00
Association Cap Navy Blue	\$15.00		
Association Polo Shirt (navy blue only) made to order			\$30.00

Items may be purchased through the web site at [www.32smallshipsqn.org.au](http://www.32smallshipsqn.org.au) and click on Q Store. Alternatively, please contact Ken or Kaye Shannon on 02 9871 4667 or email them at [property@32smallshipsqn.org.au](mailto:property@32smallshipsqn.org.au)

## Disclaimer

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor 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 on MSWord and send it to:

[editor@32smallshipsqn.org.au](mailto:editor@32smallshipsqn.org.au)

or to:

**32 Small Ship Squadron RAE Association  
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! An email to the Secretary or a note to the above address would be appreciated.



**Nov 2013 Notice to Mariners**

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