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NEWS LETTER NUMBER 3 2009

WHAT DID WE DO?

Dick (Jacko) Jackson-Hope had two trips to Manus Island during the PNG operations the first one was the most memorable.

Along with Major Jim Steadman Dick had been helping the American air force with some of their logistics on the HiRan operations which they were running out of Port Moresby.

The Americans had two B29's fitted out with electronic equipment and were doing much the same as we were doing with the Tellurometer.

Measuring distances electronically except they were measuring distances of 200 to 300 miles compared to our 50 miles with the large dish.

Also employed on this operation were American civilian surveyors and they had a team working on Manus Island as well as other teams on other islands in the South Pacific.

The measuring equipment the Americans were using was a small Geodimeter which had a limited measuring distance of fifteen miles and this line was about 25 to 30 miles between the stations.

The Americans requested our help to measure this particular line due to the limitation of their equipment.

Jim Steadman and Dick Jackson-Hope flew by courtesy of the American air force in their DC 6 which was being used to transport equipment for the American operations.

Jim Steadman preferred having afternoon tea with Australian Navy at Lorengau to roughing it on the American Navy ship and their helicopter so guess who got the rough end of the pineapple.

This was supposed to be a quick operation measure the angles and the distance and be in and out the site within three hours.

Nothing goes to plan and this was one operation that certainly did not go to plan.

Jack Seagood an American civilian surveyor in his late fifties and Dick were lowered into a very small clearing in the jungle near the site by a US Navy helicopter as Dick relayed; "It was a thrill in its self hanging in mid air on a support belt jammed up into your armpits with your arms by your side praying the operator put you on the ground and not up a tree and pilots knew what they were doing and there was no engine failure."

All went well until the last of the equipment was lowered and that was one of our large green portable batteries.

The crew did not put in the sling correctly and it rained battery acid on Jack Seagood and Dick.

After topping up the battery and washing the battery down with their only water they set off to the trig station the Americans had established leaving the empty water container behind.

After setting up the tellurometer and making barely audible voice contact with Jim Steadman they tried to figure out what the problem was with the reception.

During a somewhat heated discussion between Jack Seagood and Jim Steadman it came apparent the line had not been proved and no angles or distance measurements had been attempted by the Americans.

Under instruction from Jim Steadman Dick set up the theodolite and when he viewed the line it became apparent there was small a hill between the two stations and it was impossible to measure angles or distance.

Things stated to seriously go wrong from this point.

The Navy helicopter suddenly appeared overhead and dropped rock with a note attached to it which read; "Dear Mr Seagood and Aussie soldier our hydraulics have failed and we are unable to pick you up you will have to walk out so sorry for the bad news."

They were completely unprepared for this event no map no food no water and it is getting dark as they set out for the camp where Jack Seagood other civilian surveyors were stationed.

However Jack had not been to the trig site prior to this and was not sure of the direction back to camp and they headed in the wrong direction descending instead of ascending in the semi dark.

By night fall they arrived at a small creek with fresh running water and decided to stop there the night.

As Dick said; “There was a bright side, Jack Seagood smoked so they were able to light a fire and talk about their different countries and experiences during the night.”

As they settled down for the night the mosquitoes arrived in black droves and to complicate things Jack fell while gathering green bamboo material to make smoke to keep the mosquitoes away and succeeded to put a section of bamboo in his upper arm which had to stay there as they had nothing to extract it with.

At first light after a very trying night they set off back up the track in the direction they had come from lugging the battery, tellurometer, an oversized barometer, theodolite and legs plus a bush knife.

As the morning progressed the oppressive tropical heat set in and they had no water then as luck would have it they came to a clump of coconut trees a type of tree which Dick said he had never climbed in his life.

Exhausted as he was he knew their well being depended on climbing one of these coconut trees.

He chose the one with most lean to it and worked his way up and managed to cut down six green coconuts.

As he said; “Clear cool coconut juice never tasted so good.”

Just as they finished their second coconut the DC6 appeared overhead and started flying in a searching pattern.

They were able to light a fire and send smoke signals to indicate where they were located and Dick climbed back up to the top of the coconut tree again and waved his shirt, after several low level passes over the smoke and coconut tree the aircraft departed.

The aircraft crew were able to give their position to a search party and they duly made contact with the search party four hours later along the track towards their camp.

Then next morning it was a fifteen mile hike down to the beach where the ships doctor removed the bamboo from Jack Seagoods arm and gave him several needles in the process.

During Jacks operation they learned there had been a real flap on when they had not turn up at the surveyor’s camp. Every one from the American ambassador to the administrator was on high alert.

Still unwashed and in the same cloths Dick re joined the Navy ship to be transported to the other side of the island to the airport.

The only comment the Red Bull made as he boarded the aircraft was; “Christ that was a waste of time and you stink Jacko sit down the back of the aircraft.”

The sad note to this adventure is that 3 days later that same helicopter crashed and killed all those on board. As they say there is luck and there is the devil and Dick consider he had a lot of luck on his side while working in PNG both with the army and later with the Department of civil Aviation as a Senior Airport Inspector.



US Navy Helicopter unloading supplies for civilian Survey party on Manus Island this helicopter crashed three days later off Indonesia killing all on board.



Jack Seagood getting medical treatment. The Navy Surgeon removing bamboo from his upper arm.

Papua & New Guinea Plaque

There has been no further development on the Papua & New Guinea Plaque.

Queensland Survey Corps Association History Web Site www.rasurvey.org

OUR HISTORY PROJECT – WHAT DID WE DO, 1946 – 1996?

Our history project has been updated with substantial entries from Peter Jensen (he’s been everywhere man!). Plus Frank Linane, Frank Fisher and Arthur Hensen.

Arthur's contribution is from the South Australian Association's own intensive investigation into the history of the RA Survey units located in South Australia.

The updated version can now be found on our website, www.rasurvey.org in pdf. You will observe that the SA file now has an entry for every year from 1946 to 1996. SA is the only State to achieve this distinction, although quite a number of the entries are sparse in detail. At least they have a project name and a location and one or two words about what sort of operation was undertaken, eg, tellurometer traversing, map control, field completion etc. It would be nice to have a little more detail such as who took part (at least some names), the field OC or OIC, air support, outline tech information. Peter Jensen has been able to provide a good deal of the latter in many instances. Association members in all States are asked to check the years in which they served on field operations and reflect on who they served with, who their boss was and what they did. The present entries can be used as a memory jogger. Let Bob Skitch know either by using the report format in the history section of the website or by simple email to Bob at bob.skitch@runbox.com Please note Bob will be away for six weeks from the end of August so don't expect immediate updates to the web site.

Past NSW Association Newsletters

The past six (7) NSW newsletters are available on the Queensland web site along with newsletters from other state Survey Corps Association. If you would like to catch up with what is going on in other states association log onto www.rasurvey.org and follow the links to access individual state newsletters.

2nd Field Survey Squadron

"During the 1970's 2 Field Survey Squadron was engaged on mapping operations in Indonesia as part of Australia's foreign aid program. The operations ran yearly, generally for about a four month period. They were made up of about thirty Royal Australian Survey Corps personnel, with support from other Army units, the RAAF and the RAN."



2 Field Survey Squadron – 1977

Back row (L to R) Dave Valentine, Ken Talbot-Smith, Frank Fischer, Jaimie Lyle, Nev Kelly, Bruce Hammond, Gordon Doherty, Bill Pert, Garen Hill, Wally Chilcott
Centre row (L to R) John Lees, Paul Leskovec, Bruce Bowers, Steve Waller, Alan White, Trevor Cleghorn, Dave Fox, Mark Westbrook
Front row (L to R) Bruce Coburn, Peter Jensen, Danny Galbraith, Greg Chambers, Bill Harvey, Don Swiney, Pat Lilley, Dave Thomson, Roy Castles, Bill Smith, Kevin O'Halloran, Alan Derby

(Photographs courtesy Frank Fischer)

Royal Australian Survey Corps Museum Update

Phil Bannister and Frank Fischer have been assisting with the museum for the past three months. The Royal Australian Survey Museum is located at Steele Barracks, LIVERPOOL, NSW

Both Phil and Frank both served in RA Svy, primarily 2 Fd Svy Sqn, based at Randwick during the 1970's

The RA Svy museum includes various equipment, memorabilia and maps that have been collected from;

1. School of Mil Svy Museum Bonegilla
2. Canberra map depot
3. Army Svy Regt Bendigo
4. 1 Topo Svy unit
5. The Field Svy units in their various names through out the history of the corps

The equipment includes but not limited to the following;

Various theodolites & field equipment dating back to the beginnings of the corps

Tellurometer MRA1 and MRA2

The Ground Elevation Meter (GEM) recently restored by the engineers

The APR equipment – yet to be unpacked

The Aerodist system – yet to be unpacked

The ANPR14 Geociever equipment – on display

Magnovox 1502B receiver

The TI 4100 GPS systems

A Heidelberg Offset printer

A Wild B8 plotter

Multiplex

Geodetic Tavistock

Wild T4 theodolite

Geodimeter 140

Cambridge stereo comparator

Numerous plans, photos, diapositives, photomaps and maps

World War 2 campaign maps

Wild RC10 camera – yet to be received from 1 Topo Svy Sqn

Thanks to the engineers and to the efforts of WO1 Bob Hopper some of this equipment and memorabilia is now on display in the RA Survey museum located within the Engineers museum at Steele Barracks near Liverpool. On going work is required to bring the museum and its contents up to standard and to complete this task we will require the assistance of other Ex-Corps members to ensure the history of each piece is documented and the history of the Corp preserved.

For example, recently we were the grateful beneficiary of the services of Russell Tiesell (Surveyor from Canberra – non corps) who spent a week installing our B8 plotter. We are now looking for assistance with the multiplex and the Heidelberg press.

Arguably the most significant contents of the museum are the list of largely unknown World War campaign maps and in recent weeks we have received requests for World War 2 maps of the Kokoda trail and of the island of Ambon in Indonesia showing Japanese gun placements. We believe we will be able to supply these maps. Eventually it is anticipated that all such maps will be digitized.

The museum complex includes a corps shop with some RA Svy items and a meeting room. It is believed that this museum facility is the ideal meeting place for ex RA Svy personnel.

To show museum progress to date, highlight future requirements and to express our thanks to WO1 Bob Hopper for the effort to get the museum to this point the Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (NSW) has proposed a meeting to be held at the museum at **1100 on TUE 13 OCT 09**.

We would urge all members interested in helping with the on going work to come and inspect the museum.
Please Note: If members are going to attend please advise the Secretary. P.O. Box 14 BLAXLAND 2774 or by e-mail aro@pnc.com.au
We need your name and address for security reasons and if you will be staying for lunch so we have numbers for catering.
Lunch will be provided at the Sergeants Mess for a cost of approximately \$10.00

LOCATION

The RA Svy museum is at the rear of the Engineers Museum which is located within Steele Barracks, adjacent to Holsworthy Army Base, 3km south of Liverpool, 4km east of the M5 / M7 motorway intersection and 25 kms west of Sydney airport.

MUSEUM ACCESS

From the M5 motorway travelling West set your odometer as follows

- 0.0 kms - At the M5 toll gates (21km west of Sydney Airport Tunnel) continue in a westerly direction
- 3.7 kms - Take the Moorebank Rd. exit and turn south
- 4.1 kms – Arrive at a set of traffic lights at the intersection of Anzac Rd. to the east. Continue in a southerly direction passing through various military establishments on both sides of the road.
- 5.8 kms – Arrive at a set of traffic lights and turn west into Chatham Ave. and the entryway to Steele barracks
- 5.9 kms – Stop at the Security gate and present Identification and then continue in a westerly direction
- 6.0 kms – Turn north and proceed in a northerly direction past a visitor reporting centre to the west and locate a car park to the east.
- 6.1 kms – locate the car park to the east of the road which is opposite the Engineers museum on the west side of the road.

Photographs of the museum



Wild T1A Theodolite and Magnavox
1502B Transit satellite receiver



World War Two Camera
captured from Japanese



Heidelberg Printing press



MRA1 Tellurometer & AGA Geodimeter



Wild B8 Stereo Plotter



Wild T2 Theodolite & MRA1 Tellurometer

(Photographs courtesy Phil Bannister)

Vale Major Ross McMillan MBE



The emails individuals have sent to one another at the passing of Ross McMillan are a reflection of the man himself.

As a soldier and a dedicated member of the Royal Australian Survey Corps, Ross will be remembered for many things.

In particular he will be remembered for his competence his discipline and most of all his comradeship with his fellow Survey Corps members.

In 1982 he was awarded the Member of the British Empire for his services to Survey Corps.

His exceptional work in recording the history of the Corps and his excellent work for the Survey Corps museum is his legacy.

Past members of the Survey Corps owe Ross a debt of gratitude for his foresight and his determination to see part of our history preserved for future generations.

As Noel Sproles said in his email “Ross was held in high regards by all who knew him even an infantry General not known for mincing his words said of Ross when he was a WO1. “He considered Ross McMillan the finest WO1 in the army”

There are those of us who have happy memories of Ross right from the Basic Surveying Course and through his army life and it was a pleasure both as colleagues and as friends for having known him.

Noel Ticehust. Reflections on Ross McMillan

My earliest recollection of Ross was when Richard Jackson-Hope and I returned to Balcombe from the Aerial Photo Library at Albert Park to start our course. The 13/58 Basic Surveying Course commenced on the 14th July 1958 Ross and I were marched into the CI’s office to be told we couldn’t do the course because we would have less than twelve months to go to our discharge date from the end of the course.

We both agreed to sign on for six years. This resulted in both of us being sent to Royal Park Personnel Depot and discharged from the Regular Army Special Reserve RASR on 4th August 1958 as “Services no longer required”.

I remember Ross suggesting on the night of the 4th; “Tonight’s the night, if we don’t want to go through with the re-engagement, we can be in another state before they realize we are gone”.

We re-enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 5th August 1958 both with brand new regimental numbers to learn.

Back at the School of Military Survey it fell to WOII Jim Bownds and Sgt (Tuppy) Hayworth to instill the surveying knowledge which Ross learnt well, carried with him and passed on to others throughout his Army career.

He also learnt the ethics of surveying and became a stickler for doing the right thing. Later as an Instructor he had to teach a lesson on honest work when he suspected one theodolite and chain traverse party was using another party’s measurements.

Just before the suspect party arrived at a particular ground mark Ross moved it slightly then placed it back in its original position when the party had moved on. After the class had handed in their results Ross told them what he had done. He added; “If you think that is the only poisoned melon in the paddock you are wrong, they are all poisoned”.

In his early days in the field he was always one of the first to jump in when a job needed doing. If you thought about making the tea for the morning or afternoon breaks you were too late because Ross will have started while you were still thinking.



Photograph taken near Mt Conspicuous Trig B069 during the 1960 Cape York survey operations show Ross dragging logs which he had cut from trees while others stood around discussing what needed to be done.

(Photograph courtesy Noel Ticehurst)

Survey Corps Museum Items

When speaking about the museum, Ross on a couple occasions expressed his dismay at not being able to reproduce a full La Place Astronomical Station.

The missing element is the essential chronometer.

The Survey Corps museum has none of the chronometers used in the La Place Astronomical Observations covering all of Australia and Papua & New Guinea.

Prior to GPS these observations for position and azimuth were an essential part of checking the progress of the geodetic observations of the Geodetic Survey of Australia and Papua and New Guinea in which the Survey Corps played a major roll.

It is well known that a number of Chronometers were handed out to individuals when the survey Corps was disbanded.

“A donation of one of these Chronometers to museum would be a fitting tribute to Ross’s work for the Survey Corps’ museum and history”.

If one of the Ex- Survey Corps members who were given a Chronometer and feel they would like to donate it to the museum please contact the (NSW) secretary at P.O. Box 14 Blaxland or e-mail aro@pnc.com.au

Note: The Australian War Memorial has many objects on display, including Victoria Cross medals, with small plaques indicating the owner’s name and that the object is on loan to the AWM.

Past News Letter

On another matter of history is there an old member or members of the past NSW Survey Association who have all the copies of their past news letters from that era that could be borrowed so they could be scanned and put up on the web site.

Items for NSW Survey Corps Association news letter

I hope this news letter inspires members to put their fingers on the key board and type some new items and forward interesting photographs for the 2009 December Issue. For those not on the inter net I have the facilities to scan typed printed material and converted into a word document so don’t feel left out. If you have items for the next newsletter please forward them to P.O. Box 14 Blaxland or email aro@pnc.com.au

Richard Jackson-Hope
Editor NSW newsletter.