



Newsletter

Royal Australian Survey Corps Association of South Australia

Number 53 - Christmas 2010

The Corps 95th Birthday celebration

Alex Munro

The celebrations were organised by the Fortuna Association, and would have meant months of planning and organising to arrange such a successful function over three days, and the committee are to be congratulated for all their work. Starting with a late afternoon get-together for the early birds at the Bendigo RSL on Friday 2nd July 10, followed by a dinner at the All Seasons function centre on Saturday night and finishing with a BBQ at the Tyson's Reef Hotel on Sunday, it provided a tremendous reunion for a huge number of former members of the Corps and their partners.

The Adelaide –Bendigo bus run is almost a door to door service for me, but does take a bit longer than driving a car, and generally I have always managed a double seat to myself, but I have a niggling fear that one day I will have to sit next to a 120 kg unwashed garlic munching person of unknown origin with doubtful personal habits. Anyway, I had a comfortable trip which got me to the RSL by late afternoon to spend a pleasant two hours catching up with the large number that had gathered there.

At a loose end on Saturday, I went looking for a lunch partner at the Rifle Brigade Hotel just after noon, to be the sole customer in the bar and I was still the sole customer twenty minutes later and wondering what next, when Bob Skitch walked in. We eventually had lunch, taking the barmaid's suggestion of kid size serves with a dinner only hours away. It was an enjoyable afternoon, reminiscing with Bob about our days at Fortuna.

Early evening I arrived at the All Seasons car park in time to tag behind a group of twenty or so heading into a dining room for the dinner, where we sat, ordered drinks, and chatted away. It was very nice indeed until someone mentioned that there should be more people present.

A mass exodus and a fifty metre walk took us to the right place—we knew this by the size of the crowd. The dinner was held in a huge dining room with tables for eight, and I had the pleasure of sharing a table with Alex Cairney, Barry Lutwyche and George Timmens.

Formality was kept to a minimum, with plenty of time and space to move between tables and greet old friends, but with the old problem of so many present it was difficult to catch up with everyone I knew.

Gary Warnest, as virtual dining, president opened the formalities, followed by a well delivered response by Graeme Ragless, with socialising going on well past midnight. The BBQ next day at the Tyson's Reef Hotel was organised by the licensee Dave Lampton-Young, who did a really top job in turning the place over for the function. There must be a few around who can remember Dave during his time at Keswick Barracks.

Dale Hudson provided country style music in the bar, the dining room was available and a large marquee erected in the back yard with tables and chairs set out, and an abundance of well prepared meats, salads and sweets available. To me it was a truly casual and convivial atmosphere that I thoroughly enjoyed, especially as I was able to have fairly long chats with several that I missed the previous night. The only formality for the afternoon was the cutting of the birthday cake by Gary Warnest and Tracey Phillips, and the presentation of a plaque to Dave as a thank you. I had to be elsewhere for another BBQ, so left just after 5pm, leaving the place still in full swing.

Of all the functions I have attended in Bendigo over many years, that week-end was probably the most enjoyable.

Goldmines Hotel aka "Esposito's"

Alex Munro

Situated so close to the back gate to Fortuna, it was very convenient to a few living in members over the years, and also the home of that character Fortuna electrician Eddy Esposito. Eddy was widely believed to be the owner, although I understood that it belonged to his wife through her family. Closed as a pub for some time now with a "For Sale" sign hanging out front, it was recently sold, whether to reopen as a hotel or whatever I have no idea.

Anzac Day Parade

Alex Munro

Our new form-up point near the end of the parade has been viewed by some to be a slight upon the memory of the Corps, however that is not the case. When our Association began to march in the parade about 1983, there were perhaps eight WW2 members in our group and consequently we were placed by the RSL in the WW2 section nearer the front, but with the passing of time we are now down to Bob Love as the remaining WW2 member perhaps able to front up. Because of the dwindling numbers the RSL decided to organise the few remaining WW2 members of each group into one single group and removing the non WW2 Association members further back in the parade, which is the reason for the change. Other similar groups to us have been dealt with in the same way.

Should the matter be reviewed some time later, I doubt if we would move all that much further forward. I must admit the old position had merit, in that we finished earlier enough to reach our half-way house on the Torrens Parade Ground for refreshments in comfort, before the crowd moved in. This year we arrived to find several hundred others well ahead of us packed in like sardines!

Vale

Harry Raisbeck

Harry died recently in Melbourne, just weeks before his 100th birthday. His contribution to maintaining high standards in the drafting of military mapping in earlier times of the Corps was, without doubt, quite considerable.

Bob Armstrong

Bob served in the Corps from around 1967 to 1973, but mainly at Fortuna, although Alex reports first meeting him on course at the old SMS Bonegilla in 1968. He became somewhat reclusive in later years, living alone in a caravan at Dandenong, where he died in mid August this year.

Steve Wainwright

Steve served at Fortuna from 1983 to 1995 as a draftsman, but he also served a period at Kapooka, when mainly volunteers from all trades were sent to train and instruct in military skills to maintain regimentality in the Corps. Steve passed on suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly in Griffith in September this year.

John (Jock) Kay

Something of a character, Jock served in the Corps as a surveyor from 1964 to 1976. He died in the Caboolture Hospital in mid October this year, suffering for some time with leukaemia.

Ann Eddy

Wife of Peter Eddy, Ann died in Perth recently. Always community and socially minded, Alex remembers well her flair in presenting nibbles at unit social functions.

First Friday Drinks

Alex Munro

When first introduced in about the mid eighties it was called "Sundowners" and held at the Brecknock Hotel on King William St south, but has been held for varying periods at three other pubs from memory ever since, finally at the Saracens Head in Carrington St. for the last seven years or so. Attendances varied from one or two up to several but always continued, however, because of changing circumstances the event has now been removed from the social calendar, the last one being Friday 3rd December 10. A ring-around system for those who wish to socialise at odd times has been suggested in lieu, and might work as six turned up for a pleasant hour on the 3rd December.

Roll Call

Steve Burke

Steve and his family are moving from Bendigo in December or January to live in America for two years or more. Steve's new employment in the USA apparently is attractive enough to warrant the hassle of moving.

Phil Smalley

Recently on a late Saturday afternoon at the Bendigo RSL, Alex turned in response to a tap on the shoulder, to be greeted with a cheery grin from Phil. He had been playing tennis during the afternoon and had called in for a beer before heading home, so we were able to catch up on news for a while. Phil has worked with a state government water agency for some time now, stationed at Horsham from Monday to Friday and commuting home to Bendigo each weekend.

Dave Lampton-Young

Alex also met up with Dave at the same bar at near the same time, however things have moved on since he hosted the 95th Corps Birthday BBQ, as he has now leased the Tyson's Reef Hotel, giving him the time to look around for other opportunities.

Future Newsletters

Noel Sproles has volunteered to produce a basic newsletter on a regular basis, on condition that the content is supplied by our members or anyone else for that matter.

So, if you have a news item of any kind such as a trip abroad or Aussie wide, anecdotes of service life, reporting a serious illness or death, tales from the bush or the drafting desk or the printing press, something to raise a chuckle, then please pass it on at any time to Noel for inclusion in the following newsletter. Remember, not too lengthy and ready to go. I can assure you that members are interested in the activities of others. Contributions can be sent to Noel at;
sproles@senet.com.au

A Nostalgic Trip

Noel Sproles

Last August, Lynda and I drove up to Townsville to visit our eldest son and his family. I decided to go via Bourke and Charleville along where the Mitchell Highway follows much of the route of the Charleville to Bourke traverse we observed in 1964. It was a First Order traverse and Jim Stedman appointed me as the angle observer. It was a tremendous opportunity for me as a young and newly qualified surveyor, even more so as my only previous real experience observing was with a Wild T2 on the Basic Course. In preparation, I spent a day with Sam Chambers familiarising myself with the 5 inch Tavistock.

Most of the stations on the NSW side of the border were observed off Bilby Towers which was an experience in itself. The terminal station on Mt Oxley to the east of Bourke had an observing pillar. Because of a misunderstanding, we did not have the correct nut to secure the Tavistock to the pillar. Instead, we had to tie it to the pillar with ropes from which were suspended several large rocks. It worked!

Grant Small was my booker. He was more like a calligrapher than a penman and his recording and station notes were a work of art. I felt reluctant to mar it with my signature each night after observing when I signed off his angle reductions as being checked and correct. They are probably rotting in some store room now when they should be in a museum. Other people on the traverse were Ross McMillan, Sam Chambers, Sammy Watson, Pat Strunks, Bob Skitch, Kevin Walsh, and Gamie Cook.

Jim Stedman was most persistent that we properly mark each station with surface and sub-surface marks, a rock annulus around the station mark, lines of rocks leading to each RM and a witness post. 'Come back in 50 years time, Sproles, and you will find the mark from the witness posts' he would predict with conviction.



Back on station after nearly a half century

Well, I did come back. Not quite in 50 years but near enough. I had the details for those stations close enough to the highway that would enable me to recover them before Lynda's patience ran out. It didn't always work out like that of course, but she humoured me.

I hoped to be able to visit five stations but could only get onto three. The other two were just within reach but we could not travel the last short distance because of the floodwater that was everywhere. They were within sight but it was a case of 'So near yet so far'.

I had a handheld GPS, which I normally use in the car, to find the stations. However, what I found first in the thick scrub in each case was - you guessed it - the witness post. Jim Stedman would have been pleased.

Survey Ex-Servicemen's Association of South Australia Annual General Meeting Held at Keswick Barracks Wednesday 6th October 2010

The meeting was declared open at 7.45pm chaired with members consent by Alex Munro.

Present: Alex Munro, John Whitburn, Bob Mills, John Harrison, Bob Dikkenberg, Allan Adsett, Peter Elverd, Ken Talbot-Smith, Jim Dunn.

Apologies: Stan Stevens, Ken Jeffery(Secretary), Wally Mooney, Stevo Hinic, Laurie Sutton, Brett Knuckey, Dave Irving, Bill Griggs.

Moved Allan Adsett and seconded Peter Elverd —That apologies as presented be accepted—Carried

Although short of a quorum, it was considered that the meeting should proceed given the circumstances.

Previous Minutes: Because the secretary was unable to attend, the chairman gave a verbal account from a draft copy of the minutes.

Moved Bob Dikkenberg and seconded Jim Dunn—That the previous minutes as given be accepted. Carried.

Business Arising: The letter from the RSL requesting service details of our group marching in the Anzac Day Parade was answered by Alex Munro.

Correspondence: Other than routine mail, the only letter of consequence received was from the RSL notifying our new form-up point in the Anzac Day Parade. To be discussed in general business. Correspondence received as read was accepted by general agreement.

President's Report: With no elected president, a report was not tabled. The chairman detailed Association activities for the previous year

- a. The Corps birthday dinner at the Saracens Head hotel.
- b. Sunday BBQ at Pam and Bob Ballard's residence in Goolwa.
- c. Anzac Day Parade.
- d. Reunion at The Elephant hotel.

Moved Allan Adsett and seconded Ken Talbot-Smith——That the chairman's account in lieu of a president's report be accepted.——Carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Peter Elverd presented his report to the meeting, detailing receipts and expenditure transactions but noted that it had been prepared in anticipation of an earlier AGM. As at 13th September 2010 the bank balance was \$2377.48 which included history funds of \$344.58.

Moved Peter Elverd and seconded Bob Mills——That the treasurer,s report as presented be accepted.——Carried.

General Business:

1. From correspondence received, the Association's new form-up point in the Anzac Day Parade was discussed at length, including the step-off time of almost one hour later than previously.

The chairman explained the reason for the RSL decision to move all association groups further back in the parade and that nothing could be done about it at this time.

2. Memorial plaque to 4 Field Survey Squadron at Keswick Barracks. Work on the project has lapsed during the last year, due in part as to whether the site originally allocated was still available but a more recent enquiry to the area manager has confirmed that it is, so the project can proceed.

3. Change of our Association name. This was raised by the chairman because the present title adopted around 1976 when the Corps was still in existence, does not adequately describe our group now. The matter was discussed at length and it was decided to bring the name in line with other states, accordingly a motion was raised——That the title of our Association be changed to the 'Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (South Australia)'

Moved John Harrison, seconded Bob Dikkenberg——Carried.

4. Annual functions. The number of functions held each year was discussed and revised and it was decided to discontinue the '1st Friday Drinks' function after many years. It was suggested that a ring-around network be set up in lieu, for those still wishing to meet on a casual basis. All other functions were retained. The change was mutually agreed to by all present.

5. Changes to the administration of our Association. An alternative way of administrating our activities was presented to the meeting for discussion, by the chairman. It was decided that the formal executive style committee of previous years be replaced with a "management committee" consisting of a secretary and a treasurer, both with set duties, and groups of one or two volunteers appointed for one year, each group to be responsible for a specific task/activity, assisted as required by the secretary and/or the treasurer. A volunteer to chair each AGM would be appointed before each meeting. It was agreed by the meeting to try the system during 2010/11.

6. Newsletter. Without members able to produce a newsletter, there has been one only distributed this year so far and has been irregular for some time. The situation was discussed, including whether to discontinue given the circumstances, but all present agreed that we should try again with an offer by Noel Sproles to produce a regular edition, on the proviso that members supply the content and arrange the distribution for a trial period during 2010/11.

Management Committee

The following members volunteered their services——

Secretary: Ken Jeffery

Treasurer: Peter Elverd

BBQ/Picnic: John Harrison and Bob Dikkenberg

Anzac Day: Ken Talbot-Smith

Corps Birthday Dinner: Combined effort

Newsletter: Noel Sproles and Jim Dunn

There being no further business the meeting finished at 10.00pm.