



Newsletter

*Royal Australian Survey Corps Association
of South Australia*

Number 58 - Spring 2013

Anzac Day 2013

A fine and mild day encouraged 23 members to form up for the parade, and although we had to wait about 45 minutes before step-off, it gave extra time to catch up on any gossip during the last twelve months. There were the usual problems at the start, such as maintaining step when two bands can be heard, but they were soon sorted out

Noel Sproles again led our group in his usual capable manner and the banner was carried by stalwart Dave Irving, not always easy to do in a skittish breeze. So with the crowd lining the route as large as ever and continually showing their appreciation as each group passed by, I think we presented ourselves very well as we passed the saluting base.

The group line-up after the march was photographed by Kay Collins, so thank you Kay. Our customary stop at Torrens Parade Ground before the reunion was a bit of a hassle with long queues fronting every refreshment booth, but it's a great atmosphere and not surprising is the number of old acquaintances spotted.



After the march - Anzac Day 2013

Rear group: Mal Henderson; Steve McGuinness; Stevo Hinic; Jon Dean; Lincoln Smith; Noel Sproles; Dave Irving (beneath the banner); John Frith; Dick Crawford; Stuart Adrain; Bill Griggs; Peter Elverd; Noel Houston (dark glasses); Eddy Jacobs; Bill Crawford; Bob Turnbull (beret); Jim Dunn.
Front group: Bob Cooper; John Whitburn; Darcy Patrick; Alex Munro; Peter Cates; Simon Lemon.

Anzac Day 2014

The RSL have notified all ex-service associations that normally participate, of their intention to shorten the length of the parade and consequently reduce the time for the march to finish. I think most people will agree with this.

The intention is not to reduce the number of marchers, but to reduce the number of smaller groups with significant gaps between them, by integrating them into fewer but much larger groups. There are exceptions to the RSL proposal so that our RASVY group may not be affected all that much, however, until further advice is received nothing can be decided, but the matter must be resolved before next February/March 2014.

Fishing on the Darling

George Timmins and John Phillips recently enjoyed themselves relaxing for a week, while fishing on the River Darling at George's favourite campsite a few miles south-west from Wilcannia. Luckily the river level and flow were just right for fishing, so the daily catch was good enough to completely fill the portable freezer with fillets of perch within a few days. George estimated there would be enough to provide him with regular fish meals for the next three months, before planning his next trip.

He also mentioned that John and Tracey Phillips in company with Juana and Bret Van Leeuwin have booked themselves on a cruise around New Zealand for next Oct/November.

Touring the Queen's Highway

Effie and Roger Rees recently departed hometown Canberra, towing a caravan south through Victoria to the coast then moving west to Adelaide, meeting family and friends along the way.

They caught up with a few locals at the Saracen's Head on Friday 6th September, namely Pam and John Harrison, Alex Munro, Stevo Hinic, Allan Adsett and Bob Dikkenberg, as well as others during their stay in Adelaide. Moving north, they intend to visit T J Whicker and Tony Balkauskas at Stansbury, before touring home through Broken Hill and western NSW.

Invitation to visit

Pam and John Harrison reminded me (Alex Munro) that the invitation to old friends to visit them at their new residence at Willunga still stands, so keep it in mind if you intend driving down that way. Their new contact details are; 53 St Andrews Tce, Willunga; Phone 8556 2028, if you had not noted them before.

Vale

Wally Mooney

Wally died peacefully at the age of 82 years in mid May this year, after being in care suffering from Parkinson's Disease for some time, at the Glynde Lutheran Homes, Adelaide. Wally served at Fortuna for about 20 years until 1970, and as a corporal managed the Other Ranks Tavern for many years, consequently he was known to most serving members who passed through the Regiment during that time, many of whom would still be able to recall his time in the tavern and be saddened at his passing. He was considered to be something of a character during his time and I'm certain many will recall with laughter a few of Wally's escapades.

Percy Long

Percy died in late May this year at the Greenslopes Hospital in Brisbane, but no further details are known. Percy served long term as a field surveyor in the Corps, retiring many years ago with the rank of WO1. He was highly regarded for his ability as a surveyor and the integrity of his work in the field providing dependable control for mapping, and as an old school surveyor his passing will sadden many.

George Graham

George died unexpectedly at the age of 72 years in mid June this year, about two days after what was hoped would be routine heart surgery at the Epworth Hospital in Melbourne. Although such procedures are not without risk, it was still a shock to his wife Pat.

George was a WO2 camera operator in Litho Sqn at the time he was discharged, retiring after 20 years service including a year in Vietnam during 1969/70. As a mark of the esteem that George held within the Fortuna community, an estimated two hundred mourners attended his funeral in Bendigo. On behalf of our members who knew Pat well from former times, I offer our condolences to her and family.

Anzac Day Reunion

Held from noon onwards at a British pub, The Elephant and Wheelbarrow, in Vaughan Place as for the last four years now, and again fortunate enough to have the upstairs function area to ourselves, it provided everything we needed for a pleasant afternoon. The bar service and counter meals provided were both good as usual, and there was the extra bonus of the recently installed large TV screen to watch the traditional Anzac Day footy match in Melbourne. A whip-around list of names showed that 26 members attended, mostly from the march, but in addition a few more popped in: Bob Dikkenberg; Kay Collins; Alex Czornohalan; Stan Stephens after the long drive from Pt Augusta; Andy Capp; John Nathan and James Scharber with apologies for his dad John. If you remember, James served in Afghanistan with RAE about two years ago. The reunion carried on until late afternoon when the last few headed for home, ending another very enjoyable get-together.

Annual General Meeting 2013 - in brief.

Only those items of direct interest to members have been reported. The meeting was held at Keswick Barracks on Wednesday 10th April starting at 7.30pm.

Members attending the meeting were Dave Irvine, treasurer Peter Elverd, outgoing secretary Rob Langley, chairman Alex Munro, Bob Cooper, Bob Dikkenberg and Jim Dunn and apologies were received from Stevo Hinic, John Harrison, John Whitburn, Allan Adsett, Ken Jeffery, and Mal Henderson. Rob Langley presented minutes of the previous AGM which were discussed and duly accepted, including a minute in recognition of his work during the past year. Peter Elverd presented a financial statement as at that date, which was discussed and accepted by the meeting, showing available and unencumbered funds in the general account as \$2913.53 and history funds as \$344.58.

Annual subscriptions are to remain the same at ten dollars for local members, five dollars for interstate members and no fees for WW2 members or widows of former members. Official functions each year are reduced to the corps birthday function and Anzac Day activities, except for the odd special event. The annual donation of \$25.00 to the RSL was approved. An amount of \$1500.00 was allocated by members towards the erection of a memorial to 4 Field Survey Squadron at Keswick Barracks. This project has lapsed during the previous two years but with funds available an effort to complete the memorial during the summer months ahead is planned.

There was no formal election of office bearers, as the following members volunteered to serve on the management committee: Secretary—pending; Treasurer—Peter Elverd; Assistant secretary/treasurer—Dave Irving and Alex Munro; Newsletter—Noel Sproles (dependent on sufficient articles being received); Postal distribution—Jim Dunn. With no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

Corps Birthday Function 2013

The function was held at Keswick Barracks to celebrate the 98th birthday of the Corps, on Sunday 30th June.

Arranged as a BBQ lunch at the covered outdoor area of the Sergeants' Mess, it once more was the perfect venue for the occasion. Perhaps a few less than usual attended this year, but those who did were a pretty happy group and certainly enjoyed themselves, although Margaret Dikkenberg was still adjusting to cold Adelaide weather after arriving by air from sunny Queensland only two hours before.

As usual, formalities were minimal with a toast to the memory of the Corps and a toast to The Ladies, both proposed by Stevo Hinic. Apologies received included Allan and Judine Adsett also Frank and Naomi Bryant.

Of those attending most readers will know a few: Moyna Briggs; Gwenda Cheater; Bob and Margaret Dikkenberg; Jim and Rita Dunn; Peter and Julie Elverd; Bill and Jan Griggs; Pam and John Harrison; Stevo Hinic and Pauline Mannix; Kay Trueman; Andy and Sue Capp; Alex and Joan Munro.

Corps 100th birthday celebrations

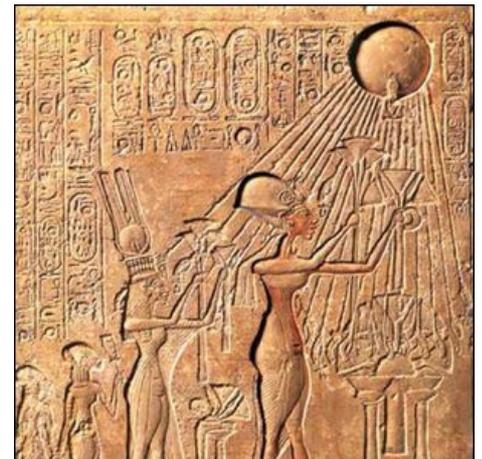
For those not privy to the various e-mails in the past few weeks regarding the where and what of proposed celebrations, a dinner and other events is definite for Bendigo as planned for some years, and perhaps an exhibition of a century of mapping by the Corps to be held in Canberra. Only two years away now so more later.

Why are there twenty four hours in the day?

Blame it on the Egyptians

Why do we have twenty four hours in a day—as opposed to twenty, or twelve, or any other division of time? To uncover the mystery of the twenty-four hour day we need to take a trip back to ancient Egypt.

While many cultures around the world use a base-10 system (largely in part because they began their exploration of mathematics by counting their ten fingers), ancient Egyptians used a base-12 system. Instead of counting their individual digits, Egyptians instead counted the knuckles of each hand using their thumbs as pointers (four fingers on each hand, three knuckles per hand, twelve total units).



It was this base-12 system that led the Egyptians to divide the day into 24 hours (two divisions of 12). What's even more interesting about the Egyptian division of the day is that light and darkness each had their own 12 hours—so in the summer when the daylight hours were extended the 12 hours of the day were longer and the 12 hours of the night were shorter. Individual hours of the day did not have a fixed length until Greek mathematicians proposed such an arrangement in order to facilitate easier calculations. Even then the length of individual hours remained largely fluid until the advent of mechanical clocks nearly fifteen centuries later.

Balcombe Barracks Commemoration

Earlier this year, a series of commemorative boards were placed near the main gates to the former Army Apprentices School at Balcombe. The only recognizable feature of the area, apart from the gates, is Mace Oval. Below is an extract from a report by Frank Maloney, a member of the organising committee, that provides some background to the project.

An image of the board dedicated to the School of Military Survey, and the text of the wording on the board, is provided in the adjacent columns.

Report extract

It was always going to be an ambitious project that first saw the Australian Army Apprentice Association (AAAA) embark upon in 2010 when it turned its attention on the original home of the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe in Victoria. From those who had visited the campsite in recent times there was a feeling that more could be done so that the military significance of the area could be improved and preserved for future generations..

Much has been written about the history of the military area that lies just south of the town of Mornington on the Mornington Peninsula, a premier district of Victoria. Though in most instances it had been done very well but it didn't have a sharp focus on the camp and its military tenants, that was easily available to the curious. Thus the project known as Balcombe Gates was borne.

AAAA established a sub committee comprising Barry Teal, Geoff Allen and Jack Westernhagen and made contact with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) and the other Associations of the Balcombe units to determine if they were interested in being a part of a heritage project. An enthusiastic reply was received from all. They also approached the 1st Div USMC Association and their prompt response was to despatch their Secretary to come to Australia and check it out.

The result was the establishment of a working committee mid 2010 chaired by Barry Teal with representatives of the MPSC and the School of Signals, School of Survey, School of Music and the AAAA. Good planning work was done by this group until personal circumstances beset the AAAA group around mid 2011 and they found they were unable to continue. As AAAA was the driving force, the project failed to make headway because at this time AAAA was focussed with the *Apprentice About* reunion to occur in Canberra in October of that year.

With that successful event out of the way the President initiated reactivation of the Balcombe Gates job. With that a new AAAA Sub Committee was formed comprising Lucas McGann, Peter Muir and myself.

From 1948 until 1965, Balcombe was used by the Australian Army to train soldiers of all ranks to be military map makers for the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Initially named the School of Survey, it was re-designated as the School of Military Survey in the early 1960s.

Training in the major map making skills of surveying and cartographic draughting ranged from the elementary to the most advanced and specialised levels. With advances in mapping and computer technology, the training provided progressed over time from labour-intensive manual field survey techniques to position fixing by satellite; from drawing maps with pen and ink to the use of computer aided draughting.

Graduates trained at Balcombe were posted to Royal Australian Survey Corps units throughout Australia where they made significant contributions to the mapping of the



School of Military Survey Balcombe 1948-1965

Australian continent. They also participated in survey and mapping operations in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and in the Pacific Islands as well as seeing active service in South Vietnam. Many served on exchange postings in Canada, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The area surrounding the Balcombe Camp and the Dromana Valley was used as a survey training ground for generations of military map makers. It is arguably one of the most surveyed and mapped areas in Australia as a consequence.

Over the course of their careers, members of the Royal Australian Survey Corps could expect to return to Balcombe many times. This close attachment between Balcombe and the Royal Australian Survey Corps came to an end in 1965 with the relocation of the School of Military Survey to Bonegilla in northern Victoria.