



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch
BULLETIN

PO Box 5784 Stafford Heights 4053

Website: www.rasurvey.org

CHRISTMAS EDITION – No 47

NOVEMBER 2011

CALENDAR 2011

9 December (Friday) Derek Chambers Award Presentation – at the Murray Bar of 1 Topo. 1400 – 1700 hrs – OC's formal invitation below.

Note: the Mapmakers Dinner hosted by 1 Topo will **not** take place this year.

CALENDAR 2012

25 April (Wednesday): March with your mates next Anzac Day. Details next Bulletin.

28 June (Thursday): Annual Dinner at the United Service Club honoring Colonel Alex Laing

1 September (Saturday) Annual Reunion and AGM – most likely at the Kilcoy RSL

From Major Troy Francis

To: President of the Royal Australian Survey Corps Assoc; past soldiers of 1 Topo Svy Sqn; ladies and gentlemen;

WO1 Stephen Hill, CSM and I formally invite you to the Murray Bar at 1 Topo Svy Sqn on **Friday, 9th December 2011 from 1400 to 1700 hrs.**

Since our previous get together, we have had a number of new junior soldiers march into the sub-unit and a number return from operations in Afghanistan, the Middle East and East Timor. It will be a great opportunity to rub shoulders with both the young and the old. We will be selling food, raffle tickets, having non-gender specific challenges and promoting a number of soldiers to ensure we have money over the Murray Bar. Dress is neat civilian attire or cams for serving members.

We also plan to announce and present, the **Derek Chambers Award** which is an annual award presented by the RASvy Association to a junior soldier who has had the greatest contribution to the sub-unit's Esprit de Corps.

RSVP to the RTF President, WO2 Lee Palfrey (lee.palfrey@defence.gov.au) by 9 Nov 2011. When you send your RSVP, please indicate to WO2 Palfrey if you have an active Army ID card as we have new security measures in place and will need to coordinate with the Garrison Security to gain access to the barracks for the function.

With our operational tempo, it has been a very busy year for the Squadron, however, we look forward to having a Christmas drink with you all. If you have questions about the afternoon, please contact WO1 Stephen Hill on (07) 3332 7564.

Troy J. Francis MAJOR
Officer Commanding
1st Topographical Survey Squadron
6th Engineer Support Regiment

The Royal Australian Survey Corps Association (Queensland) acknowledges the generous sponsorship and support of 

COMMITTEE

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1 TOPO SVY SQN			
Squadron OC	Major Troy Francis		
Squadron SSM	WO1 Stephen Hill, CSM	Ph 3332 7564 mob 043 817 5977	email: stephen.hill1@defence.gov.au

Note: Refer Veteran's Affairs matters to Peter Bates-Brownsword and Stan Campbell

NOTICES

BERETS – BERETS – BERETS

Our stocks of our ever popular beret are now nearly depleted. However, stocks are held at Christie's in Sydney. Be distinctive in the RA Survey Association headdress. Contact Alex Cairney email alex.cairney@hotmail.com

Note: Christies can be contacted as follows:
Unit 4D; 1-7 Unwin Bridge Rd, St Peters, NSW 2044.
Phone 02 9519 0784

THE 1 TOPO CHALLENGE COIN

No longer available.

GARY HUNTER'S KABUL NEWSLETTERS:

Newsletter No1 was included with our last Bulletin No 46. Since then a further six newsletters have been received. They are a fascinating read – life in the Green Zone in Kabul from a past Corps member who is there and experiencing it day by day. Gary is happy for his newsletters to be forwarded to any Association or ex-Corps member who has an interest. Email either Alex Cairney or Bob Skitch.

MAPMAKERS OF FORTUNA

Copies may be purchased from the Ex-Fortuna Survey Association (PO Box 865 Bendigo 3552) at \$60.00 plus postage of \$11.50 which includes cost of a padded postal bag.

VIETNAM – A TECHNICAL TOUR by Bob McMillan-Kay.

Copies can be obtained from Bob McMillan-Kay at a cost of \$36.00 including postage. We commend this highly successful book of Bob's Vietnam experience. Bob's address is 14 March Lane, Maryborough, Qld, 4650.

RA SURVEY HISTORY by Dr Chris Coulthard

Clark – copies are still available. Contact Secretary Greg Knight for details.

ASSOCIATION TIE or SCARF & BADGE

Cost of tie or scarf is \$25.00 plus postage. Association badges are still available from the Queensland Association. Place your order with the Queensland Association. Phone or email Secretary Greg Knight

POST OUT OF BULLETIN

Our post-out by email continues with only about twenty members requiring hard copy. Keep in mind if you require hard copy let Secretary Greg know and hard copy will be sent.

OUR WEB SITE – www.rasurvey.org remains a 'work in progress' but it is still active and appears to get a number of 'hits' – some quite unexpected.

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

Our 'What Did We Do' project remains open for further contributions. Have a look and see if you can fill a few of the gaps. Email your contribution direct to Bob Skitch bob@skitch.me or enter your data on our website – www.rasurvey.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Association members in the categories of 'Life', 'Honorary' and 'Ordinary' are listed at Annex A to this Bulletin. Please check your membership status. Paid-up status for Ordinary Members terminates with the AGM on the first Saturday in September. Annual subscription is \$15.00 per year. If your name does not appear on the listing it means your membership has lapsed. We suggest that paying three or more years in advance is a good idea. (Annex A not on website)

REPORT – AGM & ANNUAL REUNION

Yet another successful Reunion function was conducted at the Alderley Arms Hotel on Saturday 3rd September. Although attendance at this traditional event has fallen over the past ten years this year attendance was creditable and included members we haven't seen for some time. A number of specific apologies were received. President Alex Cairney conducted the AGM on the basis that a 'good meeting is a short one'. The following business was attended to...

President's Report

The President welcomed all members and guests present and read out the apologies received. He then commented on recently departed Association members and also included the passing of other Corps notables.

After reviewing functions conducted during the past year, the President thanked the Committee members for their hard work and Bob Skitch for his tireless efforts in producing the Bulletin and also the PNG plaque project.

He then invited Percy Long to provide a brief report on the dedication of the PNG memorial plaque which Percy, Bob and Peter had attended on Sun 24 Jul 11.

The President then canvassed members for support in holding the 2012 AGM/reunion function again at the Kilcoy RSL. This suggested function venue was met with enthusiasm and widespread support from the large majority of those present.

Financial Report

The President acknowledged that our strong financial position resulted from the ongoing generous support of our sponsor, RPS, and called on the Treasurer to present the Financial Report. Greg Knight proposed that the Financial Report as presented be accepted and the proposal was seconded by Stan Campbell. The motion was carried.

Election of 2012 Executive Committee

The President declared all executive committee positions vacant and called on Peter Blaskett to take the chair for the election of a new executive committee. Those elected for 2012 were:

President: Alex Cairney – nominated: Barry Lutwyche; seconded: Greg Knight.

Vice-President: Kym Weston – nominated: Barry Lutwyche; seconded: Stan Campbell.

Secretary: Greg Knight – nominated: Barry Lutwyche; seconded: Stan Campbell.

Treasurer: Ross Smithwick – nominated: Barry Lutwyche; seconded: Greg Knight.

Asst Secretary/Treasurer: Barry Lutwyche; nominated Stan Campbell; seconded: Alex Cairney.

Roll call

Present

Dave Anderson	Greg Knight	John Gilbert	Brian Partridge
Jim Gill	Percy Long	Ross Smithwick	Ian Fitzgerald
Peter Bates-	Matthew Long	Grant Small	Tony Gee
Brownsword	Peter Blaskett	Apologies	Ian Thiselton
Barbara Bates-	Alex Cairney	John Ashby	Bruce Gordon
Brownsword	Barry Lutwyche	John Hunter	Kym Weston
Ian Hutchings	Stan Campbell	David Bush	Colin Hargreaves
Warner Hutchings	Hank Opdam	Dave O'Shannessy	Steve Wilson
John Beard	Peter Cross	Ace Evans	Bob Skitch
Sandra Beard			

'WORLD WAR TWO MILITARY MAPMAKERS OF THE SEVENTH'

A booklet by Trevor Menzies

Ed: Although never having served in RA Survey Trevor Menzies has had a great interest in the 7th Field Survey Section that was based in Darwin during World War Two to undertake mapping in the Northern Territory at a time when it was believed that Australia was in imminent danger of being invaded by the Japanese. Trevor through the Institution of Surveyors in July 2002 had a plaque placed at the Darwin Cenotaph to commemorate the contributions of the Northern Territory based Survey Corps Units to the war effort. Like many other WW2 survey units the Northern Territory unit underwent several name changes. Initially it was raised in early 1941 as the 7MD Svy Sec, then became the NT Force Fd Svy Sec, then 1 Fd Svy Sec and finally, 7 Fd Svy Sec. The unit strength was 2 officers and 43 other ranks and the OC was Lt L.J. (Lindsay) Lockwood. In 1943 the unit returned south and was replaced by 6 Army Topo Svy Coy under Capt J Tait and carried out extensive mapping in the NT and NW WA. (*Australia's Military Mapmakers – CD Coulthard-Clark*)

To many members of our Association the 7th Field Survey Section has become the 'forgotten 7th' Trevor has corrected that on two occasions and we in the Survey Corps Associations owe Trevor a debt of gratitude.

Trevor Menzies was the convenor of the '100 Years of Topographic Mapping' conference in Canberra this year to which Peter Jensen and Dennis Puniard made significant contributions. Their respective papers are published in recent special editions of the ACT Association Newsletter available on our website.

Preface

This booklet recounts the experiences and achievements of a military mapping unit of the Australian Army during the Second War. The unit was initially called the 7th Military District Survey Section when raised in April 1941 and subsequently underwent several

changes of name to become the 7th Australian Field Survey Section A.I.F. Because of these name changes the unit is generally referred to as the *Seventh* for brevity. The *Seventh* was disbanded in September 1943 after serving in the Northern Territory and north Queensland. Most of its members then transferred to the larger 2/1st (*Second First*) Australian Army Topographical Survey Company and served in north Queensland, Dutch New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies until the end of the war. The material in this paper is largely based upon the personal notes of Jim Aitken who served with *Seventh* and then the *Second First* from November 1940 to January 1946. Jim was in the process of writing the history of the *Seventh* when he passed away unexpectedly in April 1994. He left behind a detailed account that had been compiled in conjunction with several of his colleagues. I have taken on the task to complete the work that Jim commenced many years ago. He had a great memory for dates, places and events and was a meticulous person in all things that he did. His material has made the task of completing the story of the *Seventh* an easy and enjoyable one.Trevor Menzies February 2010

Ed: The complete booklet with maps and photographs is fully presented in the latest ACT Association Newsletter 4/11 now posted on our website – www.rasurvey.org .

4TH FIELD SURVEY COMPANY – a series of emails

Ed: I have often referred to the 4th Field Survey Company as our forgotten WW2 survey company. Coulthard Clark makes some reference to 4 Coy, the most significant of which is on page 82 which reads *'Doubtless No 4 Field Survey Company would have been thrown into the task as well but for the fact that at this time Western Australia was facing its own threat of Japanese attack from captured bases in the Netherlands East Indies, with the result that the company was retained in the west and kept busy on local mapping, mostly on the coastal fringe from Albany to Port Hedland'*. 4 Coy came to an end in April '45 with personnel being transferred to 2 and 3 Coys. Our Association Patron, Lieutenant Colonel Ed Anderson, MBE was a member of 4Coy and recalls service as a young soldier in the Kimberley region in the early years of WW2.



Perusing a few photos recently I came across a photo of the RA Survey plaque installed at the AWM in Canberra. Reading the plaque caused me to email Brian Mead as follows...

Brian: I happened to pull up a photo of the RA Svy plaque installed at the AWM in Canberra and I noticed that 4Coy doesn't appear on the plaque. Why not – was there a reason for that?Bob

On 5/10/2011 5:07 PM, Brian Mead responded (cc John Bullen, Charlie Watson):
Hi Bob: Charlie (Watson) would be the best person to give you an explanation.

I believe that the decision made before the plaque was installed is unfair as the Coy was operating under war time conditions. Both the late Frank Cohen and the late Eric Brook told me that during the plane table mapping of Exmouth Gulf (Sep 1943) – they experienced a Japanese air raid.

A bomb landed 500 metres away from their party. American submarine base !!!! The late Nevis Cherry also wrote about his 4 Fd Svy Coy experiences and covered the inequities of service recognition. Frank Cohen told me that the OC Wally Relf was of the opinion that 4 Fd Svy Coy's mapping work was top secret intelligence – **“they did not exist !!!!”**

There appears to be only scant documentation of 4 Coy's activities which could contribute to the lack of recognition of 4 Fd Svy Coy's work. Clem Sargent told me (letter 2004) that there was a clean out of early RA Svy Records (covering WW2) in Canberra during the 1950's by some over exuberant clerical staff. (Ed – I believe this happened during one of the many moves of Survey Directorate in Canberra)

Charlie Watson gave me a part copy of the 4 Fd Svy Coy War Diary – Jan 1941 to Aug 1941. This was the only part still in existence and was found totally by accident with other records.

I have created a digital copy of the WW2 writings of Sgt Ron McCallum – 4 Fd Svy Coy and later 3 Fd Svy Coy. His recollections begin in mid 1942.

There are some old records at Australian National Archives located at East Victoria Park, Perth. I have visited there a few times in 2010 and found the staff very helpful. Records held at 5 Fd Svy Sqn were documented and evaluated by the OC John Greggs during 1989. At that time, active survey records were forwarded on to 4 Fd Svy Sqn (in Adelaide) while those of historical significance were handed over to the Australian National Archives East .Victoria Park – late 1989.

I have yet to completely 'sight' all the ANA records as part of our WA Association Project – History of RA Svy Corps in WA.....Regards, Brian.

On 9 October John Bullen emailed in response...

Bob & Brian: Sorry for slow reply – have only just returned home after a month away.

Also sorry to learn of disappointment at 4 Fd Svy Coy not being included on the Survey Corps plaque at the AWM. 4 Coy did not qualify under the AWM's rules for inclusion on such a plaque. In essence, a unit had to have served in an officially recognised theatre of war.

Two Survey Corps units which did not serve overseas were presented to the AWM for consideration as special cases for inclusion. These were 7 Fd Svy Sec (in NT) and LHQ Carto Coy (in Vic).

7 Fd Svy Sec was based in NT 1941-1943 and was in Darwin at the time of the major raid, thus serving in an officially recognised theatre of war.

Although LHQ Cartographic Company was at Bendigo for almost the whole war, this unit's contribution to the war effort was so remarkable that its inclusion as a special case was strongly sought. The case was based on it being the key unit to which all the field

companies overseas sent their field compilations for LHQ Carto Coy to do the draughting and printing of all their maps. Between 1942 and 1945, LHQ Carto Coy printed 75 million impressions in the course of printing some 15 million maps. LHQ Carto Coy's tremendous importance to the war effort was the very reason it was moved from Melbourne (too close to the front line!) to Bendigo in 1942.

Both units were readily accepted by the AWM for the Svy Corps plaque. No case was submitted for 4 Coy which was seen as being in a category similar to many other Australian Army units which may have experienced minor enemy action though not in an officially recognised theatre of war.

Before the AWM's final decision was made on the Survey Corps plaque, the AWM's History Section examined all Survey Corps WW2 war diaries closely. So too did I and I discussed everything in full detail with Clem Sargent who was in good health at the time. My study of the war diaries was done independently – indeed the AWM would not allow outsiders to have direct contact with their History Section. Clem and I considered the final AWM decision to be sound.

The AWM holds ultimate responsibility for selection of unit titles on the Survey Corps plaque but unofficially Clem and I share that responsibility, having concurred in that decision.

Sorry if anyone feels aggrieved, but this is one of those situations where the line had to be drawn somewhere and 4 Coy's case was not strong enough to warrant being presented.

Hope this explanation helps.....Cheers, John

MORE ON CLEWSY – THE MAJOR

Lieutenant Colonel Clews (otherwise known affectionately as 'The Major' or simply Clewsy) died in 1980. The 'Major' was an original member of the Australian Survey Corps and his memory through anecdotes lingers on for many.

Brian Mead in WA emails..... 'Whilst fossicking through a few boxes of old magazines, I came across a copy of Bulletin No: 81. *'The Life Story of Lt.Col. H.P.G. Clews'*. Must have been fate as I have been trying to track down info ref Clew's employment on mapping tasks in Australia prior to WW1.

How my interest came about – my old friend the late Eric Clutterbuck gave me an original plane table sheet, completed and signed by Clews in 1916. The map sheet area was part of a 1:63,360 topo map near Fremantle that was printed in the early 1920's in Victoria. Eric told me that he had rescued the plane table sheet from the incinerator at Karrakatta – early 1950's. The sheet was scanned @ 200 DPI by one of our WA Members – Phil Bray a few years ago. My aim is to obtain a digital copy of the printed Fremantle 1:63,360 Map and to identify the Clews plane table sheet within it. Naturally I will proceed with a *Westlink* article covering the origins of the plane table sheet and include references to Bulletin No 81'.

Ed: I have been sent the following entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography. (I have no record of who sent it to me and I apologize to that person). It is certainly worth publishing

CLEWS, HUGH POWELL GOUGH (1890-1980), surveyor and army officer, was born on Christmas Day 1890 at Rotherham, Yorkshire, England, son of William Henry Clews, restaurateur, and his wife Helen Powell, née Sharp. After a basic education, Hugh completed a two-year apprenticeship as a surveyor. At 5 ft 6¼ ins (168 cm), he was considered too short for the Royal Engineers, so he enlisted in the Sherwood Foresters in July 1909. He left the British Army in 1911 and migrated to Western Australia.

On 1 August 1912 Clews joined the Permanent Military Forces as a sergeant in the survey section of the Royal Australian Engineers. He was employed as a mapmaker in South Australia and—with the new (Royal) Australian Survey Corps—in Victoria and Western Australia. In December 1917 he transferred to the Australian Imperial Force. Before embarking for England, on 10 January 1918 he married Alice May Reeves with Anglican rites at Holy Trinity Church, Balaclava, Melbourne. Clews served in France from June 1918 to April 1919. Back home, he reverted to the P.M.F. in July and next year was posted to New South Wales where he carried out topographical surveys and established survey control for mapping.

Commissioned lieutenant and made officer commanding No 3 Survey Section in November 1933, he took command of No.2 Field Survey Company in October 1940 and was promoted major next month. From successive headquarters at Strathfield and Kyogle, and Childers and Ingham in Queensland, he supervised coastal triangulation, geodetic control and topographic mapping. 'Iron Man' Clews endeared himself to his subordinates by his feats of endurance, and by his humanity and charm. In June 1944 he reluctantly gave up field-work for staff duties in Sydney. Placed on the Retired List on 29 July 1949 as an honorary lieutenant colonel, he established a home in the bush at Bell.

In early 1950 Clews entered into an initial five-year contract as a senior surveyor with the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority. Wiry and white haired, he wore a battered hat and loved being the first into new territory. His reconnaissance surveys, carried out on foot through harsh terrain, preceded the construction of roads and tunnels, and anticipated the work of hydrologists, other surveyors and blasting teams as the vast water-diversion project took shape. 'The Major's' courage and leadership made him a legend among fellow workers, many of whom were European refugees. He retired in February 1958 to a forty-acre (16 ha) lease at Indi, near Khancoban, where he built a pisé house. Eccentric but by no means a recluse, he enjoyed the *Illustrated London News*, the works of Rudyard Kipling, the music of Sibelius, gardening, a pipe and a drink of rum. He wrote *Strzelecki's Ascent of Mount Kosciusko* (Melbourne, 1970).

Until the 1970s 'Clewsie' continued to march on Anzac Day in Sydney and was a regular visitor to the army's School of Survey at Bonegilla, Victoria. Increasingly frail, he moved to Khancoban, then to Frankston, Melbourne. Survived by his son and two daughters, he died there on 22 August 1980 and was cremated. A granite cairn at Indi commemorates him.

PERSONALLIA and other jottings

Les (LVJ) Smith reports that their July old and bold basic course (all from the 4/52 other than LVJ who was earlier) annual get-together at Dooley's Irish pub is thinning out with apologies this year from Len Davies, Dennis Cox and Jock Campbell all not in the best of health. This year it was reduced to LVJ, Jeff Lambert and Mac McCarthy. Les reports that Jeff has published another book with the title '*Pathways to Gold*'. It is to be launched in September by the Maryborough City Council. This is Jeff's second book, the first, *The Traveston Story* sold well and it dealt with the very contentious issue of the then proposed Traveston Mary River dam.

'Longitude'

Ed – the following hyperlink was sent to me by Brian Mead who with Fred Brown had received it from B.J. Sloan, Assistant Director Capability Coordination, Office of the Capability Coordinator - Geospatial Information, Department of Defence, Canberra – via Michael Ryan, the WA President of the RAE Association. The email read.....

The latest issue of Longitude can be found at the link below. Please distribute the newsletter to your staff and communities. Internet:

http://www.defence.gov.au/digo/ccqi/Docs/Longitude_Issue3_Sep2011.pdf

(Ed: to open press control then left click – it may take a few moments to open.)

What is 'Longitude'? This is its masthead.....

Longitude – The Defence Geospatial Newsletter

Issue 3 - September 2011

- DIGO Support Elements - TS11
- DIGO LO Deploys with 6th Brigade
- Headlines in Brief
- 131st Surveillance Target Acquisition Battery in Joint ScanEagle Exercise
- The Geo Domain - Seeking Value for Money
- HM Branch assisting with OP RENDER SAFE

It advises the following forthcoming events.....

September 2011

- 9-11 - State of the Map 2011 - Denver, Colorado USA Link
- 12-16 Free & Open Source Software for Geospatial - Denver, Colorado USA Link
- 27-29 - Geospatial Defence & Intelligence Asia Pacific 2011 - Malaysia Link

October 2011

- 12-13 - Inaugural Joint Warfare Conference - Canberra Link
- 17-19 - Asia Geospatial Forum - Jakarta, Indonesia Link
- 24-27 - United Nations Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management - Seoul, ROK Link

November 2011

- 9 - Defence GEOINT Conference - 'National Security Challenges and Opportunities' - Canberra.
- 15 - HoDGA & DGUF Meeting - Canberra
- 15-17 - Spatial@gov 2011 - Canberra Link

Noel and Linda Sproles have recently completed a road trip to Townsville. Their son



James is an army legal officer there with the rank of Major. Apart from seeing James and grand children Noel enjoys the trip and a bit of sightseeing.

The piccy – Noel calls this one 'The Four Galahs'. I can only count three – now I wonder who the fourth one is.....Bob

Alex Cairney (our President) is a survey militaria buff. He has notified his interest to 'e Bay' and gets a notification of any items of militaria that have 'Survey Corps' in their address line; (e Bay – the online auction and shopping website in which people and businesses buy and sell a broad variety of goods and services worldwide). Alex was seeking something on 'Survey Corps' on e Bay and got the following surprising response.....

Hi alexander,

You saved survey corps as something you are looking for. We've found 1 newly-listed item that matches. Just click "Show items" to see this matching item. We hope this helps you find exactly what you want.

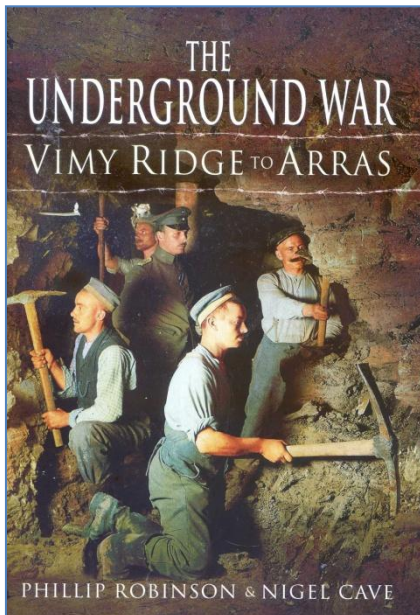
Map, LUSCOMBE AIRFIELD - NUI DAT, Vietnam War 6430 iii - ANZAC SURVEY CORPS 1968



Buy it Now AU \$405.33
Postage AU \$.89
End Time 16 Oct 11,
10.06.25

Alex's comment – what a rip-off!....we agree!

Bob and Wendy Skitch depart for London on Saturday 25 November returning Sunday 25 January 2012. Why London in the middle of winter you may well ask? On the 13th August their son Christopher and daughter in law Sharon presented them with their first grandson named Thomas Oliver Rex Skitch. Their intention is to have Christmas with



Sharon, Chris and Thomas, cold though it may be. At some point during that six week sojourn they will visit Bob's cousin Jeffrey at Lymington, Hampshire, a delightful very old coastal village on the Solent opposite the Isle of Wight. Not far from there in the New Forest the ships of Lord Nelson's fleet were built, careened and repaired using the oak from the forest. New Forest is not really a forest but a very large protected area of pasture, small villages and some forest.

Bob says Chris and Sharon both became naturalised Poms earlier in the year but Chris remains an Aussie nevertheless.

Bob also plans to visit Phillip Robinson at Andover. Phillip spends much of his time with the *Durand Group* opening, exploring the tunnel complexes of WW1 in northern France and making safe the huge caches of explosives, a legacy of the underground war. His co-authored book, the first of a series '*The Underground War*' was recently published by '*Pen and Sword Military*'. Some may have seen the excellent Australian movie '*Beneath Hill 60*' which dealt with the Australian involvement in that war of desperation.

Dennis Gregor has been appointed the Chief Examiner of Surveyors by the Surveyors Board of Queensland recently. Dennis modestly comments: 'It is not a thing of much significance in the wider world, but certainly a career highlight for me and one I am quite proud of. It has been a fairly busy year for me and I haven't been able to attend many Association functions, but hope to change that next year.

Remember the WRAAC

Those of us who served at the AHQ (later Army) Survey Regiment during the 1950s, '60s and '70s would well remember the ladies of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC). Mostly employed in the Cartographic and Lithographic Squadrons they numbered at a guess probably 50 or 60 out of the total Regimental strength of 320. (all of this from memory). In very early post WW2 days some had continued on from the WW2 AWAS. Many lived in at what was known as the WRAAC barracks in Carpenter Street, Bendigo, once the home of Premier Dunstan in the 1930s. During the 1980s the WRAAC was disbanded with members allocated to the corps within which they served.



In the *'Vetaffairs'* spring issue there is an article headed *70th Anniversary of Women's Services*. The article has a single photograph of two WRAAC members. The caption inaccurately reads : *Bendigo VIC. 1957-05. Two members of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), attached to the Royal Australian Survey Corps, working on topographical survey maps. Note the Army Headquarters badges on their right arms. Image courtesy of AWM.*

Now – who are these two ladies poring over a manuscript? A lieutenant (unusual at that time) and a sapper – I think the ladies were termed 'privates'.

VALE

Frank Cohen

Brian Mead emails..It is my sad duty to inform you that Frank Cohen passed away today – Wed 7th September 2011. Frank was a long term Member of our Association/s – 4 Fd Svy Coy Old Comrades and RA Svy Corps Association (WA).

During WW2 Frank served with 4 Fd Svy Coy in WA. Later in 1948 he joined the ARA – serving with RA Svy Corps as a Topographic Surveyor.

Frank was interred at the Karrakatta Cemetery – Jewish Section on Thursday 8th September 2011. Frank's family abided by Jewish custom. Frank's coffin was covered by the RA Survey Corps Flag. Brian visited Frank's family at Yokine and attended his funeral on our Association's behalf.

Neil Divett

The Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute notes the passing of Dr Neil Divett yesterday from a heart attack at the age of 76. Dr Divett was an Honorary Fellow of SSSI and ISAQ, a Past Surveyor General, and was actively involved in the profession right up to the time of his passing. He was much loved and will be sadly missed. Neil's funeral took place on Monday 12 September 2011 at the Kenmore Baptist Church.

Ed: Dr Neil Divett although not a past member of RA Survey was a significant member of the surveying profession. He spent many years in the Australian Survey Office before moving into the then Department of Surveying and Mapping as Director Division of Surveys, succeeding Bernie McDonald, an ex 2nd/1st Coy man.

Neil spent his final years in public service on the Land Court.

BLASTS – Deserved or not!.....Bob Skitch

Most of us would have been on the receiving end of a blast from a superior authority on the odd occasion throughout our army career. All one can do is grin and bear it. I can recall three and in each instance it was entirely undeserved – at least I think so.

Incident No 1 – About 1964 or 65 I was administering command of the N Comd Fd Svy Section, then at Damascus Barracks Gaythorne. We had with us at the time the Johnston Ground Elevation Meter, a complex piece of equipment fitted into a large *GMC 4 wheel drive, 4 wheel steer van with a retractable 5th wheel that accurately recorded distance. The wheel was on the centre of the road side so that it recorded the same portion of the road on its return journey; the electronic pendulum constantly calculated the sine of the angle in the direction of travel which when applied to the distance covered, calculated the height difference travelled. A dumpy level was installed internally enabling connections to be made directly to bench marks etc.* It was an amazing piece of equipment of US origin and I think the Corps had two. Sam Chambers was the GEM guru, at least here in Northern Command. The GEM van was fitted with flashing lights and large warnings that it was left-hand drive such that it was very obvious on the road. Furthermore, to get the best out of the equipment it had to be driven close to the centre of the road at about 20mph – at least that was what Sam said.

At about 5.00pm one day I had a very angry call from a very red-faced red-cap Colonel, Chief Engineer sitting in his office at Gaythorne overlooking Samford Road – then only a two lane road. Our JEM was progressing down Samford Road at about 10mph with all lights flashing and the traffic piled up in both directions as far as one could see. Our Colonel was irate beyond belief and all I could do was to assure him that it would soon be over as soon as it reached the front gate of Gaythorne. Sam Chambers always liked making a splash!

Tech description in italics provided by Alex Cairney who also said that Cpls Mick Johnson (E Comd) and Wayne Gillies (Regt) did the user trials at Balcombe.

Incident No 2 – About the same time one morning I had a very querulous call from no less than the GOC of Northern Command wanting to know what was going on in North Queensland (Gulf country I think). Some landholder had reported a rather bizarre incident. He came across a bloke camped on his property in the middle of a paddock in a small tent and a whole lot of weird looking equipment that looked like some sort of clandestine radio station. If it had anything to do with army 'why the hell didn't he know about it?' It seems that when the landholder approached the lone bloke and asked what was going on the bloke replied in a very thick foreign accent and on being asked if he

was army the reply was 'I'm from the udder army'. I had little or no knowledge of what it was about but vaguely recalled that either the lunar occultation project or the HIRAN survey was somewhere in northern Queensland. Both were managed by Survey Directorate. Anyhow, I told the angry GOC that it was lunar occultations and that just about blew his mind. He ordered me to produce a brief on the matter and have it on his table by 0900 the following morning. After a quick bit of research I produced a page or two with diagrams and passed it to his aide and it was duly placed on his table. I doubt if he even bothered to read it. I think the bloke in the paddock was Harry Berger; at least so the story went.

Incident No 3 – In 1975 when I was OC 1 Field Survey Squadron in Brisbane I had a small opportunity program taking air photos of army bases when we were mapping or doing other things in the vicinity. It was an authorised program and a number of Army units had requested an air photo of their base location. Our civilian contractor based at Toowoomba (Snow Richards – Phoenix Air) who undertook our extraneous air photography and other air based survey tasks accepted the job at a very nominal price. Trevor Richards whom I knew in Vietnam was the OC of the Signals Unit at Toowoomba had asked whether his location could be put on the list and sometime later that opportunity occurred. On a clear sunny day the contractor's Queenair aircraft circled around at about 5,000 feet over the unit. I wasn't aware it was happening on that day – it was pure opportunity. I think Trevor must have forgotten his request (or maybe he had moved on) because he or someone else, maybe his 2IC, had phoned 1MD stating to the effect that an unmarked aircraft was breaching the secure airspace above his unit. I had an angry call from the 1MD Deputy Commander who asked if I knew anything about it. I explained the circumstances and copped the rocket. The photos were of course excellent taken with the RC 10 high resolution camera. I hope Trevor appreciated them. I should add that the Sigs unit at Toowoomba enjoys a high security classification.

ERNIE CHAMBERLAIN AND D445

Who is Ernie Chamberlain and what is D445? you might ask. For those who did not serve in Vietnam, D445 was the Provincial Viet Cong Battalion and our chief adversary throughout the seven years of our involvement in Phuoc Tuy. Ernie is yet another who has discovered our website and found it of use. He has thoroughly researched D445 and has written and privately published a book available at no cost to the reader. Ernie's initial email dated June 2011 reads:

Hi Bob,

Have just read your book on-line, and enjoyed it greatly. I don't believe that we've met so to introduce myself - my background is : retired Australian Army officer (36 years), two Vietnam tours (Div Int, Baria Int LO, Embassy), two years in Cambodia, JIO Vietnam desk officer 1973-75 etc. I'm a "contemporary" of Don Swiney. Currently I'm completing a book on D445 that I'll publish privately, and non-commercially, next month – and also place on Scribd for "free-to-read" on the Internet. The book is based on the translations I've done of several Vietnamese communist military histories and captured documents – I'm an ADF linguist (Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesia and Khmer).

In your book, I was interested in your mention of a North Vietnamese officer "Hung" at p.20 in Part 3 where you mention working on some of his captured maps. I'm certain that it was Nguyễn Nam Hùng – the 2ic of 274 VC Main Force Regiment, whose diary – and other documents, were captured in the Nui Thi Vai area. I expand on that in my forthcoming book. Interestingly, Hùng was interviewed a few years ago in Vũng Tàu by Paul Ham (ie author of Vietnam - The Australian War), but Hùng could not "recall the loss of his diary."

I was also very interested in the battle sketch maps made by Harry Smith that you included in Part 2, p.55. D445's History – which they've published (in Vietnamese), related the Long Tan battle - but their description is a bit of a "muddle". However the 5th VC Division History is a little clearer – and certainly less propagandist. The 5th VC Division History states: "The 3rd Battalion ((ie the NVA D605 Battalion that had been integrated into 275 VC Regiment about two months before the battle at Long Tan as the third battalion of 275 VC Regiment)) was deployed about 800 metres to the northwest of Route 52 with the task of attacking into the main killing zone at the Thát Pagoda". Does the "Thát Pagoda" ring a bell with you ? Do you know whether there was any such structure in the immediate area of the Long Tan rubber plantation – is the rectangular "block" on the battle sketch maps possibly a small pagoda-type structure ? Any ideas would be appreciated ?

Best wishes, Ernie Chamberlain

My reply:

You seem an interesting fellow. 1966/67 was early days for 1ATF. Any sort of captured VC doc always created a great deal of interest but the unfortunate fact was that the TF had very little capacity for doing much with them. Coming from US sources by the time it got to us it was so old as to be worthless.

The small in-filled rectangle might have been some sort of small pagoda given that the others are square. Certainly small structures of that kind were common enough. It would be a gigantic guess however to identify it as such. We produced a map at scale 1:5000 of Long Tan at about that time. I am not sure that it ever went past dyeline stage, that is, not printed. The village had been totally wiped out before the so called 'Battle of Long Tan'. Harry Smith's battle sketches were done on a handful of enlargements of that map in a great hurry. I think Harry Smith might just as well have drawn his sketches on plain paper. I don't think they have much relationship to scale either. One of them was even drawn with the map base upside down. To my mind the whole incident was very strange, quite some weeks after the battle. It struck me that it was an attempt to put what was really just a contact into classic military maneuvers – situating the appreciation as we sometimes call it. Harry Smith seemed remarkably subdued. So much has been said about Long Tan – too much I think. Alpha Company's arrival at the scene saved what would otherwise have been an unmitigated disaster. Alpha Company has received little recognition for what they did. Without wanting to denigrate any of the young blokes in Delta Company, Alpha Company were the real heroes of the whole incident – charging in to the point of contact in pouring rain and near darkness not knowing what they were going to find. But then who am I to say. I am a surveyor, not a military tactician. Perhaps you have read Charles Mollison's book Long Tan and Beyond – it is a worthwhile read. Charles is a great fellow.

Recent revelations of radio intelligence from 547 Sig Tp available to the HQ staff and OD Jackson at the time seems to have opened up a can of worms yet again. You may be aware of the article below.

http://battleoflongtan.reddunefilms.com/2011/02/secret-australian-army-intelligence-battle-of-long-tan/?utm_source=feedburner

From my observation of what went on in the HQ it has always seemed to me that OD (Jackson) played his cards very astutely. He had company size screen patrols out north and east and I can't see a case that he ignored 547s evidence.

Thank you for your kind comments on my own writing. I am at the stage where I do not really know what to do with it. I look forward to your own publication. I have read Paul Ham's book – not bad, best so far, and Greg Lockhart's book on the minefield disaster. Best wishes....Bob

Again from Ernie on 14 June

Thanks for the prompt and very informative email – and again, congratulations on your book. I believe that it's very important to put your history down – before we (our generation) "fades away". I'm very disappointed that there's no history – like yours – of Det 1 Div Int Unit, it's a significant omission.

Finding the “pagoda” reported in the 5th Div History is really no big deal. Indeed, that 5 VC Div History that I mentioned is the only Vietnamese source that mentions such. The small hut shown “central” to the Battle area (ie beside the track) on the sketches is almost certainly the “rubber tapper’s hut” described by Dave Sabben and others.

As you might imagine, there are considerable disparities – contradictions and errors also, in the half-dozen or so Vietnamese military histories that relate their version of Long Tan (and other engagements also). Perhaps a good example is the D445 History that cites “274 Regiment” (ie and not 275 Regiment) as their VC “partner unit” at the Battle of Long Tan. Perhaps one of the best reports that I have is the debrief of the assistant political officer of the 3rd Battalion of 275 Regiment (ie formerly D605 NVA Battalion that arrived in about May 1966).

The catalyst for me writing on Long Tan was my “annoyance” in discovering that the two volumes of the official history (ie *To Long Tan, On the Offensive*) both cite Nguyen Van Kiem as the D445 commander at the Battle – and there are photographs of the AWM historians getting a briefing and Long Tan battlefield tour by Kiem in mid-1988. Kiem has also briefed and guided visiting Australian dignitaries – eg Tim Fisher when Deputy PM, Peter Cosgrove when Chief of Army. Kiem has also appeared in the Long Tan “DVD” explaining the battle – and is quite dismissive of any Australian accounts of the engagement. However, Nguyen Van Kiem was not at the Battle. Rather, from March 1966 to December 1967, he was commanding the Chau Duc District Unit. I have an “administrative instruction” that Kiem signed as the Chau Duc commander on 19 August 1966 – the day after the Battle. Kiem did command 445, but not until December 1967 – and he led the attack on Baria at Tet 68. The 445 Commander at Long Tan was Bui Quang Chanh – later killed in mid-1969. I don’t mean to denigrate the principal official historian – ie the late Dr Ian McNeill, as I thought a lot of him and provided him with some material in 1989. However, understandably, the historian group jumped at the chance to interview the purported Long Tan D445 commander during their mid-1966 visit to Vietnam – and Kiem appeared quite credible to them. Interestingly however, a few small remarks in “*To Long Tan*” do indicate that Ian McNeill thought that something was a bit “fishy” about Kiem. Kiem always had Nguyen Duc Thu beside him – who had been a company commander at the Battle (where he was shot in the head) – and Nguyen Duc Thu followed Kiem as the 445 commander in late 1969. Anyhow – I’m rambling on !!!! I’m told that the third volume of the official history is due out in August.

As soon as I put my book on the Internet - ie at Scribd, I’ll send you an email indicating the reference.

Regards, Ernie

PS. Yes, I agree with you on the difficulties of captured documents. In Mike Heenan’s time at Det 1 Div Int Unit, there was only very limited capacity. Even later, we would have been quite lost without the constant help of the Vietnamese detached from 10 MID.

PPS. Of course, the most “vexed” issue is the disagreement on the Long Tan body count of “245 VC KIA (BC)” cited by the Australians – and which the Vietnamese reject. Terry Burstall was also quite skeptical in his two books – particularly in “*A Soldier Returns*”. In recent years, the issue has been raised on several Vietnamese military blog sites. I’ve tried examining the issue from a range of sources and angles – and can’t come to any really definitive figure. Probably somewhat irrelevant – simply put, a lot of men died there.

PPPS. On 547 Sig Tp – I had been in that “business” since 1963, and knew many of the 547 personnel at Nui Dat. Their “unofficial history” is at: <http://www.angelfire.com/empire/547sigs/547.pdf> and an AAVN website relates Denis Hare’s story of DF-ing 275 Regiment (beginning at the end of July) as it moved from north of the Xuyen Moc area westward to the Long Tan site – at: http://www.fourays.org/features_2005/547sig/547_1.htm .

Finally from Ernie on 22 September....

Further to our email discussions a few months ago, I have now written and privately-published a 145,000-word “non-commercial” (ie not for sale) and “limited edition” book that would be of interest to your RA Svy Vietnam veterans who served in Phuoc Tuy Province during the War: “The Viet Cong D445 Battalion – Their Story.” Complimentary copies have been provided to

several relevant departments and agencies in Canberra (including Chief of the Army, Australian Army History Unit, Department of Veterans' Affairs, etc), to selected libraries and museums, and to "Canungra". I have also placed the text of the book on the Internet as "free-to-read" – <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62621973/The-Viet-Cong-D445-Battalion-Their-Story> . Interested readers will probably find it most convenient to access the copy - ie for free, on the Internet. However, to reduce the "file size" on the Internet, I have not uploaded the many annexes (ie A to N). In its first three weeks on the Internet, it has had about 2,400 "reads".

You might wish to place a short notice of the book's free Internet availability in your RA Svy Association's newsletter or on your website – and perhaps advise other State branches if you wish.

The sections probably of most interest to veterans are the Viet Cong's version of the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 – at pp.39-48, and 7 RAR's successful ambush at Ca Thi (near Xuyen Moc) on 31 December 1970, p.79 – just another couple of hours and D445 Battalion would have been "safe" ie covered by the 1970/1971 New Year's ceasefire.

Regards, Ernie Chamberlain

(You know my background: 36 years Army veteran – former DMI, two Vietnam tours, two years in Cambodia – Vietnamese linguist and Khmer speaker; RSL member.)

PS. I have included your work at page 4 of the book's bibliography – ie: Skitch, R. (Bob), War in Vietnam – A Surveyor's Story (The Royal Australian Survey Corps at Nui Dat in its first year: 1966-67), Four Parts, 2010.

So there it is – D445 exposed! It is worth opening and perusing. Perhaps only a true aficionado would read it in detail from front to back. It is a tremendously scholarly effort, researched in great detail as indicated in the extensive footnotes and I certainly commend it to those who have even a passing interest.

OTHER STATE'S ASSOCIATIONS BULLETINS – All can be found on our website
www.rasurvey.net.

New South Wales September Newsletter

- Report on ANZAC Day 2011 – 52 marchers from the Association and the Geomatic Wing (sure beats us). The march was followed by the Association's AGM conducted under the Moreton Bay Fig Trees in Hyde Park. Lots of great photos.
- Reminiscences by John Hillier on the RA Survey Officer's Mess at Bonegilla from the beginning to the end including a photo of its destruction.
- Mick Symmons recollection of Aerial Surveys in 1960 at Camooweal with George Constable.
- The PNG Plaque – a short acknowledgment with photos.

ACT Newsletter 4/11

- 'World War Two Military Mapmakers of the Seventh' a booklet by Trevor Menzies

ExFortuna Survey Association 'Magna Carto' – April 2011

- This issue comprises a total and fitting tribute to Harry Wright.

South Australia Newsletter No 54 – Autumn 2011.

Clearly Noel Sproles having taken over the editorial role for the SA Newsletter is getting quite a kick out of it. His Autumn issue is well worth a read.

- Adelaide Anzac day march – features great post-parade photo.
- Annual New Year Picnic BBQ – photos of Ken Talbot-Smith; Pamela Harrison; David Irving.
- Article by Noel Sproles – When near Enough was nearly Good Enough.
- Vale – Graeme Priestly.
- Personality – Alex Munro OBE

- Article by Noel Sproles – What a difference a little bit of rain makes – Lake Hume.
- Roll call – Neville Stone, George Timmins, Allan Adsett, Jim Dunn.
- Major Clews trail
- Visit by John Collins.
- 'Near Map' – a useful supplement to Google map.
- Canvassing a title for the SA Newsletter.

West Link – due out soon. Check website

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LANCASTER, Chris
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