
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS
ASSOCIATION
Queensland Branch



BULLETIN

ANZAC EDITION

APRIL 2001

ANZAC DAY

*March with your Association on Wednesday 25th April 2001 in the traditional Anzac Day parade in the city. Our serial this year is 123, which means we are well back in the field with Navy leading the march followed by RAAF and then Army. Expect to step off not before midday. Forming up area is outside the Treasury Casino in Elizabeth St between George and William and around the corner in William. We march behind Australian Water Transport (RAE) and in front of Signals. Once again our theodolite carried at the slope will distinguish the Survey Sappers from those other Sappers. **Volunteer needed to carry the theodolite.** Tony Gee will lead the march. We expect to have some serving members of the 1st Topographical Survey Squadron (RAE) marching with us.*

After the March: Again we are invited to join the Sapper's Association for drinks and BBQ at the Jubilee Hotel in St Pauls Terrace Spring Hill. Cost at the door – not very much.

Dawn Service: Again this year we are participating in the Dawn Service at the Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER) 7 Sqn Cenotaph at Enoggera Barracks adjacent to Samford Road. The ceremony commences at 5.00am. Bob Skitch is laying the Association wreath on behalf of President Peter Bates-Brownsword. Our 1 Topo Svy Sqn (RAE) participates in the ceremony.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There is no Rank in our Association

Some, on being approached to join, have suggested that the Association is some sort of officer's club. Please be assured that there is no rank in our Association. The Survey Corps had a long tradition of appointing commissioned officers from NCO rank and all those currently holding office on our committee who held commissioned rank also served in the non-commissioned ranks, some for many years. This applies also to our patron Ed Anderson who alone we recognise by rank. Of course we would love to have a more active involvement from past OCS and RMC graduates as indeed we would love to have the active involvement of those who may have served only a short time in the Corps without achieving rank. Their service to the Corps was no less valuable and just as essential as those who may have gone to the very top of the Corps hierarchy. Bear in mind that the only Association award conferred is the Derek Chambers Award. Derek served his career in the non-commissioned ranks.

EDITOR'S NOTE

To my surprise there is never a shortage of material for each issue of our Bulletin. The real question is whether the articles presented are of any interest to our members. I know the personalia items, that is, short snippets of information about members near and far, are of interest. But these are hard to generate out of thin air. I have started to cull through the pages of other State Association newsletters and pick up a few items from these. Notes sent in with annual subs are useful but do not give a comprehensive coverage. What would be useful is a call by phone or email or snail mail of any chance meeting that may have occurred giving a bit of info on who, when, where they are and what they are doing. Army service is very different to other forms of employment – I have experienced both. The camaraderie of army service rarely exists elsewhere, certainly not in the public service. And it outlives the years. Lets not lose it!

COMMITTEE

Patron Lieutenant Colonel EU Anderson MBE (Ph 3408 9179)

President	Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001)
Past President	Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)
Vice President	Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)
Secretary & Asst Treasurer	Mary-Ann Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026)
Treasurer	Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970)
Functions Member	Alex Cairney (Anzac Day, Reunion) (Ph 3397 7583)
Bulletin Editor	Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)
Membership Records	Kim Weston (Ph 5445 6927; mob 0427 377 226)
WW2 Veteran Member	Hal Jones (Ph 3395 1404)
Squadron Liaison & Welfare	Jim Gill (Ph 3264 1597)
Squadron SSM	WO1 Steve Winner (Ph 3332 7564)

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

NOTICES

CORPS DAY WEEKEND REUNION AT BENDIGO

Although it had been planned to launch the Regiment History at a Corps Day Weekend festivity with a regimental dinner, it now seems unlikely that the History will be in published form by that date. Nevertheless the festivity will proceed regardless of numbers attending. All past members of the Corps, their partners as well as civilians with a past association are invited. Not having access to Fortuna (see article next page) any longer the venue will be the RSL Serviceman's Club in Havalah Road with the dinner commencing at 1930hrs on Saturday 31 June 2001. Other supporting activities are planned. **For further details see last page of this Bulletin.**

THE REGIMENT HISTORY

Historian Val Lovejoy has completed her thesis version of the history and it has been assessed and accepted. The History committee chaired by Gary Warnest has been working flat out on the version to be published, applying the finishing touches. The association has enough funds to produce the history through to negative stage ready for print and this will be completed by the end of June. However, a further \$20,000 is needed to have 1000 copies printed and reducing the print run does not significantly reduce the cost. The history committee is exploring every possible funding option. It will be printed but unfortunately not in time for a Corps Day launch.

RA SVY ASSOC BOX NUMBER ADDRESS

For the first time in years we have changed our postal address to a more convenient post office. The new address is shown on our Bulletin cover sleeve. It is:

PO Box 5784; Stafford Heights 4053

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH DRINKS

This regular informal event continues at the Gaythorne RSL. The RSL is about half way between the Gaythorne and Mitchelton Railway stations and there is ample parking at the Club. The next gathering will be on **27 April 2001**. See you there.... **Rock Thiselton**

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2000 – 2001

Keep in touch with you Survey Corps mates by remaining in your Association.

Our financial year runs from September to September. Subscription is but \$10.00 per year. We encourage you to pay three years in advance (or more if you wish). Some have already done this.

We consider all past members of the Corps to be members of our Association however, our Bulletin can only be posted to those members who are fully paid up or not more than 12 months in arrears.

AN ASSOCIATION BADGE

Gary Warnest advises that the Fortuna Association has designed and has in the course of production an Association badge comprising a miniaturised version of the overlapping Corps badges featured on the front page of this bulletin and most other bulletins/newsletters produced by other state and unit associations. It will be suitable for wearing on a lapel or maybe as a tie-tack. Gary expects the badges to sell at about \$7.00 each.

TOURS OVER AT FORTUNA!

(From Magna Carto – 4 March 2001)

Sunday 12 November 2000 was a nice sunny day just ideal for an indulging Public to tour the Gold King of Bendigo's Mansion and to step back in time. A great day also to enjoy a coffee and sample Hayden's hot scones with jam and cream, and soak up the atmosphere amongst the ornate surroundings.

It was, however, much more than this. Two groups had assembled to start the 1300hrs tours but many more were at the guardhouse to try to get onto what was to be the last tours of Fortuna open to the Public. The local Bendigo Weekly had carried the story "An end of an era" to signal the end of the weekly tours which had been conducted for years. Unfortunately most that turned up were unable to join the last tours. Such was the interest from the local community that over a 1000 phone calls had been received in the days prior, only to be told that the last tours were already fully booked. All those who had a place on these tours knew they were very lucky. It was with mixed feelings that the tours headed off.

Amongst the groups were members of the Lansell family and their family historian, Fortuna property neighbours, past Fortuna members, local Bendigonians and members of the public. Hayden and Malcolm Beer, Greta Balsillie and several helpers had over recent years conducted the tours. The Tavern was now closed and Hayden and Malcolm were heading off to Echuca.

It certainly was "an end of an era" – the classic Fortuna Villa again closed to the public. An American tourist was in total amazement that such an asset was going to be closed to the public, a building of such historical significance and in good condition. This also indicated the end to Fortuna Reunions at Fortuna. The newspaper article stated that the reason for the closure of the tours was the departure of the Beer family from Bendigo. We can but hope that this situation will change sometime in the future.

Your Editor's Comment

Regular tours of Fortuna started in 1978 or 79. There had been open days in the past but with up to 1000 visitors availing themselves of the opportunity these had become simply too difficult to manage. So the planned conducted tour was

initiated to meet the local interest. At that time the tour was organised by the Bendigo Trust – they put the tour together and got them there. They advised the Regiment's duty staff of numbers and the tour guide was the duty NCO working from a tour plan. The Lansell history had been researched sufficient for the purpose and the guide worked to a script. Tours took place Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The proceeds of the tour (a small charge of two or three dollars per person was levied) were split between the Bendigo Trust and Regimental Funds, the latter in a special account for the purchase of fittings and fixtures appropriate to the old mansion. Quite a lot was acquired in those early years – attractive gasolier style lighting to replace the existing 'railway station' variety; victorian style wall papering of the all ranks ballroom and others. All of this happened without reference to higher authority. Nevertheless, 3MD gave it their blessing and the final accolade came when representatives from Fort Queenscliff (the home of Staff College) visited to see how it was done so that they might model their own tourist venture on that of Fortuna.

But why has this happened? The published reason seems a little thin – because the Beers are leaving Bendigo – really! This should not stop the Fortuna Association from using the facility. One might assume that the underlying reason is one of security and no doubt there well might be classified work going through DTE (Fortuna) It was ever so and probably never more so than during the late 70s. It wasn't a problem then so why now? More likely DTE can't really be bothered – too much trouble. All this military traditional historical nonsense. **Give them the boot – well done fellows!**

AN UNEXPECTED EVENT

By Bob Skitch

In January I had a phone call from Chris Lancaster – remember Chris? He is a paid up member of our Association, lives in Brisbane but we don't see much of him. Any how, Chris had phoned to ask me whether I remembered Jeff Lambert and remember him I did! Jeff was the first survey corps sergeant I worked for when I left the School of Survey at Balcombe as a very green know-it-all sapper in 1956. With Brian Berkery, Bob Beckett and Sam Chambers all from the same 7/55 Basic Course, we were posted to 1 Fd Svy Sect and after passing but briefly through Brisbane (to acknowledge our OC Major Jake Herridge) we were on the 'Sunlander' to Townsville (a two day trip) and then on the most antiquated rail car to Charters Towers,

although we alighted at Macrossan because that was where the field survey section was located – in the old near deserted ordnance depot.



Chris Lancaster, Ted Miller, Sam Chambers (squatting), Bob Skitch and dogs Lassie and Knuckle in front of the 'homestead'. Abdul, the unit 'totem' sits above Chris's head.

The field section had been at Macrossan for some months while they weathered the wet season, completely cut off from the rest of the world by a very flooded Burdekin River. Somehow they had completed control for the Dotswood 1 mile map sheet because that is what they were doing; mapping that Townsville hinterland area at the scale of 1 inch to 1 mile. Horizontal control was by triangulation with intersections and resections – all very classical survey stuff just like we were taught at the School of Survey. Vertical control was mostly by barometer heaghting. In those days field survey sections were in the field all the time – 12 months of the year. Personnel came and went but most stayed at least until they took leave. Occasionally wives visited but this practice was not encouraged. Our field OC was Captain Ed Anderson and the blokes I remember were WOs Snow Ralston and Blue Hunter, Sergeants Chris Lancaster and Jeff Lambert, Corporals Jeff Helsham, Ted Miller, Col Pugh, and others, including Nobby Clark (survey assistant and axeman). Also there were the camp mascots, Lassie the pig-dog (Col Pugh's term) and never was there a more gentle animal and Knuckle the most uncoordinated sort of cattle dog I have ever seen. Knuckle was the only dog I hav known that would trip over its own feet!

Soon after, we pulled out of Macrossan to set up camp in the Charters Towers drill hall and after that we moved to the old gold-mining town of Ravenswood, then almost a ghost

town. Our base became a somewhat dilapidated abandoned house – our 'homestead'. Ravenswood had two pubs, one run by two old maid sisters where the beer was always stale and the Railway Hotel run by the Nutley family where the beer was good and that was where we imbibed Snow Nutley's fine drop of ale and sang raucous songs at the top of our voices into the late hours of the night before drifting off to the 'homestead'. Of course we did a lot of work as well. Ravenswood had a population of 'characters' old miners and prospectors all of whom had a story to tell and tell them they did – to we diggers until we knew them as well as they did.

Anyhow, I was assigned to Jeff Lambert, a keen and serious minded young sergeant.

So... back to Chris Lancaster's phone call. Did I remember Jeff Lambert? Affirmative given, Chris advised me that Jeff was to celebrate his 70th birthday on the 17th February and his wife Judith and daughters were planning a surprise party for him at his home, 'Eaglecrest' at Traveston, 17kms south of Gympie. Well, to cut a longer story short as they say, we (Wendy and I) went. So did Ed Anderson, Chris and Wendy Lancaster, Charlie and Margaret Kovacs and Percy and Dell Long. Pughy had a bad back and couldn't make it and neither could Garney Cook. Garney phoned Jeff during the afternoon.

What a day it was! The 17th was the day of state elections so those of us leaving Brisbane had to vote first but we all made it by the appointed hour – before 11.30am. Jeff had been spirited off to Gympie by Judith on some trumped-up reason, not returning before midday. Nearly all his family had arrived (one son and four daughters) and so many grandchildren. Our cars were parked out of sight. Jeff and Judy arrived soon after 12.00, Jeff with the Saturday Courier under his arm planning to have a quiet read. In he walked to Surprise!! Surprise!! and happy birthday. And there we were, the Ravenswood mob at the back giving forth a rousing chorus of *Ukeley Moor Bartuk* the old song we used to roar out in Nutley's pub at Ravenswood after a certain hour of the night. Jeff couldn't believe it. He was bowled over completely. I hadn't seen him in 45 years – the others, probably less time than that. Chris

Lancaster is a brother-in-law, married to Jeff's sister.

Eaglecrest is aptly named. It sits on the highest point of a ridgeline with sweeping views through 360 degrees of mountain peaks and deep valleys with cattle gently grazing. A truly beautiful place indeed. Jeff and Judith occupied the place some years ago and went in for aquaculture specialising in lettuce. All that is over now and they mainly agist cattle.

And Judith – who is Judith? Judith is the daughter of the Ravenswood publican, Snow Nutley. Jeff and Judith were married some four years after we left Ravenswood because when we were there, Judith Nutley was a mere 14 years old. It has been a wonderfully successful marriage with five beautiful children and many grandchildren. Snow Nutley died some years ago and Mrs Nutley, now very infirm, lives with Jeff and Judith. The Lamberts took over and restored the old Railway Hotel and lived there for many years, Jeff being very instrumental in the restoration of Ravenswood itself and putting it on the tourist route.

Yes; it was a wonderful weekend. Wendy and I stayed overnight, returning home on Sunday. Many yarns and reminiscences were swapped; 45 years is a good-sized gap to fill in.

ANDY STEEN RECALLS a slow train to Cairns – as told to Bob Skitch

It is always a pleasure to pick up and take Andy Steen to our reunion. An amusing pleasure at that, because Andy is never short of a tale or two.

Back in about 1942 a certain freshly promoted corporal was detailed by his OC (Capt Bert Eggeling) to conduct a draft of Survey stalwarts from Gladstone to Atherton by train for the purpose of some sort of camp site survey. Capt Eggeling, not a man to be trifled with, assured the corporal his future depended on his successfully carrying out this mission without mishap. That in itself might seem straightforward enough these days, however, during WW2 Queensland Rail was not what it is today. Drafts frequently camped at the rail side waiting days for the train to arrive and even when once entrained,

long delays could occur in remote sidings while an important train passed.

Our corporal paraded his troops and advised them in words to the effect "Give me a fair go on this one you blokes – don't stuff up or I'll be for it! And you'll cop a knuckle sandwich from me if you do". Needless to say, Andy was one of 'you blokes'. So also was one sapper survey hand known to all as 'Abdul'. Of course the bane of every draft conducting NCO then and now during these long delays was the ever present rubberty-dub and getting the troops back on the train before it took off again. Sympathetic train drivers would give several long blasts on the whistle before turning the steam to the wheels. But not all were sympathetic.

They duly entrained and made their way slowly northwards without incident and after some days arrived at Townsville. Not having had the opportunity to wash or shave during the trip so far, at that point our corporal's draft were all starting to hate each other. Exercising his command prerogative he ordered his charges to de-train and proceed to a nearby camp in order to conduct ablutions. This they did and since there were no trains scheduled for a day or two it seemed appropriate to at least stay overnight. Finding some pre-used palliasses on which to rest their travel weary bodies they settled down to a well-deserved night's sleep. Then the fleas struck and a restful sleep they did not have! Back to the station next morning on the off chance that there might be a train pointing north and sure enough there was. Our survey party once again entrained. It seems that if you were in uniform and carried the right papers, questions were never asked – it was wartime and a security cloud hung low over every action. And then they waited, and waited – that train seemed not to be going anywhere. Abdul (one of those individuals whom I am sure we have all known) and who are drawn to mishaps like iron filings to a magnet, needed to visit the latrine. He was obviously distressed and there was no alternative. Our corporal opted to accompany Abdul and – you've guessed it – during this latrinal sojourn, with a quick whistle and a full head of steam, the train took off. Andy and his mate – less Abdul and the corporal – stood on the rear platform of the departing train leaning over the rail with arms outstretched trying to grab the hands of

the galloping two illegal absentees. But no; it was not to be. The distance between the outstretched arms gradually increased until Abdul and his NCO were but distant dots on the horizon.

There they were, a draft without a DCNCO – their leader gone – his career in tatters! Captain Eggeling was not a man to forgive.

But of course, they should have known better. Our corporal could not be so easily dismissed! Inevitably the train on which our draft was travelling was shunted into a siding to allow a faster moving rail vehicle to overtake it, stopping only briefly to allow one corporal and a crestfallen Abdul to alight. All was well. They eventually made their destination and no doubt the survey was executed in accordance with the finest traditions of the Corps.

The corporal? His career blossomed, reaching many years later the very top of his organization – with his shock of sandy red hair and bristling red hairs on his fore-arms.....! Of Abdul? – we know nothing about!

So ends Andy's tale.

Editor's note: I ran this story past Jim Stedman not long before his untimely death. Although he admitted his memory was not as sharp as Andy's, he confirmed its basic accuracy. He certainly remembered Abdul – who could forget him!

LEX LAWTON

Valedictory

Many of us knew that Lex had been in poor health for some time, even visiting him in hospital but somehow his inevitable death on the 12th October 1999 slipped past without recognition from the Association he served so well for so many years. Lex was our treasurer for as long as most of us can remember. As treasurer and with a chair and table strategically placed just inside the door, Lex was the first to greet arrivals at the annual reunion on the first Saturday in September and extract from them their subscription and dinner cost.

And yet Lex's service with the army survey was quite short. He was in the pre-war militia survey unit and with that unit went to Kilcoy in the survey training camp where, as far as

anyone can remember, he served as the camp quartermaster sergeant. When the survey push moved from Kilcoy to the Hamilton Town Hall Lex went off to other parts of the army, initially with 1 Bde in Hervey Bay and served in a variety of other roles. His pre-war experience in motor spare parts led him into transport management and his daughter remembers him riding motorcycle escort on convoys. Lex reached the rank of warrant officer when demobilized.



Lex Lawton with great grand-daughter not long before his passing

So how did Lex become associated with the survey association after the war? Jim Houston recalls that Lex turned up one night at one of the reunions, perhaps during the 50s, and continued on after that, taking on the role of treasurer.

Lex's daughter, Mrs Gay Fletcher, has provided the following outline of Lex's life beyond the army, a life few knew little about.

“Alexander Albert Lawton was born in Warwick Queensland on 7th April 1913, the first of three children. Soon after his birth the family moved to Wynnum and the children attended school there. As the family moved around Brisbane Lex attended several schools, went to ‘Churchie’ for a while and did ‘Junior’ at Industrial High. In 1930 he began ‘sub-senior’ year at Brisbane State High School. His fate was sealed when he met one of his classmates – Cassie Mayers, and was promptly smitten.

In his senior year in 1931 he was one of ten prefects, captain of the tennis

team, vice-captain of the athletics team, running the 440 yards. After leaving school he earned two pockets for old-boys' tennis and later played club tennis in Townsville.

Lex and Cassie were married in Brisbane in 1936 and lived in Townsville for three and a half years before returning to Brisbane and settling at Kedron.

Soon after the outbreak of war and with a wife and two small children to defend, he enlisted in the army and in recently dyed jungle greens, went by troop train to Townsville. Lex became ill and had an operation for appendicitis. Following further medical examination he was found to have osteomyelitis (the result of an old ankle injury incurred playing football) and was therefore destined to see out the rest of his army service in Queensland. His past experience in motor spare parts put him into transport and in this role he spent time in Tiaro, Black Mountain, Toowoomba and Enoggera. I remember him as an escort on a motorcycle on convoys also.

After the war Lex began the 'Brisbane Napkin Service'. This report appeared in a local newspaper in 1947:

Diaper Service

Young mothers are going to get a break at last when Brisbane's first nappy washing service starts this week.

The service, which has been launched by a young ex-army man, Lex Lawton, is an example of the initiative and enterprise shown by many ex-servicemen who have chosen unusual and profitable jobs in 'Civvy Street'.

Lex, who saw five and a half years service in the army, employs another ex-serviceman, Frank Witt, to drive round the homes and hospitals to collect and deposit the containers.

The firm will supply metal containers with a cloth sack attached inside to hold the soiled napkins. They will collect them three times a week, wash them by machine and return the containers full of clean napkins. Already Lex is under contract with four

maternity hospitals, one of which guarantees him 250 napkins a day. Lex, who has three children of his own, says his wife keeps wishing he'd got the idea years ago.

When the business became variable he undertook paid employment, working at Martin Wilson, ESCA, UK Motors and Payen Byrne and Blackford, while still running his own business. His days started at 5 am when he would go out to his customers, deliver clean nappies, collect the soiled ones and deliver them to the laundry. He would then return home for breakfast and a shower and go to work by 8.30. After work at 5.00pm he would collect the washed and dried nappies on his way home in time for tea. After tea he would fold, sort and bundle ready for the next day. It was a family job too as the rest of us joined in after washing up and homework was done. It was usually midnight before he finished.

Lex always put his wife and family first and his extra work made life more comfortable for us all and among other things enabled us to have caravan holidays to Adelaide, Hobart and all points in between. He loved driving and needed no encouragement to undertake a trip.

The employment at Payne Byrne and Blackford gasket manufacturers was from 1955 till retirement in 1973. Prior to retirement Lex attended night classes and undertook a heavy course of study to become a customs agent. With his appetite for numbers he excelled and qualified with a very high pass, exceeding his class-mates, many of whom were 40 years younger. He maintained his licence and kept up this work till about the mid eighties.

Lex and Cassie were married for 61 years and 3 months. They had one daughter and two sons with six grandsons and two granddaughters and one great granddaughter. When Cassie died in 1997 the light of his life was gone and his own health began to deteriorate. After a few weeks in hospital in early 1998 he was facing

transfer to a nursing home with high level care. He went to live with his daughter and within a few months was able to walk unaided and began to take more interest in life. His days were occupied with doing crosswords; visit from the home nurses and reminiscing, but still remained very lonely.

In spite of his willpower his body began to let him down and after a few spells in hospital in 1999 he finally gave up – leaving in the evening of the 12th October with his three children nearby. Lex Lawton was interred at Pinnaroo in the presence of his family, after a simple grave-side service, his flag-draped coffin being carried by his one son and five grandsons”.

We in the Royal Australian Survey Corps Association will remember Lex for the very fine person he was and his long and diligent service to the Association.

AN HONOUR FOR BILL KITSON

By Bob Skitch

Who is Bill Kitson some may ask. Those who have attended our last few September reunions would recall the affable and bewiskered gentleman presenting his display of beautifully produced World War II posters depicting the mapping exploits of 5 Field Survey Company in Queensland from 1940 to 1945. Bill Kitson is the curator of the State's Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying and at the Institution of Surveyors annual awards night in December Bill was awarded the Queensland Surveyor of the Year Award and the Harry Ward Medal for outstanding achievement.

Bill's work over many years collecting artefacts and recording the surveying history of the state, including military surveying has become a significant component of the total history of Queensland. It is of interest to we military mappers that Bill holds possibly the only complete collection of early Corps and WW2 inch to the mile (1:63360) maps. This collection in itself tells a remarkable story of achievement by army surveyors and mappers during those uncertain years of WW2. Bill has addressed hundreds of schools and community groups throughout Queensland on

the history and contribution of surveyors in the development of the state. Bill's collection of photographs and records of 5 Coy was of invaluable assistance to Dr Chris Coulthard Clarke, our Corps historian.

The Harry Ward Medal honours Harry Ward, an Australian surveyor in the British Colonial Survey Service serving in Malaya before WW2 and who as a sergeant in the Singapore Volunteer Rifles was captured by the Japanese and survived the rigours of the Changi POW camp and the infamous Thai-Burma railway construction. Harry served as Chief Surveyor of Singapore after the war and then as chief surveyor on major development projects in central Queensland. For many years he was a surveying tutor at the University of Queensland where he helped many budding surveyors through their degree courses. The award to Bill was presented by Harry's daughter Mrs Shirley White.

The Royal Australian Survey Corps Association congratulates Bill Kitson on this well deserved award. Bill is an honorary member of our Association and mention is made of this in the accompanying article on his career published in the December edition of the 'Queensland Surveyor'.

MAJOR BERT EGLING'S LAST PARADE

By Bill Boyd

A few words about the author: Bill would be known to quite a number of our members in Queensland, especially those who practiced the fair art of cartography. Bill spent most of his career with the Army Survey Regiment, reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1. I and most others would associate Bill with the cartographic detachment of the Regiment located at Bonegilla and in my recollection Bill was there in 1972 when I was serving with the school and continued at the det throughout the 70s till his retirement in the early 80s. This was the time of the Papua New Guinea 1:100,000 series with its incredibly dense contour sheets requiring hand scribing skills of the highest level. Because the Det had no reprographic capability, a high level of coordination was required with Litho Squadron at Bendigo in moving manuscripts back and forth for the various intermediate litho processes. Bill's name became associated with two processes, that of 'flexiflow' and 'progressive editing', both of which were taken up by the Corps as SOP. Bill earned the medal of the Order of Australia for his service to cartography in the Corps.

Bill is a North Queensland boy and in retirement assists his wife Ann in running a bridal wear shop at Gosford, NSW. Building on his Corps experience Bill for many years practiced as a quality assurance consultant to survey and mapping firms. Not least of Bill's many talents is that of writing both in prose and poetry, an example of the latter is at the end of this Bulletin. Bill writes:

Ed

My first contact with Bert Eggeling occurred after the then OC of 2Fd Svy Sqn, Major George Gehrman announced at the Monday morning weekly conference that a group from 2 Sqn, yet to be decided upon, would call on Major Eggeling at his Berkley Vale nursing home on the Central Coast (of NSW). He had a World War II Japanese leveling instrument that he wanted to donate to the RA Svy Corps Museum. It was no surprise to me that I was chosen as one of the group to visit Bert because I lived on the Central Coast and it meant that one less person had to be taken from the job in Randwick. At the time I was doing some full time Army Reserve work at 2 Sqn.

The following week I was picked up from my home and we proceeded to the Berkley Vale Nursing Home where a morning tea had been arranged. For our part we had brought the unit photographer to mark the event.

Bert's son who is also a surveyor, together with Bert's two daughters, were with him on the day. The lady, who was introduced as his wife, it seems was not the mother of Bert's offspring.

Major Gehrman introduced himself and continued by introducing the rest of the party. Bert was reserved during the introductions and quite soberly shook each hand on offer. When I was introduced to him, he looked me over and said, "Are you the Sergeant Major?"

I replied that I was a WO1, taking into account that he would probably not be familiar with my badges of rank because in his day, the Royal Coat of Arms was the insignia for a WO1. He grew a little impatient and said "Yes I know that, but are you the Sergeant Major?" Without lying, I said, "Yes sir. I am."

As it happened I was acting SSM in the absence of Al Hancox. He smiled, and moved his wheel chair alongside me as if he was

back in harness with his Sergeant Major at his side and ready for anything. I do not know if it were noticed by others in the party, but it certainly struck me that he still had "green and purple blood in his veins".

The presentation of the instrument was carried out with due ceremony, photographs taken and in a short while we were on our way back to Randwick. I never saw the level after that day. I expect that it duly arrived at the museum.

A month or so later, George Gehrman called me into his office and said that he had received word that Bert Eggeling had suffered a stroke and was not expected to survive much longer. Would I mind visiting him on the weekend whilst I was at home on the Central Coast? No one else was in a position to make the visit. I said that I would, not really looking forward to the "task," hospitals/nursing homes not being amongst my favourite places.

I did not give it much thought on my drive from Randwick to Gosford. A week had passed since I had last been at home. The next morning, Saturday, I was enjoying being at home but knew that my duty was to be at Berkley Vale.

I agonised as to whether I should just put on a fresh set of polys, peaked cap and shoes, or go in full parade dress, it was after all on my own time. My conscience got the better of me, so I proceeded to polish my Sam Browne, brass and boots. I must admit that I felt somewhat out of place walking up to the entrance of the nursing home dressed in full parade attire and it wasn't even Anzac Day.

I was shown to his door where I was met by his wife. We spoke briefly outside Bert's room. Yes, he was in poor condition and it was just a matter of time. She was more than happy for me to go in and speak to him.

Bert lay propped up on pillows with his eyes closed. A few seconds after I entered the room, his left eye flicked open and fixed on me with unmistakable intelligence. I came smartly to attention, saluted and delivered an unrehearsed greeting from all members of RA Svy Corps, from the Director down. I moved forward to his bedside and bending, held out my hand in further greeting. Bert's left hand shot out and grasped my offered right hand

around my thumb with the back of my hand in the palm of his own. He was obviously paralysed down the right side of his body.

For a man on his deathbed, his left handed grip was almost painful on the receiving end. That powerful grip, in unison with the piercing gaze of his left eye, communicated with clarity and passion.

Without doubt he said, "I know what you are and I know whom you represent. I am part of you and you of me". I responded in like fashion with eye contact and hand pressure. I assured him he was remembered and his contribution appreciated.

I have not experienced a wordless conversation like that, before or since.

It is impossible to know if he recognised me as the Sergeant Major that he almost insisted that I be at our first meeting, but that is if no consequence.

He relaxed his grip, simultaneously closed his eye and sank deeper into the pillows. I rose and spent about ten minutes with Judy on the verandah.

On re-entering the room I again sat on the side of his bed and spoke briefly to him, again of RASvy. I took his hand again, this time the contact was gentler, almost familiar and then stepped back, saluted and took my leave. I spoke briefly again outside with Judy, who expressed her appreciation to the corps for my visit.

I sat in my car for some time while I relived the experience.

There I was, before the event, wondering if I should "go to the bother" to appear in full parade dress to visit Bert. As it turned out, it was probably the most important parade of my life.

It was a parade of one for one reviewing officer. I can only hope that I passed inspection.

A further note from the editor: Bert Eggeling came into the Corps as a topographer in 1935. As a captain he commanded the newly formed 1 Fd Svy Coy (later 5 Coy) in 1940 at its permanent HQ location in the old Hamilton Town Hall. He remained with 5 Coy during all its subsequent

deployments in Queensland and then at Moratai, Labuan and North Borneo. After the war 5 Coy under Bert was deployed on early investigative survey work in the Snowy Mountains. In 1948 when the School of Survey was formed at Balcombe, Victoria, Bert was its first Chief Instructor. Bert left the Army in February 1950 to take up the post of Chief Surveyor of the Snowy Mountain Authority a position he served in with great distinction for a number of years. On leaving the Authority Bert continued in private surveying practice well into the 80's, one of his projects being the south western Queensland gas pipeline. Bert rates some six mentions in the Corps history.



1ST TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY SQUADRON

By WO1 Steve Winner

In light of the Australian Army's Centenary Birthday this year, 1 Topographical Survey Squadron's activities and support to the wider Defence Force continues unabated.

The New Year started off with welcoming in the new Officer Commanding, MAJ Bill Thomson, from Staff College at Queenscliff, Squadron Induction Training and two weeks of range shoots and Infantry Minor Tactics (IMT) in the Wide Bay Training Area. For those not familiar with the training area, it has the world's largest population of almost invisible biting sandflies and mosquitoes. Coupled with extremely warm temperatures and the odd torrential downpour, the exercise was otherwise handled well by all participants.

Training on the new Topographic Support System (Project TOPOSS) and its implementation is now in full swing with it's first major deployment planned as a capability demonstrator for Exercise Tandem Thrust. This is a joint Australian / US / Canada activity to be conducted in Shoalwater Bay in May of this year. Squadron elements will be deployed in support of all the Brigade HQ to provide MGI support and product distribution. In house operator training has also been occurring recently with the Army's new Battlefield Command Support System (BCSS).

The Imagery Acquisition Section (Air Camera) will also be busy flying Damage Control photography in various sections of the Shoalwater Bay during the time of

Tandem Thrust. In fact most of the Squadron will be deployed over the duration of the exercise. Deployable elements have already been in the field to support 3 Bde in the Townsville High Range Training area. Topographic and geospatial support will continue soon in preparation for lead up exercises to Tandem Thrust with a deployment with the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters (DJFHQ).

Other training also continues to be a big focus of the Squadron with ten personnel currently on the new Operational Control Survey Course being conducted at the now renamed School of Military Engineering at Moorebank. The upcoming purchase and acquisition of state-of-the-art military GPS equipment later this year will ensure that a full geodetic survey capability exists for many years to come. This will be tested later this year with a proposal for a joint Artillery / Engineer survey exercise.

The Squadron in the past month has also hosted visits and discussions with MAJGEN Peter Abigail, AO, the Land Commander – Australia, the new Commander- Land Command Engineers (CLCE), COL Rod West CSC, and the new RSM-Army, WO Brian Boughton OAM.

And on a final parting note....the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER) will be hosting the ANZAC Day Dawn Service Ceremony this year for all Engineer units and ex-serving Engineer and Survey associations. This again will traditionally commence with a Gunfire breakfast before the ceremony at 0500hrs in front of the cenotaph at the 2 CER HQ. Further advice will be forthcoming in the bulletin.

Out to you. WO1 Steve Winner, SSM.

PERSONALIA AND OTHER ITEMS

Culled from the pages of other Association bulletins and newsletters as well as the odd snippet from the local scene.

Many people served in the Corps over its eighty two years of existence. Many have passed on and in the years during which most of our current Association members served the Corps strength averaged around 500. With this in mind past Corps members mentioned in personalia may be known to some and few will be known to all.

Peter Frodsham left the Corps in the early 60s and has lived and worked in Tasmania since. Peter is best remembered for his tours of duty on Projects Xylon and Cutlass in the then Territory of Papua and New Guinea or more specifically, New Britain and New Ireland. In shore-ship survey Peter was allowed to graduate to the bridge of the 216 and the 392 and say over the radio “one, two, three, four, MARK!” Peter keeps in touch with the Fortuna Association.

Damien Killeen (Killer) has left Fortuna and is back at school studying.

Many would remember **Don Cocker** who served mostly with the Army Survey Regiment's Topographical Squadron during the late 50s, leaving the Corps somewhere in the 70s. Don continued in survey work in the west with Hugh Taylor for a number of years and his untimely death occurred not so long ago. Don's widow **Yvonne Cocker** visited Victoria recently and has been in touch with the Fortuna Association.

John Showers has moved from SA to Robina on the Gold Coast. Can we connect him to our Queensland Association?

Scott Fitzsimmons has left the police service and has returned to Bendigo to work with Intergraph.

Dave Longbottom was in Bendigo recently for a table tennis tournament. David's sons are both top players in the SA competition.

Pat Graham has just retired from Fortuna after so many years of manning the Fortuna switch. Pat was the voice of Fortuna at the end of the telephone line. Pat and George plan to do some travelling.

Ray Sargent continues as President of the Association in WA. 'Westlink' reports that Ray is gearing up for retirement and has purchased a Jayco Eagle camper trailer – no more tents and stretchers!. Ray and **Barry Parker** did a 'shakedown cruise' of the WA goldfields recently.

Westlink reports that **Con Tsakalos** died in Perth on the 29th September 2000. Con will be well remembered by many in the Corps

who passed through the School at Bonegilla in the 70s.

Together with his cheque for \$30.00 for 3 years subscription treasurer Stan has had a newsy letter from **Bruce Bowers**. Bruce and Ann live at Burpengary. Bruce states that he is contracting to Sunstate Engineering Surveys as their full time office manager and is cutting back on his own contract drafting. Ann is undertaking a six month nursing assistant course and plans to work assisting the elderly.

A note has also been received from **Brian Partridge** reminding us that he is still alive and hopes to make the reunion this year. The letter came from Wollongbar NSW.

John Hogan has sent a note with his subs for three years reminding us that he also is still alive. John speaks well of our bulletin and comments how well he enjoyed the history launch, catching up with old mates. We all remember John in his years as RSM of the Regiment.

Frank Thorogood moved to Queensland from Melbourne about four years ago, initially settling at Mudgeeraba on a few acres and recently moving to Sorrento on the Gold Coast. After he left the Corps in 1982 Frank qualified in law as a barrister. He taught International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at Bond University last year and it was so successful it will be undertaken again this year. IHL is variously called the Law of Armed Conflict or (in the ADF) Operational Law. Bond is generous with titles and Frank is an adjunct assistant professor.

GHOSTS

By W.R.Boyd OAM

Bill recalls a conversation with Kevin Walsh where Kevin described his every dogged step to Wyanbeel Trig with batteries on his back. 'The Wyanbeel he spoke of was the very same Wyanbeel referred to in "Ghosts". At the time Kevin was somewhat sceptical that my claim to having lived in Wyanbeel for some time was anything more than a joke. It wasn't – and only when I described the Wyanbeel Valley to him in detail, he believed me. My reference to an old bridle path from Wyanbeel to Daintree convinced him that I was not having him on'. I said to him at the time, "When you reached my home at the upper end of the Wyanbeel Valley, you were nowhere." The poem 'Ghosts' follows:

*Set just proud of Hawkesbury tides,
The dwelling is crude, but it shows a pride,
Reflective of our forebears homes.
It brings to mind the boyhood years.
Bare of foot and free to roam,
Around and from just such a place
To the rainforest verge,
Or maram scented creek,
Where as a statue to watch,
Thrilling to the platypus family at play.*

*Star picket fences set to guard the oyster
crop
Fulfil their purpose as did those,
Remembered in the Wyanbeel Valley.
If let roam, hard worked draughts and mules
Took wages from the fields they trudged.
They gorged the newly sprouted sugar cane.*

*A small boy perched on Dolly's ample back,
Through the creek strewn with smooth
washed stones.
Down the track to the old worn stable,
The daily game was played,
Of bushrangers and troopers in pursuit
With truce at chop-chop and molasses time.*

*The hot and threatening cloudy day,
Is reminiscent of "the wet."
Oppressive humidity envelopes
As plunging into tepid glue.
The silent sigh of gratitude
From every living thing
Luxuriating in the soothing power of rain.*

*Visions of monsoon swollen creeks
Replay their part in bygone days,
Blocking the way to school,
Thus leaving the day to watch
The ceaseless curtain of rain.
Puftaloons, damper and tea
Kept cosy the inner being.*

"Tickets Please !"

THE CORPS HISTORY

Copies of 'Australia's Military Mapmakers' remain available through the RAE Corps Shop at a cost of \$37.00 plus postage. Full details were published in the October issue of this Bulletin. Postage varies with location, however for Brisbane orders it is \$7.46, other SEQ, \$7.74, Central Qld, \$8.29 and North Qld \$8.40. Send orders to RAE Corps Shop, Moorebank Avenue, Moorebank, NSW 2174. RA Svy Corps ties are also available at a cost of \$11.50.

CORPS DAY WEEKEND REUNION

Although it had been planned to launch the Regiment History at a Corps Day Weekend festivity with a regimental dinner, it now seems unlikely that the History will be in published form by that date. Nevertheless the festivity will proceed regardless of numbers attending. All past members of the Corps, their partners as well as civilians with a past association are invited. Not having access to Fortuna (see article below) any longer the venue will be the RSL Serviceman's Club in Havalah Road with the dinner commencing at 1930hrs on Saturday 31 June 2001. Other supporting activities are planned.

Alex Cairney has investigated travel options from Brisbane to Bendigo and these are as follows:

- **Option 1**
Hire a mini bus. Assuming, say, 20 takers the hire of a 12 seater HIACE and an 8 seater Torago (or similar) would be \$1800 for 10 days plus cost of petrol (estimated \$700) – unlimited mileage. This option suggests something of a 'Cooks' tour, calling at the Suevey Museum at Casula, Sydney and other points of interest. Accommodation enroute to be in caravan parks. A shorter period would be pro-rata less.

- **Option 2**
Air travel to Melbourne and hired transport to Bendigo. Air tickets can be purchased Brisbane – Melbourne return for \$220 on all airlines. Attendees to arrange own bookings.
- **Option 3**
Make own arrangements – travel by car, bicycle, mule, camel or whatever. Some members are already doing this – car I think!

IF OPTION 1 IS YOUR FIRST CHOICE PLEASE ADVISE ALEX AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON 3397 7583

Gary Warnest of the Fortuna Association has asked that the return below be forwarded to him at the address shown as soon as possible. Also please advise our own secretary, Mary-Ann Thiselton.

CORPS DAY WEEKEND RETURN

The Secretary
Fortuna Survey association
Po Box 865
BENDIGO Vic 3552

Name.....am interested in attending the
Corps day Weekend 30 June/1 July.

Circle the appropriate responses below

- I wish to attend a Saturday afternoon Fortuna visit (if one is approved) **Y / N**
number attending
- I wish to attend the Saturday evening Corps Dinner at the RSL **Y / N**
number attending.....
- I wish to play a round of golf on Saturday morning **Y / N**
number attending.....
- I wish to attend the Saturday lunch BBQ **Y / N**
number attending
- Contact me with further details by phone FAX : Phone:
- I require some assistance with accommodation (please provide details)