As this will be the last newsletter for 2013, I would like to wish all our members and their families a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year. I would also like to thank all those who have contributed to the newsletter over the year.

Wed 15 June 2015 represents 100 years of our Corps and there will no doubt be a number of activities Australia wide to celebrate the fact. I have added a note in this newsletter seeking your support for one of these activities - the creation of a “Faces of the Corps” presentation. Please spare a moment or two to hunt up those “selfies” or other images of any corps members and send them to John.
Hiran Nandan Helicopter Crash

By Rob McHenry

In 1973, 8 Fd Svy Sqn, based out of Popondetta, was conducting a field survey operation to improve control of New Britain and eventually to connect it to the mainland of PNG. The operation had many facets including a first order traverse down the spine of New Britain, recovering and re-observing old coastal stations initially established by the US, and aerial photography acquisition. Because of the rugged nature of the terrain, RAAF Iroquois helicopters were used extensively to position and recover survey parties.

Hiran Nandan, a survey station previously established by US Hiran observations, was deemed suitable to use for first order re-observation and connection to the first order traverse down the spine. Hiran Nandan was positioned near a sink hole on the rim of a long extinct volcano. The rim of the volcano was near-vertical where the survey station was situated - providing excellent intervisibility for traversing. Because of the significant height of the station, the vertical nature of the face of the rim and updrafts caused by the physical characteristics of the terrain, helicopter operations were not conducted without some inherent risk.

Unfortunately, the risks associated with helicopter operations over dangerous terrain were realised when one of the RAAF Iroquois crashed on Hiran Nandan, ending up in the nearby sink hole and burning.

Gary (Blue) Hunter was on the 8 Sqn operation and has provided the following images of the crash. All images on the ground at the crash site were taken by TJ Wicker who was actually on the helicopter along with Alex Cairney when it crashed.
Alex Cairney and the aircraft captain inspecting the remains of the aircraft. Between them is the metal stationery box containing the leather-bound angle observation book – which survived the fire.

The injured co-pilot who suffered a hip injury and was carried from the crash site to the landing pad at the top of the hill on a stretcher.

The injured aircraft loadmaster.
Burnt out Iroquois helicopter in the middle of the clearing (sinkhole). Alex Cairney and TJ Wicker were onboard when it pranged.

I took this photo from a Porter shortly after the accident. Note the cloudy area on the right bottom edge of the photo is actually of cloud at the edge of the vertical cliff face.

The interesting thing is that subsequent crash investigation found another burnt out helicopter under ours. It was lost when the original Hiran station was established.

A good reference for further information on US Hiran operations over the Southwest Pacific was produced by Paul Wise and can be found at:
http://www.xnatmap.org/cpng/docs/hiran4web.htm

Report Incorrectly Links Op Cenderawasih Hueys to Genocide
By Rob McHenry

It took the Hong Kong based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) three years of investigating to somehow incorrectly link Australian Iroquois helicopters with alleged human rights abuses performed during Indonesian military operations near Wamena in 1977-78. The recently released AHRC report, *The Neglected Geno-cide: Human rights abuses against Papuans in the Central Highlands, 1977-1978*, details mass killings by aerial strafing and bombings—
using both napalm and cluster bombs—in and around the Baliem Valley. Page 7 of the report states the following:

1977-1978 Atrocities
in the Central Highlands

‘Bullets slayed fathers, mothers, children,
who will look after them? -
Our parents did not recognise the war planes.
They thought it was assistance promised by the OPM.
They were like pigs who did no know the noise of dogs.
They stood in the clearings. The plane dived
like an eagle.
Some died in their houses. Others died in the places where they stood.
Others were wounded. Others hid in their houses
and burned to death.
It was an air attack by three fighter planes’

During 1977-1978, extensive military operations were launched in the Central Highlands of Papua. There is no official record of number people killed, but in 1981, a former governor of Papua, Eliezenere Bonay testified before the Tribunal on Human Rights in West Papua that the death toll was around 3,000. The Fellowship of Baptist Churches of West Papua reported that at least 210 people were killed in Jayawijaya only. Most of them were shot dead; one was tortured to death; whilst another was beheaded by the Indonesian military. Reverend Obet Komba, a well known priest in the Baliem Valley, reported that the military operations resulted in the death of 11,000 people in Jayawijaya alone due to gunshots, torture, disease and hunger. It is estimated that there were 9,000 deaths in Wamena, Pyramid, Kurulu, Kelila, Bokondini and Kobakma, and 2,000 further deaths in the Eastern Highlands. There have been reports on the involvement of foreign governments, at least in the form of providing military supplies and training in these series of atrocities. As later will be explained, the helicopters and attack aircrafts used by the Indonesian military against the Papuans were provided at least by the American as well as the Australian governments. In 1978 alone, the military support provided by the US to Indonesia amounted to GBP 130 million four times than what it spent in the previous year.

Of course, it didn't take the Australian media too long to add to this incorrect information and start to embellish the story. Never bothering to let facts get in the way of their headlines and being too lazy, or simply unprofessional to actually check the story, the SBS, ABC, Fairfax, Guardian and several other digital news outlets immediately jumped at the opportunity to connect our Defence Force with an act of genocide. The following are examples of the slightly hysterical headlines and text I have lifted from some of these outlets:
• **Helicopters supplied to Indonesia by Australia used in military operations amounting to genocide: Report**
• **West Papua: Report details genocide by Australian-backed occupiers.**
• **A recent report by the Asian Human Rights Commission, “The Neglected Genocide: Human rights abuses against Papuans in the Central Highlands, 1977-1978”, found that two helicopters supplied by Australia were used in the operation, which killed at least 5000 people.**
• **The report says two Australian-supplied Iroquois helicopters, along with US-supplied Bell UH-1H Huey helicopters, were among aircraft used by local command in the attacks.**
• **SBS claimed that: The (AHRC) report claims two helicopters provided by Australia were used in bombing attacks on the Central Highlands villagers.**
• **Australia link to 70s atrocities (Sydney Morning Herald).**

As a result of the above stories, there were numerous responses to media outlets explaining that the Australian Defence Force is not in the habit of carrying out or supporting genocide. The helicopters mentioned in the report were operating in support of Operation Cenderawasih, a Defence Cooperation surveying, mapping and aerial photography operation conducted by 2 Fd Svy Sqn supported by RAAF and Army Aviation assets. The aircraft were unarmed and not connected in any way with the Indonesian military actions referred to in the report.

The Defence Department is quoted as providing the following weak and less than helpful rejection of the claim - “From 1976 to 1981, Defence units undertook Operation Cenderawasih, the survey and mapping of then Irian Jaya. Iroquois, Caribou, Canberra and C-130 Hercules aircraft from Australia operated within Irian Jaya. The base for the operation was Mokmer Airfield on the island of Biak.”

I was surprised that this was the best response our Defence Department PR/media types could come up with........

What I find most disturbing is that the media in general was quite happy to pick up on negative elements of the AHRC report with respect to ADF involvement but apparently not interested enough to find out the truth before publication. I should add that I haven't seen any retractions so far.

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**Faces of the Corps Presentation**

*Rob McHenry*

As part of the 100th anniversary of the Corps activities to be conducted by the Canberra Association, a "Faces of the Corps" presentation is being produced. The idea is to get a photo of as many Corps members as possible - ideally but not necessarily connected with a Corps activity, and project them on a large screen in a continuous loop during our reception and/or dinner on the 1 July 2015.

Noting the years and the number of people who have served in the Corps, we will obviously not be successful in adding everyone to the presentation. However, I seek your help in getting as many as possible - not just from Canberra but from all over Australia. Accordingly, it would be
appreciated if each member who receives this would contribute to our “Faces of the Corps” presentation. I’m sure everyone has at least one photo of themselves and some fellow Corps members they would be happy to provide.

John Mobbs has volunteered to produce the presentation and all images should be forwarded to him. A maximum file size of 2Mb per image would be appreciated. Also, if anyone has analogue pics and can’t get them scanned, John has also volunteered do that for them and return them by mail. John's contact details are:

e-mail: jdmhome@iinet.net.au
Ph: 02 4471 1322
Mob: 0404 820 776
Skype: Horrebow
Postal: P.O. Box 3413, Batehaven NSW 2536, Australia

RASvy Corps Colonel in Chief – Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales

By Peter Jensen

I was recently browsing my work diaries of the early/mid -1990s (I was then posted SO1 Corps/Plans at DSVY-A) and happened across a few entries of ‘send Christmas wishes to HRH Princess of Wales’ and ‘send Birthday wishes to HRH Princess of Wales’. These are perhaps strange entries for any reader to come across in the future.

My recollection of first having anything to do with the Corps Colonel-in-Chief was when I was posted as SO3 in DSVY-A in 1986 and being an adhoc Secretary to some Corps Committee (Colonel Commandant, Director, ex-Directors, RSM – I think) meetings when the Princess of Wales was chosen as who the Corps would like as our Colonel-in-Chief. Her birthday was the same as the Corps, she had no other link to the Australian Army or Australian Defence Force and her formal relationship with us would of course be a real coup. The fact that our Colonel Commandant (then Colonel Clem Sargent) was of Welsh heritage also played a not so small part in that decision.

On my first day as SO1 in 1993 I was going through the safe to see what might jump out to bite me and in the bottom drawer was an envelope with the title Plan xxxxxx (forgotten its name). That plan was what to do in the event of the death of our Colonel-in-Chief. I read it, put it back and simply noted in my mind that it was there.

The Corps’ interaction with the Princess of Wales was always through correspondence and of course we never got around to the ceremonial formalities of her presenting colours. But each year we did send her Birthday and Christmas wishes and she always reciprocated with her Corps Birthday wishes and Christmas wishes to all ranks normally in a family photo card and signed simply Diana. For the Corps the protocol was not a matter of the Director sending a card direct to her through the post, but I did message AUSTARM LONDON requesting the Military Attache forward the Corps’ wishes to our Colonel-in-Chief. She remained our Colonel-in-Chief until the Corps integrated with Engineers.
A bit more than a year after the Corps integration, and only two weeks after her sad and untimely
death in Paris, I was in London to attend the Five Nations Mapping, Charting and Geodesy
Conference. Just after arriving, I tried to shed the jetlag by walking to Buckingham Palace where
there was a mini-mountain of floral tributes to Diana. There was a huge staff moving flowers and
wreaths around and one of the staff suggested that I continue walking on to her home at
Kensington Palace. There, there was a bigger collection of flowers, wreaths and teddy bear
tributes all the way around the fence surrounding the palace and spilling out onto the roads.
Looking at the cards, most of them from individuals, families, children and schools from all around
the world, it was obvious that she was held in great affection as the peoples’ princess. I thought
of that envelope in the safe in Canberra and what part the Corps would have played at her funeral
had she still been our Colonel-in-Chief at the time of her death.

Kensington Palace - September 1997
I have now added a note to the Diana, Princess of Wales Wikipedia page under Honorary Military Appointments
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana,_Princess_of_Wales#Honorary_military_appointments that she was the Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Australian Survey Corps and linked that entry to the Corps Wikipedia page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Australian_Survey_Corps with the reverse link.
Australian War Memorial – Roll of Honour

By Peter Jensen

In the Mar 2010 newsletter I wrote of the Australian War Memorial Remembrance Book in which had been added the names of two officers (2LT Shoppe and FLTLT Taylor) who had been killed on survey operations in Papua New Guinea 1973 and Irian Jaya 1977. Earlier this year the War Memorial decided that the Roll of Honour would now commemorate not only those who died during war, but also those who died on non-warlike operations outside Australia.

Those servicepersons who were in the Remembrance Book are now commemorated on a bronze plaque in the Roll of Honour south-east commemorative section of the War Memorial and also in the on-line Roll of Honour. The on-line Roll of Honour commemorative entries for the two officers are: 2LT Shoppe http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person/R1729458/ and FLTLT Taylor http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person/R1729459/

Balcombe Barracks Commemoration

From Magna Carto

The Balcombe Barracks Commemoration took place from 3 to 5 May 2013 with RASvy being represented by Bill Boyd, Max Neil and Don Swiney. The following information, with supporting photographs, was provided by Bill Boyd.

Don Swiney did the honours for the School of Military Survey. Brass plaques on rock plinths with their accompanying permanent story boards are installed on a median strip in the car park which once was the Apprentice School parade ground, just inside the memorial gates (built by the Apprentices as a memorial to the 1st Div US Marines) which are the access from the Nepean Highway to Mace Oval. This oval was part of the apprentice school facilities. Concern over fickle weather resulted in a “virtual unveilings”.

The plaque reads –
At the southern end of Balcombe Barracks the School of Military Survey was established in 1948, moving on to Bonegilla in 1966. Soldiers allocated to the Royal Australian Survey Corps completed their basic training in topographical mapping and charting before being posted to any of the Corps units throughout Australia. During their career they returned from time to time for advanced and specialised training with the practical aspects conducted in the nearby Dromana Valley. Graduates were involved in mapping and charting projects in Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia and many of the South West Pacific countries and some saw operational service in Vietnam. Their expertise made the Corps a world leader in mapping and charting sciences. Many left the Corps, either at the end of their initial six year
The Story Board text: From 1948 until 1965 Balcombe was used by the Australian Army to train soldiers of all ranks to be military map-makers for the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Initially named the School of Survey it was re-designated as the School of Military Survey in the early 1960s.

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

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

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

The area surrounding the Balcombe camp and the Dromana Valley was used as a survey training ground for generations of military map makers. It is arguably one of the most surveyed and mapped areas in Australia as a consequence. Over the course of their careers members of the Royal Australian Survey Corps could expect to return to Balcombe many times. The close attachment between Balcombe and the Royal Australian Survey Corps came to an end in 1965 with the relocation of the School of Military Survey to Bonegilla in Northern Victoria.
Vale

GERALD ALOYSIUS WARBER

53136 Gerry Warber passed away in Oct. He served from Sep 56 to Apr 77. Gerry was a member of the lost generation - aboriginal children removed from their parents and raised in Government Hostels. After his mother died of tuberculosis the authorities of the day sent him to what was called Children’s Cottage Home in 1934 where he stayed until he was 17.

From Brian Mead - My own first memory of Gerry Warber was as an 18 year old Sapper at Fortuna in 1966. Back in the these days reveille took place at about 6 am in the OR’s Barracks, with room inspections conducted about half an hour after breakfast. I was woken on this particular day by a Sgt (Gerry Warber) wearing a kilt and playing the bagpipes - in step to the music of course.

Gerry left Bendigo and was posted to the WA Royal Australian Survey Corps Sqn. Gerry made a solid contribution to the Sqn’s technical output during his 6 year posting.


Brian advises that Gerry could well have been the first Litho tradesman employed in the WA Sqn.