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

VALE

The Traverse of Kevin Walsh
Does the Wyanbeel Trig recall you
To the thrill of job well done?
Do monsoon clouds surround you,
So your helio finds no sun?

Do the shimmering plains that baked you dry
Still call you to the test,
Of raising up the Bilby towers
That took the traverse west?

Do you give the nod for the Canberra jet
To start the sortie now?
Do you send supporting choppers
To Diggers on mountain’s brow?

Do you look across Fortuna’s lake,
George Lansel there with you?
Do you tell him where Bonegilla is
And the draughties that you knew?

Please know good friend your time with us,
Was time for us, well spent.
Your example and your guidance
Mark the paths down which you went.

COMMITTEE

Patron          Lieutenant Colonel EU Anderson MBE (Ph 5445 1156)
President       Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001)
Past President  Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)
Vice President  Alex Cairney (Ph 3397 7583)
Secretary & Asst Treasurer  Mary-Ann Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026)
Treasurer       Ross Smithwick (Ph 3356 5786)
Functions & Sqn Liaison John Hook (Ph 3354 2680)
Bulletin Editor & Historian Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)
North Coast member Kym Weston (Ph 5445 6927; mob 0427 377 226)
North Queensland member Dennis Gregor (Ph mob 0409 648 026)
WW2 Veteran Member Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)
Welfare         Jim Gill (Ph 3264 1597)
Auditor         Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970)
Squadron OC     Major Shaun Hoffmann
Squadron SSM    WO1 BL (Barrie) Craymer (Ph 3332 7564)

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

OUR HISTORY PROJECT – What did we do over all those years – 1946-1996?

I continue to canvass support for this worthwhile project. Our collective memory can fill in many gaps but it is fading with the passing of years. In 2006 it will be ten years since the disbandment of the Corps we as individuals served, the Corps that gave such outstanding service to our nation for eighty-one years. We need to record what each of the units did over the fifty years following the end of WW2. It really is a simple exercise. I have had excellent responses from Clem Sargent, Noel Sproles, John Bullen, Charlie Watson, Alex Cairney, Percy Long and Ted Laker. I have had promises from a number of others and the major gap area is after 1980. The following is a sample of the preferred format but I am just as happy to receive your input listed down the page – pen and ink is OK. Please give this matter some thought. Every bit helps ….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YR</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>OPERATION PROJECT</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>NATURE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN</th>
<th>PERSONS TAKING PART</th>
<th>OTHER INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>N Cmd Fd Sv Sy Sect</td>
<td>No name</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Qld – Macrossan, Charters Towers, ….</td>
<td>Control for 1” to 1 mile mapping - 4th order triangulation, Intersection, resection, (plane table) baro heighting</td>
<td>Capt EU (Ed) Anderson OC, WO2 Blue Hunter, Sgt Snow Ralston, Jeff Lambert, Garney Cook, Cpl Ted Miller, Geoff Helsham, Sprs Sam Chambers, Brian Berkery, Bob Skitch.</td>
<td>Arrived May at Macrossan. Sect had not returned to Brisbane since sometime in 1955. Xmas in the field.…….</td>
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NOTICES

LAST FRIDAY

Last Fridays continue at the Gaythorne RSL with increasing patronage. Pop along and have a beer or a softie with you mates.

ASSOCIATION TIE and SCARF

Cost is $20.00 and $7.00 postage. We suggest you place your order directly with the Ex Fortuna Association, Tracey Phillips, email phipsys@bigpond.com or phone Mary-Ann. The tie features the Association tri-badge emblem in red with a diagonal purple and white stripe against a dark blue background – very handsome!

The Association BERET

We expect to have a custom made beret ready for distribution in December. A great deal of investigation by Ross Smithwick has gone into this and we think we are onto a winner. So polish up your old Corps badges and get ready for Anzac Day 2006.

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.

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 including cost of a padded postal bag.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MEDAL
The tender for the new ADM was released today. The medal design is somewhat different to the one that has been floating around. It is expected to be distributed in March 2006.

DESIGN
General – The Australian Defence Medal is a circular cupro nickel medal 38 millimetres in diameter with a thickness of 3 millimetres. A rim, one millimetre thick surrounds the outer edge of the flan. The medal is suspended by a ribbon passed through a sealed cupro nickel ring, 1.6 millimetres thick with an inside diameter of 12 millimetres.
The ribbon is 32 millimetres wide with black, white and red vertical stripes.
Obverse – A stylised version of Commonwealth Coat of Arms is used. The top outer edge is inscribed with the words ‘THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MEDAL’.
Reverse – the words ‘FOR SERVICE’ lie central to the flan surrounded by a wreath of wattle with the top edge of the flan ensigned with St Edward’s Crown.

EVENTS FOR 2006
Your committee has yet to firm up a program for 2006, however, we expect that it will be similar to that of 2005; in outline as follows:
March: Tony and Loretta Gee’s BBQ at Bribie,
April: Anzac Day Commemoration with ‘after the march’ at the Gaythorne RSL,
May: Andy Steen’s 100th birthday event,
June/July: Col Alex Laing Memorial Dinner – 91st Anniversary Dinner at the United Service Club,
September: Reunion and AGM at Gaythorne RSL,
October: Mapmaker’s Dinner (I Topo Svy Sqn)
November: Derek Chamber’s Award Presentation at I Topo Svy Sqn,
December: Christmas Function somewhere (perhaps)
Last Friday of the month drinks at the Gaythorne RSL to continue.

ASSOCIATION BADGE
Association badges are still available from the Ex-Fortuna Survey Association. Place your orders with Mary-Ann and we will try to satisfy them.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2003 – 2004
& 2004 - 2005
‘Don’t go to sleep on your membership!’
Keep in touch with you Survey Corps mates by being a paid-up member of your Association.
Our financial year runs from Sept to Sept. 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. Subscription is waived for veterans 75 and over who have been standing paid-up members of our Association.

VALE – KEVIN WALSH
After a long battle with circulatory and related problems, our dear mate and Corps colleague, Kevin Walsh passed away at 1.10 am on Sunday 30th October 2005 in the Centaur (RSL) Nursing Home at Caloundra. Kevin was in the company of his daughter Barbara at the time of death. His son Ian from UK had the first two weeks of October with his Dad and remained with him in spirit.

We gave Kevin a very fitting send-off. A service was held at the very beautiful Gregson and Weight Chapel at Caloundra. Kevin’s casket, draped with the Australian flag, a digger’s slouch hat with RA Svy badge at the head, a coiled Sam Browne at the foot and a wreath of colourful flowers in the centre was backed by a sunlit lush tropical garden behind the glass wall of the chapel sanctuary.

Barbara Walsh gave a family eulogy of Kevin’s early life in Sarina and her recollections of her father as a family man. This was followed by two minutes reflection then Bob Skitch presented a eulogy on behalf of the Association. Our Patron, Ed Anderson read Bill Boyd’s poem ‘The Traverse of Kevin Walsh’ and then followed the traditional RSL Poppy Ceremony, the Last Post and Reveille. It was then time to repair to the RSL for Kevin’s Wake (so proclaimed on the function board in the RSL lobby); a light lunch and coffee provided by the Association and beer at cheap prices from the sub-branch bar. It was a good occasion and I am sure that ‘Walshie’ would have enjoyed it – as we all did.

About 50 attended Kevin’s funeral, perhaps more, comprising family, Corps Association
members and local friends with 40 continuing on to the RSL. The following list of RA Svy Assoc members may not be complete and I apologise to those I may have missed.

Ed Anderson
Bob and Wendy Skitch
Jeff & Judith Lambert
Garney & Eileen Cook
Dell & Percy Long
Kym Weston
Peggy Hebblethwaite (David was in the Solomons)
Artie McClure & Ann McInnes
Alex Cairney
Lex Gilvear – Caloundra RSL Sub-Branch
Dick Allchin, Caloundra RSL Sub-Branch
Mrs Joan Stedman, Mervyn Stedman,
Grant Small

THE KEVIN WE KNEW: Bob Skitch
Few if any who served in the Royal Australian Survey Corps during the 1950s, 60s and 70s would not have known Kevin Walsh – ‘Walshie’ to many. Certainly those who served with the Northern Command Field Survey Unit, the Army Survey Regiment or the School of Military Survey, would have known him well. And with Kevin, his beloved wife, Madge. Who would not have enjoyed the generous hospitality of Kevin and Madge in their various homes over those years, or even since then in Kevin’s years of retirement?

As a very youthful fresh faced 18 year old in 1946, Kevin came into the Australian Survey Corps in the then called ‘Interim Army’ and after recruit training he was posted to the lingering WW2 survey unit, the 2nd Field Survey Company then at Indooroopilly. Ed Anderson recalls Kevin with a few others that included Des McGuire, Snow Rallston and Ron Newman arriving at Indooroopilly as the first group of post WW2 survey recruits to reach the unit. Kevin was very much the topographical draughtsman and a remarkably skilled one at that. The others were trained as topographical surveyors and as such were immediately assigned to field duties – inch to the mile mapping west of Toowoomba. Kevin was married at a relatively young age in October 1949 to the very glamorous Madge Worthington and he became an intensely family orientated man.

I first met Kevin in 1956 when he was then a Sergeant approaching Warrant rank. The unit was field based at Charters Towers with just a small compilation element in Victoria Barracks, Brisbane. Kevin was very much the compilation expert and had moved into photogrammetry with the old three-bar Multiplex on which he was a wizard. Air photography was Kevin’s forte and his ability with air photos finally took him out of his office compilation duties and into the field. With a group of other young fellows I had returned to Brisbane prior to leaving for survey duties in New Ireland and it was then that I first met Kevin in his home and enjoyed Madge’s hospitality. The three or four of us were invited to tea one night shortly before our departure. That was typical of Kevin and Madge. They had an open house and for we young blokes whom they hardly knew it was an unexpected privilege.

In the years that followed the tempo of field operations for the then Northern Command Field Survey Section stepped up – inch to the mile mapping west of Townsville in ’56; four mile mapping at Boulia and triangulation in the Central Highlands in ’57, mapping in the Gulf in ’58 and so on. They were busy years and Kevin, now a warrant officer, spent many months in the field leaving Madge, in common with other Survey Corps wives, at home to look after their two children and maintain the domestic scene. There was no change in the ‘60s – each year lengthy excursions into northern Queensland, sometimes up to eight months away although with increasing technology, time in the field started to reduce. Kevin, now a Warrant Officer Class 1 took a major role. He had a remarkable ability to relate ground detail to the air photograph and in carrying out the task of aerial annotation he could readily relate the ever increasing network of tracks on the ground to the air photo image; a skill I certainly could never manage.

For the young officer Kevin was always generous in the help and support he gave them. That was certainly my experience when I arrived in Northern Command as a freshly commissioned Lieutenant. It was also the experience of a certain Second Lieutenant
Noel Sproles. In an email I received from now Dr Noel Sproles on Monday he commented:

“I always remember him for his kindness in mentoring me on the four month trip to Cooktown in 1963. Before I left, Major Jim Stedman told me in a most forthright manner that I was going along just to sign the ‘59s and ‘Walsh is in charge – don’t you stuff it up!’ And he was in charge, but imperceptibly he handed it over to me carefully guiding me all the time. He never patronised me and always respected my rank (Noel asks ‘is 2Lt a rank?’). He also protected me from the predators such as Sam Chambers. We left with Kevin in charge and returned with me in charge. He and Madge were the closest things to family that I had when Lynda and I were married in London. Both Madge and Kevin were at Southampton to farewell us when we left to come back to Australia and they looked after Lynda’s mother when it all became a bit too much for her. He was a good man and will be remembered for that”.

Time moved on and Kevin finally took a commission to Lieutenant in 1967. This meant moving from his much beloved Queensland to the Army Headquarters Survey Regiment in Bendigo taking Madge and his now teenage children with him. At the Regiment he served variously as a troop officer, squadron 2IC and finally squadron OC in the Cartographic and Topographic Squadrons of the Regiment. Kevin had a great capacity for innovation, finding simple solutions to seemingly complex problems.

And then in July 1970 the Walsh family embarked on a life changing experience. Kevin was posted to the much sought after exchange appointment to 42 Survey Regiment, Royal Engineers in the United Kingdom with promotion to Captain. Kevin thoroughly enjoyed his UK experience, both in a technical and a Regimental role. He found he could more than hold his own with the Sandhurst graduates and earned the respect of both the British soldiers and his contemporary and superior officers. Kevin had stints of service with the British Army on the Rhine and in some of the more outlandish outposts of northern Scotland.

In returning to Australia in 1972 Kevin brought back with him a cartographic technique we knew as ‘terrain embossing’ which literally revolutionised the process of depicting relief on medium and small scale maps. This was in the pre-computer age and it was to be many years before computer techniques overtook this simple and effective process.

The Walshes were back to Bendigo and Kevin to the Army Survey Regiment. A two year posting to the Regiment’s cartographic detachment at Bonegilla soon followed and then again back to Bendigo with promotion to Major as Officer Commanding the Cartographic Squadron. But in 1976 the call to Queensland came again and Kevin at the age of 49 years for mainly family reasons resigned his commission after 30 years of military service.

Kevin’s span of service in the Royal Australian Survey Corps saw many changes and an ever increasing technology. Kevin was always able to keep abreast of these changes, ranging from the days of plane tabling, through electronic distance measurement, the integrated use of aircraft on field operations to computer assisted cartography. There is a legion of mappers out there – many now retired – who would thank Kevin for the skills they learned from him, not just technical skills but also life skills. While Kevin at times would not suffer fools lightly, and he could be very firm indeed, he was generous in his help to those who needed it. In Noel Sproles simple words – “He was a good man and will be remembered for that”.

Kevin Walsh is survived by his daughter Barbara and living in the UK, son Ian, grand children Julie and David and great- grand daughter Jamie.

On the day of Kevin’s funeral, Ian and family conducted their own observance. In an email Ian said “We had a family day on Thursday, going to Winchester Cathedral and into the Epiphany Chapel for private reflections of Dad. Then we all went on to Longparish to the Plough Inn for lunch and a couple of beers (they were XXXX too). If Mum and Dad were to have walked into the pub they would still recognise it”.

5
Kevin had many friends in Caloundra and especially through his ‘computer school’. Kevin became the computer guru for many retirees wishing to learn computer skills. They were Kevin’s ‘pupils’. One such pupil was Heinz Weis and his wife Jaqui, both of whom attended Kevin’s funeral service. They were good friends who in return gave Kevin a lot of support during his gradual decline. Jaqui penned a poem that was read out at the close of the service. The poem reflects the level of esteem in which Kevin was held by Heinz and Jaqui and many other Caloundra friends’

Dear Friend
Dear Kev you passed away today,  
Our hearts are sad and blue.  
But now you’re free to be with Madge,  
We must be glad for you.

We will not cry and wish you back,  
You would not want us to.  
Instead we’ll raise an amber glass  
And drink a beer to you.

You taught us all the easy way  
What books would not release.  
Your knowledge now lives on in us  
And you can rest in peace.

We thank you for your generous heart,  
Our friendship gave us cheer.  
Whenever Mozart’s music plays,  
We’ll know your spirit’s near.

So now dear friend, your soul sails free,  
We wish you joyous flight.  
We won’t forget you soon, Old Mate,  
Though you are out of sight.

DEREK CHAMBERS AWARD PRESENTATION

This very pleasant event took place at 1 Topo Svy Sqn’s Murray Bar on Friday 11th November. The Squadron provided a sausage sizzle BBQ and nibbles all of which went down well with cold beer from the bar.

This year the award went to Corporal Jason Bevis and from the comments made in a short address by his OC, Major Shawn Hoffmann and the enthusiastic applause of all his Squadron colleagues, Jason is a deserving recipient and certainly contributes to the esprit-de-corps of the Squadron. No doubt this will be put to the test in the days following. On arriving for the presentation we oldies were confronted by a most impressive line-up of the latest and best vehicles the Army has to offer, all ready for a pre-deployment exercise to commence the following Sunday.

In making the presentation to Jason, our Vice President, Alex Cairney commented on the value of ‘esprit de corps’ in building a team. Jason in response expressed his surprise and delight in being selected for the honour. Lorraine Chambers was present and was first to congratulate Jason on the award. Other Association members attending were: Bob Skitch, John Hook, Derek and Sandra Stanmore, Robyn Tangey, Mary-Ann Thiselton, Jim Gill, Harry Hargraves and perhaps others I may have missed.

Clearly the Derek Chambers Award is held in high regard by 1 Topo Svy Sqn and it contributes greatly in cementing the relationship between the serving diggers and we who once were….. Bob Skitch

What is this thing we call ‘Esprit de Corps’ – this odd expression of apparently French origin and no doubt with a history going back centuries?

The dictionary tells us that it means ‘regard for the honour and interests of the body one belongs to’. A Google search produces ‘a strong sense of enthusiasm and dedication to a common goal that unites a group’. Put into more meaningful terms it identifies the soldier who…….

• totally identifies with the aims and objectives of the unit to which he or she belongs;
• readily accepts the hardships imposed on him or her;
• is prepared to contribute beyond the norms of the job or his or her rank;
• maintains an attitude of infectious cheerfulness that carries others along,
• makes light of adversity,
• helps others who may not be bearing up too well.

All of that? – well ,most of it!

In my experience the person most frequently seen to be contributing to the esprit de corps of a unit is
the junior NCO or recent sergeant who still remain close to the ranks he or she has just left and who has already gained their respect....BS

**PERSONALIA and other Jottings**

**Peter and Barbara Bates-Brownsword** returned from their UK tour on Sunday 13th November, somewhat exhausted and jet-lagged and facing all the chores one faces after being away for six weeks. But they had a great time touring around and catching up with friends from their exchange days; the familiar places – Barton Stacey, Winchester, East Anglia, Norfolk then to the west coast to stay with son Daryl and wife who live just outside Bristol. That proved to be their base for further tripping, to Cornwall and the south coast. Returning to Australia they stayed a few days with daughter Amanda and her Squadron Leader (Communications) husband Gary at Penang/Butterworth. Peter has brought back lots of memories and stories which he has promised to commit to paper for future Bulletins.

**Ed Anderson** our Patron has left Bribie Island and is now comfortably ensconced in a retirement village at Buderim, close to the watchful and supportive eye of his daughter Margaret Taylor. Ed’s unit is very comfortable and despite misgivings about moving into a retirement settlement (Ed said he never would), He was taken there for a casual inspection by Margaret’s husband and liked it immediately. Ed has a house for sale on Bribie Island!

**Adrian (Charlie) Creedy:** Met briefly with Charlie recently. He didn’t tell me how Adrian came to be called ‘Charlie’ but that’s the name by which we knew him. Charlie lives at Sadlers Crossing out of Toowoomba and works in Real Estate in Toowoomba. Charlie left the Corps in 1991 after twenty two years service. His first posting was to the Regiment and then in 1974 to 8 Fd Svy Sqn at Popindetta and then back to 1 Fd Svy Sqn.

**Ted Laker:** I contacted Ted on 1 Apr 05 to enlist his support for my history project – what did we do. Ted spent just about all of his 35 years in the Corps in E Comd and much of that time on major field operations. Ted lives at Beacon Hill in Sydney having left Smithfield some years ago. Ted’s wife Heather died a couple of years ago and Ted lives on his own. Now 84 year old he has ‘gone in his legs’ and has a dicky heart but gets by quite well. Ted’s daughter lives in Liverpool St near Hyde Park and his son lives at Glebe. Ted’s son developed a financial accounting software package which he finally sold to an American company leaving him, according to Ted, quite well off. His daughter also is in the computing business but Ted himself doesn’t own a computer. Ted has a brother at Cleveland whom he visits from time to time.

**Stan and Helen Campbell** (the galloping ‘greys’) have returned from yet another excursion through northern Australia and Western Australia accompanied by Helen’s sister and brother-in law. Following the Rocky Creek event on the 14th August they headed over to Perth to Stan’s daughter Cindy and then tripped through the wild flower region visiting Mullewa, Kalbarri, Moura, Wave Rock, Albany and Margaret River. Returning home via Adelaide, Stan and Helen called on Wally Mooney (getting up in years but keeping fit), Stevo Hinic and John Harrison. At Swan Hill Stan developed a knee problem which he assures me is not gout necessitating a hard drive back to Brisbane with Helen at the wheel. Stan is still feeling a few twinges – but it is definitely not gout!

**Bob and Wendy Skitch** suffered a misfortune during September in that their holiday unit at Caloundra was gutted by fire – just their unit, not the whole block of 12. Bob comments that to walk into one’s holiday unit the morning after it has been gutted by fire is a despairing experience – the previously glistening white unit reduced to the blackness of a coal mine. Evidence of the amount of heat generated was in the complete melt-down of every plastic item – ceiling lights, TV – even the light on the open balcony at the far end of the unit. The good news for Bob and Wendy is that insurance sprang into action and the unit is now on the way to full restoration.

**Jeff and Judith Lambert** attended Kevin’s funeral on the 3rd November. The Lamberts earlier this year suffered the tragedy of the
death of their daughter Helen after a long fight with cancer. Helen had been female surf riding champion of Australia and was by any account, a most remarkable person. Despite tragedy, Jeff never loses his sense of humour and has sent me an amusing tale of a cricket match that featured Ted Miller (the gentle giant) as umpire. This will appear in a future Bulletin. In this Bulletin is another amusing tale from Jeff’s pen concerning a certain ‘turkey’ at Charters Towers back in 1956.

Jeff also reflects on the ‘spreading of one’s wings’ as we gain a little in age. “The days are getting shorter and at that, one would think the years should be longer; but they aren’t; they are getting shorter also – and woe and behold, I think I am getting shorter too!. What is happening to the blue planet?? Hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts, melting ice, tsunamis, oil wars, Poms winning the cricket test series, Japanese and Eskimos getting taller and everthing else shrinking, including this year my tomatoes, cabbage and pomegranates. As ‘Gardening Australia’ puts it – this is your lot for now. Judith and I look forward to catching up soon”.....Jeff.

Bob McMillan-Kay: Many of you may have known Bob McMillan-Kay in recent times through our Association and others may have served with him at the Regiment or the Det at Bonegilla or in Vietnam. Bob’s carer and close friend, Ros, passed away unexpectedly in the Maryborough hospital, having been transferred there from Hervey Bay the day before and about to be transferred to Greenslopes. Ros suddenly became very ill and the cause of her death is not clear. Ros has been Bob’s carer for the past two years and Bob says that he has owed his life to her on two past occasions. Some of us attending the Military Mapmaker’s dinner this year would have met Ros. Bob was quite resplendent in his Scottish rig and Ros impressed as a very warm and gracious lady.

I have spoken to Bob and passed to him our sincere condolences.

Brian Murray of the New Guinea Survey Section has sent me a copy of ‘Long way too Much’, the WW2 history of that remarkable Survey Unit, later taken on the order of Battle as 2 Fd Svy Sect and then to avoid confusion as 8 Fd Svy Sect. But the old name sticks because that is what it really was. Following my comment in our last Bulletin to the effect that a detachment of 3 officers and 50 other ranks from 3 Fd Svy Coy was sent to NG to supplement the NG Fd Svy Coy (as reported in the CC-C history), Brian recalls that the ‘Colac volunteers’ numbered 33 and their only officer was JK Herridge (whom we believe was a ‘WX’). We sailed from Sydney in June 1942 and arrived in Port Moresby about 3 July. Brian thinks the 3 & 50 must have been the total strength of the unit at some early stage after we arrived.

‘Long way too Much’ is a fascinating account of the New Guinea Field Survey Section and a valuable contribution to our historical archive.

Milton Blain: Back in July I had a call from Colin Van Senden – just a chat – during which he asked whether we were in touch with Milton Blain, a member of 5 Coy and with whom Colin had served on a post WW2 job undertaken by 5 Coy, the hydrographic survey of Spencers Gulf in SA, a job that sticks in Colin’s mind. I said we had lost touch with Milton but then I found his name on our address list. Finally I got to phoning him and had a very interesting discussion.

At the end of the war Milton was a Sergeant and was in charge of a section of eleven blokes that included Colin Van Senden and it was this group that was sent to Spencers Gulf to work with the Navy. Milton told me that following demobilisation he took advantage of the repatriation training scheme and did a degree in engineering.

His first job on graduation was that of Shire Engineer with the Emerald Shire Council. Engineers were in short supply at that time and he was approached by another shire in collaboration with Emerald suggesting that if he were to set up a private engineering consultancy practice he could contract his services to Emerald and other shires in central Queensland. Milton accepted the challenge and set up practice in Emerald and his firm boomed. Soon after he established an office in Proserpine, then Rockhampton and over a number of years in Brisbane Port Moresby and
Townsville. Finally Milton's firm employed 25 engineers with a technical staff of 64. Milton is 81 now and has to keep his diabetes under control but apart from that he isn't too bad. Milton expressed interest in receiving our Bulletin and his name is now well and truly back on our distribution list. Incidentally, Milton said that Andy Steen was the best axeman he had ever known and a great bloke as well. We all know that Milton.

Jim Brock has sent me a fascinating account of his time in the 1st Field Survey Company (later the 5th) during WW2 and his life in the years following. This will appear more completely in a subsequent Bulletin during 2006.

Jim was demobed in July 1946 and joined his father in a small manufacturers’ agency business representing overseas manufactures of a variety of products associated with the building industry. Jim gives an interesting account of not only his time in 5 Coy but also his life in the building manufacturing industry. In closing, Jim reveals a more recent incident of no small interest. He writes…..

“Well Bob, you did ask me to tell you just what I had been doing with my life since those 4 years in survey- 1942-46 but before closing I must send you something extraordinary. My son Peter aged 52 lives in Townsville working as an instructor in TAFE. He is very interested in the environment and is certainly very much aware that I haven't forgotten the area around and to the north of Townsville including Mt. Spec. Sometime ago he told me that a TAFE friend of his with similar interests to Peter had alerted him to the fact that it was now possible to 4 wheel drive to the top of Mt. Spec and in a conversation earlier this year he told me he had found a tree at the end of the road with a shield-shaped ‘blaze’ hacked into the side of the tree with the name ‘Comerford’ distinctly visible and did I know anyone with that name? Of course I did - Teddy Comerford, so I asked Peter if he could have a closer look if and when he made another visit with his friend to the top of Mt. Spec and this he did, a few days ago following which he sent me the enclosed piece of paper on which he had written in black ball-point the other names he could decipher and I have written in blue ball point the initials which I think are ‘missing’ as a result of the tree repairing many of these axe cut injuries.

Names on the tree blaze at the top of Mount Spec:

M BLAIN
T BLAIN
A JONES
K JONES
K TRAVERS
HF POWELL
R WALKER
J MATHEWS
? LOWERSON
T COMERFORD

Jim comments – done ± 1943/44. The two ‘BLA’s’ would have to be Milton Blain and his father (I can’t remember what the ‘T’ stood for). The ‘A Jon’ could possibly be the one we knew as Ack Ack Jones. The ‘Trave’ would have to be Ken Travers. ‘HF Powell’ – trust him – immaculate Bert, putting his complete name so neatly!

Re- Peter’s writing on the right hand side is ‘this is the blaze at the top of Mt. Spec. Can’t find a ‘bench’ on nearby trees or the blaze and tree, (nearby tree has a rotten base)’ I told Peter that I thought the usual custom for the clearing party was to cut a flat benchmark at the bottom of the tree trunk which would be the registered height above sea level but apparently in this instance the benchmark base has rotted away – a bit unusual….. Jim Brock

Richard (Jacko) Jackson-Hope writes: I retired from work for a period of six months but have been undertaking casual work at a convention centre in Sydney for the past month.

Had morning tea with Brian Fowler last week he is in good form as usual and asked about you. I do enjoy the Bulletin it keeps me in touch with others I know.

Say hi to Stan Campbell and Peter Bates-Brownsword for me when you see them next. Regards Jacko
FROM THE WA ASSOCIATION

Annual Dinner – Saturday 24th September
Twenty three people attended the Annual Re-Union Dinner at the Victoria League, in Shenton Park. Of note, was the initial attendance by Collin Lutz from York, and Trevor and Sue Bottomley from Bridgetown.

Life is great in Bridgetown”

L-R: Kim Johnston, Sue Bottomley, Trevor Bottomley, Anne Eddy and Peter Eddy.

FROM THE SA ASSOCIATION

90th Anniversary Dinner – Adelaide
The SA Association held a well attended and enjoyable 90th Anniversary Dinner at the Keswick Sergeants Mess. In attendance were Allan and Judyne Adsett, Bob and Pam Ballard, Frank and Naomi Briant, Bob and Rhonda Cooper, Jim and Rita Dunn, Peter and Julie Elverd, Bob Griffin and Pam Richards, John and Pam Harrison, Arthur and Barbara Henson, Stevo Hinic and Pauline Mannix, Dave Irving and Pam Illert, Simon and Elaine Lemon, Bob Mills, Alex and Joan Munro and Ken and Lorraine Talbot-Smith.

George Timmins phoned Darby Munro and invited him to a fishing trip on the Darling River near Willcannia. Darby couldn’t accept quickly enough and met with George at his place in Swan Hill. From there they embarked to the Darling and set up camp at Culpaulin Station. They stayed for six days and managed to fill their freezer with fillets of golden perch. George introduced Darby to ‘berl carving’. A berl is a lump that grows naturally on the trunk of a large tree. When cut from the tree and hollowed out with a chain saw, then sandpapeded and polished it makes an attractive sideboard bowl.. It rained while they were there and Darb grew inches in height with mud stuck to his boots each time he left the tent. But it was a great trip and plans are in hand for a return visit.

Reunion on the Murray: The SA Association is planning a reunion on the Murray. Three or four have indicated an intention to participate with Neville Stone being the latest. Darby is the organizer and I feel sure it is not restricted to SA members. Give Darby a ring on (08) 8277 7074.

Max Coletti has had a bout of fairly serious but successful surgery.

Neville Stone has been retired since March after selling his Bob Jane T Mart franchise at Alberton. He and Dianne have joined the not-so-grey brigade and have been caravanning northern SA and NT – Ularu and all that. They planned to be at the Bathurst 500 in October – sounds like a compulsory attendance for an ex Bob Jane franchisee.

Jim and Rita Dunn were in Japan in September for the marriage of their son Steve to his Japanese sweetheart, Yuki.

Bob Cooper is reported to have become president of ‘Bowls South Australia’. A big undertaking one would assume.

Bob Mills, a dedicated cyclist has come out of retirement at the age of 62 to manage the Cycling Information Centre in Hurtle Street, Adelaide. This is an ACC initiative to make Adelaide a cycle friendly city. Bob has gained notoriety in cycling having ridden the length of the Canning stock route in WA and across the Simpson Desert.. He more recently participated in the World Solar Cycle Challenge with teams from Australia, Nigeria, Italy and Malaysia competing on ‘solar assisted human powered bicycles’.

VALE

John Gaskell died peacefully in his sleep at his home on the 7th September 2005 at age 79. John was a much older than average recruit when he enlisted in 1958 and served for nine
years full time and three years part time. As a
surveyor he worked on mapping operations in
the NT and in SA with 4 Fd Svy Sqn. (From SA
Assoc Newsletter Sep 05)

Arnold Jones
died 23rd August
2005 at the age of
85 years. A
Courier Mail
obituary
published on the
3rd November
states that ‘Arnold
joined the army in
June 1942 at the
age of 21 and
was drafted to
Engineering Services, Townsville, building
camp facilities. He applies for a transfer to 1
Field Survey Company and joined the
Company at Alligator Creek as a ‘six shilling a
day’ sapper. He then joined the first road
convoy to Cape York in October 1942 to survey
the Cape York baseline. The baseline was
measured along part of the Cape York
telegraph line to establish a triangulation
network to control mapping of the extreme
northern tip of Australia and its adjacent islands
at a time when a Japanese invasion of the
Australian mainland seemed imminent. He later
served overseas in Borneo and was present at
the surrender in Moratai. He had attained the
rank of acting WO2 on demobilisation’.

Following the war, Arnold obtained an
engineering certificate and worked for
Mullholland Consulting Engineers in Brisbane.
His great love was sailing and navigation. He
was a member of the Royal Queensland Yacht
Squadron and the Queensland Cruising Yacht
Club where he was a past commodore. He
competed in many of the ocean races of the
day, the Sydney-Hobart, the Brisbane-
Gladstone and the Brisbane-Noumea. He was
a yacht judge and examiner and undertook this
role for the America’s Cup trials in Fremantle.

Arnold’s interest in his later life was wood
turning and wood working, repairing toys for
the family day-care centre and teaching wood
working skills.

Arnold is survived by his wife Mae, three
children, two grand children and three great
grand children. (From Courier Mail Obituary 2 Nov
05)

TURKEYS – Plains or not!...by Jeff Lambert

Laurie Arnold, for one, was frequently attacked
by plains turkeys (bustards), however, one day
one flew into the jeep and expired. Well; waste
want not; the bird became the centrepiece
of a magnificent roast dinner. Sometime later
one of the consumers was talking to a certain
WO2, whom we will call Ted, whose vocation in
the Army was other than survey. Ted had
never seen a plains turkey and after drooling
over the description of its edible qualities
requested its habitat whereabouts to which the
young sapper replied that they were
everywhere out in the bush and that they could
even be seen on the outskirts of town.

Several days later Ted pulled up at his HQ,
pulled a dead turkey out of the back of his jeep,
beheaded it and placing the bird on a table in
the yard began to pluck it. Being a true
amateur at this he soon had feathers flying all
roads and it was at this critical juncture that the
Sergeant of Police drove up, watched the
scene before him for some moments, then got
out and walked up to Ted, who having been
told that bustards are a protected species
thought "I'm a goner now."

"How yer going Phil?" says a very
embarrassed Ted, to which Phil, not looking at
the carcass or mess of feathers on the table,
but looking Ted in the eye said ; “Ted, I've just
had a phone call from a bloke who lives just
outside town on the north road, who said
some fella in a jeep
shot one of his prize
turkeys, threw it in
the back and drove
off into town."

A baffled Ted
responded, "Does he
keep plains
turkeys."?

"No Ted he
keeps domestic
turkeys and before I
go any further” – still not looking at the subject on the table – “I want you, if you don't mind, to answer a question”.

"Go ahead " said Ted.

“This is a very serious matter Ted so I ask you – do you have a dead turkey in the back of your jeep?”

“In the back of my je-e…no Phil I don't”.

“There, I knew it wouldn't be you Ted – anyhow, a full turkey would be too much for a single man like you. You know, even someone like me who loves roast turkey so much would normally cut the turkey in half and give half to a friend – preferably someone to whom I owe a favour. Well Ted---better get on with it. Oh, and by the way, my wife is at home all afternoon if you happen to be passing that way”.

Both Ted and the Sergeant dined well that night, however, Ted was never again seen to exit town via the north road and the mere mention of turkey in any subsequent conversations saw Ted lapse into embarrassed silence.

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THE WORLD OF GERARD MERCATOR –
 a book review by Noel Sproles

It is almost a certainty that all of us who served in the Corps were acquainted with the Mercator map projection. One way or the other, this celebrated projection influenced either our computations, our drawings, or the maps we printed. However, I had little knowledge of Gerard Mercator the man or of the story behind the establishment of his seemingly ubiquitous projection. Little wonder then that when I saw a book on Mercator's life and works in the ‘cheapies’ bin outside a bookshop, I snapped it up.

When Mercator was born near Antwerp in March 1512, a great era of exploration was under way. Columbus had stumbled across the Americas just two decades earlier; Vasco da Gama had found a route to India via the Cape of Good Hope in 1499; Balboa would first set eyes on the Pacific the year following Mercator’s birth; and in a further nine years, the remnants of Magellan’s expedition would complete the first circumnavigation of the globe. These discoveries pushed back the limits of European knowledge of the world, making the continual development of new maps a necessity. The Renaissance had already led to a resurgence of interest in cartography based on the works of the ancients, such as Ptolemy, but their inadequacies in portraying the ground soon became evident.

It was fortuitous therefore that a cartographic genius such as Mercator was born into this age. He grew up with an interest in maps and mapmaking and became not only a cartographer but also a prominent maker of surveying and mapping instruments. Mercator was a contemporary and student of Gemma Frisius who is acknowledged as the developer of triangulation for mapping. The book does not go into details as to how people like Mercator went about his survey tasks and original map making, although triangulation was certainly a part of the process. As well as producing his own maps from scratch, Mercator also collected other people’s works and, having checked them for accuracy and reconciled one with the other, used this information to produce new maps. I was involved in a similar style of project in the early 1960’s in trying to make sense out of PIR patrol reports to update PNG mapping. As a consequence, I can appreciate the confusion inherent in such a process and the forehead-banging-on-the-desk frustration that the attempt to resolve the anomalies can produce.

As his skills developed, Mercator earned a comfortable living as a map engraver and globe maker in what is now western Germany. Contrary to popular belief, it was accepted in medieval Europe that the earth was round. The real challenge for cartographers was to portray this spherical surface (Newton and the oblate spheroid being still a century or more in the future) on flat paper for navigation, especially for navigation at sea. Mercator undertook the task of producing a map for sailors to use so that a straight line on the map represented a straight bearing to follow at sea. He achieved this in 1569 by developing his famous projection, but it is still unclear whether he did this mechanically with his drawing instruments or mathematically. Although his projection represented one of the great achievements in cartography, it did not gain the instant recognition that he had anticipated. Its acceptance had to wait until 1599 when the English mathematician, Edmund Wright, developed a set of tables to allow distances on the map to be corrected for the distortions inherent in its design. Mercator’s greatest enthusiasm was for his maps and globes, of which only a few examples survive to this day. It is therefore ironic that it is because of the projection that he largely dismissed, and not for his precious maps and globes, that his name has remained a household word for over four centuries.

The book provides an insight to life in 16th century Europe with its religious conflicts and almost continual warfare. What is known of Mercator and his colleagues is treated in detail and provides a good background to the problems faced by mapmakers in keeping up with the rapid rate of European exploration in the New World. The text is
well supported with both footnotes and endnotes and illustrations of the old maps. Unfortunately, the standard of reproduction is not the greatest and the illustrations are generally difficult to read. This aside, I feel that anyone who has been involved in map making in any way will find this book a worthwhile and interesting read.


‘WRECKED’ – from PROJECT CUTLASS – a personal story by Kevin Moody

Kevin Moody has stretched his memory back to the mid fifties to produce a fascinating account of a very unique project the Survey Corps undertook at that time, a time before the introduction of EDM in any shape or form and before the use of rotary wing aircraft – or any other sort of aircraft for that matter. ‘Project Cutlass’ was the second of two joint mapping operations undertaken during the period 1954 to 1957 in the Bismarck Archipelago involving the US Army Forces Far East Mapping Service and the Australian Army’s Royal Australian Survey Corps. ‘Project Xylon’, the mapping of New Britain, commenced in 1954 and Project Cutlass, the mapping of New Ireland and surrounding islands commenced in 1957. Major Spencer Snow commanded both projects. Kevin’s story concerns the second of these two projects and the following is an extract from Kevin’s account.

Working on the southern coast of New Ireland in the St Georges Channel on a blowy day with half rough seas we finished our observations later in the day than usual. Our J boat arrived with Perc Long’s party already aboard; we boarded then picked up John Van de Graaff’s party from a nearby station and made haste to collect a fourth group, Bob Skitch and John Lambie from their station behind a small strip of jungle backed beach. I could see our destination about a kilometre ahead but then ever so quickly the present twilight that I expected would continue for 20 minutes or so abruptly ended. We seemed to have moved from the half light of twilight to dense darkness instantly. A huge bank of storm clouds that had been hovering on the horizon throughout the afternoon enveloped the sky and rain backed by strong winds bucketed down. Not to worry: we were within a few hundred metres of our destination. We continued blind for a minute or two when, with a not so loud crunching noise, our forward movement stopped dead. Our J boat had glided on the crest of a larger wave to be deposited on the coral reef. We thought we were about 700 metres off-shore but in total darkness we could see nothing. We could only feel the waves pounding on the side and rear of our boat about every ten seconds.
thoughts led me to realise that with the tide going out and the sea becoming calmer there was no real damage likely to result to our launch from us being aboard it. The Filipino crewman disagreed but after all of his passengers climbed out of the sea back into the launch he was quick to follow.

After all that we suddenly thought maybe Spencer would like to know we were ‘reef wrecked’, so after a few attempts we made radio contact with the ship. Spencer listened to our story and cool as a cucumber enquired about our health and said he would arrange our rescue ASAP. But Captain Mellor (US Army), had other ideas as Spencer was soon to tell us. With one of his craft on the reef he was very inclined to remain at his present safe anchorage at Lamassa (a small enclosed bay slightly to the north) and was not prepared to sail along a not so well chartered coastline on a pitch black night. We rested as best we could in the J Boat overnight before our ship hove into sight and anchored in deeper water to seaward about 0800hrs. Now high tide we were able to float our J Boat off the reef and return to the 216. A Penn Yang (small launch) had already recovered Bob Skitch and John Lambie from their station.

We were most pleased to climb aboard and enjoy a breakfast. A soft sweet loaf the Americans called bread, was more welcome than usual. (PS – After this incident we always returned to ship well before dark. Back in Australia 9 months later John Van de Graaff had an operation on his toe to remove a small splinter of bone.)

Bob later recounted his and John Lambie’s ordeal the night before. Waiting on their small strip of beach with their gear stowed away in the sea bag and with some apprehension at the advancing storm clouds and no J boat in sight, the storm hit with a fury. Bob recalls that the rain was like he had never seen before. Total darkness prevailed and after a few sporadic words from others on the ANPRC10 set, the radio died. The waves were now pounding across the lagoon and onto their small beach. He and John moved back into the line of jungle with as much of their gear as they could locate and wondered why after a while they were huddled together in a slosh of water. It was a long and somewhat fearful night, especially not knowing what had happened to the rest. Morning finally dawned and to their surprise the small beach had been completely washed away. Debris from the forest was afloat in the lagoon and thankfully there also was the landing craft half full of water half way across the lagoon. The small creek they had waded through the previous day on the way to their observation station (a rock ledge overlooking the beach) had become a raging torrent, entering the lagoon and taking the beach with it. By 0800 a Penn Yang was hovering just off the reef and the 216 was in sight.

The FS 216 returned to Lamassa where we had a day of rest and ‘make and mend’ before proceeding to Kavieng where we transferred across to the FS 392, a somewhat more comfortable ship. Furthermore, it had a supply of the latest American movies which it was able to screen in ‘cinamascope’ across its midship well-deck, a facility the 216 didn’t have.
Somewhat to our surprise Spencer ordered a four day rest at Rabaul and the FS 392 made its way there as soon as the transfer of stores had taken place. In Rabaul we assumed our ‘planter role’, reacquainted ourselves with the Cosmopolitan Hotel and even indulged in a bit of touring. With Geoff Helsham, Bob Skitch, Brian Berkery and Peter Rossiter we hired a car and drove around Blance Bay to Kokopo, a very pretty place; years later to become the principal settlement after Rabaul was destroyed in a volcanic eruption.

Christmas 2005

We normally have had a Christmas message in our December Bulletin either on our first page or at least at the top of Page 3 but somehow this year in compiling this Bulletin, Christmas has become a casualty – but not quite! For your editor, the lead up to Christmas has been somewhat tumultuous and he was taken a little by surprise to hear traditional Christmas carols and songs being piped into the consciousness of super-market shoppers as early as mid-October. His immediate reaction was to depart as quickly as possible – who wants Christmas that early – lets ban it!

Nevertheless, It is a remarkable time of the year; for some, an intensely spiritual occasion, for others a hedonistic ritual of gift giving and receiving, drinking and eating then sleeping it off. Too cynical? Perhaps! There is nothing wrong with gift giving and receiving, so long as it is spontaneous enough to represent joy; the giving and receiving of joy and what better pleasure can their be than to sit with your family around a Christmas table to partake of a common meal. For those who have family absent the certainty that they are there with you in spirit contributes to the significance of the occasion. But for those who are absent, on their own maybe, or at least spiritually alone, the clear knowledge that the thoughts of their family are with them is at least sustaining.

Your editor reflects that he has been with his family at home each Christmas, despite the exigencies of the service with only one exception. Christmas 1966 was in Vietnam and there was nothing remarkable about that. But it was Vietnam and the war had stopped for a few days – a truce of sorts I suppose. American largess supplied us with turkey and cranberry sauce and our cooks at Nui Dat rose to the occasion. There was plenty of imbibing. The CP was alive but no angry shots. Des Ceruti produced a Christmas card that was screen printed and used by members of the Det to send to their family and friends – all very normal. Des’s Christmas card is our Christmas message this year.

To all our members...a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Dr Ken & Mrs Kerry Lyons

Barrie Craymer & Michelle

Bob McMillan-Kay & Ros

Ian Reed

Col & Val Moorhead

Bob Skitch

MAPMAKER'S
DINNER
REUNION & AGM
September 2005

Peter & Barbara Bates-Brownsword

Andy Steen

Tony Gee

Perc & Dell Long

Mary-Ann Thiselton, Sandra & Derek Stanmore

Charlie & Nyo Mar Johnson (Pioneer Survey), Alex Cairney & Ross Smithwick
DEREK CHAMBERS AWARD
November 2005

Maj Shawn Hoffman, Lorraine Chambers, Cpl Jason Bevis (recipient)
& Vice President Alex Cairney