

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER
SUMMER ISSUE 2011

*The Official Quarterly
Magazine*



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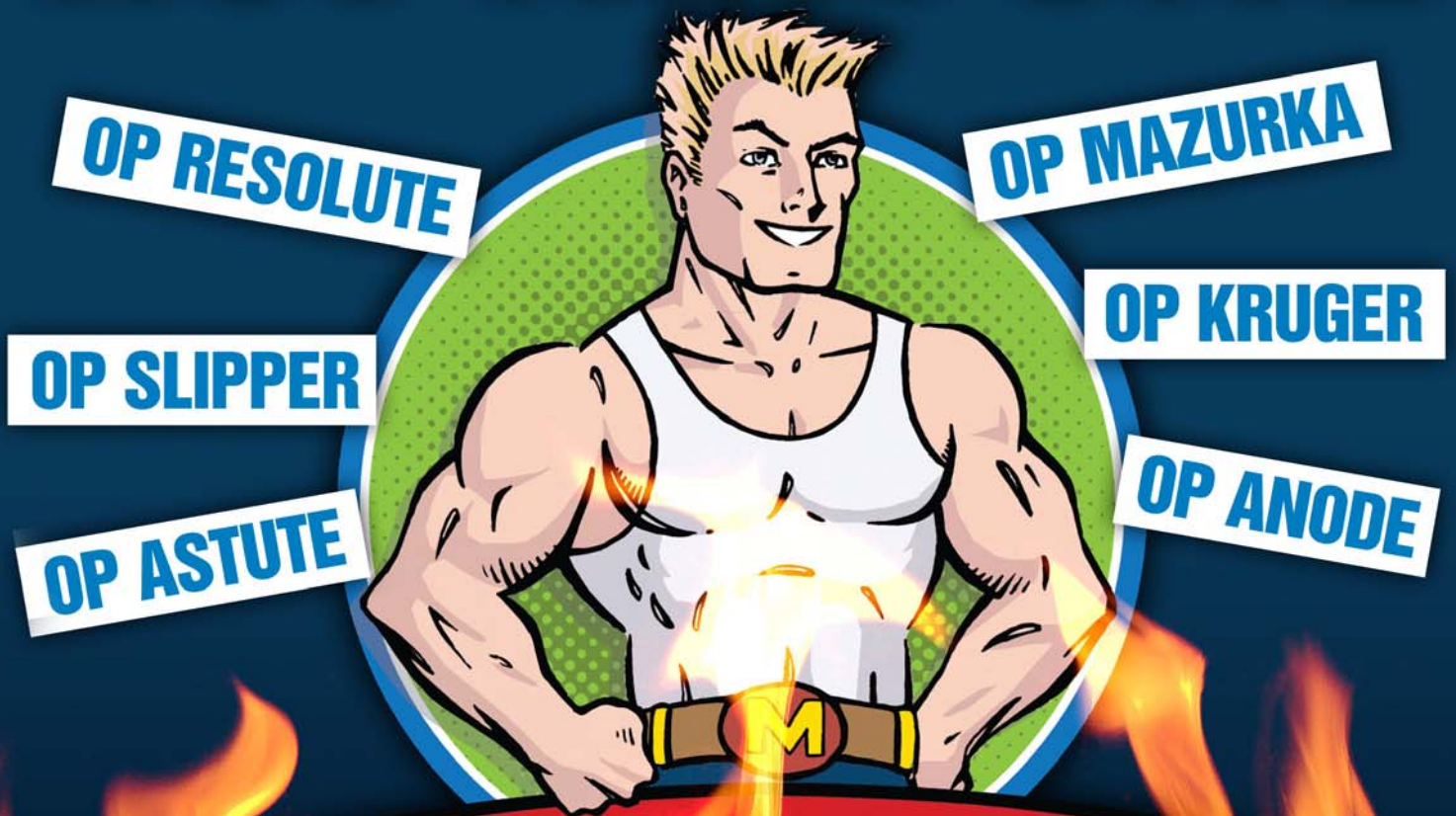


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VALE ~

Harley RODD.....15/7/11

Don BOOTH27/10/11

John "Spud" MURPHY..... 4/8/11

Harley RODD passed away on the 15th July 2011 and his funeral was held at Rookwood Cemetery on the 20th July.

I came home from my sea voyage at the end of August and found the sad letter from Harley's mum informing me of his passing. She wrote to me when our SPRING Issue 2011 magazine arrived for him.

Harley had been sick for the last 12 months with cancer and although I had spoken to him in early July, I had no idea from talking with him that he was so sick.

Harley never married and lived with his mum who told me he was a wonderful son.

His working life was with the Westpac Bank and he was involved in some official capacity with his club — The Wentworth Bowling Club.

His mum told me there were a lot of people at his funeral — sadly, we were not part of it.

Harley joined us in July 2005 and has always turned up to our events — even carrying our Banner in the 2006 ANZAC Day March.

Harley completed his National Service as an Australian Regular Army Supplement from 28 September 1966 to 27 September 1968. His army number was 2785521 and was allotted to the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps.

He served in the following units; 3 Recruit Training Battalion (Trainee Strength), RAAOC Centre (Trainee Strength) and Central Army Records Office. His rank on discharge was Private (Temporary Corporal).

Harley was awarded The Australian Defence Medal and the Anniversary of the National Service 1951-72 Medal.

Harley is survived by his mum.

If any member knew Harley on a more personal level and would like to contact me with more information, I would be grateful.

Don BOOTH passed away in the early hour of the 27th October. His friend and partner, Terry Langworthy, was by his side in their home in Bayview, Cairns.

Don contracted cancer a couple of years ago and it gradually beat him. I was glad that I had the chance to 'catch up' with them, in Cairns, last year, when Ruth and I visited our grandchildren.

Don's wish was to have a private funeral and this was respected. He made many friends whilst he was at 5th Field Ambulance and they were saddened to hear of his passing.

Terry kindly sent me the eulogy he gave to Don and with his permission I share it with you;

... "When I met Don, I was in a state of despair. He asked no questions but in the last 24 years taught me to trust again and transported me from the very edge of the abyss to the very pinnacle of love. I could not have met a more courageous, kind and generous soul. At no stage during the last 18 months, whilst we fought the cancer that ravaged his body, did he ever complain or ask — 'Why Me' — I just hope that when my time comes, I can match him. On the last evening I asked him — 'Where do you want to sleep tonight?' (this meant in his reclining chair or in bed) and he replied... "with you." I held him in my arms until he 'slipped away' at 7 minutes past midnight on the 27th October. He will always live on in my heart".

A Memorial Service was held for Don on Wednesday 9th November in the West Chapel of Rookwood Cemetery, at noon.

I was pleased to represent our Association and be present with his partner, Terry, and sister, Lola and niece, Leoni and about another 25 family and friends.

Don was a private person and was very much loved by Terry and Leoni, which became apparent as they, in their own words, gave us a loving account on how Don touched their lives and others. Each of us was invited to file past Don's coffin and accept a yellow rose as a memento.

Don's army service commenced when he was called up for National Service on the 13th May 1958 to the 13th NSTB at Ingleburn with Army Number 2/772736.

He completed his obligation on the 28th April 1960 and re-enlisted in the CMF the next day, on the 29th, with the 5th Field Ambulance and the new Army Number 2127090.

He remained with the 5th Field Ambulance over 3 separate occasions — 29th April 1960 to 14 November 1968, 6 February 1969 to 21 August 1969 and lastly, from 29 June 1970 to his discharge, with the rank of Staff Sergeant, on the 21 April 1975.

Either his civilian work or travel arrangements would have been responsible for those breaks in his service.

Don is survived by his sister, Lola, his niece, Leoni, and his partner, Terry.

John ("Spud") MURPHY was not one of our members, but I would like to acknowledge his passing in our newsletter.

Some of us would remember "Spud", especially on ANZAC Days and the "Battle for Australia" Commemoration Days, in Martin Place, Sydney.

He was one of the senior Scouts 'On Duty' at the Cenotaph. He and his fellow Scouts would also attend the HMAHS Centaur "Remembrance Ceremony" held at the Concord Repatriation Hospital each year.

"Spud's" old Scout Troop is the proud custodian of the 2/12th Australian Field Ambulance Banner and they have carried their Banner in every ANZAC Day March since 1992. He very kindly sent me their story which I placed in our June 2011 newsletter (p24/25).

I knew "Spud" was sick when we met at the last HMAHS Centaur Memorial Day in May this year; he had lost a lot of weight but never his positiveness. I remember him as a very strong and robust man and a very proud Australian Merchant Seaman/Scout.

I did not know that "Spud" had died until I read the tribute, in "Reveille" (Sep/Oct Issue, p10), from the RSL's NSW State President, Mr Don Rowe. He was a member of Maroubra RSL Sub Branch and was given a RSL funeral.

"Spud" passed away on the 4th August; he was 71 years of age. He is survived by his two daughters, Fiona and Jane, and son, Matt.

Our Association passes on its sincere condolences to his family.

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| + Mr. Neil | BARRIE | Dr. Helena | MARTIN |
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| * MAJGEN John | BROADBENT CBE DSO ED | COL G.R.W. ("Roy") | McDONALD (Rtd) |
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| Mr. Kevin | CARTER | Mr. Barry | O'KEEFE |
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| LTCOL Marie | DOYLE | WO 1 Ken | PHILLIPS OAM |
| LTCOL Andrew | ELLIS OAM | Mr. John | PRICE |
| * LTCOL James | ELLIS | Dr. F.G. (Geoff.) | PRIOR |
| MAJ Madeline | EVES RFD | + Mr. Thomas (Tom) | PRITCHARD |
| Mr. Phillip | FAGUE | COL Robert (Bob) | REID ED (Rtd) |
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| Victoria | GORRIE | Sr. Elizabeth | SHEARD (nee Reid) |
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Message from the President

Welcome to the 2011 Summer/Christmas Newsletter of 5 Field Ambulance RAAMC Association Quarterly Magazine.

Our members plus Banner, attended the Battle for Australia Day Commemoration at the Cenotaph in Martin Place Sydney on Wednesday, 7 September. Our hard toiling Secretary has also been very active representing our Association at the Commemoration Ceremony of the 70th Anniversary of the Syrian Campaign in June 1941 by the 7 Australian Division A.I.F. on Thursday, 13 October. Of historical interest to us was that 2/5 Australian Field Ambulance was in 21 Brigade, 7 Division. On 3-6 November he represented our Association along with life member Stu Jones (also Patron of 1 Field Ambulance Association) at the RAAMC Banner Presentation in Queensland. These important events are covered by Alan later in the Magazine.

The Reserve Forces Day 2012 National and NSW Launch will take place on Saturday, 26th November with a march down Macquarie Street, Sydney to Parliament House and marching the Standards into Parliament House. The theme for 2012 is "The 110th Anniversary of the end of the Boer War and Reservists serving overseas since then". As this event clashes with the 5 Field Ambulance mixed Luncheon at Paddington RSL our Standard will be carried by a volunteer from the National Servicemen's Association.

I attended a presentation at the monthly meeting of the Cumberland/Hawkesbury Branch of the National Parks Association (NPA) in October. The illustrated talk covered trekking in Greece and Turkey and was given by two of our NPA members. To my surprise in their group on screen was a distinguished white haired gentleman Dr Bob Kenyon. Bob was my OC Medical Company at 5 Field Ambulance and was also my Medical Officer on Exercise Rongbuk in 1992 an, Adventure Exercise to the Rolwaling and Everest Region of Nepal where the team

became the first Australians to scale the 6000 metre Peak Ramdung Go. Major Bob Kenyon went on to Command 2 Pvnt Med Coy and is a Director of OccuTox a Consultancy dealing with Occupational and Environmental Toxicology. Bob tells me he still treks in the Blue Mountains most weeks and I hope to join him from time to time on some not so hard treks.

The RAAMC ASSOCIATION INC. (NSW) continue to meet on the first Friday of each even month with the last meeting for 2011 being on Friday 2 December. All 5 Field Ambulance Association members are encouraged to attend.

The mixed end of year function was held on Saturday 26 November at the Paddington RSL. 27 members, associates and friends attended and 12 apologies were received. Alan Curry will cover this event later in the Magazine. From a personal point of view I was delighted to catch up with all our regulars and with former unit CO Lt Col Marie Doyle and her husband Brian, the remarkably fit Elizabeth Sheard and the 1 Field Ambulance Association connections of Patron and also one of our members Stu Jones and his wife Sue as well as President John Bevan.

As the festive season approaches Edna and I wish all our members and their families a peaceful Christmas and healthy New Year and may our many sick and frail members have a better 2012. Our next gathering will be Anzac Day march and after march luncheon at Paddington RSL and I look forward to seeing many of you joining us that day. Good reading.



Derek Cannon

Derek Cannon

Why men shouldn't write advice columns

Dear John,

I hope you can help me. The other day, I set off for work, leaving my husband in the house watching TV. My car stalled. and then it broke down about a mile down the road, and I had to walk back to get my husband's help. When I got home, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbour's daughter!

I am 32, my husband is 34 and the neighbour's daughter is 19. We have been married for 10 years. When I confronted him, he broke down and admitted they had been having an affair for the past six months. He won't go to counselling, and I'm afraid I am a wreck and need advice urgently. Can you please help.

Sincerely, Sheila

Dear Sheila,

A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine.

Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line. If it is clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires.

If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors.

I hope this helps,
John

– Forwarded by Steve Sanderson
Gilbert, S.C.



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Message from the Secretary



Dear Members,

As Christmas draws near our thoughts are with our sick and hospitalised members. Your committee passes our good wishes to each of you.

We are thinking of you, and we hope your loved ones are with you to celebrate Christmas and New Year.

Our Treasurer, Brian Tams, received a good report from his doctor regarding the heart surgery he had last year. Barring any mishaps, his doctor will see him in 12 months' time.

In August I had the occasion to join our eldest son, Stephen, on a sea trip—I hope you enjoy the read when it is printed in our newsletter.

Then in October I went camping and rabbit shooting with our youngest son, Gregory, and his youngest son, Marcus (he's 14). We didn't get many rabbits but we certainly frightened a lot and left a lot of lead in the hillsides!!!

I was pleased to represent our Association at the Memorial Service for our late member, Don Booth, on Wednesday 9th November, held in the West Chapel of Rookwood Cemetery.

When I left the Cemetery I visited two of our good members, John de Witt in his Nursing Home in Jannali and Dr. Bob McInerney, in his retirement village in Chatswood.

By a strange coincidence, I 'ran into' another member, Gordon Dodd, when I was visiting John. I was most happy to drive him home, as he lives in a nearby suburb. Gordon was actually 'booking' himself into Chesalon for a week's respite, so as to give his wife, Olive, a small break — what a champion bloke this man is — and he's in his 90's.

On Remembrance Day I had the honour of giving the "CITATION" at our Sub Branch (*Lemon Tree Passage and Districts RSL*). I spoke about Keith Payne VC OAM. We had about 80 in attendance.

I had a member email me the following article on;
WHY A RED POPPY ON REMEMBRANCE DAY?

The red poppy, the Flanders poppy, was first described as the flower of remembrance by Lt Col John McRae. John went to France in WW 1 as a medical officer with the first Canadian contingent. At the second battle of Ypres, in 1915, when he was in charge of a small first-aid post, he wrote these lines, in pencil, on a page torn from his dispatch book:-

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky,
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.*

Lt Col McRae was wounded in May 1918 and died after 3 days in a military hospital on the French coast. On the eve of his death he allegedly said to his doctor ... "Tell them this. If ye break faith with us who die we shall not sleep".

The red poppy has become an international symbol of sacrifice and remembrance.

LEST WE FORGET.

Alan Curry

"SPECIAL" Fund-Raiser



HARLEY DAVIDSON 105th Anniversary Kit (1903-2008)



This 'kit' was very kindly given to me, some years ago, by our recently deceased member, Don Booth.

I am sure Don would have been happy for me to use this 'memento' for any purpose that suited our Association.

The kit is enclosed in a sturdy (brown coloured) cardboard container and contains a wallet with key ring, 2 small flags (one is a US flag and the other is a HD flag), brass wrist band, a corded key (etc) holder and 2 small booklets.

This 'prize' would obviously be a 'treasure' for a Harley owner. We will raffle this kit for \$5 per ticket (postage included) and will only sell to whoever reads this issue and draw the winner prior to our next issue (ANZAC Newsletter—AUTUMN ISSUE 2012)—the "Cut-Off" date will be 26th March 2012 and the winner will be notified.

If you are interested, please send in \$5—who knows, you may be the only entrant!

Thank you all, in advance.





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Battle for Australia Commemoration Ceremony

(Summary – Wednesday, 7th September)

We were blessed with a crisp spring morning and a lovely sunny day. The MC was our good member, David Cooper OAM who handed over the 'Welcome proceedings' to LTCOL Brian Nebenzahl OAM RFD (Retd), the President of the BFA Committee and he warmly welcomed everyone present.

It was a big crowd though not as big as previous occasions, probably due to a lot of sickness that is around at this time.

The NSW Police Band and the Pipers from Scots College were in attendance and marched the Catafalque Party to the Cenotaph and later, played the Lament. The Royal

Salute was given to the NSW Governor, Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC.

Then 'on cue' at 11.10am two jet fighters from the RAAF Base at Williamtown 'flashed' overhead, down Martin Place—very impressive.

The crowd gave a very warm welcome to our visiting "Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels" and PNG Representatives. They were escorted by Mr. Michael Ali (Qantas Rep) and Rosemary Bayne, in the absence of our good member John Phillips OAM.

John was too ill to be in attendance—this is the first year for a long time that he was not present—he was very much missed and we hope he is in good spirits when reading this.

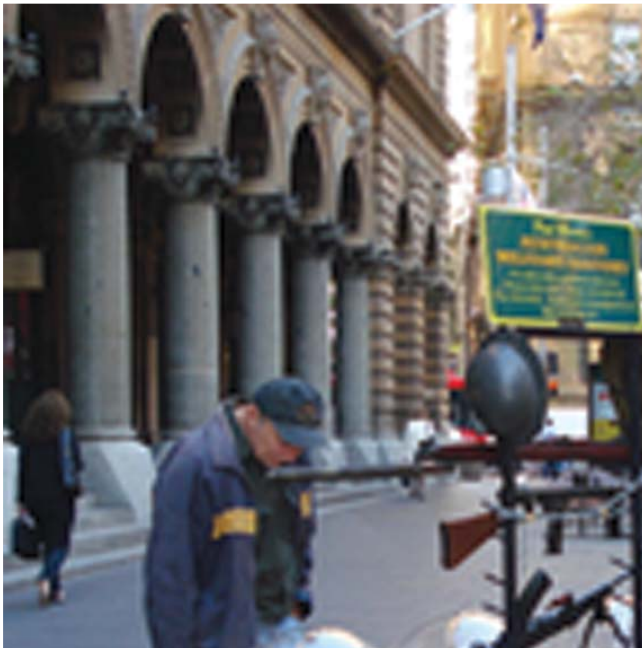
The stirring Address was presented by FTLT Fred Cassidy OAM who was well and truly in the Battle for Australia.

He flew with 30 Squadron Beaufighters in that very decisive "Battle of the Bismarck Sea". This battle, against the might of the Imperial Japanese Forces, was the last of three decisive battles which started the decline of the Japanese military supremacy.

The other two 'battles' were the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway.

Fred reminded the crowd that much of the credit for this victory was given to the Australian Group Captain, Bill Garing, whose plan involved the 'shadowing' of the Japanese convoy whilst 22 Squadron, flying Boston Aircraft, attacked the Japanese held airfields in Lae, in PNG.

This action reduced the capabilities of the Japanese Zero aircraft to retaliate in the coming attack on the Japanese convoy that was heading to PNG.



Top photo (1) shows a 'display' of weapons etc used by our troops in WW 2. Next lot of photos (2) from L/R PNG Reps. Benjamin Ajumi, Leah Pomoleu and Fr. Hannington Dabinyaba. Photo (3) M/s Rosemary Bayne and Mr. Michael Ali (Qantas) with PNG members in background. Photo (4) Olive and Gordon Dodd (behind). Photo (5) and (6) PNG Reps laying Tributes on Cenotaph. Photo (7) Choristers from St Andrews Cathedral School. Photo (8), (9) and (10) Groups show Banner Bearers Barry Perigo and Heather Perigo (partly obscured) with Alan Curry, Benjamin Ajumi, Miss Jasmine Hopkins (in front), Leah Pomoleu, Fr. Hannington Dabinyaba, Derek Cannon, Eileen Henderson, Gordon and Olive Dodd, Master Trevor Tomai (boy in head-dress) (young girl in denim skirt—unknown)



This huge Japanese convoy, which had sailed from Rabaul at midnight on the 28th February 1943, consisted of 8 troop and supply laden transport ships and escorted by 8 Destroyers and would be protected by hundreds of Japanese Zero fighter aircraft from bases in New Britain, New Ireland and New Guinea.

Our plan of attack began at 10am on the 3rd March, with our aircraft flying from bases at Milne Bay, Buna and Port Moresby. It consisted of a coordinated attack at 3 levels and only seconds apart.

Flying Fortresses were at 8,000 ft., protected by USAF Lightning Fighters, Liberators at 4,000 ft. and Mitchell and Beaufighter bombers at sea level. All had their specific tasks to do.

30 Squadron Beaufighters were to suppress anti-aircraft fire and to disrupt command by destroying the bridges of the ships and the captains and officers in them.

The ensuing action was furious with ships and planes filling every bit of space.

The end result saw all 8 transports and 4 of the Destroyers plus many Zeros completely wiped out. This was a most significant turning point in the south west Pacific region during WW 2.

Our President, Derek Cannon, kindly thanks the following members for being with him in attendance;

David Cooper OAM (MC), Alan Curry, Gordon Dodd (and his good wife, Olive), Eileen Henderson (representing the Nursing Corps Association), Barry and Heather Perigo.

(Heather laid a posy in remembrance of her brother, Robert Sims, who was killed when his ship, HMAS Perth, was sunk by the Japanese, in the Battle of the Java Sea, on the 1st March 1942—He was just 18.)

After the Ceremony, Derek, Alan, Gordon and Olive had lunch in the Gallipoli Legion Club a short distance away.



The BFA Committee are requesting the following;

- That our local MP's embrace this important occasion on the Sunday prior to the first Wednesday in September—each year.
- Remind the local radio stations and papers to give publicity to this very important event.
- Remind schools to do something—even if it is just the ringing of their bell and having a Minute's Silence.
- RSL's and Clubs have a Minute's Silence at 11am.
- Retirement Villages could gather, say at their Flag Pole, for whatever length of Service is considered appropriate.
- Suggest to your "boss" that he does something.

Our Association AND the BFA Committee would be very interested to hear what happens in your area—now and in the future.

A short piece written by Fr. Hannington Dabinyaba

(In reference to the "Battle for Australia" Summary)

I was at Banumo village (now called Onodo village) near Gona. The first Japanese landing in PNG took place at Gona beach head.

We were told to leave the Gona area as the Japanese had landed and were to take refuge at Bakubari village.

From here, our people moved into Ambasi and lived there for one year. After the Japanese were driven inland towards Kokoda, the Australian army had told my people to return to Gona and other small villages within the Gona area, while the Australian army took control over Sopotu area and advanced to Gona area as well.

I, and my friend, Bradley Aiga, helped build shelters. Myself and Bradley Aiga also helped carry Gona sands for sandbanks around the shelters or camps to keep the rain from flooding the camps or campsites.

We were helping Australian soldiers or Diggers helping build camps, work on bringing sand and putting sandbanks for protection from rain penetrating/destroying the camps.

Lt. Moore and Captain Cat (*Ed. Note—I presume Fr. Hannington is referring to Captain Basil Catterns*) take myself and my friend, Bradley Aiga, for Training Exercises at the back of the current Gona Mission Station.

I worked at Gona, Buna area only 1942-45.





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Annual "Mixed" Reunion

(Summary)

When we woke up in the morning and were confronted by pouring rain and atrocious weather, Ruth said I hope it all goes good today. We drove down from Newcastle and it poured all the way down until the end of the expressway—as we got closer to the city the clouds parted and the sun came out!

We had a wonderful turn-out with 27 in attendance. Unfortunately, ten members of 1 HSB (included wives and friends) did not turn up, which was a bit sad because we were looking forward to greeting them again.

Some welcome attendees were John Bevan (President of 1st Field Ambulance Association), Stuart and Sue Jones (Stu' is also the Patron of 1st Field Ambulance Association), Brian Hogan (a 1960's member—and all the way up from Longwarry in Victoria), Elizabeth Sheard and Tony and Julie Evans (Julie is Derek and Edna's daughter, with her husband).

We had the pleasure of Brian Hogan (a part-time Pastor) saying Grace and later, our committeeman, Warren Barnes, proposed the Loyal Toast.

During the course of the meal, Warren placed a "Lucky Door Prize" with every attendee and later, Ruth gave everyone a small 2012 diary (with the compliments of our Association).

Our President, Derek, thanked everyone for coming along and making the day a happy success.

He read the APOLOGIES and reminded everyone of what had taken place with our Association during the year. He sends a special message to our sick members, especially, John Straskye and John de Witt.

We finalised all our "Fund Raiser" raffles which included the Sudan Print Raffle and the yearly \$1 raffle.

Warren Barnes had presented our Association with two books to be given as a 'Door Prize". The first book was won by our President, Derek, and the second one by Robert Love.

The \$1 Raffle collected a total of \$149 and the winner of 50% (\$75) was Bill Rylands (who was present—he asked me to keep \$25 to be used as a Donation to our Association.)

The biggest shock came when the Sudan Print was drawn by Ann-Marie and checked by Brian Hogan and announced that I had won this wonderful, framed print. I was



Group photo with the Sudan Print Raffle Prize

Front Row (Seated L/R): Brian Doyle, Marie Doyle, Alan Curry, Ruth Curry, Gail Tams and Edna Cannon.

2nd Row (Seated L/R): Warren Barnes, Sue Jones, Penelope Lowery, Margaret Dougherty, Heather Perigo, Kerry Rylands (obscured), Julie Evans & Tony Evans.

3rd Row (Standing L/R): Fred Bell, Brian Hogan, Brian Tams, Edwin Lowery, Barry Perigo, Derek Cannon, Stuart Jones, Robert Love, Kevin Hurrell, John Bevan and Bill Rylands. (Missing was John McKeown and Elizabeth Sheard.)



Photo shows (L/R): Warren Barnes, Barry & Heather Perigo and Elizabeth Sheard.



Photo shows (from man in front then L/R): Edwin Lowery, Brian Hogan, Marie & Brian Doyle, Fred Bell, Margaret Dougherty and Penelope Lowery.



Photo shows (from man in striped shirt then L/R): Robert Love, Derek & Edna Cannon, Julie & Tony Evans, John Bevan, Sue Jones, John McKinnon and Stu' Jones.

flabbergasted to say the least. It will be 'treasured' in our home.

Derek sincerely thanked all the participants who had purchased tickets in our two "Fund-Raising" activities during the past year and reminded members they are welcome to attend the next RAAMC Inc. Meeting at Victoria Barracks on Friday, 2nd December at 10.30am.

He looks forward to seeing us on ANZAC Day in 2012.

We sincerely thank the following members and friends who attended our Annual "Mixed" Reunion;

Warren Barnes, Fred Bell, John Bevan, Derek & Edna Cannon, Alan & Ruth Curry, Margaret Dougherty, Brian & Marie Doyle, Tony & Julie Evans, Brian Hogan, Kevin Hurrell, Stuart & Sue Jones, Robert Love, Edwin & Penelope Lowery, John McKeown, Barry & Heather Perigo, Bill & Kerry Rylands, Elizabeth Sheard, Brian & Gail Tams.

APOLOGIES were received from; Theo Dechaupepie, John de Witt, Nelson Florentino, Joe Gatty, Ray Hyslop (our Patron), Huss Mahomet, Bill Molloy, John O'Brien, John Phillips, Diana Rothfield, Rob Stewart, John Straskye, John Weaver, John & Margaret Gorell.

I have attached some photos of the Luncheon.



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RAAMC Association Inc. BANNER PRESENTATION

(Summary)

This was my first visit to Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera, Queensland. This base ranks as one of the biggest bases in the Commonwealth.

The organising committee of LTCOL Shaun Fletcher, MAJ John Smith and WO 1 Ross McGregor are to be congratulated and commended for all the logistics of a faultless 3 days.

It started with a small "Meet and Greet" at the Gaythorne RSL Club on the 3rd November, from 6pm, then the main Parade in Gallipoli Barracks from 11am on the 4th, the superb "All Ranks Dinner" at 6.30pm, that evening, in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel, Brisbane, and next day, the 5th at The Chapel in Gallipoli Barracks, at 3pm, where the Ceremony for the "Laying Up of the Queen Mother's Banner" was conducted.

Last, was a "Farewell Bar-b-q", for ALL Ranks, in the Digger James Club on the base from 5pm.

PARADE DAY—(Fri. 4th November 2011, 11am)

PRESENTATION OF THE NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S BANNER TO THE RAAMC

What a spectacularly memorable event we were all to witness, I am thankful I was able to attend!

Thankfully, the Parade was conducted in relatively overcast weather conditions, which was a Godsend for the troops taking part.

I arrived with Stuart Jones about 10.30am and we were directed to our seats (all under cover) to await the start at 11am.

The committee had organised for seating for over 500 guests—all under cover. The seating was in about 6 tiered rows and commanded uninterrupted views of the entire Parade to be held before us.

This was a Corps activity with the troops on parade, the majority of whom, were from 2 HSB at the base. They would have numbered in excess of 180 all ranks.

They were ALL Medical Corps and they had volunteered from bases right around the Commonwealth to be a part of this 'once in a lifetime' memorable event, to make up the numbers for this "Special" Parade.

(I make no apologies here for giving a 'special' mention to PTE Catherine Salmon. Cath is a member of our Association and was the only volunteer from 5 Brigade. She is a Reservist with 5 CSSB at Banksmeadow (Sydney) and was a member of No: 1 Guard, and a member of the Guard for the "Laying Up" Ceremony in The Chapel. Cath informed me that although the week of training for this event was rigorous—"Reveille" each day from 6am until "Stand-Down" at 4pm—she said she was very proud to have been a part of this momentous occasion and was made feel very welcome from the time she 'reported in' until she departed.)

The parade started with the Australian Marching Band (QLD) being given the order to QUICK MARCH by the Parade Commander, LTCOL Jocelyn King.

(An Infantry Commander would have been a little jealous (but very proud) to see this Medical Corps unit, such as the one we watched, march and drill to perfection.)



The soldiers were "On Parade" from 11am. They "Open Order" marched, waited whilst the various Guests of Honour arrived, then their Officers "Took Post", they gave Royal Salutes about 4 times, they formed a hollow square for the 'Piling of Drums', they were inspected by our Governor General, M/s Quentin Bryce AC, and finally Marched Past in Review Order to finish the Parade at 1pm.

As I mentioned above, the Parade Commander, did NOT MISS A BEAT. Her orders were loud and clear and her troops acted as one. Everyone present was very proud of them. None more so than the Head of Corps, MAJGEN Paul Alexander AO.

The Chief of Army, LTGEN David Morrison AO, received a huge accolade when, prior to his departing in his official car, deliberately faced his troops and said quite loudly (and probably not said too often) ... "WELL DONE, MEDICAL CORPS".

The Chief of Army said exactly what every person present was thinking.

At the conclusion of the Parade, and after all the guests had departed, we were able to visit a "Set-Up" of a small section of a Field HSB, (Health Services Battalion), an all-weather structure, complete with separate triage area, operating room (with a 'life-like' patient that breathes etc), recovery, x-ray and pathology areas and a field ambulance on 'stand-by'.

There were marquis set up with plenty of sandwiches, cakes, biscuits and either cold or hot drinks available.

FORMAL DINNER at the Hilton. (Friday Evening-6.30pm)

I can only say that it was a wonderful occasion to be present. There were canapés and pre-dinner drinks where everyone 'mixed in' until we were ushered to our respective tables around 7.15pm.

The NEW Banner was "Marched In" and placed on the stage, and below it was placed a small statue of "Simpson and his donkey".





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Registration is quick and easy, accessible on the ASSG website: www.army.gov.au/ASSG

For more information contact ASSG.Admin@defence.gov.au or 02 6266 5559 or 1800.....

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ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE HEALTH ISSUES OF AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS



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ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE HEALTH ISSUES OF AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS



The Australian Army Band (Qld) provided an excellent range of 'mood music' all night, and there was much conviviality and comradeship, the entire night, through meeting old and dear friends, some not seeing each other for decades. The meal and service was excellent.

MAJGEN Paul Alexander AO gave a wonderful, warm and welcoming speech to everyone. He left no doubt in anyone's mind that the Medical Corps was very special—to him and, hopefully, all who had been present to date. I know it was for me –and I am a Service Corps man. He certainly praised the efforts of the entire parade and reiterated what a great spectacle it was. He sincerely thanked the organising committee for a job well done—in all areas.

He gave a very special "THANK YOU" to the National President of the RAAMC Association Inc., MAJ John Straskye. He thanked John for being behind the 'setting up' of the RAAMC Web Site and informed the gathering that John was, at present, ill and undergoing hospital treatment and that our thoughts and prayers are with him.

CHAPEL CEREMONY.
LAYING UP OF THE QUEEN MOTHER'S BANNER.

(Sat 5th November 2011)

At 3pm all the guests were seated and then the GUARD (consisting of about 30 soldiers) entered with head-dress on and took up their seating position on the left hand side of the Chapel.

The Officiating Chaplain, 2HSB Chaplain Christine Digby, met the Banner Party at the Chapel entrance. She then moved in to the Chapel Sanctuary and then the Banner Party "SLOW MARCHED" to the altar.

The Deputy Head of Corps, BRIG Duncan, then moved up and took the Banner from the DHOC, LTCOL Jocelyn King, who was the Head of the Banner Party.

The Chaplain then said...*"We are gathered in this chapel to lay up this Banner of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, no more fitting place could be found wherein to deposit this emblem of duty and service than the House of God, where prayer and sacrifice are constantly offered"*.

The DHOC then said to MAJGEN Paul Alexander AO (Head of Corps)...*"General Alexander, Sir, will you honour the Corps by receiving the Banner and delivering it in the custody of the church?"*

HOC then said to the Chaplain... *Reverend, this consecrated Banner, formally carried by the Royal Australian Medical Corps in the service of Queen and Country, I now deliver into your hands for safe custody within these walls."*

The Chaplain replied... *"Sir, I now receive this Banner for laying up and safe-keeping within this chapel."*



The Banner was then placed on the altar. Prayers were offered and then the Banner Party 'About Turned' and 'Quick Marched' out of the Chapel. ALL Army personnel in head-dress then removed same.

The Royal Australian Army Medical Corps Prayer was read by all...*"Almighty God, Your Son Jesus Christ endured the depths of human suffering. Help us, members of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, in our care of those who suffer. Give us the skills and compassion we need to work with you in healing wounded minds and bodies, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen"*

Head of Corps—MAJGEN Paul Alexander AO asked the assembled to recite with him The Soldier's Prayer.

...*"Almighty God, Whose command is over all, and whose love never fails, let us be aware of your presence and obedient to your will. Help us to accept our share of responsibility with a strong heart and a cheerful mind. Make us considerate of those with whom we live and work and faithful to the duties our country has entrusted to us.*

Let our uniform remind us daily of the traditions of the army in which we serve. When we are inclined to doubt, strengthen our faith. When we are tempted to sin, help us to resist. When we fail, give us the courage to try again. Guide us with the light of your truth and keep before us the example of Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen."

The Chaplain then gave Benediction, followed by the National Anthem—The Banner was LAID UP.

FAREWELL BAR-B-Q (5pm)
DIGGER JAMES CLUB
GALLIPOLI BARRACKS.

I must congratulate the Catering Staff (all soldiers) who did a magnificent job the entire weekend.

The food at this bar-b-q just 'topped it off'. There was plenty of hot and cold food AND sweets.

What a fitting end to a memorable and unforgettable week-end. The mateship was ever present – yes, even from the General down. All ranks mixed freely and they all relaxed at this fitting finale. One could feel the 'esprit de corps' in this unit.

(I would like to thank the following 5th Field Ambulance Association members who were present with me:)

MAJGEN John Pearn AO, COL Ray Hyslop OAM (our Patron), COL Suresh Badami OAM (Hon Colonel-NSW), LTCOL Stu' Jones (Rtd) (and also Patron of 1st Field Ambulance Association), PTE Catherine Salmon, Alan Beckerleg and Steve Paris.

There were a number of APOLOGIES, including our President, LTCOL Derek Cannon.



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Dates to put in your diaries for 2012

RAAMC Association Inc. (NSW Branch) FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER, DECEMBER.

(They meet on the FIRST FRIDAY at 10.30am at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. An "OPEN INVITATION" is extended to you. Please advise me if you wish to attend.)

14th FEBRUARY

National Servicemen's Day

(We have no "official" involvement but if any member attends a Ceremony and represents us, would they be kind enough to write/email and let me know so I can put an article in our AUTUMN Issue.)

25th APRIL

ANZAC Day

MAY

AHS CENTAUR SERVICE

(Concord Hospital, 113 AHG Memorial Chapel). TBA

1st JULY

RAAMC CORPS BIRTHDAY (Paddington RSL Club - TBA)

JUNE/JULY

RESERVE FORCES DAY --- NEWCASTLE

JULY (1st Sunday)

RESERVE FORCES DAY --- SYDNEY

(Lunch at Paddington RSL afterwards)

SEPTEMBER (1st Wednesday)

BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATION

(Martin Place, Sydney, 11am)

NOVEMBER

Reserve Forces Day "LAUNCH" (TBA)

NOVEMBER (last Saturday)

ANNUAL "Mixed" Reunion Luncheon (Paddington RSL Club)

"Cut-Off dates" for articles for AUTUMN issue, WINTER issue, SPRING issue & SUMMER issue
MARCH 20, MAY 24, AUGUST 19, NOVEMBER 25.



Happy Birthday

OCTOBER:

Edna CANNON, Dorothy FOSTER, John GORRELL, Margaret GORRELL, Rayda NOBLE, Dr James ROCHE OAM, David THOMPSON and Peter THOMPSON.

NOVEMBER:

Roy CROSSLEY, Peter DALGLEISH, MAJGEN Warren GLENNY AO, Robert GLOVER, Simon HERLIHY, Robert KENYON, Tony MILLER, Gordon MILLS, Dr Bill MOLLOY, John SMITH OAM, Judith STRACHAN and Dr Phillip YUILE.

DECEMBER:

Fred BELL, George DONNELLY, Dr Andrew ELLIS OAM, Laurie FARRUGIA, Maureen LIVINGSTON, Robert LOVE, Bob LYNCH, Nick MARSHALL, Noel MOULDER, Dr Phillip McGRATH, Barry O'KEEFE, Chris O'REILLY, Heather PERIGO, Michael ROWLEY, Michael STRINGFELLOW, Peter SULLIVAN and Noel TAME.

*Our Association wishes each of you "All the Best" on your "special" day.
 (If your name is not here, please contact me.)*



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 Sir Keith JONES (*RSL Wing, Peter Cosgrove House, Veterans Pde., Narrabeen, Phone: (02) 9949.4139*)
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 Anthony JORDAN
 Dr Ted KREMER, OAM
 Bob LEECH
 Robert LOVE
 Huss MAHOMET
 Noel MOULDER
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 John TROY
 Arthur WALTON
 John WEAVER
 Bruce WHITTET
 John WOODHEAD (*Lourdes Nursing Home, Room 27, Stanhope Rd., Killara, Phone: (02) 8467.4550*).

"Forgetter be forgotten"

(Kind Thanks to Member Barry Perigo, by email—Author Unknown)

*My forgetter's getting better but my rememberer is broke
 To you that may seem funny but to me it is no joke!
 For when I'm "here" I'm wondering if I really should be "there"
 And when I try to think it through, I haven't got a prayer.*

*Oft times I walk into a room, say... "what am I here for?"
 I wrack my brain, but all in vain! A zero is my score.
 At times I put something away, where it is safe, but, gee!
 The person it is safest from, is, generally me!*

*When shopping, I may see someone, say "hi" and have a chat,
 Then when the person walks away, I ask myself "who the heck was that?"
 Yes, my forgetter's getting better, while my rememberer is broke
 And it's driving me just crazy and that isn't any joke.*

A WOMAN'S POEM

(Author unknown—kindly submitted by email – courtesy of member, Barry Perigo)

*He didn't like my casserole
 and he didn't like my cake.*

*He said my biscuits were too hard,
 not like his mother used to make.*

*I didn't 'perk' the coffee right
 and he didn't like the stew.*

*I didn't mend his sox
 the way his mother used to do.*

*I pondered for an answer,
 I was looking for a clue,
 Then I turned around and smacked him one
 —like his mother used to do!*



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NEW MEMBERS



Mrs Marion NEWMAN is sincerely welcomed into our Association. She contacted me some months ago, through our website, when she was searching our "Honour Roll" to see if her grandfather was on it.

I gathered the information from the National Archives and read that her grandfather, Sergeant William Maxwell, enlisted in Perth WA, in the AIF in November 1914 and served in Gallipoli and France with 5th Field Ambulance and was discharged in July 1919, in Perth.

I immediately placed her grandfather into our Honour Roll with much pleasure.

Marion also enquired what colour was the unit's Colour Patch (it was a Brown Diamond).

I sent Marion some old copies of our quarterly magazines and she kindly filled in an Application Form to become an Associate Member. Thank you, Marion, and WELCOME.

George CARUANA is sincerely welcomed back to our Association. George resigned of his own accord, some years back, for personal reasons. We look forward to renewing our friendship with George in the near future and take this opportunity to wish him good health in his retirement.

Steve PARIS is warmly welcomed into our Association and also as a LIFE MEMBER.

He joined the Army when he turned 17 and served with the following units; 1 Field Hospital, 10 Field Ambulance and 5 Field Ambulance, DSU- Perth and the School of Army Health-Healesville (Vic). He retired after 23 years' service with the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2.

When back on 'civvie street', Steve worked as a 'postie' in the northern suburbs of Sydney for 12 years before he and his wife, Mary, decided to move to Glen Innis—a beautiful township in the New England ranges of NSW. He is happily working part-time in one of the Aged Care facilities in the region.

Steve and Mary enjoy travelling – either in their motorhome (twice around Australia) or overseas when they get the chance.

He owns a Harley Davidson motorcycle and is a member of two clubs ("neither of them with any adverse notoriety"—he said). They went on one unforgettable trip overseas to the US to attend a motorcycle rally.

They had ridden over 2,000 miles and finally congregated with more than 500,000 other motorcycle enthusiasts in Sturgis, South Dakota, USA.

The highlight of this particular trip was the meeting, in Daytona and the reunion, of his half-sister, Linda, who had learned of Steve's existence only 2 years previous.

Steve was sorry that he hadn't been in touch with some of his mates over the years but one of the motorcycle clubs he belong to ("Patriots") has a few serving members and he enjoys this military comradeship and ANZAC Days with them.

(Ed. Note: I met Steve at the RAAMC Banner Ceremony in November and it was a pleasure to put a face to the phone calls. He certainly caught up with many of his comrades over this weekend. – Welcome, Steve "Boris" Paris, especially for your donation for Life Membership, it is very much appreciated.)

MAJ David CZERKIES is sincerely welcomed into our Association. I had the pleasure of being in David's company over the course of RAAMC Banner Presentation weekend in early November.

Since then David has kindly sent us the following 'insight' into his army and civilian life;

... "I commenced my career in the Australia Regular Army in March 1976 and after 1 RTB Kapooka, was allocated to the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps.

After completing my initial employment training at Healesville, Victoria, I was posted to 1 Australian Field Hospital as my first posting. Whilst posted here I completed my Medical Assistance Course.

My career encompassed various postings and promotions. These have included postings to instructional positions—School of Army Health, Medical Centres/RAP's—DSU Watsonia, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, 5/7 Royal Australian Regiment (Mechanised) RAP, plus a further two postings to 1 Field Hospital before it became Health Services Battalion.

In 1999 to February 2000 I saw Operational Service in East Timor as part of the 1 FST (Hvy) before electing for transfer to the Active Army Reserve.

In March 2000 I transferred to the Active Army Reserve with my first posting to Health Company, 8 CSSB as SGT Medical Assistant.

During my service with the Army Reserve it wasn't long before I was returned to Continuous Full Time Service as the Training Warrant Officer for 8 CSSB, for a few years before entering the civilian employment sector.

Postings in the Army Reserves have been with 8 CSSB and UNSWR, both clinical and regimental positions, before electing for a Commission through the Army In-Service Warrant Officer Commissioning Scheme.

In March 2004 I received my Commission as Captain.

My Officer career has encompassed 2 IC 8 CSSB, Staff Officer positions on Eastern Region Health, Land Warfare Centre-NSW, 8 Brigade in Training and the last 6 months of 2011 as Operations Officer of 7 Field Regiment—an artillery unit.

In my civilian life I have held a number of positions in the training sector, commencing as Education Officer for a GP training organisation, Head Training Officer for St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) and Curriculum Manager and Quality Coordinator Training for Aurecon P/L.

In my spare time I am an active member of St John Ambulance—First Aid Services (uniform branch) as the State Emergency Management Officer responsible for the management of all major incident/disaster call-outs for NSW.

I have been an active member of St John Ambulance for 30 years, both as an instructor and uniformed member.

In respect to Awards, I hold the following military and civil Awards; Australian Active Service Medal with Timor Clasp, Interfet Medal, Defence Long Service Medal with 4 Clasps, Australian Defence Medal, Officer of the Order of St John, St John Long Service Medal with 3 Clasps.

I am married with 3 adult children who have pursued their careers. With two of my eldest children having also had military experience in either the ARA or the Ares, however they are no longer on active service but on Standby Reserve.

I have completed, so far, 35 years of service and I look forward to sharing my future experience with Health Company, 5 CSSB."



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KIND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*(Of monies received since last newsletter, Spring issue 2011.
Please contact me if your name has been omitted.)*

- **Warren BARNES** (Cheque \$50 and Cash \$20) for Annual Reunion, Sudan Print raffle, \$1 raffle.
- **Fred BELL** (Cash \$160) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle and \$1 Raffle.
- **John BEVAN** (Cash \$41) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle and \$1 Raffle.
- **Robert ("Scotty") BOYD** (Cheque \$20) for Subs \$15, 5 x \$1 Raffle Tickets.
- **Derek CANNON** (EFT \$70 and Cash \$75) for Annual Reunion lunches and \$1 Raffle.
- **Edna CANNON** (Cash \$2) for \$1 Raffle.
- **George CARUANA** (M/Order \$15) for New Member Subs.
- **Alan CURRY** (EFT \$100) for Annual Reunion \$70, 4 Tickets in \$5 "Sudan Print \$20 and 10 Tickets in \$1 Yearly Raffle \$10.
- **Brian and Marie DOYLE** (Cash \$204) for Annual Luncheon, Name Badge, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle, RAAMC Envelopes.
- **Julie EVANS** (Cash \$7) for Sudan Print Raffle and \$1 Raffle.
- **Ron FOLEY** (EFT \$70) for Annual Reunion Lunch.
- **Nelson FIORENTINO** (EFT \$100) for Annual Reunion Lunch \$70, 2 X \$5 tickets in Sudan Print and 20 X \$1 Raffle Tickets.
- **Pattie HARRINGTON** (Cheque \$22) for RFD Medallion.
- **Brian HOGAN** (Cash \$80) for Annual Luncheon, Key Ring, Subs, \$1 Raffle and Donation \$5.
- **James HOOLAN Jr.** (Cash US\$50 = A\$47.51 (incurred a A\$5 Service Fee!)) for RAAMC Corps Tie.
- **Kevin HURRELL** (Cash \$59.70) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle, Key Ring.
- **Stuart and Sue JONES** (Cash \$88) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle, RAAMC Envelope.
- **Bryan LINDSAY** (Cheque \$30) for 10 tickets in yearly \$1 Raffle and 4 Tickets in \$5 "Sudan Print" Raffle.
- **Geoff LINDSAY** (Cheque \$20) for Subs \$15 and one Raffle Ticket in Sudan Print \$5.
- **Robert LOVE** (Cash \$36) for Annual Luncheon and \$1 Raffle.
- **Penelope LOWERY** (Cash \$6) for Sudan Print Raffle and \$1 Raffle.
- **John McKEOWN** (Cash \$37) for Annual Luncheon, \$1 Raffle.
- **Mrs Marion NEWMAN** (Cheque \$15) for New (Associate) Member Subs.
- **Steve PARIS** (Cheque \$100) for New Member/Life Member Subscription.
- **Barry and Heather PERIGO** (Cash \$177) for Annual Luncheon, Coin and Token sets, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle, RAAMC Envelopes.
- **Bill and Kerry RYLANDS** (Cheque \$70 and Cash \$40) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle and Donation \$25).
- **Sr. Elizabeth SHEARD** (Cheque \$55
- **Brian TAMS** (EFT \$70 and Cash \$10) for Annual Luncheon, Sudan Print Raffle, \$1 Raffle.

Thank You

(From your Committee)

Thank you Members, for your yearly dues, donations and LIFE MEMBERSHIPS, they are so very much appreciated.

...for completing your (FREE) Application Form to join the RAAMC Association Inc.

...for giving your "unwanted Magazine" to your local doctors/hospital waiting rooms/ Nursing Homes/Retirement Villages/local chemists/RSLs/etc "Reading Rooms" for their enjoyment.

...To all the businesses who have paid our publishers to have their advertisement placed in our magazine.

...To our members who have paid by EFT and for identifying yourself. (There are some members who are a little behind with their Subs—any little effort is much appreciated.)

... For your contributions, letters and emails. They are enjoyed by us all and are an encouragement.

Members on the Internet—don't forget our own site, **www.5fdamb.com**, and also "surf" the RAAMC website:-
www.raamc.com

If you do visit our website, please feel free to write a comment in our "Guest Book".

5 Field Ambulance RAAMC Association is also a proud member of the **RAAMC Association Inc.**

NB: Some of you reading this magazine may decide you may now wish to discontinue to be on our Mailing List. We hope this is not so, but if it is please let me know and your wishes will be respected.





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MESSAGES FROM MEMBERS

James HOOLAN Jr. sends his kind regards and included a recent trip diary that he and his wife, Gia, had just returned home from. I have included it in this newsletter for your enjoyment.

He also emailed me in late August to say his area had a 5.8 magnitude earthquake followed by aftershocks in the early hours of the next morning (31/8/11).

James said he felt nothing at the time but all power was lost for many hours which caused the loss of his fridge and freezer foods which were covered by his insurance.

(Thank you, James, for your email. It is good to see you both back home safe and sound. And more importantly, there were no reported injuries as a result of the earthquake.)

John OVERTON passes on his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He wrote to say he enjoys reading our newsletters and in particular, our last Spring issue (2011).

He commented on our "Member's Profiles" and how he was enlightened in reading their 'input'.

John commented that, on reading Jim Roche's Profile, it brought back a memory of the 1970's when he visited various country centres on behalf of the Post Graduate Committee in Medicine at Sydney University.

One town he visited was Bowral (in the Southern Highlands of NSW) where he met Jim's brother, John, who was a leading GP in the district.

John wrote that he took me for some afternoons 'around the traps', as he did his house calls, and showed me what being a doctor was all about. *"I thoroughly enjoyed this experience..I wonder if John remembers those great afternoons"?*

(Thank you, John, for your letter of encouragement. I would be certain that John Roche remembers because he often cogitates in the late afternoon sunshine, in his favourite chair, with a kindly drop of malt 'w' in his pewter mug!)

Bryan LINDSAY sends his good wishes to all the members in the Association. He happily wrote that he is now (almost) as good as new and to take him off our 'Sick Parade'.

Brian underwent a heart operation some months ago and his doctor does not want to see him until next February. Brian said the other ailments he has he can live with and they are so much better managed now that he has moved from Epping to "God's Country" in Failford (near Taree).

He also kindly posted me a book—"Diaries of a Stretcher-Bearer—1916-1918" which is about the 5th Field Ambulance in WW 1. It is very interesting to read his letters that he sent home. If any member would like to read it I would be very happy to post it to you.

(Thank you, Brian, for the book and your letter and your purchases. I have removed your name from our Sick Parade—with much pleasure.)

Dorothy FOSTER enjoys reading our magazines and kindly thanked us for including her on our 'Sick Parade'. Dorothy is having some eye surgery done in the near future.

(Thank you, Dorothy, for the thoughtful cards that you sent. We are thinking of you as you prepare for your operation.)

Bob McINERNEY passes on his good wishes to his friends in the Association.

I mentioned in our last Issue that I would like to 'catch up' with Bob for a cuppa and happily this happened in early August. I had attended a RAAMC Inc (NSW Branch) meeting in Victoria Barracks and after the meeting I met Bob at his retirement village in Chatswood.

He is well liked by many friends in the village and we had a pleasant hour or so having a chat.

Bob loaned me a copy of his book "Triumph of the Spirit" and it was a pleasure to read it. His words are profound and in some cases very hard-hitting and so truthful.

He has just about recovered from a fall he had recently, and to his credit he never let it get him down.

Just recently, I had the pleasure of calling in to say hullo to Bob and to return his book. He is presently under his doctor's care for fluid retention—and this heat is not helping much.

(Thank you Bob, for the loan of your book—It was good to see you again and I hope when you read this you are back to your old self.)

John WEAVER sends his good wishes to his friends in the Association.

He had a phone call from our good friend, Nelson Fiorentino, who, being the eagle eye that he is, spotted that I had given John TWO birthdays in our SPRING Issue 2011—one in July and another in September!!

When John sent me an email I promptly checked my records and found that I only have him recorded for September (which is his correct birth month)—I must have had a mental 'block' when I put our July names in—Anyway, congratulations old friend on being 'born again'?

John also came across this little piece of nostalgia from his days in the SGT's Mess at Carrington Road, Randwick. *(I knew it had to be in the SGT's mess because the OR's and Officer's Mess were more refined???)*

(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)

*He grabbed me by my slender neck, I could not call or scream.
He dragged me to his darkened tent where we could not be seen.
He took from me my flimsy wrap and gazed upon my naked form.
I was so cold, so scared, so damp and he so delightfully warm
His fevered lips he pressed on mine, I gave him every drop
He took from me my very soul, I could not make him stop.
He made me what I am today. That's why you find me here
An empty, broken bottle, that once was full of beer.*



(Thank you, John, for your email. I was pleased to hear your diabetes is under control and that you are still able to enjoy your occasional 'red'.)

John ROCHE sends his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He wrote to say he enjoyed reading all the articles and especially the one on his brother, James, who does a lot of history research on many matters including military and medical.

John said he attended "Fromelles Day" at the War Memorial in Hyde Park in mid-July and the State Governor, Marie Bashir AC, gave a great talk.

He remarked that, over a "cuppa" later on, the Governor told him that she had received the 'note' about the upcoming "Gunner's Dinner".

She had been invited to attend the Dinner and give a 'talk' on Sir Roden Cutler.

I had previously sent her some information on the 'mythical' "Gunner Peck" and she jokingly wondered "if he might be present"!

John "booked" a seat at the "Dinner" for Major "Harry Peck" and requested that his bill be "put on my account"!

(John said "Harry" left bills all over the Middle East during WW2)

He duly attended the "Dinner" in early August, at the Parramatta RSL Club, with his cousin, Pam, Warwick Wilkinson and his wife, Jan, his brother James and his wife, Mary.

He said that behind their table was a glass case which had a 'model 25 Pounder' with the "Harry Peck Trophy" for Battery Competitions—presented by "Peck's Paste".

John said the Governor's 'talk' on Sir Roden Cutler was very well received.

The Gunner's Association President and Treasurer were also aware of the "Gunner Peck Story" because they DID put his account on MY bill!!!

John also attached 2 stories—one was on James Osborne: A forgotten Australian Officer. The other one was on the 'mythical' "Gunner Harry Peck".

(John and James were both RMO's for Artillery Regiments. John was with 5 Fd Regt, which was the CMF successor to the 2/5th Fd Regt—and they still had a few from that regiment in the CMF. The depot was the Eastern Command Personnel Depot in Marrickville (Sydney))

(I did write two small articles on "Harry Peck" – one in our September 2010 Issue—p 35 and the other in our December 2010 Issue—p 27 in the late Ray Grant's "Message")

(Thank you, John, for your letter and excerpts. I am pleased you all had a great evening.)

Ray HYSLOP (our Patron) sends his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He sends his apologies for not being with us at our Annual Reunion due to being involved in Medical Corps examinations on the day.

He and his wife, Helen, just returned home from a month's cruise (in early October) and Ray wrote that they had a wonderful time with the 'highlight' of the voyage being a Dawn Service held on the 22nd September as a Memorial to the HMAS Sydney.

He said our ship was about 91 nautical miles off our starboard beam to the resting places of the HMAS Sydney and the German raider HSK Kormoran.

He kindly enclosed the Dawn Service program. He said the service was very moving and very well attended.

The Naval Ode... *"They have no grave but the cruel sea, no flowers lay at their head. A rusting hulk is their tombstone, afast on the ocean's bed."* was read by Clement McMahon;

Excerpts from the program:

(With kind thanks to the RSL of Australia and the program coordinator)

The sinking of the Sydney is the most terrible loss ever suffered by the RAN. It occurred on the 19th November 1941, after a sudden and disastrous battle with the Kormoran.

None of the Sydney's compliment of 645 men survived. The Kormoran was also sunk and 80 of its crew died and 317 survivors were picked up in the days following the battle.

According to the Kormoran's accounts, Sydney sighted the Kormoran, disguised as a Dutch merchant ship, approximately 240 kilometres south-west of Carnarvon, Western Australia, and both ships altered course.

The Kormoran increased engine speed on a reverse course while the Sydney headed toward the raider.

When the Kormoran was asked to identify itself, it instead hoisted the signal identifying the ship as the Straat Malakka, but the Sydney was unable to read the signal and requested the Kormoran to hoist the signal letters more clearly.

The Commanding Officer of the Kormoran was unable to respond to the Sydney's request for the 'secret signal' for the Straat Malakka.

As the distance between the two ships narrowed, the Kormoran struck the Dutch flag, hoisted the German colours, and, already at Action Stations, fired on the ill-prepared Australian cruiser at almost point-blank range.

The Sydney's bridge and director tower were hit within seconds and for 30 minutes the two ships fired guns and torpedoes at each other.

By 6pm, the crippled Sydney sat low in the water with its forward area well ablaze as it as she staggered away from the enemy.

At 6.25pm, despite their own difficulties, the Kormoran fired one last shot at the departing Australians before the ship disappeared into the horizon for the last time.

On the 17th March 2008, the Australian Government announced that the wreckage of both HMAS Sydney and the German raider HSK Kormoran had been found.

POEM—"A Sailor's Prayer"

(Henry Shipstone—PO HMAS Sydney)

(Read by Judith Eastwell)

*"There sleeps one who took his chances
In that war-crazed tragic hell
Battled luck and circumstances,
Loved and laughed, but forgot and fell.*

*Victor, then he did no crowing,
Wounded, then he did not wail,
Cursed and swore, but kept on going,
Never let his courage fail.*



*He was fallible and human,
Therefore loved and understood,
By his fellow men and women,
Whether good, or not so good.*

*Kept his spirit undiminished,
Had a laugh for every friend,
Fought for Freedom till it finished,
Lived, loved, laughed, until the end.*

(Thank you, Ray, for your letter and program. You will be missed at our Annual Reunion. It was good to be in your company at the RAAMC Banner Presentation weekend in early November.)

Peter PAISLEY was saddened to hear the news of the death of our member, Don Booth.

He emailed me to say that he knew Don well ...*"from our days in 5 Field Ambulance, back in the Jurassic era. I particular remember him—and the other NCO's like Brian Tams and the rest, in the context of nil 'class distinction' between officers and other ranks—we all 'mucked in' together to make the unit work. At field exercises this was very much the case—with officers digging latrines etc, just like anybody else (and so they should!)"*

Peter asked to pass on his sincere sympathies to his loved ones.

(Thank you, Peter, for you sincere email. Your message was passed to Terry and Don's family.)

Chris O'REILLY kindly emailed me some information contained in an article he receives from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to whom he greatly acknowledges.

Chris wrote that on the 25th September, a service was held at the Brookwood Military Cemetery in the UK to commemorate the life and gallantry of army doctor, Captain J.R.O. Thompson.

He was Posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in February 1945 by King George VI. He was, and is, it seems, the only RAMC doctor to be awarded the VC.

Part of his Citation read...*" on the 23rd/24th January 1944, Captain Thompson was serving on board the HM Hospital Carrier "St David", off the coast of Anzio, Italy. The ship was dive-bombed and began to sink rapidly. He returned alone to almost certain death in a last effort to save the one remaining helpless patient still lying trapped below."*

The Brookwood Military Cemetery contains the crosses of 3,500 military personnel who have no known graves. Captain Thompson's name is listed among 150 RAMC personnel.

(Thank you, Chris, for emailing a piece of this article. Our kind thanks)

Bill MOLLOY passes on his good wishes to his friends in the Association. He sent me an email in early November to advise me of the illness of John Straskye, whom he had just visited in hospital

Bill also apologised for being unable to attend our Annual Re-Union. He is involved in the RF Day 'Launch' (which is on the same day) with the Boer War Standard.

He will be leading the relatives of descendants on the actual RF Day in July 2012.

Bill's grandfather was the Transport Officer for 2 NSWMR in the Boer War and was a Regular Soldier in the NSW Army prior to Federation.

(Thank you, Bill, for informing me of John's illness and you apology at our Re-Union will be read.)

David FRANCIS sent me a 'reply' email to thank us for sending our members a "Warning" on SCAMMERS.

David said he was 'caught' about 12 months ago when he bought a laptop computer from a Chinese based firm called "Ali Baba"—the laptop never eventuated. He found out later that this company are known to notorious scammers.

David said he enjoys reading our newsletters and was wondering when the next one is due.

(Thank you, David. I was sorry to read of your being duped—it pays to be on guard at all times.)

POEM

MY JOB

*(With kind thanks to Robert J. Service—
taken from "Rhymes of a Red Cross Man" – WW 1)*

*I've got a little job on 'and, --the time is drawin' nigh;
At seven by the Captain's watch I'm due to go and do it;
I wants to 'ave it nice and neat, and pleasin' to the eye,
And I 'opes the God of soldier men
will see me safely through it.
Because, you see, it's somethin' I 'ave never done before;
And till you 'as experience, noo stunts is always tryin';
The chances is I'll never 'ave to do it any more;
At seven by the Captain's watch my little job is....dyin'.*

*I've got a little note to write; I'd best begin it now.
I ain't much good at writin' notes, but here goes;
"Dearest Mother,
I've been in many 'ot old 'do's';
I've scraped through safe some'ow,
But now I'm on the very point of tacklin' another.
A little job of hand-grenades; they called for volunteers.
They picked me out; I'm proud of it; it seems a trifle dicky.
If anything should hapen, well, there ain't no call for tears,
And so...I 'opes this finds you well. Your very lovin' Micky."*

*I've got a little score to settle wiv them swine out there,
I've 'ad so many of me pals done in it's quite upset me.
I've seen so much of bloody death I don't seem for to care,
If only I can even up, how soon the blighters get me,
I'm sorry for them perishers that corpses in a bed;
I only 'opes mine's short and sweet, no linger longer lyin';
I've made a mess of life, but now I'll try to make instead...
It's seven sharp. Good-bye, old pals!...a decent job in dyin'.*





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SKYDOME



Stems of Interest

(1) **7th Australian Division A.I.F. Association Commemoration Ceremony**

I had the pleasure of representing the 2/5th Field Ambulance by attending the 70th Anniversary of the WW2 Syrian Campaign (“Operation Exporter”).

It was held before a crowd of approx 150 people in Remembrance Driveway park, on the corner of Hume Hwy and Miller Road in Bass Hill (Sydney) on Thursday, 13th October at 11am.

Their Association’s President, Dick Payten OAM, and his committee are to be commended for the successful organising of this very important event.

Our State Governor, Marie Bashir AC, was the Guest of Honour. State and Federal Representatives, Local dignitaries and a High School class from Bass Hill High School, were also in attendance.

The MC was Commodore Ian Calloway, President of the Remembrance Driveway Committee.

The very informative “Address” was given by MAJGEN Gordon Maitland AO OBE RFD ED (Patron of the 7th Division Association).

After the ceremony, Dick invited everyone back to Chester Hill RSL Club for lunch. (I thanked Dick for his hospitality but had a prior engagement—he told me later that the luncheon was well patronised.)



L/R: Dick Payten OAM (President), MAJGEN Gordon Maitland AO OBE RFD ED (Patron), Brian Chaseling, Laidley “Bag” Pinnington and Bill Sellers.

A Small resume` of ‘Operation Exporter’ the Syrian Campaign

(Kind thanks to “GOOGLE”)

During WW2 Syria and Lebanon were controlled by Vichy French forces and as such Lebanon and Syria were aligned to Germany.

The Allied commanders of Wavell, Wilson and Lavarack recognised the threat of Syria and Lebanon being used as a possible “springboard” by the Axis forces to attack our forces in Egypt and North Africa.

“OPERATION EXPORTER” was launched on the 8th June 1941 and concluded successfully on the 14th July 1941. It was not widely reported at the time because it was thought it would have a negative effect on public opinion, due to Allied forces fighting against French forces.

At the time, the Allied forces to the south of Syria in the British mandate of Palestine consisted of two main formations under the command of British General Henry Wilson;

- (i) The Australian 7th Division—minus 18th Brigade which was in North Africa at the Siege of Tobruk and
- (ii) Gentforce; comprising two Free French Brigades (of the 1st Free French Division—including two battalions of the 13th Legion Demi-Brigade attached to the 1st Free French Brigade and the 5th Indian Infantry Brigade (of the 4th Indian Infantry Division) with artillery, engineers and other support services attached to form the 5th Indian Brigade Group.

The Allied forces in Iraq were commanded by Lt Gen Sir Edward Quinan and used to attack northern and central Syria from the east.

Commando and raiding operations were undertaken by the British Army’s No: 11 (Scottish), and Palmach — a unit recruited from Jews in the British mandate of Palestine. Palmach also provided interpreters and guides to other Allied units.

Close air support was provided by the RAF and the RAAF and ground forces on the coast were supported by shelling from RN and RAN ships

The plan of attack was devised by General Wilson and called for 4 lines of attack.

The First Line on Damascus from Palestine (commanded by Brig. Wilfred Lloyd and to cross the Syrian border and capture Quneitra and Deraa.)

The Second Line on Beirut (The Australian 7th Division –(minus 18th Brigade who were engaged in the “Siege of Tobruk”) – under command of Major General John Lavarack—succeeded later by Major General “Tubby” Allen when Lavarack took over command of 1 Corps on the 18th June) had the responsibility of advancing along the coastal road from Palestine to Haifa. The 21st Brigade was responsible for the capture of Beirut. 25th Brigade was tasked with attacking the major Vichy French airbase at Rayak. It also supported a commando landing from Cyprus at the south of the Litani River.

The Third Line on Northern Syria was commanded by Major General William Slim and to advance northwest up the Euphrates River from Haditha, in Iraq, toward Deir ez Zor and thence to Raqqa and Aleppo. This was to threaten the communication and supply lines of the Vichy forces that would be defending Beirut against the Australian advance from the south.

The Fourth Line on Central Syria called for HABFORCE (part of the Iraq command) to gather in western Iraq between Rutbah and the Transjordan border. They were to advance in a north-westerly direction to take Palmyra in Syria and to secure the oil pipeline from Haditha to Tripoli.

MAJOR BATTLES OF THE CAMPAIGN:

9th June; Battle of Litani River

13th June; Battle of Jezzine

15th- 17th June; Battle of Kissoué`.

18th-21st June; Battle of Damascus.

19th-24th June; Battle of Merdjayoun.

1st July; Battle of Palmyra.

3rd July; Battle of Deir ez Zor.

5th-9th July; Battle of Damour.

12th July; Battle of Beirut.



The Allied forces consisted of Australian, British India, British Palestine, Transjordan, Free French Forces and Free Czechoslovakia.

The Axis Forces were Vichy French, Syria, Lebanon and Germany.

The Allied strengths were 34,000 troops, 50 (plus) aircraft, 1 Landing Ship, 1 Cruiser, and 6 Destroyers.

The Axis Forces were 45,000 troops, 90 tanks, 289 aircraft, 2 Destroyers and 3 submarines.

Casualties:

Allied were 4,052 and 27 aircraft.

Axis Forces were between 6,352 and 8,912 and 179 aircraft.

VICTORIA CROSS:

Two Victoria Crosses were awarded;

Roden Cutler (later Sir) in the Battle of Merdjayoun and Private (later Sergeant) Jim Jordan in the Battle of Jezzine.

(2) Tobruk House News (Vic. Branch)

I have received their August and October (2011) editions and if any member would like to read them, I would be pleased to post them to you. I applaud two of our members who were on their committee—Neil Barrie and Tom Pritchard, both are 2/5th veterans. Well done.

A very thoughtful poem was inserted in their August edition, and with the kind permission of the author—Mr. Dave Wotherspoon—Tripoli Rifle Range—I have written it below;

SEEING IT THROUGH

When you are fed up with the army and you're feeling blue

*When the Parade Drill drives you balmy,
and you're sick of eggs and stew.
Why there's only one thing for it,
square your shoulders and see it through.*

When you've sent your last quid spinning,

*at the game soon after pay,
Then bite a mate who's winning,
'till you owe a heap of hay.
Marleesh, just keep on grinning,
your luck must change some day.*

When the girl whose snap you've carried

*since you left old Aussie's shore,
Writes and tells you she is married,
to a gob from Baltimore,
Square your chin and keep the Arak,
you've got a lot to thank him for.*

*When the Syrian sun is burning,
on a route march long and dry,*

*And you get a wishful yearning for a cool, blue Aussie sky
Cheer up mate, the others made it, and so will you and i.*

Some day as we are steaming, far across the miles of blue,

*You may lie back planning, scheming all the things
you're going to do.*

You'll be proud to be an ANZAC, with guts to see it through.

- (3) Mrs. Pattie HARRINGTON** wrote us a nice letter to thank us for posting her a Reserve Forces Day Recognition Medallion for the service given by her late husband, Ray. Ray had 33 years' service and Pattie had 2 years' service

with the RAANC. She said the memento will be very much cherished by her.

(The RFD Committee may still have some 'spare' Medallions to purchase. If they have any left and you would like to purchase one (\$25-postage included) please let me know.)

(4) BOER WAR Celebrations

Our President, Derek Cannon, kindly sent me an 'extract' from his local paper (*Hawkesbury District Independent News—Issue 17, Sep. 2011* by kind permission of Michelle Nichols & Jonathon Auld) which contained a brief story with old district photos, on the homecoming after the Boer War.....

"When word was received that the troops were coming home from the war, about 400 locals, at a few hour's notice, gathered at the Windsor railway station to welcome home six soldiers!

A few weeks later, a much larger crowd of around 800 was present at an organised event which was held in Richmond Park, embracing day and night activities.

It included a Grand Parade of about a quarter of a mile in length which included 20 Returned soldiers from the Hawkesbury area, local dignitaries, Mounted Police, Hawkesbury Squadron of the NSW Lancers, members of the Fire Brigade, a number of local Masonic Lodges with their colourful Banners, several bands and a contingent of students from the Agricultural College with some of their farm animals.

A Dinner afterwards, at 9pm, was held in the School of Arts building to honour the soldiers' homecoming. Toasts were made to King and Country and a responding speech by LT Greenwell said he was grateful for the reception shown to the returning soldiers.

The residents of Windsor raised money to establish a Memorial to honour the memory of the soldiers who died whilst serving in the Boer War in South Africa from 1899-1902.

The Memorial stands in McQuade Park in Windsor and has four names recorded; George Jennings DICKSON, Charles John GOSPER, Thomas Moore MITCHELL and George Archie MONTGOMERY.

The article mentioned another soldier, Edward SULLIVAN who apparently died of wounds in 1900 and a Memorial Service was held in Richmond—it did not say why his name was omitted?"

(5) TWO NEW BOOKS 'LAUNCHED'

(With kind thanks to an email friend, Ian Pfennigwerth)

Early in March, Ian sent me a 'Media Release' concerning 2 new books that our members may be interested in reading.

One is titled... *"More than Bombs and Bandages — Australian Army Nurses at work in WWI"*. It was 'Launched' by MAJGEN John Caligari who said that the author, Dr. Kirsty Harris, has paid a great tribute to the RAANC.

It is a well-researched book which presents a view of nursing life during the horrors of WWI.

The second book is titled... *"The Australian Army Veterinary Corps 1909-1946"*. It was 'Launched' by MAJGEN Paul Symon AO, who praised the author, Dr. Michael Tyquin, for his well-presented and researched history regarding the services of the AAVC.

Michael's book gives an insight to how our animals were extensively used in war, until they were replaced by machines in 1946.



(Michael is a noted historian for the RAAMC and is a well-respected member and Life Member of our Association.)

(I have not had the opportunity to read either of these books to date but they are available through "Big Sky Publishing"—for info contact Sharon 0410.332.789)

Ian also commented on Dr. James Roche's 'Profile' (*SPRING Issue 2011*), which he enjoyed reading. He wrote that James was a very good help to him when he was writing a biography on Dr. Sam Stening.

Ian said he was happy to return the favour some time later, in assisting James regarding an article about the medical personnel on HMAS Sydney.

Ian said he enjoyed those brief moments with James and would like to sit down with him for a day for a more engaging 'talk'.

(6) RESERVE FORCES DAY 'LAUNCH'

(Saturday 26th November)

What a "Bummer"! It was held on the same date and time as our Annual "Mixed" Reunion.

Last year was the same except it was held in Victoria Barracks (Sydney) but it was finished by noon and we were able to walk across the road to our Reunion Function Room in the Paddington RSL Club.

This year the 'Launch' will have the theme... *The 110th Anniversary of the end of the Boer War and the Reservists serving overseas since then*".

I was informed by Mr. Peter Coleman (he carried our Standard) that everyone gathered at Parliament House at 10am in absolute pouring rain. He said the RFD Committee decided to revert to "PLAN B", due to the weather and we rehearsed for about an hour inside Parliament House, but fortunately by 11am the weather cleared and the sun came out—so it was back to PLAN "A".

We proceeded back to Hyde Park to take up our positions and were ready to MARCH OFF at 1pm (as arranged).

The 1/15 RNSWL Brass Band was magnificent in the front, as about 25 Standards marched behind the band, from Hyde Park down Macquarie Street and into Parliament House. The onlookers who were around at the time gave everyone a rousing round of applause.

Peter also said the Naval College cadets and the Barkley College cadets were represented.

There were wonderful speeches given by Sir Laurence Street, Air Marshall Binskin and Mr Barry O'Farrell MP, Premier of NSW.

Later, Afternoon Tea was served. A "highlight" was having the poem "Reveille" (written in 1899 by A.B. "Banjo" Patterson) recited beautifully by Mr. Keith Anderson.

Although we couldn't be present, our thoughts and good wishes were with all the participants on the day. *(We wish to thank CAP Ken Duncan, the CO of 202 Cadet Unit, Blacktown, for his endeavours in trying to secure a senior cadet to carry our Standard.)*

We sincerely thank John Moore for then seeking the assistance of the National Servicemen's Association by arranging with the President of the Sydney South

Western Sub Branch, Mr Alan Drinkwater, to seek a 'volunteer' from his ranks.

Alan, in turn, received the voluntary assistance of a fellow member, Mr Peter Coleman. Peter gladly represented our Association, both at the "Rehearsal" and, on the day, by carrying our Standard.

The RFD Committee 'struck' a special lapel pin as a 'Thank You' to all the Standard Bearers for taking part in this year's 'Launch'.

I sent a general email to our members on the internet, advising them of the RFD "Launch" details.

(7) MEDIA RELEASES: *(With kind permission of the Dept. of Defence—edited for space and in no particular date order)*

(i) RAAF's FOUR SQUADRONS CELEBRATE their 95th ANNIVERSARY

The 23rd September marked a day of wonderful celebration at the Williamtown Airbase (NSW) for 2, 3 and 4 Squadron. Number 1 Squadron is based in Amberley (QLD). These squadrons were raised during September and October 1916. They were then sent to England to train as Royal Flying Corps units where they were later deployed in France, in 1917, under the banner "The Australian Flying Corps" (AFC).

Four AFC Squadrons joined the British during WWI. No: 1 Sqn. flew against the Turks and Germans in the Middle East and 2, 3 and 4 flew on the western front in France—all with great distinction.

They carried out photographic reconnaissance, artillery spotting, strafing and bombing raids on enemy troops and positions and air to air combat with German aircraft.

One of the many heroes was a 24-year-old, Captain Harry Cobby, from No: 4 Squadron, who was credited with 29 aerial victories. He was awarded the DFC with two bars and a "Mention in Dispatches".

Over the past 95 years these units have served with distinction in times of peace and conflict. This includes Operational Service in The Pacific, Middle East, North Africa, Southern Europe, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Today, No:4 Squadron is performing enduring Combat Control duties with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan.

(ii) COURTS MARTIAL CLEARS ADF MEMBERS.

Members may recall that three soldiers were 'Charged' over an incident that occurred in the Uruzgan Province of Afghanistan on the 12th February 2009.

The soldiers were members of the SOTG (Special Operations Task Group) and were taking part in a compound clearance operation in which 6 Afghans were killed and 4 were injured.

After all legal processes were completed, the Director of Military Prosecutions applied formally to withdraw the charges before the Judge Advocate.

The Judge Advocate ordered that the Charge Sheet be withdrawn.

(iii) AFGHANISTAN — LARGE NARCOTICS 'FIND' DESTROYED.

A combined operation, in mid-September, involving the Afghan National Security Forces and the SOTG uncovered, and destroyed, a narcotics laboratory in the Baghran District of the Helmand Province.

It is said to have 'housed' enough ingredients to manufacture drugs worth around US\$150 Million. Several weapons and ammunition were also seized in the operation.



During the operation a number of insurgents were killed and some were detained and taken to the Multi National Base in Tarin Kot for processing.

The CO (name withheld) said this is a massive blow to the revenue the insurgents would have gained had it not been located and destroyed.

In the raid, **4 were wounded**. Two from the SOTG and two from the ANSF, they were evacuated, by air, to the **Role 3 Medical Facility at Camp Bastion** in the Helmand Province.

(iv) **DH & A APPEALS TRIBUNAL—RE: ADF PEACEKEEPERS.**

The Government has accepted the (below) 3 recommendations of the Independent Defence, Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal Inquiry into recognition for ADF personnel who served as Peacekeepers from 1947 onwards.

1. **No change** be made in the present practice of an Award of the ASM or the AASM being the appropriate form of recognition for participation by ADF personnel in peacekeeping operations.
2. The Australian Government **should not establish** a new medal for general or specific recognition of peacekeeping service, to be awarded to ADF personnel who have taken part, or in the future take part, in peacekeeping operations.
3. **No action be taken** by the Australian Government to recognise the award of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to UN Peacekeepers.

On the matter of our Peacekeepers, Mr. Warren Snowden, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, laid a wreath at the Peacekeeping Memorial in Canberra, in mid-September. It marks the **64th Anniversary** of Australia's Peacekeeping involvement.

In his speech he praised the almost 600 men and women of the ADF and AFP and State Police Peacekeepers who are, or have been, currently deployed around the globe in area such as **The Middle East, Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and Sudan.**

Their roles include; support and assistance to victims of conflict, military observation, logistics support, ceasefire monitoring, land mine clearing, supporting democratic elections, humanitarian aid and repatriation of refugees. (The Government is considering our involvement in places such as; Rwanda, Somalia, Namibia, Western Sahara and East Timor. Hopefully to be revealed at the end of 2012.)

(v) **Combat Support Unit--Rotation 5 (CSU-5) return from Middle East**

The CO, Wing Commander **John Leo**, praised the efforts and commitment of the 118 personnel who came from 41 separate army, navy and air force units around Australia.

They had just completed a 6 month deployment in the Middle East Area of Operations as part of "**Operation SLIPPER**".

They were responsible for providing medical, transport, security and accommodation support to more than 2,500 Australian and ISAF personnel who operate the Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates, as well as Multi National Base—Tarin Kot and Kandahar in Afghanistan.

The unit worked in extreme heat conditions, which regularly exceeded 45 degrees centigrade, and ensured that no mission was delayed or cancelled because of air movement technical deficiencies.

They loaded more than 15,000 passengers and almost 6

million pounds of cargo across 3 airfields of operation. As well as being responsible for the accommodation and meals for over 9,000 personnel who transited through the Al Minhad Air Base.

(Operation "**SLIPPER**" is Australia's military contribution to the international campaign against terrorism, maritime security in the Middle East Area of Operations and countering piracy in the Gulf of Aden.)

(vi) **Government to "UPGRADE" the AUSTEYR Rifle**

The government has invested \$8 Million dollars to make changes to this rifle.

The changes will include a new design that will;

* reduce the weight and improve the balance of the weapon.

* Integrate NATO standard rails to allow a wide range of military attachments to be fitted to the weapon to provide flexibility to re-configure the weapon to suit the mission

* The integration of a grenade launcher attachment and grenade launcher sight into the rifle.

(vii) **FORCE SUPPORT UNIT—4 return home.**

Approximately 190 ADF members from 50 parent units across the three Services returned home in mid-August after 8 months providing logistic support to ADF operations in Afghanistan and the Gulf region of the Middle East.

They assisted more than 2,350 ADF personnel during their term of duty.

Their CO, LTCOL Ron Armstrong, praised the efforts of his team. He made the comment that after one month of the operation, "...**if it wasn't for the different service insignia on our uniforms, it would have been impossible to tell who was from the Navy, Army or Airforce**".

LTCOL Armstrong said the team became very close after the tragic incident involving the death one of their members—LCPL Andrew Jones at Patrol Base Marshal on the 30th May, and his and their thoughts were with his family.

Their deployment saw them accomplish a number of 'key feats' including the roll-out of the 'Crye Cam Precision Assault Uniform and Tiered Body Armour System to soldiers deployed with the MTF.

They also supported the establishment of new contract arrangements for the Middle East Logistics and Base Support and re-supplying patrol bases using a contracted helicopter. They also enhanced catering, environmental health and camp maintenance support to MTF patrol bases.

LTCOL Armstrong said... "**Although our role was not well publicised as some other units who are serving over here, it was an honour to work extremely hard to support our Australian brothers and sisters who put themselves in harms way every day**".

(viii) **ROTATION 24 returns home from the SOLOMON ISLANDS**

80 ADF Members mainly from **13 Brigade in WA** have completed a Duty Tour of 4 months in early August. They had a "**Homecoming Parade**" on the 6th August at Irwin Barracks, Karrakatta.

A "**Transfer of Authority**" Ceremony, prior to the departure of ROTATION 24, saw the outgoing commander of Combined Task Force 635, LTCOL **Paul Landford** hand over command to ROTATION 25 commander, LTCOL **Campbell Smith**.

LTCOL Landford said... "**RAMSI is evolving and the**



highlight of my 12 month tenure has been to oversee the incremental shift from security to local capacity development. Our mission is to assist the Solomon Islands government in maintaining security, law and justice, economic governance and improving the machinery of government."

Trooper **Sam Woods**, from the **10th Light Horse Regiment** in Karrakatta, WA, said he joined the Army Reserves when he finished school and to have taken this opportunity to deploy has been great as he will always remember his time in the Solomon Islands. He found the people very friendly and always with a smile and a wave.

Operation Annode is the name for the **Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)**.

(ix) **NEW GIRL'S SCHOOL in MALALAI OPENED in TARIN KOT**

In a joint effort, partnered by the **Uruzgan government and PRT-U**, the 21 classroom school was built mainly by **Afghan contractors using local labour and with direction from ADF engineers**.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team-Uruzgan is led by the **Dept of Foreign Affairs and AusAID**.

The classroom has 3 laboratories. It has facilities for up to **700 Primary and Secondary students** and took 15 months to complete at a cost of **US\$1.6 million**.

Several **ISAF partners** provided furniture, book shelves, laboratory benches and sports equipment.

Air Commodore **John Oddie**, The Acting Commander of ISAF in Afghanistan, said... **"supporting the Afghan Government's efforts to improve literacy was a major objective of the Australian Government's mission in Afghanistan. For the first time, hundreds of girls in Tarin Kot will have access to quality education, which will open up a new world of opportunity. There is less than 1% of Afghan women in Uruzgan who are able to read and write. It is essential for the future of this country that we help provide vital services like education for children"**.

Air Commodore **Oddie** is hopeful that the benefits to the girls, their local community and their country at large, will be felt for generations to come.

(x) **OPERATION SLIPPER—RAN Ships exchange Deployment duty.**

HMAS Toowoomba 'Handed Over' maritime security duties in the Middle East to **HMAS Parramatta**, in late October, after a 6 month deployment.

This is **HMAS Toowoomba** second deployment and travelled more than 35,000 nautical miles.

The CO, Commander **Andrew Quinn**, commended his ship's company for a job well done. The Middle East Area of Operation is a very demanding and volatile environment and his crew rose to every challenge in a professional and committed fashion and maintained Australia's highly respected position as a Coalition Partner.

Commander **Quinn** also acknowledged the huge support from family and friends back home. This produces a wonderful morale throughout the ship's company.

Their duties included counter-terrorist activities, multiple boarding and helping numerous vessels requiring medical or engineering assistance.

In between operational commitments the ship's company raised more than \$2,000 for **"Beyond Blue"** and more than \$3,000 for the **"Toowoomba's Flexi School"** with a 24 hour marathon and a fete—held on the ship's birthday, the 6th October.

190 personnel from **HMAS Toowoomba** enjoyed a **"WELCOME HOME"** at their Fleet Base West in **Rockingham WA**, on the 7th November.

(xi) **NEW HOUSING for 3,000 ADF Personnel.**

The Government announced Phase 2, which is a (approx.) \$6 Billion contract for **NEW permanent live-in accommodation units, for single ADF personnel**, around Australia.

3,000 new self-contained apartments will be **built at 14 Defence Bases** in places like **Elizabeth, Nowra, Puckapunyal, Rockingham, Townsville and Wodonga**.

The "Public Private Partnership" arrangement will be with **"Plenary Living"** who will be responsible for the **finance, design, construction, operation and maintenance of these accommodation services at the 14 Bases for the 33 year contract term**.

Construction costs are estimated at approximately **\$1 Billion** and provision for services over the following **30 years to be approximately \$3 Billion**.

(Phase 1 has successfully delivered, in 2008, 1,300 units at **RAAF Amberley, Enoggera Barracks and Holsworthy**.)

(xii) **AUSTRALIAN MENTORING PROGRAM in AFGHANISTAN.**

MTF-3 is Australia's largest unit in Afghanistan and is continuing to build on the achievements of its predecessors. It has been here since **June this year** and will complete its "Duty Tour" about **March 2012**.

The CO, **LTCOL Chris Smith** said that since the ADF commenced its Mentoring mission, the **4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army** has shown promising development.

The 4th Brigade has demonstrated an increased ability to take control of local security and a marked improvement to plan, lead, execute and sustain operations.

Since MTF-3 has been in Afghanistan, they and the ANA have discovered **95 insurgent caches containing explosives, IED components and weapons**.

They have **found and removed 45 IED's**, been involved in 40 small arms fire engagements and detained a suspected insurgent who was allegedly responsible for the facilitation of IED's.

Tragically, MTF-3 suffered the loss of one of their members when **PTE Matthew Lambert** was killed when an IED detonated (on the 22nd August).

LTCOL Smith said... **"Even though the fighting will continue through the coming harsh Afghan winter, our team is fully focused and believes in the mission and how important our actions are here. We have experienced some sad times but also enjoyed many successes.**

We have disrupted the insurgents and seen our Afghan partners continue to grow in confidence and capability and 'on track' for them to take complete charge of their own security in Uruzgan by 2014".

(xiii) **Exercise "OLGETA WARRIOR" starts in PNG**

This 'Exercise' started in 2009 and is a **bilateral exercise** between the ADF and the PNG Defence Force.

Approximately **300 ADF personnel** travelled to PNG in early October and took part in infantry, logistics, engineering and aviation training.

(xiv) **JOINT MISSION in PNG to render SAFE, WW 2 Ammunition.**

OPERATION "RENDER SAFE 2011" will take place between 18 October and 4th November in Rabaul, PNG and will involve the identification, assessment and rendering safe of unexploded ordnance such as torpedoes, bombs, grenades and projectiles. These items have been found domestic



yards, the local police station and along the shoreline. Senator Feeney, the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, stated that the Operation was **vital** in providing a safe environment in **Rabaul**, which relies heavily on **tourism**. **150 personnel** from the **ADF, NZDF** and the **PNGDF** will be under the command of **RAN Commander Scott Craig**, Commander of **Task Force 663**. It will be bolstered by **HMAS Gascoyne** and **Diamantina** and **HMNZ Resolution** and **Wellington**. They will provide important **underwater surveying** capability. The Operation will also involve clearing unexploded ordnance from the **Kokoda Track**. Although the ADF has historically conducted explosive ordnance disposal in the South Pacific including **Kiribati** and the **Marshall Islands**, **Operation Render Safe** is the first enduring operation of its type. In **2009** **Operation Render Safe** provided explosive ordnance disposal assistance to the **Solomon Islands**.

(xv) Afghan Security Forces uncover Ammonium Nitrate cache.

A highly successful operation conducted by the ANSF and their Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) partners seized and destroyed a large cache of chemicals (used to manufacture IED's) from compounds in Kandahar Province. The ANSF led the successful mission without any casualties being suffered. In excess of 800kgs of ammonium nitrate (a key component in IED's) was destroyed. This amount could have made about 50 IED's. During the cordon and search operation a 'person of interest' was detained and transferred to the Multi National Base, Tarin-Kot for processing. **(TEN Australian soldiers have been killed in action as a result of IED blasts.)**

(xvi) AFGHANISTAN TRAGEDIES

On a more sad and sombre note our thoughts go out to the families who have lost loved ones in conflicts overseas and even on Training Exercises here in Australia. I received sad "Media Releases" one--advising of the Inquiry results into the tragic deaths of three of our soldiers in Afghanistan in late June. They were among a number of Australian and US soldiers who were in a US UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter which crashed on uneven ground and rolled over and burst into flames. Two were killed instantly and the third soldier died of his injuries shortly after his arrival at the Role 3 Medical Facility in Khandar. The soldiers were conducting a "Disruption Operation" against insurgents, with Afghan and Coalition Forces. It occurred at 0339hrs on the 21st June. The helicopter, which was part of a group of 4, was crewed by US personnel and it appears that the crash was a lack of aircrew coordination to the approach of the designated landing zone. The crew lost situational awareness of their rate of descent and hit the ground with little or no prior warning. The crash injured seven other Australian commandos and a civilian interpreter. (I did not read in the "Release" if any of the US aircrew were injured in the accident—one would think so.) Another 'Release', in late October, stated that during a weekly parade at a Forward Operating Base in southern Afghanistan, a 'rogue' Afghan National Army member opened fire on our unsuspecting members at the conclusion of the parade.

He killed 3 of our soldiers, CAP Bryce Duffy, CPL Ashley Birt and LCPL Luke Gavin and wounded 7 others before being shot dead. The more critically wounded were moved to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Centre in Germany. The Chief of the Defence Force, General Hurley, said the Afghan officer in charge of the Corps, Brigadier General Mohammed Zafar Khan ordered the immediate disarming of the 6th Kandak. Then in early November, yet another 'rogue' ANA soldier from the 3rd Kandak Patrol Base Nasir, in the Charmestan region, which is north-east of Tarin Kot, opened fire with an automatic weapon and a grenade launcher, from an overwatch position. He fired into his and our troops, seriously wounding 3 Australian soldiers and 2 ANA soldiers before fleeing in an ANA vehicle. The wounded were evacuated back to the Role 2 Hospital at Multi National Base-Tarin Kot. It must have been a difficult task for the Australian commander in charge of MTF-3 to 'rally' his troops. They put their life 'on the line' fighting insurgents, trying to keep the peace and mentoring the ANA to do the same. Now, for this happen by the hands of soldiers they were mentoring must pull on every reserve of his troop's personal courage and strong mateship to bond tight and re-focus. Our prayers go to the families who have lost their loved one—they, like their fellow soldier mates, are very, very brave soldiers and will be sadly missed by their own good mates, either on the Base or back at home. **LEST WE FORGET.**

(With kind thanks to our Internet Members)

**Words to the Last Post
(or Day is Done)**

Day is done, gone the sun
From the lakes, from the hills, from the sky
All is well, safely rest
God is nigh.

Fading light dims the sight
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright
From afar, drawing near
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise for our days
Neath the sun, neath the stars, neath the sky.
As we go, this we know
God is nigh.



A SEA ODYSSEY WITH MY SON

(By Alan Curry)

Do you remember when you were a young boy or girl and your parents told you they were going to take you for a ride on the Manly ferry (or any big event for that matter) and you got very excited at the forthcoming prospect of this very special event with your parents?

Well, this excitement happened to me but in reverse! My eldest son, Stephen, rang me in early August and asked if I would like to accompany him on a sea trip to Papua New Guinea! At first I thought he was joking but he was most serious.

It came about because a business associate and PNG National (Mr. David Pondros) had sought Stephen's help in finding a suitable boat that could carry passengers and limited small cargoes from the Western Province of Daru (David's main home Province) to other various locations around PNG, including Port Moresby and Horne Island.

David eventually saw the vessel that filled this purpose. All he needed was 'someone' to take it to PNG—David asked Stephen to be that 'someone'!

I talked it over with Ruth and she was more than half way convinced that she would like to come also! I said to Stephen that this was a monumental task and I, or we, could die!

Stephen said...*"Dad, you only die once"!*

Ruth and I thought about it and I told him I would go with him—I then set about making out my will (it's true) and renewing my passport—which, by the way, had not arrived by the time I left home.

Ruth packed a small bag for me with 5 pair of undies, one pair of shorts, 5 singlets, a pair of swimmers, 5 handkerchiefs, one towel, my toilet bag, my gout tablets, some acimax tablets (in case I ate too much fish before going to sleep), a pull-over jumper, a pair of track suit pants, 2 decks of cards, my Balmain Tigers cap and my camera.

Ruth, and our daughter, Julie, drove me to Newcastle airport on the **13th August** and after emotional hugs and kisses watched me fly away into the unknown!!

Stephen picked me up at the Gold Coast airport and drove me to the marina at Runaway Bay—just near Southport, on the Gold Coast of Queensland. And there she was—the "HILLARY SUNSET"—Registration Number 7106 QB—bobbing gently at pier "C" berth 19. She was a good looking 'party boat'.



I read that she was built in Western Australia (in Myaree) in 1985, by Laurie-Chivers & Coy.

She was then named the "WESTERN SUNSET". She is 14.33 metres LOA and a beam of 4.22 metres with a draft of two metres. Her gross tonnage is 20 tonne and net tonnage is 6 tonne. Her main construction material is GRP and she has 5 bulkheads and 2 decks and her Type is-- Passenger Launch. She is Carvel built with Raked Stem and Transom stern. She is licenced to carry 35 passengers.

She has twin screw Volvo Penta 6 cylinder TAMD 70E, 195 Kw diesel motors. She has 3 fuel tanks—the Port and Starboard tanks hold 850 litres each and an Auxiliary tank holds 350 litres, making a total of 2050 litres.

It also stated that she is capable of 20 kts per hour.

She has a Fly Bridge and her topsides are all white with a royal blue hull.

When I stepped aboard I noticed the solid, stainless steel railings all around the boat. It was 'fitted out' for Fishing Charters. The rear deck area was very spacious with a long aluminium seat on each side of the vessel and a seat at the stern for a lucky bugger to sit in while he reeled in his big fish. The toilet (or 'Head' as it's called) was on the port side—it only had a hand basin so Stephen 'rigged' a shower to it.

A large anchor was securely tied at the bow (as you would expect) with about 200ft of chain and rope in the anchor locker. The anchor was operated, when necessary, with your foot on to a power winch/capstan.

The Fly Bridge had a seat (with storage underneath) on each side, and there were 2 chair seats at the front with the speed controls and a compass. There were two life rafts and two life buoys lashed to the rear rails of the Fly Bridge.

As you stepped inside the vessel, I noticed a ship's clock and a weather barometer on the rear wall—port side, about 6 sliding (and lockable) windows were on each side of the boat, there were seats on both sides which converted to double bunks. Under the bunks were all the Life Jackets and Distress Flares, which were kept dry and secure in a large, plastic, screw-top water tight container.

I made my bed on the bottom bunk—starboard side-- and she is a very comfortable boat to sleep on—especially at the berth!. There was also a table on the port side with facing seats.

On the starboard side was the 'skipper's' seat, the dashboard with all the gauges, a large 'floating' compass, the Auto pilot knobs and speed control levers, ship to shore marine radio and an AM/FM cassette radio. There was a ledge under the four front windows (one which opened upward) which held a 'spare' satnav screen, a depth sounder and a Raymarine radar/navigation system.

There was also a large access trap-door to the engine room.

Proceeding forward, you descended 5 steps to the 'Crews Quarters'. On the port side was the galley with hot/cold fresh water, a large fridge and freezer and a 2 plate electric stove. There were plentiful cupboard spaces and 240 volt power outlets for hot water jug and toaster and 2 spare points.

On the starboard side was a seat that converted to a double bunk. Stephen chose the bottom bunk as his bed.

The stairs were able to be lifted up and fastened at the top so as to give access to a bulkhead door and another entry into the engine room.



As you went forward further, you opened another bulkhead door that contained a double bunk on both sides of the vessel.

The excitement of coming aboard, exploring the vessel and 'settling in' soon led to utter frustration, as I was to find out.

14th August (Sunday) Stephen decided to give the boat a 'run' to the heads (about 20 minutes away) to get a small feel for it. She performed admirably and Stephen was happy. (There was no bedding on the boat so we bought some pillows and sheets from Target and some blankets from a Salvo's shop.)

15th August (Monday) Stephen had arranged for a marine mechanic to give the boat a thorough service and to supply as many spare parts as was necessary (filters, hoses, clamps, gaskets, navigation globes, oils and coolant etc) as it was very doubtful that David would be able to get any of these in Daru.

Stephen expected to steam out that evening when the young mechanic fixed what he had to do?

Disappointment set in when he was told that a part had to be ordered from Brisbane and some parts had to be taken back to the workshop for more precise work. We had even faxed Customs on Thursday Island to say we expected to be arriving on Sunday the 21st and with all the details of who would be on board.

(At that stage we had four people listed—the other two were business associates of Stephen (one from Brisbane (Patrick) who was to join us in Cairns, and the other person (Norm) who was to join us either at Cairns or at Mission Beach.)

16th August (Tuesday) We heard nothing from the young mechanic until late afternoon, not that it bothered Stephen too much because we were very busy with every spare moment, stocking the boat up with provisions for the voyage ahead. This included buying crockery/cutlery/eating utensils and tools of all kinds for the boat's current and future use. (Stephen assumed that the young mechanic would be working on the boat.)

One large item he purchased was a 5kw diesel generator (to supply 240 volt power) because he was informed by a ship's electrician that the ship's generator was inoperable and would have cost thousands of dollars and a lot of labour hours to remove and replace it, and besides, it was a huge asset for David to have anyway (Stephen always accompanied the electrician or mechanic in the engine room whilst they showed him the various problems.)

17th August (Wednesday) Stephen contacted the marine workshop to find out the progress of the repairs only to be told that the part from Brisbane was held up in a transport yard in Mudgeeraba or 'somewhere' and would not be available until tomorrow because it was a Public Holiday in Brisbane for "Ecce Day"??

Stephen was fuming at the mechanic boss because had he known, we could have driven to Brisbane yesterday and collected the part ourselves—more so because the 'boss' would not answer his office or mobile phone when Stephen tried vainly to find out what was going on!! We could not do anything but wait! He was at the mercy of the marine shop.

Stephen had to return the rental car back to the Gold Coast and we caught a taxi back to the boat – we were now stuck at the marina, on the boat, until it was fixed!

He had ordered almost 30 Navigation Maps to take us from Southport to PNG (they arrived by post to our marina) and we put them in order of each leg of the trip.

Ruth had also rung me to say my passport had arrived and, SURPRISE SURPRISE, she would fly up to Mission Beach and "kill two birds with the one stone"—have a visit with our great grandchildren (at Mission Beach) and hand me my passport when we met!!

18th August (Thursday) Stephen was very upset with the marine company over their blasé attitude. He wanted the boat fixed and us to be on our way. To make matters worse we 'flattened' the auxiliary batteries that are normally charged by the boat's generator—he had to buy 2 new 24v batteries.

The young mechanic turned up at 4.45 pm and Stephen asked him to leave at 5.30 pm because he would have to come back in the morning anyway. He asked the mechanic if he could fit the hose and filters so as to save some time tomorrow—the mechanic was grateful for Stephen's offer.

Stephen worked in the engine room until 8 pm then come up and made his dad some soup for dinner! We were in bed by 9.30 pm. (I was 'buggered' just from watching Stephen do all the work!)

19th August (Friday) We had a shower at the marina and then some breakfast in the café. The young mechanic was true to his word and promptly arrived at 8 am. He checked all the work that Stephen had done and gave him the 'thumbs up' and then did what he had to do, and at 8.40 am 'fired up' the motors—all good.

We steamed over to the fuel wharf and 'topped up' all 3 tanks plus the portable generator and two 20 ltr containers (for the generator). Stephen had some concern for the fuel that had been sitting in the auxiliary tank—it had not been turned on to mix with the port and starboard tanks for over 12 months but he found a diesel additive product (on 'Google') called Fuelmaster, which he had purchased earlier, and he dosed all the tanks very liberally. We finished re-fuelling (water also) at 10.20 am and still with the mechanic aboard, we 'trilled' the engines on a short sea trip and brought the mechanic back to our berth. The mechanic left at 11.15 am and we, at last, steamed out of the marina at 11.20 am.

We 'cleared' the Gold Coast Gateway VMR (Volunteer Marine Rescue) at 11.40 am and headed north.

Stephen plotted our course to Bundaberg, which was approximately 235 nautical miles north. It was a beautiful day,



a light s/e breeze and a slight swell and the sea was relatively calm, we were doing 10 kts per hour very comfortably. Stephen had given our particulars to Gateway VMR to alert Mooloolaba that we were heading for Bundaberg.

We had rostered ourselves to do 4 hours on and 4 hours off with me starting at 0600 and then Stephen at 1000 etc .

We steamed all that day and night (and saw whales) keeping our eye on our course and checking our maps.

20th August (Saturday) Stephen took us into the approach of Bundaberg harbour and we tied up alongside the Burnett River fuel wharf at 2.30 pm on a receding tide and re-fuelled (and topped up our water). Steve replaced the filters and topped up the engine oils and coolants and checked the gear box oils and then we both had a welcome hot shower at the wharf. Stephen amended our next plot to Mackay and made it further north to Bowen because we took less fuel than we thought we would have used—the boat was very economical plus we weren't 'pushing' it at all hard. We were averaging 10 kts per hour with the luxury of being helped along by the s/e breezes and swell.

At 4 pm on a dead low tide we left Bundaberg for Bowen. I might add that on many occasions so far, we would start the generator and run it for 3 or 4 hours to keep the fridge and freezer cold and to cook meals or boil the billy for a cuppa (and we had plenty of these).

We resumed our 4 hour 'watches'.

21st August (Sunday) At 2.25 am I stopped each engine (in turn) so Stephen could check all the oil and coolant levels—all good. At 11 am Stephen was in the engine room and saw that he had not turned on the auxiliary fuel tank lever so as to mix the fuel with the port and starboard tanks—he did so.

At this stage we had been steaming at 1700 rpm which was about 10/11 kts per hour. At 4.30 pm I again stopped each motor (in turn) so Stephen could again check the oil and coolant levels. All good.

Although the seas were 'lumpy' the weather was good. The boat was performing great.

22nd August (Monday) At 5.30am Stephen took us into Bowen harbour. It was a bit 'tricky' and because it was dark he could not exactly see where to navigate into the marina, so he turned around and we just idled around the harbour until daylight at 6.10 am. Stephen took us to the fuel wharf at 6.20 am where we re-fuelled etc and then had a shower and some breakfast on the boat (Stephen cooked it—he is looking after his dear old dad!!).

After brekky he plotted our next leg to Cairns and we also re-checked with our maps—all good. At 9.15 am we departed the Bowen marina. We were only 30 minutes out of Bowen when the port motor spluttered and cut out! Try as we might we could not get it fire up for more than 2 or 3 minutes at a time.

Stephen worked tirelessly in the engine room until 11.15

am but it kept doing the same thing. We were lucky that the starboard engine was able to keep going on auto pilot AND we had reduced our speed to 1100 rpms (still doing 6/7 kts per hour). At 11.25 am Stephen made the decision to turn back and return to Bowen.

What a dreadful trip back to Bowen. We 'punched' into the s/e swell and wind and 'nursed' our starboard motor, barely making headway.

We arrived back at the fuel wharf at Bowen at 3 pm and the marina owner (Terry Must) even loaned Stephen his 'ute so we could drive to this truck spare parts centre about 15 klms away—Terry was a great help and couldn't do enough for us—he even gave Stephen some huge fish fillets (as he also owned one of the fishing co-ops).

Stephen was able to buy a 'makeshift' bleeder screw off the proprietor (\$10). When we got back on board we started the generator so Stephen could have the power light in the engine room whilst he fitted the screw and tested the port engine—it was sluggish at first but we kept it revving at 1700 rpms for a few minutes and all was good.

We were going to spend the night at the fuel wharf but Stephen said ... "Bugger it, dad, let's get going eh"?

We departed Bowen fuel wharf (again!) at 5.30 pm and headed north to Cairns (again) with both engines firing. Sunset was 5.53 pm.

Steve was on 'watch' at 6 pm and at 6.03 pm the port engine spluttered and cut out again!!! Poor Stephen—he was back in the engine room again trying to rectify the problem until 7 pm—no good.

He decided to push on to Cairns on the starboard motor. We were doing 1100 rpm and the boat was still going 8/9kts per hour with the s/e swell and wind helping us along. We decided to now work in 2 hour 'watches'—2 hours ON and 2 hours OFF. Stephen was constantly down in the engine room until 11.05 pm.

We had a number of vessels pass us during the night—some going south. I remarked to Stephen a saying that has always stuck in my head (probably from fishing with my brother-in-law, Bob Marks, who is a boat builder of some note)...Red to Red and Green to Green BUT Red and Green must NEVER be seen. I don't know if I got this saying right but it certainly makes sense.

We varied the speed of the starboard motor, depending on weather conditions, from 1100 rpm to 1500 rpm. Our speed was always between 7 and 12 kts per hour (with the help of the prevailing s/e wind and swell).

23rd August (Tuesday) Stephen (in the morning) had asked David (the owner of the boat), who was in Cairns, to get the engine part he needed for the boat and to bring it to him to Clump Point (near Mission Beach).

At 3 pm we reached Clump Point wharf and attempted to berth but the weather was too rough to make fast to the wharf so we steamed over to a mooring buoy near the wharf.



Of all the rotten things to happen. We got caught up on the buoy and its rope tangled around our starboard propeller shaft and stopped us fast! There was no way we could free it, short of having scuba gear, but as luck would have it we were near a moored boat called "Calypso 11" and it was a 'Dive boat'.

Mike, the skipper, saw our dilemma and got one of his deck hands to don his scuba gear and cut us free—what a Godsend! They would not take any payment for their good deed. (Stephen won't forget them)

We secured to the mooring buoy and waited for Stephen's son, Samuel and his mate, Reece, to put his fishing boat in the water and bring David (and the engine part) out to us.

What a lovely surprise we received when their boat pulled alongside us. As well as David, there was Tawhai (Stephen's son-in-law) and his twin boys, Manu and Marley to greet us. They were so excited to see their "Poppy Steve and Poppy Alan".

We loaded David's gear aboard and said farewell to all the others as they departed in their boat.

Stephen worked on the port motor with the part that David had brought. All seemed good so Stephen made some toasted sandwiches and a nice hot cuppa for us and then, at 6.50 pm, we 'slipped' the mooring rope to resume our course to Cairns.

At 10 pm the port motor failed us again—the part that David brought did not fix the problem! We steamed on to Cairns in choppy seas—again relying on the starboard motor.

24th August (Wednesday) at 3.35 am Stephen guided us through the 'leads' into Cairns harbour. At 4.15 am we came into the marina. A large dredge was anchored near all the boats and we were about to enter a vacant berth at idling speed, when David told us we were caught on the dredge line! None of us could believe what was happening. The dredge line was not a thick rope but strong enough to again stop our starboard engine. We could see the rope in our torchlight, beneath the boat but it was too deep to do anything, so we just sat there in stony silence and waited—and waited!! Then at 4.45 am our boat just drifted free—you beauty.

We nosed into a berth and made fast, and all of us promptly fell asleep until 8 am. Stephen then moved the boat carefully out of the berth (away from the bloody dredge line) and reversed it into an adjoining berth because our shore (240v) lead could not reach the shore power outlet when we were bow in.

Stephen 'booked in' to the Marine Authority and was also given the name of a mechanic to look at our port motor problem.

We received another very pleasant surprise when Carol (Stephen's wife), Abby and Macey (Stephen's eldest daughter and her little girl), Sophie and Jack (Stephen's son Samuel's partner and their little boy) and last, but not least, my dear wife Ruth (and my passport!!) met us on the concourse. We all

had a lovely breakfast together, except David 'did his own thing'. Abby and Sophie and the children went back to Mission Beach and Carol and Ruth came back to the boat to have a look around and see how we have coped to date. They liked the boat very much and were happy for David.

The mechanic came and showed Stephen the problem and fixed it (after the mechanic had to get a 'special' piece of equipment to fully rectify the problem).

Then a lot of extra tools etc were delivered to the boat for David's use in PNG. These were duly loaded aboard and stowed safely and securely. We then bade farewell to Carol and Ruth and then Stephen plotted our next course to Cooktown and prepared to re-fuel at his allotted time of 3.30 pm.

We cleared the fuel wharf at 4 pm and for some unknown reason the starboard motor started to 'play up', thankfully it was just a glitch! Stephen contacted Cairns VMR and we cleared the port at 4.35 pm.

David, by this time, changed his mind and wanted to stay aboard and steam all the way with us to PNG, instead of flying home.

We were again heading north at 1300 rpm and between 8 and 9 kts per hour with both motors going good.

When we put our navigation lights on we noticed that the stern light was not working. Stephen tried to fix it but it was no use so we kept our anchor light and the toilet light on. The seas were 'lumpy' but it was not unpleasant and we were maintaining a fairly good speed without taxing the motors. We still worked 2 hours on and 2 hours off between the hours of 6 pm and 6 am—it gave us both piece of mind.

25th August (Thursday) at 3.50 am Stephen guided us through the 'leads' into Cooktown harbour and at 4.15 am we were tied up at Cooktown wharf and plugged into their shore power and promptly fell asleep. We awoke at 8 am and had a very nice breakfast at the waterfront restaurant that overlooks the wharf. It was a very picturesque scene. At 9 am we re-fuelled etc (which included adding the 'Fuelmaster' to the tanks) and fixed the stern light (loose connection) and then re-switched all the fuel tanks to work in unison (we had earlier switched off the auxiliary tank thinking it may have been 'dirty' fuel that caused the problem with the port motor).

Stephen plotted our course to Thursday Island and at 9.45 am, after logging in with Cooktown VMR, we cleared Cooktown harbour. They were going to alert T.I. Customs of our pending arrival and Stephen also spoke to the Customs on T.I. informing them of changes to our original fax which he had sent, back on the 15th August!

A lot of shipping passed us on this leg—one was about 500 mtrs off our starboard side and also travelling north.

26th August (Friday) the weather has been very kind to us and at 9 am Stephen again checked all the oil and coolant levels—all good. At 9.30 am on a beautiful, relatively calm sea, Stephen stopped the motors and we both jumped into the



sea—we were at 12 degrees 48 min South and 143 degrees 38 min East—how invigorating. We did not stay in longer than a few minutes as I was conscious of SHARKS!!

27th August (Saturday) At 5.40 am, Stephen berthed at the wharf on Thursday Island and shortly after, we all had a beautiful hot shower and shave at one of the nearby guest houses.

At 8.20 am we had re-fuelled etc and visited Customs to clear us for our voyage to PNG. When we left Customs we walked a few minutes into the town and had a lovely, filling breakfast at “Uncle Frankies”. It was a very popular spot apparently because there were many people eating here.

We returned to the boat and turned the generator off (been on since 6 am—and you could hear it ‘banging away’ in the distance) at noon.

David had previously asked Stephen if he would take the boat to Port Moresby instead of Daru and Stephen, of course, agreed.

It meant the difference of 10 hours from T.I to Daru as against 46 hours from T.I to Port Moresby.

Stephen plotted the course to POM and we re-checked our maps.

At 12.35 pm we departed T.I with Stephen at the helm. At 12.45 pm Stephen was secretly regretting his decision to go to POM!!!

The weather, from the word go, was simply atrocious. The “Hillary Sunset” just ploughed into the oncoming seas, bobbing and weaving, throwing all our gear and maps and everything we had on the bunks, all onto the floor, time and time again. We had to lash the generator to the starboard rail to stop it from sliding around. Stephen was cursing—I was silent—David was sleeping!!

It was so bad that we took turns at the helm for 1 hour on and 1 hour off. We were not ‘pushing’ the motors—just doing enough to try and make the trip a little less ‘bumpy’. The one redeeming aspect was that the motors never missed a beat and the troublesome port motor, since it was ‘fixed’, went like a beauty.

29th August (Monday) At 8.45 am on a nice, hazy, morning, Stephen logged in to the Port Moresby Yacht Club (Papa Yankee Charlie) for instructions on berthing and Custom arrangements. POM is a very busy harbour and some of the shoreline is dotted with high rise buildings.

At 10.25 we were told to anchor inside the marina area as there were no berths available. We turned the generator on, made some brekky and a cuppa and waited for Customs to come aboard.

At 1 pm the Customs came alongside in a tender and cleared us and they, with David, departed at 1.20 pm.

Stephen and I gathered all our personal gear and waited to be picked up at 2 pm and taken ashore. David had brought two of his men to take over the boat—which Stephen officially handed over to David at 2 pm.

Stephen showed the men all the main features and we departed the “Hillary Sunset”—probably for good.

David had ‘booked’ us in to the “Weigh Inn” motel—near the POM Yacht Club. Stephen and I were in room 20 and I can tell you it was strange to be on terra firma again and even as I’m writing this I am still ‘rocking’!

30th August (Tuesday) Stephen and David drove me to the airport (Jackson) for my flight at 9 am back to Newcastle via Brisbane. I thanked Stephen for all he did and told him that I loved him very much. He was staying on in PNG for some business meetings and would be there for about another 2 weeks. My sister-in-law, Jude and hubby, Bob picked me up from Newcastle airport at 5 pm. Our daughter, Julie, got a huge shock when I came in the front door as she had not heard from me for a few days.

Ruth, by the way, was also in transit from Cairns to Newcastle and I picked her up from Newcastle airport at 9.30 pm. We were very happy to see each other again.

IN SUMMARY

Port Engine hours at **start of journey** read-15,436. Starboard Engine hours read-19,646 (It seems that the previous owners obviously used the starboard engine most of the time!)

Port Engine Hours at **end of journey** read-15,607. Starboard Engine hours read-19,853 which means we were basically at sea for 207 hours (over 8 and half days).

The **total fuel** used (including a small portion for the generator) and nautical miles travelled was;

Southport to Bundaberg = 1046 Litres and approx. **234 NM**

Bundaberg to Bowen = 1561 Litres and approx. **419 NM** (plus extra when we had to turn back!)

Bowen to Cairns = 564 Litres and approx. **287 NM** (we found it more economical to do between 1100 and 1400 rpm)

Cairns to Cooktown = 254 Litres and approx. **103 NM**

Cooktown to Thursday Island = 782 Litres and approx. **415 NM**

Thursday Island to Port Moresby = (don’t know—did not re-fuel) and approx. **420 NM**

Although we had two ‘trolling’ lines out all day and all night we only caught one tuna—Stephen filleted it and we had a heap of beautiful fish pieces—it was so nice. Almost as nice as the large fillet that Terry Must gave Stephen back in Bowen. ‘Something’ did ‘hit’ one of the lines because when we wound the line in, the large hook was almost straightened?

I saw whales, and reefs that were just at water level. I have seen and passed places I have only read in geography books. We all got on very good and basically the trip was, on the whole, very idyllic. I managed to take a few photos and Stephen had a chance to tell me about ‘the birds and the bees’???



KEN PHILLIPS' CYCLING VIETNAM ~ APR 2010

Having just turned 65yrs I needed a challenge. That challenge was to ride my 20" folding Bike Friday down the National Highway 1A in VIETNAM from HUE to NHA TRANG solo with no support vehicle.

Tuesday, 6 Apr 2010 – arrived at **Sydney Airport**, no problems at the check-in counter even though the case and bike weighed a total of **26.6 kgs** on the check-in scales. Flew out at 1400h to **KLI Airport in Malaysia**.

Hotel Concorde (\$AUS80.00 per room per night) is only 5-10 minutes drive from KLIA. Hotel has courtesy bus from airport, staff are very helpful, rooms are very clean but plain. Nice size outdoor swimming pool.

Wednesday, 7 Apr – flight from KLIA to **Saigon** was uneventful and on time. Hotel courtesy vehicle was there to meet me and dropped off at the **Huong Sen Hotel** (\$US60.00 per ROH room per night) in **Dong Khoi St, District One**.

Hotel is three-star, staff very friendly, rooms large and clean. Swimming pool and gym are on the rooftop with bar facilities.

Also on the roof is the Terrace Bar and Dining, an open area dotted with palm trees and a view of the city. However at the moment it is being refurbished and was not available for use.

Thursday, 8 Apr – unpacked Bike Friday from its suitcase and repacked into lightweight travel bag ready for flight to Hue.

Explored city area of District One. Good spot for lunch/dinner at good price was the **Zan Z Bar** at **Saigon Hotel on Do Dong Street**.

Friday, 9 Apr – booked early wake up call for 0430h and taxi for 0500h for flight to **Hue**. Domestic Airport was only 20 minutes, however, word of warning at peak hour it could take over one hour to get to or from **Tan Binh Airport**.

Booking in with the Bike Friday (**21.6 kg**) was no problem at the domestic airport (**Jetstar**). Flight to Hue one-and-a-half hours. Driver from hotel was waiting for me at the airport. Hue airport is 14kms from the city. Taxi from airport to city is 140,000 dong (\$AU8.00).

Hue Heritage Hotel (\$US30.00 per room per night) is about 2kms from the main tourist/restaurant area. Hotel is three-star, room was large with a double and one single bed.

Although there was large road works outside, the hotel was very clean, staff were cheerful and always on hand for your convenience. The hotel restaurant has a large menu range to choose from which was very well priced.

Toured the city centre, lunched at the **DMZ Bar on Le Loi Street**, good food and great personality.

Trishaw drivers tend not to leave you alone, just keep walking and they will eventually turn away.

Saturday, 10 Apr – today I ventured out into the crazy no rules (by western standards) of Vietnamese traffic, however it was not as bad as it looked. You have to be aware of all things around you. At intersections the trick is to slow right down, everyone judges the space and speed

of traffic as they move across intersections. Doing a left hand turn is a little tricky but with practise and confidence you are soon flowing with the rest of the traffic.

So off I went, rode out to visit **Tu Doc Tomb** from the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945), the last of Vietnam's Royal families. At the roadside entrance to the tomb I was besieged by a French girl, couple from England, family from New Zealand and four guys from Vietnam wanting to know all about the Bike Friday. Of course I held court for a long time with the history of the bike, where I am riding to, all the gadgets on the bike, how much it cost, etc.

I covered over 20kms for the day and have a good feel on how to survive this traffic.

HUE - LANG CO – Day 1 (77 kms/3.15 hrs)

Sunday, 11 Apr – Left the hotel at 0630h. Instead of riding through the main city area I scouted around on minor roads that led me to the **National Highway 1 A**. The traffic this early hour was heavy with constant honking of horns letting you know that a vehicle is about to pass. The traffic did start to thin out near the airport at **Phu Bai**.

The road was very straight, head wind and very hot travelling in an easterly direction. Before I started this trip I decided that I would stop at 20km intervals for a drink and 15 minute rest. The first stop was at a stall run by a family of three (mother, father and daughter). They were very chatty even though I did not understand we still communicated. I took their photo and enjoyed a cup of Vietnamese ice coffee. At about the 25km mark a local chap rode up to me on his road bike he was riding to **DaNang**. We chatted and talked about the Bike Friday. Soon we had travelled 40km, my next drink stop. I asked the local chap to join me but he wanted to push on to DaNang. We wished one another safe journey.

At this 40km stop I was at the base of a hilly area just past the village of **Phu Loc**, so having a good rest was just what I needed for my first encounter with the mountain range that divides the North from the South. It was a short but sharp undulating road of about 3km, however, further down the road I encountered a very different scene. This was a gruelling ride up and across part of the mountain. The heat and head wind didn't make it any easier but as always when riding up a hill there is always a down slope. I must mention that heavy transport was becoming more frequent now. Because of the traffic riding down the hills was slow and the use of my brakes more frequent.

I arrived at **Lang Co** in 3 hours 15 minutes of riding time, however, I did ride an extra 5km looking for the **Lang Co Beach Resort** (not well signposted). I paid a local guy (120,000 dong, \$AU7.00) on his motor scooter to show me the way to my lodgings for the night.

Lang Co Beach Resort is facing the China Sea.

I pre-booked a budget room for \$US30.00, however for an extra \$10.00 I was upgraded to a sea view villa which was very spacious and just to the side of the swimming pool. Lovely spot for a few days of relaxing.



LANG CO - HOI AN Day 2 (75 kms/ 4.45 hrs)

Monday, 12 Apr – Did not get onto the road until 0730h as breakfast was late. Today is the assault on **Hai Van Pass**, a 10km climb with a 4km stretch of 8 degrees gradient. The first 3kms was a steady climb. What was not good was that it was very very hot, no breeze or shade travelling in a SE direction. Once I hit the 8 degree gradient I knew this was to be a tough ride, I was carrying over **10kg of luggage** on the rear rack. After 2kms I had to rest. I left the bike leaning against a railing whilst I went across the road to some shade from a lonely tree. After 15 minutes I decided it was time once more to tackle the mountain. As I was about to ride off I saw a truck slowly rounding the bend behind me, I decided to let it pass before I started. As the truck approached the co-driver beamed me to get a tow up this steep part of the mountain. I quickly hopped on my bike and rode up to the off rear side and held onto a railing below the tray bed. This helped take the weight off my luggage, I still had to pedal but there was not much effort required.

At about the 7km stage I let go as the fumes from the truck were getting to me and my arm was starting to feel the strain of having to hang onto the railing.

I rested for a good 30 minutes then set off determined to reach the top. The going was becoming easier I could move out of 'Granny Gear' a few times on this stretch of the ascent.

Once at the top I was besieged by store vendors wanting me to buy from their store. I was now on a high and did not want to lose my rhythm and shouted 'Can't Stop' 'Can't Stop' and so began the 10km descent to **Kim Lien** at the bottom of the Pass. The descent was full of swish backs, my top speed was 47kms. I soon feathered the brakes to be more in control of the bike. Once at the bottom there is a straight road through an industrial area of 10kms to **Chon Tan** where the road sweeps to the left then straight on to downtown **DaNang**, however I was going to **Hoi An** which was a turn to the right, not sign posted.

I asked locals if I was on the road to Hoi An and as usual they nodded and pointed but I was not convinced. Earlier I saw a taxi stand with about a dozen drivers sitting by the roadside. I turned back and sure enough they correctly directed me to the road to Hoi An which was further down towards DaNang. This was a four-lane highway which ran for about 9kms. Near **Dong Ha** I stopped for one of my break, had ice tea and a can of red bull. Shop owner said Hoi An about 20kms away. This was a good wide road with plenty of room. I was making good progress until I came to the turn off to Hoi An which indicated to the left as per my map but as I continued I was not sure of this road. Soon I came across two policemen who indicated that up ahead was a turn to the right to Hoi An (these directions were all done by hand movements) sure enough there was the sign - Hoi An 14km sharp left. I followed this road and once again as I rode further along I was not convinced this was taking me to Hoi An so I stopped in a town for a coffee and ask for directions. Whilst having coffee I glanced up at a sign across the road and to my surprise it said **HA NOI**, *somehow I had done a complete circle and was heading back in the direction I had started from.* So back I rode for about

4kms where there was a road junction to the left in this town of **Vinh Dien**. This time the local info was correct – follow road to the next junction turn right and follow for 10kms to Hoi An. At last I had arrived.

Rest days: 13 - 15 Apr

Accommodation was at the **Pho Hoi Riverside Resort** in an executive villa (\$US45.00 per night). This is a very fine resort at a very good price. The villa is an excellent choice overlooking the swimming pool and river. The resort is on **Can Dan Island** connected to Hoi An by a concrete bridge opposite the town market square.

Of course whilst in Hoi An one must have some clothes tailor made as I did, shirts which are of fine quality from **Yardley**.

I found the food at the resort restaurant of good quality and plenty to choose from including wines of Australia. The staff were always available and helpful to your requests. Hoi An is a great place to stay as there is lots of day trips available, if so desired. **Restaurant Hai San on Bach Dang St** is a good spot for a meal. They do a great prawn penne, white or red wine by the glass with good background music. Take a table outside, you will be looking at the waterfront.

HOI AN - MY KHE BEACH - Day 3 (131 km/6.17 hrs)

Friday, 16 Apr – On the road by 0620h, weather was overcast with a sprinkle of rain, a facing breeze which was cool. I made the most of the overcast conditions and did not have my first break until the 30km mark. I had a school boy follow me for some distance. He would pass me, then I would pass him. Eventually he wanted to race, so off we went. The little bugger could certainly ride that one speed bike, however after about 300mtr I went to top gear and pulled away from him. It looked like he had had enough so I slowed down, within a km he was back alongside of me but now he was wanting to talk, so we conversed with some English and nodding.

When it was time for a drink stop I offered him to stop and drink with me and that I would pay. He had a coke and I had the mandatory Red Bull. When I went to pay for the drinks he jumped up and paid the lady, she would not accept my money saying that my friend had paid. He also would not accept any money from me, how is that for hospitality. We got back on our bikes and rode together for about one more km, The boy indicated that his school was up ahead, so we shook hands and he pedalled off across the road to school.

At **Tam Ky** the **1A Highway** turns left at the first set of lights. This skirts the main city area and did not have much traffic flow. It is a stretch of about 5kms.

The sun was up and very hot which made it tough riding. At **Son Tinh** I stopped for a drink and information on the road to **My Lai**. The road is to the left of the bridge which links the city of **Quang Ngai**. Ride 500m down this road then turn left at road junction, ride for 8km to the **My Lai Memorial**, entry fee 100,000 dong. There is very graphic photos of the 805 villagers that were massacred during the Vietnam War.

I pushed on to **My Khe Beach** looking for **My Khe Beach Resort** with no success so I rode on past the many seafood



restaurants to a place called **Pho Bien** which had rooms for 200,000 dong (\$AU12.00). Room was air-conditioned and OK for the money as a one night stop over.

Of the town there is not much to say as there is really not much to do, only advantage is the beach and the many seafood restaurants.

MY KHE - SA HUYNH - Day 4 (76 km/3.30 hrs)

Saturday, 17 Apr – After breakfast I set off at 0630h backtracking the 10kms to the 1A Highway, turn left onto the large bridge that takes you across to the city of **Quang Ngai**. At the first set of lights the 1A veers right through the city. If you continue straight ahead it becomes a four-lane highway which skirts the city, very little traffic and continues for about four kms then joins back onto the 1A. The highway to **Sa Huynh** was flat, weather overcast with a cooling head wind. Traffic was low which helped me to ride with ease and at a better pace. On arrival the **Vinh Hotel** is on the southern side of the town and is well signposted.

When researching for this hotel the comments were that it basically was a restaurant with eight rooms available. Now the hotel is a two-story 25-room building alongside the restaurant. Good value for 200,00 dong.

Across from the hotel is a beach with white sand and little surf. Many seafood restaurants are located in the town.

SA HUYNH - QUY NHON - Day 5 (114km/6.45 hrs)

Sunday, 18 Apr – Breakfast not available so rode off at 0550h. I knew this leg was going to be hard, first rise came 200m from the hotel. This was a continuous uphill ride with overcast skies and a head wind all the way. First 20km stop was at a bus stop restaurant where I had breakfast and rested for 30 mins. Pushed on to ride up over the first mountain pass. It was now getting hotter and the wind had increased to the point that I was now stopping every 10kms for my standard shot of Red Bull and resting for at least 30 mins.

Traffic on this part of the ride was constant but OK. There is a three-metre shoulder which is adequate for bicycle riders. This shoulder is consistent all the way along my ride from **Hue** to **Nha Trang** (with the exception of bridges and some areas on the mountains). Three kms past the town of **Binh Dinh** there is a turn to the left (**Highway 19**) to **Quy Nhon**. The ride into the city is about 16kms and once in the city proper signage is not great, best bet is to ride through city to the beach (east), keep mountain range on your right.

Most hotels are on the beach front. The beach has a four-lane road along it and best place to get your bearings. Found my **Hotel Sai Gon**.

It was a long and hard day in the saddle.

Rest days: 19 - 20 Apr

Sai Gon Hotel is a 4-star hotel. I booked a deluxe room in advance, \$US37.00 (highly recommended). It was a great place to recoup from the hard ride of the past days. Food was excellent, swimming pool and bar/coffee shop on the roof top. Room was well appointed and aircon was on throughout the hotel, also piped music in the hallways and excellent staff.

Across the road was the town beach with white sand and fishing fleet anchored within 30metres of the beach. Each night the beach was enjoyed by the locals with the kids all playing soccer. On the horizon you could see the lights of the lobster boats working their nets.

About six hundred metres to the left of the hotel is **Barbara's Kiwi Connection** with backpacker accommodation, café and a place for information on things to do. Also there is a large supermarket close by.

The day before my departure I went for a ride to find the start of **Highway 1D**. As usual the directions from the locals was not correct. Ride down the **Nguyen Hue Street** onto **An Duong Vuong**, turn right at **Tay Son** then left onto **Phu Yen**. This is now **Highway 1D**. To get these directions I had a taxi driver take me to the start of 1D, he could not speak English, I just showed him a local map from the hotel – we communicated.

QUY NHON - TUY HOA - Day 6 (111km/6.37 hrs)

Wednesday, 21 Apr – At breakfast there was road cycling teams having breakfast. They were racing from **Ha Noi** to **Ho Chi Minh City**. I rode off at 0630h. Once on Highway 1D there was a nice wide flat road for 2kms then a hard climb of 4kms, down hill for 2kms then the road continued to climb over the mountain range.

Today was again hot with a strong head wind. The ride was a continuous climb all day. Even though I had sun screen on, the top of my hands blistered. At the 41km mark the pro cyclists caught up to me (I rode with the breakaway group for one second) then waited for the Peleton (rode with them for 30 seconds) then they were gone. Once again my 20km stops dropped to having 10km stops for drinks and rest. The strong head wind did not let up and made negotiating the hills very hard and slow. On approach to **Tuy Hoa** the 1A veers right, instead ride straight ahead on **Hung Vuong Street**. This is a four lane highway with some newly built cheap hotels. I stayed at the **Sinh Hien Hotel** 140,000 dong (\$AU8.00). It was small new hotel, air-conditioned, very clean but no restaurant. Most hotels are to the left and parallel to this road (approx one km) along **Do Dap Rd** on the beach front.

TUY HOA - NHA TRANG - Day 7 (128km/7.15h)

Thursday, 22 Apr – No breakfast was available so rode of at 0600h. Headed down **Hung Vuong Rd** to the end, turn right and follow road through city area to large crossroad, turn left onto 1A heading for **Nha Trang**. The first few kms was a slow ascent through a mountain pass then undulating hills for 24kms to **Vung Ro**. Here the 1A follows the coast, continued steep hill climbs. Once again the weather was hot with a very heavy winds coming off the ocean and again the tops of my hands blistered. The pro cyclists caught up to me and this time I stopped and videod as they raced by.

At one point on the crest of a hill I noted that there was truck stops where the trucks get hand washed by hoses. I decided to stop and ask for a spray which was no problem, it felt very refreshing and cooling. Back on the road it didn't take long to become hot again. At one stage on a steep uphill climb the going was tough, traffic was quite heavy and the heavy trucks were also struggling up the climb, in



fact one lorry had to stop and change down gears. I was also in 'Granny Gear' and doing it tough, so I hung onto the side of the lorry and was towed for about two kms until we reached the top of the climb. The downhill run was very welcome, however the downhill runs don't go as far as the uphill rides. At **Luong Hoa** the road veers to the left to **Nha Trang** with great ocean views and sandy inlets. This is a four-lane highway eight kms out from the city and is hard going on long ascents and short descents into Nha Trang.

Once I was down from the hilly approach the road divides, take the left fork as this runs along the beach and is where most of the hotels are located.

It was early evening and I was not far off the mark to where the **Olympic Hotel** is situated (**Phan Boi Chau St**). Traffic was very heavy so I decided to get a taxi to take me to the hotel. No problem, placed panniers and suitcase on back seat and folded Bike Friday and placed in boot of taxi. Of course the locals all wanted to help fold the bike and lift it into the boot. This was the end of the bicycle ride and this day was by far the hardest of all.

Rest Days: 23 - 25 Apr

Olympic Hotel quite nice \$US40.00 per room. Swimming pool on roof. The hotel is near the **Dam Markets** which sells everything imaginable. This hotel is north of the main hotel area. Beachfront is only 500 mtrs away. The hotel restaurant did not have a very good selection on the menu. On the day I left took taxi to **Cam Ranh Airport**, about 40kms south of Nha Trang. Flew out to **HCM City** at 1145hr.

SUMMARY

1. Do plenty of research on Vietnam and it's people/ climate/route you wish to ride.
2. Pack what you think you will need then halve it (or more). All things in Vietnam for bike riding are cheap.

3. It is much cheaper to pre-book your hotel accommodation for each leg of the ride by internet. Google sight called 'Hotels in Vietnam'.
4. The people of Vietnam are very friendly. Try to learn just a few words in Vietnamese, it will be most welcome by the locals.
5. When in a foreign country observe the customs/rules and be patient, things are done at a slower pace than what you may be used to.
6. Be aware of the traffic especially on the highway. As a bike rider you are near the bottom end of the food chain.
7. The honking of horns is the Vietnamese way of saying 'I'm going to pass - move over'.
8. Be wary of eating fresh salad(roll) as it may not come from a refrigerator.
9. When wanting to walk across a busy road – wait for a small break in the traffic (if possible). Step off and walk at a steady pace straight across to the other side. **Do not stop or run**. The traffic judges your pace. They will adjust and weave around you (first time is very heart in the mouth situation).
10. Highway 1A (on my ride) had at least a two-metre (lined) shoulder to ride on, however, be aware that the locals dry rice/timber and park their motorbikes on this shoulder.
11. When schools out there is lots of kids on their bikes, they are friendly and some want to chat or race you (good fun).
12. You may get guys on their motor bike follow you. He will sit just behind you, just ignore him, after a while he will ride on.
13. Vietnam is relatively untouched by tourists and things are cheap. Give yourself an adventure and ride the coast before tourism really takes hold of the country.



POEM

(I think this came from Rayda Noble? via a Ron Fletcher. With kind thanks to author, Edna Worrall)

WEAR YOUR MEDALS

*Last year you promised you'd find them, and then you'd wear them, all shiny, like the other men.
If they're all rolled up in a little box, under the ties, undies and sox,*

*Perhaps all fancy in bright velvet cloths, the ribbons all eaten by hungry old moths.
So find them and polish off the verdigris, before April 25th when you reminisce,
Just shine them until they are looking their best, and proudly wear them on your chest,*

*Let them tinkle with the beat, never mind your aching feet,
When march is over, legs turned to jelly, you fall into big chair and dump medals on Telly.
In a few days when your head feels clear, pack them away until April next year.*





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A Baltic Sea Cruise—9th July to 21st July

(With kind thanks to member, James Hoolan Jr. – from his 'trip diary')

Gia and I left our home in Williamsburg, Virginia on the 8th (Friday) and flew to the UK. We arrived in Dover at 9.30am, Saturday (9th) ready to board the vessel "Eurodam" at 5pm.

10th (Sunday) At sea.

11th (Monday) we docked at Kiel, Germany. This was the largest submarine building and operational port during WW 2. The city is very clean—just as I remembered Germany in 1963. We took a train ride (an hour-and-a-half) to visit Hamburg.

12th (Tuesday) Our ship arrived in Wandermunde, a small port east of Kiel. Car ferries operated here (as in Kiel) from Denmark and Sweden. The Danes and the Swedes like to visit Germany in the summer.

13th (Wednesday) At sea.

14th (Thursday) We docked at Tallin, the capital of Estonia. The Estonians have been "free" for 20 years this month, and are doing very well as a developing democratic country. Tourism, a great 'cash generator' for every country, has been going very well. The Russians make up about 30% of the population but don't seem to have the same work ethic as the Estonians. The Russians commit about 80% of the crimes and they live outside the city in apartment blocks, built in the '60's, that are 6 to 9 stories high!

The Swedish company, Ericsson, has one of the largest production facilities of 4G phones in Tallin.

15th and 16th (Friday/Saturday) We docked at St Petersburg. What a marvellous place. It is made up of 14 Islands. It is much like France in the layout of the city, with wide streets like Paris—but that is the only comparison, as everything is old, dirty and the people are poor and shabby in appearance. They are living like we did in the mid-20th century.

We saw the Peterhoff—Czar Peter the Great's summer home. Most people we spoke to enjoyed Catherine's Palace and the famous Hermitage. Even the new buildings looked old and passé.

17th (Sunday) We docked at Helsinki. This was the favourite port of our cruise. The city has about the same population as Copenhagen—567,000. The city is very clean and the people are industrious. Their industries consist of lumber, pulp, paper, newsprint, shipbuilding, and fishing, and they have 6 nuclear reactors (which they had to import workers from Poland and Slovakia to complete).

Nearly every Finn owns a boat—so there are many, many marinas! And there are beautiful parks everywhere throughout the city. They do have a shortage of workers because of their low birth rate (10 per 1,000 compared to the world birth rate of 186 per 1,000). They are going to import 10,000 Filipino workers because in the next 10 years, 700,000 Finns will be retiring. I think more will be needed after this first group!

Out of a population of about 5.6million people, the Russians are 8% and, like Tallin, they live outside the city and they don't speak the language and are unemployable.

We both like Australia's policy that everyone speaks English and schools are available to them (In 1984, while

watching channel 048, we learned that the government would send tutors to an immigrant's home to teach them English). Without the language they cannot interface with society and the economy.

18th (Monday) was the scenic 'highlight' of the cruise. The Swedish Archipelago consists of 20,000 Islands, which makes it the largest in the world (I did not learn that in school—I was taught it was Indonesia).

Our ship was proceeding at about 10knots per hour because of the shallow depth of the channel. The ship has a 26 foot draft and there some spots where the sea-bed was about 40 feet deep. The slow speed is a government regulation so as not to disturb or destroy the sea floor.

The greatest source of the semi-precious stone, Amber, is found in the Baltic Sea and it takes tens of thousands of years for the stone to evolve, to a point that it floats on the water.

There is an Amber room in the Hermitage—a compound of 5 buildings, and it is full of gold leaf and amber. Amber was in each of the Czar's Palaces.

Going up north through the passage to Stockholm, took about 5 hours and we arrived about 9am. Stockholm was the second largest port with 1.7 million people.

St Petersburg has 7 million people. It was a typical large seaport and capital city with many people and quite busy. We departed a 6pm and had the chance to see the beauty of the Archipelago.

When the Finns and Swedes build a house (main or holiday), they build the sauna house first.

19th (Tuesday) at sea (from Stockholm to Copenhagen)—I kept 'raving on' to Gia about the beauty and cleanliness of Copenhagen and how it was to be the apex of our cruise—what a "let-down" it was!

20th (Wednesday) Copenhagen was not how I remembered it in 1963. Everything looked old and shabby. We took the normal city tour (like we have been doing).

We were shown the Maersk World Headquarters (a huge shipping and transport conglomerate) and was informed that its owner, A.P.Moller, is 92 years of age and still comes into the office 7 days a week!

He recently donated \$250 million for a new Opera House across the canal from the Queen's residence. He is at the highest tax rate (60%)—most Europeans don't mind paying 45 plus % tax because they receive a lot from their tax payment. Everybody pays according to their income.

Copenhagen is very crowded with its narrow streets and dirty, shabby people. The density of pedestrians reminded me of the sidewalks of Beijing and Shanghai. We were having a lunch at Palace Hotel, across the street from the City Hall, and we saw through the window a young black fellow begging several tables of diners. One Dane seemed to give him the gesture of "get the hell out of here".

We saw lots of Muslim mothers with a string of children behind them—what a change since 1963. We went to the famous Tivoli Garden Amusement Park, which had not changed other than an increased number of guests. There is construction of a new bridge between Copenhagen and



Malmo, Sweden and a number of Swedes work in Copenhagen.

Our server at the Palace, Erika, lived in Malmo and takes the train to Copenhagen main station and walks 3 blocks to her job. This round trip costs her the equivalent of about US\$4. We stayed on the ship Wednesday night.

21st (Thursday) This morning we flew to Dulles, Washington Airport, before eventually arriving back home by 3pm. We were tired but very happy to be back home—a memorable trip.

When I wrote about the above trip I thought of the cruise we did in 1993. We sailed on the "Rotterdam" from Vancouver, through the inside passage, to Alaska. The Officers were all Dutch and the crew all Indonesian.

Now the crew is 60% Indonesian and 40% united nations. The cooks, waiters, etc are Filipinos and trained in Manila.

We noticed on this trip there were a number of speakers, English, German, as well as Americans. The Captain had a lecture on the ship and a 'bio' of himself.

The ship was launched by Queen Beatrice on the 1st July 2008, in Italy. It cost \$569 million—and the Captain said the ship is now paid for (isn't that incredible in this current economic crisis).

The ship burns 9 barrels of oil per mile and they buy their bunkering in St Petersburg because it has the cheapest price.

The St Petersburg harbour is frozen from November to April and the ships have to be escorted by an ice-breaker.

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Australian nurses have been going to war for well over 100 years.

A new exhibition at the Australian War Memorial draws on its rich collection to explore the service of military nurses, from the first known Australian in the Zulu War of 1879 right up to the experiences of the male and female nurses serving in recent conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

More than 3,000 Australian civilian nurses volunteered for active service during the First World War. As well as being involved in the war effort, nursing also provided opportunities for independence and travel, sometimes with the hope of being closer to loved ones overseas. The women worked in hospitals, on hospital ships and trains, or in casualty clearing stations closer to the front line. They served in locations from Britain to India, taking in France and Belgium, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East.

When the Second World War broke out, nurses again volunteered, motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to “do their bit”.

Eventually, some 5,000 Australian nurses served in a variety of locations, including the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Britain, Asia, the Pacific, and Australia. Seventy-eight died, some through accident or illness, but most as a result of enemy action or while prisoners of war.

At first, the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) was the only women’s service. The Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS) was formed in 1940, and the Royal Australian Navy Nursing Service (RANNS) in 1942. But the AANS remained by far the largest, and also made up the bulk of those who served overseas.

Today, both male and female nurses are officers in the Australian Defence Force. With a high level of specialist training and the benefit of improved technology, these men and women continue to work in remote and dangerous places, often under difficult conditions. They share a spirit of adventure, a desire to make a difference, and the discipline required to work in a military team. But most of all, like yesterday’s nurses they remain committed to putting their patients first, come what may.

Watch the YouTube video:

Nurses: from Zululand to Afghanistan.

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Home Telephone Email Address

Ordinary Member – Tick Special Member (Other than RAAMC) Associate Member (Allied)

I understand membership of the RAAMC Association is free, however, I wish to make a donation of \$_____ to assist in the administrative costs.

Please make cheques payable to the RAAMC Association. Donations to the RAAMC Association are VOLUNTARY.

In applying to join the RAAMC Association I hereby confirm that I will abide by the Constitution of the RAAMC Association and continue to hold the values I have served under whilst a member of the Australian Defence Force and the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please be advised you will be asked at a later date to provide the Executive with a photocopy of your 'Record of Service' to enable verification of your Service.

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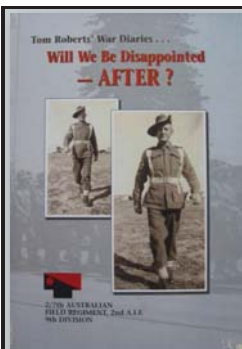
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I hereby apply to join 5th Field Ambulance RAAMC Association as (Please mark “X” in the appropriate box below)

- A FULL MEMBER (served/serving in the A.D.F. or Allied Forces)
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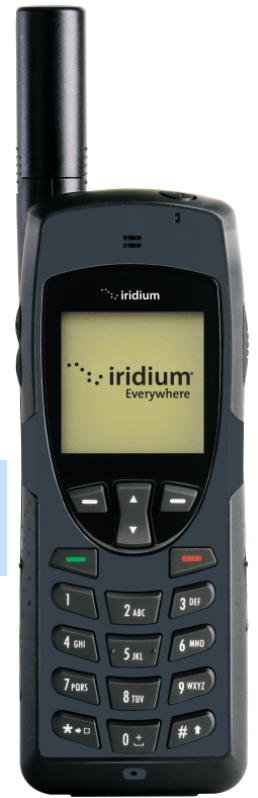
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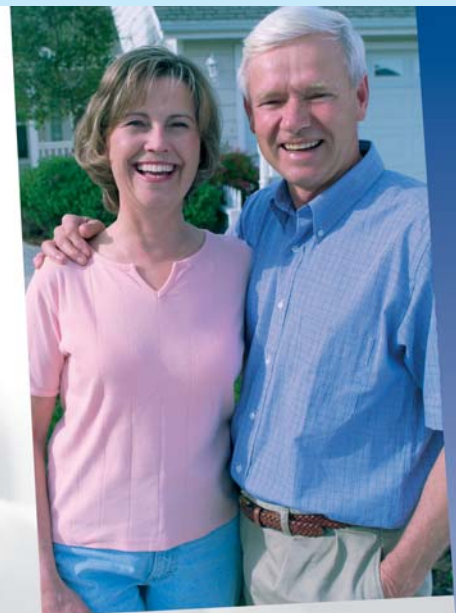
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