

SIGNAL NEWS



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SEPTEMBER 2023

Official Journal of the Royal Australian Signals Association (Tas)

(Founded 1945)

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SIGNAL NEWS

September 2023

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ASSOCIATION DIARY (2023)

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Signal News

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September, December, 2023

2023 "1st Friday" Reunions

Aug 4th, Sep 1st, Oct 6th, Nov
3rd & Dec 1st. **starting from**
4.15p. Concludes approx.. 6p

Committee Meetings 2023:- from 3.15p
On 1st Sep & 3rd Nov – at RAAF Centre

Annual General Meeting (77th):- Friday
6th October 2023. Commences at
5p at the RAAF Memorial Centre

Commemoration Day: Sun, Oct 15th

Service: 11.45a

Anglesea Barracks
Signals Memorial

Medals to be worn

Lunch:

RAAF Memorial Centre from 12.30p

Remembrance Day Lunch: Friday, 10th
November

Timing & Venue TBA.

Medals may be worn

Committee Pre Xmas Dinner:

Dec 1st from 6.45pm. Venue TBA

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The Hon. Nic Street , MHA,
Liberal Member for Franklin

A much-appreciated Community Service

Your President's Report

Welcome to our 3rd edition of “Signal News” for 2023.

Our next AGM (*our 77th*) is on 6th October at the RAAF Memorial Centre, commencing at 5pm. The meeting normally takes only 20-30 minutes and **drinks are free after the meeting** concludes.

Our Mid-year Lunch was held on Sunday 25th August at the *Dr Syntax*. Tony and Helen Marchant and their pleasant, efficient staff again produced a fine meal at very reasonable prices. 12 members and family attended. Great to catch-up with John and Jenny Harland, Ric Marshall and Bruce Berwick again and see Denise Geeves back from the mainland after a recent medical procedure. Regrettably, Vice President Basi Apted was ill, Patron Owen Winter found himself “doubled booked” and Treasurer Mick had other duties and missed the luncheon, on this occasion

I recently met again with our IT Advisor, Graeme Ingram at the Kingston On-Line Access Centre about the possibility of improving access to the files in our “Archives” USB smart drives. Graeme felt we may be able to re-save our files so they can be controlled by viewers as a “slide-show” on Smart TV set’s. He is examining the practicality of such possibilities.

While on IT matters, I would like to again acknowledge the ready willingness of former Sqn Tech Elec Brian Marriott and IT advisor Graeme Ingram to “rescue” me from the “clutches” of a Maltese firm which threatened to shut-down the functionality of the Laptop, on which most of my Sigs Association business is processed. Brian loaned equipment which circumvented the immediate issue while Graeme “wound-back” my system, wiped out the unwanted “drivers update”. The firm in Malta refunded the fees charged – so a very successful conclusion!

Your Committee has been working on the proposal to provide some fixed seating at the Signals Memorial at Anglesea Barracks. We have recently been advised that an inspection of the area is to be arranged involving the Senior Army Officer (Commander) of 6 Military District and our Patron Owen to discuss the details. We intend to apply for DVA grant funds for such works if the project is approved.

Your Committee has finalised the recommended amendments to our current Constitution and Rules for presentation to this year’s AGM. Details have been forwarded via email to members who have provided us with their addresses. Other members please obtain copies by contacting Secretary Chris.

Further revision of our “Order of Service” for Commemoration Day has been completed to the stage we can now bind the new document for use at our service in October. Again a debt of gratitude to Anna Vincent at Nic Street’s Kingston office for her assistance in improving the document.

Members and families are reminded that our **Commemoration Day service** will be conducted at the Anglesea Barracks Signals Memorial on **Sunday; 15th October**. Please arrive at the main entrance by 1115 for vehicle access to the parking on the Parade Ground or park in the street and walk in.

The service will be followed by the traditional Commemoration Day lunch at the RAAF Centre for members and families where there is plenty of free parking. This year a smorgasbord lunch will again be provided. The “**Wheel**” and a **Free Bar** will operate. Adult family members are most welcome too.

Please advise Secretary Chris if you intend attending the lunch, to assist with catering arrangements. The cost for a very good quality meal is likely to be in the order of \$20-25 per head.

There was a nice surprise awaiting our return home from a recent break up the East Coast. We had received a letter from Chris Edwards, wife of former Sqn Chief Clerk from the early 1980’s; **Doug Edwards**. The couple live with their daughter near Brisbane. Doug joined the Association several years ago. He was a very likeable Cadre staff member and was with us for a couple of years. Doug has recently been battling some balance issues requiring some surgery.

Chris and Doug are hopeful that they may be able to pay us a visit in the not too distant future. That would be most welcome after an over-40 year break since their posting to our Sqn.

Yours in Signals,

Dick G

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LEAVE WHILE SERVING IN SOUTH VIETNAM

During the Vietnam War, the normal leave available to Australian Soldiers serving in Vietnam was: Rest and Recreation (R&R) - a five-night 'Out of Country' leave, and Rest and Convalescence (R&C), a three day 'In-Country' leave. R&C was normally taken in groups, and spent at the purpose-built R&C Centre. This was located in the southern beach-side city of Vung Tau, not far from the 1st Australian Logistical Support Group (1 ALSG) base. In addition, individuals could also be granted a 'stand-down' of not less than 48 hours at the R&C centre

As a rule, R&R was generally taken around the six-month mark of our one-year tours of duty. Although for practical purposes and manning issues, it could be taken earlier or later. R&C could be taken much more frequently, e.g., every couple of months depending on the nature of operations. In 1971, our choices of R&R destinations were: Australia; Bangkok; Hong Kong, and Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)¹. US Servicemen could also travel to Australia, the Philippines and Hawaii.

Due to the unrelenting pace of 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion's Operations, I hadn't been able to take R&R and was going to give it a big miss. However, by late August, we'd been in the field for three and half months. We were tightly wound; bordering on feral, and it was showing. I needed a break away from the Battalion. The answer seemed obvious: spend some time in a 'normal' environment around 'normal' people, again. So, I contacted 104 Sig Sqn and asked them to set the wheels in motion for an R&R to Australia. It would also be a good opportunity to check on my recently-widowed Mother and my elderly Grandparents. Within a couple of weeks, I was on my way.

Our battalion sat astride National Route 2, a gravel road which ran north through Phouc Tuy and Long Khanh Provinces. It bisected a number of the major Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army's (VC/NVA) east-west infiltration and courier routes. As a consequence, this road was subject to their constant interdiction by co-ordinated ambushes, landmines and IEDs. The area south from Courtenay Hill to Duc Thanh was a notorious 'hot zone'. Movement from Courtenay Hill to Nui Dat coincided with that of other Battalion members also moving out on R&R and R&C. We travelled down a very dusty and increasingly dangerous Route 2, sitting back-to-back in centre-seated Mk5 Trucks, eyes peeled, facing east and west; each of our weapons in the "Action Condition".

Only days earlier, the NVA had mounted coordinated attacks against the ARVN's⁴ 626th Regional Force Company outpost at Xa Bang hamlet and the village of Ap Ngai Giao, several clicks further along Route 2. They'd followed up with a failed ambush of 3 Cav's APCs the very next day in the same vicinity. Fortunately for us, the trip down through XA Bang, Ap Ngai Giao, Duc Thanh, Binh Gia, Binh Ba and Ap Suoi Nghe, went without incident. Around an hour later, we rolled into Nui Dat caked in red dust, unscathed and relieved. It was no surprise when I later opened my secure trunk back at 104 Sig Sqn, that my khaki polyester uniform and civilian "R&R" clothes were mouldy and smelled worse than I did. They were quickly washed, dried and ironed in a couple of hours.

During my document check at the Squadron Orderly Room, it dawned on me that I didn't have any money. Like most soldiers in Vietnam, the majority of my pay was allocated to a bank account. We didn't draw pay in the field and as I'd been in the field for the last three and a half months, I had a tidy sum due. So, the unit pay clerk sent me across to the Cash office where I was paid in US Dollars. Early the next morning, along with 20 or so other soldiers also proceeding on R&R, I took the RAAF 'Wallaby Airlines' Caribou from Luscombe Field to Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport. On landing, some were taken directly to flights leaving for Taipei and Hong Kong, the remainder of us were bussed around to the US Army's Camp Alpha for 'Out-Processing' Camp Alpha was the home of the US Army's 90th Replacement Battalion, a unit whose lineage stretched back to WW2 in Europe. It was located on the south-eastern side of Tan Son Nhut Airport and was the US Army's main Transit facility in Southern Vietnam.

We were greeted by a US Army SGT who checked our Army ID Cards, International Health Certificates (IHCs) and confirmed each of our destinations. He gave us our various report-in and departure times. We were briefed on the Camp layout and Open Mess location, allocated bed-spaces in a double story barrack block, and left to our own devices. Camp Alpha was an absolute eye-opener. It was over-flowing with US Army soldiers; those arriving as replacements from the USA, those rotating back to the USA on DEROS⁷, US Army slang for 'going home'. Or going on, or returning from, various R&R destinations. Their huge, Open Mess was simply incredible: Fresh Fruit, Fresh Bread, Fruit Juices, Cereals, Milk, Ice-Water, Ice-Tea, Ice Cream, Coca Cola, Pepsi, Dr Peppers, Steak, Roast Beef, Pork, Bacon, Ham, Chicken, Turkey, Salads and Vegetables. Incredible food cooked to order and you could eat as much as you wanted. Prominent Signs posted throughout the mess hall read "*Take what you want. But eat what you take.*" There were three cooks just doing eggs. Scrambled, fried (sunny-side up/over easy), Poached – all done to your fancy whilst you waited. I have never seen anything like it before, or, since.

Camp Alpha operated around the clock. However, you could feel a tension in air. Heroin use amongst some US Service men had become a serious issue and an escalating problem. It was dirt cheap and readily available in Saigon and major base areas. In an effort to reduce the numbers of addicted servicemen returning to CONUS (Continental United States), all DEROS personnel had to undergo a Urine Test. Those who passed, boarded planes home. Those who failed were refused exit and confined to the Base Stockade, where they were held until such time as their follow-up urine tests returned negative results. This did not sit well with many of the US servicemen whose tours were over and who just wanted to get the hell out of Vietnam. As a consequence, there were a lot of very angry men in Camp Alpha.

One of the interesting things I noticed at Camp Alpha were the elaborate greeting rituals practiced by many Black US Army Soldiers. They called it the "Doing the Dap", or simply "Dap". It was a very involved system of hand and arm movements which could take several moments to complete. Two fellas who tried to teach me dissolved into laughter at my attempts to pick it up. "You need to hang out here longer, then you'll be cool, man!" I was told. Later that day I reported back in as ordered, joined a long queue and boarded a US Military Airlift Command (MAC) DC-8 Charter Flight to Sydney. The plane was full of US Servicemen. As I recall, there were only a handful of Aussies on board.

On Leave from SVN Cont.,

We touched down at Mascot around 2230hours. As we pulled up at the terminal, we were ordered to remain seated. Moments later, two very big Customs men entered the plane spraying cans of aerosol insecticide right and left as they walked the length of the centre aisle. This didn't go over well with some of the yanks, who took it the wrong way. None the less, it was 'standard procedure' for all arriving international flights, regardless of country of departure.

Once we'd deplaned, the US Servicemen were ushered away for further briefings. We were quickly walked away by Army Movements NCOs who checked our movement documents, navigated us through Customs and into the terminal proper. As we emerged, we were greeted by a very small, but vocal group of anti-war demonstrators. They were waving signs as they chanted slogans, and yelled various insults at us from behind a single rope barrier, watched over by a couple of bored looking cops. We fired back threats Each of us were escorted away to our various terminals for further travel. In my case, the TAA terminal and boarded a flight to Melbourne.

My brother Ray was waiting at Essendon airport for me and drove me home. I was surprised to find our house crowded with young male and female American School Teachers. In the early 1970s, Victoria experienced a severe shortage of High School Teachers. To ease this shortage, the Victorian Government had recruited heavily in US Colleges. They promised graduating Mathematics and English teachers' minimum two-year contracts, with excellent conditions and generous 'no tax' salaries (The Victorian Government paid their US tax, as I recall).

Ray was dating one the said young ladies (whom he later married) and a crew of them decided to call my mother's place, 'home'. Most were staunchly Anti-War and would have been drafted if they'd stayed in the USA. We had some lively discussions about Vietnam. Regardless, they were upstanding people and great ambassadors. It was good to see my mother again. She was an AWAS Operator in Signals up on the Atherton Table Lands during WW2 and tough as old boots. Not much fazed her. And I could see my brother was taking good care of her. I asked Mum why she didn't tell me about the American School Teachers – "I wanted to surprise you, dear", was her simple reply. Mum had a soft spot for anyone from the USA. It was extra bloody good to lay down in my old comfortable bed again, too. However, I couldn't get settled. Sleep only came in short, restless patches. Deep sleep completely eluded me.

The next day I went to see my Grandparents. They were 'salt of the earth' people. My Grandmother was a wonderful woman. She had waved goodbye to her husband in WW1, waved goodbye to my father and his brother in WW2 and hugged me tightly before I left for Malaya and later, Vietnam. She sent my dad fruit cakes in WW2 and sent them to me in Malaya and then Vietnam, too. They were always perfectly baked, wrapped in brown paper, placed into a round, dimpled, "Willow" cake tin, the lid of which was then sealed. The tin was covered in a tightly-sewn, thick white calico cloth. My address was written on the top and bottom in indelible ink. She wrote me two letters every week for the entire time I was in Vietnam.

Next item on the agenda was to retrieve my car, which I'd stored in their garage, the previous year. My Grandfather had taken good care of it for me. And it was great to drive it again, but I had to concentrate hard, because out of force of habit, I kept drifting across to the right-hand side of the road. I'd been corresponding with a girl I knew in Melbourne. She was midway through her teaching degree. So, just on spec I called her up. She seemed pleased to hear from me and invited me to a teacher's college party in South Yarra. However, I was asked not to mention that I was in the army, and most especially, in Vietnam. Against my better judgement, I decided to go. The party was going extra well and my prospects were looking extra good. That was until I made the mistake of remarking that I was home on R&R from Vietnam. You could have heard a pin drop. A particularly obnoxious anti-war idiot and his long-haired offsider, got right into my face and it was on. As fortune would have it, a Navy CPO by the name of Mick, was also at the party. Between the both of us, we sorted them and a couple of others out. But the party had fallen as flat 'as a shit-carters hat' and nobody wanted anything to do with us. Least of all the girl who'd invited me to the party. Mick and I left, shook hands, and went our different ways. Anti-War sentiment was 'over the top' obvious and along with daily news reports from Vietnam, was widely reported on radio and TV. Victoria was notorious for its huge Vietnam moratorium protest marches. And was the home of the "Save Our Sons" antiwar movement. It was the undisputed protest capital of Australia.

I travelled into Melbourne and walked around the city. The centre of town was packed with bustling crowds. The hair on the back of my neck constantly prickled. A mob of Vietnam Moratorium demonstrators, sprouting VC/NVA Flags, were congregated on the steps parliament house, eagerly soliciting donations of money from passers-by. These ratbags were blatantly stabbing us in the back and getting away with it. I wished I could gather them all up along with Bob Hawke, Jim Cairns, Bill Hartley and Albert Langer, dump them all in the middle of the De Courtenay Rubber Plantation, or down on Route 2 at Xa Bang, and see just how long the bastards survived.

From what I could gather, people seemed either totally oblivious to, or completely fed up with, the war we were fighting a mere seven flying hours away. Didn't they realise what we were doing for them? Did they even care? Something had definitely changed here. Maybe it was me. I felt completely out of place. Like I'd landed on a different planet. And the colours. Everything was a palette of wild, vibrant, colours. I was used to olive drab, shades of green, dull browns, blacks and red oxide dirt. And maybe I'd been away too long, but things seemed to be more expensive. A packet of Marlboro cigarettes and pack of chewing gum cost me 52 cents! It was a totally and completely different world to the one I'd just come from. I was a stranger here. Waves of guilt, anger, and disappointment washed over me. I felt terribly guilty for being 'back in the world'. And worse, for leaving the Battalion and Vietnam. I constantly worried about them and how they were faring. Coming back here was a big mistake. It quickly dawned on me that I'd come back for all the wrong reasons. I wasn't really feral at all. I'd merely adjusted to my environment. If you didn't adjust, you simply wouldn't survive. We were all 'tightly-wired and switched on'. It was that kind of place in that kind of time. And I couldn't wait to get back there.

I missed the heat and humidity; the earthy, mouldy smell of my bunker's sandbags; the pungent odour of burning diesel/petrol mix; sweat-stained clothes and unwashed diggers; the language and the constant radio transmissions; the thump of Huey rotors; the spectacular electrical storms; the ever-present and ingrained red dirt; dust and mud; the Vietnamese bush bee swarms; the artillery and mortar contact missions, gunfire and explosions; the mad minutes; the nightly fireworks; the incredible sunrises and sunsets; the eerie, white ground-mist stand-to's; the closeness and the camaraderie; and the pure adrenalin of living in the boondocks. These were elements that formed my world.

On Leave from SVN Cont.,

As I look back now, that's probably why I was so angry. I was angry with myself for being so stupid. Angry for thinking it would be any different. I should have gone to Bangkok, Hong Kong or Taipei, where I'd have been amongst my own kind, comfortable in the company of fellow soldiers on R&R. And could have lost myself in an alcoholic haze for 5 days and nights. I split the remainder of my R&R between home, my grandparents and the bar of the Croydon Hotel.

We flew back to Vietnam on another MAC DC-8 Charter, this time via the Philippines. There was a welcome stopover in Manila. I spent a very pleasant sojourn drinking ice-cold San Miguel beer in the transit lounge, smoking excellent, thin, cheap, local cigars (liked them so much I bought a box), yarning with our American Brothers-In-Arms, several of whom I'd met on the flight down. They raved about just how well they were received and treated in Sydney. Many were making plans to go back there permanently. They absolutely loved the place. Consequently, I was a tad the worse for wear when we finally landed at Tan Son Nhut. However, a couple more San Miguel's, and a 'Heppo' Roll from the cafeteria and another cheap cigar, seemed to do the trick.

Amongst the passengers at the RAAF Movement Control Section waiting to catch the RAAF Caribou to Nui Dat and Vung Tau, were two drunk and boisterous engineers. I'd noticed them sky-larking in the cafeteria earlier. There was also a rather officious-looking Army Ordnance Captain who, it seemed to me, regarded us with some disdain. In stark contrast to our crushed, sweaty polyesters, scuffed boots and rumpled slouch hats, he was immaculately dressed in perfectly pressed polyesters, khaki cap and wore highly-polished shoes, which he sporadically dusted. His demeanour, dress and pallid complexion, screamed 'Saigon Commando'. I wondered what sort of pittance he paid his Vietnamese laundry maid to do all his gear. He kept looking at me, nodding his head towards the two engineers, obviously expecting me to quieten them down. The sappers weren't doing any harm, so I ignored him and stared off into the distance. The captain gave me another dirty look then loudly braced the sappers up and threatened to charge them if they didn't quiet down and behave. Both settled down somewhat, and moments later we boarded the Caribou. We sat at the back of the aircraft, just up from the loading ramp. I was closest to the ramp. Next to me were the two engineers, who were sitting opposite the captain. He was still scowling at the two sappers, who were becoming a bit 'chirpy' again.

To aid internal air circulation when carrying passengers (in good weather), Caribou generally flew with the top half of the loading ramp fuselage in the raised position. About ten minutes into the flight, we hit some rough patches of turbulence. Without warning, the Caribou suddenly yawed, pitched and bumped as it fought its way through the air. The violent movements proved too much for one of the engineers, who suddenly heaved-up the contents of his stomach which splashed onto the shiny shoes of the crabby Captain opposite him. I awarded the sapper a mental 'A' for effort. Unfortunately, the sight and smell set his mate off next to me. He heaved-up and got the captain, too. This sparked a chain reaction along the aircraft. Several other passengers also began dry-retching. At least one of whom, a female nurse, vomited as well. The RAAF Loadmaster, who was going to have to clean it all up, was doing a furious sick bag, arm-waving, war dance. But it was too late.

The captain sat frozen in his webbing seat; jaw dropped in horrified shock. All I could do was try not to laugh and hold my San Miguel's and Heppo roll down, too. God knows what the sappers had been eating, because the smell was bloody awful. Audible groans of disgust and revulsion marked the billabong of speckled vomit's passage backwards and forwards along the Caribou's floor in time with the pitching, bumping and yawing. It was one of the funniest things I've ever seen. And a salutary lesson in 'Karma'.

Just three of us got off at Nui Dat, the two chirpy sappers and I. They'd both come good and we yarned as we waited for our transport. Turned out they were a Splinter/Mini Team¹⁴ and had been through a pretty rough trot together. They were good fellas who'd let their hair down after a well-earned break. We laughed and laughed as we pictured the officious captain walking stiffly bow-legged down the Caribou's ramp in Vung Tau. I always had a very soft spot for Engineers; my maternal Grandfather was their WW1 equivalent. And according to family legend, just as wild. That night I stayed at 104 Sig Sqn and had a few quiet beers in the SGTs Mess with Brian Fisher, Bill Bannigan, Bluey Joseph and Laurie Harbridge. The main topic of conversation was the Australian Government's gutless decision to turn its back and run away from the Vietnam War. Early the next morning I flew up to Courtenay Hill. By lunchtime, R&R was a memory. I was back in my own. It was just so good to be back.

NOTES:-I've read various accounts over the years by people attempting to rewrite history. They seek to assert that incidents such as this never actually occurred. Moreover, that the airports never had any records of demonstrators abusing returning servicemen. Well, it did happen and I saw it with my own eyes. And I wasn't the only one by far. It was one of the reasons why our flights were deliberately scheduled to arrive late at night [1ATF SOP Part 2 AG Branch, Section 7 (10) (c) "*US Charter flights to Australia normally arrive at MASCOT 2230 EST*" (sic)], rather than in the morning or afternoon.

Interestingly, it came out in conversation at our Manila stop over, that the US Servicemen on our flight were taken from Mascot via a VIP exit which avoided any protesters. . It's a small world. Into our third day at sea on the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney, heading back to Australia. We were issued a daily ration of two, large, 26oz (770ml) cans of beer per man. This was done late each afternoon on the carrier's flight deck. The cans were opened in front of us and had to be consumed then and there on the flight deck. Naturally, the cans were lukewarm to 'warmer'. I was sitting on the steel deck having just finished my second can. Felt a tap on my shoulder, looked up and there was Mick, the Navy CPO from the South Yarra Party! Turns out Mick was part of Sydney's crew. He took me down to the "Chief's" and introduced me to the other CPOs. Their beer was ice-cold and there were no limits.

Happy Days.

Ken Mackenzie (for RA Sigs FB Page)

ANOTHER DEDICATED GOLFER

A husband and wife were out Christmas shopping in a busy shopping centre just before Christmas. The wife suddenly noticed that her husband was missing – and as they had a lot to do, she called him on the mobile and asked "Where are you, you know we have lots to do."

Not missing a beat, her husband confessed: "Do you remember the jewellery store that we went into about 10 years ago? You fell in love with that diamond necklace? And although I couldn't afford it at the time, I told you that one day I would get it for you?"

Little tears started to flow down her cheek. She was all choked up, but managed to reply: ... "Yes, I remember that wonderful store." "Well, I am in the Golf shop next door to that." (to be 18 again!) *(Bob Gray)*

IRISH VASECTOMY

After having their 11th child, an Irish couple decided that that was enough, as they couldn't afford a larger bed. So the husband went to his doctor and told him that he and his wife didn't want to have any more children .

The doctor told him there was a procedure called a vasectomy that would fix the problem but it was expensive. A less costly alternative was to go home, get a large firecracker, light it, put it in a beer can, then hold the can up to his ear and count to 10.

The husband said to the doctor, "B'Jayzus, I may not be the smartest guy in the world, but I don't see how putting a firework in a beer can next to my ear is going to help me with my problem." "Trust me, it will do the job", said the doctor.

So the man went home, lit a cracker and put it in a beer can. He held the can up to his ear and began to count: "1, 2, 3, 4, 5," at which point he paused, and placed the beer can between his legs so he could continue counting on his other hand. *This procedure also works in New Zealand and Tasmania.* *(Bob Gray)*

JUST NOT CRICKET

A man who had a terrible fear of hospitals, had to take his wife into the Maternity Ward when she was about to give birth to their first child.

He, being scared, stayed at work, then rung periodically to check up on progress. On the first call he was told it was a boy, but wait there is another on the way. The second call he was told it was a girl, but wait, there is yet another one on the way. It was too much for him to think about, so he decided to go to the pub and get drunk as fast as possible. He slammed back double rums one after another until he had the guts to make the call and see what the latest count was.

Unfortunately his hand was shaking so much through the effects of alcohol and nerves he punched the wrong buttons on the phone and got the local sports line.

"What's the latest score?" He slurred. The reply came back: 198 all out. The last one was a duck!" He fainted!

(Geeves)

LONELY OLE LADY

An old lady is lonely and decides to get a pet to keep her company. She goes to her local pet store and looks around. A frog looked straight at her and winked.

He looks up at her and says "I'm lonely too, so buy me and I promise you won't be disappointed." She thinks, well I haven't found anything else, so she buys the frog and takes him to the car.

Driving down the road the frog leans over and says, "kiss me and I promise you, you won't be sorry for making the purchase.

She kissed him. Immediately and he turned into a most gorgeous handsome sexy young prince. The prince kisses her back, and do you know what she turned into? The first motel she could find! *(Geeves)*

A GALLIPOLI STORY

Recently my great nephew serving in the Royal Australian Navy contacted me for information about relatives who had served in the military forces. I was delving into the family tree on to a branch of the family I had never explored when I was confronted with information that I never knew about. The man in question was Arthur Gordon (Gordon) Gibson, the son of James Edwin Gibson and Marian Jane Gibson (nee Malone) Born in New Norfolk, his date of birth varies as to the sources on different family trees but his enlistment date was 27th August 1914 and he stated his age as 22 years and 5 months which suggest he was born in March 1892.

Gordon was a school teacher by profession employed by the Department of Education, 5 feet 9 inches in height, 11 stone 6 pounds with fair complexion and brown (reddish) hair. He passed the medical and with the rank of Private (service Number 230) was based in the Army Camp at Pontville for several months intensive training.

The History of the 12th Battalion tells the story of life for the recruits. Including the story about a fire that destroyed a building on the property where I now live. I wonder whether he may have been one of the soldiers that helped fight the fire that engulfed Hinds Iron Store on the 7th October 1914.. “ In addition to the neighbours, a large number of the soldiers from the Pontville camp, a few hundred yards away across the Jordan, came to lend a hand.”

On the 20th October 1914, the 12th Battalion sailed away from Hobart aboard the "Geelong and arrived in Albany, West Australia where the “Geelong” joined a convoy of 28 Australian Troopships and 10 New Zealand Troopships. They then departed on the 1st November 1914 in three long lines of ships. They were fortunate in the crossing to Ceylon the German Cruiser “Emden” was active but fortunately missed the flotilla by several hours, however at 7:30 Am the “HMAS Sydney” was seen to belch a lot of black smoke and dash off across the front of the “Geelong” and disappeared over the horizon. There was much conjecture amongst the troops and it wasn't until some hours later the story was told that the “Sydney” had engaged the “Emden” and defeated her. The speed of the convoy was based on the slowest of the flotilla, the “Southern” and the troops wondered whether they would get to the front before the war was over.

From Colombo where they did not go ashore, the next destination was Port Said and finally Alexandria where they disembarked on the 10th December, finishing up in Cairo where their camp was set up at Mena Road. The Turks attacked the Suez Canal on the 3rd February 1915, the sound of gunfire could be heard but the 12th Battalion was not needed as the Turks failed miserably.

On the 2nd March, 1915 the 12th Battalion set sail for Lemnos on board the “Devanha” where they stayed with daily landings and carrying training operations on shore. On the 9th April Private Gordon Gibson was listed as a Lance Corporal although the information does not appear to have been gazetted properly due to the confusion of the pending conflict. On the 22nd April a full-dress rehearsal for the landing at Gallipoli was carried out.

At 9 PM on the 24th April they were given their last meal before they landed from the “Ionian”, it consisted of Bully Beef Curry with plenty of fine large onions cooked whole “and my word, didn't we enjoy it! And there was plenty for a second helping , which most of us accepted without a murmur.” The landing is so well known and the history of what followed is engrained in our collective memory.

My 1st Cousin, three times removed, Gordon Gibson, was “killed in action” on the 2nd March 1915, at a place called Gaba Tepe, a week to the day after the first Anzac Day. His parents and siblings like so many other families must have had such mixed emotions when the sad news finally came through.

A list of his possession was recorded and returned to the Gibson family and consisted of :-

Gift Box, Testament, 2 Gospels, Cards, Cigarette -Holder, case damaged, Dog Tag.

He was awarded posthumously, the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and his family received the Memorial Plaque (commonly known as the Death Penny), the Memorial Scroll and the King's Message. Sadly some of these items did not get to Hobart before the passing of his mother on 6th September 1920 and his father on the 8th September 1920, both from the effects of the “Spanish” flu. Gordon's name figured prominently in the death notices.

He is buried at Lone Pine Cemetery.

LEST WE FORGET

Richard Watson Tas History Facebook

YOUR SECRETARY SAYS

On the Sick List:- **Graeme Boscoe** – was hospitalised in Bendigo recently. His Cardiologist was evidently happy with Graeme’s progress and he has now returned home. Former Sqn SQMS **Allan King** had had surgery and has ongoing treatment in Qld. He is now RASA President in Qld. **Dave Harcourt’s** leg is likely to take about another 4 months to return to normal, Chris Harcourt has also been in hospital with a nasty bout of Influenza A. **Martin Potter** has multiple breaks in a leg from an INCAT workplace accident. He is expected to be “released” from his leg “cage” around the time of reporting, **Brian Watson** has again been in hospital receiving further treatments. **Bev Andrews & Ray Woolley** are still battling along.

It’s pleasing to report that we have two new members. They are former 1960’s/70’s Sqn “Liney” & Q staff member; **Ernie Downie** and former Sig in the 1970’s; **Mark Hodgman** who went on to have a career in the RAAF. Ernie resides at Risdon Vale and Mark is living at Sorell. Welcome to you both. We hope you enjoy being members. Thanks also to those who have sent Proxy forms approving our proposed Rules changes including Basil McClymont & Al King in Qld.

Our condolences have been passed to Ric Marahall & family on the loss of their son & brother and more recently to Ian Beadle on the loss of his wife.

Please don’t forget our Commemoration Day Service & Lunch on Sunday 15th October.

Advice of your intentions will be much appreciated to assist in our catering arrangements for the lunch.



L-R Fiona, & Sue Farley & Chris Goodwin prior to the mid-year lunch at “The Doctor Syntax” hotel, in Sandy Bay



Former 124 Sig Sqn “Drill Sgt” of 1967, (Ian Hosan) in discussion with former trainee (retired Major, John “Fred” Harland) and spouse (Jenny) at the Mid-year lunch



Not well it would seem!!!

(Sigs Facebook Page 12 July)

TO MY FRIENDS WHO ENJOY A DRINK

And those who don't and are always seen with a bottle of water in their hand:

As Ben Franklin said: In wine there is wisdom, in beer there is freedom, **in water there is bacteria.** In a number of carefully controlled trials, scientists have demonstrated that if we drink 1 litre of water each day, **at the end of the year we would have absorbed** more than 1 kilo of Escherichia coli, (E. Coli) – bacteria found in faeces.

In other words, we are consuming 1 kilo of shit annually. However, we do NOT run that risk when drinking wine & beer (or rum, whiskey or other liquor), because alcohol has to go through a purification process of boiling, filtering and fermenting.

Remember: Water = Poop, Wine = Health

Therefore, it's better to drink wine and talk stupid, than to drink water and be full of Shit.

There is no need to thank me for this valuable information: I'm doing it as a public service. (Geeves)

UNGRATEFUL KIDS

A wealthy old gentleman and his wife were celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary and invited their three grown sons to join them for dinner.

He was rather irritated to find that none of them had brought a gift, and after the meal, he pulled them aside. "Your all grown men," he said, "and old enough to hear this.

Your mother and I have never been legally married." "What?" snapped one of the sons. "Do you mean to say we're all bastards?" "Yes," snapped the old man, "and cheap ones too."

(Geeves)

ARABIC COMMERCE

A married couple was on holiday in a remote part of the Arab country side. They were touring around the marketplace looking at the goods and such, when they passed a small sandal shop.

From inside they heard a gentleman with an Arabian accent say, "You foreigners! Come in. Come into my humble shop." So the couple walked in and the shopkeeper says to them, "I have some special sandals I think you would be interested in. They have special power. Dey make you wild at sex like a great desert camel." Well, the wife was really interested in buying the sandals after what the shopkeeper claimed, but her husband felt he really didn't need them, being the sex God he was.

The husband asked the man, "How could sandals improve my abilities?" The Arab man replied, "Just try dem on, Saiheeb. The sandals will prove it to you." Well, the husband, after much badgering from his wife, finally conceded to try them on. As soon as he slipped them onto his feet, he got this wild look in his eyes; something his wife hadn't seen in many years: raw sexual power!

In a blink of an eye, the husband grabbed the Arab man, bent him violently over a table, yanked down the man's pants and his own, and grabbed firm hold of the Arabs thighs.

The shopkeeper then began screaming, "YOU HAVE DEM ON DE WRONG FEET!"

(Elaine)

GETTING MARRIED IN HEAVEN

On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St. Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven?

When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left.

The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven?

After yet another month, St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven." "Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?"

St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple. "OH, COME ON!," St. Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"

(Great Oyster Bay News)

Mc GLYNNS HAT

I got to be honest with ya Father, a while back, I misplaced me hat and I really, really love that hat. I know that McGlynn had a hat just like mine and I knew he came to church every Sunday.

I also knew that he had to take off his hat during Mass and figured he would leave it in the back of church. So, I was going to leave after Communion and steal McGlynn's hat."

The priest said, "Well, Murphy, I notice that ya didn't steal McGlynn's hat. What changed ya mind?" Murphy replied, "Well, after I heard ya sermon on the 10 Commandments, I decided that I didn't need to steal McGlynn's hat after all."

With a tear in his eye the priest gave Murphy a big smile and said; "After I talked about 'Thou Shalt Not Steal' ya decided you would rather do without ya hat than burn in Hell?"

Murphy slowly shook his head. "No, Father, after ya talked about 'Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery' I remembered where I left me hat."

(Bob Gray – thanks!)

THE NOOR INAYAT KHAN PROJECT

The Indian Signaler who fought for Britain in WW2

A touring pop-up exhibition has been created about Noor Inayat Khan entitled *Liberte* supported by the British Department of History at Royal Holloway in partnership with Arts Asia and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and developed with the Girl Guiding Association.

Commenting on the project, head of the Department of History. Dr Anna Whitelock said: "We're excited to be providing space for Arts Asia to bring their exhibition to our campus. Inspiring and fascinating stories, such as those of Noor Inayat Khan, are what make studying history so rewarding. Her life and story touches on so many of our areas of interest in the Department of History, such as Asian and women's. history, as well as our research into the Holocaust".

"Working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to raise the profile of this fantastic local historical resource is a privilege."

To view *Liberte*, the digital exhibition on the life of Noor Inayat Khan, visit: artsasia.org/Lintro.aspx

The film relates how Khan went undercover to Paris as a Wireless Operator for xxx Entertainment

In the film *A Call To Spy*, you see her in a WAAF uniform, Pattinson said. "It would have been detailed on her form that she spoke French fluently and that would have come to the attention of SOE."

However, there were major concerns that Khan wasn't suitable. Pattinson added: "There were questions about her loyalty to Britain. because she was Indian - where her loyalty lay; Britain or India".

Despite these doubts, Khan received SOE signals training in 1943, learning how to be a wireless operator behind enemy lines. How to encode and decode messages. This was one of the most dangerous assignments and those in the role had a life expectancy of just six weeks. They were vulnerable because the Germans had vans seeking out radio operators and used triangulation to pinpoint locations of transmissions.

Within 15 minutes of being on air, an operator could be discovered. "They had to operate under extraordinarily tense conditions and quickly transmit a message and then get off air as soon as possible", Pattinson explained.

Eventually, Khan was captured because of an apparent love triangle. She was betrayed by a woman who was in love with another agent. The woman sold Noor's address for 100,000 francs to the Germans. Pattinson said: "She was jealous of Noor and her close relationship with this man."

Khan showed incredible bravery. She was recalled to Britain, but ignored the request as she was the only SOE wireless operator in Paris at that time, so was desperately needed. She felt compelled to remain, despite the fact that the Gestapo knew about her and it was only a matter of time before she was arrested.

When cornered, Khan fought back savagely, biting the SS officer attempting to restrain her so badly that his wrists bled profusely. The agent was kept in chains and in solitary confinement. Even though she was tortured for hours, she refused to reveal any information or betray any colleague.

Khan was sent to Dachau concentration camp where on September 13th 1944 she was shot, aged 30.

It's believed she died with the word "*Liberte*" on her lips.

SELF ISOLATION HUMOUR

- *Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem.
- *I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.
- *I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
- *Still haven't decided where to go for Easter ----- The Living Room or The Bedroom
- *Every few days, try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believing all is well in the kingdom.
- *Home-schooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job.
- *I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to the Twilight Zone
- *This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dogs..... we laughed a lot.
- *So, after this quarantine.....will the producers of My 600 Pound Life just find me or do I call them?
- *Quarantine Day 5: Went to this restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal!? I have no clue how this place is still in business.
- *My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I pee it cleans the toilet.
- *I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?
- *I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to 'Puerto Backyarda''. I'm getting tired of 'Los Livingroom''.
- *Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitizer for good clean fun. (*Bill*)



A well regarded & remembered piece of Sigs "kit" from the 1960's to the 1980's – AN/GRC 25 set

From Sigs FB page

JEAN'S STORY

We'll hear some more about the early days in the Millewa camp later in this article, but there is an intriguing chapter in Jean's life, that up until the mid-1990s, she wasn't able to speak about to anyone.

Jean served with Australian Special Wireless Group (ASWG) in the Australian Army during which she joined in Victoria. in 1942.

The top secret section. originally known as the Australian Special Wireless Section, was moved to Bonegilla in Victoria and on May 18, 1942, it was renamed as the Australian Special Wireless Group with a 'war establishment' of almost 1000 personnel. Most of the new personnel. who included Jean were recruited from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

In time, the ASWG would be relocated to Brisbane, where it remains today.

The function of the ASWG was to intercept enemy wireless transmission and monitor Allied wireless transmissions .

The operating site at Kalinga in Brisbane. was in a tent, surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Some other sites operated in huts and sometimes in trucks.

The operators were usually not aware of the contents of the messages they were receiving or sending. They were trained in Morse code and Japanese operating methods by the experienced personnel who had just returned from the Middle East.

They were assisted by some expert British operators who had escaped out of Singapore. One of the well- known instructors was Regimental Sergeant Major Bill Stevenson. He was affectionately known as 'The Scot'.



It was a very secret group. One batch of recruits for ASWG was told : "Not only do you not exist, you never will have existed.

You will remain for always unknown and unacknowledged . There will be no awards. no glory. There will be no medals for this unit.

Jean in her ASWG uniform in the early 1940's

French “Come-backs”

There was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and Americans, shortly after a coffee break, one of the French engineers came back into the room saying sarcastically 'Have you heard the latest dumb thing Bush has done'. He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims -- What does he intend to do, bomb them?

A Boeing engineer standing nearby replied in a measured tone:

'Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with the capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day, they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh water from sea water each day, and they carry a number of helicopters which can be used in transporting victims and injured to and from their flight deck. We have eleven such ships; how many does France have?'

You could have heard a pin drop.

~~~~~

A Royal Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., England , Canada , Australia and the French Navies.

At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of Officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks when a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, the English learn only English. He then asked, 'Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?'

Without hesitating, the British Admiral replied,

'Maybe it's because the Brit's, Americans, Canadians, Aussie's, and South Africans, arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German.'

*You could have heard a pin drop.*

~~~~~

Robert Whiting, an elderly British gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane.

At French Customs, he took some time to locate his passport in his carry on.

"You have been to France before, monsieur?" - the customs officer asked sarcastically.

Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously.

"Then you should know enough to have your passport ready."

The Englishman replied, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it"

"Impossible -- You English always have to show your passports on arrival in France!"

The English senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look -- then he quietly explained,

"Well, when I came ashore at Gold Beach on D-Day in 1944, to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchmen to show a passport to."

You could have heard a pin drop!

16.

VALE : PETER SAMUEL LOFDAHL

5 Feb 1947 - 24 Feb 2023



Peter was a WA based member residing at Joondalup.

Unfortunately, we had no resume and so have relied on other Associations, interstate, for the following service details.

Peter joined the Army in 1967 and trained at 1 Recruit Training Battalion. He attended the School of Signals for trade training before being posted to 1 Sig Regiment late in 1967.

Peter was re-posted to 110 Sig Sqn in May 1968 and took his discharge a year later.

R. I. P. Peter

CONSTITUTION UPDATES

Some members will recall that we received advice from our former Squadron Captain/2IC John Druery, about our constitution after our 2022 AGM. John resides in Victoria and retains his membership in our Association.

Last year we nearly had to defer the Annual General Meeting due to lack of a quorum. John offered what your Committee considered were sound but reasonably simple amendments which should assist us to overcome any difficulties with quorum issues (and another minor issue), in the future.

The suggestions were examined by your Committee members at the July meeting and the resulting recommended amendments will be put to the 77th AGM to be held in October.

The Committee will publish the details of the changes and the rationale for the proposed quorum amendment for members information prior to the AGM.

We have also taken the opportunity to recommend further minor amendments, unrelated to the quorum issue and again, brief explanations will also be provided for those changes.

REG MALONEY - The Old and the Bold!

A 50's CMF joiner. Enlisted as 8th recruit of the University of Technology Regiment in 1952 (Now University of New South Wales Regiment).

Came to Tassie with Mum and me in 1967. Joined 1RTR. Company Commander and organiser of elements of the Presentation of the Colours in early 1968.

Staff Instructor at 6 Trg Gp at CSTU. Had to retire as a Major at 47 in 1978 as per the law. Rejoined St Virgil's Cadet Corps as a Lieutenant in 1979 to coincide with my service.

He gleefully took the Parade at Barrack Street and advised us how lucky we were to be commanded on Parade by the Army's only Lieutenant Major!

Guided with Owen Winter at the Barracks Museum for 20 years and marched on Anzac Day until 2019. Attended the RAINF dinner about 6 months back.

Ran Student Administration at Uni for 27 years and guided thousands with their Uni degree choices.

Drove and played golf at RHGC for 50 years until 3 months ago when the legs started to give way.

My Dad - 90 years young. *(Phil Maloney - former Lt Troop Comd, 146 Sig Sqn 1987)*