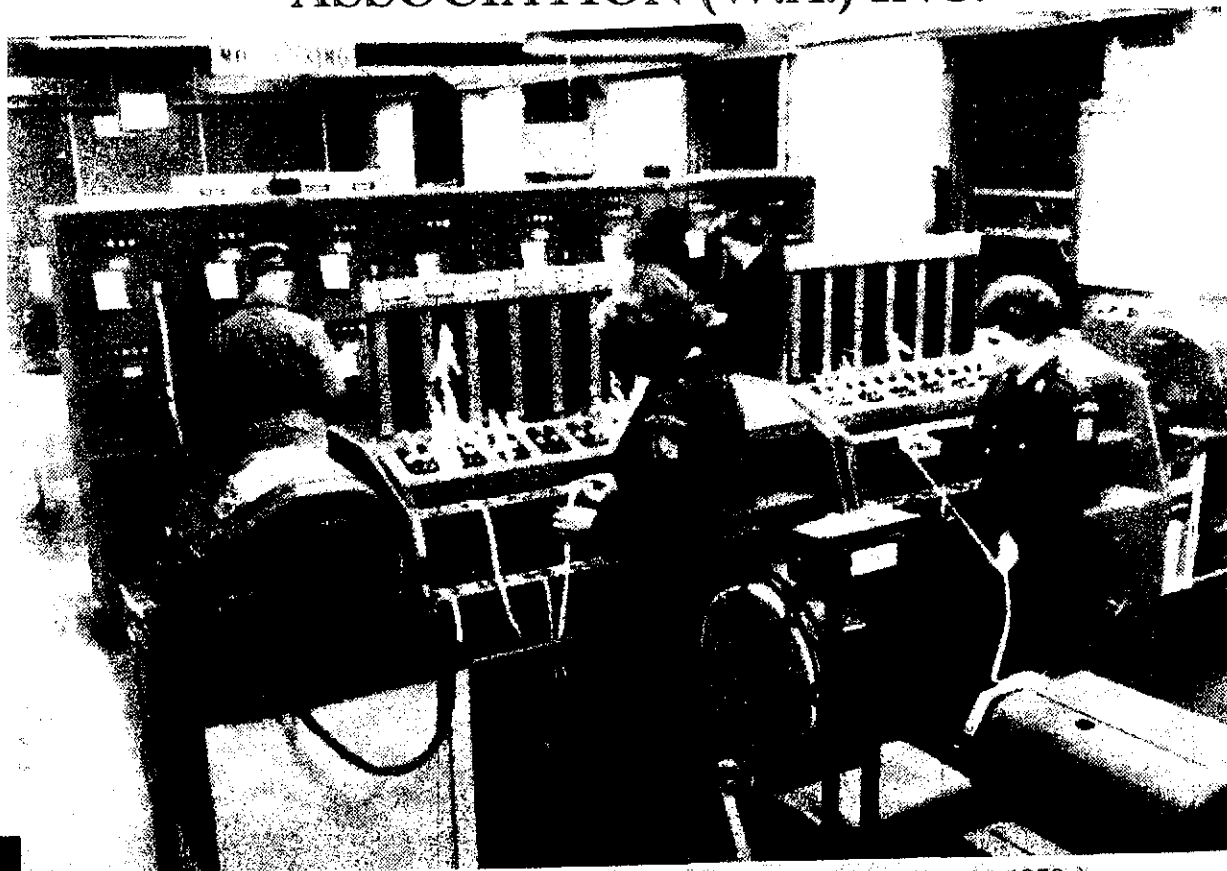


ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (W.A.) INC.



Tape Relay Centre, AHQ Signals Regiment, Grosvenor, Melbourne (c. 1950s)

WAVELENGTH

ANZAC DAY EDITION - 2016

This newsletter is the official journal of the ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (W.A.) INC. Meetings are held on the last Thursday in February, March, June (AGM), August and October at 11.00 a.m. at the Cannington R. & S. L. Wharf Street, Cannington. General enquiries may be directed to the committee members who are listed herein.

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (WA) Inc

PATRON – COLONEL PHILLIP SKELTON AM

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VICE PRESIDENT: Doug Williams 44 Manning Rd Wilson Ph: 9458 6708

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Colonel Michael Brennan

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DISCLAIMER.

Thoughts expressed in articles in WAVELENGTH are those of the writers/contributors and not necessarily those of the Association.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The next Meeting is the Annual General Meeting and it will be held on Thursday, 30th June, 2016, at the Returned & Services League Club, Wharf Street, Cannington, commencing at 11.00 a.m. A light luncheon will follow the meeting and we would like to see as many members as possible to attend.

Presidents Report

SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Please note that on Thursday 30th June. 2016 we will be holding our Annual General Meeting at the Cannington R. S. & L. Wharf Street Cannington, commencing at 11-00 a.m. This A.G.M. will be the most important A.G.M. for many years as both our Secretary/ Treasurer and our Vice-President along with myself will be stepping down.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Brian Macauley has not enjoyed the best of health for some years now but has continued to soldier on, but now he has reached the stage where he needs a brake. Our Vice-President Doug has other challenges which he would like to achieve. As for myself, I have been President for 23 years and I reckon that it is time to step down as it time to look after Cathy for awhile.

Now the situation is that we have at least four Members, who will need to step forward, or we will fold as an Association, which we would not like to see, but Brian, Doug and I are stepping down and will not change our minds. The task does not require much of your time, just a few hours a month.

We will help our replacements out where we can, and then we can step back. We will also need a Newsletter Editor.

Please do not let our Association fold. We must have the Members who can help us, don't leave it until it is too late.

A.N.Z.A.C. Day Arrangements

First the March, this year the Signals contingent will form up at the corner of Barrack Street and St. Georges Terrace in the Army Section "E ". Please note that this year's March will commence at 09-00 a.m. I have taken the liberty of copying the route of the March for you.

Now the Annual A.N.Z.A.C. Day Reunion.

This will once again be held at Irwin Barracks, commencing after the March. As in the past three years you will Need A Visitor's Pass. Remember NO Pass NO Entrance. All you have to do is to contact myself or Cathy on 9305 – 1303 No later than 1900 hrs (07-00pm) on Wednesday 20th April, 2016. Don't forget Family and Friends are most welcome to join us at the March and Reunion. Of course we will be holding our annual Monster Raffle with some outstanding prizes, so come along and have some fun and enjoyment, lunch will be available, and I look forward to seeing you on the day.

Honorary Life Membership.

I am very pleased to announce that our Honorary Colonel for the central region (W.A. and S.A.) Colonel Michael Brennan has been awarded an Honorary Life Membership to the Royal Australian Signals Association. Michael we are sure was born with a Morse key in his hand. Since Michael was appointed to the position of Honorary Colonel, he has been a staunch supporter of the W. A. and S.A. Branches as well as the Signals Units. We have always found him to be available to discuss and advise on any matters.

Michael is a very worthy recipient and besides his wife (Irene) and family there is one of nature's gentleman who lives in Beaumaris, Victoria who will also be pleased with Michael's award.

KOKODA LINESMEN.

Once again our Major Graham Donley.RDF (Ret).has had another Signals book produced, this time it is the story of some of the Australian Corps Of Signals Units in the south west pacific area during World War 2, 1939 to 1945.The book is taken from the draft prepared by L/Cpl Cecil Jeffery Sainsbury, Sgt. Guy Bowra Senior and other Signallers.

It is an easy and enjoyable book to read and fills a gap in our Corps proud history and is a lesson for our current Members of our Corps. If you have a story about our proud Corps have it printed now, don't wait until we are all passed over, like we are still waiting for volume 3 of our Signals Corps history and the corrections to volume 1. It would appear that the powers that be have their own agenda and that does not include acknowledging our Corps proud history for all past and present Signallers to learn from.

This interesting book is available at the very affordable cost of \$25-00 plus postage, but if you are attending our ANZAC Day Reunion you can purchase a copy and we won't charge you for postage, but this offer is for ANZAC Day only.

SICK PARADE.

I am sorry to report that our past Secretary W.O.2 Bert (the blow fly) has not been in the best of health lately, but is starting to make a recovery now and there is no truth in the rumour that he is chasing all the female nurses that attend to his needs. We all wish Bert a speedy recovery and a thank you to his lovely wife Lois who is doing a great job looking after Bert.

Our current Secretary/Treasurer Brian Macauley also a W.O.2. is not in the best of health also and although he, like Bert have been suffering from ill health for some time now, he has managed to keep on top of all the Association paper warfare. We would also like to thank Brian's wife Avis for doing such a great nursing job.

Should there be anyone else who is not feeling the best, we send our best wishes to you and hope that you are up and about very soon.

Well that is about all the news for now, but please don't forget to make sure that you contact Cathy or myself to make sure that your name and whoever else that you are bringing to 109 Signal Squadron at Irwin Barracks on ANZAC Day is on our list before we send it to 109. Cathy and I would like to enjoy the reunion and not be standing at the main gate checking names off.

Also please remember that all the money raised from the Raffles goes to cover the cost of running the Association for the next twelve months. See you on ANZAC Day.

Kindest regards
Peter.

CAN YOU HELP? NEWS 59

KOKODA LINESMEN

WWII HISTORY: Kokoda Linesmen – the stories of some of the Australian Corps of Signals Units in the South West Pacific Area during World War II, 1939-1945, is now available. The manuscript was edited

by Major Graham Donley, RD, (Ret'd) and produced by the Royal Australian Signals Association (WA). Cec Sainsbury's draft was prepared with the assistance of a number of former World War II Signals personnel and tells of their service from initial enlistment, training in Melville Camp and on to Albany, Darwin, Rottneest, Garden Island and the South West Pacific areas of Papua New Guinea and Borneo. During this service, the men were instrumental in helping to erect and maintain the lines over the rugged Owen Stanley Range. Cost: \$25 (plus postage \$10). 100 pages. Contact: Les Emery, Post Office Box 1003, Booragoon, WA, 6954. Tel. 0407 190 860. Email:

see@bigpond.com.

the west . com . au



Linesman: In 1994, the late Cecil Sainsbury (pictured here as a young Lance-Cpl in World War II) presented a draft manuscript to the Royal Australian Signals Association (WA). It was forwarded to the Corps museum and later used to prepare a big display board of the line work in the South West Pacific area. In 2015 the manuscript was again brought to the association resulting in a book, *Kokoda Linesmen*. See main column for details.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I wish to draw your attention to that the Annual General Meeting of this Association which, will be held on Thursday, 30th June, 2016 at the Cannington/Victoria Park R. & S. L. Wharf Street, Cannington, commencing at 11.00 a.m. Your Committee would like to see as many of our members as possible in attendance to show your support for the work undertaken by your volunteer Committee Members. You can be assured that your presence will be appreciated along with any suggestions you may wish to put forward to enhance our Association. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

A hot lunch will be available follow the meeting at \$5.00 per head.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 30TH JUNE, 2016.

AGENDA.

The Agenda of the AGM shall be:-

1. Confirm the minutes of the previous A.G.M.
2. The presentation and acceptance of the audited financial statement of the Association.
3. The presentation and acceptance of the President's Report.
4. Confirm the minutes of the previous General Meeting.
5. Correspondence and General Business.
6. Verifications of Subscriptions.
7. Election of Committee.

COMMITTEE.

The Committee of the Association shall consist of

President

Vice President

Immediate Past President

Honorary Secretary

Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Editor and a minimum of six other members.

~ ANZAC DAY PROVISIONAL ORDER OF MARCH ~

MONDAY, 25 APRIL 2016

- 1 Defence Raps (RAN, Army, RAAF)
Mounted Police

DEFENCE FORCES CONTINGENT

RAN Band – WA Detachment
Royal Australian Navy
Australian Army Band Perth
Australian Army
Trinity College Pipes and Drums and Coastal Scottish Pipe Band
Royal Australian Air Force
Republic of Singapore Airforce
Floreat Park Salvation Army Band
Australian Navy Cadets
Australian Army Cadets
7 Wing Air Force Cadet Drum Corps
7 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets
WA Police Pipe Band
WA Police
Police Rangers
WA Fire & Emergency Services Concert Band
Department of Fire & Emergency Services
Fire & Emergency Services Cadet Corps

EX-SERVICE CONTINGENT

- A Town Of Victoria Park Brass Band**
State Presidents' of RSL, Naval Assoc, RAAF Assoc, & Perth Legacy of WA
10 x Australian National Flags
10 x New Zealand National Flags
WW1 Banners & Victoria Cross Recipient

- Banners – Escorted by Westralian Great War Living History Assoc
Legacy Wards
War Widows Guild
2 Jeeps
3 Veteran Carrying Cars

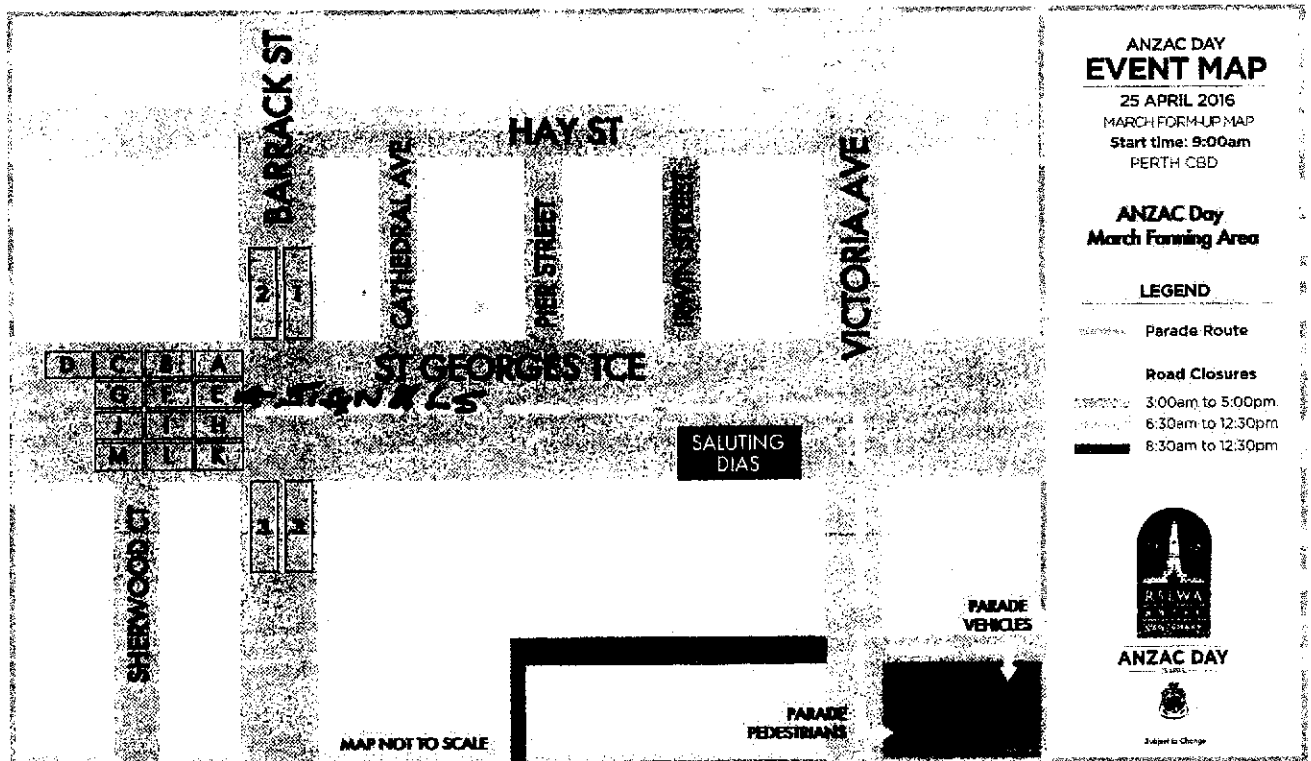
NAVAL SECTION

- B Perth Fortress Salvation Army Band**
Naval Assoc of Aust (WA) Section State Executive
Naval Assoc (City of Perth Sub-Section)
Fleet Air Arm Assoc of Aust WA Division
HMAS Perth National Assoc
HMAS Brisbane Assoc
HMAS Hobart Assoc
Scotch College Pipe Band
HMAS Sydney Assoc
RAN WWII Heavy Cruisers (HMAS Canberra Assoc, HMAS Australia Assoc, HMAS Shropshire Assoc)
RAN Communications Branch Assoc
'N' Class Destroyers Assoc
Tribal Class Destroyers Assoc
(HMAS Arunta, HMAS Warramunga, HMAS Bataan)
C Perth Metro Pipe Band
RAN Clearance Divers Assoc
Far East Strategic Reserve (Navy) Assoc
Vietnam Logistics Support Veterans Assoc (incl HMAS Sydney II)

- Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships Assoc
Tingira Association
WRANS-RAN Women's Association WA

ARMY SECTION

- D The Royal Agricultural Society Of WA Brass Band**
6th Aust Division Cavalry Regiment Assoc (WA)
Royal Australian Armoured Corps Assoc (WA Branch)
1st Armoured Regiment Assoc
3rd Cavalry Regiment Assoc
Royal Australian Armoured Corps Vietnam Veterans Assoc
Royal Australian Artillery Assoc of WA
Churchlands Senior High School Band 1
101 Field Battery Assoc
102 Field Battery Assoc
104 Field Battery Assoc
2/7th Field Regiment Artillery Assoc
116 Light AA Assoc
2/3rd Aust Composite AA Regiment Assoc
RAE Ex-Servicemen's Assoc (Engineer Units)
Royal Australian Survey Corps Assoc
E Churchlands Senior High School Band 2
Royal Australian Signals Assoc
2/11th AIF Battalion Assoc
2/16th AIF Battalion Assoc
2/26th AIF Battalion Assoc
51 ACU Swan Regiment Drums & Pipes
2/28th Battalion & 24th Anti Tank Coy Assoc



PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY:



BOOK "KOKODA LINESMEN"

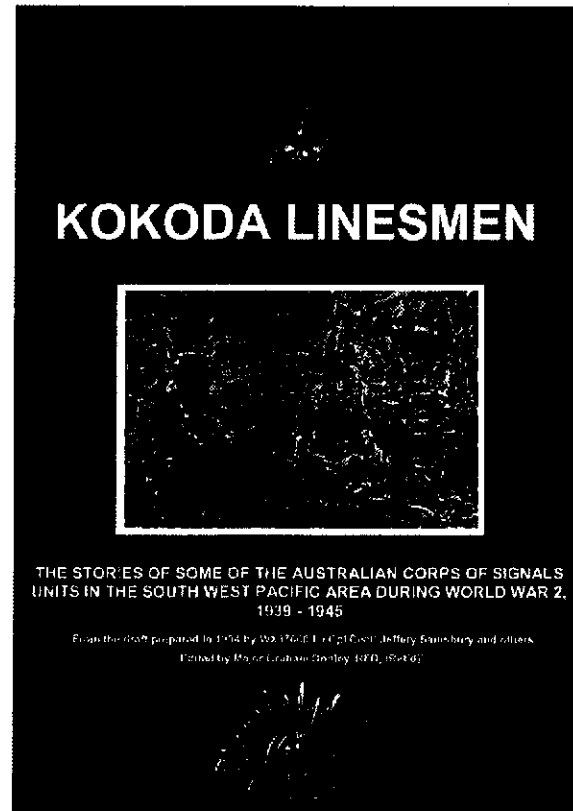
In 1994, the late Cec Sainsbury presented a draft manuscript to the Royal Australian Signals Association W A (Inc) which was forwarded to the Corps Museum. It had been prepared with the assistance of a number of former World War 2 Signals personnel and spoke of their service from initial enlistment, training in Melville Camp and on to Albany, Darwin, Rottneest, Garden Island and the South West Pacific Areas of Papua New Guinea and Borneo. During this service they were instrumental in helping to erect and maintain the lines over the rugged Owen Stanley Range. This manuscript was used by the Corps Museum to prepare a large display board of the line work carried out in the South West Pacific Area during World War 2.

In 2015, this draft manuscript was again brought to the Association, this time by Guy Bowra Junior who had located it among his late father's effects – Guy Senior was a member of the Association and one of the former World War 2 Signalmen who had worked on the original draft.

From this draft manuscript, a book has been produced in a dedication to these past Signalmen and the work that they did in their service to Australia. It is available for purchase from the Association at the cost of \$25.00 plus postage \$10.00.

As well as the military aspects, it takes us back to when Melville was *"way out in the sticks and just black sand and flies"*; Balcombe in Victoria, Rottneest Island and Garden Island among others get the same treatment. It is a good read as well as a history lesson and a walk in the past.

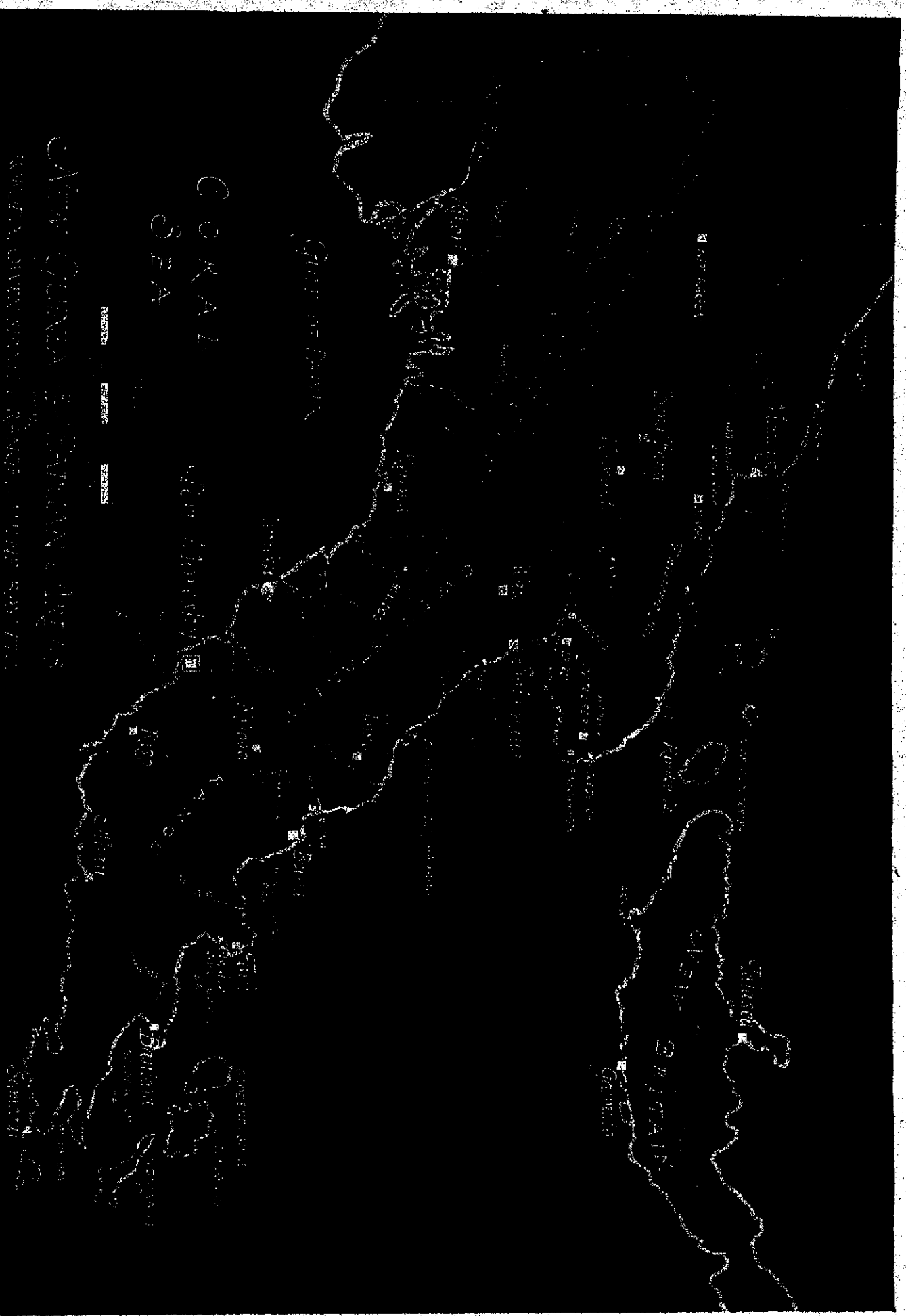
Orders for this book can be made to Les Emery, an Association member who worked on the production of the book and is handling the sales on behalf of the Association. Les can be contacted on 0407190860 or at lsee@bigpond.com



NEW GUINEA - BAWAN & DEAS
KORUVA OVER SEVEN RANGES, 1900-1901

RECEIVED - 17/1/1901 - 1901/1902

C O K A L
O E A



CORPS SIGNALS

—MARK I—NEW GUINEA VERSION

SIGNALS 1 Aust. Corps, commanded by Lt-Col. L. J. Wellman, said farewell to Adelaide on the 17th of April 1942 when the advance party left by road for Queensland. The main body followed the next day. The ultimate destination was Esk, the area of the new H.Q. 1 Aust. Corps, where reorganising, re-equipping and further training were the rules of the day.

Early in August, embarkation was once more in the air and on the 10th of August the advance party of five officers and seventy-eight men boarded their transport. Two days later the main body followed and the whole unit was destined for New Guinea.

At 0900 hours on the 18th of August, a small Signals Office came into operation at the foot of Horsley's Gap, a few miles from Moresby. It was manned by the advance party of Signals 1 Aust. Corps who had arrived in New Guinea the day before, together with the advance party of what was later to become New Guinea Force H.Q. This was to become the largest Signals Office in any A.I.F. operational area, spreading its tentacles from north to south and from east to west with wireless, line, D.R.L.S., and air communications.

The primary tasks were to establish communications with both 7 Aust. Div., which was going over the Owen Stanleys, and our forces at Milne Bay. The Signals Office was established in a tent with the switchboard in a slit trench. Communication to the 7th Division was by means of the main line strung precariously over the Kokoda Trail by the division's linemen.

On the 25th of August telegraphic communication was established with 7 Aust. Div. through a Signals Office at Bisiatabu by means of a D.III line left behind by the

division. It was decided to supplement this by a D.VIII cable. Arrangements were made for appropriate cable to be dropped from the air at Nauro, Menari, Efogi and Myola, but only eight out of the fifty-two drums dropped were recovered. Eventually a fullerphone was installed at Myola working to base forty-five miles back.

The story of that link is one of men toiling through trackless country, incessant rain, of climbing up and down steep mountain sides, across rivers and down dense gullies, only to see their work destroyed by lightning and broken down by trees hurled over in the fury of tropical storms. In one day alone 400 yards of cable were burnt to white ash.

A heavier line was built over the seventeen miles from Bisiatabu to a point one mile on the other side of Imita Ridge. The job was finished eight days after commencement and in that time the barrow drums had to be dragged through mud eighteen inches deep and the cable then had to be laid with the aid of sticks thrust through the drums.

While work on the line was going ahead, a D.R.L.S. was being conducted from the various test points, native police boys being used as D.Rs. The operators were on the job for eighteen and twenty hours each day.

During September, the 2/2nd Line Section maintained lines over the twenty-five miles between Rouna Pass and Owers' Corner. A 200-lb. copper pair was added to the existing line from Bisiatabu back to 17 Mile and a permanent line of 200-lb. copper was built from Bisiatabu forward to Ilolo. Late in October work was started on a 200-lb. galvanised-iron wire which was tree-slung from Ilolo forward. The A.A.S.C's "flying

SIGNALS

fox" at Owers' Corner and a jeep in the Goldie River Valley both came in handy on this task.

When the "flying fox" broke and the Goldie River bridge was destroyed, one hundred natives carried wire, insulators and rations from Owers' Corner. A party of 400 native stretcher bearers on their way forward were used to carry stores, but they were new recruits and thought that insulators were valueless stones so they dropped 260 of them in the jungle together with two and a half miles of wire. Some of the wire was found later but the insulators had to be marked off strength.

It was decided that the 2/3rd Line Section would start working from Kokoda back towards the line creeping out from N.G.F. H.Q. A detachment was flown to Kokoda and started to work on the wiring of the Signals Office there. The track party arrived on the 27th of November and this party began to work back to meet the galvanised-iron line from the south.

Clearing the jungle was a Herculean task. Sometimes ten trees would have to be felled before the right one would fall. After weeks of chopping, the axes lost their edges and files had to be obtained. Christmas Day was spent in sharpening the axes.

In thirty-one days the line was connected with the galvanised-iron wire coming from N.G.F. and Kokoda was in direct communication with Moresby by a solid and reliable line.

It was not long after that malaria began to make itself felt and in twelve days the strength of one line party was reduced by fifty per cent. For months the men of the line parties had worked under heart-breaking conditions and were physically exhausted. They had the knowledge that, despite the fact that their efforts had been buried in the obscurity of the jungle, they had been responsible for uninterrupted communications to the fight-

ing men in the forward areas. Still, it was with a sigh of relief that they handed over to Signals New Guinea L. of C. and returned to Moresby on the 19th of February 1943.

While the line was being built over the ranges, the Signals Office at Horsley's Gap daily grew bigger. Detachments were sent to Kokoda and Wairope. On the 17th of November 1942, a composite line and wireless detachment under Capt. Kennedy set sail, ready to take over at Buna when it fell. The plan did not eventuate and the party returned to Moresby.

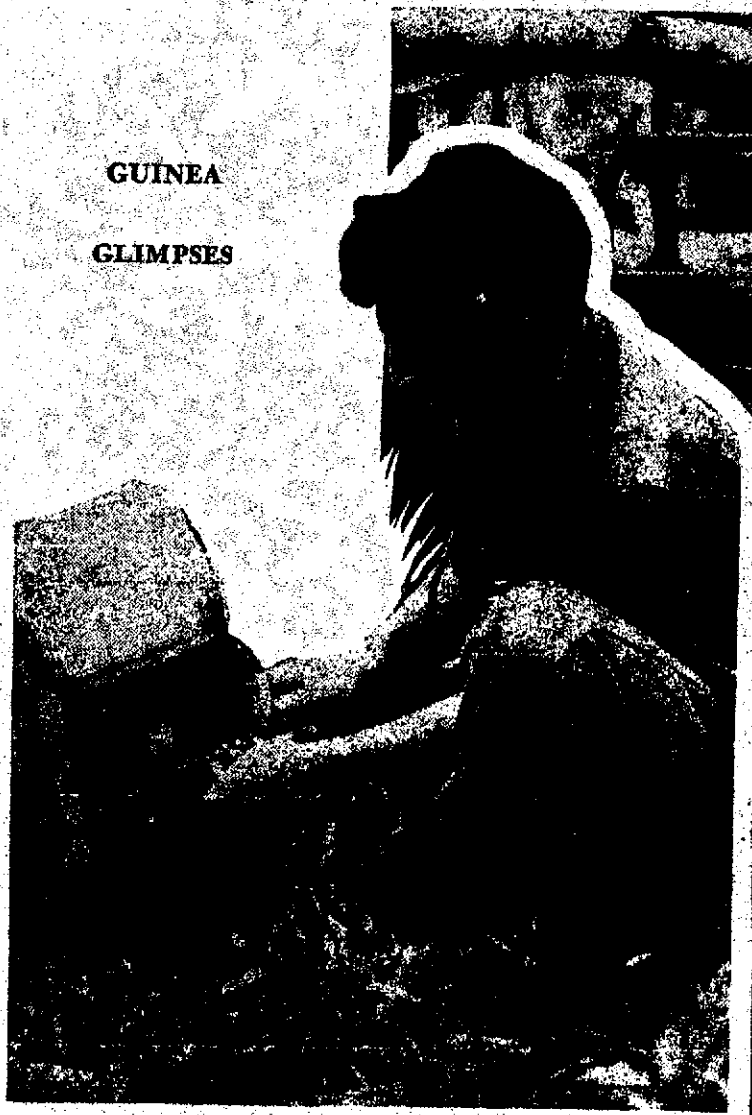
On the 29th of November, Capt. McKeon left Kokoda with five operators and walked to Popenetta, a trip that took five days. Three weeks later Advance N.G.F. H.Q. decided to move to Dobodura. At an appointed hour the Signals Office at Popenetta was dismantled and one line from Operations was left working to 7 Aust. Div. and the fullerphone was left through to Moresby and 7 Aust. Div. In pouring rain, equipment was piled on to the jeeps and taken to the airstrip. Then it was decided that it was too wet to move and everything had to be taken back and re-installed. The Signals Office was working again within an hour and a half.

The following morning the move really took place. Some flew over but the main party walked. It took them thirteen hours to walk twenty-five miles while those who flew got there in six minutes.

The Signals Office was similar to that at Popenetta. Despatch riders, when not on foot, struggled along the kunai tracks on push bikes. One D.R. was ordered to deliver a secret despatch personally to an officer at the H.Q. of an American division which had recently moved into the area. The D.R. had to cross a river, so he left his clothes on one side and swam across clad only in his hat and belt with pistol attached.



GUINEA
GLIMPSES



Operator in com
with forward pa
(above) while a 5
technician supervis
battery-charging
Above: Entrance to
Milne Bay Ceme
and (left) the Am
can portion of a p
ade at an Allied Sig
school in New Guin

CORPS SIGNALS—NEW GUINEA

Dressed like this, he calmly delivered the despatch to a slightly incredulous officer.

Once the Sambogi Creek flooded, rose seven or eight feet in two hours and carried away the entire trunk line system, in addition to bridges and trees. One man tied twine around his waist and swam the swollen torrent pulling the end of the broken cable across. In spite of this and similar troubles the record transmission of a message from Moresby to Dobodura was created when a message was sent from Dobodura, received at Kokoda and re-transmitted to Moresby in four minutes. While one operator at Kokoda was receiving, another was looking over his shoulder, transmitting at the same time. Not quite in accordance with *Vol. V* but it was a high priority message. The unit functioned at Dobodura until February 1943 when the Americans took over.

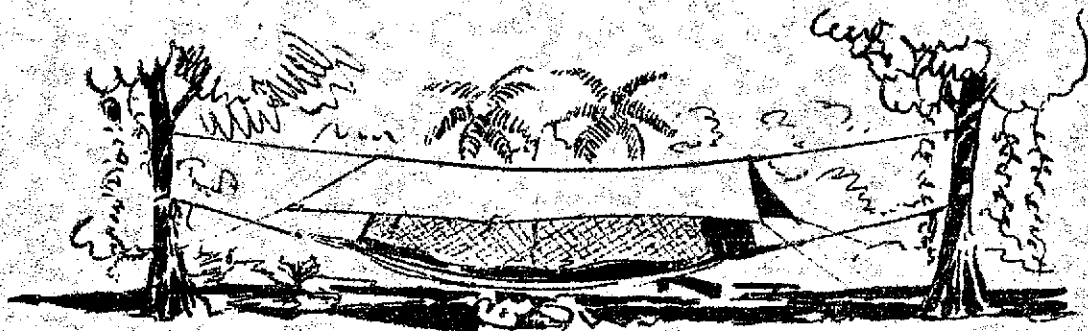
When the detachments returned to Moresby they did not recognise the Signals Office. It had grown from one switchboard with three subscribers to a large grass-roofed building in which the operators handled forty-four trunk lines and 174 local lines. On the Morse channels, both line and wireless, as many as 50,000 groups were sent in a day. The wireless system had grown to embrace all parts of the peninsula and went as far back as the mainland. In addition, an air-letter service operated to a time table, weather permitting,

and a Signals courier accompanied the despatches.

Some members of the unit encountered unusual duties. It fell to the lot of a wireless detachment to accompany an independent company on a reconnaissance of a new track leading from Rigo through to Kokoda. Despite new and hazardous country and terrific atmospheric conditions, communications were maintained with H.Q.

By March the entire unit was concentrated at Moresby, enjoying dry weather and normal sunshine as a relief from the fetid conditions of the mountains. In April an air raid took place in which an estimated number of one hundred enemy planes participated. Bombs fell into a B.I.P.O.D. area and set fire to a dump of petrol. Volunteers were called for and members of the unit flocked to the scene and gave valuable help in moving hundreds of drums of precious fuel to safety. It was a farewell gesture to New Guinea because the entire unit was reassembled back in Australia and on leave shortly afterwards.

Preparation was necessary for future campaigns. The health of the unit had suffered. Over 230 men had contracted malaria. The rehabilitation and re-equipping of this much experienced unit is now complete and everyone waits with confidence for the next engagement.





Above: The suspension bridge across the river which flows through the N.G.F. School of Signals—a popular spot after classes. *Below:* An underground exchange at a northern battle station.



"B" CORPS SIGNALS IN NEW GUINEA

FROM a humble beginning in a North Sydney drill hall in 1936, "B" Aust. Corps Signals moved to New Guinea in June 1943 to play a vital part in providing communications for the divisions which did so much towards sweeping the Japanese out of Salamaua, the Huon Peninsula, the Ramu Valley and their northern strongholds on the island.

The unit was formed in 1936 and based at the Carlow Street drill hall, North Sydney. The original commander was Major L. J. Wellman who remained in command until the outbreak of war when the unit expanded into Eastern Command Signals. Long periods of training followed until early in 1942 when 2 Aust. Corps came into existence. "B" Aust. Corps Signals served the H.Q. of this formation at its various locations.

In June "B" Aust. Corps Signals sailed for New Guinea under the command of Lt-Col. H. L. Moulds. The position in the S.W.P.A. at this time gave promise of victories to come. The Japanese had been forced back over the Owen Stanley Range to beyond the Sanananda-Buna area. The first successful steps in the Salamaua campaign had been taken. However, the Japanese were still firmly entrenched in the Huon Peninsula and beyond. In August, the unit was flown to Dobodura and at first attached to 1 Aust. Corps until the arrival of its parent body. The area was frequently swamped by rain water in a matter of five minutes. At other times the atmosphere was muggy and oppressive. Hardly a single member of the unit escaped some sort of physical trouble—skin

rashes, dengue fever, yellow jaundice, malaria or scrub typhus.

Capt. Elkin, O.C. of a line section, paid the supreme sacrifice while on the job. His section was engaged in laying a line from Dobodura to Morobe. It would be difficult to exaggerate the tiring nature of the work and the physical fatigue it caused. Capt. Elkin underestimated the extent of an illness he had contracted. He overtaxed his strength and died of scrub typhus. In so doing, he upheld the finest tradition of Signals. Very few men saw the line right through. Eventually it was completed but only after heavy casualties from sickness.

At the end of September, an advance party from the unit moved by barge to Lae. The purpose of this move was to establish closer contact with the 7th Division in the Ramu Valley and the 9th Division advancing up the Huon Peninsula. For the next three months, "B" Aust. Corps Signals handled heavy wireless traffic to the fighting divisions. A link was also established to the United States First Air Task Force, ensuring close co-operation between the ground and air forces.

As the Huon Peninsula campaign drove the Japanese northward, Corps H.Q. was moved to Finschhafen. A line was constructed forward to the 9th Division, which was subsequently relieved by the 5th Division at Sio.

At no stage was "B" Aust. Corps Signals operating as a whole unit. A plague of dengue fever swept through the various sections at Katika. Already diminished in

SIGNALS

strength, they had to function with a majority of their personnel incapacitated by illness. Despite this fact, Signals communications were never impaired at any stage.

Another important task undertaken during this period was the laying of line communications in the Markham Valley. Under tropical conditions this type of work involved exceptional difficulty. The op-

pressive heat, hilly country, dense jungle and transport difficulties all combined to make the linemen's job an unenviable one. In addition, vital communications were established with the Sixth U.S. Army. By efficiently performing all duties, "B" Aust. Corps Signals have in some measure discharged part of the debt which civilization owes to those who will never return.



"How many more times must I tell you——
more wrist movement with those dits!"