

NOTICE TO MARINERS

Newsletter of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn

Patron: Colonel K.L. Duncan (Rtd)

President's Message

It seems that sadly with every on the deaths of our comrades. In Annie Gunn and Ivan Cullen.

Dave's passing was the result of a that Charlie Bawden died of contact with asbestos, three years exposed to asbestos on ships LSMs and the John Monash. It is not show up until long after being infected with it – sometimes 30 or 40 years. I urge all our members to look at the article in this issue about the Defence Monitoring Group and its free examination for asbestos related diseases.



newsletter we publish we report this edition it is Dave Perham,

form of asbestosis. I also recall emphysema, probably from ago. Nearly all of us were because it was present on the an insidious disease that does

We have just been notified of the death of Jeff Beach. He had leukaemia and passed away on 25 October 2010. The family had a private funeral service. I am saddened with Jeff's passing as in 1965 we attended the MEIII course under Bob Metcalfe at Chowder Bay. We were part of the original delivery crew of AS John Monash and also sailed on its first voyage to P.N.G. Further details will be provided in the next newsletter.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Australian Engineers. On Saturday 13 November 2010 there will be an official opening of an exhibition at the RAE Museum at SME. There is a poster providing details in this edition but unfortunately it may be too late to respond to it because of the time taken to distribute the newsletter. However, we will email or post the notice to Sydney members.

I received a very nice letter from Wal Blumenfeld and I wish to share a paragraph with you – 'Alf Smith sailed with me on both the Clive Steele in 1968 and the Brudenell White in 1970, both tours in South Vietnam. We actually had RAA gunners from the 16 AD Regiment on board in 1970 to give them a chance to get their war service. As they had no experience with the M2 Browning .50 caliber machine gun it was with great satisfaction to us all when Alf had to instruct them in their use as a sapper corporal. Alf was a great seaman and soldier and again I was sorry to read about his passing.'

Ocka

JAMAIS ETRE REMORQUE



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SUPPORT TO LEGACY

Phil Cameron OAM, our Auditor (and member), is a member of Sydney Legacy. He recently advised us that Legacy operates a Holiday House at Moss Vale in the Southern Highlands of NSW for mothers and children for periodic holidays. One such holiday is conducted during the September/October school holidays when they invite mothers and children (Junior Legatees) to participate in a five day holiday. There are two periods; mothers with children over 13 years old visit in the first week of the holidays, and mothers with children under 13 visit during the second week. In the last two years pregnant mothers also attended.

The staff at Moss Vale Holiday House provides motel style accommodation, room service, all meals and five acres of pleasant grounds for the juniors to play and the mothers to relax and talk. It provides a great setting for them to catch up with each other and to welcome new mothers to the group.

Legatees and volunteers undertake a wide range of activities for the Junior Legatees, and the mothers are provided with a “gentle pace” range of activities, including a pampering session and High Tea at the “Carrington”, an historic guesthouse at Bowral.

Junior activities cover such things as outdoor confidence building events, laser skirmishes, surf swimming at Wollongong, Science Museum, indoor rock climbing, Bradman Museum, golf driving range for the older juniors and putt putt golf for the younger ones, swimming in an indoor heated pool, and visit to the tulip festival for the girls.

The mothers undertake, in addition to the pampering and High Tea, such things as pottery creations, ocean swimming and the inevitable shopping spree.

In previous years mothers have been provided a bag of “goodies” donated by a business house. Unfortunately that organization is unable to continue that practice. Phil asked if our Association could help in any way. He suggested a gift voucher for the mothers may be suitable. Our Committee agreed with this and the Association has presented a cheque for \$1000 to Legacy to provide a \$50 gift voucher at Myers stores for the 20 mothers who will attend the Holiday House in the September/October school holidays. This amount was largely achieved from the sale of Dave Perham’s book, “Rolling Through 32”. Our Association has previously donated \$500 to Legacy from book sales. It is Dave’s wish that profits go to Legacy and we share his request.

Phil said that it was regrettable that the number of deceased veterans post Vietnam was on the rise. At the time of their death they often leave young families and Legacy attempts to provide the role of the father to these families. As yet Legacy has not experienced the death of a female veteran who leaves a family.



VALE – DAVID KEITH PERHAM

10 December 1943 – 19 September 2010

Dave Perham passed away on 19 September 2010 after a prolonged form of asbestosis. About three years ago he was diagnosed with this insidious disease and had a portion of a lung removed. He appeared to be OK for a long time but the illness returned with devastating effects. After a short stay in the Selangor –Nambour Hospital he returned home to Bella Creek to be with his family.

His funeral service was at Nambour on 23 September 2010. Over 120 people attended, including 24 from our Association and ex members of 32. Eulogies were given by Dave's daughters, Kathryn and Jeanette, his brother, John, and a friend, Graham Henderson. Bruce Reilly also gave a good talk about Dave's Army life.

John talked about Dave's early life growing up in Queensland where they both had tough upbringings brought about by their father who was a bit of a disciplinarian to say the least. Kathryn and Jeanette outlined their family life with loving parents and talked about the long periods Dave was away and how happy they were when he was back with them.

Bruce discussed Dave's Army life and the years after it. His eulogy is edited for space reasons but the thrust of it is as follows:

“Dave had just finished doing marine fitters apprenticeship in Brisbane in 1962 when he saw an Army LSM berthed on the Brisbane River. He went aboard and was introduced to the 2nd Engineer who showed him around the engine room. This was the launching pad of Dave's Army career. He enlisted, was allocated to RAE and his first posting after recruit and FE3 training was to 32 aboard *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee*. He subsequently served on all four LSMs and the cargo ship *AS3051 John Monash*. He saw extensive service in Vietnam, Papua New Guinea and Australian coastal waters.

Dave was a competent engineer, committed, focused and passionate in his job. Nothing was too much trouble and he worked until the job was done, without complaint and with a very positive attitude which rubbed off on those he worked with. He could fix anything on board from an engine to a tape recorder, the cantankerous stern anchor winch, outboard motors, the cook's mixers and bread makers, the bow doors and even the dreaded washing machine.

Dave was in the Army for only six years. He saw that the end of Army water transport was looming, with the Navy taking over all blue water military shipping, and decided to pull the pin. His last posting was a marine engineering instructor at the Transportation Centre.

The next I heard of Dave was when he was Chief Engineer on a small ore carrier in PNG. I was heading off to do the Kokoda Trail and sailed down river with him. Not long after that in 1999 he decided to hang up his ear muffs and have some fun on a farm. He and Merle did just that by moving from Cooroy purchasing a 150 acre property at Bella Creek.” You summed up Dave's career very well Bruce.



It could be said that Dave Perham was singularly instrumental in bringing 32 Small Ship Squadron back to life nearly 30 years after its disbandment. He achieved this in two ways. Firstly he, along with his wife, Merle, and Bob and Annie Gunn, conceived the idea of a water transport reunion in Ballarat. They thought that reunions such as this would help bring old comrades together who may have lost touch with their mates over the years. After the Ballarat event reunions have been held in Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and Albury, with Hobart being the venue in 2011. A smaller reunion will take place in Wangi Wangi NSW in mid October this year (by the time this newsletter is out it would have been held). These events have been very successful and because of them we have recruited many new members to the Association.

Secondly, Dave put a book together. About ten years ago he and a few ex 32 mates talked about getting some photos and stories of other ex 32 types and making some sort of photo album. Well, that was a bit of an understatement. As you are aware, the photo album turned into a 218 page hard covered book that depicted the living and working conditions on the ships of the Squadron. The response he got when he asked for information, stories, memorabilia and photos was overwhelming. Just about everyone in the Association put in their two bobs worth. The book was launched on ANZAC Day 2008 at Hunters Hill RSL Memorial Hall and of the 600 books printed we only have a couple left. Again, a lot more new members resulted from the book sales.

These two events – the reunions and the book gave us a great deal of publicity, not only in the Army and ex Army unit associations but also in the general community. We all know that the Army generally, and to some extent our Corps did not realize we were part of the green machine until three things occurred. One was the 40th anniversary of the deployment of RAE to Vietnam when 32 Small Ship Squadron received a lot of publicity about its involvement. The second was the publishing of Brigadier Phil Greville's Volume Four of the Corps History, and the third was Dave Perham's "Rolling Through 32".

When we decided to publish the book we had a lot of support from the Corps including the RAE Corps Committee and the RAE Foundation. This put the unit back on the map and with its publication 32 is now pretty well known in the Army and ex Army unit associations (notice the article in this newsletter about the RAE 75th Anniversary at SME this year. 32 gets a mention).

After the funeral service a get-together took place at Nambour RSL Club. It was a good gathering under the circumstances. A lot of stories were told over a few quiet ones and friendships renewed. Dave would have enjoyed it.

Association members and ex 32 members included: John and Carrol Spindler, Geoff Summergreene, Rod and Sue Cook, George Cosis, Allan Hyde, Alan White, Ross McMurray, Arthur Jackson, John Purcell, Bruce Reilly, Bob and Annie Gunn, Dave Jupp, Dave Thomas, Dazz Graney, Phil Cannane, Bruce and Audrey Pattison, George Stubbs, Bob Bailey, Tony and Dal Harris and Les McFadzen. I know there were a few more ex 32 there but I didn't get their names. My apologies. Let me know and I'll fix it in the next newsletter.





Bruce Reilly, Alan White, Allan Hyde, George Cosis, Ross McMurray



Bob Bailey, Bob Gunn





Arthur Jackson, Bob Gunn, John Purcell



Les McFadzen, Dave Thomas, Daz Graney, Ross McMurray





Bob Gunn, Geoff Summergreene, John Purcell



George Stubbs, Bruce and Audrey Pattison



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Rod Cook, John Spindler, Arthur Jackson



Phil and Cindy-Lou Cannane





John Purcell, Bob Gunn, Rod Cook, Bruce Reilly

VALE – IVAN CULLEN

15 January 1941 – 8 August 2010

It is with regret that we report the passing of Ivan Robert Edward Cullen. A lot of our older members would remember Ivan (hang on, I just remembered – we're all bloody old). He was a Plant Operator and did a trip on *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee*. He also served with 30 Terminal Squadron in Vietnam in 1965 and with 17 Construction Squadron there in 1967/68.

He enlisted in the Army on 18 June 1962 and was allocated to RAE. He served in Malaysia in 1964 and Borneo in 1964/65.

Units he served with were: 30 Port Squadron, 32 Small Ship Squadron, 30 Terminal Squadron, Army Component HMAS Sydney and 17 Construction Squadron.

He elected discharge 17 June 1968; just six years after he enlisted.

We don't know much about Ivan after he left the Army. He lived in Queensland and passed away on 8 August 2010. His funeral service was held at Hervey Bay on 13 August 2010 and was attended by over 100 people. Phil Cannane and Tim Gay represented our Association.



VALE – ANNIE GUNN

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Annie Gunn, Bob's wife of ten years. She had a long illness which she fought bravely and with good humour but finally succumbed on 17 October 2010. Ironically she was a great comfort to Dave and Merle Perham during Dave's illness and his passing a couple of weeks ago. She had a private family funeral in Brisbane on 26 October 2010. Bob thanks the many people who phoned him or sent cards. He will answer them shortly.

SICK PARADE

Stephen Bannister has worked as an accountant on a coffee plantation in Goroka in the Eastern Highlands in PNG for the last two years. On 26 October 2010 as he was leaving work he was attacked by five men with machetes and guns resulting in serious wounds to his hands. He was airlifted to Port Moresby for emergency treatment and then to Brisbane where he underwent surgery. His mother, Shirley, recently accompanied him back to Sydney where he will have follow-up surgery undertaken shortly.

You may recall that Stephen is the son of Mike Bannister who lost his life in the tragic Sydney to Hobart yacht race in 1998.

ASBESTOS AND BERYLLIUM MONITORING

About five years ago we advised that anyone who thought they had encountered asbestos during their service career (and it was prevalent on the ships) should contact the Defence Department Asbestos Monitoring Group on 1800 333 362 (Australia wide). There's no cost and just a simple procedure and an x-ray is all that's involved for your piece of mind. You also get a written report. With the recent passing of Dave Perham who contracted a form of asbestosis it is a timely reminder. If the tests identify any anomalies the Monitoring Group will recommend what action to take. It is also suggested to contact the Association who may be able to offer advice.

The Department of Defence advised that there may be a risk of lung disease to some members and ex members of the Defence Force who used Jason pistols to strip paint from ships. The pistols are a pneumatic or hydraulic tool and work by vibrating a set of 'needles,' containing beryllium, against the painted metal, which caused the needles to wear, generating dust. Beryllium is an alloy containing heavy metal. It was used in Jason pistols because it does not cause sparks when used to strip metal. Beryllium dust can cause fatal and untreatable lung disease, similar to asbestosis.

There is anecdotal evidence that Jason pistols were used by Army crews on Army craft and ships, especially at Garden Island, Cockatoo Island and shipyards in Australia and overseas. They were usually borrowed from the dockyards, but may have been on the ships inventories. Again, as with asbestos, it's better to be safe than sorry. The Department of Defence has announced that the Beryllium Information Service is now available and concerned persons should ring 1800 000 644 (Australia wide). The service will record your potential exposure details and will send you an information package. When you phone you will need to advise your name and regimental number, your unit and type of ship, and circumstances surrounding the exposure, eg, operating a needle gun, in close proximity to someone operating one, etc. It only takes you five minutes and doesn't cost anything.



GLENORCHY GATHERING

Most members would have received a newsletter from Arnold van Leeuwin outlining the planned “Glenorchy Gathering” water transport reunion to be held in Hobart during 4 – 6 March 2011. He put a lot of information in it including a detailed itinerary, registration form, accommodation venues and some details about the area. If you haven’t received a newsletter and wish to attend, please contact him at:

4/15A Stansall Street
GLENORCHY TAS 7010

Phone: 03 6272 1710
Mobile: 0419 721 715
Email: maryleewen@bigpond.com.au

So contact him for further information or if you’ve already received a newsletter from him now’s the time to return the registration form and sort out your accommodation. Get in early.

VIETNAM VETERANS’ DAY – SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING

On Wednesday 18 August 2010 the RAE Vietnam Memorial Committee commemorated the 44th anniversary of the battle of Long Tan at a moving ceremony at SME. The Catafalque Party was provided by Holdfast Troop, SME which is the old Holding Troop (yes, I’m sure you remember) that has the recently trained Kapooka graduates who remain in that troop prior to undergoing Field Engineer training. Anyway, they were very good – didn’t miss a beat.

The Commanding Officer, LTCOL Mark Coyle and his Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Betson, welcomed the 70 guests. Chaplain John Crosbie, also from SME, assisted in the service and Wattle Grove Primary School provided their excellent choir as usual.

The Guest Speaker was Brigadier John McDonagh (Rtd) who was accompanied by his wife. He raised, trained and commanded the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit in Vietnam in 1967/68. He gave an interesting talk about the raising of the unit and being fostered by the Army Intelligence Centre at Mosman, NSW where they were briefed on historical, cultural and physical aspects of the area they were to operate from their base at Nui Dat.

One of the significant projects that the unit conducted was the construction of a refugee hamlet at Suoi Nghe, a few miles North West of Nui Dat. About 1200 refugees were to be housed in permanent blocks of land on which had been constructed a timber framed shelter, partially clad



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with corrugated iron and poly vinyl sheeting. The bulk of the construction work was undertaken by 1 Field Squadron assisted by working parties from 7 RAR and HQ Company 1 ATF. This was a remarkable achievement by the engineers because they constructed an “instant town” with its roads, drainage, water supply, latrines and about 200 framed shelters in less than a fortnight.

Brigadier McDonagh concluded his informative talk by stating the importance of good relations between military and civilian authorities, and looking at the similar circumstances of his experiences Vietnam in 1967 and the 1st Mentoring Task Force in Afghanistan in 2010. A military commander is required to maintain good relations with the local civilian population. Not much has changed in this regard, and lessons learned from experiences in Vietnam over forty years ago are still relevant in the Australian Army today.

After the service many people stayed on to inspect the Heritage Precinct of Steele Barracks which included the RAE Museum and Corps Shop. Lunch was provided at the Peeler Club.

Our Association was represented by Ken Duncan, Jack Peel, Brian and Val Waites, Glenn Daly, Ross McMurray, John Sahariv, Bruce Reilly and Cec Weekes (President Australian of the Water Transport Association, NSW AIF).



Chaplain, CO SME, Brigadier McDonagh, Jack Peel





Jack Peel signing autographs for the Wattle Grove Public School Choir

WANGI WANGI WIPEOUT WEEKEND

Gary and Sue Everitt reported that the Wangi Wangi Wipeout Weekend, held during 15 – 17 October 2010, was a huge success. Over 54 people turned up for the reunion and although the weather was terrible everyone managed to enjoy themselves.

Friday night was a “meet and greet” affair at the Camp Kitchen in the caravan park. It was a great start to the weekend and for all to get together with a few quiet ales and a lot of talk.

Saturday morning was the memorable cruise on Lake Macquarie on the “Wangi Queen”. A real gale was blowing; some would say it was Storm Force but it was probably like a mill pond compared to what the crews of 32 had to contend with. Anyway, everyone got their monies worth. Morning tea was provided for a few brave souls and some even took advantage of the bar. Perhaps small rum to get their sea legs back. Despite the weather a good time was had by all.

Saturday night’s dinner was held at the local RSL club. A great night with good food, good drink, good show and good company. An ex Army bloke provided the entertainment with some excellent country songs. Again, a great evening.



Sunday morning was a Gunfire Breakfast at the Camp Kitchen. More eating, more talking and more laughs. After that some said their farewells while a few stalwarts decided to stay for a few more days. The weekend was a great success despite the weather. Sue and Gary thanked all who attended, including a lot of inter-taters. They also thanked the Association for its support.



Today's Army



Two of the latest Patrol Boats, River (PBR) on the Euphrates River in Iraq. They are from the US Army's 1st Riverine Squadron



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Property for sale

Ties (new stock now arrived)	\$25.00	LSM Lapel Badge (new stock)	\$12.00
Association Book	\$30.00	Collar Badge	\$12.00
Association Woven Patch	\$8.00	Association Cap Navy Blue	\$15.00
Car Sticker	\$5.00		
Association Polo Shirt (navy blue only) made to order			\$30.00
Book "Rolling Through 32"			All sold

Please contact Ken Shannon 02 9871 4667 or property@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Disclaimer

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of 32 Small Ship Sqn RAE Association Incorporating RAE Tn.

Contributions

Contributions are welcome from members and their families of anything that is of interest of members. So, if you would like to contribute please have it typed (preferably in MS Word or .pdf format) and send it to the editor at:

editor@32smallshipsqn.org.au
or to

32 Small Ship Squadron RAE Association
Box 33
12 Philip Mall
WEST PYMBLE NSW 2073

Email and Postal Addresses

Please let the Association know if you get a new email address or change your current one. The same goes for your postal address. Remember, we want to keep in touch with you!



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Committee Members

President: Graham Murray 02 9634 3752
president@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Vice President: Ken Shannon 02 9871 4667
property@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Hon. Secretary: Ross McMurray 02 9403 1456
secretary@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Treasurer: Peter Tierney 02 4369 2616
treasurer@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Vacant

Welfare Officer: Vacant

Property Member: Ken Shannon 02 9871 4667
property@32smallshipsqn.org.au

Social Member: George Fisher 02 9876 4713

Committee: Ian Johnston, BEM 02 9623 7948
John Bryant 02 9979 1197
elizabethandjohn@hotmail.com
Bruce Reilly 02 4655 9394
bruce@truckalign.com.au

Hon Auditor: Lt Col Phil Cameron, OAM (Rtd)

Editor NTM: Ross McMurray

Publisher NTM: Jack Madden

Chaplains: Monsignor Eugene Harley

Reverend Richard McCracken

Web Address www.32smallshipsqn.org.au



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