

Patron

Date 12 Sept 2009

CMDR GEOFF HARLE M.B.E. R.A.N. (RET)

Spring Edition 2009

# BASEGRAM

## Anzac Day 2009

On a wing and a prayer.

I wonder how many times a serviceman has said this when being told by their Command that the message on their situation has been dispatched to HQ.

On the day it was great to see the recruits from HMAS Cerberus, turned out as if they were on Admirals inspection, a real credit to themselves and the staff at Comms School, BZ and we hope you enjoy your careers as we did.

For Naval Communicators charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the message does get through then perhaps we might see a few more manage to front and centre at next years March, as there are a number of changes being considered to assist the WW1 and Korean Veterans in participating in the march.

After the march a few of us wandered down to the Maori Chiefs Hotel to join with the HMAS Sydney Association and members from the New Zealand Navy for a real bit of "Anzac Spirit"

Next year, there is a suggestion of booking lunch or something similar after the March and this will be raised at the AGM

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Comments, queries or if you have a story you would like included contact

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## RANCBA Annual General Meeting 2009

The 2009 AGM meeting will be conducted in the Sergeants Mess at Victoria Barracks this year instead of Coopers Inn as has been the case for a number of years. The reason for the change in venue is primarily based on access and cost.

Our thanks go to PMC W.O. 1 Dean Austin and his members in granting permission for our Association, use of the mess and facilities.

A little bit of history, in 1870 after the British Redcoats had left, Victoria Barracks became the Headquarters for the Victorian Navy and Military units.

For those who are unfamiliar with Victoria Barracks, it is located at 256-310 St Kilda Road, adjacent to the Shrine of Remembrance, one kilometre from the Melbourne CBD. Reference - Melway 2F H11.

The Sergeants Mess is located in the centre of G block which is easily accessed through the "Wells Street Entrance"

Proceedings will commence at 1100 hours sharp so those who wish to charge their glasses prior to the commencement should arrive in the Mess at 1045 hours, Note the bar will remain open until 1400 and will shut for 1 hour before reopening at 1500.

The cost for this years function will be \$20 which will include a Bistro Menu (e.g. when an item runs out then you choose between the other remaining items) it generally includes:-

### Choice of Soup

A Roast e.g. Beef/Pork,  
A Casserole,  
A Vegetarian/Cold Selection  
Choice of Vegetables

Choice of Desert e.g.  
Apple Pie, Fresh Fruit Salad.

Coffee and Tea are available

Beer, Wine and soft drinks are included.

To attend this years AGM you must carry a Photo ID which will be required to access Victoria Barracks through the Wells Street Entrance or St Kilda Road Entrance (if allocated parking)

For those who require parking please indicate this on your Registration Form which should be returned as soon as possible with the vehicle registration details which will then be forwarded to the Base where parking will be available on a first come first served basis. *Note include a telephone contact so you can be advised if you have been allocated a parking spot – No contact means Request for Parking Denied (Shave off) :-)*

If you are approved then you will be contacted and On base Parking is through the St Kilda Road Entrance only.

Public transport to the venue is available e.g. Trams on routes 3, 5, 6, 8, 15, 16, 64, 67 and 72 pass along St. Kilda Rd in front of the Barracks, disembark at Stop number 18.

*Dress: As per standard Mess rules eg No Jeans or Denim that is in disrepair, no beach/athletic attire, no sandals/runners, gettas, thongs, your shirt should have a collar!*



# RANCBA Annual General Meeting 2009 Cont

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Telephone .....

Email .....

Car Parking  
Registration Required .....

WMP (with much pleasure) I will be attending the AGM

3 Course Bistro Lunch including Beer, wine, soft drinks \$20

Game of Skill Tickets \$10

Yearly Subs \$10

MRU (Much Regret am unable to attend)

Total \$.....

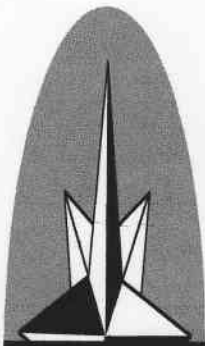
*Please return to the Treasurer*

*Jack Duffy RAN (Ret)  
2 Cadby Pl  
Frankston  
Victoria 3199*

*Email jackduffy@gmail.com*

*Phone: 9783 6050*

*At your earliest convenience  
or latest 22nd October 2009*



**United States  
Admiral of  
the Fleet,  
William F.  
Halsey,**

paid tribute to  
the enormous  
value of the  
early warnings  
provided by  
Australian  
Coastwatchers  
when he said:

**“Coastwatchers  
saved  
Guadalcanal,  
and  
Guadalcanal  
saved the South  
Pacific”**

## BENCE'S—FLEET NEWS BULLETIN

### 17/08/2009 SUBMARINERS RECOGNISED FOR BRAVERY IN HIGH SEAS RESCUE

Three Australian submariners have been awarded Bravery Medals by the Australian Bravery Decorations Council for their extraordinary efforts to rescue shipmates who had been washed overboard in bad weather during a night operation. The medals were announced today by Her Excellency the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

### 20/07/2009 ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY LANDING CRAFT TAKE A LOAD OFF

HMA Ships BETANO and WEVAK have joined Humanitarian Civic Assistance Mission PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2009 enabling the delivery of vital medical, dental, engineering and veterinary aid to Tonga and the Solomon Islands from 13 July to 23 August 2009.

### 17/07/2009 AUSTRALIAN NAVY TAKES NEW YORK BY STORM

Two Australian warships, HMA Ships Sydney and Ballarat, will arrive in New York on Sunday for a four-day visit, as part of a round-the-world trip to promote Australia. New York is giving the Australians the VIP treatment, inviting them to promote the tour on the 'Astrovision Screen' in Times Square.

### 06/07/2009 OCEAN RECON TO JOIN ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

What: The Director General Defence Force Recruiting, CDRE Tim Barrett, and the Head of Navy People and Reputation, RADM Steven Gilmore, will officially launch the new high end digital product "Ocean Recon" which is a high end digital product which features cutting edge online interactive technology. The product will demystify submariner careers and provide potential candidates with an 'experience', leaving them with a lasting impression that goes beyond traditional media.

### 09/06/2009 HMAS TOOWOOMBA FAREWELLED

HMAS Toowoomba, departed for a six-month deployment to the Middle East Area of Operation. Toowoomba's Ship's Company of 193 men and women were farewelled before a large gathering of family and friends, in a traditional ceremony at Fleet Base West at Garden Island, WA

### 29/05/2009 PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF HMAS NEWCASTLE

The Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) today agreed to contractual hand back and Provisional Acceptance of HMAS Newcastle from the prime contractor, Thales Australia. HMAS Newcastle was the fourth and final FFG for upgrade. The timing of provisional acceptance is within the amended schedule agreed in May 2006.

### 18/05/2009 AUSTRALIAN NAVY DETERS SOMALI PIRATES IN GULF OF ADEN

The Royal Australian Navy Frigates, HMA Ships Sydney and Ballarat, last night came to the aid of the merchant vessel MV Dubai Princess, after she raised distress signals in the Gulf of Aden. The MV Dubai Princess claimed it was under attack from pirates, who were reported to be firing rocket propelled grenades and attempting to board the vessel by force.

### Editors NOTE:

*I would love to hear from the Radio Operators onboard HMAS Brisbane 1981 who fabricated a story into the "Fleet Bulletin" which related to Bert Scunthorpe, a Newcastle Coalminer from Fiddlington in the UK who had just smashed the world 100 metres sprint in some amazing time and ran with this for a few weeks setting up an international race between him and another fabricated individual who was Russian*

# The Secrets of Chesterville Road

Continued from previous issues:-

Tony Sheppard of Heatherton remembers the Americans for a somewhat different reason. As a boy, one of Tony's favourite recreational areas was Neill's Waterhole,

a deep muddy pool in Wickham Road near the intersection with Chesterville Road. The waterhole interested Tony Sheppard because it contained many small redfin, a fish not common in such places around Moorabbin.

After the Americans left, Tony Sheppard revisited Neill's Waterhole to find it invaded by yabbies, but bereft of redfin. He says:



'I decided to fish the waterhole and they did it with hand grenades. They landed a few fish all right, but finished off the whole lot of them in the process. I think it must have been boredom.'

The rough and ready conditions at the base

probably proved too much for some of the American personnel. A number of them, generally the more senior members of the unit, were to find more congenial accommodation in the local hotels, the Moorabbin Hotel on the highway and the Royal Oak in Cheltenham.

The operators of the local taxi services prospered by ferrying the servicemen to and from the hotels to complete their shifts.

There was at least one romantic outcome because of this arrangement. As Gladys Stott recalls, one of the American officers, Lieutenant Tony Novak who was billeted at the Royal Oak, was later to marry Shelagh Blackburn, the strikingly attractive daughter of the Royal Oak's proprietor. The couple lived in Moorabbin for a period following the war before settling in the United States.

There is no remaining trace of the wartime radio base. After its closure in 1944, the radio equipment was relocated, the temporary buildings disposed of, and the land and farmhouses returned, with some argument over compensation, to their owners. The site has long since been overtaken by industrial development.

**Author** John Cribbin  
Reprinted with permission from the Kingston Historical Website.



*Gladys Marriott, aged 15, in the potato fields of her father's property which adjoined the Naval listening station. Her cousin Graeme (centre) and young brother Alfred are with her in this photograph*

'What had happened was the Americans had de-

**Editors NOTE:-**

We would like to thank the Federal Member for Calwell for her assistance in the production and distribution of this Newsletter.

## THE EMPEROR'S CODES— Bletchley Park's Role in Breaking Japan's Secret Ciphers

**The Emperor's Codes: The Breaking of Japan's Secret Ciphers (Hardcover)** The history of cracking the German codes during World War II has emerged slowly over the last ten years, and is now fairly fully described. By comparison, relatively little has been revealed about the comparable efforts aimed at Japanese codes. Recent declassification of British documents, privileged access to secret Australian histories of these events, and extensive new interviews with participants by Mr. Michael Smith (who spent 9 years in codebreaking for British Intelligence) provide the basis for the most complete and interesting account yet of the efforts aimed at Japan. The book is a success as a riveting history of individuals, for explaining the techniques involved, changing your view of how the war was won, and for raising fascinating new questions about military activities (did the atomic bomb really have to be dropped, or did Truman drop the ball?).

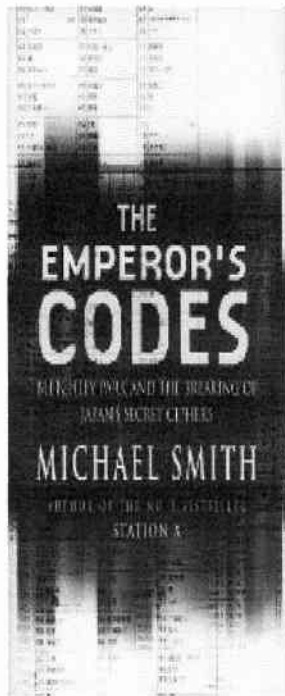
Right after World War II, the American cryptographers broke the story of how they had cracked the Japanese diplomatic code (the so-called Purple code). What was not known, until recently, is that almost all of success with the other Japanese codes involved British and/or Australian code breakers.

Even more surprising is that the U.S. Navy kept intercepts and code books from the British codebreakers despite agreements to share. Undoubtedly, many lost their lives and the war was prolonged because of these U.S. errors. But there were also errors in using the coded output. Some commanders just wouldn't take it seriously, and placed their ships in harm's way.

Consider the irony of the British decoding an impending attack on their code breaking home in

Ceylon which the British Navy largely ignored after the attack was delayed for a few days.

The Japanese codebreaking was much more difficult than that for the German codes because the allies had few Japanese readers to draw on.



Before the war's end, the British invented a six month cram course that effectively taught code-breaking Japanese. Also, because the British lost so many bases in Asia, the codebreakers were pushed further and further away from Japanese bases and shipping.

That meant an inability to get enough radio messages to be able to effectively decode. At the key turning points in the war, the British were trying to listen to Japan from a lousy station in Kenya. Go figure! Here's where the U.S. Navy could have made a big difference, because they always had lots of intercepts from naval shipping in the Pacific. "The record of the US Navy in cooperation, not just with the British but with their own Army, was not merely lamentable, it was shameful."

Interestingly, the Japanese codes were able to be broken mostly because the Japanese assumed that no one could. So when it appeared that the codes might have been compromised, they kept using the same ones. That gave the allies an edge.

The Japanese also had some habits that helped. They began many messages with similar flowery language such as "I have the honour to inform your Excellency . . ." Find enough of those messages, and you could begin to decode. The book also recounts how a broken message allowed the allies to shoot down Admiral Yamamoto. You also get a very fine explanation of how the coded messages were used to help win the Battle of Midway and the speed the liberation of the Philippines

**Review by Professor Donald Mitchell**

# 'Answering the Call'

Port Melbourne is a hugely significant site for the history of the navy in Australia. Some milestone dates

- 1859: Naval Reserve training commenced with the formation of the Sandridge company of the Victorian Naval Brigade
- 1912: following the formation of the Royal Australian Navy in 1911, the Drill Hall was built on the corner Rouse/Bay (currently the home of Circus Oz)
- 1942: Australian Navy Reserve Drill Hall was built on the former lagoon and named HMAS Lonsdale



Nothing of this history remains - save the name hm@s which you may notice as you drive past.

The Naval Heritage Foundation of Australia is seeking to install the memorial (featured on the opposite) on the foreshore opposite Dow St.

The Council has provided 'in principle' support. Coastal consent will now be sought from the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

## CIS Category Medallion

Captain Chuck McHardie RAN who is the Director General of all things related to Naval Communications has provided the Victorian Committee of RAN/CBA and similarly other States with an allocation of the CIS Category Medallion (based on our mailing list) with the intent that these medallions will be distributed to those ex-RAN sailors and WRAN's who made up the Communications Branch as we knew it. (Note any additional medallions will be distributed to new members joining until the allocation runs out)

The awarding of the medallion is now part of the passing out ceremony for Communicators, where an RAN/CBA member awards it to each member who successfully completes their training at HMAS Cerberus.

The medallion is not worn but rather is a rather substantial Commemorative piece.

In Victoria the AGM and committee will decide the process for distribution of the medallions and the first issue will no doubt go to those that attend the Annual General Meeting this year at Victoria Barracks

For those not attending the AGM please contact a member of committee after the AGM for details on how these medallions can be collected.



On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1867 it was announced that the *HMS Nelson* was being masted and rigged for service in Australia. This once magnificent ship was to be turned over to the Government of Victoria for the defence of the Colonies.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1870 the first Victorian flag was hoisted from the *Nelson* in a ceremony to mark the occasion.

In 1882 HMV *Nelson* was used as a training ship for neglected boys.

Hundreds of boys were to do training on board the *HMS Nelson* on Port Phillip Bay.



## Vale Ernie Summer

Our past President of RANCBA Victoria, Ernie Summer, crossed the bar on Saturday morning (08 August 2009) in Vasey House, Bundoorra.

There was a private service held for Ernie and Eleanor his partner took his ashes to Korumburra to be buried alongside his parents as was his wish.

Les Thurgood and I made the trip down on a bright Saturday morning into the rolling green hills towards our designated meeting place at the "Astral Hotel" in Korumburra on Saturday the 22nd and were warmly welcomed.

Ern's family and friends are very much like the reef knot, steadfast and secure and the memorial service whilst informal was a memorable affair for all concerned.



*A poem to commemorate his passing by his wife and fellow RANCBA member*

*There is no turning back the clock  
No matter how we may yearn for the day that has passed  
Like music when soft voices are hushed  
Perfume, when the rose has lost its bloom  
Rich auburn hair faded to grey wisps  
Firm hands that now tremble  
An athletic body wasting away  
An agile mind stolen by the ebbing tide*

*Yet through the mists emerges the ghost of yesterday  
The active man  
The fisherman on the banks of the river  
The "Sportsman" Best and Fairest"  
The Mariner home on the rolling sea*

*The honest man  
The constant husband  
Devoted father and grandfather  
No blasphemy ever crossed his lips*

*Spring and Summer are but a distant memory  
Autumn leaves are falling  
Winter frosts chill the air.*



**The 6<sup>th</sup> National RANCBA Reunion**  
**Adelaide**  
**April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 2011**  
**“Celebrating 100 years of RAN Communications”**

The 6<sup>th</sup> National RANCBA Reunion will be held in Adelaide between Saturday April 23 and Tuesday April 26 2011 incl. A Reunion Committee has been formed and work has already commenced in making this event a memorable experience, particularly as it is the Centenary year of the formation of the RAN.

Please note that in 2011 Anzac Day falls on the Monday of the Easter long weekend which will enable some attendees to extend their visit to Adelaide and enjoy the many delights that South Australia has to offer.

A 2011 Reunion section is on the RANCBA website ([www.rancba.org.au](http://www.rancba.org.au)).

For planning purposes we would like who would be interested in attending the 2011 reunion. To indicate your interest please complete & return the form below

(We need to have some idea of the number attending for planning purposes)

Yours in Communications,  
 Barry Sherriff  
 Chairman  
 RANCBA 2011 Organising Committee

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

Yes, I am interested in attending the 2011 reunion.

Name: .....

Address .....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

Number attending: .....

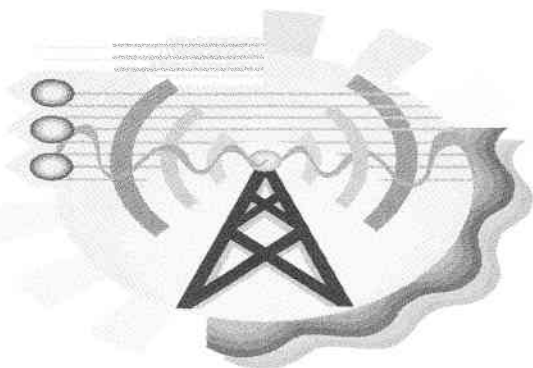
Activities I would like to participate in are:

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Return to:-  
 2011 RANCBA Reunion-  
 10 Karalee Grove  
 REYNELLA SA 5161

or email it to: [bsherriff@adam.com.au](mailto:bsherriff@adam.com.au)

## SOMETHING NEW



# Gigabit Propagation Studies

## Propagation study at 60 and 83.5 GHz

The propagation of microwaves is dependent on atmospheric conditions (such as temperature, humidity and rain rate). At frequencies of less than 40GHz, this dependence is well researched and radio manufacturers and their customers can have confidence in predictions of radio performance.

However, as the frequency of operation of a radio link is increased further, models based on studies below 40GHz become less reliable. Higher frequencies mean shorter wavelengths which interact strongly with gas molecules and rain drops. This results in greater scattering and absorption of the microwaves.

Our team is continuously collecting data on weather, including rainfall rates, raindrop size distributions and radio link performance, to improve the applicability of propagation models at frequencies between 60 GHz and above.

We aim to develop reliable propagation models through better understanding of the interaction between raindrops and microwaves at frequencies from 60 to 90 GHz. This interaction is complicated as individual raindrops differ in size and shape, and the distribution of sizes and shapes alters over the course of any rainfall event. We are using an optical disdrometer to measure the size distribution of raindrops.

The results of our work will be made available to the ITU-R Study Group 3 for the development of

international radio standards. More information on ITU-R Study Group 3.

### Propagation study specifications

Location: Marsfield, Sydney, Australia  
 Valid data collection start date: 4th April 2003  
 Radio Path: 250 metres  
 Synchronised data integration period: 1 minute  
 Radio Links: 60.1GHz, 61.856GHz and 83.5GHz  
 Radio Link Data: transmit signal strength, receive signal strength, bit error rate, link availability

### Weather Equipment:

(a) **Weather Station** - temperature, relative humidity, atmospheric pressure, wind speed, wind direction; one minute averages recorded for each variable.

(b) **Three tip-bucket rain gauges** located at either end of the radio link and mid-path; rain rate implied by number of bucket tips recorded for each minute.

(c) **Disdrometer** - measures rain rate and rain-drop size and velocity distribution with a 10 second integration period.

(d) **Present Weather Detector** - measures rain rate with a 15 second integration period. The disdrometer and present weather detector are located at opposite ends of the link

Source CSIRO

Mr. Val Dyadyuk  
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