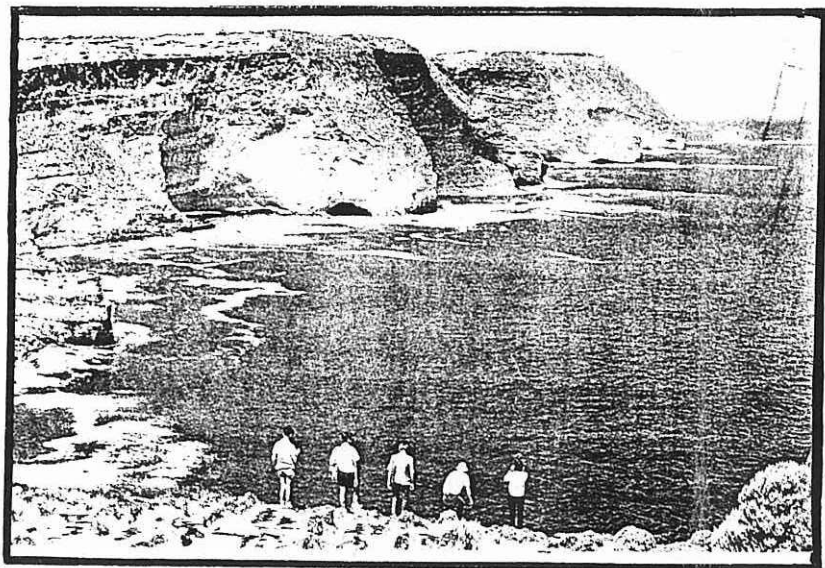


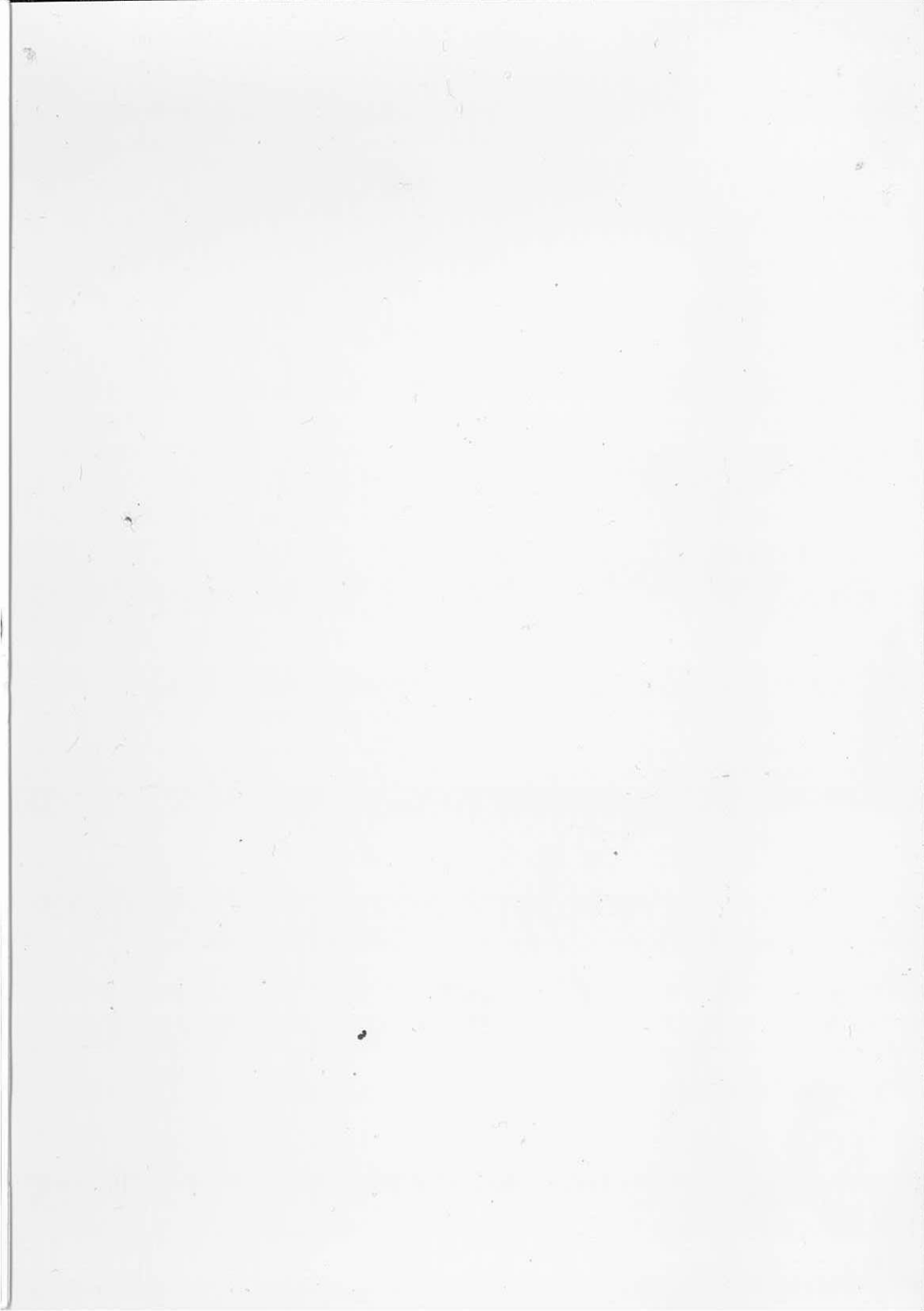
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MEMORIES OF WEDGE,

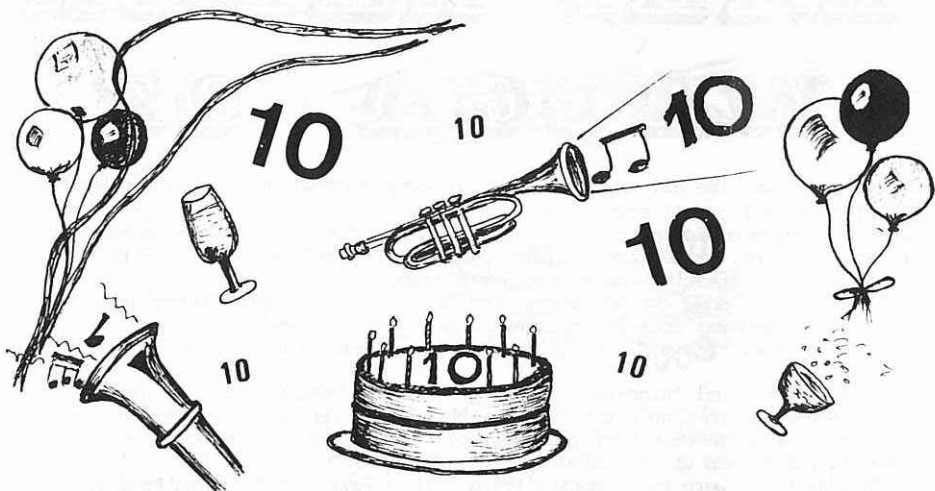


7 RADAR, WEDGE
1943 - 44 ISLAND

10th REUNION 1998



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This year we celebrate Ten Years of Wedge Reunions.....not a record perhaps as Reunions go.... but there is one thing that few others can emulate - and that is the Loyalty and Solid Support of our small group of Wedge men, our ladies and families.

This can be attributed to two principal reasons. Firstly, the fact that Doug and Ronda have cheerfully and capably acted as both Principal Organisers, and as the central phone contact for Wedge folk from at least six States...Secondly, not only have the Adelaide folk enthusiastically supported the Reunions, but so too have Country and Interstate folk from near and far. Just as important has been the support of our Ladies and Friends who have come to enjoy the company and the occasions as true Associate Wedge Islanders!

So we celebrate 10 Years - a Decade of Pleasant Recollections of Wedge days of Service Life...of seeking out names....of joining with Friends and also of Promoting and Supporting the big National Get-Togethers.... and of helping to compile our important and unique Radar Histories. In ten years, 7 Radar Wedge has earned a great record of local Comradeship and National Support which has been and continues to be clearly evident whenever we get together.

So today is the occasion for a little self-congratulation. We congratulate Doug and Ronda on their great idea of 10 years ago.... we congratulate our helper committee...and finally each of us deserves a Pat on the Back for the Support which has made our Reunions such a Success. AND LONG MAY THEY CONTINUE !

RAAF RADAR WAGGA '97

One can just imagine all the convivial chin-wagging that went on at the Wagga re-union which from all accounts was just a nice size - and with a very sensible degree of formality - or rather informality. There were no marches or banner waving, or services - just enjoying the excellent weather - the sights of the district - and each other's company.

I've heard from Wedge attendees Stan and Des - Neil and June - Derry and Judi and Ron and Pat Coat (Wedgies by adoption) and all have been loud and long in their praises. Neville and Gwenda Franks also joined the throng I hear.

There were the usual 'signing on' arrangements and informations packages on the Monday, with a buffet dinner at the RSL. Chief organiser Warren Mann pronounced the customary few words of welcome (60 were expected he said and 220 turned up including one very mobile 92 y.o.)

On Tuesday there were two tempting trips - the Wagga RAAF Training Facility and Museum...or the City Art Gallery. The RAAF proved popular, with the highlight being the morning tea prepared by trainee staff - it was a sumptuous spread of delectables (Verily, Verily I say unto you..How different are Mess arrangements these days!) while the visit also took in jet engines, aircraft, M.T., helicopters etc. of all shapes and sizes. Lunch was back at the RSL where W/Cdr. Pete Smith (champion of all old radar bods) gave an informative talk on JORN which certainly indicated that operating and interpreting JINDALEE is a far more complicated operation than staring cross-eyed at the 5 inch scope of the old LW/AW.)

At night there was some serious sampling, sipping and supping at the W.W. Winery with the majority again in attendance. The evening was crisp and clear which made it chilly at the outside tables, and most gradually gravitated inside where quarters became a mite cramped - but a good and cosy time was enjoyed by all.

Wednesday offered a tour of the Charles Sturt University, followed by lunch at the Botanic Gardens. Highlight here were two Chinese structures built without bolts or nails, being outstanding in appearance and both colourful and so differently Oriental in appearance.

Thursday - the last day - brought a trip around the Bomen Industrial Complex and Saleyards...then on to Monte Cristo, an historic old homestead of 1884 which, once abandoned and vandalised, has now been beautifully restored and furnished.

Lunch was served in a large building in the yard called the Ballroom - then back to base to prepare for the big Celebratory Dinner at the RSL. Speakers were Major Gen.(ret.) Steve Gower, Director of the Canberra AWM -

Mr. Walter Fielder-Gill as President of the NSW Radar Group, and David Wilson, I/C of the RAAF Historical and Archives Section at Canberra. Even though this was said to be THE final Re-union, (so was Port Stephens) there are hints of yet one more - hopefully when a re-discovered LW/AW goes on display at the AWM in Canberra. So save the cents, chaps, and cherish the dollars...there may be one last call. Keep the ears open for word of the Final-Final Re-union. (just like Melba's last concert isn't it?) Stan mentioned that 20 attended a re-union for the first time! which shows that location and spreading the word is so important.

Finally, Warren and Helen and their many helpers are to be congratulated and thanked,(did I detect a strong 131 element?) and the re-union has proved just how successful a regional group can be.

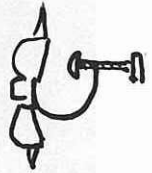
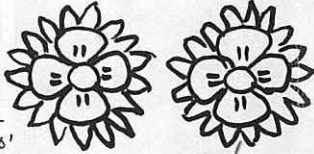
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BASHING OUT 'FOREIGNERS.'

Making and creating 'foreigners' was a very serious business, and a good, well made foreigner was a thing to be proud of, so it had to be as perfect as possible. It demanded craftsmanship - patience - lots of spare time at the mechanics' bench or in the fitter/DMT's work-shop

and in addition to all those requirements there was the matter of organising supplies and tools. Often a well-made foreigner became a gift for mum or the girlfriend - sometimes an item of profit to be sold or bartered - sometimes it was made as a favour for a mate.



Making rings from dural was usually regarded as the first attempt and became the rookies' test - an exam almost - and once a certain standard had been attained and a certain amount of critical acclaim received, a progression followed as more ambitious items were attempted, with the supply of suitable materials alone deciding the extent of the range of items attempted.

From the aircraft dumps came dural, perspex and laminated ply. From outlying stations came pearlshell and tortoiseshell, with the local Aborigines being the chief suppliers via a mate, and the bartering medium being tins of 'baccy.' From the stations and camps along the road down to Adelaide River came small amounts of buffalo horn - and understandably this was the most difficult of all materials to score, for few buffalo seemed anxious to part with any, and few chaps - even good mates - wanted to argue with a not-too-friendly water buffalo, even with a .303 at hand.

In spite of shortages 'down south,' small files were still available and could be sent in the next parcel...also Gibbs tooth powder, that rather abrasive sort in cake form which was the favoured polishing medium, though some swore by Brasso, and then finishing with ordinary toothpaste and a flannel cloth. Even nail files were good.

Spitfire and Kittyhawk brooches were winners, I recall, made from the old pre-war silver two bob bits. Strictly illegal, so it was said, though defacing the coins of the realm was a crime no-one seems to have served time for, and frankly, we were never deterred by any such dire threats of Governmental action in any case.

Smaller coins - tray-bits and zacs - were hammered thin to make brooches and ear-rings, and much imagination went into planning and designing...and those who had perspex moulded that stuff after heating it in hot water. And other articles, such as paper and butter knives were very successful, though sometimes some very doubtful salt and pepper shakers were made from incendiary shells, deloused and burnt out.

Native crafts were popular too - the easy way out of gift giving for the lazy ones...and many of these were true art of the local type...and cheap too, and beautifully made.

All of these gave great satisfaction to giver and receiver.

