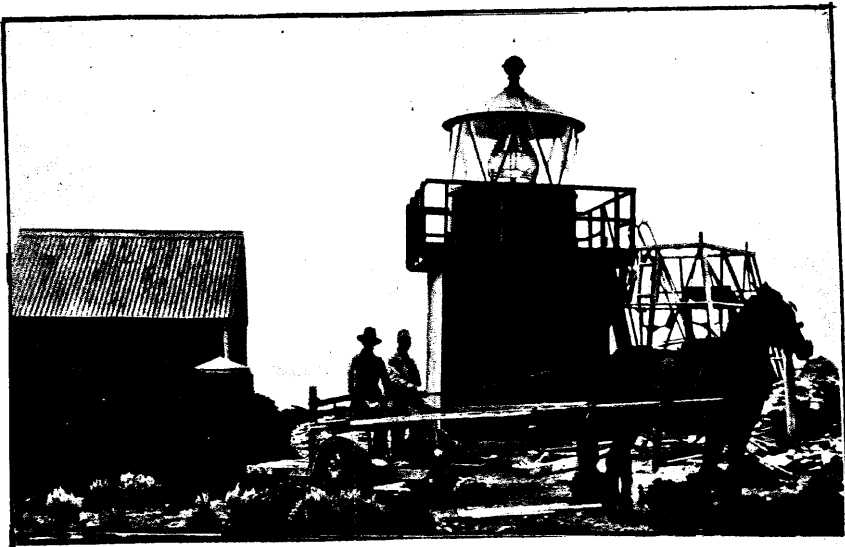


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MEMORIES OF WEDGE,

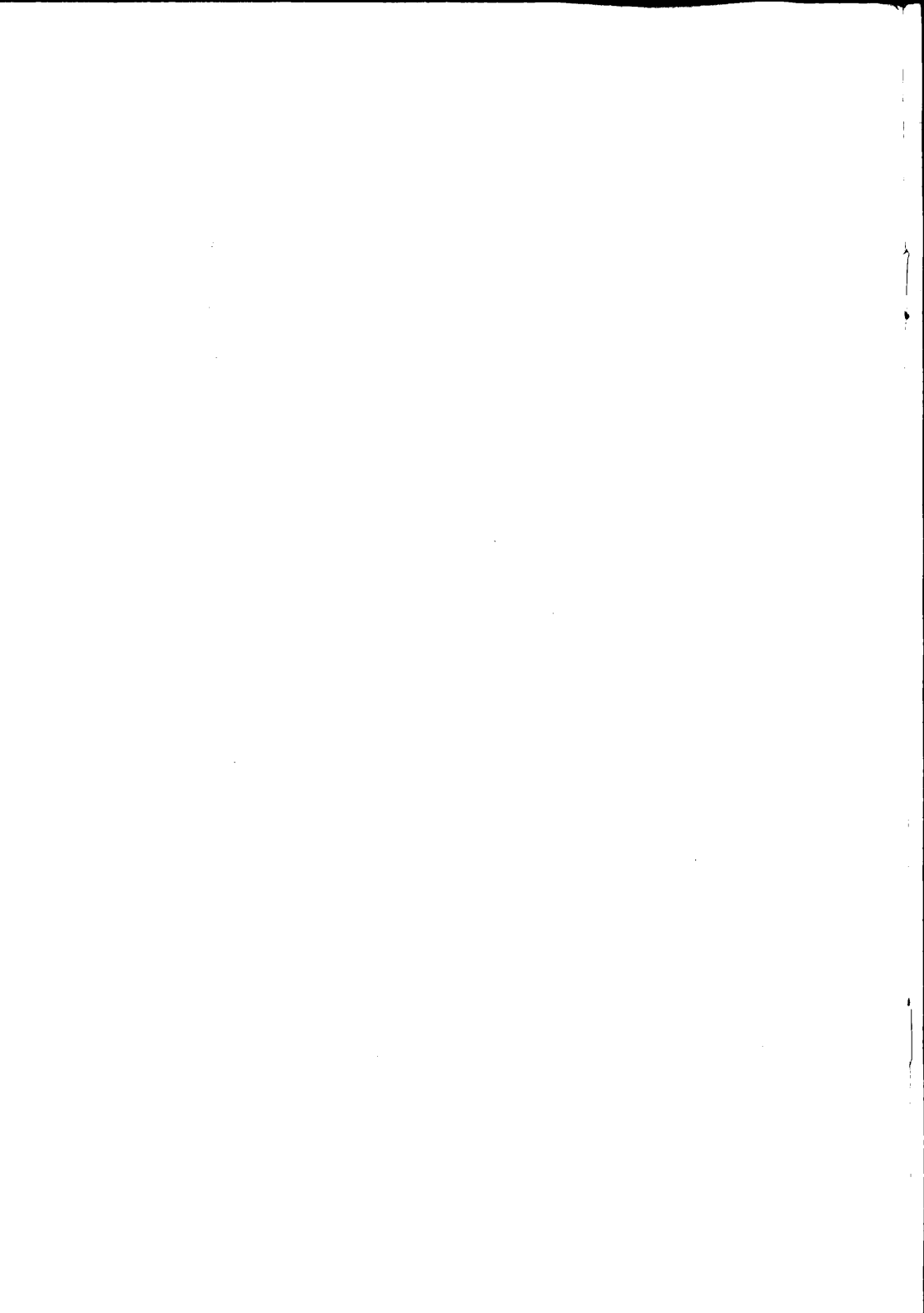


ISLAND TRANSPORT.

Photo, Ron Coat.

**7 RADAR, WEDGE
1943 - 44 ISLAND**

17th REUNION 2005



"THANK YOU, ED. SIMMONDS."



It's time someone said "Thank you" to Radar's Good friend and Champion, Ed. Simmonds.

For almost twenty years now- since before our first National Reunion in Canberra in 1988, Ed. has been at work -admittedly with some dedicated help from friend Norm Smith and wife Liz - spreading the word in every possible way to tell of Australian Ground Radar.

One rarely even heard the word 'Radar' before the 80's - it was still so secret - but Thanks Be Ed realised the old embargo. had been finally lifted and he and friend Norm started on the first series of radar history books, in the printed word and one-time secret photos.

Perhaps to their surprise, they found they had tapped a huge reservoir of suppressed history. Photos and stories poured in, and in a relatively short period of time, five histories had been produced, including three remarkable pictorials - also Norm had produced the story of his own station 305.

From that point onward, Ed was on his own, writing, contacting, co-opting and computering.

From Bendigo '92 onward, he has been the chief reference point in research for all aspects of Australian ground radar. Because of the stimulus he injected into all who contacted him, there is now a virtual library of Oz radar books, station histories, pictorials and overseas reference points and even a Radar Archives. And from the RAAF Historical Section, he has been informed that Radar is perhaps the best documented section from within the Air Force.

As the years passed, Ed has felt the inevitable 'run down' effect as age has slowed his ability to get around, and the loss of his younger help-mate and student, Pete, has affected not only Ed, but Radar in general. But Ed still presses on regardless with enquiries from all over Australia and many enquiries from overseas too. Most of these he seems able to satisfy from information stored safely in the Simmonds cranium.

So Thank You Ed, - and Thank You Liz too.

Without your wonderful work and friendship over the years, so many of us would still be wondering..."Where does one start?"

* * * * *



The Air Force's AEW&C fleet will rise to six with the Government decision to buy two more of the aircraft.

WEDGETAIL'S FIRST FLIGHT.

With all the Razzamataz of a typical Hollywood launch of a new blockbuster movie, Australia took over the tarmac at the Boeing plant in Seattle USA in May last as the first of the Wedgetail Radar 737's rolled along in front of the cameras while 'Advance Australia Fair' was churned out over the loudspeakers. This super equipped plane was the first in a fleet of six similar aircraft, all with a radar range exceeding 400 kilometres, and with one manned and fitted out as a control centre.

Evidently the No. 1 plane then took off while the equipment on board was carefully monitored by ground controllers, and all went well. The cost of the full fleet is estimated at \$3billion.

Australia's Defence Minister, Senator Hill, said afterwards that the project was progressing ahead of time and was within budget, and he felt the Chief Officer of the AEW & C System was to be congratulated on achieving a successful outcome to such a hugely complicated undertaking which incorporated leading edge software technologies.

Senator Hill said the the aircraft would enhance Australia's combat capability through leading-edge air and maritime surveillance.

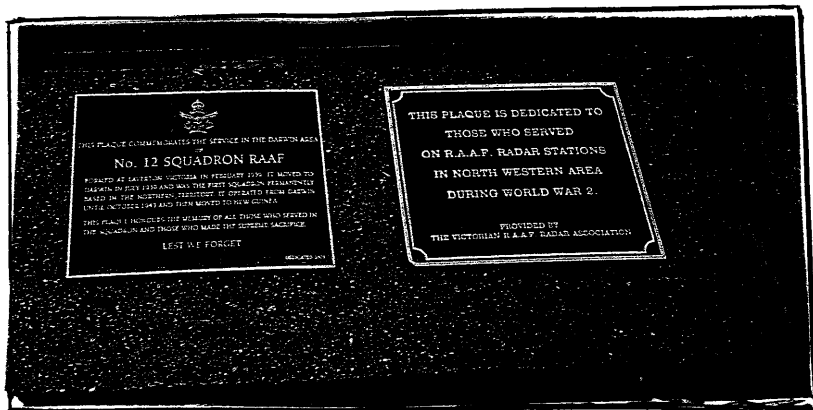
"The Wedgetail is based on Boeing's next generation 737 aircraft, which is being modified to accommodate an advanced phased-array radar and various other sophisticated mission systems," he said.

"The aircraft will have far more flexibility and capability than other similar platforms in service today."

It seems just a little strange to be discussing such complicated and expensive systems which will be watching over Australia's north when there are still so many who can recall our nation's previous desperate efforts in '42 and '43. "Here's your gear and engine, and ten tons of bully beef....the rest is up to you and your men. Go to it lads, and report in when you're operation - al. Don't take too long though!"

Even the task of getting the gear on site or up the hill was a monster task at Dripstone - Bathurst - Pt. Keats - these should all go down in the annals of RAAF history. In comparison, taking delivery of this new system by O6 seems almost like buying it off a supermarket shelf. The new system will be based at Williamtown and the 737's will form part of the re-formed No. 2 Squadron.

* * * * *



BACK UP NORTH AGAIN.

Remember back to the reunion of 2003 when we had some distinguished visitors from Victoria. There was Len Ralph, Allan and Margaret Ferguson, all radar folk who were over in South Oz for the Big Reunion, but nevertheless found time to come along to the 7RS Reunion.

Well, they've since been to Darwin with Alex Culvenor and Stan Middleton and have brought back news and reports from Up North - also some fascinating photos which add greatly to Paul Kloeden's story of 132 at Knuckeyes Lagoon which was his old station.

The recent Darwin occasion was the unveiling and blessing of a Radar plaque near the Darwin Cenotaph, and Allan and Co. have given a good report of their stay which, though short perhaps, extended over several days.

Their trip began on Sunday 30th. May, and after a flight via Alice, they were in Darwin by 2.30 p.m.,these modern day jets are a bit faster than the old DC3!
With the Big Ceremony being on Thursday 3rd. June, Allan and Marg. had a few days to themselves...and it was HOT! They roamed the town, and met our friend and ex-operator Austin Asche at the RSL. For sure, there would have been some old memories, legends and leg-pulls that day, for one-time Administrator Austin had been at 38RS Bathurst, 344RS Montalivet, and 59RS Lee Point among other places

Darwin has a beaut bus service for visitors, so over the next day or two, Allan and Marg. 'bussed' around the Darwin district-Casuarina - Dripstone - Nightcliff - Fanny Bay - Palmerston.... they saw these and the Darwin sights and probably more...all on a \$2.50 bus pass.

Thursday 3rd. June was the BIG day. Len Ralph was the No. 1 organiser, and he had done a good job with invites to all the local dignitaries, He'd prepared the Order of Service and even had chairs for the old boys. Len was to be both commended and congratulated for the care he had put into arrang-

ing proceedings which were faultless;

There was Ted Egan; (Administrator) Yes... The entertainer
of yesteryear.

Claire Martin, Chief Minister, N.I.

Austin Asche. (Previously Administrator)

AV/M Jordan (Retired)

Metz (C.O. Tyndall)

Ray Chin and Frank Geddes (RSL)

There was a RAAF Chaplain and various G/Captains,
other RAAF Officers, a Guard of Honour and so on.

Len Ralph opened proceedings, and other speakers were Alex
Culvenor, Austin Asche, Ray Chin as President of the RSL,
and the Chaplain.... All had prepared their speeches and words
carefully. That night, Austin Asche sent transport to pick
up the visitors and to take them to the Air Museum for a
'look-see', followed by a barbeque at the big hangar... a good
night indeed.

Bob Alford was at the Museum with them, and he arranged to
collect Allan, Marg. and Len the next morning for a conducted
tour of Knuckkeys Lagoon and the 132 site where a number of
Wedge chaps finished up, and this has been separately described-
then on they went to the old site of ADHQ which now is an
experimental farm. Most NWA radar men have vivid memories
of this place but there's not much to see now. The floor
of the operations centre has been unearthed but there's not
much else of relevance.

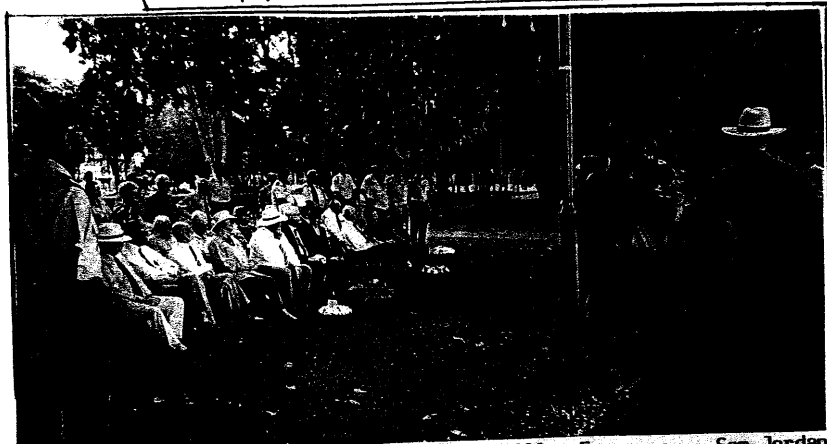
After Bob had dropped the visitors at their digs, a RAAF bus
picked them up, then out to the RAAF Base for a look at the
14 MCRU HQ and their Radar gear.... after which there was
an adjournment to the Snake Pit, sometimes known as the Sergeants'
Mess for lunch after a promise of no Bully Beef.
Friday night was spent packing after a hectic six days, then
next morning was the 7.30 plane to Adelaide, where, believe
it or not, they arrived at 11.35.
So ends the Darwin odyssey, and a right royal time was had
by all.

A note of appreciation and our thanks are very much due to Len Ralph,
Allan and Marg. Ferguson for their ready compliance to help this edition
of M. of W. get off the ground this year.
Without their reports and photos of the big radar occasion at Darwin, there
would have been a distinct and noticeable shortage of suitable material
to make this pamphlet a worthwhile effort.

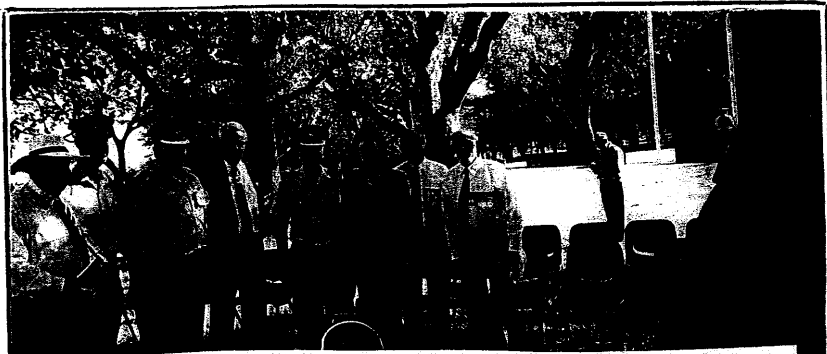
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Len Ralph, Allan and Marg. Ferguson, Bob Alford

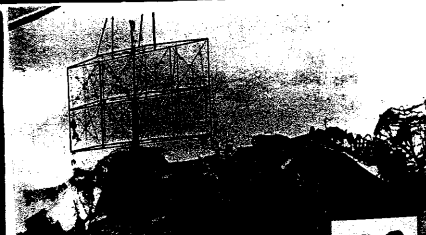


In this group, 2nd from left, Austin Asche, Allan Ferguson, Sam Jordan, Claire Martin, Len Ralph, Mrs Chin and Ray Chin (RSL)

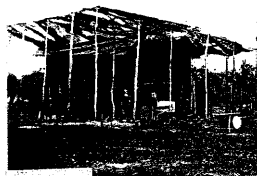


In this group....Ted Egan,-McCue, Sam Jordan, Cory Metz, Claire Martin, Alex Culvenor, Len Ralph.

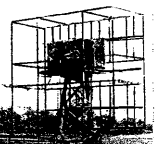
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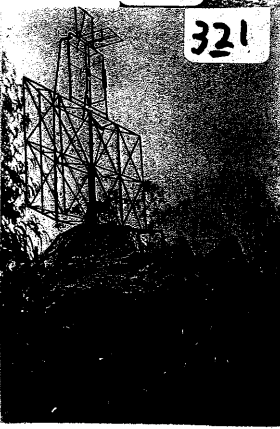
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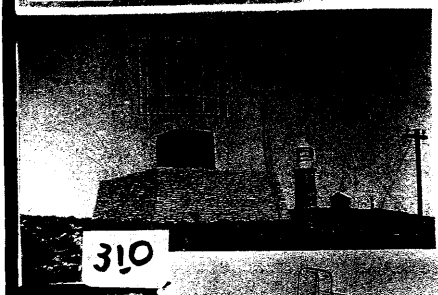
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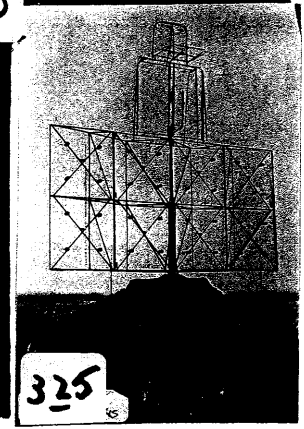
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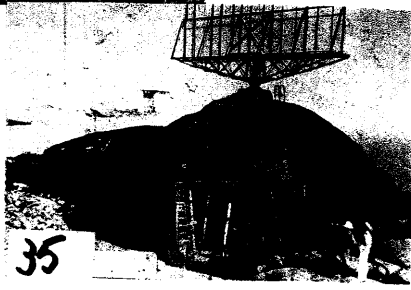
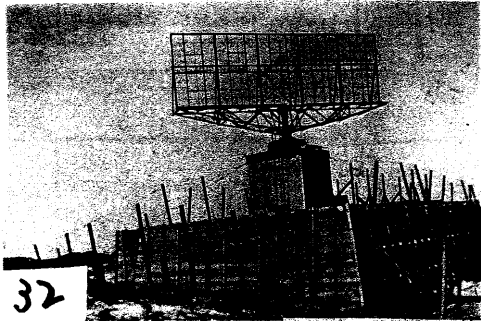
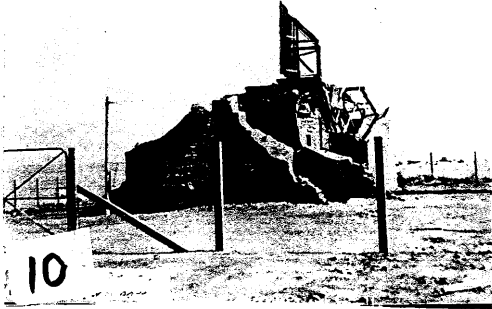
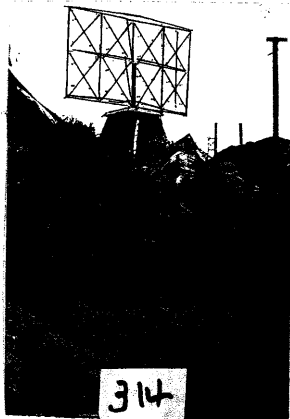
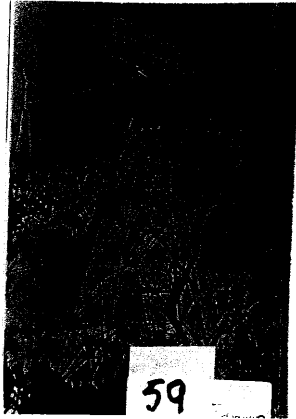


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ROUNDUP



MORE ON 132 RADAR AND KNUCKEY'S LAGOON.

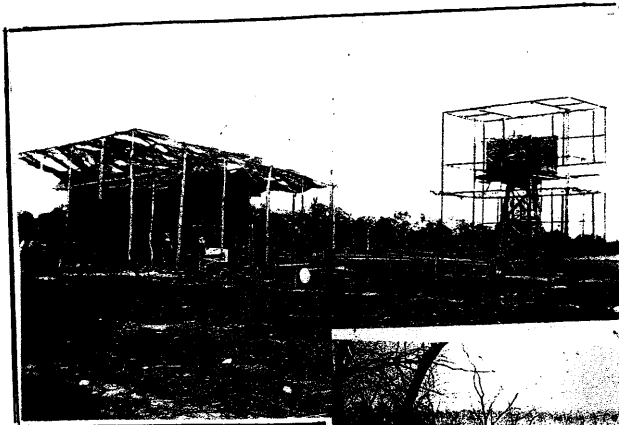
Last year, Paul Kloeden gave us a good, interesting report on his Sherlock Holmes activities while at Darwin when he investigated his old stamping grounds at 132 Radar and Knuckey's Lagoon, a large 'wet' area about 16 km. from Darwin. Paul found that access from the highway was no longer possible, but he found that a heritage group was actively seeking the war-time history of the place which Paul thought was pretty good. No doubt he added to their store of knowledge.

Allan and Marg Ferguson, and Len Ralph were taken into Knuckey's by Bob Alford, the well known history and heritage buff. He knew the only way to get in these days was from the far side. Not only that, but Bob had a good collection of photos, taken post-war, but clearly showing the big aerial foundations and the concrete piles which had supported the Doover, or Operations Room. Some of those are reproduced here. Hard to imagine, but I slept coolly and comfortably under the Doover between these concrete supports.

Wedge chaps who served at 132...Ken Arnold, Paul Kloeden, Jack Lawrence, Morrie Fenton and Clem Richardson.

Paul tried to bring home a concrete column as a souvenir, but couldn't fit it into his carry bag!

* * * * *



Aerial foundations,

← From this.....

To this!!! ↓





From this

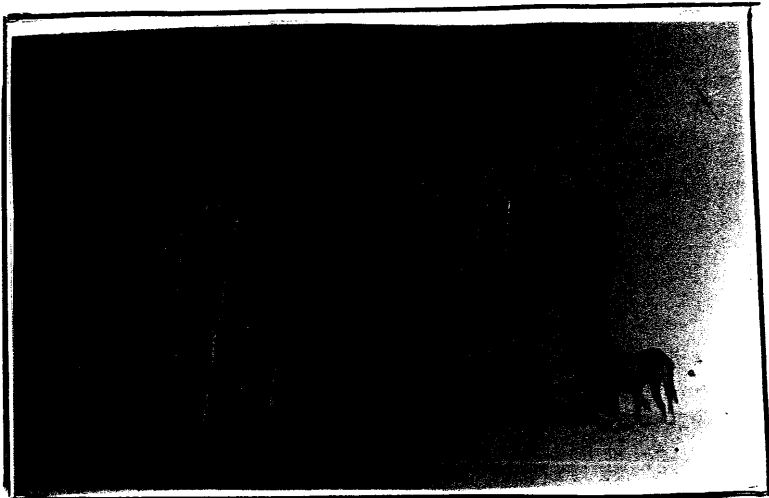
To this!!!



From this

To this !!!





A VERY APPEALING PHOTO.

A rather unusual and appealing photo from a radar station that tells a story....

The place was 61 Radar on Peron Island in Anson Bay south of Darwin. The station was very important in the NWA radar chain, for often any raiders, either coming or going, would pass close to the station, and both 61 Radar and its neighbour, 39 Radar at Port Keats, would send in good plots to 105 FCU.

Doc Fenton's supply planes would land on the beach, and occasionally, time and tide permitting, an operator and his picture show would be on board, the movie also being viewed by the aboriginal men and women living on the island - but only the women who had clothing suitable for such a mixed social occasion. This was a severe restriction on the younger girls particularly....their wardrobe was very limited - and the radar men found it equally unacceptable. So...what was to be done?

A campaign was organised, and despite the fact that ladies clothing was hard to procure down south during the war, Vinnies had a lean week or two when Mums, wives and G.F.'s were written to and asked to send parcels of discarded clothing of various sorts so that the Peron Belles could attend the picture shows, properly clothed for the occasion.

The photo shows a couple of local lasses in their finery, their beaming smiles show they too approved the result after the parcels arrived, and no doubt there was no shortage of 'beaus' to escort them home the long way after the show. But the old dog's expression appears to indicate he preferred his old friends 'au naturel.'

The rather elaborate residence is the castle of Chief Ahcor, the leading man of the aborigines, who all came to Peron from the Daly River region.

Wedge

Flashes ..



I've had correspondence with Mrs. Williamson, daughter of one-time P/O. Glover, 1st. C.O. of 7 RS. Mrs. Williamson was seeking details of her father's service and radar stations particularly for family info. and history.

Of interest to ex-Truscott men....the old strip and facilities have been receiving maintenance and this attention will continue so that particularly the coastal patrol aircraft can use it.

A video tape of our 2004 reunion was made and copied, one tape going to Ed. Simmonds in N.S.W., the other tape going on loan to Keith Backshall in Perth.

I think Keith may have experienced a fit of nostalgia - he announced his hope to be with us in 2005.. We all hope you and Shirley are able to make it, Keith.

To our many friends not with us today for various reasons, we all think of you and wish you well, together with the hope that your health and spirits are good.

Copies of the last two editions of 'Memories of Wedge' have been placed in the Port Lincoln Library where no doubt they will be found one day in the future and everyone will be amazed that Wedge was in the forefront of radar technology during the war.

Wouldn't it have been nice if the Melbourne Cup winner in 2003 and 2004 was in some way related to the equine strains from Wedge Island! I guess one can dream perhaps.

It is debatable whether next year's reunion can follow the same format as the last few years....organizer Fenton feels that perhaps a luncheon only may be the answer as some difficulty was experienced when arrangements were being made because of a bout of health heeby-jeebeys.

Finally, I would wish to pass on my thanks and gratitude to my helpers....to John Beiers for his amiable oversight of our reunion for many years, and to Claire and Jan who have helped as 'hostesses' with the various jobs around the tables. And to the support and assistance given by you, the Wedgies, most of all of course with your loyal and continuing support.

* * * * *

FELICIA - REMEMBER WHAT
FATHER SAID - THERE'S NO
SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH!



COACHING THE LITTL' UNS TO BE BIG'UNS.

The jealously sought King George Whiting has been much in the news lately, for the South Oz No. 1 fish has been well down in numbers at the last census, and he's just not around much any more. No wonder he appears shyly in the SAMTASS fridge window at \$30. a kilo, his glassy eye obviously watching for more affluent customers than the Fentons.

It's the recreational fishermen who have done the damage and caused the fuss and bother, for suddenly it's been realised the Rec. Fisherman and his thousands of brothers have been taking about 60% of the whiting catch regardless of size. Spencer Gulf, and particularly those lower spots out from Lincoln and around Thistle and Wedge are among some of the most rewarding of whiting grounds. So the size and length for the rec fishermen has been increased, and every King George fish caught by the amateurs must be more than 30 cm. in length.

Strange it seems that other fish have not been outlawed - I remember tuna, blue groper, gar and salmon also sought the Wedge waters, not to mention crayfish and prawns which seemed to flourish in the waters between Wedge and Thistle particularly.

I have to admit that not one of these exotic species ever fell victim to my line while fishing from the jetty, though I did catch the occasional rock cod which had obviously lost its way between the reef and the jetty. I really did feel sorry for the little fellahs.

Those wonderful pursuers of the piscatorial, Jim and Doug, sometimes went fishing on the south side of Wedge - they apparently had been trained for the job by the mountain goats which fearlessly skipped from rock to ledge down those fearsome cliffs.

But then they were richly rewarded - so too was Harry. All three caught monster blue groper now rigorously protected, maybe because the three chaps so reduced their numbers!

What we need is a sort of nursery school for all undersize fish, and the ideal supervisor for such a scheme would be a retired AFL coach....they seem to know all there is to know about encouraging the young and inexperienced.

* * * * *



YOU'LL REMEMBER THE **GULF TRIP**
FOR THE **REST** OF YOUR LIFE!

Once started on the Gulf Trip, you live in a world apart. The fascination of changing surroundings, the varied deck games, and dancing on the Promenade Deck at night add zest to the health and happiness of smoothly-flowing ship-board life.

M.V. "MOONTA" leaves Port Adelaide every Saturday, calling at Ports Lincoln, Pirie, Augusta, and Whyalla. Round Trip Fare: £9.

M.V. "MORIALTA" leaves Port Adelaide every Tuesday, calling at Port Neill, Arno Bay, Cowell, Wallaroo, and Whyalla. Round Trip Fare: £7 7s.



ADELAIDE STEAMSHIP CO. LTD.

17 Currie Street (C. 3671), or at the Government Tourist Bureau.

This incredibly handsome, Brylcreamed and obviously available chap would have created a riot on the MOONTA in the 40's. Speaking from experience, there was very little REST even for us ordinary young chaps in those man-shortage days. I feel certain that this handsome fellow had finally collapsed from fatigue - or from attempting to keep a full deck-length ahead of the myriads of the opposite sex who had been pursuing him relentlessly since the old MOONTA cleared the Outer Harbour breakwater and set course due south then due west to swing towards the Althorpes and Wedge Island. These southern waters were legendary in the history of the Gulf Trip - everyone spoke in awed tones of 'the roughest trip ever' once having experienced them. 'Once bitten - twice shy' as the saying goes., though once aboard the steamer there was no place to hide and be shy. But I digress... today this 1940's advert would definitely be in the category of false advertising, and the Adelaide Steamship Co. Ltd would have some fast talking to do to avoid hundreds of claims for damages. Though once past Wedge and sheltered by Thistle, the MOONTA - and her passengers - enjoyed five beautiful days of calm Gulf waters. More likely this chap is merely recovering from the inevitable sea-sickness bouts after the southern crossing - everyone - but everyone copped a dose!

