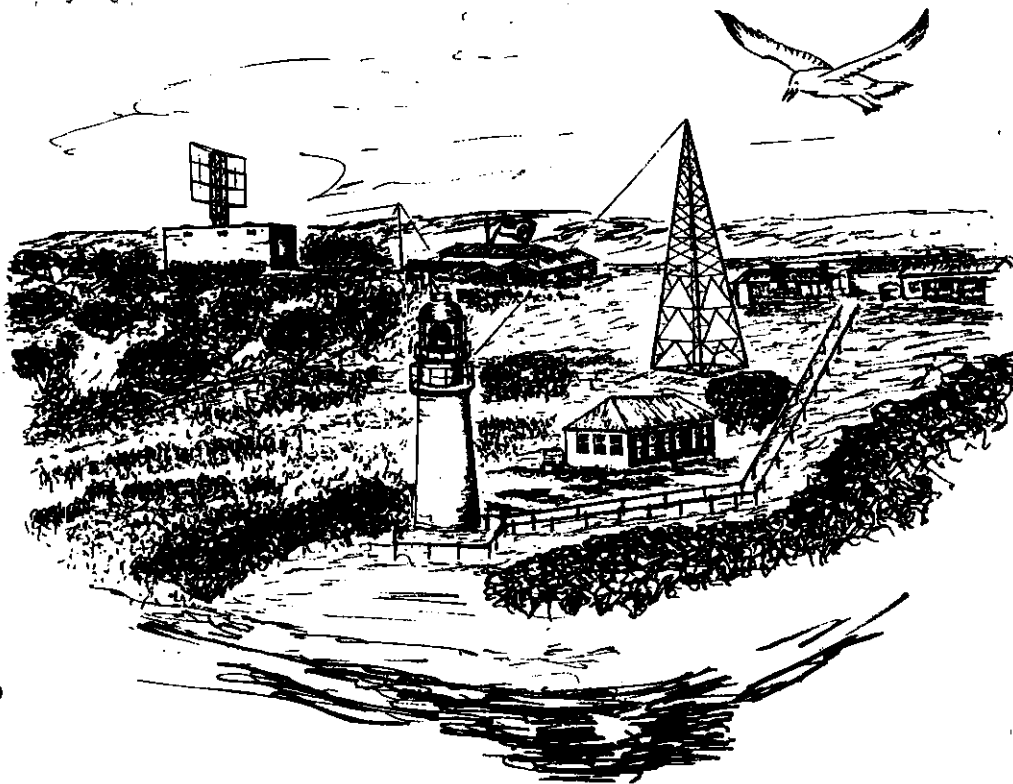


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13 RADAR CAPE OTWAY

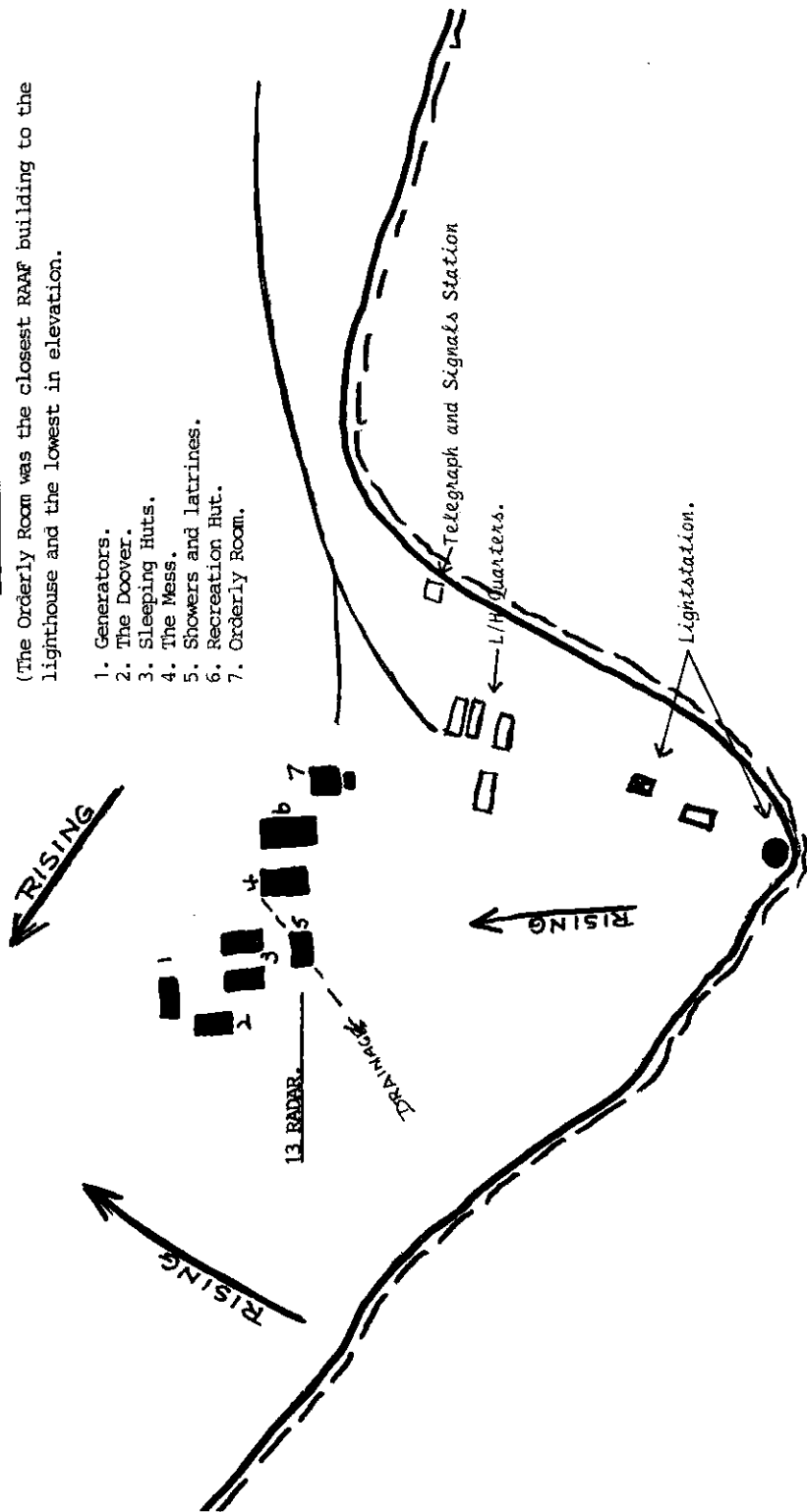


Edited by **MORRIE FENTON**

A "Not-to-scale" sketch plan of the Cape Otway area in 1942 as Digger Nottle remembers it.

(The Orderly Room was the closest RAAF building to the Lighthouse and the lowest in elevation.

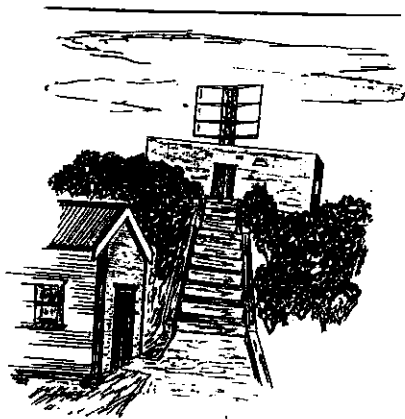
1. Generators.
2. The Doover.
3. Sleeping Huts.
4. The Mess.
5. Showers and latrines.
6. Recreation Hut.
7. Orderly Room.



13 RADAR CAPE OTWAY

"DOWN SOUTH ON VICTORIA'S SHIPWRECK COAST."

13 Radar was one of Australia's first radar stations set up on the mainland at a key coastal location to watch over southern shipping lanes.



Edited by **MORRIE FENTON**

13 RADAR

CAPE OTWAY

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Edited by M.E.Fenton

Published By

M.E.Fenton.

(Morrie Fenton)
27 Lasscock Ave,

LOCKLEYS 5032

EDITOR'S REMARKS.

Since colonization first began, Cape Otway has been recognized as a landfall for shipping about to enter the treacherous waters of Bass Strait, and to lessen the dangers, the famous old Otway lighthouse was built in 1848. 13 Radar was set up on this same site almost 100 years later.

It was in 1940 that a German minelayer had been along the southern coast, and had been at work near Cape Otway. An American vessel, the CITY OF RAYVILLE struck a mine and went down near Cape Otway—the first American ship sunk in WW2. So no surprise that 13 RS was set up there in June 1942 - one of the first on the Australian mainland and soon after Australia's radar program had begun. Also the Navy had requested that radar stations be set up at key locations along our shipping routes.

Operationally, 13 RS was not very active, and putting its story on paper was not easy....a not very exciting story of 59 years ago. There was a great lack of incidents worth reporting, and there were far too many boring inspections. But the strangest aspect was the complete lack of photos....not a single one, whereas most stations in all areas had a few available. So I've attempted a few sketches adapted from some modern photos, and I've used a few old tourist photos.

Nevertheless, 13 RS was important as a southern 'rest' station, and as a training station for the many new radar men being turned out from Richmond.

Not too many other stations stayed on air for four years, and it has surprised me how many chaps have revisited Otway over the years. Perhaps they liked the place.

Morrie Fenton.

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Don Bailey		

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I am pleased to acknowledge and to express my appreciation for the efforts and co-operation of all the 13 RS contributors. It's certainly not easy to cast the mind back so far, especially as the stay at the Cape seldom exceeded a few months, and I feel we all did really well. 'Digger' Nottle proved to be the expert, and Bob McD my special adviser (as indeed he was back in 1944)...their help was invaluable. And as is usual, I'm grateful to Pete Smith and the Newsletter...and to Ed Simmonds who so often prevents me opening my mouth and putting my foot in it! So Thanks One and All...the story has turned out better than I expected.

Thank You : 'Digger' Nottle.

Reg McCarthy

Don Bailey.

Bob McDonnell.

Ken Nice.

Ron Richards.

Alan Every.

Bill Harnath.

Alan Weeks.

Leo Doolan.

Don Parncutt.

Jim Patterson.

Ron Keats.

Peter Yeomans.

Pete Smith.

Ed Simmonds.

RAAF Historical Section

[Janet Beck]

Vict. Tourism Information Service.

Great Ocean Road Information Service.

For photos and illustrative material, I thank

Ron Coat.

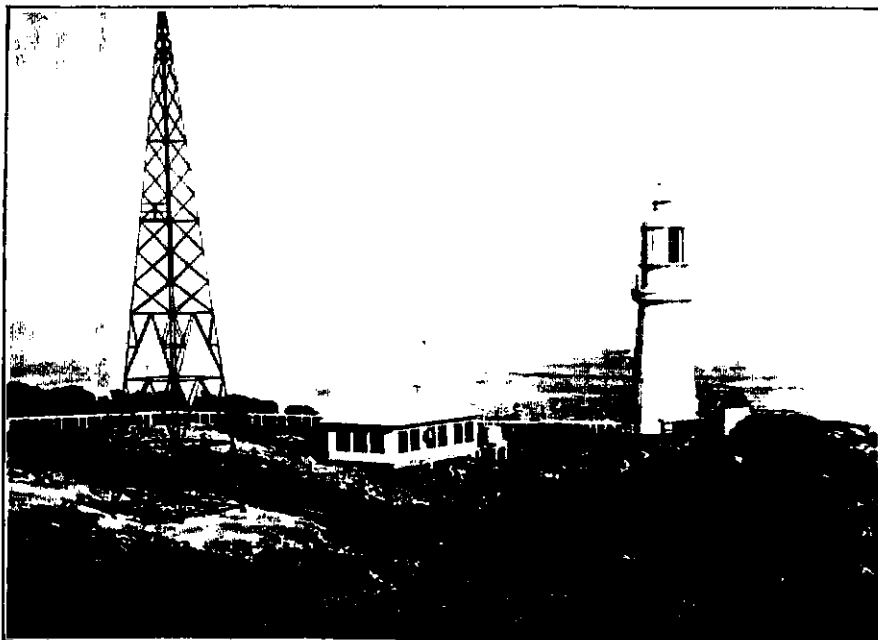
Bob McDonnell.

Bryan and Margaret Wardle.

Various Brochures.

Morrie Fenton.

#####



CAPE OTWAY AND APOLLO BAY. The photo above shows the Cape Otway Lightstation as it appeared in the war years when 13 RS was set up close by. The mast and building are believed to belong to the radio beacon then operating. The photo appears to have been taken from the 13 RS Doover hill surrounds. The photo below is of Apollo Bay in the same period. Captain Loutit, of the schooner APOLLO, named the bay in 1845 when seeking shelter from the westerlies on a trip to Portland.



INTRODUCTION.

Australia's lighthouses and radar stations seem to have had a somewhat similar task...the one to send out a beam of light to guide shipping through dangerous waters...the other to send out a beam of radio waves from a prominent site to detect aircraft and shipping. So during WW2 the two were often sited close to each other - and 13 Radar at Cape Otway, built in 1942, was placed close to the historic old Otway lighthouse which had been built in 1848. This was after several early sailing ships had been wrecked along the coast, some with heavy loss of life.

The Cape Otway lighthouse was the first to be built along Australia's southern coastline, and 13 Radar was the first radar station to be built along the same stretch of coast.

A primary purpose of the radar unit was to detect and report on all shipping (and possibly enemy subs and minelayers) in the vicinity of the cape - though of course all plots, whether of aircraft or shipping, were reported. Additionally, being an early station in Australia's radar program, it became a training station for the freshly trained radar personnel from Radar School where operators and mechanics learned something of the routines of an operational station.

Directly east of Cape Otway, and performing a similar duty, was the Wilson's Promontory lighthouse and 14 Radar Station, so that all shipping turning north from Bass Strait towards Melbourne was likely to be plotted and reported. South of Cape Otway was Cape Wickham on King Island. The treacherous stretch of water between, even after 150 years of navigation, still sometimes is known by the name bestowed in sailing ship days..."the eye of the needle," and is the entrance to the treacherous Bass Strait.

The lighthouse carried out its duties from 1848 to 1994 when it was replaced by a small light tower and automatic light with less range powered by solar energy.

The radar unit ceased its wartime watch in 1946.

#####



CAPE OTWAY RE-VISITED.

Morrie Fenton.

In 1984 I was stricken with a bad bout of nostalgia. At the time my wife and I were staying in the lovely little town of Apollo Bay in Victoria. Just 20 miles further south was Cape Otway where as an 18 year old AC1, I had spent three months learning something of the routine of an operational radar station....13 Radar. That was in 1944.

It was a pleasant, sunny day, so down we went, just for the fun of it really, but imagine my surprise to find the old concrete blockhouse 'Doover' still there....and I was welcome to inspect it, so the friendly lighthouse keeper told me.

I climbed the steps up the sandhill - through the bushes I saw the familiar shape of the old Doover - doorless, no windows - but how the memories flooded back. The rusted base of the old turntable only was recognizable inside, but nevertheless in my mind's eye....there was the Receiver - the WT gear - the strange old phone switchboard - the plotting table. That's where the transmitter stood, and the mechanics' bench. There we made the brew when we were on dog-watch, and suddenly I recalled the name of the Corporal Op. in charge of my watch...Bernie Frith...and I hadn't thought of that in over 40 years.

A container ship was ploughing past, and I remembered there had been more shipping than aircraft plots. Probably the reason why the station had been planted there, for other than the flights across to Tasmania, few aircraft were plotted.

Nothing was recognizable on the camp site itself, and the scrub had reclaimed the area. There were a few gutters and cement pads...but the memories were there too. Perc the cook who fed us: the Guards who called us; the clerk who paid us. No ghosts, but plenty of memories.

When I arrived home, the nostalgia was still bad, and out came the diaries and stories I had scribbled 40 odd years ago. The memories were there too, and so here they are...and yours too...memories and stories of 13 RS.

#####



THE CAPE OTWAY LIGHTHOUSE.

The Otway lighthouse and keepers' quarters were built over a three year period from 1846 to 1848 to the design of Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis. The light first shone out on 29th. August 1848 marking the entrance to Bass Strait, a much feared and treacherous passage for early shipping. The Cape area and its terrain had been particularly difficult to penetrate and negotiate, but eventually a safe landing area was found at the mouth of the Parker Creek, only a short distance from the Cape so that equipment and supplies could be brought almost to the intended lighthouse site. Good building stone was available locally, also lime and water, and the tender of £1995 from Geelong contractor McGillivray was accepted. But the work proceeded so slowly that in October 1847 the Government dismissed the contractor and assumed responsibility itself, assembling a party of 40 stonemasons under the control of a Royal Navy surveyor, Lieut. Charles Yule.

The work was completed in August 1848 at an estimated cost of £4300. - but after only 9 years, it was necessary to rebuild the keepers' quarters. In 1859 a telegraph station was erected near the Cape - a link in a line from Melbourne to Tasmania via King Island, but two years later the cable was broken, though the link from Otway to Melbourne via Geelong was maintained to warn of approaching shipping.

The first light system comprised 21 oil lamps in three groups of seven, with the heavy arrangement turned by a mechanism worked by descending weights which were rewound several times each night.

In 1891 the system was replaced by an incandescent kerosene lantern apparatus employing three groups of five glass panels, rotating in 5 minutes to give a triple flash every minute. The system was electrified in 1939 with the lens floating in a mercury bath to reduce friction. Also in 1939 a marine radio beacon was installed with the lighthouse area then presenting the appearance when 13 radar was set up in 1942.

THE LIGHT IS EXTINGUISHED.

More than 3000 interested folk gathered at Cape Otway on Thursday, 6th. January 1994 to witness the final working night of the historic light. There was some live music for entertainment, a commemorative service, and various historians attended as the most recent light-keeper, Peter Scott appeared on the balcony in company with a lone piper who played 'Lights Out' on the pipes as the Union Jack was lowered.

Among the many visitors was a senior lady who, as a 7 year old back in 1926, had lived at the Cape - her father was one of the four light-keepers of the day. She remembered particularly the schoolroom in one of the cottages where 12 children were needed to attend to keep it open. The station then was able to provide its own milk, cream, butter and eggs, and the children all rode their own horses.

On Friday morning, the light was extinguished, and as with other manned lighthouses in Australia, it was replaced by an automatic light which at Cape Otway is a 2 metre high solar powered light with a range of 19 miles. The old lighthouse will be preserved and will welcome visitors on week-days during arranged hours.

#####



THE OLD SIGNAL STATION.

An historic building at the Cape is the old Telegraph and Signals Station just NE of the lighthouse. It has seen many changes of fortune since it was built about 1861 as a terminal station to a Tasmanian cable which was unsuccessful, and was abandoned. The building then became a Signals Station to send shipping information to Melbourne and Sydney, and operated until 1880. Subsequently it has been used as lighthouse accommodation - as the school - and as war-time Navy quarters and Signals station, which evidently was its WW2 function when 13 RS was set up in 1942. The old building is presently being restored.

The photo shows the rear aspect of the building, and the top of its tower can be seen above the roofline.

#####

INTRODUCTION TO THE A50'S DIARY.

13 Radar at Cape Otway was one of the RAAF stations set up at key locations on main shipping routes to satisfy Navy requirements so that a watch could be made for possible enemy shipping activities - minelayers and subs particularly. While it cannot be claimed that 13 RS carried out any memorable action against the enemy, nevertheless its watch was prudent and precautionary from May 1942 to May 1946...a very commendable war-time effort.

The station came on air at Cape Otway in mid-1942 - it was an early mainland station and the first along the southern coast. Its operations commenced when Australia's radar program was still getting into gear. For that reason, the well known transportable steel tower was not yet available, so the Doover was cast on site from concrete - a blockhouse which was then partitioned into three rooms, or compartments for the Transmitter, the aerial turning gear, and the Receiver, or Operations room.

The gear itself was a mix of Air Warning (AW) Receiver and aerial, linked to an English CD/CHL Transmitter.

The aerial turning gear was floor mounted in the central partitioned compartment, with the big cogged gear wheel almost on the floor. At first the aerial was turned through 360°, then reversed because of the lack of a rotatable junction between the aerial and the gear, but this was later corrected to allow continuous rotation.

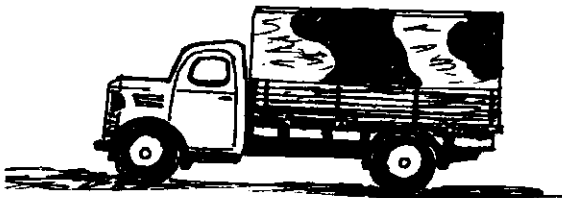
In the Receiver room, an AT5/AR8 wireless telegraphy set was eventually positioned, and a daily schedule to link the station with 7FS at Preston was set up.

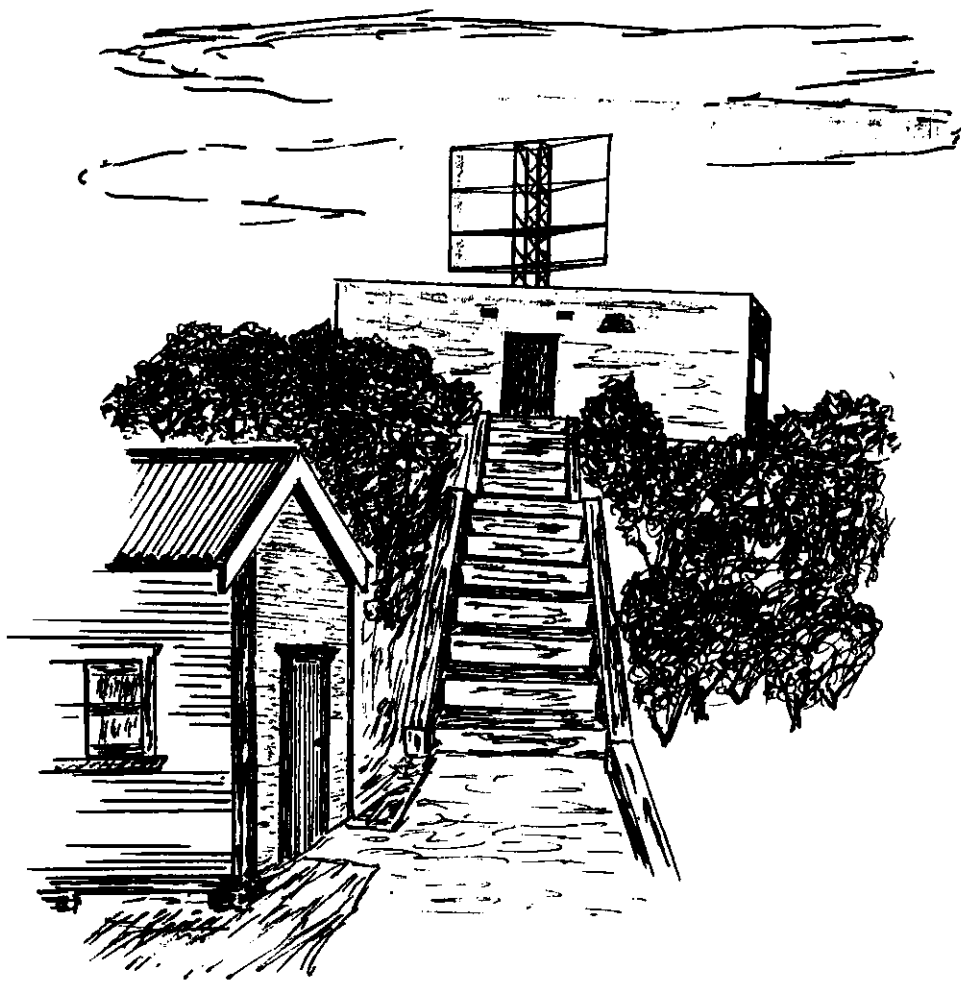
By the blacked out window on the south side was the Recorder's desk, next to an old style Ericsson phone switchboard, which was hooked into a local party line, though Preston was usually contacted by a direct land-line.

At the rear of the room was the BL4 - the IFF gear to recognise friend or foe, and hardly necessary at Cape Otway.

The Doover was built on top of a sandhill almost within stone's throw of the lighthouse, and the camp was immediately below it - only a few concrete steps separated the Doover from the sleeping hut.

#####





An impression of the approach to the 13 RS Dover,

THE OFFICERS AT 13 RADAR, CAPE OTWAY.

Commanding Officers.

13/6/42	P.O.	Harrison	R.L.	25/7/42
21/11/42	P.O.	Fletcher	R.W.	7/8/42
7/2/43	F/Lt.	Johnson	A.S.	19/2/43
17/1/44	P.O.	Stark	J.	8/3/43
25/3.43	P.O.	Bennett	N.R.	12/6/43
27/6.44	P.O.	Dennis	F.R.	15/6/43
25/8/43	F.O.	Bass	E.J.	29/11/43
7/4/45	F/Lt.	Muir	J.D.H.	6/12/43
4/7/45	F.Sgt	Graham	A.D.	15/3/44
11/7/45	F/Lt.	Gravell	W.J.	15/4/44
24/7/45	F.Sgt	Graham	A.D.	
27/11/45	Sgt.	Manthorpe	J.R.	
17/12/45	F/Lt.	Ross	J.B.	
14/1/46	F.O.	Parramore	I.I.	
26/3/46	F.O.	Mulcahy	B.S.	

Other Officers.

P.O.	Young	I.W.
P.O.	Katz	B.
F.O.	Skinner	E.B.
P.O.	Gibbons	R.W.
P.O.	Balfe	J.D.
P.O.	McMichael	H.O.
P.O.	Cooper	J.
P.O.	Gallagher	B.F.
P.O.	Bennett	N.R.
P.O.	Dennis	F.R.

#####

PERSONNEL — 13 Radar, Cape Otway.

The alphabetical list of names that follows comprises the names of men from the records researched....the record produced has to be regarded as 'incomplete.'

Arbuthnott	W.	Evans	R.L.	Lunney	J.
Anderson	G.	Every	A.	Loneragan	J.F.
Adamson	R.P.	Eller	J.H.P.	Leabeater	C.
		Edsall	G.	Lewis	J.A.
				Leahy	G.
Bunker	M.A.				
Bradshaw	R.P.				
Bowe	D.H.	Frith	B.J.	McLean	J.A.
Bryan	J.R.	Fendler	M.F.	McArdle	F.C.
Bagley	A.	Fenton	M.E.	Magee	F.L.
Bramwell	R.	Friday	A.M.	McCormack	E.J.
Burns	V.N.			Menner	N.J.
Boyd	L.C.			McCarthy	R.J.
Brown	R.J.	Gazzard	V.J.	McDonald	S.F.
Bell	M.	Gannon	L.F.	Manassa	J.
Bent	E.T.	Gillies	N.H.	Menday	R.E.
Bowie	L.E.			McCann	J.A.
Bushby	N.R.			Major	N.R.
Brennen	F.D.	Hocking	W.H.	McDonnell	R.T.
Bailey	D.	Hickling	L.T.	McKenzie	A.K.
Burnett	J.	Harvey	F.H.	Murray	D.G.McN.
		Hathaway	R.W.	McConnell	J.
		Harnath	W.		
		Hickman	D.		
Coles	R.A.				
Campbell	A.J.	Hannon	J.	Nottle	A.G.
Crossley	R.W.	Hardy	G.	Nice	K.
Coyne	P.J.				
Corbin	D.				
Cork	K.P.	Isaacs	M.	Osborne	H.W.
Cox	R.B.			O'Connor	A.E.
Cope	P.				
Campbell	W.F.	Jones	L.T.		
Cuttriss	D.R.	Jordan	J.H.	Patterson	T.
Coster	J.E.	Jelbart	S.J.	Parker	R.S.
Crowther	N.			Plumer	F.C.
Corbett	-			Payne	J.H.
		Komcoff	N.	Plumridge	M.R.
		Killorn	R.J.	Potter	R.E.
Davies	F.M.	King	R.G.	Parncutt	D.
Dawson	W.J.	Kinvig	W.L.	Parkinson	K.V.
Duckworth	M.	Kests	R.		
Davies	J.J.				
Doyle	R.J.			Reeves	T.
Dyker	E.A.	Lay	G.I.	Richardson	T.A.
Dunshea	J.	Landells	H.D.	Rodney	G.
Dennis	R.V.	Lawson	L.	Richards	R.
Decker	H.H.	Longworthy	G.	Richardson	J.
Doolan	L.	Lamond	A.S.	Ryan	A.L.
Davis	J.				

PERSONNEL 13 Radar, Cape Otway. (Continued.)

Richardson	C.N.		
Roberts	C.D.D.		
Raw	A.A.		
			<u>Security Guards.</u>
		Bunten	A.E.
		Beecroft	L.
		Barrie	R.K.
Savage	G.F.	Barnes	G.T.
Skeffington	W.	Crisp	T.H.
Skeggs	G.N.	Counihan	R.
Sankey	A.	Dalton	J.J.
Schofield	E.G.	Day	W.J.
Scott	D.J.	Etherington	N.
Sasson	P.B.	Hockham	W.R.
Sibson	R.	Holtham	E.A.
Streat	J.A.	Jerrams	L.W.
Sweeney	K.W.	Miller	W.H.
Slee	I.B.	McEachern	C.M.
Sweet	L.C.	Meehan	J.P.
Spain	D.R.	McLean	W.M.
Skinner	A.W.S.	McIvor	W.T.
Simmons	T.H.	McDonald	T.J.
Stott	J.C.	Smith	D.J.
Smith	H.G.	Tussup	E.G.
Taylor	G.D.		
Thompson	L.		
Thomson	A.		
Tye	A.J.		
Tudball	K.D.		
Ulett	J.G.		
Veitch	R.		
Walls	A.		
Weinert	M.L.		
Whitlock	J.		
White	D.F.		
Walsh	J.R.		
Whelan	R.B.		
Williams	J.L.		
Weeks	A.W.		
Yecmans	P.		
Yum	R.		

Unfortunately, though the list of Personnel is quite large, it must be regarded as incomplete.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK.

of (Unit or Formation) NO. 13 R.D.F.

No.

Summary of Events.

Place.	Date.	Summary of Events.
CAPE OTWAY	28/5/42	No. 13 Radio Station formed at CAPE OTWAY, VICTORIA, to Provisional War Establish H.D-273 Authority 251/9/1079.
		(1) Personnel - 1 officer (P/Lt.) 45 Airmen.
		(2) Mechanical Transport - 1 tender, light.
		To provide Air Warning by means of R.D.F. equipment.
		Equipment comprised 1 only CD/CHL Transmitter A.W. Aerial Turning Gear and Receiver, two Ford (Mercury) V8, 25 K.V.A. petrol generating sets.
		Buildings comprised four naval buildings, one reinforced concrete building R.D.F. equipment and two reinforced concrete dug-outs for generating sets.
	6-13/6/42	Advance party of officers from Air Board comprising P/O.R. CHOATS and P/O. together with other officers the commanding officer of the Unit and a inspector from the Department of Interior paid a visit.
	13/6/42.	The following personnel arrived at the Unit with equipment and barracks:
		A.4732 P/O. P.L.HARRISON Commanding Officer
		43255 CPL. BAGLEY, A.S. Radio Mechanic
		60857 AC.1 NOTTLE, A.G. " "
		60859 AC.1 SANKEY, A. " Operator
		80156 AC.1 DAWSON, W.J. " "
		41964 CPL. DAVIES, P.M. Service Police.
		21808 CPL. GAZZARD, V.G. " "
		41263 CPL. PAYNE, J.H. " "
		4054 LAC. BEEVER, T. Cook
		27297 LAC. COLES, R.A. General Hand (Lab
		50679 AC1. HOCKING, W.H. D.M.T.
		40731 LAC. WOODRUM, E.J. Clerk Stores.
		49449 AC.1 McARDLE, P.O. Clerk General
	13/6/42.	Work commenced on six new buildings comprising two huts for sleeping or mess building, one orderly room and guard room combined latrine and ab.

13 RADAR.....THE A50's DIARY.

13 Radar - (or RDF station as it was known at first) formed up at Cape Otway on 28th. May 1942, and provisionally it was to be manned by 1 officer and 45 men. Their RDF equipment was to be a CD/CHL Transmitter linked to an AW aerial and Receiver with the power supplied by 2 Ford Mercury V8's with 25 KVA generating units. The initial buildings were to comprise 4 station huts and 1 re-inforced concrete blockhouse to house the air warning equipment. The chosen site was adjacent to the old Cape Otway light-house of 1848 vintage.

On 13th. June, the C.O. P/O. P.L.Harrison and the first party of 12 men arrived at their new unit and work immediately commenced on 6 new camp

buildings - and it's interesting to note that 3 Service Police with Corporal status were in the initial party which suggests they were the overseers for the work.

Over the following week, 4 more men arrived, and once the air warning equipment had been installed in the Doover, 13 Radar went on air, commencing operations on 27th. June 1942 - the first radar to operate along the southern coast and one of the first in Australia. By the end of June, the station complement was 1 officer and 27 men.

P/O. I.W.Young was posted to the station as Technical Officer in July and he arrived on the 25th....his big task was to keep the equipment up and running, and he also received some helpful advice from F.Lt. Marsh, a senior technical man who spent a day with him on 29th. July. This suggests that the gear was not yet performing to the standard expected. At the end of July the station complement was 2 officers and 33 men.

P/O. Young was posted away early in August - he was replaced on Tech Duties by P/O. Katz....and then the proposed station establishment was amended to 1 officer and 62 men (though this figure was never achieved.) The camouflage of the station was the next big task, though the camp was well concealed in the hollow behind the Doover, and another urgent problem was to find an adequate supply of water for such a large number of men. Evidently there was a well nearby which necessitated the erection of a windmill, the setting up of tanks, and the laying of a pipeline. During October, rifle practice was begun for the Security Guards, and the camouflage work was completed. On the 21st. P/O. Fletcher arrived on posting with authority to take over command, and on the following day P/O. Harrison and P/O. Katz departed. The strength of the Guard detachment was reduced on the 27th. to 1 corporal and 4 men - a reduction of 11 - and at the end of October there was a total of 37 men on the unit.

The 1st. November saw an Army tender arrive with the necessary rations - this was to be the method of delivery in future - and on the 16th. 3 electricians arrived to instal electricity for the Navy...perhaps this was an observation post or perhaps in the old signal station. An organ was donated to the unit in mid November and this was picked up from Lavers Hill. (the story of the organ remains a mystery) Then over the remainder of the month came a succession of officers pursuing their various interests, all no doubt inspecting the effectiveness of the work completed around the camp. The most welcome visitors would have been 3 airmen from 1 RIMU whose task was to carry out work on the aerial turning system, probably to ensure continuous rotation was possible. The camouflage work on the station was still causing some concern (and much work, though the camp's position behind the sandhill was itself very effective) and a succession of visiting officers and officials and many workmen were all on the site for varying lengths of time. Additionally 3 airmen from 1 RIMU attended to the feeder system, and a new land-line to 7 FSHQ at Preston was brought into service. At the end of December there were 41 men on the unit.

On 9th. January 1943, a couple of officials from the Department of Interior visited to investigate the unit water supply which was hardly satisfactory.... then on the 12th. came the Big One...the AOC Southern, Gr. Capt. Pearce and his party spent a day on the unit. There were a few more visiting officers and their parties on the station during the remainder of the month during which a new phone was installed

in the Control Room.

February began with the arrival of F.Lt. Johnson on posting - and the unit tender was despatched to Geelong to take delivery of a new engine to replace a defective unit.

Then came a shuffling of jobs as the C.O. (now promoted) F/O. Fletcher was posted to command 314 Radar and with F.Lt. Johnson assuming command of 13 RS. Then came a rifle shoot on the 25th. and a series of lectures on machine guns and demolition procedures.

On 29th. F/O. E.Skinner took temporary command while F.Lt. Johnson was in hospital with an ankle injury.

The inspections and visits continued in March - there was a Canteen Audit, and resulting from a Department of Interior official being at the station, the doors and windows were screened against insects.

F.Lt. Johnson the Commanding Officer returned from his stay in hospital on the 5th., and then came a lecture on the Vickers Machine Gun for all Personnel.

P/O. R.W.Gibbons arrived on posting on the 6th. as RDF Tech. Officer - then followed more M.G. lectures and some more camouflage work. But more important was the selection of a site for an ASV Beacon, the erection of the necessary poles, and the arrival of men to instal the equipment. Meanwhile, there was M.G. practice for all personnel out on the range and lectures for the new arrivals.

There were three events of some importance in April - early in the month the ASV beacon was brought into service, and on the 12th. two plumbers arrived to instal a hot water service, while on the 18th. considerable damage was sustained by the camp buildings which was caused by heavy gales, and the windmill was blown down.

Other than that, there was even more M.G. practice and lectures, and 4 Tommy-guns were received to be added to the station armaments.

May proved to be a continuation of the station activities of the previous month - there were officials from the Department of Interior who obviously came to assess the storm damage to the camp buildings, and to plan the necessary repairs; while W/Cdr. Cunningham, the Southern Area RDF Officer and F.Lt. Thomson arrived to inspect the gear...perhaps there was some concern the storm had caused damage at the Doover too.

On the 10th. the installation of WT equipment was completed - 3 WT Operators arrived on posting, and a daily schedule of tests with Preston was commenced, even though plot reporting would have continued via the new landline. During the month, intensive machine gun practice and lectures continued unabated, and there was also one competitive rifle shoot.

June 3rd. "Unit tender overturned on the Cape Otway road about 8 miles from the unit. Extensive damage to the tender but no injury to personnel. Replacement received same day."

Rifle, M.G. practice and lectures continued through June.

The Southern Area Education Officer was on the station on the 9th. to interview and advise personnel on the advantages of the RAAF Education Scheme; then on the 12th., P/O. Balfe the Tech Officer departed to take over 328 RS at Wallal in W.A....his place was taken by P/O. McMichael. And the Librarian of SAHQ also visited to inspect and bring the library up to date.

On the 22nd. the M.O. from the School of Technical Training was on hand to dispense any injections due, and on the 26th. the replacement tender ran off the road about three miles from the station and hit a tree. Although its engine was damaged, luckily no personnel were injured.

The month of July was given almost completely to lectures, demonstrations and personal practice on the Vickers, the Thompson sub machine-gun and the hand grenade. On the 15th. several senior officers from SAHQ arrived to inspect the operations of the station relative to their particular duty;- and F.Lt. J.E.Jackson arrived to act as President of the Court of Enquiry into the circumstances of the accident to the station tender on 26th. June.

The lectures on the Vickers and Tommy guns continued into August, also the rifle practice out at the station range. On the 12th. Mr. Cottman, Inspector of Works for the Department of Interior, made an inspection of the station buildings, also he had a look at the site chosen for the erection of a garage for the station tender. The various station accounts were audited on the 18th. and on the 31st. a party from the Southern Cross Windmill Company completed the installation of a diesel water pump to replace the broken windmill.

September....a very quiet month. Other than the now customary armaments lectures and practice, the only excitement was the authority which arrived on the 24th. 4 corporals were promoted to T/Sergeants, and one LAC was promoted to T/Corporal.

October was not the most exciting of months either down at 13 Radar...the Signals Officer from Southern Area HQ was a visitor to check out the WT arrangement and to advise the telegraphists on procedure. Then the Medical Officer from 7 STT at Geelong arrived well equipped to bring up to date the needles and inoculations of all personnel.

On the 16th. P/O. McMichael the Technical man, left on posting to 1 RIMU and on the next day a party of officers headed by Group Capt. Chamberlain was at the station to make a general inspection. 13 RS was within fairly easy driving distance of Melbourne, and the station was now finding itself a popular unit to inspect....especially during a spell of pleasant weather.

Yet another general inspection on the 3rd. November, and a further Signals check up on the 14th.

On the 16th. Section Officer Hunter from 7FS HQ was a visitor...there had been one or two WAAAF's on the station at various times - drivers mainly, but this was apparently the first WAAAF Officer to visit the station. Next, the station camouflage was checked over yet again, then a building contractor arrived to attempt an improvement in the station water supply while an official from the Department of the Interior arrived to inspect the camp buildings. 13 Radar must have been a very fussy station to be on, and in a continuous state of preparedness!

Finally, on 29th. November, P/O. J.Cooper of 67 Squadron arrived to act as C.O. during the absence on leave of F.Lt. Johnson.

Not the most noteworthy of months.

On the 4th. December, P/O. Cooper was recalled to 67 Squadron - his replacement as Temporary C.O. was F/O. R.Steel, though only 2 days later P/O. B.F.Gallagher arrived to takeover until the return of F.Lt. Johnson on the 13th. The final piece of officialdom for the month was the inspection of the unit accounts....yet again.

The C.O., F.Lt. Johnson, newly returned to his station and his duties, was taken sick early in the new year and was admitted to the Sick Quarters at 7 STT. 10 days later he was attached to No. 1 Convalescent Depot.... meanwhile P/O. J.Stark arrived at the Cape to take-over as C.O. Then in a further shuffling of officers, P/O. B.Gallagher was posted to Radar School at Richmond to undergo a Radar Officer's course.

Then on 26th. January, 2 corporals from 1 RIMU arrived...their task was to instal BL4 equipment.

A party of Staff Officers from SA HQ visited the station on 6th. March - their varied tasks were to inspect the Administration, the Messing arrangements, the station defence, finishing with the engines and generators. Their inspections seemed to all co-incide fairly closely on the length of time taken, for they all left the same afternoon.

On the 9th. March, P/O. Bennett arrived from Radar School, and P/O. Stark proceeded on leave on the 15th., leaving the newly arrived young officer to act as Commanding Officer.

Two officers from 107 FCU arrived on inspection duties on the 21st. and the radar operators received instruction from them...and finally P/O. Bennett took over as C.O. on 25th. March.

April proved to be almost a 'non event' month - no problems - no inspections - no maintenance of buildings. But P/O. F.Dennis arrived at 13 RS as a sperrumary officer - and apparently he became Temporary Commanding Officer.

In May the A50's become just a little more informative - the unit's accounts were inspected by the Area Finance Officer who declared them O.K. (Surprise!) and advice was received of 5 promotions among the men

On the 29th. a mobile dental unit arrived and all were checked and brought up to date.

Finally, on the 30th., the big brass was back again - the AOC, the SASO and the Area Radar Officer. Also the Senior M.O. from 7 SIT arrived on duty.

The station strength was 2 officers and 41 men at the end of the month. (C.O.'s report extract) Recreation afforded on the unit include billiards, badminton, table tennis, wireless and piano. Four tennis racquets and a supply of balls are held by the Welfare Committee. Members make full use of this equipment and play tennis in Apollo Bay as opportunities permit

Quite a few happenings in June - P/O. Bennett proceeded on leave and P/O. Dennis relieved him. The stores clerk was promoted to Acting Sergeant, and the Unit Wall Newspaper - "The Doover News"- made its appearance.

On the 24th. the Radar Football Team defeated the Apollo Bay team - a significant and rather prestigious occasion. P/O. Bennett was posted away to command 355 RS and P/O. Dennis took over as C.O. of 13 RS which then had 1 officer and 42 men on strength.

(C.O.'s Report) The efficiency of operation of receiver and transmitter seems to have improved due to the keenness of the mechanics who have laboured untiringly in an effort to obtain the best from the equipment.

Best range over sea, 108 miles. Best range on shipping, 24 miles.

The Area Filter Officer arrived on 7th. July to enquire why the radar gear could not locate and plot the daily aircraft flying between Tasmania and the mainland....it was pointed out that the pattern of the transmission, or the beam, was such that low flying aircraft would not normally be located. On the 25th., the BL4 (IFF) was despatched to Laverton - the operation of that equipment was hardly necessary at Cape Otway.

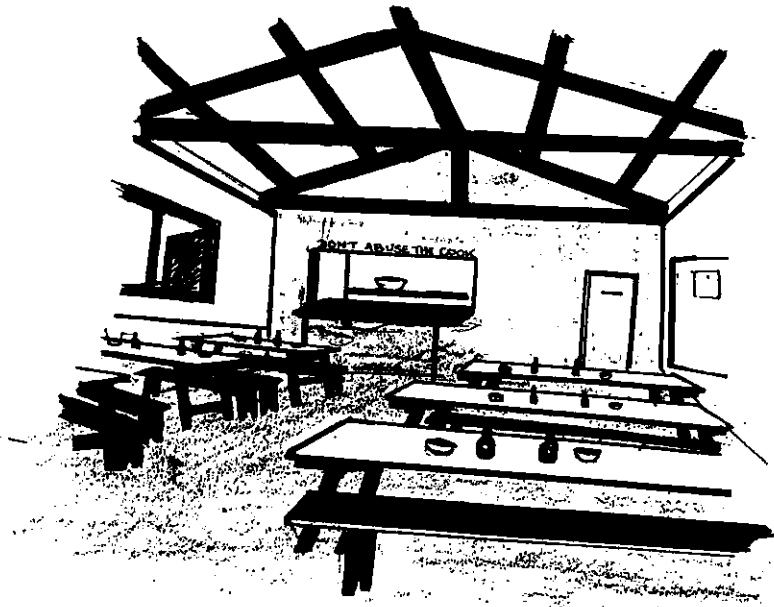
During this month notification was received of 2 promotions in the 'ranks,'- and the wall newspaper, 'The Doover News,' was issued.

There were now 30 men on the unit.

(C.O.'s Report.) A 200 yard range has been set up and some rifle shooting has been done.

A total of four entertainment runs and four church runs have been made to Apollo Bay.

The weather has made outdoor games impossible.



The Mess Hut on a radar station was a fairly standard arrangement everywhere, both in size and fittings.

The tables were all RAAF collapsible - so too the seating forms which each sat three on the two sides of the table - and in very limited comfort. Sugar, salt and pepper, sometimes sauce or jam, adorned each table, and behind the serving hatch the Cook and one or two helpers dished out soup, main course and dessert according to the Menu for the day - basic fare but pretty nourishing.

At a side table bread was available - it was sometimes fresh, too - also a mug of tea straight from an urn, while outside in true radar fashion was the DIY wash-up system - a half drum of hot soapy water and one of fresh rinsing water,

The tables could be cleared for meetings, concerts and the like - and with the addition of a visiting Chaplain, the Mess quickly became a non-denominational chapel.

Many of the northern Mess huts had louvred sides with fly-wire for coolness, and even a tunnelled flyproof door. A few even harboured a tenant under the roof - a harmless carpet or tree snake, both great deterrents for mice and other nasties. These were pretty rare though.

A radar maintenance party arrived on the 11th. August and spent 4 days overhauling and (hopefully) improving the performance of the gear - and the Area Radar Officer was also on the job checking the results and the equipment. Probably 13 Radar was *not* performing quite up to expectation. On the 23rd August, F/O. Bass arrived, and two days later he took over command from P/O. Dennis who was off on pre-embarkation leave, then on to 1 P.D.

The 30th. saw a meeting of all personnel to form a Welfare Committee, their first task being to organise a series of competitive games over 4 weeks. Similar committees were responsible for sports and entertainment at many radar stations in all areas.

The equipment overhaul - a fault with one Ford generating engine - and rough weather at the cape were all responsible for a high number of hours "off air" during August, and the station now had 1 officer, 38 men and one 30 cwt. Bedford on strength.

(C.O.'s Report.) A series of competitive games has been completed.

Four entertainment trips, 2 Pictures and 2 dances to Apollo Bay have been made.

Football and cricket practice has commenced, and tennis is frequently played in Apollo Bay on stand-down days.

The Mess room has been calcamined cream, and this has brightened the appearance a good deal.

The morale of the personnel is considered quite good.

September. A special mention this month. The tender made an 'entertainment trip' to the Bay so that personnel could attend a dance. No doubt an 'invite' came from the organisers so that the dance was not lacking in partners for the local girls...eligible men were in short supply during those years - an example of the happy co-operation between town and 13 RS. And 8 or 9 men also attended a special church service marking a National Day of Prayer.

On the 8th., the M.O. from 7 STT visited, and 7 men received injections; while on the 11th., the Area Equipment Officer and the Armaments Officer, also the Education Officer visited 13 RS...a nice trip was had by all! The station ceased 24 hour watch at 1800 hours on the 15th., and this marked the beginning of a daily 4 hour watch from 0700 to 1100 hours. The beginning of the end perhaps?

Then on the 16th. a competitive rifle shoot was arranged on the Bay rifle range between 13 RS and the 19th. Battalion VDC...and the VDC were the victors. Final score, 277 to 251, with 10/- for the highest scorer. Another clutch of Staff Officers visited on the 21st - this time Signals, Cypher, and Cypher Security were represented, and the Cypher Officer explained how to use RADCO, the new cypher.

On the 22nd., Cpl. Crossley was taken by ambulance to Heidelberg with suspected malaria - and on the 28th. a defect developed in the ASV beacon, requiring a new component.

The station had been operational for 389 hours this month, reporting 61 aircraft plots and 309 shipping plots. And 3 men were promoted.

(C.O.'s Report.) Members are well provided for with reading matter - one RAAF Circulating Box Library, one State Welfare Library, and other books and periodicals.

The billiard table continues to hold its place as top favourite for the evenings. The contractor is at present working on the recreation room, lining the eaves and fitting new windows. This should make the room less draughty, brighter and more comfortable.

Rabbit shooting is particularly keen at the moment, not that we are short of rations, but in a competitive spirit.

The Unit vegetable garden is progressing fairly well.



The Sleeping Hut on southern radar stations was set up pretty well in accordance with RAAF practice - a wire bunk, a locker, a straw palliasso and three substantial grey blankets. There was a correct and proper way of preparing and displaying everything for the C.O.'s inspection too, but then the C.O. had to time his inspection to suit the sleeping habits of the denizens of the Dog Watch who usually retired to pick up an hour or two of shut-eye after breakfast.

The sleeping hut was often the scene of a bit of fun too - usually harmless. The bunks sometimes just collapsed, or the bedding was short sheeted. On one occasion a chap opened his locker, and an angry and obviously upset penguin took him on - and effectively won.

On wet and stormy days and nights, the only readily available warm refuge was one's bunk, dressed - or undressed - in overalls pulled on over other clothing or pyjamas or whatever. It could be very cosy, particularly with an overcoat over the bunk!

"Lights Out" was usually at 10 p.m. at the latest, and in deference to those going on Dog Watch, the hut was not too noisy after 9 p.m. and reading or letter writing proved popular with all.

I guess a WAAF sleeping hut was much the same really.

Early in October, the Dental Officer from STT set up shop at 13 RS and all personnel were examined; and on the 10th. the ASV beacon repairs were completed and the beacon was back in operation.

On the 18th. the station accounts and stores were audited, while on the 25th. 5 staff officers from 7 STT - the SASO, the Principal Medical Officer, the Chief Signals Officer and the Security Officer arrived to inspect that section of the station relevant to his duties and interests, and all were satisfied and happy.

The appointment of a Sergeant Clerk to replace the Corporal was discussed, and this was to be attended to.

On the 26th. an official from Gilbert and Barker arrived to calibrate a 500 gallon petrol storage tank, and various repairs were attended to on the station buildings. The kitchen and Mess doors were painted, and camouflage paint was removed from the Mess windows. A number of fly-wire screens were renewed, and laundry facilities were installed in the shower room. At the end of the month there were 20 men on the unit.

The Area Radar Officer, F.Lt. J.Jordan, and a maintenance party of 4 arrived in November to spend four days adjusting and improving the performance of the equipment. In 1943, F.Lt. Jordan had been the respected C.O. of 38 Radar on Bathurst Island. And also an officer and an NCO from the Area Finance Office, while inspecting accounts and stores, decided that the records had not been properly maintained since the unit was formed. Both parties departed on the 10th.

The maintenance work that had been carried out on the station buildings was inspected by an official from the Department of Interior - and on the 22nd. a fridge mechanic HQ checked and adjusted the fridge.

On the 23rd. a general meeting of the personnel Welfare Committee was held which was followed a week later by the Sergeants and Officers get-together. F.Lt. Bass then travelled to Melbourne when empty drums were being returned in order to attend to arrangements for the delivery and collection of safe hand mail.

During the month a start was made on the painting of the station buildings, also station equipment and stores were checked.

At the end of the month there were 16 men on the unit.

(C.O.'s Report) The usual entertainment trip for pictures or dance to Apokko Bay has been made.

Members are well provided for as regards reading matter. One State welfare library and other books and periodicals, also a daily newspaper is provided from Unit Welfare funds.

The airmens' Mess has been painted inside and outside, consisting of windows, blackout shutters and doors.

The unit vegetable garden has to date provided one meal of broad beans.

A group of Service Police Officers were on the station early in December, and on the 11th. 107 FCU requested a 24 hour watch be maintained because of the possibility of an enemy sub in the vicinity. (the sub was U862, which crossed Australia from west to east, sinking at least two ships and shelling another. 7 Radar at Wedge Island was also alerted, possibly other stations.) Also a small party from Radio Physics Laboratories arrived at 13 RS to study atmospheric.

Several personnel were innoculated and vaccinated on the 12th., and on the 13th. there was interference on the radar screen, but it was decided it was coming from the radar on a corvette, and not from the sub.

(C.O.'s Report for December on following page.)

(C.O.'s Report,) December 1944. A particularly enjoyable Christmas dinner was partaken of by members of this unit. Two geese were obtained some time before Christmas and fattened for the festive meal. A plum pudding and a Christmas cake were made for us in Apollo Bay, and pints of cream were donated by local residents. The mess table was decorated with wild flowers and gum tips. After dinner, the lighthouse keepers and their wives were our guests and all joined in a musical and games evening.

The unit vegetable garden has provided several meals of carrots and silver beet during the month.

January 1945 began with a couple of unusual emergencies for a radar station - Guards were supplied to watch over two Anson aircraft that landed on the emergency strip at Apollo Bay. And on the 21st., Sgt. Friday departed by ambulance for 6 RAAF Hospital with an attack of malaria. On the 22nd. the station went on 24 hour watch until normal hours from 1900 hours to 0500 hours were resumed on the 25th. And a Medical Officer, a Dental Officer and an Accountant Officer visited on the 25th. to inspect according to the particular interests of each. The station was on a Dusk to Dawn watch for most of the month, with 239 aircraft plots and 343 shipping plots passed to 107 FCU. And from 21st. January 1945, 13 RS became a section of ADHQ Melbourne. There had been 2 promotions among the OR's during the month.

(C.O.'s Report) The usual weekly entertainment trip, pictures or dance, was made to Apollo Bay. Members are well provided for as regards reading matter. During the month a football and 6 ping pong balls have been received. The billiard table is the main attraction for the evenings. Food is of a good standard. Fruit and green vegetables are provided from Supplementary Ration Allowance.

The AOC, Group Capt Eatts, OBE, AFC, attended by a party of officers, visited the station early in February; and a competitive rifle shoot with the 19th. Battalion VDC was arranged, with prizes for the highest scorer on both sides. And it was noted that a few jobs still needed to be attended to on the camp buildings. There was another promotion among the OR's; and 184 aircraft and 137 shipping plots were passed to ADHQ. 120 miles was the best range. There were now only 13 men on the unit.

(C.O.'s Report.) With such a small number of personnel on the station, the sporting and general activities are of course rather limited. The interior woodwork of the Airmen's sleeping quarters has been painted, brightening up the appearance. An evening game of football has recently commenced. Food is of good quality and very well prepared. Morale is considered good.

A Medical Officer arrived on the station on the 7th. March, probably with station hygiene and cleanliness foremost in his mind...then on the 25th. a Mobile Dental Unit, unable to reach the station as the dental gear had been set up in a caravan and the road just wasn't suitable, was set up in Apollo Bay where personnel were sent for treatment. The radar had operated well during the month; and there were 13 men on the station.

On the 7th. April, F.Lt. Muir arrived to take-over as C.O. of 13 RS, and F.Lt. Bass departed on pre-embarkation leave. The Medical Officer arrived back again, also W/O. Campbell and his team of maintenance men to check over the radar gear .

There were two more visitors of reasonable consequence before the month ended....the Accounting Officer from 7 STT and the Education Officer from Southern Area HQ who arrived on the 23rd. but with only 11 men on the unit at this time, he would not have had much advising to do.

(C.O.'s Report.) The number of personnel being only eleven, duties for the personnel are more numerous and arduous. The fatigues are carried out daily, but due to severe winds blowing over sandy areas, it is hard to maintain complete cleanliness. The Telegraphist has been posted ...no W/T calls are now made with ADHQ.

Messing is not considered good. The new cook does not appear to have any idea of preparation and presentation of food. This airman would be more suitable on a larger unit where there is greater rotation of messing staff. It is hoped to exchange him as bad messing, particularly on a small unit is detrimental to contentment and morale.

The inspections continued next month - records, station buildings, and the 'weightiest' visitor for the month was the AOC Southern Area, G.Capt. Eaton, OBE, AFC, who made a general inspection of the station. At the end of the month another 4 officers visited as a group to make their inspections (one wonders if they had to wait for the fatigues to be completed.)

(C.O.'s Report for May.) The number of personnel is now twelve. The posting of the new operator will facilitate fatigues. A Telegraphist has been posted to the unit.

All personnel on the station are in a very fit condition. The new radar operator is unfit for operating due to eye trouble.

Repairs are required to the grease trap to avoid complications.*

From the 28th. May the unit is to ration itself from subsistence allotment. This will mean that all visitors will have to give ample warning of their visit and provide the necessary coupons.

June 1945. In recent months, with restricted hours and reducing numbers of personnel, the comments in the A50 Diary are also reducing. This month's activities are covered by three Diary entries;

A F.Lt. Medical Officer in company with 2 S.Ldrs inspected the unit;

The Army ceased to supply the unit with the customary rations, and in future 13 RS had to obtain its own supplies from the town;

And finally, the unit accounting records were inspected.

Not a particularly noteworthy month.

(C.O.'s Report.) Operation continued on the four hour watch basis from 0700 hours to 1100 hours. No trouble was experienced with any part of the radar equipment. Results from the equipment continue to be very satisfactory. The traffic plotted by the station is very small and it is difficult to see the actual use of the station in this respect.

The unit commenced to ration itself on subsistence allowance on the 3rd. June. Rations procurable are quite satisfactory and the messing standard is fair.

In July the unit records were again inspected - and on the 3rd. a party of officers from Southern Area H.Q. inspected the unit, and on the same day A/Cdr. De La Rue DFC, Inspector of Administration, visited the unit

*See "Ode to a Grease-trapper," Page 29.

The following day saw a shuffling of positions - F/Sgt. Graham assumed command for one week, then on the 11th. he handed over to F.Lt. Gravell who in turn handed over again to F/Sgt Graham after two weeks in charge. There were now only 10 men on the unit.

(From the C.O.'s Report.) With such a limited staff, a considerable effort is required in order to complete all returns at the end of the month and little margin is left for unforeseen eventualities. However, as a change to 'Care and Maintenance' is expected shortly, the unit should operate efficiently until such time as the changeover occurs.

Considerable work has been done on the equipment records during the month. The attachments of an LAC Clerk Accounts for two weeks and an indefinite attachment of W/O. Haywood have assisted in the clarification of these records.

The A50 Diary for August carries only one entry recording that three officers arrived on the 1st. to investigate the loss of motor fuel. (with so few men remaining on the unit, the effective control of motor fuel must have been difficult to police.)

LAC's Leabeater and Davey were posted away for discharge, and LAC Sibson was posted to 14 Radar.

In September, the Medical Officer from WTU Lara carried out an inspection on the 6th., and on the 11th. a party from Southern Areas HQ inspected the unit, particularly the radar and signals arrangements.

An instruction from HQ converted the unit from one on restricted watch to a fully operational unit. The strength of personnel has been increased to some extent to cover the instruction. With no officer on the unit, a considerable amount of work had to be done by inexperienced personnel causing some delay with returns.

During October, LAC Edsall was taken ill and an ambulance and crew arrived to convey him to hospital. Then on the 25th. a W/Cdr. and party arrived on an inspection tour. A Warrant Officer remained at the station to bring the records up to date.

There were now 23 men on the unit - perhaps the station strength had fallen too far, but to date no instruction had been received regarding the station going on full time.

A maintenance party of four arrived on the 9th. November to check and adjust the gear, and command of the station was handed over to Sgt. Manthorpe.

Early in December the Area Inspector of Accounts found all station records to be accurate and satisfactory, then on the 14th. the No. 1 motor broke down. Southern Areas HQ was informed the ASV beacon could only operate on limited hours.

On the 17th. F.Lt. J.B.Ross took over as C.O. - and on Christmas Day only a skeleton staff stayed on the station to enable all others to enjoy Christmas away from the station.

There were now 15 men on the unit. A further decrease is expected in January due to discharges.

January 1946 appears to have been the beginning of the end for 13 Radar Cape Otway, for although F.Lt. Ross arrived as Commanding Officer, he and two NCO's were posted away on discharge - two airmen were posted to HQ and two were posted to 1 PD. The newly arrived C.O. was F.O. Parramore, and he was left with 8 men.

The Cook was posted for discharge late in the month, and no word was received

of a replacement. *Members of the unit have not gone hungry, however. Rations purchased in Apollo Bay are satisfactory with the exception of fruit and vegetables, which are scarce and expensive.*

Big trouble in February - No 2 motor broke down - a Radar Operator was posted away on discharge and Mechanic LAC Edsall was off to Central Sick Quarters with another bout of malaria.

No 1 motor was then used to repair No 2 motor, and the station was back on air. But the only Operator on the station was posted away, and permission was sought to close down the station operations.

The only happy incident was the arrival of a Cook from 1 PD., LAC Andresson. Only 7 men were now on the station.

It is hoped there will be a marked improvement in the meals which have tended to consist of either eggs or meat, potatoes, bread and butter and tea which can hardly be called a balanced diet.

A similar pattern continued in March. LAC Edsall returned from hospital, but then left immediately on discharge. So too the FDMT and F.O.Parramore, and F.O Mulcahy arrived to command the unit - or what there was left of it.

But three Staff Officers arrived to prepare the unit for disbandment and closing, and found there were only 6 men on the station.

In April, various officers, NCO's and one airman arrived on attachment until 8th. May. The AOC Southern Area, Air Commodore Knox Knight and his party arrived presumably to wave the flag (or perhaps to lower it). There were only 3 now 'on strength.'

During May all were posted away or ceased attachment.

The last load of equipment left the station, and after four years of watching from Cape Otway, 13 Radar closed down.

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THE COOK'S OFFSIDER,

Perc the Cook at 13 RS was certainly a hard case...maybe he'd been a shearer's cook or similar....who knows. But he was a good cook and knew it, and was very fussy about his kitchen and was so very clean himself.

In contrast, his hardworking offsider always looked hot and sweaty - his overalls stained and greasy - and no wonder, for Perc kept him at the pots and pans, and the kitchen too, until everything was spic 'n span.

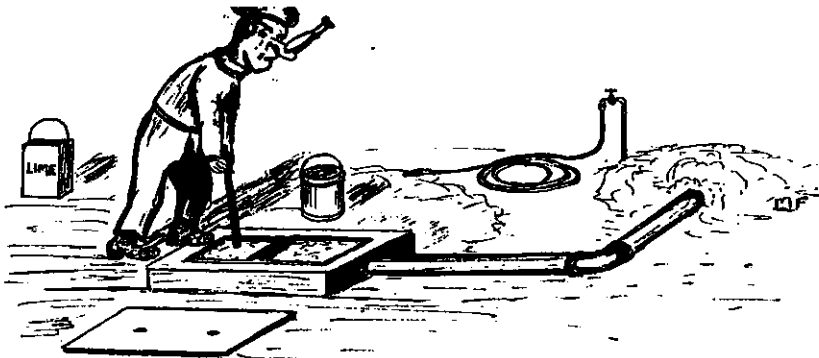
One day Perc made his customary appearance at the serving hatch, and broke up the queue with another of his dead-pan and outrageous statements:

"Got me off-sider to have a shower last night....he even washed under his 4-skin. He scored two gum leaves and a dead lizard!"



M.F

Hey Perc, Look Here! You wouldn't believe it!



ODE TO A GREASE-TRAPPER.

The Sergeant frowned down on the men
With visage far from kind.

"Latrines for you - you, chop some wood,
What else have I got in mind ?

A volunteer is what I want,
I need a willing chap,
I want him round behind the Mess,
To clean a blocked Grease Trap.

I wouldn't pick just anyone,
Who might turn out a shirker;
You're just the chap I had in mind -
You look a trusty worker!"

The Sergeant pointed straight at me,
I must have looked a fool,
"Of course I saw you raise your hand,
Now don't give me no bull!

I'll show you what you have to do,
The Cook's got tools and gear,
And see the job's done clean and neat,
No mess left - do you hear ?

So get to work!" the Sergeant barked,
"With this here scoop and tin;
This lime goes round the place as well:
I know it stinks - just don't breathe in!"

Oh loathsome pit with fetid stench
And lid so foul and crusted,
Oh why was I the only one
The Serg. said could be trusted.

Oh, what a greasy overflow
That taints the morn so fair,
I hose it down and lime it quick,
Retreat to breathe fresh air.

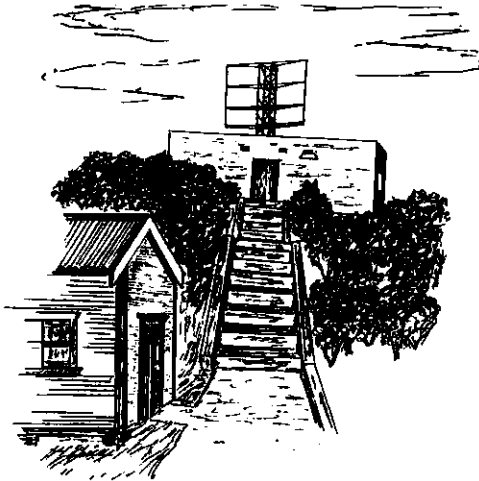
I hold my breath - then breathe I must;
There's sludge still inches thick:
The smell so vile - the pipes so choked -
I can't help feeling sick.

But Virtue earns its own reward -
When trap's as clean can be,
The cook calls from his kitchen door;
"Come have some scones and tea!

There's strawberry jam and fruit cake,
And here's a mug - just fill it;
And what that Sergeant doesn't know
Won't hurt his Mess-fund, will it?"

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M.F.



SETTING UP 13 RS AT CAPE OTWAY.

'Digger' Nottle.

My first posting from Radio School at Richmond was to No. 13 RS at Cape Otway, Victoria. On the 13th. June 1942, thirteen airmen including myself travelled from Melbourne to Apollo Bay via Geelong, then on by motor coach to arrive in Apollo Bay somewhat the worse for wear. I was one of the lucky ones who did not feel the sickening nausea brought on by travelling from Lorne to Apollo Bay on the then rough and unsealed Great Ocean Road. However, after some refreshments, we were soon back to normal and finished our journey to Cape Otway on the back of a RAAF truck.

On arrival, we were greeted by our C.O. P/O. Harrison and other airmen. There were also two RAAF semi-trailers waiting with 13 large packing cases on board ready to be unloaded. P/O. Harrison reckoned we had a burden to bear.

We were not alone at Cape Otway....there was the well known lighthouse and a communications station manned by the Navy. The lighthouse stood out sharply against a background of the white-capped ocean and sky stretching to the horizon over the grass covered knobby point of the cape. From this point the grassed slope rose to the NNW for a few hundred yards where it met the cliff face and the low scrubby bushland, then rising sharply to higher ground and a small knoll on which the Doover blockhouse was situated. To the NE the grassed area dipped into a large depression, then rose to the north and east to meet the bushland. The station Orderly Room was situated on the northern rim of this depression just before it met the bushland. The recreation room and other buildings were in the scrubland north and west of the Orderly Room.

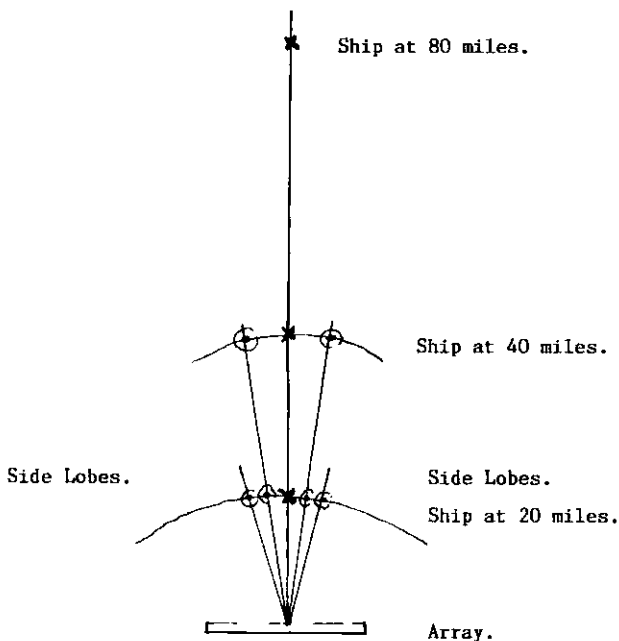
Cape Otway was about 400 feet above sea level, and when big seas were running, which was most of the time, and with the wind blowing a gale, the whole area was covered in soft sea spray. This created a problem. It perpetually coated the array and feeders with salt which had to be scraped off the dipoles, and the open wire feeders.

An English CDCHL transmitter and an AW receiver came out of the packing cases....the AW array was already in place above the Doover and installation of the gear went well. The transmitter dictated the type of feeders - open wire to the TR switch, thence to a junction box on the back of the array where beaded coaxial cable took over. The only problem came about when the matching coaxial cable stub, about three inches long, had to be soldered in place in the junction box along with the open wire feeders from the transmitter and the coaxial from the receiver.

Matching on paper was simple enough - a 1 to 1 scale drawing with all connections clearly shown. This operation was carried out in atrocious weather conditions and with great difficulty.

The first attempt with an 80W soldering iron hardly melted the solder, let alone make a good soldered joint. Eventually the joints were made with a 150W iron with a one inch diameter tip, and then only with me manipulating the iron and my mate, Arthur Sankey, applying the solder to the joints.

Because of its position, 13 RS was virtually non-effective to the north. The Otway Ranges threw back a solid block of Permanent Echoes to saturation. The height above sea level gave regular plots of 50 miles on shipping under normal conditions. However, when we first encountered 'temperature inversion' the first plot on a ship was over 80 miles to the west. Before the morning was over many false plots had been passed to Preston on this one ship. It later became evident that a mismatch between the array and the transmitter was responsible.



The sketch shows roughly what happened. The false plots (circled) were all plotted on the main lobe bearings. 13 RS may have been the first station to encounter 'TI.' Our first encounter with 'temperature inversion' came about early one morning, before dawn, when a blip appeared on the trace about 80 miles to the west. After a few more plots it became evident that a ship was involved. The information was passed to Melbourne and later confirmed as a ship. At this stage the only worry we had was the extreme range. F/O Harrison was informed. Also at the same time, King Island came in strongly as a PE and was recognised. As the morning passed, the ship's course was plotted to within 40 miles of the station. On the next clockwise sweep of the array, a faint blip appeared at the same range south of the ship. The C.O. was notified and

I joined him in the ops room. The Operators, the radio mechanic, the C.O. and I confirmed a faint blip, and the plot was passed on. (I should say here that because of the solid block of PE thrown back from the Otway Ranges to the north, the array did clockwise and anticlockwise Sweeps, controlled by limit switches in each direction.) From here on....BOY!.....haa we put 'the cat among the pigeons!' From the diagram, it can be seen that when the array rotated in a clockwise direction the side lobe to the right of the main lobe picked up the ship and was plotted on the main lobe bearing to the south of the ship. The blip from the left side lobe appeared to the north of the ship. And Vice-versa for anti-clockwise sweeps.

It was not long before a plane appeared to take a look. From memory it was a fine warm winter day and clear skies. The plane departed and soon after our visitors arrived. Top RAAF Officers and civilians, all expert in the field of Radio Direction Finding,(RDF). By this time the ship was 20 miles away and No. 13 was turning on a 'show' for our visitors. I am not sure at what time the effect of 'TI' faded, but the ship, no longer escorted by 'ghost' submarines, arrived at the cape, turned sedately and headed for Port Phillip Bay and Melbourne, unaware of the 'panic' it had no doubt caused in Melbourne. Our visitors departed and 13 RS returned to normal.

THE BILLIARD TABLE.

Shortly after we went on the air, Frank Plummer and I were granted a few days leave. We went to Apollo Bay on the early transport and booked into the Hotel Ballarat where we were given a two bed cabin at the rear of the hotel. During the day we spent some time in the bar and it became evident that there was a shortage of domestic staff. That evening after dinner, Frank and I offered to wash and wipe up, and our offer was gratefully accepted by our hostess. The following morning Frank and I made our beds and had breakfast in the kitchen and made ourselves useful for the rest of the day. On our return to camp we told the boys what we had done and how our efforts had been appreciated by our hosts. Many of the airmen who stayed at the hotel followed our example and helped with the domestic tasks. Our hosts responded in a wonderful way. They moved their billiard table from the hotel and set it up on a concrete slab in the recreation room at 13 RS. It remained there for the duration of the war.

The people of Apollo Bay went out of their way to make us feel at home. Parties and other functions were arranged to suit the station's leave rosters and many of the airmen spent their leave days in family homes. Long bamboo fishing poles with hook, line and sinker attached were suggested by the fishermen for fishing from the rocks below the lighthouse, and they gave us a couple of cray pots as well. There was a small beach in the lee of the cape where some of us used to swim, though there was no room to swim more than a few strokes, weather permitting.

Apollo Bay was a small picturesque fishing village, nestling in the lowland between the sea and the bright green foothills, dotted here and there with the stark white trunks of old trees. It was a delightful place.

RETURN TO APOLLO BAY AND CAPE OTWAY.

'Digger' Nottle.

On the Sunday before the Moomba Festival Parade in Melbourne in 1979, my wife Patricia and I visited Apollo Bay and Cape Otway. What a surprise Apollo Bay proved to be, for it had changed so much.

We continued on to Cape Otway, arriving about 3 pm. The Cape had not changed other than the only evidence of 13 RS was the concrete Dover blockhouse and an 8 ft. high wire mesh fence enclosing the area of the lighthouse and the old 13 RS site. A communications station was still operating. A notice on the gate informed us visitors were allowed on Thursdays only. There were a number of people wandering around the cliff tops and coming up from the rocks below. My wife and I were travelling in a Ford F100 utility, and I followed the perimeter fence until we were on the higher ground overlooking the old Dover. There was nothing more to see other than the green cape, the lighthouse, the buildings and the ocean beyond.

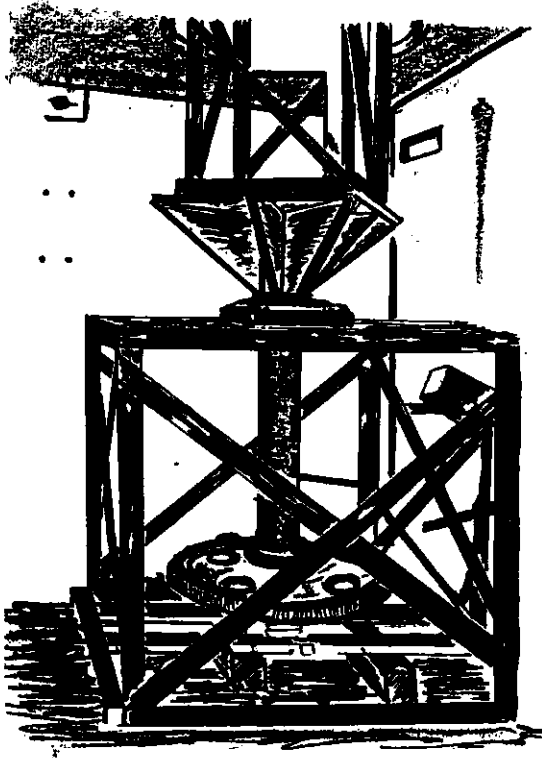
By this time, most of the visitors had left, leaving only a few stragglers. I spoke with a chap in white shorts and shirt on the other side of the gate, told him where we had come from and that I had been involved in the installation of the gear in 1942. We waited until the other visitors had left, then he opened the gate and let us in. He told us that many of the airmen who had served at 13 RS had visited the site. Surprisingly, the only things he knew about were the 'Dover' and the 'air raid shelter.' However, he accompanied Patricia and I as we walked around the site.

To our right as we entered was a solid block of concrete imbedded in the ground where we had poured it - it was the step up to the Orderly Room entrance which had faced the south. Further up the slope and to the left I identified the site of the recreation room. The concrete slab on which the billiard table had stood had been broken up and left among odd bits of corrugated fibro cement roofing material. Higher up the slope were bits of fibro roofing and brick footings where the barracks, kitchen and storeroom had stood. "Over to the right is the air raid shelter" we were told as we headed through the scrub which soon formed a canopy over our heads, so low in places our escort and I had to duck. We soon came to an opening in a concrete structure completely over-run with scrub where Frank Plummer had installed our power units in 1942. "This is the air raid shelter" our escort informed us. I walked along and found the two vents where the exhausts of the two Mercurys had passed. The vents were still blackened with carbon. I reached up and touched the edge of the vents with my fingers - they came away covered with carbon residue. I explained what the air raid shelters had actually been. We crossed the scrubby bushland to the Dover. The angle iron structure of the array mast had been cut off at roof level with an oxy torch and the base frame and associated drive gear left to rust. Otherwise the place was empty. "The only other concrete is in the old 'chook run'" our escort said as he led the way along the path. Sure enough we ended up in an old 'chook run.' The concrete floor was covered in rubbish and was only evident in a couple of places. With a piece of old timber I raked away the rubbish and exposed the concrete drain which had taken away the waste water. The old toilet and ablutions block floor, covered with rubbish washed down over the years was still there.

I told our escort the story of the Hotel Ballarat and the billiard table, and how the people of Apollo Bay had made us feel at home. Then I told him the story of the Temperature Inversion and other 13 RS incidents and RAAF life.

We parted late in the afternoon, Patricia and I grateful our escort had allowed us entry, and he 'tickled pink' about the information he could now pass on to his future visitors.

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INSIDE THE DOOVER. 13 RS was an early stylé Doover, and was cast from concrete 'on site.' The aerial turning 'works' rested on a central slab - and its remains are still in place, quietly rusting away after 59 years.

As Australia's radar program gained momentum, the standard Doover was a transportable tower, with a framework that bolted together. The aerial turning gear was then mounted in a compartment above the Ops room.
