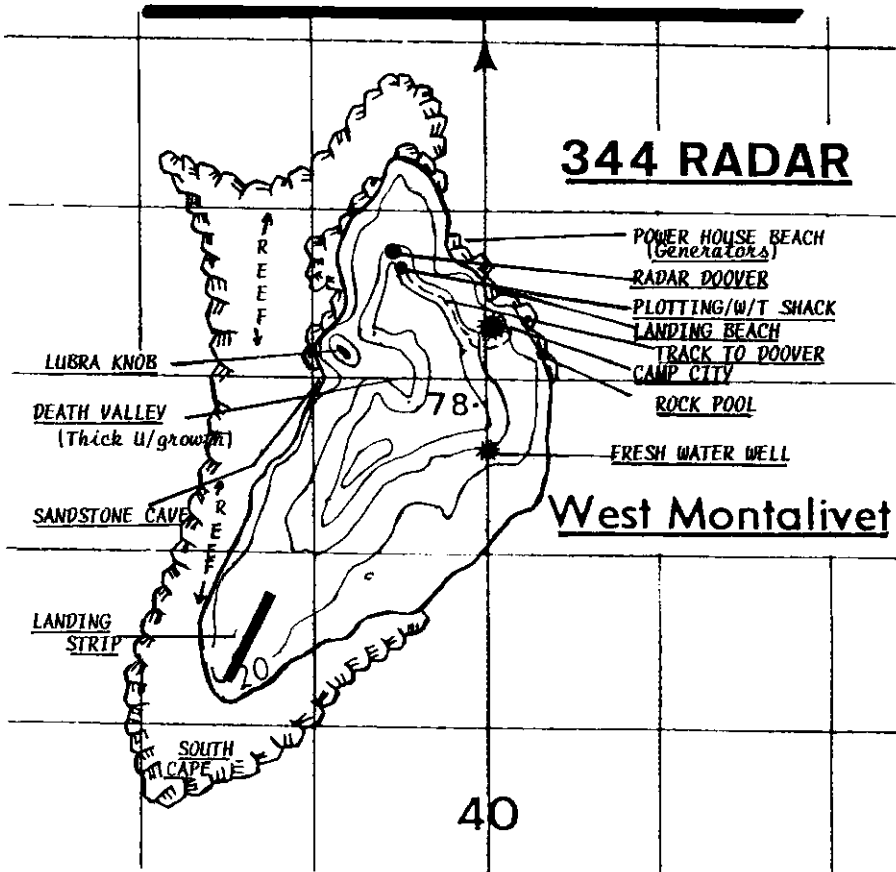


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344 RADAR, WEST MONTALIVET.



Edited by **MORRIE FENTON**

The History and Stories
of

**344 RADAR,
WEST
MONTALIVET.**

THE STORY OF A SMALL
AUSTRALIAN RADAR UNIT
ON A LONELY CORAL ISLAND
OFF THE KIMBERLEY COAST.



Edited by **MORRIE FENTON**

CONTENTS.

Contents.		Page	2
Acknowledgements.			3
Frontispiece.			4
Foreword.	Austin Asche		5
The French Connection.	C.Fenton		6
Introduction.	M.Fenton		7
Survey Description.	12 Survey and Design Unit		8
F/Lt. Bill Sanderson and Crew.	Ed. Simmonds		9
West Montalivet.	Stanley Morgan		13
344 at W. Montalivet.	Walter Wood		14
The Laddie with the Lamp.	Gordon Shearwin		14
Montalivet Diary Highlights.	Duncan Stewart		15
F/Lt. Jack Slade.	NT Aerial Medical Service		16
From the Diary of 344.	M.Fenton		17
Monte Memories of Mates and Much More.			
	Austin Asche		22
344 Radar Montalivet.	Ken Nice		29
344 Trivia.	Wal Duckering		30
Strange Happenings around the Monte.			
	Wal Duckering		31
Fresh Meat by Air Mail.	"		32
Entertainment on Monte.	"		33
Hey! Do You Remember This?	"		33
Hey! Did You Know This?	"		33
Storms and Cyclones.	"		33
Exploring the Reef.	"		35
Swimming with the Sea Creatures.	"		36
Letters from West Monte.	Laurie Leckie		38
"Rough as Bags"			45
Memories of Monte.	Max Baker		50
The Kaiara.	"The Art of the Wandjina"		51
My Memories of 344.	Ray Kelly		
Looking Back.	Bill Langford		53
Personnel.			56
Return to Monte.	Laurie Leckie		57
"The LONELY STAR."			59
Roster.			60

Photos - pages 10, 11, 21, 37, 49, 54, 55, 58.

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344 Radar,
West
Montalivet.

ISBN 0 9585243 0 0

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Edited by Morrie Fenton,

(M.E.Fenton.)

Published by Morrie Fenton,
27 Lasscock Ave, LOCKLEYS
5032 S.AUS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I acknowledge with pleasure and gratitude the enthusiasm, and the help, the encouragement and effort of those I now mention. Without their co-operation and support, this story of 344 Radar on Montalivet Island would have been far less interesting. Their personal contributions certainly bring the story alive.

The following are all co-authors of the station's story:

Laurie Leckie.
Wally Duckering.
Austin Asche.
Ken Nice.
Stanley Morgan.
Walter Wood.
Gordon Shearwin.
Duncan Stewart.
Max Baker.
Ray Kelly.
Bill Langford.
Cliff Leavy.
Lynden Carter.

Ed. Simmonds.
Pete Smith.
M. Fenton.
Claire Fenton.
"Radar Yarns."
"More Radar Yarns."
Peter Callaghan,
{Paper on Northern Territory
Aerial Medical Service.}
"The Art of the Wandjina,"
{I.M.Crawford 1968}

A special word for Laurie Leckie whose idea this is !! and who went to great effort to cull the collection of letters he possessed..... also to Austin Asche for the 'Foreword,'...an original and pleasing idea for a little booklet like this.

Historical research by Claire Fenton.

The photos are not many really, but those that came in certainly add to the story, even though they may have appeared before.

I thank Pete Smith for loaning the Bill Sanderson collection, also Laurie Leckie and Lynden Carter.

Finally, a note about The Lonely Star, the station's newsletter. I'm not sure how many copies or editions....but I have to the best of my ability copied two, and these are available separately.

Murray Marks and J.P. Seymour were the Editors of that rare paper, and I acknowledge their effort of 50 odd years ago. Murray Marks was a good friend of mine, and I'm pleased to pay an Acknowledgement to Murray for his work...and friendship.

Morrie Fenton.

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*Wally Duckering and Jim Seymour at the cave
on the western side of the island.*



*Two neighbours from a nearby island drop in for
an 'exchange and barter' session.*

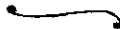
Foreword.

Well met, good friends, though scattered far
About our great South Land.
This book will bring us home again
To sun and stars and sand;
And rocky soil and stunted trees,
And sweaty days and evening breeze.
And nightfall over diamond seas,
And winds by tempests fanned.

Though half a century or more
In years have passed away,
There still remains those mates of yore,
Wal, Laurie, Ken and Ray,
And others whom we'll not forget,
For Bill and Phil are with us yet,
Their laughter in our memory set,
And live with us today.

Old Monte stands alone again,
Cares not for hopes and fears
Of young lads turning into men
Once in her million years.
We were a shadow passing by;
But we'll remember when we fly
To that great Doover in the sky,
And take her with us then.

Austin.



THE FRENCH CONNECTION.

C.Fenton.

Stretching northward from the site of 326 Radar at Cape Leveque, the Buccaneer Archipelago and the Bonaparte Archipelago reach along the Australian North-West coastline to the northern-most Kimberley point at Sir Graham Moore Island above the Anjo Peninsula - a continuous chain of small islands protecting the mainland.

A dangerous coast this...with reefs and shoals...a huge 10 metre tidal variation....not to mention the islands themselves with the crocs and sharks that patrol them.

At one time, ten or twelve thousand years ago probably, those archipelagos were actually part of the mainland; but then the rising seas at the end of the ice age changed the shoreline, with the lower parts of the coastline inundated, leaving only the higher peaks to form the dangerous chain of islands and reefs which first began to appear on the maritime charts only after the exploration and survey work of the early 1800's.

In the early years of the new century, both the French and the English were intent on exploring the North-West coast in the vicinity of Timor and the Spice Islands. The French explorer and navigator, Nicholas Baudin, sailed north from Cape Leeuwin, and the Englishman Lieutenant King sailed westwards from the TIWI Islands. So it is no great surprise to find a rather curious mix of French, English and Dutch names - for indeed the Dutch were the first - identifying the coastal features and islands.

The Montalivet Islands in the Bonaparte Archipelago were named in 1802/3 by the French expedition headed by Baudin in 'Le Geographe'...the name honoured Jean Pierre Bachasson, Comte de Montalivet, (1766-1823) who was a French engineer and a peer of France, a soldier and statesman. Baudin also named Cape Leveque for Pierre Leveque, (1746-1814) an engineer hydrographer, while the Bonaparte Archipelago was named for a patron of the expedition. The Buccaneer Archipelago was named by King in 1821 to commemorate the visit of William Dampier to this coast in 1688.

The Montalivet Islands have a volcanic and sandstone base, the higher plateau areas being covered in harsh scrub common to the area.

West Montalivet Island where 344 Radar was set up proved harsh and dry, with fresh water only to be found in the monsoonal wet season.

INTRODUCTION

Among the radar fraternity, there was a fear - yet fascination about 344 RS on Montalivet Island. An air of mystery, yet some envy, about a posting to this remote island off the Kimberley coast. And all we other operators and mechs felt we had missed out on one of life's experiences unless we were posted there. Hard to believe perhaps but true.

The stories of isolation - deprivation - tough and rough living, - these were savoured almost by others....and almost certainly embellished by those who could speak first hand of the place.

Tinned rations every day - drinking water carted in and tasting of aviation fuel - no pictures - no transport - infrequent mail - nowhere to go - no comforts to speak of except an occasional Comforts parcel. A 'closed ' island off an uninhabited coastline.

True all that was for a while - particularly in the early days when the station was 'working up,' - but it's a revelation to read in this booklet of life on the island after the first year. Ballantyne's 'Coral Island' was almost compulsory reading in my young days....and I could only compare Montalivet with 'The Coral Island.' The reef - the fishing - the 'making do' - the lack of resources - but sound leadership and young followers.

But it's been an eye-opener to read of the great life there actually enjoyed by those who followed the 'originals.'

The mateship - the indomitable spirit of youth - the ability to ignore or overcome each hardship with Australian adaptability....and now nostalgia - all these show out in the pages of memories that follow.

There were many other island radar stations through the NWA, but none could match Monte's reputation other than perhaps Bathurst in the very early days.

And I'm now convinced none could match Monte's spirit of mateship which has endured for more than 50 years.

I'm only surprised the C.O. did not record that well known motto in the Diary....."Semper Unitas."

Morrie Fenton.

WEST MONTALIVET ISLAND.

344 RADAR STATION. Latitude 14°18' Longitude 125°14' .

The following Data Extracts are from a Reconnaissance Report made by F/O Crocker, of No. 12 Survey and Design Unit DARWIN following a survey of the island in February 1944.

DESCRIPTION OF ISLAND.

- (a) Size approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.
- (b) Three beaches on all of which materials can be landed by shallow draft vessels.
- (c) The Officer in charge of HMAS SOUTHERN CROSS advised that satisfactory anchorages are present at each of the beaches although not all-weather anchorages.
- (d) Island rises from sea-level along gentle slopes to central ridge approximately 230 feet above sea level.
- (e) Generally fairly well covered with trees and shrubs. Average height of trees 14' and shrubs 10'.
- (f) Very little overhead cover for natural camouflage.
- (g) No natural tracks.
- (h) There is evidence of white ants.
- (i) No areas either beach or ground suitable for landing aircraft.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE.

Timber - None suitable for building.
Gravel; Sand; Aggregate. Available.

WATER.

- (a) On the S.E. side of the island there is a large catchment area terminating in low lying ground of sandy loam with a group of Pandanna palms and luxuriant foliage.
- (b) There exist two native wells. The larger contained approximately 400 gallons. 300 gallons were baled out which were replaced within 12 hours.
- (c) This well was enlarged to 1000 gallons which was full at time of departure. Immediate water supplies will therefore be available for the working party on arrival.
- (d) Water will also be found at the rear of a beach approximately 400 yards N.W. of proposed Camp site.
- (e) From observations it would appear that a reasonably constant supply of water will be available for the needs of the radar personnel.

ACCESS.

Natural slopes generally negotiable but covered with long grass and large boulders. A fair amount of clearing would be necessary to operate a truck.

CAMP SITE.

Selected on a well drained area on N.E. side of island, approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from site of well. Camp level 100 feet above sea level. No attempt made to site individual buildings, only general area.

RADAR UNIT SITE.

Radar Unit sited N.W. point of ridge on N.E. side of island, 230 feet approximately above sea level.

AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIP.

A satisfactory landing area available on East Montalivet Island approximately 5 miles from W. Montalivet. Access between islands could be maintained by work boat.

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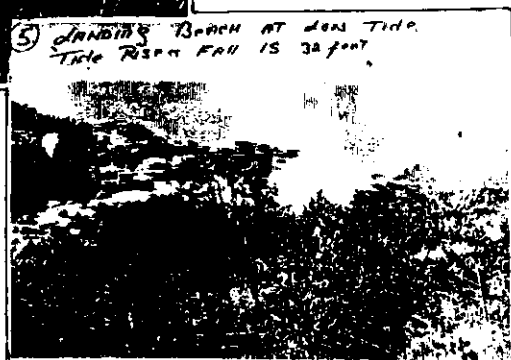
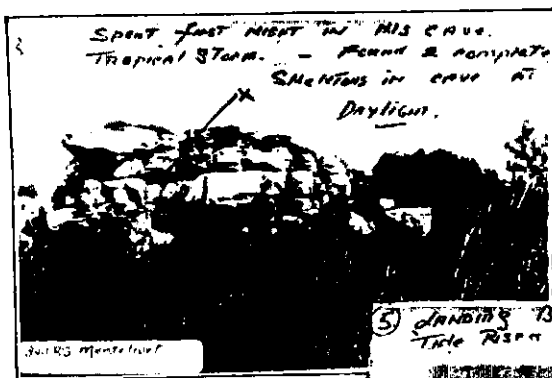
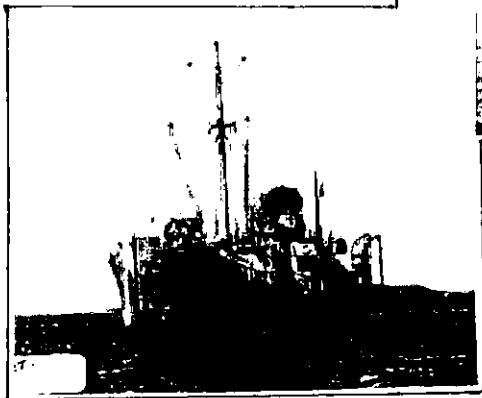
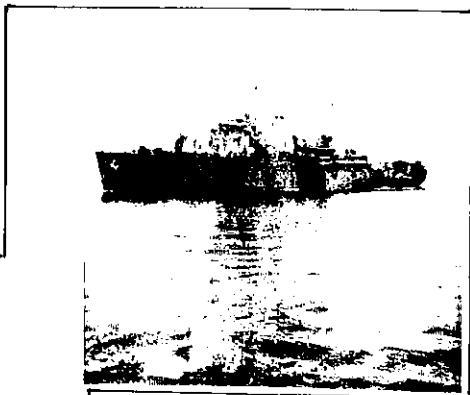


F/LT. BILL SANDERSON AND HIS CREW.

Ed. Simmonds.

Radar men had to be a pretty resourceful lot, for besides setting up the radar gear and getting 'on air,' they often had to set up camp as well. Showers, a workshop, not to mention the all important kitchen and Mess.... often these were attended to by the men who used bush timber, black iron, sisal paper and even ant bed material to make the camp comfortable. But towards the end of the war, more assistance seemed to become available, and so in the NWA in March 1944, F/Lt Bill Sanderson was in charge of a construction unit given the job of erecting the few buildings considered necessary for the 344 Radar camp down on West Montalivet Island. Bill Sanderson was an officer who, while he was not actually a Radar Officer, played a significant part in the RAAF radar network of NWA and Queensland. Before the war he was an electrical contractor in Victoria, and the manpower authorities considered him to be working in an essential occupation.... in other words he was not allowed to enlist. That restriction was relaxed when he made his business into a company!

He first tried to enlist in the RAN only to be told that his qualifications were not considered suitable for a Naval Officer. So he joined the RAAF as an Airman, and it was quickly realised that his background was such that he was needed for the 'civil' side of radar installations. He was then commissioned and placed in charge of installation parties at 1 RIMU. The 'civil' side can be described as constructing buildings, erecting aerials, installing electrical connections, placing transmitters and receivers into buildings etc. etc. Bill said that he then handed over to the intelligent and bright bods within the radar system. His knowledge of lifting devices, levers and winches proved invaluable for fixed radar stations such as the ACO's, 209 and 210 radar stations on the east coast, and the COL's at 38 RS and 46 RS, as well as the buildings for the LW/AW at 344 on Montalivet. His crew consisted of about 12 men, among whom was Perc. Robinson, said to be the oldest serviceman in NWA - who is said to have reduced his age by 10 years in order to enlist as a DMT in the RAAF in 1943 when he was





COMING ASHORE AT MONTALIVET.

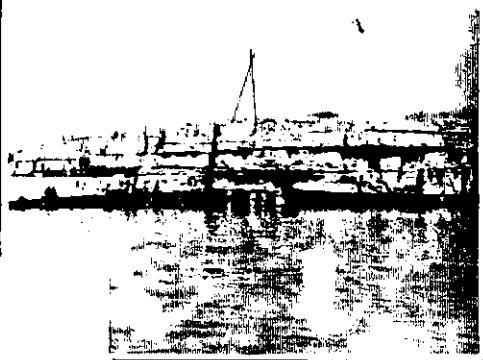
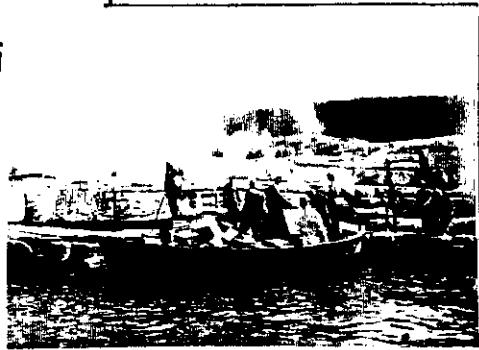
(Opposite page)

Escort vessel HMAS COOTAMUNDRA
and transport HMAS BOMBO
arrive at the island.

And the beach where the
men came ashore.

(This page)

Landing stores and equipment
from the ship's landing craft,
and lifting some of the
equipment over the island's
rocks and low cliffs.

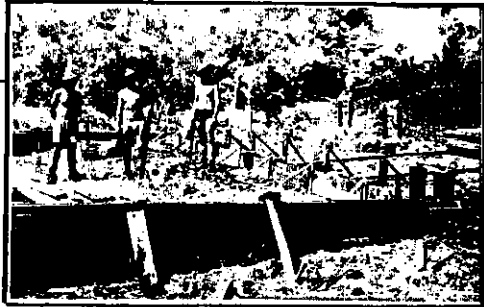


aged 50.

Perc, or 'P.O.' as he was perhaps better known, was in the installation party on Montalivet where he divined and located water - and then lost portion of one finger when packing a gland on the water pump while it was still working. He was put on the first boat that called and was packed off to receive attention in Darwin. Bill Sanderson referred to him as a 'Grand Man.'

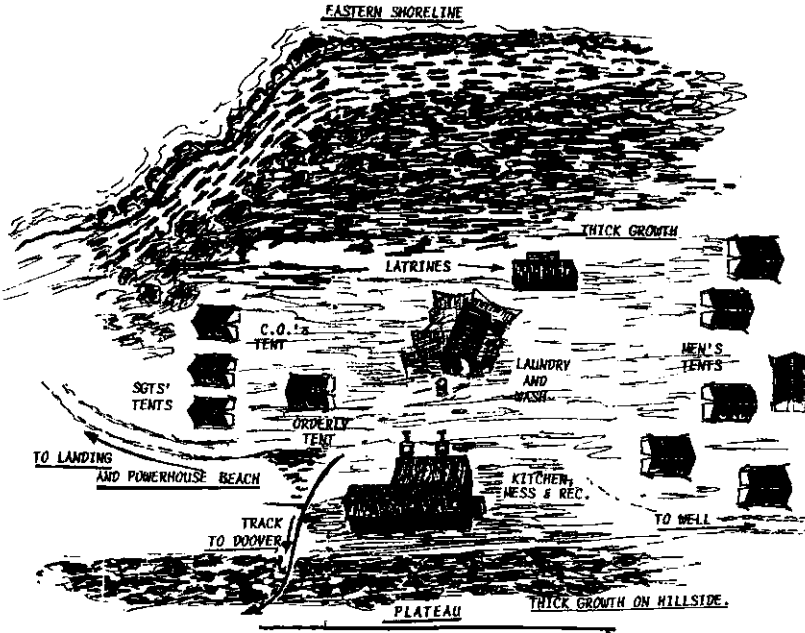
The photo illustrations have been selected from many taken by Bill Sanderson on the Montalivet trip, these being the most relevant perhaps. The installation party, after completion of its tasks, left the island on SOUTHERN CROSS on 5th. June 1944.

(At Right) Pouring the Mess Foundations.



ROUGH PLAN OF 344 RADAR CAMP,
WEST MONTALIVET.

(Laurie Leckie)



WEST MONTALIVET.

Stanley W. Morgan - (Radar Varns.)

344RS was formed at Mascot, NSW and we went by rail to Mt. Isa and road to Darwin. There we were loaded on the HMAS BOMBO with West Montalivet as our destination.

This trip took four days and we were told that the waters between Darwin and Timor and near the coast had not been charted since William Dampier in the 17th. century. Therefore we anchored each night because of unknown reefs. There were two submarine scares and the RAAF personnel refused to go below decks, for reasons obvious to us at least. After this incident RAAF personnel were treated as being members of the ship's crew and we had to perform the same duties. As a RAAF Medical Orderly I finished up shovelling coal in the boiler room.

Fortunately we reached our destination on the fourth day and so we escaped from the Navy. But we then faced the task of unloading our gear. Firstly into barges and then by manual labour onto the beach and up a cliff. Then we carried the gear to the site selected for the Doover and the camp area. No trucks or jeeps were supplied.

Most of the food landed on the island was hard tack on which we lived for some months until an oven was built to bake fresh bread. 19 meals a week were bully beef with the rest being either tinned 'gold fish' (pilchards in civvy street) or fish we could catch ourselves.

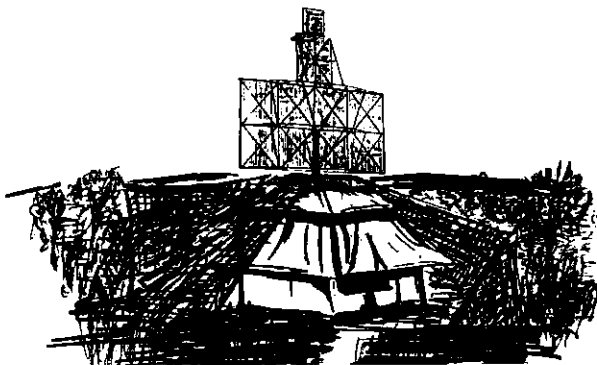
In the early days they did try an air drop of fresh food but this was unsuccessful so we went back onto hard tack.

Fresh water was the greatest problem - no fresh water available - however the Navy left us some 44 gallon drums to tide us over until we could dig a well. This we did but the water turned salty after a very short time.

Since further supplies were uncertain, we were rationed to half a pint of water per man per day. Clothes had to be washed in sea water which caused skin problems among the men as well as quickly rotting our clothes.

After six months a small fishing craft manned by an RAAF crew arrived with food, water, mail and Comfort Fund parcels and this was repeated every few weeks. Once, not only did they bring the usual food, water and comforts but also a Salvation Army Officer.

We really had few problems except that we had a few bombs dropped by enemy aircraft returning to their bases plus a few shells from surface craft but no landings - just as well because we only had half a dozen guards with one NCO and they were only armed with the standard 303 Lee Enfields and some Mills bombs.



344RS AT WEST MONTALIVET.

Walter Wood. (Radar Yarns)

Isolation and Loneliness.

My main recollection of this station was the isolation and loneliness - about 30 men, no changes of personnel for approximately seven months. The same faces, the same limited view, the same food, no fresh water, no 'flicks' and no mail for several months initially.

344RS was a very tough posting. Six months was almost more than enough for any man to bear and the initial crew spent about nine months there. Probably what helped preserve our sanity was the hard work in establishing the place. The unloading of the 'BOMBO' was the worst with the boys standing waist deep in shark infested waters with lookouts, armed with .303's, standing on nearby rocks to frighten off any of the hungry monsters.

Supplies, including water, came initially by boat every two or three months until we were able to construct an 'airfield.' Thousands of stones and rocks were removed by hand between radar shifts. These were dispersed in the surrounding area so as not to make the runway noticeable to the Ungodly. What a celebration when the first plane arrived with fresh tucker and mail.

The shortage of fresh water caused problems with the Ford 10 generating plants - running 24 hours a day, they inevitably used water that we really needed for living. Now the C.O. was an ingenious man (a former builder and radio ham) and he got the boys to build a substantial evaporative cooling tower over a large holding tank which was then filled with sea water. The radiators were then disconnected from the engines and the water pumps connected to pipes leading to the top with cool water being drawn from the bottom of the holding tank. A periodic chore was the removal of salt which formed on the tower during the evaporative process but the unit was still working well when I left the unit after being there for nine months.

A Visit by a Jap Submarine.

Late one afternoon a Jap submarine surfaced off the island. Frantic signals were sent to Fighter Sector and a rapid overhaul of our defences took place. These ranged from one Vickers machine gun (ex-WW1), two Brens, two Thompsons, a number of 303's, one box of hand grenades to the C.O.'s revolver. All that plus deadly silence.

Midday on the following day a Beaufighter appeared ready to do battle. But where was the enemy? Somewhere in the Indian Ocean feeling fully refreshed no doubt.

THE LADDIE WITH THE LAMP.

Gordon Shearwin. (Radar Yarns)

As the Dental Officer at Truscott, Gordon Shearwin visited the island to make a routine inspection of the men. On coming ashore, he was somewhat concerned to see a figure wandering around the camp area carrying a lighted hurricane lantern - this in broad daylight and full bright sunshine. But all was well. The island was completely out of matches and the 'laddie with the lamp' was the camp cigarette lighter!

MONTALIVET DIARY HIGHLIGHTS.

Duncan Stewart.

23rd. March 1944. The operational members of 344RS boarded a DC3 at Batchelor and flew direct to the Drysdale River Catholic Mission. Here we had a 2 night stay at 317RS which was operating close to the Mission.

On 25th. March we were marched to the beach where we waded out in groups to a launch, and then trans-shipped to HMAS BOMBO which was loaded with all the stores, equipment and operational gear to set up a complete radar unit and its camp.

Two days later BOMBO dropped anchor off West Montalivet and everyone was taken ashore by small motor launch. Over the next few days, the gear was loaded onto rafts made from timber lashed to drums, and then floated ashore, despite the huge 30 foot tides and the steeply shelving coral beach.

During the landing operations we ate out of tins and bedded down under the stars on the beach where we dug holes in the coral for our hips. The worst job was carrying long lengths of bore piping up on to the ground above the beach - the pipes became so hot that they burnt our skin as we were wearing only our hats, shorts and boots.

The island was probably 2 miles long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide, and a spring was eventually located some distance from the camp-site, so we had to carry those pipes a further 500 yards inland.

On 3rd. April, BOMBO weighed anchor to return to Darwin - then our work really started as we moved everything - by hand - from the beach to the approved camp-site - bags of cement, lengths of timber, cases and drums of foodstuff and stores - in fact everything the Air Force considered necessary to set up a Radar station. There were 2 gangs of men working on establishing camp...the radar group who were trying to establish camp and to settle in, and a works unit whose task it was to build a kitchen, Mess, Admin. block and ablutions. But first of all everyone worked together to erect the tents which were to be our sleeping quarters.

By 14th. April, a work party had cleared and levelled the Doover site at the N.E. end of the island plateau, and on 21st. April 344 Radar was 'On Air.' I was on 'C' shift with Tex Corbin, Don Bailey and Ted Corless - Don was our W/T Operator.

The first crisis came on 12th. May when our water supply gave out. After a 3 day search another source was tapped and made available to the camp - meanwhile we bathed and washed our clothes in the sea. And a launch and a yacht arrived on the 15th., bringing our first mail since our arrival two months before. The yacht was left for us to use, so on our days off we were often out fishing, afterwards enjoying meals of fresh fish.

The Mess building was completed on 17th. May, and that night we enjoyed our first meal in it. And although there was still much to do around the camp, a party was detailed on 31st. May to begin clearing a flat area and to burning off clumps of grass at the south end of the island - the area was to become our air strip, and eventually we enjoyed delivery by air of mail and some fresh food - even an occasional film, for at this stage a DH84 found the area large enough and clear enough to land.

Both SOUTHERN CROSS and VICTORY visited the island during May bringing mail and food parcels (we heard news of the fall of Rome in the European war) and one of our visitors on this occasion was a Salvo who spoke to us at an assembly....I seem to recall too that the C.O. seemed to enjoy our morning parades with the men dressed in battle gear!! What a farce!!

At this stage in our progress, every movement of men and materials was still

by Shank's pony - with not even a barrow of any sort - but despite the hard work that was our lot, we were always anxious to welcome the launch which came down from West Bay near Drysdale where a new base was being built. We had to rely on each other for company and even entertainment, and my tent-mates were great company. Tex Corbin played a guitar and sang endless and mournful ditties of country style tunes of the day. We had occasional dramas with snakes crawling through our tent, but the mosquito nets over our bunks saved us from the centipedes - much larger monsters than those back home. There were no major health problems that I can recall - a few burns, minor accidents - and even overgrown toenails!

Two Diary entries at the end of June mention Tommy-gun practice down on the beach (I suffered hearing loss for some days) and our launch was caught on the coral reef below the Doover, but somehow we managed to pull it clear. For recreation we hiked around the island when off duty and saw many turtles - we even tried turtle soup. And a Spitfire dropped a mail-bag by parachute, but this was not tried again.

Life on our coral island seemed almost like a holiday, and there were very few dramas. Our plots were mainly of shipping which we did not need to report. But there was one aircraft track identified as 'hostile' - on 20th July. I understand it was shot down in Vansittart Bay by Spitfires from the new Truscott air base.

The 2nd. August was my 20th. birthday...then on 10th. September my six months were up - and in fact all operational staff received notice of posting back to Darwin once all the replacement crew had arrived and settled in. I can remember Cliff Leavy and Wally Duckering (I had worked with Wally at Tomaree, Pt. Stephens) and I have reference to Ray Holding, Ken Nice and Austin Asche. Laurie Leckie arrived by air apparently - the pilot was F/O Slade and the aircraft was a DH84.

Before I left, there was more trouble because of the critical shortage of water with consumption far exceeding supply, and water had to be shipped in regularly.

On 20th. October HMAS STEADY HOUR called in at Montalivet, and I was able to leave the island.

#####

Flight Lieutenant Jack Slade.

Of the 20 plus aircraft landings made on West Montalivet, only two were made apparently by S/Ldr. 'Doc' Fenton....the rest were made by F/O - later F/Lt Jack Slade who first flew in using DH 84's, later in Avro Ansons. F/Lt Slade had first trained as a pilot in the Empire Training Scheme; then after some time flying with a squadron, in December 1942 he was attached to 6 Communications Unit as No. 2 I.C. to the 'Doc.' When 'Doc' Fenton was discharged at the end of the war, Jack Slade assumed command, and because of his experience flying over so much of the Northern Territory and its coastline, he was well suited to the work.

He was discharged from the RAAF in April 1946, and he then became the chief, and only pilot for the Aerial Ambulance service which was about to commence a big expansion programme as an essential part of the Northern Territory Medical Service.

#####

FROM THE DIARY OF 344 RADAR, MONTALIVET.

Morrie Fenton.

For 5 days after he first arrived at Mascot on 15th. November 1943 to begin the formation of his new station, Pilot Officer P.R.A. Watson held the uniquely responsible position of being the total complement, and also Commanding Officer of his new unit, 344 Radar. Then slowly the men of the various musterings began to assemble under his command.... Guards, a Clerk, a Fitter/DMT, several Radar Mechanics and General Hands. In December came the Radar Operators, Telegraphists, a Medical Orderly. Finally at the end of the month the all-important Cook and Messman arrived - and as the necessary stores and equipment had now been allotted, collected and assembled, the unit was ready to move on from Mascot - at this stage to a destination still unknown.

Came the anxiously awaited Movement Order - and on 19th. January 1944, 344 Radar entrained at Central Station, Sydney - destination 44 Radar Wing at Coomalie, N.W.A., and travelling to the northern areas via Townsville and Mt. Isa.

44 Radar Wing was reached on 4th. February 1944 where evidently the C.O. was advised of his promotion to Flying Officer - and doubtless all personnel now knew that their eventual destination and radar site was West Montalivet Island, an isolated inshore island in the Bonaparte Archipelago off the lonely West Kimberley coast.

The men of 344 must have wondered why they were being sent to this place on an uninhabited part of Australia's coastline - but no one would have known then that construction of a giant secret air base was about to begin on Anjo Peninsula, near Drysdale, and that their station was intended to help keep watch over it. The new base was to be known as TRUSCOTT.

On 22nd. March, 344 consisting of 1 Officer and 20 other ranks departed by motor transport from Radar Wing, and no doubt the men were pleased to be leaving the place which was notorious for its work parties, P.T. and route marches. At Darwin all embarked on HMAS BOMBO, its immediate destination being Drysdale where another 19 men were to join the unit after having flown from Batchelor. Also F/O W. Sanderson and his party from 3 Maintenance and Installation Section were to accompany the unit.

Finally BOMBO with its escort HMAS COOTAMUNDRA arrived at West Montalivet Island where all disembarked on 27th. March... 2 Officers and 43 men going ashore.

Work commenced on landing stores, material and equipment, and F/O Sanderson and his men commenced the construction of the few buildings required, while the men set up temporary camp and began to erect their tents, latrines and cooking facilities. The immediately pressing task was to establish communications with H/Q and to erect the Doover together with its Ford 10 power units, and on 8th. April W/T communication with N.W.A. was established. Finally, on 21st. April, 344 Radar came 'On Air' and was operational. In a well co-ordinated effort, construction of Truscott air base began the same month, and 317 Radar, the other 'eyes' for the base, moved to Sir Graham Moore Island immediately north of Anjo Peninsula, leaving 319 Radar at Drysdale.

May would have been a very busy month at 344 - but few Diary entries were made. The supply launch VICTORY arrived from West Bay bringing more stores and equipment, and SOUTHERN CROSS, attached to the unit for the time, came with her. Moorings for SOUTHERN CROSS were established at East Montalivet, just a few miles east, and by then the construction work of F/O Sanderson and his men was completed.

Water proved a big problem on the island, and one of the construction party who claimed some success as a water-diviner, selected a place showing some promise - which after a fairly major digging operation, proved correct, although the water proved pretty brackish. However, eventually when a pump was installed, the water was suitable for ablutions and the like. At the end of May there were 2 Officers and 48 men on the island.

On 5th. June, F/O Sanderson and his construction party departed on SOUTHERN CROSS, together with camoufleur Mr. Dignam from the Department of Home Security - and on 16th., VICTORY arrived bringing the Area Radar Officer, S/Ldr Grout-Smith and F/Lt Clark the Wing Medico, to make the customary early inspection. All must have appeared satisfactory to the inspectorial eyes, for they departed the following day, happy no doubt that the lonely vigil was in good hands and as comfortable as possible.

Meanwhile, the men were already hard at work clearing an area at the south of the small island to serve as an emergency air strip, and 600 yards of the most suitable ground was cleared with the wry Diary comment....'Unless constantly attended to, the strip would become unserviceable due to the building of mounds by white ants.'

July proved an eventful month indeed, for VICTORY arrived on 9th, but was not able to afterwards continue her trip to Champagny because of engine trouble. Spare parts were requested by signal from RAAF Marine at Darwin, and these were flown out and dropped by parachute. Nine days later VICTORY was able to continue her trip.

Then on 20th. July, 344 was one of the stations which tracked the last intruder aircraft to be shot down over Australia.

The Dinah recce was first located by 326 at Cape Leveque as it approached the Australian coastline. 344, 317 and 319 also tracked the aircraft as it crossed the coast and turned eastward to approach Anjo Peninsula from the south. As the result of this carefully watched approach, 154 GCI at Truscott was able to take over and plan the interception.

Three Spitfires from 54 Squadron, RAF, were 'Scrambled' and the Dinah was shot down in Vansittart Bay by 2 of the fighters, while a third Spitfire was deployed over Drysdale - just in case. A well executed operation.

Then on 25th. July, Flying Officer Slade of 6 Communications Unit landed in a DH84 carrying mail and supplies, departing later the same day. So all the hard work at the strip was to pay off. F/O Slade was second only to S/Ldr Clyde (Doc) Fenton in his skill and daring in landing on the improvised landing strips of isolated radar stations.

Finally, VICTORY called again on the last day of July when returning from Champagny where a LORAN slave station had been established.

44 Radar Wing closed down in August 1944, and 344 then commenced reporting to 105 FCU which in turn became known as ADHQ, and for the remainder of the month the men continued with the work of improving their station, particularly the clearing and extending of the airstrip. Good drinking water was scarce too, and VICTORY was now to bring in regular supplies in drums - which often caused a taste suggesting the previous contents. And the SOUTHERN CROSS, which had been standing by while attached to the station, also left the area to return to West Bay and probably Darwin.

September saw the work parties still at the strip - 100 yards of extension was now completed; and meanwhile the calibration of the set was carried out with the co-operation of an aircraft from 6 C.U.

The unit strength was now 1 officer and 40 O.R.'s.

October proved fairly quiet. VICTORY called 3 times, and also STEADY HOUR arrived with an emergency supply of water. F/O Slade flew in twice in a DH84.

The W/T Administration reporting was now organised with ADHQ, which was now responsible for all matters of radar stations.

November saw the regular routine continuing :- further calibration flights were carried out, and VICTORY dropped anchor at the island on 4 occasions. On the 4th. trip, VICTORY brought a Dental Officer - also the new Commanding Officer, F/O K.S. While who was to take over from F/O Watson. This was effected on 6th. December, leaving F/O While as C.O.; and the Dentist and F/O. Watson left 344 on VICTORY on the 10th., but the BIG NEWS for the month was the arrival of a barge carrying a Jeep and trailer as transport for the station. No longer would Everything - but Everything - even drinking water, have to be manhandled and carried by hand from the landing beach to the camp, or from the beach to the Doover. No wonder the power house was constructed down at the beach!

December also saw a report on the station performance, with 40 plots exceeding 100 miles, the best range being 175 miles.

The Diary for January proved very light on information - particularly as the men would have been enduring the worst of the monsoonal season with storms, flooding downpours, humidity and insects of all varieties. But only a couple of promotions are recorded in station doings, with Sgt. Gore WOM promoted to Flt/Sgt and LAC Deane M.O. to Corporal.

February proved far more informative, with the arrival of well known Fr. Cubero from Drysdale Mission to hold Mass...and on 13th. F/Lt Slade (note the promotion) arrived in a DH84 to convey LAC Morton back to sick quarters at Truscott. And once again there was Big News for the lonely little unit with the arrival of an Entertainment Party on VICTORY. Admittedly there were only two men in the party - LAC Doug Elliott and LAC Fullagar - but how they were welcomed!

The Stats for this month were again very favourable with the best range being 182 miles.

VICTORY arrived at the island 3 times in March. And an aircraft showing distress IFF was picked up 80 miles from the station i.e. about 150 miles from Truscott. Over 50 continuing plots were passed in less than 40 minutes, and the echo faded gradually as the aircraft approached Truscott.

April proved rather noteworthy, for S/Ldr 'Doc' Fenton landed with urgently needed fresh food and supplies...VICTORY seems to have broken down on the regular island runs - but when she did finally make it on the 12th., not only did she bring the Area Chaplain, S/Ldr Carver, but she also brought a Cinema Operator and his equipment for a first island visit. Both were equally popular though, for the Chaplain's visit was the first in six months and of course the arrival of a film show was a tremendous morale booster for the unit. 344 was almost suburbanised!

F/Lt Slade flew in later in the month with a passenger - but more importantly for the unit, the 6 C.U. pilots could now bring and operate film equipment, and he turned on another film show. But unfortunately a tyre on the landing gear of his Anson had punctured, and a DH 84 flew in on the following day with a spare wheel for the Anson. Two aircraft on the Montø strip! Temperature Inversion had been evident during this month with some very long ranges being logged...and a ship was followed out to 160 miles. Late in the month were two more picture shows...one arranged by F/Lt Slade, and the other four days later when VICTORY arrived with film equipment on board.

There were now 34 men on the unit.

May proved a fairly uneventful month...VICTORY arrived twice and F/Lt Slade dropped in on 3 occasions. 'Doc' Fenton made a visit also, and each aircraft seemed to signal the arrival of yet another officer on inspection duties.

An important event was the arrival of a new Commanding Officer - F/O J.P. Gowing - early in the month on the supply launch VICTORY after which F/O While, the previous C.O., left by Anson on the 19th. June followed a rather similar pattern....F/Lt Slade arrived by Anson on 4 occasions, and also the small vessels VICTORY and AMARYLLIS called. VICTORY arrived early in the month bringing F/Lt Gordon Shearwin, the Dental Officer from Truscott; also an officer to inspect the water and distillation facilities. Later in the month a Medical and Hygiene inspection was made by F/Lt Kidd and F/Sgt Dewey from ADHQ. AMARYLLIS brought F/Lt Trathan, the Methodist Chaplain from Truscott. And there were now 29 men on the island.

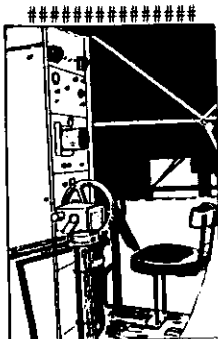
July began with yet more visitors, and AMARYLLIS apparently took over the supply run, for she called twice. But aircraft deliveries now seemed the accepted way of bringing visitors and fresh provisions, for an Anson landed on 4 occasions. Wing Commander A.K.Stielow, Commanding Officer of ADHQ was on one of these flights, and 3 days after his visit - on 26th. July - instructions arrived from ADHQ to cease operations that day. The following day the men set to work dismantling the gear, and packing and moving everything down to the beach ready to move out. On 29th. July 1945...some two weeks before VJ Day...a Farewell Break-up party was held, so signalling the end of operations for 344 on Montalivet Island.

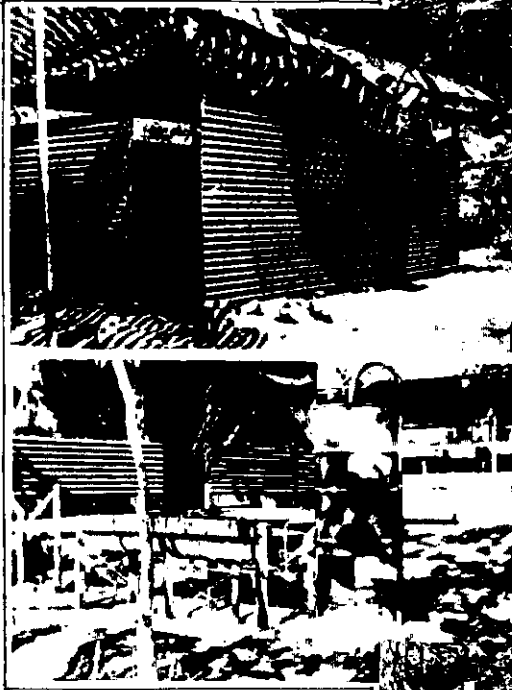
The men would have had little difficulty in pulling down, packing and transporting the equipment to the eastern landing beach, under the supervision of the C.O. and Sergeants, The heaviest items, the Ford 10 generators might have presented some problems, as they weighed about 1500 lbs each - but as the power house was at the beach, any problems would have been minimised.

Meanwhile, on 1st. August, a convoy of 3 small vessels under the command of F/O Brownson left West Bay at Truscott to bring the station in, the convoy comprising the launch AMARYLLIS - launch 017-29 and landing barge 018-11.

Evidently the work went well due no doubt to the easy loading on to the barge because of its loading ramp, and the convoy was back in West Bay by the 9th. with the men and gear to be transported to the strip and loaded onto 3 C47's. These flew out the same day to Darwin.

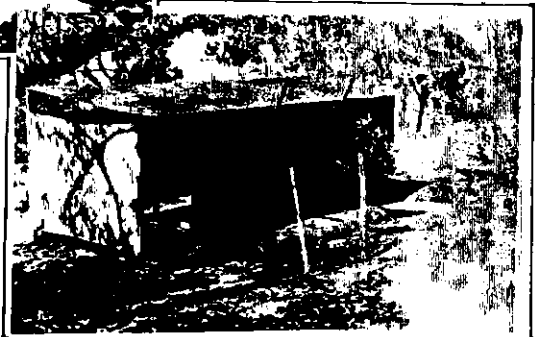
The last of the station Diary notes record that 344, now down to 1 Officer and 11 O/R's, travelled overland to arrive at RAAF Richmond on 11th. September. On 30th. November, F/O Gowing was posted to 2 P.D. for discharge, and F/Lt. A.F.Williams assumed Temporary Command, with 8 men left on the unit.





MONTALIVET IMPROVEMENTS.

1. The Mess nears completion- note the flywire and louvres for coolness.
2. The showers.
3. Hot water service for the laundry and kitchen. A dangerous looking convenience!
4. There was little privacy down in the 'essentials,' - airmen for the use of.



MONTE MEMORIES OF MATES AND MUCH MORE.

Austin Asche.*

I am not going to write about those who are still with us because it would give them all swelled heads which might be dangerous at their advanced age. Suffice to say I was lucky to have had such congenial companions.

So...Ken Nice, Laurie Leckie, Wally Duckering, Ray Kelly...and others whose names are now a little indistinct...Thanks! Also to Max Baker if he's still around. Max was a mech, a little older than the rest of us, certainly wiser, and almost a father figure. He could assess character well, sometimes with a dry sarcasm which would prove very entertaining to the listeners, though not always to the person described. Also to Gus Sims our very friendly cook who tried very hard to get some variety out of the rather monotonous supplies of M&V and tinned sausages. He lives in Perth now, although I have not seen him for some years.

When thirty or so men were confined in these small, isolated camps, there were often problems of one person who could not get on with another particular person, or of just one person who somehow managed to disrupt the place. I saw such things in other camps, but not at Monte. That of course does not mean that all was sweetness and light. Various personal irritations erupted from time to time and minor feuding manifested itself sometimes between individuals. But apart from the traditional whinges which act as an emotional catharsis in every camp, there were no really troubling incidents, and we managed to tolerate idiosyncrasies and remain on friendly terms. Perhaps we were all fairly reasonably adjusted individuals...perhaps we were lucky, or perhaps years have dimmed the memory. Who can say now?

Our arrival was not propitious. We were the first batch of relieving operators and mechs. Those who had set up this place had been there for nine or ten months and were heartily sick of it. We were greeted with loud encouraging cries of "You'll be sorry!" and regaled with stories of the hardships to come. In fact, owing to the hard work of our predecessors, the camp was in good working condition, and the Doover was operating well. But clearly, it must have been a tough job for the first few months. If any of the original team reads this, we offer our thanks and respect.

There is a venerable old service joke of a new recruit arriving at a camp and being asked by the sergeant if he can make a bed. Naturally he says "Yes" - and is then handed hammer and nails and told to do so. Something like that happened to us, though some of us managed to inherit the framework of some of the original beds. It didn't make much difference because mostly they were made of local wood, which was definitely not of Huon Pine, and was subject to rot, ravage, and white ants. And any frames we did inherit were in pretty poor condition, for their makers, conscious of our impending arrival, had not bothered to attend to the frequent maintenance necessary to keep the superstructure from collapsing. So we set to making beds. It was an important skill to learn, because lack of expertise inevitably led to one's being deposited on the ground, usually in the middle of the night, to share fortunes with various creeping or slithering creatures which at best, regarded the human body as just another obstacle to crawl over in the journey from point A to point B.

Having put together the legs and frame, the next task was to fit hessian to the frame. If the hessian was properly and tightly fitted, one had a firm and comfortable foundation for one's blankets. But the moist climate, and the impact of sweaty bodies 'spine-bashing' after shift, would ultimately rot the material. My carpentry skills were about 'zilch,' so I became quite used to that familiar old tearing sound that meant the bum was once more about to be deposited on to the knobby and pointed rocks beneath.

* Hon. Austin Asche AC, QC.

The other problem was to discourage the insect life from crawling up the legs of the bed, and more importantly, the very large centipedes which obviously welcomed the desirable new residence between blankets provided by friendly humans. To combat this, each bed leg was placed in the centre of a cake tin filled with sump oil. Great care was taken to see that the legs remained in the centre as any shift to one side and the invasion began again. I can personally vouch that sharing one's bed with a centipede is not to be recommended.

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We found that West Montalivet was about half a mile wide and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long. It was selected as the furthest north of the Bonaparte Archipelago islands, thus allowing the Doover a forward sweep to the north uninterrupted by any islands. This was of course, a necessity for the best performance; but the drawback was that this island had virtually no fresh water. Some brackish water served for the showers, but was virtually undrinkable, so that all fresh water came in 44 gallon drums on a supply vessel. When jeep transport arrived, the drums could then be taken direct to the kitchen. This of course meant building a road, so we included road building in our extended education. But the jeep made things much easier all round. The Doover itself was on the highest point of the island about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the camp. One trudged up a rocky path to the Ops room to start one's shift, usually carrying the essential waterbag, and at night, a hurricane lamp or torch.

There were certainly snakes on the island, but I can't say we were really worried by them. They were shy creatures and generally kept out of our way. We were more interested in the lizard life which scurried around us. I regret to inform the RSPCA (of which I later became a patron of the NT branch) that our pleasant habit was to throw small stones at these lizards - not to kill them, for we enjoyed their presence. The idea was to aim at their tails. A well directed hit would see them discard their tails which remained wriggling on the ground while they made their escape. This was apparently their main form of defence against predators. The interesting thing was to see how quickly they grew new tails, and we would often see our recent victims with small stumps protruding from the back, indicating that a replacement was on the way. It was, of course, considered most unsporting to throw stones at any lizard with an incomplete appendage.

In some recompense for our discourteous behaviour, we would catch flies to feed to the smaller lizards, who became quite tame enough to crawl on our hands to be fed. It was considered normal to talk to the lizards, but when they started talking back it was time to see the MO. The nearest of the many other islands of the archipelago was East Montalivet. Since we never got across to it, it had a sort of "Bali Hai" enchantment. It was supposed to have plenty of water, beautiful beaches, and some soft sandy soil which contrasted with the motley collection of rocks which constituted the surface of West Monte. I don't know how much of this was true. Sunsets were spectacular, and although the climate was almost always hot, there was some relief in the wet season when magnificent storms swept across the island, and for a few hours, one revelled in the novelty of feeling cold.

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The radar gear was LW/AW, and I have never yet met anyone who has operated an LW/AW who does not, when describing it, start moving one arm in a sideways circular motion. The operator propelled himself, and the gear, round 360° by turning a wheel at the side of his chair, slowing and adjusting the aerial to get the best echo when a blip was found. Distance and bearing were then read, and that information was telephoned through to the other operator on shift who positioned it on a Grid Map with that position then radioed by the W/T operator (the third member of the shift) to the HQ at Truscott.

Shifts lasted six or seven hours and, as mentioned, consisted of two radar ops and one W/T op. One radar op took turns on the Doover, usually in half hour stretches, while the other took over the plotting, recording and other odd duties. We were quite keen about the work and each shift would compare its results with others. This was not always a fair competition because flying activity was usually concentrated in certain hours and the shift that got those hours usually scored the most sightings. Nevertheless it served to pass the time and gave us incentives. I still have one or two cards on which we recorded the results of the month. Of course most of our keenness was inspired by the hope that we may be tracking a 'bandit,' or enemy plane. Regrettably, I must in all honesty report that this was unlikely. By the time we reached Monte the Japs were in retreat from this part of the world. We did pick up a few unidentified aircraft, but these were almost certainly our own who had forgotten to turn on their IFF. However, we did have the pleasure of tracking our own planes on various manoeuvres, or flying off on bombing missions. And on some rare occasions we would detect one of our own in trouble and displaying the emergency IFF.

Like all radar sets, the LW/AW could not pick up very low-flying aircraft. I was therefore not particularly surprised one day when two aircraft 'buzzed' the Doover at about 200 feet. But visual sightings had to be reported back to HQ and this posed a dilemma. Although we had all been given a course in aircraft identification, much of it sounded too technical for one like myself who had long realised he was a mechanical moron. During the lectures I had happily turned off and caught up on a little refreshing snooze to prepare for the next and hopefully more interesting subject. Now the day of reckoning was at hand and I was being asked to identify these intruders roaring overhead. At least I knew they were ours as they had RAAF markings - even I knew that much. But how to describe them? I settled on the only description I could think of, and solemnly informed HQ that "two twin-engined monoplanes" had just flown over. Since this information would have fitted at least 50% of all RAAF aircraft at the time, I am not sure just how much HQ was enlightened. But at least it was accurate.

The Cathode Ray tube on the LW/AW was calibrated to 180 miles. Our effective range was on average about 120. With Temperature Inversion we could often get the full range, and with mechs doing mysterious things to the calibration we could, on rare events, get a bit more. Our skill improved with practice and ultimately we could all pick up the smallest of blips from the surrounding 'grass.'

The LW/AW was developed by Australian engineers and scientists and was a splendid tribute to their efficiency and initiative. Being light and easily transportable, it could be set up very quickly. It was much used in the South West Pacific Area and by all accounts did all that was required and expected of it - and more.

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Swimming at Montalivet was one of the great pleasures of the place. There were a couple of superb beaches away from the camp, but the camp beach itself was excellent and only about 200 yards down from the tents. The landing beach wasn't so good because it was smaller and had a number of rocks. But it proved very exciting in the wet when storms churned up the sea. Then its narrow confines compressed the waves and gave us some surf. It wasn't Bondi, but it wasn't bad.

I was rather a skite about swimming and liked to go out further than anyone else. Nick Carter followed me out one day. It was clear he was challenging me to see who could go furthest before the other lost his nerve. We went a hell of a way out and we began thinking deeply about certain large sharks

that were reported to be in the area and might wish to join us for lunch. The water was very deep, and we were both getting tired and starting to realise the obvious fact that the further out you go the further you have to swim back. Finally, and under the influence of increasing concern, or more accurately, plain simple fear, we came to a sensible decision. We both turned back at the same moment, so that neither could claim he went further than the other.

This was my first experience in the art of face-saving compromises, and it was a lesson worth learning. In later years in the law I employed it to good effect. Some cases must be fought out of course, but many lend themselves to obvious and sensible solutions, and the art of settlement is to find a fair result which makes both sides happy.

I remained an incorrigible show-off about swimming. We saw a log far off in the sea. Naturally the great bronzed camp skite decided to investigate. This was on the landing beach which had a few rocks sticking out in the distance. I swam a fair way out to the last of these and climbed up to get a better look. It was just as well.

There he was - a very large crocodile, slowly and peacefully drifting along about 200 yards away, and fortunately, quite unaware of my presence. While I had been swimming I had not been able to hear the shouts and yells of the chaps on the beach who had made some further observations from a higher point and concluded that the average log does not possess a tail to swish backwards and forwards, even in leisurely fashion. I heard the shouting now, but the advice being tendered was, as far as I was concerned, boringly superfluous.

It is a pity no-one had a stopwatch that day. I am convinced I covered the distance back in a time that would have done credit to any Olympic Champion. The chaps got out their .303's for some useful target practice, but they didn't get him - he was too far away. The only result was to make him move a little faster: but I think he was sneering as he did so.

It may be appropriate to say something about the guards whose duty it was to defend the camp from attack. This being somewhat unlikely, and it being highly undesirable to have a dozen or so men doing nothing all day every day, the guards were appointed to various general duties round the camp. The duties were not burdensome, and I suspect they found camp life far easier than anything they had done before. For they came from a hard school. Being much older than the operators (they were in their late twenties or early thirties) they had been through the worst of the depression and experienced the hardships and miseries of those times. They were not unfriendly to us, but obviously felt that we had seen very little of the world. We rather resented this at the time, but of course, from their point of view, they were probably right. They had all been recruited from the same area and were West Australian miners and very tough. I think they regarded us with the sort of bored tolerance of an old dog surrounded by yapping puppies. Perhaps I should make it clear, if I have not already done so, that we operators were all in the eighteen or nineteen year age group. The guard sergeant was the odd man out, in the sense that he was a Tasmanian, but he too had been a miner, and completely understood his troops. They respected him and so did we. He was tolerant and fair, and had the leader's skill of being obeyed without question.

I think he found us rather amusing and we gave him no trouble.

Our own sergeant, Nick Carter, was a good bloke who managed us well, tolerated our eccentricities and didn't come the raw prawn. Not that he had too much to worry about. We were fairly amenable and none of us went troppo on him.

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Going round and round on the Doover could get very boring when no blips were appearing. Most of us took to singing to keep awake. Bing Crosby would have been extremely flattered by the numerous versions of his popular hits sung loudly and lustily, though he would have found it a painful experience to hear how they were rendered; and I use the word 'rendered' in the dictionary sense of 'tearing or wrenching apart.' Suffice to say that, despite a vast amount of repetition which might charitably be called 'practice,' if any of us felt that he was destined for fame as a vocalist, he was speedily disabused by the frank and forthright comments of the others.

I very much doubt that I could or would or should suck out a whole tin of sweetened condensed milk today. But on Monte it was an accepted recreation. One purchased a tin from the canteen, punctured two holes in the top, lay down on one's bed and imbibed slowly. Delicious! It was, however, most unwise to leave a partially consumed tin around. Ants, it appeared, had the same predilection for the stuff that we had. They were even prepared to sacrifice themselves, for, once inside the tin, they got stuck in the gooey mixture and died what was no doubt a glorious death, which did not stop their multitudinous friends and relatives from rushing in to do the same.

I found out the hard way. I had consumed some part, and left the tin standing for no more, at most, ten minutes. On return, I grabbed it, and with pleasurable anticipation, took one mighty suck. A mixture of condensed milk, formic acid, and recently deceased ant bodies does nothing for the taste buds - or at least nothing desirable. Nor did my spluttering profanity (when I could speak) arouse the slightest sympathy in my companions, who seemed to regard it as the joke of the weak.

The first officer we had at Monte was not liked....but looking back over the years I can put a reasonable case for his defence. He had been in charge of setting up the camp, and had obviously done it well in the face of harsh, natural surroundings. The camp itself was run efficiently and I am sure, delivered what HQ asked of it. Nor can I point to any glaring injustice, to any deliberate persecution of an individual, or for that matter, to any cronyism or favouritism. If he criticised, it was usually on a sound basis. His favourite term was "piss-poor," which, in any RAAF camp, would hardly qualify as likely to shock and horrify the average serviceman. Furthermore, when he used the term, it was usually an accurate description of what had been done, and if he exacted a penalty, it was a penalty perfectly fair and appropriate to the offence.

So, looking back, perhaps we misjudged him. All I can say is that we did not get on.

My real purpose, however, is to mention his successor, and to pay a long delayed tribute to an officer and a gentleman in all the best senses of the word.

When F/O While came, the camp continued to run efficiently, but the atmosphere changed. He was interested in what we were doing, and made us feel that we really were doing something important. Without losing his identity as an officer, he was friendly and happy to help us organise various games, debates and other recreations.

One instance of his co-operation and good sense stays in my mind. We, the operators, told him we were not happy with the way the shifts were organised. The earlier officer would have told us not to be presumptuous and to get on with the job. F/O While suggested that we present him with our own plans. This we did. It merely involved changing the lengths and times of the various shifts. He immediately accepted it. It was not only good psychology but had sound common sense. After all, so long as the operators provided a 24 hour service, there was no harm in letting them organise it.

He did not fuss or deliberately try to court popularity, but we knew he was genuinely trying to do his best for all of us, so popularity naturally came to him. We enjoyed his command: he was a great bloke, and, if he is still with us - my deepest thanks.

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Bill Tucker.

The comedian of the camp was Bill Tucker. He had a delightfully sardonic sense of humour mostly directed against himself. I first met him at Wilson's Prom, where he regarded himself as the oldest inhabitant, since successive drafts out always seemed to miss him. However, he finally made it to Darwin and then on to Monte.

He was hopeless at drill, invariably going left on the order 'right turn,' and presenting arms in a way which put those nearest to him in considerable danger. At Monte he achieved the distinction of producing a rifle for inspection in which an army of opportunistic ants had built their nest right through the barrel. His reaction to such misadventures was an expression of mock horror and a long and involved explanation which, so far as it could be understood, suggested that he was the innocent victim of malignant forces over which he had no control. It worked. Even the most ferocious sergeant ended up regarding him as some special case of irredeemable incompetence, and apart from relieving his frustrations by much shouting and threats of dire and often seriously illegal penalties, left him alone. If this suggests that Bill was a bit dim - forget it. He was in fact, one of the most quick-witted persons I have ever met. He was a natural entertainer, and, as well, a competent amateur magician. While at Monte he decided to learn the clarinet, and later in civvy life, he and others formed a jazz band.

His great mate was Ken Nice, a quiet, likeable bloke, with a gift of laughing at and with Bill, and contributing his own brand of sly humour. They were both jazz fanatics and introduced me to this fascinating world which I had not before encountered. I learned of legendary characters called King Oliver and Duke Ellington and Fats Waller and Bessie Smith. I cannot claim that I ever became an aficionado, but I am grateful for the education they gave me.

Bill died a few years ago. Ken is still with us...Hi! Ken.

Phil Newbold.

Radar Ops will remember the apparently haphazard system where, periodically, friends were separated and sent to different stations. In the Army, and some other parts of the RAAF, blokes stayed together for years. I suppose our system meant that we necessarily learned the art of tolerance and mixing well, since you never knew when you were going to be separated from a group you had come to like and be comfortable with, and thrown in with a new mob. Somehow Phil Newbold and I stayed together. We met at Wilson's Prom, got posted on the same day, travelled to Darwin (train, lorry, cattle trucks), and then to Monte, and later, to Bathurst Island, and then home. I saw a fair bit of Phil after discharge, then we lost sight of each other for a time. I suppose we were both building careers, and I spent a few years in Brisbane. We met again, a few years later and remained firm friends until his death.

Phil was a fascinating character. He was highly intelligent and full of ideas. At Monte, while I spent the leisure hours reading Shakespeare, (which may or may not have done me any good), he busied himself learning much more useful things, such as how to build a radio. Ray Kelly, one of the aristocrats of the place, (i.e. he was a radar mech), helped him. Of course

all the mechs had built their own, so we were able to listen to the dulcet tones of Tokyo Rose announcing the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. It would be wiser not to enquire too much where the mechanics got a lot of their equipment.

Phil then got down to the Power Plant, trying to find out about electrical generation. When the jeep arrived he turned his attention to motor mechanics. He acted quickly to douse a fire in the Doover one day, and thereafter claimed to have been mentioned in dispatches because our CO, F/O While, had mentioned him in reporting the incident to HQ.

We all learned Morse Code from the W/T ops, but Phil learnt it best, and his technique was sufficient to take over the W/T op's job from time to time and let the W/T man have a go at the Doover. This was probably highly illegal.

After discharge, he did a course at the Gordon Institute of Technology and then commenced his own business. He was full of original ideas and was obviously going to be a great success. I have no doubt that he would ultimately have become one of the movers and shakers of our country. But it was not to be.

Still in his twenties, he had a serious road accident which left him a paraplegic. While he was in hospital, his business, a one man show, fell apart. He obtained employment with the Geelong Water Board (I am not sure that is its correct name) and I have the word of the CEO there that he gave sterling service. But he was never afterwards in good health.

He had one piece of good fortune. He met and married Maureen, a sweet lady, who looked after him with loving care.

He remained his old cheerful self, still exploring original ideas, until his death many years ago.

I retain the memory of a bright questioning mind in someone who would have gone far if the fates had been kinder.

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*Sergeant Lynden Carter and F/O While ('Nick' and the C.O.)
swimming with the sea creatures.*

The group I arrived with on Montalivet was the second wave of operators posted to relieve the 'originals' who had, among other things, endured the rigours of building the station in the first place. They were more than overjoyed to welcome us, and to regale us newcomers with their tales of their hardship and woe. As far as my memory serves me, Bill Tucker, Phil Newbold (both now unfortunately deceased) Austin (Oscar) Asche, Laurie Leckie, Wally Duckering, Cliff Leavy and myself flew from RAAF Darwin to Truscott in a Dakota, and after the inevitable period spent in 'Pool' at 58 OBU, we were shipped by RAAF launch to Montalivet - a day and overnight trip. Laurie was the lucky one - he scored a flight by DH84. Due to the limited carrying capacity of the launch, only those tinned essentials to keep body and soul together were brought in, which made life for the Cook extremely easy. Hence no beer at that stage - no entertainment - and basically nothing extra for the first 3 to 4 months

Due to sickness on the island during the wet season and the difficulty of removing urgent cases, the word went out that somehow or another we had to cut a landing strip suitable for a small aircraft. The island was extremely small, but on the far southern end we toiled for days and weeks to clear a short dirt run just long enough for a light aircraft to land. I think that was the hardest physical job I have - and others - ever undertaken in my life. However, it was all worth while in the long run, for it certainly added to our feeling of security as well as other benefits. Then, to add to our problems, the 'well' on the island became salty and drinking water had to be brought in from the mainland - a 2 day trip by launch - in smelly 44 gallon petrol drums. The problem of getting the drums to the beach was quickly solved by the then 'powers that be' by marshalling off-duty personnel - usually shift workers which meant operators - to swim out to the launch then swim and push the drums to the beach. Everyone, which usually meant operators again, then had to fill and cart at least 2 buckets of water a day for about a quarter of a mile up hill to the camp. Though now all of this may seem a bit of a whinge, when one looks back, we were all remarkably fit at around 19 years of age, and no doubt it certainly didn't do any of us any harm.

Before the small aircraft started to land on our hand-made strip, we managed to supplement our tinned diet by one day catching a huge turtle. I don't know if you have ever tried turtle, but those of us so inclined (which included myself) managed to feast on turtle steaks for a couple of days.

Another trick in which the whole camp was involved was the catching of huge quantities of fish with the aid of a couple of hand grenades. These were thrown into the water from the cliffs from where we sighted a large shoal of fish which, as can be imagined, did a good job of stunning them. We then all dived in and collected a huge haul. All of this seemed to have the C.O.'s consent so I guess it wasn't against any regulation.

Life started to change a little for the better when the entertainer, Doug Elliott, arrived on the island and did a wonderful job in entertaining us with jokes, stories and musical records and numbers - I think he travelled the whole of the Northern Areas entertaining the more remote radar stations. When the small kite started to land in the two months before we were all reposted, we managed some beer, films, and some fresh meat and eggs. Believe it or not, we also managed to receive a 'Jeep' in the last month of our stay which solved the water carrying problem, and made life a little easier for our replacements.

All in all, I think we were there for about 6 or 7 months, then all were re-posted - in my case to 3BR5 on Bathurst Island.

I can only remember 2 Radar Mechanics during my stay at 344 - Ray Kelly and 'Nick' Carter. They were both great guys but I haven't seen them for years.

As far as day to day operating was concerned...nothing much happened. I did at one time pick up a plot that was not transmitting any IFF. It was travelling at about Jap recce speed and the boys at 105 FCU caused the Spits to be scrambled, but it eventually turned out to be one of ours. I bet the pilot came in for a bit of a blast!

Well Morrie, whether the above is of any interest or not I leave to you.

344 TRIVIA. (OR WHAT THE NEW ARRIVAL COULD EXPECT AT MONTALIVET.)

Wal Duckering.

All supplies drawn from Truscott...mostly by RAAF Launch.
Water in 44 gallon high octane fuel drums which always seemed to miss the cleaning out process - consequently petrol and lead content polluted all our drinking water - (excepting in the wet season when local water supply was sufficient.) This broke me of the habit of using sugar in my tea as it turned the petrol-tasting-water in tea to castrol-tasting-tea which was far worse. I have never used sugar in tea since.

Drinking water....1 quart bottle per day.

General food....Dehydrated potatoes, and onions, and whatever else would dehydrate.

Tinned bacon.....A speciality.

Bully beef.....Special Sunday Tea Only.

M. & V. or S. & V....Main courses with some Camp Pie.

Jam....Marmalade or Apple Jelly only.

Tinned Fruit.....Peaches; more peaches and then more peaches.

EggsHardly ever known. Powdered available.

Turtle eggs...(the whites won't set so don't try. Yolks fair.)

FishNearly always available.

Shell Fish...Almost non-existent - too much coral.

Washing water....Salt - used salt-water soap except in wet season.

Drinking water...Dumped in drums over reef and ferried in by swimmers.
4 gallons per man per day to be carried from beach cave up to Camp.

Beer and Lolly water....2 bottle ration per man when and if available.

But no complaints - it was just one of those things that we did and made the most of. At least nobody seemed to get sick on it and it sure ripped the fat condition off the new arrivals. Most importantly, it forged a mateship and friendship that will last for all our times.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS AROUND THE MONTE.

Wal Duckering.

A posting to 1 PD usually meant overseas service, and I've heard since that we were destined for Borneo....but the final count of Radar Operators revealed that there were six too many. So I suppose for the want of something better to do with the 'six over,' in September 1944 we were posted to 105 FCU, then on to Montalivet to relieve the operators of 344 (who surely needed it.) During my time there, a couple of happenings impressed themselves on my memory.

All water, food, and in fact everything for the operation of the station was brought in from Truscott by the RAAF launch VICTORY which had to make a fairly long trip through dangerous waters studded with many reefs and islands, sometimes through weather conditions which could make the trip almost impossible, and often supplies and mail were late arriving as the launch just couldn't get through.

One particular hazard not usually reckoned on was submarines. On occasions these would surface behind the islands nearby, mainly East Montalivet, apparently to recharge the batteries or other maintenance, or to give the crews some fresh air. Although they were not visible to us on West Montalivet we would get the information from the crew of VICTORY when we enquired why they had been held up.

East Montalivet was directly on their course, and evidently they lay up quietly near another island until their course was clear again.

It was a perfect area for a sub. resting place with deep water close to shore, no patrols, and a quick get-away possible if necessary. I know some of us used to feel a bit itchy about it as there was no way out for us if any visitor was other than friendly.

(With the Royal Navy, the U.S. Navy and the Dutch all using Fremantle and Exmouth, Wal agreed Allied submarines could have been recharging batteries on some occasions east of East Montalivet. At the same time, Japanese subs and German U-boats were based at Penang and later at Batavia. One long range U-boat travelled from Batavia around the coast to Sydney and back.)

Another incident which caused concern was the jamming of all our communications, radar and W.T. for some hours. This instance I can recall very clearly - it happened when I was on the 12.30 to 18.30 hours shift, and I was the Operator on the Dover. Firstly our radar went out and the CRT was showing a continuous array of closely spaced vertical lines which jammed out the trace completely. I had never seen or heard of 'window' in the area, but this did quickly pass my mind, but I dismissed this and requested that the mechanic on duty examine the set for any possible fault. After a thorough test and examination, he decided it was performing correctly and no fault was found.

I then requested the W.T. Operator to contact base and inform them of our problem. Almost immediately when communication was established on our usual channel it was jammed out and no message could be sent. The W.T. Operator was then asked to change to our alternate channel which he did, but again it was jammed before a message could be sent.

He was then asked to carry out a channel search in the hope that he could pick up any station within range of our equipment but the jamming followed us very quickly....we were now without communication with any other operator within our range.

This continued past the end of my shift and well into the next. I don't know exactly when, but I do know that communications were re-established before the dog watch shift took over at 0100 hours.

The incident was reported to the C.O., and when communications were restored, questions were asked as to what had happened to us when we were 'off air' for so long. I heard no more on the matter, but then only ADHQ and the C.O. may have exchanged reports on the jamming.

Not long afterwards, yet another strange little incident occurred when I was on the dog watch. I was in the Ops. room after coming off the tube, and two of us walked outside and looked down over the rocks and beaches to the north-west of Dover hill. It was a calm, clear night with no moon, and we were more than a little concerned to see what appeared to be subdued lights and movement along the shore, and this continued for some time while we were watching.

So we called a third man on the shift, and the opinion was that all was not as it should be down there, and whatever it was it certainly wasn't being caused by any of our boys. Open fire with the Bren gun was the universal decision - and so the Sgt in charge let go with a number of short bursts which seemed to quieten things down...there was no more movement or dimmed lights, but the camp was now fully awake and the Guards were on full alert.

An inspection of the beach area at first light revealed nothing...only a few marks on the rocks from our own bullets of the night before. No footprints or other indications of anything suspicious, but of course the 30 foot tide rise and fall would have eliminated anything on the beach in any case.

So...what was it we ALL saw? It was hardly the place to come ashore admittedly, but was it possible we had visitors? Or was it phosphorescence? Sea creatures or plants perhaps? Maybe it was reflections of the stars or tricks on the eyes accustomed to the dark...but something was not right that night, and imagination it was not!

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TROPPO GROTTO...The residence of Laurie Leckie
and Wal Duckering.

FRESH MEAT BY AIR MAIL! (As related by Wal Duckering.)

The Montalivet Landing Strip was without doubt the biggest job accomplished on the island during the life and times of 344. It deserved its label of a 'Marvellous Engineering Feat' - and was completed by the Montalivet Airfield Construction Corps - Manual Labour Division - which comprised all Personnel, Volunteers and Otherwise, caught not otherwise engaged. Picks and shovels and bare hands were the heaviest gear used - plus the occasional use of the newly acquired Jeep and trailer which arrived while construction was under way. The strip was the only cleared area on the island, and also served us well as the local football and cricket field, though it proved mighty hard ground.

So - that's the story of the airfield....which having been tested and proved long enough and useable....our first air freighter arrived - an aged DH84 sagging somewhat under the weight of our first ever fresh meat delivery - a full $\frac{1}{2}$ side of beef direct from Vestey's. After 6 or so months of hard tack, this was indeed luxury fare for the island internees, and there wasn't a person who was not anxiously activating the gastric juices while keenly anticipating the next meal. Our cooks didn't disappoint either, and generous helpings of richly smelling and sizzling beef steak appeared on each and every plate.

It was just great - even perfect with a touch of Colman's English - and we were all looking forward to more of the same - but a down side to the sumptuous spread came as a complete and unwelcome surprise. Almost 100% of the eager epicurean participants developed very sore teeth and gums - and even those with artificial ivories joined in the chorus for the gummy part! The teeth ached and became extremely loose - the choppers moved around easily yet uneasily and with a goodly amount of pain, while every one's gums were sore and untouchable.

So the next steak meal formerly so keenly anticipated was placed 'on hold' by popular decision and unanimous vote. Truly....What a Blow!

Then, as a further after-shock, the unaccustomed rich fare introduced a gastric upset for quite a few, though the sudden curtailment of supply kept the additional unwelcome side effect to a minimum.

Happily the tooth problem soon improved and fresh steak appeared again on the Menu for those who preferred it to the soft tinned stuff - M & V - S & V and the like...and from then on a quantity of fresh food did find its way out to us by air - enough to keep the molars conditioned to the challenge of the new chomp and chew exercise.

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ENTERTAINMENT ON M/L.

Wal Duckering.

Entertainment depended very much on our own efforts on Montalivet, and I must mention the talents of my good friend and fellow operator, Bill Tucker.

In civvy life, Bill was, amongst other things, an amateur magician, and some of his tricks of trade came with him to our island home. Bill was always available to perform some of his tricks for our entertainment, sometimes in his tent, or in the Mess hut when we were holding a little self organised night entertainment.

As one of his tricks, he had with him a set of Chinese puzzle rings, and these were usually hanging up in his tent for all to see and inspect. I think there were six, and they were all of chromed steel. They were constantly of interest to us, the great uninitiated, for somehow they frequently changed in their combinations of interlocking combinations and designs. Bill being a cheerful and friendly sort of chap, was liked by everyone on the station, and we were invited in to inspect them at any time. But no matter how they were set up, singly or combined together perhaps in a circle, no one including yours truly could ever find out the secret of the rings, no matter how we studied them.

The other entertainment on the island was a quarter size billiard table which gave countless hours of entertainment for tournaments as well as ordinary games...but despite our skills, we were hopeless when we played on a full size table back on the mainland.

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HEY! DO YOU REMEMBER THIS?

Wal Duckering.

The sure and easy way to catch fish for the kitchen.....Empty the kitchen refuse bins into the sea at high tide from the shallow rocky ledges leading to the reef.....wait for a while.....then add a few explosives.....then BANG! and there was tea waiting to be collected.

Of course, scooping up the floating fish was a bit of a problem as the sharks caught on to the idea and decided to join in the exercise.

RESULT.....Exit all Personnel, and also Exit future fishing exercises of this nature.

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HEY! DID YOU KNOW THIS?

Wal Duckering.

The grass during the Wet Season grew to 15 foot tall on Montalivet, and when the large seeds were ripe and mature ready to fall, we had to put plugs in our ears when we walked through the stuff to prevent the seeds from entering our ears as they could work their way further into the ear to possibly damage the ear drum itself.

A 'quick-fix' was a finger in each ear if not otherwise engaged!

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STORMS AND CYCLONES.

Wal Duckering.

With the onset of the 'wet' season, wind and rainstorms became part of everyday life with the occasional cyclone to relieve the monotony, for one or two caused consternation and even showed us the lighter side of life up there.

Of course, the Doover always had to shut down and the array had to be lashed into the wind sometimes for a day or so to prevent obvious damage to the whole set.

Huge waves pounded the island and the wash back down the beach made the waves stand straight up for about 20 feet, then collapse from the bottom for their attack on the beach and rocks again. Their strength and power were tremendous and equally dangerous. However, they did not dampen our enthusiasm for a swim, and quite a goodly number of us were surf enthusiasts. We would wait for the wall of water to rise to its peak, then we would dash down the beach and dive into it, coming out in about 20 feet of water which would collapse and carry us up the beach. Crazy really!--as it was mixed with coral boulders etc and was so strong to struggle against on its return surge back to reform. Not for me now Thank You, and probably should not have been for us then...Still, we did it with no casualties. Perhaps it was pure, unadulterated sheer luck and good fortune.

The rain and wind during these periods were so strong and heavy that keeping ourselves in any state of dryness, particularly when making our way from the camp to the Doover to change shifts was to say the least, impossible. Hence - the idea was formed....remove all clothing except our 'fur-felts' and boots - wrap our clothing in our groundsheets - carry our rifles upside-down - and then trudge through the scrub and undergrowth, trying all the time to stay on the track and avoid those menacing 'wait-a-while' vines which would wrap themselves around you and make you 'wait a while' to untangle them. Invariably next day you would wear a festered band around the body from last night's encounter with them - particularly so because of our style of dress - or lack of it.

On the lighter side....the fish - especially the large trevally - were about in the rough waters and some of the boys from W.A. were experienced in the special art of catching them. Sure enough....two beauties during one of the cyclones were caught - one of about 65 pounds and the other of about 25 pounds. When the larger one was being carried up to the camp, hoisted on the back of one of the boys, it easily out-spanned the width of his shoulders. These were welcome indeed as a break in our regular and monotonous diet.

The beneficial side of the cyclones was the availability of good, fresh, clean and unpolluted drinking water which lasted for perhaps a week before it again became contaminated gradually by algae and water mites of some kind.

EXPLORING THE REEF.

Wal Duckering.

Laurie Leckie and myself often used to roam the reef surrounding the island in search of various forms of sea life and shell-fish. The best part of the exposed reef at low tide was to the W.S.W. both in extent and for the variety of coral lagoons which dotted it and were usually full of water. These were of various depths, from a few inches to 40 feet or so, and were generally well populated with a variety of fish.

On this particular day, we went out mainly to spear some fish in a lagoon approximately 200 yards or so from the beach. The tide was dead flat - or very nearly so - exposing the reef and making it easy to walk out, skirting the deep lagoons on the way. We became very engrossed in our searching and spearing endeavours and were mainly head-down looking down and under the coral ledges...and so we misjudged the commencement of the run in of the tide, which was a fast 33 feet in this part of the world.

When we looked up, all we could see of the reef was a few high patches protruding through a sheet of water right back to the beach. This was not

a very encouraging sight or situation, as all the lagoons were now as one beneath the fast incoming tide.

Our boots were heavy and naturally saturated. We couldn't take them off as the coral does not bear walking on with bare feet...any way, we could not stay put, so off we started, picking our way through the shallow areas of lagoons and sand patches, and trying to skirt the large, deep ones. This wasn't exactly easy, but we finally made it to the deeper channel which nearly always forms where the reef and the beach meet. The channel by now was filling quickly -- it was about 30 yards wide and some swimming was required. Then..."Happy Days"...our next sight was not exactly meant to cheer us up either as the white tip fin sharks had commenced their scavenging runs along the channel for anything that had suffered damage, or died, or whatever during the low tide. The options did not come in multiples, so it was boots off, hung around our necks, and off we went. Our arrival on the beach was to say the least very gratifying.

This didn't stop us from exploring the reef again, but we never again went out to the far edge of the reef without regularly keeping a very watchful eye on the reef and the tide.

SWIMMING WITH THE SEA CREATURES.

Wal Duckering.

Swimming was a popular relaxation and sport...the water was great - clear, cool, and in our case a great place to use the salt water soap and have a bath. All of us could swim with varying degrees of proficiency, but the next incident involved one of our best swimmers.

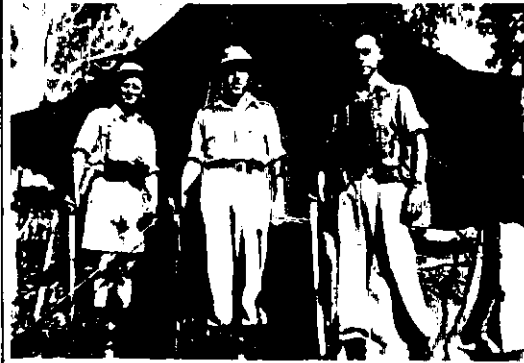
The off-duty shifts were having a swim from the landing beach and diving from some of the rocks which were always exposed - even at high tide which it was at the time. Austin Asche was having his usual swimming laps a little way out from the beach where he was swimming from one end of the cove to the other and back. Often he would swim some way out...not dangerously so...and then back again with another swimmer in a friendly race; but this day he didn't do so. However a little later he spotted a log floating just inside the edge of the reef. Now these logs were what a few of us used to float around and over the reef at low tide when the reef was covered by about 5 or 6 feet. We would then dive down and do a little exploring, then surface and hang on to the log for support. So they were often much in demand as at that time we weren't lucky enough to have a boat of any sort.

Anyway...Austin started off again, and some of us were not so keen on the idea, and one or two of the boys sitting on the higher headland rocks were asked to have a look at it.

It was then that the 'log' changed to a very large salt water ocean going crocodile, just slowly cruising along on top of the water. Luckily, Austin was not near enough to make the croc.curious...but how nasty it could have been had it investigated!

Some of the boys then fired at it without hitting it evidently, for it slowly swam away. And for a good while after this, we always had a rifleman handy on the cliff top when we went swimming.

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(Top Left)
Sgt. Lynden Carter out on
the reef at low tide.

(Top Right)
Laurie Leckie in war garb
ready for a corroboree!

(Above)
Cliff Leavy, Don Bailey
and Wally Duckering on
manoeuvres.

(Right)
Bill Tucker, Phil Newbold,
Ken Nice and Austin Ashe
leave on VICTORY. Note
the sad expressions!



LETTERS FROM WEST MONTALIVET.

Laurie Leckie.

Whilst we were 'up north,' I'm certain we would all agree that 'letters from home' were always eagerly awaited and were great morale boosters. Conversely our letters home helped our folk to keep up with our movements, our health and our feelings....that infernal censor permitting of course! During the 7 months I spent on our 'island in the sun,' I wrote some 30 or more letters home which my mother chose to keep, and which surprisingly have survived to this day! For many years they have been packed away in a case of various family treasures in the proverbial shed down the back yard, but now they again see the light of day. Inspired by the thought of putting together something of the story of '344,' I have resurrected these documents of vital information, all now free of the 'Official Secret' restrictions, and felt that excerpts may be of interest to fellow Monte vets. Not surprisingly, many happenings of those days - now more than half a century ago - would have been forgotten by us all, so these 'Diary' type notes may be of added interest.

My story begins on Saturday, 16th. September 1944 when a party of keen young operators, posted to relieve the original team on Monte, arrived at Truscott air-base in transit to our new posting. At that time, H.M. good supply ship VICTORY took only 4 passengers at a time which would have been OK for our party, but as luck would have it, there had been a 'problem' on Monte. One of the unit had to come over to Truscott for Court Martial* proceedings together with three witnesses, one of whom was the Medical Orderly. So a replacement M.O. had to be one of the 4 going on the next voyage. So - the four of us -(in fact only three as one Corporal Cliff Leavy pulled rank and declared he would be a definite starter) drew lots....and I drew the 'short straw.' I did indeed contemplate stowing away on VICTORY, but it was soon made clear that that plan was a 'non starter,' and as it appeared that I could be stranded at Truscott for another fortnight slaving in the Sergeants' Mess, other solutions were sought. One of these in fact was to parachute down on Monte from one of the Liberators heading out that way and this almost became a reality, but the DWO ruled that as I was under 21, parents' permission had to be obtained to carry out such a risky act. Eventually after three weeks at Truscott, the opportunity occurred to fly out as passenger with 'Doc' Fenton in his incredible little DH 84. Doc was making his first trip to land on the rough and rugged strip that the gallant team on Monte (under almost slave conditions) had hacked out of the inhospitable terrain down on the southern tip. That trip proved to be quite a thrill - especially coming in only a few feet above the rocky foreshore - but it was certainly the way to go! So....having now safely arrived on Monte, I'll just recount some of the items of interest from my letters:-

8th. Oct. As censorship is very strict here, I'll not be able to tell you any more about where we are until a much later date...so that is that! My first impressions are indeed very favourable, for although it is completely isolated, it is indeed a bonzer little spot. The camp is very well laid out and commands a lovely view out over the sea and various pieces of land. The country around here is not so attractive as it is formed entirely of rock larva although it is well covered with many small shrubs and bushes. The most redeeming feature is the reef which stretches for several hundred yards out from the shore on the other side of the island and is an absolute wonderland at low tide. Within its many pools is practically every conceivable tropical fish

Quite a number of fair sized fish are also caught in these pools when the tide recedes and they are easily caught by those who go out properly equipped.

*I wonder if anyone knows what this Court Martial was about.

Rifles and harpoon spears are the proper equipment!

Wally Duckering and I had the day off yesterday, so we took our lunch of sandwiches, fried fish, tin of peaches, harpoon and rifles, and plenty of water, and went for a scramble over to the other side of the island. As it was low tide, we went out on the reef about two hundred yards. We looked around to see an ever increasing sheet of water coming in BEHIND us! Wow! Did we go! But even so we finished up wading through a channel with water up around our waists. We reached shore OK, but on turning round we saw two sharks zig-zagging through the water where we had just crossed! Lesson learnt!

16th. Oct. We soon settled into making our tents comfortable - ours was named 'Troppo Grotto' - we put together our own hessian covered beds made up from odd pieces of timber plus side cupboard boxes. One of our daily duties is to bring up a tin of water - and I don't mean jam tin - from the supply down on the beach. On the whole the fellows here are a good crowd of chaps so that helps a lot. Our Sergeant Op. is one of the best we've yet struck, so we are very fortunate in that regard.

The ground hereabouts is not much good for growing vegetables, but there's a spot near a brackish well which might be OK - would you mind sending up some seed packets of water melon, carrots, cucumbers etc...Thanks!

All the paths here are constructed of broken lumps of rock and the wear and tear on our boots is colossal, especially as we wear the same boots out on the reef. We do our own repairing, and we'll be kept fairly busy.

Would you also mind sending up a piece of khaki material please which I can use for patching the seats of my two pairs of shorts which are starting to look the worse for wear. Today we were up at 6 a.m. and on shift till lunch, then immediately after we were grabbed and conscripted into clearing an area for erecting a tent....this took us till five...and afterwards we brought up our day's supply of water then we had tea and I did some washing. Our next shift commenced at 0100 so we are kept busy!

The water supply at the moment is rather acute and we are rationed to one water-bottle per day. We had been going through that at least every shift so we now have to ease up with a bang. Fortunately some lolly water arrived a short while ago - the first we have had here - even so the present ration is one bottle per man per week for the next two weeks. There is also a beer ration, so us non-drinkers swap our beer ration for lolly water which helps a little. We are hoping for relief shortly.

Owing to the vast number of scorpions and lizards which inhabit our tent area, we have to put the legs of our beds into tins of oil to keep out the unwelcome visitors. The centipedes are simply enormous and measure up to 9 inches. We have a pet lizard near our tent which we feed with tid-bits. He lost his tail in tragic circumstances, so we are checking to see how long it will take to grow. We've named him 'Clarence.'

Yesterday we had a spot of unloading to do from the VICTORY which provided us with some exercise. The fun started when we had to unload the drums of water...well, was that a picnic! A row boat hauls a few at a time to a few yards from the rocks...we strip off - scramble out - push and haul them up the slippery rocks to where they are stored. We had a low tide and a fair sea running on this occasion, so we had our work cut out.

22nd. Oct. Four bags of mail arrived yesterday and out of it I received some fourteen letters, two magazine packets and one parcel. From the looks on the faces of everyone as they collected their mail, one would think that we had all been posted south!

We have one day off roster every eight, and on that day we usually like to get away and 'commune with nature' on the other side of the island.

From dawn to dusk - except for the weekly rifle parade - we wear only shorts, hat, socks and boots, but have to wear long sleeve shirts and trousers for tea and afterwards. As the temperature is never below 80° night or day, this rule is rather a nuisance - but we just have to wear the long-uns and look pretty! Thanks for the billy you sent and its contents - a cup of tea will be appreciated on our jaunts around the island. We have just had a great 'day out' and staggered back to camp this evening with a dozen bream, three parrot fish, two eels and some sting-rays, after using our rifles harpoons and hands. We just missed a turtle (but couldn't have carried it anyway). The sunset over the reef was really beautiful!

28th. Oct. Our time up north commenced from 1st. September - almost two months already - we received two mail deliveries last week as VICTORY made a second trip to build up our depleted water reserves. We are lucky that we are able to receive mail every week or so now, as on one occasion the original team did not receive any for two months! We are all out of stamps now, so will have to send this letter minus stamp.....I hope it still goes 'Air Mail.'

I popped down to our well a few days ago...at present still a bit salty.... and planted those water melon seeds. The soil is very rich there and is about the only place where anything can be planted on our island. So.... here's hoping!

Yesterday was Station Duties and we all lost a few gallons of perspiration collecting and bringing down firewood from the plateau, then cutting it up and stacking it in our kitchen. We also brought up some rations, and more rations from our store shed down at our landing beach...also some more water. On these duties days we also help in the kitchen by washing up all the cooking dishes after tea.

We had a great panic last week when we heard that we were having an overnight visit from a Squadron Leader...we thought he would be a Technical Officer on inspection, but we were greatly relieved to find out when he arrived that he was a Squadron Leader Padre! We joined in a service with him...the second church service for the Unit! We appreciated his visit, and the writing paper, the envelopes and the biscuits that he left for us.

Thanks for the apples, oranges and lemons...only a couple didn't make it. The rest were in good condition and greatly appreciated. We have a good little canteen that is open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings and has such items as tinned peaches and pears, cordial, condensed milk, tinned peanuts, barley sugar, powder, matches, soap, bootpolish, cigarettes and lolly water when available.

We experienced our first monsoonal storm this afternoon. A huge mass of black clouds could be seen approaching from the north, then came a sudden gale which lashed the sea and everything in its path. We were surrounded by a wall of rain which completely blotted out East Monte. This was all most impressive, and after the storm the atmosphere was beautifully clean and calm.

Every Wednesday we hold a euchre night and they are really first rate. We can usually muster four tables....one shilling entrance fee which goes into a 'pool,' with 10/- to the winner and the remainder in small prizes. Tonight Wally and I spent half an hour pinning up numerous photos of alluring film stars...all are quite respectable, and they do give a new lease of life to the old tent!

Our latest craze is hermit crab racing. Hundreds of these crabs come up around our tents each evening. We are amazed why they come up all the distance from the shore. We tie pieces of cotton on their legs and they are 'jockied' down the course. Definitely...we must be going 'Tropo!'

For sweets tonight we had fruit salad and jelly....Beautiful!!! Donated by Red Cross, so please put something in their collection box, will you Mum? 9th. November. Another beaut storm this afternoon. We've added another strip of malthoid round the side walls of our tent to keep out the driving rain, and strengthened our trenches to save us being washed out - also attached a tray under the beds to hold our kit bags, respirators. We had some high drama a few nights ago when Cliff Leavy became very ill with malaria contracted in New Guinea. He had to be carried down to our camp; he had a temperature of 103° and has to go back to base for proper treatment. Our island was thought to be uninhabited before being selected for our use, although there are signs of Aboriginal habitation probably during the wet season. One of their gnyahs is still standing, and a skeleton has been found.

We have shower facilities O.K., using salty water of course, but still real good. We have apparently been using too much lately and have been threatened with rationing to 10 gallons per man for all washing purposes. The problem arises because the water has to be pumped from the well, and if we use too much, the pumping has to be done twice each day to keep the tank full. And thanks to the recent rains we are now suffering from an over-attack of mossies....the blighters.

17th. November. We all had a beaut fish meal one night last week after the 'Boss' and some of the boys had been out fishing with a few plugs of 'Gelly.' It sure brought results and we had a fish tea with sufficient left over for breakfast. Old Cookie was cursing as he had been looking forward to an easy bully beef tea! The bread he makes is terribly dough-ie and when pressed between the fingers just stays put!

Four of us enjoyed a real good game of bridge this evening, and although Oscar and I were beaten hands down, we still had our fun. Our Mess-Roc room is in continual use from dawn to 11 p.m. The hut itself is well ventilated and is mostly made of thin wire-netting on a wooden frame and an iron roof. The men are at one end, and the Sergeants and C.O. at the other with a store room and canteen dividing the two. Apart from our five tables, the other furniture consists of a completely priceless billiard table - pocket size - a mantel type wireless, a cupboard for various games, magazines etc., and a fridge, recently made to work and now kept locked up. There is a jam and salt cupboard and a sports box containing a good stock of equipment which is seldom used. Down one end we have a mild 'pin-up' gallery and over that a very humorous, large artist's impression of the first landing here. I must try to reproduce it one day as it's a masterpiece. Beer bars, hula-hula girls, custom houses, centipedes, rest homes are all depicted. Down at the other end we have various maps, notices, placards.

25th. November. During the last few weeks we have been having quite a few beaut fish meals - once again the result of some T.N.T. being chucked around, and great fun! There is a rock pool just below our camp where we used to bathe quite often, but as so many chaps were getting cuts and scratches whilst clambering in and out, the pool is now out of bounds. Rumour has it that a Dentist will be coming out shortly....several of us hope it's true. I lost a filling last week which could present problems.

2nd. December. Thanks for the mouth organ you sent up, though fellow tent-mates don't appreciate it. But I can take it up to the ~~██████████~~ (deleted by Censor) and play it one handed to my heart's content. And the water melons I planted are doing well and high hopes are held for their survival and progress.

The Dentist arrived O.K. and did a great job...he is now enjoying a few days off until the next boat. We had turtle eggs for breakfast this morning - they were discovered by the dentist in his ramblings, so he's a popular chap.

12th. December. Thanks for the beaut fruit cake...we took it up on shift and finished it off afterwards at a community get-together. Ron (my brother) also sent some rubber for the catapults we are making. We have been enjoying Crispies for breakfast quite often lately, but the supply has now temporarily runout. Stan our Medical Orderly and Barber departed suddenly as he broke out in a wicked skin rash all over, but fortunately one of our new Guards is also a Barber so we can all remain respectable. Until now all the grass has been as dead as a bone but we have been having heavy rain lately and everything seems to be re-vitalised and is becoming a most refreshing green. Some of the boys caught an absolutely whopping big proper a few days ago - it was the biggest fish most of us had ever seen. We reckoned it would have been about 150 lbs, and its mouth was just about big enough to climb in. The boys had seen it off the rocks, so they threw in a stick of 'Gelly' and just at that moment the proper dashed in to check the splash...and "Whoosh"...up he came. They fixed a hook into his jaw, dragged him ashore, and he made a very tasty meal for tea and breakfast! Another good catch was a nine foot python that one of the fellows killed down at the well. He just grabbed it by the tail and cracked it around a tree...nothing to it! Today we received some FRESH meat, spuds, onions, butter and apples. Super Dooper! We have not had any bread for the past week due to the oven going U/S - so good old Army biscuits have been back in use.

As will be observed from the new Censor's signature, we now have a new C.O.....I must of necessity restrain myself on the subject, but suffice to say that a new atmosphere prevails over the camp. Admittedly the previous C.O. did a marvellous job in selecting sites and getting things to run smoothly, but that's all I can say about him. We will be on shift Christmas Eve and Christmas afternoon, but we will be able to work our meals O.K. and will have Boxing Day to recover.

19th. December. We all received A.C.F. Christmas parcels yesterday - most came from Clubs, Patriotic Committees and the like, but one of the fellows received his from a "Miss" - so is responding promptly to take advantage of the introduction! Parcel contents have included tinned fruit cake, pudding, dried fruits, small tin of pears, powder, tooth paste, tobacco, writing paper, envelopes and a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb block of chocolate, also a card advising who was the donor. Parcels greatly appreciated.

Yesterday was indeed a red letter day for us, for a special vessel brought over our very own bonnie bouncing JEEP! She will relieve us of a tremendous amount of strenuous labouring...for instance the drums of water are now brought right up to the Mess, which saves us from carting our daily bucket. Also the Jeep will carry our rations up from our store shed at the Landing Beach. So we have been 'road-making' during recent Station Duty days, but they are pretty rough. We have nick-named the main one the 'Burma Road' but no doubt our new baby will flatten them out. Unfortunately we still have to use 'Shank's Pony' when we go up on shift as even a Jeep couldn't get up that track. One of the crew from the vessel came ashore and shot one of our all too few pheasants - we believe there were only two pairs left on the island, so we all thought this was a pretty poor show. We had a three day session of rain last week - quite spectacular with Hughie providing plenty of effects. And as we now have a Jeep, we have hopes of acquiring a row boat for our use which would be super if it can be obtained.

Christmas Day. We were up at 8.30 for a morning get-together and to enjoy nuts, muscatels, and a spot of sherry. Lunch was at 12 noon and extra good. Our two Sergeants and the C.O. served the meal - the Air Force tradition - and they came in for quite a bit of good-natured banter. The tables were

adorned with lilies and green, and the dinner consisted of Chicken Broth; with the main course of Chicken, Ham, Roast Potato and Onions, Peas and White Sauce, followed by Plum Pudding and Custard. There was cold beer for those that wanted it, but there was also cold cordial and coffee. We were on afternoon shift, so had to stagger up the notorious track immediately after the feast, but we still made it somehow. During the afternoon we devoured a tin of fruit salad, pears and cream plus a brew afterwards at our shack.

We had a concert in the evening, and that really was a rare turn. Everyone contributed an item, though most of the chaps were somewhat inebriated and some of the items were rather rough.

I received a letter from Tim Jones, but unfortunately he had mixed up letters written to his mother and to me, with the result that I got a "Dear Mum" letter. His mother will most probably be finding Tim's letter to me most enlightening!

We went turtle egg hunting one afternoon, but even though we dug up most of the beach, the cunning lassies outfoxed us...and I almost swallowed one of our pet lizards yesterday - the little blighter had fallen into my water bottle. One of the boys had carried a dead one around in his bottle for quite a few days before discovering it...then the odour aroused his suspicions. 31st. December. The water-melons are coming on great guns!

Last night as it was a full moon and king tide, a party of us set out about 11.30 p.m. to the other side of our island hoping to catch some turtles actually laying their eggs, but as luck would have it, none obliged at the beach where we were. So we stripped off and had a really exhilarating swim. We got back to camp about 3.30 a.m....it was good fun except for the mossies. We continue with our 'mass production' fishing using 'Gelly' sticks. It's most productive, although we have to keep our eyes open for sharks that like to come in for their share of the stunned fish after we've thrown in the sticks.

2nd. January 1945. As you know, New Year's Eve fell on a Sunday, and it passed fairly quietly up here. At 6 in the morning we were hit by a terrific storm which proved quite exciting...but we survived! During our 3 a.m. swim a couple of days ago, I 'ducked' one of the swimmers who was just floating on his back....just a bit of horseplay. There was much gurgling below the surface, and much mirth above which quickly turned to horror when my victim surfaced to reveal himself as the C.O.! However, he took it in good spirit, though I was just wishing I could disappear down under, while the others almost drowned themselves laughing.

8th. January. A new launch came out with our mail and stores yesterday. Quite a few of us were able to go out for a short 'cruise' around the island to see our home from a different angle...a very pleasant afternoon. Then we had a great spurt of energy and have given our tent a complete re-furbishment. There's new awning out the front; a fresh coral floor brought up in bags from the beach; and our neighbours from 'Knot Inn' just across from us came over to voice their approval.

Last night was our regular Welfare Meeting at which the winners of two competitions were announced. Wal and I won the 'Best named' tent with our 'Troppo Grotto' and I won the competition for the best name for our Jeep - 'Bouncing Bertha.' I also scooped the pool by winning a Lucky Number for our Euchre night....then another for the Booby Prize. There were loud protests from the assembled multitude, but I eased the protests by sharing the contents of the prizes - tinned peaches, whitebait etc. Then I beat Wal in a game of billiards...a really good night.

19th. January. We have had several days of very heavy rain and our tent has finally developed some leaks. We had to get up about 3 a.m. one morning

to put ground sheets over the top of our mosquito nets...that was O.K. until I got up - forgot the groundsheet which was by then full of water - and copped a sudden cold shower! We have now put some malthoid over our tent so should be O.K. We are trapping the rain water in all kinds of containers and are now well off for fresh water.

We had a visit from a Salvation Army Chaplain recently - a Captain Petersen - a great fellow. As well as holding a church service he also ran a quiz night and sing-song. Several of the boys excelled - Cliff featured with 'I am a Jolly Bandoliera' and its strains continued to ring around the camp for several days.

Our well has now filled with beautiful fresh rain water - the water being pumped up for our showers. It's still a bit brackish but is 100% on how it was during the 'dry.'

22nd. January. Max Baker went 'south' after 17 months tour...Max was one of our leading wits and will be greatly missed...he took two rolls of film down for me.

Our C.O. has developed a bad habit; he has made several visits to the Doover at all hours of the night and early morning to check that everything is running efficiently. Still, we made him welcome!

The 'Bull' parades are now held only once a month, mainly to check rifles and respirators. There are tent inspections once a fortnight, thanks to our new C.O.'s commonsense approach to such matters. And the old VICTORY is back in Darwin having a re-fit and our new supply launch is a super-duper Air/Sea Rescue launch.

The landing strip has been out of service lately due to the heavy rains, and we're all hoping it will be O.K. again soon...the only real disadvantage of being out here is the food...we're all heartily sick of it; also the isolation with its irregular mail and supplies. As the fighting moves north, we would all dearly love to be closer to the action, but have been assured that we are doing a vital job etc. etc. We are fortunate in having a very healthy life-style and all feel very fit.

28th. January. There has been a long delay in supplies coming in and mail going out due to some unexplained hold up. We have lost count also of the mossies that we have disposed of during the last few days and we have decided to counter-attack...~~we~~ that is another one that has bitten the coral! We are even trying to train our pet lizards Clarence and Henry to sit on our shoulders and help in the fight, but they are slow learners. We now have our own approx. 12 foot rowing boat and it is proving very popular. It was originally flat bottomed, but some of the boys went to work on it and it now has a keel. Some of us are not good sailors when we get off-shore in a swell and several have lost their breakfast, but it has been good for fishing in the deeper water. And our beautiful little billiard table has been renovated, so now instead of every second ball shooting off the table, the rate has dropped to only about one in six. We certainly have a lot of fun on it.

4th. February. We have had a three week gap between mails so very pleased to receive a good delivery today. Last night we were attacked by swarms of flying ants - literally thousands were attracted by the lights in our tents, and eventually we just had to turn out the lights, all other methods having failed. We were actually overwhelmed by them.

Our island is now completely transformed and luxuriant green foliage covers everything. The grass has grown to about six feet and innumerable springs have appeared in unexpected places. We have had several good sessions on our main reef and it is quite incredible the extent of the many glorious coloured shells and fishes that are to be found. We even came across a batch

THURSDAY 1-3-45

DOORS OPEN 7.15

SHOW COMMENCES 8.15

PAY AT DOOR

RAAF GROUP 592

PRESENTS

Music by Fullagar.

Lighting and Amplification
by Kelly.

"ROUGH AS BAGS"

A REVUE IN ONE ACT
DIRECT FROM
THE LONDON HIPPODROME

Production by ELLIOTT

Stage Setting by SEYMOUR.

PROGRAMME.

1. Bill Fullagar (the one man orchestra) plays the overture.
2. Luftwaffe.
3. Elliot sings:- I heard a Forest Praying.
Without a song.
4. Nick gets a letter.
5. "Hotpoints" from Bill Fullagar and his stomach Steinway.
6. The Singing Scotchman - Jim Maitland.
7. 40,000 Horsemen.
8. Troppo Troubadors - the Gentlemen Songsters sing:-
"I love You Truly."
9. QUIZ. - the Battle of the Nit-Wits - Look-out Quiz Kids.
10. Bill Fullagar - Piano Accordion.
11. Recitations.
12. Plantation Melodeers sing "Way Down Upon The Swanee River."
13. Magic by TUCKER.
14. Elliot sings :- Lady Be Good.
Tiger Rag.
15. Troppo Jim - the "No Hoper."
16. Maori's Farewell

THE KING

"Lonely Star" Print.

of baby turtles clambering out of their eggs in the sand, and helped them on their way to the ocean.

And today we had a visit from two Aborigines in a dug-out canoe. We all enjoyed bartering with them - they had brought some tortoise shell with them, and they left well contented with their visit (we managed to 'spare' them a box of bully beef!) and some flour. They do not stay here now because of the skeletons - they must have quite a story.

A wasp disappeared down Wally's rifle barrel and this caused a bit of consternation for a while, but eventually we coaxed it out O.K. We often go for 'shoots' down on the rocks just to keep our eye in - and have enjoyed some tremendous 'surfs' with the massive waves that pound in during a storm.

12th. February. We had a snake visit our tent yesterday, but a good team soon assembled to persuade it to go elsewhere. And our Aboriginal friends returned today bringing with them an 'elder' from their tribe to meet us and look around. More bartering.

We have a Billiards Championship under way at present - thirty of us have paid a shilling each to be used for prize money. We are all handicapped, from 60 'off' to 50 'on.' I'm 10 'off' and we are all paired off to play as shifts permit. It should be good and interesting fun. We also had a Housie-Housie school running on Saturday night which went very well. Quite a few snakes have appeared lately, and not knowing much about them, we have taken the easy way out and 'disposed' of them. We especially have to keep our eyes open when going along our tracks.

17th. February. We enjoyed a very enthusiastically fought out cricket match this afternoon on a convenient area cleared for 'other purposes,' the losing team to buy the winners a bottle of beer each and one for themselves. It was crazy really as the temperature was well over 100° but it proved to be great fun. Our team scored a gallant 57 and we thought we had the game won as they were 8 wickets for 50, but they tied with us at 57 before hitting their winning run with one man left. We all enjoyed a swim immediately afterwards, and yes, we paid up and all enjoyed a celebration party. A recent delivery of stores and supplies has provided fresh meat, turnips, marrows and potatoes, also a case of oranges. This was our first 'fresh' meal since Christmas...eight weeks.....so it was very much enjoyed.

We have been delighted to discover that quite a few of the trees up around our 'shack' are actually wattle trees, and they are now out in a glorious mass of yellow. Many colourful small wildflowers are appearing where there is no grass and they look really good. And the local billiard tournament was keenly contested with games to go to 200 up...my game went to 190 each but then I lost to a good winning break.

Thanks for sending the tin of Granny Smith apples - and no...I won't give them to the cook to bake. Knowing him and his methods, he would probably burn them!

My two pairs of shorts are now just a mass of patches and shorts are not on issue here (A,F.O. Rule 119/287 Sect.H. Sub-sect 19 Par 127 etc!) Could you send up one of my pairs from home please.

An entertainment party of two arrived on the last boat and are staying for five days. Doug Elliott (previously a Radio Announcer) is the lead and he is terrific. Each night he puts on a different type of entertainment, from Classical, to Popular, to Jazz. One night he played the five movements to the Grand Canyon Suite...sheer magic. We've also had excerpts from 'Merry Widow,' most G.and S. Operettas (with me in 7th. Heaven) 'Ave Maria,' 'Jealousy,' 'Vienna Woods' etc. We have all really enjoyed their visit.

Radio Shoman has been on this afternoon and judging from their account

of the war they have just about won it! We get quite a laugh listening to their version!

4th. March. Our old boat VICTORY is back on our run again, but for the last three days has been anchored off East Monte sheltering from the fierce monsoonal storm we have been having, making the intervening sea too rough for it to make the crossing. All very exasperating to know mail and supplies are so close! It was still rough when it did eventually make the crossing, but we really felt it could have come sooner. Our six months on Monte will actually be up soon so we are expecting postings any day...several of us have spoken to the C.O. and asked if he could help with posting further north, but he has advised that we will have to wait till we get back to Darwin to see what can be done, so we'll see then.

We had a bit of excitement a few nights ago...it was during our 'dogwatch' shift up at the Doover when we thought we saw some torchlights flashing down on the reef below us. It was a clear starlit night, and we called up the guard and sergeant as we thought we may be getting an unwelcome visit. We keep a Bren machine-gun up near the Doover, so for the fun of it we fired off a few rounds at the possible lights. After a while we convinced ourselves that they must have been star reflections in pools on the reef and we resumed our normal duties.

6th. March. Len Reynolds and some others left our happy abode during the week...they all received a very happy send-off. I'll be missing Len...that's the worst part of the Air Force system...you are continually making and losing friends. The 'making' is O.K. of course - it's the 'losing' that hurts.

We've had another visit from our Aboriginal friends, keen to do some trading. We are very impressed at the way they handle their dug-out canoe in the choppy seas. We have had another week of heavy rain and storms. Our track along the plateau is permanently under water - it's great fun! The tall grass on either side bends over when wet and makes progress pretty messy. Our well area is now completely flooded over and under a good 5 or 6 feet of water, and so the area down there is looking great. These humid conditions are playing havoc with any leather, boots etc., even the woodwork on our rifles.

The first edition of our new fortnightly newsletter is being printed now and is eagerly awaited. It is named 'The Lonely Star'....I'll include a copy if it's out before posting this letter. And we had a great game of American Soft Ball last Saturday and we all enjoyed ourselves very much. We almost got as tired shouting and cheering as we did playing.

16th. March. We had an exciting incident one night last week. We have just acquired a fishing net! Three of the boys went out with it in our rowing boat and were industriously hauling it into the boat when they suddenly realised that the boat was sinking beneath them and that they were treading water, with only the nose of the boat protruding above water! Two of them swam to the shore while one stayed with the boat. One of the swimmers got into difficulties and had to be dragged out of the water unconscious. However, he soon recovered and was O.K. later. A relief party went out to drag the boat in but after about 10 minutes without making progress, they realised that the anchor was still down! Another exciting incident occurred when some of the boys were out swimming. An object was sighted floating about 50 yards off-shore, and Oscar swam out to see what it was. Fortunately he took a breather on a rock en route...and was aghast to find out it was a croc!!!! Fortunately some rifle shots from the shore scared it off, and Oscar set a record coming back to the beach. Needless to add, we always have a rifle with us when we go swimming!

29th. March. The last batch of parcels was great...we all enjoy the Milo and Horlicks which together with the condensed milk make up into really good drinks. I've also made up a batch of ice cream using the Hennessy powder that you sent up. Very tasty! The fruit cake and icing also greatly we have been having some very tasty feasts from those very welcome supplies. Thanks from everyone!

The second edition of the 'Lonely Star' is now out and I am sending a copy to you for your information. There's been a full moon for the last few days and after the storms cleared the nights have been delightful with the ocean and sandy beaches looking very nice lit by moonlight. All very romantic, but it would be nice to have someone with whom to share it!

We now have a new cook, and he is very good. On one occasion our 'old' cook, on the morning after receiving some beaut fresh eggs, presented them to us as a mash! He was not very popular! We caught a turtle recently. There was much excitement, and although it may now sound cruel, we took advantage of the opportunity to have some turtle steak. It was very good, but a sad end for the turtle! We have also found some more turtle eggs, and they have made good breakfasts.

We can now take our Jeep 'Bouncing Bertha' with us when we go over to our cricket pitch. On the last trip back, 22 of us managed to climb aboard.

6th. April. We had been out of boot leather for the past two months and our boots are in a really bad way. However, new stocks have now arrived just in time to save one pair, but the other pair was too far gone and I have been able to trade them in for a new pair!

A new perpetual billiards competition is now running...all names are on a board in alphabetical order and we can challenge any one above us on the board - 100 up. If you win you take his place on the board and he takes yours. I'm lucky enough to be 2nd. at the moment, but I don't expect to stay there long.

Last Sunday being Easter, we held a simple Church Service conducted by our C.O. It went well and we sang about a dozen hymns all chosen by the congregation.

At long last!!! Postings for four of us have come through and we will shortly be returning to base for re-posting. In many ways we will be sorry to leave our home of the last 6 months, but we're looking forward to wherever our new postings take us.

8th. April. We received an unexpected mail drop yesterday, and it was gratefully received. It came by air, but unfortunately the aircraft had to leave immediately and before any outgoing mail could be organised, so it will be several weeks again between deliveries. I received 17 letters and 4 parcels in the last mail drop so I'm feeling really spoiled. And fresh butter was received in the last supply drop....it was our first since Christmas and it tasted beaut.

Not having seen a member of the fairer sex for the past 7 months, it is going to be quite nice to at least see one when we get back to base. As you know, I have been leaving quite a few of my shells to 'dry out' for a few weeks before cleaning and packing them to send down to you. Last night I was amazed to find that some of our 'regular' hermit crabs had come up during the night and 'swapped' their old shells for the 'new' ones I had just cleaned out. The blighters! And not even a 'Thank You.'

Although the temperature was 90° yesterday, we all participated in a very strenuous game of Aussie Rules football. Our team had a win which we reckon was well deserved. And the 3rd. Edition of 'Lonely Star' was out today and hope to send it on. Also our newly formed Debating Society held a meeting

last week, the subject being "Should the White Australian Policy be abandoned?"

15th. April. We had our first film evening for four months a few nights ago when a Padre came out and as well as a church service, he ran through a showing of Deanna Durbin in "Three Smart Girls Grow Up." and "Golden Boy." Both films were greatly enjoyed. And a new Mess is in the process of being built which should prove a big asset.

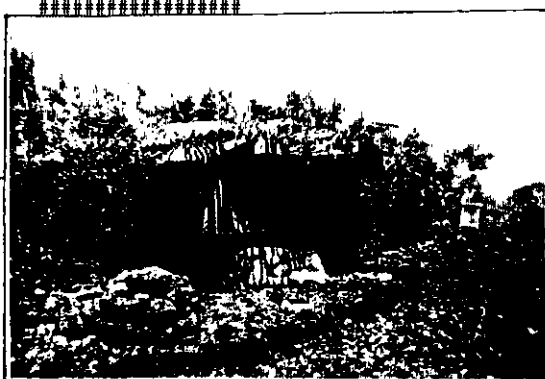
Our Aboriginal friends have paid us another visit, and this time they also demonstrated how they catch fish with their harpoons....they also brought some good shells for bartering. Believe it or not, we have a surplus of tinned peaches in our Canteen...the silly thing is that there are none in our kitchen store! So if we want peaches, we have to shop for them at the Canteen!

There was another film show - "Bride by Mistake" and "The Great Moment" and they were shown when Wally and I were on shift, but the operator very decently ran them through a second time for our shift, so we had a 12.30 a.m. to 4.00 a.m. film session. And we now have a lovely little broad-billed Fly Catcher that has taken up residence in our 'top' premises. He flits into the room and has a most enjoyable time fluttering around picking off moths, spiders etc. We have named him 'Wilbur.'

27th. April. This will be the last note as we are due to depart - with it - in a few days' time. Wally and I have just despatched a 4 foot Brown snake that ventured too close for comfort. It has been great receiving the fresh fruit that you have been sending up...we have only had two issues of fresh fruit on our Menu, and the last was over four months ago.

3rd. May. Well, we are REALLY on our way, for this note has been written while sitting on top of the hatch of the good ship VICTORY, and there are six of us making the trip (previously only four at a time - must be a new captain). It is a beaut day and the sea and islands through which we are passing are looking good. We had heavy rain last night so are thankful that the day has dawned fine. We dropped anchor for the night off an island where we landed for a while to get fresh water - and some OYSTERS! We had a rather bolsterous party last Saturday night to celebrate the occasion of our party leaving, and on the previous Saturday we put on a mighty production of "The Mill Girl" which with all the necessary trimmings was quite hilarious..... and so our 7 months' stay on our great little island has come to an end, and we await our new postings with high expectations.

THE OP'S HUT.... On the plateau near the Dover.



MEMORIES OF MONTALIVET.

Max Baker.

344 Montalivet was a station where the isolation and lack of amenities made it so very important to be friends with everyone - and to join in the camp activities arranged by the Welfare Committee. Most importantly, one learned to live and work together for the benefit of all on the station.

I recall that the defence preparations of our tiny and lonely home were not extensive - in fact were hardly enough to inspire any real confidence. Apart from the issue 303's and possibly hand grenades issued to the Guards, there was one lone machine-gun - probably a Vickers - mounted on a tripod between the camp and the Doover. The tripod mounting was apparently designed to enable the gun and its hero gunner to repel any attack from the sea, land or air. Or perhaps it was to slow down any advance towards the Doover while the gear was destroyed.

We picked up occasional Jap reconnaissance aircraft. At that time the Japs were still 'working' the Fenton area and their bombers were dropping occasional small stuff on that area, apparently just to maintain a presence.

Montalivet was ringed by coral. Our swimming pool was a shoreline rock pool, exposed at low tide, which we shared with a variety of sea creatures including a sizeable stingray which went about its business, ignoring us 'foreigners.' At low tide, rigged in boots, shorts and hat, and in accordance with regulations, armed with .303 in case of enemy attack, we could walk, say, 300 metres out to enjoy the spectacularly colorful and diverse marine life in the coral-sheltered pools. When seafood was needed on the station Menu, we 'fished' with 'Gelly' in our swimming pool, harvesting the results to provide an epicurean addition to bully beef and powdered egg.

One memorable day though, Sgt. Wally Woods and I, on the outer extremity of the reef, became aware that the tide was rising, and that between us and the shore was a - by now - five foot deep channel, in which the racing tidal waters were alive with hungry, finny hunters.

Not a pretty prospect, but the alternative had even less appeal. So, carrying our .303's above our heads, we waded to shore through this finny army - with 4 foot sharks that nosed us and thankfully turned away. Safely back on shore, we dried out in the blessed sunshine, lamenting the loss of our 2 oz. ration of 'Ready Rubbed.'

During my time on Montalivet, 'heroic' figures among our 30 plus community were Radar Mech. Sergeant Nick Carter and Radar Op. Austin Asche, who attempted to introduce a challenge into their lives, and regularly swam out from our landing beach, some 3 or 400 metres. We lesser mortals would see the two heads bobbing up and down, away out on the edge of visibility. There were always sharks in that water - we'd see them regularly off-shore - but fortune favours the brave, and so both lived to tell the tale!

As a life-time bird watcher, the only land birds I was ever aware of were the Peaceful Doves which lived in the low 9 foot scrub that was the island's only tree-type vegetation.

Aborigines. According to camp folklore, Montalivet was visited regularly in peacetime by Aboriginal people. Anthropological evidence included at least one shell midden, and more importantly, at least one burial site. This took the form of a low-pitched mia-mia of sticks erected in a cave, about 2 ft. at its apex and 7 ft. long, containing clearly visible human skeletal remains with matter still attached to bone. Naturally, as intruders, we respected the remains and left them untouched.

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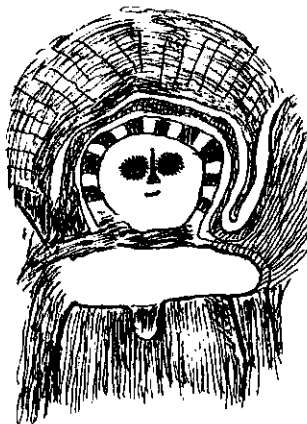
Editorial.

The mention by Max Baker of peacetime visits to Montalivet made by the Aboriginal people of the area is very much emphasized by research and discoveries made on the island and other islands close by in 1968 by the then Curator of Anthropology and Archaeology at the Western Australian Museum. The story of the expedition should be read in full in the book referred to below, and the following is a brief account of the findings made which relate to Montalivet Island and the Aboriginal culture of the islands of the Archipelago.

THE KAIARA.

West of Vansittart Bay in the northern Kimberleys, the islands of the Bonaparte Archipelago - including the Montalivet Islands, are subject to the influence of the 'Kaiara' - spirit people of the region very similar to the 'Wandjina' of the Kimberley country, both being depicted in cave paintings similar in appearance. The Kaiara live in the clouds from where they control the wind, and the rain, and the lightning.

They first came from the sea to the north and the west of the islands with their influence extending as far as the coastline of the mainland, and each Kaiara with his followers could, if provoked, strike with the force of a cyclone, or with fierce wind or rain, and with a blink of his eye could cause fierce lightning to strike.



The Kaiara are depicted in cave paintings on several of the islands of the Bonaparte Archipelago— Bigge Island and West Montalivet Island being two of the cave homes of these spirits.

The Kaiara painting on West Montalivet has faded and has almost disappeared and it is believed that the Kaiara spirit was attempting to reach Prudhoe Island when struck by blindness and stayed on West Montalivet. The Kaiara are also said to have built up a large stone arrangement on West Montalivet.

Who can tell...the souls of those unfortunates found in the cave may be the guardians of the West Montalivet Kaiara spirits which lived somewhere in those caves but which remained hidden to the eyes of the Air Force men during the radar days.

From "The Art of the Wandjina,"

I.M.Crawford. (1968)

MY MEMORIES OF 344 RADAR, WEST MONTALIVET ISLAND.

Ray Kelly.

I was posted to 344 Radar around December 1944. By this time things were fairly quiet in the North-West sector, and I cannot recall any enemy activity while I was there. The Japanese in Timor had been isolated from sources of supply and were probably conserving their weapons to defend the territory that they occupied. I do recall that in times of Temperature Inversion we plotted enormous echos which were stationary, and we attributed them to reflections from the Timor Islands. Since the range would be outside the range that the equipment was calibrated for, this would mean that the echo would appear on the second or even third retrace of the timebase. I am not sure how far from Timor we were at Montalivet. As I was one of the team of four radio mechanics my other vivid memory of my technical activities there was on the day that the W/T equipment (AT5/AR8) failed. I suspected a faulty 807 valve in the transmitter. When you don't know, try the easy fixes first. I pulled the 807 after switching off, and as our spares were held with the radar equipment about 100 metres away, wandered off for a spare. Now the 807 has a plate connection to the top of the valve, at a potential around 500 volts above ground. While I was away some disbeliever decided to give it another try, and left it switched on. I have quite vivid memories of bouncing around with 500 volts running through my body when I tried to replace the top cap, but somehow I cannot remember what I had to say!

Montalivet was quite a small island, with some coral reefs, and the technical equipment was located on the highest peak at the north end of the island. It was possibly a 10 or 15 minute walk with some climbing, from the camp to the Doover, and as I recall, shifts changed over every four hours. The link back to the camp was by Army field telephone. I vividly remember the nightly ritual before turning in. Our tent had a floor of coral, each bed had a mosquito net around it, and each man had a torch. You climbed into bed, tucked the net well in around you, then gave a very close examination to your bedding for centipedes. Only when you were quite sure that you had the bed to yourself did you rest your weary head on the pillow!

Mail and supplies were delivered about every second week, by launch or light plane (Anson or DH). We had a rough airstrip on the island and a Jeep to move supplies. At the south end of the island was a nice rock pool, refilled at high tide every day. We would go down there for a swim quite often, not worried by a skeleton of some unfortunate who had crawled into a niche in the rocks to spend the last of his time on earth. Nor were we worried that we had forgotten to pack any 'tights.' One day I was there alone, the sea was calm and I decided to jump in off the rocks for a swim in the sea. I was out of there in very short time...had I stayed I am sure that I would soon have looked like my friend in the rock shelter. I had never heard of sea lice before, but it took me a long time to remove all the repulsive little beasts. I know that they are all God's creatures, but perhaps the Almighty does not go swimming.

The toilet amenities were about normal - a concrete slab with half a dozen pipes with a shower rose on each, and a choice of cold or lukewarm water, depending on the time of day. Screens were not necessary...the centipedes were only interested in your body when it was dry! Our Cook did his best with what was supplied....it is amazing just how many ways you can disguise bully beef. One meal is memorable. A turtle decided to have a nap in the quiet of our tiny bay. He was persuaded to come ashore and join us for dinner, as the main course. At the time I found it very like steak and not at all fishy in taste, and these days you cannot disprove my memory, as the turtle is now a protected animal.

Towards the end of my stay we had a visit from Doug Elliott, a Melbourne

radio announcer who was working with Army Amenities as a one man entertainment unit, and he arrived with an AWA 5 watt P.A. amplifier, a turntable and some records. Doug Elliott later became a member of the ALP political team, and I believe died some years back. Doug was not happy with the performance of the amplifier, and felt that the service it was getting back in Darwin was not adequate. I was given the job of fixing it for him, and after looking at it, without a circuit to help me, I decided to rip it apart and rebuild it my way. My way was the simple way, just basic circuitry, but Doug was delighted with the results; it had never worked as well while he had it, and as a result I finally gained my last promotion, and a box of surplus components which went towards building a radio for myself.

My memories of my time there were generally good - we were all good mates, and young enough to take it all as it arrived. However, it was good to be posted back to Darwin where mail arrived more regularly. The trip back was by launch to Truscott, and the crew knew what they were doing. We spent the night at some unknown beach, and as soon as all was secure they were off. They returned with huge oysters, possibly pearl oysters, and cooked them in batter for us. It was a feast that deserved a very good white wine, but all I can say is - that is one meal that lives still in my memory... that meal and turtle steak!

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LOOKING BACK .

Bill Langford.

It's good to know that there is a continuing interest in Montalivet since we occupied it and made it another link in the chain of radar stations around the coast. It would be interesting to re-visit the island.....I suppose some old hands have!!!! I cannot put a face to any of the names in your letter except Austin Asche. We were both on No. 14 Radar Station before going up to Darwin.

I was on the island for only a short stay of five or six months before being transferred to Sir Graham Moore Island on LORAN. There we shared work and facilities with the Yanks when the war ended.

The thing I remember most about life on the island was the lack of radar activity...but I also remember that the surrounding ocean was an excellent fishing water. As a matter of fact it was a fisherman's paradise! At night we would use an old rowing boat patched up with chewing gum to scoop up garfish from the surface of the water with the aid of a torch. We would often see the occasional shark cruising about underneath. Sad to say, fishing like that would not be possible now. That area of the Kimberley coast was a paradise for fishermen.

My other memory concerns the visit now and then of a group of Aborigines in a dug-out canoe who I think came from the only other island visible to us which was East Montalivet, about ten miles away. They were very quiet and watched our activities with interest. One poor fellow suffered from a bad case of leprosy which had attacked one leg, leaving him with only a stump...the foot itself had disappeared. All of this was just a curiosity to us.

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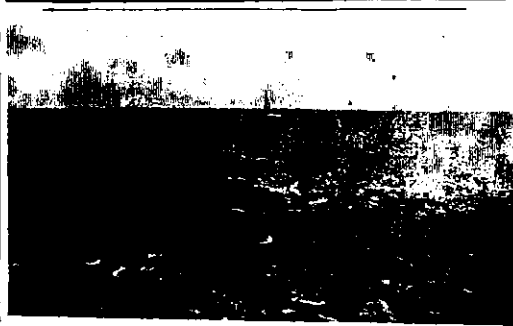
Life on an island only about 2 miles by $\frac{1}{2}$ mile was of necessity rather restricted - and was mostly confined to camp duties and shift rosters. But there was time for other activities when the jobs were done.

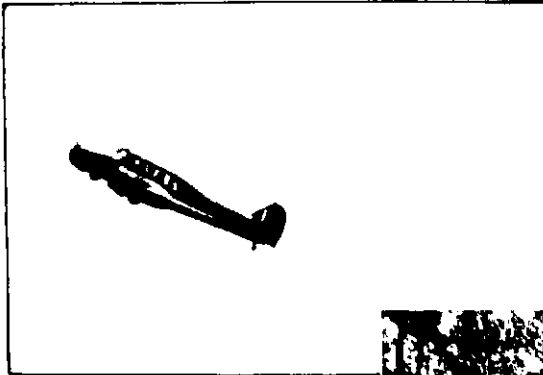
1. The arrival of a Jeep and trailer made light of the heavy work previously carried out by hand.

2. The rock pool below the camp was popular for swimming.

3. The arrival of the supply launch VICTORY was always a big event.

4. The Doover - and Doover Hill, are outlined in this photo taken from Power-house Beach. (Most of the features on the island rejoiced in local names, and even the tracks carried names such as 'Burma Road.')





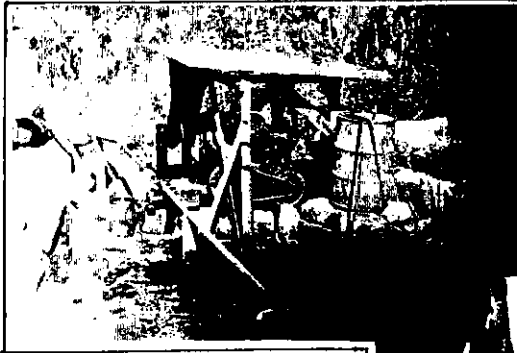
MONTE MISCELLANY.....

An Anson carefully inspects the strip before deciding not to land.

(Right) Bill Tucker, Cliff Leavy and Phil Newbold reluctantly at work at Truscott while awaiting transport to Montalivet.



Bill Tucker, Cliff Leavy and Phil Newbold at Truscott in the background.



(Left) The pump and the start of the pipeline installed to provide water at the camp.

(Below)

A corner of the luxurious Leckie/Duchering suite.



PERSONNEL LIST. (An Incomplete Record.)

The first list of Personnel is from the station's POR's - the second list of names is from various sources, newsletters, photos, recollections etc.

Pilot Officer P.R.A. Watson was appointed first Commanding Officer, 15/11/'43.

Cpl Wood W. R/Mech	AC1 Westlake H.F. Guard.	AC1 Gresham N.J. R/Op
AC1 Berry J. G.Hand.	" Hadfield A.A. "	" Brierley F.A. "
LAC Hutchinson G.A. Mess.	" Loftes B.A. "	LAC Pritchard H.L. "
AC1 Hillery W.J. G.Hand.	" Morrissey G.L. G.Hand.	Sgt Balmer R. "
" Sibley G. R/Mech	" Albrecht H.A. "	Sgt Sharpe I.R. "
" Dodd B.W. "	LAC Piper R.H. Stores Clk.	AC1 McQueen W.F. W.T.
LAC Moritz K.W. "	AC1 Cohen J. Mess.	" Paterson G.J. "
" Curtis A.F. "	" Chaplin A.N. R/Op.	" Stewart G.C. "
" Noske B.A. "	" Hackett T. "	" Cunningham B.F. "
" Whitby D.W. F/DMT	" Smith E.W. "	" Best F.E. Cook.
AC1 Waugh T. Guard	" Stewart D.M. "	" Richardson E. Mess
" Brown N.S. "	" Whitechurch L.L. "	LAC Morgan S.W. Med.O
" Dengate G.N. "	LAC Corbin L.R. "	

Of the Personnel listed above as the "Originals," LAC Moritz was attached for one week only before he was posted away, and Sgt. Sharpe was attached for 13 days.

The names listed below are from various sources, and many show only surnames. Rank and mustering are shown when known.

Flying Officer K.S.While appointed C.O. 6/12/44.

Flying Officer J.P.Gowing " " 16/5/45.

J.Maitland	C.Leavy	- Sims Cook
J.Eaton	M.Baker.	Tullberg
L.Reynolds	W.Langford R/Op	Flynn
J.Thompson	Sgt L.Carter R/Mech	Pike
Cpl J.Dean Med.	W.Duckering R/Op	McManus
Sgt P.Seymour	LAC Heinrich	Molloy
Cpl Pike	" Phillips	Maiden
LAC Mays	" P.Newbold	P. Robinson
" K.Nice R/Op.	" Andrewartha	'Tex' Corbin
" W.Tucker	" Ayoub	Ted Corless
" M.Marks R/Op.	" Maynes	E. Smith
" Howard	" Stokes	C. Chapman
" Terry	J.Davidson	Ben Knudsen
" Bickerton	H.Elliott	P. Forrest
F/Sgt R.Gore	A.Crutchfield	G. Whitby
Sgt Rowell	R.Kelly R/Mech	R. Holdesay
LAC L.Leckie R/Op	LAC A.Asche R/Op	Chatfield
		T. Deane

After the unit returned to Sydney at the end of hostilities, those remaining on the list of Personnel were:-

Sgt F.J.Burrows R/Mech	W.H.Prior Cook	T.D.Steel F/DMT
C.E.McMorrow Recorder	D.J.Weir R/Op	K.R.Dye R/Op
P.W.Butler R/Op	L.A.Gilbert R/Op	A.J.Toohey R/Op
W.M.Mealey Cook	H.N.Payne Cook Ass.	
F/Lt A.F.Williams and F/Lt	T.J.Ling acted as Temp. C.O.'s.	

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RETURN TO 'MONTE.'

In July 1988 I was able to achieve an ambition that no doubt many other Monte veterans have yearned to do...I returned to Monte for a nostalgic visit.

I had been transferred to Perth from Sydney by my firm, Woolworths, in 1967 and was very much aware that I was so much closer to our old island. Through my Doctor son Alan I was able to make contact with the skipper of a converted 60' cray-fishing boat - the WAVE SPIRIT - which operated out from Broome. The deal was to make up a party of 10 - get ourselves to Broome - help load up our supplies and then set off on an 8 day cruise along the coast which would include 2 days on our island.

The first night we moored off Cockatoo Island - the second in the lee of Bigge Island. Then on the third day you can imagine my feelings when Monte came up on the horizon and we closed in to sail along its eastern side. We moored off our landing and swimming beach, and after some of the party were dumped out of the launch as we made the landing, we went for a scramble down to the island's southern tip, our old landing strip, which now was overgrown with hardy scrub. I endeavoured to locate our old camp site, and although I found a cable on the ground which would have led me to the site, the going was just too tough. I had to reluctantly give up - especially as my search had no significance to the rest of the party. However, we did manage the climb up to the plateau and successfully made our way along to the site of the old W/T shack and our Doover. The view from that point was still magnificent! There was quite a bit of rusting metal lying around, and you can imagine my delight to come across our old thunder-box still standing in all its glory!

We all made our way down to the shore again on the west side and enjoyed a swim..a relief in the hot and humid conditions,. then we walked on and round the northern tip and back to the site of the power station. This site was disappointing, for it was still littered with 20 or 30 old and rusting 44 gallon drums which had been left behind by the demolition party.

Re-boarding the WAVE SPIRIT, we sailed round to the west side where a party of us went ashore to camp for the night on the beach outside the distinctive large sandstone cave which dominates that spot.

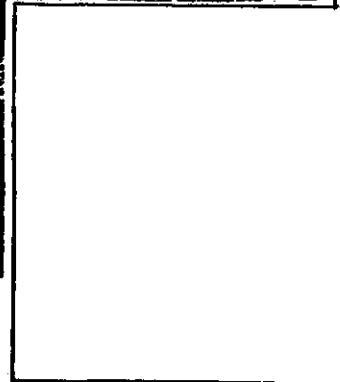
On the next day we were able to have a good exploration of the reef which all will recall lies along that side of the island before we reluctantly set sail to return along the coast, calling in at Prince Regent River and other feature spots.

All can be assured our war-time island lies there as it always has through time immemorial - and perhaps is waiting for a visit from another team in the years to come...though I fear time is running out!

And now to conclude....As I am the fellow who 'invited' Morrie to put together this story of 344 - and who was delighted and surprised when he accepted the challenge, I felt it would be appropriate to ask that a few words of thanks to be inserted in the final product.

So for all of us who spent some of those long-ago days of our youth out on 'Monte,' it is great that those days are now recorded here for future radar fans and buffs. So 'Thanks' Morrie, for all the time and effort put into our little publication - especially as there are so relatively few of us who will be enjoying the results of your work. Another radar job well done!

(ex LAC 137022) Laurie Leckie.



'L.L.' Returns to Monte in '88.

(From Top.)

1. Laurie at the airstrip and footie field.
2. Well preserved 'souvenirs' at Power-house Beach.
3. The cave on the western side....did it hold a secret?
4. "With a sense of 'deja vu'...Laurie has a 'dry run' on the old Doover thunder-box."



EDITOR.
M. R. L. MARKS.
SUB-EDITOR
J. P. SEYMOUR.

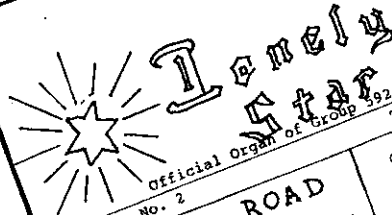
VOL 1. No. 1

Thurs. 8th March 1945.

BLACKS IN CAMP CITY.

FLOODS AT DOOVER HEIGHTS

Camp City : Mon. 5th March. Doover Heights Se...
A canoe was seen today beach- A sudden cl...
ing at Landing Beach. It was today c...
full of natives (to be exact Wa...
3). They were soon in Camp...
City trading articles. Camp...
LECKIE seemed to be...
lot of bartering...
fit. One...
attend...
fa...



EDITOR
M. R. L. MARKS
SUB EDITOR
J. P. SEYMOUR

Official Organ of Group 392 R.A.A.F. DARWIN.
Thurs 22nd March 1945

VOL 1 No. 2

BURMA ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION

CAMP CITY. Wed. 21st:- The proposed "BURMA ROAD" is now under construction. This will make the route to Nigger - Head Beach much shorter. At present the route taken is along Princes Highway to White Road and along here the remaining part of the way had to be along the foot, due to the covered by the Landing Cove. One of the new road starts and runs along behind Nigger

CROCODILE SIGHTED.

On Sunday, March 11th., a crocodile was sighted off Landing Beach. At first it was thought to be a log, and our great piece of shark bait (Baby Austin) started to swim out to it. After numerous entreaties not to be so SILLY, he decided not to. Someone uttered the word "CROCODILE" and about a dozen forms shot out of the water on to the beach as though they were powered with Outboard Motors. A few shots were fired, but only "Near Misses" were recorded.

INVEST IN VICTORY.
AMOUNTS OF £10
over
EPD. Cove

Laurie Leckie had retained two copies of the station newsletter, "LONELY STAR." There are 12 pages in the two editions, telling mainly of the small happenings around the lonely camp, and also advertising for the War Loans etc. Copies will be produced To Order if \$2 to cover costs of printing and postage are sent to Morrie Fenton, address on P.2.

ROSTER

RADAR OPERATIONS 344 RADAR.

JANUARY 1945

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31.

0100 - 0730 A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C
 0730 - 1230 D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B
 1230 - 1830 B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C
 1830 - 0100 A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C

STAND-BY DUTY B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C
 STATION-DUTIES O B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A D C B A

Personnel listed for Station Duties will report to Ordnery N.C.O. at 0800 hours on the day of duty.

Meal Hours.

NUMBER	BRKFAST	0645 - 0730	All Personnel	"A" SHIFT.	"F" SHIFT.
1145	1245	"	"	LAC LECKIE	CPL. LEAVY
1745	1845	"	"	" DOCKENDING	LAC MARSH
				" REYNOLDS	" FAYRE
0800	0845	Personnel off shift.		" " SHIPT.	" " SHIPT.
1300	1345	"	"	LAC TUCKER	LAC ASCHIE
1900	1945	"	"	" HIGG	LAC NEWBOLD
				" BAYO	Sgt. GORE

This Roster was the 'Genuine Article,' and has been re-touched as little as possible. We thank Laurie Leckie for souveniring it.

N.L.S. Operators are liable for lateness besides Station Duties.
 Note. Personnel going on shift should attend for meals promptly at 0645, 1145, and 1745.

THE WESTERN KIMBERLEY REGION,
 showing the course taken by the
 launch VICTORY from Truscov
 to WEST MONTALVEI.

