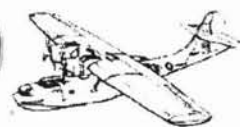


RADAR RETURNS

ECHOES FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT



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Please address all correspondence for Radar Returns as follows:

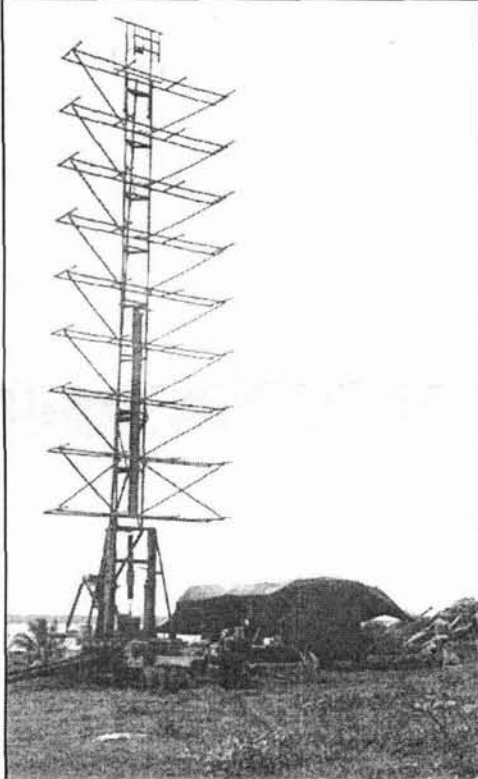
POSTAL ADDRESS

WgCdr P.G. Smith (retd)
18 Pandian Crescent
BELLBOWRIE QLD 4070

or

EMAIL ADDRESS

Radar_Returns@Hotmail.com



number of comments on the accuracy of the radar equipment depicted in the movie. I even made mention of it in the last edition of Radar Returns. On the left is an example of the actual radar that was sited at Opana Mountain on Oahu on 7 December 1941. The operators' trailer can be seen on the right of antenna. I guess that there is a slight connection between Kevin Lynch's story and the two Privates who operated this radar on that fateful day. The command chain which processed their reports did not accept the information they presented (for whatever reason). Fortunately, Kevin was able to persist and make a difference.

More unit histories are being produced by veterans and this issue has three more which you may find interesting. The details Len Ralph's *Golden 306* are on page 6 and Jack Woodward's two volumes are mentioned on pages 6 and 8. All these books provide more insight into the conditions and circumstances under which personnel had to operate. They further highlight the fact that history is not a bunch of sequential dates but personal events involving all aspects of *human* endeavour.

I have had a significant amount of correspondence about the reunion next year (in March) and it looks like being very well attended. The amount of interest in these events does not seem to have dwindled and I believe even more 'get togethers' are being planned. I shall keep you up to date when I have the details. In the meantime I hope to catch up with a lot of you, in person, at the reunion in Williamstown (Nelson Bay) next year.

In the meantime, I trust you have gained some enjoyment from this edition and that you all have a Merry Christmas and happy, healthy 2002.

Pete Smith [Editor]



EDITORIAL

Another year is almost over and I am still recovering from the last one. But this has been another good year for radar history. As well as adding new members to the mailing list, the stock of radar related photographs and stories has been greatly increased. Radar is even becoming 'visible' in history documentaries on television.

This edition of Radar Returns has some samples of the material that has appeared through the year. Kevin Lynch's recollections of events at 321RS highlight another important aspect of radar – surveillance of friendly forces. Not only was radar a vital asset in detecting enemy aircraft and directing fighters against them, it also ensured that a lot of airmen were able to make it back to base. It is even better to see the aircrew acknowledging the efforts of some very dedicated airmen.

After the success of the reunion in WA, a number of the people who attended this event brought back enthusiastic reports of the WA Radar

Group and the work they are carrying out. Page 3 provides a little insight into this group and how they are ensuring radar history is not forgotten.

Unfortunately Faded Echoes still gains a place in this edition although I would prefer not to have any material for this column. Unfortunately some of the individual entries are a little brief, so, if you can add to these individuals' service history, please drop me a line so that they can ensure they are not forgotten.

Brad Langley has provided an interesting commentary on a certain LAC Allan Loomes. Not only did Allan serve on radar around the Pacific but he also had a very distinguished career with the Department of Foreign Affairs. This has caused Brad to reflect on the selection process for radar personnel. His thoughts on pages 5 and 6 do make you wonder about the thought processes of the recruiting personnel at that time.

With the release of the movie 'Pearl Harbor' early this year, I have had a

RADAR RESCUE

The radar station at Yirrkala [321RS] in the Northern Territory was, on recollection, some 35 miles from Gove (now Nhulunby) airstrip.

Our radar shift consisted of LAC John Whitfield, a W/T Operator (name forgotten) and me [Kevin Lynch]. Having joined the RAAF two weeks before John, I was the senior person. Our shift was uneventful with the usual 'plots' until late in the afternoon when a 'blip' on the screen behaved in an unusual manner. A few readings established [the target] had a speed of around 105mph. ADHQ Darwin were not impressed and suggested we were reporting 'migratory birds' and dismissed our request for permission to concentrate on our 'find'.

John Whitfield and I double checked and we were both satisfied it was not birds. We knew an aircraft 'blip' when we saw one. It was not transmitting any IFF.

We suggested, through our W/T Operator, that our 'blip' might be an Avro Anson (not always radio equipped) and the slowest aircraft we could think of. Back came ADHQ "No Ansons, no aircraft on record bound for Gove - resume your 360° sweep!"

At our remote distance we chose to back our own judgement and continued to monitor our 'blip'. We juggled the reports to ADHQ, on our own initiative, making an occasional 360° sweep while concentrating on our mystery 'blip'.

Our W/T Operator used up all his known emergency calls to try to make contact with what John and I were sure was an aircraft. It was still not transmitting any IFF.

Meanwhile our 'blip' was on a course taking it some 40 miles south of Gove, the only available airstrip, and the day was drawing to a close.

I think it was the W/T Operator who said "We have a landline (telephone) connecting us with Gove airstrip!"

"Use it!" was the unanimous decision. Perhaps Gove could help where ADHQ had not. We gave Gove Air Controller our latest 'fix'. We emphasised our conviction we were plotting an aircraft in difficulty.

Gove, at first, reiterated ADHQ's advice saying "No aircraft expected at Gove at this time."

After an interval, Gove came back with the message "We have made radio contact with your 'find' through an emergency frequency." (One not known to our W/T operator).

By a series of directions to Gove via our landline the aircraft, now identified, was steered on a course to Gove airstrip until Gove was able to tell us "We have your aircraft now on a visual and it is preparing to make and emergency landing."

Our shift concluded at 2000 hours and we trudged along the track to our tent and went to sleep. Around 2300 hours we were woken and told to dress and report to the CO. Shortly after we reached his office, a jeep came to an abrupt halt and out scrambled four aircrew. They were the relieved crew of the disabled aircraft we had detected. They explained the loss of power in one engine which had contributed to their navigational difficulties. On one engine they were making up their minds to try for a North Queensland landing. This would involve a journey in darkness over inhospitable terrain. They said they were greatly relieved when they were contacted by Gove. On landing safely, they were told of our actions and decided to make the uncomfortable 35 mile journey by road to Yirrkala to express their thanks. I remember the pilot kindly saying "When we are in the skies we never give a thought that anyone on the ground would be watching over us. We'll remember in the future. Thanks!" Handshakes all round.

My diary entry for Monday 4th June 1945, entered with the bravado of a 19 year old, reads briefly: "brought Mitchell in on one engine."

Kevin Lynch
22 November 2001

RADAR QUIZ #2 (ANSWERS)

1. Aside from the USA, UK and Australia, which other country produced radars which were employed by RAAF personnel?
A. Canada
RWG/GCI (SCR 588).

2. Were any radar stations built in Tasmania during WWII?

A. There were six radar stations planned for Tasmania, only one had its building works completed but was never activated.

3. How many Radar Installation and Maintenance Units (RIMUs) were established during WWII?

A. Six - three on mainland Australia and three in PNG/DEI.

4. There were three radar wings established during WWII. Which one was first and where was it located?

A. 44 Radar Wing at Adelaide River, NT was formed on 14 December 1942.

5. On each approved unit crest there is a motto to represent the unit's capabilities. What is the unit motto for 3CRU, 2CRU and 114MCRU? For a bonus point, what was 1CRU's motto?

A. 2CRU - Aware, 3CRU - Unite, and 114MCRU - Swift To React, 1CRU - Watchful.

6. What is the air defence microwave radar presently in service in Australia and what is its replacement?

A. AN/TPS 43 to be replaced by AN/TPS 117.

7. Following the demobilisation of the RAAF at the end of WWII, all the radar stations were disbanded. One of these units was reformed in the 50's. Which one was it and what was its purpose?

A. 302RS was reformed at RAAF Base Wagga as part of the RAAF School of Technical Training. The unit was employed in National Service training and took part in Operation Longreach in 1956. The unit remained in existence from May 1956 until October 1957.

8. Did the RAAF train any US Navy personnel during WWII?

A. Yes - 410RDF was formed on 16 October 1942 using SCR 270-B equipment from US Army 699th SAW Bn to train USN personnel at Gin Gin WA. They trained both operators and mechanics who were all submariners. The unit personnel went on to form 47RS when 410RDF was disbanded on 29 October 1942.

WA RADAR GROUP

The NSW Radar Association conducted a 50 year Re-union of ex Radar Veterans in Bendigo in March 1992 commemorating 31RS Dripstone Caves Darwin which first detected an approaching Japanese squadron and enabled early interception by Allied fighter planes.

A few West Australians went to Bendigo and I was one of that group. After our return to the West, the RAAFAWA Group of ex-radar Veterans was formed and is still active.

The group has established Memorial Plaques at the following local Wartime sites.

32 RS Rottneest Island,
35 RS Stony Ridge Albany,
44 RS Cannington, (Whale-Back Golf Course)
227 RS Yanchep,
228 RS East Rockingham.

Some 2½ years ago our group was granted some space in the Aviation Museum at Bull Creek, where we have established a display of RAAF Wartime Radar. The display includes a number of photographs, a complete set of vacuum tubes as used in LW/AW Equipment, an AT5 Transmitter, an AR8 Receiver, a Coupling Unit, Loran Equipment Cathode ray tubes and text books.

Over the past 2 years Mark Bussanich has been constructing a replica of the LW/AW Indicator Rack and two power supplies, and he has modified a CPR 46 AAT Aircraft Radar Receiver which feeds signal noise into the Indicator Unit. He now has a time-base, trace, and receiver noise appearing as 'grass'. This equipment is soon to be transferred from his home to a special cabinet at the Aviation Museum becoming the focal point of the display.

This project could not have reached it's conclusion without the provision of parts by the following Amateur Radio Operators:

VK6CK, VK6FT, VK6HC, VK6HK, VK6SO, VK6DY, VK6XJ, VK6JAS, VK6UT, VK6QB, VK6NA, VK600, VK6KFD, VK6ZAF, VK6AX.

Also Graham Wright, Len Brighton (W/Cdr Ret'd), Brian Harvey (Air Services), Alec Thomas,

Jack Davies, VK6XH supplied text books, VK2AY (Norm Smith) supplied Radar Pictorial copies, Ed Simmonds provided circuit diagrams etc. VK6FH catalogue and circuit. VK6ARE R&H circuit copies, VK6AF printing and search for parts, Ralph Jeffreys laminated boards, maps, books.

He applied for and received financial assistance from Department of Veteran Affairs "Their Service Our Heritage Fund." The WA Group members also contributed by donations.

Mark Bussanich

*President RAAFAWA Radar Group
Ex RAAF Radar Operator*



LW/AW INDICATOR REPLICA

The following are some of the construction details which went into building the LW/AW Indicator replica by the RAAFAWA Radar Group.

The start of the project required copies of pages from the service manual - ASD 2056. Ed Simmonds was able to dispatch some copies to Colin Hayes. Later I received many photographs from Len Brighton showing several views of the chassis of the unit in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Ultimately Len also provided us with a copy of the complete manual which we copied and returned. Colin Hayes, with the assistance of Don Graham manufactured the chassis, punched the valve-socket holes in their correct positions, and supplied and installed high quality ceramic sockets and some 807 valves. I obtained a sheet of aluminium which I took to an engraver (Terry Madden) who painted the panel and chassis and engraved the plate of the Range Control. Colin supplied the metal hood which was affixed by the engraver, hairlines were

included. Finally, the names of the controls were engraved in black on a grey-painted unit.

The foregoing all took place over several months. The large Marquis Knob for the Range Control was donated by John Tuppen who also found the 12 pin plug and socket for the input voltage connections. Our supply of resistors and capacitors, switches and other sundries, too countless to mention, along with power transformers, were donated by Wayne Tangey. Graham Wright also provided many parts. The next source of high-voltage capacitors, resistors and new valves came from Don Reimann. Having thus assembled all of the available parts there was still a void remaining and Lee Hitchins, who joined our group, donated the CRO transformer, two power transformers and chokes required to complete the two power supplies. Heavy duty resistors and valves were donated by Phil Bussanich. High voltage capacitors were donated by Alex Thomas. Other donors were Air Services (Brian Harvey), Don Truscott constructed a steel box to house a special resistance network. Ron Baker provided cathode ray tubes and acorn valves. We purchased all new electrolytics for the power supplies and received sundry resistors from Geoff Woad, Tom Berg, Fr. Basil Nosedo, Bruce Hedland Thomas. Colin Hayes provided many parts out of his own stock. Naturally, I contributed many valves and parts from my own supply.

Initially I wired the complete Indicator Rack and then the two power supplies. All of this work took place over a period of approximately two years and, excepting for a few final touches, the units are ready to go into a cabinet in our Radar Display in the RAAF Association Aviation Museum.

I trust that when you read this article you will have already viewed the replica and some memories will have been stirred by those among you who were privileged to operate or maintain this type of equipment.

Mark Bussanich

President RAAFAWA Radar Group

FADED ECHOES

Ralph Stanley Jeffreys

Born 29/07/1914 - Died 28/05/2001

From a young age Ralph became involved in 'rowing', along with his father and brothers at the Fremantle Rowing Club. He won at several levels, and was Stroke in the King's Cup crews, serving that club in all official positions and finally as it's Patron.

He studied Accountancy and was employed by a firm of Chartered Accountants in Perth up until his enlistment in the RAAF in May 1942. Ralph trained as a Wireless Mechanic at Shepparton, Point Cook Victoria, and later at Richmond NSW as a Radar Mechanic on No 24 Radar Mechanics (G) Course. Some of his service record is:

47RS Mount Gungin
(near Mundaring WA)
35RS Stony Ridge Albany WA
102 Fighter Sector Newcastle NSW
106 Fighter Sector Mt. Lawley WA
5 VAOC Geraldton WA.

He was also posted overseas to Bouganville, Solomon Islands, Finschhafen, Madang ADHQ, Krankut Island and Hollandia.

Ralph returned to civvy life in 1946 and worked for the Associated Employers of Waterside Labour in Fremantle as Paymaster (Consolidated Pay) for the whole of the Waterfront Workforce until his retirement. He was a foundation member and committee-man of the RAAFA WA Radar Group, contributing much in time and effort to the establishment of the Radar Display at the RAAF Association Aviation Museum Bullcreek WA. A true gentleman, sadly missed by all who knew him.

Mark Bussanich

[President RAAFA WA Radar Group]

Francis Henry William Surman

Born 31/07/1924 - Died 23/09/2001

Frank was one of the 'Bailey Boys' and trained at Radar School on No 21 Radar Officers (G) Course from 14/09/1943 to 05/12/43. He went on to serve at 23RS, 25RS, 131RS, 134RS, 163RS and 111MFCU.

A Tribute from his ex WO Radar Mechanic at 163 Radar Station

163RS gathered at Bradfield Park in

July 1944 thence moved to Brisbane via Richmond on 11 August, bound for Cape Gloucester. The unit was off loaded at Yeerongpilly [Brisbane] and went to Sandgate where, subsequently, the Cape Gloucester destination was cancelled. On 29 Nov 44 the unit departed for Tullamarine [Vic] to install an LW/GCI Mk I and hand it over to Civil Authorities. The unit then returned to Croydon on 3 Feb 45 and re-equipped with Canadian GCI/MKII equipment and returned to Sandgate. We sailed from Brisbane on board the Simon Bamburger on 2 May 45 destined for Borneo via Morotai. The unit arrived at Labuan [BOR] on 16 May and landed on 12 June. The unit was then moved to Lutong in Sarawak on 27 June and returned to Labuan on 14 August when peace was declared. Frank Surman was a very capable leader and did a fine job with 163RS and has been a good friend through the years. We met up again during the re-union at Bendigo 22 -25 March 1992 and, unfortunately, were the only two of the 30 odd members of 163 to meet. Betty and I had the pleasure of taking Frank to lunch on 13 September this year while we were holidaying at Kirra Beach Qld. He was coping well with some various health problems although, necessarily, pacing his activities somewhat. His greatest worry was the failure of Southport RSL Club of which he had been Treasurer of the Sub Branch for a number of years. The Club had suffered financial difficulties in recent years.

Our friend is now resting with his beloved Gwenneth, who died on Saturday 1 August 98. Both dear friends will be sadly missed.

Fred Robjant [Vic]

Ronald Harry Woodward

Died 27/10/2001

Ron enlisted early in 1942 in the Empire Training Scheme, aspiring to become a pilot. This was not to be, as he developed eye problems. He was transferred to radar training at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne in late 1941. After completing No 3 Radar Operator's Course (26/01/1942

- 20/02/1942), he believed he was one of the first Radar Operators to go out to Shepherds Hill, near Newcastle, where he operated the station there.

[This was the RAAF's first operational radar station.] He also served at Tomaree[20RS], Dunk Island[27RS] and along the coast and islands of New Guinea. One of his later postings was to Tanah Merah in Dutch New Guinea where the station was established on what was formerly a prison for political prisoners of the Dutch. It was surrounded by a virtually impenetrable swamp. I recall him saying, when he went there in the early days, the only way in (or out) was when the Diguel River flooded and the Dutch forces provided a flat bottomed boat. Of course supplies of food and medicine were also difficult to deliver and often did not arrive. Later on they managed to build a small air strip with not much more than picks and shovels. He was subsequently posted to Montelivet Island which he said was just a rock in the Indian Ocean. No vegetation and no fresh water. Water was dropped to the unit in 44 gallon drums but, due to the terrain, could not be dropped on the island but into the sea. Ropes were attached to the drums and they took turns in 'volunteering' to swim out and pull the drums ashore while the rest stood around the shore with rifles at the ready in case the sharks, which were prevalent, attacked and prevented their precious water arriving.

Jean Woodward [NSW]

Thomas Edward Ham

Born 07/01/1921 - Died 27/08/2001

Tom was a Radar Mechanic who completed No 20 Radar Mechanics (G) Course (14/09/42 - 08/11/1942) and went on to serve at 23RS, 52RS, 134RS, 42WG, 1RIMU and HQ Southern Area. He was member of the Qld Radar Branch and he, and his wife Betty, were regular participants in all of the meetings and functions conducted by the branch. He will be missed.

[Editor]

Claude Alfred Williams**Born 04/12/24 - Died 09/11/01**

Claude served in Dutch New Guinea at 151RS Merauke and 322RS Tanah Merah

Dudley (Bill) Moreland**Died 15/07/01**

Bill was a Radar Mechanic who completed No 32 Radar Mechanics (G) Course (25/01/1943 - 18/04/1943) and served at 151RS Merauke.

Keith Andrew William Blair

Keith was one of the very early radar mechanics and started his radar career on No 4 Radio Mechanics (A) Course (19/10/1941 - 28/12/1941). The entire course, upon graduation, was transferred to No 2 Radio Mechanics (G) Course (28/12/1941 - 04/02/1942). He went onto to serve at various radar units and was granted a commission and promoted to FlgOff on 19 December 1943. He was appointed the Commanding Officer of 151RS, 349RS, 340RS and 337RS.

Geoff Felton

Geoff was a Radar Operator who graduated from No 4 Radar Operators Course (06/02/1942 - 06/03/1942) and went onto to serve at 105RS, 109RS, 24RS, 210RS and 54RS.

Noel Edwards**Died February 2001**

Noel was a Radar Mechanic who completed No 15 Radar Mechanics (G) Course (27/07/1942 - 20/09/1942).

Peter Coyne**Died October 2001**

Peter was initially trained in Melbourne and then on No 14 Radar Mechanics (G) Course at Richmond (13/07/1942 - 06/09/1942). He was one of the original personnel to set up and man 31RS at North West Cape. He later served at 39RS Port Keats. He was flown into Port Keats by 'Doc' Fenton. They were running early so 'Doc' tried some single engine approaches. The weather was hot, the air was thin and the Anson made a wheels up landing in the cane grass. Peter mentioned that there was a lot of grass rushing past the windows but there was no damage. The mission people helped to jack up the aircraft and drop the wheels. They then cut a path through the grass to the airstrip and the Anson was taxed

to the apron for takeoff.

He met his wife in Melbourne in 1942 when she was manning the canteen in the Exhibition Building.

After the war, Peter sold insurance in the rural areas of WA and in the early 1970s he became a State Parliament Politician (Liberal) until 1985. Peter was a nice bloke and highly thought of.

Colin Hayes [WA]

Victor Bruce Aldrich**Died 07/12/2001**

Bruce Aldrich was a Melbourne Grammar boy who became a 'Bailey Boy'. He completed his initial radar training at Richmond on No 11 Radio Officers (G) Course (20/10/1942 - 20/12/42). He went onto command 305RS, 207RS and 342RS. When he assumed command of 305RS he would have been one of the youngest Commanding Officers on record. He was aged 18 years and 11 months. His age and position of responsibility was also noted by Gordon Powell when he wrote his book *Two Steps To Tokyo*. Bruce gained an entire chapter to himself and 305RS at Kiriwina (Chapter 11). He was a highly respected CO, particularly by the people who served under him. He became an active member of the Radar Branch RAAFA in Queensland and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him. The branch meetings will not seem as lively without him.

Edward Cruse**Born 1920 - Died 14/072001***Radar Man in MI5*

Radar expert Edward Cruse led a secret life inside the intelligence community. Born in England, he studied at London University's King's College. He was recruited by the British Government to work on developing radar systems, continuing this work through World War II. He then moved to MI5. Cruse's role was to help establish governments the British wanted to see put in place in Asia and the Middle East. Over 10 years, he worked in Iran, Iraq, India and Pakistan. He then moved to the US to work for the Air Movement and Control Association. He lived and worked in America for the next 25 years, becoming a citizen in the 1970s. Cruse served as chairman of the Park Ridge Fire and Police

Commission.

Herald Sun, 21 September 2001
George Treadwell [Vic]

Laurie McLean**Died 21 November 2001**

If you can provide further details on anyone mentioned in this column, please send them to Radar Returns so that their history can be accurately recorded.

[Editor]

MEMORIES OF LAC ALLAN LOOMES

Allan is mentioned in *Radar Yarns* on pages 173 to 176 & 182 to 183.

Page 182-183 refer in particular to Allan Loomes. Allan was my class-mate at Radar School RAAF Richmond. We were good mates and went on leave together. He shared my tent in Moresby. At this point, please note that Allan does not appear on the full list of 335 Personnel ready for embarkment from Mascot to Moresby on 5th October 1943, shown on page 174. The reason is he was with 331RS at Moresby prior to this date.

One night he was in S/LDR Israel's tent teaching him some language or other. He came back to our tent, quite shaken and said he had to vacate the tent immediately and was no longer with 331 RS. He told me some of the story at the time. He told me the full story much later when I visited him at the American Hospital at Finschhafen where he had been evacuated with a leg injury. (I will not repeat it in this note.) At the time of the Israel episode there was a signal requesting Allan be held at Moresby pending return to Australia to join Dr Evatt's Foreign Affairs Department. Obviously the signal was not acted on as he was transferred to 335RS.

I note on page 182 that LAC Loomes lectured the unit on International Law. This brings to mind a day at Fairburn RAAF Base. As it was snowing, all of 331 were herded into a hut to be instructed on Air Force Law, by a Warrant Officer. Not long into his stride he was interrupted by Allan. "This is not correct W/O, the law is so and so. The W/O's reply was "Listen youse - I will tell youse what the first Air Force Law is, what you think I

don't give a F*@K." Ludicrous questions then bombarded the said W/O for the rest of the lesson and this turned what would have been a boring lecture into one of great hilarity.

LW/AW Radar operating is an unskilled occupation? It requires a certain standard of health and dedication to the job at hand. One day you might enlighten me as to the requirement for the Educational Qualifications for 331 RS operators? The tertiary qualifications of my tent mates at Tami Island were as follows:

- All were aged over 21 years.
- Herbert (Bunny) Blythe, a Chartered Accountant, Manager of a South Australian Trustee Company, now 89 years.
- Doug an ordained parson with Theological Degrees. Can't remember which religion. It did not matter to us. Now Dead.
- Norman, University graduate. Keen gardener. Had our tent surrounded with tropical shrubs. Now dead.
- Myself. Gained an Intermediate School Certificate. After school reached Intermediate Standard, Commonwealth Institute of Accountancy at Metropolitan Business College. Bunny used to joke with me that the only true Accountant was a Chartered one.
- In another tent Morrie McMahon, second year University failure (Medicine).
- Allan Henry Loomes. Department of Foreign Affairs with many qualifications and a career in many high posts, including Ambassadorial stints at Rangoon, Bangkok, Seoul and Lima etc. (Not bad for an LAC Radar Operator.)

How did I get included in this company? The fact that I topped the Aptitude Test and had Army experience may explain it. Who knows?

Allan Henry Loomes OBE was born on 25 April 1917 in Burrinjuck NSW; he died in November 1990. Educated at Sydney Boys High School and University of Sydney (BA LLb) before the war, he became a Barrister

at Law NSW and joined the NSW Public Service from 1935 – 1943. He was a radar Operator from 1943 – 1945.

After the war he joined the Foreign Affairs Department and held a number of posts including Ambassador Bangkok, Ambassador Lima (accredited to Venezuela).

Brad Langley
30 September 2001



SINGING FOR THE UNSUNG

Singing the praises of 1942 RAAF heroes and aircraft.

Jack Woodward

Part 1 *The Rabaul Disaster* The courageous Wirraway pilots who went up against the superior Zeros — I have the personal story of a mate who was there and later escaped with W/C Lerew. Information from Josephine Lerew, the Wing Commander's good lady. The messages coming in from the south, when the Japanese invasion fleet was approaching, with orders impossible to carry out, resulting in Lerew retaliating with his famous Gladiator's Farewell signal — "We who are about to die salute you". There is a copy of a personal letter written by John Lerew describing his feelings at the way he and his 24 Squadron were treated from the south. Sgt. Higgs, who I met in Townsville, when I joined 24 Squadron — he escaped from Rabaul in a sailing boat.

Part 2 *The disastrous ignoring of an RAAF Hudson sighting signal.*

Part 3 *The engineering officer, in charge of maintenance, tells his hair-raising story of Hudson supply dropping to the AIF, December 1942.*

Part 4 *My last months on Horn Island.*

Part 5 *In the south at 73 Squadron Nowra — Ansons on submarine patrol along the coast.*

Part 6 *Milne Bay — where the Japanese suffered their first defeat on*

land.

Part 7 *Wireless Operator on a RAAF ship plying from Moresby to Madang and the Admiralty Islands.*

Part 8 *J T. "Bunny" Burrows unsung hero.*

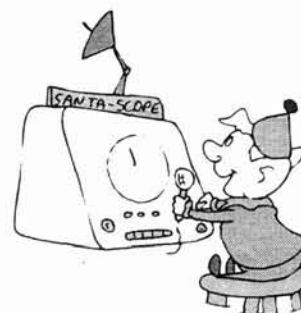
Part 9 *My mate "Jed". We were together in quite a bit, but some of it was not warfare.*

There are 270 pages with 46 photos, including some rare ones from the War Memorial.

I will supply the book direct to you, personally signed - if requested.

Just send me your name and address plus \$35.00 (includes postage) to:

Jack Woodward
P0 Box 224
PENNANT HILLS NSW 2120
Tel: 02-9875 1828



GOLDEN 306

The Story of 306RS

Len Ralph has produced the history of 306RS and DVA have now decided to finance the printing of an additional 800 copies of this history. These copies will be distributed as gifts, from DVA, to college or high school libraries. This of course is in line with the Government's initiative, "THEIR SERVICE, OUR HERITAGE".

The graphic designers have completed the front and back covers, and printing has commenced. It is expected that the book will be available around December. The price will be \$25 (includes postage and handling). I can accept advance orders as from now. Please send your orders to:

Len Ralph
96 Fawcner Street
ESSENDON VIC 3040
AUSTRALIA
Tel: (03) 9337 8272

RETURN TO CAPE LEVEQUE

When I first went to RAAF Radar School in Richmond, NSW, in the early 1940s, I recall clearly my instructor's first quote. "You have to get used to some unusual things we do here, like splitting one second into one million parts." To me, at that time, it seemed incredible, yet understandable when we are dealing with radar waves which travel at the speed of light, it becomes a little more comprehensible. The radar equipment translates the time taken into distance and that was magical enough in World War II, but the level of sophistication today is almost unbelievable.

So that was the environment into which I was trained as an RAAF Radar mechanic. My most interesting posting was to No 326 Radar Station at Cape Leveque, 220km north of Broome, WA. Its location was highly secret as was radar itself. All our mail was closely censored and our first line of defence should a Japanese submarine surface, were two 18 pounder field guns from WWI, manned by two Army Artillery sergeants with crews made up from the 40 RAAF personnel on the station.

Almost every day was eventful. In March, 1942, Japanese aircraft bombed Broome claiming 50 Dutch, 30 American and five British lives. The attack also claimed 16 flying boats and damaged seven aircraft. One Japanese zero was shot down, so the area was vulnerable.

Later American liberator bombers conducted runs over Java from inland Corunna Downs. They would fly out at 4pm and return at 2am relying on the radar station to provide plots to bring them home. Sometimes a bomber would overlook turning on its IFF (Identification Friend or Foe), another secret transmitter 'booster' which amplified the return 'pulse' every few seconds, and was visible on our radar screen. When this happened, information was transmitted via morse code to Fighter Sector in Broome, for fear it was a Japanese reconnaissance plane following the boys home to discover their operations.

On another occasion, we picked an aircraft at our maximum calibrated

range of 240 miles, no IFF, headed directly for our station at about 120 mph. It was thought to be a Japanese 'recco'. When it was within a few miles, Fighter Sector asked us to see if we could pick it up visually, when suddenly an American Catalina flying boat came skipping over the sand hills, circled the lighthouse, obviously lost, so our radio operator flashed the direction of Broome with an Aldis Lamp. It turned out to be from Leyte in the Philippines, headed for Broome for a load of beer. As Broome was 'dry', it relied on shipping for its supplies, so the Catalina was last seen heading for Queensland!

We had practice shoots with the field guns including tracer, which we tried out one night, to be told later that the Aborigines at Lombardina Mission, 12 miles south, had 'gone bush', thinking the Japanese had arrived.

We experienced a cyclone which passed right over our station and during which a RAAF Lightning aircraft on a photographic mission ditched in King Sound. The two crewmen spent a week being carried, in two dinghies, in and out of the Sound on the 30 foot tide, among the highest in the world, eventually to finish among the mangroves. From there they walked north until they met an Aboriginal cutting paper bark for Lombardina Mission. A runner advised us and joyfully they were returned to base after having been declared 'lost in action'.

Over the years, I mentioned these and other events to my family, which finally resulted in my return to Leveque, 57 years later, with my two sons, Mark and Rik, earlier this year.

Several features, including the lighthouse, were the same. There was no trace of where our radar station had been located nor the gun emplacements. The Bardi Aborigines, who we had almost camped alongside in tents, had mostly departed to One Arm Point, about 20km south, which had been developed as a centre for that area. It is currently subject to a well-justified land claim by the Bardis.

My sons and I went mud-crabbing with one Aboriginal, not entirely unsuccessful, considering the amount

of ankle deep mud we ploughed through. Fishing with hand grenades, with the Aborigines as sighters for the fish shoals, as we did in 1944 was 'out' of course, but we had a glorious day out trawling for trevally and riding the horizontal tidal waterfalls on a launch in the Buccaneer Archipelago. We visited the now deserted Sunday Island, formerly a self-sufficient Catholic Mission. Only a banana plantation remains, some derelict buildings and the remains of a reticulated electricity supply. It was deserted in 1956.

We stayed in a safari tent, part of a holiday resort being built for the Bardis. It is run by a young white couple and on completion, will be a tropical paradise. A four-wheel-drive is needed to get there, which we hired. It is also accessible by light aircraft from Broome. We swam every day from a beautiful white sandy beach in the tepid ocean, reluctant to get out. We returned home with seven-day beards, very happy that we had made the trip.

*W.A. (Bill) Thornton, JP, FCA
[Chairman, Management Committee,
Probus Centre, Probus Club of
Floreat, WA.]*

ARTISTIC BAILEY BOY

"Dr John Flett, 80, of Tranmere[SA], practised in Kadina for 40 years and is a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and Commander of St John. The amateur landscape painter exhibits annually at the Pepper Street Gallery, donating all proceeds (\$12,000) to the McGuinness McDermott Foundation in memory of his son, Rodney, who died of cancer at age 17."

The above extract was in the Adelaide Advertiser on 30 October 2001 as part of an article honouring volunteers. The McGuinness McDermott Foundation works for the Kids With Cancer group and they have raised several million dollars to rebuild, extend and equip the Women's and Children's Hospital.

John has certainly done his bit.

For those who may not be aware of John's radar past, he was a 'Bailey Boy' and served as CO 17RS, 32RS, 33RS and 314RS and was a member of 1RDIU[RIMU].

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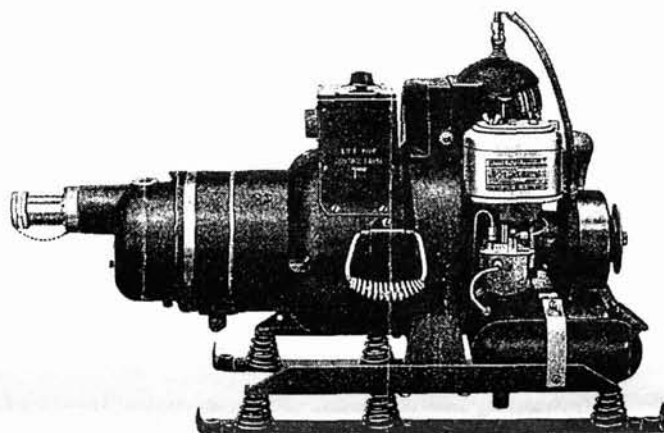
If you can provide an answer to any of the enquiries in this column, please send your reply to Radar Returns.

POWER FOR WHAT?

In 1958 I acquired a 400c/s alternator from a disposals dealer (Pictured at right). I still have the alternator and it is still in working order. However the mystery is which piece of equipment did it support. One of the drawings has the nomenclature 'Power Unit PU-6/TPS-1' and the manufacturer was Homelite 1944.

Did this belong to the TPS-1 radar or was it used for something else. Can you help?

Alex Culvenor [Vic]



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SCALE IN INCHES

TL-35584

BLACKOUT CURTAIN LYTTON

I wonder if any of the readers know what happened to a curtain we had in the 23 Radar Doover in 1943.

In order to keep the door open for a bit of fresh air, we made a black curtain to keep the light out of the operators' eyes. One girl beautifully embroidered the RAAF Badge and then we got all on the station to sign their name and home town, which we duly embroidered. (Yes we were multi-talented. We could sing, dance, play tennis, and even tote a 303 with the COs reluctant permission.) The idea being that all names would go into a hat at Wars End and the winner would have the curtain to gather dust as other souvenirs do. Anyway it caused some amusement to see "Blue Thompson - Gwabegar" and "Kaye Rae - Nymagee," and everyone wondering who was looking after the horse in each of those one horse towns.

I have tried "Wings" and Betty Robertson who was the WAAAF Officer and I believe was there when the station was dismantled, but nobody knows to where that priceless piece of hand work has gone.

Kaye Hutchison [NSW]

ANSWER

This particular blackout curtain has recently gained a lot of notoriety. It is now hanging in pride of place next to the LW/AW radar in the Australian War Memorial. Its journey to this location may have been rather circuitous but it is now bringing back memories for a lot of people (particularly WAAAF) who served at Lytton.

Pete Smith [Editor]

UNDER IT DOWN UNDER SURVIVING IN SLIT TRENCHES

Horn Island RAAF Advanced Operation Base 1942
270 pages plus illustrations

I was a W/T Operator Mechanic and, with two other operators, was posted to 24 Squadron Garbutt near Townsville. After a few weeks in their signals office, we were sent to Horn Island in the Torres Strait, December 1941, to set up a W/T station for an RAAF Base. There were only two men on the island to welcome us - a General Hand and a Messman.

Trouble was never too far away for us but we got Morse Code communication going with RAAF North Eastern Area Headquarters at Townsville, Port Moresby and Tulagi.

The Japanese threat to Australia was very real in early 1942 - on a special parade by 32 Squadron we were told - "We have a lugger tied up on the other side of the island. If it comes to the worst we might get away to the mainland". The nerve tingling listening for the 'air raid expected' siren - running to a slit trench - often a false alarm but better than being caught.

The book travels along all the important historical events on Horn Island - the air raids - how Horn Island developed into an important AOB (Advanced Operational Base) - the air attacks on Port Moresby - the first enemy defeat on land at Milne Bay - the Battle of the Coral Sea.

If you would like a copy of this book, just send your name and address, plus \$25 (includes postage and handling in Australia) to me:

Jack Woodward
P0 Box 224, PENNANT HILLS
NSW 2120
Tel: (02) 9875 7828