

CHALKIE NEWSLETTER

2/13

Hello All,

We do trust that this newsletter finds you well.

In this letter, we aim to bring you up to date with things that have been happening with the Chalkies group in the past and in the future.

These centre on the Queensland Chalkie Reunion in September and a future project that you may be interested in and where you may be able to contribute.

Best wishes,

Ian Ogston Email ozoggies2@gmail.com

Greg Ivey iveygj@gmail.com

QUEENSLAND CHALKIES REUNION

This is set down for Saturday, September 7 at the Kedron-Wavell RSL at Chermside, Brisbane. We would like to build the day around the Taurama Barracks story and, in fact, we are calling this reunion, 'The Year of Taurama'. In subsequent years, we will tell the unique stories of the other places where Chalkies served.

While this is designated the Queensland reunion, we welcome any of our interstate colleagues who may wish to attend. Certainly all Taurama people will have a special interest in proceedings.

The (very) tentative plan for the day is as follows:

10.00 am: Registration, coffee and socialising.

10.30: Welcome and outline for the day

10.30-11.00 : Taurama in Pictures (Commentary by Taurama Chalkies)

- panel of Taurama Chalkies outline what it meant to be a 1PIR Chalkie e.g. Nature of work in the Education centre, Battalion Duties, life in the Sergeants' Mess, social life etc.

11.00 – 11.45: Keynote address - Colonel Ron Lange (CO Taurama Barracks for part of the Chalkie period)

12.00 – 1.30 : Lunch at Kedron-Wavell restaurant

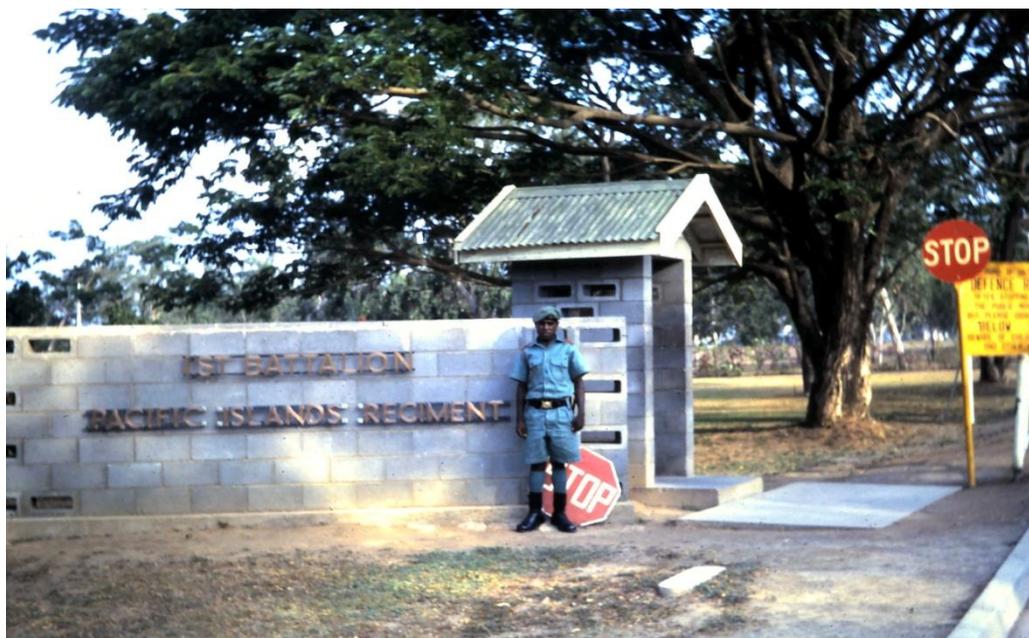
1.30 - 2.00: Taurama under the microscope – Chalkies from other barracks compare their experiences with those of the Taurama group. (All involved and led by a panel of Taurama Chalkies).

2.00 -3.15: Housekeeping Session: Website issues (Frank)

Terry re the RAAEC archives

Future projects for the Chalkies group

Optional drinks at the RSL



Entrance and guard at Taurama, 1967

A PROJECT FOR ALL CHALKIES

Many of you would have seen and perhaps even read books which contain collections of letters written by soldiers on overseas service. Historians love these as they give a personal and very real picture of life in the various distant places that Australians have served in the military forces. This compares with the breathtakingly dry accounts of troop movements that constituted military history in an earlier period of history writing.

I think that it may well be equally true for our group. By using these resources, an intimate understanding of the Chalkie experience can be developed.

I have been prompted in my thinking in this regard by my re-reading of my letters to my wife (which she fortuitously kept for all of these years) in recent times.

I will give an example of what can be learnt from these letters below.

Naturally, the personal parts of these letters are not wanted, but the descriptions of what were, it seemed, everyday events may well contain a richness that has not yet been explored.

I have visions of putting together a book of these letters and in the process, producing a rich and vital account of the Chalkie experience.

If you do have items of this nature, perhaps you could search them out. I will be in contact with more information on what to do with them later as the project develops.

To set your thoughts in motion, I have set out below an excerpt from a letter I sent to my wife (then fiancée) about the experience of arriving at Port Moresby airport for the very first time.

Taurama Barracks,

25/10/70

So many things have happened today that I still cannot get grip on the idea that I am actually here.

We had a reasonably good flight up with some tremendous views of the reefs. We were even asked to come up to the cockpit to have a look around. While I was there, I took some great pictures of the islands and the reefs as we came into Port Moresby.

We arrived at about 11.00am and found everything looking very green. Apparently, they have had a lot of unseasonable rain up here. When they opened the doors of the aircraft, the hot, humid air just raced down the aisles of the cabin. After being in air-conditioned comfort for the trip this was quite a shock.

After disembarking, we were shunted through customs and various other places. Eventually, we found our transport and were taken to Taurama Barracks which is just outside Port Moresby. Here, we are to do a one week's orientation course. The barracks are really beautiful - all of the trees with their different colored leaves were unbelievable. Everything was so green.

On arrival, we were given a bit of a talk on what was doing around the place. - what to wear and when to wear it.

All of this week, we are living on the same type of food that the PI soldiers have. This consists mainly of brown rice, potatoes and chops. No sweets, soup or anything!! I think I will starve before the week is out!

So far, we have met quite a few of the native soldiers (PI's as in Pacific Islanders). They seem to be extremely friendly and eager to talk to us. There appears to be no comparison with them and the Aborigines that I taught last year in Cairns.