

CHALKIE NEWSLETTER

3/2018

**Newsletter of the Australian Teachers who served in PNG in the
Royal Australian Army Educational Corps, 1966 – 1973**

REUNIONS, REUNIONS, REUNIONS

One of the great outcomes of the whole Chalkie experience has been the coming together, sharing of our common experiences and enjoying each other's company over the years at our various gatherings. In this newsletter, we are celebrating this with the record of several recent reunions.

1/71 Chalkies Perth Reunion

by John Hain

The 1/71 Chalkies Group met in September 2017 in Perth for their fourth reunion. Since their first reunion in 2011 in Katoomba NSW (Blue Mountains) to commemorate (or commiserate) the forty-year anniversary of their call up, the group has grown and kept to their commitment to meet every two years and do so in a different state (or territory). So far, that has meant:

- 2013 in Adelaide SA
- 2015 on the Gold Coast Qld
- 2017 Perth WA.

The 2019 reunion will be held somewhere in Victoria.

As a result of the reunions, the number of known 1/71 Chalkies has grown from seven (in 2011) to twenty - six today.



Figure 1. (Rear) Denis Riley, Warren Dunn, Andy Dalziel, John Hain, Bill Semple,

(Front) Bob Strachan, Ross Yates and John Fragomeni at the Freemantle War Memorial

This time, we met from 5 – 8 September at the Bayswater Hotel, in Perth's eastern suburbs in a program organised and brilliantly executed by WA chalkie, John Fragomeni. The first and last days were welcoming and farewelling days. Day 2 was spent exploring Perth. Starting at the huge Freemantle War Memorial, we made our way to the Maritime museum (coffee, of course) and then to explore Kings Park, which was at its spectacular peak. There were a large number of trails to explore as well as

the great views over the city and the river. That evening we held our annual dinner at a place not to be forgotten, Western Australia's Parliament House. We were guests of the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament who, after Dinner, gave us a tour of the building. We were treated like VIP's.

Day 3 was spent on one of our traditional mini- bus tours, capably driven by Bob Strachan. We visited the Avon River Valley, historic towns of York, Northam and Toodyay, following in part the



Figure 2. The group after Dinner. Les Ware is in the back row under the "Western" sign.

course of the Avon River White-water Classic. Besides trying out the local coffee shops, there was the museum in York displaying a collection of cars that once belonged to Bond (Alan Bond). We also visited the local high spots to get spectacular vistas of the fields and flowers that make the area stunningly beautiful.

About half the attendees spent up to a month either before or after our gathering to further explore Western Australia, enjoying the wildflower season.

Those attending this time were Andy Dalziel, Bill Semple, Bob Strachan, Denis Riley, John Fragomeni, John Hain, Les Ware, Ross Yates and Warren Dunn. With partners, this made a group of fifteen people.

If you are a 1/71 chalkie and you haven't made yourself known to us yet, please drop a line to

john.hain2@gmail.com so we can add you to our mailing list



Figure 3. Final dinner in the railway carriage. It was hard to keep track of time!

BRISBANE REUNIONS

Queensland Chalkies have met several times this year thanks to the initiative and work of Terry Edwsmith.

The first meeting was in the Brisbane CBD in March and Terry presented a meeting agenda of ten items (yes, ten) for discussion. There was concern as to whether we would need to find accommodation for the night after this but all items were dealt with and, indeed, rather thoughtfully discussed. Again, a very productive day and much appreciated by all – thanks, Terry.



(L to R) Norm Hunter, 'Knobby' Carnes, Ian Ogston, Terry Edwsmith, Kevin Smith, Peter Darmody, Frank Cordingley.



Thanks to the ladies who joined the Chalkies Lunch at The Collective, Ann Street, Brisbane

Second meeting – Kenmore

Again, Terry has been able to assemble Chalkies for a fine meal and much discussion at the Kenmore Tavern, Brisbane for a mid-year get-together. As usual, fine food and jolly fine conversation.



(L to R) Kevin Smith, Greg Farr, Richard Boddington, John Worthington, Dan Winkel, Peter Darmody, Ian Ogston, Terry Edwsmith, Frank Cordingley, Darryl Dymock.

CHALKIE OFFICIALS AT THE GOLD COAST **COMMONWEALTH GAMES**

Former Chalkies, John Morris and Bill Bailey (both ex-Goldie Chalkies) played prominent roles as senior athletic officials in the recent Commonwealth Games. The photo below shows John resplendent in his Games uniform.



THE NATIONAL SERVICE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHEME IN QLD

(Just when you thought that most of the stories from the Chalkies era had been told, Terry has shone a light on a significant post-National Service scheme that some of us participated in to our very great benefit.)

by Terry Edwsmith

(The following is an excerpt from an article written for a Qld university.)

Upon the completion of the two-year conscription period, an opportunity existed for soldiers to upgrade their qualifications under the National Service Vocational Training Scheme. The University of Queensland received many soldiers who undertook one year of full-time study, provided that their application for training was received within twelve months of discharge. Those who participated in the scheme received a fully-paid, recognised course of

study for one year with a book allowance and a travel-living allowance which approximated the basic wage of that time, tax-free.

UQ students were enrolled in Education, Arts, Commerce, Science and Law, to name a few. Some students came directly from the battlefields of Vietnam, others returned from instructional duties in Papua New Guinea (of whom the author was one) and the remainder came from military postings around Australia. These mature-age students continued with their previous studies with only about 20% movement to more exotic courses. Some former teachers did move to commerce or law.

By 1969, UQ had at least 15 mature-age ex-soldiers studying full-time in various faculties with as many as 100 students in total over the seven-year conscription period. Most had the maturity to succeed in their chosen field. At studies end, candidates returned to the workforce, completing their degree part-time. For others, the full-time study continued unfunded, unless a Commonwealth Scholarship was secured. Many returned to former employers. Now with a degree in hand (or in sight) promotions followed for those who sought it. For teachers returning to the classroom, Principal positions and other higher duties became available in both the state and private sectors. A few participants have become tertiary educators.

A colleague of mine studied Computer Science in its inaugural year in 1971 as part of a science degree. He re-joined the Queensland public service and has recently retired as Chief Scientist – Computing at a Brisbane hospital. His ground-breaking work in pathology processing was a vital fore-runner for today's computer-run health system in Qld.

For myself, I studied first-year Commerce with the vocational grant and completed this degree, followed by an Economics degree using my savings from part-time work, until the course was completed. This led me to a satisfying career in business and education.

The UQ years enhanced qualifications, confirmed a chosen career path and gave students the best possible opportunities. These ex-military Baby Boomers are now settling into retirement. Although the NSVTS gave them the opportunity to make the most of their circumstances, career disruption and

the obstacle course of a two-year Army career in war circumstances is a path that young men might well resist today.

(Editor: If you have any comments or stories to relate on the NSVTS, especially Chalkies from other states, please let us know and we can view them for this Newsletter for all to read.)

PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR ASSOCIATION GATHERING

Chalkies who are members of the PIB-NGIB-HQ-PIR Association turned out in force at Caboolture, Qld on 21 June to honour the founding President of that Association, Sergeant Frank Wust. Frank was a World War 2 member of the PIB and the NGIB, the precursor battalions for the PIR. A large concrete bridge on the outskirts of Caboolture now bears his name to honour both his War service in Papua New Guinea and his contribution to the Caboolture community. Chalkie Kev Horton played a central role in co-ordinating this project.



(L to R) Frank Cordingley, Greg Ivey, Kevin Smith, Terry Edwinsmith.

Chalkie Newsletter, 2-2018, pages 1-5, correction

Following a request from Dr Andrew Remenyi, the editors have corrected the title of the above article on the official Website version (www.nashospng.com)

Andrew has informed us that he did not personally meet the then John Kaputin and that his intention was less to highlight John Kaputin than to draw attention to Ken Barton's fine initiative in providing a salient learning experience for the MCS soldiers they were educating.

The editors have also added additional material from Andrew to the website version, such as the important book reference on page 4 and a technically-enhanced photo of Ken Barton with Andrew Remenyi in their Sergeant days.

Editors: Ian Ogston: ozoggies2@gmail.com

Greg Ivey: iveygj@gmail.com