

Radar Returns

ECHOES FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT

"History repeats itself – the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce"

Karl Marx (German Political Theorist)

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RADAR RETURNS

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Radar_Returns@Hotmail.com

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the final issue of Radar Returns for 1998. Although this issue will be arriving in 1999, its production become entangled with the 'silly season' and this led to a slight delay in its delivery. Still, better late than never.

I trust that everyone has had an enjoyable holiday season and all are looking forward to a prosperous and enjoyable 1999. The membership of Radar Returns continues to grow, despite the number of entries in the Faded Echoes column. More people are discovering this newsletter and, I hope, that it continues to kindle more

memories and nostalgia about radar, both in WWII and later. Following on from my request about radar personnel becoming POWs during the war, I received a number of replies which have led to a more complete list on page 2. Unfortunately, this also meant that the 'Deaths in Service' list for radar personnel has now grown to 65 personnel. A number of the radar personnel who were captured were listed with units, rather than radar stations, and, therefore they were a little harder to track down. I believe that this list is now about finalised, and if you would like a copy, just drop me a line.

I always thought that 'steam radio' was something referred to in the Goon Show but I have now had my thinking corrected, thanks to the question raised by Ray Burton. A fascinating reply to this question is featured in the Q&A section. There are also a couple of more questions which some of you may be able to provide the details required.

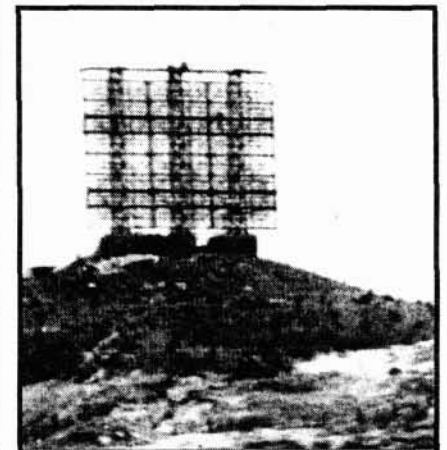
I would also like to draw your attention to the 'Where Are They Now' section which is drawing some interest. To date, this column has enjoyed a significant amount of success in bringing old comrades back together. I gain a great deal of enjoyment out of letters which relate how comrades-in-arms have been reunited after 50 odd years. Please look at this section and see if you can provide some clues on the whereabouts of the people concerned.

For those that have requested this change, I have added the year of production of the Radar Returns issue at the top of the page. I hope that will assist you in keeping your copies together. If you are missing some issues, I have spare copies of most, so just drop me a line and I shall endeavour to comply with your request.

I recently saw the movie 'Saving Private Ryan' and I was very impressed by the attention to detail by the producers. They even included a German radar site in one scene and it appears to be an accurate reproduction of a Mammut Early Warning radar. Has anyone else seen this movie and correct me if I'm wrong? That is all from me for now, I shall begin production on the next issue very shortly. Have an enjoyable 1999 and don't let the millennium bug bite!

Pete Smith

[Editor]



Mammut Early Warning Radar
200kW, 125MHz Fixed Antenna

Q
&
A

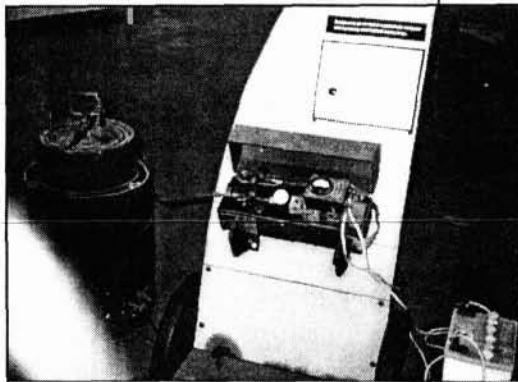


RADAR POWS

The question of radar personnel who became POWs generated correspondence that resulted in the 'Deaths In Service' list being increased to 65 members. A total of 13 radar personnel were listed as captured and served as POWs of the Japanese. Four of these people survived the experience. The list, on the right, is a more detailed description of those personnel.

STEAM RADIO

In answer to Ray Burton's question about 'steam radio', I received replies from a couple of locations which lead me to a 'museum' here in Queensland. Ray's question went right around the world and the answer ended up being 5 minutes away. The item in question was an



ALCO Firefly Battery Charger on display at AFA Aviation Museum Bullcreek WA. Photograph Courtesy of Ray Sewell

ALCO 'FIREFLY' steam powered Battery Charger for the Type 3 Mk II Suitcase Radio. This radio was used during WWII by the Resistance Movement in Europe as well as by Coastwatchers and Australian Commandos (Z-Force) in Borneo.

PltOff	C.J. Abercrombie	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	P. Britnell	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	L.E. Bruillat	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	M.H. Buchhorn	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	A.H. Caswell	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	J.B. Evans	Died as a POW (John Evans is recorded at Kranji Memorial Cemetery, Singapore, as one of the 24,000 who have no known graves. He was captured in Java and went down in one of the 'Hell Ships' on its way to Singapore.)
AC1	A.S. Faulk	Died as a POW (Arthur Faulk died of injuries and is buried at Kranji Memorial Cemetery.)
AC1	J. Forby	Died as a POW (Jack Forby died in Java and is buried in Jakarta War Cemetery.)
AC1	J.L. Goodwin	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	A.F. Knowles	Captured and served as a POW
PltOff	A.C. Lewis	Died as a POW (Andy Lewis was posted 'Missing Presumed Dead' and was last heard of in Java on 17 Feb 1942. His name does not appear on any list of men evacuated. Officially listed as killed in a 'ground battle'. He had been left behind to load some equipment onto trucks to transport south but the Japanese arrived too soon. The RAF and RAAF personnel were presumed killed.
PltOff	D.J. Thomas	Captured and served as a POW
AC1	H.G. Vine	Captured and served as a POW

The ALCO 'Firefly' was assembled by Arthur Lyons and Co (ALCO) using an existing model steam engine made by Stuart Turner called the 'SIRIUS'.

A hand operated generator was used in the prototypes. In production, new armatures were wound and installed in the existing genemotor cases. This is evident by the fact that the case has provision for brushes at either end but the armature only has one set of brushes. By the way, the generator output is 6 to 8 volts at up to 4 Amps, not 12 volts.

The prototype boiler was made from a single Army pressure cooker but this did not produce enough steam.

Two pressure cookers were then welded together and, as this proved satisfactory, new boilers were made of that capacity. Although the boiler is rated at 45 psi, the pressure gauge on the ALCO is red lined at 25 psi, but the normal operating pressure was

30 psi. The following details were gained from an original manual.

Weight of boiler with lid and fittings	35 lb.
Weight of furnace with 2 spare fire bars	25 lb.
Weight of generating set	30 lb.
Total weight	90 lb.

Dimensions of generating set in box - 15" x 72" x 52". The generator packed inside the boiler and the boiler fits inside the furnace. Total size, packed, is 14" diameter x 18" long.

This information came from Dave Prince with assistance from Col MacKinnon and Ray Sewell. If anyone is visiting Brisbane, they are welcome to come and see what Dave has in his 'museum' (shed?) at a mutually convenient time. He can be contacted on (07) 3288 4911.

Pete Smith (Ed.)



WINGS OF LOVE

While delving into the A50 History Sheets for 40 Zone Filter Centre (Broome), I came across the following entry:
 "2/9/44 'Wings of Love' (civil mail plane) delayed until tomorrow. Unit morale thus drops to bottomless depths."
 Although I can come to some obvious conclusions about the statement, can anyone further enlighten me about this reference and why it should rate a mention in the 'official' history sheets?
Pete Smith (Ed.)

JAPANESE AIRCRAFT

Lex McAulay is presently researching a book on Japanese aviation in the SWPA during WWII. He would be interested in hearing from anyone who may have photographs of Japanese aircraft that show their tail markings. The aircraft's specific unit can be derived from these markings. Of particular interest are Japanese bomber aircraft such as the Nakajima Ki-49 Donryu – codenamed 'Helen'. If you can assist in this area you can either contact Radar Returns or write to Lex directly at:
 Lex McAulay
 122 Walker Street
 MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650

THE INVENTION THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The Story of Radar from War to Peace by Robert Buderer.
 Published in the UK by Little, Brown & Co.
 ISBN 0 684 83529 0
 Recently, a very good friend gave me a copy of this book and then added that the price would be a review for Radar Returns [*I enjoy Ed having friends like that - Editor*]
 There is no doubt that radar has changed the world and made it a much better and safer place in which to live. Buderer has covered

the subject very well but, being an American, wartime activities in Australia and the SWPA hardly rate a mention. The book is long - 575 pages including about 100 pages of notes and index etc. It deals with the personalities and politics, mainly within the Radiation Laboratory, American with a few British, such as Sir Henry Tizard and Taffy Brown tossed in for good measure. Every radar history book contains new information for the reader and this one is no exception. As with every technical book produced, there are some minor errors. But there is a lot of material about centimetric radar, the Battle of the Atlantic and the proximity fuse which played a significant role in the defeat of the buzz bombs in the UK. Problems, clashes of personalities, bruised egos and differences in opinions encountered between scientists, servicemen, bureaucrats are highlighted. This only proves that our experiences during the war were not much different to the rest of the world. Post war Australian radio astronomy, Radiophysics, Taffy Bowen, along with Harry Minnett and Dr Joe Pawsey and the Parkes radio telescope receive good mentions. There are so many characters mentioned in the USA, UK and Australia that Buderer lost me at one stage when he was talking about Eddy Bowen until I realised that he meant Taffy Bowen. The book is very readable and emphasises that those of us who were in the forefront of technology in radar during WWII can feel that our efforts were not wasted as the scientists and manufacturers made good use of our experiences after the war. A nice book for radar buffs to add to their book shelves.
Ed Simmonds

WHO THE HELL WAS SIR GRAHAM MOORE?

This was, and still is, a question frequently asked by anyone who was ever on 317RS, or on the neighbouring LORAN Station. Both of these units were located on the island of this name in NE West Australia, not far from Truscott and Kalumburu in the Kimberly. This question has bugged me all these years, until recently, when I decided to chase it up on the Internet. Eventually I learnt that Sir Graham Moore had a distinguished career in the British Navy as a captain, commanding various ships of the line, in battles against the Spanish and French fleets. Eventually he was promoted to the rank of admiral and was made a Lord of the Admiralty. It has been more difficult to learn just who named the island after him. However, it is known that he reached the peak of his career some years after Matthew Flinders had completed his exploration around Australia so it is probable that the island was so named by one of the explorers who came after Flinders. I also learnt that Sir Thomas Laurence had painted Sir Graham's portrait in 1792 and that it was hanging in the National Portrait Gallery in London. I visited the Gallery recently but, unfortunately, the painting had been taken down for restoration. Never the less, I was able to purchase, for just a few pounds, a very nice digital colour print of the painting. So, was it an honour to have this scruffy little uninhabited island called after you? Having spent some six months or so towards the end of the war on Sir Graham Moore Island, on both 317RS and the Loran chain, I feel it was lucky that His Lordship never got to make the trip out to inspect his island.
Len Ralph

FADED ECHOES

GEOFFREY HAIN Died 18 Aug 1998. Geoffrey trained on No 86 Radar Operator's Course (08Aug43 - 05Sep43) and he went on to serve on 27RS, 36RS, 169RS and 164RS.

ROBERT WILLIAM BRISCO Died 17 Oct 98. After completing No 30 Radar Mechanics Course (04Jan43 - 28Mar43), he went on to serve at 17RS Burrawarra Point and 301RS Saidor. After the war, he joined the State Electricity Commission of Victoria in the electrical operators department and remained in that organisation until his retirement. In retirement, he maintained his interest in electronics as well as travel. He was 74 years old when he passed away peacefully at LRH Taralgon West.

NOEL COLLINS Died 23 July 1998. Noel trained as a Radar Operator on No 102 Operator's Course from 19Mar43 to 16Apr44. He was wounded by shrapnel while serving in NWA but had great difficulty convincing DVA that he was entitled to a full war pension.

KEITH W. BLUNDELL Keith passed away quietly on 21st May 1998 after years of battling Parkinsons Disease. I first met him the week before Christmas 1941 at Exhibition Melbourne (1STT) when we were to commence Course 5RM (Radio Mechanics) at the old Meat Tech., part of Melbourne Technical College. After finishing our rookies in various States, we had been promised home leave for Christmas, but the Japanese and Pearl Harbour put an end to that. The need for trainees was so urgent that we were tossed into the fray. On that early course were some others who have become notables in the

radar world (i.e. Norm Smith, Ed Simmons, Ray Kelly, Jack Hillier, Jim Brown and the late Ray Anscombe and Bill Hurrey). After the condensed six months course, it was off to Richmond Radio School and Course 14G (Ground Mechs). Then it was on to 3PD Sandgate, embarkation leave and then on to the infamous 1RPP Pool in Townsville. Two months on, after rolling countless petrol drums on the wharf, we were posted to Kissing Point, Townsville to form 304, 305 and 306 Radar Stations. Keith was on 305RS with Norm Smith and Noel Lynam. The OIC was one PltOff Bernard Katz, now a renowned scientist in London. 305RS formed ahead of the other two stations and flew to Port Moresby early in December 1942. After a time in Konedobu Village, they proceeded by boat to Goodenough Island, off the lower eastern part of New Guinea. At the time, there was a number of Japanese on the island. More landed but they were mopped up later. It was indeed a dangerous place. Keith spent only a short time on Goodenough before being selected to return to Radio School Richmond as an Instructor. There he joined, amongst others, Vern Berrett, Jim Brown and Alan McGuigan, who had also been recalled. In time, he moved with the now Radar School to Maryborough Queensland, where he remained until the end of the War. Keith is survived by his wife Ruth and nine grandchildren. Vale Keith Blundell, one of nature's gentlemen.

Joe Lynam, ex 306RS and 41 Radar Wing

JOHN HUBBARD 16 May 1921 - 7 Nov 1998 John was a Bailey Boy on No 1 Course after being

recruited from an engineering course at Melbourne University. After completing radar training on No 5 Radio Officers (Ground) Course (11May42 - 26Jun2) he was posted to 1RIMU and replaced FltLt Bert Israel as the Radar Liaison Office in Sydney. Bert had been posted to be CO of the newly formed No 41 Radar Wing in Port Moresby. While in Sydney, John met his future wife, Myn, who was a WAAAF secretary.

John's next posting was a Technical Officer at 41 Radar Wing where he was placed in charge of a number of radar installations including 332RS at Lae, 152RS at Tadjil and 338RS at Long Island. He was next posted to RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne. While at this location he and Myn were married. After the war John completed his course at Melbourne University and then joined Davies Shephard, a family company. He started on the bottom rung and rose to be the Managing Director. He was active in his many interests in the South Melbourne and Brighton Districts and was a member of the Victorian RAAF Radar Association.

John was a real gentleman and, as stated by various radar technical people who served under him, was 'one of the best'. To those of us who knew him well, he was a very good friend.

Joe Lynam, ex 306RS and 41 Radar Wing

John Hubbard was one of the few radar veterans who received official recognition for his actions during WWII when he awarded an MBE. The following is the text which accompanied the award:
FltLt John Rickett Hubbard (255058) **MBE**

FltLt Hubbard was in control of 338 Radar Station on Long Island, eight days before the landing of the American 6th Army at Cape Gloucester New Britain.

The installation of this station was ultimately achieved in the face of very great difficulties and despite extreme hardship. FltLt Hubbard was the driving force during the whole of the operation, and by the initiative, resource and determination which he maintained over a period of some weeks, the establishment of the station was successfully accomplished.

This station has subsequently proved of great value during recent Allied operations. FltLt Hubbard's ability, determination and devotion to duty have been at all times outstanding and worthy of the highest praise.

ROBERT IAN MCCLYMONT Bob died in Townsville in late September 1988. Originally from Western Queensland, he had retired to Townsville some years before. He was a Wireless Operator Mechanic and is remembered for his time on 306RS at Bulolo, New Guinea.

ROD GRIFFIN Died mid October. Both he and his wife, joy, attended BLIPS in 1995 and also visited Williamtown RAAF Base at a later date and provided valuable publications for inclusion in the Radar Archives.

Rod was an Army Radar Veteran. **HARRY RADBONE.** The ranks of the WWII radar personnel have lost another good man - Harold (Harry) Radbone died on 25 October 1998. After graduating from No 78 Radar Operator's Course in June 1943, Harry served for several months early in the life of 7RS when that station came on air on Wedge Island in the Spencer Gulf and had quite a few interesting stories of life out on that tiny piece of land in the

southerly swells. Early in 1944, Harry was posted to 301RS when it was forming up at Richmond. After three months at Finschhafen, 301RS moved on to Saidor where one of those strange radar incidents occurred. The 'doover' was completely destroyed by fire and the subsequent capture of a couple of unkempt Japanese soldiers who had been living in the jungle pointed to the destruction of the 'doover' by enemy action. Harry described this incident in 'Radar Yarns'.

Harry, and his wife Barbara, have been keen supporters of the 7RS Reunions over the past 10 years and their regular attendance at these yearly functions has been much appreciated and enjoyed.

Morrie Fenton



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Gordon Thomas (NSW) wishes to get into contact with some of his compatriots from 337RS. He served as a Radar Operator on this station at Kiriwina and then moved to Los Negros. Following a get together after the war, he lost contact with his friends and wants to find out how many are still out there. He particularly remembers the ukelele he used to play when off duty and how the tropics affected its condition. It was rebuilt by the carpenter from timber from a used butter box only to be thrown overboard by guards when the unit was boarding to move to Los Negros. He also has vivid memories of the unit mascot, a small dog called 'Flak'. He was smuggled aboard by helpful Americans and was fed by unit personnel from their own rations until they arrived at Los Negros.

If you can remember Gordon, or

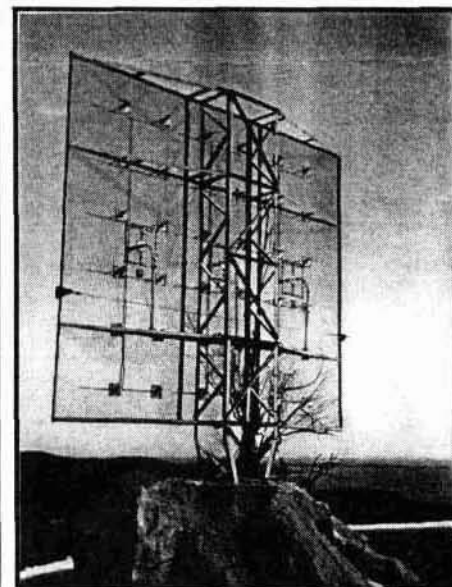
these incidents, you can contact him via Radar Returns or write to Gordon at:

136 Broadwater Drive
SARATOGA NSW 2251

Joe Lynam and Len Ralph (306 RS) would like to find ex-Sgt. John W. Smith (Smokey), a direct entry radar mechanic. He was the original top sergeant at 306RS from its formation in Townsville, and then in Port Moresby and Bulolo until its end back in Port Moresby. He was last seen in 1946 on a train heading out West from Sydney, where we believe he came from originally. Has anyone heard of him since?

Any replies can be sent to Radar Returns or to Len Ralph at:
96 Fawcner Street
ESSENDON VIC 3040

Laurie Dwyer wishes to contact any RAAF operators who trained (at Radar School Richmond) under Sgt McCarthy and Sgt Rabkin. Laurie went on to serve at Mt Surprise Qld (53RS) and at Koigaki PNG. Laurie can be contacted via Radar Returns or by writing to him direct at
40 Nimmo Street
WEST ESSENDON VIC 3040



20RS Tomarre Head NSW
Formed 19Apr42 Disbanded 21Jan47

CLASSIFIEDS

FENTON PUBLICATIONS

Morrie has just released the latest volume of Radar History. Entitled '132 Radar and 150 Radar - The Crossley GCIs of NWA', the book encapsulates the use of mobile GCI radar which employed the famous Crossley trucks as their main means of transportation. Although truck mounted equipment may be common today, employing operational equipment directly from the back of its transport was only just coming into its own in WWII. To employ this operational method for sensitive radar equipment required some ingenious engineering and a true appreciation of the equipment's use. Morrie Fenton has recorded this use of radar equipment in NWA and, as usual, each new story is more fascinating than the last. If you would like your own copy of this volume, just write to Morrie and enclose \$5.00 to cover costs, including postage. His address is:

Mr Morrie Fenton
27 Lasscock Avenue
LOCKLEYS SA 5032

BANNER BOOKS

Banner Books is an Australian owned publisher of books on Australian aviation topics. A copy of their booklist can be obtained by writing to them at

122 Walker Street
MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650

or you can visit their Internet site at

WWW.Banner-Books.com.au

All their books are sent post free in Australia.



ANZAC DAY LONDON

The traditional ANZAC Day Dawn Service is now being held each year in London UK in the grounds of Battersea Park – next to the Thames River and the Chelsea Bridge. The service commences at 5:15am. The park is the site of the RAAF Remembrance Stone which has been set in the park to commemorate the 5,397 Australian aircrew killed over Europe during WWII. RAAF Veterans, or their family members, who are planning to visit the UK in the future are encouraged to plan their itinerary to allow themselves the opportunity to attend. Final details, concerning wreath laying etc, are available from Australia House London.

BROOME, ONSLOW & CORUNNA

If you are interested in reading about one person's experiences at these locations, you should be contacting Tony Cafarella. He has produced three booklets centred on these locations. They are entitled *My Broome*, *A Town Called Onslow* and *The Invisible Airfield*. The *My Broome* booklet costs \$7.00 plus postage. If interested, contacted Tony at:

Mr T.A. Cafarella
PO Box 24
HAWKER SA 5434

7 RADAR WEDGE ISLAND REUNIONS.

On March 14th last year, the 10th Reunion of 7 Radar Wedge Island, out in Spencer Gulf, was held - an event well worth recording. Once again a great time was had by 33 men and wives who, after ten years of 'getting together', are all really good friends.

The first reunion was called by Doug Cocks back in 1989, and, assisted by his old CO Jack Measday, names were traced, adverts were published, and that first reunion saw 14 ex-Wedge men get together for the first time in nearly 50 years. Since then, a yearly reunion with the ladies has been held - a great collection of photos has been gathered - the history and a yearly newsletter has been printed - and up to 40 folk have got together for an enjoyable lunch and a good time.

There are regular attendees from WA, VIC, NSW and TAS, in addition to those from Adelaide and the SA Country - an astonishing response for such a small station.

Doug Cocks still organises the event each year and he would be pleased to hear from any Wedge man not on his list - his address is:

14 Canberra Drive
ABERFOYLE PARK SA 5159.