

# RADAR RETURNS

*ECHOES FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT*



**“A committee is a cul de sac down which ideas are lured and then quietly strangled.”**

*Sir Barnett Cocks English Parliamentary Official (1907 – 1989)*

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## EDITORIAL

After dealing with a number of committees over the years. I feel that the quote at the top of the page is fully justified. Whenever one hears of the government deciding to send anything 'to committee', one knows that nothing really workable will result.

I have had this degree of frustration with the Gold Card of late but Laurie Leckie has provided some more heartening news on page 2.

Combined with announcement of the review of the 1939-45 Star, there appears to be some activity in this arena.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Nelson Bay Reunion as well because No 7 Radar enjoyed their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in March as well. I trust you have all returned fit and well. I was precluded from attending by work commitments however I am

already planning to ensure that I don't let work get in the way for the 2003 get together. The initial details of this event are on page 7 so you should start planning your diary now.

Alex Culvenor's generator certainly produced some activity. A summary of the replies appears on page 8 and they do go some way in explaining what the device was used for. However, it does not fully explain which one of the roles Alex's particular device was employed in. That is the only problem when one asks questions – you are likely to get more questions than answers in reply.

*Technicalities & Generalities* has passed its last editorial check and is now ready for distribution. Ed Simmonds has put a lot of effort into the collation of an immense amount of material about the design and manufacture RAAF Radar in World War II – much of it unpublished. Additionally, he has also included a review of the career of Air Commodore [Ret] Alfred George Pither CBE – the 'Father of RAAF Radar'. You may find some of his career details very enlightening.

More details of *Technicalities & Generalities* and a Book Review can be found on page 6.

Some interesting stories of life in the radar branch during the war have also come to the surface. Page 3 has some more recollections of Allan Loomes as well as details of a naval contingent run by Graham Colley in New Britain. Radar personnel got into anything and everything.

Eleanore Wells' information about the WAAF at IRIMU raises, once again, the accuracy of some of our official records. I would greatly appreciate more details on this episode so that we can make sure that history is recorded correctly.

For those of you who served with

352RS, you may remember Michael Penidis, a Wireless Telegraphist. He had an article printed in the *VetAffairs* March newsletter; his activities may bring back some memories. I have reproduced the article on page 5.

The Q&A column includes a photograph of a Wireless Mechanics Course taken in Melbourne in 1943. Although the photo may not reproduce very well, I can provide a better image if you think you can identify others in the picture. You never know – you may be in it yourself.

I would like to thank Mr Bob Fullenwider of the USA for his support in developing our radar history. Bob was also a member of the radar branch in the SWPA during the war serving in the US Army. He has been able to discover more information and photographs pertaining to radar in Australia and the islands, particularly on how the US Army SAW Battalions worked with our Fighter Sectors and what life was like from their side of the war. Lack of space has precluded including some of his comments in this edition but can look forward to some of his observations in Volume 7, No 2.

Last and by no means least, the Faded Echoes column has a number of familiar names included for this issue. Some of the individuals mentioned do not have a lot details about their service career and I would appreciate more information if you can provide it.

I trust that you all remain in good health and don't get caught up in too many committees. Either as a participant or as a 'victim'. Remember, the best committee has a membership of three people with two of them absent!

*Pete Smith [Editor]*

### 1939-45 Star Announcement

On the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2001, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Awards and National Symbols, Mr Peter Reith, Minister for Defence, Mr Bruce Scott, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence and Mr Warren Entsch, Member for Leichhardt, made the following announcement:

"It is notified for general information that the Governor-General has approved amendments of conditions for the award of the 1939-45 Star to include qualifying service in the Torres Strait Islands during the period that commenced on 14 March 1942 and ended on 18 June 1943."

This means that the 1939-45 Star Medal may now be awarded to those who served in the Torres Strait and who fit the qualifying criteria. The following taken directly from Governor-General Hollingworth's Special Gazette.

Paragraph 4. The 1939-45 Star may be awarded to a person who served in the Torres Strait Islands during the period that commenced on 14 March 1942 and ended on 18 June 1943, if the service rendered by the person satisfies any of the following conditions:

- a. operational service as a member of aircrew in the Australian Defence Force for a period of, or periods amounting in the aggregate to, two months or more;
- b. operational service as a member of the Australian Defence Force, other than as a member of aircrew, for a period of, or periods amounting in the aggregate to, six months or more; or
- c. operational service as a person in a civilian category designated in Command Paper 6833, for a period of, or periods amounting in the aggregate to, six months or more.

This is great news for those who have been writing to their local members for years, in an attempt to have recognition for the Torres Strait awarded in the form of the 1939-45 Star. After conducting a few years of

research into the issue of the 1939-45 Star Medal for the Torres Strait, I submitted a proposal to the Awards and National Symbols Branch of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in November 2000. This was in an effort to have the qualifications for the 1939-45 Star Medal reassessed. A Committee of Inquiry was held over the next 12 months, with the above result ratified by the Governor General Peter Hollingworth.

Thanks for this reassessment must go to Warren Entsch, my local member, the Member for Leichhardt, who supported this proposal through the lengthy parliament channels, and also to all those who wrote to their local members for years. Without these letters from you the veterans, the decision might have been negative.

If you believe you fit the criteria as mentioned above, please contact your Local Member, or Warren Entsch's office on Thursday Island (07) 40 691 393, for information on making applications.

It has taken some time, however the Torres Strait is now recognised as an area of significant importance to the World War II effort.

*Vanessa Seekee (QLD)*

### Gold Card

Determined efforts are still being made by all state Radar organisations to maintain pressure on our Federal Government to extend the benefit of the Gold Card to ALL WWII veterans. You are aware that the RSL, RAAF Association and Navy Association, plus many other national organisations, have also been pressing the Government to extend the range of the card holders. This pressure reached a peak prior to the last election but to no avail. It is now being taken up vigorously with the new Minister for Veterans' Affairs – Ms Donna Vale.

To maintain pressure on those responsible for the decisions regarding the Gold Card, it would be of benefit if you wrote to your Local Federal Member of Parliament and expressed your opinion on this matter.

Bob Gilgen, Hon Secretary of the SA 'Gold Card Campaign', has taken a strong lead in this project and can provide a complete update on the approaches which have been made and the progress to date.

*Laurie Leckie [WA]*



36RS Buildings Hammond Island  
1999

**ALLAN LOOMES – 335RS**

Allan had the misfortune to be somewhat taller than the rest of us. During one of the many visits from 'Washing Machine Charlie', he had rather hurriedly tried to 'fold' himself up into a slit trench near the doover during the raid.

Unfortunately, in his dive into the trench he could not get his feet tucked away and a 'daisy cutter' [bomb] exploded fairly close to his foxhole. His ankle received some shrapnel which necessitated his evacuation to the mainland of New Britain on Cape Merkus and, eventually, evacuation to hospital at Finschhafen.

Allan was a very quiet, reserved man, a thorough gentleman, but he never the less did not hesitate to correct anyone, such as the WOD as witnessed by Brad Langley.

We had several lectures on International Law by Allan, often interrupted by air raids.

*Athol Cottrill [Vic]*

**Colley's Navy**

Early in 1944 the US Army Engineers stationed on Arawe found a Japanese barge sunken off Cape Merkus. The barge had no apparent damage to the hull, but had been scuttled by the Japs for some reason or another.

Graham Colley got to hear about the barge and approached the Engineers to see if 335RS could have it for their own transport requirements.

The Americans were, as usual, only too eager to help and offered to raise the barge and tow it to the beach on Pilelo Island. On reaching an agreement with the Yanks, they carried out the salvage operation and duly beached the barge on our original landing beach.

Our Fitter DMT then pulled the diesel engine to pieces, cleaned and checked everything, lubricated it and fitted it all back together. This took about three or four weeks, whenever the DMT had some spare time available.

When the launching day came all off-duty personnel were invited to come for a cruise in the barge.

'Admiral' Colley was on the Bridge, Pat McGuire was in the Engine Room. After much toing and froing and loud shouted orders from "Bridge to Engine Room", which was all of four feet from the ship's wheel to the Engine Room hatch, we eventually sailed off to cruise around Pilelo Island. One of the Radar Operators on board was heard to hum a few bars of Gilbert and Sullivan's music from "The Pirates of Penzance" which fetched a great deal of mirth from all on board.

Graham Colley was all of 6'4" and was bent over double steering the barge from a wheelhouse designed for a 5' Japanese. Apart from being buzzed by a curious RAAF Boston and loud cheering from the American barges in the harbour, there were no untoward incidents. The skipper was a little enthusiastic in beaching the barge and the unit jeep had to come to the rescue and push the barge back into the water.

From then on the barge was used to ferry provisions, personnel, mail and anything else to and from the mainland and was known as 'Colley's Navy'.

*Athol Cottrill [Vic]*

**WAAAF at IRIMU**

Some years ago, when I was in Sydney, I went to the Presbyterian Ladies College in Concorde and spoke to some of the girls about the wartime occupation of their school. The librarian gave me a history of IRIMU.

What interested me was that there was no mention of all the WAAAF who were there in 1942 and, evidently, there is no mention in the Unit Diary of any WAAAF in residence before 15<sup>th</sup> February 1943.

According to my records, I was posted, along with 15 other West Australians, from Richmond to IRIMU on 31/07/1942 and left on 01/12/1942. There is a passing reference to 2 or 3 other WAAAF and at least one was Clerk. We lived in an old double storey house (the Headmistress's House) just outside the main gate.

Most of the radar equipment was still in crates from the UK. We laboured mightily with crowbars to open them. We then unpacked, sorted, counted and finally made an inventory of all those bits and pieces which made up a radar set in those days. We had never heard of these things and didn't have much idea of how they worked or were put together.

We handled those first big cathode ray tubes as if they were the finest crystal or eggshell china! After a while all those valves were being gently flipped from one to another. We became quite adept at handling them and I don't ever remember anyone dropping one.

All the crates had shipping notes in them, but these rarely belonged to those crates. Obviously they had been packed and the notes were thrust in randomly. I gather that some of the crates rest on the bottom of the Atlantic.

*Eleanore Wells [WA]*

**CORRECTION**

Just a small point of correction I noted while reading the latest issue of *Radar Returns*

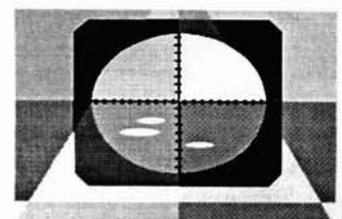
On page 7 Vol 6, No 3 in *Return to Cape Leveque*, mention is made of a RAAF Lightning ditching in King Sound.

This of course was a RAAF PR Mosquito (the Lightning was a single-place fighter). The aircraft was A52-7 of 1 PRU crewed by Sqn Ldr Gray and F/O Sudlow and the date was 28 February 1945.

The confusion is understandable - both types were operated by the unit, though the last Lightning flight was on 01 September 1944 when A55-1 crashed.

No doubt I am not the only one who will have noticed this small error.

*Bob Livingstone*



## FADED ECHOES

*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 Noel Edwards

Noel was a Radar Mechanic who completed No 15 Radar Mechanics (G) Course (27/07/1942 - 20/09/1942). He served at 220RS at Tolga on the Atherton Tableland. He was probably a Corporal. He had a Melbourne Tech Diploma of Electrical Engineering and worked as an Experimental Officer with the CSIRO after the war.

*Alan D Cook [Vic]*

### Memories of Geoff Felton

Geoff was a Radar Operator and was born in Kempsey NSW and attended school there before joining the RAAF. He had two brothers, Colin and Richard. The last time I saw him was in Kempsey in 1944/45.

*Edith Zupp [NSW]*

After I completed my training at Richmond on No 87 Radar Operators Course, I was posted to 210RS, Toorbul Point, near Bribe Island, Qld. In September 1943 the station was not yet operational and I was quartered at Sandgate. I worked on the Operations Table at 8 Fighter Sector in the old W.D. & H.O. Wills building in Brisbane until October 1943. I met Cpl Geoff Felton at 210RS in October. The station was still not complete when we moved into the bush camp adjacent to Captain U. Parry-Oakden's farm. The two concrete igloos and towers were on a swampy area nearby. Late spring and summer rains deluged the site and a road was needed over the swamp to serve the installation. Geoff Felton was in charge of a small group of us who made the loop road, single track, across to the receiver igloo and thence to the transmitter igloo and back to the 'main' gravel road. We had two spades and a mattock or two, as I recall, and we dug parallel gutters, throwing the overburden up to form an elevated roadway for the trucks. The spades were actually worn down

during the operation, as were the diggers. Geoff was constantly good humoured and encouraging, while ensuring that discipline was maintained and the job was done. The igloos are still there I understand, and about 1960, when I last visited the site, the roadway was still visible. You might say it was Geoff's memorial.

Geoff and his Darwin mate, Sgt Gordon Clarke (also a 'Faded Echo') used to regale us with stories of the MAWD stations on which they had served during the heavy days of air raids in 1942.

I was posted from Toorbul in 1 June 1944, bound for 46RS at Cape Don on the Coburg Peninsula. On Sunday, 11 February 1945, the vessel 'Bombo' called in at Cape Don and Geoff Felton came ashore with an old school mate of mine, Neville Adcock. They were en route from North Goldburn Island (309RS). Geoff was now a Sergeant.

On 14 February 1945 I was at 224RS just south of Darwin and I met up with Geoff Felton once more. He was, I believe, scheduled to go south the next day. I did not see or hear of him again until the receipt of Radar Returns Vol 6 No 3.

Many will recall Geoff Felton as a happy, earnest NCO who was considerate to his fellows and dedicated to his duties.

*Lionel Gilbert [NSW]*

### Doug Cocks

**Died 25/02/2002**

Doug was 7RS's Corporal Cook in '43 and '44. He died peacefully in February in his 80<sup>th</sup> year. He had been the principal mover and organiser for the 7 Radar Wedge Island reunions back in 1988, and he was certainly the strength behind their continuation annually despite his failing health in recent years. His wife Ronda gave him able support at all times.

Doug attended the Bendigo Reunion in '92, and was also at the 7 Radar Wedge Reunion of that same year. There is a 'Doug' story well worth repeating — Doug was on the first convoy of trucks and men to Darwin

in '41, before the 'bitumen'. The trip was a dusty one — a dry one — and a mighty hard one. At Batchelor, he was the principal cook when General MacArthur and his family landed from the Philippines, and it fell to Doug to cook their first dinkum Aussie meal.

Perhaps it was the pleasure of Doug's good cooking or perhaps it was that they shared the same Christian name, anyway, the General sought Doug's advice on his next method of travel — whether to fly or motor south to view the country.

We can well imagine Doug's advice! So the future Supreme Commander of the Pacific Area, his family and entourage flew south to Alice Springs, then on by train to Terowie where MacArthur uttered his famous words "I came through - I shall return."

This was a memorable time in Doug's life, but the time he spent as cook on 7RS Wedge and more recent reunions were his favourite memories of Air Force life.

*Morrie Fenton [SA]*

### Mervyn H. N. Beitz

**Born 21/12/1924 - Died 19/02/2002**

Merv was a Radar Operator who served on 14 Radar Station, Wilson's Promontory Vic, and on 345RS on Bepi and Harengan Islands in the Admiralty Group in the SWPA. Before turning 18 years old, Merv won a teaching scholarship and taught for one term before joining the RAAF. He returned to teaching after the war and completed 43 years as a teacher in the Manly-Wynnum-Cleveland districts of Brisbane. During the postwar period, Merv pursued an interest in local history and produced several books and countless newspaper articles and gave many lectures. He was co-founder, with his wife Myrtle, of the Manly & District Historical Society and together, over many years, they gathered a vast quantity of historical material, including hundreds of photographs, which they presented to the local council for public use as the South Moreton Bay Historical Collection. This collection is housed

in the local library in the purpose—built Merv Beitz Reading Room named in his honour and officially opened by the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Sally-Anne Atkinson. Merv was awarded many honours for his public work including being made a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International and he received the Order of Australia Medal in the 1995 Queens Birthday Honours List.

I met up with Merv in 1942 when we were both posted to 14RS where we served six months before being posted to Richmond to form up 345RS under the command of F/O Walter Fielder-Gill. Here we met up with other operators, Jim Brown (now deceased), and Leo Doolan of Castlemaine Vic.

The four of us shared a tent for about 18 months in the Admiralty Islands and we kept in touch, including get-togethers, continuously after the war until Jim's death in 1986. Since then just the three of us have remained in contact, a total period of 59 years.

Amongst Merv's local history activities was the joint organisation, with our old CO F/Lt W. Fielder-Gill, of a stone monument and dual plaque commemorating the site of a home for boys at Wynnum, Brisbane which was later used as the staff headquarters for 23RS (Walter Fielder-Gill was also CO of 23RS).

Merv was a long time member of the Radar Air Defence Branch of the RAAF Association and wrote a history of the Admiralty Island military campaign which was highly praised and is retained in the Branch Archives.

I attended Merv's funeral at St Peter's Church, Wynnum on 25 February 2002 and was honoured to be asked to deliver a personal and Branch eulogy as part of the large and impressive service.

Merv was tended daily, by his wife Myrtle, in the Nursing Care Unit throughout his very long illness and will be sadly missed by his family and fellow citizens, many of whom he taught, saw grow up and raise families of their own and he then taught their children. He is survived by his wife Myrtle and daughters Cathy and Sharyn and son Kenneth

and families.

He was a much loved teacher, husband, father and friend.  
*Bob Balfour [NSW]*

**Lionel Mitchell**  
**Died 21/07/2000**

Lionell served on 20RS, 49RS and 152RS.

**Raymond G. Allison**  
**Died 24/12/2001**

No 7 Radar Mechanics (Air) Course  
21/04/1942 – 29/05/1942.

**Brian O'Loghlin**

Born 7 May 1912 - Died 22 June 2001  
No 41 Radar Mechanics (Ground)  
Course 15/05/43 – 08/08/43.

**Audrey Verna Walker (nee Andrews) [Update]**  
**Died 27 May 2000**

Vol 6 No 2 reported that Audrey was born in Uralla SA when, in fact, she was born in Uralla NSW.



#### No 7 RADAR REUNION

The 14<sup>th</sup> Reunion of 7 Radar, Wedge Island was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March at the Marion Hotel, and was enjoyed by 30 or more faithful folk.

Wedge Island was named by Matthew Flinders in 1802, and so, as a feature of this reunion, the island's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday was honoured with a cake....and what a cake!! A model of Flinders' ship the INVESTIGATOR negotiated a sea of blue icing on the cake, and happily there were only two Centenary candles rather than 200. The candles lit the whole operation as the cake was ceremoniously cut. Most importantly, there was plenty for everyone. A potted history of Wedge was read before the cake ceremony.

The usual pamphlet, 'Memories of Wedge,' was produced, and several displays showed the new halls of the AWM, servicemen's NWA art efforts and a display of Wedge articles.

Those folk attending made it abundantly clear that another reunion is expected next year.

*Morrie Fenton [SA]*

#### Wireless Telegraphist

*The following letter appeared in a recent edition of the Vet Affairs newsletter distributed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Can any of the radar veterans remember Michael Penidis?*

"Further to Douglas Bable's letter (*Vet Affairs* March), I was also posted to an RAAF Intelligence unit to monitor and intercept Japanese messages. My wireless OPS training was at the RAAF Base at Point Cook in Victoria where I was taught the Japanese 'Kana Code' which was their version of our Morse Code. By the end of my training I was able to receive 28 to 30 words a minute. After serving my time at Point Cook I was posted to an American Intelligence unit in Brisbane based at what is now the members car park of the Queensland Turf Club (Eagle Farm), Ascot.

I was billeted at the WAAAF camp at Victoria Park Golf Club where there now stands a photo board showing the barracks and surrounding areas during the war. There were nine other telegraphists training with me and, as all our orders were different after leaving Brisbane, I was unaware of their destinations. As for myself, I was sent as a wireless telegraphist to the RAAF 352 Radar Unit and served the balance of the war in the Pacific area.

*Michael Penidis Clayfield, Vic*  
*Vet Affairs September 2001"*



**Technicalities & Generalities  
Relating to RAAF Ground Radar  
in World War II**

by

Ed Simmonds

and

Wing Commander P G Smith (Ret)

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**BOOK REVIEW**

*Technicalities & Generalities*

by Ed Simmonds & Pete Smith

**Reviewer** Alex Culvenor

The authors of the recently released  
CD-ROM *Technicalities &  
Generalities*. Ed Simmonds and Pete  
Smith, are energetic researchers of  
the history of WWII Australian  
Radar Development and Operation.

Ed Simmonds trained as a Radar  
Mechanic in 1942. He served on  
23RS, 44 Wing and IRIMU. Over  
the past decade he and his wife have  
published and distributed *Radar  
Yarns*, *More Radar Yarns*, *Echoes  
over the Pacific*, and the *Pictorials I,  
II and III*.

Pete Smith served in the RAAF, post  
War, as an Air Defence Officer and  
Project Officer of RAAF Projects  
such as Over the Horizon Radar —  
Jindalee. Pete Smith is probably  
more widely known as the Editor of  
the newsletter *Radar Returns*.

Radar left a very impressive mark on  
World War II history. There is a  
long list of publications recording  
the numerous failures and successes  
of research and development and  
operation in the years leading up to  
the beginning of hostilities in 1939  
and through to the end of the war in  
1946. The authors have completed  
an important service, by collating  
within one publication, the  
comprehensive data pertinent to the

numerous types of imported and  
locally developed and manufactured  
Radars operated by the RAAF in  
WWII.

This history highlights the  
promptness of local development  
and manufacture as the RAAF  
struggled with uncertain supply from  
overseas. Australian skills were  
given a loose rein by the Director of  
Radar, Wing Commander George  
Pither. Ed Simmonds, in his matter-  
of-fact style has compiled the first  
and only review of the career of Air  
Commodore [Rtd] Alfred George  
Pither CBE — the man regarded as  
the 'Father of RAAF Radar'. As  
Director of Radar during the crucial  
years of the war, George Pither was  
directly responsible for the training,  
equipping and organising the  
effective deployment of RAAF radar  
in the SW Pacific theatre. Although  
highly regarded by all who served in  
RAAF Radar, it was not until after  
the war that we got to meet and  
know George Pither through his  
attendance at the Victorian Radar  
Reunions for several years.

Ed Simmonds' review demonstrates  
that George Pither believed in  
getting on with the war in the best  
way possible and that regulations  
were there to be bent to fit the  
pressing urgency of the situation.  
Equipment was developed and  
delivered in record time. Similar  
achievements were not uncommon  
in other fields, [eg aircraft], at a time  
when the war demanded new  
technology and rapid development  
and manufacture. This cannot  
happen in peacetime because the  
'system' demands compliance.  
Lead-times are measured in years  
not in months.

For the discerning reader, there is  
excellent coverage of the advantages  
and disadvantages of American,  
Canadian and English equipment  
rushed into service by Australia  
during the critical period following  
the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.  
The numerous modifications and  
innovations introduced by RPL and  
RAAF Units to improve operational  
effectiveness are also recorded,  
along with technical comparisons  
between equipment types used by

the RAAF such as SCR268 from  
USA [designated MAWD in  
Australia], ACO, COL, AW,  
LW/AW, LW/GCI, and LW/LFC.  
All this is supported by many  
circuits and diagrams. Then there is  
the intriguing story of the 'Milne  
Bay Specials'. During their service  
in the field, most personnel would  
see only 3 or 4 of these pieces of  
equipment. For 'yours truly' it was  
only AW, LW/AW and COL.

The research for this publication has  
prompted the authors to identify  
many bureaucratic shortcomings and  
there are opinions expressed that  
will be judged as very controversial.  
However, before passing critical  
judgement, readers should study  
carefully the reference material that  
supports their convictions.

The Ed Simmonds - Pete Smith  
enthusiasm is infectious and the  
reader's memory will be taken back  
almost 60 years. It is recommended  
reading for the technically minded  
and for the readers who just enjoy  
history. So crank up that computer,  
put the grandchildren's games to one  
side and burn the midnight oil.

**ACOs instead of TRUs**

I recently had an enquiry about  
ACOs from Ray Whitmore who re-  
opened the question as to why the  
RAAF installed nine ACOs  
(Advance Chain Overseas) instead  
of the 32 TRUs (Transportable  
Radio Unit) as originally proposed  
by W/Cdr Pither.

No explanation was found by  
examining official documents.  
The suggested reason is twofold.  
Firstly, the LW/AW became  
available ahead of the HF Band  
English radar and it was much more  
mobile in coping with the fluid  
nature of the SWPA campaign plus  
the fact that suitable sites would  
have been hard to find in the islands.  
Secondly, it is thought that some  
accountant within the RAAF  
bureaucracy may have decided that  
it would be a better economic  
solution to utilise the towers, no  
longer required by the RAF in their  
overseas installations, than proceed  
with the TRU collapsible towers.

*Ed Simmonds [NSW]*

## RAAF RADAR VETERANS REUNION, SOUTH AUSTRALIA - 2003

Following the Maroochydore reunion in September, 1999, quite a lot of interest has been expressed in a further get-together in the RAAF Radar Veterans format. A flurry of reunions in the meantime: Canberra (October 2000), Perth (September 2001) and Nelson Bay (March 2002), has delayed any definite arrangements but now it is our turn again. The RAAF Radar Veterans committee is planning for a reunion in the second half of March, 2003.

It has been widely suggested that this time it should be held in South Australia or western Victoria, and various venues have been considered. In an earlier note we mentioned the possibility of a visit to the RAAF Base at Edinburgh to see something of the Jindalee project and other activities at the Base, and it has now been confirmed that such a visit would be possible, making the Adelaide area desirable. Our next move will be to select a location which, while accessible to Edinburgh, will offer us scope for variety and interest during the remainder of the reunion. An early thought was the Barossa Valley, and that is still possible. But, following suggestions from some of our number who are familiar with South Australia, we are also looking at the possibility of centring it on Adelaide city, as perhaps offering more variety of activities and easier access. This question will be resolved within the next couple of months.

Wherever it is held, we shall do our best to make the arrangements friendly and informal as in Wagga and Maroochydore, with a range of activities to cover as wide a spread of interests as is possible. In particular, we should like to encourage spouses, families or friends of RAAF radar veterans of WW2 or later to attend, even though they may have had no contact with, or even interest in, wartime or post-war RAAF radar units or activities. We believe they will find the reunion interesting and enjoyable.

To help in planning the function, we are once again asking people to register their interest by completing the attached form. Newsletters will be prepared and sent to all who do so, announcing decisions about the venue, the program and the costs and give details of accommodation, transport, etc.

Warren Mann, Convener

## RAAF RADAR VETERANS 2003 REUNION - REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

Please return no later than 28 June 2002 to RAAF Radar Veterans, C/- 39 Crisp Street, Hampton, VIC 3188

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of persons interested in attending: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We would like to know more about the proposed reunion: please send further information when available.

Accommodation preferred:  Motel/Hotel  Double/Twin  Single  Caravan Park  Other

*The above information is required to make general reservations. The actual booking will be left to you.*

Mode of transport anticipated:  Train  Coach  Air  Private Car

**Please include a deposit of \$10.00**, payable to RAAF Radar Veterans, to cover postage and other costs involved in organising the reunion. If the function has to be cancelled because of insufficient response, or for some other reason, such as unavailability of public risk insurance, the unused portion of the deposit, if any, will be returned *pro rata*. Otherwise the deposit will be non-returnable.

**Do you have any suggestions or comments?**

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

### Alex Culvenor's Generator

A number of replies were received about the item: three of these are listed below.

I just checked my course notes from 1950. This PU was used with the AN-TPS-3 in RAAF service. It used 100 octane fuel, ran at 4000 RPM, had two outputs: 120 volt, 400 cps at 1400 VA and 24 VDC at 400 Watts. The TPS-3 was a USMC beach head radar with a life expectancy of 4 hours: we used them for years. Last time I had my hands on one was in Darwin in 1955.

*Arthur Ellem [ACT]*

The Power Unit PU-6/TPS-1 appears identical to the ones used to power the transportable radar set TPS-3; an American centimetric throwaway radar designed for beach landings.

During 1954 I spent some time sorting out radio gear at RAAF Darwin for a Disposal Auction there. I was Sgt i/c Base Radio Workshops. I found new boxes containing a TPS-3 radar complete in the Equipment Store, withdrew it and with the aid of two fellow Radio Techs I set it up alongside the airstrip. Two power units similar in appearance to that of Alex Culvenors were part of this radar.

I particularly remember these power units as the radar transmitter pulse modulator was part of their output. The 400 hertz alternator enabled very small, light internal power supplies to be used.

It worked. We picked up a Douglas "Globe-Master" about 50 miles. We then reboxed it to concentrate on picking the best of the old AR7A, Marconi and ATR 5/8 gear for our pirate ham radio in the workshop.

*Jack Coomer [QLD]*

This power unit was used in Catalinas as a Power Supply for the ASV Radar. The PU6 Power Unit TPS1 was generally used for testing the radar unit on the ground as the Catalina employed 400 cycle power in flight. The generator was driven by a 24 volt motor direct coupled. The 24 volt motor in the aircraft supplied enough power during flight to operate the 24 volt motor directly coupled to the 400 cycle alternator powering the ASV radar equipment.. The 400 cycle supply needed much smaller mains transformers.

*Lester Wyatt [Vic]*

*All of the above comments are consistent. It was (and still is) common practice to use aircraft components to manufacture mobile ground equipment due to smaller generator requirements and compatibility with existing equipment.*

*[Editor]*

### WHO ARE THEY ?

This photograph was taken on the roof of the Royal Melbourne Technical College in May/June 1943. It is a Wireless Mechanics Course and the Instructor (in the leather jacket) was named Cranston(?). Wilf Allen is on his left. Bob Brann is on his right (with hands clasped). Pat Wilkinson is the blonde head at Bob's right shoulder. Bob Storey, eventually an Operator at 340RS, is second from the left in the front row.

*Bob Brann [Vic]*

