

Mysterious, Unique Lake George, and a Duntroon Tragedy

Allan Limburg

On Anzac Day 2003 my son, Peter, drove his wife and four children to see the famous, mysterious, unique Lake George, 25 miles north-east of Canberra, renowned as the largest, natural lake in Australia, over 2,000 feet above sea level, of which I had often spoken. They were bitterly disappointed. There was no lake to be seen.

That prompted me to undertake some research about Lake George and its close historical relationship with Canberra, Yarraluma, and Duntroon. This story is the result.

The first documented account of the lake was about 1812, as narrated in 1855 by the Reverend Robert Cartwright (1770–1856), in 1810 chaplain to the Governor of NSW. He was later based in Collector.

In 1812 Governor Macquarie and his vice-regal party, accompanied by the Rev. Cartwright, while visiting the Breadalbane Plains, then the remotest settlement in the southern districts, decided to explore further south. Two aborigines sent ahead to pick a route returned to their camp a few miles north of Collector with the astonishing tale that they had arrived at the sea and could not proceed any farther.

The members of that exploratory party, believing themselves to be more than 60 miles from the ocean, listened in disbelief. But, proceeding forward, they were overwhelmed to find the aborigines' tale was evidently correct. At their feet and stretching southwards as far as could be seen was a vast tract of water, with waves rolling to the foothills of their vantage point, later named Windmill Hill, just north of Collector, seemingly from the Pacific Ocean itself. 43 years later in Collector, in his then parsonage which was probably established in 1820, Rev. Cartwright said:

Believe me, my little church and this parsonage where we are now, had they been in existence then, would have been under fathoms of water.

Another version of the discovery of a lake of smaller size is that it was first found on 19 August 1820 by Joseph Wild from an elevated point west of Tarago, east of the lake, in a party organised by Charles Throsby, although a study of the evidence does not discount an earlier discovery.

So what is the mystery of this large lake which appears and disappears for no apparent reason, seemingly unrelated to rainfall and evaporation, certainly in the 1800s, despite recent theories to the contrary by a crop of erudite academics attempting to justify their research funds? And why would it recede five or six miles, contrary to more recent subsidences, in only 8 years from when Cartwright saw it in 1812?

In 1926 John Gale wrote:

Since I have known it, thrice it has been an extensive pastoral plain, abounding in luscious herbage; as many times an inland sea. Certainly never so vast as when its

waters laved Windmill Hill, covering fathoms deep the site whereon the village of Collector now stands. At that time the lake was an inland sea of respectable measurements; or, perhaps, one of a series of lakes stretching from the Murrumbidgee—a distance of sixty miles or more.

According to an eminent geologist, Reverend W.B. Clarke, after detailed study:

Its visible outlet aeons ago was Geary's Gap, some 100 feet or more above its present level, whence its superfluous waters flowed into the Yass River. There can be no question of its having in bygone ages been an active volcano. Its present bed is an extinct crater—pumice stone and scoria are frequently found on its shores.

And what a crater—20 miles in length by eight or nine miles in breadth! Even today local earth tremors occasionally occur in its neighbourhood. The most recent were two earthquakes along the Lake George Fault on 5 July 2003.

It has alternated between extensive rich pasturage and an authentic inland sea. Why is it that it can fill so quickly, remain full for as long as 44 years, despite periods of severe drought, yet just as quickly subside?

One reasonable theory is that on its eastern coast, towards the northern extremity of its present basin, is a bay known as Kenny's Point. Here in the driest times there is always a marsh where cattle wander and graze. When full, earth tremors can re-open a crack which has previously provided an outlet for its waters into subterranean rivers and storage, such as nearby Mount Fairy Caves. This converts an inland sea into fat grazing land. Afterwards the constant trampling of the mud chokes and slowly blocks the volcanic crevice. Thus the lake fills once again and remains so, often for some decades, even in times of severe drought, until another local earth tremor reopens the fracture.

Since 1812, when full, the extent of the waters of Lake George has never exceeded 20 miles south to north and seven or eight miles west to east. In 1834, 22 years later, it was partly dry and gradually receded. Major settlers during the 1830s included Robert Cooper on 2,000 acres at Willaroo, James and Francis Kenny on 1,000 acres at Kenny's Point, Terence Murray (1810–1873) on 2,500 acres at Winderradeen, Richard Guise on 1,020 acres near Geary's Gap. Daniel Geary, a constable, ran an inn 'Sir John Barleycorn'. Richard Brooks on Turalla held 4,000 acres near Bungendore. Other major holders were William Lithgow on 1,920 acres at Mount Ellendon and Joseph Thompson on 2,560 acres at Grantham Park. In 1838 it had dried up completely. In that year sheep from Winderradeen, Willaroo, Currandooley, and other properties were soon grazing on the luscious grasses, referred to as 'the grassy meadow', and houses were built near the water, but as the

waters rose some, such as those of Patrick Osborne and Ranger, had to later be removed to higher ground.

In 1859 Lake George was once again such a pasturage. Free settlers took up holdings in its bed and erected homes and fences. But tragedy overtook them all as the lake began rising again until only the ridge cappings of the homes could be seen. They were allowed to select properties elsewhere.

In 1873 it was full—18 miles long by 7 wide with a depth of 24 feet over the greater part, holding about 500 million cubic metres of water (15 times the water in Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin)—and soon teeming with fine codfish. Some years later the water again began to slowly recede and in 1878 it was only 20 feet deep. In 1890 it was full for at least three years. In 1899 it was down to 2 feet 9 inches. By March 1900 it was a mere 10 inches (with a length of five miles by three miles). In 1904 it was dry, after being a navigable sheet of water for about 44 years, with the depth varying from 1860 to 1904 from 24 feet to 7 feet. From about 1905–1929 its depth varied from almost dry to 10 feet deep.

In 1924 it was 10 feet deep but by 1926 when my parents first moved to Canberra with my aunt and uncle, it was almost dry. But shortly afterwards, in 1927, the lake was, once again, at least 14 miles long by seven broad—a popular holiday and tourist venue, renowned for its beauty, surroundings, fishing and shooting pleasures and was again re-stocked with fish.

Until 1900 the surrounding countryside experienced periods of drought in 1810, 1838, 1859, 1865, 1868 and 1875–1879 and floods in 1852, 1867, 1870, and 1887, and normal seasons from 1871–1874, only some of which relate to the size of Lake George. In which case any theory which supports its existence being related only to rainfall and evaporation appears erroneous. Further proof of such a faulty theory is the presence of windmills in the lake bed, supporting subterranean waters and streams at such a high altitude. When full only the tops of the windmills can be seen.

Its deepest parts in recent times (in the 1820s and 1870s) were not more than three or four fathoms (24 feet), although many hundreds or thousands of years ago, from a study of its gravels and relics of great floods, it was at least twice that depth. It is unique in that its only visible outlet is at least 100 feet above its level when full. It has no other visible outlet (apart from the fissures mentioned). It has a total of five feeder creeks—two on its southern boundary, (Butmaroo or Deep and Bungendore or Turalla Creeks), two on its eastern shores, (Taylors and Allianoonyiga Creeks) and one, Collector Creek, on the Winderradeen property, from the north.

On 25 May 1874 two small steam boats were ceremoniously launched on the lake and numerous trips each of 20 passengers were made all day, with bands playing and sumptuous food and fireworks at night. At one time a steam yacht, employed on meteorological research, and several sailing vessels graced its waters. In past and recent times it has known dangers and tragedy. On one occasion a squall overtook two sailing boats just after they left the steam yacht on a fishing expedition. Both were driven many miles and could not return until the following day. Other similar events have taken place.

On 20 November 1890 when the sheet of water was more than twenty miles in length and about eight wide, an

aquatic contest promoted by Bungendore's leading residents including Powell, Rutledge, McJannett, Sparrow and Leahy was held with three of Australia's champion scullers and others from overseas taking part. The prize for the main championship race was 50 pounds. It was contested by Bubear from England, Stevenson from NZ, and Miller from Sydney. Stevenson won the three mile course. Other races were also held. The attendance of spectators was stated to be 'immense' and most of them had never previously seen a racing boat.

One unusual phenomena of the lake is its astonishing tidal feature. Unlike oceans which respond to earth's rotation, it has only one not two tides a day, with the normal rise being only 12 or 15 inches, but it can be much higher in times of storm and tempest which can be, and has been, the cause of boating accidents and drownings. Researchers from Adelaide University, partly funded by the US Navy, are studying its extraordinary, unique wave patterns, not necessarily related to winds only. One apparently bright young academic claims, rightly or wrongly, based on only about the past 30 years, it is all to do with 'an effect called a seiche'. If so, it is unlikely that the university and US Navy would expend such efforts and funds.

When full it attracts an abundance of wildfowl—immense flocks of black and mountain duck and silver, painted and brown teal; grey, black, red and wood duck; widgeon, blue-wing, blue-bill, white-eye, whistler and musk duck; black swans, quail and snipe, coots, seagulls, and waterhen.

For many years after 1874 the waters of the lake were teeming with fine freshwater Murray codfish. They had been brought there in water casks from his Yarralumla property by Sir Terence Aubrey Murray on bullock drays, in three trips, from the Molonglo River near Yarralumla, now the site of Government House. He released them into his creek at his property at Winderradeen, Lake George. Despite being freshwater fish, as the waters rose they multiplied rapidly and migrated throughout the lake and its four other tributaries, particularly into the creeks with their fresh water, whereas the waters of the lake tended to be brackish. The freshwater silver bream which he also released surprisingly all died. Sir Terence apparently was the original owner of the Yarralumla property.

His brother, Dr Murray, first occupied the Yarralumla homestead. After his death Sir Terence, wishing to part with all his properties except for his newly acquired Winderradeen at Lake George, sold it cheaply to August Gibbes, who paid it off in three years. He subsequently sold it to Mr Fred Campbell, a grandson of 'Merchant' Campbell, the original owner of large areas of land at Duntroon and the future Duntroon House and the Royal Military College, established there in 1911, away from Sydney and Melbourne, 'so that cadets would not be exposed to the temptations of a large city'! Two years later, on 12 March 1913, Canberra was named as the capital of Australia by Lady Denman, wife of Governor-General Sir Thomas Denman, before a guard of honour provided by cadets of the Royal Military College.

Fred Campbell built a very spacious, old fashioned, comfortable station homestead, Yarralumla House, which was purchased in 1911 to serve as Government House. The first Federal Cabinet held weekly meetings in it from 1915 prior to the construction of Parliament House opened by the

Duke of York in 1927, when my parents attended as invited guests. It was later used as a hostel for visiting politicians. It then underwent considerable renovations, repairs, and refurbishing in 1927, at substantial cost, before becoming, with its fine old gardens, more recently greatly enhanced by the waters of Lake Burley Griffin, the abode of our Governors-General.

Incidentally my father, an architect, designed Civic Centre shopping blocks, the Girls Grammar School, and Albert Hall. He returned to Canberra in 1947 as Assistant Director of Works, when I commenced work at the CSIRO at Black Mountain. My mother, having been invited to the official opening of the first Parliament House was also invited to the official opening of the new underground, yet extraordinary, Parliament House opened by HM The Queen on 9 May 1988. Michael Manson, aboriginal activist, was arrested gatecrashing the ball and put a curse on the site.

Because of the ideal, unique, lengthy, laser-level base of the lake bed when dry, it was used in the mid 1930s by the Goulburn Motor Cycle Club for bike races and regular working bees built a three-mile speed track course for use by them and light car clubs of NSW and Victoria for speed trials. It was proposed as the site for an historic attempt on the world land speed record by Sir Malcolm Campbell and by Australia's champion 'Wizard Smith', but apparently insufficient funds were raised. Sir Malcolm, who was enthusiastic, had specified a requirement of at least 11 miles dead straight with a total of 14 miles in length in a letter dated 1933 and published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 12 August 1993.

Swimming races across the then five-mile width of the lake were an annual event for several years in the 1960s. In more recent times Lake George has become a popular site, when wet, for water skiing and, when dry, for hang gliding, when such enthusiasts daringly launch themselves off the elevated slopes of Geary's Gap, to the delight of the many onlookers driving to and from Canberra by the newly re-located highway.

In 1948 when I entered RMC Duntroon it was nearly dry. Yet by 1951, the year of my graduation, and the year in which I established the RMC Ski Club at Mount Ginini in the Brindabella Ranges, it was at least ten feet deep and fluctuated from 1948–1983 (35 years) from 3–15 feet deep. In 1956 and 1962 it was at its fullest for decades. In 1984 it was again 10 feet deep and from 1986–1987 almost dry but filling rapidly again in 1988. Whether or not this coincides with the pattern of rainfall and evaporation during this period, as claimed by recent academics, based on only the past 30 years, in contrast to patterns in the past 200 years, seems at best to be hypothetical. Why its depth has never exceeded 15 feet between 1948–1988, as compared to the 24-foot depths in the 1880s, is not certain. Its significant lower depths could be due, in whole or part, to extensive open-cut mining begun in 1978 at Woodlawn, to which is pumped copious underground bore water from 30 metres below Lake George's edges.

It was at least 10 feet deep in the early 1950s as cadets from Duntroon were regularly using it for sailing with the Canberra Yacht Club from 1951, prior to the construction of Canberra's magnificent Lake Burley Griffin, completed in 1963, with its clear, resplendent, shimmering waters, its spurting Captain Cook Memorial Jet and its pealing Centenary Carillon bells which delight and enchant—a

jewel in the crown'. The cadets had surveyed and constructed a boatshed on the western shores of Lake George shortly thereafter which they regularly used. This had a tragic ending:

On 8 July 1956 when five cadets were drowned in a boating accident on the lake and another two first-year cadets had gone to the help of others who were rescued only some eight hours later, adrift in the middle of the lake in pitch darkness. The Commandant recommended the two survivors, Staff Cadets D.W. Ford and K.V. Gosling for bravery awards for 'An outstanding feat of cool and deliberate courage.'

They were both invested with the George Medal by the Governor-General, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, in April the following year. But for the actions of Staff Cadet F.J. Alizzi, who remained ashore and raised the alarm, all seven would have perished. The impact was felt throughout the College. The loss of so many lives in a single accident was devastating in an institution of RMC's small size. In one class the number of students was abruptly cut by a quarter. (*Duntroon* by Chris Coulthard-Clark, 1986).

How and why these tragedies occur has yet to be satisfactorily explained, despite all the recent theories from all the many bright academics who thrive on research funding and try to make a name for themselves. Alan Granger from Collector who knows it well and has seen it full and empty, and run stock on it for over 70 years during its dry periods, said 'You wouldn't get me out on it in a boat'.

Epilogue: Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, Governor-General, signed my commission as an officer in December 1951. Lieutenant Colonel Frank Alizzi worked with me in HQ Logistic Command in 1975-6 as SO1 Finance. Lieutenant Colonel David Ford, CVO, AM, GM, then Victorian Protocol Officer, worked with me at Footscray Institute of Technology in the arrangements for the visit there of HRH Prince Philip in 1980.

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*Colonel Allan E. Limburg entered RMC in 1948 and graduated in 1951. His father was appointed Assistant Director of the Department of Works in 1947, having previously been one of Canberra's early residents in 1920's. His father designed the Civic Centre, the Church of England Girls Grammar School and Albert Hall. Having completed his Leaving Certificate in 1946, Allan moved with him to Canberra where he was employed in 1947 by the CSIRO as a clerk at Black Mountain uniquely following in the steps of Bill Woolston by being accepted for RMC and was in turn followed by Peter McGrath.*

*He has always taken a keen interest in Canberra, its history and its beautiful surroundings.*

*He was medically discharged in 1977 and has taken a keen interest in story writing and military history having written several short stories, some published. As the Director for the Royal Visit to Northern Territory he was invested as a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order by HM in 1963. He is a graduate of the Staff College, Joint Services Staff College, British Administrative College and Industrial Management at Manchester University. He attended various courses in the UK and a posting to Germany. He also held senior instructor and command positions.*

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The Prodigal Son's Corner

Bradley Trevor Greive

[Bradley Trevor Greive graduated from the RMC in 1990. After leaving the ARA, he has gone on to become one of Australia's most successful creative talents. His eighth book—*The Blue Day Book*—received the Australian Book of The Year award in 2000 and, to date, the associated series (some 13 books or more) has sold over 15 million copies in 105 countries and 27 languages. Ed.]



I confess to being more than a little alarmed when I received word that my old RMC tactics instructor, corps advisor and rugby team mate, Brigadier Chris Appleton, was looking for me. It has been some 15 years since I left the ARA and as such, apart from generally

belated invitations to attend Kapyong Day reunions at 3 RAR (Para), I no longer expect much in the way of urgent correspondence from the ADF. As my knees trembled, I entertained the ominous prospect of donning the khaki breeches of service to stand in harm's way for the greater good once again or, and this didn't please me much either (having only recently acquired a sane sense of self preservation commensurate with my various metal joints), the awful possibility of pulling on another bloodstained RMC Old Boys XV jersey for the annual melee of beer-bellied berserkers ... and subsequent rugby match.

Thankfully I had been unearthed simply to share insights from my post-service experience, such as it is, with readers of the Duntroon Society Newsletter. Nevertheless, whilst the testicle-shredding terror I was nurturing rapidly subsided upon receiving this reprieve, I still felt an increasing unease following my acceptance of this great honour, insomuch as my service record is so pitifully inferior to previous contributors. A fact clearly illustrated in the anecdote shared by B.N. (Brian) Dobson (1940) which appeared in the 2/1989 issue and marked this column's debut.

Nevertheless, I am grateful for the opportunity to reflect upon my brief days in and out of the army and to share publicly the tremendous benefits I gained through service.

I should point out to the reader that, far from the usual graduate featured in this column, my exit from the ADF was not on ideal terms. I contracted a rather nasty lung infection during a major joint service exercise in the tropics that evolved into a self-generating sea of viscous, liquid jade. The serious nature of my respiratory problems was discovered by accident at 5 Field Hospital one weekend when I spent a memorable hour in casualty while attentive nurses removed a large amount of blue stone gravel from my hands, knees, and elbows courtesy of a painful bicycle spill initiated by my dear friend Captain, now Lieutenant Colonel, N. Sorial, who slipped a slender pneumatic pump between my spinning wheel spokes in a curious demonstration of high spirits.

The net result of this breathless drama was that I had been gifted a residual asthma condition and therefore my career trajectory as a combat officer evaporated in a cloud of pink mist. Realising that my days in marching order were over, and fearing a Canberra desk job more than the black

plague and the clap combined, I requested transfer to the inactive army reserve at the soonest opportunity and, when this was approved by a benevolent superior, I removed my 'dull cherry' beret and stepped gingerly into a different world wearing uncomfortably new civilian shoes.

My first ports of call were the sun-soaked beaches of Sydney's North Shore. I had taken the 3 RAR triathlon team to compete in a number of the Shelley Beach Biathlons every summer and decided that, after the drearily functional veneer of Holsworthy, this was exactly the sort of place where I should reinvent myself.

Despite the picturesque environs, I'm afraid my "reinvention" took a lot longer than I had hoped. Almost a decade as it turned out. During the early years I found it very difficult to adjust to civilian life as a functional adult. I'm afraid that, as my transition to manhood was ensconced in college and regimental life, I was quite at sea when it came to the way things were done outside of such a rigid and purposeful structure.

During my regimental service I would not have been alone in thinking that civilians were rather soft (a condition I have demonstrably embraced at this point in my life). This condescending view was further reinforced upon being discharged. My disdain for sleeping late and an enduring passion for both hard physical training and long working hours were met with a mix of admiration and alarm. I found that I had substantially greater energy reserves than my new peers and I was able to put this advantage to good use; indeed my very survival depended upon it.

Whilst trying to gain traction as a writer and cartoonist I found it necessary, on occasion, to hold three or four poorly remunerated jobs simultaneously, and even these barely covered the rent in the high-priced beach suburb of Manly. To keep the wolf from my door I waited table at a Mexican restaurant, provided illustrations for various publications, became a junior creative in an advertising agency, worked in an art gallery, produced commercial photo shoots, sought bit parts in movie and television productions and I even wandered through a large shopping centre dressed as a giant, red M&M candy as part of an ill-conceived confectionery promotion.

Though perhaps now I look back with a wry smile, I recall clearly that at the time it wasn't much fun. Pursuing a creative career, whether as a writer, musician or artist or whatever, is always difficult and I was no exception to this rule. For a period of some 18 months I was forced to sign up for unemployment benefits to subsidise my meagre living costs (for more than two years I managed to live on roughly six dollars a day).

Paradoxically, my first genuine breakthrough led to perhaps the lowest point of my professional life insomuch as, following only my 36th submission, I was finally accepted as a feature cartoonist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and thus, with an extra \$210 in my pocket every fortnight, I was finally able to move out of my bedroom office into my own studio. Flush with cash I sought out the best creative work space I could afford; settling on a rat infested hovel next to Central Station that was formerly home to



an illegal narcotics den. My one room studio, office and abode (I also slept there each night on the floor), was conveniently located near public transport, a fact that was brought to my attention every time a train arrived or departed Australia's busiest station and the decrepit building shuddered like an old dog with fleas and termite snow flakes would slowly fall from the emaciated beams onto every horizontal surface. It transpired that free entertainment was also included in the rental agreement as my immediate neighbours turned out to be an illegal S&M brothel and a Korean karaoke club. Many a midnight hour was spent reluctantly eavesdropping on flabby, middle-aged executives being beaten with paddles and whips to the accompaniment of 70's and 80's pop anthems sung with a unique Pyong Yang twang. These were humbling days.

Throughout this time I continued to write as much as I could whilst greedily taking whatever paying work came my way. I finally completed my first book, an anthology of my cartoons from the newspaper but, despite my popularity exposure, not a single publishing house was prepared to take the risk. Undaunted, I wrote another book, a collection of amusing anecdotes from my military service, but once again, no one was interested. After nine years had elapsed I had completed a total of seven books—each of which had been rejected by every notable publisher in Australia. It was then, at rock bottom (or so it seemed) that I struck upon a highly original idea for my eighth book—*The Blue Day Book*—which would incorporate juxtaposed text and image within an amusing linear narrative. The topic, appropriately enough, was how to see things in a fresh perspective when everything was going terribly wrong and seemed utterly lost.

After completing this book, the first of its kind anywhere in the world, I trotted it out to every Australian publisher with fresh energy. Alas, the result was the same. Refusing to take a backward step I then borrowed money from my family and pitched the book in the USA. Again, nine more publishers rejected my suit.

Eventually however there was modest interest from a wonderful family-owned publisher in Kansas City, Missouri, named Andrews McMeel Publishing. My first book was published in America and subsequently I was able to get an Australian publisher to come on board. Within 12 months *The Blue Day Book* had raced to the top of best-seller lists throughout the world, received the Australian Book Of The Year award and, to date, this series (some 13 books or more) has sold over 15 million copies in 105 countries and 27 languages.

On the back of my publishing success I have been able to build a dynamic international company that creates commercial content for numerous different categories and, more importantly, I now support other Australian creative talents on the rise and invest heavily in my lifelong passion, the preservation of wildlife and wild places around the world.

The bottom line is that, were it not for the lessons I learned and values I embraced as a young officer; principally the military ethic and, of the principles of war, 'selection and maintenance of the aim' above all else, I do not believe I could have succeeded at all.

There is no doubt in my mind that being conditioned for military service gives young men and women a terribly unfair advantage in life. I am convinced that an Australian soldier's resolve is unshakable. Not only is there a

toughness, a sheer bloody mindedness if you will, for which we are renowned, both in times of war and peace, but there is also an inherent resourcefulness that leads us to consider changes, both subtle and radical, and ultimately new approaches in order to achieve victory where others have given up and left the field.

After a few stumbles at the start I have enjoyed a charmed life these past few years. I have had the privilege to traverse the globe from Amazon basin to the Antarctic icecap again and again. I have worked with many celebrated figures whom I've long admired and I have been generously rewarded for the pleasure of doing what I love on a daily basis. Yet, regardless of whatever accolades or indulgences have come my way, I look back and say that, without any reservations, my proudest hours were spent in company of soldiers.

After all these years I still miss the integrity, the commitment, the loyalty, and the sense of duty and honour that so define the profession of arms. The A Coy, 3 RAR (Para) flag still flies outside my home and reminds me where I came from and what I owe to those who have shaped me into the man that I have become.

I no longer have the knees for parachute insertions or Old Boys' XV fixtures, but I'll try not to let the side down.



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*Bradley Trevor Greive (BTG) graduated from the RMC Duntroon in 1990 (as the BQ SGT, having been banished to BHQ from Kapyong Coy) to enter the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and take command of 1st Platoon, A Coy, 3 RAR (Para).*

*After leaving the ARA BTG has gone on to become one of Australia's most successful authors and creative*

*entrepreneurs.*

*BTG is a passionate wildlife enthusiast and has built conservation facilities in Zimbabwe (painted dogs), Montserrat (mountain chickens), and Myanmar (Burmese roof turtles). His most recent completed project was an endangered forest turtle assessment survey in Sulawesi. He is also Governor of the Taronga Foundation, the southern hemisphere's largest and most successful zoo-based conservation institution, Patron of Painted Dog Conservation Inc, Life Benefactor of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (UK), and the International Conservation Ambassador for Fort Worth Zoo (Texas).*

*BTG is also a major supporter of the arts and a committed champion for emerging Australian writers and artists. He is Chairman of the Taronga Foundation Poetry Prize, Australia's leading prize for young poets, an Ambassador for the Dymocks Literacy Foundation, and a Founding Sponsor of the International Tour Fund for the Australian Youth Orchestra.*

*In his spare time Greive enjoys scuba diving, sky diving and desert racing. In 2004 he successfully completed Cosmonaut selection with the Russian Space Program at Star City in Moscow.*

*When not abroad BTG tries to spend as much time as possible on his farm in Tasmania with his three Great Danes.*  
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New Commandant, Royal Military College of Australia— Brigadier M.D. Bornholt, AM



Brigadier Mark Bornholt was born in the New South Wales town of Leeton and educated locally. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in December 1978 and was allocated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

As a junior officer he had a series of regimental appointments with 3rd and 6th Battalions, The Royal Australian Regiment, and 41st Battalion the Royal New South Wales Regiment. He also commanded a recruit platoon at 1st Recruit Training Battalion and was the Australian Exchange Officer at the British Army's School of Infantry at Warminster. In 1993 he was appointed Career Adviser—Infantry in the Directorate of Officer Career Management—Army. He was posted as the Military Assistant to the Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1994 and was the Chief Instructor of Warrant Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer Wing at the Land Warfare Centre, Canungra from November 1995.

Brigadier Bornholt was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment on 5 December 1997 and commanded the Battalion for two years including the lead up to Australia's commitment to operations in East Timor in 1999. In June 2000 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his exceptional performance at the Land Warfare Centre and for outstanding leadership of the 1st Battalion.

He commanded the Australian Service Contingent and was the Assistant Chief of Staff of The Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai region of Egypt in 2000. In 2001 he was promoted to Colonel and appointed Director of Australia's Defence Force Recruiting Organisation. During his tenure he supervised the outsourcing initiative to change the service delivery component of the recruitment business to a commercial contractor.

In 2003 Brigadier Bornholt deployed to the Middle East during Operation Falconer, the War against Iraq and served in Baghdad as the Chief of Staff of the Australian Joint Task Force during Operation Catalyst, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq. He received a Commendation for Distinguished Service in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 2004 for distinguished performance during these operations.

He returned to Australia in late 2003 and was posted as the Director of Studies—Land at the Australian Command and Staff College. In May 2005 he was promoted to Brigadier and appointed as the Commander of the Land Warfare Centre—Canungra. During this appointment he initiated a significant restructure of training development and conduct of all-corps promotion training for all ranks of the Army to make it focused and relevant to the future land operational environment. In January 2006, Brigadier Bornholt was appointed as Chief of Staff Land Headquarters where in conjunction with his staff he coordinated the operational deployment, collective training and capability development activities of Australia's largest environmental command.

Brigadier Bornholt became the first Portsea graduate to be appointed as the Commandant, Royal Military College of Australia on 3 October 2006.

Brigadier Bornholt has a wealth of command, staff, and training experience. He is a graduate of the Australian Defence Force Language School, the Australian Army Command and Staff College and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He attended the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies in 2005. He and his wife Karen have two boys, James aged fifteen and Michael aged thirteen. He is a capable golfer and enjoys rugby, cricket, and collecting red wine. He spends his spare time trading on the share market.

From the Commandant

Brigadier Mark Bornholt

I assumed the appointment as Commandant of the Royal Military College in October 2006. It was a time of great personal pride as I am the first graduate of the Officer Cadet School to be appointed to the position. I first came to the College thirty years ago to watch my brother graduate and would probably have followed him here if not for a desire to be commissioned quickly. In many respects there are parallels between those days and today where many of our young men and women are eager to be commissioned so they can gain some operational leadership experience.

This forum is an excellent place to pay tribute to Chris Appleton. You will be aware that he was formally recognised for his contribution to the College in the Australia Day Honours List where he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross. The work he completed over his tenure as the Commandant has set us on the path for some significant change over the next few years. Chris and his staff produced an excellent body of work called Project MONASH which sets the basis for the future. The changes are mainly in the curriculum and will produce platoon commanders ready for employment on operations in the complex, ambiguous and challenging environment of the 21st Century. My challenge will be to implement the changes Chris has worked to develop. To this end I have recently launched Plan HAMEL to move us from project to plan and ultimately, delivery.

The College vision is graduates, who are able to command, ethically lead, and effectively manage soldiers in complex, ambiguous, and challenging environments.

Some of the changes which will start to be implemented this year includes a new mission; 'The Royal Military College of Australia is to produce officers capable of commanding platoon groups in the Hardened and Networked Army and to prepare specialist candidates for commissioning'. Specialists include Specialist Service Officers, officers commissioned from the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and Warrant Officer Scheme (ASWOCS) and officers laterally transferred from other nations' Defence Forces. The College charter to 'prepare cadets and other selected candidates for careers as officers in the Army by promoting learning, leadership and integrity, by inspiring high ideals and the pursuit of excellence and inculcating a sense of duty, loyalty and service to Australia,' has been retained.

The next few paragraphs will give you a sense of where the College is heading and is an edited transcript of the formal guidance I have provided to the staff:

This guidance is applicable to the full time and part time First Appointment Courses (FAC). I want to conduct training which prepares our junior leaders and commanders for the demands of complex war-fighting in the all-corps environment. There are very few elements of MONASH that I have difficulty with. Philosophically, however, I believe we must teach people what to think before we can teach them how to think.

I seek Training Management Packages that are based upon the Future Land Operating Concept and incorporate the tenets of the Chief of Army's Campaign Plan for the development of a Soldier for the 21st Century. I will move the emphasis of our operational training from planning centric to execution centric with a clear focus on the basics—the Combat Military Appreciation, delivery of verbal orders, the all-arms call for fire and safe handling and proficient application of basic weapons including Steyr, Minimi, and pistol. I will constrain our operational training to platoon level. Our threat scenarios will be omnipresent and asymmetrical. I will provide our cadets with exposure to the full spectrum of operations the ADF may be or are currently engaged in. I will seek to combine our existing full time FAC Battle Blocks to achieve the environment presaged by Krulak's 'Three Block War' and conduct field training as a corps. Upon graduation our officers must be able to command at platoon level in support of Peacetime National Tasking. We will make greater use of simulation and technology in concert with field training.

Leadership training will be scenario based and we will provide maximum opportunities for our cadets to exercise command and leadership during training. We will use the final six months of the full time FAC to polish our graduates, not sort out who should and should not graduate. This is the time for us to teach these young men and women 'how to think'.

Management training will concentrate on where and how to find information and our communication education will focus on the basics of military writing—quick assessments, briefs, minutes, training programs and platoon commander notebooks. The time for strategic papers and essays will come later in their careers once they have mastered command. Our young officers must be able to articulate their orders, directions and opinions verbally and with confidence. They should be encouraged not to use complicated supporting materials such as PowerPoint presentations.

All of this training and education will be heavily underpinned by the study and application of clear thinking, ethics, values and history. Physical training will be constant and progressive; team sport is essential to the application of courage and teamwork.

I will organise our instructors into teams who demonstrate and deliver expertise in their respective fields. Officers will teach tactics and governance. Senior Non-Commissioned Officers will teach basic skills and supervise training.

My priorities for 2007-2009 are:

- *Develop the Full-Time FAC to train platoon commanders in a complex environment for the Hardened and Networked Army by January 2008.*

- *Develop a new Army Reserve Officer Course that trains platoon commanders for peace and security operations in the Hardened and Networked Army by January 2008.*
- *Review the Specialist Service Officer Course and develop a FAC for ASWOCs and lateral transferees by July 2008.*
- *Redesign training to reduce external support.*
- *Reschedule courses to commence training later each year to allow staff leave clearance.*
- *Develop the classroom of the 21st Century by January 2009.*
- *Introduce the Combat Military Appreciation Process by January 2008.*
- *Develop Majura Training Area to provide realistic training settings for complexity and urbanisation by January 2008.*
- *Centralise all Regular Army RMC Selection Boards at Duntroon by July 2007.*

As you can see, there is a lot on our plate; however, most of the really hard work has been done over the past few years and we will now concentrate on implementation.

The College remains an extremely busy place, we have nearly 400 Regular cadets and 100 Reservists, here at the time of writing and our attrition rates remain low. I am particularly pleased with the results of our III Class who after six weeks at Majura have only lost four people (which is a considerable improvement on the historical average). Initiatives such as Bridges Company, which Chris outlined in the last newsletter, continue to produce good results in the development of young men and women who would otherwise have been turned away for a year. I intend to further develop this concept in conjunction with returning Selection Boards to the College from May this year. I hope to be able to offer individuals jobs and start them immediately into Bridges Company after the selection boards whilst waiting for III Class to commence. We also have increased numbers waiting in the Officer Tertiary Recruitment Scheme who will complete their degrees whilst training with the Active Reserve and start in II Class next January.

We conducted another successful Graduation Parade in December whilst hosting a large number of re-unions and the feedback from all involved was positive.

I am starting to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Centenary in 2011. I see a much larger role for the Duntroon Society in delivering this plan. At the moment there a number of interest groups and various projects being planned which need to be coordinated. The strategic plan will deliver that co-ordination and ensure we are all aligned. I hope to give you a sense of the plan in the next edition.

I trust this rather long article gives you a good feel for where the College is heading. The Army remains an institution at war and our people are in harm's way in many different theatres around the world. The training of our junior leaders needs to be focused on the future battlefield and to that end, my priorities will very much be on the curriculum. I want to ensure that we produce officers who have earned the right to be Army's next generation of leaders; personally equipped to command, ethically lead and effectively manage soldiers in the complex, ambiguous and challenging environment of the 21st Century.

Reunion—OCS 1956 Classes

Iain (Jock) Stewart and Ian Gollings

The OCS June and December Classes of 1956 combined for a memorable reunion in Canberra in December 2006 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their graduation. Of the 34 surviving graduates of the two Classes, 23 were able to attend. With wives and partners and the widow of a former classmate a total of 45 attended. Graduates attending were Rod Althaus, Roly Brazier (RAAF), John Browne, Karl Cameron-Jackson, Ian Darlington, Brian Johnson, Kevin McDonald, Iain Stewart, and Rob Vickery (June 1956). Malcolm Count, Jim Devitt, Brian Edwards, Ian Gollings, Ian Henderson, Paul Jones, Brian Lawler (RAAF), Gordon Lilley, John Mark, Richard McCluskey, Bernie Sullivan, and Mick Weaver (December 1956). We were especially pleased to welcome Joan Skelton, the widow of Morrie Keane who also graduated in December 1956. Peter Luck and Warwick Smith, two more December graduates, were able to participate in some of the week's events.

Activities commenced with welcome drinks at the Canberra Yacht Club on the evening of Monday 11 December and concluded with a formal dinner at the RMC Officers' Mess on Thursday 14 December. Highlights included the graduation parade on Tuesday morning when 150 young men and women graduated. Apart from the large numbers the parade was notable as the first to be held on the newly resurfaced parade ground—a far cry from the grass parade ground at OCS, Portsea, with Port Phillip Bay in the background.

At morning tea following the parade we were able to renew acquaintances with our many friends in the RMC Class of 56. As subalterns we all went through much the

same experiences and formed life long friendships. At one stage it had been hoped that the RMC and OCS Classes of 1956 could get together for at least one of their reunion activities but this could not be arranged so the morning tea became our major opportunity to say hello to some of our other old friends.

The tour of RMC on Wednesday morning, with guides provided by the Duntroon Society, was most interesting. OCS Portsea, WRAAC OCS Georges Heights, and OTU Scheyville have disappeared from the order of battle but each made a significant contribution to officer training. It is heartening to see their contribution and traditions recognised at RMC. The OCS Graduates Memorial Wall located in Starkey Park facing the Military Instruction Block was the scene of a short memorial service at the end of our RMC tour during which we remembered five classmates who are no longer with us. An inspection of our archived personal files from 1956, now held in the RMC Museum, caused much hilarity!

Major General Alan Stretton, AO, CBE (1943) was guest of honour at our dinner in the RMC Officers' Mess on Thursday night. He was Major in Charge of Administration while we were at OCS and in that role administered the cadet disciplinary code. Very few cadets graduated without having a one-on-one discussion with 'the Judge' as he was fondly known. General Stretton gave an interesting address and endured witty responses from John Browne on behalf of the June Class and Malcolm Count on behalf of the December Class. As a cadet John Browne had spent more time with 'the Judge' than anyone else so sought clarification on a few points of law! The General thanked us for our invitation but let it be known privately that he was not expecting an invitation to our 60th reunion.



Members of the OCS Classes of 1956 at the OCS Graduates Memorial Wall.

The NSW Branch Graduation Day Lunch, 12 December 2006

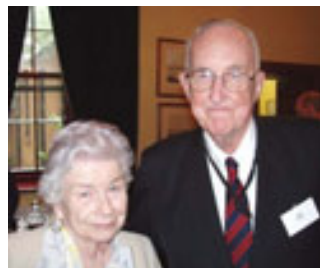
The NSW Branch Graduation Day lunch was held as usual at the Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess, and there were 51 members and guests present. Again the Mess did us proud, and the meal and the service were excellent. The atmosphere in the anteroom and dining room is always conducive to the spirit of the gatherings, which blends friendship, nostalgia, and the sense of history. How fortunate we are to meet in this place! *Photos courtesy of John Hutcheson.*



Some of us caught on the way into lunch. The couple in the centre facing the camera are guests, Ron Evans (1935) and his wife Allison.



Derek Sharp (1941), June Sharp, Marie Patterson, Jean Swinbourne, Allison Evans and Ted Swinbourne (1947).



Left: Classmates (1947) and Sappers, Ted Swinbourne and John Hutcheson. A rare photo of John: he is usually the one pointing the camera. Right: Who said there are never enough Sappers? Here is another, Owen Magee (1944), with his wife Beverley.

Class of 1953 Reunion

Paul Kitney

At the 50th reunion in Auckland in 2003, the graduating class of 1953 decided it should not wait another five years for the next get-together—the attrition rate was too high! Consequently, in the first week of October 2006, sixteen members of the class (roughly one third) with wives and one widow, assembled in Brisbane to mark the 53rd year of our graduation. Most of the international and interstate visitors stayed at the United Service Club in Wickham Terrace, which was the venue for two of the major functions.

Festivities commenced on the first evening with a successful cocktail party at the club. A couple of Queenslanders, Bill Gale, and Graeme Douglas, made their first appearance at a reunion in many years and it was great to catch up with them.

Next day was free and a number of the group went cruising on the Brisbane River. Others went looking for a winery—which was closed! That evening the class attended a dinner, also at the club. That too was a great success, due in no small part to the efforts of the club management and staff and our own organisers, Noel McGuire, and David Vivian-Smith.

The climax of the three days was a coach tour of the Sunshine Coast hinterland taking in the Glasshouse Mountains, Maleny, and Montville. We had a fabulous lunch at a charming French restaurant at Flaxton—*Le Relais Bressan*—chosen for us by Ian and Cecelia Maclean. This is a must for any group gathering in Brisbane. On the homeward journey everyone was in good voice much to the delight of the coach driver who said he had not enjoyed such a good sing-a-long since he was a lad when his parents were in the army.

As we said our goodbyes it was decided to meet again in 2008 in Victoria (to be organised by D'Arcy Peisley and Ian McKeown) and again in Canberra in 2011 (to be organised by Ray Sunderland) to coincide with the Centenary of the College.



Class of 1953 re-union coach tour, morning tea stop—Ray Sunderland, Jenny Vivian-Smith, Noel McGuire, David Vivian-Smith, Christine Davis, Paul Kitney, Natalie Cole, Nan McKay, Donna Sunderland, Graeme McKay, Barbara Kitney, Betsy Stewart, Hugh Stewart, Bill Wells, Coral Wells, Peter Cole, Derek Lamperd, Rosemary Hulse, Mark Hulse, Joy Templeton, Graham Templeton, Barbara McGuire, and Barbara Lamperd.

The Victoria Branch Annual Lunch, 9 November 2006

Hon Bruce Billson MP, Minister assisting the Minister for Defence and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, was guest speaker at the annual Victoria Branch luncheon held at Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess on Thursday 9th November 2006. There were 40 members and partners present, and many apologies from those unable to attend.

The Minister gave a spirited talk in which he displayed a sympathetic understanding of the special place servicemen and servicewomen have in the nation's history and future world standing, and his own commitment to ensuring that returned servicemen and servicewomen are appropriately supported.

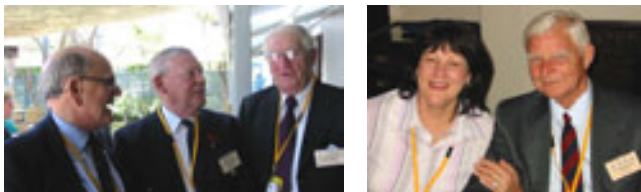
Alan McDonald (1953) welcomed the Minister, and Zena Sharples (partner of Richard Coates (OCS 1975)) gave a vote of thanks. Zena took the opportunity to thank the Minister on behalf of Carers Victoria and present him with a DVD funded by his Department.



Alf Argent (1948), John Sedgley (1938), Lois Murchie, co-convenor Bob Slater (1963), Hon Bruce Billson, and Sue Robison.



Left: Zena Sharples and Hon Bruce Billson. Right: Ewen Cameron (1971), Peter Swaab (1956) and Don Fenwick (1956)



Left: Rex Rowe (OCS 2/53), Don Fenwick (1956) and Terry Bates (OCS 1/54). Right: Maria and co-convenor Alan McDonald (1951)



Left: Noema and Rex Rowe (OCS 2/53) with Jake Robison (1962). Right: Jim Hughes (1950) with guests Maureen and John Capp.



Left: Jim (1944) and Mary McCoy. Right: Jan Hughes and John Sedgley (1938).

From the Central Office

Peter Evans

Affiliates

On 5 December 2006, with the approval of chief of Army, I sent an e-mail to the work e-mail address of all serving Army officers of the rank of lieutenant colonel and above advising them that they were now Affiliates of the Duntroon Society. Each officer was given the opportunity to unsubscribe from any future contact. Of the approximately 958 e-mails sent out to valid addresses, only 23 officers unsubscribed. Consequently the Duntroon Society currently has 935 affiliates.

We are now looking for a mechanism to contact all serving officers of rank major and below (Army does not have a readily available list of e-mails for these officers). Additionally, from the e-mail addresses provided by the Commandant, I will contact each new graduate and offer them the opportunity to be an Affiliate of the Society.

Web Site

The web page at www.dunsoc.com is up and running but will remain a work-in-progress for some time yet. Past Newsletters are accessible on the site. We still rely on Branches to provide information on social events etc. Some very favourable comments have been received from the membership.

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Lieutenant Colonel J.A.N (John) Chapman
 Lieutenant Colonel I. (Ivan) Clark
 Mr J.M. (John) Cook
 Lieutenant Colonel R. (Rick) Davies
 Lieutenant Colonel C.A. (Chris) Field
 Colonel M.W. (Matthew) Hall
 Major D.B. (David) Jordan
 Mr C.M. (Colin) Morse
 Colonel D.J. (Danny) O'Neill
 Mr R. (Roger) Schie
 Lieutenant Colonel G. (Garry) Spencer

E-mail

Members are encouraged to provide their e-mail addresses to Peter Evans—there are significant administrative cost savings to be achieved if contact between the Society and members can be conducted through electronic means.

From the Branches

Australian Capital Territory

Last year's annual Dinner & Speech was held in Duntroon House on 15 November 2006. The speaker was Jack Waterford, Editor-at-Large of *The Canberra Times* and the event was so successful that he was shortly afterwards appointed to Membership of the Order of Australia and also Canberra's Citizen of the Year. We note that our previous year's speaker, Ross Bastiaan, was also appointed AM shortly after addressing the Society. Clearly there is a message here and we appear to be on a hat-trick.

This year's Dinner & Speech will be in November as usual and the lucky speaker has yet to be appointed.

New South Wales

The numbers for the 2006 Graduation Lunch [report on page 9, Ed.] were slightly lower than usual, as some members and their wives were attending class reunions at Duntroon.

The 2007 Winter Lunch and Graduation Lunch will be held respectively on Thursday 28 June and Tuesday 11 December. The Commandant and his wife will be the guests of the Branch at the Winter Lunch. He has agreed to speak briefly about the RMC in 2007.

The biennial general meeting for the NSW Branch will take place just before the Graduation Lunch on 11 December. The agenda will include the election of office bearers for the next two-year term.

New Zealand

Ralph Porter established the New Zealand branch of the Duntroon Society when the society was formed in 1980 and continued as convenor until his recent death. His contribution to the success of the branch was enormous and word of his passing was received with considerable regret by New Zealand members. The New Zealand branch now has a very successful pattern of well attended social events and an annual golf trip. Financially we are well secure and the credit for all of this must go to Ralph. Ralph's wife has received many messages of support from New Zealand and Australia members notably from those in the college 1st XV which won the ACT first grade championship in 1962. At that time Ralph was on the staff at RMC and was the team coach. Ralph was farewelled at a military funeral at St Luke's Church, Remuera, attended by a large number of his friends and colleagues. He will be missed.

The Christmas function for the Wellington sub-branch was a lunch held at the Trentham Camp Officers' Mess on Sunday, 26 November 2006. Major General Ken Gordon (1956) hosted the function which was attended by 38 members, partners and friends. Lieutenant Colonel Stan McKeon (1944) and his wife Helene travelled from Napier specially to attend the function and were warmly welcomed.

Auckland members and their partners gathered at the Auckland Golf Club for the traditional Christmas lunch on Sunday, 3 December 2006. The function was hosted by Colonel Tom Aldridge (1961). Thirty nine members and their partners attended. Again we were joined by Colonel Rob Dickie (1952) and his wife, Dale, and Lieutenant Colonel Wally Stenberg (1942) who travelled from Whangarei to be present. Brigadier Graeme Birch (1960) and his wife, Janine, joined us from Tauranga and

Lieutenant Colonel Laurie Pilling (1961) and his wife Shenagh made the trip from Hamilton.

Membership of the New Zealand Branch is 129 including sixteen spouses of deceased members.

Queensland

Postal Golf was held for 12 players at McLeod Country Club Thursday 7 September on a desperately windy day which must be the reason for the poor scores. A Mixed Lunch was held for 26 attendees at Victoria Barracks Officers & Sergeants Mess on 19 October. The guest speaker was Brig Andrew Smith, Commander 7 Brigade who up-dated us on current in-service issues and happenings—a most enjoyable and quite economic occasion. On Tuesday 27 February, 22 attended the annual cocktail party at United Service Club and 15 stayed on for an a la carte dinner.

South Australia

The Annual Graduation Luncheon was held in the Keswick Barracks Officers' Mess on Tuesday, 5 December 2006. 22 members enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship of good food, fine wines and a relaxed afternoon.

It should be noted that Branch members continue to indicate their preference for one function only each year. The Convener has advised members that he is prepared to accommodate additional functions/activities requested by a majority of members.

We continue to have problems assembling a team to participate in the Annual Postal Golf Competition. However, it is planned to embark on a Branch recruiting drive this year to attract a number of potential members who have recently been identified. Hopefully, this will result in an increase in Branch membership and allow us to re-enter the Golf Competition.

Victoria & Tasmania

Hon Bruce Billson MP, Minister assisting the Minister for Defence and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, was guest speaker at the annual Victoria Branch luncheon held at Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess on Thursday 9 November 2006. [See report on page 10, Ed.]

Western Australia

The last function for 2006 was held in conjunction with the Graduation Parade on 12th December. A mixed group spanning graduation groups almost 40 years apart were in attendance with a few stories shared that while they crossed the generations, did not change in content too much.

Coming Events

ACT Branch

19 April 2007. Autumn Lunch at 12:30pm at Duntroon House.

November 2007. Annual Dinner & Speech.

NSW Branch

28 June 2007. Winter Lunch in the Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess.

11 December 2007. Graduation Lunch in the Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess.

New Zealand Branch

- 6/7 March 2007. Golf trip to Tauranga. Organiser Major General Rob Williams (1952).
- 22 July 2007 (TBC). Auckland Winter lunch at midday at Remuera Golf Club. Organiser Major Peter Skogstad (1964).
- 14 June 2007 (venue to be confirmed). Wellington Winter dinner at Trentham Officers' Mess. Organiser Major General Scotty Gordon .
- 23 November 2007. Society postal golf competition. Auckland teams at 1230 hours at Helensville Golf Club. Organiser Brigadier Mike Dudman (1959). Wellington dates are still to be set but most probably in December. Organiser Lieutenant Colonel Trent Harker (1961).
- 25 November 2007. Wellington Christmas lunch at midday at Trentham Officers' Mess (venue to be confirmed). Organiser Major General Scotty Gordon.
- 2 December 2007. Auckland Christmas lunch at midday at Auckland Golf Club. Organiser Colonel Tom Aldridge (1961).

Queensland Branch

- 18 May 2007. A society table at the USC's ADF Dinner on (TBC and subject to vacancies).
- 22 June 2007. Theatre Night (Alan Ayckbourne's *Bedroom Farce*).
- 6 September 2007. Postal Golf at McLeod Country Golf Club.
- 4 October 2007. Mixed Lunch at Vic Barracks.
- TBA, November. Lunch and 'equipment handling' at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera.

South Australia Branch (incorporating NT)

- 4 December 2007. Annual Graduation Luncheon to be held in the Keswick Barracks Officers' Mess.

Victoria Branch (incorporating Tasmania)

- 23 October 2007. Lunch at the Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess.

Western Australia Branch

- 10 April 2007. Lunch at the Officers'/Sergeants' Mess, Leeuwin Barracks
- 28 August 2007. Lunch at the Officers'/Sergeants' Mess, Leeuwin Barracks
- 11 December 2007. Lunch at the Officers'/Sergeants' Mess, Leeuwin Barracks

RMC Ceremonial Parades

- 9 June 2007. Queen's Birthday Parade and Trooping the Colour.
- 16 June 2007. The Graduation Parade.
- 27 & 28 September 2007. Beating Retreat and the 1812 Overture (at Duntroon as normal).
- 11 December 2007. The Graduation Parade.
- Further information can be obtained from the SO3 Ceremonial, Warrant Officer I S.M. (Stephen) Hladio on (02) 6265 9539.

Open Day Duntroon House

- Sunday, 30 September 2007. From 11:00am. The Duntroon Guides will be available, the Band of the RMC will be in attendance, and refreshments will be provided.

Pool Replacement

Warrant Officer Class I Allport

In November 2005, Headquarters RMC-A submitted a request to replace the RMC-A Pool Facility, as the existing pool was inoperable due to leaking. Access to facilities such as the pool complex was considered a critical component of the accommodation precinct design.

The request was accepted and the Defence Service Group (DSG) oversaw the start of construction in October 2006. The project includes construction of a 25-metre pool, a toddlers pool, new amenities blocks, and state-of-the-art filtration units for each pool in accordance with Commonwealth and Territory legislation.

The pool base has already been successfully tested using water from the Molonglo River to ensure that there are no leaks. This water was returned to the Molonglo River when the test was completed. The pool is now ready for tiling and then may be filled.

DSG included the filling of the pool in its undertaking to reduce Garrison water usage to meet current water restrictions. At this stage the project is planned to be completed and handed over from the contractor to DSG at the end of April 2007.



The RMC pool being replaced. Photograph courtesy of the Defence Publishing Service AudioVisual, Duntroon.

Shorts

- In a flight of whimsy your erstwhile Editor published in *Newsletters 1/1987 & 1/1998*, photographs of what he purported to be the two meetings of the 'Somerset & East Sussex Branch' of the Duntroon Society. At the time the complete membership of that 'Branch' was Colonels T.G. (Geoffrey) Brennan (1928) and R.R. (Ross) Harding (1948). Now in his 98th year, Geoffrey's health has deteriorated to the stage where he and his wife have moved from their home in East Sussex to Cornwall. Here they now reside in two rooms of the Porthgwarra Nursing Home in the village of Coverack with a panoramic view across the English Channel that affords them much pleasure. Although wheel-chair bound, Geoffrey is in reasonable spirits and retains a good memory. Mounted on one wall of his room is the Sword of Honour awarded to him 78 years ago. To extend the whimsy a little, a meeting of the

newly formed 'Cornwall & Somerset Branch' was held on 23 October 2006 at Coverack with Colonels Brennan and Harding making it a 100% attendance. With the poignant death of Colonel D.D. (Doug) Pitt (1929), Colonel Brennan became the Elder of the Society on 16 January 2007.

- After reviewing the Graduation Parade on 12 December 2006, the Governor-General, Major General P.M. Jeffrey (1958) presented commissions to 155 graduates. At the Military Prizes and Sporting Awards Ceremony conducted on the previous day, The Duntroon Society Award went to Lance Corporal M. (Marshall) Lawrence who has been allotted to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. He has been posted to 2 RAR in Townsville as the commander of the Assault Pioneer Platoon.
- Under this heading in Newsletter 1/2003 was a snippet about Colonel William Frank Steer who was born on 12 January 1901, becoming the oldest living graduate of the United States Military Academy (USMA). We have recently learned that he died aged 105 years on 7 March 2006. His successor was Colonel Michael Buckley, jr, who was born on 17 May 1902 and who graduated from the USMA in 1923 but has since died on 17 August 2006 having been the oldest for just over five months. In turn his successor is Colonel Herbert T. Benz who was born on 31 August 1902 and graduated from the USMA in 1924. For the graduates of the RMC, Duntroon and the USMA, West Point, does the final rank of colonel have some relationship with survivability and longevity??
- The Chief of Army, Lieutenant General P.F. (Peter) Leahy (1974) reviewed the Graduation Parade for Part Time General Service Officers on Saturday 24 February 2007 and the presented commissions to 80 graduates. Staff Cadet K.D. (Kyle) Taylor received the Duntroon Society Award. He has been allotted to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and returns to his unit, the Western Australian University Regiment.

Letters to the Editor

Apropos of Something or Nothing at All

Tiit Tõnuri

Back in those days when there was Fourth Class Training (to be politically correct) one of the first questions fired at us was about which way the boomerangs went on the RMC badge. I think that most of us would have got that right.

Back in the 60s we were all issued with Sterling Silver serviette rings from Hardy Brothers, engraved with our Cadet No and the RMC badge. I recently noticed that that on my serviette ring the boomerangs are crossed the wrong way and "DOCTRINA" is in fact spelt "COCTRILIA". I wonder what I would have done with this invaluable bit of knowledge had I been aware of it back in 1960?

Has this been corrected since and do they still issue Sterling Silver serviette rings?

[Can anyone shed any light on Tiit's question? Tiit graduated in 1963. Ross Harding and I belong to graduating classes that are twenty years on either side of the period Tiit mentions—neither of our classes received personalised serviette rings. Ed]

Profile of Students at the RMC

Current strength (26 March 2007)	379
CSC	
First Class	91
Second Class	184
Third Class	104
East Timor	2
New Zealand	1
Papua New Guinea	9
Philippines	1
Thailand	2
ADFA Graduates	93
Females	47
Cadets with previous military service	51

In addition to those at Duntroon the number in training in University Regiments is approximately 540. The above statistics are those obtaining near to the publication dates of the Newsletter. Other courses conducted at the RMC, often early in each calendar year, are the Part Time General Service Officer Courses, Specialist Service Officer Courses and Single Service Training. Therefore the number of trainees in residence at the RMC can be considerably larger than the number shown for the Corps of Staff Cadets.

Obituary

Since the publication of the last Newsletter we have learned of the deaths of the following:

28 Mar 2006	Major R.I. Kidston (1961)
24 Sep 2006	Lieutenant Colonel E.U. Gooch (1943)
14 Oct 2006	Lieutenant Colonel I.R. Diggle (1943)
15 Oct 2006	Brigadier R.K. Fullford
5 Nov 2006	Brigadier I.M Hunter (1939)
13 Nov 2006	Professor B. Dempsey*
29 Nov 2006	Captain M.A. Bingley (2/1997 DEO/SSO)
27 Dec 2006	Lieutenant Colonel C.E. O'Callaghan*
15 Jan 2007	Colonel D.D. Pitt (1929)*
26 Jan 2007	Captain B.C. Kollias (1966)
28 Jan 2007	Colonel R.K.G. Porter (1944)
4 Apr 2007	Brigadier W.J. Morrow (June 1041)

* See following obituary.

CLARICE ESTHER O'CALLAGHAN, AM
née CAVANAGH
20 July 1913 – 27 December 2006

John Bullen



Known to her family as Charl and to the Army community as Cav or, more formally, as Sister Cav, Cav was born in the family homestead 'Stray Leaf' at Mulligan's Flat, now part of the outlying Canberra suburb of Forde. She was the fourth of five children born in one of Canberra's pioneering families. Cav's father was the stud groom for the Crace family and her mother worked for Mrs Crace.

Cav's early life was on the family farm, where she became familiar with farm life and managing large animals.

Her primary schooling was in the one room school at Mulligan's Flat. For her secondary education, she boarded at Mt Carmel Convent School in Yass.

Around the farm Cav showed less aptitude for mechanical equipment than her younger sister Pat who mastered tractors and everything else with enthusiasm. Accordingly, when Cav turned 17, her father decided that Pat (aged only 15) should be the one to get a driving licence and took Pat along for her licence with Cav's birth certificate. Two years later, Cav got her licence with Pat's birth certificate. Later on, both sisters got the records corrected, but although Cav reverted to her correct birth date of 20 July, she kept Pat's birth year for the rest of her long life. Army records and her passport both erroneously showed her as being two years younger than she really was!

Cav chose nursing as her career but this was initially opposed by her father who believed that nurses smoked too much, drank too much and were dissolute. Shortly before his death however, he experienced fine nursing support in hospital and changed his mind about nurses. Cav trained at Canberra Hospital from 1933 to 1937 and then nursed in a several country towns, including Gundagai and Harden.

Cav enlisted in the Second AIF just before Christmas 1944. With the war soon over, Cav stayed on and was posted to Japan at the time of the Korean War. Here she made many good Army friends—most notably her future husband and several young Army officers who quickly became close friends and whose friendships endured for the rest of Cav's life. She finally married Gerry O'Callaghan, a former army accountant, in Goroka in 1978, but they had always kept in close touch. Sadly Gerry died not long afterwards from cancer.

Back in Australia and now aged 40, Cav was posted as Hospital Matron, Duntroon, from 1953 until 1961. Here, she was to become an institution. She served in Malaya from 1963 to 1965 and returned to Duntroon in 1966. After a posting to Kapooka she was back at Duntroon again in 1969 until her retirement in 1970 (when the Army believed she was 55). But by 1973 she was back at Duntroon, this time as a civilian nursing sister. Cav finally retired in 1976, aged 63. That same year she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to nursing.

Altogether, Cav spent about 14 years at Duntroon between 1953 and 1976. This brought her into contact with 2,255 Duntroon cadets.

To all the cadets of Duntroon, Cav was an Army officer. But to many of them she was also a surrogate mother. Cav quickly identified those cadets who needed motherly support and gave generously. Other cadets enjoyed Cav's understanding friendship too. These friendships endured, with Cav taking a lasting interest in their wives and families.

At Duntroon, Cav first lived in the Hospital where she had her own room. This was her home for seven years, where she was always on call for any emergency, around the clock. In 1960, she moved into Nimmo House—the brand new nurses' quarters next to the Hospital and named after the long serving Dr Nimmo.

As an Army officer Cav was formal, loyal, and very conscious of what was correct. As a Nursing Corps officer she was caring, compassionate, understanding and supremely competent. She brought her fine personal

qualities to bear in mothering cadets who needed the support that she so willingly gave.

Cav combined these roles wonderfully, moving between her roles as officer and mother with such ease that becoming a legend was inevitable.

In the 1990s alongside Monsignor John Hoare, Harry Hutton, and General Alby Morrison, Cav was awarded Life Membership of the Duntroon Society, these being the Society's first four life memberships to be awarded for service to Duntroon.

An even greater honour came Cav's way in 2005. The Commandant, Brigadier Chris Appleton (1975–78), graciously named the newly built Commandant's residence Cavanagh House in honour of Sister Cav. Cavanagh House is on the site of the old RMC Hospital—Cav's home throughout the 1950s where she was always on call.

Chris Appleton's thoughtful action recognises the quality of the devoted service Cav rendered to the College from the 1950s to the 1970s. Cav was thrilled!

The four pall bearers at Cav's funeral were General Sir Phillip Bennett (1946–48), Lieutenant General John Coates (1952–55) and Major Generals Adrian Clunies-Ross and Peter Phillips (both 1952–55). The military eulogy was delivered jointly by Colonel Coralie Gerrard (RMC Matron 1976–80 and 1981–82, and later RAANC Matron-in-Chief) and Lieutenant Colonel John Bullen (1956–1958). Brigadier Peter Evans (1955–58) was the acolyte assisting in the Requiem Mass. To the very end, Cav was among her friends.

The funeral cortège made a detour past Cavanagh House before heading out through the Gun Gates for her burial at Gungahlin beside her husband.

More than 2,000 cadets, many RMC staff and their families all remember Cav's caring friendship with enormous affection.

BOYD DEMPSEY

5 July 1923 – 13 November 2006

John Bullen



Boyd had a bush heritage—he was born in Bathurst, the second youngest of 13 children, when his father was the schoolteacher at Oberon. Two years later, Boyd's father was transferred to Araluen where the Dempsey family lived for many years. The family was closely bonded, creating Boyd's life-long and strong sense of family. Boyd's father played tennis and cricket and often took the family along. This is how Boyd first visited Duntroon.

For his secondary schooling, Boyd boarded at St Patrick's College, Goulburn, from 1938 to 1941 where he completed the five years in four, achieving great distinction both academically and as a leader. The College magazine for 1941 recorded Boyd's aim as 'to earn grey hairs in the services of education'. He finished up white, so we guess he achieved his aim. A classmate remembers him as being tall, unassuming, modest, good natured, and humble ('even when we discovered how bright he was'). Boyd demonstrated a thirst for knowledge, he was mature beyond his years, and was always composed. He was effortless and quietly capable in all that he did. He had warmth and gentleness. He had a great sense of humour, he was adept at sport (in particular

hockey and cricket) and, importantly, he was a good sport. He endeared himself to all.

He graduated Bachelor of Science with honours from Sydney University in 1946 and then undertook his Diploma of Education. Ultimately he finished as a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Education.

On completing his Dip Ed, Boyd ignored opportunities for an academic career in Sydney. Wanting to get back to the bush in the days when Canberra's population was 20,000 and the bus went twice a week from Duntroon into Civic, Boyd applied for the position of Lecturer in Chemistry at Duntroon and took up his appointment on 20 December 1949. Traill Sutherland, Ridley Bryan, David Swan, Syd Hodges, Arthur Corbett, John Laird, and Boyd Dempsey were the core of the Duntroon academic staff in the 1950s, with Boyd heading the Chemistry Department. Fellow staff regarded him as ideal for Duntroon, professionally sound, practical, and an ability to relate to people well.

A fellow newcomer in 1950 was the College's Roman Catholic chaplain, Father John Hoare. Boyd and John Hoare enjoyed a close friendship for well over 50 years, with John Hoare becoming a significant figure in Dempsey family life. It was John Hoare who later made known Boyd's exuberant practice of announcing the birth of a Dempsey child (five in all) to the Duntroon community by firing his shotgun into the sky—one for a boy and two for a girl.

Boyd was a fine teacher and a genuine leader. He made a point of knowing his students, and always having a friendly word for them. With his simple, straightforward and guileless manner and his quick and delightful humour, he became a wise and real friend to many cadets, even to those who had never studied chemistry at Duntroon. This was demonstrated at his funeral by the strong representation from Arts Classes over the years.

He was proud of his association with the many fine officers who graduated from the College and he cherished his many enduring friendships. His devotion to Duntroon throughout his entire working life was recognised in the 1990s by the Duntroon Society in awarding him Life Membership. He was the fifth to receive this honour. Typically, he was an active member of the Society's ACT Branch committee for over 20 years, right up to the time of his death.

In 1986, St Patrick's College presented Boyd with the *Age Quod Agis* Award ('do well what you do') for 'Service to Science at the RMC'. He was particularly pleased to have his involvement in both institutions recognised in that way.

Several Duntroon classes appointed Boyd as an honorary member of their class, an unofficial but highly personal honour which greatly delighted him.

On the personal side, Boyd was actively involved in the St Vincent de Paul Society for the best part of 50 years, visiting, counselling, and helping those in need. He never spoke about this.

Married to his dear wife Gwen late in 1950, Boyd had a wonderfully happy life amidst a close-knit family who revered him.

Boyd enjoyed good health and maintained his many interests and activities until the last year of his life when heart problems struck. Even then his death was a surprise to many.

Boyd is remembered very widely for his warm and wise friendship, his lively sense of humour, his professional

competence, for being a fine family man, and for being a supreme gentleman in every sense of the word.

COLONEL D.D.PITT

11 July 1907 – 15 January 2007



Ross Harding

Newsletter 1/2003 included the statement that Colonel T.G. Brennan (1930) had become the Elder of the Society on 31 January 2003. Within a week or two of the distribution of that Newsletter, the Editor at that time, Colonel R.R. Harding (1948), received a telephone call in a somewhat diffident tone to enquire about the Elder statement just published. The voice, belonging as it did to Colonel Pitt,

then said, *What about me?* A quick check showed that indeed he was the oldest living graduate and the Elder of the Society. He seemed to give some value to his situation and, as the years passed, he became the oldest ever graduate. Further, he then approached being the first graduate to reach 100 years. Sadly, it was not to be, although he had just under six months to go.

His association with the RMC and the Society is not restricted to that unique fact. After his graduation in 1929, he served in Citizen Military Force battalions, interspersed with service in India from September 1933 to January 1935. He returned to the RMC on 22 June 1939 as a captain Company Commander and Instructor in Rifle Training until 24 September 1941, by which time he was a major. About a year later on 29 October 1942 he was back at the RMC as the Director of Military Art until 2 July 1943. By 1946 he was the Commandant of the Officer Cadet Training Unit, then at Seymour, wherein one of his cadets was a Corporal R.R. Harding.

As a very long time member of the Society he joined his friend, Air Commodore R.G. Heffernan (1928), in contributing articles to the Newsletter when they were sorely needed. His writings generally reflected his cheery disposition which remained with him to the end.

Editorial Issues

Submissions to the Newsletter are always welcome. Please provide electronic copy by e-mail to the Editor.

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Annual Postal Golf Competition 2006

This year's competition saw the ACT (Federal Golf Club) team wrest the Team Event from the ever-dominant New Zealanders—a very satisfactory result for the Australians after last year's total whitewash! The Kiwis were, however, able to gain second place and take two out of the three places in the 4BBB. May the friendly Australian-New Zealand rivalry continue!

It was pleasing to see seven teams competing after only six the previous year. A warm welcome back to Queensland. This reinforces the need for Society members in those states currently not fielding teams to make a concerted effort to encourage participation in 2007.

Team event results were:

1st: ACT (Federal Golf Club) 25 Nov 2006	G.R. Wainwright (1965) D.M. McDonagh (1961) D.H.E. Gillett (OCS Dec 1964) W. Traynor (1970) I.F. Ahearn (1966) F.C. Lehman (1960)	40 38 37 36 35 <u>34</u> 220
	M.L. Prunty (1973) G.C. Hay (1974)	34 32
2nd: Auckland (Helensville Golf Club) 18 Nov 2006	T.A. Aldridge (1961) R. Andrews R.G. Williams (1952) M. Ritchie (RMA Sandhurst) C.M. Dixon (1954) B.D. Chippindale (1958)	38 38 37 36 32 <u>32</u> 213
	M.J. Dudman (1959) F. Burns	26 22
3rd: ACT (Royal Canberra Golf Club) 27 Nov 2006	R.A. Sunderland (1953) P.R. Phillips (1955) A.M. Stove (1963) L.G. O'Donnell (1954) N.L. Horn (1961) A.J. Fittock (1961)	38 34 34 33 32 <u>28</u> 199
Equal 4th: NSW (Avondale Golf Club) 8 Nov 2006	G.W. Grimsdale (1959) B. Vale L.S. Sheringham (1959) G. Tiekle K.W. Lunney (OCS Dec 64) J. Stark	40 39 33 30 30 <u>24</u> 196
Equal 4th: Wellington (Martinborough Golf Club) 20 Dec 2006	D.S. Baguley (1970) T. Loorparg (1963) M.F. Dodson (1965) I.J. Duthie (1962) J.G. Cutler (1968) T.R. Kuper (OCS Jun 1967)	35 34 33 33 33 <u>28</u> 196
	D.J. Grant (OCS Dec 1961) J.A. Brandon (1970) M.H. Beattie (OCS Dec 1976)	26 22 22

6th: Queensland (McLeod Country Golf Club)	J.W. Kingston (1974) A.R. Burke J.H. Townley (1960) B.G. Bond (1960) B. Millar G.J. Loughton (1956)	35 34 32 29 28 <u>24</u> 182
	D.W. Collins (OCS Dec 1966) B.D.V. Lindsay (1958) I. Clark L. Hall	32 24 21 17

7th: ACT (Royal Canberra Golf Club—Blacks)	D.K. Baker (1954) G.T. Salmon (1959) I.R. Smith (1957) P.J.A. Evans (1958) K.J. Heldon (1961) I.G. Porteous (1954)	32 32 31 30 29 <u>22</u> 176
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Best Individual Scores were:

Equal	G.W. Grimsdale	NSW	40	
1st	G.R. Wainwright	ACT	40	
2nd	B. Vale		39	
3rd	T.A. Aldridge	NZ	38	(OCB)

Four Ball Scores were:

1st	T.A. Aldridge C.M. Dixon	NZ	48
2nd	G.W. Grimsdale B. Vale	NSW	47
3rd	B.D. Chippindale M. Ritchie	NZ	46

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Sadly, as noted elsewhere, Ralph Porter has teed off for the last time. His death had left a large gap and he will be much missed for many reasons, not least for his strong and abiding support for this competition. His role as the NZ member of the Match Committee has been taken up by Michael Dudman.