

Off to Vietnam, again!!

These four blokes left Perth on the 3rd April for a reminiscent ‘Jolly’ to Vietnam and surrounds and intended to stay away for about 6 weeks. Their itinerary included a visit to Hanoi - Saigon – Vung Tau – Nha Trang – Da Nang – KL – Manilla then back home. It’s great to be rich!! - half their luck I say!!

While in Hanoi they went to a Beer Festival – have a look [HERE](#)

Word of warning, Mr and Mrs Vietnamese, lock up your daughters.....



L-R:- Robbie Rhodes (Sumpie – 9 Sqn), Ted McEvoy (Radio, Pommie import), Denis Macneall (Instruments, ex RTFV and 35Sqn), Jim Muscat (MT Fitter, ex 2 Sqn)

Point Cook Museum.

We recently received, from the Museum at Point Cook (thanks Monica), a bunch of photos of blokes and blokettes on Appy and Technologist courses and we’ll run them over the ensuing editions.

Some have names some don’t so we will need your help putting names to faces in some cases.

The Radio Apprentice School was housed at Frognall from 1948 to Jan 1961 after which it moved to Laverton and was later incorporated, as Apprentice Squadron, into the School of Radio when it moved down from Ballarat.

The Apprenticeship scheme was finalised in 1993.

In 1982, the RAAF introduced the Technologist Apprentice Scheme to supplement the existing Radio Trade Apprentice scheme. This new scheme arose from a perceived need to train tradesmen capable of adopting a systems approach to the maintenance of modern, complex high-technology aircraft now in RAAF service. Unlike their trade Apprentice counterparts whose two year course was conducted entirely at Radschool, Technologist Apprentices undertake a three year Certificate of Technology course at Footscray College of TAFE as well as specialist training at Radschool. In 1988, the Certificate of Technology course was upgraded to an Associate Diploma in Engineering (Electronics).

No 1 Technologist Appy Course

These blokes were from Qld, NSW and ACT and arrived at Laverton on the 12 January 1982 aboard a modern, complex, high-technology aircraft, all bright eyed and bushy tailed ready to start their studies.



Back Row: *Bruce Boyes*, from Gladstone Qld; *David Smith*, from Canberra ACT; *Stephen Creese*, from Mackay Qld; *Gavin Healy*, from Cairns Qld; *Cpl Tregilgas*, Radschool Staff; *Greg Fuller*, from Cootamundra, NSW; *Gary Wickham*, from Gladstone NSW; *Warren Downing*, from Innisfail Qld; *Darryl Platz*, from Gold Coast Qld;
Front Row: *Justin Baldwin*, from Cairns Qld; *Brian Barrow*, from Mt Druit NSW; *David Jensen*, from Cairns Qld; *Craig Thomas-Schumacher*, from Penrith NSW; *Michael Cummings*, from Lemon Tree Passage NSW; *Ted Lander*, from Ipswich Qld.

How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

No 1 Technologist Appy Course Feb 1983



Back row: Warren Downing, Darryl Platz, Steven Hoyer, Craig Thomas-Schumacher, David Smith, Gary Wickman, Bob Millington, Eric Riemsdhyk, Ted Lander, Hadyn Lyness.
Front Row: Michael Cummings, Eric Riordan, Justin Baldwin, Greg Fuller, Joe Hann-Rivero, Dave Jensen, Bruce Boys, Jamie Canterbury, Stephen Creese, Tony Marshall, Mark Smith

I was in a pub last night and saw two large girls by the bar. They both had strange accents so I said "Hello Are you two girls from Scotland?" One of them screamed "Its WALES you idiot!" So I immediately apologised and said "Sorry are you two whales from Scotland?"

Beavers Bivouac 16th to 22nd November 1963.

Warren Dickson

With the final trade tests safely passed, and nothing to do now except practice for their graduation paraded with the newly issued SLR rifles (with bloody razor sharp bayonets on loan

from the Army at Kapooka as the RAAF didn't have any spares for apprentices at that stage!), the third year appies "went bush" for the annual bivouac on Saturday 16th November 1963.

The location of the apprentice bivouac area was in the [Murraguldrrie State Forest](#) just off the Tumbarumba Road. Close by the camping area is the Murraguldrrie Creek which eventually feeds into the Murrumbidgee River. The advance party, which consisted of the Officer-in-Charge FLTLT H. E. Wiles, with FSGT H. J. Burke and No 3 Flight, departed early in the morning to erect store tents and other conveniences.



*All the tents –
right dressed!*



*The Camp
Kitchen, the
most popular
spot in camp.*



***Stores tents,
generator, and
cool room.***

The main party arrived in the early afternoon to find the wilderness of the State Forestry Reserve transformed into a hive of activity by the industrious advance party. By nightfall all tents were erected and the occupants well settled in. Can't remember who was in which tent, but I do have a record that shows Sticks Carlton, Crossy, Westy, and Franky Argæet shared one tent.

After lunch on the Saturday, at about 1.30, when we were just lying around waiting for the afternoon activities to commence a couple of low flying light aircraft buzzed the camp site. This created great excitement and interest at the daring fly pasts. Then one aircraft banked sharply and lo and behold a couple of flour bombs came flying down and 'exploded' amongst the camp site. Everyone was talking about the incident and wondering who could have carried out this marvellous deed, when the penny dropped.

Over a year ago, one of the Beavers left the appy scheme (not of his own choice!) and was accepted as an adult trainee. Kevin 'Sammy' Walters was his name, and he had been on pool duties for such a long time that he had in fact got his LACs! Here he was on LAC pay while we were still on Appy pay - who's the fool now we thought? Well, to fill in the time and with his newfound wealth, Sammy took up flying lessons. We all reckoned that it must be Sammy and his mates doing the flour bombing runs. They came back again at about 3.30, just in time for smoko, and carried out another flour bombing flypast coupled with a number of toilet rolls..

Great stuff we thought!!



Pete Joyce and John Rouse “at rest”.



Aussie ingenuity, a camp hammock!

On Saturday night a small party established their presence on the nearby main road – as you do!! This “forward defence post” kept traffic down to a modest rate so as to avoid the “troops engaged on manoeuvres”. Murphy's group (Janco, Kleyn, Blythe, Lee, Verney, Gorrie and Springfield) also went out the first night and flagged down any traffic going along the road to Tumbarumba and told them they had to travel at about 5mph for the next five miles or so because of Army manoeuvres. They all obeyed the instructions. Later on they recalled the

incident with one poor bugger in a truck really having to work his gears over the hill because he couldn't get up to speed going down one to get up the next.



Sunday morning began with PT and unarmed combat training given by a Cpl Chatt and a Cpl Hannaford.



This became a daily routine for the rest of the week

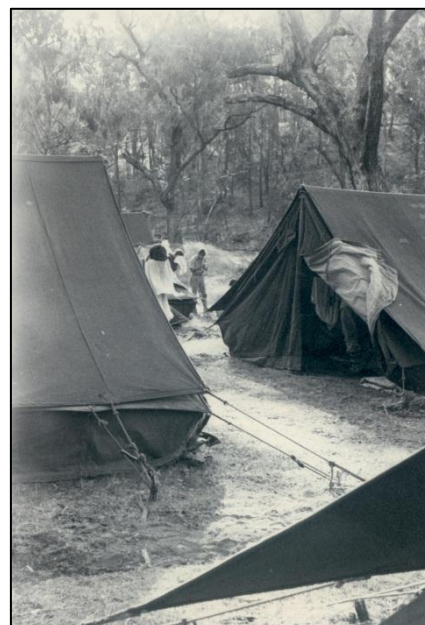
Later on Sunday we were visited by our two Padres (well it was Sunday!), and their visit was followed by one from the RTU duty NCO and two RTU staff, and then the Orderly Sergeant also

turned up. Both left together rather impressed by the initiative shown by the appies in abducting the two duty RTU members in broad daylight.

When the OC, Grp/Capt Faye arrived, he spotted Cpl Boxer at the bivouac site when he came out to rescue the two captured duty personnel and promptly ordered him be taken back to RAAF Wagga, muttering: '...that this is no place for a prized dog.' When the Padres were leaving, a couple of Beavers went with them and with their assistance kidnapped CPL Porky O'Rourke in the Church and took him out to our Bivouac area where others had made a prison out of logs, which became Porky's residence for a few hours.

Sunday night defences were set up against a simulated attack on the camp. 'Josh' Gordon's booby traps proved very effective in capturing the members of the telephone warning sites as they returned to the main lines.

Monday and Tuesday were devoted to rifle familiarisation, camouflage, insurgent tactics, and map reading - blimey, anyone would think we were going to war! At some stage during the training by a jungle warfare instructor (an Army type) we were told of what to expect if captured by the enemy and that we shouldn't be fooled by the appearance of food we might have to eat. The instructor demonstrated this latter point by taking a roast meal direct from the camp kitchen, minced it all together and added some purple cochineal food colouring then proceeded to offer it around. To paraphrase Crocodile Dundee, it looked like crap but tasted fine.



Another memory of this jungle training stage was of Russ Cross and Ralph Donelan having a running battle in the bush with slingshots using clods for ammo. Cover was afforded by the tall straight gums and one had to be careful because those clods hurt if one happened to get you. Having seen a western movie where in the same situation the hero, realising he had only one round left, removed it from the breach then aimed and fired for the opposing gunman to hear the 'click'. He quickly withdrew his gun from sight, loaded the last bullet and as they both stepped into view of each other, raised his gun and shot the baddy! When Russ exclaimed loud enough for Ralph to hear that he had run out of clods, the ploy worked just the same and

Ralph was doubly shocked at the betrayal and at the shot that hit him square in the chest! Game over.

The lantern raid on Monday night allowed the appies to demonstrate their prowess at night fighting. The attacking parties crossed the creek and advanced up the mountain, striving to reach the lanterns on the top. S/App Booth did especially sterling work for the defence, but unfortunately was out-flanked by a group of attackers (MI-5) and tied to a tree.

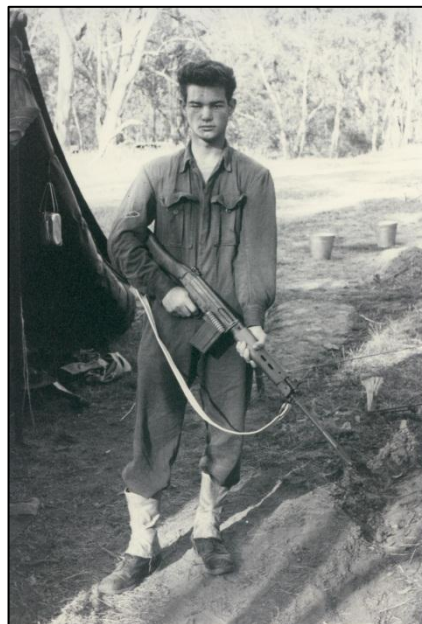
S/App Vanderheld was so badly injured in the region of his big toe that he had to return to the Base. We have often wondered why this bloke was nicknamed 'Shufti'. The exercise was again performed the following night with the sides reversed.

Wednesday was devoted to an all day NAVEX route march by independent sections. Cpl 'Porky' O'Rourke's crowd set the pace and won all the bets. 'Murph' won the booby prize - only 40 degrees off course. Rob Wilson's group was, as expected, diligently carrying out the exercise until they came across a young Kangaroo trying to get through a fence. At this stage all concentration on the NAVEX went out the window. It was suggested by one of the crew that this animal would make a great replacement mascot for the Beavers mascot, CPL Boxer. Of course all the team agreed and proceeded to expend much energy chasing this animal down, not to mention 'Shoulders' Harvey smashing his water bottle against the fence while performing an outflanking movement on the startled animal. The kangaroo was finally captured and carried it back to the bivouac site using dead reckoning since the group had now managed to find themselves way off course. The Kangaroo was hidden for the remainder of the bivouac and taken back to base for few days until all was forgiven and CPL Boxer was re-installed as our mascot.

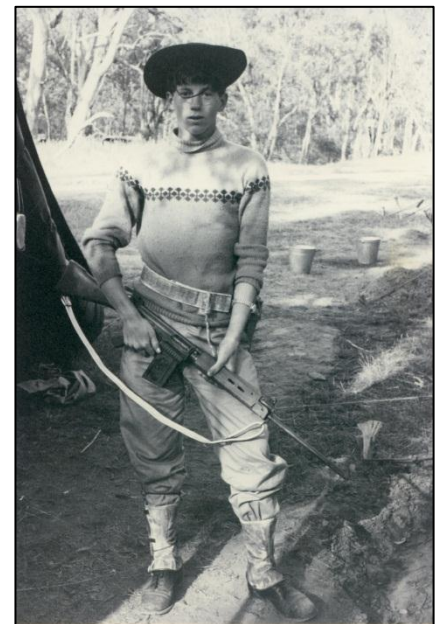
ONCE WE WERE WARRIORS



*Peter Booth and
Ivor Springfield*



Adrian Blythe



Ivor Springfield

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

The RNZAF appies on this course were always copping it from their Aussie mates. When it was discovered the New Zealand didn't have any snakes and that most Kiwis were in fact a bit wary of snakes, some Beavers decided to make the most of this mania. Beavers JQ Bone, Stretch Carlton and Wazza Churchin had found a brown snake and wanted to scare the shite out of Russ Cross. They shepherded Russ on a 'casual' walk through the bush until he almost stepped on the strategically placed brown!! Russ was duly taken aback and positioned himself at the rear of the big brown, but the lads' further enjoyment was gained by convincing Russ that this type of snake attacked backwards, sort of up and over its tail. Russ believed them and was duly apprehensive about where he could stand. All the time, of course, this big brown dangerous 'dead' snake lay quietly on the side of the path.

Another snake incident occurred in the Beavers' pond when not long after it had filled a rather large red and black snake was found swimming in the dam. The swimmers exited *post-haste* until some brave Beaver despatched it. It was skinned and then hung to dry. The skin was worn as a 'trophy' and the body despatched to the mess tent, for the Kiwis entre!

On Thursday the appies were taken by trucks to a point on the main road approximately 6 miles from the camp. Here they were dumped, and had to return to camp. Fortunately no one was lost (whether that was the idea or not, we're not quite sure). Some of the chaps made very good time beating the mob back by at least an hour.



Murraguldrie Creek became our bath, laundry, pool and recreation area, especially when we dammed it and created the Beavers pond - well isn't that what Beavers do!!!



When the ration truck arrived that evening, the rumour mill was rife. We learned that the OC, Gp/Cpt Fay, was not very impressed with the flour bombing sorties, amongst other things. He was to conduct a formal investigation and an Investigating Officer was going to be appointed and we would all be called as witnesses. We all agreed that we had seen the aircraft and had seen the flour bombs and toilet paper being dropped but we didn't recognise the aircraft or the pilots so there was no use in interviewing us. An Investigating Officer (a Flt/Lt Burr) was appointed and witnesses called from RAAF Staff members and the Manager Wagga Air Taxis, but no appies were called. Fortunately the suspects in this incident both declined to make any statement. The Investigation was unable to categorically prove what or which aircraft and which pilots did the dirty deed so no further action was taken. Typical Sirs – got no sense of humour.

Sammy Walters will be invited to relive this tale at a subsequent Beavers reunion.



The Motor Pool

Friday was go home day. All the tents were dismantled, the kitchen, the ablutions, the motor pool, the stores, everything. However; we had a bit of free time, so someone suggested that we thank our favorite DI, CPL Porky O'Rourke for all he had done for us during our week long bivouac. What better way to do this than toss him into the real Beavers dam they had built themselves. Boy did he put up a fight - it took about 10 Beavers to hold him down and strip him. The sight of such pure white skin, except for his face and arms, was quite frightening. He was throwing punches and threatening to charge us, (which didn't worry us, we were men now!!!) and in he went. We expected him to come out of the water like a raging bull, but to our surprise he quietly went back to his tent, changed his clothes and sulked for the rest of the morning.

The site was cleaned up, the trucks were loaded and home we headed. As luck would have it, we arrived on the apprentice parade ground with about 15 minutes to go till the end of lunch. As we all know, apprentices are always hungry, so we were allowed to proceed (more like run) straight to the Airmen's Mess. We promised to unload the trucks after lunch. What a sight it was - 99 hungry unshaven, unwashed Beaver apprentices in all forms of home-made jungle

warfare attire with mud and muck mixed with camouflage paint, rope belts, torn drabs, snake skin adornments, etc storming into the Airman's Mess wanting to be fed immediately.



A bunch of Beavers, one in, all in.

Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your point of view, the Orderly Officer appeared in the Airman's Mess for his regular check of the Airman's meals. Now this was no ordinary Orderly Officer - he was a gung-ho, newly graduated from the Army OTS at Portsea, RAAF Ground Defence Officer called Flg/Off Allen or Wusty Wifle Allen as some called him (he couldn't pronounce his 'r's) - and he hated apprentices. He especially had it in for the SNCO apprentices, and SGT/App Mick Churchin in particular. Flg/Off Allen confronted the last few Beavers who were walking to the tables with their meals, and singled out the appy NCOs, Churchin, Wilson, West and Murphy. He berated them for their appearance and pulled out his note book to take names.

When he started to write down the details and stated that you will all be on a charge, which was overheard by some Beavers sitting nearby, all hell broke loose. Allen's back was to the tables and the apprentice NCOs were facing the tables. As he started to take down the details an almighty roar erupted as the air was full of bread rolls and pieces of fruit and any other items of food close at hand sailing through the air, all heading towards Allen: an apple knocked his hat off. Then quite a few appies rose from their tables and surrounded the OO to confront him, wanting all our names to be taken. The OO realised he was outmatched and he was shaking like a leaf when he wrote down the four names. I think this is when he 'shite' himself and thought he was about to be lynched which I'm sure would have happened if someone had suggested it. He, and the four NCO apprentices, got out of the Mess: the appies were subsequently charged.

The four SNCO apprentices were not allowed to change out of their uniforms, and had to parade before the CO Base Squadron after lunch. They were seriously dressed down by COBS and advised that they would all be charged with destruction of public property i.e. their drab uniforms. They were charged, the charges being heard the following week by the respective Electrical and Mechanical Squadron subordinate commanders. However, by then sanity had returned, and when the Electrical Trades Squadron subordinate commander heard that SGT/App Rob Wilson wasn't even in the group but had somehow got his name on Allen's list, the charges were torn up.



*Don Worner
taking a
cooling-off dip*

The Mechanical Trades Squadron SNCO appies had their charges referred up the line by the MTS subordinate commander to the OC. Mick Churchin ever the bush lawyer had a plan. Before they faced their judgment day with the OC, he went back through Routine Orders and found that FLGOFF Allen had swapped with another Officer for OO duties on that day. When they eventually fronted GPCPT Fay, Mick in mitigation stated that Allen had a well known vendetta against appies and should have turned a blind eye to what was a long standing graduation year bivouac tradition. The OC asked Mick to explain further and he tabled the Routine Order. When asked to explain about this Allen was caught off guard and mumbled some lame explanation. The OC saw right through him and dismissed the charges - but not before giving the appies a right royal boot up the arse.

The OC however realized that things had got out of hand during the bivouac week, what with the flour and toilet roll bombing sorties, the RTU kidnapping, the CPL Boxer incident, and now the confrontation with the OO, he ordered the whole Beavers Intake to assemble in the Picture Theatre where presumably he would read the riot act etc. Everyone was assembled and waiting for something to happen. Then a Beaver grabbed the initiative: FSGT/App West got to his feet and introduced himself to the OC and the assembled mob and very eloquently proceeded to tell him what actually happened. It broke the ice. A solid dressing down followed but no one did CB or lost rank. No one ever found out what happened to Allen, but his career ended that day.

Where are you now Allen – you wanka....

Lunch over, the trucks unloaded, and everything stowed away, it was back to the blocks for the first real shower in a week - and to relive those wonderful memories of a bivouac which would go down in history. However, it was not over yet.

Remember, this was the 22nd November 1963 in Australia, but on the 22nd November 1963 in Dallas Texas USA a different and more pertinent event was occurring. When we awoke the next morning on Saturday 23rd November 1963, the first item on the news was of course the assassination of President J F Kennedy. There were little gatherings of Beavers everywhere. Discussions covered all sorts of possibilities from whether we would now graduate or whether we would, with our newly found military skills honed to perfection on our recent bivouac, be shunted off to a War somewhere or other - some were hoping for the latter!!

All in all, the week was very enjoyable one, and our thanks go to Flt/Lt Wiles and his instructors for the enthusiasm and energy they showed. It was this that made the bivouac such a success. Interestingly, this site is now the location of the Murraguldrie Veterans Retreat, run by the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia,



We got this photo from Doug Barthelson, it was taken around 1977.

Back L-R: Chris Squire, David Tape, Andy Grant,
Front L-R: Alex Matheson, Andrea Lonigan, ??? Durack

Does the little mermaid wear an algebra?

Sorry Rupe!

