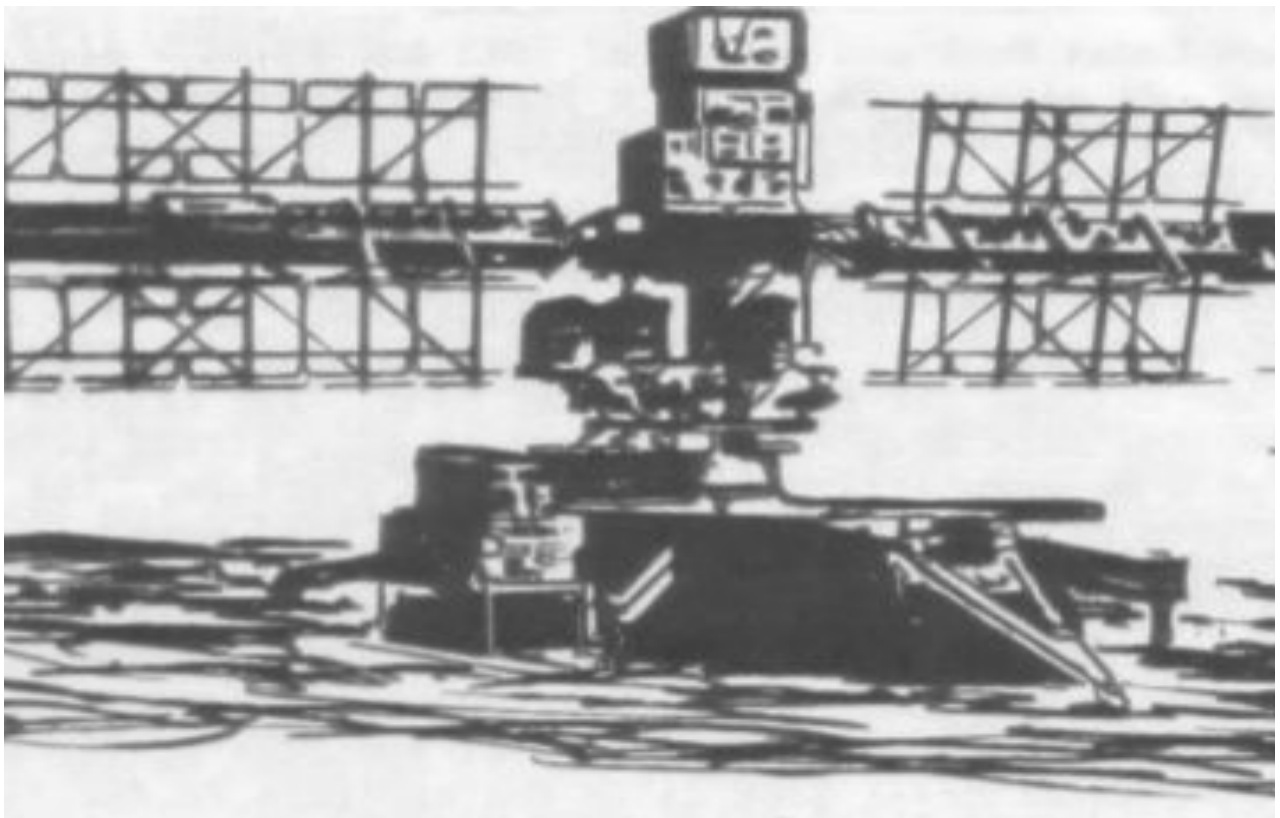


progenitor



Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory Inc.

The Family History Place



JUNE 2021

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FRONT COVER:

THE "DOOVER" - ONE OF DARWIN'S BEST KEPT AIRFORCE TOP SECRETS DURING WW2

From Facebook

THE "DOOVER" - ONE OF DARWIN'S BEST KEPT AIRFORCE TOP SECRETS DURING WW2

The Doover - as it was secretly referred to. It had the latest technology for a mobile radar unit and was stationed in the surrounds of the Charles Point Lighthouse. The device was flown into Batchelor from interstate (not sure exactly where) and was reassembled into 2 sections which were transported to Cox Peninsula on 2 x 8 wheeled American Army Trucks. This road trip took two weeks in April 1942 along the rough track during heavy rain with lots of washouts and I guess a "jump-up" or two. Once at Charles Point the radar was modified to extend its range to 160km. The "Doover" played a significant role in detecting and plotting unidentified aircraft, some as distant as 220kms.

The men were larrikins and if you are interested in learning more about this operation, the conditions the men lived in and the things they got up to (including "borrowing" a Piano from the Darwin Town Hall), Google "Charles Point 105 Radar Station".

Ps.. I remember as a young child if you couldn't remember the name of something you called it the "Doover" or the "Doover Lackey" so I guess - hence the name.

Postcard Point Charles Lighthouse. N T.

Port Charles lighthouse, Charles Point, Cox Peninsula, NT.

John Robert Johns Collection



105 MOBILE RDF STATION POINT CHARLES

DARWIN, NT

With kind permission from Peter Dunn's "Australia @ War" www.ozatwar.com

In March 1942 the RAAF decided that more RDF cover was required in the Darwin area. An SCR 268 radar (the Americans used the term RADAR) which had been modified for air warning was flown to Darwin. These units were known as a MAWD or Modified Air Warning Device.

The equipment was dismantled on 24th March 1942 and packed onto two trailers, with a total weight of approximately twenty tons. The equipment arrived at Batchelor by the 6th April 1942. It was all assembled by 25 March 1942 and moved over 100 miles of bush country to Point Charles. The Mobile RDF Station was operating two days after it arrived on 20 April 1942. Warnings of the approach of enemy aircraft were passed by W/T circuits to No 5 Fighter Sector. These links were known as telling circuits. The RDF Station was named No. 105 RDF Station RAAF on 1 June 1942.

Specifications for MAWD SCR 268

Type MAWD

MADE IN USA

Modified Air Warning Device	Modified SCR268
Type of Array	Stacked dipole arrays, one Tx and two for Rx one for azimuth and one for elevation.
Frequency Mc/s	204-206
Pulse Recurrence Frequency	1366
Pulse Width, Micro seconds	5--9
Pulse Power, KW	50-80
Display	two A Type Tubes
Maximum Normal Range	100 Miles
Remarks	RPL modified some SCR268'S for air warning for use on mainland Australia in early 1942

105 RADAR in its comparatively short length of service, was known by all the names adopted for the new detection system. The station was known as:-

Mobile RDF Station 23 Mar 1942 to 31 May 1942 .

105 Radio Station 1 Jun 1942 to 31 Dec 1942

105 RDF Station 1 Jan 1943 to 31 Aug 1943 (during which time 44 RDF Wing was formed in February 1943)

105 Radar Station 1 Sep 1943 to 15 Oct 1943

THIS IS MY STORY OF 105 MOBILE RDF STATION POINT CHARLES DARWIN APRIL TO DECEMBER 1942. (WW2) THE SECOND RDF UNIT AT DARWIN.

105 STARTS UP AT POINT CHARLES BY BOB MEREDITH

Commanding Officer, P/O P.E. EVANS,

Early assistance & relief by P/O RAY RYAN & P/O HAL PORTER.

Early in April 1942, I left 31 RDF station at Dripstone to join with the POINT CHARLES crew, and to pick up the equipment from BATCHELOR. From there we departed for POINT CHARLES on the western side of DARWIN HARBOUR from where the Darwin lighthouse looked out over the open sea. Our route was approximately 100 miles through very rough country. There were no roads, and we had only a rough map and a compass.

There were two eight wheel American Army trucks on loan, with each carrying around ten tons and a RAAF tender with about three tons, all with our gear, tucker, stores etc. I cannot remember the number of personnel perhaps there were eight or ten men. The trip took two weeks, and at times it was so slow we had to walk beside the big trucks, wielding axes to cut trees and branches to clear the way .We had load shifts, tyre blowouts, we had to ford streams, ditches and gullies, and of course we were bogged many times by one vehicle or another. We then had to use both front winches on the trucks to pull the other out, and sometimes we would be held up for hours, even at times with the hold up extending over-night.

It was at one of these bogging hold ups that we had a frightening experience. The bogged truck had its cable attached to a tree and the other truck its cable attached to the bogged truck when the strain became so great the steel cable sang like a violin string. Suddenly the cable attached to the tree snapped. It snaked and whipped all around the place even cutting down small trees, luckily without striking any personnel, although we were spread all over the place. We were indeed very fortunate. It was a very good lesson.

At night we just stopped where we were, ate hard rations, and slept on our groundsheets, then off again at first light. I remember having to hang a blanket from the tail-shaft under a truck, and use it as a hammock to get off the ground because of heavy rain. The water just flowed through and under my hammock. At last, after arriving at the site, our first priority was to unload the American trucks so they could return, then we began to set up the unit.

It was "ON AIR " within a day or so, but our camp was a shambles. Actually I remember it was a week or more before we got our tents up and began to settle in. The NAVY delivered our fuel by dropping 44 gallon drums overboard, and we had to swim out to retrieve them, with a sentry always placed close by to watch for sharks and crocs. We walked the drums in to the beach, where they were manhandled up the cliffs with ropes to be stored.

The Navy boys made it quite clear they were not hanging around they got out in one hell of a hurry. They liked plenty of sea around them!!! Our food was bad, mosquitoes and sand flies drove us mad !! The first few weeks were very hard on all of us; but I believe the job was well done, with all of us including our C.O. doing anything and everything to keep the unit performing and it did perform well!!!!

Medically and physically we all suffered. We had an uphill battle with the food rations and dysentery, then there were troubles with ulcers, sand fly poisoning, mosquito bites and Dengue fever. I had Dengue twice; the first time I kept going (just), but the second time I landed in hospital at BERRIMAH. They told me later I was taken out by boat. A few kilometers north of us along the beach was a deserted banana farm. We used to walk up there and bring back a stick of bananas and hang them from the ridge pole of the tent until the lower bananas became ripe, then we really enjoyed them.

A Jap Naval Bomber, a "Betty", was shot down near us and crashed in the bush a few kilometers inland from our camp. I was in the party sent out to bury the dead, retrieve their dog tags and identify sex, as intelligence reports suggested that the Japs were using female aircrew as radio operators. There were no women in this crew, and we buried seven bodies. On the beach below the unit, we were able to swim and paddle about in cutout Jap belly tanks, and go hunting for turtle eggs. They were hard to find for they were buried very deep. What stuck in my mind was the practice we had of cutting a small hole in the cliff wall and placing our mugs there to catch fresh clean and cool drinking water. It amazed me so close to the sea.

One point I would like to make in closing this article was that at the beginning of this unit, which was second only to 31 RDF at DRIPSTONE, we never knew its name or number until much later. History tells us now it became 105 POINT CHARLES in June 1942, but we didn't know that until after we left the unit. As a matter of fact my personal papers from the RAAF doesn't even mention 105, so in theory I was never there.

**"ON GUARD"-----AT 105 RDF POINT CHARLES DARWIN APRIL 1942
BY BOB MEREDITH.**

Security at 105 RDF in the early days of *42 was not at the top of the station's priority list. The main problem while settling in at Point Charles was to get the unit in position and on "air". The Guards (there were only a few of us) were busy working with all other ranks to make camp and to become operational, although sentries were posted at night near the Doover.

Later on as we settled down, we installed a Twin Vickers machine gun post for anti-aircraft defence which was manned by the crew only when the unit picked up an "unidentified". This post was situated on top of the cliffs north of the Doover and Lighthouse. 105 itself was completely isolated with the sea basically all round it, except for the total virgin scrubland south of the camp on the peninsula, so we relied on the security of isolation and camouflage. At night we always observed a strict black-out, so after dark any movement was restricted only to what was necessary, like changing shifts for the guard & operators at the Doover and guard at the Generators.

I do remember an incident on guard duty one night. Leo Merritt (ex Collingwood footballer) and I were sitting on a box back to back, as was the practice; we had Tommy Guns on our knees with safety catches off, which also was the practice. Leo spoke to say his leg had gone to sleep, and he'd have to stand up, which he did. The gun fell off his knees with his finger still in the trigger guard, and the weight of the gun on his finger was enough to fire the gun. Leo received two bullet wounds to his left leg, one below the knee, the other just above the ankle. His leg was badly injured by the .45 calibre bullets.

He was very lucky, as I learned later that his leg was saved. Of course he was sent south for treatment. Guard duty was always a bit scary, but we always went on duty in pairs which helped a lot. There were all sorts of queer sounds heard on a still night, also there were animal eyes and their movements. It was always reassuring to say "It's only an animal or bird" which helped each other. Also at this time the area was under constant attack from the air, and air raids warnings, real and false were coming all the time .

During daylight hours, all sorts of duties were performed, and by all musterings, may I add. The most disappointing aspect of 105 's life at this early stage was the very very poor food, mostly out of tins, and mainly Gold-fish, Bully Beef, Rice, Dog biscuits and sometimes that horrible tinned butter (more like running oil) though there was bread now and then. Of course this did not help our health problems, and things were bad with tropical ulcers, prickly heat, dermo, stomach upsets, and Dengue Fever everywhere.

The mosquitoes and sandflies were murderous, plus the living conditions were not the best. We were under canvas on dirt floors with only low cyclone stretchers, not much protection from the elements. We mostly washed our bodies in the sea as we were always swimming, when we could of course. Our only transport at the time was by boat as it was the only way out then. Our personnel really struggled to keep working, we often stood in for each other just to keep the unit functioning. However, conditions at 105 gradually improved as time passed.

POSTED FROM 105 TO AN SGU COURSE.

About the end of November 1942 , I was posted to a Security Guards Unit Advanced course, designed to train personnel, Guards mainly, for the security of AOB's(Advanced Operational Bases). The Security Guard Unit was first formed about September or October 1942, and was located just south of the RAAF Base Darwin, at the end of the north-south runway, opposite "Hell - Fire Corner" Winnellie.

Sgt Monty Wood (still a friend of mine today 2007) was one of the first instructors. Three or four courses were completed, then the unit moved to the 31 Mile site, where it became known as 31 MILE SGU, under

the command of S/Ldr McKennon. The unit grew into a very large training establishment with not only RAAF personnel, but also Army and Navy lads. There were up to 2000 men in training at any one time. The course was very tough, mainly spread over 24 hours each day,

We could be called out of bed during the early hours in full battle gear, then route marched and map read (navigate) through the bush, even in pouring rain. We did have stand down periods which varied, even an odd day stand down, The course was four weeks long. The course also comprised weapon training in Vickers, Bren, Sten, English Browning, American Browning, 20 mm Cannon, Anti Tank Gun, Grenades, Field of fire, Thompson Sub Machine Gun, Mortars, Hand Grenades, Explosives, Mines, Gas, Aircraft Recognition, Ship Identification (sloop, destroyer cruiser etc.) and of course we were well instructed in rifle and bayonet drill.

To my knowledge after passing out, personnel were posted back to their units or to AOB's or similar. In my case it was to another RDF unit. I was posted from 105 Point Charles to 39 Port Keats, then under the command of P/O Radcliffe. I was in charge of all AA guns and their installation, explosives, blasting out gun pits, fields of fire, training of crews, testing, maintenance, camouflage ammunition storage, trip and barbed wire defences, and security in general which included the Doover up on Mt Goodwin .We were housed together in tents, also bark huts, and ate in a common mess. But as Sergeant Guard, I was always responsible to the CO, who gave the orders.

WHEN THE STATION CLOSED

CONCLUSION.

105 Radar indeed proved a worthy 'second ' to 31 RS which historically was the first Australian station to operate in a war zone. 105 was set up in a hurry to increase the effectiveness of 31 RS, and to back up the lone station in Darwin. It was equipped with modified gun laying gear to do a big job, at a lonely isolated camp at Point Charles where life at first must have been mighty basic, just tents and hard rations.

Its results were astonishing. At its advanced westward site, its range was anything from 50 to 140 miles, besides giving a reasonable accurate height reading on closer plots. From April 1942 until it closed 17 months later, 105 plotted enemy planes on more than 80 occasions. This may seem impossible considering there were in all 64 raids, but there were plots in and out ...recces...2nd waves...3rd waves. 105 plotted them all with remarkable success, possible because the station was located close to the usual track in to the target area.

In August 1942, 38 RDF & 39 RDF at Fourcroy and Port Keats came on air and relieved the critical urgency and pressure somewhat, but 105's good work continued until it closed in October 1943 with a record second to none really. It was indeed a record to be proud of. 105 and its men deserve more credit and recognition than they received. Perhaps this small history will help.

From Morrie Fenton's "The 105 mobile R D F Station at Point Charles (1942 - 1943)"

BOB MEREDITH.



A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

Making the Top End a new kind of Community

Diana Giese

In the early 1950s, Darwin still lay in the ruins of World War II. The Esplanade was full of grass the height of a man, and littered with debris left by the departed troops. The business heart, Chinatown, had been burnt and looted, razed to ground-level rubble and overgrown with weeds. A single house had been built since 1945, and water and electricity were only available at intervals each day. Doctors Gully was a junkyard. The old post office was a roofless ruin. The Harbour had not been cleared of the wrecks left by the wartime raids, sixty-four of them. The skyline was dominated by the vandalized bulk of the meatworks.

These were the impressions of Paul Hasluck on a 1951 tour of the town. He was on the threshold of becoming the long-serving Minister for Territories. The American and Australian forces that had linked Darwin to the international War effort were gone. There were shortages of everything, and few services. It was hard to find a place to live. Mary Lee remembers her family simply moving into an abandoned Army hut, with rusty galvanized iron walls and roof, white-ant eaten wood, and a dirt floor, and claiming it as their home. The barn-like space was partitioned with 'a bit of curtain' for a stab at privacy, there were push-out windows, and the gap under the walls let in armies of wildlife, including snakes and centipedes. Her family chopped wood to feed the stove and the copper.

For those of Aboriginal and Islander background, surviving often meant feeding themselves. They knew the country contained abundant resources of game, fish and birds, as well as dozens of edible plants. They hunted geese, wallabies and turtles, fished and crabbed. Don Bonson remembers that 'We had to live off the land. You had to stretch the dollar'. He recalls going out with his father on a bush track to shoot geese at Holmes Jungle, near today's suburb of Leanyer. There were no restrictions on how many birds could be taken. 'In those days when a flock of geese lifted, it blackened out the sky. There were thousands of them.' He remembers baking turtles in their own juices; cooking up dugong with vinegar and ginger, garlic and lemongrass; and enjoying stingray for its rich fishy taste. Food in the big family camps involved the kind of fusion cooking that only became fashionable decades later elsewhere in Australia.

Long before multiculturalism became official policy, big 'mixed' families, whose fathers and grandfathers had come to Australia to work in pearling or mining, were living lives which drew on many different traditions. They stuck together to support one another through good times and bad. Lack of accommodation forced people to pitch in together in the ex-Army camps. Greeks and Italians joined Islanders, Malays, Indonesians and others of every kind of mix and blend. There were over 3000 people in Parap alone. There were also camps at Mindil Beach, and in the rickety skeleton of Vestey's Meatworks at Bullocky Point. A cheerful cacophony of languages could be heard in Darwin's streets and dwellings. Terry Lew Fatt, of Chinese, Aboriginal and Filipino ancestry, born in 1937, lived at Parap with his six brothers and three sisters, with other large families such as the Ahmats, Angeles, Cadonas, Cubillos, Hazelbanes, Muirs and Roes. Ted Milliken noted that Darwin would not have functioned without them: 'they were in all the jobs that created the infrastructure for living', the roads, the railway and the wharf.

Meat for non-hunters and fishers came up on the train once a week. There was no fresh milk, so everyone used powdered. Newspapers including *The Sydney Morning Herald* and magazines such as *The Australian Women's Weekly* were flown in, days late. The ABC was the only radio station in those pre-TV days. There was always a sense of being slightly behind what was going on in the rest of the world.

In 1954, my family arrived in Darwin. My father Harry Giese's first office, in his big new job as Director of Welfare with the Northern Territory Administration, was an unlined Sidney Williams hut. It was hidden by the bright yellow flowers and luxuriant foliage of an allamanda vine which overwhelmed the fragile man-made structure. He and his staff sweltered in the heat.



Darwin minimally existed. There were a few streets of shops, a school and a couple of churches, most in a rundown state. There seemed to be two towns. There was the vibrant, ramshackle inter-War place held in the memories of old-timer families, many of whom were returning to claim what had been theirs before they had been evacuated to other states. Then here was the clean remodelled vision of the future proposed by the new planners.

Amid the rubble was a stubborn sense of hope for a better future. Keeping in mind those enduring problems, distance, isolation and the vast scale of the Territory, one-fifth of the Australian continent, but buoyed by the optimism of the post-War years and the possibility of building a new world, Australians resurrected northern development as an important guiding concept.

As part of post-War reconstruction, surely a fresh start could be made, in many promising directions? There was a new Administrator, F.J.S. Wise, the ex-Labor Premier of Western Australia, with wide experience in legislative management and a professional background in tropical agricultural science. There was a new head of the new Department of Territories in Canberra. In 1947 a partly elected Legislative Council had been set up in Darwin. After years of government neglect, citizens felt they could demand and get more say in how the north was governed.

Big dreams were possible — and many would be realized. The people of the Top End wanted better schooling and further education, so that more families would be encouraged to settle. Decent health care should be available to all, and debilitating tropical diseases eradicated. New and reorganized service and sporting and cultural organizations for pleasure and relaxation would make life worth living. A dream of many was of a dynamic civil society based on effective government and a strong economy, where family, faith, voluntary association and culture could flourish.

Gradually, the 1950s and 60s were to develop into times of change and progress. With country-wide prosperity, the mining and pastoral industries boomed, as communications and transport improved. The European population of the Territory increased as more jobs became available. Aboriginal and 'part-Aboriginal' people were offered new opportunities, including working for equal pay.

Under Administrator Wise, from 1951–56, Commonwealth spending more than doubled, and works expenditure more than tripled. Commercial investment reached over three million pounds. Inadequate electricity and water supplies were improved. Money was spent on moving single public servants out of hutment camps such as 'Belsen' and into hostels, and families into houses.

A housing loan scheme to assist private house builders was set up. 'Wise's administration was a turning point in the Territory's postwar history,' said Hasluck. Wise's successor, J.C. Archer (1956–61) added expertise in administration, making the Public Service more efficient. He was joined by Reg Marsh, first as Government Secretary, then as Assistant Administrator, from 1953–62. Dynamic and progressive, Marsh played a key role in setting up the Darwin Municipal Council in 1957, and initiating statutory authorities such as the Housing Commission and the Port Authority.

Cattle at this time was the major product of the Territory. The Lands Department under Hugh Barclay revised the tenure system for pastoral holdings to give greater security, and surveyed roads. The Animal Industry Branch re-opened and improved stock routes to railheads and meatworks. By 1956 there were 5000 kilometres of serviced routes, and also stock inspectors to monitor yards and diseases. During the Dry season, some 160,000 cattle could be on the move across the north.

Agricultural experiments, that continuing feature of Territory life since European settlement, continued to fail, often spectacularly, as did Humpty Doo rice in the mid-50s. But if Top Enders had been able to look into the future, they would have seen a time of approaching prosperity based on the Territory's natural resources.

Mining would boom. Copper, with gold, ensured that Tennant Creek remained the dominant mining region. Geological exploration and feasibility studies would abound. Big companies would exploit rich deposits of uranium at Rum Jungle, around the South Alligator River and at El Sharana. Manganese from Groote Eylandt and bauxite from Gove would be extracted over twenty years.

In the mid-60s, when iron ore was found at Frances Creek, a contract would be signed with the Japanese to export three million tons of ore. At the beginning of 1968, Nabalco would set up its alumina refinery at Nhulunbuy.

Sharing this increasing wealth became over the years an issue intertwined with the rights of Aboriginal people on whose tribal land much of the exploration and extraction would occur. As early as 1952, the Mining Ordinance was amended so that, for the first time in Australia, indigenous people could receive benefits from the development of their land. Royalty payments of 1.25 per cent of all production at places such as Groote Eylandt and Yirrkala were paid into the Aboriginal Benefit Trust Fund.

My mother Nancy Giese accompanied my father, Harry, to Darwin in 1954. My brother and I were children of two and seven. Harry Giese had worked in Queensland as founding Director of Physical Education, in Canberra as Commonwealth National Fitness Officer, and in training for the Public Service Board. In his early 40s, fit and energetic, he had by then travelled across Australia for his work, and was eager to set up an entirely new Branch which would develop programs for family, child and social welfare, as well as for Aboriginal Territorians.

This was a time in Territory history when citizens of many different backgrounds were banding together out of necessity, to build up the places they had chosen to make their homes. Darwin was an outpost of Canberra, a kind of colony in a country that was itself searching for a role, as the British Empire sank into slow decline.

The people of the Top End needed to invent for themselves a new kind of Australian community.

I SUFFER FROM ADGD

(Attention Deficit Genealogy Disorder)

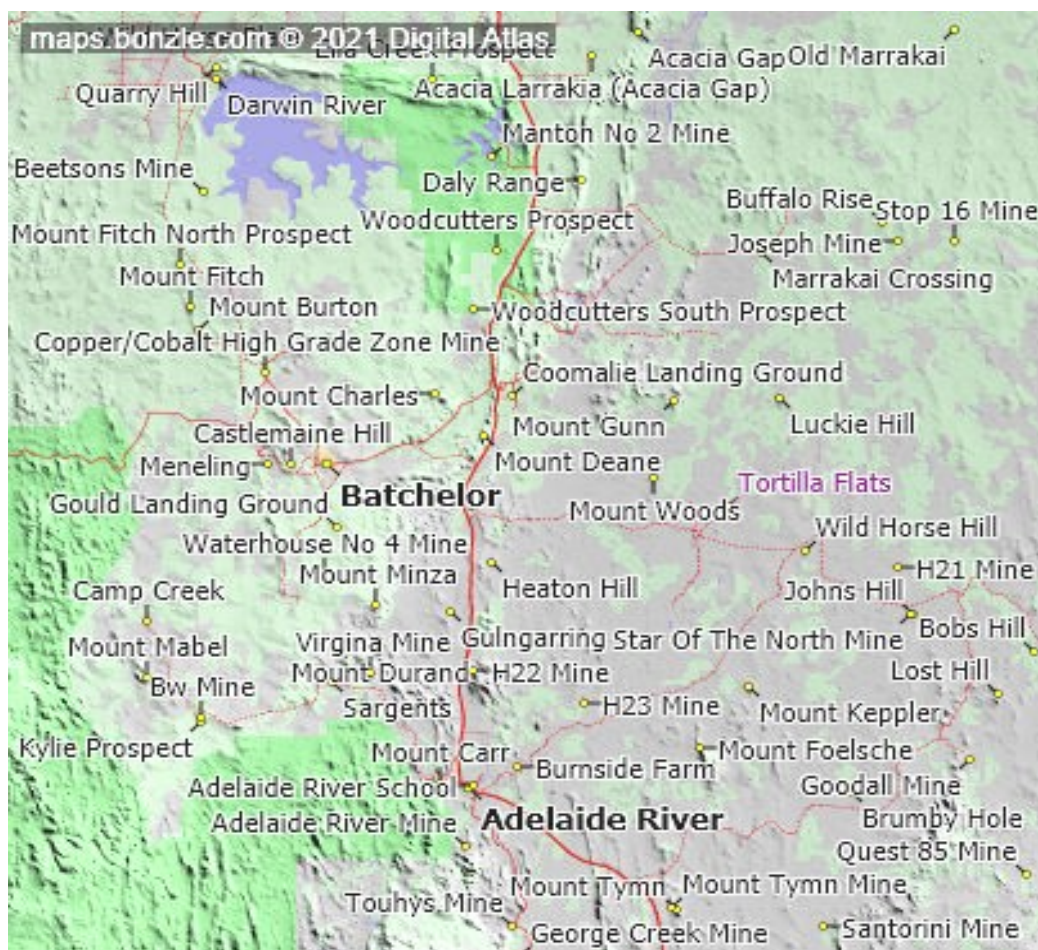
It's when you start researching one ancestor, but get distracted by another ancestor, which causes you to bounce around to different ancestors only to end up doing a lot of work with very little to show for it.

NORTHERN TERRITORY FARMING HISTORY – POST-WAR

Noonamah – Batchelor – Coomalie Creek – Sixty Mile –

Adelaide River

From late 1987 to 1996 I lived at Wandinya Farm near Tortilla Flats. Our property had been one of the pilot farms developed from 1964. I recently read excerpts from a memoir by **Joan Turnour**, wife of Jack who lived at the 60-mile and was involved in rice trials at the Upper Adelaide River Experimental Farm. In it she comments about the pioneering farmers of the 1950s and 1960s, fearing that their history would be lost. I have attempted to address her concerns, in part, with this article.



Jack Turnour was secretary of The Adelaide River, Batchelor, Noonamah Primary Producers' Association which represented a variety of farmers including pineapple growers, poultry and dairy farmers, horticulturalists, and pastoralists. One of Jack's achievements was the provision of a school bus from Adelaide

River to Batchelor in 1968 thus ensuring Adelaide River students had access to some secondary education. Another was the establishment of a Bush Fire Council.

According to the Sullivan family as published in a tribute to Jack's life in *The Queensland Times*: 'It was Jack Turnour who blazed the track that became the Tortilla Flats Road, now called Ringwood Road'.

Jack and Joan later moved to their own block of land at Coomalie Creek where they had a market garden. They wanted to open a caravan park on the south side of the Coomalie Creek Bridge, but this was refused, one ground being that it would interfere with accommodation at Batchelor. Disappointed with this result, the Turnours moved to Queensland in 1971.

Walter and Betty Barnes were at Coomalie (now Richard Luxton's place).

Hugh and Dot Van Heythuysen had a property Huandot (53-mile). Hugh was later a butcher in Batchelor. According to Wendy Leach, 'they bought the shop at Batchelor'. Melons were grown there when we first came to the Territory in 1987. Now it is the site of the ex-Woodcutter Mine's spoil heap.

Clare and Keith (Snow) Best had a block of land on the Elizabeth River at Noonamah and grew pineapples amongst other crops. The pineapples were sweet, and Clare later set up a roadside stall selling pineapple juice drinks. Their success in this venture eventually led to the establishment of the Noonamah store then motel. For many years Noonamah was the only stop between Batchelor and Darwin.

Les Parr of Noonamah, the first president of the Association, and his wife Dot lived in a caravan on their property at the 37-mile. **David Veal** was at Noonamah.

Ralph and Kath Meyering ran a successful dairy. Kath was also known as a pilot. The family owned and operated the Emkaytee Airfield from 1980.

Erwin Groll and his wife **Elizabeth** were at the 32-mile (Santavan).

Reg and Pauline Wilson were at Manton River. Reg was a land surveyor whose name appears on the Electoral Rolls for 1972-1980 as living at Manton River Station.

John and Teresa Lugg were at Larabalara, Darwin River. John was principal at Batchelor Area School when this writer arrived in the NT in 1987. **George and Pat Bennett** were at Lake Bennett where George and brother Ken had created a dam with the view to irrigating crops.

Jack and Olga Wilkes were at one of the pilot farms, Prague, at Tortilla. Jack was a pastoralist who also bred horses. **Jim and Barbara Sullivan** were pastoralists at Wandinya Farm until 1985. **John and Jenny Whatley** were pastoralists who bought Prague. Jenny and Barbara Sullivan were renowned for their delicious sponge cakes.

Stan and Gay Brett lived at the 60-mile where Stan worked for the government. They were both great volunteers for the Adelaide River Show Society (ARSS).

Vincenzo (Vince) Di Cesare and wife Rina started a market garden close to Adelaide River township.

Graham Melville, formerly working at Tortilla, took up land on the bend at Stapleton Creek. He had a boundary with Wandinya Farm. He was known as a hard worker on difficult land. He baled hay for many years. He sold his property to Dr Marten Muis and went to NSW.

John (Jack) England was market gardening on the road to Batchelor and lived in a tin shed with **Maddie Verburg** after 'Old Man Verburg died.' Unfortunately England drowned in Coomalie Creek. **Bob Drysdale** was farming at the old Verburg farm on the northern side of Coomalie Creek in 1963.

Errol and **Margaret Kerle** had a poultry farm, and Brahman cattle, at Mt Burton. Errol (Bluey) was an electrician at the Rum Jungle Mine and Margaret was a primary teacher at Batchelor. Margaret was renowned for her yummy lamington cakes made on her wood stove.

Jim Jeffery farmed goats at Rum Jungle and sold milk around Batchelor. He and wife Marjorie also had Brahman cattle.

Mal and **Wendy Leach** were at Cameron Downs, Batchelor until 1977 when they went to Mt Ringwood Station. **Max** and **Ada Sargent** were at Meneling Station out of Batchelor. **Burge** and **Ida Brown** were at Banyan Farm (now Eva Valley). **Peter** and **Chris Bosshard** were at Sundance on the Batchelor Rd near the town. **Bill** and **Eva Childs** were at Eva Valley.

I hope some of you readers can further flesh out the stories of these farming pioneers. Many thanks to Wendy Leach, Ros Jones, and Margaret Kerle for sharing their memories.

Ruth Sheridan

RICE GROWING IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY - The lesser-known story.

Did you know that there were two experimental farms looking into the potential of growing rice in the Northern Territory in the 1950s – the more well-known project at Humpty Doo and the one at the 60-Mile.

Rice research at Upper Adelaide River started in the 1952/3 wet season with the opening of the 60-Mile under the auspices of the Northern Territory Administration. By 1957/58 footrot in early maturing varieties and lack of sufficient water storage for evaluating late season varieties forced a change of location, closer to the river, 15 km east of the Stuart Highway. Here the soils were different, and the climate similar to that of the Ord River with colder dry season nights.

The Upper Adelaide River Experimental Farm began in 1958 'with the view to cattle rotation, rice and pasture growing experiments.' In 1964 pilot farms were set up. Jim and Barbara Sullivan were at Wandinya Farm. Jack and Olga Wilkes had another. Rice growing was short-lived, the funding being removed after only a couple of years.

On the advice of the Research Farm now called Tortilla Flats Research Farm growers grew Stylo for cattle feed. One year the crop failed which led Sullivan to diversify into growing bananas. Mike Morcom helped with the planting.

Jack and Olga Wilkes built their house adjacent to Tortilla. Later the property was sold to John Whatley, senior.

In the 1980s rice growing was taken up again in this area and beyond. Mal Leach at Mt Ringwood and Don Roebuck at Adelaide River grew rice for hay in the 1982/83 season. In the 1983/84 Mal Leach, Don Roebuck and John Whatley at Tortilla harvested grain and produced hay. John Lugg at Noonamah grazed with

cattle but did not harvest. Bill Doyle produced hay only. In the 1984/1985 Wet, Leach, Roebuck, Doyle, Luxton (Coomalie) and Whatley grew rice for hay. Lugg harvested little grain because of severe pig and bird damage. Bruce Sawyer (Lake Bennett) harvested a small area and produced hay. Graham Melville (67-mile) grew hay only. The bulk of the harvest was bought by Territory Milling and used for stockfeed. Only one rice grower grew grain for human consumption. Whatley harvested at high moisture content and dried it in mesh silos using unheated air.

In 1985 Jim Sullivan sold part of Wandinya Farm to a partnership from Carnarvon WA which included Sheridan Bros, Sullivan Bros, Doug Otway and Rupert Gore. They traded as Tortilla Produce Company, running cattle, growing pasture, melons for a couple of years and rice. But the bulk of their income came from bananas. By 1989 two of the partners had left and a short time later only Sheridan Bros (Mick, Ken and Frank) remained.

Rice growing at Tortilla Produce Company (1985/6 and 1987/8 – 1998).

Seeding

Seeding was accomplished using seed bought from DPI which they kept in an air-conditioned storage room at the research station. In mid to late December, they applied urea deep then did a second run with superphosphate and the seed using a combine seeder, with the hope that rains would come to ensure germination.

Preparation

Once the bays were blocked by sandbags, ensuring water to the plants, aerial spraying for weeds was conducted. One pest was army worm which attacked the plant, eating the leaves. Cockatoos went after seedlings and Whistling Ducks pulled the seedlings out.

Harvesting

If all went well, harvesting would be done in April (in a wet year, not until June) using a combine harvester similar to a wheat harvester. At this time magpie geese would stomp on the crop while red-tailed black cockatoos would go after the seed.

The harvester used was originally on contract from South Australia. Later the Prison Farm at Gunn Point bought a harvester from the Daly corn growers. The government bought it, but it needed special heads for harvesting rice.

Marketing

Tortilla Produce Company's first harvest was sold to DPI and put in storage bins at Fawcett's of Adelaide River. Then it was transported to Douglas Daly as cattle and pig feed. In the later years it went to Katherine and was stored in big bins there.

Economics

To make a profit you needed to get at least 3 tonne per hectare. Tortilla Produce Co. rarely achieved this so rice growing was not profitable for them. Leach (Mt Ringwood) and Whatley (Tortilla) were more successful in the 1984/85 season. Tortilla Produce Co. did not have a crop in 1998.

The Farm after 1998

Phil Robins of Philco's Auto Electrics bought the farm in 1998. He then sold it to a Mr Hill from Queensland who destroyed the rice bays and cleared along the river to grow sorghum. Markus Rathsmann bought the farm (which had been reduced in size) from Hill.

Rice Growing in more recent times.

Bill Moon at Mt Ringwood planted rice then Bruce White at Mt Keppler (over the river from Wandinya Farm) produced irrigated rice from 2014. He had a poor harvest in 2019 due to the poor Wet season. White marketed the rice to a local cubing plant to make nutrient-rich cattle feed and grazed his cattle on the stubble.

In 2020 a research project to grow native rice and support aboriginal enterprise began. 'Three species of native rice will be grown at Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade's (DITT) Coastal Plains Research Farm and in shade houses at Charles Darwin University's (CDU) Casuarina campus,' according to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

This article covers only part of the history of rice growing in the NT. Further reading is recommended if you want to know more about Chinese rice growing in the NT or the Humpty Doo Rice Project.

Ruth Sheridan

WEB SITES

- <https://bdmabbreviations.steveparker.id.au/>

Victorian BDM Place Name Abbreviations List

This is a list of place name abbreviations used in the Births, Deaths and Marriages registry indexes for Victoria, Australia. Useful for all three versions of the indexes. The list currently contains **6361** abbreviations, including abbreviation errors, and is a work in progress

BEFORE MY MEMORY FAILS

MV KOOLINDA & PEARLING LUGGERS IN DISTRESS

It was around this time my father enlisted in the 19th Australia Garrison Battalion (AIF) on 5th March 1942 and he married my mother in Port Hedland a month later on 20th April. When I was growing up my father told me stories about his time in the AIF. For example, he did a stint as a submarine guard on the MV Koolinda, (referred to as Koolinda from now on) which was ferrying evacuees (including my family members) from Broome in the North West to Fremantle in the south of WA. He said on the way to Fremantle a Japanese submarine had 'shadowed' Koolinda all the way and did not attack it. It was thought the reason they didn't might have been because in 1935, there was a cyclone off the coast of Broome. It was Koolinda which sailed out in treacherous seas to search for Japanese pearl divers and had found and rescued 18 men.

'The fleet scattered, and by mid- afternoon winds of cyclone force, almost continuous wind and rain squalls, high mountainous seas (and) heavy confused swell' and, as Koolinda's log book recorded, set in along the coast. Koolinda succeeded in manoeuvring around the cyclone and was immediately diverted to

search for the missing pearling fleet. Some luggers had found havens along the mainland, and some others had ridden out the storm at sea. During a three day cruise through wreckage- strewn waters, Koolinda rescued 18 men at sea. 21 luggers had sunk and a further 15 were damaged. The loss of life was 142. (Book: Natural Hazards and Peoples in the Indian Ocean World: Bordering on Danger) Edited by Greg Banoff, Joseph Christianson.

My brother Victor worked on luggers for 3 years from the age of 14, in the Torres Strait and Dutch New Guinea. His job was to man the air pumps for the divers searching for shell (pearl shells) on the seabed and was one on the crew that sailed to Dutch New Guinea with a fleet of luggers when a cyclone came and tipped over all but 2 of the luggers. Thankfully the lugger my brother was on did not tip over. After leaving the luggers, my brother became a merchant seaman and spent time in Singapore when the merchant ship he was on needed to be dry docked for cleaning and maintenance, and then he was crew when the ship sailed to other countries.

Koolinda was an Australian general cargo and passenger ship which operated as a coastal steamer off Western Australia from 1930 to 1959, built in Scotland in 1926 and registered in Fremantle WA'. In an earlier excerpt, I mentioned my parents sending me to school in Perth for a year. At the end of year 6, my mother flew to Perth to pick me up and take me home to the Pilbara and surprised me when we boarded Koolinda at Fremantle. This was not my first trip on Koolinda. The year was 1954 and mum and I had spent 6 months with my father when he was a cook for a road maintenance gang in the Kimberley. One weekend my father took mum and me to buy a goat from an old Aboriginal couple who bred them for meat. They had a couple of hundred of them.

When it was time to return to Port Hedland, my mother had booked us passage on the Koolinda from Wyndham to Port Hedland. During the evenings a brass band played music out on the deck and passengers could go out and listen to the band play. One evening I heard a crew member talking to a passenger, telling him Koolinda was a lovely ship to sail in however, if the sea was rough it would sail up a wave and corkscrew down the other side.

There were several ships sailing the West Australian coast when I was a child but there is and will always be something romantic and endearing about Koolinda and will stay in my heart and memory for as long as I live. Maybe it is because my niece Nancy was born on the Koolinda when it was in Broome harbour and she was christened Nancy Koolinda (RIP Nancy).

The Japanese pearl divers were not the only rescue Koolinda had carried out in its time sailing the West Australian to Darwin coast, as it is recorded 'In the aftermath of the battle between HMAS Sydney and the German auxiliary cruiser Kormoran in November 1941, the Koolinda recovered German sailors from a 31- man lifeboat and returned them to Geraldton' (Wikipedia)

Because of the Japanese attack on Darwin, Broome and Port Hedland there was a story going around (hearsay) that the Japanese Emperor had given orders that the Australian ship Koolinda was not to be attacked. My father said it was thought this may have been because of the rescue of 18 Japanese pearl divers during a cyclone in 1935 off the coast of Broome.

The last I read of Koolinda was that it had been sold to a buyer in Hong Kong and it was going to be turned into scrap metal. I wish it could have gone into a Maritime Museum in Perth or somewhere up the north coast of WA.

Emma Collins on Facebook

THERE'S ALWAYS MORE TO THE STORY

By Julian R Schüller

The “Talk Back Radio” presenter, John Laws wrote a book titled “There is Always More to the Story” and that viewpoint led me down a fascinating track of detection and discovery. Patsy Hickey has given me a long list of names of people who contributed to The Gothenburg Disaster Relief Fund in 1875 to ascertain if they are in our Pioneer Register. After many, many months I have reached the group of Southport residents who made donations. I came to **A. Jonathan M^cCann** but could not find the name anywhere other than on the list, however I found a number of references to A.J. M^cCann in Government Gazettes taking out mining leases especially around Yam Creek (near Pine Creek) could this be him?

Further research discovered A. J. M^cCann was Arthur James M^cCann so not my M^cCann, but could he be related? A Nation-wide search on Trove for Arthur James resulted in a correction in The West Australian Newspaper of 27th August 1932 to an Obituary previously run in the same paper correcting the partner of Arthur James M^cCann as being Harry Langmid, the writer’s uncle not Harry Longman as written in the obituary.

However, the Obituary did not come to hand easily. I checked Ancestry and got Arthur James death certificate and looked in the Voter Register for Moore River where he was listed as a farmer. This did not look promising. I then trawled around this date for the obituary which finally came to light and what a gem it proved to be.

Mr M^cCann was a pioneer of the Moore River area of Western Australia which is situated about 95 Km north of Perth having lived there for 40 years up ‘til his death he came there from Victoria in 1892. With his partner Harry Langmid they selected a 320-acre block at Hill River 40 miles north of Dandaragan which is in the wheatbelt about 200 kilometres north of Perth. At that time there were fears Bushrangers were heading for Western Australia and there was much angst throughout the area and suspicion of these two settlers. *(This reminiscence seems a bit fanciful as Ned Kelly died at the gallows in Melbourne Gaol, on 11 November 1880 – 12 years before they arrived at Hill River)* However, a strange occurrence backed up his fears when an outlandish man stepped into the firelight of their campfire one night, armed with a rifle and dressed in Kangaroo skins, he scared the living daylights out of them both. Turned out he owned most of the good land in the area and that they had been misled by the land office as to the quality of the land available so they ended up selling their pack horses and getting the boat back to Fremantle. Eventually they both settled in Moore River.

His obituary then outlined his life history. Born in Fulham, London England in 1846, he went with his parents to San Francisco, California at aged 2½ years his father taking a cargo of merchandise with which to set up business in San Francisco. After a few years his father died and his mother carried on the business making her fortune. She then intended to return to England but the Crimean War (1853-1856) thwarted her plans as, to travel by sea at this time, was very hazardous, so instead she sold the business and bought land with the proceeds. In 1861 the American Civil War broke out (12 Apr 1861 – 13 May 1865). The family moved to Coloma, California.

On January 24, 1848, an event occurred in Coloma that would radically impact the history of California and the Nation. James W. Marshall was building a sawmill for Captain John Sutter, using water from the South Fork of the American River. He noticed several flakes of metal in

the tailrace water and recognized them to be gold. Though he tried to keep it a secret, the word spread quickly and triggered the California Gold Rush of 1849.(where the 49ers name comes from)

The M^cCann brothers ran a sawmill there which produced timber for shafts and sluices of the mines. The area was rough with Highwaymen holding up coaches carrying gold and silver over the Sierra Nevada. One such occurrence Arthur James witnessed personally. In 1863 he went to England and thence to Melbourne settling with an uncle in Portland, Victoria.

He next went to Port Darwin before arriving in Western Australia in 1882. This information confirmed that Arthur James had been in Darwin, also that he had a brother and he had an Uncle in Portland Victoria. None of this information gave any Christian names.

This was really the end of my story as all Patsy needed was confirmation of Northern Territory residence for the Pioneer Register, however, I had got a bee in my bonnet!! My next step was to try and find his birth in England. I found a likely entry but as with all English Civil Registers, no parents were given, another stumbling block.

Try Portland, Victoria, and M^cCanns abounded in the Newspapers. Portland was where Nicholas (1803 - 1879) a stonecutter and his son Peter (1828 – 1908) had started the Portland Cement Company. This fired me up even more as Portland cement was an iconic brand during my youth in England. This family of M^cCanns had been fully documented with Family Trees easily accessible on the Internet. I also found an A.J. M^cCann in the correct period with an Agency in Portland. This looked very promising. I ascertained that Peter M^cCann had 16 children so perhaps A Jonathan M^cCann was one of his offspring? However, the only Jonathon I could find was Jonathon Peter M^cCann who became a Methodist Minister starting on this career at aged 17 years it didn't seem likely that he was A. Jonathan M^cCann. Neither could I find any connection with Arthur James M^cCann and further more the "Uncle" may have been from his mother's family and therefore not a M^cCann at all.

I tried to find the father's death in San Francisco, but the only listing was for John C Cann on 2 November 1850. I kept this information in mind in case I came across John M^cCann in this search.

My next "find" was a death notice in Trove for Edmund Thomas M^cCann at Echuca formerly of Placerville and San Francisco California the son of the late R J M^cCann of Adelaide, South Australia. A search of Family Search brought up the 1860 Census for Placerville, California with Edmund Thomas aged 20, born in Australia, Ann aged 17, Arthur James aged 16 both born in England and Kate aged 10 born in California together with M J De Arroyaie born in England, aged 45 E. De Arroyaie born in Spain aged 42 however M.J. was male and E. was female and a child also E De Arroyaie aged 6 also female and born in California. So, it looked as if Arthur James mother was Spanish. Trawling South Australia for R. J. M^cCann brought up a number of references but still no Christian names.

I then turned to Kate M^cCann and found an Obituary for James William Trangmar in the Portland Guardian of 1938 who had married Kate St George M^cCann who had predeceased him in 1929. So, I looked for Kate's death in 1929 and happened upon another exciting Obituary. The opening paragraph intimated that she was born at sea on the ship St George outside the Golden Horn, San Francisco on 15 September 1849 but under an old law ruling all persons born at sea under the British Flag belonged to the Parish of Stepney, London.

The Obituary went on to say that she passed her early years on her mother's ranch on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains in California. On her mother's death, she sailed to England with her sister. For several years she resided with her Aunt, Miss Emma Crouch at Rosceth, Harrow, England. She sailed with her Aunt plus her brother and sister on the SS Great Britain (*she is a museum ship which I have boarded at her current dock in Bristol, England. A former passenger steamship, which was advanced for her time. She was the longest passenger ship in the world from 1845 to 1854. She was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–1859), for the Great Western Steamship Company's transatlantic service between Bristol and New York City. While other ships had been built of iron or equipped with a screw propeller, Great Britain was the first to combine these features in a large ocean-going ship. She was the first iron steamer to cross the Atlantic Ocean, which she did in 1845, in the time of 14 days. In 1852 she was sold for salvage and repaired. Great Britain later carried thousands of immigrants to Australia from 1852 until being converted to all-sail in 1881. Three years later, she was retired to the Falkland Islands, where she was used as a warehouse, quarantine ship and coal hulk until she was scuttled in 1937, 98 years since being laid down.*)¹

Kate arrived in Australia on Christmas Day 1866. A check of the Passenger lists found her with Arthur James and her sister E De Arroyale (slight difference in spelling) and Emma Crouch. It said she married James William Trangmar on 16 March 1876. Finding her marriage in Ancestry gave her father as Robert James M^cCann and her death certificate gave her mother as Matilda Jane Crouch. This indicates that the American Census of 1860 has Matilda Jane's sex transposed with that of her second husband! Her father was Edmund Allen Crouch who sired a number of children and explains her first born being "Edmund Thomas".

So, now I have Arthur James parents and siblings, is this the end of the story? For me I have to continue with the Gothenburg Disaster Relief Fund with still no more on A Jonathon M^cCann. I would also like to know what happened to little sister E De Arroyale, was she Ernestino? The spelling of her name has made all searches so far fruitless as sometimes she could be in "D" surnames or others in "A" surnames and the correct spelling is problematic. One day maybe – there is always more to the story.

MARC

My favourite photo in my dad's album was captioned 'Marc.' He was seated on the ground in his trunks by a campfire, grinning at the camera. Whenever I asked my dad about 'Marc' all he would say was that he was a friend who died in the war.

Recently revisiting the album my interest is piqued again and I set out to find out more myself. Browsing the internet, I find a photo of my father's sister with a group at Hay, NSW including a face that looks remarkably like the one in the album. Fortunately, the photo is captioned so I learn that 'Marc' is probably Mark Rushton. Now I have a surname, I can search the World War Two Nominal Roll, but alas, his name does not appear.

My next port of call is Trove where I find several articles in *The Riverine Grazier*. Chronologically they flesh out his story. First there is a notice (6 August 1943) announcing the engagement of Mary Isabelle Hill, of Hay, to Sergeant Arthur (Mark) Rushton, R.A.A.F. (Overseas). It now appears that 'Marc' is Arthur Mark Rushton. An earlier article (27 October 1942) reports a farewell to Sgt Air-gunner Arthur Rushton

(given by the Hay branch of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A). A further article announces that Sgt. Mark Rushton, R.A.A.F. eldest son of Mrs and the late Percy Rushton is missing (28 September 1943).

The Riverine Grazier article published on 17 December 1943 is titled 'Flight-Sergt Mark Rushton now believed dead.' At last the mystery of his name is revealed: 'Mrs L. Rushton of Murray St, Hay has been advised by the Department of Air that her son, Flt-Sgt Arthur Noel Forrester Rushton previously reported missing as a result of air operations on the night of 22 September is now reported missing but believed to have lost his life.' News had come through from the International Red Cross.

The above article included more information about Marc. '...before his enlistment he was working in the town and was a great help and comfort to his widowed mother and to his sisters. He had a bright cheery nature, and smart demeanour in his work which at once recommended him to all. He was the well-respected son of his honoured father.'

Now I know Marc's name I return to the Nominal Roll and learn some more. He was born in Marrickville, NSW on 17 December 1918. His next of kin is Louisa Rushton (his mother). He enlisted at Hay NSW on 1 February 1942. His posting on death was with 460 Squadron.

According to the internet site WW2Talk:

[Rushton] was crew on a Lancaster bomber (Lancaster DV 219) *which took off from RAF Binbrook at 1900 hours on 22 September 1943 to attack Hanover, Germany. Bomb load 1 x 4000lb and 3 x 1000lb bombs, 64 x 30lb, 540 x 4lb incendiaries. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take-off and it did not return to base. Crew: RAAF 22001 Flt Sgt Hansen, R H Captain (Pilot); RAAF 406912 Flt Sgt Barrett-Lennard, M G (Navigator); RAAF 416935 Flt Sgt Cox, D V (Bomb Aimer); RAF Sgt Mott, L O (Wireless Operator Air Gunner); RAF Flt Sgt Sedgwick, J F (Flight Engineer); RAAF 421512 Flt Sgt Rushton, A N F (Air Gunner); RAF Sgt Shepley, N (Air Gunner). Post war enquiries established that the aircraft was shot down and crashed at Branstedt near Vechta at 2230 hours on 22 September. Wreckage was scattered over a wide area and all the crew were killed. The remains of the crew were recovered by the Germans and buried in Vetcha cemetery. The four RAAF crew members were re-interred at the Sage War Cemetery, located 13 miles south of Oldenburg, Germany.*

Now I know about Marc I prefer to remember him full of life in dad's album.

References

Australian War Memorial

The Riverine Grazier

<http://ww2talk.com/index.php?threads/in-memori-am-those-air-force-pilots-crews-who-died-on-this-day-in-ww2.18267/page-2>

World War Two Nominal Roll

BOOK REVIEW – Eddie Webber

SHEER HARD WORK AND PLENTY OF GUTS

The Farrar family of the Northern Territory

compiled by Lynette Derrick from her mother's notes.

Lynette and her husband Phillip travelled to other Australian states to complete this story.

The book is in two sections, the first being of the Farrar family, pioneers in the Roper River and Limmen Bight region of the Gulf of Carpentaria. It fills in a number of gaps in the history of the Gulf Region of the Northern Territory during the period 1883-1890 when John Costello sought to establish the "Valley of The Springs Station" to a later period with the Farrar family's establishment of pastoral properties, Nutwood Downs, Maryfield, Mainoru and later Ban Ban Springs. The family were pastoralists in the region for over 70 years and certainly did it pretty tough during this time.

The second section deals with the life of the Farrar family from the perspective of Phyllis the mother of the author. It deals with life in Darwin prior to and after WW 11 and life on Ban Ban Springs Station during this period. While the book can be a little repetitious, it contains a veritable treasure trove of photographs, some never seen before in publications. For those interested in the history of the NT and in particular the Gulf Region this is a welcome addition. However do not expect a romantic saga of the great Australian outback in the finest Ernestine Hill tradition.

The books depicts the hardship, loneliness, suffering and isolation in one of the most remote areas of Australia as just part of day to day living in the family's struggle to survive.

The title of the book *"Sheer hard work and plenty of guts"* probably says it all.

WEBSITE FROM FACEBOOK

<https://www.wendishheritage.org.au/.../customs-and-beliefs/>

I have finally found the answer to the black wedding dress for Lutheran (some) brides. They are Wends.

The Wends, also known as the Sorbs or Lusatian Serbs, are a Slavic people primarily from East Germany. Most Wends who left Germany immigrated to Australia and Texas. Most came for economic opportunity, although some came mainly seeking religious freedom. In general, the Wends consider themselves German, but they have maintained their ethnic identity as Wends. Their religious conservatism prohibited wearing bright colours, dancing, or secular singing. One early custom of theirs involved brides wearing black wedding dresses to represent the hardships of marriage.

I have found this link to the Wendish Heritage Society in Australia. This page takes you to their "Customs and Beliefs" which, if you read down, mentions the black wedding dress.

For those of you with German/Lutheran heritage, the whole website is a most interesting read, giving names of Wends and where they settled in Australia, as well as an A-Z of Wendish immigrants to Australia and their spouses.



