

Your say!



Scott Alford writes, “Howdy, I am still in the wireless industry and it never ceases to amaze me how few Radtechs (and others) have surfaced through the magazine. I guess most changed trades when they left the RAAF? I have hired a few ex-Navy and Army guys, but where HAVE the hundreds of RAAF Radtechs gone”?

Geoff Reddish, who now lives in Launceston, the real capital of Tasmania, got in touch, he says: Hi, I was just browsing [Vol12 page 4](#) and it brought back a few memories of the Red Sales crash when I was a tech on the GCA at Sale.

Memory 1

Post 1960

I was just married at the time and we were living in quarters in an area along with at least 2 of the aircrew involved. On the day I was airborne in a DC3 travelling back from Laverton after an inter-service trials rugby game and we were made aware of the crash by the co-pilot. Arriving home I was met by my distraught wife Eve who had heard of an aircraft crash on the local radio and immediately thought it could be my flight. On going outside to seek other wives, she then heard that it was in fact the aerobatic team and the wives in the area had heard about it first on the local radio!!

If memory serves me, the station later apologised.

Memory 2

1961?

One balmy evening we heard multi aircraft overflying the town so I jumped in my trusty VW and raced out to the Base. On arriving at the GCA, I watched multi 4 engined giants land and taxi past (about 6ft wingtip clearance from the GCA). They were [B50 Superfortresses](#) (looked like B29's but much larger fin) with air sampling pods on the wings plus a number of Military Airlift Command Douglas [Globemaster freighters](#) (C124). Jack Haynes in the tower told me they got 30 min notice of their arrival and did not know from whence they came.



They flew every day air sampling (read; *spying on Russian Antarctic installations*) for a few weeks and one day all started up and went off to an unknown destination, although rumours said it was initially Perth.

Memory 3

1960-1

Crow Flight 1 yanks arrived at Sale and 2 techs came in with a large suitcase, set it up, plugged it in and commenced talking to the USA on SSB. WE watched in wonder as the best the RAAF could do at the time was sometimes raise San Francisco on FSK with a SWB8 or 10 punching out 10mw on HF at 1TS. When the U2's arrived we (RAAF GCA) did the talk-down to 1/2 mile as usual and then a USAF Ford station wagon full of radios stopped at the threshold would talk the pilot down to the ground in 1 ft increments as it drove down the taxiway parallel to the U2 on the runway. The GCA contained the only UHF transceivers on the base at the time so most comms with the U2 were from there.



They would mostly taxi about 0700-0730 and the aircraft in my time would commence take off with the pogo sticks attached to the wingtips and as the fuel laden wings lifted up the pogos would fall away as they rotated and climb at approx 70-80 degrees until disappearing from sight. Mostly they would not return until about 1700. One quiet afternoon with no

ATC controllers present in the CPN-4 I heard a Mayday call on UHF from the current U2 who advised he had suffered a flameout. I asked his position and intentions and he advised he was approx 300 mile South of Tassie and was descending on return.

About 15 minutes later he advised of a relight at 37,000 ft and eventually landed back at Sale. I think his name was Major King and I overheard him telling Flt Lt Ian (Cappy) Norris (a WW2 spitfire pilot turned GCA controller) that contrary to popular belief after the Garry Powers saga, the U2 could exceed 100K fooms and was not restricted to 63K ft.

Memory 4

The same Cappy Norris had last flown full time on an RAAF DC3 fitted with a radar altimeter to overfly Maralinga??, Mallala?? (can't recall which) to maintain 50 ft AGL over the whole of the area where the A bomb was exploded. They carried civilian boffins and measuring gear to map the radiation - if any. He recalled it being totally boring flying but had to be very exact. He told me of the 3 RAF Canberras that flew into the atomic cloud immediately after the explosion to get air samples. On landing the aircraft taxied through a birdbath wash-down; on stopping the crew ran through a canvas tunnel with water jet sprays while stripping off their clothing and then into a closed off medical building. He told me that one crew died within days, a second a week later and the third crew a few weeks later again.



I suspect if the story is true then it probably went into the official secrets but maybe someone reading this can confirm or poohoo the story.

Memory 5

Back to 1958 . Anyone remember the dreaded AOC's inspections? At 1TS we had a very rigid rotational inspection and maintenance program for all the HF transmitters and we worked 2 man shifts covering 24/7. Upon hearing of the imminent AOC visit we ceased maintenance and began painting the rocks, surrounding the vehicle park, white! As a lowly AC mech I asked about the HF maintenance I was scheduled to start that night and was told to forget them until after the AOC visit! One of our SNCO's (not Dusty Miller) used to coax a 6 inch arc off the SWB 10 aerial feed lines to light his cigarettes.

Memory 6

I did an officially recognised AN/CPN-4 tech course along with Barry Laidler (both of us were 5 RadTech Conv) with Cpl Eddy Nagajak as the instructor. As Barry didn't want to get his friend pregnant, he decided to stand in front of the precision 3cm radar for 10 minutes of everyday!

"Except For Ending Slavery, Fascism, Nazism and Communism,
WAR has Never Solved Anything."

Phil Witts (right) writes. Howdy, I hope you or someone can help. I am trying to get an RAAF cap badge for other ranks post WW2. It's the gold one we wore. Like a dill I gave all my hats etc. to a local kindergarten for dress ups. Needless to say the badge went too.



Now my kids are interested I have nothing to show them. If someone knows where I can get an original that would be great. I don't want it for nothing and I quite willing to pay for it. Have been onto quite a few web sites but they are reproductions, Not quite the same. Regards.

Mary Windsor got in touch, she wrote: "Hi, I enjoyed reading Vol 32 of the Radschool Magazine. Of particular interest to me was the piece on [Frognall](#). I arrived at Frognall in 1965 as an ACW (Mary Moore), teleprinter operator and remained there through my Cpl's and was finally posted as Sgt to Radschool as an instructor. I returned to Frognall in 1971 and finally left there in 1972 as a F/Sgt.

The photos of the buildings were of particular interest and I'd like to comment on "the Sgt's mess". I think that photo (right) was actually the equipment store and I think the bottom part of the building (closest to Mont Albert Road) was transport section. The building next to it, by the tree, was the pay section, I think. I may be wrong but it looks to be the wrong orientation for the Sgt's mess. The cars you can see in the photo were on the "parade ground"- cum volleyball court. I don't know why there would have been cars there as it was not usual. Anyway that's my thoughts on the matter. Congratulations on the quality and quantity of the magazine. My comments are not a criticism - just an observation that could be distorted with time".



Thanks Mary – can anyone else comment?? – tb

Dick McGoogan says, "[The pic of Russ Osborne](#) gave me a hangover."

"When In Doubt, Empty The Magazine"

Fred Griffiths says, "Hello to all, while trolling the net, I came across your web pages. At the time I am writing my own family history, which included a stint at Rad School (#70) during about 1972-73. It's been a long time and the dates are not clear in my head at this late stage.

I was the only Canadian in Radschool at that time, and possibly in the RAAF! I went on to serve 9 years, ending up in Williamtown (NSW), then Bringelly and finally HQ at Glenbrook. Made sergeant, but the paper pushing got too much for me, so left. I owned the Clock Museum in Katoomba for a time, then returned to Canada in 1984. Presently spending half my time living in Costa Rica, where the weather is better than Canada's, I can tell you.

So just in case anyone wants to know what happened to the "Canuck", he is still alive and well. It could be interesting to see if any of the (few) names that I do remember from that era actually remember me.

Cheers,

Mark Fielding got in touch, he writes, “I know it's a long shot but I am seeking any information on the whereabouts of the Monkey in a Perspex cage holding onto a Cyclic that was presented to Training Flight at 5 Squadron by No 12 Conversion Course in December 1970. The trophy, such as it was, was a memento from No 12 Conversion course and was to be presented by each course thereafter to the Best and Fairest Instructor. I am not sure which instructor won it at the end of No 12 Course though I would be interested in knowing that as well.”

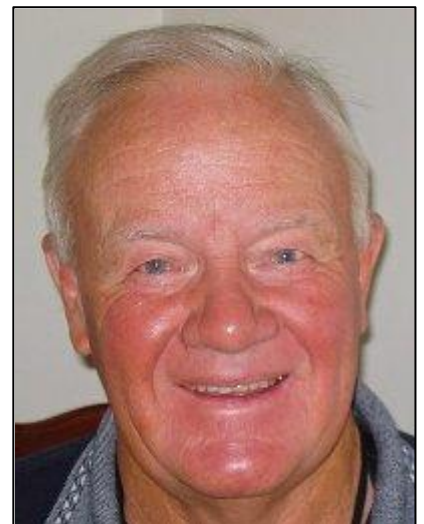
If anyone can help, let us know and we'll pass it onto Mark

"Happiness Is A Belt-Fed Weapon"

Gary Broughton got in touch, he says “In [Vol 28, Page 19](#), Bob Richards commented on a painted slogan that appeared on the footpath across the road from the front of the WOD's office (which was at the front of the admin hut) one morning and he remembered it as “it's not hard to be an a*se”.

At the time, the CO was WG/CDR Thorn, who was vertically challenged and not well liked as the new CO. Of course, the WOD (Eric Nothard) was not too popular either, although I always remembered him as fair, but that does not count for much at a training establishment.

The actual slogan was “*It's not hard to be a pr*ck when you've got a thorn up you're a*se*”. I was either on pool at the time, or just in the RADMECH phase, so it was probably about early to mid '73. Everybody was paraded and quizzed, although identifying the culprit would have been akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Normally, you would think that the only people likely to remember such detail would be the culprits, but it made quite an impression on me as a new, very junior airman and amused us all immensely. Very ballsy. Lots of people left Radschool disgruntled in those days through failures, suspensions and the like and it seems to me that somebody who had nothing to lose was more likely to be the perpetrator.



Twenty years or so later, Eric Nothard (right) and I shared a few ales at Edinburgh while we were both doing resettlement training. He'd bought an EnZed franchise as I recall and was a really nice bloke. As for the Thorn, who knows?

(Actually, I was being polite, because the word was not “pr*ck”. The actual word used was a four letter non-technical term for female anatomy, which may be why such a determined effort was made to find the doer. It simply was not polite.)

G' day, I write you from Italy to ask you some news on the vehicles used by the Australian Army in Vietnam. In 1966 the Australian Army bought 50 off-road Haflingers from Steyr-Puch, Australia. In the various searches conducted by our club (Haflinger club Italy www.haflingerclubitalia.it), we have discovered that some of these Haflingers have perhaps gone with you to Vietnam. I attach photo of a Haflinger in Australian Army. Livery.



I ask if this news is true and if it is possible to find some photos of the Haflingers in Vietnam. Thank you for your attention and I want to excuse me for my English, but I use an electronic translator!!.

Ferraroni Massimo.

"Artillery brings Dignity to what would otherwise be just a Vulgar Brawl"