



# FOPIA Newsletter

July 2018

Editor - Peter Ludlow

## The Australian Army at Peel Island

Ray Cowie was the Redland Shire Council's Ranger on Peel Island from 1988 until 1993. During that period, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit Ray and his wife, Nola, on many occasions.

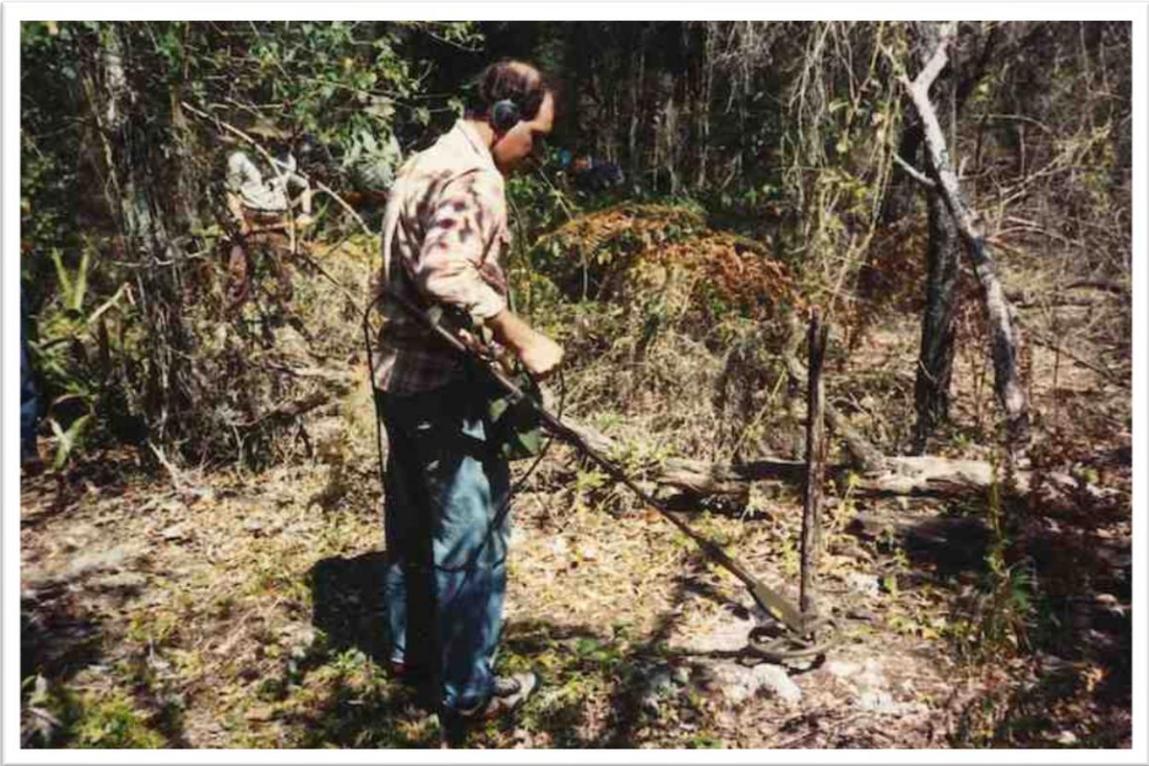
One day, while we were down at Peel's Horseshoe Bay, we came across the Army practicing its amphibious landings. Ray was always keen for a chat and a rapport was quickly established between them. Ray Cowie and the Army got on well together and this resulted in a number of Army visits to Peel Island for various exercises.



*The Army lands at Horseshoe Bay 1990 - Photo courtesy of Ray Cowie*

Much later, Ray was to invite the Army over to search the first quarantine graveyard with mine detectors for any metal grave markers.

None were found but they did locate the barbed wire from the perimeter fence which was still in place just below the surface of the soil.



*Army personnel using mine detectors in the Lazaret Cemetery 1990 - Photo courtesy of Ray Cowie*

They also carried out search sweeps for the "lost" graveyard (which we concluded to be the Lazaret Cemetery) and then scanned the cemetery area using mine detectors to endeavour to locate buried grave markers.

The Army had a weeklong camp on the quadrangle at the Lazaret itself and, during this stay, they helped Ray clear all the undergrowth that had cocooned many of the Lazaret buildings over the previous 30 years.

All these events happened in 1990. They were exciting times of discovery.



*Army in the quadrangle at Peel 1990 - Photo courtesy of Ray Cowie*



*Army clearing undergrowth in the Men's Compound at Peel Island 1990 - Photo courtesy of Ray Cowie*

The most exciting project involved the reconstruction of the stone jetty.

The jetty had been completed in 1893 at the quarantine site and for the next 60 years it was the access point for vessels visiting Peel's Quarantine Station and the Lazaret.

Sadly, after the Lazaret's closure in 1959, the stone jetty gradually deteriorated. Ray asked the army engineers if they would reconstruct it as an exercise. They were more than willing to offer their labour for free if the Government would supply the materials.

The Army reached the stage of surveying the site and preparing a reconstruction plan. Unfortunately, Government finance wasn't forthcoming and the project lapsed.

The haunting story of Phyllis Ebbage, a former inmate at Peel's Lazaret, is being retold at a new exhibition

**"Islands : Hidden Histories from  
Queensland Islands"**

at Queensland's State Library until January 27, 2019