



**Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc.**  
**ROCA DIGEST**

Print Post Approved PP539022/7	<b>ROCA Contact Details</b>	
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## Autumn 2012

### ROCA South East Dinner Friday 10 August 2012

Charlie Goode and Alan Richardson have booked Patrick of Coonawarra for a ROCA South East dinner on Friday 10 August 2012.

Many years ago ROCA used to hold an annual dinner for its members and for old Roseworthy scholars generally in the South East, as is still occurring on the West Coast. After a (short) lapse, the South East gatherings are now back on!

Don't miss out! For details, contact Alan Richardson Mobile Work 08 8724 1010, Home 08 8724 7772, Email [yahl@internode.on.net](mailto:yahl@internode.on.net)



### ROCA Dinner & AGM 2012, at The Grange Golf Club

Please don't forget the upcoming Annual ROCA Dinner and AGM, to be held at **The Grange Golf Club**, White Sands Drive, Grange on Friday 19 October 2012. The dinner is always a great event, filled with riveting and revealing stories from the 10, 25, 40 & 50 Year Reunion Groups. Year groups, it is time to start rounding up your mates.

Contact people are:

- 50 Years (1962) - Peter West, Mobile 0409 558 835, Email [peterwest7@bigpond.com](mailto:peterwest7@bigpond.com)  
Postal PO Box 1449, Victor Harbor SA 5211
- 40 Years (1972) - Alan Richardson, Mobile Work 08 8724 1010, Home 08 8724 7772,  
Email [yahl@internode.on.net](mailto:yahl@internode.on.net)
- 25 Years (1987) - Craig Hole, Mobile 0409 710 535, Email [cghi@iprimus.com.au](mailto:cghi@iprimus.com.au)  
[craig.hole@landmark.com.au](mailto:craig.hole@landmark.com.au)  
Rodney Lush, Phone 08-8756 5066, Email [rodney.lush@bigpond.com](mailto:rodney.lush@bigpond.com)
- 10 Years (2002) - We need a coordinator. Can you help? Ring Dick Turnbull 0437755034

### "Pay attention you jokers" – this is your President speaking

Claire and I joined a very well attended EP reunion dinner at Cleve in February. Over 60 were present, including a number of recent female graduates and other younger members. We all enjoyed the repartee and the entertaining guest speaker, Ian Sampson, lawyer and farmer from Cowell. He had a lot to say about the rights of mining exploration companies to enter your land for prospecting purposes and the rights of farm owners when mining activities are conducted on their land. Question

time went on for “hours” and the hot topic was ground water. To balance things across the state, the SE Roseworthians are reactivating the SE reunion dinner, after a dormancy of forty years. It used to be bigger than the EP Dinner. It’s all about wine, re-connecting and networking.

### **Two old boys – Ray and Robert**

A week later I visited Ray Beckwith, our 2010 Award of Merit winner, as he turned one hundred on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. He proudly showed me a room full of specially framed photographs, packs of vintage wines, cards and other memorabilia presented to him by his friends and members of the wine industry. He still lives independently with his son in Nuriootpa and was in fine form. He was invited by the Barons of the Barossa to be their guest of honour at the start of vintage celebrations and he says his olfactory senses are still functioning well and he enjoyed some good wine. We also chatted about the great Roseworthy Student Strike of January 1932, and Ray said he was done out of one or two major prizes by the principal W R Birks who wrongly thought he was involved in the strike.

I also visited one of Ray’s co-accused strikers, Robert Stirling from Cummins who is in his 98th year. Robert was in hospital after having his hand amputated because of some creeping but benign growth. We were able to compare injuries as I had just come off second best after a fight with a 4 inch angle grinder to which I had just fitted a blade that would cut through anything (it does!) My arm will recover 95% of its function and the healing process is going well. He was full of beans and told me how as a 16 year old he ran in the professional Stawell Gift and so could not compete in amateur athletic events in Adelaide. He said he did NOT win the RAC Steeple chase in his first year however. That was in 1932. His father had died some time before and his mother needed him back on the farm so he had to surrender his scholarship and return to Cummins. He was also accused by principal Birks of participating in the New Year’s Eve stone throwing event that triggered the strike, but Ray said he was in Adelaide at that time. I seem to recall another College principal who jumped to conclusions in the name of maintaining student discipline. Robert ran a very successful farming business on southern EP and was in Bomber Command during WW II, flying over 40 missions. Statistically his chances of surviving that “tour” were very low, but he is well and truly alive at 97 and still full of energy.

### **Current Residential student at Roseworthy**

David Purdie, Manager Student Service at Roseworthy sent me a photograph of the one hundred plus residential students who attended an inaugural Welcoming Dinner. He is trying to activate some new traditions and to add more “soul” to the place, which he should be commended for. What we did as RAC residents seems to have passed into history and this year’s event was certainly more civilised than our Third Year Dinners.



On Anzac Day he and other staff conducted an impromptu Anzac commemoration in the chapel and 70 -80 students rolled up, which I found rather surprising and most heartening. Things must be changing at Roseworthy when “the man who lives on the hill” does NOT have to come down at night with a torch looking into cars, but instead runs event like this. In the University David works for a department called “Student support services”, a less autocratic role than in our time. Today’s students do not have to live by HA’s four golden rules (or “holes in the sieve”).

### **John Tassie, his library & the Anzac Centenary**

David Forwood, Manager Property Services at Roseworthy, tells me that stage one of the Tassie Memorial Library’s restoration is almost complete, and that stage two (restoration of the interior) has been approved. When it is completed it will become a reading room for postgraduate students. The

near completion of stage two was confirmed to me last night by John Tassie of Eden Hill, who visited the College on spec three weeks ago. This John Tassie is the nephew of 3015 Pte John Tassie, killed on Anzac Day 1918 and in whose name the library was built in 1921 by his parents. I visited John to show him what information I have gathered about his uncle after whom he was named after. Today's John Tassie never met his uncle, as he was born 14 years after his uncle's death near Villers – Bretonneux. There is a short biography on John Tassie jnr. towards the end of this newsletter. Remember we have the Anzac Centenary fast approaching and as an association we should think about how we are going to mark this occasion, considering the fact that 228 Roseworthians enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> AIF, 256 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF with 41 being killed both in WW1 and WW2. Not to mention the South African War, Vietnam War and the other bloody little wars (all wars are bloody) up to this very day. The government's National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary will remember not only the Anzacs who served at Gallipoli and the Western front, but all Australian servicemen and women who served in wars including Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. The National Commission on behalf of the government will lead the charge, but organisations such as ours will be expected to be involved in the commemorations.

### **ROCA Prizes**

Another event which I attended was the final prize distribution ceremony for the Bachelor of Agriculture degree (the direct successor to the RDA) held at the Waite. Final because it now combines with the Bachelor of Agricultural Science to become a Waite based Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) course. The Old Student Cup and Trophy for the second highest aggregate in the final year was awarded to Samuel Wedding, who happens to hail from Wasleys. I had a good chat to Sam and his family and he seemed a responsible sort of fellow so I let him take the cup home on the condition he dropped off at College in a few weeks. It will be placed in the glass display cabinet behind the main foyer stairs as this houses a lot of other College historical stuff. So this is the last of the old Roseworthy based prizes and your committee has proposed that ROCA seeks to award the top or at least one of the main prizes in the final year of the three animal based courses currently being offered at Roseworthy. These are the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Bachelor of Science (Pre-Veterinary) and Bachelor of Science (Animal Science). The Association has to commit at least \$500 each year for each prize. ROCA has a long and proud history dating back to the 1890's of awarding the main prizes to students at Roseworthy and the current committee wishes to continue this tradition. However we will need the support of the membership to do this and last year's 40 year group, who have some funds left over from their book "The Roseworthy College Legacy and the '68 group", have generously offered to provide the \$1500 to cover the prizes for the first year. Your committee is looking for a commitment from all members but in particular each 10, 25, 40 and 50 year group as their turn arrives.

### **The '68 Group and their book**

I must congratulate this group most whole heartedly for a splendid effort they made with their book. It is a beauty and its first chapter, "Pre-history" is the best and most succinct précis on the history of Roseworthy College I have read; and extremely well referenced. The stories of the members of that year group are fascinating and well worth reading so I commend the book to all Roseworthians, past, present and future.

### **Roseworthy Campus and Student Fund**

The committee is most impressed with Ray Taylor and his band of Co-patrons and what they have achieved with the fund over the last two years (See Ray Taylor's report). And there was me thinking that a "Co-Patron" was just a friend you brought to the pub with you after the footy!

Dick Turnbull  
President

## **ROCA and ANZAC Centenary commemorations** **- Tales from the Honour Roll**

As an individual member of ROCA I have undertaken to write short biographies on all 228 Roseworthians who enlisted in WW1. The names are recorded on the two honour rolls; one in the main foyer of Roseworthy Hall and the other in the Chapel. I have titled these biographies "Tales from the Honour Roll", as they will tell a narrative about each soldier, covering their life at Roseworthy, their time in military service and their career afterwards. When available, some family history will also be

included. Telling their stories has been made much easier in this computer age, by our ROCA Archiving Group, which has scanned in "The Student" magazines and other key documents from RAC history. Digital materials from the Australian War Memorial and National Archive collections and the newspaper search engine TROVE have also been great resources.

Following in the electronic version of this Digest is the story of John Tassie (our first tale)

I will need some help in future however, so any of you jokers who can drive a computer or read a book, please contact me at [randturnbull@tpg.com.au](mailto:randturnbull@tpg.com.au) or phone 08-84316618

Dick (RK) Turnbull May 2012

### **ROCA Extra**

There is more information for ROCA members receiving the electronic version by e-mail. You can also visit our website [www.adelaide.edu.au/roca](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca)

### **The 2011 ROCA Dinner**

Once again the ROCA dinner was well attended at the Glenelg Golf Club, with over 150 attendees. The guest of honour was Professor Kym Abbott. The recipient of the Award of Merit this year was Ray Taylor, a very worthy recipient.

The 1961 graduates as the 50 year group and the 1971 graduates as the 40 year group were well represented. The 25 year group was small in number but Nick Kentish made up for it with a great presentation. An additional reunion group was the 1971 A Grade football team, celebrating 40 years since winning the premiership in the Gawler League.

We even had some table prizes this year as Peter Rumble kindly donated some of his Sparkling Red for each table.

In 2012 it will be the turn of the 1962, 1972, 1987 and 2002 graduates. We have not had a good run with the 10-year group for a long time but if there are any 2002 graduates they are strongly encouraged to attend. Rumour has it that we may even see an Oenology 40 year reunion group as well.

### **The Year of 71 Launched a Book**

The 40 year group presentation was led by Brian Ashton, Mike Wake and John Crosby. Mike officially launched the book produced by the 40yr group called "THE ROSEWORTHY COLLEGE LEGACY AND THE '68 GROUP". It is a 250 page hard back book with a striking pink and black cover; it is a history of the college and the graduates of 1971 over the last 40 years. The 40 year group call themselves the 6870 derived from their start in 1968 and their third year of 1970. They have produced an annual newsletter for 40 years, providing valuable material for the book. They engaged professional journalists Peter and June Donovan to put it together, Peter and June did a lot of archival research and interviews to piece together the history of RAC from the beginning to the change-over period in the 70's as it became a College of Advanced Education, Bob Herriot retired and women were admitted. The 6870 group financed the book production with sponsorship from CROP LANDS to print it. There have been many favourable comments about the book as it has gradually circulated.

John Crosby the Patron of the Roseworthy Student Fund followed on from Mike about raising funds for scholarships using the book. All the past students in attendance at the dinner received a free copy of the book and were encouraged to make a donation to the Student Fund. It is intended that every member of ROCA (about 1600) will also receive a book, the 6870 group will try to hand deliver as many as possible and will post as a last resort as the postage rate on a hard back book is not cheap and will eat into the scholarship drive. The aim of the Scholarship drive is an attempt to attract talented students to study Agriculture as the present student numbers are in decline but will need to build up to replace the aging agies and also meet the challenge of the impending food shortage in the not too distant future.

If any member would like a book they can contact David Spencer by email [spencers@adam.com.au](mailto:spencers@adam.com.au) who will put you in contact with somebody who can possibly deliver.

The 6870 group as other reunion groups before them made a weekend of it mostly centered around the Adelaide Shores Caravan Park. The group initiated a few fun comps to make the reunion more attractive, like The Masters Cup (Golf), Master of Darts and the Austin Gift (Bike against the Austin 7 over 400metres). There was a visit to RAC and a good look around the new Vet-mansion as well as plenty of time for chin wagging and reminiscing.



### **Multiple Golden Jubilee Celebrations for the Year of 61**

The RAC class of 1961 celebrated their 50 years since graduation in style on the actual day of graduation, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2011, the class first met in the University of Adelaide Archives to peruse their personal files from College days. Some previously unknown and interesting snippets were discovered. The photograph is of those attending this event.



The class with members, wives/partners coming from all states, then gathered at Ayers House for a celebration dinner. Our Jubilee book was released and presentations given to all graduates. The recovery BBQ was held at Henley Beach the following day.

Celebrations recommenced in October 2011 to coincide with the Annual ROCA Dinner and University of Adelaide graduates Jubilee functions. Again all members (less two who had attended in March) gathered in Adelaide from all states. A visit to the Roseworthy Campus took place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

[www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/)

when Professors Phil Hynd and Kym Abbott gave us an excellent insight into current activities and future plans. On Friday 21<sup>st</sup>, the University Jubilee celebrations were attended. In the evening this eminent group crashed in style the Annual ROCA Dinner at the Glenelg Golf Club.

The highlight for the reunion became the Saturday excursion to Mannum when the Paddle Steamer the 'Marion' was hired for the day. The cruise on the River Murray on a perfect day was matched with the wines presented by our 3 wine maker members. The photo was taken after re-landing on shore.



Following on from the year of '61's regular reunions, the next will probably take place in Tasmania in 2013.

Mark Seeliger

## Eyre Peninsula Branch Elections

Dick Turnbull took the chair for the election of officers at the AGM held at Cleve in February 2012.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Nominated by</b>	<b>Seconded by</b>
President	B Ranford	B Ashton	J McFarlane
Secretary	B Ashton	B Ranford	Fish
Treasurer	T Ashman	P Dunn	J Shipard
EP Representative	M Wake	J Shipard	B Ranford
Committee	F Cordon (past president) P Shane P Russell M Stanley S O'Brien A Forrest C James (Jo Turner was nominated in her absence but declined)		

## **Roseworthy Campus & Student Fund**

2012 will be the best year yet for scholarships resulting from activities of the RC & SF Committee. Seven awards are to be made;

- Trevor Dillon Scholarship - \$5,000
- RC & FC - \$1,750
- Royal Ag. And Hort Foundation - \$5,000
- Agribusiness Leaders Scholarship for Excellence - \$10,000
- Lower Murray Lot Feeders Scholarship - \$5,000
- Viterra Award – 2 @ \$5,000

The total value of all scholarships is \$37,500. With approaches being made to other industry groups we are hopeful that more awards can be made next year especially as R.O.C.A has approved assisting students at Waite Campus who undertake appropriate rural courses.

We offer our congratulations to Maddie Jonas the recipient of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Award and who graduated with a Degree in Agriculture and who was the top student and Gold Medal winner for the year. Congratulations also to Andrew Hunt, the winner of a RC & FC who also has graduated with a Degree in Agriculture. Both found employment immediately following their exams and both have proved very worthy scholarship winners.

The Co-Patrons committee has enlisted four new members. Namely;  
 Locky McLaren – Former R.O.C.A President and also former Executive Director of Rural Solutions SA  
 Michael Farmilo – Principal Winemaker Boar's Rock Winery, McLaren Vale  
 Graeme Pope – Leading identity within the pig industry  
 Stuart Matthews – Manager School of Agriculture Food and Wine at Adelaide University

We look forward to their involvement and ability to connect with groups and or individuals not known to the present members.

Applications for new Scholarships indicate an ever increasing demand with interviews for the 2012 awards to be undertaken in the last 2 weeks of April or early May. Co-Patrons would like to have sufficient funds to support other initiatives such as study tours for students and or staff or exchange visits by highly qualified teaching staff.

Despite making significant headway it is disappointing that R.O.C.A members have not been as supportive as we had expected hence the RC & FC can only offer \$1,750 per year when other scholarships are worth much more; let's hope for a better outcome this year.

We welcome the appointment of Professor Iain Reid as Executive Dean at the Roseworthy Campus. Professor Reid addressed Co-Patrons at the 18<sup>th</sup> of April meeting and displayed a very real passion for the future of Roseworthy Campus. Representative of the Co-Patrons committee met with the retiring University Vice Chancellor to thank him for his major contribution to the re-immersion of the Campus as a major force in rural education and to wish him well in retirement.

I thank sincerely all Co-Patrons for their efforts over the past year. I thank also Kelly Banwell and Paul Finn for their very real contributions.

Ray Taylor  
 Chair Roseworthy Campus and Student Fund

## **Archiving**

The regular Tuesday group of Old Scholars continues to archive Roseworthy College information. This is undertaken under the supervision Tupp Carmody of the University of Adelaide Archives group.

The copying of 'The Student' magazine from the first issue in 1897 into electronic format for entry onto the web site is nearing completion. The 1897 to 1934 issues are already on the web and issues up to 1971 have been digitized. However the archives is missing copies of 1972, 1973 and 1984 to 1990 inclusive.

It would be great to have all issues available on the web. Are there any ROCA member who are able to arrange for the missing issues to be provided? These can be passed on to Committee members or to the University of Adelaide Archives on North Terrace.

Some useful links to Roseworthy information are as follows:

- The ROCA page is: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/>
- The University Archives Page is: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/>
- The Roseworthy Agricultural College page is:  
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/roseworthy/>

On this page are a number of links to:

[Roseworthy Agricultural College Photographs & Images](#)

[Establishment of Roseworthy College including a copy of the Act - Parliamentary Library Research, 1979](#)

[Naming of College Buildings and Roads and Walkways](#)

["The Student" Magazine](#)

[Roseworthy Old Collegians Association \(ROCA\)](#)

[ROCA Award of Merit Medallists](#)

[Roseworthy Graduates 1886-2005](#)

Mark Seeliger

## **ROCA Salutes the Archives Group**



University Archives Volunteer Group - Roseworthy Special Interest Group  
Taken at end of year function 29 November 2011

L to R - Harris Nash, Andrew Brown, Wilf Bowen, Peter Fairbrother, Richard Thomas, Tupp Carmody (University Archives Volunteer Group Coordinator), Richard Campbell, David Spencer, Mark Seeliger, Dick Flower – absent Denys Slee.

## **Ray Taylor - ROCA Award of Merit 2011**



### **Mr Raymond John Taylor (RDA 1952)**

Following his graduation from Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1952 with second class honours, Ray Taylor had a distinguished career in both the public and private sectors. He also has been very active in services to the Roseworthy cause and the broader community.

Ray joined the SA Department of Agriculture after graduating from Roseworthy and following short stints as a Field Officer and Project Officer was promoted at age 23 to District Agricultural Adviser based at Murray Bridge. This was a multi-faceted role involving the provision of advice to those associated with both dryland and irrigated agriculture. He was transferred in 1955 to Adelaide as Agricultural Adviser for the Central District.

Six years later he moved from the public to the private sector joining the newly-formed Commonwealth Development Bank where he assessed the economic viability of proposed land development projects. During this period Ray studied Valuation, a discipline integral to the type of work he was undertaking.

In 1972 he formed his own company utilising his agricultural and valuation knowledge to assist clients such as the Primary Industry Bank of Australia. His work took him to all States and the Northern Territory, much of it centred on the pastoral and viticultural industries. Ray also became involved in assessment of compensation claims by landowners whose properties were compulsorily acquired or affected by natural disasters such as bushfires. Incorporated in this was his provision of expert testimony to Courts. He contributed a number of papers to conferences and directed the First International Dryland Farming Conference involving delegates from 42 countries held in Adelaide in 1982. In 1994 he sold his interest in the business to a partner.

Ray Taylor has spent many years promoting the Roseworthy cause. He is an Honorary Life Member of ROCA, a Member of the ROCA Committee, a former College Council Member from 1974 to 1986 during the formation years of Roseworthy as a College of Advanced Education; a former ROCA President and Chairman of the Co-patrons' group of the Student and Campus Fund. He was inaugural State President and subsequently Federal President and Life Member of the former Agricultural Technologists Association; an Emeritus Member of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology, Fellow of the Australian Property Institute and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. At the general community level he has been a member and president of the Oaklands Estate Residents' Association and a member of the Advisory Committee to the Patawalonga Catchment Management Board.



## **Call for ROCA Award of Merit Nominations for 2012**

Nominations are now being invited for the 2012 ROCA Award of Merit, on the form enclosed with this Digest. ROCA awards the medal to a ROCA member who has made a meritorious contribution to any field of agricultural activity and/or ROCA community affairs. "Agricultural activity" is given the widest possible meaning and can include all aspects of animal, land and natural resource management.

All nominees must be ROCA members and nominations must be prepared and signed by two ROCA members. Nominations must be made on the Nomination Form and must include the information requested. A resume should be included, detailing the nominee's career since leaving Roseworthy, including details of major published papers, achievements, other qualifications, awards and honours received, services to industry, community, government and ROCA focusing particularly on impact and outcomes. References from colleagues familiar with the nominee's career and achievements should be included.

**Nominations, with the supporting information, must reach the ROCA Secretary by 30 July 2011.**

Since 1961, fifty notable Old Collegians have been honoured by the Association. The Honour Board detailing past recipients is in the foyer of the Main Building adjacent to the Dining Room at the Roseworthy Campus. The Award of Merit is regarded as the highest honour ROCA can bestow on one of its members. The quality of past ROCA Award of Merit recipients is illustrated by the following list:

1961 Roland Hill OBE	1978 Henry Day AO	1995 Grant Mayfield
1962 David Riceman	1979 Dr Mark Hutton	1996 Bob Knapstein
1963 Len Cook	1980 Cliff Hooper	1997 Jim Pocock
1964 W J Dawkins	1981 Andrew Michelmores	1998 Ian Young
1965 Frank Pearson	1982 Milton Spurling	1999 Don Moyle
1966 Sir Allan Callaghan	1983 Ralph Hewett Jones	2000 Grant Paech
1967 Bob Herriot OBE	1984 David Suter	2001 Brian Jefferies AM
1968 Denis Muirhead	1985 Hon Dr Bruce Eastick AM	2002 Dr Graham Mitchell AO
1969 Jack Reddin	1986 John Obst	2003 Philip Laffer
1970 Ron Badman	1987 Robin Steed	2004 John Vickery
1971 Prof Rex Butterfield	1988 Reg French	2005 Ronald Mertin AM
1972 Rex Krause	1989 Ray Norton	2006 Brian Rex Wilson
1973 Rex Kuchel	1990 Tony Summers	2007 Kenneth Wilfred (Wilf) Bowen
1974 Lex Walker	1991 Scott Dolling	2008 Philip John Young AM
1975 Ken Pike	1992 Rex Anderson	2009 Ian Hickenbotham OAM
1976 Len Laffer	1993 Bob Baker	2010 Arthur Ray Beckwith
1977 Des Habel	1994 Brian Hannaford	2011 Raymond John Taylor

## Award of Merit Nomination Form

### Nominees Information:

Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Period at Roseworthy:	
Qualification Gained:	

<b>Proposed by:</b>	<b>Seconded by:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Name:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Address:</b>
<b>Phone No:</b>	<b>Phone No:</b>
<b>Period at Roseworthy:</b>	<b>Period at Roseworthy:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>

Please attach supporting data outlining the nominee's career since leaving Roseworthy, including details of major published papers, achievements, academic qualifications, awards & honours received and service to industry, community and ROCA. Nominators and nominee must be current ROCA members.

Nominations should be sent to Roseworthy Old Collegians Association, P.O. Box 503, Kent Town SA 5071 and must be received no later than 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

#### Rules governing the ROCA Award of Merit

- ROCA shall periodically award a medal to a ROCA member who has made a meritorious contribution to any field of agricultural activity and/or ROCA community affairs. For the purpose of these rules, "agricultural activity" shall be given the widest possible meaning and will include all aspects of animal, land and natural resource management.
- The award shall be considered annually and if, in the opinion of the Selection Committee, there is no candidate of sufficient merit, no award shall be made.
- All nominees must be ROCA members and nominations shall be prepared and signed by two ROCA members. Nominations must be made on the Nomination Form and must include the information required thereon.
- Nominations should be accompanied by a resume detailing the nominee's career since leaving Roseworthy. This should also include details of major published papers, achievements, other qualifications, awards and honours received, and details of services to industry, community, government and ROCA focusing particularly on impact and outcomes. References from colleagues familiar with the nominee's career and achievements should be included.
- Nominations with the supporting data must reach the ROCA Secretary by 30 July each year. The Executive of ROCA shall review the nominations and has the right to reject any nomination deemed unsuitable before submitting the nominations to the Selection Committee.
- The Executive of ROCA may, at its discretion, include for consideration any candidates previously nominated.
- The Selection Committee shall consist of five members, one from each of the following fields:

Primary production research and/or extension	Public service	Primary production
Agricultural related industry	President of ROCA	

- The Executive of ROCA shall appoint to the Selection Committee such persons who are, in its opinion, of sufficient standing and experience to be competent to assess the merits of candidates from any field of agricultural activity. The Executive of ROCA will review membership of the Selection Committee each year.
- The President of ROCA shall be the convener of the Selection Committee and shall have only a casting vote. Three members of the Committee will constitute a quorum.
- In the event that a member of the Executive of ROCA or the Selection Committee is nominated for the Award, that person will stand down from all discussions and deliberations for that year.
- The Selection Committee shall make its recommendation to the Executive of ROCA at least four weeks prior to the date of presentation of the Award.
- Members of the Executive of ROCA and the Selection Committee are required to hold the names of all nominees in strict confidence.

## ROCA Digest – electronic and hard copies

The DIGEST will be sent out in electronic form to more than 600 members who have agreed to receive the Digest by e-mail. These recipients will receive the "long version" which will contain extra material and more pictures. This version will be posted on the ROCA website which is located within the University of Adelaide website. [www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/)

Make sure your e-mail address is current to receive future ROCA Digests in their electronic form. To do this you have two options:

- Log in to Adelaide onLION to update your details yourself:  
[www.alumni.adelaide.edu.au/adelaideonlion](http://www.alumni.adelaide.edu.au/adelaideonlion).

or

- Send an e-mail containing your full name, address and year of graduation to:  
[roca@alumni.adelaide.edu.au](mailto:roca@alumni.adelaide.edu.au). (the Alumni automatically forward this onto our President)

Not an Adelaide onLION member? You can request an account at:  
[www.adelaide.edu.au/alumni/requestanaccount/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/alumni/requestanaccount/).

All members with e-mail addresses will receive their Digest and special occasional news briefs by e-mail.

For those of you without e-mail addresses registered on our membership data base you will automatically receive a hard copy of the ROCA DIGEST. Remember this will not contain the extra material of the longer electronic version.



<p><b>115<sup>th</sup> AGM</b> <b>2012 Reunion Dinner</b></p> <p><b>Don't miss another memorable night. Bring your partner or guest</b></p> <p><b>Friday 19th October, 2012</b></p> <p><b>The Grange Golf Club</b> <b>White Sands Drive, S.A, 5040</b></p>	<p><u><b>Your 2011/2012 ROCA Committee</b></u></p> <p>President: Dick Turnbull Vice President: David Spencer vacant Secretary: Tracy Parkes Treasurer: Paul Mansfield E.P. Rep: Mike Wake Student Rep: vacant Committee: Dale Manson – Immediate Past President Ian Rice Alan Richardson Mark Seeliger David Spencer Ray Taylor Richard Inwood Public Officer: Dick Turnbull Digest Co-ordinator: Locky McLaren</p>	<p><b>Will you be a ROCA Committee Member for 2012/13</b></p> <p><b>If you would like to join the ROCA Committee during this fascinating period of Roseworthy and ROCA's history, you can nominate yourself.</b></p> <p><b>ROCA needs you</b></p>
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## ROCA EXTRA

There is more information for ROCA members receiving the electronic version by e-mail. You can also visit our website [www.adelaide.edu.au/roca](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca)

### Roseworthy Agricultural College - Tales from the Honour Roll

**John Tassie RDA (1903 – 1906)**



**3015 Private John Tassie jnr  
Killed in Action 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918, France.**

John Tassie's war was a short war. He arrived 'in the field' at North Western France on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1918 in the last year of the war, and was killed on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 111 days later and became one of the 41 Roseworthians who gave their lives in that great and terrible war. He was one of the "deep thinkers", a term used for those who enlisted later, by those who enlisted early, in a haze of patriotism, sense of duty and a hunger for adventure. Perhaps many of those who did enlist early, later with the wisdom of hindsight, wished they had given it a little more thought. John's attestation papers show him joining on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1916, at the age of 31 years, so he could not have thought all that deeply about it. He was appointed to the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement detachment for the South Australian 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion, AIF. He had come to Adelaide from his farm at Keith and recorded his address as 10 Seawall, Glenelg, his parents' home. Their home was an imposing residence right on the foreshore at Glenelg, on Moseley Square, where the Grand Hotel now stands. His father was the managing director of the Adelaide branch of D & W Murray, a large British Importing & Exporting Company. He had purchased his son John a farm at Keith, after he graduated from Roseworthy.

John's family came to Adelaide from Perth not long before he entered Roseworthy Agricultural College (RAC) in 1903, aged 18. He had been student at Scotch College, Perth. It was there he gained the four years cadet experience mentioned in his attestation papers ... the forms where a recruit attests to his personal details as part of his application to join the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). At Roseworthy he appears to have been a quiet student, as he does not get many mentions in "**The Student**", a magazine produced and edited by the students detailing College life and events. In those days there were only around 40 to 50 students at Roseworthy. The only committee he appeared to have served on is the library committee. He was not on the sport committee or the dance committee, and his name does not appear in any of the football, cricket or tennis team during the three years he was there. At the Annual Sports and Dance Day in July 1905 he won the 220 yards flat race. He did much better academically, coming second overall in his final year, also winning the Viticulture

and Wine Making Prize that year and the Book-Keeping prize in his first year in 1903. In second year he won the prize for outside work. Not bad for a city boy!

The family called him Jack and his mother's letters are addressed "Dear Jack", but he signed himself John Tassie jnr and his father was known as John Tassie snr. It was, and still is a family tradition to name one of the sons John. His nephew, (another) John Tassie says the family knows very little about Jack's life other than that his father purchased a farm at Keith for him some time after he left Roseworthy. In those days Keith was real frontier country, but they did at least have the Adelaide Melbourne railway line.



Jack's Farm at Keith



Upon enlisting in July 1916 Jack was marched into Mitcham army camp, which was the main AIF training establishment in South Australia from July 1915 to 1920. The suburb of Colonel Light Gardens is now located on the old camp's site. His army records show that he qualified for the rank of Sergeant after attending an NCO course and the camp commandant noted on his certificate "Recommended to attend an Officer Training Course". He qualified with certificated in Musketry and Trench Warfare and Grenade use and was promoted to Sergeant. Very few details are known of his time at the Mitcham camp, only that he stayed there for almost a year. He did not go on to officer training but probably became an instructor. No doubt his RDA, his general knowledge and leadership abilities persuaded the army to keep him back for this important role. Finally he embarked for overseas service on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1917, on the HMAT (A30) Borda and arrived in Plymouth on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1917.



**Photo of a young woman Bessie, unknown to the family**

As far the family knew Jack was never romantically involved, but have speculated that he may have been in the early stages of a budding relationship with Bessie, who he could have met in Keith where he worked on his farm. The above photo is dated 22 June 1917, four days before Jack embarked for Europe. However they never heard from her after his death.

He arrived in England as a sergeant and immediately requested to be reverted to the lower ranks. Later after being promoted to acting Lance Corporal he again requested to be reduced to a private just prior to going to France in late December 1917. This explains the photo of Jack over the fire place in the Tassie Memorial Library, in which he is wearing sergeant's stripes. Note that the letter notifying his family of his death, records his rank as "Private" Tassie. It was not uncommon for new NCO's and even some officers with no battle experience to request they be reduced in rank as they did not wish to lead experienced front line men in battle. A very understandable sentiment. He underwent further infantry training in Southern England, at Larkhill military camp near Durrington village in Wiltshire, not far from Stonehenge. He was well trained by the time he embarked at South Hampton for France on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1917.

Private John Tassie arrived at Havre France and was marched into the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion AIF on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1918, the day the battalion was rotated out of the line. He was one of the 210 reinforcements that joined the battalion around that Christmas period. The battalion had just endured nine very hard and bitterly cold days in the trenches in the Armentieres – Bois Grenier sector of North Western France. Jack may have thought he was finally to see action, but the battalion moved to the rear and immediately commenced the normal regimental routine of training and drilling. According to the battalion's story and official history written by E.J. Colliver and B.H. Richardson published in 1920 (Rigby Ltd), that was "where a thorough system of smartening drill and ceremonies was adopted and a strict discipline maintained, both on and off parade". He must have thought he was still in a training battalion. It seems incredible that a CO would subject his men to this seemingly unnecessary activity considering the battle weary troops had just come out of the trenches in the middle of a bitter winter. Keeping strict discipline and not allowing the men to slack off, was a policy the Australian High Command had adopted to keep their battalions in a much better fighting condition, just as a football coach would refuse to relax his training regime in the middle of the season. The weather conditions frequently proved unfavourable for outdoor training, as numerous snowstorms and heavy falls of rain rendered the ground unsuitable for drill movements. Brigade courses in signaling and intelligence were arranged and numerous lectures were delivered on topics of military importance. The Australian Divisions were now very experienced and at full strength. At this stage of the war many of the experienced British battalions were severely depleted and war weary, while the new battalion contained a high proportion of enthusiastic 18 year olds fresh out of recruit training.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion was formed in Adelaide in 1916 and was South Australia's contribution to the new 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. Together with the 41<sup>st</sup> 42<sup>nd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Battalions the 43<sup>rd</sup> formed the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Division. The battalion spent most of 1917 bogged down in bloody trench warfare in Flanders. In June of that year it participated in the battle of Messines and in October it fought in the Third Battle of Ypres. Thus Jack was joining a very experienced battalion and the 210 new arrivals of which he was one, brought the battalion to its full strength of around 960 men.

For most of January the battalion was in reserve, while in February it went in and out of the front line a week at a time. When not in the front line they were not far behind in support. Even as early as late January/February 1918, Allied command believed that the Germans were preparing for a general advance, as intelligence reported large numbers of German divisions were returning from Russia after the 1917 Revolution. In March the battalion went to the back area to billets at Selles which was near the English Channel, not far from Calais. In his CO report for March 1918, Lt Col. John Farrell described their time at Selles thus: "The billets were very scattered and consisted mostly of barns which were very comfortable, and were provided with straw – The weather was good during this period and the men greatly benefited by the change". The spring weather prevailed and the men were allowed to relax and play sport, which included inter-company and battalion football matches and other forms of entertainment. Training was not forgotten, with daily musketry and Lewis gun instruction, followed by range work, while a certain amount of ceremonial drill and marching was undertaken. On the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> March a mounted staff officer arrived at the battalion HQ from Brigade bringing information that the long awaited German offensive had started. The Division's 14,000 men were ordered to be prepared to move forward within 48 hours. This was the beginning of Ludendorff's **Operation Michael**, which had as its aim the capture of Amiens, a critical rail centre, 90 km north of Paris. The German plan was to drive a wedge between the British army to the West and the French army to the East. The Germans were hoping this offensive would give them greater bargaining power at any peace talks which they believed would be inevitable. By then they had given up on the idea of defeating the Allies

The Roseworthy Agricultural College magazine *The Student* of January 1920 (Vol XIX – No 2) contains an article "When the Germans Attacked" written in the first person by a student or an old scholar identified only as "I.O.". The article describes almost exactly the movements of the 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion from Selles, 100km towards the South East to an area in the Somme Valley a few kilometres north of Villers-Bretonneux. (See [www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/roca/) and click on *Roseworthy Agricultural College*, it is in the University Archives, Records and Collection page, then click on "*The Student Magazine*" and find *Vol 19, No2 Jan 1920*). It was here the Germans were to mount their greatest effort. Jack Tassie and his battalion arrived at Heilly, on River Ancre during the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> March 1918, with orders to hold the line. They had been on the move for five days with hardly any sleep. The article in "*The Student*" gives a much more personalised account of the move.

The battalion only lost 8 killed and 15 wounded during March. During the month of April the battalion was employed on the line for the whole month in the Bonnay-Heilly area, 16 km north east of Amiens and 8 km north of Villers-Bretonneux. They were covering 2500 yards of the front line during this vital period, and lost 22 killed (including Jack) and 54 wounded during the month of April. These were considered light casualty numbers. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, from their positions on the northern side of the River Somme, Jack no doubt was able to hear and feel the ground rumble as 15 German Divisions comprising about 150,000 men launched their a major attack East towards Amiens about 4-5 Km south of their defensive position. This was the start of the first Battle of Villers-Bretonneux in which the 18<sup>th</sup> British Division and the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Australian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division halted the German advance toward Amiens. An heroic counter attack by the 36<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 3rd AIF Division saved the day. The 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade sustained 660 casualties in this two day battle. The 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion took no direct part in this action although it was only occurring a few kilometres south on the other side of the Somme river. On the next day another major German attack took place at Dernancourt, just south of Albert and 4 km North East of Jack's position. This attack was blunted by the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Brigades of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division.

Operation Michael was putting a lot of pressure on the Allies all along the front, particularly in the Somme valley across from the city of Amiens, pushing the front line further into France. The river Somme flows through the middle of Amiens. All five Australian Divisions had been sent to this vital sector. However a major offensive in the North near the Belgium border forced the British commander Field Marshal Haig to order the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division North where it had just come from to assist in the defence of Hazebourck, a key rail centre for British supplies from the English Channel. The British high command knew that much of their army were on their last legs or were so inexperienced that they could not be relied upon, but all 5 Australian Divisions (about 75,000 soldiers) had proven themselves to be effective and reliable. On 24<sup>th</sup> April the Germans made a second attempt to capture Amiens, again by attacking through Villers-Bretonneux. This time they captured the town. The British were incapable of retaking the town, so it was left to the Australian 15<sup>th</sup> brigade attacking at night from the North and the 13<sup>th</sup> brigade attacking from South to re-take the village on 25th April 1918. At this time the 43<sup>rd</sup> battalion was at in the line at Bonnay 8 km north of Villers-Bretonneux. The Battalion's war diary records that after five days of comparatively quiet enemy

activity, heavy shelling, HE and gas erupted in the early morning of 24<sup>th</sup> April and did not finish until 4 p.m. The barrage was particularly heavy, with shells landing in the trenches and further behind to the artillery positions nearer the village of Bonnay. Most were Phosgene shells. That night the battalion was relieved by the 41<sup>st</sup> battalion and they moved to the support trenches a few hundred yards further back. In the battalion's war Diary, the O.C. B Company recorded in his monthly report for April, the deaths of two members: T/Sgt Lilliecrap and Pte Grant occurring on the 24<sup>th</sup> April. These were the only deaths recorded in the battalion's diary for that day and for the next day, Anzac Day 1918. The War Diary's report for 25<sup>th</sup> April was very brief, stating "Day was spent mostly improving sleeping positions. Day quiet and visibility bad."

The official forms in Jack's service record, (available on the National Archives website) all record his death occurring on 25<sup>th</sup> April. No other details of where and how he died are recorded in these documents. His family has no letters or other communication from his CO or comrades in arms regarding his death. A search of the 43th Battalion War Diary, does not mention his death and his name does not appear in any of the regimental documents. This is not unusual, as very few individual deaths are recorded in these documents. One can only speculate about the circumstances of his death, based on information in the battalion's War Diary.

The Battalion had to move back to the support trenches by 01 00 hours on 25/4/12 after being relieved by the 41<sup>st</sup> Btn and enemy activity opposite their position that day is recorded as "quiet", unlike the previous day. Even on quiet days, the odd shell may come over or snipers could have been active and support positions could well have been in their sights. These were very hazardous places in those days. Not more than a few kilometres to their South the second battle for Villers-Bretonneux was in full flight. It appears Jack was very unlucky on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918.

There is some indication that his father sought further information from the army regarding his son's death and requested a picture for his grave site. Today the family have very few of Jack's things. I was shown what appeared to be the contents of his personal kit sent to his father, by the AIF Kit Store, Hammersmith, London. The inventory of his kit read as follows: "disc, tobacco pouch, 3 certificates, letter, photos" I was shown all these items by Jack's nephew John Tassie when I visited him at Eden Hills, Adelaide, May 2012. Not much to show for a life.

The death of Jack must have affected his family very much; especially his father. Jack had four siblings, Janet (b 1879), Jeffrey (b 1880, died 1906), Anne (b 1882) and Gemmel (b 1901). Gemmel was the father of Jack's nephew John Tassie of Eden Hills. Jack was born 1885. Soon after the war John Tassie snr set about seeking permission to erect a memorial library at Roseworthy to honour the memory of his son. The Governor opened the library in December 1920.



Private 3015 John Tassie is buried here at **Bonnay Communal Cemetery Extension** (grave reference B 28), near the village of Bonnay on the north west banks of the River Ancre, 3 km north of Corbie in Northern France. The date of death on his headstone is recorded as 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918, Australian Infantry AIF, 43<sup>rd</sup> Btn. The extension contains the remains of 106 soldiers; 34 British and 75 Australian.