## BUILDING the AERIAL FARM at 3TU

by Ted Pitts



The photographs and copy reference the construction of the Aerial Array at 3 TELECOM at RAAF Station Pearce are being sent in the hope that they might be included at your next newsletter.

I knew I had them somewhere , but where? After turning the house inside-out there was great joy but I found them in poor condition so I had them enlarged and enhanced.

After joining the Interim Air Force in 1947 I was drafted into Course No. 11 at RAAF Station Pearce and on completion of this training I was posted to A&GRS (Air and Ground Radio School) at Ballarat, Victoria.

It would be as well to know that in those days the A&GRS was a cluster of timber and iron huts that were bitterly cold in winter with one pot-belly stove per hut to keep us warm. You can imagine the Canteen, which served hot drinks and pies, was well patronised.

When this very interesting Course, which culminated in the Mustering of Radio Serviceman, came to it's completion, I, along with several others was posted to 3 Telecom Unit and it was here that we were given the task of constructing the masts to carry the Aerial Array for the new Telecom facility.

Contractors were called in to cement in place the base footings of all the masts. Two work teams were then formed, comprising four men to each team with one driver and an old weapons carrier supplying materials.

I was put in charge of one team and it was inevitable that a competitive spirit developed. Special tools including three sizes of spreader were made in the workshops of RAAF Pearce and these contributed to the speed and quality of our work. The fact that we had a rival team kept us on our toes and the team lead by myself ran out clear winners. Every man gave his best to bring about a construction time of approximately 5 to 6 hours for what I remember was a 70 foot tower.

I had three men including myself up the tower with one man on the ground sending up frame parts and bolts by rope. The conditions at the time were horrendous as the ground was low lying paperbark country and was wet and boggy. Our lunch was sent out from the Airmen's Mess and we had a canvas covered area to escape from the elements.

Of the masts, some 20 in all were finished ahead of time and we were congratulated by the C.O.

## In the beginning ...(the very beginning)......



Ted Pitts (right) and mates enjoy a graduation drink outside the 'Bucks Head' Hotel in Ballarat.



Inspecting the dreadful conditions in which the erection crews had to work.



(Above) Under canvas. Shelter from the elements at 3TU 1948.

(Left) Morning smoko. Ted pours the tea while LAC Wittmer stokes up the fire.