

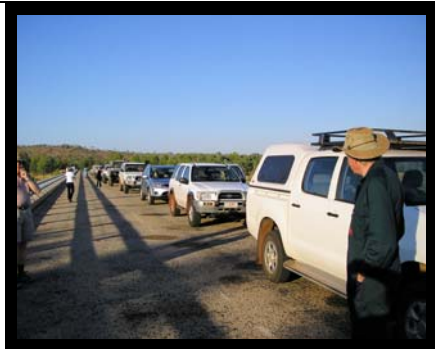
The Historical Society of the NT's trip to Bradshaw Station
(Department of Defence Bradshaw Field Training Area)
14-16 August 2009

By Bev Phel ts

The trip had been in the making during the past few years and finally it came to fruition. Our hosts and guides were Warrant Officer Peter Watts, Department of Defence, Peter O'Brien, Bradshaw Caretaker and Smiley, local Custodian.

Bradshaw's Run/Station was founded by Captain Joseph Bradshaw in 1894. Bradshaw took up 4,800 square mile on the northern bank of the Victoria River. As well as cattle, Bradshaw purchased sheep from his neighbour, Goldsborough & Mort (Wickham River Station later Victoria River Downs). Among other water transport, Bradshaw owned a pearling schooner and a yacht and he believed that some areas of his Station was suitable to grow rice and sugar. Bradshaw died in Darwin in 1916 from gangrene complications. During the early 2000s, the Department of Defence took over the pastoral lease, established a training base and built a bridge over the Victoria River to enable better access to the Station. The bridge is located 10kms from Timber Creek off the Victoria Highway. Bradshaw Station was registered on the Place names Register in 2007.

On our first day, 33 eager participants and 12 vehicles mustered at Bradshaw Bridge waiting to be met by Warrant Officer Watts. Peter then took us to HQ where he briefed us on safety issues (eg. wild animals, first aid, excavation procedures and bushfires) and gave us an interesting talk on the role and aims of the Army on Bradshaw.



Waiting on Bradshaw Bridge.



Andrew Baker (President, Kununurra Historical Society), David Carment & Brian Reid



At Army Headquarters

We traveled towards the Yambarran Range and on the way looked at the airstrip, the many boab trees, old grave sites, and the original Bradshaw homestead. Our lunch stop was at the current homestead which also presented the opportunity to explore the former Aboriginal camp, old buildings on the grounds and Bradshaw's Packhorse Cutting. It is believed that the Cutting was the route that Bradshaw took to bring his horses thru the Yambarran Range .



The original Bradshaw Homestead



Lunch on the lawns of a later homestead.

After lunch we traveled to Finlay's Grave Boab and the Lady Ruth Boab. Nearby way up on the hillside is Bradshaw's Tomb. Fred (brother of Joe) along with others were killed by Aborigines. Their coffins were made of crude beer-cases and they were carried up the cliffs and laid on the ground as it was too rocky to bury them. The site became known as Bradshaw's Tomb.



Finlay's Grave Boab



the Angalarri River

The following days took in the Ikymbon River and the Koolendong Valley areas and the scenery was magnificent and constantly changing.



Lunch at Ikmbon River



Renate Morbach, Ruth Kerr, Janie Mason & Margaret Donald



Charlotte and Wendy James



Wendy Carter & Andrew Baker from the Kununurra Historical Society



Kathy & Graham McMahon & Tubby & Carmel Selwood



Sandra Lenz, Ros Henry and Yvonne Forrest



James, Belinda & Brad Boland, Peter O'Brien & Trevor Horman

Besides visiting Bradshaw Station, we managed to find time to explore the surrounding district.



The old Timber Creek Police Station



Augustus Gregory's Tree inscribed 2 July 1856. Gregory established a camp on the Victoria River in 1855



Ros Henry, Yvonne Forrest & Sandra Lenz at the Ord River



The Victoria River Bridge



Sunset at Naccaroo Lookout near Timber Creek

Everyone arrived safely home with no incidents or even a flat tyre. Thanks to our guides, Warrant Officer Peter Watts, Peter O'Brien and Smiley for the wonderful three days we spent on the Station.