

Heard the News

Sound survivor – fighting gales on the set of *Australian Survivor*



Why Head Mics Aren't Hair Raising

How to soundtrack a war – *Australians at War*



... the new committee and much more in this issue!

President's Perspective

After a period of hibernation, the newsletter has come out of the cold.

I welcome the appointment of our new newsletter editor, Jason Harty, a name many of you will know as past feature writer and assistant editor of *Encore* magazine. Jason's experience will be most welcome and will help us to produce our newsletter on a more regular basis.

While the printed newsletter has been asleep, the ASSG website has remained very much awake. Webmaster, Phil Purcell, has kept current news and information active on our website. I encourage all members to visit our website where you will find news, archived articles, photos and details of ASSG events. The address is: www.assg.org.au.

Since the last newsletter the Annual General Meeting has been held and the committee for 2002 elected (see page 5). And there have been some further changes. We are sad to lose Cate Cahill as our Administrator after many years of service to the ASSG. Cate's "real-life" commitments are going to take priority for a while. Her contribution to the ASSG has been invaluable. Thanks for everything Cate.

Events for 2002 are taking shape after the first committee meeting of the year. The ASSG has already held a seminar on location sound recording at the Entech 2002 trade show held at Darling Harbour. Future events planned for the year include a seminar on Sound Standards for Digital Television, the ASSG Disco Bowling Challenge and of course, the Annual Screen Sound Awards.

In a year when we are seeing so much international recognition for our peers, I look forward to great year locally, as well.

Stephen R Smith
ASSG President

Aussies miss Oscar, win BAFTA

Despite missing out on the big one, the sound crew from *Moulin Rouge*, including Roger Savage and Guntis Sics deserve a huge round of applause for their nomination for the Academy Award for Sound Achievement 2002.

Taking home the award would have been a great follow up to winning the British Academy of Film and Television Award (BAFTA) just a couple of weeks earlier over films such as *Black Hawk Down*, *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Shrek*.

We know that there are many more who worked on the soundtrack than are permitted to be nominated so we congratulate all who worked on the nominated films for the Oscars this year. It really helps focus attention on our industry and the quality of craftspeople in Australia.

The BAFTA nomination allowed more of the sound team to actually be named for the award. The full BAFTA winning team is as follows - Andy Nelson, Roger Savage, Anna Behlmer, Guntis Sics, Gareth Vanderhope and Antony Gray.

Gethin Creagh was also nominated for the Sound Achievement Oscar for his mixing work on *Lord of the Rings*. Just prior to flying out on the complimentary first class ticket to Hollywood, Gethin was apparently unsure whether to invest in a suit for the night or not. With another two films in the series yet to be completed, he may get good use out of the new suit.

New studios to create new jobs?

A \$10 million-plus extension to the Warner Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast is expected to create around 2,500 new jobs, making the studios one of the largest film production facilities in the southern hemisphere.

A major part of the 6,000 square metre development will be the construction of two new sound stages of approximately 1,600 square metres and 2,200 square metres in size, as well as two new production offices and two construction workshops.

The Pacific Film and Television Commission (PFTC) will lend Warner Roadshow Studios \$8 million, "to increase the size of its studios in return for guaranteed film production and jobs", according to premier Peter Beattie. The deal was instigated by Warner Roadshow Studios, who sent a proposal to the PFTC about the extension several months ago.

LA-based Warner Roadshow Studios president Michael Lake said the studio expansion was a direct result of the "hard work" between the government and the PFTC and would ensure

a dramatic increase in the amount of production within the state. Construction will begin immediately and is due to be completed by August.

Meanwhile, the Central City Studios (CCS) consortium has been given the green light for its \$111 million film and television studio complex in Melbourne's Docklands.

The Victorian Government announced it would inject \$40 million into the private sector consortium, which is chaired by former Coles Myer chief Peter Bartels and headed by entrepreneur Tim Barnett as managing director.

The CCS proposal consists of the studios spanning over six hectares and including a film and television studio facility, six sound stages (totalling 76,000 square feet), buildings for production houses, an art department, wardrobe, construction workshop and storage space.

There will be four film and two television sound stages of various sizes, covering a total area of 7061 square metres.

As the studios are not expected to be in operation until mid-2003, the Premier has announced an interim studio space at St Albans, where the US feature *Queen of the Damned* was shot.

The temporary studio will allow for the service of productions immediately, allowing the market to build prior to the completion of the Docklands site.

Christmas Curiosity

It seems hard to predict whom the sound fraternity will have a drink with. Our two Christmas events had mixed results.

The ASSG combined Sydney Christmas party with the ASE (Australian Screen Editors) attracted a healthy turnout of members. Held at the discreet location of the Dobroyd Point Rowers Club, we had our chance to mix with both colleagues and screen editors. It was a great night and a tradition that we hope to establish.

AFFTA (Australian Federation of Film and Television Associations) held drinks for us all at the Soho Bar in Kings Cross following numerous notices. The venue was packed but the one ASSG member who attended felt very lonely! Maybe we'll find some company for you next year Trevor.

ASSG presents...

The ASSG presented a seminar on location sound recording at Entech 2002, entitled "Microphone techniques, choice and tricks for capturing sound on location".

The seminar was part of a three-day program held alongside the entertainment and technology trade show. The session attracted a full house to listen to the words of wisdom from Jack Friedman, Peter Grace, Ross Boyer, Brett Heath and

Stephen Smith.

Many thanks to them for volunteering their time.

The Guild also had a display at the show promoting the ASSG to the wider industry. There was a lot of interest in the Guild website and applications for membership. Thanks to Trevor Harrison for his effort in organising the display.

AusFILM revs up promotion

Film marketing body AusFILM has targetted Tokyo, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York as part of its efforts to market Australia as a location for film and television production. At a seminar and cocktail party in Tokyo, 140 Japanese guests were joined by more than 20 AusFILM members including producers, special effects and post-production houses, casting agents, state film agencies and production services companies. AusFILM has also hosted an industry event in Los Angeles, with guest speaker Michael Lake, the executive vice president of Worldwide Feature Production, Village Roadshow Pictures and President of Warner Roadshow Movieworld Studios talking about the new tax offset in Australia, studio expansions for Warners Gold Coast studios and the Fox Sydney studios, and the Melbourne Docklands studios. AusFILM is also using the tour to promote TVC producers of the diversity of locations in Australia and the expertise of crews, and has distributed over 400 brochures as part of the overall promotional exercise.

Macquarie launches new film fund

The Nine Network and Macquarie Bank have joined forces to lure investors to a new investment fund, seeking to raise \$62.5 million for the production of between two and nine features, two TV series and two telemovies. The Macquarie Nine Film & Television Investment Fund is asking for a minimum investment of \$5,275 and predominantly targeting mum and dad investors. Nine Films & Television will manage and supervise the selection, production and distribution of the television series and films, with Macquarie handling all the lending and investment. Local distribution will be through Hoyts Distribution, with the Nine Network having exclusive rights for free-to-air television.

The investment fund is guaranteeing that investors will get half their money back from their investment as well as accessing a potential 100 percent tax deduction over three years, under divisions 10B and 10BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

Lectrosonics' Moore meets ASSG

Sydney recordists and boom-swingers got together on Monday February 4th to meet Gordon Moore, Vice President, Sales, Lectrosonics inc.

Gordon has been with Lectrosonics since 1988 and travels the world lecturing and visiting Lectro dealers. The guild was fortunate to snare Gordon for an evening sponsored by John Barry Group, who provided their premises and refreshments on what must have been the wettest night in Sydney for years.

Seventeen people listened to an enlightening and very funny talk from Gordon, who gave a powerpoint presentation on the Lectro facility in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, describing various stages in the manufacture of Lectrosonics radio microphones and IFB systems. He also gave demonstrations of the ruggedness and durability of the units by dropping them from a table and twisting the antennae (not for the faint-hearted owner!!)

Following the presentation, Gordon was hit with a barrage of questions from those present and for one-and-a-half hours entertained us with witty answers to some very technical questions. Some very important points were raised during the evening.

Digital radio microphones may only deliver one third the range of similar powered analogue systems, with an upper audio limit of 15 kHz, all-in-all just not good enough when compared with the units we are using now. Gordon felt it may be better to stick with analogue transmission and add digital encoding for the audio signal. This is similar to Lectro's digital squelch encoding on one of their existing systems.

With the advent of 24P video cameras for High Definition television and producers requiring the 2 or 4 track master audio recording to be on the camera tape, Gordon said it was not



feasible to have a multi-channel receiver on the back of the camera due to the proximity of different frequency signals present in the one casing. There were however several suggestions of utilising AES/EBU or multiplexing from the floor which could solve this problem, but Gordon ruled out the possibility of royalties should they be developed !!!

Lectrosonics is in the process of developing a waterproof transmitter approximately half the size of the current 200 series units and hopes to be Beta-testing within six months.

Unfortunately Gordon was unable to meet with members in other states due to a very tight schedule. The Guild was fortunate that Wayne Harris of John Barry Group helped out on the only night Gordon was available.

After the get-together, David Glasser spoke with Wayne about the possibility of further guild meetings for trade nights and product reviews at John Barry Group, and Wayne agreed to help organize such events in the future.

New committee members elected

The ASSG Annual General Meeting was held at the Roxy Theatre, Film Australia at the end of last year.

A group of interested Guild members attended the meeting where the current committee reported on the previous year and the new committee was elected. All committee positions were declared open and specific duties were assigned to each position on the new committee.

Stephen Smith was re-elected as President and Trevor Harrison as Vice-President.

The rest of the new committee members are:
 Julius Chan - Secretary/Membership Coordinator
 Angus Robertson - Membership Coordinator
 Philip Purcell - Webmaster
 Tony Murtagh - News Coordinator
 Andy Postle - Sponsorship Coordinator
 David Glasser - Email Coordinator
 Trevor Harrison - Treasurer

There are also two paid positions appointed by the committee:

Administrator - to process new memberships and renewals, to run mail-out lists, and generally "run" the ASSG;

Newsletter Editor - an experienced journalist to assist in producing a regular newsletter.

Thanks to all the time put in by the out-going committee and special thanks to out-going Treasurer, Steve Murphy, who has given so much to the ASSG. We will miss you!

The Administrator Speaks

What a great night it was at the Waters Edge! Thanks to everyone for their support of the 2001 Awards. At the very least it's a great time to catch up with friends and colleagues as well as being important for other reasons (whatever they were again). Everything ran smoothly from the PowerPoint to the fantastic music, and I've only received one complaint - about the food. I was enjoying Shoko Ono on the Koto too much to notice the food really, although I was a bit suss of that orange thing for desert. When in doubt stick to the chocolate.

Thanks to the sponsors for their generous support and to all who came and made it another memorable occasion.

Ok here's some wildly exciting Administrator stuff...

American Express Phased Out

American Express is a larger administrative hassle than other cards and takes a large percentage for the pleasure of using their service, so it's not in our best interests to use it.

Membership Subscriptions

Membership subscriptions reminders were out a bit late this year.

It's easy to fall behind with subscriptions and I hate having to chase them up. Apart from it being hard to ask someone for a couple of years worth of arrears, it's a waste of members funds to spend so much administrative time following people up. So please get them in as soon as so that we can get newsletters out and plan activities for the Guild. So much of what we do is directly related to your support and input.

Email

In the last two years we have used email as a principal means of getting fast information out to members. This includes a lot of news/subjects of interest and events that we wouldn't have the time to get out via ordinary mail. It saves us a lot of time and money and saves a few trees as well. If you have an email address and would like to be "in the loop" please email it to the Guild to be forwarded to David Glasser, who prepares all our email bulletins.

The website usually has some of this information, but the emails are immediate and cover anything of interest from events at associated Guilds (like the Editors or the Composers Guild) to info on film festivals.

If you think we have your email address but aren't getting any bulletins, we may have the wrong address or an old address. So let us know.

Some old one.net customers (like Liam Egan!) haven't let me know if they have new emails yet.

Membership Survey

Thanks to all for filling in the little boxes on the membership survey on your subscription returns. I'll be publishing the results of it soon. At the moment it looks like we have a healthy balance between production and post production, and between film and TV. There are sponsors that contribute as associate members, and also one of Australia's few music editors. The membership profile of the Guild is important for planning events for members.

Feedback

We thrive on member participation and giving us feedback is one of the ways you can contribute to your Guild. In particular, we really need to know if there are any problems with or questions about your membership, such as the areas discussed above.

One of the best ways to contact us is by email, or by mail generally (that way we have it in writing and can't ignore you!) Also Andy Postle will answer any of your queries by phone. All our contact details are at the front of the newsletter.

Discussion Forum

On the topic of feedback, I've been discussing with Phillip Purcell, our website genius, the possibility of getting up a discussion forum onto the website. If anyone out there has any expertise in the realm of website discussion forums, we are eager to pick your brains. It will be a place where members can communicate and exchange information on issues of relevance to their profession. Hopefully we can attract contributors from overseas as well. We're a-workin' on it.

Cate Cahill

This is Cate's last column as ASSG administrator. Thanks again Cate, we wish you all the best.

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Sound survivor

By Steve Ravich, sound recordist

During November and December of 2001, I had the pleasure of being involved in the Nine Network production of *Australian Survivor*. The show was shot in a very remote location in South Australia in extreme weather conditions and involved around 90 people all up. These included nine “crews” comprising producer, sound and camera working on a roster system over the seven-week shoot.

We had to cover “reality” in the two camps, each of which started with eight survivors, following the action, challenges and tribal council meetings, everyday between 5am and 10pm. Overnight was covered by producers armed with Mini DV Cameras so we could get some sleep. Basically, we were rolling from dawn ‘till dusk.

The audio setup was discussed briefly at a pre-production meeting with the following decided upon as a basic guide:

- * RF Link(s) to Camera, one or two channels.
- * 2 x radio mics for talent
- * 1 x shotgun mic



* Mixer O/P to Track 1 of camera, Track 2 Cam Mic set to “Auto”

* No back up required

* All gear to be provided by sound recordists.

If you are reading this and thinking s**t! then you are not alone. Putting five different brands of radio mics into the field and working in close proximity is asking for trouble in most cases. Fortunately for all concerned the problems were very few.

During shooting there were never more than two crews in camp and the frequency agile units proved their worth. One of the other methods used to avoid “hits” was to position the transmitters up high on the mixer harness which helped to improve desensitizing of receivers in off-the-shoulder setups.

Bruce Jones from Lectrosonics was very helpful here running detailed tests on loss of front-end sensitivity in receivers with the results published on R.A.M.P.S. I should



add that the MKH 816 made a welcome return to many kits.

As we were not allowed to talk to the talent and radio mics could only be used occasionally during “reality” they were the perfect solution. Most of us had forgotten how good they are in the right situation. Brings back memories of holding one above my head on a full pole for 3 minutes walking backwards down Palm Beach. (*Home & Away* booming made easy).

Shooting the challenges involved more preparation as our host was thrown into the mix along with the survivors. These challenges covered a wide variety of locations, numbers of people involved and methods of shooting. They were all shot with between four and six crews and a Jimmy Jib. Initially we had problems trying to find out what was going on prior to the shoot but in the end it meant very little.

We realized that turning up and working it out on the run was the best plan. The other departments were up against all kinds of problems too so we were all in the same boat. Once we found out which camera was covering the host the rest was delegated as needed. Occasionally we had to have things re-jigged for audio due to the different setups each recordist had, (some were using two-channel mixers), but the director and camera department were always happy to help. After that it was just organized chaos based on what we thought and/or hoped would happen.

Tribal Council proved to be challenging in its own way.

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A maximum of nine radio mics, one each for talent and the presenter. Sounds simple. Then put them all on the end of a headland jutting out into the Southern Ocean with wind speeds up to 40 knots and driving rain. Add to that the pyro department and their hissing gas burners, the lighting brothers with the same problems as us and shooting it all “as live”. We decided to use two four-channel field mixers with four radio mics each for the

talent along with another two or four-channel mixer for the Host. The talent was separated into male and female mixes with each mix sent to both tracks on two static cabled Sony DVW 709 cameras. It was at this point that we decided to utilize the spare Lectrosonics radio mics on loan from Nine News. This meant more control over the RF situation and also enabled us to have two dedicated kits for Tribal Council.

Through a process of trial and error during rehearsals we managed to avoid too much clothing/wind noise although some was impossible to lose but fitted the pictures quite accurately at times. Return monitoring was via the 5-pin O/P on the back of the Digi Beta’s which left the minijack O/P’s to be used for directors monitoring in the “shed”. All seven cameras had comms systems provided by Nine and TOD time code was jam-synched from a master clock at base camp.

By my very abbreviated version of events you may have gathered that the shoot was BIG to say the least. In conclusion, I can only say that it was great fun! We all got on really well, learned from each other and did our best under the circumstances. Throwing a bunch of normally independent crews together for a shoot of this kind was a valuable experience and proved that the normal rules are there to be broken if everybody chips in.

I would do it again in a minute.

Head Start Head Job

By Jack Friedman – Photography: Jimmy Pozarik

A few years ago I went to see a performance of the musical, *Boy From Oz*, and was totally impressed with the sound. They achieved crisp, clear, noiseless sound with their radio mics. All through the show, as the actors sang to each other while embracing, or danced energetically on a crowded stage, I wracked my brain as to where the mic heads actually were. It's obvious now but I had no idea then. I thought they were sown into the costumes but that was a DFI because the costumes have to be cleaned after each show.

The answer came while watching television. It was a tribute to great show tunes from the twentieth century sung by the great singers live from the London Palladium. When the camera zoomed into close-up of a singer's face, there it was, in full view – a Sanken head strung over the ear and taped to the cheek. Another singer had his just dangling over his ear beside his face, and yet another, our own Philip Quast, had his taped fairly and squarely in the middle of his forehead, there for all to see. He didn't care, he knew he would sound good.

So there it was – head mics, a theatre technique that applies very well to location sound recording.

Why head mics?

The actors are not disturbed with adjustments for clothing noise;

Actors can go into a clinch or a hug and continue dialogue;

Missed head turns are eliminated because the mic goes with the head;

Actors can put on or remove outer clothing;

Actors can lean on railings, cars, lie on tables, fold their arms;

Bypass all wardrobe problems including creaking leather jackets and hissing polyester shirts and ties;

Interior car scenes – speaking out the window and head turns are covered.

Now on to *Head Start*, ABC TV, 6:10pm Sundays. Thanks to Juliette Flannagan, Hair and Makeup Supervisor, pictured, and her team, head mics have become the norm.

Head Start is shot in the style of *Heartbreak High* and *Wildside*, the young actors are allowed complete freedom with the set and the scripted lines. Two cameras, no marks,



ad-libs, youthful physicality, left-of-field movements, coupled with overhanging fluorescent lighting adds up to a lot of challenges for the sound department, Grant Shepherd, Jack Friedman, Daniel Carlin, and Gavin Marsh.

Usually our biggest challenges, when in the studio, are the breakfast and dinner scenes. They involve all nine principal cast members, doing their own thing like making coffee, toast, squabbling, wrestling, walking, sitting and standing, reaching across the table, reaching across each other – while delivering their dialogue.

We noticed one character, the manager, Garrett Quinn, played by Blair Venn, pictured, always moves around the room in these scenes, and leads the dialogue as he quizzes each participant on their particular projects progress.

We asked to put a mic into Blair's hair. Juliette had done it before so it wasn't as absurd an idea as it may have been to some. How did it sound? Great! As an added bonus, we found as Blair moved around the room his mic could serve him and another, when they were close and intimate.

Head Start Head Job Technique:

Juliette winds tiny rubber bands around tufts of hair creating a part. The mic cable runs along these tufts and is held down with bobby pins inserted below the rubber bands. This creates the opportunity for adjustment by sliding through the hair loops.

The mic head pokes forward of the hairline so it has "line of sight" to the face.

The cable is taped to the back of the neck with surgical tape and covered with makeup, or left free when hair is long enough. The process takes less than ten minutes. The actors arrive on set, we conceal their transmitter packs, and usually, that is the last time we need do anything, until a battery change.

The bottom line with head mics is – they sound very good indeed – but, the makeup and hair departments have to want to do it – or it doesn't happen.

Thanks again Juliette, Danielle, Mandy, Angela, Head Start hair and makeup dept.

Thanks here also to Marilyn on *Russian Doll*, and Christina on *La Spagnola*.

Soundtracking *Australians At War* or How I Learned To Love The Bomb

By John Patterson

Australians At War is an 8 x 1-hour documentary series that details the history of the Australian Army's involvement in the numerous wars and conflicts that it has faced in the 100 odd years since its formation.

Utilising a combination of interviews with surviving diggers, a small amount of location shooting, and a massive amount of mute archival footage, the production presented some atypical challenges from a sound design point of view. The scope of the story being told, the drama within that story and the sheer physical nature of the issue at hand – war – called for a feature film-style soundtrack within a television timeframe, with the added rider of the need for unerring historical accuracy wherever possible.

Commissioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs as the defining document of the Army's first one hundred years, the series was broken down episodically – Ep.1: The Boer War; Eps. 2 and 3: WW1; Eps.4 and 5:WW2; Ep.6: Korea; Ep.7: Vietnam; Ep.8:The role of the army's history within society.

In addition to screening on the ABC and being for sale to the public, the series has gone into Australian schools as a historical teaching aid.

The creation of the soundtrack for this series would have been well nigh impossible without the several months lead time I had up my sleeve by virtue of being booked for the job well in advance. In addition to being able to advise the editors of my intended production path early on, I spent a lot of my spare time in the months prior to starting the sound edit accumulating sound effects specific to the production.

Although we had access to the War Museum and the Sound Archives collections, it soon became apparent that their collections consisted mainly of newsreels or the like with music and commentary, and the specific sound effects they had available were either of below-average fidelity, or were too wide and general to be of much use. If I wanted the series to sound great, and be a true documentary, I had to start the sound edit with all that pre-production done – the howitzers, the .303s, the right tanks, the right machine guns for each war etc.

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Fortunately, I have access to a number of quarter inch libraries collated over the last 40-odd years, and within those libraries were recordings made for various army docos and war movies, most with verbal identification. Also, colleagues who had worked on more recent army docos (they make a lot of docos, the army) were able to supply more modern material, and after some months I had a fairly definitive collection of sound effects sitting on DAT waiting for D-Day. The several months lead-time also gave me the chance to clean many of the older recordings with intelligent noise reduction and EQ.

D-Day dawned and the troops rallied round the Fairlights at 0900 hours. Our battalion consisted of John Patterson, Penn Robinson and Luke Dunn-Geilmuda on the sound editing front, Helen Brown in the foley bunker, ably assisted by trooper Duncan Mcallister on the mikes, and Julian Ellingworth holding the fort on the mixing desk. Logistical assistance was provided by the post-production supervisor on the show Jeremy Rice – a trooper who proved to be worth his weight in bully beef.

The series structure – each episode relating to a particular war enabled us to allocate whole wars to individual sound editors, allowing them to immerse themselves into the particular war being discussed. I had managed to slip into the cutting room for a couple of days reconnaissance before D-Day to transfer sound effects into the Fairlight and compile them into specific war libraries



on standby for the editors.

The first spotting session set the style for most of the series. For months beforehand, (probably mindful of the timeframe) the producers had talked to me about the stylistic concept of picking out one element from a mute archival shot and focusing on that one element in the soundtrack. It was obvious early into the first spotting session that without the luxury of the as-yet-unrecorded music to work with, it would be difficult to take that minimalistic approach and not fall flat or limp fairly often throughout each episode. This was after all war - the noisiest, nastiest physical activity known to man. So we decided to track and foley everything as if it was eight one-hour feature films that could be mixed in the time it takes to mix eight hours of television.

The first step was to autoconform the digger interviews from the original DATs. This was done purely for quality, as the difference between the OMF and the autoconform was such that you would reject the OMF outright, an unfortunate and common side effect of inconsistencies in rushes digitizing that we felt it best to avoid. It was particularly pertinent here because a number of the diggers were over 100 years old, and their voices had unusual harmonics, which the original DAT had captured, but the Avid found more difficult to deal with. Rod Pascoe had done a lovely consistent job recording the interviews so the dialogue edit was a breeze (once the ubiquitous EDL issues had been resolved).

The next step was to track the 40-odd minutes of mute



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archival material within each episode. With the libraries on standby, it was really just a matter of starting at the beginning and ploughing in. At this stage we were able to utilise the research department of the production, and their army contacts to precisely identify any piece of equipment we weren't sure about. I found that my library pre-production had been thorough enough to allow me to soundtrack more than 90 percent of the show using actual sounds, and the few specific sounds that we didn't have an exact recording of were easily covered by manipulating the sound of a similar piece of equipment.

As we were working with a guide VO we had to track knowing that any major punctuations we inserted had to work at a lower level as well, because once the final VO was fitted, it was highly possible that it would run longer than the guide in some places, and we didn't have the option of being able to obliterate John Stanton's voice with the biggest explosion of the series. This was exacerbated by the producers not deciding who the voiceover artist would be till the week before the first episode was due to mix. We had no idea what sort of voice to expect.

At the same time we had to make sure the audience at home would be able to feel the sheer power and cacophony that is war. In one 90-second sequence about the Tobruk barrage, we laid up over 800 explosions. When you get to that level an extra challenge is presented in ensuring that the barrage doesn't become repetitive and boring - back to Varispeed!

Meantime, Helen Brown had managed to

find the most congenial and helpful armourer in Australia, Tony Garland, and was busily recreating several wars in the foley booth at Audioloc with the help of his weapons. Again historical accuracy was a premium. the weapons, backpack and movement tracks really helped bring the archival footage to life, and drove home the fact that these remote black and white figures in uniform were actually real people.

The client script approval process required the voiceover to be recorded at the last possible minute. Each episode was recorded and edited two days before it was due



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to mix by Tony Vaccher at Audioloc. Tony was able to apply a particular global EQ to the voice over that greatly enriched its quality and allowed it sit beautifully in the mix, freeing Julian's precious time up a little, and giving the effects and music more of a chance to breath. Like all Fairlight EQ's it was easily removable with the push of one button if required.

All files were delivered to Julian on Exabyte tape. He did a dialogue premix and an effects premix, then ran both those premixes with the foley, voiceover and music to create the final. The only way a mixer's ears can cope with

ten hours of war a day is to mix at a low to moderate monitoring level, which is what Julian did. Needless to say, once it was turned up a bit it really rocked. The client brief called for an ordinary two-track stereo mix rather than 5.1, probably because the series was conceived well before 5.1 was established as a standard, but by the time it was in production technology had advanced. The series will have a 5.1 remix at some stage for its DVD release.

All mixing was done within Fairlight at Jules Sound. The music, composed by Roger Mason and recorded by the Tasmanian Philharmonic Orchestra, an increasingly popular orchestra for Australian film scores, largely because they offer great sound relatively in-expensively, came in on DA-88, allowing Julian more room to move, but not demanding too much extra time. Each episode was successfully mixed and laid back to Digital Betacam within the two days allocated per episode. The series premiered on April 25, 2001, rating very highly and has been kept alive by strong sell through video and book sales, and by being re-edited for use in schools.

The series was fortunate enough to be nominated for an AFI award for best sound in a non-feature film in the 2001 awards. The AFI did not include the names of all those who deserved to be on the nomination, so this is the one opportunity to point out that the names that should be on the nomination are: Rod Pascoe, John Patterson, Julian Ellingworth, Penn Robinson, Luke Dunn-Geilmuda, Helen Brown, Duncan Mcallister, Tony Vaccher and Roger Mason.

Whilst working on the series, I felt extremely grateful to have been a member of the first generation in a hundred years to not have to have lived through a major war. As this article finally goes to print (months late due to a very busy year) it appears that my good fortune may be short-lived as Australia commits troops to a US led force that is shortly to commence a war that could embroil many nations for many years, utilising horrific weapons we cannot begin to contemplate, and as always, devastating the lives of hundreds of thousands of uninvolved innocents.

The series *Australians at War* is an extremely powerful and prescient reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by our descendents so that we could enjoy the relatively peaceful and stable society we have all grown up in. But as well as being a heart-wrenching tragedy, it is a motivating life-affirming wake up call to all of us, that it is beholden on all of us to use whatever peaceable and non-violent methods we can to preserve that peace and to ensure that we never have to witness futility and loss on such an overwhelming scale ever again.



Awards date set.

The 5th Annual Screen Sound Awards dinner will once again be held at the fabulous WatersEdge Restaurant in Sydney. Mark it in your diary - Friday 11 October, 2002.

The 2001 Awards dinner was a great success and the number of entries for the Awards surpassed previous years. Judging took a lot of time and support from members. Thanks to all those members who offered their time and debated the merits of the many entries.

Now is the time to start thinking about work you may want to enter in the 2002 Awards. As with last year, we plan to hold

our own screenings for the feature film categories. Being part of the judging panel gives a great opportunity to see the films after each other in the one theatre.

We will be looking for as many judges as possible to attend these screenings in August/September.

The committee is also starting to consider the Lifetime Achievement Award for 2002. We welcome nominations for this category. Any nominations can be sent to Stephen Smith directly at soundpro@ozemail.com.au.

Below are some moments from Awards 2001. You can see more at our website... www.assg.org.au.



Robbie McGregor (Announcer), Shane Withington (Host), Trevor Harrison and Stephen R Smith



Annie Breslin and Phil Heywood



Graham McKinney, Syd Butterworth, Mark van Kool, Cathy Gross, David Glasser, and John O,Connell



Phil Judd, David Hannay, Mauricio Hernandez, Liam Egan, Delia McCarthy, Julius Chan and Les Fiddess



Annie Breslin, Andrew Plain, Pete Smith, Adrienne Parr



Peter Purcell, David White, Guntis Sics, Chris Aldderton