

Vale - Jim Combe



Jim with his wife Helen in May 2009

Jim (Slim/Slimbo) Combe worked in Natmap during 1961-64 inclusive, mainly in field parties led by Bobroff. He worked alongside people like Bob Goldsworthy and Ed Burke.

Ed recalls that Jim proved to be tough, a hard worker with a great sense of humour, and was a wonderful companion to have in the bush.

In 1961 Jim was a Field Assistant on the Mt Tietkens - Well 35 (WA) traverse and participated in the digging of Jupiter Well. On completion of that work, involving 18 stations over 260 miles, the party moved to the Mt Kintore area, SA, which is just beyond the western end of the Musgrave Ranges. Bobroff's party reconnoitred a traverse from there to Emu; a feasibility reconnaissance was also done from Mabel Creek to Emu.

The 1962 program saw Jim involved in Mt Kintore - Cook (SA) Theodolite / Tellurometer Traverse. On the hills stone cairns had to be built after which steel beacons could be used in the sandridge country. In the flat mallee covered area from Muckera Rock Holes to Cook, seven towers had to be used.

During this period Waldana, a native well, was reconditioned by the party providing more accessible water.



Jupiter Well & Waldana with Jim as part of the group with Bobroff, Goldsworthy & Burke

Overall during 1962 the party beacons, measured and observed 27 stations, including the tower section; distance Mt Kintore - Cook 360 miles.

The program for 1963 saw Jim firstly on the Otway Ranges - King Island - NW Tasmania Traverse where seven stations were occupied with nine lines measured for a total distance 160 miles. Later in Queensland on proving lines, beaconing and clearing from Dalby - Charleville - Mt Howitt, a total of 29 stations were prepared including two which would require towers and scaffolding for the observations.

1964 saw Jim on the Halls Creek - Well 35 Canning Stock Route, WA, Theodolite / Tellurometer Traverse. This was a "hard" period for the men as progressing the work had to cope with the failure of vehicles and the harsh conditions.

All work was completed to Well 45 in four weeks. Eleven new stations plus two established stations had been observed, distance 225 miles. The section Well 45 to Well 35 gave those who worked on it a sense of having achieved something well worthwhile. The distance Well 45 to Well 35 was 201 miles, twelve stations were beaconed and observed in 7½ weeks, while overall from Halls Creek to Well 35 twenty three new stations plus three old stations had been observed in about twelve weeks.



Jim driving an "Inter" and at EMU with Bobroff

Jim and Helen attended the 2007 reunion where those that worked with him (and those who didn't) were delighted to see/meet him.

Photos courtesy: Bobroff collection (through Sadie), Burke collection, Goldsworthy collection (through Denyse).

Detail extracted from: Ford R.A., (1979) The Division of National Mapping's Part in the Geodetic Survey of Australia, *The Australian Surveyor* Vol.29, Nos. 6, 7 and 8, 1979.