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The President Writes

Neil Hamer



A Message from the Colonel Commandant

Membership Report

27 Sep 2004

Current Membership

Life Members	218
Annual Members	83
Affiliates	46
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	11
Libraries	4
Total	<u>362</u>

Included in the above total are four Annual Members who have not yet renewed their subscription.

Honours

Congratulations to MAJ Jeffrey M Lawrence who received an AM in the recent Honours List.

The usual reminder about the proforma on the last page below the Parade Card.

If you have not already done so, it would be appreciated if you would provide the information requested so that our files can be kept up to date. This proforma should also be used to notify us of any changes in the future.

Neil Hamer

Neil Hamer
MAJ (R)
Membership Co-ordinator

Contact: Telephone: 9702 2100
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RAA Association (Victoria) Inc
Corps Shop

The following items may be purchased by mail, or at selected Association activities.

PRICE LIST

<p>Badges, etc</p> <p>RAA Assn (Vic), members \$5.00 RAA badge cuff links \$9.00 Key ring, RAA badge \$4.00 Key ring, RAA (Pewter) \$4.00</p> <p>Ties</p> <p>Blue with single red gun \$30.00 RAA Burgundy with gold gun \$43.00 RAA Navy with gold gun \$43.00 St Barbara Stripe \$43.00</p> <p>Books</p> <p><i>Kookaburra's Cutthroats</i> \$39.00 <i>Aust Military Equip Profiles</i> \$13.50 <i>AMEF Profile – Leopard Tank</i> \$17.00</p> <p>ENQUIRIES:</p> <p>BRIAN CLEEMAN (03) 9560 7116 REG MORRELL (03) 9562 9552</p>	<p>Stationery</p> <p>Card, RAA badge, with envelope Christmas message \$0.20 blank inside \$0.20</p> <p>Stickers</p> <p>Bumper: <i>Gunners do it with a bigger bang</i> \$2.00</p> <p>Square: gold badge, red and blue background \$2.00</p> <p>ORDERS: Most orders will require an additional FIVE DOLLARS packing and postage, which will cover one to several small items. If in any doubt concerning this, or availability, please contact one of the enquiries numbers above.</p> <p>Cheques should be made payable to RAA Association (Victoria) Inc, and be crossed <i>Not Negotiable</i>.</p> <p>Orders to: Mr B. Cleeman 28 Samada Street Notting Hill VIC 3168</p>
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MY SERVICE CAREER

By COL Graham Farley, OAM, RFD, ED (Rtd)

Part 18 – CSTU, 1975-6

When the annual camp commenced on Saturday, 15th May, 1975, I was clearly now on the CSTU books. The Command and Staff Training Unit was commanded by a chief instructor. He had two staff officers to assist him. The unit was further divided into a Senior Officers Course and a Field Officers Course, together with a Project Team. Alternatively, this grouping could be considered as three wings: Tactics, Staff Training and Military Studies. The camp was held at the Watsonia Barracks. It was a “hutted camp.” This would be a relatively new experience for me, having spent many of the recent camps “in the field.” It was on this camp that I commenced a friendship with LTCOL Colin Bannister, who had been a member of the training team in Vietnam and was now in the reserve. LTCOL Ken Fargher was also in the team. I had last known him as a major in MUR in 1954 when I was a lowly corporal.

LTCOL Neale Bavington¹ (Chief Instructor) wanted his tactics team* to arrive at Watsonia in “greens” and to be on time for an early orders group. I probably added my artillery stable belt to my splendour for good measure. I arrived by car with my usual full load of gear and unpacked into a hut, which I thought, was correct. Then, having had lunch in the mess, I was told I was in that accommodation area. I had to repack and move, being thankful for LTCOL Mike Vincent’s help. Having been trained as a commerce teacher, I was relatively competent at touch-typing. These skills were pressed into service, but it takes time to switch on to remember all the intricacies of Army staff duties.

*Amongst my papers I have found the names of the “team”: LTCOLs Vin Musgrave (President of Fd Offrs Board); Mike Vincent (Senior Instructor and principal instructor Artillery); Jack Preston (Senior Instructor Fd Offrs); Ken Fargher (Infantry); Tom Edmondson (Armour); Bill Kirkham (Enemy and Air); Jim Barry (Engineers?); Colin Bannister (Logistics); and instructors Graham Lockwood, Don Sandow, John Burns, Graham Farley, Ralph Bailey; and Majors Baxter Green, Maurie Ryan and Jim Leicester. MAJ “Chalky” White was SO2 Co-ord and LT Glenn Staunton was SC.

On the Monday, Mike took me out to an area which was under power lines on the 1:50,000 KINGLAKE map, an area that had always interested me. Now I was able to enjoy it without having to foot the bill for the vehicle, time and energy involved.

Exercise “Ocean Chase” was the name for the first week’s activities. Tuesday saw us at Wandong, a region in which I had once hiked with senior scouts. To make sure we could enjoy our lunch, a cask of claret was bought from the local pub. On the shelves, for these still were the days when wine was “plonk” to beer drinkers, it had matured very nicely. Students were being trained for their Canungra assessment. Hence there were these long gaps when the members of the DS had very little to do. I used this time to go for walks, much to everyone else’s amusement. “They” stood around and swapped stories. For me, this was the “pits.” When it came to the presentations, Majors Reinmouth and Blanksby had to suffer me as their DS.

The problems for that week included: The Advance (Tuesday); Logistics (Wednesday); River Crossing (Thursday); The Attack (Friday); and The Defence (Saturday). The nation under attack was known as Regina and Australia was responding to a request for military help. The “enemy” was based on the relevant pamphlet at the time.

The exercises for “lieutenants to captain,” which ran parallel were “Coffee Pot” and “Sea Hunt.”

¹ BRIG Bavington was 4TF (and later 4 Bde) and 3 Div FF Gp commander in subsequent appointments. He was also Honorary Colonel for the Army Cadet Force

Two days later, RAAF helicopters took us from Strath Creek up to Mount Hickey. I recall realising just how hard it would be for military vehicles to hide under eucalypt trees as I could see clearly from the air through the foliage of even the thick forests. This was a river crossing exercise. I had always been taught that a river provided wonderful defence possibilities, but not on this occasion. Apparently it was more of a hindrance. Again, it was a day when one did not "fight the greens"! MAJ Barry Cairns was my student. My diary records that we sat legs dangling over an embankment above the railway line. We were rewarded with a long slow freight train – which was not in the greens or the pinks!

On the Friday we were at Lades Hill. To quote my diary, it was "a day in the open on the borders of three maps with an impossible feature to defend or attack (and) with insufficient troops." The following day saw the group at Murchison's Gap, a day when the weather was bitterly cold. So, I set off for a walk during the time for consideration.

My colleague, Mike Vincent, was in the habit of referring to me as the "Bishop of Birchip." This only encouraged another friend to use the prefix, "Deacon," he having felt that I should have married a Ghanese deaconess! Those officers ignorant of ecclesiastical terms, soon abbreviated this to "Deak," but it was a term that fortunately did not follow me to Braemar College! On the other hand, nothing was going to put Mike off when later in my career I lived in Woodend, for he was soon calling me, "the Wicar (sic.) of Woodend"! I might add that with the passing of time and promotion, Mike upgraded me to "cardinal." All this perhaps because I always supported attendance at church parades.

Meanwhile, back in "the Royal Regiment," 2 Field Regiment and 15 Field Regiment were combined to become 2/15 Field Regiment, with RHQ and 2 Fd Bty at Batman Avenue, HQ Bty at Dandenong and 23 Fd Bty at Frankston. The new unit would have LTCOL Jim Barry as its CO. Three months later, HQ RAA would be disbanded, the artillery units coming under direct command of 3 Div FF Gp. The two regular army majors of the Div HQ, formerly the SORA 2 (Ops) and (Admin), were retained in the role of a "training officer" for each of the two surviving regiments. 132 Div Loc Bty remained unchanged.

It was further announced in the July 1975 Gunner Newsletter that 37 Mdm Bty of 10 Medium Regiment had won the Mount Schanck Trophy during the RAA 3 Div Camp at Cultana, SA, in April. From July, the CMF would be re-styled the Australian Army Reserve (A Res).

Before 1975 was out, I had successfully applied for the position of foundation headmaster of Braemar College, a school that was to take over the former premises of The Clyde School at Woodend. Clyde, together with The Hermitage in Geelong, merged with Geelong Grammar School and moved to the Corio campus. Braemar was to be an ecumenical secondary day school for boys and girls and to be conducted on a "no-frills" basis with fees as low as government funding would permit.

In Birchip I had been the high school principal in a school of some one hundred and forty students. The secondary teachers' union had convinced the Education Department that principals needed all their time to administer the school and therefore should not be teaching in class rooms. It was a restful existence as I had a senior teacher assistant who felt he could run the school quite adequately, he having done it the year before my appointment. Braemar College on the other hand would be a full-time commitment until it was operating, which would be a number of years into the future.

So, in 1976 I hit the ground running! But it did mean that I would be close enough to Melbourne to resume regular parading, if not on weeknights, then at weekends. My days in the "wilderness" were over for the time being. There were opportunities for new adventures ahead of me. But the two years in Birchip had been happy ones and they had enabled Shirley and me to have quality time with our two-year-old son.

I now had some chance of being more regular in attending home training parades with CSTU. This was made rather complicated, not by the army, who normally plan two years ahead, but by the various groups within the new school who could arrange meetings with very little notice. The “boss” was expected to attend them all! There was also the feeling that a Christian headmaster should not necessarily be involved in military matters!

In those days, 3 Training Wing had its HQ at *Netherby*, 8 Queens Road, Melbourne. I recall that *Netherby* had a very active mess, particularly for the sale of wine and spirits. It all seemed to be a thriving concern and the turnover must have been considerable. An order placed at the beginning of a parade night would be ready before one went to drive home. I do not want to know how this was managed!

My first weekend under the new conditions was in March when I met up again with MAJ Warren Hardy, whom I had last met on the Tac 5 assessment. Once again, we were domiciled at the Yarra Glen Hotel with the various assessment problems being taken in the surrounding area. The subject for study on the Saturday was a Battalion Group in Advance, with the same group in attack the following day.

On the Yarra Glen – Steels Creek road, there is a knoll (GR 563355, 1:50,000 Yarra Glen, 1966), which has been very convenient for problems involving the attack and the defence. When I did Tac 3 it was half wooded. The road went around it. But by 1976 it had been all but cleared of foliage. But that did not stop it being used. One just had to dig deeper!

I never saw eye to eye with the officer that had for officer training, replaced COL Bavington as SI Tac 3 Wing, but that is now of no consequence. There may be many others that have from time to time felt the same about me. I have memories of several artillery officers, such as John Henry and Jim Christie or John Morkham tackling their problems under a canopy of transparent plastic to keep out the wet and or windy weather.

The 1976 camp began on 15th May at Puckapunyal. I found myself tasked with Warren Hardy to write the November assessment exercise. I had no experience in this area, having always felt it was done by staff-trained regular officers, who had the jargon off pat. Warren and I spent several days driving around the western area of Puckapunyal trying to find the right sort of ground that would fit in with the requirement.

In those days, the exercise, assessed over several days, had to include an advance with tanks in the open. This advance would then pass through wooded country, requiring the infantry to precede the tanks. Then would come the small unit attack on the advanced elements of the enemy, building up to a full-sized deliberate company one. Then would come the defence problem, following possibly by a withdrawal. After several days, I think we finally had a workable set of problems over suitable ground that could be held together by a narrative.

During the second week, I was switched (promoted/demoted) to the Tac 3 coaching course with “captains proceeding to major.” The location was near the Yan Yean Reservoir. No one can say that we were not seeing the country. The 2/75 ARES Field Officers Tactics Course, Field Training Requirement, was Exercise “Gum Paddock.” The president of the board was LTCOL M. J. Musgrave², and the other members besides me included LTCOL Graeme Marshallsea and LTCOL Noel Danne, both of CSTU. LTCOL Alistair Lloyd³ was Chief Instructor of HQ CSTU.

One of the problems was centred on Mount Puckapunyal. As readers know, this feature dominates the range. I had seen it on fire from one end to the other. I had seen tanks dug in on its sides. I had seen attempts to re-grow trees on its summit. I finally had the chance to walk up its slopes and view the scenery from its summit.

² HQ 3 Trg Gp

³ Appointed AO for service to the pharmaceutical industry

On the second day of the week, my reputation amongst staff and students was made when the midday meal came out by helicopter, complete with tables, table cloths, cutlery, glasses and wines. My mind went back to a day at Strath Creek, when BRIG Dick Eason had provided lunch (and probably with candelabra) and announced that these were the minimum conditions under which he expected his officers to eat in the field.

That night I had an invitation to attend a Rotary dinner in Seymour, which was given by a gentleman who was a high school principal and long-time friend. Fellow guests included Tom Tehan, whose sheep were still roaming the range, and COL Terry Tripp, then local Puckapunyal area commander. Terry had given 10 Medium a "going over" in his previous appointment when he inspected the Geelong depot. It was now good to sit down with him as a colleague. The camp concluded with the announcement of those officers who had qualified. Transport was provided so that the artillery officers on the course could attend the annual Gunner Dinner on the Friday night. It was pleasant to be driven down to Melbourne and then have the opportunity to sleep on the way back.

Later in the year in September, I reported to LTCOL Peter Nattress at CSTU to join his writing team. LTCOL Darryl Strickland was also with us. The project was to draw up plans for mobilisation, based on the 1942 experiences. About that time, COL Alan Mason in true gunner fashion gave a very realistic and frank account of the circumstances surrounding his own enlistment when he joined the Second AIF early in the war.

But events were starting to move fast. On 24th November, I was called to MAJGEN Frank Poke's office. Before I set out, Nattress said to me along the following lines, "Well, with Myers overseas on study leave, and you having a degree from the University of Melbourne and having had a command, well it is obvious."

That night I was asked in the presence of Neale Bavington whether I would be prepared to administer command of MUR for a year while LTCOL Bill Myers was undertaking his doctorate in the UK. I think I said "Yes" before the requesting sentence had been completed. I was overjoyed, particularly as it had been my post national service unit. But in view of my contract with Braemar, I would need approval from my school chairman. This was freely given. I had a very open contract with the Board of Governors of Braemar College, but it was both wise and courteous that I should seek their approval as there would be more regular demands on my time. I now looked forward to attending a week of the MUR camp at Puckapunyal which would be held over the January vacation, 1977.

Parade Card
as at 8 September 2004

OCT 2004

21 Committee
29 Golf Day

NOV 2004

18 Committee
4 AGM

DEC 2004

04 St Barbara's Day
09 Committee

JAN 2005

FEB 2005

06 Church Parade
19 Committee

MAR 2005

18 Committee

APR 2005

21 Committee
25 ANZAC Day

MAY 2005

19 Committee

JUN 2005

?? **3 DIV lunch** (all ranks)
16 Committee
24 Gunner Dinner

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND DETAILS UP-DATE

Please forward to:
RAA Association (Vic) Inc.
101 Warralong Ave
GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088

Rank _____ First Names _____ DOB _____

Surname and Post Nominals _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Phone (Home, Mobile, Work) _____

Fax and/or E-mail _____

Do you wish to receive Association information by E-mail Y/N _____

Serving Y/N _____ If so, Unit _____

Awards, Decorations, Medals, Etc. _____

Brief Service History _____

Additional Information (Committee, Unit Rep, Etc) _____

Please Use Additional Blank Sheets if Space Insufficient

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