

CASCABEL

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

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November 2010



Dutch Mr and Mrs Santa Claus celebrate Christmas at the Australian recreation area called Poppy's at Camp Holland.



Soldiers based at Camp Holland enjoy a traditional Christmas Day lunch.



Warrant Officer Class Two Shawn Goodbody (Santa) delivers presents to the Explosive Detection Dogs and their handlers at Camp Holland.



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CONTENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

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The President Writes

I was taken to task by a member of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia Inc for incorrectly using an abbreviation of the Association's name in the last edition of Cascabel. I apologise for any concern I may have caused to members of that Association. There was no disrespect intended.

Not a great deal has happened within our Association since I last wrote to you.

The activity at the School of Artillery planned for 11 Sep to celebrate the 125th birthday had to be postponed until later in the year due to the floods in Victoria. I will notify the members who are on the internet when I know the date.

We have about 110 members on our email contact list. For members who are not on the list, but are interested in attending the activity, please let a member of the Committee know so that you may be told when we have the information.

You may have noted on the Parade Card at the end of the magazine that St Barbara's day will be held on the 5th Dec this year. Also it is intended to change the annual church parade to this date along with a parade and family day at 2/10. LtCol Jason Cooke is keen to combine these activities into a general get-together for 2/10 and the Association. If it is a success, we will try to make it a "new tradition".

A visit to 2/10 in the field on 17 Oct has been proposed, but is yet to be finalised.

The AGM will be held on the 4th Nov at the Caulfield RSL. This is the day before that other very important activity – the annual golf day. I look forward to seeing you at either or both of these activities.

A nomination form for all positions on the committee is on p12.

I look forward to seeing you at the next Association Function.

Regards to all

Neil Hamer

MAJ (R)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(Royal Australian Artillery Association (Victoria) Inc.

Thursday, the 4th of November, 2010 at 1930 hours.

Caulfield RSL
2 St. Georges Road,
Elsternwick.
(Melways 67 G3

Bistro opens at 1800 hours.
(Contact Reg Morrell on 9562 9552 for bookings by 01 Nov 10)

This is a great opportunity to know what your Association is doing and also to find out the current **status on 2/10 Field Regiment's training programme.**

Light refreshments will be provided after the meeting.

From the Colonel Commandant



Greetings once again.

In July, in company with the CO and RSM of the Regiment, I attended the 150th Anniversary Dinner of the Launceston Volunteer Artillery Company. It was a great night. It leads to the conclusion that we need to look to more celebration of our heritage in Victoria. However, we are observing some aspects of it.

On the 8th September 1885, the NSW School of Gunnery was formed. This was the antecedent of the current School of Artillery and so this year is **the School's 125th Anniversary**.

To celebrate this occasion the School held a Gunners Dinner for staff and students on Friday 10th September. It was intended that the following day be an open day for families and friends of the School. Unfortunately, due to the involvement of the School in combating the floods that occurred in Victoria at that time, the open day had to be deferred, probably until November. You should be aware of the new date by the time you get this edition of Cascabel, and I hope that you enjoy the day.

Another significant anniversary is occurring in Victoria. The first shot fired in World War I from any member country of the British Empire was from a coastal artillery gun emplacement at Fort Nepean, Victoria, on 5 August 1914.

This engagement took place in order to prevent a German merchant ship escaping from Port Phillip **Bay out to sea and neatly encapsulated Australia's** swift commitment to the cause of Great Britain and the allied nations from the earliest moments of that great and tragic conflict.

To mark the significance of this event, as well as to recognise the rich defence heritage at Point Nepean, a proposal is being processed to restore the gun and emplacement from which this historic shot was fired. We are being well served by Major Bernie Gaynor from the Land Warfare Development Centre, in helping to ensure an appropriate observation of this anniversary.

In the last edition of Cascabel, I reported that in the near future there will be significant changes relating to the Australian Army Artillery Museum, (see p40) the Historical Company etc. Brig Doug Perry was appointed as the Victorian representative on an interim RAA Historical Society.

You may now have seen a message from Major General Tim Ford, the Representative Colonel Commandant, advising that we are about to make some changes to the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company (RAAHC) to refocus its priorities (from the museum at North Head) on the national preservation and maintenance of Australia's artillery history and heritage, past and present.

By the time you read this there will have been an AGM of the RAAHC conducted on Sat 9th October to elect a new Board of Directors and consider amendments to the RAAHC Constitution that reflect its revised focus.

Best wishes

Brig Neil Graham AO

Colonel Commandant, Southern Region
Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

Membership Report

October 2010

Current Membership as at 10 Sep 10

Life Members	199	(199)
Annual Members	40	(49)
Senior Annual Members	13	(16)
Affiliates	34	(35)
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	12	(12)
Libraries	5	(5)
RSL's	<u>2</u>	<u>(2)</u>
Total	<u>305</u>	<u>(318)</u>

Current Unfinancial Members 8

New Members No new members during this period.

Resignations No resignations during this period.

Vale

It is with regret that we note the passing of LtCol Ray Waters (joined Aug 90), Maj J C Shimmin (joined Mar 92), Bdr T R Hayward (joined Aug 87) and Capt R F Parsons (joined May 95).

Lt Col Water served with Coast Artillery 1935 - 40. AA Defences NG. Staff Capt Scomd. Adjnt 14 NS Trg Bn. QM 2 FD REGT. Adjnt 2 FD REGT. SORA (2) HQ RAA. QM 2 FD REGT. Retired May 1973.

He was awarded the 1939 - 45 Star. Defence Medal. War Medal. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Meritorious Service Medal. Australian Defence Medal.

Maj Shimmin served with the British Army 1941-46 Europe and Palestine. Australian Army (CMF) RAA (Victoria) 1952-62.

Bdr Hayward was awarded the Reserve Forces Medal.

Capt Parsons was awarded the Efficiency Decoration.

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. It would also help if you could provide any information about your occupation, achievements and other service to the community.



Neil Hamer

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MAJ (Retd)

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Membership Co-ordinator

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EDITORS INDULGENCE

The article on p 41-42 attracted some interesting comments when it was published in the **Daily Mail (UK) in Aug '10. They included:**

This was developed in 1965 for the Vietnam war and first flew a mission in 1966. Before that was the AC-47 gunship. The author of the article should of done their homework before sensationalizing this one with VERY, VERY OLD news.

- Mike, Houston, 03/8/2010 16:06

*Old - and incorrect - news. The aircraft is over 20 years old and it is operated not by Special Forces (US Army) but by US Air Force Special Tactics squadrons. Give credit where credit is due.
USAF Special Tactics - First There ... That Others My Live ... Hooyah!*

- Texasboy, Houston TX USA, 04/8/2010 02:12

My understanding is that both Mike & Texasboy are whingeing over nothing. The article refers to the latest weapon being used, not **that it is a new development. So it's been used before** - so what!

Your comments are invited.



More faces from the past.

I believe it was taken in the Sgt's mess at the Dandenong Depot in the 80's?

The photo in Journal 104 brought this response from LtCol Keith Bunnett.

G'day Alan I've got a few names for you.

Rear Row Right marker-Tom McLean (I think)-6th from right Keith Bunnett-7th from right Ken Johnson-8th from right one of the Flint brothers (I think it's Ken) These were all from Dandenong.

Middle Row - Second from left Jack Crutchfield (Dandenong)-7th from right Dave Minns (Warragul)

Front Row - Second from left Mal Bugg (Dandenong)-6th from right John Boothroyd (RAEME)(Dandenong)

Regards Keith

Thanks Keith. Can we add any more names to the list?

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Xmas & a prosperous New Year.

What Does It Mean To Be A Gunner?

*Lieutenant Colonel David Brook (Retd)
RAA History Sub Committee Member*

What does it mean to be a Gunner? This is not easy to put into words because in this day and age. it is unfashionable to describe ones innermost feelings. In Australia, the Gunners have by virtue of their very close association with the Royal Artillery in peace and war and as members of the Commonwealth, absorbed and adopted many of the customs and traditions of the RA. It is true that over the years, we have gradually been developing our own customs and traditions but in many respects they are not very different from those of our forebears.

*... over the years, we have gradually been
developing our own customs and traditions ...*

From the early Colonial days when RA officers and men provided the early impetus in forming the individual Colonial Defence Forces, this process of absorption has continued. Certainly the close association is weakening but we share a common Captain General, battle honour, motto, cap badge, facings and some uniform details. We are part of a very extended family of Gunners who share this common heritage with formal alliances, visits and regular communication.

Indeed it goes beyond the Commonwealth because this same spirit extends into the Gunners of other countries. They have the same general outlook and share Saint Barbara with us. There is one extra bond and that is the belief in 'Serving the Guns'.

Our whole training experience is devoted to this and encompasses many things. These range from the way in which fire control is exercised, the philosophy of providing fire support, advice, communications and liaison through to the priority given to the passage of fire orders. All of these things are instilled into all Gunners regardless of rank. We 'are' required to provide fire in the right place, at the right time and in the right quantities.

We are also a 'complete' Regiment rather than a 'tactical' one and this has fostered the sense of purpose and unity which exists throughout, whether for example, a unit is equipped with guns, missiles, radars or drones.

*We are also a 'complete' Regiment
rather than a 'tactical' one...*

An Infantryman, for example, has pride in his cap badge, his battalion, his colours and the fact that he is an Infantryman. The Gunner is no different but he does have one other rallying point - 'His Guns'. His Guns are 'His Colours' and he takes them into battle - the last Regiment or Corps to do so - to provide the fire support for others when they desperately call for it. What a magnificent rallying point our guns are.

*To Serve the Guns is more than firing them
or maintaining them.*

To Serve the Guns is more than firing them or maintaining them. It is actually 'serving' them in the widest possible sense and many a Gunner long past has the words 'In the Service of the Guns' as his epitaph. This is exemplified by the phrase 'Once a Gunner, always a Gunner'.

SPECIAL NOTICE

WARNING ORDER

The next RAA LUNCHEON will be held on Thursday 3rd March 2011 at the RACV Club.

Further information will be published in the next Cascabel.

Customs and Traditions

Christopher Jobson

Former RSM Ceremonial & Protocol Army; and

Author of RAA Customs and Traditions

Australian National Flag

When Australia was proclaimed a nation, on Tuesday 1 st January 1901, it was done so without a national flag. Australia didn't have a National Flag until some nine months later and it was first flown, on Tuesday 3rd September 1901, over the dome of the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. There are today many Australians who ignorantly believe that Britain 'forced' Australia to incorporate the Union Flag ('Jack') into its National Flag and that Australians had no say in its design; however, this is not so.

*There are today many Australians
who ignorantly believe that Britain
'forced' Australia to incorporate
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National Flag...*

In fact two separate competitions were conducted, prior to Federation, asking Australians to design a National Flag; one was set-up by Melbourne's *Herald* newspaper and the other was conducted by a magazine named the *Review of Reviews for Australia*. The combined prize for a winning design was £125. In 1901 the Commonwealth Government joined the search and offered a prize of £75; bringing the total to £200. The result was a total of 32,823 entries and the judges selected five final designs, all of which were similar, and the prize money was equally shared amongst the five competitors (entries included a kangaroo aiming a rifle at the Southern Cross, a circle of six hands with the index fingers pointing towards Britannia, six boomerangs in flight and a kangaroo with six tails). Great Britain had no say what-so-ever in the accepted winning design.

The Flag was made-up of the 'jack', a large six-pointed star (representing the six states), and five smaller stars (each with a different number of points; nine, eight, seven, six and five respectively); all on a blue background.

In 1908 the large star, the Commonwealth Star (sometimes incorrectly referred to as the Federation Star), was given seven points; one for each State and one representing the Territories (at that time the only territory was Papua, but it was also to represent any territories that may be created in the future). In 1912 the Flag was again re-designed to both improve its appearance and to reduce its production cost (four of the Southern Cross stars were each given seven points, whilst the smaller star kept its five points - representing Epsilon Crucis, the smallest star in the Cross -actually the brightest star, but because it's further away it appears smaller). However, it wasn't until 1953, when the *Flags Act 1953* was passed by the Australian Parliament, that the Flag was officially declared as being Australia's National Flag (the five brighter stars, clock-wise from the bottom of the Cross, are Alpha Crucis, Beta Crucis, Gamma Crucis and Delta Crucis).

In 1985 *The Bulletin* magazine ran a contest asking Australians to submit designs for a new National Flag (the aim being that the winner's design would be put forward as a replacement of the current Flag in line with the 1988 Bicentenary). The Magazine received thousands of entries; however, even *The Bulletin* (very much a 'republican-leaning' magazine) had to admit that none of the submitted entries were even close to being suitable as a replacement for the current Flag.

*... during the lead-up to the recent
referendum for a republic in 1999,
the subject of a new National Flag
was quickly withdrawn from the
debates because there was a
strong resentment by the public
to the Flag being changed...*

One of the competition's guidelines was that the flag should, if possible, represent both our past and our geographical location, and that the flag should be able to be modified in the future if necessary. The current Flag already meets these criteria (the 'Jack' represents our past - this Country was established by the British; the Southern Cross represents, to an extent, our location on the globe (our Country being in the Southern Hemisphere); and the Commonwealth Star may be modified with extra points with the addition of new states).

Also of interest is that during the lead-up to the recent referendum for a republic, in 1999, the

subject of a new National Flag was quickly withdrawn from the debates because there was a strong resentment by the public to the Flag being changed and the Republican Movement saw it distracting from the republic issue.

An argument often raised about the changing of our Flag to one without the 'Jack' is the Canadian National Flag. The Canadian Government changed the Country's National Flag, in 1965, in an attempt to appease the French community (ie. the Province of Quebec) during a troublesome period. The change was implemented without a national referendum and was against the wishes of the majority of Canadians. True, the Flag is now accepted but, by many, begrudgingly so. It should be noted, however, that nine of the ten Canadian provincial flags still, to this day, carry British emblems, and two of these (Alberta and British Columbia) incorporate the Union 'Jack' (Newfoundland changed its Flag, which had the 'Jack' in the canton, in 1980 to an 'abstract' design based on the 'Jack').

Another argument for change is based on the National Flag of the United States of America, like Australia, a former British colony. It is often stated that America got rid of any visual recognition of Britain in its Flag; however, in reality this isn't true. The 13 stripes represent the original 13 British Colonies and the white stripes represent a divide from Britain, represented by the red stripes (in other words, Britain is still represented in America's National Flag). A point of interest too is that the Union 'Jack' takes-up the canton in America's Hawaiian State Flag.

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Australian National Flag is Not Recognised by Other Countries

Many Australians often say that one of the problems with our current National Flag is that it isn't recognized around the world; very few national

flags are recognized by the peoples of other countries. The most popularly known flags around the world include those of Great Britain, the United States of America, Canada, China, Japan and perhaps France; however, it's a fact that the majority of national flags are not internationally known and recognized.

A contest conducted in 1982 asked Australians to name the well known countries of 20 national flags and the result of the competition was very poor. A large majority of people failed to recognize most of the countries of the displayed flags, which included Germany, Egypt, Turkey, Denmark, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, Cuba, Philippines and The Netherlands (Holland).

To argue that we should change our Flag, because it's not 'internationally recognized', doesn't stand; and if it were changed, there's no guaranteed that the new Flag would be generally recognized as being that of Australia. Many people don't know the current national flags of Russia, which changed to its present Flag in 1993, and South Africa, which changed its Flag in 1994.

Confusion with the Flags of Other Countries

Another argument raised about the current Australian National Flag is that its design is similar to those of a number of other countries and therefore confusing in its recognition; for example it is similar to the National Flags of New Zealand, Fiji and Tuvalu.

However, a great number of countries around the world have similar designed flags: Poland, Indonesia and Monaco each have a plain red and white flag; Syria and Egypt have very similar flags; as do Austria, Lebanon and Peru; France, the Republic of Ireland, Italy and Mexico; Thailand and Costa Rica; Malaysia, the United States of America and Liberia; Luxembourg and The Netherlands; Denmark and Norway; Greece and Uruguay; and Tonga and Switzerland; to name but a few. The fact that the Australian National Flag is 'similar' to a few other national flags is not a reason to change; similarly designed flags are a commonality both accepted and shared around the world.

Dear Mr Halbish,

Hearty congratulations on the latest issue of Cascabel. It truly is a treasure chest of reading and the sight of photos of mortars in the Chapel Street Drill Hall recalled memories of the 3 inch mortar of the 132 Div Loc Bty at Puckapunyal in 1968.

These photos of the mortar may be worth including in a future issue. Numbers are written on the back.



Photo one. Sgt (later WO2) Phil Baines standing with Bdr Bowman, behind him Capt Graham Taylor, Regular Army Adjutant of 15 Fd Regt, and Sgt Colin Swindells kneeling at right of the tube. Gunner kneeling at left front not known.



Photo two shows the group checking bomb fuzes. L to R, Sgt Colin Swindells, unknown, at rear with binoculars, Capt Graham Taylor, Gnr Blandy, Sgt Phil Baines and Bdr Bob Bowman.



Photo 3 shows Capt Percy Cooper who, in accordance with standard practice is the officer who fires the first few bombs in a long unused tube. That way, if a disaster occurs the Army have not lost something important, like a trained mortar crew.



Photo 4 is of Sgt Phil Baines getting a 3D view of air photos with a spectroscope outside the AIO office.

Alan, I am a member of the Military Historical Society of Australia and enclose a copy of a recent media release.

Warmest regards

Percy Cooper (Ex Capt)

Many thanks to Capt Cooper for his contribution. I encourage other members to (please) also submit items of interest from their memorabilia. Ed

Phil Baines has been in touch & reports that:

Jimmy Breeze is not travelling very well, Jock MacDonald is fighting fit in Q'Land, not seen Keith Zibell for a long time. Brian Aitken all ok. Not heard of Col Swindells or any of the other guys.

Keep up the good work, hope to catch up in the not to distant future.

Kind regards, Phil Baines ex 132 Div Loc Bty

Memorial being raised for the 'Forgotten War'



The Mafeking Defenders, from the Boer War Memorial website.

A memorial to remember Australian soldiers who served and died in the Boer War is being organised for Canberra.

The Boer War of 1899-1902 was the first war in which Australians served and died as part of a national contingent, but Australia has no national

Boer War Memorial (BWM) in Canberra.

The Australian colonies federated in 1901, during the course of the Boer War.

Before Federation, Australians served in contingents drawn from each colony (which then became the **states in the new nation**). **At the war's end, as the** site for our national capital was not yet agreed there was no obvious site for a national memorial and each state set up a memorial for its own soldiers.

By the time Canberra had been built as the capital, the losses of World War 1 were foremost in the minds of Australians and the Boer War essentially **became the 'forgotten war'**.

Both the Governor General and the CDF are patrons of the National Boer War Memorial and there are a variety of ways to become involved if you too are interested. If you (or anyone else you know) is a descendant of a Boer War veteran it is very simple to register this on the BWM website

(<http://www.bwm.org.au/>).

Courtesy of The Bayonet

NOMINATION FORM

To reach the secretary, Mrs Rachel Decker 8 Alfada Street CAULFIELD SOUTH VIC 3167

Not later than Wednesday 27th October 2010

Nominate: _____ for the position of _____

Nominee Signature: _____

Proposer: _____ Signature: _____

Seconder: _____ Signature _____

Date: _____

Positions Vacant:

President

Vice-president

Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Treasurer

Committee

Origins of the 25 Pdr - Pt 3a

Design, Redesign, and more Design.

In time of war, the expedient and the short-term measure flourish. Time is always pressing and all too often there is insufficient of it to develop new equipment to meet unexpected and important operational requirements. Under such circumstances, whatever is to hand is hurriedly adapted, altered or modified to an extent that would horrify the particular equipments original designers, and/or planners.

So it was with the 25 pdr between 1939 and 1945. The 25 pdr underwent its required changes and alterations in a number of ways, some minor and some more spectacular. It would be no use pretending that the listing provided below is fully comprehensive, but it is the best that can be found. Mentioned below are several 25 pdr variants and modifications that have not seen the light of day for years, most in the UK for the European theatre of operations. But little doubt there are still numerous projects involving the 25 pdr, tucked away in archives or in some designers or engineers desk draw or shoe box under the bed.

In the meantime the following may serve as a review of what was proposed, but not always accepted, in a time of uncertainty and expediency in a time of war. Including self propelled versions, which produced a Mark of its own, centered around the 25 pdr that **was attempted or “dreamed” up to fulfil a particular or perceived role**

The 17/25 Pdr

The 17/25 pdr is a good example of the hurried modification that is made only in times of dire emergency, but for all that it was a workmanlike piece of ordnance. It had its origins during the latter half of 1942 when news of a new German 'monster tank' began to appear in intelligence summaries compiled by the British Intelligence staffs. By late 1942 the first tentative sketches were appearing in their intelligence reports, and with hindsight these early sketches now look remarkably accurate.

Fortunately the intelligence staffs knew what to look for, as for some time mention of a new Tiger tank had been appearing in the various 'Ultra' ¹ summaries made from intercepted German radio messages, and they had even been provided with

some intimation of the depth of the armoured carapace this Tiger tank would have. As we now know, this new tank was the PzKpfw VI Tiger, armed with an 88 mm main gun and having spectacularly thick armour (the front hull armour was a huge, by then standards 100 mm thick).

The 'Ultra' intelligence was even able to deduce the fact that some of these new tanks were scheduled to move to North Africa to take part in the campaign near the Tunisian borders. This was picked up soon after the units involved became aware of the fact.

Thus the Allied troops had forewarning of what they were to expect some time before the arrival of the Tiger tank had been appearing in the various 'Ultra' Tiger transcripts, and had time to prepare some sort of defence. Their problem was with what?

At that time (late 1942) the best that the Allies had in the anti-tank defence line was the 6 pdr with a calibre of 57 mm and a hitting power quite unable to penetrate the expected frontal armour of the Tiger. Perhaps a lucky hit on the side might get through, for in places this was only 60 mm thick. However, it was unlikely that the German tank crews would proffer their side armour for such attentions very often, and some form of frontal attack was required.

Fortunately, this armour increase had been foreseen by the long-term planning staffs and they had requested a large anti-tank gun that was to emerge as the 17 pdr. ² Unfortunately, by late 1942 this was still in the early production stage.

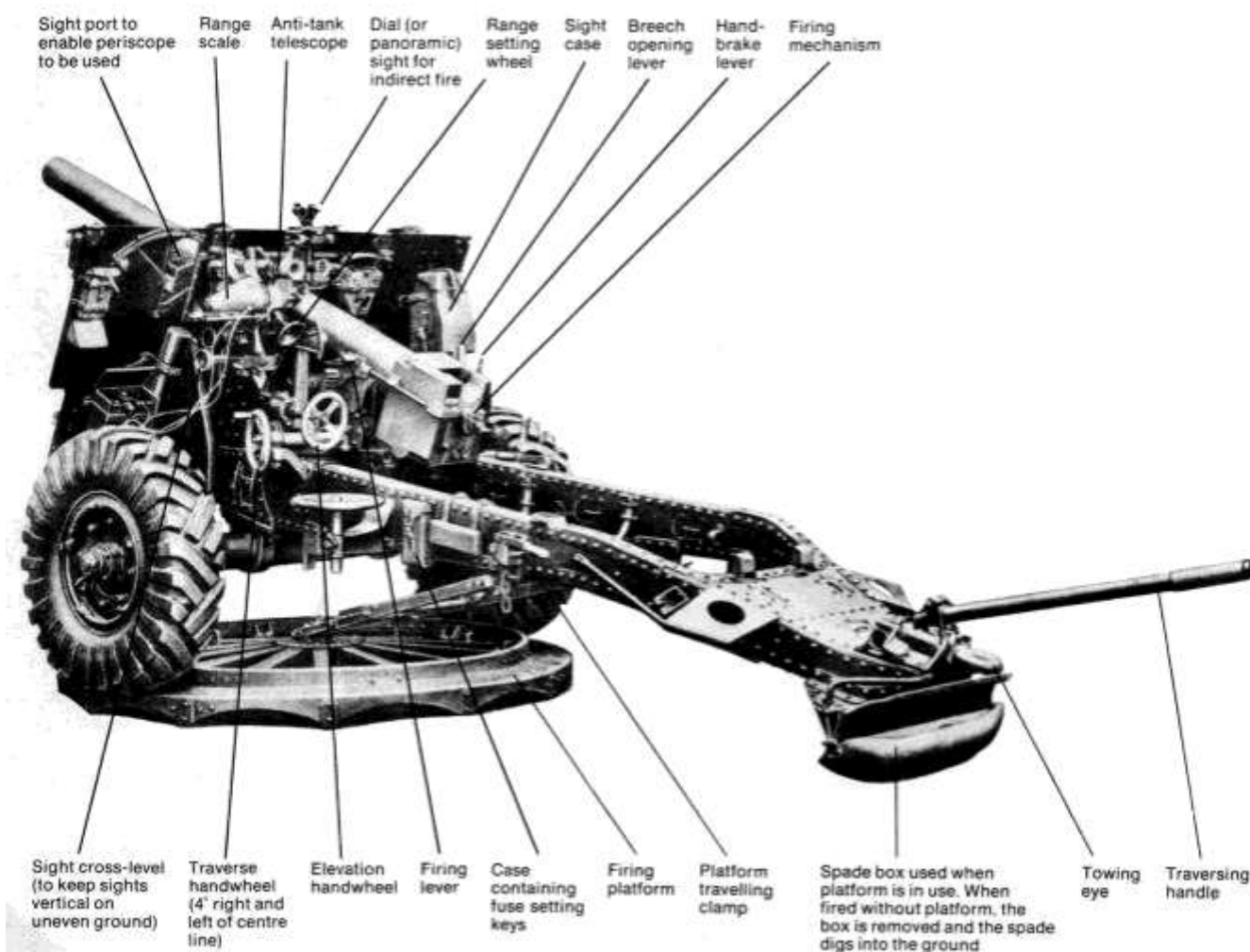
Some complete guns had been produced but there were as yet none of the large and complex carriages ready to take these barrels. As yet, it is not certain who was responsible for the idea, but the solution was to use the 25 pdr carriage to take the ordnance of the 17 pdr. The first of these barrel and carriage combinations was test-fired in the United Kingdom in September 1942. The results were lively but acceptable.

Thereafter, things happened with surprising speed. By January 1943, no fewer than 100 17 pdr barrels had been flown out to North Africa where they were placed on 25 Pdr carriages, test fired and issued (by whom and where is not found, more than likely by a field workshop) they were just in time. Although this weapon is virtually unknown of their use outside this theater of operations, and used mainly by the “Brits.”

The first Tigers landed in Tunisia soon afterwards and the resultant combination, the 17/25 pdr, first went into action against their expected quarry on 5th March 1943 at Medenine. As expected, the 17/25 pdr was 'jumpy' but the combination worked and for some reason the 17/25 pdr was soon allotted the nickname of 'Pheasant'. The 'Pheasants' did sterling service throughout the last stages of the Tunisian campaign and thereafter took part in the fighting in Sicily and the beginnings of the Italian campaign.

the gun that was to emerge as the 'Short' or 'Baby' 25 pdr was a deliberate and involved modification. It was a purely Australian design and originated as a result of the desperate and hard-fought campaign that the Australian Army waged in New Guinea and the surrounding islands.

In that campaign, the terrain was as much an enemy as the Japanese and moving 25 Pdr's through the close jungle and across the mountains was a desperate and time consuming slog. As a result there



By that time they were being replaced by the 17 pdr proper on its intended carriage, and the 'Pheasants' were withdrawn and their carriages scrapped. It is a considerable indication of the 25 pdr carriage's sturdy and sound design that it was able to accommodate the considerable firing stresses of the 17 pdr. They were far in excess of what the 25 pdr's designers had in mind at the time, but the carriage took it and helped to defeat the menace of the Tiger at a time when no other weapon was available.

Australia's Own, the Baby 25 Pdr

Whereas the 17/25 pdr was a hasty improvisation,

came a call for some type of gun that would have the fire-power of the 25 pdr but without its bulk and weight.

The Australian defence industry accepted the challenge, using as many parts of the existing 25 pdr as possible, they proceeded to redesign it so that not only would it be lighter, but it would also be capable of being broken down for pack transport, i.e., it would become a pack gun. The result first appeared in early 1943, complete with a shield that was removed from the eventual production version.

The full designation of the Australian 25 pdr was

'Ordnance Q.F. 25 pdr Short Mark 1 (Aust.) on Carriage 25 pdr Light Mark 1 (Aust.). Needless to say that cumbersome title was attenuated to the 'Short 25 pdr' or the 'Baby'. It could be broken down into 14 parts, the heaviest of which weighed 182 kg. Once broken down the parts could then be carried by mule or even local native porters, but this option does not appear to have been taken up very often as the **Baby 25 Pdr's were usually towed** in one piece by Jeeps, if they were available it has been recorded. But the very terrain that they were designed to be used in, would have negated the use of such vehicles anyway.

The main change from the usual 25 pdr was that the Baby had a much shorter barrel and a completely revised carriage. These carriages gave some trouble on the first production batch of 112 equipments for they tended to 'bounce' to an unacceptable degree rendering the carriage even more unstable than it was already. In an extreme effort to reduce this 'bounce' feature, some gun detachments even fitted Beaufort aircraft wheels, but with little success. **(With I hope, "official" approval)**

The problem was only eliminated on the second production batch of a further 100 guns. This batch had a Mark 2 carriage with larger wheels and tyres, the wheels having matching stabilising segments. Firing platforms for these carriages were developed but were little used. The short barrel was one of the Baby's main sources of trouble. It was much lighter than the original and as the recoil mechanism was virtually unchanged from the original; it had to contend with this barrel recoiling at much faster rates than the designers intended.

Thus there were limits to the charges that could be used and the range suffered accordingly. In fact it was reduced to 9,330 meters, which mattered little as the gun was inaccurate over 8,635 meters. The barrel had to have a cone fitted to the muzzle to prevent muzzle blast damaging the recoil assembly, but even with this cone the muzzle blast was considerable, and did little to endear the type to its gun detachments. The rate of fire was only three or four rounds a minute. From the above it would seem that the Baby was not a great success, but despite all its shortcomings it was useful enough in the campaign for which it was designed.

Most of the fighting was at very close ranges anyhow, and conditions were generally so unpleasant that the vagaries of a stropky gun went almost unnoticed. In fact the Baby gave good service

on occasion and even took part in one air-drop. But the lack of range and the low fire rate often meant that the men in the field preferred the 25 pdr **proper, and the Baby's were left behind unless** conditions were such that the 'big' 25 pdrs could not be used.

The full production run was 212 and they were withdrawn from use in 1946. Today, at least one still exists at the Commonwealth War Museum in Canberra. Not forgetting the odd one or two that **stand guard outside numerous RSL's, and various** memorial parks today.

The Vauxhall Wheel Carriage

When the Malay States and much of South-East Asia fell to the Japanese in early 1942, there were justifiable fears that the supply of raw rubber would soon dwindle and lead to raw material supply problems. As a direct result of these fears the Vauxhall Motor Company designed and produced an internally-sprung wheel with leather tyres in place of the normal rubber.

During 1943 two of these wheels were fitted to a 25 pdr and carriage for tests. These trials were, to put it mildly, not a success as the vibrations produced by the solid leather tyres were such that the carriage was almost shaken to pieces after even short towed runs. The wheel bearings in particular, designed for wheels with more resilient tyres, gave particular cause for alarm to the extent of wheels falling off. Not surprisingly, the whole Vauxhall Wheel programme came to a halt.

Fortunately, the anticipated shortages of rubber never made the impact that was expected, on production, and discarded to the annals of what might have been.

The 25 Pdr MARC

The 25 pdr MARC is one of the more involved and colourful of the 25 pdr variants, and had its origins during the German assault on France in 1940. During that whirlwind campaign, a French artillery officer, one J. M. Riboud, personally experienced the full force of *Blitzkrieg* warfare and determined to find some form of defence against the highly mobile tank. Being a gunner, he hit upon the idea of using as heavy a gun as possible, in a low mobile turret mounted on a wheeled carriage with a full 360 degree traverse. In 1940 his idea remained in his mind only, for he was for a while a prisoner of war of the German Army.

After a period, he was released into civilian life but M. Riboud was too lively a character to settle down to a peaceful existence, and, by a series of adventures, escaped from Occupied France, made his way to the United States, and from there progressed to Canada, where he got a job as a mechanical engineer. But his concept of a heavy anti-tank weapon was still with him and he managed to convince the Canadian Army Engineering Design Branch of the practicality of his ideas.

From this point, the 25 pdr MARC moved from an idea to the hardware stage, but only to the extent of a full engineering mock-up (completed March 1943). The 25 pdr was chosen to arm the device mainly because there were plenty to hand and one was fitted to the mock-up of what was to become the Mobile Armoured Revolving Carriage, or MARC. The MARC had the 25 pdr mounted on a low carriage with a full 360 degree traverse. The gun was provided with almost enveloping armour that would have been up to 55 mm thick - only a small opening at the rear was left clear for access, and overhead armour was provided as well.

The idea was that the carriage would be towed into position using a forward axle on the carriage, supported at the rear by a dummy axle from which the carriage was lowered onto two stabiliser jacks. This could be done quickly by a cable-release device. Once in position, preferably in a shallow pit, the gun was served by three men with another three located externally for ammunition supply. With a minimum amount of camouflage the gun and carriage would be difficult to detect other than at very short ranges, by which time the gun would be able to tackle armoured targets appearing from any point of the compass.

There were 12 rounds carried on the carriage and more could be ready to hand in slit trenches nearby. The MARC certainly had its attractions and the MARC mock-up was used for a series of trials and tests using a Quad³ as a tractor. These trials revealed that the gun could be fired from the towing position if the situation demanded it, and they also showed that the MARC could be rapidly and easily concealed.

But for all these attributes the Canadian Army remained lukewarm, and would not take the idea further than the mock-up stage. In fact they terminated the whole project in October 1943 even though the Royal School of Artillery at Larkhill in the United Kingdom had expressed interest in the idea a

few months earlier.

M. Riboud persisted for a while and even put forward the idea of replacing the 25 pdr with a 6 pdr anti tank gun, but in July 1944 the whole project was finally cancelled once and for all. For all that, M. Riboud persevered and succeeded in getting the US Army to actually built a prototype fitted with a 75 mm field gun. That was during 1946. But that was that - the MARC prospered no more and does not even appear to have carried out any trials with the US Army. The MARC was an attractive concept, and would no doubt have made a formidable anti-tank weapon armed with a 25 pdr.

But its main drawback was that it was essentially a static weapon produced at a time when mobile warfare was the accepted norm, and after a period when the German Army had demonstrated the potential of using mobile anti-tank guns in an attacking role. But for all that the MARC remains an odd example of a weapon that never made it. One wonders what became of M. Riboud?

The Ford Portee

By 1942 the idea of carrying light guns on the backs of trucks was established, if not yet widely practiced. Already the 2 pdr anti-tank gun and the little 37 mm Bofors anti-tank guns were being fired from trucks in North Africa and there were plans afoot for a special portee truck for the 6 pdr. The idea followed to produce a special portee truck for the 25 pdr, but for what exact tactical role remains unclear.

The Ford Motor Company accordingly produced a 4 x 4 3-ton chassis equipped for the 25 pdr portee role. The portee/25 pdr combination was trialed in July 1943 and the gun was even fired from the vehicle. But the gun was a bulky load for the vehicle and there was little room for ammunition or the gun detachment. As a result the whole project had terminated by September 1943. One now wonders why it was even started, but at the time, it probably looked like a good idea, alongside so many others that were considered, and then discarded. Like so **many others that were "thought up" and failed to** see the light of day, either for financial, practical or tactical reasons.

The 25 Pdr Tank Gun

The German assault gun was one that exactly suited their close-in infantry support tactics, and when the British Army experienced the power of 75 mm artillery used at close range by the various German

Sturmgeschütz, they decided to investigate the concept themselves. Using the Valentine tank as a basic chassis, Vickers designed a form of support vehicle with a 25 Pdr gun mounted in the front hull. To reduce the recoil forces involved, a special five-port muzzle brake was to have been fitted to this 25 pdr. But the whole project was abandoned, and although the design of the special 25 pdr was ready by December 1942, it never really left the drawing board. At least, another idea was looked at, only to further the feeling of desperation of the times.

The 25 Pdr CMP Truck

This was a Canadian concept that mounted a 25 Pdr in a small armoured turret on the back of an armoured 6 x 4 CMP truck. It was a project that reached the mock-up stage, and may even have been produced in prototype form, but it was top-heavy, and too unstable, and the project was terminated. This is one 25 Pdr project about which we have more to learn. It was produced in about 1943-1944.

The Schofield 25 Pdr Half-Track

This was another 25 pdr project that never left the drawing board. It was a New Zealand project, from the fertile mind of E. J. Schofield, of General Motors (Wellington). He was a great proponent of the idea of equipping vehicles with both wheels and tracks for increased mobility, and his half-track project was one of many. In very basic terms, his 25 pdr half-track could be converted to a fully-wheeled carrier by backing the track section onto a limber, normally towed behind the vehicle. The British War Office was not impressed with the idea, no doubt noting how complex the design was, for no real tactical advantage, and thus the project lapsed before full drawings had even commenced during 1944.

The Lloyd 25 Pdr

Very little is known about the first of the attempts to mount a 25 pdr onto a self-propelled carriage. The attempt appears to have been made circa 1941 but to what end is not clear, or even by whom the attempt was made. All that remain are a couple of archival photographs. For the conversion, a standard Lloyd Carrier was taken and the front superstructure removed. The gun cradle was mounted well forward in the hull, and that was about that. Some revision of the interior was made to stow the various bits and pieces, but the crew was but one gunner and a driver.

That gunner would have been very busy at all times, would be a profound understatement, masking that **of the proverbial "one armed paper hanger"** For it would have been his task alone to serve the gun by loading, aiming and selecting targets, which would have produced a very low rate of fire, to say the least, and the installation does not appear to have left much room for elevation. If the gun was supposed to be used in the direct fire role for assault support, it lacked armour and overhead protection, to say nothing of the open front. Ammunition stowage must have been very limited. Perhaps the kindest thing to say about the Lloyd 25 Pdr was that it was some sort of feasibility study. It would have been of little use as anything else, another idea born out of desperation?.

The Bishop

The self-propelled 25 pdr variant that was eventually to become known as the Bishop, was conceived at a time when the 25 pdr was being pressed into service as an anti-tank weapon in the North African desert. The Germans soon learned that while the 25 pdr was a good anti-tank gun it lacked mobility and range, and so used long-range tank and artillery fire to nullify the 25 pdr's effectiveness. From this it was seen that mounting the 25 pdr on some form of self-propelled chassis would not only improve mobility, but also protection, for the resultant carriage could move quickly, as and when required, unlike the unfortunate dug-in batteries.

From this, the Valentine infantry tank was selected to be the intended carriage from reliability factors rather than any other reason, and the Birmingham Carriage and Wagon Company was given the production contract, along with a high priority cachet. The first prototype was ready for trials in August 1941, but thereafter the trouble started. The main problem was that no-one was quite sure what the new 25 pdr SP was supposed to be. Tankies regarded the vehicle/gun combination as a tank with a 25 pdr main armament.

Gunners were adamant that it was an artillery piece on a mobile carriage. The resultant squabbles and uncertainties delayed approval, and caused detail design arguments, so that it was not until November 1941, that the production go-ahead was given with the Gunners apparently in the ascendancy. The first production order was for 100 vehicles, and although more were envisaged, only the first production batch

was ever finished. By the time the first vehicles reached the troops in the field, the need for protected 25 pdrs had passed, and there were enough 6 pdr anti-tank guns coming off the production lines to meet the Army's requirements. So the 25 pdr became a fully established piece of self-propelled artillery, but it was not a very good one.

The early uncertainty regarding the actual form of the 25 pdr vehicle resulted in what can now only be described as an unhappy compromise. The 25 Pdr Valentine emerged as an ungainly high vehicle with the 25 pdr set in a large and awkward armoured box situated in place of the Valentine's normal turret. This armoured box made the vehicle difficult to conceal and it was also cramped internally and so arranged that elevation was restricted to only + 15 degrees. This limited the maximum range to only 6400 yards/5852 meters and thus severely affected the use of the 25 Pdr Valentine as an artillery piece.

Furthermore, the armoured box was a fixed item with no traverse, and traverse of the barrel was limited to only 4 degrees either side. Normally this was no great problem, but the only way the gunners could usefully improve upon the limited elevation and range was to build earth ramps that the vehicle could climb onto, and thus increase the angle of barrel elevation. If a target moved outside the limited angle of traverse, the ramp had either to be extended or re-built, a time-consuming and laborious process. And, it may be added, with the enemy rapidly advancing, "a tactical problem"

As if these limitations were not enough, the top speed of the Valentine (24 km/h) was far too slow to keep up with the cruiser tanks in action, and far below the speed of a normal Quad and 25 pdr. The internal ammunition stowage was 32 rounds, and more had to be towed in a normal No. 27 ammunition limber. Ventilation inside the turret box was poor. All in all, the 25 Pdr Valentine was not a popular piece of kit. When the American M7 105mm self-propelled howitzers became available they were much preferred, and the M7's nickname of 'Priest' led to the retrospective name of 'Bishop' being bestowed upon the 25 pdr Valentine, rendering the vehicle's full designation as, Carrier, Valentine 25 pdr Gun, Mark 1 Bishop.

Thus the Bishop was used in action in North Africa, Sicily and the early stages of the Italian campaign, but as soon as something better, usually the M7 Priest at that period, became available, the Bishop

was withdrawn from service and replaced.

No-one was sorry to see it go, for it was an awkward, ungainly beast, with limited range, few comforts and a conspicuous outline. On the credit side it must be said that it gave the Royal Artillery some practical lessons in the use of self-propelled artillery, and the logistic and other problems involved. But at best, the Bishop was a crude stop-gap design until something better appeared.

1. *"Ultra" A name given to a Top Secret decoding program based at the now famous Bletchley Park, London, during WW 2 (and after, this story is worth a read on its own)*
2. *The 17 Pdr Calibre was (72.6 mm) or 3 in*
3. *The Quad was a generic name for the Gun Tractors made by Morris Motors and others as 4 X 4 Vehicles. Refer to Part 2.*

This extremely comprehensive article from Barry Irons will continue in the next issue. Ed



Note the Morris 6 wheeler gun tractor behind the 25 pdr.

Further info on gun tractors in future editions.

A special Christmas message for diggers past and present.
Lest we forget.



it was the night before
Christmas,
he lived all alone,
in a one bedroom house,
made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney,
with presents to give,
and to see just who,
in this home, did live.

I looked all about,
a strange sight I did see,
no tinsel, no presents,
not even a tree.

no stocking by mantle,
just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures,
of far distant lands.

with medals and badges,
awards of all kinds,
a sober thought,
came through my mind.

for this house was different,
it was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
once I could see clearly.

the soldier lay sleeping,
silent, alone,
curled up on the floor,
in this one bedroom home.

the face was so gentle,
the room in disorder,
not how I pictured,
an Australian soldier.

was this the hero,
of whom I'd just read?
curled up on a poncho,
the floor for a bed?

I realized the families,
that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these
soldiers,
who were willing to fight.

soon round the world,
the children would play,
and grownups would celebrate,
a bright Christmas day.

they all enjoyed freedom,
each month of the year,
because of the soldiers,
like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder,
how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas eve,
in a land far from home.

the very thought brought,
a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees,
and started to cry.

the soldier awakened,
and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry,
this life is my choice.

I fight for freedom,
I don't ask for more,
my life is my god,
my country, my corps."

the soldier rolled over,
and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
so silent and still,
and we both shivered,
from the cold night's chill.

I did not want to leave,
on that cold, dark, night,
this guardian of honour,
so willing to fight.

then the soldier rolled over,
with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "carry on Santa,
it's Christmas day, all is secure."

one look at my watch,
and I knew he was right.
"merry Christmas my friend,
and to all a good night."

Although this article concerns the USA, I would like to think that, given the circumstances, a similar response would occur here in Australia. Do you agree? Ed.

MAY GOD BLESS THIS AIRLINE CAPTAIN:

He writes: My lead flight attendant came to me and said, "We have an H.R. on this flight." (H.R. stands for human remains.) "Are they military?" I asked.

Yes', she said.

Is there an escort?' I asked.

Yes, I already assigned him a seat'.

Would you please tell him to come to the flight deck. You can board him early," I said.

A short while later, a young army sergeant entered the flight deck. He was the image of the perfectly dressed soldier. He introduced himself and I asked him about his soldier. The escorts of these fallen soldiers talk about them as if they are still alive and still with us.

My soldier is on his way back to Virginia ,' he said. He proceeded to answer my questions, but offered no words.

I asked him if there was anything I could do for him and he said no. I told him that he had the toughest job in the military and that I appreciated the work that he does for the families of our fallen soldiers. The first officer and I got up out of our seats to shake his hand. He left the flight deck to find his seat.

We completed our pre-flight checks, pushed back and performed an uneventful departure. About 30 minutes into our flight I received a call from the lead flight attendant in the cabin. 'I just found out the family of the soldier we are carrying is on board', she said. She then proceeded to tell me that the father, mother, wife and 2-year old daughter were escorting their son, husband, and father home. The family was upset because they were unable to see the container that the soldier was in before we left. We were on our way to a major hub at which the family was going to wait four hours for the connecting flight home to Virginia.

The father of the soldier told the flight attendant that knowing his son was below him in the cargo compartment and being unable to see him was too much for him and the family to bear. He had asked

the flight attendant if there was anything that could be done to allow them to see him upon our arrival. The family wanted to be outside by the cargo door to watch the soldier being taken off the airplane. I could hear the desperation in the flight attendants voice when she asked me if there was anything I **could do. 'I'm on it', I said. I told her that I would get back to her.**

Airborne communication with my company normally occurs in the form of e-mail like messages. I decided to bypass this system and contact my flight dispatcher directly on a secondary radio. There is a radio operator in the operations control centre who connects you to the telephone of the dispatcher. I was in direct contact with the dispatcher. I explained the situation I had on board with the family and what it was the family wanted. He said he understood and that he would get back to me.

Two hours went by and I had not heard from the dispatcher. We were going to get busy soon and I needed to know what to tell the family. I sent a text message asking for an update. I saved the return message from the dispatcher and the following is the text:

'Captain, sorry it has taken so long to get back to you. There is policy on this now and I had to check on a few things. Upon your arrival a dedicated escort team will meet the aircraft. The team will escort the family to the ramp and plane side. A van will be used to load the remains with a secondary van for the family. The family will be taken to their departure area and escorted into the terminal where the remains can be seen on the ramp. It is a private area for the family only. When the connecting aircraft arrives, the family will be escorted onto the ramp and plane side to watch the remains being loaded for the final leg home. Captain, most of us here in flight control are veterans. Please pass our condolences on to the family. Thanks.'

I sent a message back telling flight control thanks for a good job. I printed out the message and gave it to the lead flight attendant to pass on to the father. The lead flight attendant was very thankful and told me, 'You have no idea how much this will mean to them.'

Things started getting busy for the descent, approach and landing. After landing, we cleared the runway and taxied to the ramp area. The ramp is huge with 15 gates on either side of the alleyway. It

is always a busy area with aircraft manoeuvring every which way to enter and exit. When we entered the ramp and checked in with the ramp controller, we were told that all traffic was being held for us.

'There is a team in place to meet the aircraft', we were told. It looked like it was all coming together, then I realized that once we turned the seat belt sign off, everyone would stand up at once and delay the family from getting off the airplane. As we approached our gate, I asked the co-pilot to tell the ramp controller we were going to stop short of the gate to make an announcement to the passengers. He did that and the ramp controller said, 'Take your time.'

I stopped the aircraft and set the parking brake. I pushed the public address button and said. 'Ladies and gentleman, this is your Captain speaking I have stopped short of our gate to make a special announcement. We have a passenger on board who deserves our honour and respect. His name is Private XXXXXX, a soldier who recently lost his life. Private XXXXXX is under your feet in the cargo hold. Escorting him today is Army Sergeant XXXXXX. Also, on board are his father, mother, wife and daughter. Your entire flight crew is asking for all passengers to remain in their seats to allow the family to exit the aircraft first. Thank you.'

We continued the turn to the gate, came to a stop and started our shutdown procedures. A couple of minutes later I opened the cockpit door. I found the two forward flight attendants crying, something you just do not see. I was told that after we came to a

stop, every passenger on the aircraft stayed in their seats, waiting for the family to exit the aircraft.

When the family got up and gathered their things, a passenger slowly started to clap his hands. Moments later more passengers joined in and soon the entire aircraft was clapping. Words of 'God Bless You', I'm sorry, thank you, be proud, and other kind words were uttered to the family as they made their way down the aisle and out of the airplane. They were escorted down to the ramp to finally be with their loved one.

Many of the passengers disembarking thanked me for the announcement I had made. They were just words, I told them, I could say them over and over again, but nothing I say will bring back that brave soldier.

I respectfully ask that all of you reflect on this event and the sacrifices that millions of our men and women have made to ensure our freedom and safety in these United States of America.

Footnote:

As a Vietnam veteran, I can only think of all the veterans including the ones that rode below the deck on their way home and how they were treated. When I read things like this I am proud that our country has not turned their backs on our soldiers returning from the various war zones today and give them the respect they so deserve.

I know everyone who has served their country who reads this will have tears in their eyes, including me.

Thanks to WO2 Max Murray for submitting this article.

Warrant Officers

A cynical old squaddie dies and being pure of heart and clean of mind he is instantly transported to the Pearly Gates.

St Peter looks through his personal file and grants the squaddie access to heaven.

"One question" says the squaddie, "no bloody Warrant Officers up here is there?"

"No" replies St Peter, "You're right."

"Good" says the squaddie, I'm not coming in if there is."

"No mate. Jobs right. Enjoy"

For three days the squaddie is literally in heaven, free Rum, hot and cold running water, no guards, heaven every day.....until he spots a figure in the

distance!

Immaculately pressed uniform, the light glistening off his beautiful polished brass, three rows of ribbons, steely gaze surveying all around him; pace stick clamped under his highly muscled left arm and horror of horrors, on that arm a large coat of arms badge.

The squaddie races back to St Peter and bails him up; "Hey Mate", you told me there were no Warrant officers up here."

"Yeah that's right, there's none"

"Oh yeah then who's the bloke then in the uniform?" asks the squaddie.

"No mate, that's not a Warrant officer, that's God. **He just thinks he's a Warrant Officer**".



Hey Soldier, If You See a "Dud" Round - Leave it Where it Lies!

Rocket Tester
June, 1983
North Carolina

The Army base at Fort Bragg has seen its share of military "accidents," including the following, a true story and an object lesson often recounted on explosive device ranges to teach soldiers a basic safety lesson: LEAVE A DUD ROUND WHERE IT LIES.

At the LAW (Light Anti-Tank Weapon) range, soldiers are afforded the rare privilege of firing a real LAW round, although the test rounds are smaller, and not armed with the full explosive power of the actual LAWs. They have an orange chalk warhead, and resemble a model rocket.

One day, the designated Range Safety Officer, Sergeant Lowe, was assigned the job of setting up the moving target with the assistance of a 3-man detail. "The installation of the target on the carrier was hampered by the absence of proper tools," so they improvised, and used a steel tent peg as a hammer to nail the target to the carrier.

While walking on the firing range, Sgt. Lowe spotted and picked up a M72A2 66mm LAW dud round that had not exploded upon impact with the target. The other men in the detail warned him to leave it on the ground, and let the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Detachment) handle it. Sgt Lowe replied, "Its just an old dud," and, to illustrate the innocuous nature of the round, began to strike it with the steel tent peg.

The second strike tripped the pressure-sensitive piezoelectric detonator, causing the round to explode. The explosion tore off Sgt. Lowe's left arm, parts of his right hand, and inflicted fatal wounds to his lungs and abdominal area.

Instead of the EOD, a medical evacuation aircraft was dispatched from the hospital, and an Army Forensics Team arrived to literally scoop up the remains of the former "Range Safety Officer."

Always remember, leave a dud round where it lies!

I am quite sure an Aussie SNCO would never be so stupid as this one! Ed

DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE

Vale Dr David Warren AO: 1925 - 2010

Defence and the Australian scientific community is mourning the death of Dr David Warren, inventor of the Black Box flight data recorder, who passed away on 19 July at the age of 85.

Born in 1925 at a remote mission station in far north-east Australia, Dr Warren served as Principal Research Scientist at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation's Aeronautical Research Laboratories (ARL) in Melbourne, from 1952 - 1983.

Early in his career, Dr Warren was involved in accident investigations related to the mysterious crash of the world's first jet airliner, the Comet, in 1953.

He advocated the use of a cockpit voice recorder as a useful means of solving otherwise inexplicable aircraft accidents. He designed and constructed the world's first flight data recorder prototype at the ARL in 1956. This device became known as the 'black box'.

It took five years before the value and practicality of the flight data recorder concept was realised and a further five years until authorities mandated they be fitted to cockpits in Australian aircraft. The modern-day equivalent of Dr Warren's device, installed in passenger airlines around the world is a testament to his pioneering work.

In November 2008, Qantas announced that they had named an Airbus A380 aircraft after Dr Warren in honour of his contribution to aviation. Dr Warren was one of only two aviation pioneers who were there to see the unveiling of the names that would grace the new fleet. His name will join such aviation luminaries as Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Nancy-Bird Walton in adorning one of twenty new planes.

Among many awards during his career, Dr Warren and his team also received the Lawrence Hargraves award in 2001 for their work on the Black Box flight recorder. He was appointed an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2002 for service to the aviation industry.

Dr Warren simultaneously served as chairman of the Combustion Institute (Australian & New Zealand Section) for 25 years (1958 - 1983) and Scientific Energy Adviser to the Victorian Parliament (1981 - 1982).



Weapon trial: A soldier lines up a target during testing of the M3 84mm Carl

Increase in firepower

By Sgt Andrew Hetherington

SOLDIERS shoulders, backs and targeting skills will benefit from the purchase of a new model 84mm Carl Gustaf anti-armour weapon.

The \$26 million contract includes the purchase of 437 of the M3 84mm weapons and an advanced sighting system, the AN/AS 13C (V) 3 Heavy Weapon Thermal Sight.

They will be used by regular infantry and special forces soldiers and also RAAF airfield defence guards.

This is the most advanced version of the 84mm anti-armour weapon, which first entered Army service in the 1960s.

The M3 is 4kg lighter than the Army's current M2 model because of its composite barrel, which consists of a lightweight steel barrel-liner and carbon-fibre materials to withstand firing pressures.

Lt-Col Rick Mollmann, Project Director of Direct Fire Support Weapons Land 40-2, said the new sight would also make a difference. "The new thermal sight can be used during the day, night or in adverse weather conditions, further enhancing soldier's targeting capabilities," Lt-Col Mollmann said

Before the decision was made to purchase the M3, a significant amount of testing was conducted by 1RAR in February and March in 2008.

Tim Efthymiou, Systems Engineering Manager for the M3 project, fired the weapon during the trials and was impressed with its performance.

"It's so light it's like you are carrying and using a heavy barrelled sniper rifle," Mr Efthymiou said.



M3 84mm Carl Gustaf

- Weight 11kg (including bipod mount and thermal sight)
- There is no change to handling drills or ammunition natures/type.
- The M3 sight weighs 1.77kg (with mission batteries) and provides superior targeting capability under day, night and adverse weather conditions.

Users can easily place their sight cross-hairs where they need the rounds to fall, using narrow and wide fields of view.

"During testing the sight enhanced the weapon so much it was 50 per cent more accurate compared to the M2 day sight," Mr Efthymiou said.

"It increases the effective range of the weapon system and I have spoken to special forces soldiers who really liked using it with HE rounds."

The sight provides video imagery of infra-red emissions.

First deliveries of the M3 are due in July and the introduction into service will be later this year.

Courtesy of The Soldiers Army. March 4th, 2010

Medium Gunner Socks!!

I received the Autumn RAA Liaison Letter yesterday: by Courier, rather than from the Postie, no less! I was so impressed that I read it last night and you certainly draw together a wide range of material: well done. I can offer some 'peripheral' information about medium gunners and their socks, although I would be surprised if this was not superseded quickly by many more authoritative communications.

On return to Australia from South Vietnam in May 1969, I was posted as Adjutant 2nd Field Regiment RAA, Batman Avenue and Landcox Street Brighton Depots. 2nd Division Artillery was a formidable group at the time, comprising 2nd & 15th Field, 10 Medium plus 132nd Divisional Locating Battery, all under the command of a Divisional Artillery Headquarters. Because Citizen Military Forces (CMF) service was available as a national service alternative, all gun units were at close to full strength, having two gun batteries and a headquarters battery each. 132nd and headquarters RAA were also well manned.

Now, to socks... Such large numbers meant that the social whirl of Melbourne included an annual RAA Ball, which I duly attended each year and, at my first, was regaled by the sight of one Captain Geoff 'Putters' Putnam, one of the forward observer captain's of 2nd Field, who proceeded to raise his trouser legs to reveal one red and one blue sock, proudly stating 'Old medium gunner quiff!'

As the founding subbie of 104th Medium Battery when it was re-raised as an independent Australian Regular Army sub-unit at Holsworthy (I joined them in February 1966), I reckoned I already knew a thing or two about those who served the OBL 5.5, but this was news to me. So I would suggest that you pursue enquiries with former members of 10th Medium Regiment (Geelong and Colac). Graham Farley, later Colonel Artillery 3rd Military District, who was a battery commander at the time I served with 2nd Field, springs to mind as a likely source of authoritative knowledge, as I still have a copy of his witty and erudite slim publication 'In Direct Support - Gunner Miscellanea', produced for the 3rd Military District RAA TEWT at Woodend in September 1980. It is, alas, silent on the question of medium gunners socks!

With warm regards

Major John Thornton

Editor: If you think back to the original query about Red and Blue socks by Colonel Reg Foster, Colonel Commandant Central Region, the background and **history to the story has evolved far beyond a 'subbie'** writing about it recently in 8th/12th Medium Regiment. Many thanks for your contribution to the evolving story about a tradition which I think was almost lost and now needs to be proudly resurrected by medium gunners. Start wearing your 'Red and Blue' socks medium gunners. I wonder if it matters which foot each colour should be worn?

Red and Blue Socks Story Continues

I'm a little embarrassed having not renewed my **subscription for some time, particularly as I've** been reading Peter Bruce's copy of the Liaison Letter and failing to return it to him as soon as I should. However, I'll see him at Legacy tomorrow night and return his latest letter, The Spring Edition 2008. Could you send me a copy of it for my keeping please? You do great work and I very much enjoy seeing some names I recognise in 'Letters to the Editor'.

I read with interest Major Kym Schoene's response to Reg Foster's question of the medium gunners' socks. I thought you may be interested in a version given to me some years ago by the late Major Jock Finlay, popular, long-serving Victorian gunner. Having discussed many things trivial over a long Gunner Dinner in the Vic Bks Officers Mess, Melbourne, Jock volunteered to improve my knowledge with a number of written pieces connected with traditions and customs. The enclosed offering on the Red & Blue Socks situation was one of them. I enclose a copy of his covering letter and his description for what it's worth. (*Red & Blue p26*)

I've sent my membership to Major Schoene. I hope your 2009 is an enjoyable, productive year and congratulations on your high quality liaison letter.

Regards

Major Warren Barnard (Retd)

Reference: RAA Liaison Letter 2009 - Spring Edition

Ed. I'm sure many members will see some familiar names on this page.

THE FINAL INSPECTION

The soldier stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.

'Step forward now, you soldier,
How shall I deal with you ?
Have you always turned the other cheek ?
To My Church have you been true?'

The soldier squared his shoulders and said,
'No, Lord, I guess I ain't.
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear.
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,
Among the people here.
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the throne,
Where the saints had often trod.
As the soldier waited quietly,
For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you soldier,
You've borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell.'

Author Unknown~

Red and Blue

The observance of customs in the Army, whether it be the dignified ceremonial of Trooping the Colour or the wearing of a piece of coloured cloth behind a badge, is an integral part of military life, derived from military experience throughout the ages. To the uninitiated these customs may seem to be meaningless anachronisms, but to those who understand their origin they are the foundation of that potent driving force 'in the British Army -Esprit de Corps.

Throughout the British Army regimental customs are many and varied, encouraged by Authority and proudly cherished by those concerned. The Gloucester's two cap badges, the queue ribbons of the Welsh Fusiliers and the Minden Roses of the Lancashire Fusiliers are only a few examples.

The Australian Army has in the past been notably short of such distinctions, the tendency unfortunately being towards uniformity. It is interesting, therefore, to note that a novel custom has been adopted by officers of the Medium Regiments of the Royal Australian Artillery.

This custom harks back to a memorable occasion in the history of human conflict. At the Battle of Agincourt, on the twenty fifth day of October 1415, an English force under Henry V comprising mostly archers, field and medium, fought against a far larger French force for three hours and won a signal victory. Legend has it that at the height of the battle, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Medium Archery Regiment fell mortally wounded. This gallant archer refused medical assistance and ably assisted by his Adjutant continued to issue fire orders until he finally succumbed to his wounds. His gallantry and devotion to duty went far towards the hard won victory and have been an inspiration to archers and gunners ever since.

Legend also tells us how when the body of the revered CO was being prepared for burial a miracle was revealed. His right leg was stained and encrusted with the rich red blood of the hero whereas to the amazement of all it was found that his left leg was covered with the royal blue blood of the aristocrat. This was immediately regarded as a divine revelation of the undoubted aristocracy of the "Mediums".

Gunners, being the modern counterpart of the gallant Archers of Olde England have for long cherished red and blue as their traditional colours, such being Symbolic - that they live like aristocrats and die like heroes.

Officers of Medium Artillery Regiments are now perpetuating the Agincourt revelation in a somewhat unique manner. On certain formal occasions they may be distinguished from other categories of Gunner Officers, in that the sock on the right is red and the one on the left is blue. By this sign shall they be known.

Major W. M. Finlay

True Warriors

Look carefully at the B-17 and note how shot up it is - one engine dead, tail, horizontal stabilizer and nose shot up. It was ready to fall out of the sky.

This is a painting done by an artist from the description of both pilots many years later.

Then realize that there is a German ME-109 fighter flying next to it. Now read the story below. I think you'll be surprised.....



Charlie Brown was a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot with the 379th Bomber Group at Kimbolton , England .

His B-17 was called 'Ye Old Pub' and was in a terrible state, having been hit by flak and fighters.

The compass was damaged and they were flying deeper over enemy territory instead of heading home to Kimbolton.

After flying the B-17 over an enemy airfield, a German pilot named Franz Steigler was ordered to take off and shoot down the B-17.

When he got near the B-17, **he could not believe his eyes. In his words, he 'had never seen a plane in such a bad state'.**

The tail and rear section was severely damaged, and the tail gunner wounded. The top gunner was all over the top of the fuselage.

The nose was smashed and there were holes everywhere.

Despite having ammunition, Franz flew to the side of the B-17 and looked at Charlie Brown, the pilot. Brown was scared and struggling to control his damaged and blood-stained plane. Aware that they had no idea where they were going, Franz waved at Charlie to turn 180 degrees. Franz escorted and guided the stricken plane to, and slightly over, the North Sea towards England. He then saluted Charlie Brown and turned away, back to Europe.

BF-109 pilot Franz Stigler



B-17 pilot Charlie Brown.



When Franz landed he told the CO that the plane had been shot down over the sea, and never told the truth to anybody.

Charlie Brown and the remains of his crew told all at their briefing, but were ordered never to talk about it.

More than 40 years later, Charlie Brown wanted to find the Luftwaffe pilot who saved the crew.

After years of research, Franz was found. He had never talked about the incident, not even at post-war reunions.

They met in the USA at a 379th Bomber Group reunion, together with 25 people who are alive now - all because Franz never fired his guns that day.

When asked why he didn't shoot them down, Stigler later said, "I didn't have the heart to finish those brave men. I flew beside them for a long time.

They were trying desperately to get home and I was going to let them do that. I could not have shot at them. **It would have been the same as shooting at a man in a parachute."**

Both men died in 2008.



(L-R) German Ace Franz Stigler, artist Ernie Boyett, and B-17 pilot Charlie Brown.

■ This is a true story
 ■ THIS WAS BACK IN THE DAYS
 ■ WHEN THERE WAS HONOUR IN
 ■ BEING A WARRIOR.
 ■ THEY PROUDLY WORE
 ■ UNIFORMS, AND THEY DIDN'T
 ■ HIDE IN AMBUSH INSIDE A
 ■ MOSQUE, OR BEHIND WOMEN
 ■ AND CHILDREN.
 ■ NOR DID THEY USE MENTALLY
 ■ RETARDED WOMEN AS SUICIDE
 ■ BOMBERS TO TARGET AND KILL
 ■ INNOCENT CIVILIANS. HOW
 ■ TIMES HAVE CHANGED.

MRH90 recommencement of flying operations

Defence Media Release

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) today announced that Multi Role Helicopters (MRH90s) will recommence flying operations later this week.

This follows an incident north of Adelaide in April this year where an MRH90 suffered an engine failure in one of its two main engines.

The Defence Materiel Organisation's (DMO) Head Helicopter Systems Division, Rear Admiral Mark Campbell, stated that media reports alleging pilot error being a factor in the engine failure were incorrect.

"There is no suggestion of pilot error as alleged in one UK report," Rear Admiral Campbell said. Eurocopter CEO, Dr Lutz Bertling, has also written to the Minister for Defence Materiel and Science, Greg Combet to directly refute any suggestion that engine damage was caused by improper handling of the aircraft by ADF pilots.

Rear Admiral Campbell also said an inspection regime and preventative measures have been developed to lift the current flying suspension.

"I can confirm flying operations will commence shortly following approval by Defence's Operational Airworthiness Authority.

"Extensive work has been conducted by Rolls Royce Turbomeca and our Industry partners with support from the Defence Science and Technology Organisation to identify the cause of the engine failure.

"We are advised the failure resulted from compressor blade fracture due to contact with the engine casing."

The impact of the engine failure combined with the workload to address some technical issues with this very capable but highly complex digital aircraft will delay the first flight at sea for Navy, which is now expected to occur in mid 2011.

The first Army capability objective of one deployable MRH90 troop will also be delayed.

Of the 46 MRH90 helicopters ordered for the Australian Navy and Army, 11 have been accepted and are being used for training and testing which contributes to the development of operational capability over the next few years.

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Customs and Traditions of the
Australian Army

by Christopher Jobson

Every army marches to the tune of its customs and traditions. The customs and traditions of the Australian Army reflect the often glorious legacies that define the Army of today. They are visible acknowledgements of the history that has shaped the character, the values and the pride of Australia's modern Army and those who serve in its ranks.'

Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, former Chief of Army

Looking Forward Looking Back - Customs and Traditions of the Australian Army provides a wealth of knowledge on the Australian Army's proud history. These customs and traditions, are dynamic, they evolve and adapt, as does the Army itself. They continue to retain their relevance to the modern Army as they inspire in the digger a strong sense of belonging. The teamwork, pride, discipline and respect of the past inspire the present.

The Australian Army boasts a broad variety of traditions, some of which belong to the Service as a whole, others to a particular corps, regiment or rank. These customs and traditions vary greatly, some are serious and solemn, others humorous and some encompass the rules of social etiquette, manners and style.

Many of the Australian Army's traditions are derived from the battle tactics and fighting dress of old. Some of the drill movements seen on today's parade ground were originally manoeuvres performed by soldiers in battle. Various items of uniform had practical uses for their wearers in combat and some customs retain their original practical use as they did hundreds of years ago.

While the ever-changing modern military environment demands that soldiers continue to look forward, looking back to the customs and traditions of the Army serves as a constant and reassuring reminder of past victories and the journey so far.

Looking Forward, Looking Back is written by Christopher Jobson, a Vietnam Veteran who discharged

after 30 years of professional soldiering. In his final years of service he was posted as the Army's Regimental Sergeant-Major Ceremonial & Protocol. His interesting compilation of the various customs and traditions is complimented by photographs and illustrations. *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, will ensure in part, the military heritage that created the foundation of the fighting force of today is not lost over time.

Looking Forward Looking Back

Customs and Traditions of the Australian Army



On Sale at all good book stores or available on-line www.bigskypublishing.com.au

Defence organisations will receive a discounted price when purchasing 5 or more copies direct from Big Sky Publishing. Freight is free.

NOTICE

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery Customs and Traditions



by Christopher Jobson

Copies available from the Museum Shop at
North Fort

www.northfort.com.au or
Phone (02) 9976 6102

NAVY'S NEW PIRATE CATCHER

What a Ship, WOW!

A couple of these should be able to easily clean
all the pirates out of the Indian Ocean.

U.S.S. Independence (LCS-2) A Triple Hulled, Weapon-Laden Monster.

We've been hearing rumblings about the U.S. Navy's triple-hulled ships, but here's one that was launched last month, the U.S.S. Independence. Built by General Dynamics, it's called a "littoral combat ship" (LCS), and the trimaran can move huge weapons around faster than any ship in the Navy. Ironical that with all that high tech built in, the ship reminds us of the Merrimac ironclad from Civil War days.



Littoral means close to shore, and that's where these fleet-hulled babies will operate, tailor-made for launching helicopters and armoured vehicles, sweeping mines and firing all manner of torpedoes, missiles and machine guns. These ships were designed to be relatively inexpensive this one's a bargain at \$208 million and the navy plans to build 55 of them.



This trimaran is the first of the new fire-breathing breed, ready to scoot out of dry dock at a rumoured 60 knots... It's like a speedy and heavily-armed aircraft carrier for helicopters.

NEW RUSSIAN SUPER TANK - T-80????

MOSCOW, September 13, 2009 - The Russian military has denied the existence of a new-generation main battle tank (MBT) based on T-80 design and featuring explosive reactive armour and a box-shaped turret.

The Russian media has recently resumed discussion of the secret tank, dubbed Black Eagle, which was developed by the Omsk Transmash design bureau and whose pictures were shown in several publications and on the Internet.

"There was no such project...and those 20-year-old pictures show a mock-up of a futuristic tank which remained just a product of someone's imagination," Col. Vladimir Voitov, head of research at the Main Directorate of the Armoured Troops, said in an interview with the Echo Moskvyy radio on Saturday.

He added that he was aware of a prototype of an experimental tank, but insisted that 'the turret of the vehicle did not have anything inside.'

According to the Russian media, an early prototype of the Black Eagle was shown at an arms exposition in Siberia, in June 1999. It appeared to be based on a lengthened T-80U hull, and to have very thick front armour and new-generation Kaktus explosive reactive armour.

However, recent reports in open sources suggest that the Black Eagle program has been halted due to the acceptance of the T-90, built by the Uralvagonzavod plant, into the Russian military in the mid-1990s.

In addition, Russia has reportedly opted for Uralvagonzavod as the developer and manufacturer of a new-generation MBT, which will most likely have a designation as T-95.

Sergei Mayev, head of the Federal Service for Defense Contracts (Rosoboronzakaz) told a news conference in July 2008 that the Russian Armed Forces would start receiving new-generation tanks superior to the T-90 main battle tank after 2010.

The new tank will feature better firepower, manoeuvrability, electronics and armour protection than the T-90 MBT.

Its speed will increase from 30-50 kph to 50-65 kph (19-31 mph to 31-40 mph).

According to some sources, the new tank may be equipped with a 152-mm smooth bore gun capable of firing guided missiles with a range of 6,000-7,000 meters.

In comparison, the T-90 MBT has a 125-mm 2A46M smoothbore gun, which can fire AT-11 Sniper anti-tank guided missiles with a range of 4,000 meters.



From a Marine Friend.....Luke

During my lifetime, I have had the grave misfortune of living on-and-off among the Arab Muslims for two-and-a half years. I have never been able to articulate about these people as descriptively as him. The Marine uses some rough language, but in his situation, how could he help but not?

From the Sand Pit

It's freezing here. I'm sitting on hard, cold dirt between rocks and shrubs at the base of the Hindu Kush Mountains, along the Dar 'yoi Pomir River, watching a hole that leads to a tunnel that leads to a cave.

Stake out, my friend, and no pizza delivery for thousands of miles.

I also glance at the area around my ass every ten to fifteen seconds to avoid another scorpion sting. I've actually given up battling the chiggers and sand fleas, but them scorpions give a jolt like a cattle prod. Hurts like a bastard. The antidote tastes like transmission fluid, but God bless the Marine Corps for the five vials of it in my pack.

The one truth the Taliban cannot escape is that, believe it or not, they are human beings, which means they have to eat food and drink water. That requires couriers and that's where an old bounty hunter like me comes in handy. I track the couriers, locate the tunnel entrances and storage facilities, type the info into the handheld, shoot the coordinates up to the satellite link that tells the air commanders where to drop the hardware. We bash some heads for a while, then I track and record the new movement.

It's all about intelligence. We haven't even brought in the snipers yet. These scurrying rats have no idea what they're in for. We are but days away from cutting off supply lines and allowing the eradication to begin.

I dream of bin Laden waking up to find me standing over him with my boot on his throat as I spit into his face and plunge my nickel-plated Bowie knife through his frontal lobe. But you know me, I'm a romantic. I've said it before and I'll say it again: This country blows, man. It's not even a country. There are no roads, there's no infrastructure, there's no government. This is an inhospitable, rock pit shit hole ruled by eleventh century warring tribes. There are no jobs here like we know jobs.

Afghanistan offers two ways for a man to support his family: join the opium trade or join the army. That's it. Those are your options. Oh, I forgot, you can also live in a refugee camp and eat plum-sweetened, crushed beetle paste and squirt mud like a goose with stomach flu, if that's your idea of a party. But the smell alone of those 'tent cities of the walking dead' is enough to hurl you into the poppy fields to cheerfully scrape bulbs for eighteen hours a day.

I've been living with these Tajiks and Uzbeks, and Turkmen and even a couple of Pushtuns, for over a month-and-a-half now, and this much I can say for sure: These guys, all of 'em, are Huns... Actual, living Huns. They LIVE to fight. It's what they do. It's ALL they do. They have no respect for anything, not for their families, nor for each other, nor for themselves.

They claw at one another as a way of life. They play polo with dead calves and force their five-year-old sons into human cockfights to defend the family honour. Huns, roaming packs of savage, heartless beasts who feed on each other's barbarism. Cavemen with AK-47's. Then again, maybe I'm just cranky. I'm freezing my ass off on this stupid hill because my lap warmer is running out of juice, and I can't recharge it until the sun comes up in a few hours.

Oh yeah! You like to write letters, right? Do me a favour, Bizarre. Write a letter to CNN and tell Wolf and Anderson and that awful, sneering, pompous Aaron Brown to stop calling the Taliban 'smart.' They are not smart. I suggest CNN invest in a dictionary because the word they are looking for is 'cunning.' The Taliban are cunning, like jackals and hyenas and wolverines. They are sneaky and ruthless, and when confronted, cowardly. They are hateful, malevolent parasites who create nothing and destroy everything else. Smart... Pfft... Yeah, they're real smart.

They've spent their entire lives reading only one book (and not a very good one, as books go) and consider hygiene and indoor plumbing to be products of the devil. They're still figuring out how to work a Bic lighter. Talking to a Taliban warrior about improving his quality of life is like trying to teach an ape how to hold a pen; eventually he just gets frustrated and sticks you in the eye with it.

OK, enough. Snuffle will be up soon, so I have to get

back to my hole. Covering my tracks in the snow takes a lot of practice, but I'm good at it.

Please, I tell you and my fellow Americans to turn off the TV sets and move on with your lives. The story line you are getting from CNN and other news agencies is utter bullshit and designed not to deliver truth, but rather to keep you glued to the screen through the commercials.

We've got this one under control. The worst thing you guys can do right now is sit around analyzing what we're doing over here, because you have no idea what we're doing, and really, you don't want to know. We are your military, and we are doing what you sent us here to do.



Saucy Jack.

Recon Marine in Afghanistan Semper Fi

"Freedom is not free... but the U.S. Marine Corps will pay most of your share."

Further to WO1 Chris Jobson's assertion (journal 104) that Harry was not an Australian soldier at the time of his death, I include the following article in support. Ed

Who's who in Australian Military History Lieutenant Henry Harboard (Harry) 'The Breaker' Morant

Henry Harboard (Harry) 'The Breaker' Morant

Date of birth: 09 December

1864

Place of birth: Somerset, England

Date of death: 27 February 1902

Place of death: South Africa

Better known for the manner of his death before a firing squad than what he did in life, Harry Morant is believed to have been born on 9 December 1864 at Somerset in England. Much of his early life is clouded in mystery but he arrived at Townsville, Queensland, in early April 1883. Using the name Edwin Henry Murrant, he married Daisy O'Dwyer, in reality the anthropologist Daisy Bates, less than a year later. At the time, Morant was working as a groom on a grazing property.



The two separated and Morant moved to Winton, Queensland before finding work droving cattle. His reputation as a horseman, drinker and womaniser grew, particularly after he began contributing poetry to the *Bulletin* under the name 'the Breaker'. In 1899 when the Boer War began, Morant was in Adelaide and he joined the 2nd Contingent, South Australian Mounted Rifles.

Having first served as a dispatch rider, Morant also worked with the well-known British war correspondent, Bennett Burleigh. His enlistment ended after 12 months, for which he received good reports and the offer of a commission. Instead, however, he went to England where he became engaged and befriended a fellow veteran of the war in South Africa, Captain Percy Hunt. The two men returned to South Africa in March 1901 and were commissioned into a British irregular unit, the Bushveldt Carbineers.

Morant served with distinction on his first posting in the area south-east of Pietersburg. The Carbineers, based at Fort Edward in the Spelonken district, however, had already acquired a reputation for shooting prisoners, looting and insubordination. When their commander was recalled, Percy Hunt was posted to Fort Edward, joined later by Morant.

In August 1901 Hunt was wounded on patrol and his body was later found stripped and mutilated. Morant, now in command, led a revenge patrol that resulted in his ordering a prisoner to be shot. He later ordered a separate group of prisoners be executed. These killings were followed by the shooting of a German missionary who had spoken to the doomed prisoners. Shortly after that, Morant, Lieutenant Peter Handcock and others shot another group of Boer prisoners.

Morant, Handcock and other officers were arrested on 22 October and, in January, were court martialed for the killings. On one occasion, while the trial was taking place, the accused helped fend off a Boer attack on Pietersburg. Acquitted for murdering the German missionary (it later emerged that Handcock did kill him at Morant's instigation), Morant was convicted on all other charges and sentenced to be shot along with Handcock. The sentence was carried out on 27 February 1902. Morant became something of a folk hero and his memory was revived with the film *Breaker Morant* in 1980. The evidence, however, suggests that he was guilty of the crimes for which he was tried even if his execution resulted from political pressure after the death of the German missionary.

Courtesy Australian War Memorial

6. Examinations (Part 2)

In the CMF officer's career parallel with mine were two "stumbling block" assessment courses supervised by full-time officers of the army. They took their names from the various acts and regulations but were known by their abbreviated titles: DA 21(a) for promotion to major and Tac 5 for promotion to lieutenant-colonel.

DA 21(a)

In 1961 BRIG Dick Eason, then CRA, rang me one night advising me that I had passed all four subjects for major and that I would be nominated for the DA 21(a) assessment course. Then in July 1961 LTCOL Peter Turner talked me into being BC for the Warragul battery, offering chauffer-driven transport both ways. It was now essential to qualify in the DA 21(a) if I was to be eligible for the rank of major.

My artillery appointments to that date had mainly been in the battery or regimental command posts. I had had little "all arms" training. The Adjutant, CAPT Graeme Taylor, gave me special coaching but would it be enough? With my usual light-hearted attitude, I thought it would be a matter of learning a number of "catch phrases," such as "dominating no-man's land," and the like, to qualify. How wrong I was!

The first (coaching) week of the fortnight's assessment was held at Yarra Glen. I shared a room with CAPT "Chalky" White. MAJ Ian McBride conducted the coaching week. The first lecture was on armour. What were tanks? Ian tended to use all the acceptable phrases, but I was ignorant of the basics. As each day passed, I knew I would not be ready for the forthcoming assessment week, but I stayed on. Nor did it help to be "hors de combat" for a day with a boil in a place that meant I had to stand!

The second (assessment) week was at Puckapunyal and conducted by LTCOL Williams. There was the inevitable first problem with infantry in front of tanks in the wooded areas but tanks in front in the open. I knew I would fail to qualify. I "crept" back home at the end of the fortnight rather ashamed.

The army always seems to give a "second chance." I was determined to qualify. If I didn't then there was little future for me in the CMF. I guess I am a little ambitious and, equally, do not like "losing face." After all, my "admiring girls" at the high school, to whom I taught commercial subjects, would want "sir" to do well.

While attending all the lectures and coaching that I could, I was also posted to CSTU for intensive coaching. The powers that be had now introduced coaching courses for both tactics assessment courses. This was a significant step forward. At the same time, there were a number of senior CMF officers who had completed their periods of command and were, in effect, "in waiting." Hence the CSTU's were set up with considerable expertise and experience at their disposal.

I noted in my diary at the time that after one TEWT earlier that year it was all starting to make sense. I was now ready with confidence to answer the question, "Where do you see your tanks?" The coaching took place in a leased building at the corner of Dandenong Road and Chapel Street. I was still administering command at Warragul, so I must have been undertaking both roles – coaching and commanding.

"Chalky" White had qualified the previous year, so I now teamed up with CAPT Baxter Green. We shared transport and often studied together in my rooms at Wesley College. In due course we set out for the assessment course at Puckapunyal where I was determined to qualify. During the assessment I found that whenever I was asked for a solution I knew the required response in some detail. Towards the end of the week, I was asked to make a comment on another candidate's solution. When I had made my observations the directing staff officer made it clear that CAPT Farley would be qualifying that week. My tanks were finally in the right position – hull down, with covering fire and moving in bounds, the infantry moving tactically behind them in the open.

"Tac 5"

In due course with the passing of time and the retention of confidence in me by my superiors, I was nominated to attend the Tac 5 course, the qualifying

course for promotion to lieutenant-colonel.

On Wed 10 Jul 68 I commenced parading at CSTU for coaching. This time I was fully detached from 10 Mdm Regt, RAA. I travelled up to Melbourne each week with MAJ Gil Bryant who worked at the Shell refinery. In 1969, all being well, I would attend the assessment course at the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra, in Queensland. This would be a two-week course divided into three parts: coaching; trial assessment and final assessment.

In addition to the mid-week lecture parades, the DS **and candidates took part in TEWT's in the general area of Yarra Glen.** The hotel at this town was often all but booked out to accommodate CMF officers on coaching courses. An informal mess dinner would generally take place on the Saturday night.

LTCOL Finlay Patrick headed up the team of experienced officers drawn from the various arms **and services. This group included LTCOL's Howard Taylor, Laurie Newell, Brian Clendenin and Gil Smith.** MAJ John Campbell was the administration officer.

Without repeating Chapter 12, there were some special memories. Along the Steels Creek road there was (and still is) a knoll to the east of it. This knoll was inevitably the location of the enemy for an attack problem or for us in defence. In those days it was wooded. It no longer is.

Light aircraft would be forever flying overhead and, because I was also a leader in the scout movement, pairs of hiking scouts would journey by at most weekends. These lads would turn up at the oddest of times. Candidates would be describing a battle situation where hot lead was flying about, only to have two weary adolescent scouts emerge out of the **enemy's lines! The scouts were taking part in an overnight hike for their First Class badge.**

The assessment coaching was of a very high standard but in the absence of cadre back up, the actual problems were not always accompanied with **the high standard "pinks" and "greens" to which some of us had become accustomed.**

If I heard the phrase, "When you get to Canungra,"

once, I heard it a thousand times. The months soon passed and we were given dates and flight details. Then, one night I was challenged by a DS as to whether I had divided loyalties between CMF and scouts and that I should decide which one. That sort of challenge always spurred me to greater efforts to prove that I could do both.

Canungra

A DC9 jet took us to Queensland and we were soon accommodated at the Canungra camp. It was one of the most professional experiences which I have had. MAJ Brian Florence administered the course. His daily administrative orders on double A4 sheets were in great detail with dates, times and locations clearly set out. Readers are referred to *Cascabel*, No. 77 for October, 2003 for more detail on my experiences on the course.

Counter-insurgency

The nature of war had changed from the tactics as presented at the earlier DA 21(a) courses. Australian troops were now fighting in Vietnam in a counter-insurgency role. The divisions and corps of World War II, and even Korea, were no longer deployed as such. But we were Pentropic.

The lesson that was continually repeated is that if **you don't react and attack immediately, the enemy** will have melted away. Yet MAJ Farley persisted with deliberate attacks which meant an attack the next morning at first light. I was glad that one of the DS **also had difficulties in "coming up to speed," to use contemporary jargon, with this urgency to react.**

Coaching

The first four or five days were devoted to coaching in the use of the various arms in this changed nature of war. Lectures continued over the Easter weekend, but MAJ Andy McGalliard¹ and I rather surprised (almost shocked) the administering staff when we elected to attend a nearby church on Easter morning **instead of the morning's presentations..**

¹Now retired as a brigadier and having been appointed AM

In the field

When we were taken into the field, whether for coaching or assessment, the administration was first class. There were the Bell helicopters lined up to take us on reconnaissance. Morning tea and lunch arrived right on time. It was a fine example of what could be staged. There was never a case of **“greatcoats on, greatcoats off”!**

Course-manship

In our coaching in Chapel Street or at Canungra the DS arranged playlets of how to present oneself and how not to when it came to fronting up to the assessing officers. An aspiring officer would present himself in a business like fashion with a smart salute and appear to be relaxed and knowledgeable. He would unfold his chair with practised ease and prop up his map with its talc solution against a tree so that all could see it. He would arrange the spot so that both DS and he could look out over the panorama and scene of operations. He would then give his solution in a clear and easy manner, virtually guaranteeing that he would qualify on that particular question.

On the other hand, the candidate that was all but doomed to failure would turn up late. He would be wearing his greatcoat and be festooned with binoculars, compasses and other items. He would have trouble in unfolding his chair. He would end up sitting with his back to the scene of operations. In one of the playlets, the sad candidate suggested that the map was more accurate than the ground!

Vital ground

The alternative to “vital ground” was “ground of tactical importance.” This was ground, which if lost, would compromise the security of “own” forces. The terms provided a great source of discussion as to where they were for the relevant problems.

Minefields

Minefields had to be covered by fire and observation. In green on the tracing paper, they **looked quite smart with “ears” or “storks”** to indicate that they were anti-tank mines, but woe betide any candidate that forget about fire and **“obs” (observation).**

Assessment

We had all been warned that if on the final problem, the senior DS was present, then one was either being considered for the Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey Sword² or a fate that was not all that far **short of military “death.” It could have the same** feeling as if one had been run through with the sword!

After stolidly working myself through administration and logistic problems, I found myself presenting for the last problem – a defence one, with a Pentropic **unit at one’s disposal, i.e. five infantry companies or battalions.** But there on one of the seats for the DS was the red cap of the senior officer. I knew it was nothing to do with the Blamey sword! I just had to excel on that final question.

My minefields were adequately covered with fire and observation and I made sure that those five companies, or were they battalions, were firmly located on the tactical ground. They were not literally standing shoulder to shoulder, but they might well have been as I gave my solution. I went to bed that night wondering whether I had done enough to swing the outcome.

Qualified

There have been some very happy moments in my life. But equally it was a defining moment when on the final day of the course we assembled at our desks around the lecture room and MAJ Brian Florence or another DS officer placed the sheets showing the qualified and non-qualified officers before us.

I have been blessed with the knack of scanning a page for its relevant important detail. I recall that I first glanced at the list showing non-qualification: my name was not there. But then I found it up above in the qualified group. It was a moment of extreme relief and joy.

²MAJ (later MAJGEN) Barry Nunn won the Blamey sword for 1969.

The 'Angel of Death': Special Forces' latest weapon is biggest flying howitzer in the world

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1299305/The-Angel-Death--Special-Forces-latest-weapon-biggest-flying-howitzer-world.html>

By Christopher Leake

Last updated at 1:06 AM on 1st August 2010

This is the 'Angel of Death', the world's biggest flying artillery gun – and the latest weapon being used by British and US Special Forces to defeat Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan.

Our exclusive picture shows the AC-130 Hercules aircraft unleashing its awesome firepower on the enemy 2,000ft below.

From a distance the plane – **nicknamed the 'Angel of Death' because of the shape that its anti-missile flares take when they are fired** – looks like a normal troop carrier.

But the aircraft, which is rarely deployed in daylight, carries a powerful Howitzer 105mm field gun which can **'vaporise' targets at a range of 1,200 yards.**



Hell in the sky: The AC-130 Hercules - aka 'Angel of Death' fires its deadly load

As the Hercules drops from 2,000ft to as low as 80ft above the battlefield, the Howitzer – normally used by ground troops – fires ten rounds a minute and has a back-up of three 25mm Gatling cannons spewing out 7,500 rounds every 60 seconds to produce the ultimate airborne gunship. Once a camera sited under the fuselage has fixed on the target, it sends the co-ordinates to an onboard computer – **and the 'Angel of Death' is ready to unleash its deadly load.**

To dampen the recoil and avoid pushing the Hercules off course as the Howitzer is fired, the gun is set on **rollers which run on a small track fixed to the aircraft's superstructure.**

After the fire controller shouts 'Fire' the Howitzer leaps back on the track and hits a hydraulic buffer that sends it back to be reloaded. The high explosive 105mm shells, each packed with 5lb of TNT, rocket towards their target at 1,548ft per second.

On contact, the shells can destroy buildings and spread shrapnel over a 'kill' area of up to 1,500 yards.

'Fire': Troops load shells and prepare for the recoil

Codenamed 'Spectre' by the SAS and SBS in southern Afghanistan, the lethal war machines have been deployed to spread fear among the enemy.

During recent operations, British Special Forces troops have flown alongside American



comrades to help pinpoint enemy targets and, in the words of one officer, 'unleash hell' against the Taliban.

The gunship is used against what intelligence chiefs list as 'Tier 1 Taliban' – top-level fighters, who are constantly hunted down by UK Special Forces units codenamed 'Task Force 42' and 'Task Force 444'.

A Special Forces officer said last night: 'When a group of key Taliban fighters are taken out it is referred to as "splashing the target" – a crude description, but it works for us.

'The AC-130 really is the ultimate weapon. It is very accurate and simply vaporises the target and sends a powerful psychological message to the enemy.

'We have called in Spectre many times and you know the minute it starts to unleash its fury the enemy melt away.

'We have taken out several high-value targets on the border with Pakistan thanks to the support of the AC-130 crews.'

Deadly weapon: The artillery gun Special troops call 'Spectre'.



The 'Angel of Death' is operated by a total of 12 crew members. There are five officers – the pilot, co-pilot, navigator, fire control officer and electronic warfare officer. They are aided by seven enlisted staff – a flight

engineer, TV operator, infra-red detection set operator, loadmaster and three aerial gunners. Their specially converted aircraft can stay in the skies for 12 hours at a time and is the largest airborne gun in the world.

The crew can carry several thousand 105mm Howitzer rounds, which weigh 40lb each. The Howitzer provides pinpoint accuracy and has top-secret sensors to protect it from missiles.

On operational flights, the plane is loaded with ten tons of ammunition.

Pilots rely on high-tech radar to track targets. It is supported by a top-secret night sensor system.

Further evidence of the plane's killing power can be seen just behind the cockpit in the form of two 20mm Vulcan rotary cannons, which fire 7,200 rounds per minute.

The gunners who man the weapons are issued with shovels to clear the huge pile of empty ammunition cases as the cannons spew it out.

The artillery gun boasts a pilot-aiming sensor, laser range-finder and a powerful night-vision camera providing real-time information and footage to the gun commander who sits behind the pilots in a fire control centre.

Just in front of the port-side wing, the 105mm artillery gun is mounted alongside a smaller 40mm Bofors cannon.

Submitted by W02 Max Murray

Australian Army Artillery Museum Future

Statement by Head of Regiment, Brigadier W. L. Goodman AM

Greetings,

I am aware that there has been some recent press (Telegraph and Manly local paper) regarding the old chestnut of moving the Museum to Puckapunyal. Please find below some facts concerning this issue, and attached a letter from the RCC. Please disseminate widely to assist in an informed and not emotive debate.

The move of the AAAM from North Fort to Puckapunyal has been on-going since the 1990s. The reports in the papers appear to have stemmed from a brief to the RAAHC and AAAM which identified that the Army History Unit still intends to progress the relocation of the AAAM from North Fort to Puckapunyal in the mid to long term.

This briefing appears to have then been leaked to the press and to local state and federal members and couched in words so as to appear as if it was occurring immediately. This is not the case. If it is to occur in the future there will be prior consultation.

Army policy remains an intent that Corps museums are co-located with their Schools. This policy is not new and is promulgated in the relevant Defence Instructions. The key issue in

meeting this intent is funding. There has been no funding allocation for construction of a new museum at Puckapunyal, and given the current issues with sourcing funding for the maintenance and repair to existing facilities in the Puckapunyal Military Area, I do not envisage any funding becoming available in the short to medium term at least.

In recent years with the development of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT), who have taken over the North Head site and other coastal historical areas in Sydney, they have advised their intent to charge AHU rent for the North Fort site. The planned rent is considered to be excessive and is being discussed by AHU and SHFT with the RAA. This development must also be considered in future planning. The HOR and RCC also attend regular discussions with SHFT and AHU.

The HOR and RCC are in consultation with all the key stakeholders and will provide further updates when information is tabled to any planned move and to the future of the AAAM.

Ubique

HOR

Gunners earn their UK stripes

By Sgt Andrew Hetherington

BEFORE arriving in Afghanistan more than four months ago, the 14 Australian gunners of Cutler Tp started their deployment in the UK in September last year.

The gunners completed a comprehensive pre-deployment package with their sponsor unit 4 Regt Royal Artillery.

"We left Australia on September 1 last year for the UK and a majority of our gunnery training was conducted at Otterburn, south of the Scottish border, Cutler Tp SM WO2 Brett Donaldson said.

"We first attended an all-ranks brief, similar to our force preparation courses run at Randwick in Sydney.

"Then all personnel in command down to the level of gun detachment commander attended a five-day tactical commanders cadre camp."

It consisted of lectures and theory on the current tactical situation on the ground in Afghanistan.

"In the afternoons we would go out and conduct a series of practical tutorial putting into practice what we'd learnt in the morning," WO2 Donaldson said.

"After the course we took the information we'd learnt back to our soldiers."

While key personnel participated in the cadre camp, soldiers took part in a team medic course.

It dealt with catastrophic bleeding, application of tourniquets and Hemcon bandages used to seal wounds and the administering of morphine.

This course and other first-aid exercises were a favourite aspect of the UK pre-deployment training for most of the Australian gunners. Gnr Chris Haire said **he'd learnt a lot** from the UK medical training.

The first aid training was unbelievably realistic," Gnr Haire said. "They brought in real amputees, made them up and put us in real situations where we had to help them."

During the training, medics watched the gunners rendering assistance and provided feedback on their performance. "It was good to know if you saved a life - or if you stuffed something up you were told you could have killed them," he said.

"When I made a mistake I took it on the chin and learnt from it. "It was awesome training, as after you called in your casualty nine liner over the radio

and patched them up, a helicopter would be flown in to take them to safety."

Gunnery training formed a large chunk of the pre-deployment program including conversion from the Australian L119 to the L118 105mm gun.

Gnr Jake Hyland said he'd enjoyed the gunnery and weapons component. "The most valuable thing I learnt was the new gun, with the new sight the British use and everyone was talking about how good it would be to have it on **our guns at home**," Gnr Hyland said.

The sight cuts down on how long it takes to get the gun into action and to fire it. "It was also interesting to learn how **the Brits do their work too**."

During their training the gunners did face challenges. One of them was dealing with the cold UK weather. "It was ridiculously cold, getting down to more than minus 10 degrees Celsius at night," Gnr Hyland said. "We were sleeping in tents, sleeping bags and sometimes under hootchies. I'll never forget that, it gives me good memories and all we could do was laugh at how bad it was."

Once they arrived in Afghanistan WO2 Donaldson said the gunners participated in another course lasting eight days at Camp Bastion. "We covered counter-IED training where we were trained to detect them with a mine detector," he said.

"Every British soldier who is deployed here is **trained to detect IED's** and we were taught to find a safe path to travel on. Once soldiers do come across what they think is an IED they are trained to find where its **exact location is**."

You get down on your belt buckle and scratch in the dirt until you find something that is not meant **to be there**," he said.

Other course subjects covered compound clearances, small arms range practices, a forward operating base (FOB) scenario and dismounted and mounted patrolling skill scenarios.

Gnr Haire said his pre-deployment time with the British Army was the most challenging training he'd completed in his Army career.

"I liked the fact I got to learn a different army, how their artillery works and it was good to get my hands on their different equipment and be a part of it all."

Courtesy of The Soldiers Army , September 2nd, 2010

SOCIAL GOLF DAY



To be held at the Berwick Montuna Golf Club
Beaconsfield-**Emerald Road, Guy's Hill**
(Melways 212 C4)

On Friday 5th November 2010

Tee Time 0830 Hrs



This will be our Ninth Annual Golf Day and we look forward to an even bigger and better field to compete for the coveted RAA Association Perpetual Trophy.

Golfers at ALL levels of expertise are invited to attend, including wives, husbands, partners, relatives and friends. Caddies, coaches observers and encouragers are most welcome to attend either, or both, the golf and the lunch.

Hire clubs, buggies and motorised carts are available from the Golf-Shop. These items should be booked directly with the Golf shop on 9707 5226 at least ten days prior. Photo ID and a deposit will be required for clubs and carts.

The cost for golfers is \$28.00 which covers green fees for 18 holes and trophies.

Lunch will be available in the Clubhouse at very reasonable prices.

The competition of the day will be a stableford competition. Players who do not have a handicap will be **"allocated" a handicap on the day.**

Trophies for the Winner, Runner Up and Nearest the Pin (3) will be awarded in the Clubhouse during lunch.

So that tee times and a number for lunch can be booked for this very busy time of the year, would you please indicate if you will be attending and the number of people in your group, by telephone, mail or e-mail to:

Maj Neil Hamer, 12 Marida Court, Berwick 3806;
Telephone, 9702 2100;
E-mail, nhamer@bigpond.net.au

Not later than 22rd October 2010.

Please include:

Your name and handicap, (if you have one).

The name and handicap of your guests.

The number of non-golfers who will be attending for lunch.

The name/s of your preferred group.