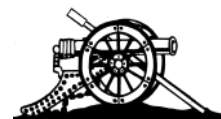


CASCABEL

Journal of the
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

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Calling in accurate fire support while exposed to enemy machinegun fire on a mountainside earned **Bdr David Robertson** a Medal for Gallantry.

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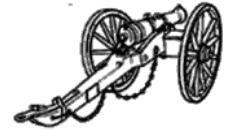
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CASCABEL

FORMER PATRONS, PRESIDENTS & HISTORY



FOUNDED:

First AGM April 1978

First Cascabel July 1983

COL COMMANDANT: BRIG P Alkemade RFD

PATRONS and VICE PATRONS:

1978

Patron: LT GEN The Hon Sir Edmund Herring
KCMG, KBE, DSO, MC, ED

Vice Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED

1982

Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED

Vice Patron: MAJ GEN N. A. Vickery CBE,
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1999

Patron: BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD, ED

Vice Patron: MAJ GEN J. D. Stevenson AO, CBE

2008

Patron: BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD, ED

Vice Patron:

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1978 MAJ GEN N. A. Vickery CBE, MC, ED

1979 MAJ GEN J. M. McNeill OA, OBE, ED

1981 COL A. (Sandy) Mair ED

1984 MAJ P. S. (Norman) Whitelaw ED

1988 BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD, ED

1991 MAJ M. Taggart RFD, ED

2004 MAJ N Hamer RFD

JOURNAL NAME:

CASCABEL - Spanish - Origin as small bell or Campanilla (pro: Kaskebell), spherical bell, knob like projection.

CASCABLE - English spelling.

ARTILLERY USE:

After 1800 AD, it became adjustable. The breech is closed in large calibres by a CASCABEL(E) screw, which is a solid block of forged wrought iron, screwed into the breech coil until it pressed against the end of the steel tube. In the smaller calibres, the A bore tube is carried through to form the CASCABEL(E)

[Ref: "Text Book on Fortification Etc", Royal Military College, Sandhurst, by COL G. Philips, RE, 4th Ed, Ch-1, P9, para 28, 1884].

[Source: COL Alan Mason, Vic, May 1993].

CASCABEL HISTORY:

The name was put forward by the first editor, LTCOL Rob Gaw, and accepted because of its unique and obvious Artillery connection.

ASSOC LOGO: LAPEL BADGE:

Our Assoc Logo and Lapel Badge is the 1800 AD 9 Pdr Waterloo Field Gun. Copy is taken from Device, Badge and Motto of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, as approved in 1833, by HM King William IV.



The Badge is a copy of the left arm brass gilded gun once worn by GUN SGTS above the chevrons on each arm. Brassards worn by IGs at North Head were embroidered with this insignia. It differs from the logo in that the badge has been cast with the rammer in a different position and the end of the trail has been reduced in length. Selected by MAJ Warren Barnard, 1984 Assoc Committee.

RAA ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC COMMITTEE

President:	MAJ Neil Hamer RFD 9702 2100
Vice President:	Lt Col. Jason Cooke 9705 1155
Immediate Past President:	MAJ Merv Taggart RFD, ED 9773 3730
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Members:	WO2 Lionel Foster SSGT Ernie Paddon
Cascabel Editor:	WO2 Alan Halbish 9587 1676
Representatives:	Maj Garry Rolfe 2 nd /10 th Light Bty RAA WO2 Lionel Foster (10 Mdm Regt Assn)
Honorary Auditor:	Major David J Osborne

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CONTENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

The contents of CASCABEL Journal are determined by the editor. Articles or opinions of authors & contributors are their own, and do not necessarily represent or reflect the official position of the RAA Assn (Vic) Inc, Australian Army, the committee, the editor, staff or agents.

Article style, clarity and conciseness remain the responsibility of the article owner or author.

Submissions for the **April 2013** issue are required no later than **1 March 2013** unless otherwise arranged with the Editor.

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The President Writes

When I wrote my first column as President I commented that it was the end of an era. At that time I was referring to Maj Merv Taggart who stood down as President after more than twelve years.

We now have another “end of an era” with the disestablishment of the last Reserve Artillery Regiment Victoria. At the end of 2012 the 2nd/10th Field Regiment RAA will cease to exist.

2nd/10th Light Battery will be raised under command of 5th/6th RVR and be equipped with 81 mm mortars. Similar action is also being taken in other States of Australia.

I am personally disappointed and dismayed at this short-sighted and inept action.

It was raised by WO2 Lionel Foster at a Committee meeting, and discussed at the AGM that recognition should be made of the Association members who have contributed their time, effort and expertise over and above normal expectation to the Association.

Four members were selected and were presented at the Transition Dinner held last December.

They are: **Maj Merv Taggart** for his contribution as President, **Maj Robin Smith** for his contribution as Secretary, **SSgt Reg Morrell** for his contribution as Treasurer and function organiser, and **SSgt Brian Cleeman** for his contribution to the RAA Trust and Memorabilia Collection.

I would like to take this opportunity congratulate these members and sincerely thank them on your behalf for the job they have done.

My congratulations also go to **Lt Col Ian George** who was awarded an OAM in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

The Gunner Dinner was well attended last year and it will be conducted again this year.

A number of other activities are being planned, so please take note of the Parade Card at the back of the journal.

Do not forget to notify me if you change your email address so that I can keep you informed about the Association.

Neil Hamer
MAJ (Retd)

Membership Report

Current Membership as at 20 Jun 12

Life Members	195	(197)
Annual Members	41	(33)
Senior Annual Members	13	(13)
Affiliates	30	(31)
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	9	(10)
Libraries	4	(5)
RSL’s	4	(4)
Total	296	(293)

New Members

No applications for membership have been received during the last quarter.

Vale

It is with regret that we note the passing of Cpl E J (Ed) Ingouville Williams.



Ed joined the Association on 20 Jun 85 and became a Life Member on 16 Jun 05. Ed was 96 years of age.

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

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

Neil Hamer Contact: Telephone: 9702 2100

MAJ (Retd) 0419 533 067

Membership Co-ord Email: nhamer@bigpond.net.au

Introducing our new Colonel Commandant, Brigadier Peter Alkemade RFD.



About the Colonel Commandant

Brig Alkemade attended 3 OCTU and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1974 and appointed to the RAAC. He was posted to 4/19 PWLH and after Corps training served in a variety of appointments. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1976 and again to Captain in 1979. In 1980 he was posted to Reserve Command and Staff College (RCSC) to complete the Intermediate staff course. He returned to 4/19 PWLH serving in several regimental appointments.

He was promoted to Major in 1983 serving as an Instructor at RCSC and then returning to 4/19 PWLH in 1985 as Squadron Commander. In 1987 he was accepted as a student at the General Command and Staff College graduating in 1989. Also in 1987 he was posted to Reserve Command and Staff College and completed the senior course. In 1987 he was posted as SO2 Operations at HQ 4 Brigade, during this posting he transferred to RAA. In 1989 he was posted to 10 Medium Regt as Battery Commander. In 1992 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed as CO 2/10 Medium Regt.

In 1996 he attended JSSC; he was then promoted Colonel and posted as Director Army Personnel Agency Melbourne. In 1999 he was promoted Brigadier and posted as Commander 3 Training Group tasked with restructuring this organization into a Regional Training Centre as part of the reorganization of Training Command. In 2001 he was appointed as Commander 4th Brigade. During this period he was involved in preparing sub units and soldiers for deployments and in 2002 transferred a rifle company to 5/7 RAR for service in East Timor. In 2003 he took up his final posting as Deputy Commander Land Warfare Development Centre. In 2006 after transfer to the Standby Reserve he undertook a series of projects for the Deputy Chief of Army at Army Headquarter.

Brigadier Alkemade lives in Melbourne and is married to Rose. They have two children Robert 21 and Paul 18. He is an active member of Scouts Australia and is employed as a management consultant focused on business improvement and process automation for the Not for Profit sector. He also provides pro-bono services through Leadership Victoria for Indigenous Organisations.

Brig Alkemade now offers his thoughts on the impending changes to ARES Artillery.

Artillery in the Reserve.

Everyone will be aware of the recent changes affecting Artillery in the Reserve. The coincidence of both a role change and a severe restriction on training due to financial changes has produced a highly undesirable situation for serving reservists and unit associations. The financial domain rests with Government not the Army so our focus as a Corps has to be on capability and emerging roles.

What most members understand is that the old model of an expansion base from the Reserve is no longer relevant. Only roles that genuinely deliver near term capability will attract resources and the RAA is a resource hungry organization. Recent unit commanders have embraced this reality and worked hard to demonstrate that the RAA reserve can provide capability in selected areas. Once senior commanders are convinced they can rely on capability from the reserve within the 90 to 180 day readiness period, then that will allow reserve units to bid for additional tasks and the resources that go with them.

The recent role change itself is desirable in so far as it provides a sustainable future for the traditional artillery indirect fire task in the reserve and equally critically provides for the demonstration actual capability. The use of mortars with the consequent saving in the cost of equipment and ammunition makes it possible to continue to train batteries in Artillery command and control procedures. Maintaining the current procedures and exploiting simulation will allow Observer and Command teams to fill roles with any weapon system within the readiness period. The 'gun line' is a different matter, although conversion to other systems is possible if training resources are made available. However, with three full time gun regiments the 'tube' artillery capability requirement is being met for the immediate future.

The future opportunities lie in new roles such as those in Combat Support roles with 16th Air Land Regt and 20th STA Regiment and other emerging capabilities now grouped in 6 Bde.

Current regular manning will not provide enough personnel for long term sustainment of these roles and they could be developed in the reserve with the use of simulation and specialist training. These roles are unlikely to be widely available to Victorian gunners, but they do offer the prospect of employment in emerging critical capabilities which will be the future for the RAA.

"Only at the edge of chaos can complex systems flourish. And, by implication, extinction is the inevitable result of one or the other strategy - too much change, or too little"

Michael Chrichton



MESSAGE FROM COMMANDING OFFICER 2nd/10th Field Regiment RAA



To all Gunners

This will be my last message as Commanding Officer of this wonderful Regiment. By the time you read this we have commenced 2013, the festive season has come and gone along with two significant events in the history of the 2nd/10th Field Regiment: the Transitional Dinner (7th Dec) and our final Regimental Parade (9th Dec). However as one chapter closes another opens and 2013 is the year in which the 2nd/10th Light Battery was raised and commenced the next chapter in the history of Gunnery in Victoria.

It has been the absolute highlight of my military career to have commanded such a Regiment as the 2nd/10th Field Regiment. It has been an honour and pleasure to have commanded, been involved with and worked along side officers and soldiers that I can call mates. There have been many highs and lows throughout my time but what has never ever been in question is the commitment and professionalism of the officers and soldiers as we continue to deliver, always at a high standard, what we have been directed to do.

So it is with much pride and humility that I say thanks to you all for your tireless work, support and dedication that has enabled us to achieve the creation of a new capability within the 2nd Division and to re-establish the mortar trade within the wider Regiment. You should be well proud of their achievements – I know I am.

There have been hours and hours of work, most at personnel sacrifice that have been put in by many of the key staff, over and above what would be expected of them, in order for us to achieve the results we have over the years. The following are a handful of those many, which in my opinion, need to be given further recognition: CAPT Brilliant, CAPT Sander, WO1 Holstein, WO2 Broughton and WO2 Mackereth. The entire list is more extensive and there are many other examples where soldiers of various ranks have provided outstanding service over and above their expected rank and role. However without these five professionals the 2nd Divisional capability would not have been delivered.

My thanks extends to BRIG Graham as COL

COMDT, the President and Committee of the RAA Association of Victoria, of course the many “tribal elders” and the wider Gunner community for their generous, direct and wonderful support they have provided me whilst I have been CO. The knowledge, experience and guidance that you all have provided me have been invaluable and reassuring, especially noting the significant changes occurring within the 2nd Division. Your insights into similar events throughout your careers have enabled me to steady and focus my thoughts, ensuring a logical and robust approach to the problems which at the time were insurmountable.

But it is now 2013 and our thoughts and support should be with and for the new 2nd/10th Light Battery as they establish themselves in their new command status within the 5th/6th Royal Victorian Regiment. Congratulations to MAJ Garry Rolfe in being the inaugural Battery Commander 2/10 Light Battery. I have complete confidence that they will quickly settle down and establish themselves within the Battalion, continuing the proud name of Victorian Gunners. In fact, they will have to as they are required to conduct the traditional Australia Day salute at the Shrine and farewell the 17 RAA Bty members deploying overseas with the next 4 BDE rotation into OP ANODE early January.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the unfortunate result of Plan BEERSHEBA and that is the withdrawal of gunners out of our birthplace – Geelong and Newland Barracks. I would like to commend the wonderful work MAJ Craig Whitford, BC 38 Bty has done not only as BC for the past six years but the way he has respectfully conducted the closure of 38 Bty and the handover of Newland Barracks to 8/7 RVR. I would also like to thank the President and members of 10 MDM Association for their tireless support to 38 Bty over the years and especially their ongoing support in preserving the history of gunners in the Geelong region. This of course extends to the Geelong and District Historical Trust whom will also play a vital role in maintaining property and preserving our history.

Apart from this tragic loss, 2/10 Light Battery will continue to operate out of Sargood Barracks, Chapel Street and Monash Barracks, Dandenong. The Head of Regiment has also submitted a proposal to change the appropriate series of

manuals allowing all of the 2nd DIV RAA Units to continue wearing our Corps hat badge and lanyard. The only physical change that will occur is Bty members will be required to wear 5/6 RVR colour patch on shoulders and hats. He has been reassured that his proposal will survive the rigour of bureaucracy and will take effect early 2013.

In summary, the deliberate methodically and steady transition in closing the Regiment and raising 2/10 Light Battery as a result of the restructure required under Plan BEERSHEBA is being conducted as smoothly and efficiently as possible. The creation of a Divisional Artillery Cell has already commenced and congratulations to LTCOL Warwick Young (current CO 23 Fd Regt) who has this wonderful task. Let’s not forget that these new units need to prove the absolute requirement for effective command and control over all offensive fire support and potential ISTAR feeds into the Plan BEERSHEBA Battle Group in 2014. There is no time to lose and much work to be done.

The immediate future will bring the next logical challenge to 2nd DIV RAA units – the effective command and control over all offensive fire assets. I believe we have proven that gunners can operate and fire a mortar safely and effectively. We have never been asked, nor have we trained our gunners to tactically deploy the mortar as the purpose of the mortar was to train FO parties or JFT (Joint Fire Teams) in the new language. We have commenced proving our JFT but due to technology and lack of new equipment in the 2nd DIV, there is an obvious gap which needs to be addressed. However command and control over JFT and then plugging these into a Plan BEERSHEBA Battle Group is the next challenge.

This is not a new problem and one that reserve RAA units have struggled with over the years for a variety of reasons. However, collectively we need to resolve this and quickly, especially if we are to play a role in the modern RAA Regiments. With this new technology comes, I believe, many opportunities and ones that we can not afford to ignore.

However my time is up and I have run out of article room, as usual I will conclude with some quick public announcements. There remains an open invitation to any member of our Gunner family to visit the collection of memorabilia at

Chapel Street. We would also love to see you all at any one of 2/10 Light Bty or Association activities including the "Development Sessions". (I will continue to run these out of Chapel Street bimonthly). As I have previously stated, it is always an excellent opportunity to discuss all things Artillery amongst friends and fellow gunners.

Feedback and views from anyone is always welcome so please contact me on-jason.cooke4@defence.gov.au if you wish to discuss anything. Again I extend all the best for 2013 and hope to see you at as many functions as possible.

Ubique Jason Cooke Lieutenant Colonel **The Last Commanding Officer** 2nd/10th Field Regiment



The following article and photos have been presented by Lt Col Cooke and Maj Carl Sarelius on the occasion of the final Regt Dinner and the marching out of 2/15 Fd Regt on St. Barbara's Day.

The Last Hurrah!

It's been a busy few months for the Reservists and Regulars of 2/10 Field Regiment (2/10 Fd Regt), Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery (RAA). Not only have they been pushing ahead with their training as light artillerymen with mortars and getting ready for deployment on OP ANODE, they have also had to prepare for the disbandment of the regiment. As part of Plan Beersheba, Victoria-based 2/10 Fd Regt (GRes) – comprising 22 Fd Bty in Dandenong, 38 Fd Bty in Geelong and Regt HQ in St Kilda – was identified for re-structuring and downsizing. As of 1st January 2013, 2/10 Fd Regt will become 2/10 Light Battery (2/10 Lt Bty) under command of 5/6 Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment. But on the 7th and 9th December it was time to celebrate the past and look to the future.



The Altona RSL in inner-western Melbourne was the setting of the 'Transitional Dinner' on Friday 7 Dec. Approximately 160 people – unit members, partners and guests – turned out to help LtCol Jason Cooke, the Commanding Officer, celebrate in style the passing of the unit. Guests included MajGen Jim Barry, Brig Neil Graham and Brig Doug

Perry. Together with memorabilia decorating side tables, two screens projected rolling images from the unit's past, providing some of the older guests and members a chance to reminisce while the younger ones could only have wondered, amongst other things, what it was like to serve the guns and 'what were greens and gaiters?'. During the evening between courses, presentations were made to individuals to recognise soldierly achievements during the year.

The Major Price Stewart (Norman) Whitelaw perpetual book prizes were awarded to:

Officer: **Lt Adam Bordignon**

SNCO: **Sgt Richard Lawrence**

JNCO: **Bdr Ian Johnson**

ARA Staff: **WO2 Roger Mackereth**

10 MDM present an annual prize for the Best GNR in 38 Bty. This year it went to **BDR Lowrey**.

The Geelong Sub-branch of the National Services League have recently supported an annual award for any member of 38 Bty that throughout the year displays the traditional attributes and qualities of an Army Soldier. This year it has gone to **PTE Armstrong**.

This culminated in the handing over of the 'Sword of Command' by the CO to Maj Garry Rolfe,



currently the Regt Second-In-Command but from 1 Jan 13 the new Battery Commander of 2/10 Lt Bty.

LtCol Rob Crawford, CO in 2008-09, although unable to attend the dinner had these words to pass on.

“Dear Fellow Gunners and Members of the Regiment’s Band,

I hope you all have a fantastic evening and send the Regiment off in fine style. To past Gunners and Musicians thank you for your service, you are the living history of the Regiment.

To those still in uniform, I ask you to serve on. Your service is extremely important in ensuring the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and Australian Army Band Corps remain represented in the “Victorian” Army.

Commanding the Regiment in 2008 and 2009 was one of the proudest periods in my Regular Army career. It is with great sadness that I write these words and I’m sorry I can’t be there tonight.

To the Musicians may you always fill the air with sweet music.

To the Gunners may you fill the air with smoke, dust and debris.

Good shooting.”



Lt Col Cooke On Parade

Sunday 9 Dec, members of the Regiment woke to a relatively cool and cloudy Melbourne morning. But as the morning progressed, the cloud started to clear and the weather continued to improve. The first order for the day was the commemorative service in St George’s Uniting Church celebrating St Barbara’s Day.

The Regiment’s Padre, Capt Ron Rosinsky, received the Banner of Queen Elizabeth II (the Queen’s Banner) and delivered the sermon, with the Regimental Band, under the baton of SSgt Alan Kirkham and in one of their last performances as such,

providing the music.

Following the service, it was time to get ready for the final parade. Under brilliant sunshine, with 81 mm mortars and 105 mm M2A2s ‘holding ground’, the RSM, WO1 Paul Holstein, brought 2/10 Fd Regt on to their parade. After the handovers were completed, the Parade Commander, LtCol Jason Cooke, ordered the Queen’s Banner to be marched on. With the Banner in position, official guests were received.

The guests for the occasion included Brig Peter Alkemade (RAA Colonel Commandant Southern Region), Brig Don Roach (RAA Head of Regiment) and Brig Robert Marsh (Commander 4 Brigade). During the proceedings the parade announcer had explained the history of the Regiment for the benefit of the spectators. (As an interesting aside, one of the guests, LtCol John Morkham, is descended from one of the first Appointments to commissioned rank of the First Geelong Volunteer Artillery Corps, to which 2/10 can trace their lineage. There were four of them that joined in 1861, converted the Corps from Rifles to Artillery and climbed through the ranks to Lieutenant, Captain and finally Major. The sabre that was carried in 1861 was carried again in this parade.)

The CO invited Brig Roach, as the Reviewing Officer, to inspect the parade and the band. At the completion of the inspection Brig Roach was invited by Brig Alkemade, the Parade Host, to present promotions, honours and awards, while Brig Marsh was invited to present the Commander 2nd Division Commendation. Following their address to the parade, the official guests were farewelled.



The Banner was marched off, and the CO handed the parade over. When the hand-over was complete and the RSM in control, the RSM gave the orders for 2/10 Fd Regt to march off. With heads

held high, 2/10 Fd Regt marched off the parade for the very last time.

The lunch that followed in the depot, together with the inter-battery games, was a chance for all to talk about the past and importantly, talk about the future. A few were sceptical, but most, particularly the younger members of the unit, were looking ahead to the opportunities that were being presented, working more closely with the infantry, learning new skills and importantly, showing their infantry colleagues what they, as Gunners, could do.

With the New Year comes a new beginning – the beginning of a combined Arms Battle Group with greater opportunities to integrate with the Regular Army counterparts is closer to realisation under Plan Beersheba. 2/10 Light Battery will play a significant role within that Battle Group and by doing so, continue the very fine tradition of dedicated service just as their predecessors did in years gone by. Well done to the soldiers and officers of the 2/10 Fd Regt for a wonderful display of artillery tradition and customs over this past weekend. You sent the Regiment off in style – we wish you well for the future – Good Shooting.



10 Mdm Regt Association



The Final March-Off

RSM WO1 Paul Holstein



RAA LUNCHEON



SERGEANT, VICTORIAN HORSE ARTILLERY 1890

Brigadier D. I. Perry OAM RFD ED cordially invites both serving and retired Gunners to the Annual Royal Australian Artillery Luncheon.

This is a great opportunity to catch up and renew friendships with other Gunners and especially to reunite those Gunners that we have not seen for a number of years.

The RAA Luncheon has been very successful over the past few years, so Gunners please bring along another Gunner to the Luncheon.

WHEN: Wednesday, 6th March 2013

TIME: 1200 for 1230 hours

WHERE: RACV Club, 501 Bourke St.
Melbourne

COST: \$60.00 (2 Course meal which includes a complimentary drink)

DRESS: Jacket and tie

RSVP: 25th February 2013

TO: Reg W Morrell
6 Melissa Street, Mt Waverley 3149.
Tel. 9562 9552
Mobile – 0425 837 958

✂-----Reply slip-----

RANK..... NAME:.....

ADDRESS.....

Tel. No.....

Enclosed is a cheque for \$.....(payable to RAA Association)

Additional NameRank.....

Special dietary requirements

If possible, I wish to be seated near

Editors Indulgence

Well, it's finally happened. For those members who do not receive a hard copy of our journals, 113 was printed in colour. I believe it adds immensely to the presentation and readability and can only hope that the current printing arrangements will continue.

How sad is it that there is now no longer an Artillery Regt. in Victoria. When I joined the CMF in 1965, we had 2 & 15 Fd Regt's + 10 Med. Now nothing. Just a couple of Bty's, 53 (ARA) & 2/15 Light (ARES). 2/15 is even under admin control of the Infantry. Good heavens, what can they do to us next!!



Another tragic SAS death. My personal comments from the previous journal still stand.

For those of you who are not on my emailing list, I have asked those that are if they would like to comment on the demise of ARES Artillery in Vic. The following are some of those. If anyone reading the hard copy only would like to contribute their thoughts, please send them to me—via snail mail if necessary—and I will publish them in our next journal. (115)

Capt. David Edwards, Ret.

Like many I am concerned about the downgrading, and potential complete loss, of Artillery in Victoria. I joined the Regiment on Commissioning in early 1986. At that time we had three Artillery units; 2/15 Fd Regt, 10 Mdm Regt, and 132 Div Loc Bty. My Regiment, 2/15, had three batteries; 2 Fd Bty (Dandenong), 23 Fd Bty (Baxter) and 3 Fd Bty (Batman Ave, with the last few L5's).

Early in my time we lost 132, and all of the advanced technical skills associated with that specialist unit. I was GPO when we amalgamated 2 & 23 Fd Bty's into 22 Fd Bty and for some time we could man six guns, two CP's and other positions. But then entropy kicked in and we reverted to similar numbers in the single battery that we had in each of the two separate batteries.

Then we combined the regiments and we struggled to maintain the various facilities losing Colac, Dandenong and Baxter (the latter combining into a shared facility).

Then, sadly, the Regiment in Victoria lost its guns. First the medium guns and then the field guns. I had hoped that we would be able to maintain "traditional" batteries, just with different equipment (mortars) but it seems that is not the model that the modern Army wants (well not for its Reserve Artillery).

My biggest lament is the loss of skills that a mortar battery light (i.e. platoon) does not need. Things like deploying a battery in the field with all of its components, complex ammunition and the firing of it (when was the last time that Reserve Artillery in Vic fired a "range and lateral spread" mission with Illum? I did when GPO of 23 Bty), all the command post and gun line drills (crest clearance checks?), the language of fire control, etc. Those skills will soon be a distant memory with Victorian gunners and lost to Australia.

I'm sure many with greater vision than I would say that we either don't need these skills or we could train them fairly quickly, but I can't help but feel that we're removing some of the overall readiness of our Army and skills we would need if we needed to deploy more than a Brigade-based Task Force overseas.



Sgt Drew Wall

In response to your email which I have received via the RAA Assn Qld I make the following comments.

I joined 35 Bty 10 Med in October 1968, transferred to OCTU Ripponlea in Jan 1970 and in June 1970 my job took me back home to Queensland where I ended up as Command Post Sergeant 13 Bty 5 Fld.

To have 10 Med subsumed into our arch rivals 2 Fd was bad enough, but surely ending up as a mortar platoon (what else would a Light Battery be other than a Duracell) has to be the final insult.

I strongly suggest the action that 25 Bn took in October 1918, that is mutiny, refuse to disband and request that they be put into the vanguard of the next action so that they be decimated rather than lose their identity, be considered.

The sad reality is that Artillery has become a ghost in the current Army structure. We are down to 3 Regular Regiments and a handful of nominal Reserve Bty's. Re-equipping with guns too big to be used in Jungle conditions without enough Air lift capacity to get them into areas where they can be deployed.

History repeats itself. This in the 1920s and 30 replayed.



Lt Col Andrew Rankine

I received an email from the RAA association in Brisbane with your email address and some details of what is happening in Geelong.

I was the CO in 1991 when 10 Mdm Regt was amalgamated with 2/15 Fd Regt in Melbourne to become 2/10 Fd Regt (I think I have the regt titles right). I lost my job and went to the Command and Staff College as a DS. I left the service and moved to Brisbane not long after that, but I remember the pain of the amalgamation and I am disappointed to hear about what is happening. The Geelong depot goes all the way back to the Eureka Stockade, from where British troops marched to Ballarat to quell the insurrection.



WO2 David Troedel

I am sure that this government would like to see the Army without Artillery as Guns kill people. It is fine to send Special Forces on active service as they collect intelligence and only kill when they need to fight their way out of a situation. The same for Engineers who build things and help the locals, the same for Medical Services and other supporting forces.

But to send Infantry, except to defend those forces helping the locals is not on as Infantry "Seek out and close with the enemy, kill and capture and take and hold ground etc, etc. This means that they are actively engaged in firing to kill. And why would Artillery fire if they did not intend to kill the enemy.

In Vietnam the Artillery was very effective, take Long Tan where it was really an Artillery victory as without the guns D Coy would have been wiped out. After Vietnam the Labour Government let the whole Army and especially the Artillery go backwards. All the experience gained was lost. It was not until East Timor that the Army was recognised again.

In the late 90's, 101 Battery was removed from 1 Fd Regt at Enoggera and became Support Company under direct command of 6 RAR. This did not work and the decision was reversed.

I always thought that the CMF/Army Reserve was a training ground for Officers who could take command in the time of War and the rest of the troops would form the core for expansion. It is easy to get Engineers, Signal experts, Doctors etc from civvy street and train them in Military methods but where do we get Gunners from? There are no courses taught in any university that I know of.

I may well be off course with my thinking but Artillery has taken the brunt of cut backs for years.



SSgt Brian Cleeman

I will give some thought to your request. I am, like a few others quite amused by the apparent disregard that these decisions will have on the Ares.

It would appear that artillery is being made a scape-goat - lack of funds = bull... - it is obvious that it is

cheaper to keep Inf than Arty. I have seen it all before - the wheel will turn - maybe slowly but it will turn.

The following article is courtesy RAA Liaison Letter, (RAALL) Spring Edition, 2012.

Demise of RAA in the Reserve

In 2006 Commander 2nd Division promoted the concept of switching the reserve field batteries of the RAA from guns to mortars. On the face of things it did not look like a bad idea if you could get past the fact that there were no conventional guns involved. Given the look of operations at the time it appeared that there might actually be a role in the area of supporting Battalions on operations. At least that's the way it was being marketed. The gun fleet had too many types of equipment with more on the way for the ARA. Mortars would allow a level of conventional deployment and training while significantly reducing costs. There was a high level of focus on the procurement of SP, M777 and TUAUV at that time so it was never going to get a high level of scrutiny or horsepower from the Regiment as a whole. So with the Commander 2nd Division pushing hard it got a run.

I was the Battery Commander 16th Field Battery around this time and we raised our concerns. Mainly we focused on continuity of training, manning levels and a scope of training that still linked us to the ARA in some way - especially maintaining gunner skills. Manning levels, establishment and a host of other issues had not been planned in detail at this stage so answers to any questions we put forward were sketchy at best. 16th Field Battery was a fairly well manned organisation at this time with around 60 - 70 effective staff and quite a high level of field battery experience. The ARTEP process which forged artillery units into cohesive teams, like nothing else can, was not long gone and the M2A2 was still in service. We were coming off the back of a 9th Brigade CATA exercise where six guns were fielded between three batteries and we fired in support of elements of 4th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Mission Rehearsal Exercise.

The initial plan was to test the mortar concept using the independent batteries, 7, 16 and 48. **2nd/10th Medium Regiment was tasked with the lead and doctrine development.** The pace at which the implementation subsequently began to

move meant that some of the key outcomes discussed at the outset began to drop away, most particularly the retention of gunner skills after the change of equipments.

In May - June of 2012 the Reserve Artillery participated in an establishment review. 16th Field Battery emerged with an establishment of around 35. I am unsure what level of support was provided by the Regiment in this process. 16th Field Battery will be linked to 48th Battery in Adelaide and the down size is to occur by 2013 although I am told this may be brought forward. Several key positions from this review have been frozen until 2014 including BK and BSM. Currently 16th Field Battery boasts around 79 effective members between two depots in Tasmania.

Without having all of the details, the TAS/SA composite Battery will be under command of 10th/27th Battalion in Adelaide as of 2014. I have no idea what the structure looks like or the basis for ongoing training. I do know that 35 is not a nucleus for sustained training nor is it a sound base to man the positions you are left with, particularly split between two States.

Already the 'administrators' are moving in to close tilings up and deal with accounts. Based on these numbers current barrack locations seem sustainable and around 40 Reservists need to be found postings or fade away. It is happening fast and reminds me of how quickly 102nd Medium Battery disappeared in 1987.

Once these units are reduced to these manning levels, there is no coming back in the short term and more importantly the accumulated experience and the expertise is gone. There is no formal reinforcement or recruiting mandate to the ARA but my time here tells me that 16th Field Battery has been the training ground for many to move on to the ARA and the likes of Lieutenant Colonel Nick Bolton, Major Rhyl Opie and Warrant Officer Class Two Toby Organ are current serving examples of the quality.

The Hobart Town Volunteer Artillery made a start in 1859 and the Launceston Volunteer Artillery in the following year. Its size pinnacle was probably around the National Service years with a regiment of guns serving in the state. The history of the unit boasts stories of VC recipients and State Governors.

This is not one unit's problem, it is a national one that will see most Reserve Artillery diminished to arguably unworkable levels. If it is thought that this is the best use of Reserve Artillery given the current climate, that's a decision for others but those involved must realise that it risks making the RAA in the Reserve unsustainable. I don't believe however that sufficient thought has been given to the complexity of the problem and finality of this particular solution.

Through the vehicle of the RAA Association of Tasmania and other avenues we will ensure that people understand the magnitude of this issue in Tasmania and I am sure that other states are doing the same. Two years ago the Chief of Army said that 'no flags will fall' when referring to the proposed restructure of certain parts of the Army. That statement is probably still true, but only just....

Major Chris Talbot

RAALL Editor: *Your letter clearly outlines the situation, views, frustrations and feelings of those at the coal face. Sadly despite the rhetoric and platitudes of our leaders ultimately in a small full-time professional Army **there appears to be very little or perhaps no place for Reserve Artillery.** This scenario is a very attractive to our bean counters who only think about the financial bottom-line.*



The following article is again courtesy RAA Liaison Letter, (RAALL) Spring Edition, 2012. I'm sure you will all recognise the author.

Reserve Changes

I would like to make a few comments about the re-structuring of the Army Reserve Artillery, particularly relating to Victoria. I was a little disappointed to see the withdrawal of the guns from the Reserve, but I can appreciate the financial aspects of the decision. From an artillery point of view, a mortar is only another method of delivering indirect fire support.

As time has passed, the Reserve regiments have been 'relegated' to the role of a mortar platoon. The decision to reduce the Army Reserve regiments to battery size, administered by an infantry battalion reinforces this thinking.

Furthermore, the fact that the current technical

equipment is not to be made available to the Reserve, and the fact that the manual systems of artillery signal log book, target records, and fire plan proforma are to be no longer used, seems to mean that the mortars cannot be used in conjunction with other forms of indirect fire. The training of observers in mortar batteries will also not be practical. Gunners of all ranks cannot be trained to use equipment that they do not have. Reserve soldiers cannot easily be integrated into regular units should this become necessary.

The Reserve artillery suffered the same type of problem, but to a much lesser degree, when Field Artillery Computer Equipment (FACE) was introduced into the system and the Reserve was equipped with the hand-held calculator Field Artillery Backup System (FABS).

On another matter, the names being considered for the Reserve batteries should be carefully chosen. I understand that 4th Battery is being considered for Victoria. I believe this to be a good choice because of the historical significance of the number in Victorian artillery history.

I also believe that, as the battery is not a gun battery, some indication should be given in the name. This is done with all other regiments and batteries throughout the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, so why not a 'mortar' battery? Mortar artillery has historically been called 'Light' regiments and batteries. Therefore the Victorian battery should be 4th Light Battery RAA. Some of the points mentioned are financially driven, but not all. I would very much like to see the Reserve artillery retain its identity in this current re-structure.

Major Neil Hamer, RFD (Retd) President RAA Association (Victoria)

RAALL Editor: *I understand and appreciate your sentiments. I have found that one of the few 'constants' in the Army is change (not always for the best in my view). The other adage worth considering is that if you do not adapt then you will be left behind. It was highly probable that more dire options were considered by those deciding the future of the RAA Reserve component than the announced changes. In the true Gunner tradition our Reserve batteries will adapt as they are already doing, and embrace their new role.*

A salute to post World War II Victorian CMF gunner units

With the metamorphosis of the last gunner regiment in Victoria from 2/10th Field Regiment to be the 2/10th Battery of mortars under command of 5/6th RVR, it is an appropriate time to summarise the expansion and contraction in militia (Citizen Military Force) that the post World War II years have witnessed.

With the post war failure of the five war victorious powers (USA, UK, France, Russia and China) to work with each other in preserving world peace, the Australian Government in 1948 re-raised its militia forces. The militia had been a feature in Australian society since colonial times. Volunteer and compulsory service, including cadets, had operated from time to time.

The new force was titled the Citizen Military Force (CMF). Nationally it would comprise a balanced force of infantry divisions with their associated corps and support units. But, in the event of hostilities CMF service was limited to the Australian mainland and its territories. When further armed conflicts arose, the national government reverted to its practice of using regular forces or using a limited form of national service.

It is only since the establishment of the Army Reserve and the passage of enabling legislation in 2001 that its units, mainly composite task forces and personnel, can be used internationally.

The principal unit in the 1948 CMF in Southern Command, as it was then known, was the 3rd Division.

The artillery components of this division included a HQ RAA, with the following support units: 2nd Field Regiment (based) at Batman Avenue; 10th Field Regiment at Frankston, 2nd Medium Regiment at St. Kilda, 22nd (Self-propelled) Field Regiment, at Brighton and Korumburra, and 21st Light Aircraft Regiment at Geelong.

In order to reinforce the manning of CMF units, in 1951 at the time of the Korean War, a National Service scheme was introduced whereby all males aged eighteen would undertake 180 days training. This would be served continuously in the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force, but 98 days initial training for Army, the remainder to be served with the CMF over subsequent years.

To a considerable extent both the training camps and the regiments were equipped with surplus war equipment, including the reopening of depots, uniforms, guns and ammunition.

Gunner regiments were initially officered by returned officers from World War II, but Blamey Battery was created at Batman Avenue to train selected gunners with officer potential who had not experienced war service.

One of the Blamey Battery recruits was Jim Barry. Jim was commissioned and rose through the ranks to become the first commanding officer (2nd Field Regiment) in the post war period without having had previous war fighting experience. Major General J. E. Barry subsequently commanded 3 Division and is currently national president of the Defence Reserves Association.

By 1951 the influx of national servicemen necessitated additional units being raised to handle the increased numbers. This included 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment at Warrnambool and 38th Light Anti-aircraft Searchlight Regiment at Hamilton. The 2nd Army Group Royal Artillery (AGRA) was raised the following year at St. Kilda. These units were "corps" as distinct from "divisional."

In 1953 further units were brought on to establishment namely: 15th Field (Light) Regiment at Sale, equipped with 4.2-in mortars, 31st Medium Regiment at Warragul, 4th AGRA at St. Kilda and 40th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment at Westgarth.

At the peak of post war establishments and personnel, according to Major Jim Killender's research, gunners could claim to be manning three headquarters and nine regiments.

However, the National Service scheme was gradually wound down with fewer personnel being called up for training. This resulted in the first "reorganisation" with the disbanding of some units.

From 1957 onwards, it was a story of steady decline. There was a period of temporary stability in the Regiment, with the remaining field branch fielding 2nd Field Regiment, 15th Field Regiment and 10th Medium Regiment, together with 132nd Divisional Locating Battery with all anti-aircraft units (Air Defence as that branch of the service would be restyled) closed.

2nd Field Regiment and 15th Field Regiment were amalgamated in 1975. This situation continued

into 1990 with only the loss of the 132nd Divisional Locating Battery in 1987.

Since 1991 the remaining gunner unit in Victoria has been 2/10th Medium Regiment which, with the withdrawal of its M 198 155-mm guns, was restyled 2/10th Field Regiment in 2000.

While the CMF (by now restyled Army Reserve) gunner regiments declined in Victoria, gunners could take some comfort from the relocation of the School of Artillery to Puckapunyal from Manly, NSW, together with the establishment of 53rd Battery as a depot battery. Despite a temporary name change to Offensive Support Division Combat Arms Centre, the school reverted to its traditional title.

There are many gunners in our community today who have given stalwart service both in command and "followership" roles. They have manned the command posts, both at the gun position and at the Observation Posts, have driven the trucks, have provided signals and have served their equipments, whether they have been the 25-pr, 5.5-in, L5, M 198, 105-mm, 3.7-in, 40-mm Bofors and of course the radars and other essential stores items of the locating battery. They have shivered in the early dawn and driven and cajoled their Mack tractors and other towing vehicles through mud and dust. They have been proud to have been members of the most exclusive gun club in the world and have served Ubique.

Vale.

Prepared by COL Graham Farley and endorsed by tribal elders (Maj Gen Jim Barry, Brig Neil Graham, Lt Col Jason Cooke)

This concludes my attempt to display a number of thoughts and opinions re the upcoming (1/1/13) changes to ARES Artillery.

Undoubtedly, you will have your own.

I welcome your future input. Ed



EXCURSION to SOUTH CHANNEL FORT

Sometime in April, 2013, on a weekday, the RAA Association is holding an Excursion to visit the South Channel Fort, which is unique and highly significant on a 19th Century artificial island. This Fort was built in the 1880's and it was a strategic defence network of the Port Phillip.

The Island contains gun emplacements, a labyrinth of underground passages and a magnificent panoramic views over Port Phillip Bay. It is also a breeding site for the White-faced Storm-Petrel and other important bird life.

Your visit will include more information on the Fort's history, how it was built and who resided at the Fort.

The excursion will depart from Queenscliff Marine Centre and a meal will be provided at a cost of under \$90.00. You may wish to park your vehicle at the Sorrento Car Park and catch the ferry to Queenscliff.

Contact: Reg W. Morrell (Treasurer)

6 Melissa Street, Mount Waverley 3149

Mobile 0425 837 958 or 03 9562 9552

Numbers are limited so, please notify me by 19th February, 2013 for further information/bookings.



Part 4 of the diary of Lt. Keith Batiste continues courtesy of RUSIV (Royal United Services Institute of Victoria)

29TH AUGUST 42. Shelled the O.P. again; the anti-tank gun behind us is knocked out by a direct hit; luckily the crew were in their dugout & not injured. Engage several small targets. Jerry strafed the Infantry with air-burst for nearly an hour.

30TH AUGUST 42. Down at the gun position; fairly quiet day; turn in to bed at 8 pm. At 11.30 all hell is let loose; Jerry attacks, wake up & wonder where I am; Jerry starts to concentrate on us straight away; his fire is very accurate. Red & green Verey lights go up from the Infantry positions calling for Artillery support. We are laid out on defensive fire tasks so open up straight away; the noise is terrific; machine-guns are blazing away & the whole of our divisional Arty of 72 guns is pounding him.

His fire creeps right down to us & in amongst the guns; a shell hit my vehicle which is wrecked; go over to No 3 gun which has stopped firing; shells land outside the gunpit; we grovel in the sand as splinters strike sparks off the metal gun. We think every moment is going to be our last but somehow or other the shells fall short or over.

We receive orders to open fire again on D.F. S.O.S. (*Defensive fire SOS: the target of maximum importance*). The Battery opens up; Jerry has set up some machine-guns on a ridge in front & tracer bullets are skimming over the dunes. The night is as bright as day with gun flashes. A shell hits the R.A.P. & the medical Corporal is buried. The gunners are loading and firing as fast as they can; great piles of empty cases are behind the gun. We try to find out what is happening in front; but all the Infantry can tell us is that one of their listening posts reported several hundred German & Italians were advancing in open order. The listening post was overrun.

The attack lasts several hours; we are ordered to pull out to another position; move as best we can in the dark; receive tasks to work out; our Infantry is to launch a counter attack at dawn. Open fire again at 5am & our Infantry go over the top; the code word for the stunt is "Bulimba". Jerry flings stuff back at us; Ted is going out to direct the fire after daylight in an armoured carrier. As he is going out through our wire, a shell nearly blows his arm off. Jerry shells us fairly heavily; a new truck I sent

over to replace my old one; Jackson (TX5396 Gunner Athol Charles Jackson, born 15th December 1919 in Wynyard, Tasmania, enlisted 14th May 1941, died of wounds 1st September 1942, buried El Alamein War Cemetery). is driving it; a shell burst in front & a large piece hit him in the head. God, what a sight; there's blood everywhere; do what we can for him but he's beyond Human aid. Lingers on for four hours with half his head blown away. Our attack withdraws.

31ST AUGUST 42. Go down to the Padre's & give him Jackson's effects & identity disks. Spend the day digging in.

1ST SEPTEMBER 42. Hear a little of the Jerry attack; he actually established a machine-gun in our O.P. Several dead Germans laying out in front of the wire; two wandered in and gave themselves up; both shell-shocked. His attack was really a raid in force; one of his armoured carriers was knocked out by our guns; our Infantry bashed him back. Go up to the O.P. & find an Italian blanket in there.

After reaching the O.P. the Infantry Company Commander told me that they have just mined the track; nice people these Infanteers, it's a wonder we didn't get blown up.

2ND SEPTEMBER 42. Sid taken ill with Yellow Jaundice has to be evacuated; take over from him about 10 am. Usual shelling; fairly quiet day.

3RD SEPTEMBER 42. At the O.P.; one of the planes was shot down this morning & crashed about 1000 yards out; an Infantry patrol went out in a carrier to try & bring the pilot in. Jerry started to shell the plane & opened up with M.G. fire; the Infanteers got the pilot O.K. & brought him in; endeavour to get orders to destroy the plane by shellfire; but they consider that some of it may be salvageable after dark tonight. An M.G. carrier is sitting out behind a dune watching the plane to keep Jerry patrols away. Have to evacuate the O.P. of a night as it is too far forward & cannot be given local protection by M.G.s. We occupy the O.P. at 4.40 am to 5 and stay there all day until 7 pm; don't think it is much use anyway; as Jerry already knows that we are there. An Infantry truck comes up & starts laying mines; Jerry ranges on it straight away & his first round nearly hits us; we tell 'em to get the hell out of it; they don't need to be told twice as his next round bursts very close. Go to bed at 8.30; shells whistle overhead all night & an occasional one lands close; don't feel particularly happy as the old slit-trench is in rock and only

about 8" deep.

4TH SEPTEMBER 42. Occupy the O.P at 5.30; at first light have a look over the zone & can hardly believe my eyes; Jerry has erected an observation tower; must be about 40' high; made of tubular steel. It's about 4000' away; open fire straight away & obtain 50 yards verified bracket; go to fire for effect with 10 rounds gunfire; it's completely blotted out by the bursts; when the smoke clears away finds it is still there; the percentage of direct hits is less than 1% at that range; break the bracket to 25 yards & try again; same effect; ammo allotment expended. We lay low all day as he has observation on us from the tower.

5TH SEPTEMBER 42. Man the O.P. at 5.30; a little shelling& M.G. fire; give fire orders in preparation to engage Jerry's tower again; as first light comes cannot find it; he has picked it up lock, stock & barrel & moved it. Heavy sandstorm blowing; visibility only about 500'. Enemy plane M.E. 109 flies low over the O.P. apparently doing observation work; our ack-ack guns pump shells up at him but no luck; he weaves in and out of the tracers; we lay still & trust that he hasn't seen us; there is an explosion outside; one of our own A/A shells had hit & bursts; no damage done.

Charlie Morton (VX14371 *Captain Charles Robert Morton, born 9th January 1913 in Hawksburn, Victoria, enlisted 7th May 1940, discharged 9th November 1945*). arrives back from Hospital: has a fine piece of shell between his stomach & spine; doctors won't operate. Get the old primus going & put some tea on; a pair of legs come sliding down into our hole & knock the billy over; my sig starts to paint the air red with profanity; it turns out to be an English Brigadier; complete with walking stick – wouldn't it? Am pretty annoyed at him coming over in daylight; wait for Jerry to open up but nothing happens. He looks around at the shell craters, remarks that the old Hun certainly has this place well taped. The Sig matters something about "mice" under his breath & have to grin. The Brig [adier] asks several questions about the Zone we are covering & looks long and intently at Ruisat Ridge; says, "we shall have to take that"; Jerry opens fire at an O.P. about 500 yards away out on West 24; it is completely blotted out by shell bursts; later hear that one shell landed within 2' of the front of it.

6TH SEPTEMBER 42. Usual Routines; flies worrying us quite a deal; things very quiet; heavy haze & dust

storm; spend most of the day writing letters.

7TH SEPTEMBER 42. Medium Artillery carry out a shoot against the German guns that have been shelling us; pour hundreds of 4.5" shells into them; later reconnaissance reports that the gun pits are blasted to pieces. Quite a lot of air activity & two large dogfights. Our taxi service & fighter bombers blast the Sidi-abd-el Rahman track; Jerry puts down heavy concentrations of artillery fire on Tel-Eisa station & cutting areas. Our guns fire throughout the night to keep Jerry from sleeping. Jerry throws a few back at them & an occasional shell whistles over our slit trenches; have a good night's sleep.

8TH SEPTEMBER 42. Send Sgt MacDonald down for a rest; large movements of enemy transport; count over 200 vehicles in our bunch; beyond range of our guns. Jerry shells us & blows away out telephone lines & the barbed wire around the O.P.

9TH SEPTEMBER 42. Pretty rotten headache today; the glare of the sand; & the old binoculars play up with your eyes after a while; if you look at anything for any length of time it appears to move. Spot a Jerry working-party or patrol & open up on them; some of the bursts appear to be right on top of them. A Jerry shell splashes the carrier with shrapnel; no one hurt.

10TH SEPTEMBER 42. Usual routine; night firing; all quiet.

11TH SEPTEMBER 42. Situation unchanged; lots of Brass Hats hanging around; looks as though something might crack shortly. Hear that we about to be issued with our Winter clothing; all indications seem to point to the fact that we shall be spending Xmas out here.

12TH SEPTEMBER 42. Nam[?] takes over at the O.P. & I go down to Alexandria to pick up my winter clothes; leave at 0500 hours unshaven & filthy dirty. Arrive in Alex, pick up my clothes & have about 4 hours left so decide to have a look around. There are a few Australians in Alex making the best of the few hours at their disposal. Life in Alex is just the same. Cheap women trying to rob the troops of their hard earned Piastres; beer houses serving drinks as fast as they can; some of our infanteers are a little drunk & start a fight; two of them against 7 Tommies; manage to break it up & take our blokes for a drink; apparently the Tommies had called them Colonial B-s: notice both of them are from the 48th Bn: any of those lads are worth a

dozen Englishmen. Everything is just the same in Alex; it's hard to believe that only 60 miles away the German guns are threatening the city. Pretty French girls walk up & down the promenade along the waterfront; there is an air of gaiety over the whole city; it makes one feel a little disgusted.

Go out to Mustapha Barracks & buy some kit to replace that blown up; also buy a watch; back to the International Savoy for a wash & clean up. Finish up in their Lounge for an iced Gin squash; things look pretty bright. Go up to Cecil's Hotel & find Jack Dench, (*VX50347 Captain John Robert Dench, born 7th November 1920 in Melbourne, Victoria, enlisted 18th February 1941, discharged 12th April 1946*), Tom Smith, John Elder (*VX14128 Captain John Stanley Elder, born 23rd February 1915 in Melbourne, Victoria, enlisted 6th May 1940, discharged 28th February 1945*), Tulloch Roberts & several other of our officers who were wounded.

Have quite a reunion which rapidly develops into a session. Jack still has about 7 pieces of shrapnel in him which the doctor won't remove; the other nine were hit at the same time; are getting along fairly well; none of them died; hear that young Hay is paralysed. (*Hay has not been further identified*).

Time to go back so we file aboard the truck & away we go; when we arrive there is fairly heavy Artillery fire; our guns have been moved further forward & spend nearly two hours trying to find them; end up in a minefield, have to leave the truck & walk through it on foot. Turn into bed at 0100 hours.

13TH SEPTEMBER 42. Go up to the O.P. again; a fairly heavy sandstorm is blowing; so spend most of the morning writing letters home & packing up a couple of small things bought in Alex. Try to get some sleep but the flies are too bad; have the old arm in plaster now. While eating our meal around the carrier a Jerry M.G. opens fire; his first burst hits the ground in between us; we all dive for cover.

14TH SEPTEMBER 42. The G.O.C. has decided to move the front forward 800 yards; small parties creep out through the wire & dig slit-trenches; a Messerschmitt Recce plane flies over but doesn't see them; the ack-ack throws up a barrage & drives him off. Our guns are laid on defensive fire programs in case the Germans counterattack; fighting patrols go out to keep him busy. During

the night the Infantry move out to their new positions. The O.P. is now protected by machine-guns & we feel much happier.

15TH SEPTEMBER 42. Dawn; Jerry finds the Infantry in their new positions & starts to shell them heavily; we do counter battery work; to try and knock out some of his guns. He shells our O.P.

16TH SEPTEMBER 42. Reinforcements have arrived from England including the 51st Highland Division & 50th Lowland Div. 51 H.D. were cut to pieces at Dunkirk; the majority of them are unblooded troops. A few of their N.C.O.s and men are sent to our sector for training. Our Infanteers put in a lot of time teaching them "the tricks of the trade", in other words how to stay alive. A few of them are sent out with our patrols of a night; they are very raw; when a shell lands nearby they don't bother to duck; they are going through the initiation period we did in July.

17TH SEPTEMBER 42.

18TH SEPTEMBER 42.

19TH SEPTEMBER 42.

20TH SEPTEMBER 42.

21ST SEPTEMBER 42. Up at the O. P.; shelling & dive bombing increasing; my dugout back at the gun position is blown in. Normal routine at the O.P.

22ND SEPTEMBER 42. Leave to Cairo or Alex for 5 days; we are only allowed to go one at a time. Jack Cuff goes back first by general election; he certainly deserves leave after being buried alive during the July show & refusing to be evacuated. (A Highland Brigade is sent up into the line in front of us for experience; the 32nd Battalion hand over to them. Their C.O. comes up to the O.P. to have a yarn; he is wearing a dirk & kilt & you can see your face in his boots! The Seaforth Highlanders are just in front of the O.P. & we are to support them. Meet one of their Company Commanders & arrange for defensive fire tasks. After dark our Infantry hand over to the Seaforths; a voice sings out, "You'll be sorry Choom".

23RD SEPTEMBER 42. Supplies and ammunition are coming up very rapidly now; there is something fairly big in the air; hear we are to be relieved for a week's spell. Usual routine, shelling & patrolling.

24TH SEPTEMBER 42. Apparently the Highland Division have brought their own Artillery up; an officer



arrived at the O.P. this morning to have a look around; tells me that they were on their way out from England when Jerry launched his offensive; weren't sent into the line before as they had no experience; he appears to be a decent sort of chap; brought a whisky flask with him; so we do it Justice, a little shelling going on; A looks unhappy; has ideas of enlarging the O.P. but when a near burst arrived changed his mind.

Hear that we shall be handing over to the 7th Regt H.D. in a couple of day's time; a Brigade of the H.D. are going to take over our sector for a week or so for experience; A tells me that many of his fellow are "browned off" through inactivity; as A leaves the O.P. on his stomach a burst of M.G. fire nearly gets him; he slithers back inside & we all burst out laughing, boil the billy & make some tea whilst waiting for visibility to fall. Send the armoured carrier back for repair.

25TH SEPTEMBER 42. Fairly quiet; increased aerial activity; large formations of our planes drone their way overhead; mostly Hurricanes, Spitfires & Tomahawks; Taxi service going over regularly & blasting the Sidi Rahman track. Jerry shells the infantry with harassing fire. After dark go down to the Seaforths & contact their Coy Cmdr. All the Australian Infantry in our sector have now been relieved; stay at Coy. Hqrs for nearly two hours swapping yarns with Capt Milden (*Captain Milden was probably an officer of the Seaforth Highlanders*); took a bottle of Aust Ale down for which they were duly grateful; tells me he had two casualties during the morning hate session. On the way back a Jerry heavy machine-gun fires bursts up at the O.P. area; have to crawl about 100 yards up to the gap in the minefield. Damn Jerry why doesn't he "play the game" & call it off after dark; pass a patrol on the way out.

26TH SEPTEMBER 42. A. arrives up at the O.P. to take over; our guns have already gone back; spend the morning showing A. enemy O.P.s & strong points; in the afternoon decide to carry out a few shoots; A is very excited & dying to have a shot at Jerry.

Consider it a good opportunity to give the Jerry O.P.s a farewell salute; we take it in turns shelling them; A's shooting is very bad & fire discipline down at the guns is completely lacking; the gunners must be fairly green. Give one of the targets 5 rounds gunfire & get what appears to be a direct hit; part of the roof flies into the air; A is very excited. My signaller & I look knowingly at

each other waiting for return fire; but nothing happens. After dark load our gear aboard the carrier & hand over to A. Our rest area is about 25 miles back; on the way Jerry Stukas dive-bomb the old Murtuh road, we stop & wait until they have gone. Reach the rest area & go to sleep underneath the carrier, out in front the sky is illuminated with flashes; but we are beyond the range of Jerry's guns here.

27TH SEPTEMBER 42. Hear that we are to stay here for about a week & do intensive training in mobile operations – might have known that there would not be much rest attached to it! We spend the day practising quick deployments.

28TH SEPTEMBER 42. Several large dog fights overhead; we watch them through our glasses. Two German planes are shot down by our fighters. One of them does a "victory roll" & swoops low over us; notice he has a shark's head painted on his plane; apparently they are Aust. pilots. We wave & he waves back. Spend most of the day doing maintenance work on our guns. Write several letters to Mother & Glad.

29TH SEPTEMBER 42. Out all day on manoeuvres; pass our Infantry trudging across the sand also out on the same stunt. After dark we are told that an ammunition dumping program is to be commenced. 600 rounds H.E. to be dumped at each gun pit. Our fellows are very tired but still it has to be done. Our new gun positions are right up the coast at the foot of Hill 33 practically under Jerry's nose; there is a tiny fold in the ground which we hope will hide them from Jerry's O.P.s. The whole area is a vast salt-marsh; Jerry will never think of looking for guns there; but if he does - . Six trucks loaded with ammunition leave at 1900 hours.

30TH SEPTEMBER 42. Put in a terrible night last night; the whole area is underwater; we dug pits, put the ammo in & camouflaged it; working for 7 hours in liquid mud; trucks were bogged down to their axles; every time they revved their engines we expected Jerry to open fire – he must have heard it. The new gun position is only 20 yards away from a graveyard; there are shell holes everywhere & some of the graves have reopened. Nice cheery sort of place!

31ST SEPTEMBER 42(?) Training all day; ammo dumping at night.

Concludes in next journal. Ed

Soldier who gave birth is named



A BRITISH soldier who gave birth on Afghanistan's frontline has been named as Lance Bombardier Lynette Pearce, 28.

The Fiji-born gunner in the Royal Artillery, had not realised she was pregnant.

After complaining of severe stomach pains, she was taken to Camp Bastion's field hospital, where shocked medics delivered a boy born five weeks prematurely.

She is the first soldier to give birth while serving in Afghanistan.

Lynette, who captained Fiji's women's football team, left home last year to fulfill her dream of serving in the British Army. She passed every fitness test while pregnant, including a gruelling eight-mile march with a 25lb backpack, say reports.

Courtesy SSgt Ernie Paddon

Stephen Smith MP

Minister for Defence

Jason Clare MP

Minister for Defence Materiel

19 new Howitzer guns for the Army

Minister for Defence Stephen Smith and Minister for Defence Materiel Jason Clare today announced that the Government had approved the purchase of an additional two artillery batteries of Lightweight Towed Howitzers, comprising 19 M777A2 155mm howitzers.

The cost of the additional 19 howitzers is around \$70 million.

In October 2009, then Defence Minister Faulkner announced the Government would acquire four batteries of 35 M777A2 155mm Lightweight Towed Howitzers (M777s).

In May, the Government announced the cancellation of the acquisition of self-propelled howitzers, proceeding instead with additional towed artillery.

The additional acquisition announced today means Army will now have six batteries of M777 Lightweight Towed Howitzers.



The M777 Lightweight Towed Howitzer is the most advanced towed artillery system available in the world. It has a titanium and aluminium alloy structure able to fire up to 5 rounds per minute. It is capable of being transported by Chinook helicopters and C130 aircraft. The full mission system comprising of the howitzer, towing vehicle and crew transport vehicle is able to be transported by C-17 aircraft.

The M777 Lightweight Towed Howitzers are also in service with the United States Army and Marine Corps and are currently supporting US operations in Afghanistan.

The use of the M777 Lightweight Towed Howitzers by US forces strengthens interoperability with our Alliance partner. There are also significant efficiencies in sustainment and training through the fielding of a single fleet of howitzers.

This acquisition decision means that the additional M777 Lightweight Towed Howitzers will be acquired off the current production line in the United States and avoids potential additional costs to restart such production. Government will consider additional support and facilities costs associated with this acquisition later in the 2012-13 Financial Year

Courtesy Mike Prowse

Had an interesting email from Jack Tattis in Q'land. He kindly pointed out an error I had made in journal 113, p 33, attributing the **Royal Norwegian Guard** to being a Police Unit.

Jack's brief history includes that he was a Sergeant, 9 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Haberfield, Sydney.

Actually marched in as a 1950's Nasho.

Thence 11 Field Regiment, Annerley, Queensland, where he converted to 25 pounders.

Was actively involved, with Graham Hampton (ARA WOI), in setting up Royal Australian Artillery website, regrettably am now just a member.

Thank you Jack. ed



GUNNER DINNER, 2012

On the 5th Oct 12, another very successful Annual Gunner Dinner 2012 was held at RHQ 2/10 Fd Regt Sergeant's Mess Annex, 8 Chapel Street East St Kilda. The Dining President was Lieutenant Colonel Jason Cooke, Commanding Officer of 2/10 Field Regiment RAA and Mr Vice was Sergeant John Decker. It was a fantastic night, one that lent itself to old mates chatting endlessly about those times gone by, guided gently by the expected tradition of pomp and ceremony as a Gunner Diner should.

As such the 61 attendees were adequately catered by the Elwood Catering Service lead by Noel Connell and his catering staff. This was their first military function and I dare say not their last. They did a fantastic job and need to be commended on the three course dinner and service presented to us on the night.



Keeping with tradition, toasts were moved to The Queen, our Captain General; to the Royal Regiment and finally to our partners/guests. The Colonel Commandant of Victoria, Brigadier Neil Graham responded to the Toast to the Regiment and read the Loyal Message and response. As he is retiring from being COL COMDT at the end of this year, he took the opportunity in complimenting LTCOL Cooke, Brigadier Doug Perry OAM RFD ED and Staff Sergeant Reg Morrell for their tireless work, commitment and support provided to him during his term of office. He also provided a brief update on the wider activities and direction of the Corps within Australia.

This was complimented by a brief update by the Commanding Officer about our Victorian Regiment and the dramatic events to be undertaken by the end of the year. He openly invited all gunners to attend and support this year's St Barbara's Day parade which will be the last time Victorian Gunners will celebrate our patron saint as a regiment. As of the 31 December 2012, 2/10 Field Regiment RAA will disband and create a single Artillery Light Battery to be commanded by the 5th/6th Royal Victorian Regiment (RAInf).

All in all a great night was had by everyone. Hope to see you all and more at next year's Gunner Dinner. *SSgt Reg Morrell*

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE TWO DUCK HUNTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT?

TRUE STORY HEARD ON A SASKATOON RADIO STATION REPORTING ON THE INCIDENT.

A guy buys a new Lincoln Navigator from Merlin Motors in Saskatoon for \$42,500.00 (with monthly payments of \$560.00). He and a friend go duck hunting at Tobin Lake in mid-October; and of course the lake is frozen. These two guys go out on a lake with their GUNS, a DOG, and of course the New NAVIGATOR. They decide they want to make a natural looking water area for the ducks, something for the decoys to float on.

Now making a hole in the ice large enough to invite a passing duck, is going to take a little more power than the average drill auger can produce. So, out of the back of the new Navigator comes a stick of dynamite with a short 40 second-fuse. Now our two Rocket Scientists, afraid they might slip on the ice while trying to run away after lighting the fuse (and becoming toast, along with the Navigator), decide on the following course of action:

They light the 40 second fuse; then, with a mighty thrust, they throw the stick of dynamite as far away as possible. Remember a couple of paragraphs back when I mentioned the NAVIGATOR, the GUNS, and the DOG...??? Let's talk about the dog: A highly trained Black Lab used for RETRIEVING!!! Especially things thrown by the owner. You guessed it: the dog takes off across the ice at a high rate of speed and grabs the stick of dynamite, with the burning 40-second fuse, just as it hits the ice.

The two men swallow, blink, start waving their arms and, with veins in their necks swelling to resemble stalks of rhubarb, scream and holler at the dog to stop. The dog, now apparently cheered on by his master, keeps coming. One hunter panics, grabs the shotgun and shoots the dog. The shotgun is loaded with #8 bird shot, hardly big enough to stop a Black Lab. The dog stops for a moment, slightly confused then continues on. Another shot, and this time the dog, still standing, becomes really confused and of course terrified, thinks these two geniuses have gone insane. The dog takes off to find

cover, under the brand new Navigator. The men continue to scream as they run. The red hot exhaust pipe on the truck touches the dogs rear end, he yelps, drops the dynamite under the truck and takes off after his master.

Then"''''''''BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM''''''''!!!! The truck is blown to bits and sinks to the bottom of the lake, leaving the two idiots standing there with..... 'I can't believe this just happened' looks on their faces. The insurance company says that sinking a vehicle in a lake by illegal use of explosives is NOT COVERED by the policy. He still had yet to make the first of those \$560.00 a month payments. In case you are wondering, the dog is okay.

Newspaper item from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix..

AND THEY MAKE FUN OF PEOPLE FROM NEWFOUNDLAND?

DID YOU KNOW

Bombardier/Lance Bombardier

The most junior NCO in artillery was referred to as bombardier, which is derived from an early artillery piece called the Bombard (used at the Battle of Crecy in 1346 - the first battle in which the English employed artillery). There were problems with the Bombards: at times they could be just as deadly to the detachments as they could be to the enemy, for they were known to blow up as the charge was ignited.

Therefore the dangerous task of firing the piece fell to the most junior NCO, hence the rank bombardier.

In 1929 the Royal Artillery upgraded the rank of bombardier to replace that of corporal and introduced the new rank of lance bombardier. The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery followed suit in 1924.

Courtesy WO1 Chris Jobson "Looking Forward Looking Back"

I received a most interesting letter in August from Lt Reg Kidd in WA. Reg was born on 23 June, 1922 which certainly makes him one of our most senior members.

He joined Fortress Engineers Freemantle in 1941. Completed OCTU and School of Artillery (Coast) March 1944. Commissioned March 1944. Completed conversion course and posted 2 Aust Fd Regt. Served in Bougainville. Transferred to 2/14 Fd Regt in Rabaul. De mobbed June 1946.

Dear Alan

Articles for Cascabel

I am attaching a copy of an article I wrote some time ago for the 2 Aust Field Regt. Association Reunion magazine dealing with the most important engagement with the Japanese in the Bougainville campaign. This battle is quite unknown to those who were not involved - but was a 'defining point' in the ill conceived Bougainville campaign because of its ferocity and the fact that it was in the balance until tanks were quickly thrown into the battle at the last moment. 4 Bty were to cross the Puriata River when the situation was stabilised.

It is interesting to note that the 2nd Field Regt. were in action for the whole of the eight months of the Bougainville campaign except for ten days when the personnel of the 4th Field Regt took over their guns and the 2nd Field Regt retired to the sea shore for a well deserved rest. In the 8 months of action they fired over 70,000 shells which is held to be some sort of a record.

I leave it to you to decide if and when you can use this article. In closing I must congratulate you and others for the much improved content and appearance of Cascabel. I always look forward to its appearance in the post.

Yours Sincerely

Reg Kidd

THE BATTLE FOR SLATER'S KNOLL

BOUGAINVILLE'S 'LONG TAN'

Lt Reg Kidd - 4 Bty, 2 Aust Fd Regt.

Each year in August Vietnam Veterans celebrate the battle of 'Long Tan'. This is held to have been a 'defining point' in the Vietnam campaign and probably rightly so. In this battle a company of Australian troops was ambushed in a rubber plantation by a force of over two thousand Viet Cong regulars.

In the ensuing fight the Australians held on to their positions tenaciously supported by artillery fire from New Zealand and American batteries. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the attackers. They were relieved by supporting troops in Armoured Personnel Carriers (A.P.C.'s). The Viet Cong retired in confusion leaving over 250 dead and taking away hundreds of wounded. The Australians suffered 18 killed and 42 wounded out of the 108

Company personnel.

Friday 14th August 2006 was the 40th anniversary of this battle. It was celebrated nationally throughout Australia with gatherings in each state and newspaper articles telling the story of the battle.

Strangely, there is a parallel to this action in the Bougainville campaign. The battle for 'Slater's Knoll' in South Bougainville was fought between elements of two companies of the 25th and 9th Bn's. They were part of 7 Bde. which had fought in Milne Bay together with 5 Bty. 2 Aust Field Regt. and nearly three thousand Japanese troops assembled to inflict a major defeat on the Australians. This battle was the largest single clash with the Japanese and opened up the way for

Australian forces to advance further south in the campaign to eliminate the Japanese - a result found later to be quite unattainable.

Probably no-one in Australia, except those who were actually involved on Bougainville, ever heard of 'Slater's Knoll' and certainly it is not celebrated anywhere. Like most of the fighting on Bougainville it has been swept 'under the carpet' by governments unwilling to accept responsibility for this ill conceived and poorly supported campaign which cost over 2500 Australian casualties.

But let us get back to the story of the battle. We are indebted to a detailed account of this action in the book 'The Final Campaigns' by War Historian Gavin Long and the Japanese account of this battle is fully recorded in the Intelligence Report prepared by 23 Aust Bde. after their discussions with the Japanese General Staff following the cessation of hostilities.

The Japanese were well aware that Australian troops, probably nearly two Divisions had relieved the American 'America!' and 37th Divisions at Torokina. Friendly natives had kept them informed. However, they considered that the Australians would continue to remain inside the Torokina perimeter in the same manner that the American troops had done so since November 1943.

They were quite surprised when Australian patrols started to move aggressively north towards the Soroken Peninsula, east along the Numa Numa trail towards Kieta and most importantly south towards Buin. This seemed to be their main thrust involving two Brigades and an Artillery Regiment (2 Aust Fd. Regt)

Lt. Gen. Kanda, the Japanese GOC decreed that the Australian drive to the south must be halted before they reached the 'garden' areas where over 35% of the Japanese forces were cultivating tropical fruits and vegetables helping to maintain their almost total self sufficiency. It was decided that the Puriata River would be the point where the Australians would be halted and driven back to Torokina with such heavy casualties that they would not venture out again.

For this purpose an attack group of about 2600 troops was to be assembled drawn from the Japanese -

- 13th Infantry Regiment

- 23rd Infantry Regiment
- 6th Artillery Regiment
- 4th Medium Artillery Regiment

Committed to this action by the Japanese were:

- 1000 troops from the two Infantry and Artillery Regt's.
- A mobile reserve of 900 troops.
- 700 troops to act as carriers, handling munitions and supplies, and to provide a further mobile reserve.

A total of 2600 well equipped and well supplied troops under the command of Lt. Gen Akinaga. The Japanese redoubled their efforts to ascertain the strength and location of the approaching Australian troops with heavy patrolling throughout the area.

The Australian 25th and 9th Bns. were allotted the task of crossing the Puriata River and occupying the area known later as 'Slater's Knoll'. Advance companies were to dig in and prepare the way for the crossing by the rest of these two Bns.

By the middle of March 1945 one company of the 25th Bn. had crossed the river and was dug in on Slater's Knoll. A company from 9 Bn. had also crossed and was occupying ground near Slater's Knoll with platoons in weapon pits about 400 metres in advance of the main body.

From a captured document obtained after a patrol clash with the Japanese it was learned that the Japanese were consolidating in strength preparatory to a major assault on Slater's Knoll. On the 28th March the eight guns of 5 Bty. 2 Fd. Regt. were emplaced at the approaches to the river crossing and they were aware that enemy patrols were very active around their perimeter. The Battery had registered targets in the Japanese areas and were scheduled to cross the river once Slater's Knoll had been secured.

During the next few days the situation was quiet but on the 30 March (Good Friday) the 25th Bn. position was attacked by a large party of Japanese. They were beaten off but attacked again with a bayonet charge. At this stage only 16 men in the forward position were still capable of resisting, so they withdrew to a new position carrying their dead and wounded with them. 25th Bn. strength at Slater's Knoll was now reduced to 83 and Japanese attacks continued unabated around this group and the positions occupied by the 25th and 9th Bns.

At this critical stage it was decided to commit tanks to the battle. Four Matilda tanks from the 2/41 Armd. Regt had been landed at Toko near the mouth of the Puriata River after shipment by LST from Torokina and were now on the far side of the river. They were speedily waterproofed and began the hazardous crossing assisted by bulldozers. Three tanks were safely hauled across but the fourth became stuck midstream and had to be temporarily abandoned.

These three tanks moved up to Slater's Knoll just as the Japanese opened another fierce attack on the besieged Australian defenders. When the Japanese came under fire from the tanks they fled leaving 94 dead around the defended positions killed by infantry fire and the tank attack.

Five walking wounded were escorted out of the Australian perimeter. Eight Australians had been killed and fifty eight badly wounded in the fighting from the 30 March to the 1st April. On the night of the 4th and 5th April nearly 200 enemy shells fell around 5 Bty's perimeter. The Battery was now firing on previously registered targets, mainly Japanese artillery positions.

On the 5th April the Japanese resumed their attack with fresh troops. Wave after wave charged forward and were repulsed. The Japanese dead lay in heaps piled up in front of the Australian weapon pits. Two tanks were again brought up and mopped up groups of retreating Japanese. The next day patrols discovered that the Japanese had completely withdrawn from the area so bulldozers were brought up to bury the Japanese dead. 290 Japanese were counted around Slater's Knoll itself, piled up in front of the weapon pits and altogether about 620 were collected in the other areas where the fighting had occurred and buried in several common graves near Slater's Knoll.

The Australian casualties from the 25th and 9th Bns. during the period early February to 5th April 1945 were 10 Officers and 179 Other Ranks killed or wounded.

The battle for Slater's Knoll proved the effectiveness of tanks in a jungle situation. Their appearance was both timely and effective and helped to counter the greatly superior numerical strength of the Japanese attackers. The battle for Slater's Knoll was a 'defining event' in the Bougainville campaign, but, as stated earlier it has never been celebrated and is only known to the remaining Bougainville veterans

Slater's Knoll was named after Private C.R. Slater of 25th Bn. who was wounded on this feature during a Japanese artillery attack when during March some 600 shells were fired on to the 25th Bn. position. Although badly wounded he elected to stay at his post until relieved.

Throughout this battle the Japanese used their artillery on the Australian positions, but it was mainly inaccurate and showed that they lacked trained observers to register fall of shot and to adjust their barrages on to targets. The Japanese had no lack of artillery, both field and medium calibre guns but did not appear to understand the basic principles of the use of artillery as an offensive weapon to spearhead an attack.

Thank you Reg.



I have included the following clip as a general interest entertainment video. It is quite amazing, but unexpectedly brilliant to listen to. View to the end and listen to the comments from 3 stunned judges. Enjoy.

<http://www.biertijd.com/mediaplayer/?itemid=13658>

Courtesy WO2 Max Murray

Shed to bring troops together

SERVICEMEN and women both serving and retired can enjoy many benefits such as mate-ship, social activities and welfare advice in a new meeting place known as the Defence Shed.

Currently available online with physical locations to follow soon it will provide opportunities for various hobbies, crafts, skills and instruction as well as bringing together various mental, spiritual and physical services to help members.

Based on the "men's shed" principle, the Defence Shed is being organised by ex-ADF personnel from various backgrounds with a passion for helping their mates in need.

For more information go to www.facebook.com/groups/DefenceShed, www.defenceshed.com and www.dan.gov.au/community/groups/defenceshed

PARS FROM THE PAST

In the July 1989, October 1989 and January 1990 editions of "BARRAGE", Drew Kettle's account of the Nadzab drop was reprinted from Keith Shepherd's "Reminiscences of a Gunner": Getting the Kettle "drum" on that Nadzab drop.

I was standing outside the Battery Commander's tent waiting to be called because of a slight misdemeanour, when I was told by the Orderly NCO to "forget it and report to RHQ".

About that misdemeanour. I had been on guard duty at the entrance to 54 BHQ. It was a sweltering day and mine was the very important job of saluting officers as they were driven into the Battery area. An old friend of mine, Hec Grant, with whom I had been in the A Light Horse before the war, rode up on a motorbike and, braking hard, came over for a yarn.

It was only natural and sensible that we make use of the shade of a tree a few yards from the Guard Post. Leaving my rifle and hat on guard, I was enjoying the shade and company of my old mate when along came this over-zealous officer who resented my slight deviation from duty. Hence my appointment with the BC.

At RHQ I found myself one of about thirty gunners and NCOs gathered to hear that we were going on a physical training programme some distance away. We were soon involved in all sorts of tumbling, running and physical combat competitions. It was certainly better than the parade ground stuff that had been driving us crazy recently. Some of us thought we were being prepared for a beach landing or something similar around the Milne Bay area.

It was quite a surprise to be paraded as a body and told that we were to do a parachute jump to give artillery support to an American Parachute Battalion, who were to jump into Jap occupied territory. Anyone who did not feel up to it please step forward. It was hardly what you would call volunteering, but it certainly looked like a break in the monotony of "inactive service". We all decided to give it a go and were rushed (or hushed) away to the Yank training camp, where we underwent a snap parachute course and, after a week, did a training jump in a remote valley. The adrenaline was really flowing.

Three of the originals were hurt in the practice jump. They were Lt. Arnold Evans, Ray Stuart and Col Coutts. The fellow who took Arnold Evans' place did his first actual jump into action without the lead-up training that the rest of us had. His

was a very commendable effort. He was Lt. Allan Clayton.

We got on well with our American counterparts. Some of them were not quite as tough as they made out to be, but they, being unblooded in battle, doubtless had their qualms about the immediate future. (I always remember the first rounds of enemy shell-fire passing close over our gun position in Syria and looking at my mates in the crew - their colouring had definitely paled. Of course mine had, too, and I had a distinct feeling of my hair standing on end). After a while battle becomes a part of everyday life, and it is the cessation of gunfire that wakes you.

In the quiet shadows of a valley, we had a religious service for the repose of our souls if the worst should happen. It was a very private affair, each man being alone with his thoughts. Soon we were to be flying in a great fleet of Douglas aircraft carrying the American battalion and ourselves over the Owen Stanleys, to be spewed out low near Nadzab in the Markham Valley. Through small side windows we should see about a hundred planes flying in formation. The brilliant sunshine occasionally penetrated the clouds to show us the ridges and the valleys of the mountains beneath.

The planes flew to Tsili Tsili. The Aussies and the guns were not to go out until a couple of hours after the initial assault. The word came back to embark along with our American jump-masters, whose job it was to see that no one held up procedure by hesitation to leave the comparative safe accommodation of the cabin when the time came to jump.

We checked our parachute assembly - the static line hooked to the cabin beam (for want of the correct word) and that the static line of the man in front had the correct tie, with cord into the back of the parachute pack sufficient to pull the 'chute out of its pack, but not so strong that it would prevent the 'chute breaking free from the plane.

With the pilot banking into the jump area, it was impossible to get a balanced look at what lay below. Suddenly the red light was showing, and above the roar of the plane and wind, the jump-master was shouting his words of wisdom, "Jump. you bastards, jump", I remember feeling a slight resentment at Aussies being sworn at to make sure they did something they were going to do anyway - whether they wanted to or not had nothing to do with it.

Unlike the practice jump, which was taken from about a thousand feet, this jump was very low - a

couple of swings in which time you were trying to orientate yourself, and you hit the green earth or the jungle, whichever it was your luck to land in. There was a twenty knot wind blowing across the valley which meant the parachutists were travelling nearly as fast sideways as they were coming down, making it very difficult for pilots to drop their human cargo accurately between jungle strips.

Our fellows who had the most difficult job travelled in the plane carrying the two 25 Pdr. mountain guns. The various gun sections were roped to 'chutes and their job was to push them out through the door of the banking plane and not fall out themselves. It was a hair-raising job. Bill Lidgerwood, "Stacker" Bradock, Johnnie Boal and Jack Stannard were the big fellows who had the unenviable job. It meant circling around several times and then having to jump themselves.

I had landed in kunai grass about shoulder high, and along with Max Mathison and others, we were getting ourselves organized, when the boys who had been throwing out our guns came pummeling into the jungle area alongside. Bill Lidgerwood's 'chute hooked into the branches of a dead tree and he had slammed into the trunk. Bill was about fifteen feet above the ground and unable to disengage from his harness. We threw him a knife and he cut himself free and fell to the ground. He had a broken shoulder blade. "Stacker" found himself clinging to a limb some considerable distance above the good earth. Another landed up to his waist in the water of a small creek. That night a group of us slept like kings in the jungle using coloured cargo 'chutes and our own white ones for bedding. We had one gun assembled and had registered ranging shots to the outer perimeter. A big problem was locating gun parts and equipment in the jungle. A Yank manning a wireless set seemed to be communicating in low tones most of the night; we found out next morning that he had a broken leg.

We had only one gun in action for a couple of days and for a time we looked like being burnt out as a fire had got out of hand. However, a few of us country lads soon flattened a strip through the kunai from which the flames were easily contained.

There were some anxious moments when 25pdr ammunition was being dropped close to the gun position. Steel boxes, each containing four rounds of ammo, broke loose from their retaining ropes and the projectiles rained down on us. Eyes concentrated on those flying boxes like slip fielders

watching a rapidly approaching cricket ball. Fortunately, there were no direct hits. Due to inbuilt safety devices, they did not explode on impact or we would have been in real trouble.

According to jungle rumour, the Americans had suffered three killed in the actual drop through 'chutes failing to open, and sixty-seven out of action with broken legs and other injuries. Several were strung up in trees for a considerable time before they could be cut down.

It had been a difficult job considering the wind velocity and close proximity to jungle areas. We were lucky to have as few casualties as we did - the Jap resistance in the area had been slight and the job of holding the perimeter not difficult. The airfield had been prepared for the 7 Division to fly in and the Yanks were asking us, as they looked towards the heavens, "How long will the Aussies be?" They had their thoughts on leave in Sydney, with its bright lights, and those lovely Australian girls who would so willingly lend an ear to their tales of jungle combat.

We were looking forward to our own troops coming in. The push would then start for Lae. I, for one, would appreciate some good solid Aussie rations instead of the soft American mash we'd had since parachute training commenced near Moresby.

The American paratroopers had no doubt learned a lot, in this, their first action. They had set too many booby traps for their own good, and bursts of fire in the night at bush noises had been unnerving. I think we all had a renewed feeling of confidence in seeing our own infantry casually walking past to take over the fighting that was about to begin in earnest.

It had been a privilege to be one of the first Australian soldiers ever to parachute into action. I feel that our gunners, NCOs and officers acquitted themselves well, and of course, it also made null and void that little episode at the 54 Battery guard post where, for me, this slice of "soldiering on" began.

Drew Kettle

Courtesy Barrage, the Official Journal of 2/4 Fd Regt Association





A RMY and Navy are supposed to be mortal enemies. "Yes, that's true," says Captain Kath Richards. So it was tricky when she met this strapping young bloke at the Defence Force Academy 20 years ago and he turned out to be army — tricky because she was navy and her dad was an admiral.

"My father asked me whether he could use a knife and fork and then he said: Do you fancy him? Who says that?" laughs Kath, who as commander of the Cerberus naval base is Victoria's highest ranked naval officer.

As her husband, Colonel Bernard Richards, explains, he must have passed muster, "because your father put on a fancy dinner for me at the Hyatt... I don't suppose I could have got out of it then," he adds with a wry smile.

Their love was certainly tested in those early years when postings and deployments meant they were constantly apart. "Our first six years, we were probably apart for five years," she says.

"We lived together in London, had a house in Puckapunyal, quarters in Sydney, then a flat in Cairns, Darwin, for a little while. But we've been

together ever since," he says.

"All up I think we've had 14 to 15 removals. But this (the move to Cerberus House, the commander's residence) is the first big move since we settled down in Canberra. We decided to have a family when we were in Canberra and every two years we had a baby — now aged two, four and six. No more—very military spacing," she says.

Life is a tight timetable for the Richards clan, helped through it with an au pair during the week and adjutants and military precision.

The colonel is up and running at 0500 on Monday morning, shooting off to the city where for the past 18 months he has been working on a billion-dollar project that identified the next-generation armoured vehicles for our defence force. Work that keeps him in town often until 2100 (that's 9pm) on Fridays, though when Kath was required to attend monthly meetings interstate he would commute each day.

As for the Cerberus commander, it's a 0600 start, though by then she would have already negotiated an early morning security breach from "Commando", the name she has given to her

second-born. Her children Elizabeth, Isabella and Henry (Lizzy, Bella and Harry) are aka Sniper, Commando and Scout. "Commando invariably infiltrates the bed — secret ops between four and six — for a morning cuddle, so it's an early start every day," she says.

After getting the kids up and running, it's off to work from 8am to 6pm "when I come home for dinner with the kids, then give them a bath and bed and then at least three nights a week it's back to work until midnight — my wonderful staff measure my in-tray in feet, that's how high it gets with 1753 people on the base who want to marry, move in, move out, as well as the normal range of postings, etc. You've got to stay on top of it, then on the weekends, one night out of three is an official function," she said

"We do try and organise a date night," says Bernard. "We aim for one every six months, seriously, because the diary gets booked up eight weeks in advance."

The house rule is the couple don't talk much about work. "We vent, but we don't talk in detail, there are security issues... and people still have to trust you," he says.

But he admits there have been times when they fall back on each other, not just for emotional support but also for technical support. Between them they have five masters degrees (Bernard has three), and he recalls a time when he was trying to get a grip on all the fuels and lubricants involved in a Leopard tank and made the call home — "you don't get an engineering consultancy any better than Kath," he says.



**OUR FIRST SIX
YEARS, WE WERE
PROBABLY
APART FOR FIVE
YEARS**

3 Fd Bty Annual Reunion at Caulfield RSL, Nov 4, '12

An excellent turn-out of ex members, many with wives/partners made for a very enjoyable evening. The catering at the club has certainly improved & a good variety of meals were consumed. Washed down, of course, with copious quantities of beer, wine, etc.

Very pleasing to see SSgt Irwin "Ocker" Brookes looking much fitter after having heart valve replacement surgery.

Similarly, WO1 Darby O'Toole is still pedalling away after numerous heart surgeries.



WO1 Frank Perry's wife Joan is recovering well after 4 weeks in hospital & 2 in re-hab.

Many of you will recall of the passing of Sgt Peter Harris' wife Susie some four years ago from Motor Neurone Disease.



Well the good news for Peter is his recent marriage to Bernadette Dowling.

They were married at the Sofitel in Melbourne and had a wonderful five week honeymoon around the world visiting Switzerland, France, Belgium, London and the USA.

Great news Peter and we wish you and Bernadette all the best for your future together.



Peter with an old Viennese circa 1815 artillery piece on display in Geneva. (Look familiar!! ed)

'I really didn't want to let anyone down'.

Calling in accurate fire support while exposed to enemy machinegun fire on a mountainside earned **Bdr David Robertson a Medal for Gallantry**.

Sgt Andrew Hetherington reports.

AN ARTILLERY Joint Fires Observer awarded the Medal for Gallantry in the 2012 Queens Birthday' Honours list was presented with his medal at Government House, South Australia, on September 4.

Bdr David Robertson, of 102 Coral Bty, 8/12 Regt, said he was honoured to receive an MG for his efforts during a patrol in the Tangi Valley, Uruzgan province, on March 20 last year.

Bdr Robertson deployed to Afghanistan in October 2010 as part of MTF 2. He then helped build Patrol Base Qareb, where he worked from late December 2010 until the end of his deployment in late July last year.

The patrol on March 20 during which Bdr Robertson earned his MG began with nothing out of the ordinary.

Two teams of 15 Australian Operational Mentoring Liaison Team (OMLT) members and 20 ANA soldiers patrolled 5km from Patrol Base Qareb to the village of Moruch.

While there, they planned to interact with locals and search for caches.

The patrol had in support an Australian infantry section, an ASLAV and a mortar section, which was pushed up to an ANA checkpoint 4km away to stay in range of the patrol.

They stepped off from Patrol Base Qareb at 1300hrs and headed further into the valley, bound for Moruch.

The village was the next settlement down the valley past Derapet, where LCpl Jared MacKinney was killed in action on August 24, 2010.

"The closer we got to the village, the more reports we had of the insurgents watching us and preparing for an attack," Bdr Robertson said.

"So we had the infantry section move forward across to the northern side of the river to establish a support by fire position acting as a deterrent for anyone wanting to target us."

The reports continued as the patrol entered the village at 1500 hrs.



"We raised our level of alertness and set up a more defensive position around the village," Bdr Robertson said.

"The patrol commander with the interpreter had already started speaking to people outside their compounds and our engineers had started searching up a dry creek bed for weapons caches.

"Not long after this at 1600hrs our snipers had identified and engaged a number of insurgents who could be seen carrying PKM machineguns in the next village, called Tutak."

This engagement acted like a trigger for the remaining observing insurgents.

"We received an imminent threat warning over the radio and not long after that we began receiving effective small-arms fire from the high ground overlooking the village," Bdr Robertson said.

"Our patrol commander told me and several others to push up onto a hill 150m outside the village to find better observation points so we could find where the insurgents were firing from.

"When we got there we could see a number of

insurgents on a ridgeline above us who were also firing down onto us and the patrol."

On the hill, Bdr Robertson, a signaller, two snipers and a MAG-58 crew were all exposed to the insurgent fire, with little cover available to them.

"We all split up to gain the most cover we could," he said.

"There was a small cliff face my signaller and I could take cover behind, but the problem was when we went there it gave us some cover from the elevated insurgent fire from the east, but exposed us to fire coming from other directions.

"Shortly after we moved to the cliff face we began taking accurate fire from a machinegun to the north."

Bdr Robertson then called in a mortar fire mission from the mortar section at the ANA checkpoint.

"After receiving permission from the patrol commander, the mortars were laid on to the insurgents on the elevated ridgeline," he said.

"After the initial round had landed 50 metres from the target I made a correction and gave them the command of three rounds fire for effect."

Silencing the elevated insurgent position allowed Bdr Robertson to turn his attention to the northern insurgent machinegun.

"I gave the new grid reference to the mortars after some of the infantry had seen dust signatures in the sky near where the machinegun fire had come from, allowing me to get an accurate grid location," Bdr Robertson said.

"The patrol commander needed the machinegun suppressed immediately so I ordered a fire mission of three rounds fire for effect.

"As this target was out in the open and away from the village, we used an airburst proximity round, which exploded above them."

By 1620hrs the two insurgent firing positions had been neutralised and the standby ASLAV was called forward to the support-by-fire location on the northern side of the river.

The patrol commander then decided to push the patrol about 300 metres towards Tutak and search the compounds where the patrol's snipers had previously seen and engaged armed insurgents.

Covering a wide expanse of open ground to reach Tutak from Moruch was a challenge.

"Because we were still receiving fire, the patrol

commander coordinated the ASLAV, mortars and support by fire location to simultaneously engage a number of targets while the patrol moved up through an aqueduct into Tutak," Bdr Robertson said.

"At 1630hrs they moved forward and we remained on our hill, which was the only high ground we could continue to observe the patrol from.

"During this time we also ordered a mortar fire mission onto a target on the high ground above Tutak, suppressing the firers."

After the patrol arrived in the village they searched compounds for insurgents and weapons.

At 1715hrs, with the sun going down and after not finding anything in the village, the patrol commander decided to withdraw to Patrol Base Qareb.

"From our elevated position we coordinated suppressive fire as the patrol withdrew from Tutak," Bdr Robertson said.

"Some of the insurgents were popping up from behind the elevated ridge-lines and firing on us and the patrol, but once the ASLAV fired on them they'd move back behind the cover of the ridgeline and re-engage us from a new position.

"We ordered our last mortar fire mission onto targets on the high ground above Tutak, suppressing and keeping the insurgents' heads down as the patrol moved back to Patrol Base Qareb."

The patrol arrived back at the patrol base by 1840hrs.

Although Bdr Robertson said he feared for his safety during the patrol, he was more concerned about his mates.

"Most of the time on patrols I didn't do much until I had to call in offensive support onto targets," he said.

"When the time came, everyone else was relying on me to do my job and I really didn't want to let anyone down.

"On March 20 lots of guys on the patrol had close calls yet continued to do their jobs and push forward."

[Return to front page](#)



Remember the peacemakers

PEACEKEEPING over the past 65 years was commemorated by more than 60 people at the future site of the Peacekeeping Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra on September 14.

In attendance was Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon, New Zealand High Commissioner Maj-Gen Martyn Dunne (retd), Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project patron Geraldine Doogue, Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Chair Maj-Gen Tim Ford (retd) and National RSL Australia president Gary Brodie, as well as senior representatives of the ADF and Australian Federal Police.

Vice Chairman of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Committee, Maj-Gen Ian Gordon (retd), said attendance at the service had been very encouraging.

"The number of people that attend and support the event con-

tinues to grow each year with a strong presence from members of the Parliament," he said.

"It's important we recognise the work of peacekeepers not only in the past but also the present and future."

The service is an annual commemoration of the work and sacrifices of Australian peacekeepers and has been a focal point in the past few years to raise awareness and funds for the future peacekeeping memorial.

Maj-Gen Gordon said the design and prototype stages of the memorial were complete. Construction would begin once sufficient funds had been raised.

"We plan to finish the memorial in the next few years," he said.

For more information about the memorial go to www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au

Photos by LACW Casey Gaul



Rest: Pte Tristan Martin, of Australia's Federation Guard, takes part in a catafalque party.



Show of respect: The catafalque party presents arms during the memorial service.

The following 3 ^{1/2} pages are taken from **RAE CORPS NEWSLETTER VICTORIAN ENGINEERS** August 2012

The RAE occupied the Swan Street site from about March 1935 to November 1991. It was also the Chief Engineer's HQ during WW2.

The RAA Depot was at the southern end of the compound also. For some time, Bruce Campbell has been negotiating to have an appropriate plaque mounted in the Bubbledome complex to mark the Army use. He now reports that the CEO of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust has advised that the Trust will use artist Ron Bastian **to design a plaque covering RAE and RAA occupation of the former Swan Street and Batman Avenue Depots.** The Trust will pay for the production of the plaque.



RAE HEAD OF CORPS WATERLOO DINNER ADDRESS -2012

Each year, the Head of Corps prepares an address which is read at all the Waterloo Dinners. Brig Wayne Budd CSC is Head of Corps, and his address is reproduced below. *(edited version. ed)*

Good evening fellow Sappers and distinguished guests. It is a pleasure to join you here tonight (or for this message to reach you in the far flung regions of this globe). This annual update is a great opportunity for me to consider our Corps' achievements and to provide you all with a message of confidence in our future.

There has been an enormous level of support organisations put in place during the last 12 months. Like the SASR and Commando Welfare Trusts before it, the Legacy Services Trust has been invested in by Government to provide additional support for our returned veterans and their families. Groups like the new 'Soldier On' organisation and our own RAE Foundation are focussing on the needs of our people post conflict and I am confident that we will have the structures, resources and commitment to provide comprehensive welfare support to those who need it.

You will all have seen the Governments transition strategy for our forces in Afghanistan. You should not assume that our work is over. The troop rotation planning will see continued deployment of Corps members into high threat operations. 2 CER is in the middle of unit rotation as our Mentoring Task Force rotates while the next Engineer task unit will be based around 1 CER soldiers who are deep in their force preparation cycle. 6 Engineer Support Regiment is also being called upon to support the required engineer force structure. 20 EOD Sqn has formally shaken out its support structure to operations and in support of the Special Operations Task Group our newly named Special Operations Engineer Regiment sappers provide vital support to operations that have an ever increasing diversity and tactical effect. The support that all our sappers provide Australian and Coalition forces remains second to none.

At our recent Corps Conference we looked at the state of the Corps and our future developments. You will be pleased to hear that the basic tenants of the Modular Engineer Force concept remain strong and sound. The challenge will remain the

re-equipping of our units. The Force Engineer concept has been reinforced this year at HQ 6 Brigade and the Force Engineer has a robust staff to support our war fighting requirements. The 2nd Division is reaching a milestone in its consideration of Reserve force structures and many will have heard of plans to disband and raise new units. It is always a pleasure to see new required units added to the order of battle and for appropriate structures to be put in place. Sadly this often means we lose some older units. When this occurs we will honour those units and their achievements appropriately but we must understand the need to adapt and move forward. The key determinant for the Corps must be -does the change support the requirements of our Modular Engineer Force structure and add capability to the Army. If so then we must embrace change and support restructure. This is a key reason for renaming the Incident Response Regiment to the Special Operations Engineer Regiment. The title now reflects the change in role that has occurred over many years and the maturing of this regiment in its support to Special Operations Command across its full range of responsibilities.

The re-equipping agenda that supports the Modular Engineer Force structure remains an area of focus for your Corps leadership. The budgetary constraints delivered by Government will make development agendas challenging. This will impact the Corps like the rest of the Army. What we have decided is that we need a Corps consolidated position to guide our way through the capability development cycle and to press our requirements to add engineering capability to Army through re-equipping our units.

On the personnel side the Corps numbers are healthy. While our rank structures remain a little un-balanced we have a pool of young sappers to grow into our new structures. There will remain a challenge to ensure that these young personnel are adequately led, properly mentored and provided with the training and development opportunities that retains their continued service. The experience gained by the Corps must be used to build our foundation and preparedness for any new conflict.

On the training front the Force Engineer Branch has delivered some outstanding remediation for some key Corps capabilities. Our EOD and EOR trades have been revitalised through some out-

sourced training activities and our EDO capability is set for expansion this year through similar external support. We have been able to source new digitised training lanes to help us hone our search skills and the lessons of war are guiding the redevelopment certain skills. I believe we are learning lessons and taking action as a truly adaptive engineer force.

You will have seen the continuing momentum behind the relocation of the School of Military Engineering. It is inevitable that the school will move and we have embraced the opportunity to have the project deliver a world class learning environment. The modernisation in facilities and systems will empower our training staff in their endeavours for superior training outcomes. The people in the school work as hard as ever and deliver the personnel outcomes needed to empower our operational cycle.

I am encouraged by the output of our people, their commitment to difficult operational activities and their dedication to duty. I am also encouraged by the compassion and willingness for our current members to support their mates in difficult times. We are truly a strong Corps family and an essential part of this Army. We serve the nation proudly and whether we be on humanitarian or disaster relief activities, operational or peace support commitments, your commitment and capabilities are recognised by the nation you serve.

Before I close tonight let me congratulate 13 Field Squadron on their soon to be reached 100th Anniversary. Laying claim to the longest continuous serving unit in the Australian Army, 100 years represents a rare milestone in the history of our Army. I look forward to representing you all on this forthcoming occasion.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide this update and encourage you all to look after the welfare of your mates, to maintain contact with our past members, support the families of the deployed and to strive for continued excellence in service.

Thank you.

Brig Wayne Budd

The next item demonstrates what a poor showing Artillery put on by their non-attendance. So much so that Brig Doug Perry felt compelled to state that he was both embarrassed and disappointed. ed

Cascabel 113, p38

RESERVE FORCES DAY PARADE

Sunday 1 July 2012

A Good Show Put On to Honour Boer War Veterans. — Our First Australian Reservists —

Of the order of 300 guests and spectators attended the 2012 Reserve Forces day Parade at the Melbourne Shrine on Sunday 1 July, and gave generous support to the 300+ serving and retired reservists on parade.

The theme for this year's parade was remembrance of Australian volunteers who served in the Boer War - which ended 110 years ago, on 31 May 1902. This was the first occasion on which Australian (as distinct from colonial) militia volunteers served in an overseas country. Throughout the period of that war, approximately 23,000 Australian soldiers served in South Africa, and of these, almost 1,000 were killed in action or died of wounds or sickness. It was also the first time in which Australian infantry and light horsemen demonstrated their fighting ability on the world stage, and established their reputations which they further enhanced in WW1, in battles such as Beersheba -the last great cavalry charge.

During the parade medallions were presented to approximately 100 descendants of the Boer War Veterans as well as to several partners of serving and retired present day reservists. The Boer War veterans' descendants included some whose ancestors had amazing service histories. These included descendants of one soldier who served two tours of duty in the Boer War, followed by service in the Light Horse in WW1, including the charge at Beersheba.

The parade this year was lead by the Band of the Royal Australian Air Force, and escorted on the Shrine forecourt by a mounted Colour Party of Light Horsemen carrying Unit pennants representing the Light Horse units which served in the Boer War and WW1.

The RAE contingent, totalling approximately 40 reservists, was made up of the Old Sappers

Association members, led by President Jim Muir and the Wood-peckers, led by President Rob Youl. Geoff Brumhead again acted as ASM, with Bruce Campbell carrying the RAE Standard.

This year, we were very pleased to include three serving RAE members in our group, being LT Haki-mova, plus two sappers. Unfortunately, WO2 Fiona Ince was a last minute withdrawal due to injury.

The parade was inspected by MAJ GEN David McLachlan AO, as Reviewing Officer accompanied by the Parade Commander, LTCOL Bruce Powell, the Governor of Victoria, His Excellency The Hon Alex Chernow AC QC and the Parade Host BRIG Neal Bavington RFD ED.

Addresses this year were confined to a welcome by the Parade Host, an address by MAJ GEN David McLachlan, and messages read from the Governor General and the Prime Minister.

Considering we had the usual cold and damp conditions, those on parade welcomed the somewhat abbreviated format this year.

Following the usual Ceremonial Wreath Laying, Last Post, National Anthem, the parade marched off to the accompaniment of healthy applause from the large number of spectators.

Approximately 25 Sappers and partners then adjourned to the Emerald Hotel in South Melbourne, and enjoyed an excellent lunch and get together. As usual, we particularly appreciated the opportunity to get together with so many of our strong supporters — particularly those who travel such long distances from country centres to attend.

Next year's march will be held on Sunday 7 July — so put this date in your diary.

Bruce Campbell.



AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Head of Regiment

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

Representative Colonel Commandant

Colonels Commandant

Commanding Officers (Artillery Commanders)
Regimental Sergeant Majors (Artillery Sergeant Majors)

All Ranks of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

Associations and affiliated friends of the Regiment

Fellow Gunners,

SAINT BARBARA'S DAY GREETING 2012

2012 has been a highly successful year for the RAA and has seen a continued high tempo with individuals and troops serving Australia overseas on a wide range of operations. Today as we celebrate as gunners, there are those whose tours of duty have concluded and who are looking forward to some well deserved time off at home, whilst the next rotations have deployed or are in the process of deploying. I would like to thank all gunners who have served overseas this year for your continued high levels of readiness and professionalism and wish you all a safe and speedy return to Australia. Our special thanks must go to your families for their enduring and unwavering support.

2013 will see the Regiment continue with the rapid pace of development as Plan Beersheba is implemented. The Air Land concept continues to mature and the Sense-Warn-Locate capability with the Counter Rocket and Mortar system continues to provide excellent capability on operations. We continue to embed the M777 Light Weight Howitzer and the Advanced Field

Artillery Tactical Data System into the Regiments. The digitised Artillery capability will be further enhanced when the Digital Terminal Control System comes on line in late 2013, allowing a routine digital link from the observer to the gun for the first time in our history. The persistent success of the capability multiplier that is the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle in Afghanistan underscores the professionalism of the Regiment in all of its integrated capabilities. As the Regiment masters these fundamental changes it is both an exciting and challenging time for all of us, regardless of rank and we continue to make very good progress towards our technical excellence goals.

2013 will also bring further changes to the Regiment in the Army Reserve. The conversion to the mortar based capability will conclude and be consolidated through the adoption of the new Light Battery sub-unit structures under Plan Beersheba. I must congratulate all members of the Regiment for their professional approach to planning and executing this significant change over several years. I am particularly encouraged by the commitment to formally acknowledge and mark for our history and heritage, with parades and celebrations across the country, the achievements of our retiring Reserve Regimental and Independent Battery organisations.

On 1 January 2013 the new sub-unit structures will be established and affiliated as follows:

2nd/10th Light Battery of 5th/6th Battalion Royal Victorian Regiment, 23rd Light Battery of 4th/3rd Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, 7th Light Battery, of 2nd/17th Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, 6th/13th Light Battery, of 10th/27th Battalion Royal South Australian Regiment, 5th/11th Light Battery, of 9th Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment, and 3rd Light Battery, of 11th/28th Battalion Royal Western Australia Regiment. We can all now look forward to a new chapter in the proud Army Reserve RAA history and to forging new relationships with the Batteries and Battalions.

Today is also the official change of appointment of our Representative Colonel Commandant from Major General Tim Ford to Brigadier Gerry

Warner. Colonel Commandant Southern Region, Brigadier Neil Graham and Colonel Geoff Laurie, Colonel Commandant Central Region also complete their tenure. Please again accept our thanks for your service to the Regiment over the years and we welcome your continued support less formally in the future. I would like to welcome Brigadier Peter Alkemade who has assumed his appointment as Colonel Commandant Southern Region.

Today, I ask that we celebrate Saint Barbara's Day reflecting proudly on the achievements of 2012 and eagerly anticipating the challenges ahead in 2013. I take this opportunity to congratulate those of you that will assume command and leadership appointments in January 2013 as Commanding Officers, Battery Commanders, Regimental and Battery Sergeant Majors.

On behalf of the Representative Colonel Commandant and Colonels Commandant, I commend and thank all ranks of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, serving and former, for their service. Enjoy your celebrations today.

U. Bique

A. Ford

S. ROACH Brigadier

Head of Regiment

Telephone: (07) 3332 6321

E-mail: don.roach@defence.gov.au_

4 December 2012



An Australian Vietnam Vet is made a criminal by a Labour government because he repaired a river bank with some crushed rock. Roger Dwyer was trying to make it easier for disabled Vets in wheel chairs to access a fishing retreat. Anna Bligh's Labour QLD government said Roger should face a maximum \$300,000 fine in court.

Another "MUST VIEW" link

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiCYuxBYBwU>

Next task group prepares to deploy

REPLACING the 3RAR Task Group in Tarin Kot will be the 7RAR Task Group, commanded by Lt-Col Malcolm Wells.

The task group comprises 400 personnel, mostly from 7RAR, with specialists from other Darwin-based 1 Bde units and some Brisbane-based teams.

"Our mission will be to advise the Afghan National Army 4 Bde, 205 Corps, which is moving into the lead to be responsible for security in Uruzgan province," Lt-Col Wells said.

The task group will take a new approach while working with the ANA.

"Due to the great progress made by 3RAR and units before it, in the areas of training and mentoring the ANA, we'll be able to move to an assistance-focused mission," Lt-Col Wells said.

"We will not need to be involved in the patrol bases or forward operating bases throughout the province.

"We'll be focused on providing advice to the higher echelons of the ANA head quarters and some of their specialist capabilities."

Lt-Col Wells said as a result of the work already done by Australian troops, ANA influence had spread through the province.

"With support from the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Afghan Government, governance and development will continue to spread throughout the province, taking advantage of the improved security conditions," Lt-Col Wells said.

Before the unit's HQ attended a Combined Team Uruzgan 4 mission rehearsal activity in Darwin, the task group had completed a busy and detailed training program.

"It's taken many months and included completion of Exercise Hamel and this mission rehearsal activity, which put us through the full range of circumstances and scenarios which we think we'll experience in Afghanistan," Lt-Col Wells said.

"We're not kidding ourselves, we're fully focused on our mission and we know it will be difficult.

"These training activities and our equipment are world class. We are well prepared and have given everything we need to achieve our mission successfully."

To finish their pre-deployment training, the task group will complete a two-week exercise at Cultana Training area in South Australia during September and October.

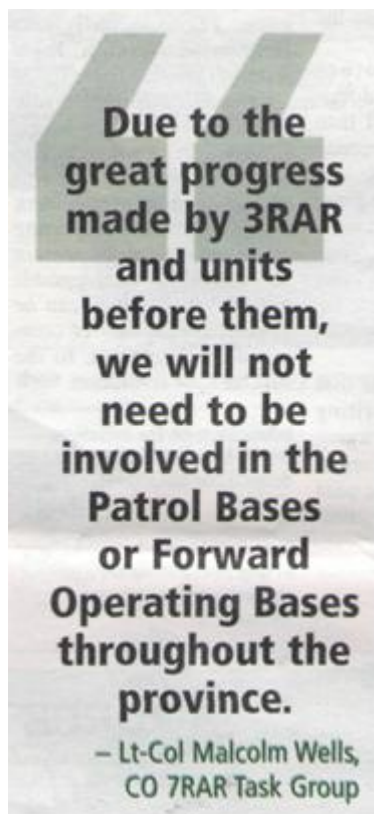
"We need to continue to push the ANA into the lead and ensure that they can take full responsibility of security during the transition

process," Lt-Col Wells said.

"In doing so we'll create the conditions for continued improvement in the development and governance of the province.

"Through this we will reinforce the alternative to those who oppose progress in Afghanistan and I have every confidence 7RAR Task Group will be up to the task."

Courtesy Army News



I urge you all to read this PDF. It contains very interesting information re the proposed F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program. You can view the article at the Dept of Defence web site at <http://www.defence.gov.au/>

Search for Dr Jensen defenceannualreport_2010_2011_report_supplementary_remarks.pdf

In October 2012, the Bellerive Historical Society published the following in their Newsletter.

The Mercury, Hobart Town, Wednesday 1st July 1868, page 2

A daily time gun.

Yesterday, by order of the Colonial Secretary, a number of experiments were made at Queen's Battery to test the applicability of certain pieces of ordinance for the purposes of a daily time gun. There were a considerable number of gentlemen present to watch the experiments, which were conducted by Staff-Sergeant Major Ecclestone of the Artillery.

The signal gun was discharged at noon and twenty-five rounds were discharged from six pieces of ordinance of different natures, the charges varying according to the nature of the piece. The guns used were :—

- An 8 inch shell gun weighing 65 cwt;
- A 32 pounder gun weighing 56 cwt.;
- A 32 pounder brass howitzer;
- A 6 pounder field gun;
- A 4 2/5 inch mortar and
- A 12 pounder howitzer.

The guns were discharged at intervals of two minutes and were distinctly heard all over the city. The effect in the outlying districts has yet to be proved. As stated in the advertisement, the Colonial Secretary will feel obliged if gentlemen residents at Bridgewater, Brighton, Richmond, Sorell, Kingborough, Risdon, and other places within a radius of 50 miles from Hobart Town, will furnish a return of the distinctness of each report, marking the figures to a maximum often.

Gentlemen who may have been on the lookout for the guns in any of the districts, but who may not have heard them, would do well to notify the fact to the authorities, as a knowledge of it will assist in arriving at a decision.

From The Mercury of Wednesday 16 December 1874:

"We understand that in consequence of the great inconvenience caused by the want of a Town Clock to give correct standard time, the government have made arrangements for a gun to be fired from the Queen's Battery in the Domain, at one o'clock precisely, every Saturday. The step is in the right direction, but it is palpably but a step, that we wonder Government have not at once resolved on the firing of a gun every day".

The Society President, John Lennox noted that; "the 1902 Inspection Report shows a 32 pounder, Number 95 on a Common Standing Wood carriage, with in excess of 1000 EFC's at Queens Battery. This confirms a 32 pounder as one of the one o'clock guns".



SSBL 32 lb on display at Fort Nelson

Some idea of the cost of the one o'clock gun can be found in the Tasmanian Statistics Volume 8 which show £60 per annum.

The one o'clock gun, with its accompanying dropped ball signal at Battery Point, ceased firing for some time in 1918.

George Adams of Tattersall's fame then paid for the cost of firing until 1923. The dropped ball signal for the time gun at Battery point ceased operating on 19 February 1927. However, a time gun continued to be fired under the supervision of the Naval Officer at the Drill Hall on the Domain, with charges being supplied by the "Victoria" gunpowder magazine keeper.

It would seem that gun being used was now a RML 70 pounder from Queen's Battery, the same gun that was transferred to the Bellerive Bluff Battery on the other side of the Derwent River, on the retirement of the Queen's Battery.

Article by John Presser from "Cannon Fire", Volume 26 Number 2, 2009.

Courtesy Capt Peter Wertheimer

(An edited) **ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE CHIEF OF ARMY,
LT GEN DAVID MORRISON AT THE
NATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTE 12 OCT '12**

Now, as the Chief of Army, I am its main public advocate and champion in the public domain, and hence when I speak to audiences similar to this I am prepared right at the outset to say how deeply I understand the respect and affection that Australians of all walks of life, and across all age groups, feel for their Army. That respect has been earned by the deeds of successive generations of Australian men and women who have put service before self at their nation's call in war and peace.

And I wish at times that the general public would understand better the complexity of the organisation and how important consistent funding and support for it is, but be assured that I am incredibly proud to lead it.

However as much as I love the Army, my purpose today is not to indulge in either nostalgia nor sentimentality. Yes the Army is one of our most treasured and revered institutions, but now I want to talk to you about it as an instrument of national power and as a substantial piece of public infrastructure. It is a large and complex organisation with a very distinct culture and ethos, but despite its mastery of violence it is a surprisingly fragile organism in some ways. Its capability must be painstakingly built up and nurtured, and this takes significant time and public funding. Yet its capability can be relinquished disturbingly rapidly if it is not carefully developed and sustained.

Now, both Peter (*Lt Gen (ret'd) Peter Leahy*) and I, as a current Chief of Army and a former Chief of Army, have seen the capability and numerical strength of the Army fluctuate widely during the course of our three-decade plus careers. Right now the Army's in great shape. We have steadily rebuilt our capital base through prudent investment by this Government and the previous government since the East Timor crisis of 1999. We are far better equipped than we have been at any time during my career and we are in the midst, budget constraints notwithstanding, of the most significant re-equipment program since the end of the Vietnam War.

Our soldiers have been exposed to sustained operations across the spectrum, from war fighting in lethal environments through to peacemaking and support, as well as pure humanitarian relief. Our ranks are seasoned by combat and led by junior officers and NCOs with significant operational experience. This is an intangible asset that few

armies in the world possess in such abundance. And, of course, I hope that that potential for the guarding of Australia's future and is not squandered.

In short, I think we are about the right size and that our modernisation plan is sound, being derived from a sober assessment of both the changing character of war and the tectonic shifts in the global system associated with the rise of China and India, assertive Islamic militancy directed against the West, rapid population growth manifested as intensified urbanisation, a changing world climate and what seems to be a semi-permanent global economic crisis.

One of the Government's most pressing stated objectives is the restoration of a budget surplus. And as a Service Chief I understand the context in which I must operate to assist them in that endeavour.

As you have all undoubtedly observed in the media, this year's budget contained significant reductions in real Defence expenditure. There was some alarmist, and not entirely accurate, commentary likening the state of our Defence Force to that on the immediate eve of the Second World War when we were in a parlous state.

That analogy was based on a raw comparison of the share of the Defence budget as a portion of gross domestic product in each era, and it is not that simple.

I can only speak for Army, but we are in substantially better shape than we were in 1939, or indeed, than we were when I first joined in 1979. And I also know that this is the consensus of my Navy and Air Force colleagues because of the significant and expensive remediation of all our Services that took place after the strategic shock of East Timor in 1999.

Now, in the remainder of my time today I will explain why implementing Army's currently approved modernisation plan, called BEERSHEBA, actually represents both sound fiscal policy as well as strategic prudence. Good economics reinforces good strategy, and produces sound public policy.

To read the entire transcript, please go to:

<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/National-Security-Lecture>

Courtesy Department of Defence - Army

'Surreal' Attack At Camp Bastion

If not for actions of Marines, deadly Taliban assault in desert could have been much worse

It was just after 10 p.m. when Lt. Col. Christopher "Otis" Raible heard the first explosions rumble over Camp Bastion and his fleet of Harrier jets. The Marine pilot had flown a combat mission that night and was heading back to his quarters after dinner to video chat with his wife. Now the battle had come to him, right there on the flight line of the heavily fortified headquarters for U.S. Marines and international forces in South Western Afghanistan.

As insurgents swarmed the hangars, Raible ran to the gunfire with his pistol and a phalanx of Marines to rally the counterattack. Sgt. Bradley Atwell, an electrical systems technician, also sprinted to help. Neither Marine survived the Sept. 14 assault on Camp Bastion that destroyed six of the Corps' irreplaceable AV-8B vertical landing fighter jets and heavily damaged two more. Raible and Atwell were buried this week.

They were among more than 100 people, most of them air wing personnel from Yuma, Miramar Marine Corps Air Station and Camp Pendleton who fought off the infiltrators and prevented a far greater loss of life, according to several witnesses who spoke with U-T San Diego and reports from NATO commanders.

Impregnable

British forces built Camp Bastion in 2006 on a remote patch of desert plain in Helmand province so it would be virtually impregnable in its isolation.

If the Taliban's video clips purporting to show preparations for the attack are authentic, the assailants plotted in front of a white-board sketch of the base identifying concentrations of aircraft. They rehearsed with wire cutters and fencing, made wills and recorded last words. "We sacrifice ourselves in the name of Almighty Allah," one said in English on camera.

Then 15 men dressed in a hodgepodge of outdated U.S. Army uniforms crept to the edge of the base closest to the airfield on a moonless night, evading notice by motion detectors, infrared sensors, human and canine patrols and overhead surveillance.

They were armed with automatic rifles, machine

guns, rocket-propelled grenades and suicide vests. After blasting through a perimeter wall, the assault force split into three teams and stormed the flight line, firing heavily on tower guards on the way.

When explosions rocked the building, Lt. Col. Stephen Lightfoot, a Cobra pilot and commanding officer of Camp Pendleton's Marine Light Attack Squadron 469, stepped outside and saw Harrier jets from the neighbouring squadron in flames.

Lightfoot called his boss while another Marine alerted higher headquarters to the attack. Maj. Gen. Gregg Sturdevant, Commanding General of the Marine air wing deployed in Afghanistan, said a curt "thank you," and hung up. All along the airfield, troops came running, thinking they were under mortar attack. Aviation mechanics dropped their wrenches and grabbed their rifles. Marines went bed to bed rousting the day shift, gym-goers and the chaplain.

After sheltering briefly in concrete bunkers, they emerged to the sound of enemy AK-47 rifles and PKM machine gun fire and the realization that the attackers were in their midst

Counterattack

Raible, commanding officer of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 211 out of Yuma, checked on Marines in the barracks. Then he pulled on his body armour and drove toward the gunfire and his burning jet fleet with his aviation maintenance officer and fellow pilot, Maj. Greer Chambless, 35, of Albany, Ga.

They parked near the hangar and hustled through enemy fire across 300 feet of open ground to reach a group of Marines. Raible yelled for volunteers to push on past the maintenance building, toward enemy fighters attacking the flight line and more Marines from his squadron. More than he needed agreed to go. He took eight.

Shrapnel from a rocket propelled grenade that exploded overhead ended up killing Raible and Atwell.

Capt. Kevin Smalley, 29, of Ossining, N.Y., a Harrier pilot who flew with Raible that night on his last combat mission, was in the next building over coordinating a medivac for two wounded Marines when he learned that his commanding officer had been killed in action.

"He was a very brave and very great man," Smalley said. "His actions that night saved the lives of 50 of

his Marines and inspired them to repel the attack from the Taliban.” By organizing a fierce counter-attack on the flight line, he “scared the Taliban into hunkering down into their own positions and not looking up for a while.” That allowed dozens of Marines caught in the line of fire to move to a more secure location and limit the enemy’s advance, Smalley said

Air attack

At the neighbouring helicopter squadron, the “troops in contact” alert horn had prompted the Marines to rush onto the flight line to launch the standby aircraft. “Usually, we respond to other units out in different areas of the battle space further away from Bastion,” Lightfoot said. This time, it was “in response to our own troops in contact for this very squadron.”

Enemy fighters were aiming rockets at his fleet of UH-1Y Hueys and AH-1W Cobras. The helicopters were safer in the air, and more useful with their heavy firepower, night vision and infrared sensors. “Now we can become the hunter, instead of the hunted,” Lightfoot said.

Marines were hunkered around the flight line on their bellies or a knee, firing on the insurgents with their rifles. Tracer rounds cut the darkness in both directions. Rounds cracked against the walls of nearby buildings, and the Marines felt heat from the flames on their faces.

Sgt. Jonathan Thornton, 23, a Camp Pendleton Marine working as a landing support specialist, pulled up to the air strip’s arrival and departure centre in a bus. When he looked around the corner, he saw a group of enemy fighters walking down the road with rifles. Thornton ordered the Marines at the cargo lot into the vehicle, but as they were scrambling in, the insurgents opened fire. They relocated to a better position and broke into fire teams to pick off the insurgents. “The Marines were all trying to do one thing ... get everyone safe and stop the Taliban from overriding our position,” Thornton said. “It was all surreal. ... a scene out of a movie,” he recalled, like “I didn’t really live it.”

The smell of gunpowder and jet fuel was a reminder that the attack inside their home base was all too real.

The Camp Pendleton air crews took off amid shooting flames, explosions and billowing black

smoke rising from refuelling stations and burning jets. The pilots navigating through both darkness and blinding brightness from the fires tried foremost to avoid shooting friendly forces on the ground battling clusters of insurgents. Staff Sgt. Steven Seay, a Huey crew chief, set in on the squadron perimeter with night-vision goggles and a 240 machine gun they normally use on the helicopter. When he saw a rocket propelled grenade shoot from a concrete bomb shelter toward the flight line, he opened fire. Coalition troops the enemy fighters were targeting also fired back, helping the helicopters pirouetting overhead spot the insurgents.

Maj. Robert Weingart, a pilot and section leader, ordered his Cobra and Huey crews to fire. The British and Marine quick reaction force on the ground also opened up as the helicopters blasted the 20 mm cannon, the .50-caliber machine gun and the 7.62 mini-gun spitting 3,000 rounds a minute. In the end, five insurgents were dead, Lightfoot said.

The running gun battle continued for hours as coalition forces flushed out insurgents dug in around the airfield. Marine aviation refuelers, called “grapes” because of the purple uniform they sometimes wear, gunned down one group of insurgents.

Later that night, Marines at the Harrier squadron’s flight line called in a “danger close” airstrike to target Taliban marauding nearby. “Get out of the way!” the Marine helicopter pilots warned. Then Cpl. Benjamin Hebert and Staff Sgt. Robert Wise, crew chiefs hovering about 200 feet overhead in a Huey, squeezed off slugs from the .50-caliber and rapid-fire 7.62 Gatling, killing four insurgents. “That’s our boys!” a contractor yelled from the other end of the flight line as tracer rounds sliced the darkness.

When it was over, all 15 insurgents were killed except one, who was wounded and captured, NATO’s International Security Assistance Force said. The Marines remained in firing positions on the ground and British and American air crews continued flying overhead until dawn, to be sure that no more lay in wait.

In addition to the two Marines who died, nine coalition personnel were wounded and more than \$200 million in materiel was destroyed. But the actions of Raible, the Harrier commanding officer

who rushed to the flight line to lead the counterattack, the air crews that managed to avoid killing any of their own and all the support Marines who send pilots into combat but rarely see it themselves — it was nothing less than heroic in the eyes of their commanders. On that night, every Marine truly was a rifleman, Marine leaders said.

Fighting on

Less than a week after the attack, ISAF announced the arrest of one of the Taliban organizers, the Harrier squadron had resumed combat operations using jets transferred from other Marine units, and a new commanding officer was en route.

Some 6 percent of the Corps' aging Harrier fleet scheduled for eventual replacement by the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter was disabled at Camp Bastion. Two heavily damaged jets will be repaired and return to service; the others cannot be replaced because the production line is closed, said Brig. Gen. Steven Busby, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquartered at Miramar.

The Corps will cover the loss by reallocating aircraft, he said. There was never any question of pulling the squadron out of Afghanistan early. "Because of the devastating effect it would have on that unit," he said.

In fact, some Marines who missed the attack because they were on the way home to Yuma with the advance party begged to return. One Marine's pregnant wife told Busby her husband wanted to reunite with the squadron in Afghanistan more than anything.

Lightfoot, the attack helicopter commander, expected the Marines who served under Raible to be solemn and sullen after his death. Instead, he was moved by their aggressive resilience and universal praise for their commander.

"One Marine corporal who suffered blast and shrapnel wounds to his face from the same RPG shot that killed Otis expressed to me, 'My commanding officer never feared death and would want us to keep fighting. That's what he would do.' Otis trained them well," Lightfoot said.

Smalley said: "We're back supporting the ground combat element, the Marines on the ground. We are doing exactly what Lieutenant Colonel Raible would want us to do — carry on and pick up the pieces here. Pick up the mess and get back into the fight."

Courtesy SSgt Reg Morrell

I urge you all—after having read the text— to view the following link to hear this brilliant man speak at a Marines Memorial Association Dinner. ed

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/38356372?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0>

General Anthony Zinni—Military career



In 1965, Zinni graduated from Villanova University with a degree in economics and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. After completion of

the Basic School, he was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, where he served as a platoon commander, company executive officer, and company commander in the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. He also served as a company commander in the 1st Infantry Training Regiment during this tour.

In 1967, Zinni was assigned as an infantry battalion advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. Following the Vietnam War, he was ordered to the Basic School where he served as a tactics instructor, platoon commander, and company executive officer. In 1970, he returned to Vietnam as a company commander in 1st Battalion, 5th Marines where he was wounded, evacuated, and subsequently assigned to the 3rd Force Service Support Group on Okinawa. There he served as a company commander and guard officer. In 1971, Zinni returned to the 2nd Marine Division, where he served as a company commander in the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Aide de Camp to the Commanding General, and Officer in Charge of the Infantry Training Centre. In 1974, he was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps, where he was assigned as the Retention and Release Officer and Plans Officer in the Officer Assignment Branch of the Manpower Department.

Zinni again served in the 2nd Marine Division in 1978, as the Operations Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Executive Officer of the 8th Marine Regiment and Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines. In 1981, he was assigned as an operations and tactics instructor at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College at Quantico, Virginia. He was next assigned to the Operations Division at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps where he served as the Head of the Special Operations and Terrorism Counteraction Section and as the Head, Marine Air-Ground Task Force Concepts and Capabilities Branch. In 1984, he earned his master's degree from Central Michigan University. In 1986, he was selected as a fellow on the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group. From 1987 to 1989, Zinni served on Okinawa as the regimental commander of the 9th Marine Regiment and the Commanding Officer of the 35th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which was twice deployed to the Philippines to conduct emergency security operations and disaster relief operations. Upon his return to the U.S., he was assigned as the Chief of Staff of the Marine Air-Ground Training and Education Centre at Marine Corps Base Quantico.

His initial general officer assignment was as the Deputy Director of Operations at the U.S. European Command. In 1991, he served as the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commanding General of Combined Task Force Operation Provide Comfort during the Kurdish relief effort in Turkey and Iraq. He also served as the Military Coordinator for Operation Provide Hope, the relief effort for the former Soviet Union. In 1992-93, he served as the Director for Operations for the Unified Task Force in Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Also in 1993, he served as the Assistant to the U.S. Special Envoy to Somalia during Operation Continued Hope. Zinni was assigned as the Deputy Commanding General, U.S. Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Virginia, from 1992 to 1994.

From 1994 to 1996, he served as the Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. During early 1995, Zinni served as Commander of the Combined Task Force for Operation United Shield, protecting the withdrawal of U.N. forces from Somalia.

From September 1996 until August 1997, Zinni

served as the Deputy Commander in Chief, United States Central Command. His final tour was from August 1997 to September 2000 as the Commander in Chief, United States Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. He organized Operation Desert Fox, a series of airstrikes against Iraq during December 1998, with the stated purpose of degrading Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. Following this, he retired in autumn 2000 as a Four Star General.

Zinni has attended the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Centre and School, Amphibious Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the National War College. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics and two Master of Arts degrees, one in international relations and another in management and supervision.

His son, Anthony Zinni, a major, currently serves in the Marine Corps.



Zinni briefs the results of Operation Desert Fox
Here's the link again. Please use it.

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/38356372?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0>

Courtesy SSgt Reg Morrell and Wikipedia

A one-man army

Gurkha used 400 bullets, 17 grenades, a mine and even a tripod to defeat 30 Taliban on his own

A GURKHA who fired 400 bullets and 17 grenades while single handedly fighting off 30 Taliban militants is to receive the second highest honour for Bravery.

Acting Sgt Dipprasad Pun, 31, was on sentry duty alone at night when he discovered two insurgents preparing to plant a bomb outside.

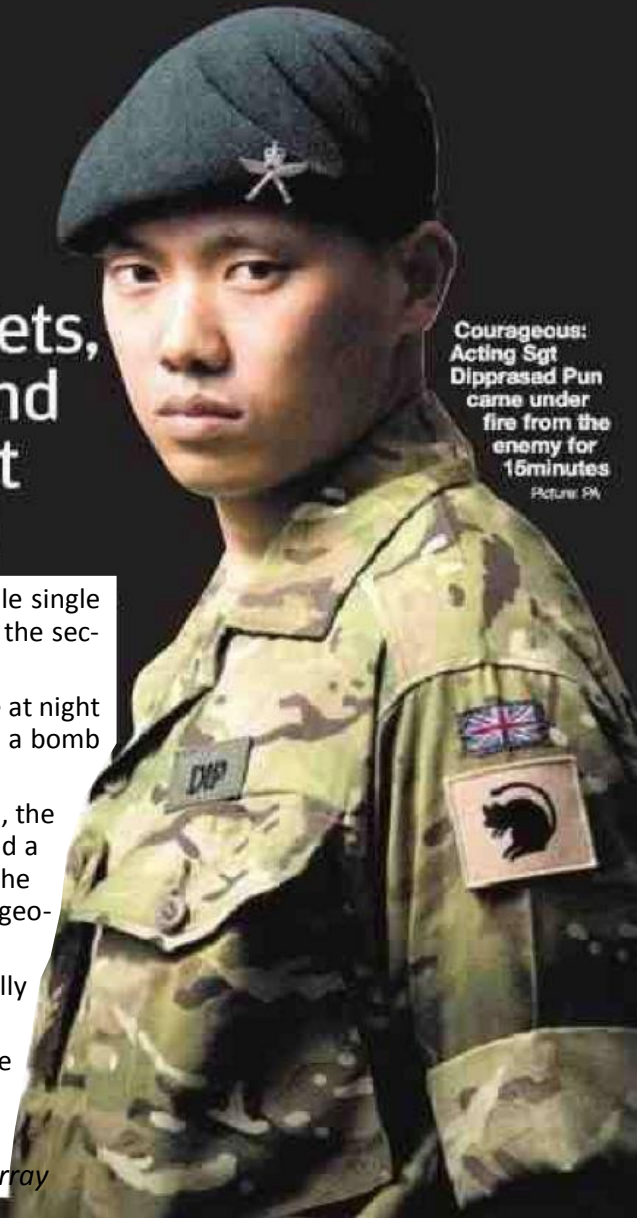
As enemy fighters launched wave after wave of attacks, the 1.7m Gurkha opened fire with a machine gun, a rifle and a grenade launcher. When he exhausted all ammunition he tried to batter one militant with a sandbag before bludgeoning him with a machine gun tripod.

When the fight was over, his Coy. Comd. arrived, casually slapped him on the back and asked if he was OK.

The third generation Gurkha, from Kent, will receive the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, one of 136 awards to be announced today.

Courtesy WO2 Max Murray

Courageous:
Acting Sgt
Dipprasad Pun
came under
fire from the
enemy for
15 minutes
Picture: PA



Mowing the Grass

A picture of this Australian Digger in Afghanistan with His Tiny 'Plot of Grass' in front of his tent. It's heart-warming! Here is a soldier stationed in Afghanistan; posted to a Big Sand Box. He asked his wife to send him dirt (Australian soil), fertilizer, and some grass seed so that he can 'smell the grass', and feel it grow beneath his feet. When the men of the Squadron have a mission that they are going on, they take turns walking through the grass in Australian soil – to bring them good luck. If you notice, he is even cutting the grass with a pair of a scissors.

Sometimes we are in such a hurry that we don't stop and think about the little things that we take for granted. Upon receiving this, please say a prayer for our Australian Soldiers that give and give so unselfishly for US.

Courtesy Sgt Eddie Evans

The dedicated guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier remain steadfastly on duty during the onslaught from Hurricane Sandy.

Courtesy Sgt Eddie Evans



I intend no disrespect to those represented by the above picture. In fact, I think many of the fallen would have really appreciated the following:

I do know that many of our members appreciate their drop of wine—and rightly so. However, I also believe there are many out there who enjoy the odd beer or two. This video is for you!!

Welcome to the world's greatest beer truck, proudly an Australian product displayed at Sandown '08. Enjoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2Vjpv0LXAo>



HANDS ON THE EF88

Cpl Nick Wiseman

I WAS fortunate to be among the first soldiers to handle and fire the new EF88 on October 26.

After receiving briefs from Thales staff, there was one instantly noticeable difference between the current F88 and the new EF88 - the barrel is no longer removable.

The degrees of weapon readiness are identical as taught for the F88, with the only difference in unloading when firers no longer remove the barrel - a simple cock, lock and look in with white light if needed and the weapon is cleared.

Another small change is noticeable when releasing the working parts forward. The cocking handle now gets flipped back towards the barrel, eliminating the risk of damage if the weapon is dropped or placed on a hard surface.

Picking the weapon up, it feels better to hold, which seems to be a combination of the Thales team shaving 500 grams from the overall weight and tweaking the design to provide a

more balanced rifle.

Sporting no less than three picatinny rails (the top rail is 30cm long) the combination of equipment you can add to the rifle is now only limited to what is available.

The rifle was readily converted into a number of variants on the day simply by switching the ancillaries between handgrips, monopods, bipods and grenade launchers - all quickly and easily removed within a matter of seconds.

The weapons had already fired thousands of rounds during the testing

process but the firing cycle felt smooth and consistent.

The changes in balance and reductions in weight made it quite comfortable to hold.

A futuristic looking rifle for it's time, the new design once again brings back the "space-age" looks with a great looking weapon.

But looks aren't everything, are they?



The hull of the first new amphibious ship has arrived in Australia for outfitting and is expected to set sail with troops on board next year.

The Head of Modernisation and Strategic Planning, Maj-Gen Jeffery Sengelman, said Army would be heavily involved with the new ships. This will include a sizeable contribution to the crew and also the dedication of 2RAR to develop and maintain amphibious tactics, techniques and procedures to allow effective projection of land forces from the sea.

"As the capability matures, our troops will be capable of conducting a range of amphibious operations, in particular short-notice humanitarian or non-combatant evacuation operations," Maj-Gen Sengelman said.

"Army will also contribute other combat, combat support and combat service support capabilities as we participate in trials throughout next year."

He said Army would post 62 personnel to the ship to work with 292 sailors and three Air Force personnel.

Lt-Col Richard Mogg will be the first amphibious operations officer and the senior Army officer posted to the ship.

"Army personnel will be fully integrated with a number of the ships departments," Lt-Col Mogg said.

FAST FACTS

- **Length:** 230.82m
- **Four main decks:** Well Dock, Heavy Vehicle Deck, Main Accommodation Deck, (including the primary casualty reception facility), Hangar 990m² and Light Vehicle Deck (1880m²), and a Flight Deck.
- **Maximum speed:** 20kn with a range of 6000nm
- **Sustained maximum speed:** 19kn (full load)
- **Ramp access:** A stern ramp to well dock for landing craft and vehicles, a fixed ramp between well dock and the 1410m² heavy vehicle/cargo deck, two lateral starboard ramp doors for wharf access to the heavy vehicle/cargo deck for vehicles up to 65T, vehicle access between the heavy and light vehicle decks on port-side fixed ramp.
- **Well dock:** 69.3m long and 16.8m wide (1165m²) with room for four LCM 1E and four RHIBs. Can handle LCUs, amphibious vehicles, LCACs and other allied nations' water craft.
- **Accommodation deck:** Sleeps 1400 personnel, mess decks, medical spaces, galley facilities, office spaces, and recreation rooms. Accommodation room is for 400 ship's company including the watercraft and flight deck crews and 1000 embarked force personnel including the PCRF, embarked flight, HQ staff and landing force.
- **Crew:** Navy, Army and Air Force personnel.
- **Flight deck:** 202.3m long, 32m wide (4750m²) and at a height of 27.50m. It can have MRH-90s, Chinooks, Black Hawks, S-70B-2 Seahawks, Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters and Romeo



Seahawks in use. Six spots on port side for medium aircraft on simultaneous takeoff and landing or simultaneous takeoff and landing of four Chinooks.

- **Aircraft storage:** Hangar has room for eight medium-sized helicopters. Light vehicle deck has room for an additional 10, otherwise 110 vehicles can be loaded across the two vehicle decks.
- **Aircraft elevators:** One medium-helicopter lift and one large-helicopter elevator.
- **Cargo lift:** Can transfer 20-foot ISO containers and vehicles up to 16T. Additional lifts for ammunition, provisions and casualties.
- **Defence systems:** Anti-Torpedo Towed Defence System (Nixie), four 20mm automated guns, 6 x 12.7mm machine guns and an active missile decoy system – Nulka.
- **Power:** Gas turbine (LM 2500) turbo generator of 19,160kW, two MAN 16V32/40 diesel generators of 7448kW each, two Siemens azimuth POD units of 11.0MW each with two 4.5m propellers, two bow thrusters of 1500kW each and one Progener-Mitsubishi S16MPTA emergency diesel generator of 1350kW.

Courtesy Army News Oct 25, '12

Soldiers will receive more accurate medical treatment after explosions thanks to a trial device

UNSEEN damage to the brain that might go undetected will be a thing of the past with the rollout of small, hi-tech devices to capture events within explosive situations.

These blast sensors are being attached to about 400 soldiers in Afghanistan to better determine the effects improvised explosive devices and other blast impacts have on a soldier's health.

Defence Materiel Minister Jason Clare said it was important to make sure deployed soldiers had the equipment to do their jobs and help protect them. "Soldiers will wear three blast gauges - outside their helmet, on their non-firing shoulder and one on their chest. This small piece of equipment can help do that," he said.

"The pressure wave that is caused by an IED can collapse the lungs of a soldier and it can also cause enormous damage to the brain, that's why these devices are important."

Col Blain said field testing with Australian

soldiers began on September 24 and would continue through to August next year.

"Early feedback from our deployed liaison officer indicated that initial fielding of the blast gauge capability was 80 per cent complete," he said.

The blast gauges are the size of a digital watch, weighing less than 29g, and are attached to a soldier's body armour and helmet.

Once triggered the gauges will record pressure from two milliseconds before the blast until 18 milliseconds after and operate independently.

The gauges worn by soldiers will display a yellow, green or red light indicating the level of pressure experienced from the blast, assisting medics in assessing the soldier and providing a quicker medical response in accordance with current procedures for the management of mild traumatic brain injuries.



AS a mother and a New Zealand Army officer in a combat arms corps, Capt Sandra Patterson, the OC of Duntroon's Long Tan Coy, has a unique perspective on the issue of gender restrictions in the ADF.

Since 2001, New Zealand has had no restrictions on roles for women in its defence force and they are able to serve in the SAS, infantry, armour and artillery, although no woman has yet made it into the SAS.

Initially this change was only for officers and in 2003 the first female gunners were enlisted.

This year's graduation at Duntroon will be the first time all corps will be open to all Australian staff cadets.



Capt Patterson joined the New Zealand Army in January 2001 and graduated from Officer Cadet School as a member of the Royal New Zealand Artillery, starting her career at 16 Fd Regt in Linton.

She trained as a forward observer for light infantry units and as a NZLAV gunner for a cavalry unit before being posted as an instructor in gunnery at the School of Artillery in Waiouru, where she also managed the regimental officer basic courses.

Capt Patterson was posted to Duntroon in 2011 for two years.

She said she always wanted to be a member of an arms corps and it was artillery which had the most appeal for her.

"I like the mix of command and technical skills which are needed and I think being a forward observer is one of the best jobs you can do in the Army," she said.

"Fitness is extremely important and the future physical employment standards testing will be a positive step, not just for women, but for all soldiers."

At 163cm tall, Capt Patterson said she would not have survived in her role if she could not physically do her job.

"Perhaps the hardest physical tasks I have been required to do have been in the role of forward observer in the dismounted role," she said.

"Carrying my personal equipment, radios, thermal imagery kit and weapon meant I would have to carry up to 80 per cent of my body weight. "And it was challenging for me. I had to do extra training in my own time and I think there was also a degree of mental toughness involved."

Capt Patterson deployed on a low-level operation to Bosnia for six months in 2004 in a human intelligence role reporting on ethnic tension which still existed nine years after the war.

Her latest deployment was to Afghanistan for six months in 2007 with a New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team as an infantry platoon commander.

Capt Patterson said she enjoyed her time in Afghanistan where she was the local security platoon commander, the quick reaction force (QRF) commander and unit training and range officer.

"I also commanded and trained an Afghan National Police platoon which assisted with security and we were often on partnered patrols," she said.

"It was interesting as a woman to be instructing the Afghans but it actually went a lot better than I thought it would because they responded well to me

Army are similar to that of the current Australian Army basic fitness ; assessment, with different levels for males and females, except the New Zealanders have less time for the 2.4km run.

I think the ADF can look forward to an environment where everyone is treated equally regardless of their gender

Capt Sandra Patterson, New Zealand Army gunner

Combat fitness assessments including a forced march, a rope climb and a fireman's carry are designed for individual combat units and do not differentiate between the sexes.

New Zealand Artillery units add a stores carry and a gun run after their forced march for their fitness tests.

As a female commander, Capt Patterson said she rarely had any issues with men, either during training or on operations.

"If someone is competent, then their gender is irrelevant and I think soldiers believe that as well," she said.

"The thought that men will try to protect female soldiers during combat is ridiculous.

"In the military we build strong teams and within those teams gender doesn't matter."

Capt Patterson said she felt positive about the changes for the employment of women in all roles of the ADF.

"I think it will take time to change the thinking of people who are opposed to it, but now the decision has been made we need to move on and give it support," she said.

"There have been some high-performing women

pass through Duntroon as staff cadets who now have an opportunity to compete with their peers and go to an arms corps."

After being in Australia for the past 18 months, Capt Patterson said she had read a lot of newspaper articles on the gender debate, especially women in combat, some of which were quite negative.

"I have also found it difficult listening to some of the public opinions because I have enough experience in the Army, doing the job, to understand the reality," she said.

"Deploying to a war zone as a mother would be tough, just as much as it would be for any parent leaving their child behind."

When asked if she was still a lady, Capt Patterson said "absolutely".

"Being a lady is something which is extremely important to me," she says.

"At first I thought I had to be a bloke to lead blokes before I realised I could just be myself - a lady and a gunner.

"At Duntroon I have seen some very encouraging attitudes from what will be the Australian Army's next generation of officers.

"I think it will be difficult for the first women to enter arms corps unless they have good role models, which I missed when I was a younger officer.

"I think the ADF can look forward to an environment where everyone is treated equally regardless of their gender and where people are comfortable working together in all areas of Defence."



Courtesy Army News Oct 25, '12

Sit back and relax as the Beer Thrower delivers an icy cold beer to you by remote control.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DMFTAnS8uo>



Fallen Combat Engineer Corporal Scott Smith returned home to his family and comrades yesterday, 28 October 2012, at a solemn ceremony at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Richmond in Sydney.

one in the Special Operations Engineer crossed paths with this fine young man," "His fellow combat engineers will honour and dangerous work they undertake in tion."



Corporal Scott James Smith, from the Special Operations Engineer Regiment based at Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney, was killed on Sunday, explosive device (IED) detonated during



Members of Corporal Smith's unit, the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, met the RAAF C-17 Globemaster aircraft and formed an honour guard and bearer party to escort Corporal Smith's casket to his family.

Corporal Smith was received by his family, members of Special Operations Engineer Regiment, Chief of the Defence Force General David Hurley, AC, DSC, Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO, and Special Operations Commander Australia Major General 'Gus' Gilmore, DSC, AM.

Special Operations Commander Australia, Major General 'Gus' Gilmore spoke of Corporal Smith's lasting legacy.

"Scott was universally respected by every-Regiment, and well liked by all who Major General Gilmore said.

his sacrifice through continuing the tough Afghanistan, with courage and distinction.

Holsworthy truck rollover claims a soldier's life

SPR Jordan Penpraze has died from injuries suffered in a Unimog crash at Holsworthy Range on October 8.

A trainee at SME, Spr Penpraze was a passenger in the vehicle when it rolled over, injuring 18 soldiers.

The 22-year-old was in a critical condition when his family made the heart wrenching decision to switch off his life support on October 10.

CO SME Lt-Col Allan Hollink expressed his deepest sympathies and praised Spr Penpraze for his dedication to the ADF.

"The Australian Army has lost one of its newest soldiers," he said.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Jordan's family, his friends and his mates.

"Our focus at the moment is on providing them with emotional and welfare support as they deal with this terrible loss."

Lt-Col Hollink said Spr Penpraze was a respected and well liked member of his troop.

"Spr Penpraze was a quiet and stoic sapper who possessed a determination to perform to the best of his ability," he said. "While Spr Penpraze completed everything he did to a high standard, he excelled at watermanship, showing his skills with watercraft and a passion for boats.



Corporal Daniel Alan Keighran, VC

For the most conspicuous acts of gallantry and extreme devotion to duty in action in circumstances of great peril at Derapet, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan as part of the Mentoring Task Force One on Operation SLIPPER.

Corporal Keighran deployed to Afghanistan in February 2010 with the 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. On 24 August 2010 he was a member of a partnered fighting patrol with soldiers of the Afghan National Army's 1st Kandak, 4th Brigade, 205th (Hero) Corps which was engaged by a numerically superior and coordinated enemy attack from multiple firing points in three separate locations. The attack was initiated by a high volume of sustained and accurate machine-gun and small-arms fire which pinned down the combined Australian and Afghan patrol and caused a loss of momentum.

In the early stages of the attack, and upon realising that the forward elements of the patrol needed effective fire support, Corporal Keighran and another patrol member moved under sustained and accurate enemy fire to an exposed ridgeline to identify enemy locations and direct the return fire of both Australian and Afghan machine guns. On reaching this position and with complete disregard for his own wellbeing, Corporal Keighran deliberately drew enemy fire by leaving the limited cover he had and moved over the ridgeline in order to positively identify targets for the machine gunners of the combined patrol. After identifying some of the enemy firing positions, Corporal Keighran, under

persistent enemy fire continued to lead and mentor his team and move around the ridge to both direct the fire of the Afghan and Australian machine gunners and to move them to more effective firing positions.

As the intensity of enemy fire grew, Corporal Keighran returned to the crest of the ridgeline to identify targets and adjust the fire of Australian Light Armoured vehicles. His actions resulted in the effective suppression of enemy firing points,

which assisted in turning the fight in the favour of the combined patrol. Moving to a new position, Corporal Keighran deliberately and repeatedly again exposed himself to heavy enemy fire to assist in target identification and the marking of the forward line of troops for fire support elements whilst simultaneously engaging the enemy. Realising that the new position provided a better location for the patrol's joint fire controller, Corporal Keighran moved over 100 metres across exposed parts of the ridgeline, attracting a high volume of accurate en-

emy fire, to locate and move the fire controller to the new position. He then rose from cover again to expose his position on four successive occasions, each movement drawing more intense fire than the last in order to assist in the identification of a further three enemy firing points that were subsequently engaged by fire support elements.

During one of these occasions, when his patrol sustained an Australian casualty, Corporal Keighran with complete disregard for his own safety, left his position of cover on the ridgeline



to deliberately draw fire away from the team treating the casualty. Corporal Keighran remained exposed and under heavy fire while traversing the ridgeline, in order to direct suppressing fire and then assist in the clearance of the landing zone to enable evacuation of the casualty.

Corporal Keighran's acts of the most conspicuous gallantry to repeatedly expose himself to accurate and intense enemy fire, thereby placing himself in grave danger, ultimately enabled the identification and suppression of enemy firing positions by both Australian and Afghan fire support elements. These deliberate acts of exceptional courage in circumstances of great peril were instrumental in permitting the withdrawal of the combined Australian and Afghan patrol with no further casualties. His valour is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Biography

Daniel Alan Keighran was born in Nambour, Queensland on 18 June 1983 and spent his formative years in regional Queensland. He enlisted in the Australian Army on 5 December 2000 and completed his Initial Employment Training at the School of Infantry in Singleton, New South Wales.

In 2001, Corporal Keighran was posted to the 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR), where he served as a Rifleman in Delta Company. He deployed to Rifle Company Butterworth Malaysia in 2001, on Operation CITADEL - East Timor in 2003/2004 and again to Rifle Company Butterworth Malaysia in 2004.

Corporal Keighran was promoted to Lance Corporal in 2005 and then served within Mortar Platoon, Support Company, 6 RAR.

In 2006, he deployed on Operation CATALYST Iraq where he served as a Bushmaster driver, a role he also filled on deployment to Afghanistan with Operation SLIPPER in 2007, where he served in support of the Special Operations Task Group Rotation 4/5.

In 2009, he was promoted to Corporal and posted back to Delta Company, 6 RAR.

In 2010, Corporal Keighran deployed to Afghanistan on Operation SLIPPER with Mentoring Task Force 1 (MTF-1), becoming a mentor midway through his tour.

For his actions carried at Derapet, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan, he was invested with the Victoria Cross for Australia by Her Excellency the Governor-General of Australia at Government House, Canberra on 1 November 2012.

Corporal Keighran transferred to the Active Reserve in 2011, at the same time commencing a civilian career in the mining industry. He is currently posted to the 11th/28th Battalion, the Royal Western Australia Regiment (11/28 RWAR), a Reserve infantry battalion of the Australian Army. He is married to Kathryn.

Corporal Keighran has been awarded the following honours and awards:

- ◆ **Victoria Cross for Australia**
- ◆ **Australian Active Service Medal with Clasp Iraq and Clasp ICAT**
- ◆ **Iraq Campaign Medal**
- ◆ **Afghanistan Campaign Medal**
- ◆ **Australian Service Medal with Clasp East Timor**
- ◆ **Australian Defence Medal**
- ◆ **United Nations Mission in Support of**
- ◆ **East Timor Medal**
- ◆ **NATO Non Article 5 Medal with Clasp ISAF**
- ◆ **Meritorious Unit Citation for 1-MTF**
- ◆ **Infantry Combat Badge**



Samsung cries foul over big gun project

Exclusive

John Kerin (Australian Financial Review)

Defence Minister Stephen Smith has come under fire over rejecting a second bid from South Korean technology giant Samsung to supply the Australian defence force with self propelled heavy guns.

Defence received an unsolicited bid from Samsung Techwin to supply up to 1840 tonne tank-like K9-field Howitzers at a cost of \$229 million. A higher priced offer with US partner Raytheon was axed in the May budget as part of Gillard government cuts.

Samsung is furious at the rejection of its second bid maintaining it was competitive on price with the Australian government's option of now pressing ahead with buying lighter towed howitzers from the United States.

Samsung has accused the Gillard government of being "disingenuous and dishonourable" in its dealings with the firm and warned the decision jeopardises further efforts to expand industrial defence cooperation between Australia and South Korea.

The Raytheon/Samsung consortia spent millions of dollars in negotiations with the defence in two years as a preferred tendered and brought the guns out to demonstrate their capabilities in Australia, before the May budget axing.

Samsung maintains the K9's offer better protection for crew and troops than smaller towed guns which require transport by truck or aircraft and more crew to operate.

The 40 tonne plus guns can fire multiple shells over 40 kilometres. Australian troops relied on German built Dutch Army howitzers for part of their deployment in Afghanistan. The government only rejected the second Samsung bid on Friday and yesterday Mr Smith and Defence Materiel Minister Jason Clare announced Australia would spend \$70 million to purchase 19 M777 towed howitzers from the US, though this only covers the upfront costs.

In its letter of rejection to Samsung Defence concedes Samsung's proposal offered a "significant cost saving" on the May bid with Raytheon.

But it adds the Korean guns were "unaffordable" compared with the M777's and exceeded the cost envelope in the long range weapons plan. Yet Samsung's bid was well under the \$400 million purchase limit.

The cancellation of the guns project was part of \$5.5 billion in savings sought by the government in the budget the biggest cut to defence spending in percentage terms since the Korean war in 1953.

Mr Smith yesterday defended the decision to go with the M777's as the right one given it would boost the ability of Australian forces to fight alongside US forces.

Australia Defence Association executive director, Neil James warned the decision to not rethink the cancellation was a "grave pity".

"This is a second blow to the South Koreans who are looking to become a regular supplier of defence equipment to Australia ... this won't do anything for the relationship at all," Mr James said.

"There's no doubt self propelled artillery makes deployments safer for the troops," Mr James said.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison admitted to an estimates inquiry in June the cancellation of the big guns would leave the army relying on less capable towed artillery and expose troops to a risk of greater harm. However he stood by the decision given budget constraints.

But Australian Strategic Policy Institute capability analyst Dr Andrew Davies said axing the big guns was in line with current defence strategy which did not envisage a high intensity conflict with armies lining up against each other as was the case on the Korean peninsula.

Courtesy Lt Col Jason Cooke

**This letter is from Dr Gary Hunter, a member of
USAID Land Reform Project, Afghanistan**

Monday 12th November 2012

Hi everyone,

I attended the 11th November Remembrance Day ceremony at the British Embassy in Kabul yesterday and it was quite moving. They read out the 50 or so names of British servicemen and women who've been killed in Afghanistan over the past 12 months. I would've gone to the Australian Embassy if I had a contact there, but it's extremely hard to get in touch with them and their location in Kabul is kept quiet.

I went to the Remembrance Day service with our British security guy – a former British paratrooper from the 1980s – and he arranged for the two of us to get into the Embassy for the ceremony. I've attached the front page from the Order of Service and a photo I quickly took with my iPhone at the end of the service.

Then I've attached the usual collection of military



images and those from street life around Kabul. Because of the location of our guesthouse accommodation, we spend an hour travelling across Kabul every morning on the way to work and between one and two hours coming home at night – and yet the distance travelled would only be about 15 kilometres.

Of course the travel time isn't helped by flocks of sheep being herded through peak hour traffic, the horses and carts, men pulling carts and wagons by hand, seriously overlaid vehicles crawling along at just a few kilometres an hour, or cars going the wrong way in the traffic (see images).

However on a positive note, one of the few devel-

opment aid success stories has been the increase in the number of children being schooled in the past 10 years – and I've attached one or two images of youngsters on their way to school. The schools here run three sessions a day, so you can see school children on the road any time between 7am and 5 pm. They all seem keen to learn – especially the girls – and Afghan parents certainly want their children to get an education so that they can improve their lives. The aid has gone mainly towards teacher training programs and school construction, and I got the following 2010 statistics from the web:



- Nearly 7 million children are enrolled in schools in Afghanistan;
- This is up from 2.3 million in 2002;
- Around 37%, or 2.5 million of them, are girls;
- Despite this progress, approximately 46% of school-age children still do not attend school;
- Since 2003, over 4,500 school buildings have been constructed with active community involvement to provide better and safer learning environments;
- Out of 673 schools closed because of insurgency, 220 have been re-opened during the last nine months providing access to over 180,000 students and 3,000 teachers

Finally, I have attached below an article I saw the other day about artillery training and the Afghan forces – and this is for all of my old artillery colleagues from the 1980s.

Gary

When reading the next article, consider whether the statements made would also apply to the Aussie trained Afghani artillery men!! ed

Bombs Away: Will Afghanistan's Artillerymen Learn How to Shoot Right?

TIME By John Wendle Nov. 01, 2012

FOB Shank, Logar Province and COP Monti, Kunar Province

The afternoon was quiet and hot, and the men of 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment were standing guard and shovelling rocky dirt into sandbags. Suddenly the heavy chatter of the 240-Bravo machine gun ripped open the tired quiet. "Incoming!" someone shouted. We dove for cover. There was a dull whoosh and a distant explosion down the side of the thousand-foot mountain as an insurgent mortar team missed Outpost Shal, a small base on the border with Pakistan in Kunar province.

An allied Afghan platoon opened up with their .50-caliber machine gun, spraying bullets all over the valley, and their mortar team went into action. Within seconds, the team of three had run down to their position, yanked the cover off the mouth of the heaviest weapon on the post, unwrapped an 82-mm round and dropped it down the tube. There was a strong metallic clink, followed by a blast as the bomb went zooming out from the mortar. Seconds later a boom reverberated over the surrounding mountains, and the Afghan crew stood on tiptoe, trying to see where it had landed.

And that is the point. Over the course of 10 days in October, the Afghan National Army (ANA) mortar crew never actually aimed their tube. They never took a bearing, never read out elevations, never set up their aiming sticks — though they did continuously clean and oil the weapon.

One American soldier fighting alongside the Afghan artillerymen explains part of the problem. "Most of their stuff is Russian, like their artillery and whatnot. So it's funny, they wanted us to teach them — our artillery guys — how to shoot, so they can actually get correct grids and all that," Sergeant Steven Schwigert tells TIME. "And our artillery guys walked over there and looked [at the equipment] and they said, 'O.K., you guys said it had instructions, right?' And [the ANA] says, 'Yeah,' and they pulled out this manual, and they sat it down in front of them, and it's all in Russian.

And our guys were like, 'What the?'"

As the U.S. and its NATO allies start to close down or hand over bases to their ANA counterparts ahead of the planned 2014 withdrawal, the Afghans are going to have to begin handling the entire range of duties that an army would normally take care of itself — from logistics and medevac to air support and artillery. And, in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, artillery is "essential," says First Lieutenant Matthew Bergeron, chief of the battery stationed at Combat Outpost Monti.

"They're getting better at direct fire, but their capability of shooting indirect, it's basically none. They don't have the capability of doing it, at least accurately," says Bergeron. "It's just a lack of equipment and knowledge. Until they get that ability, they can't shoot indirect fire."

And the ANA will have to catch up quickly, as U.S. and NATO forces withdraw, since Afghanistan's mountains and valleys provide perfect cover for insurgents. This makes learning how to shoot over a ridge to hit something on the opposite slope a necessity.

"[Indirect-fire missions are] essentially what it takes around here, especially at those outposts,



because they're in the middle of nowhere, and you're literally surrounded by the enemy, 360 degrees," Bergeron says.

A walk down to the ANA's gun line on the Afghan side of Combat Outpost Monti does not instill confidence. The sun gleamed off the cannon's freshly oiled exterior, but this did nothing to cover the rust spotting the field piece. It was a D-30

howitzer, which first entered service in 1963 and was introduced to Afghanistan by the Soviets, who sent it to help arm the communist regime; later, it would be deployed during their 1979 invasion of Afghanistan and war against the mujahedin.

To clean their 122-mm field piece, the gun crew had elevated the weapon almost straight up. From the top chirped a very nervous monkey, which one of the soldiers had tied for no apparent reason with a string to the muzzle of the apparatus. The monkey peaked over the edge and looked down at us, his darting eyes seeming to say that he knew he was in a pickle. The crew laughed.

Back on the U.S. side of the base, Colonel Fakir Mohammad Gundiwal, the commander of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade of the ANA's 201st Corps, was sitting in his office at a desk piled high with documents, but lacking a computer. After dodging questions and saying that the army had no problems, the colonel, who has served as a soldier of one stripe or another for nearly three decades, suddenly relented and enumerated a specific series of problems facing the Afghan Army.

"It's a problem with our Defense Ministry. It's bad management. We need the right man, at the right

weapons, ammunition and training at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) and through Security Force Assistance Teams (SFATs) and Stabilization and Transition Teams (STTs) deployed out to smaller bases across the country.

At the KMTC, artillerymen can go through anything from a six-week course on basic maintenance to a 16-week officer career course. This year, the school will have trained over 1,200 artillerymen, which will bring the total strength of the artillery corps to more than 2,200 since its formation in 2010. The U.S. Army is still in the process of procuring 194 D-30s for the ANA. However, in mid-September this year, Staff Sgt. Mike Wimberly, an SFAT member training Afghan artillery crews at Forward Operating Base Shank in Logar Province, said that the ANA had gotten only 64 guns.

At Forward Operating Base Shank, in Logar Province, with Staff Sgt. Wimberly, the challenge appears in starker relief. Standing behind a D-30 painted a light yellow, a crew of six loudly counts off in Pashto, only to have artilleryman number five shout "seven!" They start over and get it right, then lustily shout, "Enemy! Death! Enemy! Death! Enemy! Death!" Then organized chaos breaks out

as they swarm their gun, trying to ready it for action in a minute and ten seconds. They uncover the recoil system, unclip clips, and crank cranks so fast their arms become blurs. Then one soldier cannot unclip a clip and he just stands there. The commander comes over and shouts and he hops to it again.

At the same time, across a gravel lot, Afghan officers who learned that morning how to use a sight to calculate bearings and arcs for indirect fire – hitting a target they cannot see – teach junior officers and non-commissioned officers how to use it. One officer sat writing a cheat sheet

on his palm. A majority of Afghans, though, cannot read, let alone decipher a map or do the trigonometry necessary for the exercise.

Though not non-existent, the technical exactitude, education and discipline needed for accurate artillery are all elements lacking in Afghanistan.

"Some of them, if you give them a map, they couldn't point out where their house was.



time, for the right job. Sometimes they'll send a guy who has logistics training to the artillery and the guy with artillery training to logistics," Gundiwal says.

Over the past 18 months, U.S. forces have begun to acknowledge and do something about the problems that face the Afghan army when it comes to its artillery readiness. They are providing

But if you showed them a terrain map, they would start to be able to use the terrain to show you where they live,” says Staff Sgt. Wimberly. “Depending on what level they’re at, they should be able to read and write,” he says. “It takes them a long time to calculate. That’s the longest part,” but in artillery, delays can translate into infantry being overrun and killed.

Aside from the massive difficulty of teaching people complex mathematics in a foreign language through interpreters, there are other complications. U.S. trainers have had to teach Afghan officers that they need to have up-to-date maps and intelligence, so they do not shell civilian areas or compatriots they cannot see on the opposite slope of a mountain by mistake.

“Artillery is a perishable skill. It’s all about repetition. These guys will quadruple the amount of dry fire missions compared to the ones that they’ll actually shoot, because if they don’t, they just make mistakes. Everything about artillery is about being safe, because when we shoot its [to support] somebody on the other end,” says Staff Sgt. Wimberly.

But, the SFAT trainers have had the Afghan officers five days a week for eight weeks and they think

and other insurgent groups by themselves.

Also, the Afghans do not have a choice. “It used to be that if [the Afghans] needed it, we just gave it to them, because it was easier than making them get it for themselves.



But now we’ve kind of pulled the rug, so, it makes them stand up on their own. And I think that that’s what they need,” says Staff Sgt. Wimberly.

The Afghans seem to understand the new ethos and are realistic about the conditions they will be fighting in when the Americans leave. When asked if he would prefer an advanced American howitzer that uses a computer for targeting, Sgt.

Nasratullah, a D-30 howitzer commander says, “I’m sure their gun can target a long distance, but I’d rather have these guns, because they are very simple to use.”

As a flight of Apaches and Blackhawks thump overhead, Staff Sgt. Wimberly steps aside from observing a gun crew run yet another drill. Over the din of the training and the noise of the American air power overhead, he says, “I feel that they’ll be trained. I think time will tell how they react to it. Because eventually there’s not going to be a US infantry platoon to go out with their infantry. There’s not going to be a U.S.

Gun battery that can partner with theirs. So the more we pull away from [them] now, while we’re still here, the better they will be for the long haul.”



A Kabul hot bread shop.

the lessons are starting to sink in. And they need to. Indirect fire had a major impact during the grinding war between the Soviets and the mujahedeen and will continue to play an important role as the U.S. and NATO prepare to withdraw by the end of 2014 and the ANA have to take on the Taliban

Courtesy Capt Peter Wertheimer

Army marches out on 150-year history



Australia's most senior army chief officer has described the loss of uniformed soldiers from the Queenscliff fort as "bitter sweet".

Many Defence families are preparing to pack up and say goodbye to the borough this month - marking the end of a 153-year relationship with our twin towns.

Hundreds of visitors gathered at the fort last month to witness a ceremonial march out of soldiers to mark the end of what Lieutenant General David Morrison described as a special chapter of Army history.

"It is with real sadness that we conclude our time here at the fort after 150 years" said General Morrison, who spent time at the fort as both a child and later an officer.

"Army people and their families have truly made Queenscliff and the greater Geelong area their home.

"I am personally very grateful for what I gained here during my time at Queenscliff.

"While this fort has stood here for the past 130 years as a symbol of the military, the strength of the fort has been the community support for its garrison.

"I have no doubt that this strong and proud community will embrace the new staff who will be moving here as part of this change." The army has had a continuous presence at the fort since 1860. It operated as a Command and Staff college for 50 years before transform-

ing into the Soldier Career Management Agency. An \$8 million upgrade currently underway will see the facility converted to the Defence Archives Centre.

"The size and intensity of the army's presence at Queenscliff has always reflected the prevailing needs of the wider Defence organisation," said General Morrison.

And this leads me to one of my most important messages - although army is moving, Defence is not.

"Nevertheless it is a bittersweet feeling for army to leave this glorious location," he said.

Courtesy SSgt Morrell & The Rip, a Queenscliff & Point Lonsdale Community Voice publication.



Colonel Andrew Gallaway leads the final march out of Queenscliff fort. Photos: CARMEL CHRISTENSEN



PARADE CARD
As At 1 February 2013
February 2013 to January 2014

January 2014	June 2013	October 2013
22. Cascabel Issue 114 posted	5. Reservist Luncheon	4. Gunner Dinner
26. Australia day Salute	18. Committee Meeting	9. Cascabel Issue 113 Posted
		15. Committee Meeting
February 2013	July 2013	
19. Committee Meeting	7? Reserve Forces Day March	November 2013
	9. Cascabel Issue 116 posted	7. Annual General Meeting
March 2013	16. Committee Meeting	8. Golf Day
6. RAA Luncheon		19. Committee Meeting
19. Committee Meeting	August 2013	
	18. Church Parade. Healing the Wounds of War	December 2013
April 2013	20. Committee Meeting	4. St Barbara's Day
8. Cascabel Issue 115 posted		8. Annual Church Parade
16. Committee Meeting	September 2013	? 2/10 Bty Family Day
25. Anzac day	17. Committee Meeting	11. Committee Meeting
? Visit to Sth Channel Fort		
May 2013		
21. Committee Meeting		
Note: This Calender is subject to additions, alterations and deletions.		

Change of Personal Details

Rank	Surname and Post Nominals	DoB
Address		
Telephone Mobile Email		
Additional Information		