

CASCABEL

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

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The bear was a hero of World War II, and there are statues of him and plaques memorializing his brave service in Poland, Edinburgh, the Imperial War Museum in London, and the Canadian War Museum.

He passed away in 1963, at the age of 22.

Wojtek (Voytek) was a bear cub found in Iran in 1942 and adopted by soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company of the Polish II Corps.

See article on [#18](#)

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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, MC, ED

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:

2016

Patron: MAJGEN J. E. Barry AM, MBE, RFD, ED

Vice Patron:

PRESIDENTS:

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

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Vice President:	Maj Merv Taggart RFD, ED 03 9773 3730
Secretary:	Col Jason Cooke 03 9705 1155
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Ex-Officio:	Col Comdt Brig P Alkemade RFD Maj Daniel Cairnes 2 nd /10 th Light Bty RAA
Cascabel Editor:	WO2 Alan Halbish 9587 1676
Honorary Auditor:	Maj David J Osborne
Association web site:	http://www.artilleryvic.org.au

VIC BTY CONTACTS

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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 **July 2016** issue are required no later than **1 June 2016** unless otherwise arranged with the Editor.

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The President Writes

I would like to personally acknowledge the loss of Brigadier Keith Vincent Rossi AM OBE RFD ED.

I first knew Keith when I was a Cadet Sergeant at 2 Fd Regt in the early 1950's

Over the years Keith was a constant presence in Artillery (except for a time in Signals) and was the driving force behind my being accepted back into the Regiment after an absence of about 10 years.

He was Patron of our Association.

Major General James Edward (Jim) Barry has agreed to take over the role as Patron. I thank him for accepting the position and warmly welcome him. I am sure that he will be a great asset to the Association.

We also lost Barry Irons on the 4th Jan.

Barry completed his National Service with 20 NSTB, was posted to RAEME and served many years posted to various artillery regiments. He retired with the rank of SSgt.

Barry was a member of our Association which he joined in May 2004.

He was a regular contributor to Cascabel and produced many interesting items.

He will be missed in both the Gunner and RAEME fraternities.

The RAA Luncheon was again held at the RACV Club. I was not able to attend this year, but a reliable source (Reg Morrell) informs me that 60 people attended and a very enjoyable day was held.

ANZAC Day is upon us once more. The information from the Bn and the Bty is a bit scarce at this time.

However, a Dawn Service will be conducted at Sargood Barracks. It will follow the same format as in previous years.

We now have a new Committee for 2016. Well, not so much "new" as "tried and trusted".

We do have some new members to the Committee from 2/10 and so we look forward to an even greater liaison with the Bty.

However, as I have said before there is always a however, looking around the table I see aging faces, and realise that we have to look for some younger faces to carry the Association forward.

I am not suggesting that the present members are not doing an excellent job, because they are.

Unfortunately, they carry most of their expertise in their heads and should we not have them we would be without the proverbial paddle.

Therefore we need back-ups prepared to learn the trade and step into the jobs if and when required.

The areas of expertise that we need apprentices for are:

President (probably the easiest task); Secretary (probably the most important and arduous task) and an Assistant Secretary is urgently needed now; Treasurer (we have a volunteer, Bdr James Overall); Membership (needs to be reasonable computer literate); and the real workers: Cascabel, webmaster, memorabilia, RAA activities, symposiums, luncheons, dinners, balls and other social events.

I emphasise again that I am not in any way unhappy with the current committee, but I am trying to ensure that we don't have to re-invent the wheel.

If you feel that you can help in any way at all; big or small, on the committee or not; do not be shy.

Talk to the Secretary or any member of the Committee for additional information.

Neil Hamer
MAJ (Retd)

Editors Indulgence

Well, I successfully navigated through 2015 managing to stay out of hospital. I trust my luck will continue.

I've been pleased to have not had any complaints from readers of the hard copy of Cascabel re the number of links I've been providing. I can only presume you have access to a computer where you can view each journal on our web site, (artilleryvic.org.au) or you are just ignoring them—I hope that's not the case.

Therefore, I'll continue to provide items which many of you (all) will view with interest.

I was dismayed to hear of the passing of our "Gun Guru" and frequent contributor, Sgt Barry Irons. The only consolation is that Barry is no longer suffering. You will read tributes to Barry on this and other #???



Letters to the Editor

Hi Alan,

A Happy New Year to you and your lovely wife. Very sad news about Barry but he had been unwell for quite some time and it maybe a blessing that he has been released from his pain and suffering.

Barry served as an Artificer in Arty for many years and an article (eulogy) in Cascabel would be appropriate. Early days yet but leave it with me and I will see what can be arranged.

All the best,

Brian Cahill (Lt Col Retd ed)

Hello All

John Boothroyd has just informed me that Barry Irons passed away this morning (Mon 4/1/16). I was the only RAA contact that John had.

I did not know him or even if he is a member but I know that he has written for Cascabel and so people will want to know about him.

Merv Taggart (Maj Retd ed)

Merv;

I had a bit to do with Barry. He visited here several times and regularly forwarded me his research on the articles he offered to Alan. Some of his work could do with checking with other authorities, but I always found his articles very interesting. Clearly, the American Civil War fascinated him.

Graham Farley (Col OAM RFD ED Retd ed)

Interesting craft and typically all out Russian machine.

Russia's monster aircraft WO2 David Troedel

<http://thebrigade.com/2015/07/09/russias-unprecedented-monster-aircraft-ship-53-photos-and-story/>

VETS Reflections of Aussie Vietnam Veterans from WO2 Max Murray

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIL7Ty0oBCw>

I would like to reply to (Ssgt) Ernie Paddon's write up in your magazine.

Ernie sent the Cascabel magazine to my computer and told me that an article he had written was on pages 14 / 15. I read the article with interest and also about the meeting with myself and Lynn.

It was a shame that we did not have lot of time to talk after the Menin Gate service. It would have

been nice to sit down over a drink and reminisce. As Ernie said, Lynn and I laid a wreath at the Menin Gate from our RA Association Branch, and also from 216 "The Bolton Artillery" Battery which is part of 103 Regt RA (V). I served nineteen years with "The Bolton Artillery" and although I had to go on gun courses my main interest was radio communications. 103 Regt regiment are now equipped with the 105 light guns. Naturally I am retired and belong to the RA Association, and I am president of our branch in Bolton. Lynn and I decided to go to Belgium for a

short break as I wanted to visit my Uncle John's war grave. My Uncle was killed in action in 1940 as I was born in 1941 hence he was my name sake. I have been many times before to the grave which is in a small village called Beveren- sur-Ijzer. There are 26 UK, WW1 and WW11 soldiers buried there. After placing a wreath on John's headstone we drove on to Ypres (or Leper) where we stayed for three nights. On the Monday we toured around a few war cemeteries with a friend, Jean-Pierre. The Tuesday, we went local site seeing and Wednesday was a complete "get in the scruffy mode" and mess about. We had an easy day with few beers here and there with some food.

When we started our short break, we left Bolton at 11.30hrs and drove to Hull around 100 miles away. We took the ferry (pre-booked) over night to Zeebrugge and arrived at 0900hrs Monday. Naturally

Zeebrugge, Hull was our return journey back to the UK.

On the Monday night the 6th October 15, I attended the Menin Gate service and along with a Belgium RBL (Scottish Branch) Standard Bearer and friend, Jean-Pierre. JP paraded the RBL Standard and I paraded the Union Standard. On the Tuesday night, the 7th, we attended the service I had

the honour of stepping out to the centre of the Menin Gate to say the Citation as Ernie said. That was a fantastic experience at services, parading the Standard and saying the Citation.

It was good of Ernie to make himself known to Lynn and myself. After the first brief meeting, I said to Lynn, "pass me an association pen and wrist band" as Lynn had then in her hand bag. I then quickly took them to Ernie as I saw where he stood, as the service was about to start. After the service when Ernie came to us we walked back to his vehicle and had a little talk. As he said, he

gave me an Australian Cap badge and a couple of uniform patches. We exchanged email address and then went on our separate ways. If it had been summer time maybe we would have had longer, but the weather was closing in so we left it there.

Lynn and I are hoping to go back again this year as we enjoyed the fantastic experiences that we had there. Yes and hopefully parade the Union Standard and naturally lay wreaths at my Uncle John's grave and the Menin Gate

Any of your members who are over that way should attend the very moving service at the Menin Gate.

Once a Gunner, always a Gunner.

John Edwards (Sgt).





Brig Keith Rossi AM OBE RFD ED (Retd)



I would like to share the notice from the State President Victorian RSL, MAJGEN David McLachlan AO.

Keith joined the RSL in 1934 at the Ivanhoe Sub-Branch. A previous member of the PMG Sub-Branch and former President of the Kew Sub-Branch, Keith served on the State Council from 1988 to 2003 as the No. 10 District Board representative; was elected Junior Vice-President on the State Executive from 1989 to 1993; Senior Vice-President from 1993 to 2002; Region 1 Representative from 2002 to 2011 and Deputy Chairman of the State Advisory Council in 2003. Most notably Keith was the ANZAC Day Chief Marshall from 1981 to 1993. Keith received Life Membership in 1991, Life Membership with Gold Badge in 1999 and the Leagues highest award, the Meritorious Service Medal, in 2009. Keith received an OBE (Military) in 1964 and was recognised with an AM in 1999 for service to veterans and their families. Keith has been a volunteer at ANZC House since 1986, working five days a week. He held a wealth of military history knowledge and, with a sharp mind, was a significant contributor to ANZAC House. He will be greatly missed at ANZAC House and by RSL Members throughout the State.

May he rest in peace - Lest We Forget.



Awards/Decorations

Member of the Order of Australia. Officer of the Order of the British Empire. Reserve Force Decoration. Efficiency Decoration. National Medal Centenary Medal. 1939-45 Star. Pacific Star. Defence Medal.

Service History

War Medal 1939-45. Aust Service Medal 1939-45. Aust Active Service Medal 1945-75. Aust Service Medal 1945-75. Vietnam Logistic Support Medal. Efficiency Medal. War Medal 1939-45. Aust Service Medal 1939-45. Aust Active Service Medal 1945-75. Aust Service Medal 1945-75. Vietnam Logistic Support Medal. Efficiency Medal.

A tireless advocate for marking the duty and sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women, Brigadier Keith Rossi died on 20 January in Melbourne at the age of 94. His death is mourned not only by veterans and their families, and the RSL of which he was a member for more than 70 years, but by Australia's Greek community who have lost a true friend and supporter.

Despite the fact that he did not serve in Greece during WWII, Brigadier Rossi was a regular attendee on behalf of the RSL at commemorative events marking the WWII Greece and Crete campaigns. He played an important role in the creation of the Australian Hellenic Memorial in Melbourne's Domain Gardens as a member of the Memorial's committee from 1995.

Keith Rossi enrolled as a cadet in the militia in 1937 at the age of 15. His service record showing his date of birth as 13 October 1919 is incorrect; he was told to say he was 17 by the recruiting officer. He transferred to the Australian Imperial Force in March 1941, where he first served as a wireless operator. His operational service began in Egypt six months later where he undertook artillery training before joining the 2/2 Australian Field Regiment.

Postings to Ceylon (1942) and New Guinea (1943/1944) followed, before he saw out WWII in Morotai and Borneo. After the war he remained a professional soldier and in 1970 served in Vietnam.

A member of the Citizen Military Forces until 1976, following his Army career Brigadier Rossi devoted his life to the RSL which he had joined



in 1943, and became a volunteer historian working five days a week at ANZAC House in Melbourne. Direct and insightful, there his assistance to those seeking his deep knowledge and robust advice became legend.

Joining the many tributes to the brigadier, Steve Kyritsis OAM, president of the Hellenic RSL sub branch Victoria, said: "Keith was a Philhellene and supporter of the Hellenic RSL.

His knowledge as a historian was always helpful to matters relating to Australian and its Allies' military history. "We have lost a great soldier, veteran and historian who devoted his whole life for the RSL."

Brigadier Rossi was given an honorary life membership of the Pancretan Association of Melbourne in 2012, which described him as "a stern supporter of the Greek community and the Cretan fraternity".

Victoria RSL state president, Major General David McLachlan, said his former colleague would be greatly missed.

"Keith received an OBE (Military) in

1964 and was recognised with an AM in 1999 for his service to veterans and their families. He held a wealth of military history knowledge and, with a sharp mind, was a significant contributor to ANZAC House."

Brigadier Rossi was predeceased by his wife Nan and two sons.

RIP Keith Vincent Rossi. AM OBE RFD ED (Ret'd). Born: 13 October 1921.

Died: 20 January 2016



Brigadier Keith Rossi at the Australian Hellenic Memorial in Domain Gardens, Melbourne.

Photo: Manny Karvelas.



To our gun, tpt
& wpn GURU.

May you rest in
peace Barry in
your RAEME
park, hopefully
adjacent to our
Great Gun Park
in the sky. *ed*

In Loving Memory of

BARRY JOHN IRONS

15th January 1940 ~ 4th January 2016

Funeral Service held at The Chapel of Reflection Springvale Botanical Cemetery Springvale

Friday 8th January 2016

**You will be sadly missed but will forever remain in our hearts and live in the
memory of those who held you dear.**

**Barry's family thank you all for attending today's celebration of his life.
Your care and support is very much appreciated.**

A Celebration of Life

**I was unable to attend Barry's funeral so the above information
is displayed courtesy of Ssgt Reg Morrell.**

Vale

3103486 Staff Sergeant Barry Irons

It is with profound sadness and a heavy heart that we mourn the passing of 3103486 Staff Sergeant Barry Irons EM RFM on the 4th January 2016. Barry was a well-known identity in the Corps of Arty having served many years as a Recovery Mechanic and an Armament Artificer in both 15 Fd and 2/15 Fd Regiments. The high esteem and respect that his Arty colleagues held for Barry was clearly evident by the many 'Gunners' who paid homage by attending his funeral.

I first befriended Barry when he was a CEBS Leader (Church of England Boys Society) at All Saints Ch of Eng in Clayton in the late 1950's and it was also here that he met his wife Margaret. They were married in Daylesford on the 1st May 1965.

Barry was an apprentice Sheet Metal Worker/ Panel Beater. However it was a trade not to his liking and he became a 'Painter and Auto Re-Finisher' – a skill in which he excelled and which also gave him 'job satisfaction'. He was employed by Dulux for the better part of his working life in their Automotive Section specialising in ducos/paints and later in their Research Section as a 'Trouble-shooter'.

Barry was a profound reader – particularly Military History and Armaments, he enjoyed welding and had an interest in restoring old cars.

On the 3rd January 1959 Barry enlisted in the National Service – 20 NS Bn. On completion of his National Service training, he enlisted into the CMF on the 1st July 1960. He was posted to 15 Fd Regt LAD on the 6th September 1960 as a Cpl Recovery Mechanic.

As the OC of the LAD (Light Aid Detachment), I particularly re-call two memories where Barry's 'recovery' skills were brought to the fore. The first was during the Arty Group camp in Cultana (Sth Aust) in 1975 when an ambitious ARA Captain borrowed (?) an APC to go 'yabbing' on the very close shores of Spencer Gulf. The coastline was tidal and swampy to say the least and the APC became bogged. With a threatening

high tide it took all of Barry's leadership and experience into the night (not to mention all hands from the LAD) to extract the vehicle and avoid an investigation and the submission of a very expensive and unexplainable L & D.

Secondly the CO of 2/15 Fd Regt, Lt Col Graham Allinson planned a movement exercise for the Regiment over the Snowy High Plains during the first week of the 1977 annual camp. The CO's strategy was that if Barry could drive the Twin Boom Wrecker over the rough mountain terrain during the reconnaissance exercise then the Regiment could do it towing their 105 Pack Howitzers as a challenging diversion on their way to Pucka. Barry accomplished the mission and the Regiment undertook one of the most daring (but exciting) exercises that I partook in during my eight years with Arty. Barry served continuously for a total of over 24 years in Artillery for both 15 Fd Regt and 2/15 Fd Regt (after the Regiments merged in 1975). Initially he was a Cpl Recovery Mechanic during my stint but later qualified as an Armament Artificer.

As previously mentioned, one of Barry's interests was the study of weaponry and armament equipment. To this end he wrote some very detailed and comprehensively researched articles for 'Cascabel' during the period 2010 through to 2014. These presentations included "The Origin of the 25 Pounder", a five part series on "The Development of the Tank", and "The History of Artillery of the Civil War".

Barry was a valuable asset to the LAD (later the TST). He was very proficient in the performance of his task and was always willing to help when there was work to be done outside his area of expertise. His knowledge of not only recovery techniques but also General Engineering (incl welding) and weaponry was an asset that he applied in a skilful manner. Barry's later contributions to the Regiment was as a qualified Armament Artificer. He was well respected by all members of the LAD and the Regiment and I held him in very high regard as an NCO. He reflected a friendly disposition and was a companion to all those who knew him.

In more recent times Barry was an active member of the Clayton R.S.L. He was on the Com-

mittee as the Historian and Memorabilia Officer and last year despite his illness, Barry was on the "Steering Committee" with Monash Health for an Exhibition dedicated to WW 1 Nurses, and his knowledge of researching and obtaining information was exceptional.

We were very proud to serve with him.

Stand easy soldier; your duty is done

Brian Cahill Lt Col RFD (Retired) RAEME

Record of Service

20 National Service Training Battalion
3rd Jan 1959
106 Infantry Workshop
21st March 1959
105 Infantry Workshop
1st July 1960
15 Fd Regt Light Aid Detachment
6th September 1960
2/15 Fd Regt Tech Support Troop
1st July 1975
3 Electrical & Mechanical Services Unit
1st April 1985
105 Field Workshop
21st March 1987
Retired from Service
14th January 1995

Women In Combat.

Below is part of an article written about women serving in physically demanding combat roles. I was surprised to learn that between 150 and 200 US servicewomen have been killed in action between 2003 and 2013. Nineteen mothers returned to their children in body bags.

The Sisterhood is indifferent to studies showing that women's health can't stand combat qualifying (let alone combat itself). Marines Captain Kate Petronio, a combat engineer in Iraq and Afghanistan and, earlier, a star college athlete, has written that armed forces in the US and elsewhere have not come close to understanding the special and long-term toll on female bodies.

Few or no women could endure the military milieu for long enough to reach late-career flag rank.

During her ten-month Iraq deployment, Petronio began breaking down after maximum-effort, 16-hour days. For example, a march with combat kit of more than 60k, could easily compress a woman's weaker spine. By the fifth month into the deployment, I had muscle atrophy in my thighs that was causing me to constantly trip and my legs to buckle with the slightest grade change. My agility during firefights and mobility on and off vehicles and perimeter walls was seriously hindering my response time and overall capability.

It was evident that stress and muscular deterioration was affecting everyone regardless of gender; however, the rate of my deterioration was noticeably faster than that of male Marines and further compounded by gender-specific medical conditions.

At the end of the 7-month deployment, and the construction of 18 [patrol bases] later, I had lost 17 pounds and was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome (which personally resulted in infertility, but is not a genetic trend in my family), which was brought on by the chemical and physical changes endured during deployment. Regardless of my deteriorating physical stature, I was extremely successful during both of my combat tours, serving beside my infantry brethren and gaining the respect of every unit I supported.

Regardless, I can say with 100 percent assurance that despite my accomplishments, there is no way I could endure the physical demands of the infantrymen whom I worked beside as their combat load and constant deployment cycle would leave me facing medical separation long before the option of retirement.

I understand that everyone is affected differently; however, I am confident that should the Marine Corps attempt to fully integrate women into the infantry, we as an institution are going to experience a colossal increase in crippling and career-ending medical conditions for females.

Courtesy WO2 Max Murray

Lithgow business making Diggers' new rifle, carrying on a 100-year relationship

The new weapon Australian soldiers will carry into battle is made in a factory 150km west of Sydney – the same one that has made Australia's weapons for 100 years.

The Austeyr that served Diggers in Afghanistan is being retired; to be replaced by the Aussie designed F90.



The F90 - the ADF's new assault rifle. Source: 7 News

The rifle will be produced at the Thales Lithgow Small Arms Factory where defence force rifles have been produced for almost every military engagement since World War I.

The F90 is lighter and more user-friendly than its predecessor.

It's also the work of some dedicated locals who have embraced Australia's small arms manufacturing like a family tradition.



"I started in 1983, my brother grandfather, my father, his brother, and then my wife started about 10 years ago," Thales worker Wayne Gurney told 7 News.

Defence has placed an order of \$100 million for 30,000 rifles and 2500 grenade launchers from the Thales factory, carrying on a long and healthy relationship.

"It is Australian and it goes back to our Anzacs," said Mr Gurney about the factory that employed more than 6,000 people at its peak

"It comes down to us that the product we make works every time, to keep those guys safe and there's a little bit of us in each one of those weapons."

Anyone interested in learning more about Thales' long history and other smaller weapons should visit the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum located in a former Thales factory building in Lithgow



An interesting 'gun' kept at the Small Arms Factory. It's believed to be a Nazi SS officer's belt buckle from

World War II.



There are only a few of the weaponised buckles in the world. Source: Nicholas McCallum

Courtesy Sgt Eddy Evans & Ch. 7

Letters to the Editor (cont.)

You may remember the book from Capt Percy Cooper titled Two Climactic Invasions. Percy has been in touch recently to advise that the book has been revised to now include maps & other relevant info. The new addition will be available from mid to late April . A reminder of the back cover which stated:

Over the same English Channel, 878 years apart occurred two invasions, each of which changed our world. William the Conqueror thrust northwards to colonize Britain in 1066. General Eisenhower thrust southwards in 1944 and invaded William's Normandy, beginning the liberation of Western Europe.

This thoroughly researched and excitingly readable book is the definitive compilation of complimentary and contrasting circumstances and consequences of those two climactic invasions.

Percy Cooper is a retired Forensic Accountant with a 40 year career as General Manager and/or Trustee of four of Australia's top Superannuation Funds. Concurrent with his civilian career he was an Army Reserve soldier for 18 years.

From a lowly National Service Artillery Gunner he was Commissioned an Officer with his last posting being that of Divisional Artillery Intelligence Officer.

If you would like to purchase a copy, you may buy (members only) direct from Percy for the cost price of just \$20.00 + \$10.00 postage. Contact him at:
Percy Cooper. Tel 03 9557 2485 or email pernor@bigpond.com.

The Last Fighter Pilot of WWII who flew the last mission

Take five minutes to watch this video interview ---

Listen carefully to what he says and how he says it. You won't regret a second of it.

Ask yourself, how many of the few surviving WWII veterans kept themselves and their uniform in such good condition for over 70 years and can still proudly wear it?

Notice his superb delivery, no teleprompter, no script --?? Just a 91-year-old fighter pilot representing the greatest generation at home and abroad who won WWII.

He has some surprises and a great take on the philosophy of life.

[The Last Fighter Pilot of WWII](#)

Courtesy WO2 David Troedel

JAPANESE RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT OVER MELBOURNE AND PORT PHILLIP BAY ON 26 FEBRUARY 1942

Warrant Flying Officer Nobuo Fujita completed a reconnaissance flight in his "Glen" float plane over Sydney Harbour from **submarine I-25** (see next page) on Tuesday 17 February 1942.

Commander Tagami then pointed I-25 southwards for their next mission - a similar flight over Melbourne. Tagami decided to launch the aircraft from Cape Wickham at the northern end of King Island at the western end of Bass Strait about half way between Victoria and Tasmania.

By midday on Wednesday 18 February 1942 they were nearly 400 miles south east of Sydney still heading southwards. Their course took them down the east coast of Tasmania and back up the west coast.

At 10.30 am on 19 February 1942 they were travelling on the surface 200 miles east of Hobart. They swung south west about 80 miles off Cape Bruny lighthouse. That afternoon they hit a fierce storm as they headed westwards below Tasmania. By midnight they had passed Maatsuyker Island off the south west coast of Tasmania.

As they travelled up the west coast of Tasmania on 20 February 1942, the seas moderated. Before he launched the "Glen" float plane near Cape Wickham, Tagami made a submerged daylight trip across Bass Strait to Cape Otway. He made a number of periscope inspections of the south west Victorian coastline when he was about 10 miles offshore.



A "Glen" Float plane

They travelled the 37 miles back to Cape Wickham submerged. They saw a number of freighters travelling east through Bass Strait. They waited in sight of the northern end of King Island for a few days for conditions suitable to launch the aircraft. After sunset on Wednesday 25 February 1942, Tagami surfaced his submarine and for an hour made his way between the reefs and shoals to a

position 10 miles north of Cape Wickham.

Nobuo Fujita and Shoji Okuda were ready for their flight over Melbourne. They could still see the beam of the unmanned Cape Wickham lighthouse in the distance through the light fog. I-25 moved forward to generate sufficient wind for take-off.

They were in the air about 2 hours before dawn on Thursday 26 February 1942. Fujita flew north across Bass Strait headed for Cape Otway where he banked to the north east and followed the coastline to the Point Lonsdale lighthouse near the narrow entrance to Port Phillip Bay. He then headed north east towards the city of Melbourne. Fujita struck a few heavy banks of cloud. He flew across the Bellarine Peninsula towards Portarlington.

The city of Geelong was 16 kms away to the left of his aircraft on the other side of Lake Connemara. He was flying NNE as he flew over Portarlington. He then flew another 24 kms along the western edge of Port Phillip Bay. He continued to encounter heavy cloud and was unsure of his position. They eventually dropped down from 1,500 metres into a gap in the clouds.

At about 6.45 a.m. Fujita cleared the base of the clouds when he reached 300 metres. They had exited the clouds directly above the RAAF's Laverton airfield. There were about 12 Wirraways based at Laverton along with some Lockheed Hudsons and some Avro Ansons.

About nine RAAF personnel at Laverton reported sighting the Japanese aircraft. Two RAAF aircraft were scrambled to try to locate the intruder. They found nothing. Three Wirraways were sent to Bairnsdale.

Fujita climbed back into the relative safety of the clouds and headed for Melbourne. He passed over Altona. He used a tactic of dropping down out of the clouds every now and then to make some observations and then climbing back into the clouds for safety. His unexpected descent above RAAF Laverton had made him very nervous about the rest of their flight.

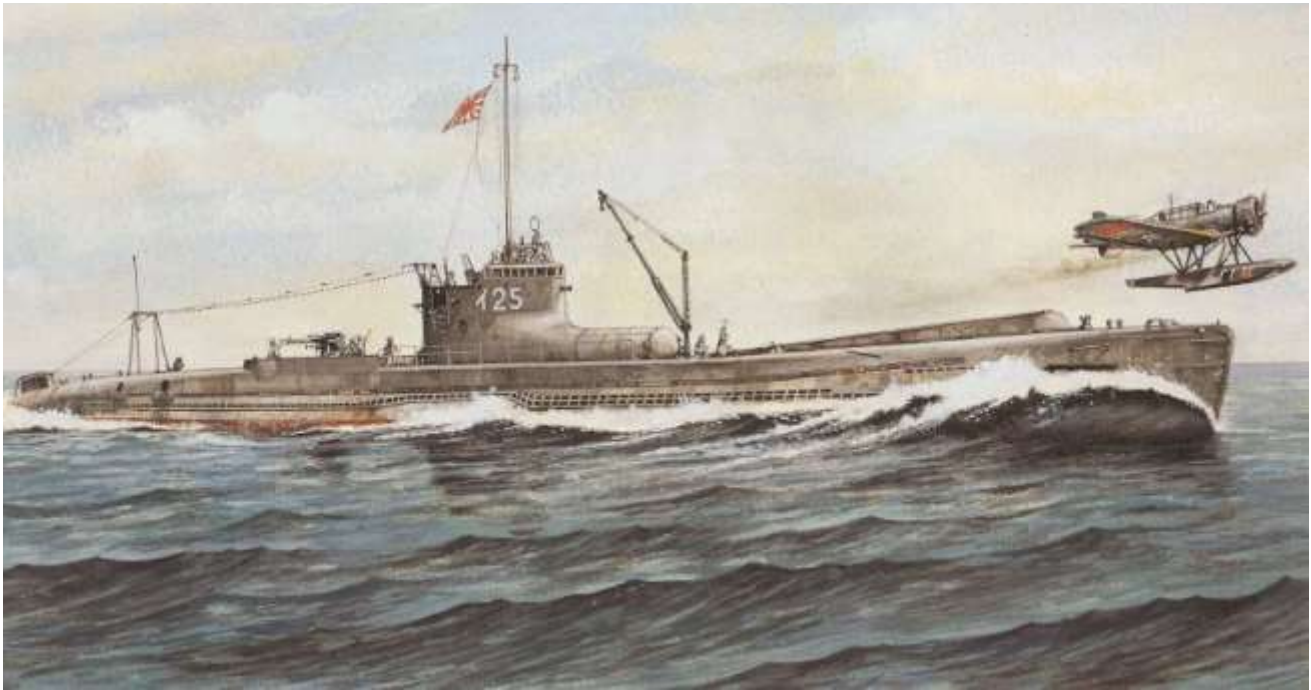
The crews of the 4 ack ack guns at Williamstown beside the rifle range were in the middle of a routine inspection of their guns when the telescope person spotted the aircraft identifying it

as a Japanese aircraft. Aubrey Auton from Melbourne, spotted the prominent red roundel. The roundel was easy to spot as the aircraft was flying so slow and was very low.

The Lieutenant in charge of the gun battery unfortunately did not give the order to open fire. Instead he got on the phone to headquarters to obtain permission. By that time it was too late. Fujita turned right and headed across the rifle range butts towards Port Phillip Bay.

able to re-establish his position via the Cape Schanck lighthouse. He then set a direct 175 kms course for the Cape Wickham lighthouse. He spotted the submarine only 6 nautical miles east of the lighthouse. It had drifted 4 nautical miles closer to the lighthouse since they first took off.

Fujita and the crew of the submarine were concerned that the large submarine would be sighted by the lighthouse keepers at the Cape Wickham lighthouse. Little did they know that



Fujita continued his charmed journey across Melbourne at a height of 300 metres obtaining a birds eye view of the Yarra River, the central business district of Melbourne and the docks at the mouth of the Yarra River. He spotted a number of docks along the river used to repair ships. The other thing that struck him was the red, green and yellow roof tiles on all the houses and the beautiful countryside and the large flocks of sheep.

Fujita continued southwards over St. Kilda, Brighton and Sandringham. He then turned towards Frankston. Okuda, with the canopy back, spotted 19 vessels anchored in the harbour through his binoculars. He also spotted 6 warships headed in single file towards the Port Melbourne dock area. Fujita confirmed through his binoculars that the leading ship was a light cruiser, and the others were all destroyers.

Fujita crossed the shore again near Dromana and continued on towards Cape Schanck where he was

"downsizing" was alive and well in the 1940's. The superintendent and his 3 assistants had been withdrawn from the island when the original kerosene wick lamps were replaced by an acetylene flasher way back in 1918. Despite this, Fujita reported sighting 3 or 4 men dressed in white running around the lighthouse. He was sure they had been spotted. The aircraft was disassembled and as it was being stowed I-25 speed away from the area doing 14 knots. Tagami set a course back down the west coast of Tasmania. He travelled on the surface.

The city of Melbourne had held a brownout trial 15 nights prior to this reconnaissance flight. Like a similar trial in Sydney, there were reports of many lights still burning.

JAPANESE SUBMARINE I-25 IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS DURING WW2

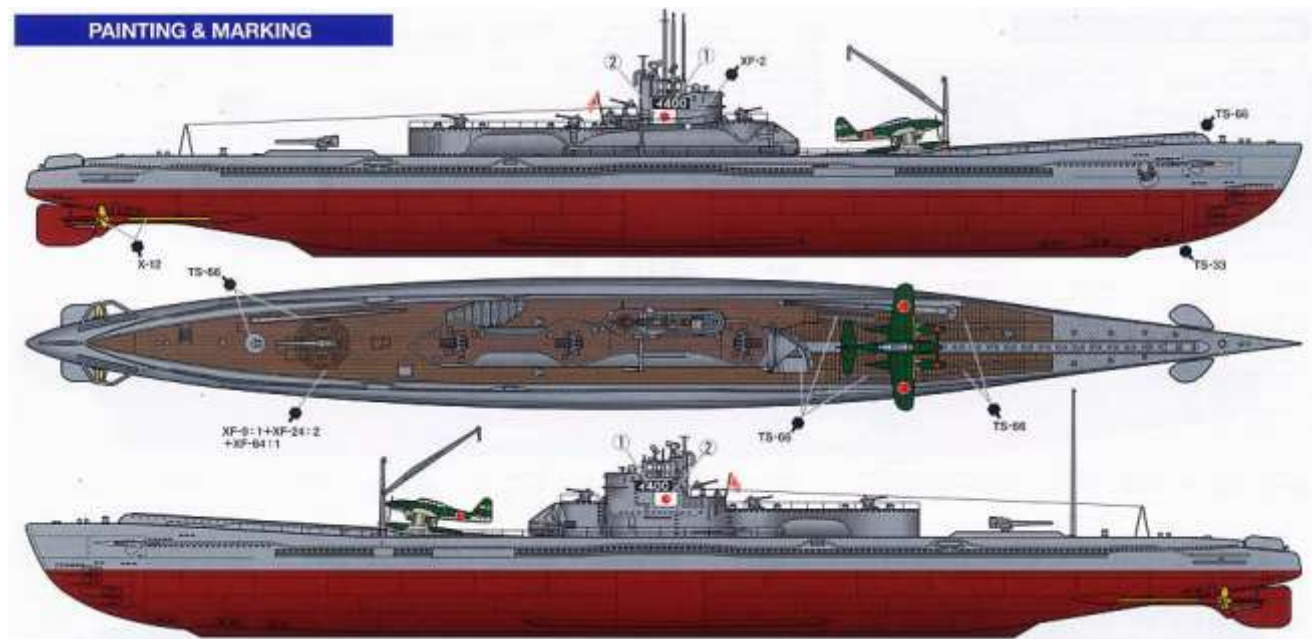
Japanese submarine I-25 was under the command

of Lieutenant Commander Meiji Tagami who had graduated from Class 51 at Etajima. 26 year old Lieutenant Tatsuo Tsukudo was the Executive Officer on I-25.

I-25 of 2,600 tons was 108 metres long, with a range of 14,000 miles, a maximum surface speed of 23.5 knots and a maximum submerged speed of 8 knots.

of the coast near Sydney. The searchlights in Sydney could clearly be seen from the bridge of I-25. Tagami then took I-25 to a position 100 miles south east of Sydney.

A number of days of rough swell prevented an immediate launch of the "Glen" floatplane. They stayed submerged during the day and back to the surface at night.



Submarine I-25 carried a 2 seater Yokosuka E14Y reconnaissance floatplane know as a "Glen". It was disassembled and stowed in the front of I-25.

I-25 and 3 other submarines had patrolled a line 120 miles north of Oahu during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. After the Japanese aircraft carriers sailed west after Pearl Harbour, I-25 and 8 other submarines sailed eastwards to patrol the west coast of the United States. I-25 attacked a cargo ship 10 miles of the US coast. The ship managed to escape but ran around at the mouth of the Columbia River. I-25 then returned to Kwajalein atoll, arriving on 11 January 1942 to refuel and be refurbished.

Submarine I-25 left Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands on 5 February 1942 for its next operational patrol in the south Pacific. Lt. Commander Tagami's orders were to reconnoitre the Australian harbours of Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart followed by the New Zealand harbours of Wellington and Auckland.

On 13 February 1942, I-25 sunk the UK merchant ship "Derrymore" at 05° 18' S, 166° 20' E. On Saturday 14 February 1942, I-25 was within a few miles

Finally on Tuesday 17 February 1942 Warrant Flying Officer Nobuo Fujita took off in the "Glen" for a recce flight over Sydney Harbour. The purpose was to look at Sydney's airbase.

By 7.30 am they had returned to I-25 and disassembled the "Glen" and stowed it in the water tight hangar. Commander Tagami then pointed I-25 southwards on the surface at 14 knots.

Their next mission was a similar flight over Melbourne. Tagami decided to launch the aircraft from Cape Wickham at the northern end of King Island at the western end of Bass Strait about half way between Victoria and Tasmania.

Fujita's next reconnaissance flight in Australia was over Hobart on 1 March 1942.

I-25 Then headed for New Zealand where Fujita flew another reconnaissance flight over Wellington on 8 March 1942.

Fujita then flew over Auckland, New Zealand on 13 March 1942, followed by Fiji on 17 March 1942. Submarine I-25 returned to its base at Kwajalein on 31 March 1942.

Courtesy Ssgt Reg Morrell

ARTICLE FROM "PACIFIC STARS & STRIPES" 22 Sep 1970

By BARNEY SEIBERT

NU1 DAT, Vietnam (UPI)—It's a different kind of war at the Australian task force base at Nui Dat.

The 5,000-man Australian task force, including a battalion size element of New Zealanders, is the only Allied unit in the Indochina War with tactics markedly different from those used by Americans, South Vietnamese, South Koreans and Thais.

The South Vietnamese, Koreans and Thais all were trained and advised by Americans. So were the Laotians. Even the Cambodians are learning the American counter-insurgency tactics from the South Vietnamese,

But the Australians have needed no advice from Americans in scouring the jungles for the Viet Cong in Phuoc Tuy Province, a lightly populated area of jungled forests and mountains along the South China Sea 50 miles south-east of Saigon.

Japanese infantrymen, who were experts in the craft of jungle warfare, told American captors at the end of World War II that the Australians were the real jungle experts on the Allied side. "Americans are not jungle fighters, one prisoner of war remarked, "They simply remove the jungle"

The Australian expertise in jungle war was forged in expeditions to maintain order in New Guinea, polished in the Australian Army's jungle warfare school, and honed in 12 years of campaigning against the Communists in Malaysia.

The Aussies are the only U.S. allies in Vietnam who brought along most of their own equipment and who pay their own way.

In addition to the 5,000-man task force there are another 3,000 Australian fighting men in Vietnam—airmen, sailors and military advisors working with South Vietnamese units. About 50 per cent of the Australians are conscripts,

Because of their jungle warfare expertise, the Australians are less oriented toward air mobility in the Indochina conflict.

One of the first things Americans notice at Nui Dat is the absence of helicopters—the Aussies have only about half as many as a conventional U.S. infantry unit of equivalent size and about one-fourth of the total assigned to an American air mobile division.

Another major difference in the Australian concept is the absence of Vietnamese civilian workers at the base. "We do not have a security problem," one officer said.

Other Differences

The Australians live in tents rather than "hooches," call their infantrymen "crunchies" rather than "grunts," maintain their vehicles and equipment almost as well as the Koreans—the most spit and polish soldiers in Vietnam—leave the trees standing to provide shade when they build a base camp rather than removing the vegetation to minimize the infiltration danger.



Tent lines of 2 Plt, "A" Coy, 7RAR, among the rubber trees at the 1 ATF base.

The Australians buy their artillery pieces and ammunition from the United States—"in the quantities in which you make it we can buy it cheaper than we could make it ourselves. They also buy machine guns, grenade launchers, armoured personnel carriers and some web equipment.

Their tanks are British Centurions. Their rifles are the Belgian NATO weapon, which uses the same cartridge as the M.S. M16; the Aussies say it has better range and is less susceptible to jamming than the M16. Their jeeps and weapons carriers are various modifications of Australian-built Land Rovers and their trucks are built by the Australian subsidiary of International Harvester Corp. The trucks do not have the familiar dual rear wheels of U.S. Army vehicles.

The elite Australian unit in Vietnam is the Special Air Service Squadron, highly trained volunteers who are paratrooper qualified.

In four years of operations in South Vietnam's Phuoc Tuy Province, the Australians have killed 2,840 Viet Cong and driven the only two main force Viet Cong battalions, D445 and D440, from

the province.

Intelligence estimates show' about 800 Viet Cong guerrillas remain in the province and the Communist infrastructure has been reduced 50 per cent to 1,500 persons. During the 1968 Tet offensive there were an estimated 5,000 Viet Cong soldiers in the province, supported by an infrastructure of 3,000 persons.

And the Australians in Vietnam know more than just how to fight.

"Take a look at the Aussies' pacification program," a civilian official of the U.S. Mission in Vietnam said, "It's one of the most effective in the country." Lt. Col. Keith P. Outridge, 43, of Canberra, commander of the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit, said: "We only try to do things as the Vietnamese see it and wish it done, and try to do something to stimulate their development as we see it and hope they see it the same as we do." The "Australian Province"- Phuoc Tuy - is a 400-square mile area of mountains, jungle, forests and coastal swamps. It's 105,000 residents are poor and the province has never been self sufficient in food. Before war disrupted its economy, its people made their livelihood by working on the large rubber plantations, lumber mills, salt drying ponds and in the resort hotels along the beaches.

The Australian pacification program is similar to, but some-what smaller in scope than American efforts in other provinces and there is some U S. pacification activity by the American Civil Operations Rural Development Support (COEDS) program in the province. But most of the effort is Australian.

The principal difference is the administration. Pacification is a civilian responsibility among the Americans, a military responsibility among the Australians.

Col. Outridge sees both advantages and disadvantages in a militarily administered pacification program.

On the plus side, he said, is that fact that "most authority in a country at war is military and there is an empathy between military men; we have closer access to military resources to carry out the programs."

Disadvantages, he finds, are "a lack of expertise in

specific fields and lack of continuity in projects" due to the one-year military rotation.

However, he feels that a military pacification program may get to the areas where it is needed most sooner than a civilian program because the soldier is less likely to be kept at a distance by absence of physical security.

"We try to work with the soft moccasin instead of the hob nail boot." Outridge said. "We try to get the Vietnamese into the program as soon as we can. We insist on their input. They must initiate the project, it must benefit the government, and they must help carry it out"

About 22 per cent of Phuoc Tuy Province's population are fishermen, 35 per cent farmers.

To stimulate agriculture, the Australians have introduced breeding stock and model farm methods for chicken and hog raising operations.

"We go up and down the highway and persuade a farmer here and there to try it out. After that it spreads from neighbour to neighbour," Outridge said.



"Head Office" ... the Headquarters building, Nui Dat circa 1967.

Head Quarters Company, 1st Australian Task Force (HQ Coy, 1 ATF) and its sub unit, Defence & Employment (D&E) Platoon were formed in the early months of 1966.

Courtesy WO2 David Troedel

Wojtek (Voytek) was a bear cub found in Iran in 1942 and adopted by soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company of the Polish II Corps.

Continued from #1



This article kindly forwarded to me by Sgt Eddy Evans.

Soldiers fed him with condensed milk from an emptied vodka bottle. The bear was subsequently fed with fruit, marmalade, honey and syrup, and was often rewarded with beer, which became his favourite drink. He also enjoyed smoking and eating cigarettes.



Over the long journey from Iran to Palestine, the bear quickly became the unofficial mascot of the 22nd company. The bear would sit around the campfire with the men, eating, drinking, and sleeping in tents with the rest of the soldiers.



The problem, however, was that British High Command did not allow any pets or animals in their camp, so the Polish Army formally enlisted Voytek into their ranks. He was given the rank of Private (at the end of war, his rank was corporal), assigned a serial number, and from that point on he was included in all official unit rosters.



The Poles' Finest Hour of the war came in the battle for Monte Cassino. The campaign was proving to be one of the bloodiest battles of the Western Front, and the Poles were brought in to make the final push to capture the fortress. During the fighting, Voytek actually hand-carried boxes of ammunition, some weighing in at over 100 pounds, from supply trucks to artillery positions on the front lines.



His actions were so inspiring to his fellow soldiers that after the battle the official insignia of the 22nd Artillery was changed to a picture of Voytek carrying an armful of howitzer ammunition.

After the war, some elements of the Polish Army, including Voytek, were reassigned to Scotland, since Poland was under USSR control, and many Polish soldiers did not like the prospect of living in a Soviet-run police state.

The issue of recognition for Australian soldiers who fought in the Battle of Long Tan, Vietnam is to be reviewed by the independent **Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal**.

The review follows an application on behalf of 13 soldiers by **Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC (Retd)**, one of the commanders, in the battle regarded as a watershed moment in Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Assistant Minister for Defence Darren Chester said he was pleased the Tribunal was progressing to public hearings for the review.

"I'm confident that the Tribunal's review will finally resolve this important issue for veterans and their families," Mr Chester said.

"I look forward to receiving the Tribunal's recommendations, once the hearings and the Tribunal's further deliberations are completed."

Seventeen Australians were killed and 25 wounded when on 18 August 1966, 108 men of D Company, 6RAR held off an assault by more than 2,000 enemies in the middle of a tropical downpour. They were greatly assisted by a timely ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from Australian artillery, and the arrival of reinforcements in Armoured Personnel Carriers late in the battle.

The Tribunal will consider honours for 13 veterans of the Battle of Long Tan, including a Victoria Cross for the late Warrant Officer 2 Jack Kirby, who received a Distinguished Conduct Medal for his gallantry during the battle.

The Tribunal will hear evidence from veterans of the battle, representatives of the Department of Defence, and witnesses called by the applicant, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC (Retd).

The Tribunal will hold public hearings from Tuesday 1 March to Thursday 3 March 2016, at The Sebel, Maroochydore.

Further information is available on the Tribunal's website at: www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au

Honoured...WW2 vet who saluted Iraq heroes

A SECOND World War veteran who spent his later years attending the funerals of soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq was himself given the final salute on Wednesday.

More than 200 mourners turned up to pay their respects to Harry Thrush, a grandfather of five who died on Christmas Eve at 92.

Veterans and serving Forces personnel packed into St Mary's parish church in Leeds wearing berets and medals.

Representatives of 269 Battery Royal Artillery carried the widower's casket draped with the Union flag.

Former artillery gunner Mr Thrush was "extremely proud" of his service in Italy and a keen attender of remembrance parades and funerals.



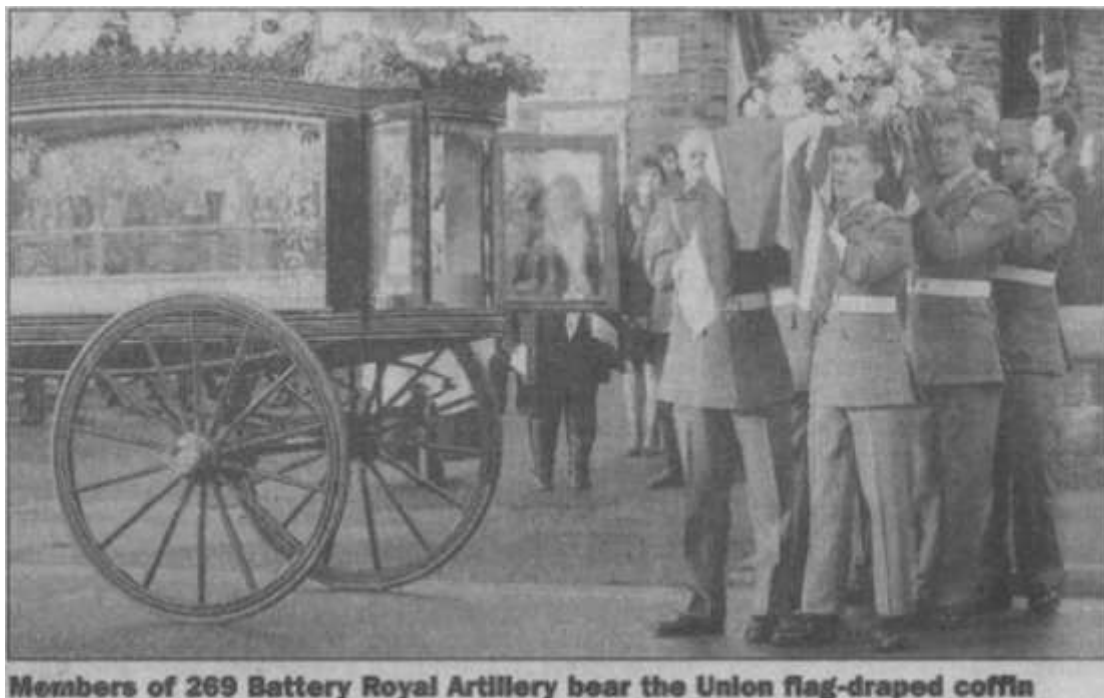
Barry Fretwell, president of Mirfield Royal British Legion, said: "The majority of people here never met Harry but because of his service they wanted to attend. It's a lovely mark of respect."

Paul Furby, from Warrington, Cheshire, said: "I wanted to come to show respects from one ex-gunner to another."

In her eulogy, Mr Thrush's daughter Janet Farr, 51, said: "This would have meant the world to him. We sincerely thank you."

"He was an unsung hero - although he was always our hero - and today you have given him the send-off he wanted"

Courtesy Ssgt Ernie Paddon



Jogging Companion?...Interesting...

This is an interesting video. Makes you wonder what kind of weaponry they might put on it??

<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/M8YjvHYbZ9w?rel=0>

Subject: The 65 Most Perfectly Timed Military Photos You'll Ever See

<http://www.rsvlts.com/2015/03/31/perfect-timed-military-photos/>

Courtesy WO2 Max Murray

Season's Greetings from our troops overseas



Some 2200 Australian Defence Force personnel have celebrated Christmas away from their families and friends this year.

The ADF's ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, the broader Middle East Region and South Sudan, as well as in our northern waters, is a testament to Australia's commitment to regional and global stability and security.

Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral David Johnston thanked

personnel deployed across the globe at the end of a high-tempo year.

"It is important to recognise the contribution of all men and women of the ADF who have supported operations both domestically and abroad in what has been a busy year," he said.

"I especially want to thank the 2200 personnel who will be serving overseas over Christmas and thank them, their families, and friends for their contribution.

"The Christmas season can be a challenging time when you're away from loved ones, but also provides our deployed men and women a unique opportunity to celebrate Christmas with their ADF family."

CONTACT adds our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to the ADF personnel spending this festive season away from their families and friends and we also extend our warmest best wishes to those families who have sacrificed a little bit of their hearts and happiness in allowing their deployed family member to do what they do, especially at this time of year.

Writes of passage for 'forgotten army'

IT'S a story more than 70 years in the making, a little known but integral chapter in our nation's history set as Australia faced its darkest hour.

A group of young men was propelled to the front-line of the Allies' defense against a seemingly unstoppable Japanese advance, isolated on a "barren, dusty, waterless, god-forsaken rock" under a barrage of bombs as the nation faced imminent invasion.

While much has been written about the bombing of Darwin little is known about the defensive outpost on Horn Island in Torres Strait and the hundreds of men who fought and died there during World War II as part of 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery.

But now thanks to decades of diligence by Balnarring resident Gordon Cameron, the heroic deeds of those young men are finally receiving the recognition they deserve.

Mr Cameron was among the hundreds of servicemen sent as anti-aircraft gunners to defend Horn Island between 1942 and 1944 as the might of the Japanese imperial forces bore down on Australia.

Last week, Mr Cameron's life-long quest to publish a book chronically the history of the unit finally came to fruition.

The book is a collection of stories of "boys thrown on a desolate island, with prospect of abandonment by the army should the Japanese arrive, and the post war struggle for recognition by an army who for a long time admitted lacking any records of our service".

A total of 190 Australian and allied veterans died in

Torres Strait during the war, while a further 124 were injured.

"They became part of Australia's 'forgotten army'," Mr Cameron said. "Even today, most Australians have never heard of Horn Island nor do they know there was a war there."

The 34th Anti-Aircraft Battery was formed in Melbourne in 1942 and posted to Horn Island with the task of defending the allied airstrip against Japanese bombers.



*Distant echo: 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery Association president Gordon Cameron outside Frankston RSL with his just-released book *The Best of the Echo* which chronicles the little known history of the defence of Horn Island during World War II.*

Picture: Gary Sisson

Horn Island was the closest allied operating base to New Guinea in 1942 and was used by Australian and American bombers to attack the Japanese advance to Port Moresby.

It was subject to multiple bombing raids.

The young gunners, mostly under 21 and with minimum military training, were located on this mostly unknown island with none of the usual infrastructure of most country towns.

"No roads, water, electricity or any of the usual

equipment like bulldozers tractors or the like,” Mr Cameron explained.

“The task of digging the gun pits for the big guns in hot tropical sun using pick and shovel was a daunting task for young boys away from home for the first time.”

Making matters even more trying, the gunners were confined to the battery site for two years, with no leave permits.

Under these extreme conditions, the gunners developed a strong bond, a bond that would last the rest of their lives.

Mr Cameron, who is the president of 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery Association, said that after the war, the gunners resolved to maintain their wartime bonds and arranged an annual reunion.

The association also produced an annual newsletter, the Horn Island Echo.

“After 66 issues we decided to combine the best of those stories in a journal that would tell the story of the times the battery spent on Horn Island,” Mr Cameron said. “Hopefully Issue 67 will

fill in some gaps in our military history.”

That last issue - The Best of the Echo - was finally published last week.

With the Anzac Centenary just around the corner, Flinders MP Greg Hunt presented Mr Cameron with a cheque for \$1000 from the federal government’s Saluting their Service grants to help with publishing costs.

“The Australian government has recently awarded more than \$274,000 in grant funding to support projects of national significance that will honour the service and sacrifice of Australia’s servicemen and women.

“Many of the projects awarded through the Saluting their Service grants program will become permanent tributes to those who served our country.”

Community and ex-service organisations interested in applying for a grant should visit www.dva.gov.au/grants

*Courtesy of Chris Brennan
chris@baysidenews.com.au*

The Royal Australian Air Force launched a new cutting-edge hot air balloon, linking the oldest and newest forms of aviation in a distinctive design, reflective of Air Force’s evolution into the 21st century.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Leo Davies AO, CSC, unveiled the new and striking helmet shaped hot air balloon in Canberra today.

“For more than 25 years, the Air Force Balloon has travelled throughout Australia, inspiring an interest in aviation among young people, and promoting the professionalism of the Air Force and its personnel,” Air Marshal Davies said.

“While hot air balloons are one of the oldest forms of aviation, they still attract a huge amount of in-

terest from the general public and schools and pique a fundamental interest in science and technology.



“With the replacement of the old balloon, there was an opportunity to create a new, custom, modern design to inspire a new generation of Australians to learn about aviation and their Air Force.”

Designed and manufactured by UK-based company Cameron Balloons, the balloon required an impressive 1574 panels to create the Air Force fighter pilot helmet shape, complete with visor, oxygen mask and oxygen hose,” Air Marshal Davies said.

Courtesy Defence Media Room

Explosive Detection Dog and Handler Sculpture Dedication

In modern conflicts, Army Explosive Detection Dogs (EDDs) and their handlers have provided critical support to the Australian Defence Force and civilian government agencies. The dogs help their handlers find improvised explosive devices, ammunition and weapons. To be trained for this role, dogs have to demonstrate a keen instinct to hunt, play and retrieve. A number of these brave and loyal dogs have been killed while on service.

In March 2014, the Australian War Memorial commissioned Melbourne-based artist Ewen Coates to produce a commemorative sculpture that reflected, through a combination of sensitivity, insight and realism, the role of EDD dogs and their handlers within the ADF. This sculpture commemorates the vital role and contribution of Explosive Detection Dogs and their handlers in war.

A number of EDDs and one handler have been killed while on active service in Afghanistan, and their names and dates of death are etched on the sculpture's central column.



The Army Explosive Detection Dog team

On Thursday 8 October 2015 the Australian War Memorial hosted a dedication ceremony for the EDD sculpture; The Army Explosive Detection Dog team attended as well as members of the public and their dogs.

Courtesy Department of Veteran Affairs

2017 National Gunner Dinner Update

The number of registered participants continues to rise quickly and at the time of publication of this edition of the Newsletter (Dec '15) we have a total of 92 registered, with some 18 months before the event

Additionally, we have now moved from a "National" Gunner Dinner to an "International" Gunner Dinner with registrations having been received from the United Kingdom and New Zealand. These registrations, we believe, are testimony to the quality of the 2014 National Gunner Dinner and a faith in the Australian Artillery Association to again deliver another quality event.




2016 Coral National Gunner Dinner

The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company (RAAHC) together with the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery will again host the 2016 "Coral" National Gunner Dinner to be held at the Federal Golf Club in Canberra on 14th May 2016.

DATE CLAIMER

National Gunner Dinner
Saturday 14 May 2016



All Gunners (serving or retired) and Spouses/Partners Welcome
LOCATION: *Canberra*
VENUE: *Federal Golf Club*
COST: *Approximately \$100 per head*

ASSOCIATED EVENTS OVER THE WEEKEND
HISTORY SEMINAR SERIES (DETAILS OVERLEAF)
TIMING AND VENUE TO BE ADVISED
OTHER WEEKEND EVENTS TO BE CONFIRMED

For Further Information

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Determined to serve

One officer overcame significant personal hurdles to fulfil a life-long desire to serve her country and is now deployed to Afghanistan, Cpl Max Bree reports.

SLEEPING in for the first time on deployment may have stopped Capt Liz Littlefair being caught in a Taliban truck bomb blast next to where she normally walked to the gym.

"There was a massive bang," she said. "My bed was under the window so I saw the window hanging over me, damaged from the blast."

Every morning before January 25, Capt Littlefair and her roommate walked to the gym at 5.50am, but the night before they decided to sleep in.

The massive explosion went off 70m from the place she normally passed going to PT, showering parts of the base at Kabul Airport with shrapnel.

Instead of being caught in the blast, Capt Littlefair suffered a rude awakening in her hardened accommodation building 200m away.

"We were told the base had been invaded so it was a pretty full-on morning," she said.

It turned out talk of a ground attack was incorrect, but the incident left Capt Littlefair rattled.

"We'd not long been there and I was thinking 'what am I doing here?'," she said.

"I felt like I wanted to bundle myself up, stay in bed and not leave the room."

It wasn't the first big event Capt Littlefair experienced after she left home at 16.

She joined the Army Reserve in 1988 as a single mother living in Kalgoorlie, but reluctantly left the reserves at the end of 1992 while pregnant with her third child.

The disappointment of leaving the Army was soon overshadowed. Four years later, Capt Littlefair was diagnosed with thyroid cancer that had likely been present for a year.



"I was told it was the best cancer to have," she said. "Just remove the thyroid, the cancer will be gone - you do a simple treatment of radiation. The success rate was meant to be really high."

Unfortunately the operation was unsuccessful. Her parathyroid gland was damaged and she was left depleted of calcium.

After a series of complications, Capt Littlefair was fading away.

"When you're that sick, you can't think, you can't get your body to function," she said.

"I couldn't speak clearly, my vision was fading away. I don't remember months either side. The doctors couldn't believe I'd survived that long without the thyroxine."

It took another six months for Capt Littlefair to recover enough to undergo radiation treatment that would ensure the cancer was gone.

She began to feel better by the end of 1998, but by then was going through a divorce.

Despite all she'd gone through, Capt Littlefair found one positive in that she could re-join the Army.

"I didn't want to get out in the first place and once my husband and I separated I enquired about re-joining," she said.

Because she couldn't survive with-out thyroxine medication, she wasn't able to re-join at that time.

Capt Littlefair moved on and earned a Diploma of Accounting at TAFE, then completed a business degree at university.

After starting a job in Canberra with the Department of Finance and Deregulation, Capt Littlefair found she could re-join the Army as a Service Officer using her financial skills.

"Initially I got back into the reserves," she said.

Over four years she did every course that was offered and tried to get on some that weren't.

"I think I drove them nuts," said. "I did well over 100 days of service," she said.

"The people at my civilian job weren't happy with the amount I was taking off - I became less committed to my civie job than I was to Army."

So Capt Littlefair took the plunge and became a full-time finance officer in 2013. She deployed overseas as the ADF's financial adviser for Afghanistan earlier this year (2015) and manages finances for each ADF location in Afghanistan, paying bills, managing contracts and the budget.

Despite missing the massive blast, Capt Littlefair still gets up early and walks down the same road to make it to the gym before work each day.

"It was quite remarkable that we didn't go to the gym that morning because we had every other day at exactly that time," she said.

"But you can't let anything stop you going to PT."



Letter to the Editor – The Daily Telegraph

I am writing to you regarding the report by Mr Matthew Benns on Australian Defence Force (ADF) combat ration packs and the Army Chaplains badge on Wednesday, 17 February 2016.

Documents released under FOI outline a request from the Army for future combat ration packs to include a variety of menu options such as standard, vegetarian, halal and kosher meals.

Combat ration packs currently used by the ADF are not prepared to halal or kosher specifications. Items included come from a wide range of suppliers, some of which are halal or kosher certified manufacturers.

Combat ration packs are not about political correctness. Combat ration packs are about our people.

The ADF carefully researches the composition of combat ration packs to ensure they are nutritionally appropriate for the work our people do. The reason for this is very simple; sailors, soldiers, airmen and women think and fight better if well fed.

It is important our combat ration pack menus cater for a variety of tastes, including the food, social and religious preferences of ADF members, now and into the future. Thirty days eating the same meal is demoralising; I know.

Further, ADF combat ration packs are designed to align with NATO and coalition interoperability requirements. The Army's request for standard, vegetarian, halal and kosher menu options will improve our ability to work with coalition partners on operations and exercises.

The proportion of combat rations specifically manufactured to meet religious considerations will vary subject to the ADF's demography and our operating environment. The suggestion that one third has to be halal certified is incorrect.

Finally, the suggestion that the badge of the Australian Army Chaplains has been changed because of an association with the Crusades is false and misleading. Defence has previously corrected reporting on this matter. I refer you to the following link for further information:

<http://news.defence.gov.au/2015/11/30/response-to-media-reporting-regarding-army-chaplaincy-badge/>

Lieutenant General Angus J Campbell, DSC, AM
Chief of the Australian Army

Remembering Tobruk in 2016

The commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk will be one of the key events of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Century of Service commemoration program in 2016.

The service of all Australians who took part in the battles for Tobruk in 1941 will be commemorated. This includes those who took part in the capture of Tobruk in January and the Siege of Tobruk between April and December, and those who played a vital support role on the sea and in the air.

Holding Tobruk and its harbour was vital for the Allies' defence of Egypt and the Suez Canal, as this compelled the enemy forces to bring most of their supplies overland from Tripoli, across 1500 kilometres of desert, as well as diverting troops from their advance. Tobruk was subjected to repeated ground assaults and almost constant shelling and bombing.

Nazi propagandist Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce) derided the tenacious defenders as 'rats', a term that the Australian soldiers embraced as an ironic compliment.

The 75th anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk will be commemorated at a national service to be held on **Sunday 10 April 2016**, at the Rats of Tobruk Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra. Veterans of the campaign who wish to attend the national service and who are experiencing difficulties in making arrangements can contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 02 6289 6146.

Veterans' commemorative mission the trip of a lifetime

Going back to a place you had not seen for 70 years would be an experience for anyone, but for seven veterans who fought in New Guinea during the Second World War it was a memorable and moving trip of a lifetime.

In early September 2015, DVA's Commissioner Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC led a commemorative mission to mark the 70th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific and Surrender of the Japanese forces in New Guinea.

The seven spritely members of the mission party, who are aged between 88 and 92 years old, were veterans who served in or directly supported the New Guinea campaigns from the Battle for Wau (January 1943 onwards), in either the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army or the Royal Australian Air Force.

The mission party was proud to represent all Australians who served in the Pacific region, but also all Australians who served in the Second World War.



The veterans' party at Bomana cemetery, the final commemoration of the PNG mission

For members of the mission party the services or commemorations at Rabaul, the Bita Paka War Cemetery, Lae War Cemetery, Coast Watchers Memorial, Bomana War Cemetery and the main commemorative ceremony to mark the Surrender of the Japanese forces at the Cape Wom Surrender Memorial, were very moving and brought back memories of lost mates.

For example, the service at the Coastwatchers Memorial in Madang was emotional for former coast watcher, Mr 'Dixie' Lee. Mr Lee was one of the incredibly brave civilians and military personnel who continued their work in enemy held territory throughout the war, at extreme risk to themselves and the local people who assisted them.

The success of the mission is perhaps best summarised by Mr Norman Quayle from Ballarat in Victoria who said, "It has left us with great memories and we feel we have made new friends."

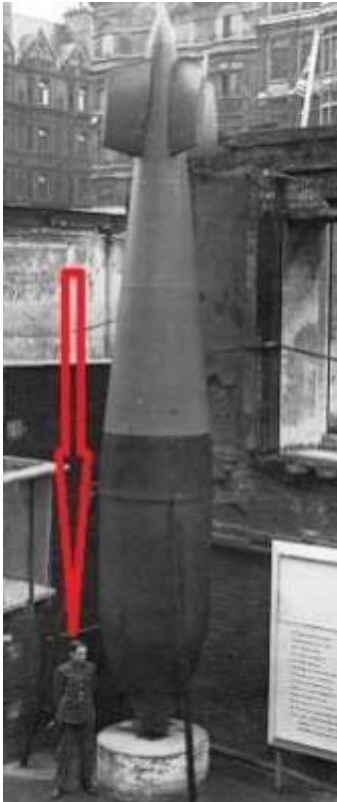
Both articles Courtesy Department of Veteran Affairs

Vintage News UK

Strangeness, 6 November 2015

The RAF discovered that a 15 year-old 'Gate Guard' Grand Slam bomb – was actually LIVE!!!!

Apparently when Lincolnshire County Council were widening the road past RAF Scampton's main gate in about 1958, the 'gate guards' there had to be moved to make way for the new carriageway. Scampton was the WWII home of 617 Sqn, and said "gate guards" were a Lancaster...and a Grand Slam bomb.



When they went to lift the Grand Slam, thought for years to just be an empty casing, with an RAF 8 Ton Coles Crane, it wouldn't budge. "Oh, it must be filled with concrete" they said. Then somebody had a horrible thought No!..... Couldn't be? ... Not after all these years out here open to the public to climb over and be photographed sitting astride! Could it? Then everyone raced off to get the Station ARMO. He carefully scraped off

many layers of paint and gingerly unscrewed the base plate.

Yes, you guessed it, live 1944 explosive filling! The beast was very gently lifted onto an RAF 'Queen Mary' low loader, using a much larger civvy crane (I often wonder what, if anything, they told the crane driver), then driven slowly under massive police escort to the coastal experimental range at Shoeburyness. There it was rigged for demolition, and when it 'high ordered', it proved in no uncertain terms to anyone within a ten mile radius that the filling was still very much alive!

Exhaustive investigations then took place, but nobody could find the long-gone 1944, 1945 or 1946 records which might have shown how a live 22,000 lb bomb became a gate guard for nearly the next decade and a half. Some safety distance calculations were done, however, about the effect of a Grand Slam detonating at ground level in the open. Apart from the entire RAF Station, most of the northern part of the City of Lincoln, including Lincoln Cathedral, which dates back to 1250, would have been flattened.

The Grand Slam was a 22,000 lb (10,000 kg) earthquake bomb used by RAF Bomber Command against strategic targets during the Second World War. It was the most powerful non-atomic bomb used in the war.

Known officially as the Bomb, Medium Capacity, 22,000 lb, it was a scaled-up version of the Tallboy bomb and closer to the original size that the bombs' inventor, Barnes Wallis, had envisaged when he first developed his earthquake bomb idea. It was also nicknamed "Ten ton Tess".



When the success [of the Tallboy bomb] was proved, Wallis designed a yet more powerful weapon... This 22,000 lb. bomb did not reach us before the spring of 1945, when we used it with great effect against viaducts or railways leading to the Ruhr and also against several U-boat shelters. If it had been necessary, it would have been used against underground factories, and preparations for attacking some of these were well advanced when the war ended. — *Sir Arthur Travers Harris (1947)*.

On 18 July 1943, work started on a larger version of the Tallboy bomb, which became the Grand Slam. As with the original Tallboy, the Grand Slam's fins generated a stabilizing spin and the bomb had a thicker case than a conventional bomb, which allowed deeper penetration. After the hot molten Torpex was poured into the casing, the explosive took a month to cool and set. Like the Tallboy, because of the low rate of production and consequent high value of each bomb, aircrews

were told to land with their unused bombs on board rather than jettison them into the sea if a sortie was aborted.

After release from the Avro Lancaster B.Mk 1 (Special) bomber, the Grand Slam would reach near supersonic speed, approaching 1,049 ft/s (320 m/s), 715 mph (1150 km/h). When it hit, it would penetrate deep underground before detonating. The resulting explosion could cause the formation of a camouflet (cavern) and shift the ground to undermine a target's foundation.

Unlike Tallboy, Grand Slam was originally designed to penetrate concrete roofs. Consequently, it was more effective against hardened targets than any existing bomb. The first Grand Slam was tested at the Ashley Walk Range in the New Forest, on 13 March 1945. By the end of the war, 42 Grand Slams had been dropped on active service.

Courtesy Sgt Eddy Evans

Commemorations Recognising our KIAs in Vietnam:

Courtesy 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

Last issue, members were advised that Victoria was holding a series of 98 separate but simultaneous commemoration services (vigils) all around the state. Between them, these services were intended to recognise the sacrifice of all those diggers killed in Vietnam. We noted that the service to be held in Camperdown was specifically aimed at remembrance for Ian Scott, killed when the blokes of HQ Battery were overrun at Coral on 13th May 1968.

Our member Vic Alsbury, who was also there that night, was one of the artillery vets who attended and he has sent this report:

Graveside vigil for Vietnam Gunner Ian Scott at Camperdown Vic.

Today we honoured the Service and Sacrifice of Gunner Ian Scott 3791583 who was born on 18 September 1946 and was a casualty at FSB Coral on 13 May 1968 with HQ. Bty. 12 Fld. Rgt.

An estimated 250 to 300 people attended at the Camperdown Cemetery and 12 Field Regiment was well represented as were Vietnam Veterans. Many people travelled quite a distance to attend as did Andy Forsdike MM from NSW. Paul Kelly from NSW makes many regular visits to Ian's grave, with Ian's sister Pat Scott and along with Ian's widow Marlene they were comforted by the attendance and tributes.

Our gratitude to all who organised the day, VVAA Victoria, Geelong and districts and to MC Darby Drennan and all the many people who helped organise the day and gave their time freely, not forgetting the talented bugler.

Country hospitality was at its best with Saturday night BBQ, Sunday, morning tea and dinner at Pat Scotts, with accommodation for some distance travellers provided by Pat and her friends. Buses to and from the vigil were provided with the Cobden graveside vigil joining us for a light lunch at the golf club, approximately 300 altogether.

Our thanks to the wonderful people of Camperdown especially Pat Scott and all who contributed to this memorable event.

Our thoughts are also of Gunner Christopher Sawtell HQ Bty 12 Fld. Rgt. who was a casualty at FSB Coral. Lest We Forget

Mount Schanck Trophy Re-established

MAJ Philip Wong

At the recent RAA CPX and Conference held at the School of Artillery, Puckapunyal VIC, the Mount Schanck Trophy was awarded for the first time in a decade. The RAA Representative Colonel Commandant, BRIG Gerry Warner, announced 7 & 23 Light Batteries RAA as joint winners.

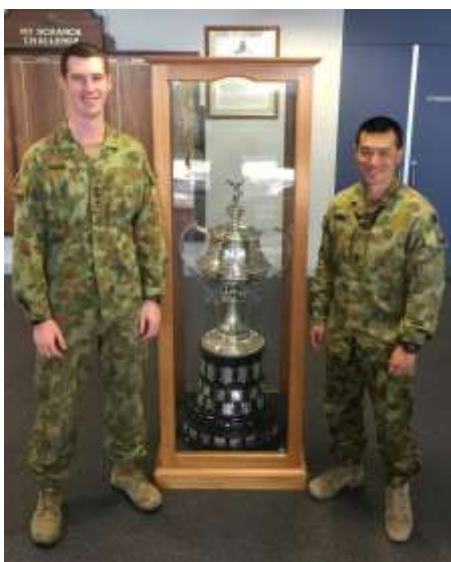
Together, 7 & 23 Lt Btys from 8 Bde & 5 Bde respectively, constitute the Battlegroup Waratah

Light Battery as part of the reinforcing battlegroup for 7 Bde, narrowly edging out 3 Lt Bty from 13 Bde (WA) for the honour.

MAJ Philip Wong, 2/17 RNSWR, Battery Commander for 7 Lt Bty and the BG Waratah Lt Bty - accepted the award on behalf of both batteries, acknowledging the support provided by members of 1 Regt, School of Artillery and HQ 2 Div. Joint Fires

throughout the year.

Left: CAPT Andrew Wallin (Joint Fires Team Commander) & MAJ Philip Wong (Battery Commander), 7 Lt Bty, 2/17 RNSWR with the Mount Schanck Trophy.



Schanck Trophy, was originally awarded biennially to the most proficient Field Battery in the Militia, an early forerunner to the present Army Reserve. Today, valued at \$100,000 the 5ft-tall silver cup permanently resides at the School of Artillery and will once again be awarded to the most proficient Reserve Light Battery every two years, based on evaluations conducted by staff from HQ 2 Div. Joint Fires branch and the School of Artillery.

Trophy winners hold a more modestly sized shield (approx. 50cm tall) with a plaque engraved with their battery details to display in their home units, during their holding of the trophy.



At the end of the tenure, the battery gets to keep its plaque while the next winner has a new plaque engraved with their details on it. Being Regimental property, the shield is duly signed and accounted for wherever it goes.

Note: [In 1910 Lord Kitchener advised on the need for an augmented force and compulsory military service that in the three years 1910-1913 increased the Citizen Forces by 50%. It was in this environment that the Mount Schanck Trophy was donated by William Clarke, the prominent wool-grower and benefactor from South Australia, on the prompting of a Captain W.S.L. Robertson and with the approbation of Major General Kirkpatrick (Inspector General of Military Forces), formalised the offer of a perpetual trophy to the Minister of Defence, Senator George Pearce].

Courtesy of Gunfire.

Newsletter of RAA Association (NSW) Inc

Instigated in 1912 at a cost of £100, the Mount

From the ABC's Landline program in 2014, an excellent presentation of the preparation of the current ration packs.

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2014/s4134168.htm>



PARADE CARD

As at 1 December 2015

January 2016 - December 2016

January 2016	May 2016	October 2016
4. Cascabel Issue 125 Released	17. Committee Meeting	3. Cascabel Issue 128 Released
26. Australia day Salute	27. Gunner Symposium	18. Committee Meeting
		28. Gunner Symposium
February 2016	June 2016	
16. Committee Meeting	1. Reservist Luncheon	November 2016
19. Gunner Symposium (Fri)	21. Committee Meeting	3. Annual General Meeting
		4. Golf Day
March 2016	July 2016	15. Committee Meeting
2. RAA Luncheon	4. Cascabel Issue 127 Released	
15. Committee Meeting	19. Committee Meeting	
	29. Gunner Symposium	December 2016
April 2016	August 2016	4. Annual Church Service
4. Cascabel Issue 126 Released	?? RAA Gunner Dinner (TBA)	4. St Barbara's Day
19. Committee Meeting	16. Committee Meeting	4. 2/10 Bty Family Day
25. Anzac day (Mon)		13. C'ttee Xmas Breakup
	September 2016	
	20. Committee Meeting	
* For up to date details visit the Website http://artilleryvic.org.au/calendar.html		
Note: This Parade Card is subject to additions, alterations and deletions.		

Change of Personal Details

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

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