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Hawain, Wewak Area, New Guinea. 1945-05-08. No. 1 Gun, 2/3 Field Regiment, In Action. These "Long Tom" 155mm Guns Are In Position For The Final Assault Against Wewak.

Reprinted from the Australian War memorial Collection. AWM Collection Record: 091715

<http://cas.awm.gov.au/photograph/091715>

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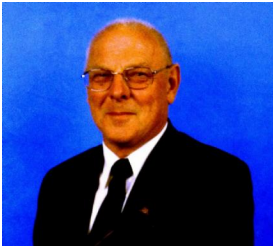
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The President Writes

It seems to be no time at all since I wrote my last contribution to the magazine. This, I am told, is a sign that I am getting (have got) old!

Reg Morrell, Brian Cleeman and I recently visited the Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island. The purpose of the visit was to decide whether it is a suitable venue for an Association visit. We decided that it definitely is so. Dates and times have yet to be finalised.

The Gunner Dinner this year, as I am sure you already know, is to be held at the Caulfield RSL.

The guest speaker this year will be Barry Heard. Barry is the author of the autobiographical military history "Well Done Those Men". His book has received much acclaim throughout both the military and literary communities.

The book gives a rare insight into the life of a national serviceman and his service in Vietnam.

The dawn service on Anzac Day this year was not held at the Sargood Barracks as usual. Members of the Association were invited to attend a service at the Caulfield RSL where we laid a wreath. 2/10 assures us that there will definitely be a dawn service at the Barracks next year.

I would like to congratulate Capt Peter Wertheimer, on behalf of myself and all members of the Association, on his being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the New Years Honours List this year.

I look forward to seeing you at the Gunner Dinner.

Regards to all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Hamer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Neil Hamer
MAJ (R)

Membership Report July 2008

Current Membership

Life Members	209
Annual Members	59
Senior Annual Members	19
Serving Concessional Members	27
Affiliates	37
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	11
Libraries	5
RSL's	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>368</u>

New Members

We welcome Bdr James Overell as a Serving Concessional Member to the Association.

I would remind Annual Members that once you attain the age of 80 years your membership becomes free-of-charge (no annual subs).

It is necessary for you to register your date of birth with me so that you can be placed in the no subs category. Nineteen members (Y S) are currently registered.

Vale

It is with regret that we note the passing of Capt R M Donovan and Gnr Raymond Alwyn Davies. Capt Donovan joined the Association in July 82 as an Annual Member and became a Life Member in November 90. We have no further information about Capt Donovan.

Gnr Davies joined the Association in June 97 as an Annual Member.

He was awarded the Australian Service Medal 1939-45, The Australian War Medal and the Australian Service Badge 1939-45.

Gnr Davies served with 2 Aust Mdm Regt in WW2. He served in the Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean, on the TSS Marella (Merchant Navy), Foulse Cape and the Pacific Ocean.

Lest We Forget

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

If you have not already done so, it would be appreciated if you would provide the information requested so that our files can be kept up to date. This proforma should also be used to notify us of any changes in the future. It would also help if you could provide any information about your occupation, achievements and other service to the community.

Would you also please let me know if you have been awarded an ADM.



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102 “CORAL” BATTERY: FIRST ARMY HONOUR TITLE AWARDED

In a moving ceremony on Mount Pleasant in Canberra earlier today, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffrey, AC, CVO, MC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, presented Army's 102 Field Battery with the Australian Military's first ever Honour Title.

The Honour Title *Coral* was awarded to 102 Field Battery, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, in recognition of its actions during the Vietnam War. Head of Regiment, Brigadier Phil Winter CSC, welcomed the award on behalf of the Army and gave credit to the outstanding actions of the unit during the long battle.

“This is an important day for the Australian Defence Force, and brings deserved recognition to the Gunners who fought so valiantly to hold their position in Vietnam 40 years ago,” Brigadier Winter said.

“I welcome the title *Coral* on behalf of the Australian Army, and hope that the story of this battle provides inspiration to our current Diggers who are serving on operations today.”

Today's ceremony forms part of a series of activities to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the battles of Coral and Balmoral, which took place in South Vietnam during May and June of 1968 and played a significant role in securing Saigon from further attack.

“The battles were the largest and most sustained engagements of the Vietnam War involving Australian troops, and were the first Australian all arms brigade-sized operation since World War II,” Brigadier Winter said.

“Approximately 2,500 Australians participated in the battles and this is an opportunity to thank them for their service, and remember those who did not return home.”

A National Commemoration Ceremony was held at the Australian War Memorial yesterday, and on Monday a reception was hosted by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, at Parliament House and attended by veterans, dignitaries and guests. Group commemorations in Townsville and Canberra are planned over the coming weeks.

Media Note

Images will be available from: <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/download/>

Media contact: Defence Media Liaison: 02 6265 3343 or 0408 498 664

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – HONOUR TITLE 102 FIELD BATTERY

1. Units that usually engage the enemy with direct fire, Armoured, Infantry and Aviation have traditionally been awarded Battle Honours for distinguished performance in battle. The fact that units of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery (RAA) are present at almost every significant battle, and that they do not usually engage the enemy with direct fire, has been recognised by the award of a single, embracing battle Honour, UBIQUE (Everywhere).
1. To recognise a particular performance by a unit or sub-unit of the RAA or the RAE, the Australian Battle Honour system (modelled on the British system) allows for the use of an Honour Title, in which a distinguishing feature is incorporated into the name of the unit or sub-unit. The awarding of the Honour Title ‘Coral’ to 102 Field Battery is the first Honour Title to be awarded to any Australian sub-unit.
2. 102 Field Battery is awarded the Honour Title ‘Coral’ as a result of their direct engagement with North Vietnamese Army (NVA) during the battle of Coral on the night 12/13 May 1968. The battle of Coral occurred during Operation Thuan Thang (Complete Victory) which involved 70,000 troops and was launched in early April 1968 with the objectives of eliminating the enemy formations involved in the Tet Offensive and preventing a second offensive against Saigon and the US base at Long Binh. The Australian Government offered the 1st Australian Task Force.
3. On 12 May 1968, the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and 161 (New Zealand) Field Battery were deployed by air into Fire Support Patrol Base (FSPB) CORAL, followed by the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and 102 Field Battery. At 2.15 am on 13 May 68

a barrage of mortars and rockets came into the CORAL position quickly followed, from the North, by a NVA regiment (about one thousand men).

4. During the battle, one of the battery guns was overrun as soldiers from 102 Field Battery engaged in close quarter fighting with the enemy. The overrun gun was subsequently recaptured and the enemy was forced to withdraw having suffered heavy casualties. Incredibly the Battery was able to engage the enemy with direct fire while at the same time providing indirect fire support as it was called in.
5. Subsequent attacks on the FSPB Coral were repelled and these engagements and those at FSPB Balmoral combined to deny the enemy an attack corridor to Saigon and Bien Hoa.

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A 105 mm M2A2 howitzer of 102 Field Battery, 12th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, on the morning after the first series of attacks on FSB Coral by troops of the North Vietnamese Army's 7th Division. (P01769.011)

Photo reprinted from the AWM Website

http://www.awm.gov.au/visit/?item=mustsee&sub=post45_coral



From Major General JE Barry AM, MBE RFD ED (Retd)



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To the Editor of Cascabel – Bdr Lindsay Pritchard

**352186 Major Robert Allen Fellows Lukis
22 October 1929 – 16 February 2008**

Rob Lukis was an endearing character of an earlier time when the Royal Regiment in Australia was at its peak in numbers of units and later on personnel following the formation of the Citizen Military Force (CMF) in 1948. This was the period of the Cold War with the introduction of National Service for all males turning 18 in 1951, with the aim of having an expansion base for a force of five divisions within six months of mobilisation.

Many young men opted to volunteer to join the CMF rather than wait for National Service, although Rob Lukis would have been too old by the time NS was introduced. Rob enlisted in October of 1950 into 2 Field Regiment RAA at the Batman Avenue Depot and little did he know how much that would change his life over the next decade and that of his fellow Gunner colleagues that became firm friends for life. In fact, for the writer, he became one of the endearing characters that I and others have held in high esteem.

Rob Lukis was seen by many in Gunner circles as the chosen one with his intellect, incisive wit and ability to command respect.

2 Field Regiment was charged with raising an Officer Cadet Battery in 1951, because of the need to obtain a large number of young officers for the re-raised field, medium, anti aircraft and locating artillery units. Over 200 personnel were divided into Troops in what was appropriately named “Blamey Battery” and Rob Lukis with a cohort of enthusiastic young bucks were in the first intake. The Battery was commanded by Major Dick Eason, later CRA Brigadier Eason.

Some of his Gunner friends will be remembered and hopefully their final rank will be correct. Colonel Mike Vincent; Majors: Rupert Balfe, Frank Roberts, Chris Armstrong, John Campbell and Michael Van Assche; Captains: Richard Fleetwood, Graham Barry, John Molony, Frank Mullins and Brian Grutzner, et al.

The anecdotes abound, but most should stay with the Gunner luncheon group! However one should be told. On commissioning as a Lieutenant in March 1952, Rob and his colleagues were ordered to join the Naval and Military Club, so as young bachelors they decided they should use its then facilities in Alfred Place. Friday Nights would see up to six or more of them at the Pipeclay Bar for a “few” drinks and a late dinner under the disapproving eye of the Dining Room Manager, Mrs. Hayes, then down to the Billiard Room for some exciting games and a few more drinks. At the appropriate hour they would then go out to “Bryon House” an appropriate name for the house in Bryon Street, Kew,

rented by Lukis, Vincent and a Legal Captain David Blackburn (later LTCOL) to “kick on” for a while, subject only to weekend parades. To quote the story teller, “this round of enjoyable activity went on for a few years, but was gradually brought to a slow grinding halt by the fact that some very nice girls infiltrated our ranks and managed to persuade some members of this rabble to get married! Rob found a delightful girl in Mary and off he went, but he never lost his playfulness.”

Back to the Regiment we find in 1958 that Rob was promoted Major and Commanded P/2 Bty of 2 Fd Regt RAA, under command of LTCOL JARK Strong. His brother BC's were MAJ Bill Swallowell (later LTCOL) and MAJ Laurie Newell (later COL). We know he had other command and staff positions, but not which units and that he was qualified to LTCOL, however his civilian employment with the Rootes Group of Humber Hawk automobile fame took him to South Australia and he handed in his chit. He was discharged from CSTU Central Command in 1969, his potential not fulfilled, but totally within Rob's view of the world. A great friend to many Gunners and he will be missed, but not forgotten. Vale.



Rob Lukis

22 October 1929—16 February 2008
A wonderful life.

We give thanks
For the many ways Rob's life touched ours,
For the generosity of his loving,
For his laughter and sense of fun
and delight in life,
For the wonderful memories
we will always treasure.
May the spirit of life that moved
so wonderfully in Rob's life
find hopeful and generous expression
in our lives.



Letter to the Editor

8th March 2008

Dear Sir,

The last issue of "Cascabel" (*Issue 94*) featured on the front Cover a photograph of a 75mm pack howitzer from the 2nd Mountain Battery in action in central Bougainville.

It went on to comment that towards the end of the Bougainville campaign four Field Regts. of 25 pdr. guns and other artillery formations were in action representing probably the largest amount of fire power for a single campaign.

This is not strictly correct. When the campaign commenced, Lt. Gen. Savage in charge of the Bougainville campaign asked for three Fd. Regts. and a Medium Regt, to form the artillery component of the 3rd Division which had been augmented to five Brigades and the additional Papuan Infantry units, to form almost two Divisions.

He was allocated the 2nd and 4th Fd. Regts., the 2nd Mountain Battery and a Heavy AA Battery. In addition "U" Australian Heavy Battery(Coast) AIF stationed at Lae was hastily augmented to a six gun battery (two guns kept in reserve) and was quickly trained in "Field" techniques by instructors from the 2/11 Fd. Regt. also at Lae.

"U" Australian Heavy Battery with its 155mm 1918 French Guns, modified in the USA, was shipped to Bougainville and performed with great results in a medium field role. But there was no additional Field Artillery support until April 1945 when in response to urgent requests the 2/11 Field Regt. was shipped from Lae and went into action in Southern Bougainville.

At that stage the casualty rate was mounting and every opportunity was being taken to use artillery to assist ground troops advancing against a determined Japanese opposition.

The 13th Field Regt. in Townsville was also alerted to move to Bougainville but a complete lack of shipping precluded its move. At that time nearly 7000 reinforcements were concentrated on Townsville awaiting movement to Bougainville and Wewak – but could not be moved because of the shipping crisis and they stayed in Townsville until the cessation of hostilities.

Therefore the artillery component during the Bougainville campaign was –

2nd Field Regt. and 4th Field Regt from December 1944

2/11 Field Regt from April 1945

"U" Australian Heavy Battery

A Heavy AA Bty from December 1944

The 13th Field Regt. on strength but still in Australia

It is interesting to note that the 2nd Field Regt. was in action continuously in Southern Bougainville for the whole eight months of the campaign except for a period of ten days when each Bty. was relieved by a Bty. from the 4th Field Regt. to allow this period for respite at Toko in Empress August Bay.

The 2nd Field Regt. fire over 70,000 shells whilst in action using two Btys. of normal 25pdrs and one Bty. Of "short" 25pdrs. This is probably a record for continuous action.

The Bougainville campaign was marked by a continual shortage of essential supplies – ammunition, landing craft, reinforcements for infantry and at times food. In retrospect it is hard to criticise the American logic in creating a heavily defended base and airstrips at Torokina on Bougainville thus denying the Japanese access to supplies – neutralising them and letting the lack of medical supplies and malaria exact its heavy toll. The Australian campaign to eliminate the Japanese was an exercise that created mounting casualties, very little if any effect on the Pacific war and a debacle in the shipping and supply requirements.

Reg Kidd

Ex 4 Bty. 2 Aust. Field Regt (AIF)



Sixty Years of Keeping the Peace

When four Australian military officers boarded a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) C-47 in Darwin to fly across the Timor Sea to Sourabaya, near the eastern end of Java, they had little inkling what a historic journey they were making. It was September 1947, two years after the end of the Second World War, in which all four had fought. Their leader, Brigadier Lewis Dyke, had commanded Timor Force, which accepted the Japanese surrender on Timor in 1945. Commander Henry Chesterman, a naval officer, had been decorated by the Americans for his role as a liaison officer in the Pacific, while RAAF pilot Squadron Leader Lou Spence had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in the Middle East and, sadly, would later be killed commanding a squadron in Korea. The fourth member of the party was another army officer, Major D.L. Campbell.

After such distinguished wartime careers, service in peacetime might have smacked of anti-climax. But now they were flying to the Netherlands East Indies to take up a posting as “military assistants” for the United Nations (UN), at a time when enormous hope was invested in that young organisation. The four officers may have shared the widespread optimism that the legacy of the war would be a new, more peaceable way of dealing with conflicts. What they could not have known is that, as the very first UN peacekeepers, they would be the start of a proud tradition for Australia and for the world.

There had been peacekeepers before the UN was formed. On several occasions in the 1920s and 1930s multinational military forces assisted as the League of Nations tried to sort out border disputes left over from the First World War. In particular, in 1935 a British, Dutch, Italian and Swedish force of more than 3,000 men maintained the peace in the Saar territory, on the border between France and Germany, as the population voted on whether to be reinstated as part of Germany. However, these precedents seem to have been largely forgotten when representatives of the Allied powers – members of an alliance which already called itself the “United Nations” – met in San Francisco in 1945 to design a successor organisation to the League of Nations. The delegates were near the end of a long and terrible war and remembered vividly the pre-war aggressions of Italy, Germany and Japan. The result was that the UN Charter focused on finding ways for member states to use diplomacy and, if need be, force, to repel a state that attacked another.



A meeting of the UN Consular Commission in Batavia, Indonesia, on 29 September 1947. The man with the pipe is the Australian Consul-General, Charles Eaton.

AWM [P03531.003](#)

In the event, the postwar world was not like that. The UN itself had a hand in setting in motion decolonisation, the great historical movement of the later twentieth century. In 1945 large parts of Asia and Africa were ruled by European states (and Japan) as colonies, snatched over the previous century or so and generally governed with little regard for the welfare of the local peoples. The League of Nations had had a system of “mandates” under which countries were authorised to rule a territory while promoting education and institutions that would allow it one day to be independent. Under the UN, these became “trusteeships”, such as that which gave Australia control of Papua New Guinea until its independence in 1975.

Today, there are no trusteeships left, and very few colonies. Some territories had independence more or less thrust upon them by exhausted colonial powers. In the late 1940s Britain gave India

its independence (creating India, Pakistan and a disputed territory, Kashmir), and turned the problem of Palestine, which it had held under a League of Nations mandate, over to the UN. Defeated Japan lost its colony of Korea. In other cases, territories fought for their independence: the Indonesian Republicans opposed the return of the Netherlands East Indies to the Dutch, while the Vietnamese began a long war against the French (and later the Americans). In the decades which followed, there were wars of “liberation” elsewhere in Asia and across much of Africa.

Believing in both decolonisation and the non-violent settlement of conflicts, the fledgling UN could not avoid getting involved. When serious fighting broke out between the Dutch and Indonesians in mid- 1947, the UN Security Council imposed a ceasefire and set up two diplomatic bodies to help negotiate a settlement. Australia's representative on one of these, the Consular Commission, was Charles “Moth” Eaton, a colourful aviator who had flown in both world wars. When the Australian Department of External Affairs worried that the Dutch were not abiding by the ceasefire, Eaton suggested that the Consular Commission needed military assistants to monitor the situation on the ground. The call went out: Australia was the first to respond.

Thus it was that Brigadier Dyke and his colleagues found themselves despatched post-haste: they spent a night en route at Dutch-controlled Sourabaya, where Eaton joined them for a cocktail party with local Dutch military officers. Next day, they flew on to Batavia (later renamed Jakarta), where they were met by Dutch authorities and a bevy of press.

The following day, Sunday, 14 September 1947, the four observers flew to Jokjakarta, the capital of the Indonesian Republic, where they were entertained by President Sukarno and Premier Amir Sjarifuddin. For the next two weeks they separated into pairs and toured the areas of fighting, Dyke and Spence on the Indonesian side, Chesterman and Campbell in Dutch-held areas.



A road perched high above the Indus valley in Kashmir that was used by UN observers in 1965.

AWM [P05689.044](#)

The Australians were pessimistic about the possibility of making the ceasefire work, noting, “As each party to the dispute is using a different set of rules, it is certain that no umpire can function effectively.” Nevertheless, the UN persisted and observers from other nations soon arrived. At a conference early the following year, all the observers shared what they had learnt about this type of operation. They agreed that it was important, for the sake of neutrality, to work in mixed-nationality teams, each team responsible for a sector of the ceasefire line. Observers were reminded that they represented the UN, not their own countries, and that they had no power to give orders. Instead, they must bring parties together “through the use of initiative, a sense of fair play, ingenuity and common sense”. Thus were principles born which have underlain UN peacekeeping ever since.

But while they had no formal power over the warring parties – apart from the ability to report impartially on what they were doing – observers had an important job in trying to prevent local disputes and fighting flaring into a new outbreak of conflict.

They acted as liaison between the two sides, using their negotiating skills and powers of persuasion to try to pull them back from the brink. And in Indonesia, unlike some of the other places in which the UN has been involved, they were rewarded with success, as they saw the country gain its independence in December 1949 and helped monitor the demobilisation of Dutch forces. After Indonesia, the UN used military observers in Palestine, Kashmir, Korea and many other places. Following the Suez Crisis of 1956, Lester Pearson, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, proposed a much more substantial UN force to act as a buffer between Egypt and

Israel. In the Congo, in the early 1960s, an even larger UN force got drawn into fighting in a civil war. Although that was a setback that left the UN considerably more cautious than before, in recent decades UN missions have grown steadily larger and more complex. Peacekeeping is no longer a matter simply of keeping peace or maintaining security. Increasingly, peacekeepers attempt to assist refugees, rebuild institutions of justice and democracy, carry out de-mining, and undertake many other functions designed to give societies the chance to live in peace.

As for Australia, 14 September 1947 was only the start. Every day since then there have been Australian peacekeepers in the field, in more than 50 different operations in most parts of the world; 14 September is now recognised as Australian Peacekeepers' Day and the government recently announced that there is to be a memorial to Australian peacekeepers on ANZAC Parade in Canberra. Soon there will be an official history of Australian peacekeeping, as well as a new peacekeeping exhibition at the Australian War Memorial. And in September 2007, the Memorial will mark the 60th anniversary of Australian peacekeeping with an important conference. Speakers will include several former peacekeepers and the four authors writing volumes of the official history, as well as academics and other experts in the field.

The 60th anniversary comes at a time when Australian peacekeeping has been overshadowed by non-peacekeeping operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. While significant regional engagements continue in East Timor and Solomon Islands, elsewhere there are small groups of Australian peacekeepers in the Middle East (in Israel, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon), Cyprus and the Sudan. Peacekeeping is certainly no panacea: it began as a bandaid solution and in many ways remains that. Peacekeepers can rarely "solve" a problem. Indeed, as an editorialist in *The Australian* wrote a quarter of a century ago: "Crossword puzzles have solutions. Long, complicated, bitter national and religious problems do not. All one can hope for is an improvement here and an improvement there and a willingness to talk rather than to fight."

An improvement here and an improvement there is often all that peacekeepers can bring; but it is still better than turning our backs on the problems of the world.

Donating to the Memorial

The Memorial is steadily expanding its collection of documents, photographs and memorabilia relating to peacekeeping, and is always keen to hear from peacekeepers who have material to donate. Former peacekeepers are also invited to register with the official history team if they have documents relating to their peacekeeping service or would be willing to be interviewed. (Resources only allow a sample of peacekeepers to be interviewed.)

Donations

<http://www.awm.gov.au/donations/>

Register with the peacekeeping official history:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/peacekeeping/submit.asp>

Additional information

- [Peacekeeping conference, 13–14 September 2007](#)
- [Peacekeeping official history](#)

Author

Dr Peter Londey is author of *Other people's wars: a history of Australian peacekeeping* (2004) and one of the authors of the forthcoming official history of Australian peacekeeping.

Reprinted from Wartime edition # 39

<http://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/39/article.asp>



The Ballarat Avenue of Honour



Continued from Issue 95

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF AVENUES OF HONOUR IN VICTORIA

The practice of planting of trees for commemorative purposes dates back to antiquity, the Romans pioneering the concept of commemorative tree planting along roads with the burying their dead outside the city in tombs strung along the roadside.

In Australia commemorative trees have been planted in public spaces since the late nineteenth century. As Dickens (1985) notes, a huge interest in plants among Victorians was created by the ever increasing numbers of 'new' plants becoming available, and trees were planted on every possible occasion. Arbor Days were held regularly in most Victorian State Schools during the late 1800's and early 1900's, and numerous trees were planted in parks in Melbourne and throughout Victoria to mark the visits of important and famous people. This tradition of commemorative planting was continued in 1901 when at the end of the Boer War trees were often planted for each soldier of the district who was killed in South Africa. In Australia the use of trees as a memorial to soldiers may date from the Boer War, however these plantings rarely consisted of more than two or three trees in each town.

In contrast, the number of dead from the First World War was enormous. By 1918 the extremely high casualty rate of 64.93% (highest of all the allied forces) meant that every Australian was related to or closely associated with someone who had been killed during the war. For Australians the war was personalised. These facts help to explain why most Australians were involved in creating war memorials (Australia outdoes all other nations in war memorials). Many towns began plans for their memorials well before the War had ended. The Avenues of Honour at Ballarat, Ballarat East, Cambrian Hill, Digby and Seymour were begun in 1917, with a further 15 avenues planted elsewhere during the following year. As many of the Avenues of Honour were planted while the servicemen were still overseas, a tree was usually planted for each person who served in the War rather than only for those who had died. Due to the sheer numbers involved, raising money for the trees, tree guards and name plates was often quite difficult. Even so, avenues were usually (though not always) a cheaper option than stone obelisks or statues and it has been suggested this may be one reason why many of the smaller country towns decided to plant avenues over other types of memorials (Dickens 1985; Haddow 1987).

A National Survey of War Memorials in 1920-21 indicates that at least 121 Avenues of Honour were planted throughout Australia in response to the First World War - 92 in Victoria, 14 in New South Wales, 12 in Tasmania, 2 in Western Australia and 1 in South Australia. By the Second World War avenue planting had lost much of its original popularity, and in Victoria only 11 new avenues were planted and extensions made to 7 existing World War One avenues

Distribution:

Avenues of Honour are a uniquely Australian phenomenon. Australians, and in particular Victorians, embraced the idea of planting Avenues of Honour more enthusiastically than any other country in the world. Despite the research of others (Dickens 1985; Haddow 1987), there are no known Avenues of Honour in the United States, United Kingdom or New Zealand.

Avenues of Honour were a more popular form of war memorial in Victoria than in any other state of Australia. Returns from the 1920-21 National Survey of War Memorials indicate that in Victoria avenues represented 10% of all war memorials, in Tasmania 5%, Western Australia 1%, New South Wales 1% and South Australia less than 1%. In terms of the total number of avenues Victoria, NSW and Tasmania dominate. Nationally, Avenues of Honour are a south-eastern Australian phenomenon with Victoria representing 78% of those avenues. In Victoria the majority of avenues occur in the Central Highlands region, with very few in the Wimmera, Mallee or East Gippsland. Within this broader distribution pattern the avenues predominantly appear in clusters with the majority located in country Victoria (Haddow 1987 & 1988b).

Research by Haddow (1987) suggests that the concentration of avenues in the Central Highlands region of Victoria can probably be attributed to the effect of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour - the earliest and largest recorded avenue in Australia. Established amidst much interest and enthusiasm, the Ballarat avenue was grand in conception and form, and no other avenue involved so many people or fundraising activities, cost so much or consisted of so many trees. It is conceivable that the Ballarat avenue acted as a stimulus for other communities who were debating the type of memorial they would erect or that it was the catalyst for communities already pre-disposed to the concept of tree the planting form of memorial.

From its inception the Ballarat avenue was associated with some influential figures - the charismatic Mrs Thompson, the State Premier, various other MP's and later the Prince of Wales. It was inevitable that knowledge of the avenue would spread, that the activities of the Lucas Girls and the opening by the Prince of Wales would receive Local, State and National publicity. Apart from the avenue itself the rather unusual family-like atmosphere of the firm E. Lucas & Co and the companionship between the Lucas girls is likely to have created some interest. The fund raising activities ensured that thousands of people were exposed to the idea of the avenue whether through the football matches, afternoon teas and garden parties or simply the purchase of a doll, necklace or souvenir booklet. Ballarat was an important regional centre in the Central Highlands and many people passed through it either holidaying or on business.

The great majority of Avenues of Honour were planted along National and State Highways or major connecting roads, therefore Avenues of Honour had maximum public exposure because they were associated with major transport links within the State. The importance of major transport links is also demonstrated by the apparent clustering pattern of the avenues, where most of the Avenues of Honour are clustered and linked with important regional centres such as Albury, Orbost, Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Leongatha, Berwick, Lilydale, Seymour, Hamilton, Dimboola and Ballarat (Haddow 1987).

Population, geographic and climatic factors also appear to have influenced the distribution of avenues throughout the state. Haddow (1987) suggests that low population densities in the North East and Central Gippsland possibly account for the fact that few avenues exist in these areas. Low population densities reflect the difficulties of terrain and communication. In both these regions the climate would have been suitable for growing exotic trees (the preferred species during WWI), by contrast the Mallee and Wimmera were not climatically suited to growing European trees and those examples which do exist are of Australian natives - Sugar Gum *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* at Pyramid Hill, Kaniva and Kotupna and Kurrajong *Brachychiton populneum* at Nathalia. Droughts during the periods 1913-16 and again in 1918-20 affected northern Victoria in particular and may also have influenced decisions about planting avenues (Haddow 1987).

Haddow (1987) speculates on several reasons for the apparent greater popularity of Avenues of Honour in rural Victoria. In addition to the often cheaper costs than other types of memorials, perhaps roadside land was more available in rural areas whereas in the city the land was in private or government ownership. In urban areas avenue planting may also have been complicated by services such as gas, electricity, water, pedestrian and vehicle routes. To account for the Australia

wide distribution of Avenues of Honour is more difficult. It is possible that the Ballarat Avenue had some impact on a national level but this would have been minimal as even within Victoria its impact decreased with distance. Haddow suggests that climatic factors and population distribution are the most likely influences. In Victoria Avenues of Honour are generally under-represented in areas of low population and climatic difficulty. The harsh climate and low rainfall of South Australia may help to explain why there was only one Avenue of Honour in that state. In Western Australia only two Avenues of Honour were recorded in the 1920-21 survey of War Memorials. Poor climate and soils for growing exotic trees (the preferred species during WWI) may account for the lack of popularity of avenues in that state. In contrast Victoria has long been referred to as the 'Garden State' and no other state can grow exotic trees so extensively.

Community Origins and Involvement:

Avenues of Honour held a special importance for a city or town and reveal a great deal about the attitudes of the local community towards those who served during the First or Second World Wars. Avenues of Honour were not the result of Government legislation but were borne (along with all war memorials) of a common social cause and commitment. The majority of war memorials of both the First and Second World Wars were paid for by funds raised locally, and to some extent the type of memorial reflected the wealth and size of the community. In Victoria the type and location of the memorial was usually decided in public forums such as the local Progress Association or at special public meetings, then funded by public subscription and other fundraising activities.

Unlike most other types of memorials, Avenues of Honour involved a high level of participation by the local community of the city or town in which they occurred. At Ballarat the Avenue was planted by the staff of E. Lucas & Co, while fathers and uncles helped dig holes for the trees and local farmers delivered wagon loads of timber to the site for tree guards. Similarly, at Rokewood the trees were supplied by the residents and planted by voluntary labour, in Piggoreet the trees were planted at working bees by enthusiastic residents, and in Seymour the Avenue was planted by school children (Haddow 1987).

In contrast, when communities chose memorials such as statues, obelisks or honour boards the work required skilled tradespeople and consequently the community was less involved in actually creating the memorial. Often these types of memorial were crafted and assembled in factories hundreds of miles away (and sometimes overseas) using imported materials and tradespeople. As Haddow notes, Avenues more than other types of war memorials exhibit their populist and vernacular origins, so that, while they are symbols of a national cause they have been created by local communities and exhibit many interesting local variations.

Tree Species:

Since ancient times specific plants have been associated with death, its rituals and surroundings. In burial grounds around the world Cypress, Yew, Weeping Willows and Poppies are the traditional symbols of melancholy, while Laurels, Oaks and Olive trees are suggestive of longevity and honour. Specific plant forms also have important associations with commemoration of the dead. Trees which are vertical or pyramidal such as Poplars and Cypress are often used to symbolise 'the elevation of the soul from worldly concerns and focusing heavenward on the external', while the weeping form of Birch and Willow signify 'grief, sorrow and mourning' (Curl 1980; Etlin 1984).

Of the 58 Avenues of Honour in Victoria which are still known to exist only 10 bare any association with plant symbolism. There are Cypress avenues (death and melancholy) at Lara, Moonie Ponds, Mortlake, Inverleigh and Coleraine, the Pine avenue (mortality) at Corindhap, the Oak avenues (virtue and majesty) at Cranbourne and Woodend, the Palm avenue (martyrdom, victory) at Epsom and the Walnut avenue (funeral tree) at Tourello. And only for the Avenues at Sandringham where it was decided to plant Red Flowering Gums *Eucalyptus ficifolia* 'so that they would form a scarlet coated guard of honour in summer' is there any record of a deliberate choice being made based on plant symbolism (Haddow 1987).

Rather, it appears that the choice of tree species had more to do with the availability of plants, fashion and practicability. In the Western District for example, Pines and Cypress had been used extensively since the 1870's, while in the case of Mt Macedon the avenue Committee's choice was determined by 'the opinion of experts'. Similarly, avenues from the First World War consisted

overwhelmingly of European or exotic species which were popular at the time, whereas the use of native plants in avenues was more common in Second World War avenues following their gain in general popularity during the 1920's (Haddow 1987).

EXISTING HERITAGE CLASSIFICATIONS

National Trust of Australia (Victoria):

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was 'classified' on the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees on 15 December 1988. The classification was defined as an Avenue comprising 3091 trees (*Ulmus* sp.) on the Western Highway from Ballarat and the Learmonth Road. The estimated age of the trees was 69-71 years, and the Avenue was rated as being in good to fair condition. The citation for the Avenue is as follows:

At 22km this WWI avenue is by far the longest in Victoria and possibly the State's first commemorative planting. Following this planting, some 128 avenues were planted in Victoria, particularly around Ballarat. The avenue was planted between 3 June 1917 and 16 August 1919 by the three Lucas sisters from the Ballarat Fashion House of E. Lucas and Co. The best sections of the avenue - mixed species of mainly Elms, Ash and Poplars - occur along Learmonth Road and near the Arch of Victory. The avenue is in urgent need of attention and the substitute plantings of mixed natives are inappropriate.

The Avenue was classified by the Trust on the basis of the following criteria:

(2) Any tree which occurs in a unique location or context and so provides a contribution to the landscape, including native remnant vegetation, important landmarks, and trees which form part of an historic garden, park or town.

(8) Any tree commemorating a particular occasion (including plantings by Royalty) or having associations with an important historic event.

Australian Heritage Commission:

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was entered on the Australian Heritage Commission Register of the National Estate on 30 June 1992. The listing was defined as 'an avenue of trees, about 22km long, on either side of the Western Highway, from the Arch of Victory near Learmonth Street, Ballarat, and Avenue and Burrumbeet-Learmonth North Roads, to the intersection of the latter with the Weatherboard Learmonth Road'. The Avenue was noted as consisting predominantly of Elms, but represented eleven different exotic species in total (*Ulmus* x *hollandica*, *U. vegeta*, *U. x hollandica* *Purpurascens*, *Populus nigra* 'Italica', *P. x canescens*, *P. alba* 'Pyramidalis', *Fraxinus excelsior*, *F. americana*, *Acer campestre*, *Quercus palustris*, *Taxodium distichum*). It was also noted that many of the original 3912 trees have died or been removed during roadworks. Many of the trees were in need of horticultural attention, and many of the name plaques had disappeared. In spite of this the Avenue remains remarkably intact and is one of the healthiest in Victoria (May 1990). The AHC Official Statement of Significance is as follows:

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour is significant as the earliest known memorial avenue to have been planted in Victoria, and appears to have stimulated similar plantings throughout Victoria in the years 1917 to 1921. They predominate in Victoria with the greatest concentration in the Central Highlands around Ballarat. These avenues represent a new egalitarian approach in the commemoration of soldiers where service rank was not a consideration and are illustrative of a peculiarly Australian, populist and vernacular response to the experience of the First World War. They had declined in popularity as a means of commemoration by the time of the Second World War (Criterion A.4) The Ballarat Avenue is the longest avenue of honour in Australia and, composed of exotic trees planted along a major road, is a dominant landscape feature in the low farming country with a powerful social message.

Reprinted from the Ballarat Accommodation & Tourism Directory

<http://www.ballarat.com/avenue.htm>



Cooking with the Rats of Tobruk

Stanley Gordon Waugh
9th Division AIF
1941



Cpl Waugh

Keeping the troops fed is never easy but when you have to dodge falling bombs and machine gun raids by enemy fighter planes, not to mention overcoming the shortage of water and food, then it is doubly difficult.

Corporal Stanley Gordon Waugh was one of the Rats of Tobruk. He was also a cook who had to put up with appalling conditions for much of the time while trying to keep up the supply of food.

Having sailed from Australia on the *Mauritania* on 29 December 1940, he arrived in the Middle East and finally reached Benghazi after a hectic overland trip by truck from Tobruk.

Life began to settle down to a fairly dull routine. Wake early, endure German air raids, cook meals for the troops.

But apart from his cooking duties, there were other roles for Corporal Waugh to undertake – including "wog chasing" (Arabs).

"We thought we were going to have some fun this afternoon, but it never turned out so funny to me," he wrote in his diary. "Seven of us had to move all the Wogs out (around our camp) as there had been reports that they have been signalling aeroplanes and morse coding of a night. Some Itis (Italians) are dressed up as Wogs (Arabs) which makes it very dangerous as there are 7000 Iti prisoners in the compound and about that many living in the town and round about, and there are only about 1500 Aussie and English soldiers here, so if they decided to make a nuisance we would be extra hard pushed.



The Australian Soldiers Club

"Anyway, about this Wog chasing. We started off on the waterfront. We rounded up 26 men, put them on a lorry and dumped them out of town. Then we ran into a lot of women and kids and did they bawl. It sure was tough having to shift them out of the houses, which were made of mud and about 5 foot high and 10 to 15 foot long.

"They were lousy and talk about the smell, it seems they ate in one corner and made the other corner a lavatory. It's a wonder there wasn't a plague there. Half of them are blind and deformed or have skin complaints, I

suppose full of disease. It's no wonder we let them take their livestock such as sheep, goats and donkeys. But after we dumped them out of town we went to their houses and took their fowls and pigeons which we plan to have for dinner and a booze up between ourselves. I suppose I will have to do the cooking.

"It sure is a shame to have to shift these Wogs as I don't think they do any harm. They have been living here for years I suppose, but it was orders and we have to obey them. I don't think we will have a raid tonight as it is pitch black."

Next day, Monday 17 March, he wrote that he'd been woken up at 5am by an explosion that nearly knocked their house over.

"I just laid in bed hoping for the best. They went away in half an hour, no damage done. Wog hunting again this morning but we only got four. Looks like we have them all rounded up now."

The following day they rode into town on bikes they had "pinched from the Wogs". [We] have a good look around, also go from one beer ship to another. We also have a camera and we have some fun taking snaps. We are learning to speak Iti language pretty good."

Later in the month he wrote:

"Our boys have captured German and Iti prisoners, tons of ammunition and they have drove them back 30 miles, recaptured El Agheila and an aerodrome they had evacuated a week ago. It seems now the enemy were led into a trap. The fighting was hot there as there were hundreds of tanks, machine guns, armoured cars, field guns, trucks and ammo all destroyed. Jerry is causing a lot of trouble by machine gunning and dive bombing the troops and convoys."

On 2 April the troops received orders to leave Benghazi following a German advance.

"After leaving all the main dumps, boats, petrol, power houses, in fact everything burning. We could see the smoke when we were miles out. We went as far as Barce before we camped."

Having been attached to the 9th Division headquarters, they arrived in Derna on 5 April.

"Soon as we arrived I got orders to go and cook for a gun crew back towards where they are fighting. At 8pm we had to pack in a hurry as Jerry was only a few miles away.

"We are expecting reinforcements as we are too weak to hold him [the German Army]. He has got a lot of tanks and armoured cars. We haven't and our infantry hasn't got a hope against tanks. We got attacked by Messerschmitt 110 at 4pm. He came down machine gunning. One of the guns missed the boys but we never missed him. He came down at 6pm. We left under fire, shrapnel and bullets bursting everywhere. We drove all night and it was cold. It was nice and moonlit so that helped our drivers.

"We stopped at Derna airport to refuel. About two hours earlier Jerry had broke through the road here but was driven back. It seems he had us cut off otherwise. We pulled up about eight miles from Tobruk. We certainly never thought we'd be here a again."

Next day they had another raid with about 18 Messerschmitts attacking them.

"Every gun about was in action and was there a noise. I was using my rifle. There were machine guns, AA guns, artillery, in fact everything was being used. The fight lasted quarter of an hour. We brought down six planes, not bad."

Now ensconced in Tobruk, the troops began to earn their nickname. German propagandists referred to the besieged garrison as "rats caught in a trap" and the Australians quickly turned the insult into a plaudit, calling themselves the "Rats of Tobruk".



Drinking at the Australian Soldiers Club

"Easter Monday and what a day! At 7am we got word to pack and be ready to shift as a lot of Jerry tanks got through but the boys got them and are pushing Jerry back," Corporal Waugh wrote. "At 7.30 a squadron of 40 to 50 enemy bombers and fighters came over and did they give us hell. They bombed the hospital again and machine gunned it for the third time. It was like hell. Planes all over the sky, dropping bombs and shooting us, shrapnel and bomb splinters fell all around us as we lay in our trenches, but he got a few.

"The hospital here is full of wounded. As fast as they clear them out on a ship, it is just as full. The boys captured 200 prisoners and 15 tanks today and the prisoners are only boys and a lot of them were wounded. It isn't a good place to see, the hospital, it certainly sickens you.

"Four Indian soldiers were blown to pieces by a bomb. We've had raids all day. There has been about 14 planes (enemy) brought down today. As the hospital ship pulled out at 5.30 tonight three enemy bombers came over and dropped about eight bombs on it and I think it got hit as I seen some bombs dropped right near it. Anyhow it went out to sea and came back again so it must have.

"By all accounts we are doing all right against the enemy as we seem to have stopped retreating. Still plenty of air raids and occasionally some infantry fighting. Jerry seems to be pretty strong with tanks and armoured cars but they are being beat back."

On Anzac Day, Corporal Waugh found himself dreaming of home.

"I sure wish I was in Australia marching than here in the Libyan Desert. It is starting to get hot now and the flies are pestering us also. The dust, there are plenty of rats, snakes, scorpions, so we have to fight them too. Today has been the quietest for a week, only the roar of the artillery guns and an occasional machine gun fire from the front line as Jerry tries to make a push."

On 1 May things began to hot up again.

"We were supposed to start an attack on Jerry at 3 o'clock this morning but somehow or other he must have heard about it as he started the attack himself at 7pm last night. And what a din. Artillery on both sides slamming away and a pitched battle of tanks and the infantry, there were enemy dead laying everywhere, also a few of ours wounded. He made three attempts to break through. He managed to get 30 tanks and some men inside our wire but the boys fought like hell and put 18 tanks out of the fight and the other 12 went back, also what enemy troops that were alive. But there was a brigade of our men got cut off about 100 men. All during the night the artillery fired and a lot of Jerry shells were landing all around us."

Next day the battle continued.



With guns and sandbags at Tobruk

"The fighting continued till late this morning but the artillery never let up. Those English boys sure know how to handle big guns. We heard that the brigade that got cut off got back again. Good on them. The only trouble here is that we haven't got quarter enough aeroplanes. Jerry seems to be able to do what he likes in the air. There is a rumour going around that there are two squadrons of Hurricanes coming here. That will cheer the boys up."

On 1 June, Corporal Waugh wrote that it was still

"hot as hell". "They say Crete has fallen to the enemy. Well, we can be prepared for some parachute troops and waves of bombers now. This place Tobruk is sure going to be hell soon."

Later in the month Corporal Waugh reported on enemy propaganda leaflets which had been dropped on Tobruk.

"They had in big printed letters: 'Aussies, don't trust the British soldiers, they ran away and left you in Greece and Crete. Now they will leave you in Tobruk and Syria. So if you want to see your families again in Australia, show a white flag and we will not fire on you. If you attempt to evacuate our dive bombers and fighter planes will be waiting to bomb and machine gun you, so surrender'."

On 21 September they received some good news.

"Well at last we have been told today that we are going back to Palestine for along spell. Everyone is glad. We are leaving in four days time."

Four days later Corporal Waugh recorded a sad event.

"An awful thing happened today. All the boys were lined up for their cigarette rations this morning about 9am and from nowhere came a Jerry bomber. We never heard it till it was almost overhead. He dropped five bombs in a heap. One landed direct on the tent the cigs were being given out from. It caught almost everyone unawares. It killed four and wounded six of our boys. It was bad luck for the boys who got hurt because the next day we all went out."

And on 26 September the Australian troops were relieved.

"We all boarded the destroyer HMS *Jackal* at 1.15am for Alexandria and quarter of an hour after we pulled out of the harbour an enemy bomber dropped nine bombs. We were lucky alright."



A crashed Stuka dive bomber

They landed at Alexandria about 1pm that day after the 500 km journey.

"Had a bonzer stew, got two bottles of beer each (the first for two months). Did they taste alright. Well, when we drank them we went to an English canteen and bought six dozen bottles between eight of us. Did we get drunk."

"Left Amirya for Palestine about 9pm same night. Everyone is drunk and we had to stagger and struggle with all our heavy kit for a mile to catch a train, boarded train, laid down on floor to

sleep."

After several weeks in which they saw a great deal of places like Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the troops eventually boarded a ship, still not knowing where they were going. It was not until they had left Colombo that they learned they were going home to Australia.

The material for this article was supplied by Yvonne Williams and Nancy Robins of Victoria

Reprinted from the Australian War Memorial Website

Australian at War

<http://www.australiansatwar.gov.au/stories/stories.asp?war=W2&id=154>



Unit Histories

2/14th Field Regiment

The second of the 8th Division's field regiments, the 2/14th Field Regiment was raised on 17 October 1940 and its headquarters were initially headquartered at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. The recruits for the regimental headquarters and 27 Battery came from Victoria, while the regiment's 28 Battery came from South Australia. By the end of the year the regiment's headquarters and 27 Battery was located at Puckapunyal, while 28 Battery was at Woodside. 28 Battery moved from South Australia to Puckapunyal in the third week of February 1941. The regiment trained with 18-pounder guns and 4.5 inch howitzers. A third battery, 64 Battery, was later raised in April 1942 while the regiment was in Darwin.

In July 1941 the regiment moved to Winnellie Camp, Darwin, which most thought would only be temporary move to "acclimatize" themselves with the tropics as most of the 8th Division had already gone overseas. Indeed, two of the division's infantry brigades and its other artillery regiments, the 2/10th and the 2/15th, were serving in Malaya and Singapore. The division's 23rd Brigade had its headquarters in Darwin and its battalions were later sent to garrison the islands to Australia's north – the 2/21st went to Ambon, the 2/22nd to Rabaul, and the 2/40th to Timor.

Following Japan's entry into the war and rapid advance through south east Asia and the Pacific, the 8th Division was captured and those who survived the fighting, then had to endure three and a half years as prisoners of war of the Japanese.

The 2/14th Field Regiment was the only major combat unit of the 8th Division that was not captured. The regiment's colour patch was later changed in part to acknowledge this, as a perpendicular "break" was inserted into the colour patch. The break signified the "Broken Eight" Division. The intention was to remove the break when the prisoners were liberated and the division reformed.

Just days after the fall of Singapore, on 19 February Darwin was bombed for the first time. Darwin and its nearby airfields were raided another more than 60 times, and during this time the regiment remained in the Darwin area.

From the June to December the 2/14th's activities remained the same, tactical training, calibration shoots, and regimental shoots. The regiment's headquarters and 27 Battery remained in the Darwin "fortress" area, while 28 Battery moved to Bagot and 64 Battery moved to 38 Mile – Coomalie Creek.

After 18 months in Darwin, in January 1943 the regiment returned south and went into camp at Loftus, adjacent to the Audley National Park, south of Sydney, in February. It was while the regiment was at Loftus that it received its allotment of 25-pounders. The gunners carried out exercises in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands, and in November moved north to Brisbane where it prepared to embark for overseas service.

In December a detachment from the regiment's headquarters and 64 Battery travelled to Lae, in New Guinea, which was being developed into a major base for the Australian operations in New Guinea. At the start of 1944 64 Battery moved to Massewang, which was north of Finschhafen, on the Huon Peninsula. Some personnel were also attached to the headquarters of the 9th Division. By the third week of January the rest of the regiment had arrived in Finschhafen where they had relieved the 2/12th Field Regiment. The 2/14th was to support the 5th Division's advance to clear the Huon Peninsula. Gunners from the regiment went into action the following month. The regiment remained in New Guinea for the rest of the year, providing necessary artillery support for the infantry and training. The guns of the regiment were located between Madang and Alexishafen.

At the end of the year the 5th Division, including the 2/14th, began moved to New Britain. Taken by troopship, the regiment left Alexishafen and arrived at Jacquinot Bay, the main Allied base on New Britain in early January 1945. American troops had made a large amphibious landing at Jacquinot Bay earlier in the war, and they were now being relieved by Australian troops.

The Australian campaign on New Britain was a limited offensive, one that contained the Japanese to Rabaul and the northern area of the Gazelle Peninsula. This was done with a series of limited

offensives to clear the Open and Wide Bays, and with extensive patrolling regime between the two. As the only field regiment supporting the division, the 2/14th frequent provided support and was heavily engaged in the fighting around Waitavalo, shelling the Japanese positions in March 1945.

While most of the regiment was located on the east coast of the island at Wide Bay, A Troop was located on the east coast, at Open Bay, with the 4th Brigade. A Troop mostly supported infantry patrolling, but in June it began engaging Japanese targets in the Matanakunai Bay and Matalaili River.

Following the end of the war in August and the surrender of Japanese forces, in September the regiment moved to Rabual, where it and the 11th Division formed the garrisoning force. The 2/14th remained in Rabual for the rest of the year. Over time the regiment's ranks thinned as men were discharged or posted to other units. In January 1946 the unit returned to Australia, where up on the 2/14th Field Regiment was disbanded.

Glossary

[2nd Australian Imperial Force](#) ; [9 Division](#) ; [Woodside Camp](#) ; [Puckapunyal](#) ; [Capture of Lae](#)

Battle Honours

- nil

Casualties

- 20 died
- 10 wounded

For more information please see the [Roll of Honour](#) and [Second World War Nominal Roll](#) (external website) databases.

Commanding Officers

- [Hone, Ronald Bertram](#)
- [Sewell, Harry Blamyre](#)

Decorations

- 1 MBE
- 3 MM
- 1 BEM
- 31 MID

For more information please see [Honours and Awards](#) database

Collection Items

Search for related [collection items](#)

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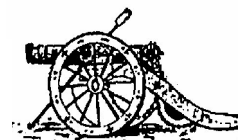
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http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_10388second_world_war.asp

From: MAJ N Hamer RFD
For: Convening Committee
Gunner Dinner 2008



**Royal Australian Artillery Association
(Victoria)**



INVITATION

Gunner Dinner 2008

The President and Committee of the RAA Association (Vic) extend to you, (and a guest if you so desire) a warm invitation to attend the 2008 All Ranks Gunner Dinner.

The Dinner will be held at the **Caulfield RSL**, 4 St Georges Road, Elsternwick
on Friday 1st August 2008 at 1900 for 1930 hrs.

Dress is Mess Dress, Black Tie with Miniatures, Lounge Suit, or Jacket and Tie.

Serving members may wear polyesters.

The Banner of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will be paraded if it is available to us on this date.

The Band of the 2/10 FD REGT will provide music.

Entrée is \$60 per person and includes pre-dinner drinks, hors d'oeuvres, three courses, table wines, port, coffee and cheese.

After dinner drinks will be available at bar prices.

Please return the enclosed form, together with a cheque made payable to the RAA Assoc (Vic) **not later than Monday 14th July 2008.**

The Association looks forward to your support for this year's Gunner Dinner.

The Commanding Officer and the Presidents of the Mess Committees have kindly made the Sargood Barracks (Chapel Street) messes available at the conclusion of the Dinner.

Any member who requires assistance with transport should contact Lt Col Jason Cooke on
Home: 03 9705 1155. Work: 03 9282 6900. e-mail: jason.cooke@defence.gov.au

Carers are also welcome to attend, but the entrée must be paid.

Enquires and return address: Ssgt Reg Morrell 6 Melissa Street Mount Waverley 3149, Phone: 9562 9552 Email: morrells@morrell.org

GUNNER DINNER 2008

Rank _____ Name _____

Address _____

I accept your invitation to attend the 2008 Gunner Dinner.

Enclosed is a cheque for \$ _____ which includes entrée for my guests:

Rank _____ Name _____

Rank _____ Name _____

Special dietary requirements

If possible I wish to seated near _____



Cocktail Party

Rank _____ Name _____

Address _____

I accept your invitation to attend the 2008 Cocktail Party.

Enclosed is a cheque for \$ _____ which includes entrée for my guests:

Rank _____ Name _____

Rank _____ Name _____

RAA Association (Victoria) Inc Corps Shop

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

PRICE LIST

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





Victorian Defence Reserves Support Day March and Ceremony 31st August 2008

Supporting the contribution of serving
Defence Reserves and recognising 60 years
of valued Reserve service to the nation

Preceded by No 21 (City of Melbourne) Squadron RAAF
Exercising their Freedom of Entry to the City of Melbourne

Assembly/Forming up point:

Queen Victoria Gardens, South of Princes Bridge

Melways Ref. Map 2F, H7

At 1230 hours for step off at 1300 hours, march to the Shrine Forecourt where a service will be conducted

Wet weather plan: Warrant Officer Ceremonial to advise by 1230hrs on the day

For more information, www.dra.org.au

Email: ebedggood@bigpond.com or dravic@dra.org.au

Phone: (03) 9284 6651 or (03) 9578 3788



'U' Australian Heavy Battery

The Battery was assembled at Breakwater Battery in Wollongong during Sep 1943 by the Deputy Fire Commander, Kembla Fortress, MAJ GC Christie who became the initial BC with CAPT RA Hitchens as BK. 12 ORs from the Newcastle Fortress brought the Battery up to establishment.

Initial 155mm gun and equipment training was conducted at Fort Lytton by attachment to 1 Aust Hvy Trg Bty. A section was trained in the Sperry CASL equipment and additional instruction included Bofors AA, Stokes Mortar, grenades, small arms and automatic weapons.

By early December the Battery was on its way north to Magazine Battery Townsville for further intensive training, including sub-calibre coastal shoots. The Battery was classified as an AIF unit 10 Dec 1943.

By February 1944 training in using the 155mm gun in a field role had commenced. This training culminated in immediate neutralisation and destruction shoots at a range of 10,000 yards.

On 19 Apr the Battery embarked on *HMT Katoomba* and sailed for Buna via Milne Bay, New Guinea. During the voyage personnel manned lookouts and assisted naval gunners with manning the ship's armament consisting of 1*4 inch, 1* 12 pdr, 2 Oerlikons, 2 Colt 0.50 inch and 4 Vickers guns.

By Anzac Day 1944 they had relieved 'F' Aust Hvy Bty at Oro Bay until ordered to move to Lae at the end of August.

During September the battery recommenced training in the field role in addition to the coast role and CAPT Hitchens became acting BC and CAPT JI McKenna was attached as a supernumerary as well as a number of NCOs from 2/11 Fd Regt to provide training assistance.

CAPT JI McKenna administered command from 12 December, acting on a secret warning order to move to Bougainville Island under command 2 Aust Corps on arrival. Strength increased by transfers in from 2/11 Fd Regt and 31 Hvy AA Bty. The battery was to take 6 guns of which two were to be kept as spares. 'U' Hvy Bty in this configuration was double the size of the other 'Letter' batteries.

Equipment, transport and stores were loaded onto *George Peat*, a converted vehicular ferry at Lae and arrived at Cape Torokina, Jan 16 1945, unloading at a pontoon wharf. CAPT Hitchens returned from leave and CAPT JI McKenna was attached to 4 Fd Regt as an FOO for a period.



Four guns were moved to a position for a practice shoot but had some difficulty with felling trees to provide crest clearance. 4 Fd Regt provided an explosives party that cleared the required trees. Meanwhile observation parties developed panoramas at the Torokina OP position. On Jan 29 the four guns fired a total of 96 rounds and personnel were involved in close protection training and small arms qualifications.

During March a recce of gun sites in the Toko area was undertaken by CAPT JI McKenna. Advanced party moved by land ahead of the guns. 4 * 155mm "Long Tom" were deployed by LST. Heavy wind and rain delayed the deployment but four targets were registered on Apr 11.

Apr 17, 120 rounds fired in support of an infantry attack on Hatai and Hongarie Roads. April saw the battery move into a gun position previously occupied by 5 Bty 2 Aust Fd Regt and the preparation of a new position while registering targets by ARTY/R (artillery reconnaissance). May saw the battery move to a new position and release gun tractors. From their new position they engaged probable hostile battery. CAPT JI McKenna appointed BC and promoted T/MAJ.

On 24 May the battery engaged and destroyed an enemy bunker detected by Air OP. By the end of May a new position had been reced and enemy ground parties were becoming more active.

[During the Sydney Luncheon, I discussed with Rudolph Hoenger (who was a Sgt with 'U' Bty) the task of moving a battery of 155 guns with Matador tractors through 25-30,000 m of jungle on jeep tracks.

Rudolph recalled that route preparation was by night using borrowed American dozers with full headlight illumination.

Before daybreak they dug a trench with the dozer then parked it across the trench to provide protection and a chance to sleep while waiting for night to press on. Vic Rae]

In early June the guns were calibrated and survey by firing tasks were commenced.

In late June the battery was engaging hostile batteries and area targets in which enemy troops were concentrated. A party preparing a new position were engaged by hostile 150mm and 75mm artillery. Many of these counter bombardment tasks were based on the analysis of earlier reports from listening posts and predicted fire when they again became active. (Horner p. 405)

The battery fired further survey missions during July and counter bombardment with a confirmed 75mm gun destroyed on Jul 6.

Increased en ground activity set off booby traps during darkness July - August. On 16 Aug, RAA 3 Aust Div advised that hostilities with Japan had ceased. All gun ammunition was returned to depot on 12 Sep and guns were prepared for storage.

Some members marched out to 2 Aust Mountain Battery as part of BCOF. From Oct to Dec small groups of high priority discharge moved out of the battery and the remaining members embarked on the *Taroona* for Townsville arriving at Chermside, Brisbane Dec 17. While no disbandment date is recorded in published records or the War Diary, MAJ JI McKenna was BC on Dec 31 1945 when the final stores were returned to depot.

In summary, the Battery fired 2578 rounds. It was the only 'Letter' Battery to convert to a total field role, delivering the equivalent of about 9,800 25 pdr rounds. The battery had its share of frustrations, cracked trails, deploying a heavy gun along corduroy jeep tracks, shortages of hydraulic oil for the recoil system, damage to firing tubes and the problem of man handling and the storage of heavy ammunition in humid conditions.

With the passage of time, the identities of the gunners in this 1945 photograph are no longer certain.



The capacity to fire concentrate heavier fire over longer ranges than field guns was a lesson aptly demonstrated on Bougainville. Late WW2 experience appeared to favour a regiment consisting of a battery of 155 guns and a second battery of 155 howitzers. The same thinking underpins the decision to move from 105mm to 155mm ordnance in the current concepts for today's army.

Of the original members of 'U' Bty, CAPT Roy Hitchens joined the CMF, was promoted to MAJ and commanded 113 Coast Artillery Battery. He became a member of the Newcastle Branch of the RAA Association (NSW) and served on the branch committee and as Treasurer. The late, LT NF Rosen, joined the RAA Association (NSW) in 1955 and became a Life Member 24/7/62. Jack 'Bluey' Mercer currently the Hon Secretary of the 'U' Bty Association joined RAA Association (NSW) Inc in 2006.

The 24 April 2007 marks the occasion when the 'U' Aust Heavy Battery Association Banner was handed over to the RAA National Museum for safe-keeping and preservation. This is a joint project between the Army History Unit, North Fort; the RAA Historical Company and the RAA Association (NSW) Inc to foster and maintain the Association banners and to display them with the assistance of serving gunners at appropriate times and occasions.

Ref: Kidd R and Neal R; The 'Letter' Batteries, the history of the 'letter' batteries in World War II; 1998

Horner, D; The Gunners; A History of Australian Artillery, 1995

Dexter, D; The New Guinea Offensives; 1968

Australian War Memorial Databases.

Reprinted from

http://www.artillerynsw.asn.au/art_321_U_AustHvyBty.htm



SOME OTHER MILITARY REFLECTIONS

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

1. Puckapunyal Army Range, Victoria

With the story of my military life complete, I thought I might offer some reflections on some experiences, starting in this article with the training range where most of us Victorian gunners practised our skills.

This article in no way endeavours to be historically or geographically accurate, but it is rather the memories of various visits since 1954 to this somewhat sacred but scarred piece of earth near Seymour.

Being in the Air Training Corps with the air force tradition of sleeping in barracks and only having to view the country from the air, the army camp at Puckapunyal was somewhere that others, such as school cadets, had to go to camp to play soldiers. My National Service (NS) call up came in 1954 and, as I was at university, I did not have six months for RAAF training and hence was invited to be in "My Army."¹

"Pucka," as it was loosely known, was renowned for being windswept, bare and dusty, unless it was raining, and then it could become even more unpleasant. Soldiers and cadets could fall victim to "Pucka throat," which, I was assured, was not pleasant. The range was dominated by Mount Puckapunyal, aboriginal I gather for "many winds." When I was more senior in rank I had the chance to climb to its summit. Earlier to that I had seen it ablaze when a range fire had not been extinguished in time.

Dysart siding

On 4th January, 1954, I found myself boarding a special train at Royal Park station which in turn transferred me to a Victorian Railways troop train from Spencer Street station.² A steam engine valiantly hauled our carriages towards Seymour, but it branched off into the Dysart siding.

Dysart consisted of several huge warehouse-type army huts – full of uniforms and all the other items with which we would be issued. Naked, but for a great coat, we received our gear. Then we had our first battle experience – would I or the flies be first to eat my lunch? International GS 3-ton trucks took us to the nearby Puckapunyal camp..

The camp

As I understand it, Puckapunyal was acquired by the army sometime just before World War II. Prior to that there had been the horse remount camp at Tallarook, which naturally lent itself to cavalry training. The "Pucka" that I was entering was the Second World War one with some slight improvements. For the families of the soldiers there were now homes – the "married quarters."

To the north-west was the Proof and Experimental Establishment near Graytown.

The range remained a pastoral run for Mr. Tehan's sheep. Somehow these sheep would anticipate the impact area for the next day's shooting and relocate themselves to somewhere safer!

Just short of the first set of crossroads in the camp was the Military Police dépôt. Any of its unit vehicles that were lined up outside their barracks were always immaculate in appearance.

Hutted accommodation

We were soon allocated to huts, of which there were quite a number. They must have been constructed early in the recent war. With corrugated iron roofs and walls over a wood framework they added little resistance to the outside temperature. But, compared with the marquees in which

¹ On entering Puckapunyal on my first day I was presented with a pamphlet that welcomed me to "My Army." It was a good example of early "spin"

² Now Southern Cross station following a multi-million make-over

much of 14th NS Battalion was quartered, the huts were “luxurious.” The officers encouraged the development of gardens around the huts using old tank tracks as barriers and carting in soil.

Up a slight rise beyond the huts were the ablution blocks. These were coke-heated shower units that were well past their “use by” date even in 1954. Even with them being stoked at night, only the first few to shower got any hot water. One night when our hut was on “stoking duty,” we really achieved that task. By the morning the pipes were vibrating and steam was issuing from every pore. The showers were hot that day!

Just beyond the shower blocks there was a hill, delightfully known as Mt. Certainty.

Here were the 25-yard firing ranges for small arms. Into this hill, thousands of sub-machine bullets had been fired and I would add to their number as training got underway.

Out beyond this hutted area was Scrub Hill. I do not think I went there during NS, but sounds of firing would echo back from the hills of the main firing range. But I must have marched out along the road to the main rifle ranges, although I recall at least two trips to the ranges at the old Seymour site. I could see the targets but my rifle couldn’t!

Pretty Sally

But if one travelled by the Hume Highway³ to Pucka in those days as one did until the freeway was completed, the “war-time” trucks would be tested by the climb up Pretty Sally – a feature that seemed to challenge most vehicles.

Climate

Pucka experienced “weather.” I had three months of consistent heat in my NS period, with the exception of a thunder storm. In camp and on bivouacs I have nearly been washed away. At the OP one can start in the morning in dense mist, which, having lifted, can turn into a most pleasant day. One needed everything from gumboots to sun cream to survive in the field.



1962 camp. Route 25 with the photo taken somewhere between GRs 206107 and 212073, the vehicle travelling south.

The Post Office

Australia Post would now probably disown the building that existed in 1954. That one was run by the Post Master General’s Department (PMG) with both phone and post under the one roof.

The price of postage was one advantage of it being a “milpo” or military post office. The price per letter was one penny as against threepence halfpenny on civilian mail at the time. How much was a penny worth you might ask! Newspapers then were a penny-halfpenny. Taking current postage of fifty cents, then perhaps a penny postage was worth about fifteen cents in today’s money.

But the telephone was the interesting part of the facility. These were the days of “trunk” calls to Melbourne. I think there were three or four cubicles with phone handsets. The lady in the exchange (in the post office) would book the number requested and then, announcing that it was connected, nominate the cubicle over the PA. Compare that with instant dialling to overseas countries today.

³ Normal width road with one lane each way

Confidence courses

These were not my cup of tea. For these courses, all sorts of physically challenging contrivances had been erected, from nearly two-metre high wooden barricades to the need to step over metre high planks and then jump over rolls of barbed wire. I would pray that I would be able to avoid having to endure them, but one day our corporal “filled in time” by sending us over them. I accepted my fate, wrote my last letters home and tried to show that I was not all that much of a coward!

Mapping

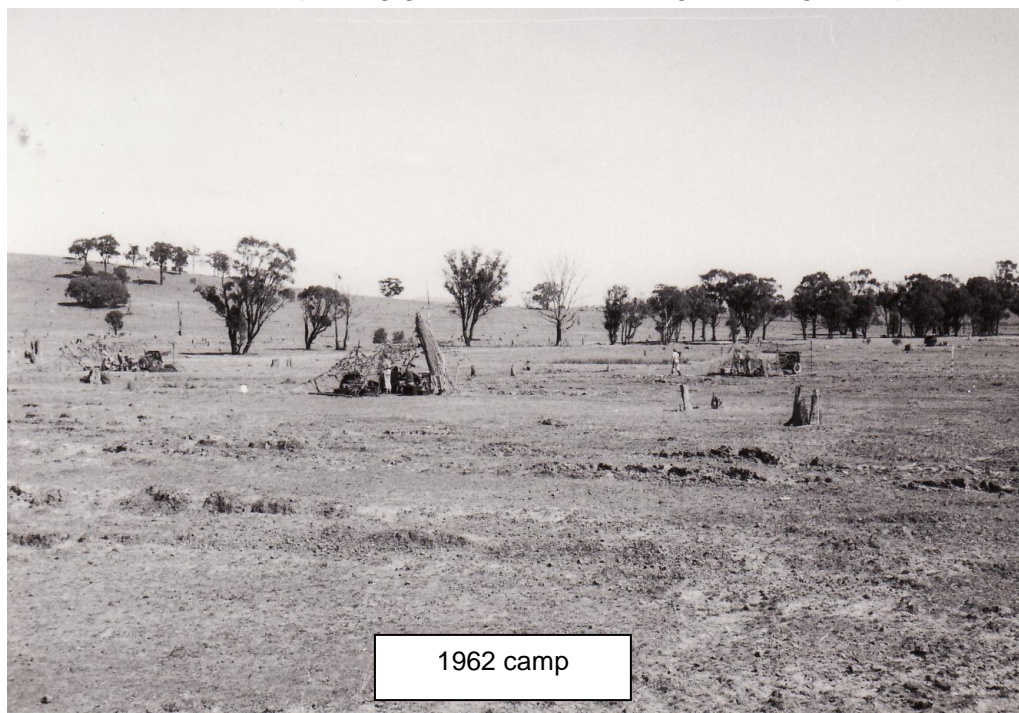
As I type this article, I have before me the 1:25,000 PUCKAPUNYAL RANGE AREA SPECIAL sheet, 1976, (Edition 2) overlaid with range boundaries prior to a later range expansion⁴. Before this map, there was a 1:50,000 one, but it was on an earlier map grid. Some of us knew the grid references of certain features by heart. But new maps came out with a change in the grid and all that knowledge was wasted! But it could be used as an excuse if one got lost!

But I do not think that was the reason I once found myself directing my driver into the impact area. Realising my error, we slowly turned the vehicle around and drove as fast as we could in a reverse direction without any thought of admitting the mistake or stopping the firing. Medals are given for that sort of bravery!

Who can forget Murdoch Hill, Tripps Tor, Campbells Ridge, or that OP in the right hand top corner, Rowells Hill?

Range camp

No sensible or self-respecting gunner officer could ignore range camp. It was north of the hutted



camp past the tank wash area. It was obvious when one approached it. A bevy of signal aerials swinging and singing in the breeze gave its location away.

Having parked one's vehicle as indicated, one entered the control room and generally came face to face with Captain Maurie Bennet. Maurie was the range safety officer. In

fact he was the monarch of the range. If he said you could shoot, you shot. If he said you could not, you didn't. I doubt whether there was a square metre of the range that Maurie did not personally know. Maurie had a respect for the artillery in regard to safety and sanity. I recall him retelling stories of the problems given to him by other Corps.

Humming away in the background were the radio safety sets. Netting on to the correct frequency was always a challenge but even the range camp radios could “wander off” the laid down frequency. When the 25-sets came in with their built-in frequencies, I recall having the cheek one day to suggest to range camp that they needed to adjust theirs if they wanted to listen in to me!

⁴ I have sighted one-inch to the mile maps (1:63,360) of pre-war Puckapunyal

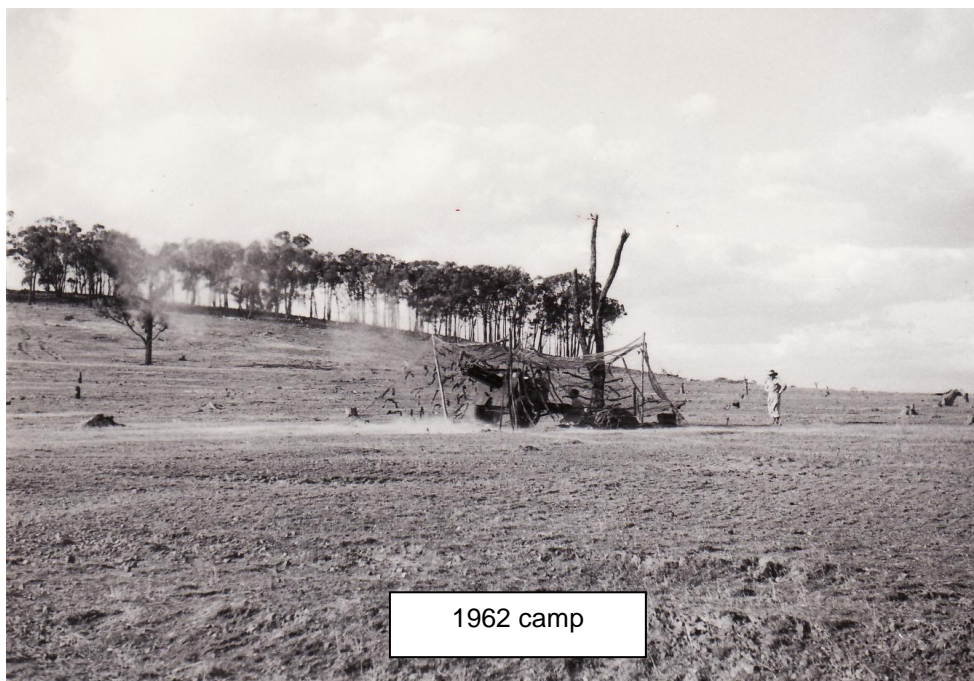
On the walls of one of the huts was a display of unexploded bombs (UXB's). It was a salutary reminder to watch where one put one's foot or what one didn't pick up.

Keys

To enhance realism in deployment exercises, there were gates around the boundary of the range to permit entry. The keys were kept at range camp where they had to be signed for. I do not recall ever having to get one but the keys could be a source of both convenience and inconvenience.

The range doubles in size

The Centurion tanks could operate on the old range and fire within the ricochet trace limits. But



when the German Leopard tank was ordered, the higher muzzle velocity would have resulted in rounds ricocheting beyond the range boundaries. Hence the Commonwealth acquired a large slab of land to the west of the range reaching towards Tooborac. The increased area resulted in the range being even more suitable for artillery, particularly now with the School of Artillery located at Puckapunyal.

Hutted sites

Many of the huts of my NS days were progressively sold off and removed. But many of us may remember camps when we were allocated to "S Block." These lines were of a good standard but were even better following the second period of NS. Out in the Scrub Hill area was Site 6. This site consisted of huts set out in a rectangular fashion around a parade ground. It was quite functional for a base camp assuming that most of the activities would be "out in the field."

I cannot recall the numeral for the site that MUR tended to use, but a seal of tar was put down each year on the access road to reduce the dust. This site was to be later equipped with "state of the art" shower blocks. Automatic oil-heated showers with abundant hot water and other fittings were provided. The promise of a shower and a change of clothes in this area got many a gunner through a hard and tiring hot day on the guns. To be able to luxuriate under hot water and wash off the dust was heaven.

But when all is said and done, we gunners "loved" our Puckapunyal.

Graham Farley ©



Parade Card
(as at 14 May 2008)

JUL 2008
17 Committee

AUG 2008
01 Gunner Dinner
31 Res Forces Day
21 Committee

SEP 2008
18 Committee

OCT 2008
?-? DRA Nat Conf
16 Committee

NOV 2008
06 A.G.M.
07 Golf Day
0? RSL Springvale
20 Committee

DEC 2008
04 St Barbara's Day
11 Committee

JAN 2009

FEB 2009
08 Church Parade
19 Committee

MAR 2009
19 Committee
?? Arty lunch (all ranks)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND DETAILS UP-DATE

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

Rank_____ First Names_____ DOB_____

Surname and Post Nominals_____

Address_____

_____ Postcode_____

Phone (Home, Mobile, Work)_____

Fax and/or E-mail_____

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

Serving Y/N _____ If so, Unit_____

Awards, Decorations, Medals, Etc. _____

Brief Service History_____

Additional Information (Committee, Unit Rep, Etc)_____

Please Use Additional Blank Sheets if Space Insufficient

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