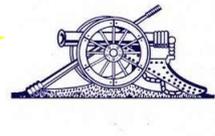


CASCABEL



*Newsletter
of the
Royal Australian Artillery
Association (Vic) Inc*

January

2021

Number 12

President: COL Jason Cooke
president@artilleryvic.org.au

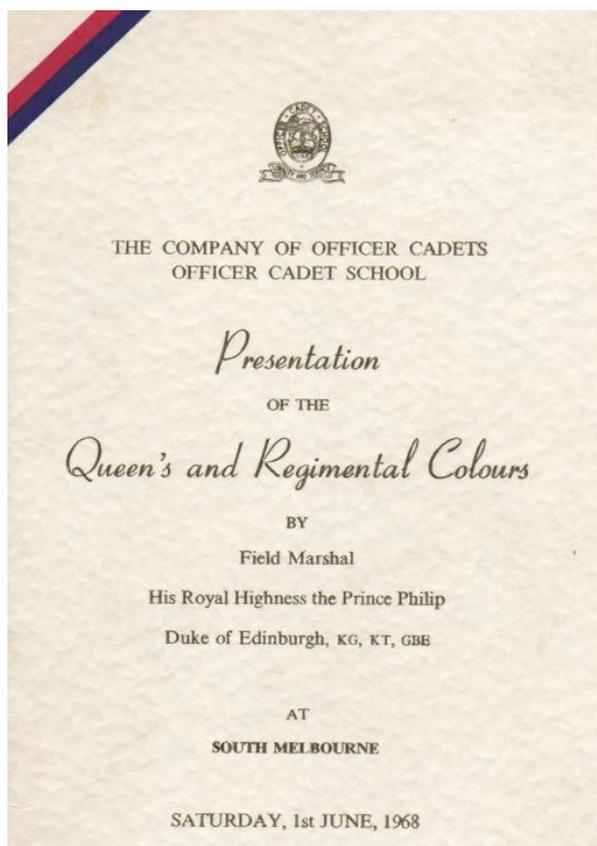
Secretary: CAPT David Edwards
secretary@artilleryvic.org.au

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Website: <http://artilleryvic.org.au>

Facebook: Artillery Assoc Victoria

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Item Submitted by Paul Heron Page 3



From The President

Fellow Gunners,
Happy New Year and Welcome to 2021. I don't know about you but I'm really looking forward to what 2021 can bring. I hope you all have had a great break taking the opportunity in spending time with family and friends.

Since the last Newsletter, the committee conducted our 43rd Annual General Meeting on Sunday 6 Dec 20 via Zoom which was a first for the Association and quite successful. You can view the AGM by the link on our webpage www.artilleryvic.org.au. Just go to the News Feed tab our home page, scroll down to the AGM article and use the following link <https://youtube/IGkWszI3LOW>.

Our new looking webpage has a variety of articles, photos and links to other associations so if you haven't visited recently, please jump on and poke around. I think you will be surprised on the changes we have made. We even have the Minutes of the 43rd AGM up on the webpage for all to see – come and have a look.

At the AGM we had a change of guard with one of our long term, passionate and dedicated committee member retiring, however this was balanced with a couple of new members joining the team, one being a current member of the Battery.

I would like to acknowledge Reg Morrell's retirement from the committee and thank him, on your behalf, for the 40 plus years of service he has provided you. Reg has been an outstanding, loyal, passionate and dedicated committee member whom has supported the Association over many years and personally supported me as President. Thanks Reg – you will be missed.

Similarly, I would like to thank Sandra Hodgson and SGT James Overall for their dedication and commitment as Secretary and Treasurer respectfully and wish them all the very best for their individual futures. Both positions require regular attention so I thank them for their loyal and selfless service.

I am extremely excited to announce two new members to the committee, MAJ Garry Rolfe and LBDR Stjepan Bosnjak. Great to have them on

board and look forward in working with them throughout the year. Garry has recently retired from Army and is looking at continuing his service to RAA through his role as committee member. Whilst Stjepan is taking on the role of Treasurer and is currently still serving providing direct and immediate contact with the current generation of gunners. A really exciting and important opportunity to refresh the association's currency with the Regiment.

2021 will see our 150th Birthday with National events and activities planned throughout the year. We will bring you all the information about those and our own events where we can celebrate this milestone locally. So please look out for the announcements when we send them out and get involved. You only turn 150 once.

Ubique,

Jason

From The Secretary

Despite the various COVID-related restrictions throughout 2020 (and into 2021) the committee has continued to operate, meeting via Zoom and communicating via email. There has been a lot of correspondence of late, much focused on the 150th Anniversary of Artillery in Australia, and this has been passed on as appropriate.

On 6th Dec we held the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Unlike previous AGMs where we met in the depot, 2020's restrictions meant we had to adopt a hybrid approach where the committee members were in attendance at the depot, and others were on the Zoom session. Congratulations on LBDR Stjepan Bosnjak being appointed to the Treasurer position and MAJ Garry Rolfe being appointed to the committee. Thanks to SGT James Overall (outgoing Treasurer), LT Sandra Hodgson (committee) and SSGT Reg Morrell (long term committee member and Museum manager). Congratulation to MAJ Neil Hamer for his Honorary Lifetime Membership. For those that missed the AGM, we have recorded it and you can view it at <https://youtu.be/IGkWszI3LOW>

Looking to 2021, we will continue the communication mechanisms, such as regular emails, facebook and website posts, and the Newsletter (Cascabel). There is a lot going on in

our 150th year and expect to see notices for events. As always, if you have anything to share with the membership or suggestions to the committee, please contact me at secretary@artilleryvic.org.au.

David Edwards.



A Word From The Editor

Things are still moving slowly forward – two steps forward and one step back.

I recently received the **Winter 2020 Edition** of the **Royal Australian Artillery Liaison Letter**.

The late issuing of the Liaison Letter was due to some printing problems and some late contributions. No comments required.

One of the items reminded us to remember that we are a **“Regiment”** not a **“Corps”**. We are members of **“Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery”**. This title was granted by **HM Queen Elizabeth II**, our **Captain General**, on 19 September 1964.

I believe that the continued use of **Royal Australian Artillery (RAA)** is confusing and should be replaced by the correct **Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery (RRAA)**.

This change would need to be made at a pay level much higher than mine.

However, I would like to see serious consideration given to the Association name:

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery Association (Victoria) Incorporated
RRAA Assoc (Vic).

What do other members of the RAA Assoc think?

As usual, many things of general interest and information has been saved for better times.

Neil Hamer

Membership Report

Hi to all members,

Happy New Year to everyone and hope you had a healthy and safe festive season. Not much has changed since the AGM,

however, we have a new member who joined us in late December. Welcome to Sgt John Staples - thanks John for joining. He is looking forward to catching up with his old mates. Not much news as it has been pretty quiet. Take care.

Our current members are:

183 paid members

38 affiliate members

Ubique

Paul Heron

RAA Luncheon 2021

The information flyer for the Luncheon is on the last page. As the attendance may be restricted, please submit your reply ASAP.

OCS Colours

Thought I might share this with you. Whilst going through my shed collecting old papers to shred, I came across this one that dates back to 1968. It was during the time when we were producing many plaques for the Military, and indeed, OCS Portsea was one of them. I know Dad was invited to go there but had no idea he kept this booklet, and only discovered it the other day. So I thought two other members might be interested in this email. I'm aware one of our members has an interest in OCS. It is the ceremony for the Presentation of the Queens's and Regimental Colours. The cover says it was in South Melbourne, I'm guessing Vic Barracks. All the wartime news reels I have seen of Prince Philip shows him in the Royal Navy. He is listed here as Field Marshal, which I thought is an Army rank, not Navy. Just curious. I apologise for the clarity as a pdf format was too large to email. The pages go left to right. Strangely, I was down at the quarantine station a few months ago and you can actually wander into the old grounds of OCS and peer into most windows, very interesting place. If Brig. Perry wishes, I can get it to him to view if he chooses, or anyone else if interested. Then I would like to give it to Reg to store in one of his many cabinets. **Link to full item.**

<http://artilleryvic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/OCS-1968-v2.pdf>

FINDING GUNNER NORRIS

Story: Catherine McGregor

Submitted by WO2 Alan Halbish

Part Three of Three

Howell recalls feeling weak, dizzy. "I'm sorry, but you must be mistaken," she remembers saying. "My dad died a few years ago."

"Did your mum ever mention that she was married to a man named Philip Norris?" the man asked. Howell could recall a fleeting reference once made by her mother to a young man to whom she had been married in the 60s. "Oh, that's right. It was brief, wasn't it? He went off to war and never came back. His name was Phil. But he's long gone. Didn't he get killed in Vietnam?"

A pause, then: "Let me tell you, he is very much alive and he would like to meet you. Some of his army mates have spent years trying to find him and he is in a hospital for people with brain injuries. But he really wants to meet you."

Howell felt nauseous. "I had a wonderful husband and three lovely boys. None of this was on my radar. This rocked my world. And I had already buried Keith Brown, the only dad I ever knew. "The man left me a number for the hospital where my alleged dad was living, and after I hung up I just broke down and sobbed my heart out. Then I tried to call them.

I had been given the name of a nursing sister, Elizabeth Miles, who ran the nursing unit where Philip was residing.

They told me she had finished her shift for that day so I could not confirm anything until at least the next morning. I spent all that night with my husband, Brad, and we just sat staring at one another wondering what on earth would happen next. It was pretty earth-shattering, frankly."

Says Brad Howell: "A few things fell into place for me. We met really young, like about 15½, so I remember when Mary went for her learner's permit. She showed me her birth certificate and her name was down as Mary Elizabeth Norris. Yet I knew her only as Brown. I said, 'What do you reckon this means?' She didn't seem too fussed. She said, 'I don't really know but my dad's name is Brown.' We didn't sweat it. She just wanted to get the permit. And you know, when you're young it just doesn't register with you."

Early the next morning, Miles called the house in Maitland.

"We just bonded straight away," says Mary Howell. "I could tell how fond of Philip she was and she was really protective of him. She had more or less become his family and next of kin because his dear old mum, Olive, had died in 1999. Olive used to visit him every few days until her own health failed.

"In fact, Olive had lost her only other son at a young age in a road accident, so I think she devoted herself to Philip as her only remaining son with extra huge passion. But she also got heavily involved in Legacy to help other wounded men. That was a stroke of luck, actually, because I think it was through Olive's links to Legacy that the Vietnam Veterans Association was finally able to piece together the jigsaw puzzle and work out where Dad was.

"During our chat Elizabeth said, 'I'd like to meet you and pay you a home visit.' So she came up to Maitland to see us. She brought with her a DVD that she had made of Dad for us so that we could see him and so that our first meeting would not be too much of a shock. She also brought his war medals, which were his prized possession, to show us those. She is a really formidable lady and I now realise that she was actually checking me out to make sure that her beloved Philip was not going to be exploited by some blow-in who had turned up out of nowhere. It was actually a bit of an audition. "But we got on like a house on fire when she arrived at my home. We chatted for hours and after she went back to Sydney I called her every day for the next week trying to learn more about this man who was the father I had never met. I could not get there soon enough."

The following week Howell set out for Sydney with her husband and three boys to meet her father — four decades after his ostensible death at Long Tan. Despite his mental impairment, Norris knew he was meeting his daughter and grandsons. It was a joyous occasion. After 40 years living in psychiatric hospitals, he had found himself in the bosom of his family.

Across time Mary, Brad and their boys developed a strong familial bond with Norris, which

deepened and endured. All the boys have replicas of his Vietnam decorations and wear them with pride on Anzac Day. Mary Howell shared his passion for the Parramatta Eels. They would don their team scarfs when together.

The few years she spent with her father before his death in 2010 reframed Howell's life but also raised many questions. Why had her mother misled her about such a fundamental matter? She will never know, but she says she can understand that for a young woman of 21 the challenge of spending the next 50 years caring for a husband who barely recognised her and whom she'd known for only a matter of weeks before their wedding must have been just too daunting. She understands why her mother might have sought a new relationship and tried to close the door on her traumatic past.

The simple pleasure of spending family time with her father remain vivid. "Dad loved fish and chips. He would light up when we suggested that we all go and get fish and chips, and some of my sweetest memories are of all of us just sitting around talking and eating his favourite treat. And somehow he worked it out that it was my 40th birthday at one stage and arranged a gift for me. You can imagine what that meant. My first birthday present from my dad was when I had three kids of my own."

The impending closure of Rozelle Hospital might have brought him Howell, but the move to a new nursing home, at nearby Croydon, was far less fortuitous. Norris disliked it intensely and missed Miles. He suffered a spate of injuries culminating in a serious fall.

In February 2009, on a visit, the Howells found him wearing a bandage on a cut on his head.

Brad Howell asked him directly, "Phil, are you happy here, mate?" An emphatic "No" was the answer. The couple moved Norris to a nursing home in Mosman, in Sydney's north, where he spent his final years happy and at peace, needing to return to hospital only in the last weeks of his life.

Mary Howell cherishes the memory of the trip from Croydon to Mosman. As she was driving over the Anzac Bridge, Norris saw the bronze statues of two soldiers astride its arches,

maintaining their silent vigil. "What are those blokes there for," he asked his daughter.

"Dad, one is an Australian Digger and the other is a New Zealand soldier. You know? It's about Anzac." Norris mused quietly, before responding: "Then why are they so far apart? They should be closer together."

Howell was stunned. "He never talked about the war but that triggered some deep memory for him because the guys had told me that the Kiwis from 161 Battery were right alongside Philip and his mates at Nui Dat. Where on earth did that come from? I nearly ran off the road."

As Norris's body failed, his memory seemed to rally. Some of Howell's most treasured moments with her dad came from long chats in his final days. "He talked a lot about his brother, Alan, who was killed in a road accident on his 39th birthday. And he even asked me about Mum. He wanted to know where she was now. I paused and thought, 'How am I going to deal with this?' I told him, 'She got sick and died, Dad.' He went quiet and just nodded. Then he asked me what day of the week it was and I told him it was Friday. Then he asked which year. I told him it was 2010. Again, he nodded quietly and asked, 'What happened to the rest of the years?'

"I just sobbed because it came home to me just how much that young man who went away to war had missed out on, all that time as a dad and a grandad and the simple pleasures we all take for granted."

The end came not long after for Norris. He died in the early hours of August 3, 2010. When the phone rang at 6.35am Howell knew it could mean only one thing. She felt deep loss and Brad and her boys were distraught. Their time with "Pop" had been too brief.

In accordance with Olive Norris's wishes, Philip Norris was interred near his mum in Pinegrove Cemetery, Minchinbury, in western Sydney. Mary Howell prepared a slide show of his final years. As she and a handful of Vietnam veterans gathered around the grave she gave a short eulogy. "Real super-heroes don't wear capes," she said. "They wear slouch hats."

Next Thursday, August 18, the remnants of the 1st Field Regiment will form up around their unit banner on Anzac Parade near the Vietnam

monument in Canberra to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

Catherine McGregor was an Australian infantry officer who served for nearly four decades in the Australian Army. She dedicates this article to the memory of Jeffrey Grey, her intellectual mentor and Australia's foremost military historian, who died on July 26.

From McGregor: On a personal note, I would like to add that the men of 1 Field Regiment are very typical of the Vietnam veterans with whom I have served. They are patriots to whom terms such as mate, loyalty and honour are more than just words; they represent a code for living. That society turned its back on them for so long forged even stronger bonds among them. These are some of the best soldiers our nation has ever deployed and among the finest men I have ever had the privilege to meet.

I am humbled that they chose to share their memories with me.

To Lighten The Load (And Fill The Space)

An elderly man in Queensland, had owned a large property for several years. He had a dam in one of the lower paddocks where he had planted mango and avocado trees. The dam had been fixed up for swimming when it was built and he also had some picnic tables placed there in the shade of the fruit trees.

One evening the old farmer decided to go down to the dam to look it over, as he hadn't been there for a while. He grabbed a ten-litre bucket to bring back some fruit.

As he neared the dam, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he came closer, he saw it was a bunch of young women skinny-dipping in his dam.

He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end.

One of the women shouted to him, 'We're not coming out until you leave!'

The old man frowned, 'I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim naked or make you get out of the dam naked.'

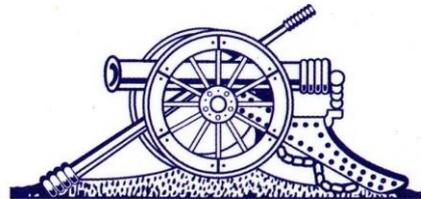
Holding the bucket up he said, 'I'm here to feed the crocodile

Moral: Old men may walk slow, but they can still think fast!

Joe and Jenny were invited to the Annual Mayoral Ball. A very much sought after event.

They were getting ready to go out. Joe was trying to tie his bow tie in front of the dressing table mirror while Jenny was putting the final touches to her make-up.

Jenny gazed in the mirror. "Look at me," she moaned. "Wrinkles around my eyes, sagging cheeks, flab under my chin. I am just getting old". She looked at Joe. "Say something nice about me." Joe looked at Jenny's reflection and said, **"You've got great eyesight."**



PROGRAM OF EVENTS JANUARY TO APRIL 2021

All events beyond this date are yet to be finally decided. Decisions will be made when the virus restrictions are more stable.

2021

January 5 Tuesday

Final Day for Cascabel Items

January 12 Tuesday

Cascabel Issue Due

February 10 Wednesday

Committee Meeting

1900 hr Sargood Barracks

March 3 Wednesday

RAA Luncheon

RACV Melbourne

March 10 Wednesday

Committee Meeting

1900 hr Location to be decided

March 25 Thursday

Final Day for Cascabel Items

April 1 Thursday

Cascabel Issue Due

April 14 Wednesday

Committee Meeting

1900 hr Location to be decided

April 25 Sunday

Anzac Day

ADVERTISERS' PAGE

Anyone who wishes can advertise their business on this page.

. Colour advertisements are welcome.



Geelong Insurance Brokers provide Advice & arrange all types of insurance. We also assist with claims

& any changes required during the year.

www.geelonginsurancebrokers.com.au

Call MAJ Don Shields (Retd) on 419 390 303 Email don@gibvic.com.au

M777 Prints for Sale
From MAJ Gary Down (SO2 HOR)

As some of you may be aware, in May 2017 the Australian Artillery Association very kindly presented the RAA with a large oil painting of an M777 and detachment painted by Mr Phillip Pomroy. The painting now hangs in the School of Artillery.

A proposal was discussed at the Regimental Committee Meeting in Feb this year regarding prints of the painting, and it was agreed that there would be a run of 200 prints of which 50 would be numbered and signed by the artist.

The prints have now been produced and a low-resolution image is attached FYI. The only difference between the attached image and the hard-copy prints is that the prints have a 40mm white border for framing purposes.



The overall dimensions of the print are 672mm x 415mm

The signed prints will be sold for \$100 each, and the unsigned prints for \$35 each. Additional unsigned copies can be printed if there is the demand.

Individual prints will be available for purchase in November and I would therefore be grateful if you would give this matter the widest distribution and place any orders through me gary.down@defence.gov.au 03 5735 6267.

MAJ Gary Down (SO2 HOR)

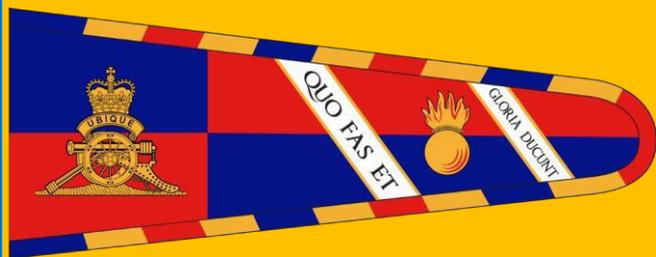
Australian Gunners

(Serving or Retired)



**YOU ARE INVITED
TO CELEBRATE THE**

150th Anniversary of Australian Artillery in 2021



Mark Your Diary National Events

Where: Canberra, Venues - RAA National Memorial & AWM

WHEN: SUNDAY 1ST AUGUST 2021

Where: Sydney, Venue - Victoria Barracks

WHEN: SATURDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2021

Note: More detailed information including timings will be provided when available throughout 2020 and 2021

Unit & Association Events

Throughout 2021 as advertised by those individual coordinating organisations.

CANBERRA

1st August 2021

**Commemorative
Service at RAA
National Memorial**

Mount Pleasant

**Synchronised
National Ceremonial
Fire Plan**

**Mount Pleasant & all
RAA Unit Locations**

**Last Post Ceremony
Australian War
Memorial**

SYDNEY

6th November 2021

**Formal Parade & Drum
Head Service**

**Incorporating the
presentation of a new
Queen's Banner**

Followed by

**150th Cocktail Party
Victoria Barracks**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact

RAA HOR Staff

via email at

raa.hor@defence.gov.au



RAA LUNCHEON



SERGEANT, VICTORIAN HORSE ARTILLERY 1890

Brigadier D. I. Perry OAM RFD ED in conjunction with the Royal Australian Artillery Association (Vic) Inc cordially invites both serving and retired Gunners to the Annual Royal Australian Artillery Luncheon.

This is a great opportunity to catch up and renew friendships with other Gunners, and especially to reunite those Gunners that we have not seen for a number of years. Let us hope that despite COVID19, we can still catch up and reminisce. Hopefully going forward we can gain confidence with the vaccination about to hit our shores.

The RAA Luncheon has been very successful over the past few years, so Gunners please bring along another Gunner to the Luncheon. WW2 Veterans are also welcome to attend at a reduced cost

WHEN: Wednesday 3rd March 2021
TIME: 1200 for 1230 hours
WHERE: RACV Club, 501 Bourke St. Melbourne

COST: \$75.00 (2 Course meal which includes a complimentary drink)

DRESS: Jacket and tie

RSVP: 21st February, 2021

TO: Reg W Morrell
P.O. Box 343, Mentone 3194.
Mobile – 0425 837 958
Email- regwmorrell@gmail.com
Direct Banking:
BSB 063 133 Account 00906918
(Please use surname as reference)

-----Reply slip-----

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

ADDRESS.....

Tel.No.....

Additional Attendee...Name.....Rank.....

Enclosed is a cheque for \$.....(payable to RAA Association) ..OR tick circle if bank transfer done

Special dietary requirements

If possible, I wish to be seated near