

# CASCABEL

Newsletter of the Royal Australian Artillery  
Association (Victoria) Incorporated



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NUMBER 18

OCTOBER 1988

## THE PRESIDENT WRITES

Dear Member,

It was fortunate for the Royal Australian Artillery that LT John Whitelaw was wounded on Gallipoli. If he hadn't been evacuated to Australia to recover, he almost certainly would have remained an Infantryman, with his sons following him into that Corps. But the young officer of the Permanent Forces, on recovering his health, transferred to the Artillery, so starting a tradition as his sons Norman, Fred and John followed their father into the RAA. Fred was a permanent soldier, from the outset, but Norman and John enlisted in the Militia with 10th Field Brigade, at Batman Avenue Depot, shortly before WW II. Both were commissioned into 10 Fd Bde. Norman enlisted in the AIF at the outbreak of the 1939-45 War, serving in the Middle East with 2/2 Field Regiment and in the Pacific with 2 Fd Regt and the Naval Bombardment Group. When the CMF was raised in 1948, Norman immediately enlisted in 2 Fd Regt, transferred to 31 Medium Regiment when he moved to Gippsland, but had to transfer to the Reserve after a few years due to the demands of his business.

In 1984, Norman returned to an active role in Artillery affairs when he succeeded the late Sandy

Mair as President of the RAA Association (Victoria), bringing to the appointment a tremendous enthusiasm for everything and anything that could benefit The Regiment. Coupled with his friendliness and gentility this brought out the best in his Committee so that we have enjoyed four very fruitful years under his leadership. As a token of his faith in the endurance of the Association he has generously donated \$1000 for a Perpetual Trophy to be awarded annually.

Thankyou Norman for your considerable contribution to the Association and for your friendship to us all. It is to be hoped that we will continue to see you and Paddy at our activities.

On Show Day a convoy of cars took 26 members to the Army Trials Establishment at Monageetta, where they were treated to a fascinating overview of the testing of a wide range of vehicles to determine their suitability for use by our Army. Some of the "obstacles" to be negotiated were: a mud field of volcanic clay one metre deep, a pool of water the same depth, a stretch of specially designed Australian "potholes", a stretch of concrete rocks and a grade of 1:1.67 (31 degrees) which was frightening to drive up and terrifying to drive down. The tour of the Establishment concluded with a nice meal and drinks in the Staff Mess.

The Committee has an interesting

programme planned for 1989 which is almost finalised.

There are still three significant events on this years schedule: a Happy Hour, a visit to the Military Tattoo and of course, St Barbara's Day. We hope to see you at all events.

Preliminary steps have been taken to make the Association the Trustee for the considerable quantity of trophies and other memorabilia that have accumulated in the Messes of the Regiments over the years. Older members will recall the losses that have been suffered due to the military authorities' belief that they "own" property donated to Messes and to the Association. Our Colonel Commandant, MAJGEN John Stevenson has kindly agreed to be the Settlor who will initiate the Trusteeship by, in effect, declaring that the RAA Association (Vic) is a suitable Trustee.

Related to this project is the wish of the President of the RAA Historical Society that States other than New South Wales, where the Society has been working effectively for years, become more active in this field. The COL COMDT has been given the task and will meet with the CDA, Norman Whitelaw and I to discuss the matter. Meanwhile, all contributions to our historical collection (properly labelled of course) would be most welcome if dropped at the Orderly Room at Batman Avenue.

On the subject of history, I would like to hear from anyone who can shed light on the fate of 4 AA Bty, formed at Geelong in November, 1938, and mobilised at Maribrynong in September, 1939. Norman Wright has told me that he raised a 4 HAA Bty in Sydney later in the War, so it appears that the Geelong battery was retitled. Can you help?

Warm thoughts to all,

Keith Rossi

#### COMMITTEE 1988/89

President: Keith Rossi 492629 AH  
Peter Hemingway, Merv Taggart,  
Judith Davis, David Osborne, Ross  
Peterken, Peter Veretennikoff, John  
Traill, Reg Morrell, Ernie Paddon  
and Linda Blake.

#### A FAREWELL WORD

Dear Member,

At our last Annual General Meeting I relinquished the position of President of your Association. I have served for a period of four terms and say honestly, and simply, I have enjoyed it all. I did appreciate the invitations by COs of units to attend training activities at Puckapunyal. I always enjoyed St Barbara's Day held by the various units in turn. And many other aspects of the position.

I have the greatest admiration for todays gunners in the ARES. One is forced to admit that they are better than we were. They have had a few advantages in life which we may have missed but they still have to compete with lack of equipment, allocation of practice ammunition and other shortages of what really are essentials. But by and large the army generally, has over generations, had to face the same problems. Admittedly, there is better transport today, far better communications and quatering and the training is far more technical. The Australian gunner is still the same bloke, however. Around the camp generally, on the gun lines under the nets when on the range, the same things are said, the same unmistakable sniff of cordite is in the air so one has to conclude that things have not changed much. Even the same mistakes are being made and the same odd actor puts on his act!!

I really have enjoyed it all. As far as we old fellas are concerned, the Association assists to keep us together and we keep telling the same jokes and the stories get better by the year.

Brigadier Keith Rossi has taken over as President and I wish him all success and I have the hope that he will enjoy the position as much as I did.

I also wish to thank the members of the Association for the opportunity I have had to be President and will look back, with very fond memories indeed, of my four terms.

Sincerely,

Norman Whitelaw

FROM THE LONDON TIMES  
MILITARY AND NAVAL INTELLIGENCE  
THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1858

Major-General Wesley, Deputy-Adjutant-General of the Royal Marine Force, made his annual official inspection of the corps yesterday, at Portsmouth. He was attended by Major Rodney, Aide-de-Camp, and Accompanied by Colonel Second Commandant Frazer, Lieutenant Colonel Tate, Quartermaster Roberts (First Lieutenant), Barrackmaster M'Callum (Captain), Surgeon Steel, &c. The inspection began at the head quarter barracks, Gun-wharf, at 10.30 a.m., where the division, about 800 strong, was principally drawn up in line, but the parade ground being too limited, about 300 were formed in column. The inspection of the small arms and accoutrements was the first part of the proceedings; then the barrack rooms school, gun stores, the sergeants' mess infirmary, &c. All these departments were found in admirable order by the Inspecting General.

On these official inspections, non commissioned officers and men have the privilege of making openly any complaint or preferring any request, and we believe one relative to the important consideration of pay was referred by the sergeants of the corps, whose pay was promised by His late Majesty William IV, under Admiralty letter dated August 25, 1804; to be precisely the same as that of the Royal (land) Artillery, - viz., 2s11.1/2. per diem for sergeants and so on down the scale. The Royal Marine Artillery sergeants have 2s.61/4d., and so on down the scale to gunner.

After the Victualling Store Barracks the Deputy-Adjutant-General next inspected the Royal Marine Infirmary, and Afterwards proceeded in the Artillery boat to Admiral Sir George Seymour to arrange about presenting the colours to the division of this day. He then proceeded to Fort Cumberland, to inspect the men stationed and witness the gun and mortar practice, &c., under command of

Brevet Major Wemyss, which commenced shortly after 2 o'clock, and consisted of three rounds from the sea service gun battery under the command of First Lieutenant De Kantzow; four rounds from the heavy battery, First-Lieutenant Thelwall; four rounds from the rocket battery. The targets were placed at 800, 1100, and 1600 yards. The whole of the practice was remarkably good, the shell bursting immediately over or on the targets; that from the 32-pounder garrison gun on the works under the command of First-Lieutenant Horsey, at long range, was the best ever witnessed. The inspection was continued afterwards in the fort, where the men were questioned if they had any complaints, but none were preferred. The divisional companies will be inspected at Forton on Friday.

The 47th Foot, under command of Colonel O'Grady Haly, C.B., received unexpected orders yesterday afternoon to vacate their quarters at Portsmouth, and move to Aldershot on Saturday, on which day the 15th Foot, from Aldershot, are ordered to relieve them at Portsmouth, but it is probable that the court-martial now sitting of the 47th may delay the movement a few days.

It appears that one of the largest army contractors contracted to supply soldiers' kits at two pounds eleven shillings and sixpence each and his contract being accepted, several thousand kits were sent into the clothing stores at Weedon, where it was discovered that the articles were of an inferior description and were not worth the sum paid for them by the government. On the discovery being made, the kits were returned to the contractor, who has since supplied the same kits to the troops at Chatham for three pounds eight shillings and ninepence each. It thus appears that articles which were rejected by the Government as not being worth two pounds eleven shillings and sixpence at Weedon, are considered to be worth three pounds eight shillings and ninepence at Chatham, and are purchased by the Government for the

troops at that price. Since the authorities have agreed to present each recruit with a free kit, the whole expense of the soldiers' necessities is borne by the Government instead of being charged to the recruit heretofore.

General Sir William F. Williams, attended by the garrison staff, yesterday reviewed the troops of the Royal Horse Artillery and field batteries Royal Artillery on Woolwich common. The proceedings commenced at 10 o'clock and terminated at 1 o'clock, immediately after which the Antrim Militia (Queen's Royal Rifles), in command of Lieutenant Colonel Ferguson, and the Royal Marines, in command of Colonel Brown, marched up to the ground and went through an interesting display of skirmishing until a heavy storm of rain obliged them to retire to quarters.

Article submitted by,

WO2 Jock Macdonald

#### 7 RHA

The 7th Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery (7 RHA), was formed in 1961. Up until this time, there had been four RHA regiments in the Royal Artillery, together with 33 Parachute Light Regiment which served in the airborne role with 16 Parachute Brigade. When it was decided that there should be only three RHA regiments, the 33 Parachute Light Regiment was disbanded, along with 2 and 4 RHA. This left the new unit, 7 RHA, to take over the airborne role. The nine senior batteries of the Royal Horse Artillery were then formed into the three regiments - the 1st, 3rd and 7th. By reorganising the RHA in this manner, it was intended to create an elite cadre through which Royal Artillery officers and men would pass in order to experience the ultimate in professional gunnery.

After 16th Parachute Brigade was disbanded in 1977, 7 RHA, served in West Germany for four years, with the role of rapid deployment being handed over to the 4th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. In late 1983, 5 Airborne Brigade was formed

and 7 RHA returned to the airborne role as the brigade's artillery regiment.

Each battery permanently supports a battalion in the brigade: F (Sphinx) Battery supports 2 Para; G (Mercer's Troop) Battery supports the 2nd Battalion, 2nd King Edward's Own Goorkhas; and 1 (Bull's Troop) Battery supports 3 Para. Since returning to the airborne role, 7 RHA has re-equipped with the Royal Ordnance 105mm light gun.

The experience of the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (2 Para), during the Falkands conflict of 1982 provided an interesting and somewhat ironic postscript to the Southern Arabian, Radfan campaign, of the early 1960s.

When 16 Parachute Brigade was disbanded in 1977, the 7th Parachute Light Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery (7 RHA), reverted to a ground role in West Germany with the British Army of the Rhine. The 105mm pack howitzers, being obsolescent by this time, were sold off. The regiment was then re-equipped with 155mm FH70 guns.

In late 1983, 7 RHA returned to the airborne role and once again became a para gunner unit. Two years later, the commanding officer of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Richards, visited Bull's Troop during a two week field firing exercise in the Falkands. Outside the Headquarters of Land Forces Falkand Islands were displayed two 105mm pack howitzers that had been captured from the Argentinian 4th Artillery Regiment during the battle for Goose Green. For Lieutenant-Colonel Richards, something about these guns seemed familiar...he took a closer look.

When Richards recognised the ordnance marks as British, his curiosity was further aroused. He took a pen knife and scrapped some of the camouflage paint off the gun shield. Just where he had expected to find it Richards saw the old Bull's Troop insignia. During the Falkands campaign, 2 Para had been shelled by the very same guns that had supported 3 Para in the Radfan! Submitted by, SSGT Ernie Paddon



### GIBRALTAR

In our last edition our former President, Norman Whitelaw, wetted our appetite for overseas travel with an account of his visits to Woolwich and The Kings Troop. This month Norman concludes the tale of his military sight-seeing with a visit to Gibraltar.

While standing on EUROPA POINT, the most southerly part of GIBRALTAR, look across that most wonderful blue of the sea, which is peculiar to the Mediterranean, and see NORTH AFRICA. The closeness of the two continents is most marked on a clear day. One cannot but give the imagination a run and conjure up a picture in the minds eye of the continual coming and going of small raiding parties over the centuries. And sometimes quite large armies. The history of the place grips you. The ATLAS MOUNTAINS, seemingly so close are seen very clearly across 14 miles of water which is the STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR. Generally, with their cap of white cloud, it was the starting point of many adventures directed towards EUROPE'S most southerly point.

The town of CEUTA, on the NORTH AFRICAN coast is directly fourteen miles to the south, while TARIGIER is thirty two miles to the southwest. Between the two places rises a mountain, SIDI MUSA or APESHILL (MONS ABYLA in classical times). SIDA MUSA is one of the two pillars of HERCULES which guard the strait, the other being MON CALPA, the name by which GIBRALTAR was known of old.

On 27 April 711, a Moorish Army led by a Barber TARIG-IBN-ZAYAD, sailed from NORTH AFRICA and landed on the sandy isthmus connecting the 1300ft high mountain with the southern shore of SPAIN. There he built a citadel, or castle, on the northwestern slope of the rocky outcrop, which he called GIBEL-TARIG, later to be corrupted to GIBRALTAR. He went on to conquer SPAIN and parts of FRANCE. Four hundred and forty years later a town had been established below the citadel which the moslems occupied until 1309. About that time

they were driven out by the Spaniards.

The Moors recaptured GIBEL-TARIG twenty four years later and it remained in Moorish hands for a further one hundred and twenty nine years. The Spanish Army, finally drove out the invaders on 24 August 1462.

GIBRALTAR was enlarged and fortified to be regarded as impregnable. But in 1704, during the Wars of the Spanish Succession, a combined Anglo-Dutch attack, succeeded in capturing "THE ROCK". The strategic importance at the time, was to command the entrance to the STRAITS and to tactically split or separate the MEDITERRANEAN and ATLANTIC fleets of the French Navy. This operation entailed the use of 1800 British and Dutch marines and the fort surrendered after three days.

Soon after its capture, the first of the Spanish attacks against the garrison took place and lasted six months. And the second in 1725, two years, also failed. In 1779 THE GREAT SEIGE began and lasted until 1783. the garrison remaining in place for a total of three years, seven months and twelve days.

At the end of the Napolenic Wars, GIBRALTAR prospered and grew in strategic importance, becoming a Crown Colony in 1830. The opening of the SUEZ CANAL imposed a further value, strategically, upon this small piece of land one and three quarters of a mile long by three quarters of a mile wide. The Royal Navy, with the establishment of THE ADMIRALTY DOCKYARD added again to its importance.

It was during the GREAT SEIGE, which saw a major development of the fortifications of GIBRALTAR. The most interesting of the defenses came about through the tactical situation facing the British commander at the time. Two developments took place after the Spanish lines had advanced so close to the north face of THE ROCK. It became impossible for artillery to be directed at them. The Governor offered to reward anyone who could deploy a gun on to a projection known as THE NOTCH. A Sergeant Major

INCE of The Corps of Military Artificers (later Royal Engineers) suggested tunnelling and work commenced under his direction in May 1782. His method was made simpler by the nature of the material through which the "galleries" were to be driven. By tapping holes about one inch in diameter for eighteen inches and using a minimal quantity of black gun powder, progress in driving the tunnels was such that up to fifteen feet a day was achieved. It is interesting to see today where they were driven in error off-line, and then corrected. The survey was not so good and it was by "a guess and by God" arrangement. Ultimately, two embrasures behind which quite commodious gun galleries had been prepared, were pierced through the wall of the rock-face, to disclose that the guns of the time could, indeed bear upon the advanced lines of the enemy below. Two guns were put into action at this point, but a further problem immediately became apparent. Gun carriages of those days were designed for firing when the piece was horizontal or elevated. There was mayhem, confusion and death for the gunners after the first firings, when the barrels broke the trunion "hoops" and flew about the galleries.

It was Lieutenant Koehler of the Royal Artillery, who modified (or invented) a carriage which, despite the barrel being in a severe angle of depression, could maintain a rate of fire and offer safety to the gunners serving the guns. It was a geometrical problem and solution. Koehler split the carriage lengthwise and elevated the rear portion pivoting on a point to the front of the carriage. This allowed the shock of discharge to be transferred downwards through an arc of timber. By this device the shock of discharge was taken into the carriage by the trunion "rests" which allowed the guns to be safely served. A full scale model of Koehlers Gun is in the main square of GIBALTAR and a further example, again in full scale, can be seen at the ROTUNDA ARTILLERY MUSEUM at WOOLWICH.

At the conclusion of the siege

the Spanish commander requested to be shown the defences of THE ROCK, particularly the "galleries", as they had become known. By that time there were places for eleven guns as the work had continued expanding the defences from which eleven guns could fire upon the Spanish front line. He was a member of the Spanish nobility. He told the British commander, General Elliott, that but for these guns the Spanish would have been masters of GIBALTAR once more. He expressed high admiration for the gunners and for members of The Corps of Military Artificers, who had built and manned the defensive galleries over such a long period.

Sergeant Major INCE was rewarded by the presentation of a house and land, high upon the northwest face of the mountain for his life-time use. It is there for all to see today. Lieutenant Koehler was also rewarded but history does not relate to what extent or by what means.

The Royal Marines, similarly to The Royal Regiment, are not awarded "battle-honours". It is interesting to note their badge depicts a castle and keys. These represent the unlocking of GIBALTAR during the combined Anglo-Dutch operation which took place in 1704, to originally capture the fortress for Britain.

In all there have been one hundred and forty six separate batteries established on THE ROCK during the period 1704-1956. GIBALTAR became of extreme importance during the two World Wars and its defences were brought to a very high standard during WWII. There were many anti-aircraft batteries to defend both the harbour and the air strip, plus coast defences of six inch - mainly MK VII and nine 9.2 inch guns. All batteries were named after either their first commanders or for some definite other reason and rather picturesquely. The last battery established was Princess Carolines Battery of six 5.25 inch state of the art anti-aircraft guns. It was sighted on a previous battery site which carried that name. It was in 1956 and at that point when, with

the introduction of the high flying jet bomber the battery was immediately and automatically made obsolete. The guns are still in place, mothballed in grease with all entry sealed against the ravages of vandals and weather.

The 9.2 inch installations are fascinating to visit. It is a fact of life, however, that they must deteriorate. The battery names, with the reasons for being so called, are fascinating and unfortunately, most of the reasons lie in history somewhere. O'Hara's Battery, Martin's Battery, Lord Airey's Battery, Buffadero Battery, Breakneck Battery and other names of equal interest.

Standing on O'Hara's Battery, looking south, I was told of the intense patrolling which took place in an endeavour to prevent German and Italian submarines passing through the Strait during both WWI and WWII. At certain states of the ATLANTIC tide there is a very brisk current either running into the MEDITERRANEAN or out to the ATLANTIC. Of this submariners took full advantage and with all power "off" they could slip by silently, in spite of all that could be done to detect them.

From the same place, one can look down upon the little harbour of ROSIA, GIBRALTAR'S first harbour. It was here within this small shelter, H.M.S. Victory was repaired and made seaworthy following the Battle of TRAFALGAR. It was here too, allegedly, Lord Nelsons body was taken ashore, sealed in a barrel of brandy for fast shipment to London by a despatch vessel and for burial in Westminster Abbey.

Much intense tunnelling was carried out during WWII. Over thirty miles of tunnels exist today and were for all users. Ammunition was the first consideration. Later water and fuel storages were excavated. A large hospital was installed and a safe underground headquarter area established. All the places consisted of tunnels and galleries, large and small, into which army type buildings were placed. It is not generally known that General Eisenhower had his HQ

for OPERATION TORCH, the invasion of NORTH AFRICA, within The Rock at GIBRALTAR. The HQ establishments are still there and can be seen. The buildings, being mainly of steel, bitumen coated, are caroding and mouldering away in the high humidity of the tunnels. Except for those areas in use today, there is no future for most of these installations within THE ROCK.

The presence of The Royal Artillery, both past and present, will never be obliterated from this small bastion of just over one square mile in area. At the northern end of the mountain is its highest peak and upon the peak flies the Union Jack, night and day. It indicates to the 35000 Gibraltarians, who reside there, Britain intends to stay, as in the Falkands. They, the residents, would have it no other way. London Bobbies patrol the streets and the pound sterling is the coin of the realm, although there is a Gibraltar pound note.

May I suggest, historically, GIBRALTAR is a gunners paradise.

Norman Whitelaw

#### WAR MEMORIAL SHIRE OF FERNTREE GULLY

A War Memorial to commemorate the ex servicemen and women of the Shire of Ferntree Gully (now Knox and Sherbrooke) will be officially dedicated, at 11am, on November 11th 1988. Anyone interested in attending should contact Ed Williams (a member of this Assoc) for details (057) 981 509.

#### ST BARBARA'S DAY

Date: Sunday, 4 December, 1988  
Venue: Fort Queenscliff  
RV: 1100HR - Fort Main Gate  
Format: Parade followed by Lunch  
Tours of Fort etc.  
For further Information Contact:  
Judith Davis 781 2445

#### CONTRIBUTIONS!

Please forward your article to:  
"CASABEL"  
P.O. BOX 449 FRANKSTON. 3199  
Not Later Than FRI 30 DEC 88

# RAA ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

## STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1988

### GENERAL FUND

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Subscriptions	1812.00	Supper - AGM	151.89
Interest - Current Accounts	191.48	Supper - Happy Hours	215.46
Interest - Term Deposits	471.69	Bar Snacks Anzac Day	200.00
Sale - Membership Badges	485.00	Deficit Church Parade Lunch	11.08
Profit RAA Assoc (Vic) Shop	360.17	Postage	783.94
Donations	26.54	Printing	163.00
		Stationery	21.69
		Annual Awards	127.50
		Insurance	107.00
		Donation - Fort Queenscliff	
		Fund	75.00
		Registration Fee "Cascabel"	40.00
		RAA Association Sign	150.00
		Bank Charges	18.98
		Banner - Post World War11	
		Gunners	290.95
		Funeral Notices	98.00
		Presentations	86.00
		Surplus for year	806.39
	<u>\$3346.88</u>		<u>\$3346.88</u>
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### RAA SOCIAL FUND

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Interest - Current Accounts	7.23	Framing - Vickery Trophy	
- Term Deposits	1.01	Certificate	25.00
Deficit For Period	<u>16.76</u>		
	<u>\$25.00</u>		<u>\$25.00</u>
	=====		=====

### MUSEUM AND MEMORABILIA FUND

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Interest - Current Accounts	1.30	Surplus For Period	1.48
- Term Deposits	<u>.18</u>		
	<u>\$1.48</u>		<u>\$1.48</u>
	=====		=====