



"CASCABEL"

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Association (Victoria)

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THAT BIT OF SHRAP?

Troop Sergeant Major Watkins got the message from the Command Post that he'd cracked it to attend a Field Works Course at New-a-Lasbin and that he could take four days leave before reporting to the School. "Snow" Watkins has a real old sweat of heavy build and had been around guns as long as anyone could remember - started on 13 pdrs and graduated through 60 pdrs, 4.5 Hows, three marks of 18 pdrs, a hybrid 18/25 pdr with a split trail and now was the undisputed boss of half a dozen 25 pdrs in 'F' Troop. He'd done his stint as an Ack IG at the School of Guts and what he didn't know about his equipment and their performance was very little indeed.

His face always looked as though he'd just put his razor away and his solid frame and blooming skin conjured the thought that half the production of C.U.B. had gone down his gullet and that his belly was a cemetery for Noon's pies.

He packed up and was soon rattling off in a truck away from the sounds of 'F' Troop as they continued in a Harassing Fire programme.

When he got near New-a-Lasbin, "Snow" Watkins came in sight of the tents and Red Cross of the A.C.H. where one of his Nos. 1 had gone a few days earlier with a nasty bit of shelling in the 'F' Troop position, with one landing just outside the gun pit, setting fire to the net and causing quite some havoc.

As luck would have it, there was only one casualty - a jagged piece of HE in "Yabber" McPhee's right thigh. "Snow" hauled in to see how his No. 1 was faring. At the bedside he posed the usual normal stupid question - "How are yer, Yabber"?

"Not real bad - a chunk of shrap in me leg, but they got it out; should be able to walk in a coupla days" - came the reply.

"Snow" Watkins grunted. He knew that these days there was no such thing as "shrap" proper. He knew that the last time he used a Shrapnel shell was way back in his 18 pdr MKII days in a practice shoot on the range outside Bullamakanka. He mused in memory that way back in 1784 Lietenant Harry Shrapnel RA had invented what was first called the spherical case shot and which later became known as a Shrapnel Shell. "Snow" had learnt all about this shell when he was an AIG at the school.

He recalled that the Shrapnel Shell used on 18 pdrs was a terribly effective weapon against troops in the open, because when used as an air burst projectile - it sprayed out, over its zone of dispersion, a deadly cone of round lead pellets which had a dreadful killing effect on anyone not under cover.

The Shrapnel Shell had an outer casing of cast iron, with sides so thin that it was only strong enough to bear the

shock of discharge. The inside walls of the shell had six grooves cast in it, so as to weaken it and enable a very small bursting charge to crack open the shell, without violently bursting it and so release some ninety-two spherical balls or pellets held inside, separately spaced apart in a resin. These were flung forward in a deadly cone effect by the forward motion of the shell.

The bursting charge was placed at the base of the projectile from which an iron tube in the axis of the shell led to the fuse at its head. The fuse was a T & P 80. You set the time fuse with a fuse key, not unlike a bottle-opener and so adjusted the height of burst above the ground.

"Snow" mused on for a moment about the similarity of the fuse key to a bottle-opener and that reminded him that "I really could go a nice cold beer".

He also recalled a snatch line or two from an old Gunner song

"That chases out the hun helter- skelter
As it bursts with appropriate correcter"

That's right he thought - "you set the Correcter on the Fuse Bar, carried on the inside of the gun shield; that big brass gadget that looked like an overgrown Slide Rule". The Correcter always came in the Initial Orders from the CPO when using Shrapnel Shell when air-bursts were needed. The T&P 80 fuse could of course be used as a percussion shell also - to burst "on graze" and in fact on graze it would explode at angles of impact down to 3°. "Snow" was shocked early in his ballistic studies to learn that a shell rarely lands on its nose - why should it? - its back end is heavier anyway; and all the rifling did was to ensure that it travels nose first in flight along the trajectory. This led him to think about shell design and "calibre radius head" and this led him back to the fuse key - and to a bottle-opener and that he was still thirsty.

So in kindly fashion, but with much correctness he said to young Sergeant "Yabber" McPhee - "got a bit of HE in yer leg did yer"?

He left - got in the truck and thought - "He'll be OK, and now for that bloody beer".

Colonel "Sandy" Mair.

TF vs RF

I have been asked how the Regular Force (RF) and the Territorial Force (TF) work together within the Royal Regiment of NZ Artillery. My Regimental experience as a Regular Force NZ Gunner Officer included three years with 161 Bty as Section Commander and Gun Position Officer and two years as Adjutant 3rd Field Regiment - qualifications relevant to this article when you understand the composition of the Regiments. I must point out that my knowledge is now six years old and some changes could have occurred within the Royal Regiment.

First a brief overview of NZ Artillery during my service, which was made up of three main components.

1. 16 Fd Regt. HQ South Auckland.
Task: Spt the North Island 1 Inf Bde Gp
 - a. Staff TF CO, 2IC, Adj, RSM, RQMS all RF
 - b. Units 161 Bty, Papakura, all RF
11(A) Bty, Auckland TF
22(D) Bty, Wellington TF
Locating Tp and HQ Bty, half RF, half TF
 - c. Eqpt L5 105mm HOW, FACE
2. 4 Mdm Bty HQ Hamilton. Task: Spt 1 Inf Bde Gp
 - a. Staff TF DC. 1RF Sect comb and BSM, all other staff TF
 - b. Eqpt 55" Guns
3. 3rd Fd Regt HQ Christchurch. Task: Spt the South Island 3 Inf Bde Gp

- a. Staff Except for RF Adj, CO
 and all officers TF
 RSM, RQMS, Bty BSMs
 RF, all other
 NCO's and Gunners
 TF
- b. Units 31 (B) Bty Dunedin
 (All TF) 32 (E) Bty
 Christchurch
 HQ Bty Burnham Camp
- c. Eqpt 25 pdrs

The minimum training requirements for a TF Gunner is 20 days (maximum 60) normally taken up with a 14 day annual camp and 6 training days. Annual Camps are normally held in January with the first week devoted to Regimental activities, live shoots, individual Battery training etc and the second week joining the Brigade for Brigade manoeuvres. 16Fd Regt and 4 Mdm Bty conduct their live shoots at Waiomu under the shadow of Mt Ruapehu whilst for 3 Fd Regt their live firing is conducted in the Tekapo area under the eye of Mt Cook - variable weather as the CO and I noted one February camp. Here we were on an isolated tussock knoll after a helicopter flight from sunny Christchurch waiting for the Regiments vehicles to arrive - in the driving snow.

In outlining the TF/RF integration within the Regiment one must bear in mind the smaller numbers involved in comparison to Australia and consequently the practical necessity of economy to share in each others activities. Often TF members would make up 161 Bty (RF) numbers for overseas exercises and conversely 161 Bty would often find themselves on TF gun positions during weekends or annual camps. Where possible TF Officers would be encouraged to attend the RF Regimental courses ie GPO's course, and so on.

When with 161 Bty (all RF) I was somewhat cynical of the "Sunday Soldiers" assisting the TF on the few weekends that I was not away on exercise, or on course, was not an instant method of inducing harmony. However, being Gunners the *Espirit-de-Corps* being far higher than any other Corp in NZ, within the few

major camps and messes we learnt to stick together through thick and thin even though it may only have been midnight ruggie in the mess.

On my move to the TF Regt (3rd Field) I came to learn what dedication to gunnery was all about. Here were these poor blighters at the bottom of the globe, still with 25 pdrs, no FACE, issue 37 pattern webbing etc, Regt Office with one light bulb, no heating and real hot bellied stoves. From the CO to the youngest gunner, the desire to learn gunnery took precedence over worrying about the seemingly poor facilities, and the camaraderie, enthusiasm and spirit of this Regt is famous throughout NZ. The RSM, Tiny Hill (ex All Black and now All Black selector) and myself continue on the many traditions of the Regt e.g. the formal dining in night in the field for the Gunners with Officers and NCO's serving. The troops ability to respond the next day through the cold and snow still bewilders me to this day.

The Adj, 3rd Fd also had the permanent position of Secretary of the Canterbury Artillery Officers Mess (based in the Christchurch Officers Club) formed to arrange four activities each year - Gunners Day, St. Barbaras Day, Golf Match and Christmas party for all current and past RF/TF Gunner Officers. The RSM likewise held a similar position on the Canterbury Gunners Association (All ranks). Their main task was the annual Gunners Ball - held each year at the stunning Christchurch Town Hall. This function was always a sell out with over 400 attending including a consistent number of notable dignitaries.

These forms of external training activities were common throughout the main Artillery centres of Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, and this common desire to further the Gunner spirit is I believe one of the reasons why the RF and TF are well integrated within the Royal Regiment of NZ Artillery.

In closing, it was my pleasure to organise the final historic live firing of the 25 pdrs and be involved in the later formal ceremony of marching out these guns. 3rd Fd Regt have since

acquired M2A2's and I now hear that TF/RF are further integrated with the only RF Bty (161) being split with half now posted to 3rd Fd Regt.

I am indebted to Lt Col R. Gaw RAA for the privilege of preparing this article and if it were not for his Gunner neck we would not have met.

Capt Robert Barker RNZA

ST. BARBARA'S DAY

Due to severe cutbacks in training time allocated to Ares Units the traditional St. Barbara's Day parade will not be held this year.

The annual St. Barbara's Day Happy Hour is however still on. It will be held at 132 Div Loc Bty, Landcox Street, East Brighton on Friday 2nd December, 1983. Festivities will get under way at 5.30 p.m. Play will be under lights and stumps will be drawn sometime before dawn on the 3rd.

The Locaters have proved to be excellent hosts in the past and this years Happy Hour is "shaping-up" as the best yet. With the cancellation of the St. Barbara's Day Parade, all serving Gunners are being encouraged to attend the HH, so it will be a great opportunity to meet with both old friends and catch up on the latest technical developments within the Corps from the current crop of Gunners.

Make a point of dropping in for an hour or two and sharing in the light supper and amber liquid! Perhaps we can even encourage our President, Col Sandy Mair, to spin a yarn or two.
Ladies Welcome!

CALENDAR

Fri 02 Dec 83	St. Barbara's Day Happy Hour
Feb 84	Church Parade
Thu 05 Apr 84	10 Mdm Regt Camp Visit
Wed 25 Apr 84	Anzac Day at Batman Ave Depot
Fri 18 May 84	Gunner Dinner (Officers only)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have not yet paid your 1983/84 subscriptions, please accept this as a friendly reminder. A renewal application form is enclosed for your use when renewing your membership. Subscriptions are \$5.00 per year or \$50.00 for life membership.

SENIOR PROMOTIONS AND POSTINGS

Lt Col Graeme Standish ED, former CO 10 Mdm Regt, will be promoted Colonel 1 Dec 83 and be posted as Chief of Staff HQ 3 Dif FF Cp.

Lt Col Doug Perry ED, CO 2/15 Fd Regt 1 Jul 79 - 30 Jun 81, will be promoted Colonel 1 Apr 84 and become Colonel Artillery.

Col Mike Vincent ED, Colonel Artillery relinquishes this appointment and will be posted for duty at HQ 3 Div FF Cp 1 Apr 84.

Maj Rob Gaw was promoted Lt Col 18 Aug 83 and assumed Command of 10 Mdm Regt.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Association's annual general meeting was held on Thursday 28th July at Batman Ave. A good number of members attended - hearing a report on the years activities from our President, electing the committee for 1983/84 and viewing a number of films about new "Gunner" equipments coming into service in Australia. A good time was had by all.

The Committee is:

President: Col A. Mair
Tel 728 1577

Vice President: Lt Col C. McLean
Tel 819 3055

Secretary: Lt K. Field
Tel 211 7201

Treasurer: WO1 K. Hodges
Tel 387 4496

Committee: Lt Col D. Cox - Tel 203196
Lt Col R. Gaw - Tel 850 6671
Maj M. Taggart - Tel 598 8452
Maj G. Hill - Tel 697 3839
Capt J. Davis - Tel 781 2445
WO1 J. Ferguson - Tel 786 7487