

CASCABEL

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THE PRESIDENT WRITES

Dear Member,

The reporting period began excitingly enough with the meeting of representatives from 17 Unit Associations at Batman Avenue Depot, where discussions ranged over such subjects as the role of the RAA Association, the possibility of amalgamating the smaller associations into groups of viable size, the collection and display of Artillery memorabilia, the location of a Gunner Museum in Victoria and the allocation of 2/15 Field Regiment soldiers as banner bearers for associations in the forthcoming Anzac Day Commemoration March. Finally, those present did their best to deal with a delicious supper tastefully presented by the ubiquitous Judith Davis.

Anzac Day found John Traill in the kitchen at Batman Avenue preparing a 7am breakfast for Gunners who had attended the Dawn Stand-To at the Shrine, and for members of the Committee and of 2/15 Fd Regt who had returned from their Annual Camp to set up the Depot for Anzac Day activities. Members visiting the Depot after the March found the Hall and Messes decorated appropriately with guns, cam nets, sandbags and other reminders of life in the Royal Regiment. Our thanks to RSM Keith Martin for arranging this work to

be done, also for organising banner bearers for the Anzac Day March. The Messes buzzed with comradely conversation and the warmth generated when old friends meet. Due to a hiccup caused by a Unit Association that believed it had special rights to usage of the JARK's Club, the Vietnam veterans transferred their reunion to the Sergeants Mess where they were made most welcome. A great day!

Exercise El Alamein, the annual firepower demonstration at Puckapunyal, was not on our schedule of activities but we were able to get 8 tickets from the United Services Institution (thanks USI) and joined that group for a day full of interest as we watched Armoured, Artillery and Infantry units of our Regular Army demonstrate their mobility and firepower capabilities. A series of setpiece displays by rifles, machine guns, flame throwers, mortars, field guns, medium guns, Light Reconnaissance Vehicles, Armoured Personnel Carriers and Leopard tanks, together with Army helicopters and fixed wing aircraft culminated in an attack exercise using all means of fire and movement. An impressive display that well warranted the long day away from home - we left Batman Avenue at 10am in Army buses and were returned to the same place at about 7pm. This annual event offers so much of interest to members that I will seek to have the RAA Association included in the routine ticket allocation.

The Forts at Point Nepean and South Channel are attracting more public interest since the former was transferred from Commonwealth to Victorian Government ownership and the latter was purchased by the Government tourist agency Victour. The two 8 in guns on Hydro-Pneumatic mountings (so called disappearing guns), barrel nos 4266 and 4312 from South Channel were found guarding the southern approaches to the City of Northcote in High Street, where they had been since 1913. Victour wants to recover them for re-installation on new HP mountings on South Channel, but is not having much success.

The Department of Conservation Forests and Lands, which is responsible for Point Nepean, has written to advise me that they have found a Gardner engine, once used to drive the generator that supplied power to Fort Nepean, on display in a park in Marysville. Used for many years to power a timber mill in the area, it is now an important historical relic of the Marysville district. DCFL seeks the assistance of the RAA Association in persuading the Marysville Historical Society to give up the Gardner for return to its original home. Any member with a bright idea for achieving this admirable objective should communicate with me without delay!

During World War II, the main anti aircraft defence of Fremantle was the Buckland Hill Battery. The Hill is now being subdivided for housing and the developer has expressed a wish to retain the battery site as a park on which to restore the battery as a museum. The Anti-Aircraft Association (WA) has written seeking our help in locating equipments to install on the site. Items wanted are: 3.7" guns, 40mm Bofors guns, one Barr & Stroud Height & Range Finder with tripod, one Sperry Predictor with tripod, and one Mobile Radar. Any member knowing the whereabouts of any of the above items should please contact Secretary Merv Taggart or me.

In an exchange of letters and telephone calls, former ARA member

of the Committee, Major Peter Veretennikoff, now attending the Royal Military College of Science, makes it clear that he and his family are enjoying their stay in the UK. He is making satisfactory progress with his studies and has high hopes of a satisfactory pass. At Anzac time Peter, together with 23 other Australian servicemen, 10 Canadians and one New Zealander visited the World War I battlefields in Flanders and on the Somme. He reports that it was a most inspiring experience, well worth the considerable cost to the participants. Both this Association and the RSL have asked the Commonwealth Government to contribute towards the cost of these visits (as representatives of Australia) in future.

You will have received in the mail notices about the "Back To The Regiment" Night in the Batman Avenue Sergeants Mess on Friday, 28th July, and the Artillery Ball on Friday, 4th August. The former is for anyone who has ever been a Sergeant in the Artillery, while the Ball is for every past and present member of the Regiment and their friends. Both events are great value and getting better every year. I commend them to you.

Perhaps the most important event on our calendar occurs at 8pm on Thursday, 24th August. It is our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING! There will be the usual formalities of course: election of committee members and office bearers, financial statements and a delicious supper but, and more important by far, it is the time when we on the Committee give an account of our stewardship and you, the members, tell us what you want us to do for you in the ensuing year. Come along and tell us! Put it in your diary NOW.

Warm thoughts,

Keith Rossi

2/15 FIELD REGIMENT
ANNUAL CAMP 1989

Annual camp for 2/15 Field Regiment for 1989 was held at Puckapunyal over the period 10-23 April 1989. The Regiment spent the two weeks in the field on Pucka Range largely in the Forest West Area. Approx 130 soldiers (including ARA) attended which represents some 60% of the unit effective strength. The first week which was generally wet and cold consisted mainly of battery level training, and the next 5 days or so of regimental level training (including a small arms shoot from a gun position) leading to the ARTEP Assessment on the last 2 days.

Each battery was assessed over a 24 hour period and below are extracts of the "ARTEP EVALUATION - 2/15 FD REGT" from Colonel A.W. English, Comd, HQ Land Command Artillery.

"I believe that both 2 & 23 Field Batteries generally met the performance requirements of the ARTEP for Fd Regt RAA. Both batteries were able to fire, move and communicate to a satisfactory standard. Key personnel were aware of their technical duties,....".

Unfortunately some missions could not be attempted due to range restrictions. These restrictions are becoming far too common an occurrence in recent years as more units bid for and use the range concurrently.

Our Chaplain, Captain Barry Brown, was introduced to gunnery at grass roots level (mud actually). "Gunner" Brown was employed as a gun no. with 23 Bty (when he wasn't a sig at RHQ or conducting his Church service under cam nets), this task he not only performed well but also enjoyed; to the extent that he had to be prised off that gun during the assessment phase to become a sig at RHQ. I am sure that this is an excellent way to induct any new officer into the Regiment. I am equally as sure our next Church Service (FEB 90) will see some new faces attend.

The middle Tuesday of camp saw reporters from various local papers in the Dandenong & Frankston areas

attend for a quick look at what their "local lads" were up to in their "spare time". Enclosed below is an article (word for word) which appeared in the "NEWS" 25 May 89. I assure that this article in no way reflects the way things are done (nor who does them) at 23 Bty, but I still thought this article worthy of inclusion for its humorous qualities.

The last Saturday in camp was "celebrated" with a BBQ, bonfire & a couple of tinnies (light of course).

This camp was also the last for our 2IC, Major Ross Peterken, who retired in June this year and I would take this opportunity to wish him well in his retirement from all at 2/15 Field Regiment.

Captain John A. Traill

THE BATTLE OF 'DOCH HILL
From: The "NEWS" 25 May 1989

"To the men of 2/15 Field Regiment, which includes Frankston's 23 Battery, the imaginary enemy on Murdoch Hill is as real as the live shells pounding their position.

A gunnery sergeant screams instructions at his six man crew - "five rounds, fire for effect" - and the three 105mm Howitzers, loaded with high explosive shells, fire in sequence with deadly accuracy.

Firing for effect, with shells exploding in a chevron or bent V pattern, can "neutralise" or destroy an enemy position 150 m square.

Information on enemy positions had been relayed from the mobile command post to the three gunnery sergeants for instant adjustment to range or direction.

The action is frantic under the camouflaged gun implacements as shells, with pre-determined sized explosives, are placed within arm's reach as the crew clamber on and over the gun making adjustments.

The gunnery sergeant looks through a telescope-measuring device making final calculations before firing and yells; "Bearing set. Five rounds, fire for effect. Fire!"

And three Howitzers thunder into action with an ear-shattering bang one after another.

Forward observers in the "impact" zone watch the shells explode and relay back to the command post changes in degrees - left or right, up or down - before the battery can zero and fire for effect.

Smoke fills the gun emplacement, the noise is deafening and the smell of cordite burns the throat and nostrils.

The 105mm Howitzer has a range of 11 kilometres and although outdated by more modern pieces, is the standard field gun used by the regiment.

After the enemy on Murdoch Hill has been "neutralised" and in theory over-run by the infantry, the men prepare to move to their next target - heavy vehicle movement 20 kilometres north of the hill.

Gun crew sergeants attend a "quick order" briefing for map references or "grid" positions of the new target and for any change in attack orders.

On this Tuesday morning alone, the gun crews were ordered to seven different locations. Each time the crews had to frantically dismantle equipment and haul their huge gun on to the tow bars of waiting vehicles.

Each gun crew is expected to be at the new location in 30 minutes and take up gun emplacements in positions already marked out by a reconnoitre party.

The scene at a new location is chaotic - it's a race against time as sergeants urge their crews to become operational in double-quick time.

The same procedure was repeated dozens of times per day during the physically and mentally draining two-week exercise.

According to a reservist in charge of the ammunition for the exercise, the total cost in ammunition was "\$2 short of a million".

When needed the 2/15 Field Regiment is designated to defend the town of Katherine and the new Tindal Air Force base."

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY IN VICTORIA 1854 - 1989

The war in Crimea gave rise to fear in the Australian colonies that the resident British troops would be withdrawn to fight there, leaving them unprotected. It was decided in the very young colony of Victoria to raise volunteer corps for defence against the Russian invasion that would surely ensue. Accordingly, on 3rd November 1854, the Volunteer Act was proclaimed to raise 10 Rifle Corps. Thus, the Melbourne and South Melbourne Batteries were raised. In 1869 the St Kilda Rifle Corps at Chapel Street, East St Kilda changed to an Artillery Corps. In the early 70's the batteries were titled "A", "C" and "B" respectively.

In 1865 the Brighton Rifle Corps converted to Artillery. Its role was to contribute to the defence of Hobsons Bay from a battery position on Point Ormond thus it may have been Garrison rather than Field Artillery, although it was equipped with four 40 pounder RBL Armstrong guns (wheeled). This corps disbanded in 1877.

The volunteer corps were not paid and had to provide their own uniforms, which were pretty elaborate in some corps. Officers and NCO's were elected by the men. The system had many shortcomings and, in January 1884, was replaced by a paid militia, similar in most respects to the Army Reserve.

A Battery (East Melbourne, where the Eye and Ear Hospital now stands), B Battery (Chapel Street, East St Kilda) and C Battery (Cnr Howe Crescent and Ferres Street, South Melbourne, now a Bowling Club) were now grouped into the "Metropolitan Brigade of Field Artillery" and remained so organised until Federation. On 30 December 1884 the Government accepted the offer of Sir William Clarke to raise a battery based on his property "Rupertswood" at Sunbury. The Government supplied three multi-barrelled Nordenfeldt machine guns and Sir William provided the horses, stables, training facilities and saddlery. The battery's role was to support the Cavalry. On 19 March 1889, the

title of the Nordenfeldt Battery was changed to "The Victorian Horse Artillery". A week later the Government accepted the offer of Mr A.S. Chirnside of Werribee to provide a battery, but as a half battery, being a detachment of the VHA at Sunbury. The Rupertswood half battery and the Chirnside half battery were each equipped with two 12 Pounder Armstrong guns. The Chirnside half battery disbanded on 28 February 1893 and the Rupertswood half battery on 30 June 1897.

On 28 July 1890 a battery equipped with four 40 Pounder RBL guns was formed at Hastings on Western Port Bay. While intended as a position (Garrison) battery, it was nevertheless mobile, the guns being drawn by bullock teams. It joined in manoeuvres on Mornington Peninsula with the Horse and Field Artillery Brigade. A Nordenfeldt Machine Gun detachment of the battery was formed at Queenscliff in 1893 but disbanded in 1897.

On Federation of the Army in 1903, A, B & C Batteries became 1, 2, 3 & 5 Batteries. 8 Bty AGA (Warrnambool) became 4 Bty and the Hastings battery became 6 Bty in the following year. All were grouped as the Victorian Field Brigade of the Australian Field Artillery (AFA). The Brigade was later re-titled 2 Aust FAB, 1 and 3 FAB being in NSW and QLD.

On 4 Feb 1911, field batteries were renumbered sequentially throughout Australia and 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 Batteries became 6, 8, 7, 9 & 10. No. 6 Bty (Hastings) was disbanded.

It should be mentioned that a permanent battery of field artillery had been established. Known as "C Instructional Cadre" it was responsible for light horse and field artillery training. In 1910, C Cadre was replaced by No. 2 AFA (Permanent). In 1911 the designation was changed to No. 2 Battery RAFA. The Battery was kept very busy in 1908 running courses of instruction for the militia batteries on the new 18 pounders, the first of the QF gun issued to the Victorian gunners.

The introduction of Compulsory

Military Training from 1 July 1912 gave rise to considerable expansion of the Militia. The field artillery in Victoria was increased to five brigades - 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11 FAB each of three batteries. After serving in the Cadets from the age of 14 years, soldiers served in a unit for three years from their 18th birthday, then on the Reserve for three from their 21st birthday. The rate of intake of recruits was such that it would be many years before all brigades were fully manned, but the organisation was there to receive them when so required. While the Militia continued to function during World War I, its operations were severely limited by the high rate of enlistment in the AIF.

Victoria raised several FABs for the AIF - 2 FAB (1st Div), 4 FAB (2nd Div), 8 FAB (3rd Div), while 10 and 15 FABs, raised in Egypt in March, 1916, largely from reinforcements for 1 and 2 Div, had a high proportion of Victorians. The organisation and reorganisations of the FABs in the AIF were too complex to be dealt with here, but will be the subject of another article.

It having been decided to perpetuate the history of the AIF units in peace, the batteries of the Militia FABs were renumbered on 1 Oct 1918 to match the numbers of the AIF batteries recruited in the same State, and were given an additional battery (Howitzer) at the same time. Thus, 19, 20, 21 Batteries of 7 FAB became 4, 5 & 6 Batteries respectively (from 2 FAB [AIF]) with 46(How) Bty added. 8 FAB batteries became 29, 30, 31, & 47(H); 9 FAB batteries became 10, 11, & 12; 10 FAB batteries became 16, 19 & 21 while 11 FAB batteries became 23, 24 & 32.

In 1921 further changes were made. The AMF adopted a Divisional organisation similar to the AIF. Victoria was allotted 3 Div, two brigades of 4 Div and two brigades of 2 Cav Div. FAB titles were brought into line with AIF units and there was some rationalisation of battery titles. The artillery of 3 Div was 2, 4 & 8 FABs, of 4 Div 10, 15 & 13 FABs and of 2 Div Cav

22 FAB. 13 FAB and one battery of 22 FAB (48 Fd Bty) were in South Australia.

The allocation of batteries was:

2 FAB: 4, 5, 6, 102(How)

4 FAB: 10, 11, 12, 104(How)

8 FAB: 29, 30, 31, 108(How)

10 FAB: 37, 38, 39, 110(How)

15 FAB: 22, 23, 24, 112(How)

22 FAB: 40, 44, 48.

Note: 40 Fd Bty (Albury) was transferred from 2 MD, where it had been 27 Fd Bty of 6 FAB. 48 Fd Bty was in Adelaide.

On 1 July 1925, 2 Medium Brigade (4, 5, 6 Mdm Batteries) was raised. In those days it was Aust Garrison Artillery (AGA). The field artillery organisation remained essentially unchanged until the outbreak of World War II, although, due to difficulties in manning it was necessary for every brigade to disband a battery. The problem of manning was particularly severe after the cessation of compulsory military training in 1929. With the increase in recruits coming forward in 1938 and 1939 it was possible to re-raise the fourth battery. In some FABs it became the mechanised or pneumaticised battery, that is, its 4 guns had pneumatic tyres and were drawn by a vehicle rather than 6 horses.

2 and 4 FABs were located at Chapel Street Drill Hall, 8 FAB at Park Street North Carlton, 10 and 15 FAB in a wooden Drill Hall in Albert Road South Melbourne until it was burnt down in 1930 when they moved to Moore Street South Melbourne until the Batman Avenue Depot was built in 1934.

(to be continued)

NAGASAKI

Our roving reporter, Norman Whitelaw, has recently returned from another overseas jaunt and files this report from his military travelogue.

Your Vice President, Peter Hemingway and I have just visited Japan with our wives and it was considered that a few comments about Nagasaki would be of

interest.

This city was the target for the second atom bomb which ultimately ended WWII. It was dropped from a B29 bomber on 9 August, 1945. The plane was called BLOCKSCAR after the skipper Captain BLOCK, USAF. This plane is now preserved in an aviation museum in the United States.

The target at take-off was another industrial city in the south of Japan but on arrival of the plane it was completely obscured by cloud. The second, or "back-up" target was Nagasaki, which likewise, was cloud covered. At the point of turning away the bombardier glimpsed through a cloud gap the Mitsubishi ship building yards and the supporting industrial complex. The bomb was aimed and dropped from 30,000 ft. It detonated at 1500 ft at 1102HR. At that time the US had two bombs which were called Little Boy and Big Boy. Little Boy, of an even cylindrical shape, was dropped on Hiroshima, and Big Boy, which was a comparable shape to an Australian Rules football, was dropped on Nagasaki. Both bombs were about 3 metres or 10 feet in length.

Immediately there was a casualty list of 74,000 dead, and 75,000 badly injured, burned, or suffering the effects of radiation. Of a population of 240,000, the balance of 120,000 was homeless. It is stated in the museum, that perhaps the dropping of the second bomb was unnecessary and pointless, three days following the first. But, who is to know?

The epicentre of the explosion was immediately above the city's gaol where 135 residents died with great suddenness. A little of the building's foundation is preserved for historical purposes but in the remainder of the area a Memorial Peace Park has been created and various countries about the globe have donated pieces of symbolic statuary to make it what it is today. It is quite impressive and the whole area is extremely well developed and maintained. A museum has been constructed alongside the park and is a repository for memorabilia and items of interest,

picked up over the city area. There are many photographs, enlarged, which were taken at the time, some are pretty gruesome but have their place among such exhibits. One interesting item is a pendulum clock, the type of which most of our grandparents had on their kitchen mantelpieces in those days. The timbercase was scorched and seared on one side, the metal clock face bent and the hands permanently stopped at the hour of 1102.

Because of the wiping out, Nagasaki today is a modern, clean city with wide streets, shopping arcades and malls - and trams. All has been built from scratch but it has its smaller streets which are crowded with shops and shopping opportunities in a very oriental manner. The larger streets and malls are rather like Bourke Street with up-market shops.

Both ports visited in Japan were extremely modern and very busy. We were welcomed officially at both places, the second being Kagoshima, I guess with an eye to the amount of money which we visitors were destined to spend while ashore. The attitude of the people was very welcoming and it was interesting to see parties of Japanese from other parts of the country, being conducted to the places of interest, especially the Bomb Park and Museum.

As a point of trivia, the population of Nagasaki is 70% Christian. Christianity was established by Portugese missionaries approximately 200 years ago and exists as strongly as ever today as demonstrated by the number of churches one can easily find.

P.S. Whitelaw

QUEENS BIRTHDAY HONOUR

Our congratulations to Colonel Laurie Newell on the award of the AM in the recent Queens Birthday Honours.

TO THE EDITOR

Following Anzac Day, which for me concluded at my usual RV at the Officers' Mess, Batman Avenue, I wish through the newsletter, to express my thanks for the manner in which the "no longer serving officers" are made welcome at the depot, adequately "fed and watered" and given the opportunity to renew our association with old comrades.

The work of all concerned is much appreciated and it is good to see that ageless gunner, SGT W. George Beale, still in action.

Having put pen to paper, may I refer to the article in the April issue of "Cascabel", regarding the origin of the Sam Browne belt, which was in greater detail than I had read previously.

I have noticed, over the last few years, that some officers, including those from other corps, do not appear to be fully aware of the correct procedure for the wearing and removal of the Sam Browne belt. May I suggest a very excellent book "Customs of The Army" (1965), which is a guide for all officers in the more important accepted Army customs.

The section dealing with "The Officers Mess", states - "It is normal for all officers, except the Orderly Officer, to remove leather or web belts before entering the ante-room. Cloth belts may be removed if preferred". This is simply to enable officers to be as comfortable as possible in their home - the Mess.

Some may consider such things as unimportant but it is just one of the many traditions and customs which, when added together, have made us all very proud to be a Gunner and a member of The Royal Regiment, which has always regarded such traditions with due respect.

G.A. (Peter) Turner

TROOPING THE COLOUR

From time immemorial armed bodies of men have had as their sign something symbolic of the spirit of the whole. Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, all had ensigns and standards, which were regarded with the greatest veneration and respect.

Mention is made in the earliest records of our military forces of the Colours or Standards, which were carried at the head of a regiment and, by the devices or badges emblazoned upon them, showed the troops where to rally round their leader. The history of a regiment's Colours is the history of the regiment itself, and the Battle Honours emblazoned thereon, represent the countries and causes in which they have been unfurled. The soldier has always been trained to look upon and treat the Colours with the highest possible respect, and when a regiment is paraded, the bringing on or taking off the Colours was, and is, always done with ceremony.

The Consecration of Colours is of very old origin, one of the earliest instances being that of the Pope consecrating the standard carried by William The Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings.

Up to 1707 each company of a regiment carried a Colour, but in that year the number was reduced to three per battalion, and between 1743 and 1751 the number of Colours was further reduced to two per battalion.

At the present time all infantry battalions carry two Colours with the exception of the four rifle regiments, who do not carry colours. In the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries the role of rifle regiments on service was skirmishing, and owing to the necessity for concealment, no Colours were carried.

The distinction between the "Queen's Colour" and the "Regimental Colour" did not arise until 1751, when a Royal Warrant of that year laid down that the King's or First Colour was to be the "Great Union", and the Regimental or Second Colour was to be the colour of the facings of the

regiment, with a small Union in the upper Canton, i.e. the Canton near the head of the pole.

At this period Ireland had not joined the Union, and the National Flag was composed of the red cross of Saint George of England, and the white saltire of Saint Andrew of Scotland. It was not until 1801 that the red saltire of Saint Patrick of Ireland was added, forming what is now known as the "Union Jack".

The above mentioned Warrant did not apply to regiments of Foot Guards, whose King's Colour has always been crimson, while the Regimental Colour is the Union Jack.

The origin of the actual "Trooping the Colour" is the old ceremony of "Sending for and Lodging the Colour", and not, as is so often stated, the old Guard-Mounting display, at which Colours are not normally "Trooped" down the ranks.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the Colours were "trooped" when they were sent for by a Battalion on parade, and it was also the custom, before a battalion or company was dismissed to quarters, bivouacs or billets, to "Troop" the Colour or Colours down the ranks. The Ensigns then took the Colours to their lodgings and displayed them from the windows, or doorstep, or entrance to their tent, and the battalion or company trooped past the Colour and so came to know, in case of alarm, the place of their rallying point.

It is, however, apposite to mention here that the Queen's Birthday Parade, which takes place annually on the Horse Guards Parade, is strictly speaking a Guard-Mounting Ceremony, and dates from the 18th Century, when the Battalion finding the Guards for the day trooped the Colour which was to be carried on the King's Guard.

Colours are also trooped by Regiments in celebration of certain anniversaries of their history. It is also the custom on presentation of new Colours to a Regiment for the old Colours to be trooped down the ranks.