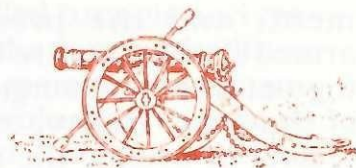


CASCABEL

Newsletter of

The ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY
ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATED



Registered by Australia Post Publication No.: VBH7517

Number 27

January 1991

The President Writes:

As I prepared to write this piece the telephone rang. It was Harry Powell, calling from the Bundoora Repatriation Hospital, where he has been working as a volunteer since the mental health nurses went on strike. Harry and I served the guns in the same Regiment in WW II.

He called to tell me about four members of our Regiment who are patients at the hospital, VX 759, VX 864, VX 980 and VX 11937. All are suffering severe mental illness attributed to their war service. Each is in need of constant care and attention. None had been washed for three days.

It is fifty years since all four of these men moved west from Alexandria, in Egypt, with the 6th Australian Division to lay siege to the Italian fortress town of Bardia. For six years of their

lives they served the guns and their country Australia.

And now, in the evening of their lives they have been abandoned by the very professionals who are paid, and paid well, to minister to their needs.

It's Obscene!

To you Bombardier Harry Powell, I can but say "Thank you" for your efforts to alleviate the suffering of our less fortunate fellows. You are an adornment to the Regiment.

It is not uncommon to hear reference to "the good old days", as if, in earlier years, life was more enjoyable than it is today. Close examination of the past almost invariably reveals that it was no better than the present.

But the year just ended and the year in prospect do seem to be a mite more turbulent than is customary in peacetime.

Against a backdrop of business failures rising unemploy-

ment, and the prospect of armed conflict, we are undergoing yet another reorganisation of the Army Reserve and as is almost invariably the case, the new organisation is smaller than the one it replaces.

Headquarters Third Division is removed from the Order of Battle, while 2/15 Field Regiment and 10 Medium Regiment will amalgamate, possibly as 2/10 Medium Regiment, with one Field Battery and one Medium Battery. No doubt, in 50 years, historians will try to determine why the unit and battery titles were chosen.

Some of the suggestions being made, and the reasons being advanced to justify them, display a certain lack of knowledge of history and of human nature.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Buckridge has completed his term as CO 2/15 Fd Regt and has been appointed to the staff of the Reserve Command and Staff College. Our thanks to you Michael for your service to the Regiment, and our best wishes for your success in the future. The new CO of 2/15 Fd Regt who, I understand, will remain to command the amalgamated Regiment is Lieutenant Colonel David Forster, a Regular Army Officer with a good Gunner background. Welcome

to Victoria, David.

A large party of Association members visited Point Nepean in November., This very successful day is described elsewhere in this issue of CASCABEL by Major David Osborn.

A more recent function was the Happy Hour at 23 Battery at Frankston. The evening was well attended by a nice mixture of serving and retired Gunners. Good food, refreshments and comradeship were features of this pleasant evening. The attendance of Captain John Traill afforded the opportunity to present him with an Association plaque in appreciation for his considerable efforts on behalf of members, before his move to Gippsland caused him to resign from the Committee.

The Annual St. Barbara's Day Parade was held at Point Cook RAAF Base on Sunday 9th December, having been deferred from the 2nd December to avoid clashing with the opening of the RAA Museum at North Head, in Sydney, on that day. The parade of the two Regiments and the RAA Band was carried out with colour and precision.

I had the honour of presenting the P.S. Whitelaw prizes on behalf of the Associa-

tion to the best Officer, WO/SNCO, Gunner and ARA member respectively. The Regiments had barely left the Parade ground for the BBQ area when the rain came down in buckets, putting a bit of a damper on the afternoon's picnic.

I would be remiss not to mention the first committal of RAA members to operations since we left South Vietnam in 1972. I refer to the employment of a small group from the 16 Air Defence Regiment to augment the anti-air defences of HMAS Success in the Gulf.

We wish them well, sure in the knowledge that they will uphold the proud tradition of the Regiment.

Finally, it is my sincere wish that each one of you enjoys good health, happiness and a measure of prosperity in 1991.

Warm Thoughts

Keith Rossi

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ARTICLES SECTION

We start off our articles section with a letter from Ed Williams.

In April '90 I attended the Defence Force School of Music, at Mear's House, Simpson Barracks Watsonia, to hear a Band concert consisting of all the School Band personnel both Army and Navy (the RAAF didn't participate) and the RAA Band from Batman Avenue. I can only say that I spent a very pleasant afternoon and to hear this mass band's performance was the acme of excellence. It took place in "Newman Hall" which was filled to capacity. Seats were even put in the lobby to accomodate the overflow.

The visit had one sad note about it. LtCol R A Newman (Rtd) ARCM MBE passed away on ANZAC Day. He was a member of the community in which I live, so I got to know him well. He was as well respected here as he was in the DFSM to which he gave 20 years devotion after coming from the Army in England. His dedication and contribution to his profession was such that "Newman Hall" was named after him in recognition of his outstanding service. He composed a piece of Military music called 'General Bridges' which was played at the concert. This was dedicated to

MajGen Sir William Throsby Bridges KCB CMG. Bridges came to Australia from Scotland with his family in 1885, obtained a commission in the permanent Artillery, was a Major in the Boer War and later as a Colonel was given the task of establishing a Military College as suggested by Lord Kitchner in 1910. In 1911 MajGen Bridges became the first CO of the College to which the title "Royal" was granted and so became the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Later during the 1914-18 War, he was given command of the 1st Division AIF, landed on Gallipoli on 25th April 1915. He was hit by a sniper's bullet on 15th May 1915 and died 3 days later. He is buried within the precincts of Duntroon, actually on a slight rise directly behind the College. I have seen his grave many times.

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A recent member - Bruce McCulloch, late of the RNZA, forwarded these two excerpts from "The Korean War" by Max Hastings.

23/4/51

The gunners of the 16th New Zealand Field Regiment, who were firing for the 6th ROK Division found themselves in a desperate position when the

South Korean infantry broke in front of them. IX Corps insisted the New Zealanders must continue to support the ROKS, but they gained permission to take a British Battalion, 1st Middlesex, to protect their positions. For a few perilous hours the two units held their ground, but when it became apparent that the ROK collapse was irreversible they were allowed to pull back down the Kapyong River.

Here they were joined by the rest of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, brought out of reserve to fill the gap opened by the Koreans precipitate departure.

Between the nights of 23 and 25 April the British, Australian and Canadian Battalions fought a fine defensive battle against repeated attacks by the Chinese 118th Division for almost 24 hours, the men of the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry were surrounded and cut-off, dependant on air dropped supplies and ammunition.

Their achievement has been overshadowed by the bloodier and even more dramatic action that took place further west at that time, but the 27th Brigade won much professional admiration from their allies for the fashion in which they broke the Commu-

nist attack south of behind that tantrum! - Ed)
Chongchon-ni.

.....ooOOoo.....

It is a typical irony of history that, because their battle ended in success at small cost in Commonwealth lives, it is little remembered. There at the centre of the UN front the line held and stabilised. The surviving attackers withdrew and one arm of the Chinese offensive was shattered.

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In the spring of 1951 a wave of outrage swept through the ranks of the British 29th Brigade, following publication in the London Sunday Times of a statement by Sygman Rhee, denouncing the alleged British role in the dismissal of MacArthur and declaring: "The British troops have outlived their welcome in my country!"

This was one of Rhee's notorious tantrums, he told an Australian Embassy official: "they are not wanted here anymore, tell that to your Government!" "The Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and British troops all represent a Government which is now sabotaging the brave American effort to liberate and unify my unhappy nation!"

(Interesting to find out what was

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Association is pleased to welcome 4 new members -

Chaplain B. BROWN
Gnr W.C. COULSON
Gnr T.R. MALE
Gnr G. McKAIN

Our Annual members have responded well to the call for renewal subscriptions to be paid. Unfortunately, there are still 48 members who have not responded. Appended to this issue of CASCABEL is another renewal notice for those members. I ask that you send your renewal as soon as possible.

It is with regret that we report the death of LtCol Tony Furze, after a long battle with cancer on 6th November. Tony was a big supporter of the Association being a past Committee Member and Auditor.

We have several members whose mail is being returned. If you know where they are please let me know.

Bdr P. DANDY
WO2 S. PONTING
Bdr A.B. QUINLAN
Gnr G.I. SMITH

Maj G. COLE
WO2 K. WALSH

Should you have any membership query, please phone me on:

BH. 781 2633

AH. 787 7852 or write
care of P.O. Box 309 Frankston
3199.

David Osborne
Membership Secretary

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Patron of the RAA Historical Society, MAJGEN J. Whitelaw wrote to advise us of the opening of the Gunner Museum at North Head on 2 Dec 1990. Unfortunately, his memo arrived after the dispatch of the last issue of CASCABEL. I advised him that at this Association's AGM, the Colonel Commandant, MAJGEN J Stevenson reported on the opening of the Museum.

The Corp museum has, amongst other things, an impressive collection of guns. It is of course in its infancy, but with the support of all Gunners either through donations of cash, RAA artifacts or visiting it

when you are in Sydney, then it will prosper as it should.

The Secretary can be contacted on:

The RAA Historical Society
c/- The Artillery Centre
PO Box 42 MANLY
NSW 2042
Telephone 02 976 1199

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ACTIVITIES REPORT

Point Nepean Visit.

On Sunday 18th November 1990, 50 members and family visited Point Nepean. Demand to attend was very high and unfortunately quite a few had to be turned away - perhaps they will be able to attend at some future visit.

The weather for our tour was magnificent (mid 20's with a light breeze). We started at the Orderly Room and had a guided tour of the Quarantine Station and Museum, followed by the Medical Services Museum. All extremely interesting and our tour guide was Major Tony Haller (OC Support Wing, Army School of Health) who is himself a qualified museum curator.

At the conclusion of the tour our President Keith Rossi

made some presentations to Major Haller. Firstly, an Association Plaque and a donation to keep the work of the museum going. A high point of the day was the handover of the Presidents Collar and Badge of the 4th Division Australian Army Medical Corps Association (1st AIF). This Association was made up of former members of the 4th, 12th and 13th Field Ambulances and existed from 1919 to 1985 when the last President, Mr Jim McConnell was unable to continue and handed the Collar and Badge to the RSL for safekeeping. In his capacity at the RSL State Headquarters, Keith Rossi advised that the most suitable place for housing the items was the Medical Corps Museum, hence the presentations.

He also handed over the records and minute books which accompanied the Collar and Badge.

After a very relaxing BBQ lunch on the foreshore within the School of Army Health, it was time to visit the fortifications of Point Nepean. After an Audio/Visual presentation at the Orientation Centre we moved by transporter to the Point. A tour of the emplacements, tunnels, engine house and barracks followed. Much work has been done in digging

out sand filled tunnels and restoration of the various facilities. One of our members is a member of the voluntary organisation called "Friends of the Point". They are always looking for extra hands to help. If you'd like to spend a pleasant Sunday preserving some Gunner History, please call Bill Goodall on 589 3623.

A most successful visit concluded at 4.00pm with all members and family tired - a sure sign that a good time was enjoyed by all present. My thanks go to all who supported this function.

David Osborne.

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FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Don't forget the Annual Church Parade on 3 Feb 1991. See notice included in this issue.

A proposed visit to 2/15 Fd Regt at Puckapunyal on 16 Feb 91. More details to follow.

The Unit Associations Night on 14 Mar 91 at the Batman Ave Depot.

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DID YOU KNOW?.....

Another famous piece of large caliber is Mons Meg, now in Edinburgh Castle, and believed to have been forged at Mons in 1461-83. It has a 20" bore and fired a 330lb. stone shot. According to an old record, Mons Meg or "Munce", if discharged with 105lbs. of powder well rammed in the chamber, and set at an angle of 45°, could project an iron ball 1,408 yards or a stone ball 2,876 yards.

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How's this for more trivia;

We all know that most guns of the period we have referred to in the last issue and the above anecdote were somewhat treacherous and unreliable and there are on record many instances of unfortunate accidents. Perhaps the most notable is the following charming account of the death of James II of Scotland during the seige of Roxburgh Castle. *"While this Prince, more curious nor became the Majestie of any Kinge, did stand near-hand where the Artylliare was discharged. His thigh-bone was dung in two by a piece of a mis-framed gune that brake in the shutting, by the which he was stricken to the ground and died hostile".*

Not until the end of the 15th century was an effective control of gunpowder achieved.

"Did you know" anecdotes are taken from the story of the Gun by Lt A.W.Wilson RA

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FROM THE EDITORS DESK

It was with interest that I included in this issue, the article submitted by Bruce McCulloch about the Korean War. Most articles submitted in CASCABEL so far have concerned either WW1 or WW2. There must be a wealth of information or just plain items of interest known by those of you who served in Korea, Vietnam or with the peace keeping forces in Malaya, Cyprus or any of the UN Observer teams.

How about putting pen to paper and letting us all share in some of your experiences. Another method of recording this information is to commit it to audio tape and send that along. After transcribing them I will return any tapes submitted.

Once again I thank all who have submitted copy - it will eventually appear in these columns.

R.Peterken Editor.