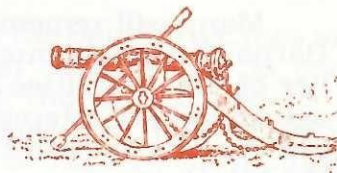


CASCABEL

Newsletter of



The ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY
ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATED

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January 1992

The President Writes:

It seems no time since my previous note to you. The reason for that of course, is due to the administrative aspects of producing the newsletter. It is necessary to prepare it before Christmas and that gives me a way of sneaking in belated but sincere good wishes for Christmas.

On a more timely note let me now, on behalf of the committee, offer our best wishes to all members of the Association and their families for a happy and prosperous New Year.

Recent functions have included an Happy Hour at Geelong which I regret to say I was unable to attend. It is hoped that our Association liaison group will be able to visit the Geelong and Colac Depots in the new year so that we can get to know the new 38 Mdm Bty.

On Friday 29th November a gunner gathering was held at Batman Avenue Depot hosted by

LTCOL David Forster, the CO of 2/10th Mdm Regt. It was a most successful function, there being representatives present of many unit associations and groups of old friends from all era's of the ARA, CMF and A Res.

Our thanks go to the CO, the 2IC MAJ Mark Della 'Costa and members of the Regiment for their warm hospitality on that occasion

The following Tue evening the committee were once again hosted by LTCOL Forster and his Regiment at an end of year parade. All three batteries (HQ Bty, 22 Fd Bty and 38 Mdm Bty) and the RAA Band were on parade and acquitted themselves well. As President I was privileged to present the Whitelaw prizes to members of the unit. The names of the winners will be listed elsewhere in the newsletter.

Whilst it is sad to have had units whittled away as has happened over recent years it was good to see the fine spirit displayed by the recently amalgamated 2/10 Mdm Regt on this occasion. This augers well for the future of the unit and we all wish them well.

Many will remember Warren Barnard as an enthusiastic member of the committee a few years ago and will be interested to know that he retired from the army on the 6th Dec.

Norman Whitelaw went to Hobart to attend the festivities. I asked him to convey to Warren the good wishes of his Victorian gunner friends and I look forward to a report from him.

In closing I remind members of the annual church parade on the 2nd Feb '92.

My Best Wishes.

Merv Taggart

.....ooOOoo.....

ARTICLES SECTION

The major article for this issue has been written as an editorial in "From the Editors Desk". It is entitled - Looking Forward with Sorrow - I hope you find it thought provoking.

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A Poem

Gunners Lament

They call us Dropshorts
nine mile snipers and more
we accept these snide retorts
for they're good natured we're sure.

For when the chips are down
and they're in trouble deep
They call upon the Gun and Crown
their arses they wish to keep.

They give us grid and direction
we pray that they are right
and to this we give our attention
for thats what goes on the sight.

And when we pull the firing cord
the radio signals splash
we pray it's right on the plotting board
or in their chips they'll cash.

And when the battles ended
the Grunt's - they're back in
base the guns - they're left unattended
for it's cold cans boys - by the case.

This poem was read at the Dining Out of
the DASM - WO1 Darby O'Toole

.....ooOOoo.....

DID YOU KNOW?

"Don't forget your Great Guns, which are the most respectable arguments of the right of Kings."

FREDERICK The GREAT, letter to his brother Prince Henry, 21st April 1759.

.....ooOOoo.....

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Since the last issue of CAS-CABEL our membership has topped the 400 for the first time. I have much pleasure in welcoming the following Gunners to the Association.

Major L.V. Haby - Life member

Cfn N.A. Jordan - Life member

WO1 N.G. Lewis - Life member

Major G.F. Mayo - Annual member

Sgt H.J. Warren - Life member

Ceylon Artillery Association - Affiliate member

Subscription renewal notices for all annual members were forwarded with the October issue of CASCABEL. Unfortunately, 53% of those members have not as yet returned the form together with their remittance. For each of

these members another renewal notice is enclosed.

Please assist me in the large administration task and confirm your support for the Association by return mail.

An analysis of our membership is as follows:

Life Members	172
Annual Members	177
Affiliate Members	52
Total	401

Mail has been returned for the following members. If you know their whereabouts, please let me know on 03 781 2633 (BH)

Lt Col R.H. Freeland

Lt A.R. Maguire

Lt Col D.M. Murphy

David Osborne

Major

Vice President & Membership Secretary

.....ooOOoo.....

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Changes as a result of the Force Structure Review.

1st Fd Regt converts to Ready Reserve and will support Ready Reserve Battalions in 6 Brigade. About 25% of the Regt will remain ARA.

The Batteries of 8/12 Medium Regt will continue to support their infantry battalions,

but will become independant batteries when the Medium battery is relocated to Darwin, currently planned for later in the decade.

16th Air Defence Regt. Over 5 years from 1992 it will convert its ARes, ARes (special conditions) and approx 30 ARA positions to Ready Reserve.

131st Div Loc Bty will have a reduced ARA component which will command the Battery and provide support to the ODF, and an ARes element to support the Ares and Ready Reserve Brigades.

Training Command will lose 20% of its manpower and this percentage is likely to be applied to the School of Artillery also.

HQ of 6/13 Fd Regt in Adelaide is to be authorised with 16th Battery in Tasmania and 48th Battery in Adelaide coming under command. Also one Fd Bty to support 11 Brigade is authorised.

.....ooOOoo.....

Amendment to the Programme of Events card 1991/92;

New Phone number for the Treasurer Reg Morrell - now 562 9552

.....ooOOoo.....

DID YOU KNOW? - part 2

Our past President Keith Rossi does have a sense of humour - one committee meeting the discussion revolved around the the ageing factor and death ie. "to kick the bucket". Keith's analogy

was "like taking a round of angles on the pearly gates" - a true Gunner!

.....ooOOoo.....

ACTIVITIES REPORT

PAST ACTIVITIES

At the final St Barbara's Day parade held at Batman Avenue Depot on the 3rd Dec. the President presented The Whitlaw Prizes for 1991 which are:

The Officer who has made the most valuable contribution to the Corp during the year. Won by

- Capt Mike Womack BK 22 Bty

The WO/SNCO who by his display of Leadership and Technical excellence, has made the most valuable contribution to his Unit during the year.

Won by

- WO2 Gary Rolfe BSM 22 BTY

The Bdr or Gnr who has displayed the greatest enthusiasm, initiative and competence in the performance of his duties for his Unit during the year.

Won by

- Bdr P. McMillan 38 BTY

The ARA member who has made the most valuable contribution

to the Corps during the year.
Won by

- Sgt T. Kew HQ BTY

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FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Annual Church Parade on
2nd February 1992 and
Pakenham Military Museum on
15 Mar 1992. See the enclosed
inserts for details.

.....ooOOoo.....

DID YOU KNOW - Revisited

Some years ago, a signaller
from Terang served 7 days at In-
doorroopily detention centre.
When called for, the RSM asked
the sig if he had any complaints.
The sig said no....."just a min-
ute, there was one thing" - you
know how I left my boots outside
my cell every night?
Yes said the RSM, that is stan-
dard practice, "well said the sig,
they weren't clean the next morn-
ing.

Thanks Bob Miller for this one - Ed

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FROM THE EDITORS DESK

*In this issue, I am including an
editorial written by Phil Wortham,
editor of the 2/2 Fd Regt Associa-
tion Journal "Action Front".*

*I present it in CASCABEL as
both representative of my own
thoughts and feelings on the sub-
ject and its possible interest to all
members. Like Phil, I also leave it
up to you the individual, to make
up your own mind as to where you
stand on this emotive subject.*

'Looking Forward with Sorrow'

"The following Editorial ex-
presses the thoughts and feelings
of the Editor, and I do not try to
force them on any one of our
members who may disagree."

As our surviving members are
now seventy years or more. I hope
they will give some tolerance to
the words I write.

I am, of course, referring to
the strident recent campaign to
convert Australia into a Republic.

As this is trumpeted as the
major event for a referendum in
the year 2001, many of us will not
be here to participate.

It will of course, be the right
of Australia's citizens in that year
to vote as they see the issue, and
I for one, would be foolish to fore-
cast the result.

This being the case, it will not
hurt to look backwards at events

that led Australians to "rally round the Flag" in 1914 and 1939.

In our own formative years, mostly between, 1914 and 1939, we heard about the exploits of our fathers and friends at Anzac, in France and the Middle East.

Pitted against well organised and ruthless armies, the British called to their far flung Empire for support to stand and fight, a call responded to from all corners of an Empire on which "the sun never set".

British command of our colonial forces was not always competent or fair, and many English Generals were out of touch with modern warfare at that time. However, the sheer ability of the Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, South Africans, Indians and other smaller Empire countries, with the recognisable talents of their Generals in Monash, Chauvel, Brudenel White, Blamey, Bennett and South Africa's Field Marshall Smuts, brought them into line with the better of the English commanders and their performances were verified by results.

When World War 1 ended, the Colonies, as they were still regarded in 1914, had emerged as nations in their own standing and have remained so ever since, though independence did not come to some until after 1945.

But strongly emerging was respect for the Monarchy which ruled loosely over what was to become the British Common-

wealth of Nations, a rallying point through the 1914-18 war, which saw Russia withdraw from the conflict in 1917 while France teetering on the brink of surrender was saved by their own new found leaders, who held the line against superior odds until the late entry of America.

Our Diggers were proud of their Imperial honours which ranked them with the best in the Empire.

Tales of the Anzacs' battle became the folklore of the twenties and thirties and young Australians proudly turned out on Anzac Day by the thousands to cheer on their ageing heroes, who proudly marched behind their Unit banners and saluted the various State Governors, usually retired English generals, who were our link with the Monarchy.

Through the world wide depression of the thirties, a visit by any member of the Royal Family would bring thousands of cheering adults and children into the streets, waving small Union Jacks and paying their respects to that distant Monarch whose family they so seldom saw.

The death of King George V called forth universal mourning, for he had ruled benignly and long through World War 1. Though there was no TV then, we could see newsreels at the local theatres and were all proud to see the King at Lord's, being introduced to the Australian Cricket Team by Don Bradman. We also had our first Australian Governor-General, Sir

Isaac Isaacs, the predecessor for many Australians to follow after World War II.

The scandal caused by Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson disappointed many millions of loyal subjects, and his replacement as King by the Duke of York, who had opened our Federal Parliament in 1927, brought to the throne a relatively low profile member of the Royal Family, but as events were to unfold over the next 10 years, no better Monarch could have been enthroned at that time.

King George VI had served with distinction in the British Navy during World War I, fully exposed to all the dangers of Naval warfare, and the Commonwealth Nations' acceptance and respect for him grew as he and Queen Elizabeth became better known.

There was even anti-British feeling during the depression, as many thought Britain had too much of a strangle-hold on Australia's finances, and in many cases, that was correct. But the people of Britain and all other nations large and small suffered the same, or more, hardships than Australia.

With the depression receding in 1938, a new menace had arisen in Europe - the Nazi and Fascist regimes of Hitler and Mussolini.

In Africa, Italy had already started its conquest of peaceful countries, whilst Hitler brazenly gobbled up peaceful Austria and

Czechoslovakia until it was time to call a halt, and England and France declared their support for any nation attacked by Germany.

Although Russia had intervened to try to stop the partition of Czechoslovakia, they stunned the world with their non-aggression pact with Hitler, paving the way for the invasion of Poland.

Two days after German troops crossed the border of Poland, England and France declared war on Germany. New Zealand and Australia followed suit, joined some hours later by Canada.

Enthusiasm in Australia to join up and "be in it" was evident, and when recruiting depots were opened, they were swamped with men and boys, some putting their age up and some first war Diggers putting theirs down. Soon the Australian Flag flew proudly over training camps around Australia and on the Flag Mast of our Sixth Division Commander, Lieut General Blamey.

We couldn't wait to get to the war alongside our courageous Pommy mates, whether it be in France or anywhere else they needed us.

The British Commonwealth was up and roaring. Despatched to the Middle East for training en-route to Europe, events overtook the Australians and New Zealanders. The surrender of France and the entry of Italy into the War, left the Commonwealth of Nations on their own, the im-

minent invasion of England a real possibility as well as invasion of Egypt by a numerically superior, and well armed Italian Army. As in times past, the Commonwealth responded magnificently and Churchill's "we will not surrender" was the password for the next four and a half years of bloody battles.

At this time, King George emerged as the Commonwealth's rallying point. Those of us who remember seeing in a Palestine camp theatre a newsreel of the King in Army uniform standing on the cliffs at Dover looking across the Channel at France after Dunkirk, a lonely but composed Monarch, preparing his country to defy the odds, took heart.

The King and Queen and their two daughters withstood, with their subjects, the horror bombing of London including Buckingham Palace, visiting victims of raids, without concern for their own safety and winning the love and respect of all who came in contact with them.

That is part of history now, and victory saw a shattered people of Europe searching for a new life and turning their eyes to the stability of the British Commonwealth Nations, all of which generously opened their gates to allow those people, enemy and allies alike, into their country to start life anew. Australia being in the forefront of those countries with high migrant intakes.

India was granted independence from England. Later, Malta

and numerous other Commonwealth countries including Ceylon, which had been loyal supporters of England throughout the war, became independent nations.

The British Raj retreated slowly, leaving behind administrative and business techniques for the new found rulers of those nations to copy or improve upon. The appointment of Governors or Governors-General remained the prerogative of the Monarch to approve or disapprove.

The world was shocked by the untimely death of King George, and sympathy and approval for his daughter, the young Elizabeth was expressed world wide. How magnificently she has responded to the heavy burden placed on such young shoulders. At that time, ironically for Australia, she and her husband were en-route to visit us.

The first blow to the Commonwealth was the forming of a Republic by the anti-British Government of South Africa, a regime which followed the early actions of Hitler with segregation and brutal laws which disgusted the free world.

Read your papers every day and assess the conduct of these countries now self ruling and free of British justice. It is their right to conduct their own affairs, but many have thrown away the opportunity given them by years of British rule, not always fair, but setting up a system of democratic rule which in late years has been

swept away by internecine bigotry and political assassinations and corruption.

Even the mighty United States of America has been shamed by a corrupt President and Vice-President who were elected by powerful party machines.-

We have maintained our link with the Monarch through a number of Australian Governors-General and State Governors, who still have the power to dismiss Federal or State Parliaments whose conduct is detrimental to the nation, giving our citizens the right to reinstate or vote them out of office.

Would a Party-elected President do the same to the Party who put him there? - don't kid yourself. Must we have the razzamatazz of parades, fancy clothes, exposed lies and scandals true or false for a full year of campaigning, or the same thing for a State Governor whose funds are put up by those set to gain the most by his or her election. Think about this scenario, make your own judgement, I have made mine.

At the Melbourne Olympic bid, our Prime Minister described Melbourne as the third largest Greek City. I would have preferred him to say it was the second largest Australian City with the largest intake of Australian Greeks, hopefully all naturalised.

The Australian Flag carries the Commonwealth Star, the

cluster of the Southern Cross and the Union Jack, which is composed of the Red Cross of St George and the White Saltire Cross of St Andrew surmounted by the Red Saltire Cross of St Patrick, and retaining the blue ground of St Andrew, representing the background and religions of those who pioneered and created the Australian Nation. Don't let this heritage be taken from us.

The well presented, educated and well clothed and fed people who appeared on television recently to push for a Republic, all seemed to have done pretty well under our Monarchical system. Could they have done better with a political President?

If you are still with us in 2001, you make the choice.

God Save our Queen.

Permission to reprint this editorial was given by Phil Worthing. I thank him very much. Editor

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