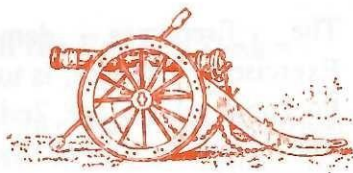


# CASCABEL

Newsletter of



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY  
ASSOCIATION (Victoria) INCORPORATED

Number 36

April 1993

## *The President Writes:*

This autumn issue always seems to be an in between sort of period. The excitement of the holiday period is over and although there have been some activities there seems to be a gap leading up to Anzac Day.

The Church Parade at St Barts. was an impressive occasion. The band played magnificently both on their own and in concert with the Church choir and organist. The Reverend Barry Brown gave a rousing sermon and I read a lesson without the roof falling in. Together with a cup of tea, a biscuit and a glass of bubbly after the service it was a delightful morning. Barry and I would like to see more of you next year. Remember it is always on the first Sunday in February.

On the 27th February many of us went to Queenscliff to see the

"Beating the Retreat" ceremony at the Fort. This is a most interesting ceremony, steeped in history. A full report of this function appears later in this issue.

The Associations Day held on the 14th March was not as well attended as we would have liked. Only two units were represented. I do think that this opportunity to share ideas is worthwhile as long as some attend. We held the function on Sunday this year in the belief that it might be more convenient than an evening. Please let us know if this is not the case.

We look forward now to Anzac Day. All the usual activities will happen but remember that the Chapel Street Depot is further away from the Shrine than Batman Avenue. There will be breakfast at the Depot and the messes will be open after the march.

The firepower demonstration, Exercise El Elamein, is to be held at Puckapunyal on the 2nd May this year. Book by calling the secretary or myself.

## Centenary Ceremony Queenscliff Cemetery

The late

Major Frederick William Ind RA  
Fort Queenscliff 1885-1887

The 21st May is nominated for a Happy Hour at Chapel Street. This will give you all a chance to see the Regiment's new home so come along and enjoy the company of brother Gunners.

There have been many staff changes at the Regiment and I am sure that you will join me in welcoming the new CO, RSM and other new members.

My best wishes

*Meru Jaggart*

.....ooOoo.....

In this issue I am publishing a speech given by LTCOL N.D.Wright ED (Retd) at the Centenary Ceremony of the Queenscliff Cemetery. I thank Norman for supplying me with a copy of his address.

"It is my privilege to represent the President and Members of the Royal Australian Artillery Association - Victoria at this ceremony and to give you an outline of Fort Queenscliff as it was in 1885-1887. As a lead up to this important era I will touch on a few point of earlier history.

Although The first guns - 3 x 68 pounder ML - were mounted in 1860 at Shortland's Bluff, it was not until 1882 that Fort Queenscliff was established, consequent upon a number of reports having been made concerning the defences of Port Phillip, principally by Capt Peter Scratchley RE (later Major General Sir Peter) and Colonel Sir William Jervois RE (later Lieut General).

In August 1885, the HQ of Victorian Permanent Artillery which was located in Melbourne under the command of Major F.W. Ind, was moved to Queenscliff. Thus he became the first officer commanding the Victorian Permanent Artillery to have his HQ in Queenscliff. Incidentally, the

Victorian Permanent Artillery was the first permanent force to be formed, on 29 Dec 1870, later to be disbanded in 1880 and reformed in 1882.

The area of the Fort is virtually the same today as it was in 1887; that is, approximately 6.75 hectares. The original buildings of the 1850's-1860's still standing are the Signal Station (1850's) Telegraph Station (1854), Lighthouse Keepers quarters (1862) which now house the HQ of the Staff College.

Between 1881 and 1889 the appearance of the fortifications and the lighthouse area changed dramatically, particularly during 1885 and 1887 when a number of buildings were erected, in addition to revamping the fortifications to cater for different sizes and types of guns.

The Guard Room and cells, erected in the 1880's, still stand inside the entrance to the Fort, likewise 3 underground water wells were constructed in 1880 of which 2 are still visible behind the HQ of the Staff College and these were the only supply of water to the Fort until water was piped in 1932. A windmill was also erected to supply water for fire protection.

Notable constructions completed during this period were the Wall,

the Keep, the Moat Barrack Buildings, Gun sheds and stores. Most of the buildings at the Fort were constructed in weatherboard and corrugated iron.

The Telegraph Station and Lighthouse Keeper's quarters were handed over to the Military. The Signal Station and Black Lighthouse still remain under the control of the Department of Ports & Harbours (Lighthouse service).

It is interesting to note that two separate old iron engine houses were replaced by the construction of a bomb-proof engine shed in 1887, consisting of 3 compartments built on the Gothic style of architecture, composed of 3 arches built of brick about 3 feet thick, having a roof of concrete, and covered with soil. In addition to the front entrance, there was a rear entrance leading to the guns at the right of the Battery and later a communicating tunnel was constructed leading to the electric light emplacements on the face of the cliff. This building now houses the Fort Museum.

Between 1885 and 1887, further rearmament took place and the length of the fortifications were increased to include 2 additional gun positions - one being on the north side of the Black Lighthouse. By 1887, the largest number of guns



at any time in its history were mounted at the Fort, there being 9 large calibre guns and 6 small calibre guns, thus making Port Phillip the most heavily defended Fort in the Southern Hemisphere. The fortifications as then established are virtually the same as can be seen today, although some modifications were later made when 3, 6" MK7 guns were installed in 1909.

*(At this point, Norman gave some details of the Guns, but space precludes me from inserting it. - Editor)*

Two electric lights were installed on the face of the cliff overlooking the Heads and access was gained by a tunnel from the engine shed. These were manned by Australian Engineers (now RAE). one of these original emplacements is still visible.

Apart from various newspaper reports, details of manning the guns are sketchy; but it would appear that the average crew was approx 10-12 men. It was reported in 1887 that the strength of the Victorian Permanent Artillery was 160 men and this was considered insufficient. Cabinet approved an increase to 200. They were required to man Batteries at Williamstown, Geelong, South Grant, Sandridge, Drysdale and Nepean, in addition to those at Swan Island and Crow's Nest. It was planned, in the event of an

enemy threat, that troops would be sent by rail from other Batteries eg. Williamstown, Geelong etc. to reinforce manning at the Fort along with the Queenscliff Company of the Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery, which was established in 1860.

The duties of the gun detachments consisted of laying the gun, swabbing out the gun after firing each round, preparation of ammunition and supply of ammunition to the gun emplacements by manual labour. In some cases ie. guns mounted on DT platforms, traversing the gun was a heavy manual job requiring the use of drag ropes and pulleys. Also getting these guns back into firing positions after recoil was a heavy manual job.

It is worth spending a minute on the preparation of ammunition, to give you an idea of the amount of work required to service the guns. The ammunition used by all muzzle loading and breech loading guns consists of the shell and the propellant charge which is contained in either a bag as used in ML and BL, or a brass cartridge case as used by quick firing guns.

From a handbook of the 9in Armstrong gun, one of which was later mounted in the

gun emplacement upon which is now erected the flag pole, it appears that the ammunition was prepared on site. This involved;

1. The shell being filled with a bursting charge and then fused.

2. The cartridge being made up by filling a bag with propellant charge, which of course required a great deal of care and accurate measuring of the propellant and then tying up the bag to a specific measurement. (Today all ammunition is supplied on site, already prepared for loading, other than being fused and fuses set if necessary, and in some cases determining the charge to be used).

It was customary practice to have a number of rounds of ammunition made up and placed in situ in recesses around the gun emplacement ready for action.

It should be borne in mind that these shells weighed anything from 88 lbs in the case of the 80pdr RML to 380 lbs for the 9.2in gun, requiring the use of cradles, trolleys and hoists to handle the shells. The gun detachments usually wore white canvass working dress around the guns, uniform no doubt being worn on special occasions.

In the absence of any details concerning fire-control, it is presumed that there was no

centralised fire control as was later developed. Each gun, which it is understood, had a limited arc of fire, being under the control of the No. 1 of the gun detachment, firing the gun over open sights. Although a contract was let for the construction of a position finder house and look-out in 1893 to replace an earlier structure, the first fire-control and depression range finder position was not constructed until 1905.

It is of particular interest to Victorians to note that General Sir John Monash attended the Easter Camp in 1887 as a Lieutenant.

I trust Ladies and Gentlemen that the foregoing summary has given you an insight of what Fort Queenscliff was like in 1885 to 1887 and the importance of it. May I conclude by quoting the Motto of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, which was formed in 1890 and absorbed the Victorian Permanent Artillery and later the Volunteer Artillerymen.

#### The Motto

*"Ubique"* meaning "everywhere"  
*"Quo Fas Et Gloria Ducunt"*  
meaning "Whither right and glory lead".

.....ooOOoo.....



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

In the list of new members, you will see the name of Herbert Bedford. A note attached to his application suggested that if accepted, it was a bit far for him to attend our functions. This may well be so, as he lives in California USA. It appears that our Association and CASCABEL are becoming well known off shore. This is great. Bert Bedford indicated that he may be contacting Mr F.A. Coleman at Point Lonsdale of the 2/2 Hvy A.A Regt Assoc'n as the name is familiar to him. He also wishes anyone who may remember him to write to;

39 Tulane Drive  
Larkspur  
California  
94939-1114  
U.S.A

.....

### TID - APA

#### **The History of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment 1940-1945**

This history has been written by Lt Col Neil C. Smith AM. It traces the history of the Regiment from the early days at Puckapunyal to the repatriation of Prisoners of War. The continuing role of the Unit Association and the part played by

relatives and friends of the Regiment are also highlighted.

This book can be obtained from 'Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications' of PO Box 20, Gardenvale Victoria 3185 for the cost of \$40 including postage. Their phone number is 03 5555401.

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One of our members, Lt Col Doug Caulfield (who is an Armoured Officer, but we wont hold that against him) has reported he is posted as CI 3 Trg Unit at Puckapunyal. He mentioned the changes that are being made at Pucka viz. the Messes. The Area Officers Mess is closing and Officers will be accommodated at the School of Armour Mess. The Area Sergeants Mess becomes the Officers Mess for 3 Training Group. I don't know what's arranged for the new Area Sergeants Mess. Doug indicated it may be possible for social functions to be held at the 3 Training Group Officers Mess.

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The Committee has thought it appropriate to inform all members of The Association of where the Regiment and the Association can be contacted. This is due to the fact

of the moves and re-organisations in recent years.

The home of The REGIMENT is now the Artillery Depot 8 Chapel Street East St Kilda. 3182.

The 2/10 Mdm Regiment has Depots at Dandenong, Baxter, Geelong and Colac. The Officers and Sergeants Messes at Chapel Street are now considered as the Corps Messes in lieu of Batman Avenue. Although the official address of the RAA Association is shown as PO Box 309 Frankston, this is for administrative purposes only. Our home is with the Regiment at Chapel Street.

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Before giving the answer to last issue's question, I would like to thank Gerry Butcher and Lawrie Newell for responding and to Gerry for finding the deliberate mistake.

The deliberate mistake was in my spelling of Woolich which as you all know should be spelled Woolwich.

The answer to the question is;

The cutting off of the Cascables of the two captured guns was to provide the metal for the manufacture of the first Victoria Crosses. Gerry writes "he believes that VC's have subsequently been made from metal from the carriages of these guns."

My observation regarding the spelling of CASCABEL has been answered by Lawrie Newell who indicated "that the Oxford dictionary lists both forms of spelling, but the entry for CASCABLE says see CASCABEL, so obviously this is the preferred spelling. Incidentally, CASCABEL has seven different meanings including a rattle snake and a child's toy."

Tom Hayward asked who named CASCABEL and why? I believe it was named by the initial committee and first editor, the late LTCOL Rob Gaw. The Committee wanted a name that was both Unique and obviously Artillery. I think they succeeded on both counts.

Finally, both Gerry and Lawrie referred to a publication for their comments, that others may be interested in. It is "The illustrated Encyclopedia of Artillery " by Ian V. Hogg published in 1987 by Chartwell Books Inc. of New Jersey USA.

.....ooOOoo.....

## ACTIVITIES REPORT

### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

#### ANZAC Day Activities.

All messes at Chapel Street will be open during the day and everyone is welcome to attend. Once again,



Reg Morrell and Brian Cleeman will be putting on breakfast, in the Officers Mess area, after the march.

*For those whose mobility is impaired and want to attend the Dawn Service, the Regiment will put on a limited bus run (Toyota Coaster) from the Depot to the Shrine. Unfortunately no return will be possible. Public transport back to the Depot will have to be used. East Brighton trams number 5 & 64, run from Swanston Street City past the Depot door.*

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### **Ex El Alamein**

This demonstration is now scheduled for 2nd May not the 16th as originally programmed. As the President said in his opening remarks, if you are interested in attending this day, call either himself or the Secretary.

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### **Happy Hour - Chapel Street**

This will be held this year on 21st May at the Chapel Street Sergeants Mess. Come along at 1800 hrs and enjoy the Regiment's hospitality.

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### **Field Firing Weekend Visit**

You will notice on the Parade Card a visit to Pucka to observe the

Regiment in action on 26th June 93. Details are:

**Arrive at Chapel Street Depot at 0730hrs** to be met by the CO &/or Adjt and move by Bus to Pucka (or meet at the new Range Control Puckapunyal at 1000hrs).

**Lunch will be provided.** Please bring stout shoes, water proof clothing etc. there is no restriction on cameras for those who would like to take photographs.

**Return off the Range No Later Than 1600 hrs** and back in Melb approx. 1800 (or in mickey mouse time 6.00pm).

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### **REAL FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The Officers amongst us will notice in the Parade Card the **Gunner Dinner on the 4 June** and for all ranks the **Artillery Ball on the 6th August**. Keep these dates free and we will give more details later when they come to hand.

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### **PAST ACTIVITIES**

#### **Presentation of the Norman Whitelaw Prizes**

At the 2/10 Mdm Regt Gunners Dinner, held on 5th December 1992, the Norman Whitelaw Prizes



and the Vickery Trophy were presented. Recipients of the Whitelaw Prizes were:

OR Prize     L/Bdr S. A. McDonald  
NCO Prize    WO2 K.C. Pyke  
Officer Prize Lt A.S. Pigdon  
ARA Prize    WO1 G.L. Carroll

The winner of the Vickery Trophy was Capt D.A. Edwardes. The Committee and Members extend to these worthy soldiers our congratulations.

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**Beating the Retreat**

Once again this ceremony was performed at Fort Queenscliff on Saturday 27th Feb. in honour of the 91st Birthday of the Australian Army. The Guard was provided by the Deakin University Company. The standard of drill was excellent. During the course of the proceedings, two Officer Cadets were commissioned.

Again, the highlight was the musical concert provided by the Australian Army Band (Melbourne), and their singer, Msn S. Drew. This culminated with the 1812 Overture, which the Guns of the Regiment supported together with a fine performance by members and cannon of the Military Re-enactment Society. Fortunately, the weather held for the evening.

This really is a function not to be missed and about 1500 other visitors thought so also.

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**15 Field Regiment Re-union -  
Dinner Dance**

On the 20th of March, I was again privileged to represent the RAA Association (Vic) INC. at the 15 Fd Regt Reunion which was held at the Dandenong Artillery Depot. The numbers were well down on last year but those members that were there, had a great time.

Special thanks go to the organisers; Keith Bunnett, Dianne Briant, Tom & Sue McLean, Igor & Heather Eremin, Norm Cathie and Jock Galloway. It is believed that Bill Mentiplay will be taking an active part at next year's reunion so we look forward to seeing more ex 15 Field Gunners.

Reg Morrell (Treasurer).

.....ooOOoo.....  
**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

The total membership of the Association continues to hover around the 400 mark. Since the last issue we have accepted the following new members and I issue them a warm welcome:

MAJ H.J.Bedford  
BDR E. Edmonds  
GNR D.F.C.Edwards  
SGT C.B.Gray  
GNR S.MacIntyre  
W02 R.Olsen  
SSGT N.Radcliffe  
SGT J.D.Ritchie  
CAPT P.F.Wortham  
Mr G.L.Zierk.

Unfortunately, nine annual members were removed from the membership list of the Association at the last committee meeting for failure to pay their subscription.

Thank you to those members who have taken the time to let me know of the new addresses of "lost" members in the past. I need the new addresses for SSGT S.McDermott and LT D.A.Young whose mail is being returned. If you're about to move, or know the whereabouts of the above members, you can drop me a line or phone.

David Osborne  
Membership Secretary and Vice President.

PO Box 309 FRANKSTON 3199 or  
phone me at work on 781 2633 or at  
home on 787 7852.

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST (Part 2)

Ed Williams was tripping around the country last May and submitted

this article (It sometimes takes awhile to get into CASCABEL but we get there eventually, Hi-tech or not!). He visited the Deniliquin RSL which he says is a magnificent building but it was a restored gun that took his interest. He says 'I was surprised to find an artillery piece being given top treatment. The gun dates back to 1864 and is believed to be only one of two in Australia, the other is at Sunbury Vic.

The gun is housed in an all-glass show-case just outside the RSL building. This secure, air-conditioned housing operates 24 hours a day to keep everything in good condition which unfortunately stops everyone from having a closer look at the mechanism, but I was assured it was all in working order, or was until modified to conform to the Commonwealth Safety Laws.

When the restoration, done by the Army Apprentices at the School at Bonegilla, was complete a test firing was done at Pucka to see what would happen. It lived up to all expectations and passed the test of time. When I asked where the projectiles had come from I was told that due to the interest, some where manufactured for the shoot. One of these is on display in the show-case.



I must give the Apprentices and Staff full credit for the restoration of this historic gun which was in a deplorable state when commenced. The total cost of the job was \$80,000 including the housing, air-conditioning etc. The RSL members at Deniliquin think it was well worth it".

Ed also sent along some coloured brochures from the RSL - very nice by the look of it. Would be worth a visit if you are up that way.

.....ooOoo.....

The Nathalia RSL is looking for a 25pdr to complete the Memorial Garden and Monument to their ex-service men and women. If anyone knows of a piece in the offering would they please contact Ed Williams at 109/466 Burwood Hwy Wantirna South 3152 or phone 801 6583.

.....ooOoo.....

### THE ASSOCIATION SHOP

The Association Shop has a limited number of books on the History of the 25pdr for only \$13.50. Contact SSGT Brian Cleeman on 560 7116 for your copy.

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### = From the Editor's Desk =

You will notice that I have returned to the two column format for CASCABEL for this issue. I found that the one column was wasteful of space particularly when reprinting poems, small items and the like. There will no doubt come a time when we have to produce this mag professionally and will probably have to change paper size and layout.

Until that time arrives I will however, continue to experiment on the best option as I go along. Thanks again to all those who have corresponded.

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WANTIRNA 3152

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720 1757 AH  
632 4055 BH  
632 4079 FAX

Et Ad Ultimus:

Maughan's Thought:

Only a mediocre person is always at his best.

.....ooOoo.....