

# CASCABEL

Newsletter of the Royal Australian Artillery  
Association (Victoria)



Editor: Lt.Col. R.M. Gaw

Asst. Editor: Capt. J.A. Davis

Number 4, June 1984.

## THE PRESIDENT WRITES

Dear Member,

In gunner parlance, I believe the orders run: "Prepare to move", "Cease firing", "Empty guns"; and so it shall be.

At last year's annual general meeting I gave due warning that I was to step down as your President. I asked that you put on your thinking caps. My decision is now quite firm although rather helped along by a thing called a heart attack. However, with the assistance of your committee, there is a worthy nomination and I think you will all be well pleased.

This year is, I feel, one for the beginning of quite dramatic changes in our Corps, and in particular, in your association. These are, and will be in the near future, much effected by that feared - or enjoyable - state called old age.

The nomination for your new President is Major P. S. Whitelaw. He served in the 10th Artillery Brigade prior to World War 2, joining up as soon as the bugle sounded as a lieutenant with

2/2 Field Regiment. "Norm" Whitelaw saw service in the first western desert campaign with 6th Australian Division and later in Greece and Crete. On return to Australia he transferred to 2 Field Regiment in 3rd Australian Division and from there he joined 1st Australian Naval Bombardment Group as a Shore Fire Control Officer and later as a Bombardment Liaison Officer. So we have in Norm Whitelaw a most experienced and versatile gunner. It doesn't stop there of course, for immediately after the war, and when the CMF was reformed, we find Major P. S. Whitelaw back in at Batman Avenue, and eventually as 21/C of 15 Field Regiment.

If you accept him - he's home!

There will be other changes needed: Lt Col Colin McLean has firmly indicated that due to other pressures, he must step down as Vice President, but is most willing to continue to serve on the committee. We have a nomination in Lt Col Rob Gaw as Vice President. Rob presently commands 10 Medium Regiment at Geelong and Colac, and of course he edits and produces our newsletter.

The spate of changes must continue, because our secretary Lt Ken Field, as Bursar of Scotch

College, has a really overflowing plate and is unable to continue with us. No problem: Major Merv Taggart has been nominated and, with your blessing, should eat the job as Secretary.

WO1 Ken Hodges will also step down as Treasurer. Captain Judith Davis has been nominated to take over the financial reins. If elected, I am sure she will carry out her duties with the same enthusiasm and reliability she has exhibited while serving as a member of your committee.

As I leave the scene, the boat may have rocked a wee bit. The changes in the crew will be made, and at the conclusion of our annual general meeting I am sure the report will firmly be "READY!"

Col Sandy Mair.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of our Association will be held on Thursday, 26th July, 1984, at 8.00 PM. Venue is Batman Avenue.

Following the formal part of the evening, which will include the election of office bearers, the incumbent Colonel Artillery, Col D. I. Perry will address the meeting. Following his address, supper will be served.

## 10 MDM REGT AFE VISIT

On Thursday, 5th April 1984, seven members of the association visited 10 Mdm Regt during its annual field exercise.

The visit coincided with the second of two days of live firing. These two days were the culmination of a series of courses run at Wangaratta during the

previous two weeks.

It was a great day for the visitors. The weather was fine, the shooting was good and we were looked after like princes (or generals). There were lots of cordite fumes for the nostrils and fire missions for the eyes to concentrate on.

Maj Greg Wishart and his two lovely female drivers carried us from place to place with efficiency, courtesy and precision (except for one little incident).

Our visit was well planned to fit in with the unit's activities. We were met at Site 4 at about 1100 hours and taken to the OP on Grahams Hill. From there we were able to observe several fire plans fired and watch the FO's preparation and orders.

A pleasant lunch was taken at the Area Officer's Mess before going to the gun position for the afternoon.

There was a five gun battery deployed. (One gun was loaned to the combined locating batteries and deployed nearby for their exercises).

For the one and a half hours that we were there, the battery fired almost continuously. The GPO, Lt Rob Mellar, with his SMIG and CP staff, were kept on their toes and the guns responded marvellously.

The day proved the value of the technical courses that preceded it and the thanks of the association members that attended are offered to Lt Col Rob Gaw and his Regiment for their fine hospitality.

Maj Merv Taggart.

## AN ODE TO THE COL ARTY

The following verse was penned by Col Sandy Mair while recovering from his recent heart attack. It was read at the handover of the Colonel Artillery posting from Col W. M. Vincent to Col D. I. Perry at Beersheba Barracks, Wangaratta at midnight on the 31st March, 1984.

"A word from Colonel Sandy,  
with a heart as weak as piss,  
it's a long way to Beersheba,  
so he's got to give it a miss.

Take on the mantle Doug my boy,  
those red tabs are your due,  
the job may seem a wee detached,  
but command to you's not new.

This Royal Regiment, peace be  
theirs,  
are extremely grand and merry,  
let them continue to continue so,  
with a gunner bloke called Perry."

## 1983/84 SUBSCRIPTIONS

This mailing will be the final reminder for payment of your 1983/84 subscriptions.

A renewal notice is enclosed only for those members who, according to our records, have not paid their subscriptions for 1983/84.

Reluctantly, due to administrative overheads, anyone who has not paid his 1983/84 subscription by 31st July, 1984, will be deleted from the mailing list. Please note that the Association's mailing list is the list used to notify non serving gunners of the dates of the gunner dinner and the artillery ball.

DON'T let your membership lapse. Payments may be mailed to the Membership Secretary, Artillery Depot, Batman Avenue, MELBOURNE, or

made in person at the annual general meeting on 26th July, 1984.

Capt J. A. Davis.

## 1984/85 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1984/85 are due and payable from 1st July, 1984. Renewal notices will be forwarded to members in August. However, payment may also be made at the annual general meeting on 26th July, 1984. Subscriptions are \$5.00 per year, or \$50.00 for life membership.

Capt J. A. Davis.

## 5.5 MOMENTS

It had been a drowsy day for 2, 3 and 4 guns. Number 1 pivot gun seemed to have been ranging all morning but no fire for effect had developed.

Suddenly, the tannoy crackled "14250, 2 rounds gunfire". "Number 4 load". "Number 4 fire".

BOOM - RIP - HISS. The round landed in the right place, but when the dust settled the breech was a foot into the ground six inches in front of the loading tray.

At the subsequent inquiry, it was decided that an important (one might even say critical) thread had stripped in the buffer.

A jeep appeared from dead ground a hundred metres in front of the gun position. "That will be the Sig Bdr with the OP line party", said the TSM. "He's the only dill that would come in that way".

The jeep stopped near number 4 gun and a lanky figure got

out and ambled over to the gun.  
"G'day Jamie", said the Bdr.  
"G'day Pratty", said the number 2.

"Jeez Jamie, it must be hard to open the breech like that. What happened?"

"Pulled the lanyard too hard", said Jamie.

"Uh Huh!", said the sig as he ambled away. "Probably cost you a beer in the Mess!"

Maj Merv Taggart.

## CALENDAR

26 Jul 84 Annual general meeting,  
Batman Avenue.

10 Aug 84 2/15 Fd Regt camp  
visit,  
Puckapunyal.

21 Sep 84 Artillery ball,  
Chaucers of Canterbury.

## ARTILLERY BALL

The 1984 artillery ball will be held at Chaucers of Canterbury on 21st September, 1984. Details may be obtained from the Association's representative on the ball committee, Major Merv Taggart, telephone 598 8452.

## SMOOTH VS RIFLED

The following article, dealing with the pros and cons of smooth versus rifled bores, was submitted by Col A. Mason. It is an extract from the "Text book on fortification etc, for the use of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.", which was published in 1884. It will be of interest to all technical minded gunners.

"Smooth bore guns have two great defects - inaccuracy of fire, and shortness of range.

Inaccuracy of fire is principally due to the evil effects of windage, or the space between the projectile and the bore of the gun. In loading, the projectile, which is necessarily spherical, rests on the bottom of the bore, and the windage at the moment of firing is above the projectile. when the gun is fired, the rush of gas through the windage forces the projectile downwards at the same time that it is pushed onwards. The downward pressure on the projectile causes it to rebound and strike some other point in the bore, while it is also given a rotary motion. The rebounding action goes on during the time that the projectile is within the bore of the gun, which it leaves after having struck it several times at various parts. In fact, during its passage along the bore of the gun, the projectile is never moving accurately in a direction coinciding with the axis of the piece, but is always bounding from one side to the other, and at each bound it receives from its friction with the bore an irregular twisting, or rotary, motion. The actual direction in which the projectile is moving when it leaves the piece will be away from the point of the bore last struck by it, and the position of this point will principally affect the axis of rotation; but as this position cannot be foreseen, the inaccuracy due to this cause cannot be allowed for in practice.

It may, therefore, be generally assumed that a smooth bore projectile never leaves the gun in the direction in which the latter is pointed; and also that its further flight is complicated by the irregular rotary motion given to it by friction within the bore.

A further cause of inaccuracy is due to the eccentricity of the projectiles

used. A cast iron shot or shell is always more or less eccentric; i.e., its centre of gravity does not coincide with the centre of the sphere: in simpler language, one side is heavier than the other.

Now, any body which has a rotating or spinning motion tends naturally to rotate around its centre of gravity; and if, in the case of a smooth bore shot moving through the air with a rotating motion, the projectile is eccentric, it will acquire a "wobbling" motion, which not only interferes with the regularity of its flight, thus causing inaccuracy, but also tends to retard its flight, and so cause loss of range.

Irregularity of form of the projectile also to a certain extent affects its flight, as it causes it to experience on rotation a varying amount of resistance from the air.

Hollow projectiles (shells) fired from smooth bore guns are less accurate than solid ones, as they are not so heavy, and are therefore more easily diverted from their intended direction by wind. Nor do they range so far, owing to their small weight.

With the exception of this last named cause, all the other causes of inaccuracy of fire from smoothbore guns may, in any single case, be combined to cause deflection either towards one side or the other of the object, or to increase or decrease the range.

Shortness of range in a smooth bore gun is due to the necessarily spherical form of the projectiles, which causes a rapid loss of velocity as the projectile moves through the air.

This loss of velocity arises from the comparatively small weight or mass of a spherical projectile in proportion to the surface that it opposes to the atmosphere in its passage through

it; for the power of a projectile to overcome the resistance of the atmosphere is measured by its weight, while the amount of resistance, for equal velocities, may be measured by the area of its section.

Therefore, with smooth bore guns, those of larger calibre have longer ranges than those of smaller calibre (elevation and initial velocity being the same in each), because their projectiles lose their velocity at a less rapid rate. It is for this reason that a long range smooth bore gun necessarily must be one of larger calibre, and therefore of great weight.

In a rifled piece the bore is provided with a number of grooves, running in a spiral direction throughout its length, with the object of giving to the projectile, which fits into them, a rotary motion on an axis coinciding with that of the bore. The rotation will be more or less rapid, according to the degree of twist given to the grooves.

By the application of rifling to guns, the following advantages over smooth bores are acquired:

1. Owing to the rapid rotation given to the projectile in a known direction, the causes of deviation arising from windage, and from the irregular shape and eccentricity of the projectile, are almost entirely abolished.

2. Since the projectile fits the bore when the gun is fired, from its being accurately centred, it issues from the gun with its long axis coincident with the axis of the gun; that is to say, it commences its flight in the required direction, or that in which the gun is pointed.

These two advantages are the principal causes of the accuracy of fire of rifled guns.



3. The projectile being given a rapid rotation on an axis coinciding with that of the gun, does not turn over in its flight, but passes through the air in a manner similar to that of an arrow, with its head to the front.

This permits the use of elongated in place of spherical projectiles, thereby allowing an increase of weight without an increase in diameter, or of the surface which is opposed to the atmosphere during its flight; and it also allows the head, or fore part, of the projectile to be made of the form most favourable for passing through the air with the least resistance, or (as in the case of battering projectiles) of penetrating iron defences in the most effective manner.

Owing to these causes, rifled projectiles lose their velocity at a much less rapid rate than is the case with those of smooth bore guns; and to this result is principally due the long range of rifled guns.

The use of elongated projectiles leads to the further advantages of great weight of projectile when solid ones are used, and also great capacity for holding a bursting charge of powder when shells are used, which greatly increases their destructive effects.

Further, the use of elongated projectiles enables all the projectiles of each kind of gun to be made of equal weights, a great advantage in many respects. And it may be here remarked that the accuracy of fire of hollow projectiles from rifled guns is even more accurate than that of solid ones, which is due to their weight lying near the circumference (similar to the flywheel of an engine), and so inducing steadiness of rotation and flight."

## NEW LOOK CASCABEL

You will have noticed that CASCABEL has taken on a new look with this issue. Not only has it been expanded to include eight pages, but it is produced on stationery with a professionally printed banner.

The committee wishes to thank Col D. I. Perry for his generosity in providing the new stationery.

## MEDIUM GUNNERY

"In the horseshoe shaped perimeter I now had some 3000 men, and in the heart of the area Sheriff Thompson's Light Regiment had gun batteries sited north-east and north-west of Oosterbeck church on the rising ground. All through, these men had displayed a remarkably high standard of efficiency and marksmanship.

Following the conference, I visited the 1st battery's command post with Robert Loder-Symonds (CRA) just at the time when Captain Macmillan announced with some relish that he had at last contacted the outside artillery by radio. Loder-Symonds himself went to speak and there were a few exchanges which suggested that the 2nd Army artillery unit at the other end were suspicious about our identity. German wireless trespassing was a common feature in the operation and the outside artillery commander, who knew him personally, now asked Loder-Symonds to give the name of his wife.

"Merlin", Loder-Symonds replied.

It was not enough. "What is your wife's favourite sport?"

"Falconry", said Loder-Symonds.

Normally, 2nd Army would

not have listened to our calls because we did not know the current callsigns; now, however, they could not do too much for us. I called on Hackett (a brigade commander) and Hicks at their headquarters and told them to select targets for the 64th Medium Regiment when it got within range. Thus started one of the most exciting and remarkable artillery shoots I have ever experienced.

From a range of about eleven miles, these gunners proceeded to answer our calls with a series of shoots on targets nominated by Loder-Symonds, some of which were no more than a hundred yards out from the perimeter line. It involved certain risks, but the situation merited their being taken, and in the afternoon the shelling had had quite noticeable effect on the Germans. Hearing the whine and tremendous blast of these medium shells - there is surely no more terrifying noise in war - we felt glad the 64th were on our side. And now, supported by a battery of heavies, these gunners broke up several attacks supported by self propelled guns on the eastern flank."

"....Our best hope now was that the 64th Medium would give us enough support to contain the Germans until the Guards Armoured Division and whatever infantry they had with them caught up with us. Already the shelling had put new heart into the troops; nothing succeeds like the big guns in building infantry morale."

"....During the afternoon the Germans continued to infiltrate into the perimeter. One group took over a wood some two hundred yards away from the Hartenstein hotel (HQ) and it was noticed that they had a machine-gun at a point along one of the escape routes. They had to be shifted. Loder-Symonds therefore called up a shoot from the 64th Medium who bombarded this area, which was plumb in the middle of our perimeter, from a range of some 15000 yards. He directed them

from the roof of a high building on the far side of the target. I am sure there has never been such a fantastic shoot."

MajGen R. E. Urquhart, CB, DSO.

## THANK YOU SANDY

The last committee meeting for the 1983/84 year was held on Thursday evening, 28th June, 1984. It was also the last committee meeting for our long serving President, Col Sandy Mair.

To show its appreciation to Sandy for his contribution to the Association over the years, the committee dined him out, following the meeting, at Onions restaurant in Commercial Road, Prahran.

Nine members were present, including the new President elect, Major Norm Whitelaw. Our numbers rated a private room and an excellent evening was enjoyed by all. The food was first class, the service left nothing to be desired, and the wine was BYO (a good selection from the 2/15 Fd Regt Officers Mess at Batman Avenue).

With such comrades present, the evening was bound to be a success. Not even Major Merv Taggart falling through his chair could have spoiled the proceedings.

The night concluded with Sandy being chauffeured home (in 2/15 Fd Regt's staff car).

From all of us in the Association, thank you Sandy!.

Yes folks, this page is  
just waiting for your  
CONTRIBUTION!!!

A funny story,  
Reminiscences (tall tales  
and true),  
Historical and technical  
articles,  
Gunner miscellanea,  
Hatch, match and dispatch,  
ANYTHING!!!

CASCABEL is only ever  
going to be as good as you, the  
member, make it.

Put pen to paper and  
forward your articles to:

RAA Association,  
Artillery Depot,  
Batman Avenue,  
MELBOURNE 3000