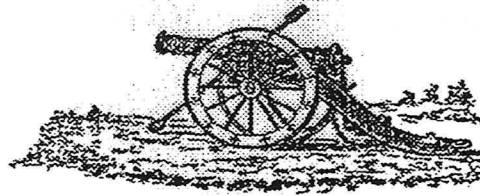


CASCABEL

Journal of the
—ROYAL

AUSTRALIAN
ARTILLERY
ASSOCIATION (VIC)

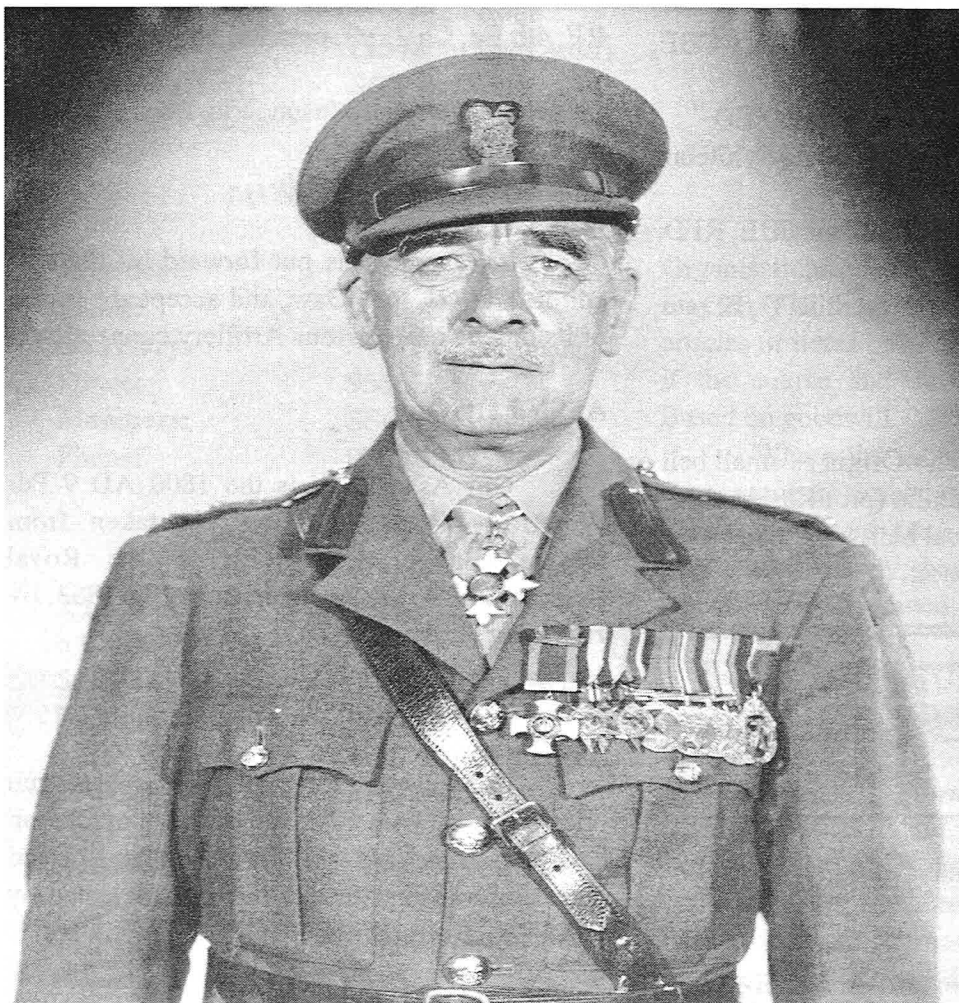
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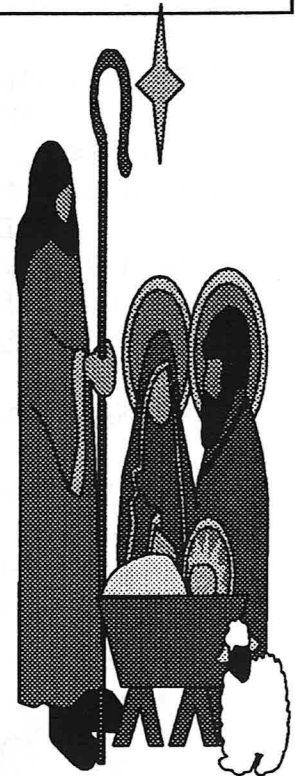
Number 58

Published Quarterly in
Victoria Australia

December 1998



Brigadier Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED.
January 5, 1906 - September 7, 1998
See pages 14 & 15

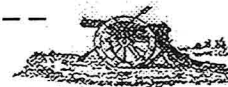


**Happy
Christmas
and a
prosperous
New Year!**

CASCABEL

Journal of the

-----ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC.-----



FOUNDED:

First AGM April 1978
First Cascabel July 1983

COL COMMANDANT:

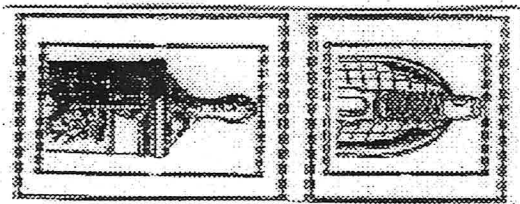
BRIG G. B. Standish AM; RFD, ED

PAST PRESIDENTS:

1978 - 1981 MAJGEN N. A. Vickery CBE,
 MC, ED
1981 - 1984 COL A. (Sandy) Mair ED
1984 - 1988 MAJ P. S. (Norman) Whitelaw
 ED
1988 - 1991 BRIG K. V. Rossi OBE, RFD,
 ED
1991 - MAJ M. Taggart RFD, ED

JOURNAL NAME:

CASCABEL - Spanish - Origin as small bell or Campanilla (pro: Kaskebell), spherical bell, knob like projection.



CASCABLE - English spelling.
REASON FOR:

Once a fixed extension left over when a muzzle loaded gun was molten cast. It was the left over molten ore plug from the cast liquid entry point. Left on as it was found to be a good handle to move or elevate the barrel. Then shaped to look like a bell.

ARTILLERY USE:

After 1800 AD, it became adjustable. The breech is closed in large calibres by a CASCABEL(E) screw, which is a solid block of forged wrought iron, screwed into the breach coil until it pressed against the end of the steel tube. In the smaller calibres, the A bore tube is carried through to form the CASCABEL(E).

[Ref: "Text Book on Fortification Etc", Royal Military College, Sandhurst, by COL G. Philips, RE, 4th Ed, Ch-1, p9, para 28, 1884].

[Source: COL Alan Mason, Vic, May 1993].

CASCABEL HISTORY:

The name was put forward by the first editor, LTCOL Rob Gaw, and accepted because of its unique and obvious Artillery connection.

ASSN LOGO:

Our Assn Logo is the 1800 AD 9 Pdr Waterloo Field Gun. Copy is taken from Device, Badge and Motto of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, as approved in 1883, by HM King William IV.

LAPEL BADGE:

Copy of the left arm brass gilded gun once worn by Gun Sgts above the chevrons on each arm. Brassards worn by IGs at North Head were embroidered with this insignia. Selected by MAJ Warren Barnard, 1984 Assn Committee.

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EDITOR'S EXOTERICS

Sorry that I did not get this out in time for Christmas.

In September I had a congestial cardiac failure, resulting in my heart being dangerously enlarged and the lungs, legs and various other inconvenient parts of the body being full of fluid.

The good news is that I have subsequently lost 16.5 kgs or 2 stone 8.4 pounds for those of the old school.

The bad news is that it is not yet known as to whether a heart transplant is feasible. The last visit to the Cardiologist, although 14.5 kgs lighter at that stage, showed no improvement in the heart at all.

However, as old soldiers never something or other. I finally have managed to get this together for you, albeit a little late. Breathing and concentration have been the basic problems.

Starting to improve now I feel so will be continuing as your editor for another year I hope. ***Please note! My new Email address is rgcurtis@bigpond.com.au***

Hoping to join you all for the Church Parade in February and the Visit to the School of Artillery in March and of course I'll be there on Anzac Day.

I trust you all had a wonderfully happy and joyous Christmas and that you enjoy a prosperous, enjoyable and interesting New Year throughout.

Ron Curtis, Editor.

INTERNET SURVEY

Would you like to have access to the latest information on RAA Association (Vic) activities through our own home-page?

We could:

- * publicise Gunner items such as the 2/10 Mdm Regt Band CD, ties, port, cufflinks etc
- * reach potential members who don't know about our Association, especially the younger Gunners
- * promulgate functions, with the contact officer for bookings

If you would like to record interest, and/or have any suggestions to add,

email to: rsmith@eisa.net.au



The President Writes

Once again it is my duty to pass on the sad news of the death of Brigadier Sir William Hall who passed away on 7 September 1998. Extracts from his eulogy will be found elsewhere in the magazine. Sir William was my first Commanding Officer when I enlisted in 2 Medium Regiment at Chapel Street Depot in 1950. As the first CO on the formation of the CMF he had surrounded himself with many ex 2/4 Fd Regt officers and NCO's. These experienced people were able to help him form a well trained and close knit regiment which was a great start to the younger people like myself and his son, Young Bill. Sir William was a legend among AIF gunners and to the wider Regiment and will be sorely missed.

The unfortunate cancellation of the St Barbara's celebrations at Pt Cook was a disappointment but I understand that the Cascabel was amended before issue. As a result I went to Puckapunyal on Sunday 15 Nov to present the Norman Whitelaw Prizes. The recipients are notified elsewhere. Our presentations as well as unit prizes and awards and the 10 Medium Regiment Association prize were presented at the conclusion of a rigorous infantry training exercise on that day. LTCOL Carl Wood was presented with an inscribed shell case as a memento of his time as CO, this being his last opportunity to see the Regiment on exercise.

I mentioned last time that Mina and I were off to Europe shortly after the AGM. We had a great holiday the main features of which were a bus tour of France, a self drive tour of England, Scotland and Wales and a four day trip on a canal boat. We visited Woolwich where I presented our compliments to the staff of the Royal Artillery Association. LTCOL Morris Felton the General Secretary entertained us to lunch in the officers' mess where it came out that LTCOL Paddy Steele knows Max Almond who some may remember as BSM 132 Div Loc Bty many years ago. Woolwich is so full of Regimental history and I recommend that any one who finds themselves in London should make the effort to visit.

On behalf of friends in the Victorian Scottish Regiment Association we had reason to visit the Gordon's museum in Aberdeen and the Highlanders HQ in Inverness. If you want to see a real example of fixed defences go to Fort George near Inverness. It is quite awesome in itself, has a 22 room museum and is still a working Battalion Depot.

A further military visit was to the Light Infantry HQ in Winchester. Peninsular Barracks is well worth a visit. It contains the museums of four of the Regiments from which the Light Infantry is formed including the Ghurkhas.

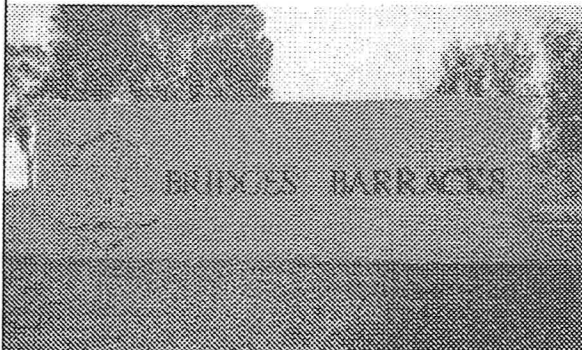
Although Mina was not so enthusiastic I thoroughly enjoyed our four days on a canal boat from a place called Chirk to Llangollen in Wales. This included the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, 127 feet above the River Dee.

Our printing arrangements mean that although I am writing this before Christmas you will not get your copy until January so I hope you have all had a satisfactory festive season and I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual Church Parade at St Bartholomew's on Sunday 7 February 1999.

Best wishes,

Merv Taggart
MAJ
President

VISIT TO SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY



SUN 7 MAR 99

**MEET AT THE SCHOOL
VISITORS' CAR PARK
AT 9.30 AM**

**TOUR OF SCHOOL FROM
10 AM TO 12 NOON**

BBQ AVAILABLE - BYO EVERYTHING PICNIC LUNCH

PUCKAPUNYAL OPEN DAY FROM 1 PM TO 3 PM

BOOK WITH MERV TAGGART ON 9598 8452

**The P. S. (Norman) Whitelaw Prizes for 1998
were presented by Major Merv Taggart at
Puckapunyal on Sunday 15 Nov 98
Recipients were:**

Most Outstanding Officer:Captain A. J. Smith (HQ Bty)
Most Outstanding WO/SNCO:Sergeant R. J. Schreurs (38 Bty)
Most Outstanding OR:Gunner T. A. Benjamin (38 Bty)
Most Outstanding ARA:Corporal P. A. Hume (38 Bty)



The following article, written in 1991, was provided by Major J. C. Armstrong ED

THE "COWARD" WHO WON THE VC

Fifty years ago this month, Australian troops were fighting a tough, difficult campaign in the Middle East against a former ally. LT Cutler would have cause to remember the Lebanese towns of Merdjayoun and Damour.

CHRIS ARMSTRONG reports:

The young 2/16th Battalion officer left LT "Ro" Cutler in no doubt that he thought him lacking in moral fibre. As forward observation officer for the RAA, 2/5 Fd Regt, Cutler, 25, was with the infantry for their attack on the strong Vichy French line at Damour. But his wireless was useless in the rugged terrain, and his field telephone-line had not yet reached him. He could not direct the fire of his regiment's guns.

It was 6 Jul 41, one month into the Syrian campaign of WW II, and the 7 Aust Inf Div was tackling the last obstacle before their major objective, Beirut.

Sitting in his comfortable harbour side home in Bellevue Hill, Sydney, the former LT Cutler looked back 50 years. Now Sir Roden Cutler, VC, AK, KCMG, KCVO, CBE, veteran of half a dozen ambassadorial posts, the capable and respected Governor of New South Wales from 1966 to 1981, and one of only two surviving WWII Australian Victoria Cross winners, he could remember the occasion clearly.

The Inf Coy Comd knew there was little the gunner could do without his line, "but there were a couple of wild heads there, and when one of them accused me of being yellow, that was it:" said Sir Roden. Armed only with a revolver, he accompanied the attacking infantry. "If I'd been older and wiser, I probably would have just accepted the insult, and waited for my line", he said.

Had the "wild head" only known, not only would Cutler prove his courage that day, but he had already done so, beyond any doubt, two weeks earlier, at a place called Merdjayoun. Strategic key to mountainous central Lebanon, Merdjayoun was captured by the 7 Div on the second day of the campaign. A strong Vichy French thrust had recaptured it, and the whole allied line was threatened. It had to be retaken, quickly.

The Australians' first attempt to do this failed, the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion in particular suffering heavy casualties. The sector commander, Artillery Brigadier (later LTGEN) F. H. Berryman, tried again on 19 June. The 2/25th Battalion lead, with 2/2nd Pioneers in support. The diggers fought their way into the town, but were strongly counter-attacked. Their only effective defence against the French tanks and armoured cars was the fire of their supporting Guns, up to nine kilometers back, directed by the artillery observers who moved with them. One of these was LT Cutler.

Forward of the infantry for better observation, Cutler and another gunner, Capt C. A.

Clark, with five men established a post in a mud hut on the edge of the town. Twice their vital telephone-line was cut by shellfire. First Cutler, then Gnr G.N. Grayson, went out under fire to repair it. As it was cut again, their post was attacked by two medium tanks and French Foreign Legion infantry.

Unable to communicate with their Guns, the party fought back with what they had. Cutler and LCpl V. G. Pratt fired .55-00 inch anti-tank rifles which, although bouncing off the tanks' armour, caused them to hesitate. The Foreign Legionnaires came on, firing and killing one Australian, wounding another. Cutler and Pratt used rifle and Bren-gun to drive them back. A tank shell burst between Cutler and Pratt, killing the latter and wounding Clark and Grayson. Again Cutler drove the tanks back, repeatedly hitting their more-vulnerable tracks with the anti-tank rifle.

Covered by 2/25th Battalion fire, Cutler withdrew the survivors. With three wounded out of five, only Grayson's insistence, although in intense pain himself, that he walk and assist with Clark, made this possible. Clark, "a very gallant Gentleman and a fine soldier", died of his wounds. Grayson received the Military Medal for his deeds that day.

Cutler was not yet finished. The same afternoon he returned to the outskirts of Merdjayoun, where he and a signaller concealed themselves in a cemetery. He cautiously engaged and recorded important targets around him, even when cut off by a French counter-attack. Finally, enemy tanks and infantry stopped within 50 meters, and settled down for the night. "We could hear their voices" said Sir Roden; "I just had time to tell the gun position not to call, as any sound would have given us away". A military 'don't call us - we'll call you'. After dark, boots slung around their necks, the two men crept back to 2/25 Battalion lines. There, Cutler's cautious call was recognised by an officer who had been about to shoot the shadowy figures.

On 24 June Cutler took a 25-pounder gun ahead of the infantry line at a feature called 'the Pimple', to deal with a pair of tanks which had been harassing the forward troops. "It was over open sights", Sir Roden said; "we had our vehicle revving up just behind us, ready to hook in the gun and run. We were in the open, in full view of the enemy". "Fortunately, we got our shots in first, and both tanks were knocked out. It was a first-class gun-crew, and we were lucky".

Not so lucky that day were a battalion of the King's Own Royal Rifles, British troops in their first action of the war, who were caught by French mortars minutes before the Australian barrage commenced to their front. They mistook the mortars for Australian guns, although more battle-tuned ears had no doubt about the origin of the fire.

After the action, Cutler was given the unenviable task of explaining to the commander of the King's Own. Fifty years later, Sir Roden seemed to recall this duty as his most unpleasant and dangerous of the campaign. "The colonel exploded:" he said. "He just wasn't prepared to listen; it was us, and us alone". Even today, the official history has both Australian and French fire falling on the King's Own, but Sir Roden is certain his regiment had no "drop-shorts" that day.

By the evening of 24 June, the Merdjayoun area was secure. Australian guns, and particularly the daring work of Cutler in pin pointing vital targets, had played a major role. The cost was high. In two weeks of fighting, the restricted Merdjayoun area cost the 7th Division a full third of its total casualties for the campaign.

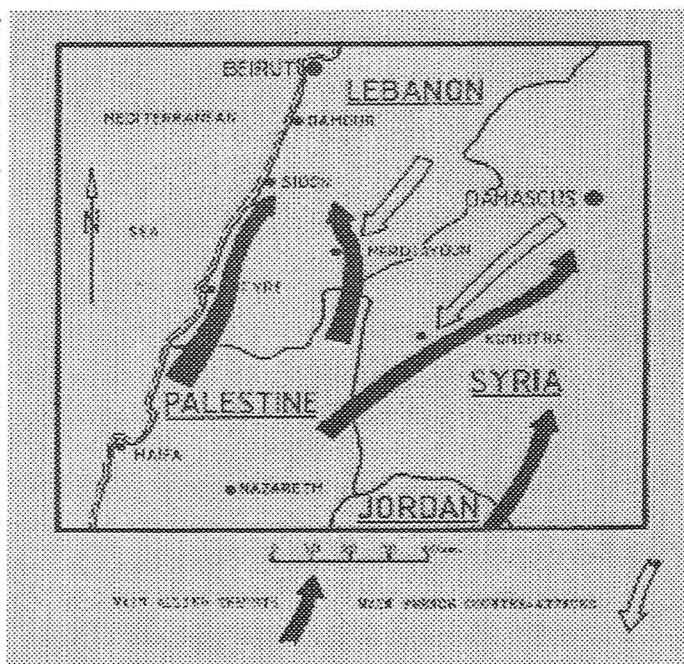
By 6 Jul, 2/5th Field Regiment was on the coast for the final push to Beirut. After his brush

with the young infantry "wildheads", Cutler moved behind the leading platoons as they advanced up the scrubby slope beyond the shallow Damour River. A French mortar-bomb landed two meters in front of him, without exploding. "The whole thing could have ended right there", Sir Roden said.

Temporarily alone, he came on three well dug-in and concealed French machine-gun posts which, in their haste, the forward troops had passed unseen in the predawn twilight. With his revolver, Cutler took them on. As the official history laconically puts it:

"Cutler captured eight Frenchmen (they were Foreign Legion) from three machine-gun posts. The enemy in the first were persuaded to surrender by the sight of this six-foot-four inches of elongated Aussie jumping right into their midst. Those in the second nest were talked into it by Cutler's limited French. A grenade (borrowed from the infantry, some of whom had appeared by now) dropped into the third plus the assistance of a Bren-gunner from the battalion, caused its occupants to make an instant Decision on the subject."

I asked Sir Roden why he had not waited for more support. "The forward troops had the French in front, and these behind" he said. "They were in a trap. I decided that, and then wasted no time."



He caught up with the company, by this time pinned down under heavy machine-gun fire from front and flanks. They needed close artillery support. Cutler set out across bullet-swept ground to find his line-party. A French machine-gun, concealed in a banana plantation, caught him. A bullet smashed the bone in his leg, and severed an artery. After an anxious moment when some of the machine gunners ran out towards him then changed their minds, he bound the gaping wound with strips torn from his shirt, and stopped the bleeding by using his pistol lanyard as a tourniquet.

He lay unattended for 27 hours, in great pain and racked by thirst. He had given his water bottle to a wounded man amongst the captured legionnaires. During confused fighting around him he was wounded again, this time in the chest, by shrapnel from his own guns. Even while being rescued, his ordeal was not over. First the stretcher-party, then the Regimental Aid Post, and finally the truck taking him further back, were shelled by the persistent French.

Gas-gangrene had developed, and his leg was amputated above the knee. "For a couple of weeks I loitered between here and the pearly gates", said this remarkable man. Lieutenant Cutler's war was over.

His Victoria Cross is the only one ever awarded to an Australian Artilleryman. "For most conspicuous and sustained gallantry during the Syrian campaign" between 19 June and 6 July, 1941, the citation for this, the ultimate bravery award, continues over a page and a half, yet does not even mention the little affair of the three machine-gun posts at Damour:

ANNUAL CHURCH PARADE

SUNDAY

7th FEBRUARY 1999

Service commences at 11 am

(aim for 10.45 am, and hear the bells peal)

**Saint Bartholomew's Anglican Church
290 Burnley Street, Burnley**

Melways reference: map 2H, E9

Members and their families are cordially invited to join our annual
church parade on the first Sunday in February

Hear the Band of the 2nd/10th Medium Regiment RAA

All denominations welcomed

Any enquiries to Robin Smith on 9435 6352

Book Review

by MAJGEN J. Whitelaw AO, CBE, RL

PORTLAND'S HISTORIC BATTERY (1889)

**A History of the Portland's Historic Battery (1889):
Including the Western Artillery Corps (1866-1884)
and the Portland Battery Garrison Artillery (1884-1904)**

Author - Gwen Bennett, printed by E. Davis & Sons, PORTLAND, Vic.

Card cover, 240x150 mm, 10 b & w photos, seven line drawings, ivl52pp, nom roll personnel 1866-1904.

Copies available from author 43 Edgar Street, PORTLAND, Vic. 3306.

Price \$11 per copy incl postage.

This book is one of those little gems which one comes across every now and then. It is bursting with information about a little known facet of Australia's military history even for those familiar with the history of colonial Victoria.

In this book we get quite a number of evocative photos of the colonial period, some of which could usefully respond to enhancement. The line drawings are well done and add much to the narrative, while the nominal roll of those who served has been painstakingly assembled from available records. It will be much appreciated by those people interested in genealogy or research into records of service of the Australian Commonwealth and Colonial forces

There is an interesting, if brief, coverage of the formation of the Western Artillery Corps from 1866, which does not describe in any detail the political pressures leading to the allocation of, what were then, quite significant resources into a distant military venture. From there the story progresses to the building of the battery, emplacement of the guns and the continuing progress of the Artillery in Portland until closure of the Fort in 1904.

There are some delightful minor stories told about the guns themselves, including a wooden gun for training (what a wonderful item for a museum!), the band, the Orderly Rooms and some redoubtable personalities.

This book is recommended for those interested in Australian and colonial history and those who wish to grasp something of the flavour of our military history.

John Whitelaw

Your editor wishes to apologise for a somewhat unforgivable mistake last issue in that after MAJGEN Whitelaw wrote to me personally pointing out that the address for obtaining copies of "The Thunder of the Guns" was not 121 as originally supplied but 12, I promptly deleted not the trailing 1 but the leading 1 leaving you with an address reading 21 Wyralla Rd in lieu of 12 Wyralla Rd Yowie Bay NSW 2228. Sorry!

Membership Report – January 1999

Most members would be aware of the death a few months ago of our Patron, Brigadier Sir William Hall. A number of our members, including Committee, represented the Association at his funeral service, conducted at Scots Church in Collins Street Melbourne. Elsewhere in this edition you will find more details. Our sympathy goes to his family, including son Bill, who is also a member of the Association, at this time.

The deaths of Maj CVI Barnden, Sgt T Biggs, and WO1 R Hayes were noted with sadness recently. On behalf of all members, I would express our sympathy to their families.

I am pleased to report that we have added five new members recently. They are Lt S Yole, Miss E Biggs (daughter of Sgt "Trigger" Biggs), Sgt J Carter, Lt J Capp, and Bdr N Hill. To help swell our numbers even further, I would encourage all our members to try to nominate one Gunner acquaintance that you know, to join us in the Association. So why not request a nomination form from me to pass on to them.

We also welcome 108 Fd Bty (SVN) Association as associate members of this Association.

The membership register currently stands at 402.

At the AGM in August the subscription for 1998/99 was set at \$12. Renewal notices were included in the last issue of Cascabel. Thank you to all those who responded quickly, I appreciate your assistance. Reminders were sent at the beginning of December, and for those who still haven't responded, you will find a final reminder enclosed. Please fill it out and return with your remittance as soon as possible. I would ask that members not send cash through the mail. we have had two members do that recently, and the \$2 coin was lost through a hole which formed in the corner of the envelope.

If you are about to move then please ensure you advise us. Please cut out and post the change of address notice on the cover of this issue, or telephone me at work on (03) 9781-2633 or at home on (03) 9787-7852.

**DAVID OSBORNE
MAJOR
VICE PRESIDENT AND
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.**

Brigadier Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED

(The following is reproduced with the kind permission of his son and Mufti Official Journal of the Victorian RSL)

Born: 05 January 1906

Died: September 7, 1998

His bravery was inspiring.

His humanity was matched by his toughness.

In war, his achievements were honoured.

In peace, he served the RSL with distinction.

Once the seven-year-old William Hall started cleaning the horse harness every morning before he went to school in Edinburgh. Scotland, his destiny was set.

Like his father he was groomed to become a soldier's soldier. And once he began polishing his father's guns his specialty was also set.

He was trained to become a gunner's gunner.

"And once you are a gunner" his son William Hall junior said, "you are always a gunner."

And like my father and his father I became a soldier and a gunner to boot.

We were all called William and we all did the same thing - three generations down the line, tradition runs strong.

"But Dad, he was a top gun - the last of a dying breed who believed in spit and polish - and was known in the Allied forces fighting in New Guinea as the soldier with the shiny boots, as he always cleaned them, come hail or shine."

Brigadier Sir William Henry Hall, who died in Melbourne on September 7, 1998 (aged 92), was a soldier through and through, distinguishing himself in an age that has produced its fair share of warriors and the conflicts in which they were tested.

He was born in Aldershot, England. A born soldier always on guard, he played a key defence role in both war and peace.

In the Second World War he defended his adopted country from invasion, then kept the nation in readiness for attack through the Citizens Military Forces.

Finally, he strengthened the

organisation that preserves the memory of all those who died in battle - The Returned Service League - almost to his dying day.

Inspired by the deeds of those who fought for the British Empire during the First World War, he joined the Citizens Military Force in 1924 at 17 years of age soon after emigrating from Scotland to Melbourne. -

He received a commission as lieutenant in 1934 just as Hitler's rise to power signalled the possibility of another war.

As a commissioned officer, said his son William, "Dad went off on a two-week training camp but did not come back for two years - because he was sent on to the Western desert"..

After leading artillery attacks against Hitler's "Desert Fox" Rommel, he was then part of the force transferred back to Australia to defend home shores as a result of the 1941 Japanese entry into the war after they bombed Pearl Harbour.

Labor Prime Minister John Curtin's radical policy was to put Australia's needs ahead of British Prime Minister Churchill's request for more troops to save Britain from German attack.

Sent to New Guinea in 1942 and appointed battery commander, Major Hall distinguished himself in a number of dangerous battles including the Milne Bay landing, where he helped defeat the Japanese by directing gun fire from a tree top.

Needing a high vantage point to direct artillery fire, he scaled a tree and, despite continuous Japanese fire, clung to his precarious perch until the Allies had won the battle.

Laughing off his bravery later, he said he felt comfortable because he knew "the Japanese were such rotten shots".

Nevertheless, during 1942, when the Japanese bombed Darwin, shelled Sydney and Newcastle from the sea and invaded Sydney Harbour with midget submarines, he was one



Brigadier Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED. January 5, 1906 - September 7, 1998

of the great heroes of the New Guinea campaign that stopped the planned Japanese invasion of Australia.

He won the Distinguished Service Order with a citation confirming his bravery: "On numerous occasions Major Hall personally supervised and directed the fire of his guns at Buna, New Guinea, when under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. He displayed courage, driving force and the highest qualities of leadership under the most adverse conditions."

Having helped win the Pacific War, by 1945 he was promoted to Colonel and in 1946 appointed Director of Armament at Army Headquarters, becoming Brigadier later that year.

Believing in the need to keep the armed forces strong, he served as Commander Royal Artillery 3 Div Southern Command till 1971.

He joined the RSL in 1942 in Perth and became Victorian President from 1964 to 1975 and served as National President from 1975 to 1978.

As the RSL National President, Major-General Peter Phillips said,

"He was an RSL man to the bootstraps with great humanity matched by great toughness, and gave great service".

<p>Blessed with tireless energy and in June 1979. A sense of community duty, he also served on a wide range of community organisations, receiving the awards of Commander of the British Empire in June 1962, Knight Bachelor in January 1968 and KBE</p>	<p>son, the marathon runner Robert de Castella. A great club member. being a Life Member of the Naval and Military Club and a fanatical sportsman throughout his life, he liked to think his prowess passed down through his daughter to her</p>
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Brigadier Sir William Hall, KBE, DSO, ED

Our patron, Brigadier Sir William Hall, died on 7 September 1998 aged 92 years. We thank the 2/4th Field Regiment Association for permission to use the following extract from the October edition of BARRAGE, their official organ.

"Born at Aldershot, England with a strong military background over many generations, Bill migrated to Australia in 1920, joined the Citizen Military Forces in 1924, and was commissioned in 1934. On formation of the 2/4th he was the Regiment's first Adjutant until he was appointed Battery Captain of 7 Battery in which position, which also included some OP duties, he was actively involved in the Syrian Campaign. Promotion then came quickly and in January 1942 he was transferred to 2/5 Fd Regt as Battery Commander.

Bill Hall was awarded the Distinguished Service Order when in action at Buna, the long citation including "*Major Hall personally supervised and directed the fire of his guns at Buna, New Guinea when under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. He displayed courage, driving force and the highest qualities of leadership.*" By the end of 1942 Bill with promotion was Assistant Director of Armaments and closely involved with designing and producing the short 25 pdr gun. Colonel J P Buckley the then Director of Design and Development has stated that "the speed with which the pilot model was produced was mainly due to the drive and strong leadership of Lt Col Hall" (*Barrage* Feb 1996 page 19).

After the war Bill continued with the C.M.F. and retired with the rank of Brigadier and joined the RSL, becoming State President from 1964 to 1974 and then National President until 1978. In 1962 Bill was awarded a CBE and then in 1968 he received the honour of Knight Commander of the British Empire. In his civilian capacity Bill pre-war had been one of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria's first employees and he went back there retiring in the prestigious position of State Superintendent of Stores.

As an overall sportsman Bill Hall excelled, winning trophies in athletics, swimming, tennis and golf. He played District Cricket (one step below Sheffield Shield) and represented Prahran and Victoria in soccer.

The death of Bill Hall brought forth an enormous number of tributes, many from organisations of which he was Patron, others from individuals. Bruce Ruxton RSL State President who led the RSL Service mentioned the one attribute that he found the greatest, and that was Bill's ability and liking to talk meaningfully with anyone irrespective of their rank or position...."

Letters to the Editor

Responding to your invitation re CA at Magnetic Island WWII Page 25 Cascabel Sep 98.

Our member (ex LT) Reg Kidd from WA, co-author of "Letter Batteries" most likely has responded, as his book in some depth spells out the details of the CA (WWII) battery there.

Interesting to read the Eulogy of N. A. Vickery.

In my time as an engineering student - University of Melbourne, post war (1948-51) Vickery was the Assistant Guidance Officer to another well known Gunner, Bill Cremor (the Guidance Officer) for ex-service students undergoing courses at the University under the Post War Reconstruction Training Scheme.

Bill Goodall
Black Rock

Thanks Bill, Reg Kidd has, as you predicted, responded to Sgt Robin Smead's letter. and thank you for that other interesting observation about MAJGEN Vickery. I know that many of our members are always interested to learn these little side issues of the careers of the 'Regimental Greats'. Ed

`T' Aust Heavy Battery - Magnetic Island

In the last issue of 'Cascabel' Robin Smead raised some questions regarding one of the 'Letter' Batteries that was emplaced on Magnetic Island in World War II. He is quite correct that this was 'T' Aust Heavy Battery although 'L' Battery was also at the same location prior to 'T' Battery.

He is also correct in that the two guns were 155 mm calibre part of nineteen 'Letter' Batteries equipped with these guns procured from the USA and used in a mobile Coast Defence role. The book 'The History of the Letter Batteries' recently reviewed in 'Cascabel' provides the complete war diary for 'T' Batteries together with an excellent photograph of one of the guns firing in a practice shoot.

This book is obtainable from R.E. Neal - 5 Tower Reserve - Castlecrag NSW 2068 at a cost of \$37.50 including postage and provides the complete story of these batteries - their formation, locations and eventual demise. 'T' Battery was destined to go to Milne Bay but this move never took place and the battery was eventually absorbed into Coast Artillery - Townsville.

At no time were 5.5" guns ever used in a Coast Defence role to the best of my knowledge.

Reg Kidd
Forresfield WA

Thanks Reg, hope that has satisfied your query Robin, but please don't hesitate to let us know if further questions now come to mind, after all this is how we all learn from one another. Ed

At our regular Committee meeting this week, our Secretary tabled the latest edition of CASCABEL, and I have noticed your request for some news of certain units, of which the 10th. is one.

Over 2 year ago, I sent a letter to Brigadier Graeme Standish in which I sent an 'unofficial' short history of our Regiment, but it must have been lost in the mail, as I have not seen anything of it in your excellent magazine (I used to serve on the War Veterans' Homes Trust with Graeme.) However, I am enclosing herewith a copy of that article.

To add some further news - on 27 Apr 97, in conjunction with the Point Leo Foreshore Committee, we unveiled a Cairn to commemorate the fact that one of our 18-pounder guns was placed on that Point in December, 1941, after the Japanese came into the War. The Plaque reads. "In December, 1941, an 18-Pounder gun was placed on this Point Leo Headland as part of Australia's Defence Strategy to defend 'Western Port Bay from an anticipated Japanese Invasion. The gun was manned by Gunners of the 37th Battery of the 10th Australian Field Regiment." If you or any of your members are down on the Peninsula, you could be interested in a little bit of almost forgotten Australian History.

At present, we still have 113 old Gunners on our mailing list, and we just completed a survey of them all, to find out what they think about our future - we have, or had, members in all States and we still have one regular correspondent in London. We have two newsletters annually and our Re-union still attracts about 60, each October.

Harry Powell
10th Aust Field Regiment (AIF) Association

Sorry Harry that this has not been published before, this may be because you sent the previous copy to BRIG Standish, not to this Association, or if he did pass it on to the committee perhaps my predecessor put it in one of the missing issues. Ed

AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORICAL STORY OF THE REGIMENT.

The 10th Field Artillery made on the 8th December, 1941, the 4 beach guns between Regiment is said to have been with 37th Battery HQ being Flinders and Merricks, was in a formed in Egypt in 1916, and went established on the old Bittern hut (which could have formerly on to action on the Western Front. Racecourse, with one troop of been a sheep shed) at the corner After World War I it continued as four guns placed in Western Park, of the Flinders-Hastings Road and part of the Militia Forces, and Somers, and one troop of four the Point Leo Road.

when war was declared in 1939, guns dispersed as follows : 1 the members were 'called up' for below the golf course at Flinders duty, stationed at Mt Martha. (code name 'Potter's Point' 1 gun

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, the Regiment was given the responsibility of defending the Mornington, and later the Bellarine Peninsulas. The Sergeant-in-charge.)

Regimental Headquarters remained in Mt Martha, but the 2 Batteries (the 37th and the 38th) were dispersed to cover Western Port Bay, and later the western coast of Port Phillip Bay.

The 38th Battery HQ was at Red Hill with the Battery's guns dispersed in the orchards, before a troop of them moved to the Ocean Grove -Pt Lonsdale area.

The building was known as 'The Orphanage' and still stands today. The 5th and 6th Infantry Battalions were dispersed throughout the Peninsula with Headquarters in the Red Hill area.

In April, 1942, the 10th Field Regiment had been enlarged to 3 Batteries, the 39th being made up of AIF volunteers. (At this stage Militia personnel were not permitted to join the AIF - this changed in June 1942, when almost the entire troops of 37th and 38th transferred to the AIF.

However, the first move was The Troop Headquarters for

Also in April 1942, (on the second Sunday), the 10th Field Regiment and the 5th and 6th Battalions, with other Army units, embarked at Port Melbourne on two old British Troop Ships, 'The City of London' (which had taken troops of the 6th Division off the beaches of Greece), and 'The City of Paris'

.After a very eventful and rough voyage (the ships with escorts went south of Tasmania towards the Antarctic Sea, because of German and Japanese submarines), the troops disembarked in Fremantle, where the units were involved in providing coastal forces to repel the anticipated Japanese invasion, after the fall of Singapore. For the next 18 months the Regiment was stationed at several places from south of Perth to north of Geraldton. When the

danger of invasion had passed, most of the units in Western Australia were disbanded. The 10th Field Regiment was one of the units and in September, 1943, the guns and personnel were packed on troop trains and returned to Melbourne across the Nullabor Plain. Some personnel

remained in Western Australia, mainly being transferred to the Armoured Corps. The troops that returned to the Eastern States were transferred as reinforcements to Artillery Regiments, Infantry Battalions, or other Army units. Some transferred to the R.A.A.F.

Almost all of them were eventually involved in action against the Japanese in New Guinea, Bougainville, Borneo and Labuan in 1944, 1945. The 10th Field Regiment (A.I.F.) Association was formed in 1947,

and it keeps active contact with its former members, those numbers growing smaller every year. Contact is kept by a regular Newsletter and an annual Reunion, and through an active committee which looks after the welfare of frail and sick former comrades.

The Commanding Officer of the Regiment from early in 1942 was Lieutenant Colonel George Crawford, who in later years was knighted as the Chief Justice of Tasmania. One of the 19-year old gunners who was on the gun at The Ritz, Point Leo, and then served until September, 1943 in Western Australia was Ninian Stephen, who became a High Court Judge, and eventually Governor-General of Australia from 1982-1987.

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7 Church Pde
18 Committee Meeting

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7 Visit to School of Artillery
18 Committee Meeting

April

15 Committee Meeting
25 Anzac Day

May

20 Committee Meeting

June

18 Committee Meeting
25 Gunner Dinner

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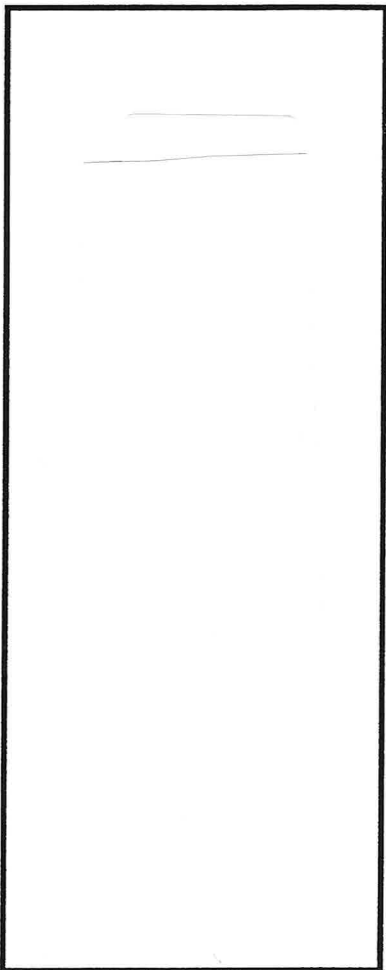
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