

CASCABEL

Journal of the

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

ABN 22 850 898 908

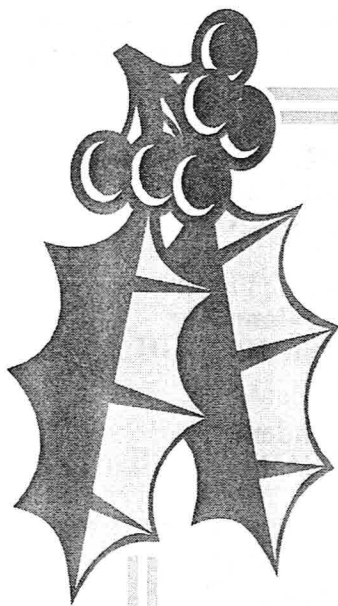


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January 2002

Tis the season to be jolly tra la la la la la la la la la



*A Very Merry
Christmas and a
Happy and
Prosperous New
Year to all of
our members and
their Loved Ones*

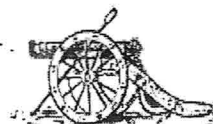


Holiday Cheer

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

PATRONS and VICE PATRONS:

1978

Patron: LT GEN The Hon Sir Edmund Herring
KCMG, KBE, DSO, MC, ED

Vice Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE, DSO,
ED

1982

Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE, DSO, ED

Vice Patron: MAJGEN N. A. Vickery CBE,
MC, ED

1999

Patron: BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD,
ED

Vice Patron: MAJ GEN J. D. Stevenson AO,
CBE

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1978 MAJGEN N. A. Vickery CBE, MC, ED

1979 MAJGEN J. M. McNeill OA, OBE, ED

1981 COL A. (Sandy) Mair ED

1984 MAJ P. S. (Norman) Whitelaw ED

1988 BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, 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 breech 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.

ASSOC LOGO:

Our Assoc 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 1833, 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 Assoc Committee.

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38 Mdm Bty 5231 2056
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CONTENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

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Article style, clarity and conciseness remain the responsibility of the article owner or author.

Submissions for the **April 2002** issue are required no later than **Fri 1 March 2002** unless otherwise arranged with the Editor.

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EDITOR'S EXOTERICS

Here we are with yet another year gone, I hope you are all feeling fit and ready for the Christmas/New Year season. I am pleased to say that I am back to my usual level of well being again, after a nasty fright on 25 Sep 01, when I collapsed on my bathroom floor. Fortunately a friend was staying overnight and found me, noted that I had vomited up a large volume of blood and called an ambulance, otherwise the medicos tell me I would have been dead now. I was in Frankston Hospital by 4.30 am and in theatre by 7 am, diagnosis a stomach ulcer. Four litres of blood transfusion and eight days of hospital treatment and I was home, but not sparking on all fours again for awhile. But back to normal now I am pleased to be able to say.

Sorry I missed the AGM, but was not recovered enough in time. How do you like the new columns, Locating Assoc News, Air Defence News and From the Archives? Also what do you think of the ongoing sagas of Lloyd Searle's War and My Service Career by COL Farley? Some people have already commented on the latter, but I have had no feed back on the others so far. Of course, this is the first time for From the Archives, so couldn't expect response on that yet. I like them all, but it is not just my magazine, it is yours and I would like to hear more about what you like and don't like and what you would like to see in Cascabel in the future.

Merv Taggart said he is waiting with baited breath to see the picture of Brian Dix and to receive his application for membership. I don't pretend to understand the message but read page 16 and maybe you can work it out for yourself.

Well that's about all from me for this year, so a verry Merry Christmas and a magnificent and prosperous Happy New Year to you all and your loved ones, from me and the other members of your committee.

Ron Curtis
Editor

CURRENT POSTAL ADDRESSES

All mail for **the Association**, except matters concerning *Cascabel*, should be addressed to:

**The Secretary,
RAA Assoc (Vic) Inc
101 Warralong Avenue
GREENSBOROUGH 3088**

This address should now also be used for Membership applications.

All mail for **the Editor of *Cascabel***, including articles and letters submitted for publication, should continue to be sent direct to:

**The Editor
"Cascabel"
Unit 1 No 3 Sandpiper Place
FRANKSTON 3199**

(or e-mail to: rgcurtis@bigpond.com.au)



The President writes

The AGM is over and I am here for another year. You had your chance to get rid of me. Considering the change of venue the attendance was quite creditable. Of course we will never know if the extra people were there for the reunion or the AGM but at least there was a good turnout. Thanks to all those who went to the trouble of finding their way there and making it a successful meeting. All the details of the proceedings will be listed elsewhere in the magazine so you can read up on the position of the Association.

At the opening of the AGM I asked the members to give their thoughts to our service personnel who are or soon will be on active service in Asia and I reiterate here our fullest support to them

The main point that came out of the CO's report was the imminent loss of the M198 medium guns which will be sent to 1 Medium Regiment in Darwin. Whilst this is a wrench to someone like me who cut his teeth on mediums at Chapel Street many years ago the logic of supporting the ever more mobile ARA brigades with the longer range guns is irrefutable. The hardest part will be the probable loss of the term, medium, in the regiments name after fifty-three years in Victoria.

In the last issue I gave notice of a visit to the Regiment at Puckapunyal. You will know that the visit had to be cancelled because of the strict security imposed since 11 September. That visit is still on the agenda for a later time and we will keep you posted.

On Saturday 27 October the officers of the Regiment held a dinner to farewell those that are departing to new postings. I am sure that you will join me in wishing them well. I will try to get a list of both those leaving and their replacements for the next issue

Although you will not see this until late December I am writing in early November. Why you ask? Mina and I have decided to visit our son Craig who I have mentioned before is on an exchange posting with the US Marines in Hawaii. We will think of you as we stroll down to Waikiki beach. That is why there is a slight lack of detailed news that I hope to rectify in due course.

Remember that this issue is to remind you of Church Parade on the first Sunday in February.

Mina and I wish you all the compliments of the season and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Best wishes

Merv Taggart
President



Membership Report

9 November 2001

Current membership

Libraries	4	Of the 93 Annual Members, 29 are currently unfinancial and second notices have been sent to their addresses on record.
Life Members	220	In addition, the <i>Cascabel</i> posted to SGT L F Jones has been returned.
Annual Members	93	
Affiliates	60	<i>Cascabel</i> has also been returned from Life Members CAPT R V C King, SGT M J Butler, CFN N A Jordan and MAJ M G Dalla Costa.
Total	<u>377</u>	

We regret the passing of SGT J C C Oldham, who recently joined the Association as a Life Member.

The following new members were welcomed to the Association:

LTCOL B G Hurrell, MAJ J P Thursky, MAJ R A Lukis, LT T C Knaggs and BDR R C Thorpe as Annual Members.

Gnr G A Armstrong joined as a Life Member.

It can be seen that the membership hovers around the 370 mark.

It is to be hoped that the presently unfinancial members respond to the notices sent so that our present viable membership is maintained.

Neil Hamer
Vice President
Membership Co-ordinator



RAA Association (Victoria) Inc Corps Shop

The following items may be purchased by mail, or at selected Association activities.

PRICE LIST

Badges, etc

RAA Assn (Vic), members (limit two per member)	\$5.00
RAA, tracksuit	\$3.00
RAA badge cuff links	\$9.00
Key ring, RAA badge	\$4.00

Brooches

Marcasite Exploding Grenade	\$93.00
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Bar items

Crock, blue with gold badge (name at no extra cost)	\$22.00
Coffee mug, blue, gold badge (name at no extra cost)	\$6.00

2nd/10th Medium Regiment Band

<i>Voice of the Gunners</i> recording cassette	\$10.00
compact disc	\$10.00

Clothing items

Cap, RAA badged	\$7.00
Scarf, blue with red flash	\$29.00
Wallet, cam	\$5.00

Ties

Blue with single red gun	\$30.00
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Books

<i>Kookaburra's Cutthroats</i>	\$39.00
<i>Aust Military Equip Profiles</i>	\$13.50

Stationery

Card, RAA badge, with envelope	
Christmas message	\$0.40
blank inside	\$0.40
Stickers	
Bumper: <i>Gunners do it with a bigger bang</i>	\$2.00
Square: gold badge, red and blue background	\$2.00
Folders, white A4 size, 2-ring	\$2.00

ENQUIRIES:

BRIAN CLEEMAN	(03) 9560 7116
REG MORRELL	(03) 9562 9552

ORDERS:

Most orders will require an additional FIVE DOLLARS packing and postage, which will cover one to several small items. If in any doubt concerning this, or availability, please contact one of the enquiries numbers above.

Cheques should be made payable to RAA Association (Victoria) Inc, and be crossed *Not Negotiable*.

Orders to: Mr B. Cleeman
28 Samada Street
Notting Hill VIC 3168

MILLIGAN GRAM

(Ernie Paddon has quite rightly reminded us a few times of those two characters of the RA, Milligan and Secombe. He has reminded me of my favourite extract from, "Mussolini, His part in my downfall". I hope GNR Milligan won't mind if I quote him.)

REGIMENTAL DIARY: 1 NOV 43. HAD ORDERS TO MOVE FROM GR 083857 BY 1000 HRS AS X CORPS WANT TO COME INTO THE AREA. THE ORDERS FROM 2 AGRA WERE VAGUE AND THEY WERE UNABLE TO INDICATE ANY HIDE AREA FOR US TO GO TO. THEY COULD NOT TELL US WHERE THE ENEMY WERE, THEY COULD NOT TELL US WHETHER WE ARE TO GO INTO ACTION THAT DAY, SO WE AREN'T DOING ANYTHING.

LATER. WE'VE ALL GOT TO BE READY TO MOVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. A MAD RUSH AS WE START HURLING OUR CRAPPY CLOBBER INTO BIG PACK, SMALL PACK, KITBAG, CARDBOARD BOXES, BROWN PAPER PARCELS ALL HELD TOGETHER BY MILES OF KNOTTED STRING AND BITS OF BENT WIRE. IT WAS REALLY TERRIBLE TO SEE WHAT A ONCE IMMACULATE BATTERY LOOKED LIKE. NO LONGER DID WE LOOK LIKE CONQUERORS. NO, WE LOOKED LIKE FAMILIES OF IMPOVERISHED ARMENIAN REFUGEES FLEEING THE TURKISH SLAUGHTER. BUNDLES OF CANVAS, TEA CHESTS AND WATERPROOF SHEETING WERE PILED ON THE ROOF, OBLITERATING THE OUTLINE OF THE LORRY WHICH, IN SILHOUETTE, APPEARED TO BE AN EXTINCT DINOSAUR.

SO FROM OUR, "WEMBLEY EXHIBITION", SITE WE ALL STARTED TO SLITHER AND SLIDE TO THE MAIN ROAD. WHAT A MESS! VEHICLES WERE EVERY WHERE, ALL POINTING THE WRONG WAY. THE GIANT SCAMMELL LORRIES WITH GUNS IN TOW HAD, JACK-KNIFED. RED FACED SERGEANTS WERE YELLING ABUSE AT THE DRIVERS, WHO IN TURN YELLED ABUSE AT THE GUNNERS, WHO POINTED ACCUSINGLY AT THE SERGEANTS.

THE SIGNALLERS (US) ARE OK. WE ARE SITTING IN OUR TRUCKS AND HAVE MANAGED TO GET TO THE MAIN ROAD FACING THE RIGHT WAY. WE HAVE BREWED UP. GREAT STEAMING MUGS OF TEA ARE JAMMING THE ROADWAY. AMERICAN TRUCKS WITH COLOURED DRIVERS ARE RACING PAST SHOUTING, "OUT OF THE WAY LIMEY WHITE TRASH", AND WE SHOUT BACK, "X! I * E ^ JOE LOUIS". WE DRANK TEA UNTIL OUR BLADDERS WERE CRIPPLED AND THE TANNIC ACID SHOWED RED THROUGH OUR SKIN, BY WHICH TIME THE GREAT GUNS HAD FINALLY BEEN EXTRICATED FROM THE MUD.

BY ELEVEN O'CLOCK WE WERE IN CONVOY, LOOKING LIKE COUNCIL DUSTCARTS ON THE MOVE.

(It's not the same 2 AGRA that many of us remember but I am sure it could be. When I first read this passage I was 2I/C of a medium regiment and I could hardly believe that this was not a story from an exercise at Puckapunyal rather than an actual occurrence on active service in Italy. I hope you found it as amusing as I did. Spike's series of war books really should be recommended reading for gun end officers.) Merv Taggart.



Locating Artillery Association News

There is quite a lot to report on this time around. I have a report from the Coffs Harbour reunion of Locators and a report from Timor on the operations of 131 Bty Surveillance Tp.

Firstly the reunion. 29 Sept – 1 Oct 2001. I had hoped to attend myself but couldn't make it this time, so John Posener the President of the Locating Association reports that 60 people arrived in town on the Friday before the reunion and promptly lost track of what happened on the Friday night. Saturday saw the group conduct a Memorial Service with the Coffs Harbour Service Club, RSL Sub branch, Coffs Harbour Queensland Border NS Association and the Locating Association all laying wreaths.

The day then followed typical reunions with much talking and socialising until the dinner at night when 93 attended. A feature of the dinner was a table with two plaques on which were the names of those Locators who have passed on. These plaques will eventually be placed at the Loc display at North Fort Museum.

During the evening a number of presentations on the Loc Bty were given about the changes to occur in 2002. Both the BC Maj Dean Pearce and the BSM WO1 Marty Gowling spoke to the assembled group.

Next year sees the 50th anniversary of the raising of 131 Bty on the 10 June and it will also be the time that the unit name will change to reflect more its present role within the Australian Army. The unit will conduct a display, formal dinner and a parade at Ennoggera Barracks when it becomes the 131 STA Bty (Surveillance and Target Acquisition). A reunion is planned and all are invited to the parade and the BBQ afterwards. It is proposed to display equipment's past and present at the Barracks.

The Sunday saw about 60 souls turn out for the breakfast buffet at the RSL with a lively games activity in the afternoon. These games consisted of ten teams playing carpet bowls, darts and snooker. Some games were played twice but the eventual winning team was awarded a bottle of Tawny Port each. Monday the 1st saw people heading homewards after a most successful activity and the decision to hold another one at Coffs Harbour in two years time following the Enoggera 50th Anniversary.

Perhaps we can get some more to attend from Melbourne this time.

Craig Cook WO2 Retd

The Eyes and the Ears of the Battlefield

The next report comes from Lt Andrew White of 131 Bty.

**131 LOCATING BATTERY - SURVEILLANCE TROOP - EAST TIMOR
APRIL – OCTOBER 2001
THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LP IN EAST TIMOR**

BACKGROUND

131 Loc Bty has been committed to providing a 15 man Surveillance Troop for each six month Battalion rotation since the transition from INTERFET to UNTAET. Within the 131 Svl Tp, there is a 2 man HQ element situated in the fort at BALIBO, consisting of a CAPT and WO2 who advise the BN HQ of the Surveillance Detachments capabilities and requirements. The other 13 men within the Troop consist of an ADMIN? RECON SGT and two six man Detachments comprising a BDR, LBDR and four GNRs. These soldiers reside in tent lines at the BN Echelon which is used as a Forward Operating Base.

ROLE.

The role of the 131 Loc Bty Svl Tp departs significantly from the Battery's traditional locating role. Each Svl Det is effectively the "electronic" eyes and ears of the Battalion Group. The Svl Dets are deployed on features which overlook the border between East and West Timor. Their main objective is to initiate the "shooter" sensor relationship with Infantry elements and provide early warning to other Battalion Groups callsigns. The Troop also assists in compiling the overall intelligence picture of border activity.

EQUIPMENT DEPLOYED BY 131 BTY SURVL TROOP.

MSTAR Ground Surveillance Radar (GSR) is man transportable motion detecting radar capable of locating personnel, vehicles (light & heavy), water craft and aircraft. This equipment allows the Svl Dets to locate targets by day and night, and in poor visibility.

The only disadvantage of the GSR is the requirement for the OP to have electronic line of sight (ELOS) from the position to the target. This is at times difficult to achieve due to heavy vegetation experienced in Timor. The GSR also poses a weight problem for the six man Detachment to man pack up features and in arduous, treacherous terrain. *[Sounds similar to the MRA Tellurometer and wet cell batteries of earlier days.]*

The **CANNON LONG RANGE DIGITAL CAMERA (LOROPS)**, has a 400mm fixed lens capable of high quality photos of personnel and surrounding detail within villages. It can also be fitted with an Astroscope that allows night photos with Infra Red (IR) backing light. Another camera used by the Troop is the **Nikon D1 Digital Camera**. This digital camera, connected to a Swarovski 20 x 60 power spotting telescope, allows capturing of photos to the same level of clarity as the LOROPS.

The **Tasman Thermal Imager (TSS)** is a small light weight system allowing the detection of any heat source by day or night of personnel and vehicles. *[A thermal Imager was being trialled during the combined Locating camp at Site 6 Puckapunyal in 19 84]*

The **Laser Range Finder [LRF]** is a small hand held pair of binoculars, which has the capability of producing the range and bearing to targets to a similar range of the LOROPS. The LRF can accommodate a GPS interface in order to produce a more accurate location of the required

Finally, the **CLASSIC** system is a perimeter surveillance, unattended ground sensor system designed to detect movement via an array of sensors consisting of infra red [IR] and seismic nodes which are alerted by vibrations and magnetic interference. This information is relayed back to a monitor located at the OP.

In effect **CLASSIC** is employed as the surveillance detachments electronic early warning device for the protection of their OP.

DEPLOYMENT.

In the field, when deployed each "Cracker" callsign is normally in the field for 4 to 5 days at a time. Whilst deployed at the OP, these Detachments observe areas of interest and (as required) inform and guide Infantry Sections onto targets that are otherwise blind to Infantry Patrols, but are easily observed from the Svl Det's elevated position. Other tasks include observing and photographing villages/villagers, local market areas and any suspicious activity along both sides of the border. In some locations, the MSTAR radar may be utilised to detect moving targets such as vehicles and personnel.

The Svl Dets are deployed to OP's by a variety of methods; from Blackhawk and UH1H (Iroquois) helicopters, LAV25, APC, 6x6 and or 4x4 LR or even more covertly inserted by foot. Understandably, the soldiers preferred movement is by Blackhawk at night, utilising their relatively superior night vision capability (NVGs night vision goggles). All equipment required for the surveillance task is carried within the Det. The average weight carried by each soldier is approximately 45 to 50kg.

The soldier also carries his chest webbing consisting of a quantity of small arms ammunition, fragmentation grenades, smoke grenades, para flares and his personnel weapon. Each Svl Det employs suitable firepower – with a mix of Minimi 5.56mm, M16/M203 and personnel F88 AUSTEYR. In order to live in the field, each soldier carries water and rations (dehydrated sachets – just add water) to last for the duration of their surveillance task. (4-5 days).

In addition to this each soldier carries a number of Lithium batteries to sustain the operation of their principal surveillance equipment.

In summary, the Svl Tp soldiers in East Timor have to be very fit and durable, if they are to be capable of carrying all the equipment previously described, whilst maintaining a high level of tactical awareness in a very demanding (hot and humid) environment.

IN BARRACKS.

On return from the field, each Svl Det have approx. 5 days break before returning for another surveillance task. During this break, numerous tasks are completed within barracks. – refurbishment of equipment, technical training, range shoots, non-tech inspections.

The Patrol Commander has the biggest responsibility on return having to complete Patrol Reports, back briefs to TC, reports on every soldier's performance and then preparing the Det for the next task. Once the mandatory refurbishment tasks have been completed, the soldiers can then rest. The soldiers are unable to attend an R&R facility with a wet canteen as it is a dry deployment. Without a wet canteen the soldiers still keep themselves occupied with the occasional trip to a beach, plenty of physical training in their home made gymnasium and the constant viewing of "over used" videos sent from home.

CONCLUSIONS.

The demands placed on the 15 man SvL Tp in EM is a marked change from what this Battery's soldiers have previously been accustomed to. This operation has provided the Battery and its soldiers with the opportunity to display multi skills and the resolve, which is inherent within the "Locator". The ability of all 131 Loc Bty soldiers to think "on the go" and adapt to new and ever changing situations in East Timor, has been the key strength for the current SvL Tp rotation.

Essentially, this operation has provided the JNCO's and GNRs with the chance to improve their basic soldiering skills markedly, whilst enjoying the rare experience of being deployed on operations. The knowledge gained from these surveillance rotations will ensure that the Battery maintains a sufficient focus in its current approach to "peacetime" training and into the future.

131 LOC BTY SVL DET - 4RAR (CDO)

17 Apr - 24 Oct 01

Tp Comd	Capt J. Ellul
Tp SM	WO2 D. McGinley
Tp SGT	L. Bowman

CRACKER 1
Bdr Davies
LBDR Grieves
LBDR Congdon
GNR Tinney
GNR Street
GNR McGregor

CRACKER 2
Bdr Edwards
LBDR Kennedy
LBDR Hodgetts
GNR Jones
GNR Bryce
GNR Pearce

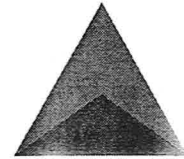
End of report.

**Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all
from Craig Cook and all Locators.**





16 AD Regt Soldiers Join the Fight Against Terrorism in Afghanistan



A number of personnel from 16 AD Regt based at Woodside, in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia, will join forces already deployed in Afghanistan to provide ground-based air defence with Rapier and RBS-70 surface to air missiles.

The 2IC of 16 AD Regt MAJ Michael Leichsenring has not long been discharged from hospital, which is why he has not been able to submit something more for this column. We wish him a speedy recovery on behalf of all our members and look forward to a contribution from him in our next issue.

Seasons greetings to all our members from 16 AD Regt, BRIG Garth Hughes, convenor of the annual Air Defenders' Luncheon, and to and from all Air Defenders everywhere.

(Don't look up as that bird you just missed while firing at the drogue may seek revenge by dropping its own type of bomb in your eye. Ed.)

ROYAL VICTORIAN VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY REGIMENT COLLINGWOOD BATTERY

The Collingwood Battery emerged but soon disappeared, during what must be the most confusing period of the Victorian Volunteers. Between 1860 and 1863, there were more units, corps or detachments than at any other time. In fact, in some suburbs both a rifle company and a battery of Artillery existed - often. It was: the same men in both units.

In 1860, the Collingwood and Richmond Battery first appeared. However, by the following year both suburbs had separate batteries. The Collingwood Battery became No.6 of 11 batteries which made up the 1st Brigade of the Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery Regiment. The Brigade had a combined strength of around 500 men.

During 1862, a major restructuring of the forces resulted in Artillery being split into two brigades. Collingwood Battery remained in the 1st Brigade but moved to No.5. Nevertheless, by the end of 1863 the unit was disbanded and all volunteers discharged to make way for the introduction of the Effective System, which formed the basis of a more organised Victorian Defence Force.

(Contributed by Ernie Paddon)

REPORTS TO THE AGM

Reports presented at the AGM on 28th October 2001 have been summarised by the secretary for *Cascabel*.

The Report on the Regiment

LTCOL D. McCallum noted the following points in his report on 2nd/10th Medium Regiment:

- * **Review of the Army Reserve.** All Units have been similarly effected by Review of ARes tasks and capabilities; ARes has been integrated with the ARA as the latter is not able to stand alone. ARes now providing reinforcement and round-out to ARA units, with individuals or small groups expected to be required for operational service on a regular basis.
- * **Legislation.** Call-out requirement has been extended, and employment security provided, similar for National Service. Employer compensation now available, eg for six-week courses.
- * **Manning.** Many of the unit's personnel due for reposting this year. At 81% ready to deploy, as at start of year. "Drip-feeding" the ARA is causing the loss of mainly experienced soldiers. Cadets are seen as long-term recruiting base, and senior cadets are encouraged to see the unit in the field. Three officers short, but expecting three graduating officer cadets. Senior NCO concerns, as courses training very difficult.
- * **Training.** Concentrating on getting skills up to speed after Olympics. ARTEPS are back, with the unit to be evaluated during camp, 24 Nov - 9 Dec.
- * **Equipment.** Unit not maintaining Medium capability. M198s and tractors to go at end of year, and revert to two four-gun Field Batteries. Naming still to be decided, but positive aspect is the availability of ample 105mm ammunition. Night fighting equipment introduced.
- * **Depots.** Building of Multi-User Depot (MUD) has been commenced at Doveton; this is needed to replace Dandenong, which is below standard. Hoping that MUD at Geelong will be started next year.

Colonel Commandant's Report

BRIG G. Standish raised the following issues:

- * **2/10 Mdm Regt.** Expressed disappointment at losing M198s, despite attempts by CO to retain. Noted need to press for employment of teams with ARA, not just individuals.
- * **Corps.** Noted: upgrade of surveillance and target acquisition; reintroduction of ARTEPS; shortage of Medium ammunition to continue; recommended employment of women be allowed in RAA.
- * **Regimental Fund.** Noted the existence of this, to support projects benefitting all Gunners Australia-wide. Appeal for assistance received, and Association invited to contribute, as well as individuals, as money needed.

* **Hall of Fame.** Has received only two responses to date.

* **USA Visit.** Spoke of visit to Civil War sites during September, and noted several aspects of the terrorist attacks at that time.



**BRIG Graeme Standish, AM, RFD ED
(Colonel Commandant Southern Region)
addressing the 2001 AGM.
Seated to his left are Reg Morrell, Brian
Cleeman and LTCOL David McCallum
(CO 2/10 Mdm Regt)**

NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS & REUNION

GOLD COAST 22-29 JULY 2001

On the day of the march the scene was a glorious one on the Qld Gold Coast as about 3600 old Nashos assembled on Sunday 29 July 01. The occasion was a parade. Chief of the Army LTGEN Cosgrove took the Salute, as the kilometre long column marched through Southport. The march past was the culmination of a week of celebrations, which included golf, bowls, meet and greet, along with concerts with Normie Rowe etc. For the Celebration dinner on Sat 28th two large venues had to be used, the RSL and the Leagues Club, to fit the large numbers of Nashos and partners who attended.

Many Gunners were present at the march including some old 132 Div Loc Members as in the accompanying photos.

The sad part was that of the 4 Musketeers, as we called ourselves, Macdonald, Dix, Breeze and Gercovich, only three marched.

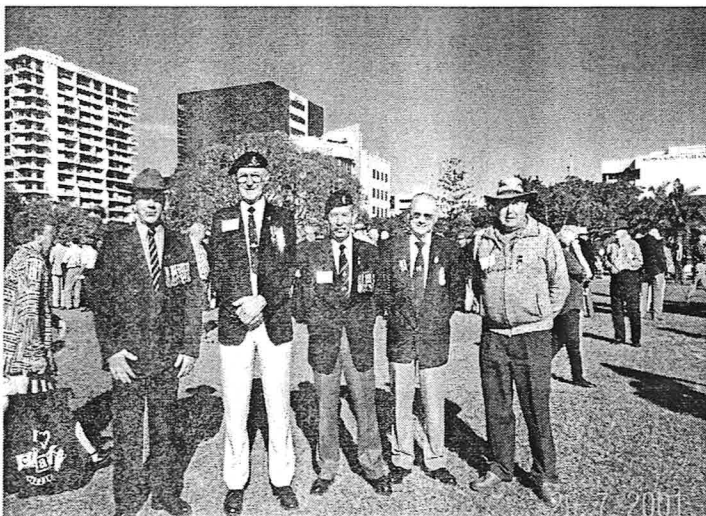
But I think Gerc was with us all the way. As his wife was.

It proves that the Australian mateship is not gone when you can arrive at the airport, be driven to the house, find the key and then go and find your room and make yourself at home until they finish work and have a key and a car when you need it.

Thank you Pam and Jock.

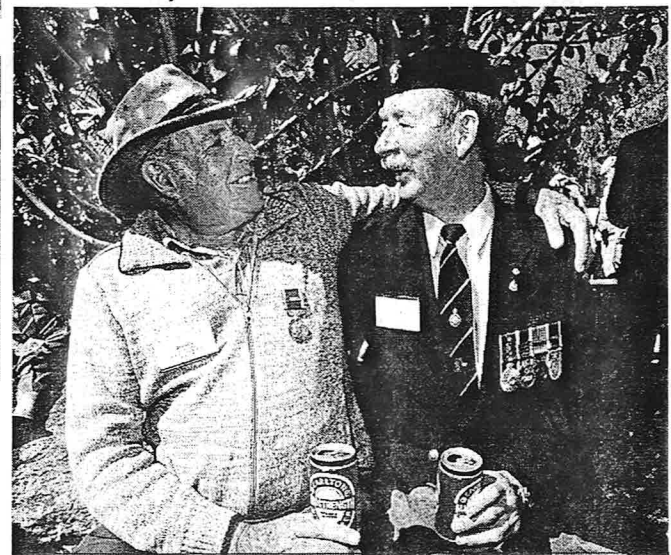


L to R: Margaret Gercovich, Barbara Breeze, Pam Macdonald, Jim Breeze and Alistair (Jock) Macdonald.

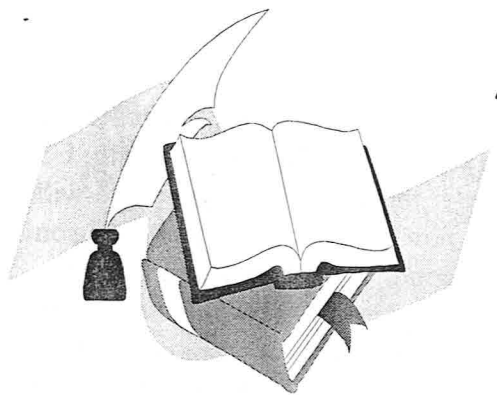


L to R Capt Greg Tommasi, WO2 Jock Macdonald, WO2 Jim Breeze, Kelvin Rodgers, WO2 Brian Dix, All Ex 132 Div Loc except Kelvin Rodgers who is a friend of Jims.

(Put together by Jim Breeze & Jock MacDonald)



**L to R Brian Dix, Jim Breeze
As printed in the Brisbane Courier Mail
July 30 2001**



FROM THE ARCHIVES

HISTORY OF THE 105 MM M2A2 HOWITZER

1. To analyse the history of the 105 mm M2A2 it is necessary for us to go back to just prior to the beginning of the 20th Century - 1898 to be precise. When the Germans found it necessary, to advance their capabilities, to introduce a 105 mm gun to their service..

2. Although the German Howitzer trials dragged on until 1911, Battery Commanders acclimated themselves to howitzer warfare quickly, when their pieces arrived. They told their cannoners..."The French contend that their (75 mm) projectile is the more efficient than ours... but real efficiency can only be expected from heavy field artillery, such as our 105 mm howitzer..."then one possesses efficiency by the side of mobility..." By and large they were right: artillerymen everywhere were realising that in order to fire the new high explosive shell they needed a large calibre weapon to accommodate the ample quantities of high explosive and low muzzle velocity so that plunging fire may be employed. "We require, in fact, a howitzer", said Nay in 1898, as if to his own surprise. Results of this universal observation were soon to materialise.

3. In 1913 manoeuvres, an experimental French battery of 105 mm Schneider Howitzers frequently demonstrated the ability to continue firing when "75's" had to change to better positions. They got into action quicker and did not need a broad field of fire in order to shoot safely. Schneider had considered this howitzer so important, it reportedly bought the entire Russian Poutifloff gun foundry in 1907, just to get the plans. The French piece designated :MODEL 1913, unfortunately was not in sufficient quantity to make an impressive record during the war, (only 84 pieces were available) nor was its max range (5000 metres) particularly commendable.

4. But the first World War did substantiate the success of the Howitzer as a useful weapon, winning acclaim from artillerymen on both sides. The English valued a now "4.5 inch" howitzer and the Italians, Germans and Australians praised their 105's. Only the US had nothing comparable, even in prototype and American officers soon complained of the fact. They reported that the heavy "155 mm" howitzer was not mobile enough, that it was wasteful when only small volumes of fire were required, and the 75 gun was often ineffective because of its straight trajectory. The consensus of US artillerymen was that a howitzer of about 4 inches, firing a 30-50 lb projectile up to about 12000 yards, would be ideal. What they were describing of course was the German Model 1898, concept that, pushing their idealism, they also wanted 360' traverse.

5. The Westervelt Board or Calibre Board (headed by Gen William I Westervelt)) was commissioned to propose a family of ideal guns for US service after the War followed the advice of European Artillerists and formalised the cries of American officers, proposing that a 105 mm howitzer be adopted to accompany the 75 mm gun as a direct support weapon. It further specified a maximum elevation of about 65°, and carriage capable of being towed at speeds up to 12 miles per hour. Officials were mildly startled, but the report was respected.

6. USA ordinance designers first turned to the German "105 mm" of which many captured specimens had been brought to the US for examination. Among several unique features it had trunnions very close to the breech, allowing for very high elevations, and facilitating loading no matter what the elevation. These German pieces were retubed and rechambered to take a new 105 mm ammunition then manufactured and were designated "105 mm Howitzer model 1916 (German)". There was some hope that the howitzer would play an important roll in the future

7. But there was little suggestion that the "105 mm" would more than supplement the fires of the smaller "75 mm" which was still in excellent reputation and undergoing modernisation of its own. Gen Malin Craig, US Army Chief of staff in 1939, said, "Regardless of what is eventually made of the 105 mm howitzer we will always have a need for the modernised 75 mm gun in larger quantities than are now on hand..." General Craig on the eve of the war seemed still unsure of the cannon-howitzer, the gun which could truly shoot like a howitzer, seemed still far away - the weapon of the future - at best. An English artilleryman Gen H. Rowan-Robinson, in 1928 wrote..." For many years (decades) the gunner has pursued this elusive phantom- a weapon that will combine the qualities in most demand in the two natures of equipment - range, power, mobility, accuracy ". He predicted that the successful gun howitzer could never be built.

8. Nevertheless, in several countries, the gun - howitzer suddenly blossomed as a revitalised weapon, combining both "weight of fire" (this desirable high-calibre plunging fire) and long range. The German solution in the late 1930's was the 105 mm LFH 18 (Leicht Feld Haubitze-Light Field Howitzer 18 calibres long) with a maximum range of 14,300 yards and a 33 lb shell, split trails, and a horse or motor drawn - apparently the only modernisation of the 1898 model. Another successful German howitzer was to be the 105 mm BHF 18 (Schwere Feld Haubitze-Heavy Field Howitzer) considered by the allies during WW2 the "back-bone of the German Artillery" with 9 charges and a maximum range of 17,900 yards for its 96 lb shell.

9. The Significant British development was to be a highly mobile 1935 gun, hailed (prematurely) as the "great discovery of ww2". Mounted on a circular platform to achieve a 360' traverse and drawn on a 2 wheeled carriage - the 25 pounder (3.45 inch gun howitzer replaced the British 18 pounder and 6 inch howitzers. Its maximum range was 17,000 yard as a gun, 10,000 yards in high angle.

10. With the modified German howitzer as a prototype, the first experimental US model was not long in coming. It was the 105 mm Howitzer, Model 1920 Mark II, on carriage 1921E, firing a 33 lb shell a maximum of 12,000 yards. It was sent to Rock Island Arsenal for preliminary proof firing in two forms: one had an eccentric disk breach (used in French 75's) and the other had the German horizontal sliding wedge, throwing the loaders hand upward when closing. Also one had split trails and the other the conventional box trail. Neither was satisfactory. The firings for range and accuracy were done in March 1922 and November 1923 at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

11. In 1926 a modern 105 mm howitzer was still considered the most pressing ordinance problem. The original howitzers of which there were 300 on hand, were still so much better, they were nearly standardised with little pretence of "Americanisation". Finally, after numerous modifications, a model M1 was actually issued to two batteries in 1931, although it was still undergoing tests. The tube was positioned so far forward on its trunnions (to reach higher elevations) that an equilibrator was needed - (a heavy spring between breach and axle to counteract muzzle heaviness of the barrel). At Rock island improvements continued up to 1934 when the model M2 emerged. The only difference being high speed pneumatic wheels were added by 1939 and its hydro-pneumatic recoil system perfected. Shrapnel ammunition for it had been approved in 1933. Despite exasperating delays the US howitzer was almost ready.

12. On March 19, 1940, the US Army adopted the 105 mm Howitzer M2 after tests at Fort Bragg and other ranges and put into immediate production at a cost of \$25,000 a piece. Slight modifications resulted in the M2A1, the model which in large numbers saw service in WW2. The most complete series of ammunition - 25 types of projectile - was prepared, from shot to canister, smoke to illumination. Its employment in combat was actually so quick that insufficient firing data existed to compute accurate firing tables in the low zones of fire. The early piece had a total of six zones, with charge 5 being considered "normal". The M2A2 changed slightly, (slight difference in chamber length reduced MV from 1550 to 1525 f/s). However this occurred sometime in 1948.

13. Between Feb 1943 and Feb 1944 due to slight manufacture changes the carriage had been advanced to M2A1 and then M2A2. (Thus you can see that the M2A2 carriage was a horse drawn affair hotted up for high-speed travel with a motor vehicle).

14. The Commonwealth Govt announced on its adoption of the M2A2 in 1960, "that the 25 pdr was to be replaced by a modern equipment".

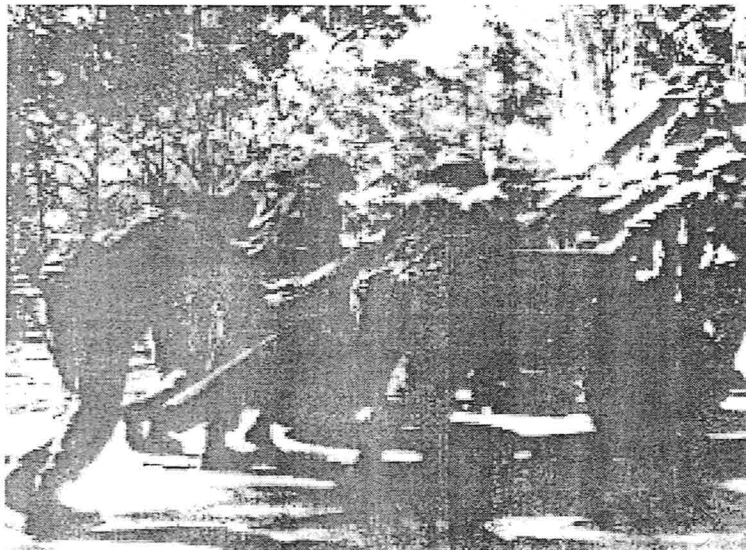
15. In combat the 105 mm howitzer fully justified all the work and hope placed in it, particularly in WW2 and Vietnam. From Alaska came reports, "the 105 mm field howitzer, despite almost round the clock firing in wet weather with no time for usual maintenance except an occasional bore swab, functioned without difficulty and maintained its long range accuracy..." Yet another, "nearly 8000 rds were fired by two batteries during a 24 hour period... the long range and accuracy of the 105 mm howitzer made it possible to give support to the infantry without being moved from original positions before the target became almost impossible to reach during the 3 week battle..."

16. Some Britishers, despite customary reserve and their own 25 pdr, thought it "the best piece of light field artillery in the world". German troops were so impressed with its rate of fire that prisoners asked to see the 105 mm "belt fed" or "automatic artillery". It became the "work horse of the Army" to soldiers everywhere, and according to General Barnes, its proud project chief, it was the backbone of the US Artillery.

17 In 1941 the 105 mm howitzer was adopted for air transportation by a shortening of its barrel 27 inches and mounting it on a 75 mm carriage. The resulting M3 fired a standard ammunition, but achieved a maximum range of only 7000 yds. However, it proved very useful and successful in North Africa and South Pacific fighting. The modern US light howitzer is much improved over the early WW2 model. It is the howitzer, 105 mm M2A2, mounted on carriage M2A2..., which is the current equipment of the Royal Australian Artillery. As times change, so do equipments, and the US is already looking to replacements for the M2A2.

*(This article was written and distributed to all Officers and SNCOs
by Capt. G. G. Hill, Adj. 2/15 Fd Regt. on 14 May 1976)*

*Brian Cleeman
RAA (Victoria) Trust*



MY SERVICE CAREER

by COL Graham Farley, OAM, RFD, ED, (Rtd)

15th Field Regiment – Q Bty at Warragul, 1962-3

This chapter will cover the period from when I qualified for promotion to Major and my first year as a resident of Warragul and Q Battery's BC. I am not sure when the formerly lettered R Battery became Q, but it was about this time. I was to be "detached" from the regiment and posted to the Command and Staff Training Unit so that I could have another shot at the tactics course for promotion.

Just before this step, I attended a 3 Pentropic Div TEWT at the Signals Regiment depot in Albert Park. Tiered seats surrounded three sides of the "mini" range map on the floor, with the senior officers suitably ensconced in lounge chairs on the fourth. The setting was in Malaysia and the problem was an opposed river crossing of the Johore River. COL George Warfe, who had often been the scourge of

the Japanese in World War Two, was the Executive Officer of the division and directed this TEWT with a similar manner. Following a morning tea break, he or one of the other DS officers asked the assembled officers as to the definition of an "opposed river crossing."

Silence ensued as most of us looked in any direction but at that of the conducting officer. Then came a confident voice from behind the stand, on which I was sitting, "I can, Sir." Up over the staging climbed LTCOL (now BRIG) Keith Rossi, the then CO of the Signals Regiment who, having seated himself, delivered the textbook answer.

On 7 Jul 62 I commenced parading at the then Moore Street depot in South Melbourne, now the site of modern housing. Course preparation was now on a more secure basis with a specific unit (CSTU) tasked to prepare Southern Command CMF officers for promotion and other courses. Our commander was BRIG Stuart McDonald (later to be MAJGEN and Commander 3 Inf Div). The depot was close enough to the boarding house at Wesley College, where I was a resident master (but a high school teacher by day), for me to walk to it. I would not be missing the long drives to Warragul and Traralgon.

In addition to the arranged program of lectures on the various corps and their tactics, there were "guest" lecturers from time to time. One of these was COL Serong who had been working with the Burmese Army to assist them in coping with the rebels with which that country had been faced at the time. COL Serong's successful methods were later to be used by Australian forces in Vietnam.



Although detached from the 15th Field Regiment, I was still able to keep a watching brief. Then a tragedy struck the unit. On the weekend of the 18/19 Aug 62, there was both the annual Gunner Dinner and a unit TEWT at the Dandenong depot. Apparently some of the personnel at the depot had been granted overnight Saturday leave. Four of these soldiers were killed when their car collided with a tree in Berwick. It was a grisly task for the unit officers to identify their bodies and advise next of kin.



*The CMF Training Depot at Warragul
circa 1962-3*

The Q Bty Banner at Warragul circa 1962-3

Three of the soldiers were from Q Battery and had lived in Warragul. The funerals were held the following Wednesday and as many members of the battery and regiment who could attend were there. In turn, services were held at the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican churches, with the caskets being placed in graves in the town's cemetery. Here an armed party paid with rifle fire the unit's last respects.

Sometime prior to this, I had applied for either promotion or transfer within the Education Department to the Warragul High School in order to make my CMF role more appropriate and to be able to better identify with the local community. I had heard nothing through official channels, but before this sad day was out, the Anglican Rector approached me to say that he had heard that my application had been successful. Well, a bit of good news helped to raise my morale that day. It was also good news apparently to the Revd Dick Stockdale, as he knew that I was a lay reader and was in the act of completing studies for the Licentiate of Theology. I would be a member of his team.

The assessment fortnight for the promotion course was steadily approaching. Our group of students put in quite a few weekends in tactical training in the Cape Horn area on the Dixon's Creek Road, with accommodation at the Yarra Glen hotel. The CMF must have kept that hostelry in the black for many years. One particular problem was an "attack" one, requiring us to work out our axis of advance, width of attack, time to reach the objective and how to consolidate on success. In those days the feature that we always seemed to be attacking had not been denuded of trees.

Most of us chose a similar axis. It looked quite OK both on the map and also on the ground from where we were standing. Enter BRIG McDonald. "Gentlemen, you are now to line up as a platoon in the FUP and simulate the advance to the objective. Right, commence." Here we were, most of us in our battle dress and caps, with our map boards and other preparation paraphernalia. We were not used to trying out our solutions, and certainly not at this time of day or place. But there was no alternative but to "humour" our commander and comply.

Unbeknown to us, our axis of advance went across a blackberry and barbed wire filled gully. Within a few paces we were stuck in the thick of it. Caps fell off, china graph pencils spilled and our battle dress uniforms became spattered with mud, if not torn. The lesson was well learnt. (From then on all attacks were over even open ground!) We wore hats on subsequent weekends and an older set of battle dress. As the Commander 3 Div, Stuart McDonald would later bring his incisive style of command and leadership to many more situations in camp, TEWTS and in training depots.

MAJ (now LTCOL) Baxter Green and I had teamed up to help each other in preparation for the final assessment camp. This proved to be of great benefit to us both as we could test each other. Once again the assessment board was in the charge of LTCOL Williams, who welcomed me back. Those of us who were in the CMF at the time may still remember the short-lived Pentropic division concept. Memory suggests that "five" had replaced "three" as the basic Army unit for organisation. There would be five battle groups in the division each made up of five enlarged companies &c. (I may not have this quite correct but it ran along those lines. Certainly Colonels replaced Lieutenant Colonels as unit COs.)

My mentor, MAJ Lloyd Baxter, in commenting on the Pentropic concept, suggested that it would only be in vogue for about five years. The Army would have to wait until the perpetrators had served their three years in their current postings and were now in new ones from which they could safely "re-assess" the innovation and return the Army to its established and proven "three" system. Lloyd was proved to be right.

But our assessment for promotion was still at that time cast against the "five" system, which meant that in defence, the ground had to produce "four" features upon which the four battle groups could be sited, the fifth one being in reserve. This worked for the Tac 3 course, but I wondered whether a real enemy would be so accommodating as to select suitable such ground for our own defence.

- Just to add realism as to why we were in training, the assessment fortnight coincided with the crisis in Cuba and in the oceans around it. This was the time that US intelligence discovered that missile sites had been built in Cuba and Russian ships with missiles were on the way to the island. President Kennedy issued an ultimatum that these ships should be turned round. The world held its breath. The USA president stared down his Russian equivalent and the crisis was averted. If we had been told then that in 2001 the same country would have acquiesced to the deployment of American forces on its soil to combat the terrorist elements in Afghanistan, I think we would have all experienced disbelief. In addition to the good news of the resolution of the Cuban crisis, was that I had qualified on the course.

My transfer to Warragul High School had now been confirmed and I arranged lodgings with a Mrs. Walker in Sutton Street. Over the vacation I contracted Chicken Pox. On recovery, I shaved off the beard part of the growth on my face. The moustache did not go until 1971. In hindsight, I wish it had gone earlier! But it might have added "maturity" to this youngish major, who had arrived in Warragul. I extended my Army activities by accepting a commission in the cadet corps, as the High and the Technical Schools possessed a "combined" cadet unit of some size and competence. I was a captain, honorary major! I also took on the role of developing a "senior scout" district unit. These lads (and now lasses) are nowadays termed "Venturers." The East Tarago Senior Scout Troop was to operate for thirty-seven years, but only for three with me as its leader.

BRIG Hector Ogilvie replaced BRIG "Grid" North as CRA. LTCOL Peter Turner was still CO of 15 Fd Regt, as was CAPT I. R. Smith as adjutant and CAPT R. Cullen as QM. MAJ Jim E. Barry became 2IC in place of MAJ Lloyd Baxter, who now retired after exemplary military service both in war and the post-war CMF. MAJ N. Body was BC of P Bty. MAJ (later LTCOL) Ralph Bailey was BC HQ Bty.

MAJ Lloyd Baxter and his wife, Audrey, were suitably "farewelled" from their military service at a social function. The Baxters were presented with a mirror, suitably inscribed with the Artillery badge. They in turn presented the sub-unit with a double-sided flag. The extra bunting might have made the flag difficult to fly, except in a very strong wind, but it could be read from either side. Naturally in red over blue, the flag bore a large "Q" together with the letters reflecting earlier associations, such as "15 Lt" Bty and 31 Med. Within the letter "Q" were mountains and the silhouette of a sheep. This was an allusion to a rather infamous barbecue at Puckapunyal when a range sheep had "volunteered" its flesh for the greater good. The sub-unit was then known henceforth as "Baa Baa Battery." A further silhouette was to be added a year later, when the sub-unit provided the firing party for the royal salute for the arrival of Prince Edward. A stork and babe were added to the other upper corner!

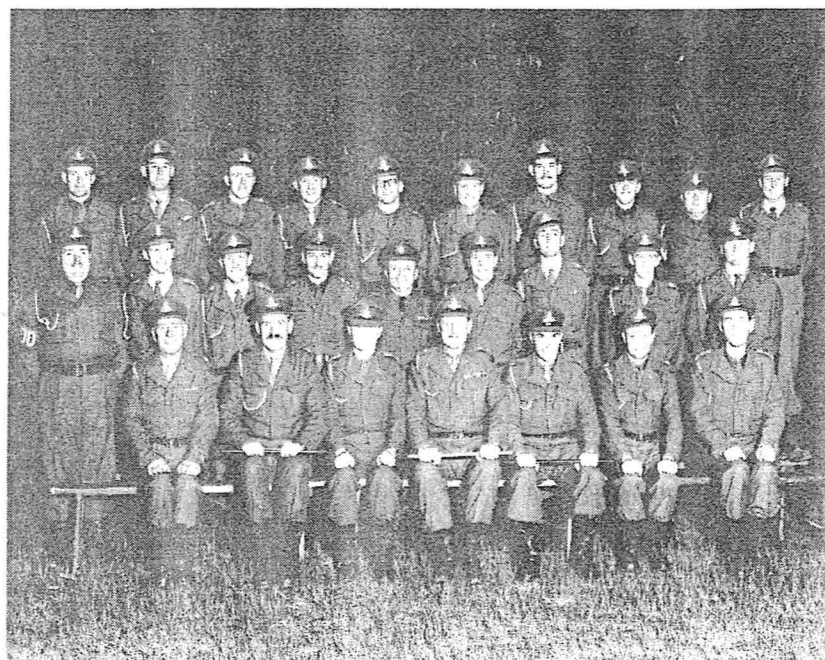
While I seem to have kept all sorts of documents relating to other of my spare time activities, I have a very poor reservoir of military ones. When MAJ Jim Killender sought establishments to enhance the accuracy of his research of post war CMF units, I was surprised to find that I could only find one and that related back to the 22nd Fd Regt (SP). Hence I have had to turn to a battery dance program to list the battery postings. CAPTs Arthur McPhan, Ray Feeley and John Perceval shared the BK and Tp Comds ones. LIEUT Reg Boucher was CPO. The CMF BSM was R. Patterson. LIEUT Clive Fisher, a local school teacher, was GPO.

In the course of the year, the unit was reorganised, and the Korumburra depot added to my responsibilities. It was a homecoming, considering that I had first paraded there in 1956 whilst teaching at Mirboo North. I have always been a great believer in maximising attendance at planning conferences. Only key people could vote, but the others could have their say. For instance, I always included the transport NCO. As a result, I always felt that the vehicles looked more shiny and the tyres had better treads. Such conferences were to be a feature of my period as a BC, and later as a CO.

In line with LTCOL Peter Turner's policy of community sponsorship and promotion, the unit exercised its freedom of entry to Korumburra. These efforts, though well supported by the soldiers, were mostly held when the local residents were glad to be home or on their farms. Saturday morning would have been the best time, but that was not always possible from the Army point of view.

The 1963 camp was spent in the field at Scrub Hill, with the second week in support of an infantry exercise in the high country. I was attached to the battalion commanded by LTCOL Peter Griffiths, a fellow "old boy" of Malvern Memorial Grammar School (which affiliated with Caulfield Grammar in 1960). During the first week, MAJ Neil Body and I were given the task of conducting a rifle practice on the Puckapunyal Range. Apart from heavy rain at midday, we did not have any shooting accidents. CHAP J. Blakemore was the unit's chaplain, but not because of the rifle shoot!

Conducting bivouacs of sub-units, who had more than their fair share of dairy farmers, presented a few challenges. The solution, but hardly a military one, was to provide a vehicle to take the dairy farmers home late on the Saturday afternoon to milk their cows and then to pick them up again after the Sunday morning's milking. It worked, and everyone was contented, as well as the cows!



***The officers of 15 Fd Regt at annual camp, 1963
Front row: MAJ Cullen, MAJ Farley, CAPT Smith,
LTCOL Turner, MAJ Barry, MAJ Body
and CAPT Bailey***

A bivouac on the last weekend in August was marked by heavy rain, which kept us in the depots on the Friday night. I have two memories of that bivouac in Rosedale. One was the ingenious way that was found to open up the rifle chest for which the key was still back on its hook in the depot. The other was the example given by our cook, SGT George Beale. Despite his verbal caressing of any situation, George could be completely relied upon to cope with weather, lack of rations cooking equipment and labour, and to come up with most acceptable meals. This weekend tested him to the limit. Thank you SGT Beale for this and other catering achievements.



***Gun Detachment on Ord 25-pr: SGT W. Cole,
GNR B. Ryan (head obscured), GNR I. Hayne
and GNR K. Watkins***

Within the Army generally and in the CMF a "sea change" was taking place in equipments and support. The Ordnance 25-pr was giving ground to the 105 mm howitzer and pack howitzer. This was justified on the grounds of using similar ammunition to that of our allies. But it did mean a larger detachment. The pack gun was theoretically to be dismantled into parts that would then be carried on mules. We were never to see these animals. Helicopters were also making their appearance and they won the task for deploying these high-trajectory weapons. We were to see much more of the RAAF with its Hercules troop carriers and the smaller version, the Caribou.

Before 1963 ended, LTCOL Keith Rossi assumed command of the regiment from LTCOL Peter Turner, MC, who would in due course become CRA. COL Turner's farewell function was held at *The Windsor*, Dandenong, on 7 Nov 63.

My final military activity for the year was to attend the Observation of Fire course at the School of Artillery, North Head, Manly. This was my first visit to the school. I was impressed with the Army's method of "whisking"



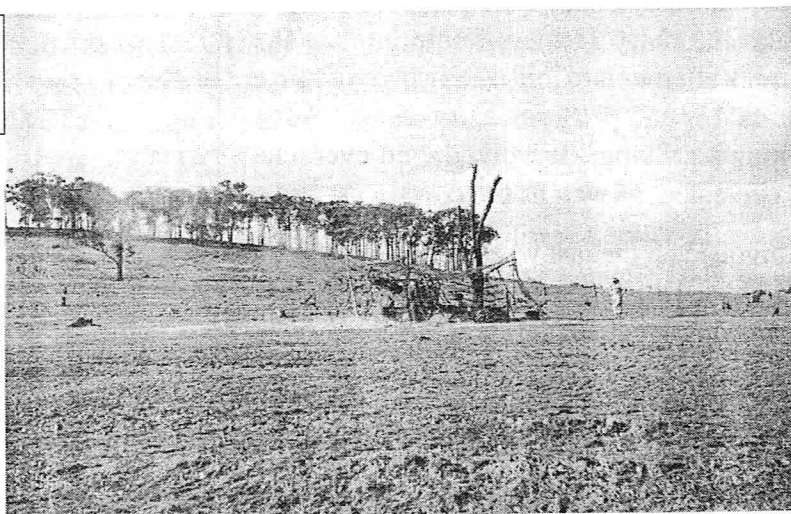
LTCOL Keith Rossi and MAJ Graham Farley inspecting dismantled sections of the Pack Howitzer

The conduct of the course was in similar fine style. A CAPT Ev. Cowan of the Royal Canadian Artillery conducted the course. Fellow students from Victoria were CAPTs Norm Cathie, Graeme Marshall, Ray Feeley and Ed. MacAuley. CAPT Derrick Stone, who had (with his brother) been a member of Blamey Battery and an officer in 22 Fd Regt (SP), was from Tasmania.

A big consumer of time was of course the drive from North Head to the firing range at Holsworthy. This range, with its hidden gullies and its unfortunate siting under the civilian aircraft flight path, made Puckapunyal look wonderful. Lost rounds and periods of "guns tight" made for challenging observation. As a result of the course, I finally understood the principles behind adjusting the fall of shot. It all became very clear. I was to become a confident observer of fire in the future – well at least on the Puckapunyal and Sennybridge (Wales, UK) ranges. But that is another story.

Is this an example of Puckapunyal looking good ?

1964 would be the last year of artillery depots east of Dandenong. Organisation and reorganisation has been the lifetime characteristic of military forces and Warragul would be no exception.



A GEELONG 2/10 MDM REGT M 198 HOWITZER BOGGED AT CULTANA 1992

The sign says, "Do not overtake turning vehicle".

Yeah! partularly if it is turning over!

AMAZING BUT TRUE

Digging up old bottles uncovered an incredible family coincidence for reader Brian Cross.

They say truth is stranger than fiction and it was proved so by reader Brian Cross's amazing discovery in a Reading clay pit.

Brian, who lives in Tilehurst, Berkshire, belonged to an antique bottle collectors' club in the mid 1970s. During their digs in Victorian rubbish tips they recovered many items, mainly stoneware ginger beer bottles but sometimes they also turned up various copper and brass items.

One day Brian uncovered a copper mule shoe and Royal Artillery badge. He takes up the story.

"I roughly cleaned this and noted the name Corporal Crosse, Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. I was mildly interested as this was my father's regiment, however our family name is Cross not Crosse with an E, also my Dad, a two-stripe NCO, always styled himself Bombardier, not Corporal.

"I passed this relic to my brother as brass is not my passion. He cleaned up the face and mounted it on the wall."

Brian thought no more about the badge until recently, when another brother showed him some postcards from around 1914 which their father had sent from France.

"Among these was Dad's discharge certificate in which he was described as Corporal Crosse," said Brian.

Intrigued by the change in spelling of their family name, Brian investigated.

"A bit of further cleaning of the inscription on the badge revealed the number B8038 and dates 6-3-04 to 10-3-19 proving that the badge I had recovered from the old clay pit capped off in the early 1920s, was indeed my Dad's.

"His medals and relics are by the family and he had never mentioned his badge. He must have lost it soon after discharge in 1919."

Now that's what we call an astonishing coincidence.

(Contributed by Ernie Paddon from an English magazine titled "Yours". I have omitted the subject heading "Real Life Stories" as irrelevant when being reproduced out of context. There was a good illustration in the original of the discharge certificate, superimposed by the mule shoe with the RA badge in the centre. Unfortunately these did not scan very well so I have omitted those also rather than reproduce them in an unrecognisable format. Ed.)

LLOYD SEARLE'S WAR

OUR LITTLE ARAB PAPER BOY

Apart from Reveille we were usually awakened to the sound of the young Arab boys doing the rounds of the camps selling the daily paper, the Palestine Post. These little blokes usually from about eight to ten years old had a remarkable gift of picking up our language including the slang and also some of the things not meant to come from the mouths of babes. It was not unusual to wake up to the sound of one of these kids singing out as he wandered through the tent lines "Bloody good news, Germans shoot down lots of British planes". What was happening was that as they entered the camp, the troops in the first tent would call the kid over and look at the paper and then say to him, "This is what you sing out and you'll sell all your papers in no time. What they told the poor kid was usually some devastating blow the Allies had received but it was always preceded by "BLOODY GOOD NEWS". The classic came when we were awoken by one little bloke singing out at the top of his voice. "Bloody good news, Old Bill has got the P.... We had quite a few Bills in our unit but I think the "Bloody good news" was directed at our Commanding Officer, Colonel Bill Cremor. Just as well the kid didn't have an Aussie uniform on or he would still be doing time in the boob. Incidentally Old Bill as he was known to us all, but not to his face, was a thorough gentleman and would be the last one in the unit to have that. He was a veteran of the First World War.

BONED BEEF

In one camp we were in some bright buggers got the idea into their thick heads to knock off a carcase of beef in the Regimental butcher's store and to bone it and sell the meat to the wogs. We had our suspicions as to who had done it, but couldn't prove it. The main suspects were naturally the ex-butchers in our unit, because they were skilled and never left enough meat on the bones to entice a starving jackal. You might ask "So what, that sort of thing goes on in the Army quite often". I'll tell you why we were so crooked on it. They took the bones up to our CO's (Old Bill's) dug in tent and lowered them silently down the steps in the early hours of the morning. Whether one of the guards was in this I don't know, but next day the CO called a Regimental Parade of all the troops and told us what had happened and that if the guards scattered around the camp at night could not stop this sort of thing then the only other thing to do was to double the guard, which he did. We would come off a 24 hour guard and go straight on to a 12 hour shift. This meant 2 hours on and 4 off and to make it more annoying the Orderly Officer would come along at any hour of the night and roar out "Fall out the guard". We had to sleep fully clothed with the old Army beetle crushers on the feet and we would have to race out and line up for inspection in front of the guard tent. We thought this would carry on for only a week or two but it went on till we moved from that camp. We soon got so annoyed with this set up that we worked out that if we weren't getting any sleep then no other bugger would. While on guard we were issued with five rounds of ammo and had to account to the Officer of the guard for any that we fired. As ammo was fairly plentiful at the time we would take our own with us and when we thought most of the camp was asleep we would aim at Mars, Jupiter, Pluto or one of the other planets and putting the sights to extreme range, fire. Some of the poorer shots were allowed to use the moon as their target. I don't think we even had a near miss. Next thing the Officer of the guard would come racing along and ask, "What did you shoot at". We'd tell him the shot came from up the hill or from down in the gully. If you have ever seen a face with doubt written all over it then that's our Officer of the guard. They eventually moved us into action but I think it was only to save ammo. The other camps within miles of us christened ours Hair Trigger Valley. One thing it did was to keep outsiders out, as no person in their right mind would risk life with such a trigger-happy bunch. I often wonder whether the other camps thought the 2/2 Field Regiment was being attacked by the Germans, and were thinking of coming to our aid, or attacking us themselves, just to get a decent night's sleep.

OUR TRUCKS

Very interesting and essential parts of an Artillery Unit are the trucks, and the tractors. The tractors are the really heavy trucks that tow the 25 pounders and the ammo limbers. All the gun crews and driver manage to climb inside when on the move, but how I'll never know. We then have a few jeeps and quite a few one ton utes. The one tonners are used by the Battery Commander, his Batman, his driver and his radio operator, this being X-Ray. Others are used by OP Officers with similar personnel. These being called Robert Ack or Robert Beer or Robert Charlie. The guns also have one each of these, which are used for communications as the unit gets spread out over wide areas at times. Now I am coming to the interesting trucks. We never struck these until arriving in Palestine and Egypt. These were six wheel Morris trucks, two wheels at front and four as a tandem at the rear. I think the pair in front of the rear wheels was put there to give the gunners another two to dig out when they became bogged in the sand, and believe me it was very often. These four rear wheels seemed to have an in-built jump system fitted into them some where along the line. When bogged and with any spare wogs we could muster as well as all personnel except the driver pushing or pulling or digging, and the thing in low gear, it would first make a jump with the two rear wheels and when this was unsuccessful the next set would jump and when this was unsuccessful, as it always was, then the whole four wheels would start jumping and rattling and kicking up a hell of a clatter. How the springs, diff, canopy, petrol tank and other parts stayed fastened to the chassis was a miracle. We soon learnt the quickest way to un-bog them was to send for one of the gun tractors and tow them out across the soft sand and on to the nearest main road. They went quite well on the bitumen. Another interesting thing about these vehicles was the ignition switch. It was found that when coasting down any sand dune or incline, the driver could turn off the ignition switch for about fifty yards and at the appropriate time turn it on again. The exhaust pipe on these trucks poked out the side just in front of the four rear wheels. The build up of petrol and air mixture in the pong box, (not to be confused with thunder box) and the exhaust would fire with a blast equal to a 25-pounder and a sheet of flame would shoot out the side pipe. The drivers used this built in feature to great advantage when they were confronted with a wog on a donkey, herding a dozen or so sheep along the roads of Cairo or out in the desert. The sheep and the wogs were under the impression they had right of way. Not so. The drivers coming down a hill towards the sheep would turn the key off and then timing and judgement came to the fore. The main thing was to have all the sheep and the wog and his donkey facing in any direction except towards the truck. These sheep and donks can do quite a bit of damage when the key is turned on again. Not a great deal to the trucks except maybe a little paint off the heavy front bumpers, but horns and teeth hanging off a Morris truck are not a pretty sight.

My friend Tony was driving in a convoy of these trucks on the outskirts of Cairo. Coming down an incline he saw a wog sitting on the stone side of a bridge he was about to cross. Off with the ignition switch and as the exhaust pipe came level with the wog, a flick of the switch and BANG. The trucks behind Tony saw the wog rock backwards, and almost topple into the creek, and then regain his balance, pick up a rock and let drive at the truck. Two nearby Gyppo cops took a dim view of this and clouted the poor bugger over the head and back with the long canes they usually carry. There's no justice. Thinking back on the keeper and his sheep, I am reminded of a beautiful old Christmas Carol - "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night". I wonder if the Composer of this lovely Carol ever had visions of the years to come that the 2/2 would be doing manoeuvres all over Palestine and Egypt with their six wheel Morris. Had he known this I believe the title may have been - "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night And Day".

Letters to the Editor

Re OCA, if I understand the question correctly, OCA = 'Old Comrades Association. More interesting is 1 Fd Regt with 4 Indian Div in Syria. It is true that 1 Fd Regt spent most of WW2 with 4 Indian Div (N. Africa and East Africa in 1940-1, El Alamein 1942 and Italy 1944-5). However, in Syria 1941 the records show they were with 6 Inf Div (and 1 Inf Div at Anzio in 1943). The reason I say this is that I'm currently working on a long 'who was where when' list for my web site <http://members.tripod.com/~nigelcf/index.htm> and so have been doing quite a lot of research, clearly more is needed.

One other point, you have a typo on page 2, referring to the Assoc Logo you say 'approved in 1883 by HM King William IV'. Problem is that in 1883 Queen Victoria was on the throne. William was 1830-37, so I'd guess the date should be 1833.

Regards *Nigel Evans*

Thank you Nigel for the info and the explanation of OCA. John Woodhouse rang me some weeks ago and gave me this same meaning of OCA, and you will notice that MAJGEN Whitelaw has responded with same answer to the question as well on the opposite page. As you are all agreed as to its meaning, I thank you all for your kind assistance, and reassurance that the answer is correct. After all, you can't all be wrong.

As for the typo on page 2, when I scanned my predecessor's copy from his last issue, my scanner misread the 1833 as 1883, and it has taken four years for somebody to notice. I have now changed it in this issue to read 1833. Ed.



- 1.. Congratulations on excellent bumper issue of recent Cascabel
- 2.. I am pleased you found the ranger Barracks clipping worth publishing (I was disappointed I was not credited with sending article)
- 3.. Keep up the good work

Regards. *Richard Parsons ED (Capt RAA ret'd)*

Hello Dick

We thought that the article on Ranger Barracks at Ballarat was of sufficient interest to Victorians in general and to our several Ballarat members to warrant publishing it. Thank you for sending it in.

The content of the magazine is in the hands of Ron Curtis (editor) who I think is doing a great job in spite of indifferent health in recent times.

I was sorry you were not able to be with us at the Gunner Dinner this year.

Regards. Merv Taggart



Received copy of Cascabel No 69 yesterday.

Ref P 11 'OCA Mystery' I believe OCA is abbreviation for 'Old Comrades Association' which the Brits use in same sense as our 'unit' associations eg '2/1 Medium Regiment Association'. I left message on Prohasky's answering machine to this effect.

Ref P 2 and P 7 - Decorations : Post-nominals. Convention has it that post-nominals are not used for foreign orders or Order of St John (eg KStJ for Sir Edmund Herring), nor are they applicable to knights bachelor where the use of honorific 'Sir' indicates this honour. Therefor 'KG' and 'KT' should be deleted against the names of Sir William Hall and Sir Edward Cohen respectively. Incidentally the abbreviation 'KG' is the post-nominal for

- Ref P 15 et seq - 16 AD Regt. I don't want to be counted as a carping critic, but the author of this item should delve a little more in the history of his unit. For example 111 AD Bty started as 'B' AA Bty (with both LAA and HAA elements in 1949 or 1950 and incongruously as a sub-unit of 1 Fd Regt), it was re-designated 3 AA Bty in 1952, 103 HAA Bty 1955, 111 LAA Bty 1957, 111 SAGW Bty 1961, 111 LAA Bty 1962, 111 AD Bty (Lt) 1975, 111 Div AD Bty (Lt) 1978, 111 AD Bty 1999. 110 AD Bty raised in 1965 was in suspended animation 1974-1978 and had a few changes in title over the years. I suppose a purist could hark back to the origins of these two batteries being with 110 and 111 Btys formed as howitzer batteries of the 24 How Bde in Egypt in 1916 as part of 4 Div AIF. On arrival in France the same year, howitzer brigades were disbanded to accord with the changes then being made to the British organisation. Thus 110 How Bty became the integral 4.5 in howitzer battery of 10 Fd Arty Bde (FAB) and 111 Bty in a similar role in 11 FAB.

In 1921 110 (How) Bty was again raised. It was a sub unit of X Bde AFA, designated 10 Fd Bde AFA in 1930, at which point its title was 110 Fd Bty (H). In 1941 the regiment become 10 Fd Regt RAA (M) and 110 Fd Bty was absorbed into 38 Fd Bty. I assume 110 Bty could then be said to be in 'suspended animation'. A similar sequence was followed by 11 Fd Bde and 111 Fd Bty (H). However there is an air defence connection, albeit slender. 11 Aust Fd Regt (AIF) reorganised in Dec 1943 as 57 Aust Comp AA Regt with 141 HAA Bty and 174 LAA Bty.

As to the 16 Regt. I think there was one formed in Victoria between the wars and in 1941 there was 16 Army Fd Regt. It was short lived being 'suspended' in 1945.

By now I think you may be confused. I suppose a good point to make is that we do have some fine antecedents of which we should take note. We have been the victims of military bureaucrats in the past. I think it would be kinder to us and easier for them in the future if we adopted a simple system of designating units when no longer required as being on a 'suspended animation' list until further required with perhaps quite a different role and equipment. This would allow continuation of a unit's heritage. For example the anniversary of its antecedent's formation could lead to a remembrance of all those good gunners who had gone before whatever their particular trade may have been, field, coast, air defence, or locating. A look at the various designations applied to 'A' Bty over the past 125 years brings this home.

May I close by noting that most of the information above came from the enormous reservoir of information about RAA lineage assembled by Mr Keith Glyde of Tasmania. Also compliments to you on the job you are doing with Cascabel.

Sincerely *John Whitelaw*

I was a little confused with the context of the question re OCA. Knowing now that it refers to, Old Comrades Association, I doubt very much if the 2/11 Fd Regt RAA OCA was ever in action as distinct to the 2/11 Fd Regt RAA. Thanks to all who answered this question.

Of course you are correct in regard to honours and awards. In both cases the information came from the Association records and therefore from the members themselves. In the case of Sir William Hall the error has apparently been there since he joined in 1978. Nobody has challenged it since we have been publishing the past Patrons names on page 2 (about four years).

I am sure that 16 AD Regt will make good use of all that data and I leave it to them to digest it.

Regards. Merv Taggart



(I asked Merv Taggart to assist me with answering a couple of the letters this time because of the technicalities involved. I was after all an NCO, not an Officer, an Air Defender, not a Field Gunner and last but not least a New South Welshman, not a Victorian.

I presume that the article on the history of 16 AD Regt was intended to reflect only the history of 16 AD as opposed to its previous non-AD roles, as it was originally put together as a press release to the South Australian press. ED)

I read with interest the last issue of Cascabel in which you sought information regarding:

1. **The origins of the present day ranks.** I have attached extracts from "Military Traditions and Customs and how they came about" which was prepared by the Infantry Centre and authorized for use as a training reference on courses at the Infantry Centre. It is dated 7 April 1977 and authorized by Colonel J Essex-Clarke Commandant.

2. **The origins of the 25 Pdr gun.** Attached is a very condensed two part magazine article by TJ Gander which relates the British 25 Pdr story. I obtained this via Major John Phillips who was originally a gunner and later changed to Pay Corps. he is currently the curator of the Pay Corps Museum at Simpson Barracks and a valuable source of information.

3. My book now named "*The Gunners of Victoria 1948 to 2000*" has reached its final draft and I am looking at a professional editing and layout while at the same time investigating ways to have it printed. For those who are interested it contains :

423 A4 size pages in 10 font.

113,600 words

262 figures (Photos and graphs)

263,087 Kbytes

As a separate document I have recorded a nominal roll of the serving gunners of all ranks 2618 names. One of my major disappointments has been that this list is so small.

I trust that this information is of assistance

Regards

Major Jim Killender, RFD, ED. RAA (Rtd)

Units and Corps

Australian Imperial Force. The true "Australian Imperial Force" (AIF) was the suggestion of the late Major general Sir WT Bridges KCB CMG whom Bridges Barracks is named after. The term AIF is not altogether a general one, a soldier will say he served with the Light Horse, Artillery etc while an Infantry soldier will always say he served in the AIF, consequently, many of a later generation erroneously regard the letters as signifying "Australian Infantry Forces".

Perhaps the splitting up of this was exemplified by Parliament when it voted the countrys thanks to the AIF and the AMF. In the order authorising the formation of the force it was styled AIEF "Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force" being gradually dispalced by the letters AIF, but never at any time was a badge or initials issued or authorised for wear showing AIF.

Artillery. Derived from the French artillaria which was derived from old French artiller - to equip or fortify. British artillery did not came into existence as an Army unit until the early eighteenth century. Before that time master gunners had been appointed for the various castles to train hired civilians in serving the guns.

In time of war an artillery train was organized and attended by the master gunners, officers and soldiers transferred from other Regiments and civilian drivers and horses. Ultimately two permanent artillery companies were raised and these became the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1722.

Australia's Artillery Corps has the oldest continuously serving permanent force within its units. This force is A Battery Royal Australian Artillery. The Battery was formed in 1871 as part of the New south Wales Forces and then became part of the Permanent Forces of the new Commonwealth after Federation. A Field Battery has served with distinction from the Sudan in 1885, through both world wars and all other conflicts in which an Australian Army Force with an artillery component have been committed.

Infantry. The origin of the word infantry is obscure although similar words in French and Italian are used to describe foot soldiers. It is suggested the word was coined by the staff to describe the troops who, though they formed the battle line could only move at a foot's pace and could not carry their own baggage or supplies to last any length of time, and were given the technical description of infants. It may also have been a term of abuse or condescension used by the more fortunate mounted men on the march.

Battalion. Battalion is derived from the Latin - *battalia* - an army in battle array, thus meaning a battle unit.

Company. The word company was used by mercenaries and "soldiers of fortune" in the Middle Ages and had a commercial meaning rather on the lines of its present one in civilian life. Its members were out for pay, loot and ransom for wealthy prisoners.

Platoon. Platoon is from the French, *peleton* - a little ball or group of people. Platoons or half companies as they were called were adopted in the New Model Army after the success of the Swedish system introduced by Gustavus Adolphus in which the odd numbers fired while the even numbers loaded and vice versa.

Military Rank, Appointments and nicknames

Ranks.

Bombardier. The Artillery equivalent of Corporal was adopted to describe the specialist who looked after the "Bombard" or "Mortar".

Captain. Has been used as a military rank for centuries. It has been interpreted as "Chief leader" or "Leader of a company". The rank has been used in the British Army from the time of the New Model Army raised by Oliver Cromwell in 1645.

Colonel. Colonel denotes the superior officer of a Regiment. The rank has been in use by the British since the time of the "New Model Army". The Colonel is derived from the Italian *Colonello* - a little column. So called because he led the "Little column" at the head of a Regiment (presumably the Regimental HQ)

Corporal. The rank Corporal is derived from the French Corporal which was originally from Italian *Capodi* - head of a section.

Digger. the nickname "Digger" is variously ascribed to the prevalence of gold diggers in early Australian Army units, the trench digging activities and the Australian Tunneling units in France in World War 1. The term is traditionally maintained (unofficially) in the Australian Army, especially in the Infantry where it refers to the private soldier in general.

Field Rank. Prior to the 16th century the rank structure of British Forces was such that a vacuum existed between high command and lower level troops in the field, who were virtually without commanders. It was decided to establish commanders to convey and have carried out orders etc. These commanders were called Field Officers. Although the officers in those days did not have the same rank titles as we know them today, they were the fore-runners of our present field rank officers (Major to Colonel).

General. The origin of the different ranks of General date from the "New Model Army" raised by Cromwell in 1645. This army was commanded by Captain General Sir Thomas Fairfax. The Cavalry was under Lieutenant General Croswell and the Infantry under Sergeant Major General Skippon. The subsequent deletion of "Captain" from Captain General and "Sergeant" from Sergeant Major General gives us the ranks used today and explains the anomaly of why a Lieutenant General is senior to a Major General ie the first Lieutenant General commanded the Cavalry which was the senior branch of the service.

Lieutenant. This is derived from the French and means one who acts as a substitute. Second Lieutenants were originally called Ensigns in the Infantry and their equivalent in the Cavalry was a Cornet. Lieutenants are often referred to as Subalterns which is derived from the French - meaning "Inferior to or subordinate".

Major. The rank of Major was originally "Sergeant Major" which denoted the Staff Officer of a Regiment.

Private. A Private was originally known as a private man meaning a man who was responsible only for himself. Up to the end of the seventeenth century a soldier was described as a "Private sentinel" - one of a hundred which was the normal strength of a company.

Sergeant. The term Sergeant dates back to the English feudal system. When the landowners of that era were forced to use serfs from their fields to fight their battles they put their sons and personal servants in charge of groups of them. These persons in charge were known as *servientes* - from the Latin meaning serving. With the advent of time the adoption of this term as military rank was used to denote a senior non commissioned officer wearing three stripes.

Sergeant Major. The title Sergeant Major was originally the rank of the present Major. By the end of the seventeenth century Sergeant Major (Major denoting senior) was the rank of the senior non commissioned officer in the unit. In 1881 the Sergeant Majors were given warrant rank thus becoming Warrant Officers as we know them today. This would explain why some are still called by the nickname "Sergeant Major".

Soldier. The term Soldier originally meant a mercenary or a man who served for *solde* (derived from the Latin "*solidus* - a shilling) In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century a soldier's pay was a shilling a day and enlistment was known as taking the Queens shilling (the first day's pay handed out by the recruiting sergeant)

Extracts from "The British 25 Pdr Story by TJ Gander" Original article written January 1976

The origins of the field gun that was to emerge as the famous 25 Pdr of WW2 can be traced back to 1919. In that year a War Office Committee was set up to examine the future armament needs of the British Army in any future war. The committee delivered its report in 1925 and among its findings was that a new field piece should be developed to combine the attributes of the existing 18 Pdr field gun and the 4.5 inch howitzer - in short, a new gun-howitzer. The suggestion was accepted but the development work did not start for many years and even then, during the early 30s, the project was carried on at a very low level of priority.

The reason for this was not hard to find, one of the main ones was the huge stocks of existing weapons that still survived from 1918. In that year there were over 8 million 18 Pdr rounds waiting to be fired from the 3,144 guns still on the books. A total of 984 4.5 inch howitzers were also still in and by the end of 1930 many were still in front-line service. With stocks like these it was uneconomical and politically unthinkable that a new field piece should be considered when the "no war for ten years" policy was in force.

But slowly and surely, work on the proposed gun-howitzer went forward. In 1928 the concept had been fully accepted and by 1933 trials had been completed that showed the possibility of using a 3.7 inch barrel firing a 25 pound shell which would meet the gun-howitzer requirements. In May 1934 the General Staff Specification was finally laid down for the new weapon. By this date it had become painfully obvious that the existing equipment's were fast becoming obsolete and in any future conflict they would be outranged by nearly all of the new weapons coming into service elsewhere on the Continent. The staff Specification called for a weapon weighing about 30 cwt which would fire a shell weighing between 20 and 25 pounds to a range of 12,000 yards (this was later raised to 15,000 yards.)

The origins of the eventual 25 pdr can be detected in the 1934 specification but its advent was delayed a further five years. Part of the 1934 decision acknowledged the fact that large stocks of the 18 pdrs on hand could be altered to take the new projectile. By 1945 it had been decided that existing 18 Pdr guns would be adapted to fire a 25 Pdr shell even though this would mean a maximum possible range of 11,800 yards and an extensive program of relining the existing barrels from a calibre of 3.3 inches (83.8mm) to 3.45 inches (87.6mm). At the same time the already agreed program of fitting pneumatic tyres and otherwise modifying existing carriages for towing by internal combustion engineered tractors and lorries was also taking place.

The April 1935 decision had also called for an eventual range of 13,500 yards. This decision ruled out the 18/25 Pdr concept for future development as the carriage, designed for the lighter stresses of the 18 Pdr was too light to

At the same time as the first barrel conversions were being made which turned the 18 Pdr into the 25 Pdr Mark 1, work was well advanced on the mock-ups and prototype construction of the gun which became the 25 Pdr Mark 2. The barrel was fairly conventional and straight forward but the carriage and other detail items were another matter entirely. It had been decided rather early on in the design study that the carriage would use a split trail which would give a wide traverse angle to the barrel and the early design studies eventually decided on a carriage with long trail legs which would permit a traverse angle of about 60-70 degrees. The shield was originally in the form of a partially enclosed box but after the early trials with the prototype this was changed to a conventional straight forward shield.

Some 25 Pdr Mark 1 carriages were produced with a split trail design but gunners in the field preferred a conventional box trail together with a 360 degree firing platform and comparative firing trials at Larkin Hill in 1938 showed the supremacy of the box trail and platform to the extent that the 25 Pdr Mark 2 had to be altered. The main contractors for the 25 Pdr Mark 2 Vickers-Armstrong had ready to hand a suitable box trail design which already incorporated a firing platform held suspended beneath the trail legs when not in use. These had originally been designed for a commercial 105mm howitzer for sale to Spain and some Baltic States.

After this hesitant start the production lines began to turn out 25 Pdr Mark 2 gun/howitzers in thousands. Exact numbers are not known but well over 12,000 were produced in the UK alone and production lines established in Canada and Australia.

One of the best tributes that can be paid to the original design was that there was little change made to it over its entire service life. These changes were only internal and the only external change made when the addition of a special charge increment for anti-tank work meant that the carriage was approaching its design limits. This was countered by fitting a double baffle muzzle brake, and all guns produced after 1943 had this muzzle brake fitted - many earlier guns were retrofitted but guns in theaters where tanks were unlikely to be encountered never did have the muzzle brake fitted (mainly the Far East).

The sturdy box trail carriage underwent little change but there were two variants. The Mark 2 was a special version first produced for use in the Far East jungles. This version used a narrow axle (the first modification prior to formal acceptance was carried out by 129 Field Regiment RA and used a converted jeep axle) which enabled it to be towed by a jeep along jungle tracks and could be loaded into a C-47 Dakota aircraft.

A further variation to the Mark 2 carriage was the Mark 3 which featured hinges halfway along each trail leg. This enabled the barrel to be elevated to angles higher than the normal 40 degree maximum which was useful when firing in mountain or jungle terrain.

In Australian service for a short period of time during WW2 was a modified and light weight "jungle gun". The barrel was shortened causing a reduction in range and while it proved to be a useful weapon which could go to places where no other gun could go its performance left much to be desired.

The 25 Pdr gun was also used on a grant tank chassis as a self propelled gun by 22 Field Regiment (Self Propelled). Each of these examples show the overall flexibility of the basic gun and many variations were built during the design and service of the weapon.

Many who served on them would say "They were a lovely gun".

(Thanks Jim, I hope some other people are going to respond as these are only some of the many relevant subjects people could be writing to us about our Army and particularly our Corps. You have certainly covered a lot here, and it really is all very interesting info. Thanks again, and if you have any other interesting background of things, be it weapons, units, people or otherwise, please let us know, and on 3 1/2" disc is fine. Ed.)





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PARADE CARD 2002

January 2002

No functions or meetings during this month

February 2002

3 Church Parade
21 Committee Meeting

March 2002

21 Committee Meeting

April 2002

18 Committee Meeting
25 ANZAC Day

May 2002

16 Committee Meeting

Jun 2002

20 Committee Meeting
28 Gunner Dinner

Jul 2002

1 Reserve Forces Day March
18 Committee Meeting

Aug 2002

2 Artillery Ball
15 Committee Meeting

Sep 2002

5 Battle for Aust Com'n
19 Committee Meeting

October 2002

17 Committee Meeting
27 AGM & Back to the Regt

November 2002

3 RSL Remembrance
21 Committee Meeting

December 2002

4 St Barbara's Day ?
5 Committee Meeting

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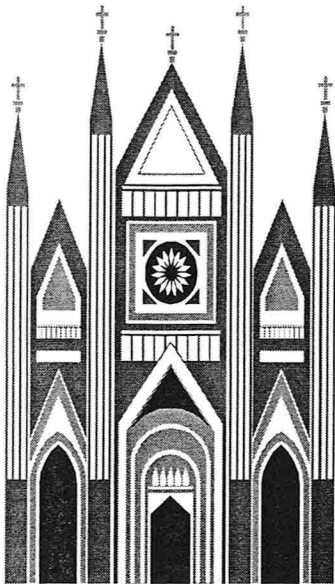
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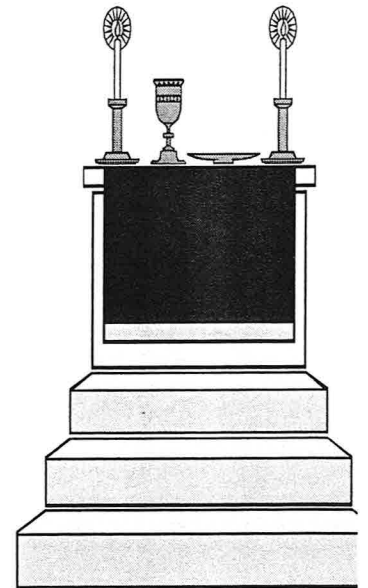
ENSURE ADDRESS DETAILS ARE UPDATED BEFORE NEXT ISSUE

Annual Association Church Parade Sun 3 Feb 2002 Service at 11 am

**Be early to hear the bells and the
2/10 Mdm Regt RAA Band
("Voice of the Gunners")
as they provide the musical accompaniment for the
service.**



**St Bartholomew's
Anglican Church
290 Burnley St
Burnley
Melway 2H E9**



**ALL Gunners past and present and their families
are cordially invited to attend our Annual Church
Parade on the first Sunday in February to worship
together, meet old friends and make new ones.**

**No bookings necessary
Any enquiries to Robin Smith on 9435 6352**

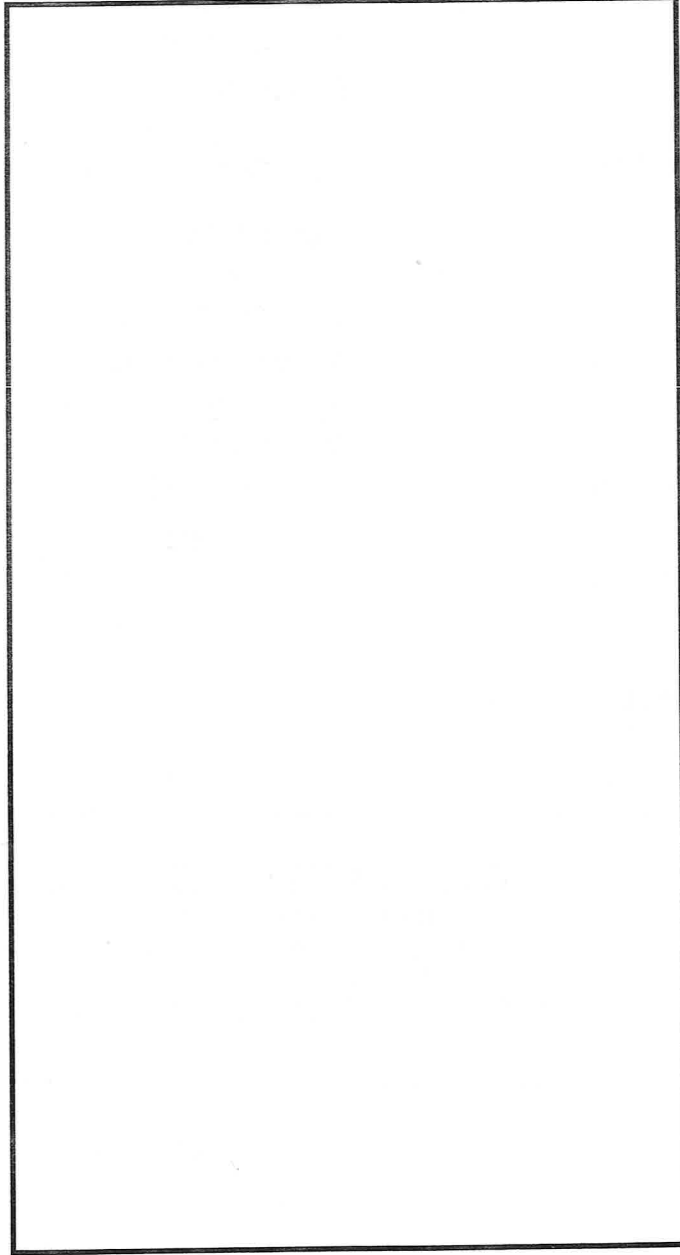
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