



Artillery WA

Official Newsletter of Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc) and the Hobbs Australian Artillery Memorial Foundation

WebSite: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>

Email: info@artillerywa.org.au

Edition 1 / 07

March 2007

Ye That Have Faith

*Ye that have faith to look with fearless eyes
Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
And know that out of death and night shall rise
The dawn of ampler life*

*Rejoice, whatever anguish rend the heart,
That God has given you a priceless dower,
To live in these great times and have your part
In freedom's crowning hour*

*That ye may tell your sons who see the light
High in the heavens – their heritage to take –
“I saw the powers of darkness put to flight.
I saw the morning break”*

Lines found pencilled on a sheet of paper in the pocket of a young Australian who died in the trenches at Gallipoli, written, evidently, by him before he met his death

- LEST WE FORGET -

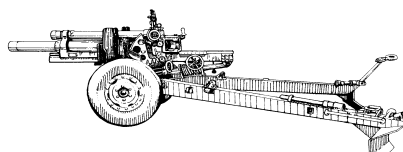
Dawn Service 0545 Hrs

(Allow time for security clearance at entrance gate)

Hobbs Artillery Park - 25 April 2007



**This Gunfire Breakfast is proudly supported by the
Government of Western Australia and Celebrate WA**



**ARTILLERY WA is published four times in the calendar year.
March, June, September and December.**

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead



Notice Board

Mark these dates in your calendars

– ANZAC DAY –

Dawn Service at Hobbs Artillery Park Memorial Wall

**followed by Gunfire Breakfast
and March through Perth**

Timings – Dawn Service starts at 0545 hrs –

~0~

Warning Order – Battery Birthday Corp Dinner – Saturday 30 June 2007

RAAHS BUSY BEES 2007

27 th Jan	24 th Feb	31 st Mar	28 th Apr
26 th May	30 th Jun	28 th Jul	25 th Aug
29 th Sep	27 th Oct	24 th Nov	15 th Dec

LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS

The Leighton Battery Heritage Site is open on a regular basis on the first Sunday of every month from 10 AM to 3:30 PM with tours of the tunnels every half hour.

Additional opening during Heritage week on Sunday 27/5 & Monday 4/6

COVER – as shown -

Inside this Issue – Main points

RAA of WA (Inc)

President's Message	3
Badges for Sale	4
Change of Col Comdt	4
Welfare Officer Contact	4
Direct Debit Details RAAA	5
HAAMF	5
Message from RAA National Museum	7
Arty Around the world	7
A Bty – Notice	8
Impressive photos	8
Bougainville – 2 nd Aust Fd Regt	9

Aiming Post

President's AGM Report	11
Australian Peacekeeping	11
Direct Debit Details RAAHS	12
Article by Maj Gen Tim Ford AO	12
Long, Long Trail to Darwin	13
Blast from the Past	15
Oral History	16
Order Form	17

Next Issue – June 2007

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• **Subs to your Association or Society are now due – RAAA of WA (Inc) - \$ 15 RAAHS - \$ 25** •

• **We now have a Direct Debit facility – Please find the details in the relevant sections -** •

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The Editor gratefully acknowledges the contributions to the newsletter by the members, whose names appear with the corresponding articles. Articles, editorial comment or book reviews for publication should be submitted to the editor, Gabriel D'Uva at: Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc) PO Box 881, Claremont WA 6910. Phone: 93836544 Fax: 93836370 or E-mail the Editor at info@artillerywa.org.au

ADVERTISING

ANYBODY INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING THEIR BUSINESS IN **ARTILLERY WA** FOR A DONATION OF \$ 10 (TEN) PER YEAR, (Four Issues), BOTH IN PRINTED AND WEB SITE EDITIONS, PLEASE MAIL OR EMAIL THE EDITOR TO THE ADDRESSES SHOW

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION WA (INC)

PRESIDENT'S AGM MESSAGE

Welcome

The year's highlights were

Dawn Service at Hobbs Artillery Park which was well attended and the Support by Major Dunjey and 7 Field Battery continues to give this event the importance it deserves, Ron Jaeger represented the Association with strong support by Gabby D'Uva in the co ordination between the bodies.

Gunners Day at Guildford and St Mathews Church, were the march past was reviewed by the incoming new Commander of 13th Bde, Brig. Phil White, taking the Salute for the March, accompanied on the dais by the Colonel Commandant Western Region, Brig. Richard Lawler AM and your President.

On this occasion 13th Bde Chaplain, Maj. Howard McCallum conducted the Wreath Laying ceremony and then the Service at St Mathews and gave an inspiring service and we appreciate his support.

One of items of concern is the Welfare Fund and the Association aims to assist past gunners and their family, our welfare officer is John Walsh who will assist in any inquiries.

This Association exists with the strong Support of 7 Field Battery. In addition from the Association our Secretary Tom Arnautovic, Treasurer Gabby D'Uva, Vice Treasurer Ron Jaeger and Peter Rowles with support by your Committee.

In conclusion your attendance today is appreciated

Ubique

Bruce G. Campbell
President



JOHN BURRIDGE MILITARY ANTIQUES

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Artillery from around the world



RAA JACKET POCKET BADGE – Actual size of Badge is 100mm wide x 90mm high - CAN BE ORDERED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION – COST \$25 EACH - PLEASE USE THE ORDER FORM IN LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

RAA ARTILLERY EMBROIDERED BERET BADGES – Actual size is 55mm wide by 40mm high - CAN BE ORDERED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION – COST \$10 EACH - PLEASE USE THE ORDER FORM IN LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

(Please post request to Secretary for both items)

WELFARE FUND and OFFICER

John Walsh is the contact person as the Association's Welfare Officer. Anybody that needs to discuss any Welfare Funding can contact John via email at info@artillerywa.org.au or jfxwalsh@bigpond.com.au or by phone on 93836544, Wednesday mornings.

Access to Funds can be made by applying in writing using the Welfare Fund Form, which is available on request. *(From the Treasurer)*

The Association reminds Members that access to the Fund to help Gunners financially at a time of need is strictly confidential and all applications are treated as such.

Change of Colonel Commandant RAA (WR)

Just as history waits for no one, so does my time as your Colonel Commandant RAA (Western Region) (COL COMDT RAA (WR)) draw to a close after three extensions of tenure for a total of six years in this important honorary appointment. It also effectively ends 40 years of being a Gunner officer in some form of active role in units of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery; a great honour indeed! I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as your COL COMDT and being part of the WA Gunner Fraternity's activities whenever it has been possible to take part in them. I came to the appointment with the very firm view that the COL COMDT had a very specific role set down by the Chief of Army. I maintained that position throughout my appointment and make no apology for that. I would like to commend our President Bruce Campbell and his committees of the RAAA and RAAHS. They have done us proud! I now look forward to my continued association with, and membership of, the Fraternity. Who knows, in a while I may offer my services to fill an office in the RAAA of WA or RAAHS of WA. For now I intend to be as active as I can be but as an ordinary member enjoying the fellowship of my fellow Gunners, both serving and retired.

I would like to also introduce my successor as COL COMDT. Colonel W A (Bill) Ritchie has assumed duty in the role. He is a long time personal friend of mine and probably the best GPO I ever served with. He is also one of 3 FD REGT's finest having enlisted into the unit as a GNR, achieved promotion to the rank of SGT before being commissioned as LT in the CMF. From here he resigned his CMF commission to enlist into the ARA and entered OCS Portsea as an OCDT. He successfully completed the course and was commissioned as an ARA 2LT and allotted to the RAA. Some highlights of his career would be his attendance at the Gunnery Staff Course at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill, UK and his time in command as BC 102 MDM BTY, a battery of 8/12 MDM REGT. I'm personally very pleased he accepted the COL COMD appointment and I'm confident he'll do a terrific job. I ask that you all make him feel 'at home' as he rejoins our Gunner Fraternity.

Ubique

Brig. Richard Lawler AM



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**Proud to be Associated with Artillery W.A.
And
Gunners— Past—Present and Future**

News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash

You can Now pay your Membership Fees by Direct Debit!

Members can go to any bank (or do it by electronic transfer) and make a deposit quoting The RAA Association's BSB and Account Number and your Name. The Funds will automatically be transferred to the Association's Account along with your name.

It's that Simple!!

If you choose this method please quote:

RAA Association of WA (Inc) – (Note: Some banks may required the full wording)

Commonwealth Bank

BSB Number: 066 163

Account Number: 0090 2583

Please do not forget to include your name, so we know who the payment is from. Thank You.

HOBBS AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Fellow Gunners and friends.

As Chairman of the Foundation I think it appropriate to inform the Gunner fraternity about our role and purpose.

The Hobbs Australian Artillery Memorial Foundation (The Foundation) is a company set up under the Corporations Act by *defence* some four years ago. It was created at a time when it was anticipated the Foundation was required in order to oversee Federal Government funds to be distributed via the Army History Unit. Unfortunately this funding has never eventuated.

In 2006 the Board undertook strategic planning to redefine the Foundation's role and purpose given that the Federal funding has not been forthcoming. As a result of this planning process I believe we have defined an exciting new role for the Foundation to go forward and support the Artillery heritage in Western Australia. The best way to convey this is to set out our strategic statements, which are:

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

Mission

The Hobbs Australian Artillery Memorial Foundation (The Foundation) is a not for profit organisation to provide money, property and other benefits to the museum for the conservation and display of Western Australia's artillery heritage.

Role

The Foundation is the corporate/ business arm of the Gunner fraternity in Western Australia.

Vision

The Foundation will work in close association with and support the Gunner fraternity with particular attention to providing funding to support to the museum and collection through the use of its charitable status.

The Foundation will respond to tasks assigned by the RAA Association, the RAAHS and other recognised RAA Associations/bodies in WA.

"The Foundation will provide funding and support for the conservation and display of Western Australia's Artillery heritage".

End State

"The RAAHS museum and collection will flourish in perpetuity."

Objects of the Foundation

1. The raising and management of funds for the conservation, interpretation and display of items part of the Artillery heritage of Western Australia.
2. Supporting and promoting the continuous development of the RAAHS museum and collection.
3. Investigating and supporting the provision of infrastructure to ensure the future

You will see from this that the Foundation is the business or corporate arm of the gunner fraternity. A key task of the Board is working on, is achieving charitable tax status. *Once this is achieved we will be able to raise funds where the donor can claim a tax deduction.* This will in turn make it possible to approach businesses for financial assistance.

Whilst we have not yet achieved charitable tax status, we would seek your assistance in identifying businesses that may have connections to the "Regiment" whom you think the Board should approach.

The current Board comprises the following members:

Bob Farrelly (Chairman)

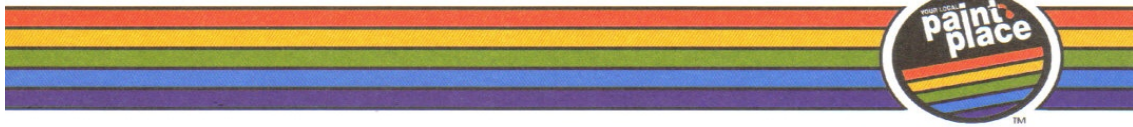
Fred Lynch (Deputy Chairman)

Andrew Dunjey (BC and Secretary)

**Peter Rowles, Tom Arnautovic, Don Rae, Murray Lampard,
Roger Martin and John Blylevens.**

Bob Farrelly

Chairman



CANNINGTON PAINT PLACE

TRADE PRICES TO GUNNERS

1448 ALBANY HWY

Phone Ian Monck on 0418 925031

Joint Message from Manager, RAA National Museum and Chairman, RAA Historical Company

Reports in the press in recent weeks covering the hand-over of NSW State land on North Head to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) have been somewhat misleading in respect to the Department of Defence land at North Fort.

We have been informed by Army History Unit, Department of Defence, Canberra that there is no change to the holding arrangements of land known as North Fort under the Department of Defence, and that the RAA National Museum will continue its operation under the present arrangements. In other words for the Museum it is business as usual!

The National Heritage Listing of North Head and the new management arrangements of facilities under the control of the SHFT should bring for the RAA National Museum a clearer understanding of its position and relationship with the Trust. No doubt there will be opportunities for us to work in a collaborative way with the SHFT for mutual benefit. With this in view we will seek to improve our working arrangements with the Trust during the coming year.

For more info go to

<http://www.northfort.org.au/>

Artillery from around the world



AYBACK: An Israeli soldier prepares a 155mm artillery round as a mobile unit fires a shell at the Gaza Strip

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

NOTICE

"Ex-members of "A" Fd Battery interested in forming a branch (WA) of "A" Fd Battery Association are asked to get in touch with Max Ptolomey, 21 Zamia Place Greenwood 6024 phone 9447 4783.

I know the following photos are not Artillery related, but they are impressive!!!! (Ed)

Medivac



Ex Valiant Shield 2006 - Guam



(L to R) USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, KITTY HAWK and RONALD REAGAN with support planes and B-52 Stealth Bomber

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

The following article was sent in by Reg Kidd and is about the 2nd Aust Fd Rgt action in Bougainville over 60 years ago, the Rgt was in action for the whole eight months and fired over 70,000 shells during the period. Reg was a FOO with 47Bn. Other Fd Regts there, were the 4th Fd Regt and the 2/11th Fd Regt.

BOUGAINVILLE - AUSTRALIA'S FORGOTTEN CAMPAIGN

By Reg Kidd - 4 Bty 2 Aust Field Regt (AIF)

The devastation caused by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 signalled the end of Japanese military activity in the Pacific. It brought to a close a war that Japan could not win and with the benefit of hindsight saved the loss of many thousands of combatants although the civilian casualties in Japan were horrific.

Much has been written for and against the use of these atomic bombs. However the cessation of hostilities on Bougainville was, with again, the benefit of hindsight, a blessing in disguise for the Australian Army.

The Bougainville campaign was heading towards a critical stage. It was being severely affected by a number of factors including-

The extremely wet July 1945 which brought most of the fighting to a standstill washing away parts of the Buin Road carrying troops and supplies south from Torokina and flooding river crossings and immobilising jeep supply train over the long line of communication from Torokina to the Mivo river where the major fighting was taking place.

The casualty rate had been steadily climbing as the Japanese resistance stiffened. In the eight months of fighting the Australian formations had suffered over 2000 casualties including 500 killed in action. Additionally over 4000 personnel had been hospitalised suffering malaria, dengue, scrub typhus and skin diseases.

The Australian troops were badly in need of relief after eight months of action but the supply of reinforcements was a mere trickle. War Historian, Gavin Long, indicated that over 7500 troops were waiting in Townsville for shipping to take them to Bougainville and Wewak, including the 13th Fd. Regt. required to stiffen the artillery activity in the southern sector. But no shipping was available as it had all been directed to the Philippines for the American campaign there. Indeed only the bare level of supplies and munitions was being received at Torokina.

The Japanese were being forced back to the southern tip of Bougainville to an area around their main base at Buin - but Japanese raiding parties were active all along the Buin road attacking supply trains, unit camps and engineers repairing the road which was being systematically booby trapped and mined.. This necessitated troops being withdrawn to protect unit headquarters.

By contrast the Japanese supply lines were much shorter and their base at Buin was heavily defended with emplaced artillery and strong points ready for a fight to the death. It is clear that the further the Australians advanced the heavier

would be the Japanese resistance and the higher the casualties.

Gavin Long, the war historian, in the official history of the Bougainville campaign in the Australian War Museum's publication 'The Final Campaigns' stated -

'the task undertaken by 11 Aust. Corps was too great for its resources. When its offensives opened the Japanese were in greater numerical strength than that part of 11 Aust. Corps on Bougainville. In eight months of fighting the Japanese lost about three sevenths of their number, but in August 1945 they were still so strong that the reduction of Buin would have undoubtedly involved longer and costlier operations than those already endured.'

The reasons for the Bougainville campaign are still unclear even sixty years after the cessation of hostilities. General Blarney's instruction to Lt. Gen. Savige - commanding 11 Aust. Corps cautioned against being drawn into a major campaign - which caution seems to have been largely ignored or misinterpreted.. But the over-riding consideration is to what extent did the campaign accomplish anything which assisted the Allied defeat of Japan? The answer is that it did nothing! In fact, it seems to have been a means of keeping Australian troops in the field to fight a politically motivated campaign, the results of which have never been properly analysed or appreciated.

But what of the Japanese side of this campaign. Fortunately, we have been able to learn of their problems through a debriefing exercise conducted by the Intelligence Section of 23 Aust. Inf Bde. after the cessation of hostilities. I have a copy of this excellent fifty page report which was not accepted by 3 Div. HQ. It obviously upset them because it contained some criticisms of the Australian conduct of the campaign. In his foreword to this report entitled 'The History of the Japanese Occupation of Bougainville - March 1942 to August 1945' Brigadier Simpson - Comdr. 23 Aust. Inf Bde. states -

This history has been compiled from a series of interrogations and discussions with Japanese Army and Navy Staff Officers. As all Japanese documents were destroyed in June 1945 in anticipation of the final decisive battles, all information has been received verbally and no documents have been produced to substantiate statements made by these Officers. When the reasons for the compilation of this document were given to Lt. Gen. Kanda and his staff, almost without exception they appeared willing to co-operate. They gave the impression of frankness and sincerity in all their statements.

19 Feb. 1946

After their defeat on Guadalcanal the Japanese army withdrew up the chain of islands in the Solomons Group and finally assembled on Bougainville with units in the north at Buka, in the east at Kieta but with the main concentration at Buin in the south. They had no air support and were cut off from their main supply bases at Rabaul and Truk. However they had over 67,000 well trained troops and plenty of supplies as well as antiaircraft and field artillery and a large number of barges.

The Japanese pinned their hopes on reinforcements from Japan which they were sure would eventuate although they realised that an American landing was imminent.

When the American 1st Marine Corps of two Divisions landed at Torokina in November 1943 it caught the Japanese completely by surprise. They never expected a landing in strength at this location which was only lightly defended. The American force established a large heavily defended perimeter around Torokina with two 'all weather' airstrips from which they could bomb Rabaul and other Japanese bases further to the north.

A first Japanese counter attack was easily turned back with heavy casualties for the attackers. The Japanese withdrew and began to organise a major counter attack which was commenced on the 8th March 1944. Initially it had some success but was eventually beaten off by American tanks with heavy casualties on both sides. The Japanese then withdrew to the Bonis Peninsula, in the north - Kieta in the east with the main force numbering about 44,000 troops returning to the Buin area in the south of the island.

Over 35% of the Japanese force was now engaged in tending their gardens growing vegetables and tropical fruit to supplement their fishing and they were becoming almost self sufficient supplementing the 1000 tons of rice that had been stockpiled. But there was still an acute shortage of anti-malarial drugs. Malaria was their greatest problem. Japanese submarines frequently called at Buin to unload medical supplies and technical equipment but this was the only contact they had with the outside world apart from wireless communication with Rabaul.

The Japanese were now content to wait for reinforcements from Rabaul or Japan which they were certain would eventuate. On their part the Americans stayed mainly inside their perimeter, having accomplished their task of immobilising the Japanese and showed no signs of mounting a campaign to eliminate them. This virtual truce was maintained from about April 1944 to November when the Australian 3rd Division augmented by two additional Brigades

and Independent Commando Companies relieved the American Americaln and 37th Divisions who were destined for the Philippines campaign. In effect almost two divisions of Australian troops were engaged - probably the greatest number of Australian troops so far committed to any Island campaign.

The Japanese army made little of this alteration until the Australians commenced to patrol aggressively, north towards the Sorakan Peninsula, east along the Numa Numa trail but with the main activity south along the Buin road towards the Japanese main base.

The Japanese fought bitterly but were forced to withdraw back towards Buin where they would have to make their final stand. Their plan elaborated by Lt.Gen. Kanda, was to disrupt the advancing Australian forces by sending raiding parties deep behind their lines to attack supply trains and isolated units and to raid vehicle parks and supply dumps and to booby trap and mine the Buin road. In the meantime Buin was being heavily fortified with strong points and Lt.Gen. Kanda indicated that he had over eighty guns to emplace around Buin with a plentiful supply of ammunition.

The cessation of hostilities in August 1945 took the Japanese completely by surprise and they needed several messages from Rabaul before they would entertain surrender. In fact the Japanese Command stated that the 17th Army was not defeated. They suffered no humiliation because of the surrender. The war was stopped by the Emperor and they had to obey his command. If anyone apart from the Emperor had ordered the surrender they would not have obeyed but would have carried out their General's order to fight to the death.

At the conclusion of the Bougainville campaign 24,000 well armed Japanese troops were interned on Fauro Island just to the south of Bougainville, many more than the Allied intelligence sources had previously considered to be the Japanese strength on Bougainville at the commencement of the Australian campaign. In all the Japanese lost 43,000 of the original garrison of 67,000 assembled on Bougainville early in 1943, mainly through battle casualties and illness - but they still had a large well equipped fighting force to confront the advancing Australian troops.

The reduction of Buin would have been a bloody battle and as stated previously would not have accomplished anything apart from disquiet among the Australian public who were largely kept in the dark as to what was happening on Bougainville and the climbing casualty rate.

In conclusion we can all be thankful that the war ended when it did, although the way in which it ended will always be a topic for discussion with support and criticism for the use of the atom bomb.

Supporting data taken from -

*'The Final Campaigns' by Gavin Long Published by the Australian War Museum
'The History of the Japanese occupation of Bougainville - March 1942 to August 1945'
Compiled by 23 Aust Inf Bde. Intelligence Section*



THE AIMING POST

The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Of Western Australia (Inc)

President's AGM Report:

Over the past twelve months the Society has benefited from increased visitor support to the tunnels and the Vice President will be giving you shortly an update.

Unfortunately at this stage the future location of the Restoration Workshop has still to be resolved, however our Curator Don Rae is working to achieve a favourable outcome.

At the Last AGM we reported progress with the Town of Mosman Park and currently the Society is awaiting receipt of the Engrossed Lease Documents for Execution. This will finally conclude the long drawn out negotiations.

The incoming Committees subject to your support will see some minor changes with Tom Arnautovic retiring as Secretary and taking up the position of Vice President, David Carter not standing for Vice President but will continue as a Committee Member, John Walsh retiring as Treasurer to take up the position of Secretary and Neil Lodge taking on the Position of Treasurer.

The minor changes will enable your Committee to continue to manage with the Society's affairs.

One of the important means of Communication with our Members is via 'Artillery WA'. This is only possible with the work by Gabby D'Uva and Tom Arnautovic and those submitting Articles for incorporation in 'Artillery WA'

To you the Society thanks you.

Yours Sincerely

Bruce G. Campbell

President



AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPING MEMORIAL - AN INVITATION TO BE A SPONSOR OR MEMBER

The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will commemorate and celebrate Australian peacekeeping. It will honour the sacrifice, service and valour of Australian peacekeepers given in the same spirit as in other conflicts honoured in cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and on ANZAC Parade, Canberra.

Progress to Date

The Federal Government, through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, has provided an initial grant of \$200,000 to assist with the construction of the Memorial, which experience indicates requires about \$2.5 million to fund such a major national memorial in Canberra. A committee for the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project has been convened with duly elected office bearers and representatives from the ADF, the AFP, State and Territory Police, and peacekeeping veterans.

The APMP Committee welcomes membership and support from all peacekeeping veterans, interested individuals and organisations.

Full details of the project are listed on our website: www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au

You can Now pay your Membership Fees by Direct Debit!

Members can go to any bank and make a deposit quoting The RAA Historical Society's BSB and Account Number and your Name. The Funds will automatically be transferred to the Association's Account along with your name.

It's that Simple!!

If you choose this method please quote:

RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc) - (Note: Some banks may required the full wording)

Commonwealth Bank

BSB Number: 066-103

Account Number: 00903744

**Please do not forget to include your name so we know who the payment is from.
Thank You.**

60 years of Australian Peacekeeping and the Gunner contribution

By Major General (Retired) Tim Ford, AO
RAA Representative Colonel Commandant, and
Chairman of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project

Peacekeeping generally describes actions taken by the international community to assist and support a developing peace in countries that have been racked by conflict with neighbours or by internal divisions. 2007 is the 60th Anniversary of Australia's commitment to Peacekeeping, and our peacekeeping veterans plan to mark the occasion later this year by approval for a site in Canberra for construction of an Australian Peacekeeping Memorial.

Australia's involvement in international peacekeeping first commenced in Indonesia on the 14th September 1947, when four Australian Military officers were deployed by Australia as part of a United Nations Good Offices Commission. Since then, Australia has contributed over 46,000 Australian military and police to more than fifty peace operations around the world¹.

Over the past few years veterans of these peacekeeping missions have felt that an Australian Peacekeeping Memorial should be built in Canberra to honor all those who have and will continue to serve on peacekeeping operations. The Memorial would represent all those from the Defence Force, the Federal, State and Territory Police Forces and Government Agencies who have served and died on

¹ For a full list of these peacekeeping operations, see the Department of Veterans Affairs web site at: http://www.dva.gov.au/commem/commac/studies/anza_csk/res2.htm

peacekeeping operations commanded or authorized by the United Nations or sanctioned by the Government of Australia.

Today's peacekeeping activity by the United Nations is as large as it has ever been. At the moment, there are some 18 UN "Blue Helmet" Peacekeeping Operations being conducted around the world, involving over 95,000 military, police and international civilians from some 114 countries. Australia is supporting seven of these missions with UN or coalition military or police components. These deployments are in the Middle East and Sinai, the Sudan, Cyprus, Timor Leste, Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to the UN commanded missions, there are a number of other peace operations being conducted around the world. These missions are being coordinated by various regional organizations, or by "ad hoc" coalitions of interested nations. Australia has recently been involved in several such coalition peace operations and is at present actively supporting peace initiatives in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

The principal role of the military in these peace operations is to provide the basic security which encourages the peace process to strengthen. This allows all the other actors, who come from a wide range of UN agencies, international financial organizations and various other international and local aid and humanitarian organizations, to effectively coordinate their activities and to work with the local community to develop a stable environment leading to a sustainable

peace. While there is no specified enemy force operating against the military in such operations, the general situation is often very dangerous and volatile, and peacekeepers are sometimes directly targeted by groups that do not support the peace process. Furthermore, the location of these missions is often remote, local infrastructure and utilities are destroyed, the areas to be covered can be huge, and there are often scattered landmines that need to be cleared. In many of these situations crime is rampant and there are often serious ethnic tensions and large distressed populations in need of humanitarian assistance. Peacekeeping is therefore a difficult assignment. Australian contingents led by young Australian military officers and NCOs and police have performed well in these difficult circumstances; but, as in other dangerous overseas operations, unfortunately Australian military and police have suffered casualties. Some have died or been injured, and many have been traumatized by peace operations. We should remember them.

The RAA has played its part in the Australian peacekeeping effort. Individuals from the RAA have commanded United Nations and other international peacekeeping operations, and Gunners have served as key personnel in various mission headquarters and contingents overseas. Additionally, RAA sub-units and detachments from field, locating and air defence units have all deployed on recent peace operations. Some of these deployments have been in their primary RAA roles, while others have been in a secondary role as an

"infantry company" undertaking a wide range of general security tasks in support of the particular peacekeeping mission. As I write, elements of 20 Surveillance Target Acquisition Regiment, 4th Field Regiment, 8/12th Medium Regiment, and 16 AD Regt are involved in overseas peace operations. Ubique.

The Australian Federal Police also has an excellent record in peacekeeping, and has now created an International Deployment Group comprising police from federal, state and territory police forces which is specifically trained and prepared for offshore peacekeeping and stabilisation deployments. We have seen the benefit of this capability in their partnership with the ADF and other actors in recent regional operations in Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Bougainville.

The proposed Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will be designed to both appropriately commemorate and celebrate all aspects of Australian peacekeeping. It will commemorate the courage, sacrifice, service and valour of Australian Peacekeepers. It will reflect the same spirit of service as do other cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and on ANZAC Parade in Canberra which honour the service of Australians in other distinguished campaigns. It will celebrate Australia's long and distinguished contribution to international peacekeeping since its commitment to the very first UN peacekeeping mission in 1947.

This proposal has now developed into the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project (APMP). You can find out much more about the plans for the Memorial by visiting the APMP web site at www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au.

19th February 2007 marked the 65th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin in 1942. It brought back memories for all surviving Service Personnel who defended Australia in those dark days. One such Anti-Aircraft Gunner was Des Lambert, the historian of the Heavy AA Regiment in Western Australia, who provided the article published in ARTILLERYWA in February 2006 "Darwin Bombing Shocks Australians".

Des' thoughts reflected the long and arduous trip undertaken by Western Australian Gunners in December 1941 posted from Artillery Barracks Fremantle to Darwin in a procession of passenger trains, cattle trucks and eventually by road arriving in Darwin some 4000 miles and ten days later. A far cry from today's luxurious GHAN experience!

Des has generously allowed his "Long, Long Trail to Darwin" to be published in this edition of ARTILLERYWA".

Thank you Des.

The Long, Long Trail to Darwin 19/29 December 1941

Friday, the 19th December 1941 will be long remembered by survivors of the draft of 260 officers and men who marched out of the Victoria Artillery Barracks, Burt Street, Fremantle, bound for Darwin. Japan had entered the war twelve days earlier and we were destined to bolster the anti-aircraft defences around that town and the surrounding installations and airfields.

We were a mixed bunch – most were in their late teens or early twenties but the draft included youngsters of

fifteen and men in their late forties who had served in the First World War. Included, also, were eighteen permanent army officers and men, former members of the 5th Anti-Aircraft Cadre which was formed on 26th January 1939. A large majority of the draft were detached from the 5th A.A. Battery which was formed on 11th September 1940. Most had served on the Park Gun Station situated where the John Curtain High School sports ground is located today. Last, but not least, came men from infantry units (the 16th, 28th and

44th Battalions) and those from the Coast Artillery (7th Heavy Brigade). The infantrymen had volunteered for transfer to an unknown unit, while the Coast Artillery men volunteered to serve twelve months in Darwin presuming that they would remain coastal gunners. To their surprise, on reporting to the Fremantle Artillery Barracks, they learnt of their grave mistake – they were to be anti-aircraft gunners. The twelve months service in Darwin, for some, dragged on for 27 months without leave. So much for volunteering!

As the special troops train pulled out of Fremantle Railway Station, around 2.30pm, most felt that they were embarking on a great adventure into the unknown – as it later proved to be. Some yelled themselves hoarse as the train proceeded through Perth suburbs but finally settled down before reaching Northam about 6pm where a meal was served.

The next morning, having spent an uncomfortable night in cramped compartments, the train pulled into Kalgoorlie Station where a good breakfast was provided. Soon afterwards we transferred to the standard gauge Trans-Train bound for Port Pirie. We were in for a pleasant surprise: the train consisted of sleeping coaches, we could stretch our legs, and find a bunk or seat to sleep on at night. We were treated like civilian passengers and served delicious meals in the dining car by white-coated waiters. We really lived it up while we had the chance. Conditions after leaving this train were soon to change for the worse.

The South Australian border was crossed at 10.45pm and we pulled into Port Pirie at 4.30pm on Sunday 21st December. There we transferred to a fine South Australian train named the "Sir Winston Dugan" and headed for Adelaide on the 5ft 3in gauge. Our comfortable journey came to an abrupt halt about 7pm at a station called Two Wells, where the locomotive broke down. We were stranded for three hours until a relief loco arrived to take us in tow.

Reaching Adelaide, on the brink of starvation, about 11.30pm we were taken to Wayville Showgrounds, served a cold meal, and bedded down on tent boards in animal stalls aptly marked Sheep, Pigs, Cows, Horses and Poultry.

The following day, Monday, 22 December, after a refreshing shower, followed by breakfast, leave was granted from 11am to 4.30pm and we took the opportunity to visit Adelaide and sample the local brew. The day was hot and dry and our thick woollen service dress we were compelled to wear proved most uncomfortable.

Next morning, Tuesday, we rose at 6am and after breakfast packed our gear and joined a train bound for Terowie. We passed through the industrial areas west of Adelaide and soon found ourselves passing through farming country. A good lunch was provided at Riverton and we proceeded to Terowie where we detrained at a large staging camp in a dry, dusty little country town, at 4.45pm. Here we had a meal before boarding motor trucks lashed down on flat railway wagons. Some of the more fortunate took their places in the few railway carriages provided at the rear of the train.

We departed Terowie at 6.45pm on the 3ft 6in gauge and proceed through rather barren country to a pleasant little town called Peterborough. We were surprised to see most of the residents lined up at the station to cheer us on our way. On reaching Quorn we were greeted with tea and sandwiches, served by members of the Country Women's Association. Their kindness was much appreciated

as we were hot, dry and hungry. Around midnight we pushed on.

With eight men and their gear crammed onto the tray of each truck we were most uncomfortable, to say the least. Sleep was almost out of the question due to the swaying of the motor trucks. Some feared that their particular truck would soon part company from the railway wagon. Having only a ground sheet and blanket each as bedding we made most of our predicament.

When Christmas Eve dawned and we saw the miserable desert country we were passing through we wondered at how people could exist in such surroundings. A few camels and donkeys were about the only sign of life, were it not for the vast numbers of cockatoos drinking from the railway dams from which the loco drew its water. As the sun rose higher in the sky the heat became intense. Although we refilled our water bottles at every opportunity our thirst remained. The water was hot and bitter but it saved us from complete dehydration.

Meals consisted of tinned baked beans and bully beef, distributed at intervals and consumed alongside the train at certain scheduled stops. Tinned fruit was the most palatable item available but, like everything else, was strictly rationed. Can openers were not supplied so knives or bayonets were used in their place.

We stopped at Marree, about 500 miles south of Alice Springs, for lunch. Some declined to eat anything. We all longed for a cool drink but had to be satisfied with the foul-tasting water from our bottles.

At most stops some took the opportunity of taking a steam bath from the loco: this helped to remove some of the accumulated dirt and dust which covered us.

Few of us will ever forget Christmas Day, 1941. Our breakfast at 7.30am beside the train, consisted of pork and beans, and tinned apricots. The early morning heat was the promise of a scorcher to follow. When we stopped for a lunch of tinned stew and fruit, just outside Oodnadatta, the temperature reached 123 degrees fahrenheit. This proved too much for the loco fireman who collapsed and was unable to continue his duties. Rather than be stuck in such an ungodly place volunteers stoked the engine for the rest of the journey. At one siding where the train stopped to replenish coal and water, we found a creek filled with more mud than water. Into this mud-hole we plunged to seek a little relief from the heat. We emerged like true chocolate soldiers about to melt.

That Christmas Night we crossed the Northern Territory border and drew into Alice Springs at 6am on Boxing Day. We were marched to the army staging camp where we received a reasonable breakfast and enjoyed a refreshing shower for the first time after leaving Adelaide, 1,000 miles behind us.

About 9am we boarded motor trucks bound for the rail-head at Mataranka, near Birdum. The convoy consisted of twenty trucks and, with the exception of those allocated to supplies and our gear, each carried around fifteen men.

As we travelled at high speed along the track, later to be graded and sealed and become known as the Stuart Highway, we found the countryside to be greener and much more interesting. Palms and other tropical growth appeared as we headed north. We passed a few cattle stations and, at 1.30pm stopped for lunch at Ti Tree Wells. Here we were advised to fill our water bottles with black tea as the local water was unfit for drinking.

Immediately after lunch we pushed on. The plains now gave way to hilly country covered with trees and green foliage. By this time we had covered 2,700 miles since leaving Fremantle, seven days earlier.

At 6pm we reached Barrow Creek which was to be our resting place for the night. After a meal and a shower we retired to bed feeling very tired and homesick.

Saturday, the 27th December, saw us rising at 5am and, after breakfast, continued on our journey. Around noon we encountered an area with enormous round rocks alongside the road. We stopped for a breather and learnt that the rocks were known as the Devil's Marbles. We were now entering country containing anthills, some of which were 15 feet tall. Cattle could be seen grazing on the hillsides. We now had our first indication of the wet season when rain began to fall.

At 2.30pm we arrived at the mining town of Tennant Creek. Here we received a great welcome from the ladies of the Country Women's Association. All the coppers were boiling and they served much appreciated tea and hot scones. How we enjoyed our stay! Being very thirsty on arrival most of us drank several pannikins of the beautiful beverage.

Leaving the delights of Tennant Creek we headed for Banka Banka where we spent the night of the 27th December. Here we had our first taste of a Northern Territory electrical storm. It was most frightening to see the great flashes of lighting, feel the ground-shaking thunder, and see the rain pelting down. After breakfast we departed Banka Banka at 7am. The sky was overcast and the weather very humid. However, we appreciated a drop in temperature after the excessive heat we had experienced on the way north.

The track was being used by hundreds of vehicles at this time as the army rushed troops, equipment, ammunition and supplies into Darwin. Heading south were many convoys of empty vehicles returning to Alice Springs to collect more troops and supplies.

With the onset of the wet season the track became soaked and very slippery as the trucks ploughed through creeks which flowed across the road.

We stopped for lunch at the well set-up camp of Elliott. Here, vegetables and tropical fruits were growing in profusion. Bamboo shelters and other amenities made this camp an oasis to the traveller.

Pushing on, through green and pleasant country, we arrived at Larrimah, the large army supplies depot, which had lately been moved from Birdum. The time was 5.45pm on Sunday, the 28th December. Larrimah was the end of our 670 miles road journey from Alice Springs.

After a meal we were herded into railway cattle trucks, the tops of which were covered with tarpaulins and the floor with straw palliasses. Towed by an ancient locomotive we started the 350 mile journey to Darwin to the accompaniment of loud bellows and other animal noises from the occupants of the cattle trucks who tried to assume the demeanour of their bovine counterparts.

That night we slept twenty-four to a wagon on palliasses provided. It rained heavily during the night and some received a free shower bath to make things more comfortable.

Early morning on Monday, 29th December, saw our arrival at Pine Creek, where we had breakfast alongside the railway line. As we headed for Darwin we found that the vegetation was getting very dense. Many kangaroos bounded along and water buffalo and wild goats could be seen.

The train passed through lush green country watered by recent heavy tropical rain. We arrived at Adelaide River at 10.30am and remained there for lunch. The adventurous ones among us took the opportunity to indulge in a refreshing swim despite the risk of attack by crocodiles.

We departed Adelaide River at 12.40pm and within a few hours passed by Batchelor Aerodrome where we were surprised to see American Flying Fortresses parked. For many of us this was our first sighting of large bombers.

At 4.50pm we reached Darwin where we detrained and marched to the Oval gun site, situated opposite the new Darwin Hotel. We had travelled nearly 4,000 miles since leaving Fremantle ten days earlier and now we awaited allocation to anti-aircraft batteries in the Darwin area.

Blast from the past

(again non artillery, but great pictures!)



From a box brownie camera – The bombing of Pearl Harbour – Dec 7th 1941

AVAILABLE FOR LOAN TO MEMBERS

Did you know that your Society holds over 11 separate interviews with gunners of different ranks discussing their varying artillery experiences? This is an on-going project and it is hoped to add memories from fellow gunners (who served not only overseas but at home) to our collection, time and resources permitting.

As interviews (and in most cases, accompanying material) are completed and become available for loan, they will be featured in future newsletters. If you are interested in borrowing any of these interviews, please give the Historical Society a call to arrange collection any Wednesday morning. Alternatively, you are welcome to listen to the tapes in our library. If you are unable to attend in person, we would be happy to post them out to you.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH John Montague ("Jack") Shadwick 2/3rd Field Regiment

I interviewed Jack, an Artillery Signaller, on 13 and 27 November 1991 at Hobbs Artillery Park, Karrakatta. The following is a summary of the highlights from our 3 tape interview. Accompanying the tapes is a bound synopsis (including photographs and copy souvenirs which Jack kindly made available to us all) together with further reading material.

- First experience of military life, pre-War Militia, uniforms, pay, training etc;
- Volunteering for the AIF Northam Military Camp, Liverpool Camp NSW, trips on the Trans train, 2/3rd Fd Regt, TSMV Manunda, advice from Maj Clough;
- Sailing from Fremantle on the Empress of Canada; passing time on board, leave in Cape Town, Scotland, Tidworth, 1st air raid, VIP visitors incl Churchill; receiving "new" 25 pounders; leave, Colchester Battery, CO's church parade;
- Sailing to Freetown and Durban, leave, Zulu rickshaw drivers, catching "coastal fever", hospital in Alexandria, meeting his first enemy, Abaseyu British Detention Camp, leave in Alexandria, 5 Battery in Tobruk, "Lawrence's men", 5 Bty mascot; leave in Cairo;
- Greece, German consul, crossing Yugoslav border during recce, firing 6,000 rounds in Elasson, "river of blood", Serbia, Hellfire Pass, Larrissa, evacuating through hills, two close calls, Kriekouki, moving to Athens for evacuation, Bty machine gunned by planes, Russian roulette incident, German humour, destroying everything including guns;
- evacuated by barge to Crete, British cruiser "York", locals, guarding Suda Bay during para landing, again abandoning everything and "running", evacuating up cliff face, evacuation by barge, gratitude to sailors;
- Back to Alexandria, leave (Palestine, Cairo etc), coldest winter for 25 years – got snowed in, arrival of "older" reinforcements, Regt divided into 3 Batteries, receiving new guns which were tested at Beersheba; bombing of Pearl Harbour and Churchill not wanting to release Aussies; sailing on Durban Castle for Australia;
- Billeted in South Australia; leave to Perth, bombing of Darwin, 12 months' jungle training in Qld, helping US defend tip of Cape York Peninsula; Cairns brothels;
- 7 Div sent to Milne Bay; Regiment's job in New Guinea, action at Drenamore River and Danmap River, injuries from recoil of 25 Pdr short, accidental shooting of Inf soldier, sad demise of Jack Bendan, Aussie "humour", jungle rations, locals, Salvation Army, rations available to US soldiers;
- contracting dysentery, 1st Casualty Clearing Station, Aitape Hospital, flown back to Brisbane, difficulty being discharged; feelings of being let down; reunions, highlights, best experience, proudest moment, who he looked up to; most vivid single memory.

Wendy Mahoney
(E&OE)

Why is oral history important because:

**When an old person dies a library burns to the ground.
(African proverb)**

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

Note from the Editor:

If any member from any of the Associations or Society would like to contribute any comments, war stories or book reviews, please send them in to the Editor at the address shown in Page 2.
All contributions will be greatly appreciated!

More of those impressive photos



Ex Valiant Shield



Pearl Harbour

Cut and return to the RAA Association

To the RAA Association of WA (Inc) - Postal address on page 2 -

I would like to order an Embroidered Badge / Jacket Pocket Badge (circle choice/s) as advertised in the ArtyWA newsletter.

Please find enclosed the amount of \$_____ being for payment of _____(Qty) Badges or
Please find enclosed the amount of \$_____ being for payment of _____(Qty) J P Badges
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