



Artillery WA

Official Newsletter of Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc)
Web Site: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au> Email: info@artillerywa.org.au

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December 2008



80th GUNNER'S DAY 2008



Notice Board

Mark these dates in your calendars

Annual General Meetings

**Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc)
And
RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc)**

**March 2009
Hobbs Artillery Park**

<u>RAAHS BUSY BEES for 2009</u>	<u>LEIGHTON BATTERY OPEN DAYS</u>
31st Jan 28 th Feb 28 th Mar 18 th Apr 30 th May 27 th Jun 25 th Jul 29 th Aug 26 th Sep 31st Oct 28 th Nov No Dec	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.

COVER - Gunner's Day 2009 Guildford

Top: Standard bearers and ex-gunners at Wreath Laying service
Bottom: Gnr James Spurgeon (20 yo.) and Alf Richards (92 yo.) slicing into 80 years of Artillery Tradition at Guildford

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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, at: Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc) PO Box 881, Claremont WA 6910. Phone: 92694544 Fax: 9269 4370 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 SHOWN



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION WA (INC)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Fellow Gunners

It gives me great pleasure to have taken over as President of the RAA Association. As the senior serving RAA officer, I see my role as President as not only to continue the good work the Association has done in the past, but to also forge closer links with the current serving soldiers, and foster their support and membership.

I would like to thank Bruce Campbell as the outgoing President for the leadership and support he has provided over the past years. He has done a great job, and set a very high standard.

My first official function was Gunner's Day. It was a great pleasure to join Brigadier Phil White, Commander 13 Brigade on the dais and see the fine turnout of Association members, serving members of 7 Fd Bty, cadets from 56 and 59 ACU's, and SES volunteers. A highlight was the presentation of the 116 Light Anti Aircraft Association banner to the RAAHS for safe keeping and display. I would like to thank you all for your attendance at the 80th anniversary of Gunner's Day. I would also like to thank the Association Committee members for their tireless efforts to make the day a success.

As to the future, the Committee will be having a planning session early in the New Year to preview the format of Gunner's Day, and how we can continue to support the RAAHS.

As the year comes to an end, I wish all of you a very happy and safe festive season, and look forward to seeing you all in 2009.

Bob Farrelly
LTCOL
President, RAA Association

Our New President Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bruce Farrelly RFD, B.Bus, psc(r)

Robert (Bob) Farrelly was born on 19th September 1957 in Perth. After completing his secondary education at Cyril Jackson Senior High School he attended the Western Australian Institute of Technology where he completed his Bachelor of Business degree.

LTCOL Farrelly joined the Army in 1975 in the Western Australian University Regiment where he undertook officer training. He was commissioned in June 1989 into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. In January 1980 after a short period as a Platoon Commander he was posted as a Reconnaissance Officer to 7 Field Battery, 3 Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. He served in Regimental positions of Section Officer, Gun Position Officer and Forward Observer before being posted to 5 Training Group (5 Trg GP) as a Military Operations Instructor in 1987.

In 1988, LTCOL Farrelly returned to 7 Field Battery as the Battery Captain (2IC). This was followed by a posting as a SO3 (Operations) on HQ 13 Bde. In 1993 he became the Battery Commander (BC), 7 Field Battery which he held until the end of 1995. Whilst BC, the Unit was assessed as the second most proficient Bty in the Reserve through the Mt Schanck Trophy and the unit received a CDF commendation.

In 1996 he completed his Intermediate Operations Course after which he was posted as an Instructor to the Command and Staff Wing, 5 Trg Gp. In 1998 LTCOL Farrelly, as a Gunner Officer, had the rare pleasure to be 2IC of 16 Battalion, RWAR and deployed to Exmouth with the Bn for the Brigade Exercise. In 1999 he

returned to the Regional Training Centre - WA (formerly 5 Tg Gp) as an Instructor and Course Manager for the Intermediate Staff Course. In 2000 he was the Senior Instructor of the Officer Training Instructional Group at RTC-WA responsible for all officer training courses.

From March 2001 to Feb 2003 LTCOL Farrelly was the Commanding Officer of the Western Australian University Regiment (WAUR) responsible for first appointment course training of staff cadets. In 2003 he completed the Australian Command and Staff College (Reserve) and was awarded the post nominals psc(r).

From March 2003 to April 2005 LTCOL Farrelly was posted as a Doctrine Writer with the Land Warfare Development Centre (LWDC). From April 2005 to June 2008 he was the SO1 Career Management with the Army Personnel Agency -Perth overseeing career management issues for Corporals through to Majors in Western Region. In June 2008 he was posted as Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor of the Land Warfare Centre- Western Australia. In this position he is responsible for the running of promotional courses and driver training. Hi is also responsible for closing the unit as all training transfers to WAUR. For 2009 he has been posted as a Project Officer at APA-Perth.

In his civilian life, LTCOL Farrelly is the Director of Human Resources at The University of Western Australia. He has a wife, Lisa, and three children and two stepchildren.

The New Treasurer - MAJ John Blylevens

John Blylevens was born on 23rd May 1956 in Northam WA. He completed secondary education at Belmont Senior High School and undertook a Bach of Arts (Double major in Economics and History) but lost interest after a year.

After a number of different jobs and some intense time at the beach he settled into a career with Australia Post. He also joined the Army Reserve at 17 years old serving as a driver with 10 TPT COY for 3 years. He left the GRES because of frequent requirements for haircuts and devoted himself to personal exploration.

At 22 he married and rejoined the GRES when 24, undertaking Offr Cadet training and graduating to Artillery, being posted to 7 Fd Bty, 3 Fd Regt in 1982. He performed the full range of regimental postings but also served at RTC-WA as an instructor and at 13 Bde HQ as a staff officer. On completing his posting as BC 7 Fd Bty in 1998 he was Arty adviser at Bde HQ followed by OC Bde Induction Management Cell, OC DFR, Recruiting Officer WAUR and currently Career Manager APA-P.

John is employed as a Postal Manager at the Bentley Delivery Centre and leads a busy life being interested in further study and many avenues of physical fitness. He is divorced with two children.

For Gunners in need of financial assistance!!!

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 9269 4544, 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)

Photos of our 80th Gunner's Day 2008



Gunner's Day Parade



Wreath laying



Parading of 116 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association Banner in the Church and then presentation to RAA

UK presents Aussie diggers with medals



Commander of the Royal Artillery 3 (UK) Division Brigadier Nick Ashmore hands out awards.

A group of 15 Australian soldiers have received medals from Britain for their work in Afghanistan.

The Royal Australian Artillery gunners were presented with UK operational service medals after wrapping up a six-month stint serving alongside British forces in Helmand province.

The gunners worked with Britain's 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (7 Para RHA) in southern Afghanistan and received their medals at a special ceremony at Merville Barracks in Colchester, Essex, on Monday. The Darwin-based soldiers arrived in Britain last October and trained alongside the British parachute regiment before travelling to Afghanistan where they provided artillery support to the British-led Helmand Task Force in southern Afghanistan.

The commanding officer of 7 Para RHA Lieutenant Colonel James Learmont said the Australian gunners should be "proud and pleased".

"Despite not having deployed in their primary role since the Vietnam War, the Australian gunners showed that they are very much up to the task of fighting in the tough conditions of Afghanistan," he said.

"They have developed a bond with my soldiers that I sense will endure long after they return to their native land and should act as the benchmark for further engagements between the Royal Artillery and Royal Australian Artillery."

Lieutenant Nicholas Cooper, who led the gunners, said that while conditions in Afghanistan had been difficult, each of the Australians had benefited from the experience.

"We are very proud to have had the opportunity to go out and do our job on operations for the first time," he said. "It's been very long, it's been a fantastic experience and we will treasure the memories. It's now a case of spending some quality time with our families."

The gunners flew back to Australia on Wednesday 22nd October 2008.

Gunner Officer's Dinner – December 2008



Bde Commander Brigadier White addressing 2008 Gunner Officer Dinner at Hobbs Artillery Park



BC Maj Steve Mathers Dining President



7 Field Battery RAA News

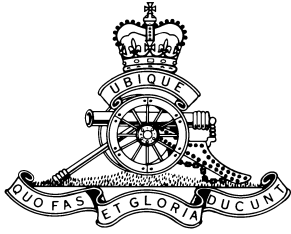


Past and Present SNCO and Warrant Officer Dinner Sept 2008

40 guests attended the second Dining-In night for serving and former serving members with three stripes, a crown or galloping horses with the Battery. All share a love and a respect of Artillery and a terrific evening was made possible by support from the AAB-P, catering and Battery staff.



Australian Army Band - Perth at Gunners Day 2008



THE AIMING POST

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

President's Report:

Your Committee has decided to proceed with a plan to open the Buckland Hill Tunnels every Sunday commencing in July 2009. This is a major change of policy and it is only with the support of the Volunteer guides has this been possible.

If you are aware of a person who may wish to become a Tunnel guide do not hesitate to contact the Society.

The clarification on the future of the Restoration premises at Irwin Barracks is progressing and the support by the Battery commander Major Steve Mathers and Brigade is appreciated. We hope a favourable outcome although the scope of the workshop will be reduced and the Society has already sold off some of its heavy equipment.

Wishing on behalf of the Society a merry Christmas and 2009 is up to your expectations.

Yours sincerely

Bruce G. Campbell OAM
President



CHANGE OF PHONE NUMBERS FOR THE ANNEX.



The Defence Department has changed the PABX System for Irwin Barracks with effect from Monday 13 October the following change was introduced: The original 9383 6 plus 3 digits has changed to 9269 4 plus the 3 original last digits.

Consequently, the Annex phone which was 9383 6544 is now **92694544**.

NEW TOUR GUIDES - WELCOME

Are you keen to promote one of WA's premier military history sites to others?

Then you are welcome to join our team of guides who volunteer their time for a few hours on a roster basis once a month on a Sunday to conduct public tours.

This historic site is the World War II Gun complex built as a part of Fortress Fremantle Defence located at Buckland Hill in Mosman Park.

- You will be trained and coached
- You will be part of a friendly team
- You need to be able to climb steps
- Vacancies for Guides and Cashiers

For further information call David Carter
93673539 (after hours)



BEREAVEMENT

JOHN BERKELEY FITZHARDINGE, AO, MBE

15 FEBRUARY 1911 – 21 NOVEMBER 2008

It is with great sadness we report the demise of foundation member John Fitzhardinge who passed away peacefully on 21 November after a long illness.

John's life was one of outstanding achievement in architecture, sport and military service. A talented yachtsman, he was a key member of the team that guided Alan Bond's "Australia II" to victory in the America's cup. His architectural prowess covered all forms of building, most still prominent icons. He was a dedicated town planner and presided over the national planning authority.

His military career commenced as a member of 3rd Field Brigade AFA in the early 1930s and at the outbreak of WW2 he enlisted in the 2/3rd Australian Field Regiment AIF with the rank of Lieutenant and was allotted Regimental Number WX9.

He served in the United Kingdom and North Africa prior to embarking with his Regiment on the ill fated Greece – Crete campaigns. He served with great distinction and his miraculous escape from Crete was recognised in his award of Member of the British Empire. His freedom was short lived and he was captured en route to Mersa Matruh by an Italian submarine and spent the next three and a half years as a prisoner of war in Italy and Germany.

His fascinating war service was captured by his wife Judith who wrote the biography entitled "Fighting for Life" – a story recommended for all to read.

A salute to and celebration of the life of John was conducted at Royal Perth Yacht Club on Thursday 27 November 2008. A private cremation followed on a later date.

"JB you will be missed by all"

UBIQUE

THANKS TO THE CITY OF SWAN

Since 1960, two 25pr Gun Howitzers have "guarded" the Guildford War Memorial at Stirling Square adjacent to Saint Matthews Garrison Church where the Annual Gunners' Day Service is held on the first Sunday in November. Photographs of the 80th Anniversary of the service held on 2nd November 2008 appear elsewhere in this issue.

For many years maintenance to the Guns was carried out by RAA Historical Society volunteers including a major restoration some ten years ago. In 2007, the City of Swan, that embraces the Guildford Ward, offered to assume responsibility for future maintenance of the equipments and undertook a complete makeover by Willis Engineering Pty Ltd in June 2008.

Our RAAHS Restoration Team was invited by Willis Engineering to inspect the work in progress and came away muttering "it's even better than we could have done"!!

With photo finish precision, the Guns were returned to their "sentinel" locations on Tuesday 28th October where new paving and floodlights had been installed. The photographs supporting this article speak for themselves.

In thanking the City of Swan, the President of the RAA Association WA, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Farrelly referred to the support that the Mayor and the local Member for Guildford have given by their attendance at the Annual Gunners' Day Service for many years.

All Gunners are indebted to the City of Swan for their recognition of and support to our Gunner Heritage.



Newly restored 25pr Gun Howitzers at the Guildford War Memorial, Stirling Square adjacent to Saint Matthews Church

THE WORLDS MOST EXPENSIVE ARTILLERY SHELL

OTTAWA - Canadian army gunners in Afghanistan are now cleared to fire GPS-guided artillery shells at Taliban militants at the cost of \$150,000 a round.

The Excalibur shell could very well be the most expensive conventional ammunition ever fired by the military. Supporters argue that the weapon, which has the ability to correct itself in flight, has pinpoint accuracy. They predict that will cut down on the mounting civilian death toll from air strikes in a war-torn region, where insurgents often hide among the population. "It lands exactly where you want it to land," said Lt.-Col. Jim Willis, a senior officer in charge of acquiring the munitions. "It provides more safety."

About 18 months ago, the army announced its intention to buy a handful of the experimental shells to go along with its brand new 155-millimetre M-777 howitzers.

Introducing the weapon to the army's arsenal has been slower than expected because of concerns related to the shell's performance in cold weather and precautions to make sure the GPS signals can't be jammed or scrambled by insurgents.

Willis said battery guns supporting Canada's battle group in Kandahar recently test fired the shell in the

desert and the new weapon performed flawlessly. He wouldn't say how many shells were fired. A U.S. army unit in eastern Afghanistan conducted its own tests late last month and has also cleared the Excalibur for action.

The price tag has provided fodder for critics of the war, who've described the shell as overkill and noted that the cost is like firing a Ferrari. U.S. defence contractor Raytheon began promoting the shells in the fall of 2006 as the "next generation" of artillery munitions.

Willis, an officer with 32 years experience with big guns, said he believes the Excalibur represents a quantum leap forward because instead of firing a dozen shells at one target, only one round is needed. The Defence Department spent \$150,000 a round in the fall of 2006 on the first batch of shells off the production line. Willis says, as time goes on, they are expecting the cost to drop to \$86,000 per shell. Ordinary high-explosive rounds cost up to \$2,000 apiece.

The Excalibur shell uses satellite signals and software to guide it to within 10 metres of its intended target, even when fired from up to 40 kilometres away. Regular shells are said to be accurate to within 50 metres. Willis conceded that army planners have noticed a difference in performance during freezing temperatures, but added that the shell is being used in hot weather in Afghanistan.

The question of whether the Excalibur has been led astray by sophisticated interference technology was something both the army and defence industry officials were reluctant to address. Safeguards are in place to make sure a round doesn't land among friendly troops - or in the midst of civilians, said Willis. The system "has counter-measures built in, but obviously I can't get into the details here," he said. "Aside from the counter-measures, it flies so quickly to a target that the chance of it being jammed is remote."



Excalibur

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.**



RAAA JACKET POCKET BADGE – Actual size of Badge is 100mm wide x 90mm high

RAA EMBROIDERED BERET BADGES – Actual size is 55mm wide by 40mm high

To purchase Embroidered Jacket and or Beret Badges -
Cut below and return to RAA Association of WA (Inc) - PO Box 881 Claremont WA 6910

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) Beret Badges

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

(Badges are \$10 each. Jacket Pockets are \$25 each.)

Name _____

Member of _____
(Name of Association or Society)

Street Name _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____ Phone _____ Email: _____

Please make cheques payable to RAA of WA (Inc)

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!!

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

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





7 Field Battery - Punching above its Weight

Notes from the BC's desk

At the tail end of my first year as BC, I look back on 2008 as a year of challenges met, although some with a greater degree of success than others.

At a glance, 2008 highlights for me included;

- Provision of two guns, CP and FO party to a nine day combined 7/16/48 Bty exercise at Cultana in South Australia,
- Fielding three guns on LFX during the year (at a time when other Reserve *regiments* are struggling to field two to three guns),
- Provision of an FO party to two-week High Readiness Reserve Combat Team exercise in Cowley Beach, Queensland (the only reserve unit to do so),
- Provision of nine gunners for three weeks on Operation Testament in Sydney, the ADF's contribution to domestic security operations associated with World Youth Day and the visit to Australia of the Pope,
- One gunner has returned from, and two gunner officers are currently serving, overseas on Operation Anode, as part of the ADF's contribution to the RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands). An eight month commitment for a reservist is no mean feat, and Capt Cowdrey (Operations Officer) and Coales (Intelligence Officer) are doing a fine job as did Gnr Chong in a previous rotation where he worked closely with a platoon of PNG infantry,
- Four members have completed a mortar conversion course in advance of the formal army roll-out of the mortar transition,
- Support to WASO's Symphony in the City 1812 Overture with a fiery night-time display that topped off this magnificent event,
- At the end of the year our individual soldier's physical, medical and dental fitness and shooting qualifications were up there with the best in the Brigade as measured by the Army's standard KPIs, and
- At the end of the year our equipment and material "health" was the best in the Brigade.

So it's been another busy year for the Gunners of the Battery. The demands placed on them by the Army continue to increase, to the extent that reservists are now, in many cases, having to attend the same courses and have the same qualifications as our full-time colleagues. This Army/work/life balance represents a special burden on our soldiers which can only really be understood by those who live it and admired in those who achieve it well.

With regards other activities during the year, Anzac Day and Gunners Day were well attended and are visible evidence of the links with the unit's history and past members. The unit will be pushing in the next two years for an increasing contact with and support by past members in the 30-40 year age bracket, as they have been missed over the past decade and we have been remiss in inviting them home.

As always, the support of our past members through the activities of the various associations has been enthusiast and consistent. It is my earnest desire that links between serving members and our associations are strengthened, although the challenge will be to fit it in to the unit's already busy schedule. I look forward to working with LtCol Bob Farrelly as the incoming RAAHS President, and wish Bruce Campbell all the best as he "retires from the Head Table".

This year was a period of considerable uncertainty for the restoration operations of the RAAHS due to the zealous application of the Army's Safety requirements. I am hopeful that in 2009 the new operating regime for the RAAHS within Hobbs Artillery Park will be bedded down and these skilful craftsmen can get back to doing what they do best, lovingly restoring old artillery pieces to their former magnificence for everyone's enjoyment.

You may be aware that the coming years will see the phasing out of 105mm field guns in the Army Reserve, and so we will lose our beloved guns and become a mortar battery. I say the coming years because the implementation schedule for the mortar transition is not yet confirmed. However, it will happen on my watch.

Whilst to some this will come as a shock and a hugely retrograde step, I honestly believe that this move will make (or break) the battery. The undeniable fact is that, with less young people joining the Army Reserve, declining numbers have reduced our ability (although not our desire!) to field a viable number of field guns. On top of this, the Army long-term sees no need for field guns and is standardising on self-propelled and medium (155mm) guns. As far as the ADF is concerned, our Reserve battery's Main Effort remains the provision of trained Forward Observer parties. Our FO's training is enhanced by observing the fall of shot of six to nine mortar tubes, rather than two or three field guns. In addition, the smaller crews and lighter maintenance and training liability associated with the mortar weapon will allow us to provide an improved capability to the ADF.

The alternative to the mortar transition is, quite frankly, that Reserve batteries will cease to exist – to all of us that is simply unthinkable.

I am confident that the gunners of the Battery will adopt whatever weapons system they are issued with the same motivation, enthusiasm and skill with which they have served the trusty M2A2 over the past 20+ years. My vision is for 7 Field Battery to start with the mortar where we finished with the gun. As the incumbent (and final) winners of the Mt Shanck Trophy as a gun battery, I see no reason why the men and women of 7 Field Battery cannot resume the mantle of the best Mortar Battery in Australia (regular or reserve).

The Battery is more than the gun or the mortar – it is the gunners, NCOs and officers, the ex-members, the pride and esprit-de-corps, the unit history, the HAP buildings, the artillery collection, the dining in nights, the unsurpassed camaraderie, the riding of the trolley down the ramp.....

And if we can continue to blow things up along the way, all the better.

Finally, to all members and supporters from myself and the serving members of 7 Field Battery, 3 Field Regiment – thank you for your support, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year for 2009.

Steve Mathers
MAJ
BC



Brigade Comd Brigadier White addressing 7 Bty at 18/12 Overture night



7 Fd Bty performing with the WA Symphony Orchestra 1812 Overture Dec 6, 2008

The men and women of 7 Field Battery for the second year in a row supported the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in the Symphony in the City at Perth's Esplanade.

Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture was performed with immaculate timing resulting in a musical triumph and a sensational spectacular finale.

The boom of 7 Field's cannons shook the ground and thrilled the 15,000 strong crowd, many returning after last year's spectacular. As anticipated, the night was lit up by the fiery release of 22 synchronised blank rounds culminating with a simultaneous 6 gun burst. The applause was fantastic and each and every member of the Battery felt the excitement and acknowledgement of a mission achieved.

The newly appointed Brigade Commander, BRIG Steve Cain attended and spoke with the Gunners before the concert began. BRIG Cain said that it was a terrific public relations opportunity not only for 7 Field Battery but Army Reserve in general and wished everyone the best for the coming festive season.