



RAM-RAMBLINGS

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Newsletter of 107 Field Battery RAA Association. www.107fdbty.com

PATRON: Maj P.J. Meakin. Battery Commander: 107 Field Battery RAA.

You lucky people are getting an extra RR this year, due to the great success of the Sydney 2008 gathering and the extra newsletter that event generated in May. Also there are some interesting things to report like 107 Field Battery gunners being deployed to Afghanistan. Your support is requested for parcels and letters, especially with Christmas just a couple of weeks away.

Having members of the Battery being deployed on active duty and with the 90th Anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ceased the hostilities in the Great War of 1914-1918 I have been thinking about the role that Gunners have played in the great and small conflicts of the 20th and 21st century.

Earlier in 2008 I read Les Carlyon's work "The Great War" that outlines the Australians role on the Western Front in France and Belgium. Carlyon notes that the role played by the artillery in the Great War has never been fully covered in any commentaries, including his own. His work concentrates on the Infantry Battalions and the life of the troops in the trenches. He acknowledges that most of the battle casualties in the trenches were the result of artillery fire, not rifle fire or person to person combat.

Following on from Carlyon's work I was fortunate to come across a copy of Henri Barbusse's autobiographical novel "Under Fire". I don't believe that this book is generally available in Australia, although I have now found that it can be downloaded as an e-book. "Under Fire" was written in December 1915 and published in France in 1917 at the height of the Great War. In this work Barbusse follows the life of a French infantry company that he was part of in the trenches in 1915, while the ANZAC's were on Gallipoli. Barbusse also refers to the devastation that the artillery wrought on the ground troops and how after a fairly short period of time it was possible to identify which guns were firing and whether the rounds might fall on you or away from you. He acknowledges that the Artillery was their greatest enemy. It was interesting that Barbusse stated that in the beginning of the war the artillery was only being used on the soldiers in the trenches. It was only late in 1915 that the artillery began to have duels against each other and was used to try to knock out the guns of the opposing side.



At the same time as I brought Barbusse I also purchased a copy of Robert Graves "Goodbye to All That" which is also unavailable in general issue in Australia. This autobiography covers Graves' career as an Infantry Officer in the Royal Welch Regiment and the British experience of the Great War in France. Graves' talks a lot about the artillery's role in the fighting on the Western Front and of the fear that a well placed barrage can instil into a body of troops. He talks about one action where he was preparing to attack a German position with a company of 100 men and they were sighted by the Germans at the staging point. He reported that 90% of the company were killed or wounded by artillery fire before the attack could even begin. He also writes about being in England, 25 miles across the English Channel,

and being able to hear the artillery pounding away 24 hours a day. Someone had to be manning the guns, but when one reads the standard histories of the Great War these gunners "voices" are generally quiet.



It was therefore very pleasing to see that at the Australian War Memorial the role of the Royal Australian Artillery in the Battle of Long Tan in August 1966 has been acknowledged. The filmed re-enactment by the Australian Army shows the part played by the Forward Observerand the words "Fire Mission Regiment" are spoken loud and clear, I believe for the first time since the end of World War 2 in 1945. The role of the "gunners" on the 105's at Nui Dat is also well depicted and I felt very proud watching the film clip to be associated with them. I would encourage all of you, if you are in Canberra, to call into the AWM and see the Post 1945 display; it is well worth a look.

These photos are of Australian Artillery in Belgium in 1916. The bottom picture was taken after a counter barrage which cost Australian casualties on the gun position.

In April 2008 Adrian “Wally” Walford took a trip down memory lane. Here is his report of his trip to Vietnam.



After ANZAC Day with my old battery, 107, in Sydney I travelled to Vietnam with my partner Anne Thwaites. Anne had booked the trip without telling me and announced it in front of a group of friends including my old troop commander John Derbyshire and his lady Sue. To say I was surprised was an understatement. I had already guessed that the overseas trip that she had told me about would be Phuket, Thailand, however not including 11 days in Vietnam.

We left Sydney at a very early hour on Sunday 27th April by flying Cathay Pacific to Hong Kong. Our flight was delayed so, overnight in Hong Kong followed by a 6 hour flight to Saigon, Vietnam.

Prior to landing I had a flashback and was feeling uncomfortable, but as soon as we landed I was OK.

The hardened shelters are still alongside the runway and the revetments where US aircraft used to hide are also there. By car to Saigon was an experience in driving close to motor bikes and pedestrians, which you have to experience to understand, a 30 minute trip to the hotel Caravelle. This is a very famous hotel and across the square from the Continental, very French and luxurious.

The first night in Saigon, from the rooftop bar we watched the Olympic torch being lit by the female deputy mayor and then the Vietnamese Army band played the North, Sorry, Vietnamese anthem. All quite surreal.

Sight seeing for two days in Saigon, a trip to the National War Atrocity Museum was enlightening; they were angels and the Americans were monsters, surprise, surprise!



Only one small mention of Australia; very much it is called the “American War”. Then to Vung Tau via hydrofoil down the Saigon River to the sea, then into Vung Tau harbour.

Many new hotels and touristy things, quite a nice town now. The Grand is still there, looked OK, but seemed to be a local’s hotel now.

Day two in Vung tau-picked up taken to Baria, Nui Dat, Long Tan, Horseshoe and Hoa Long.

In Baria, only thing the same is the old bridge and the water tower. Memorials to the VC everywhere.

Nui Dat, the SAS Hill feature was being mined, but not now, from the top you can see all over Nui Dat-our positions are able to be ascertained.

Much has been mentioned of the Regt Rocks, they are not in their old location, but moved closer to the old main gate, which the locals think was used but wasn’t in our days.

Luscombe strip still there and a small kindergarten, unused (but to be used in the near future) funded and built by Vietnam Veterans.

Our guide (an ex-south Vietnamese Officer-Hai- what an amazing find), informed me that Aussies have done a lot for Nui Dat people and are well liked; respected by the VC and local government as well.

Hai showed me D445 Battalion, which is located at the old headquarters of the Task Force, using the same prefabricated buildings. Makes a point don’t you think?

Next, to Long Tan Cross; the only foreign memorial allowed in Vietnam.

Dry flowers still left from ANZAC Day. The main reason it is allowed according to my ex SVN officer guide is two fold. We treated the VC well, buried the dead and didn’t mutilate the dead-very important to the Buddhists.

Secondly, we did not leave any half caste kids behind. NOT ONE, so breathe easy boys!

Back to Saigon the same way and then to Cu Chi tunnels. All very interesting-very touristy, worth a look; your’s truly spent \$32US for 1 mag of AK47 on the range and won two

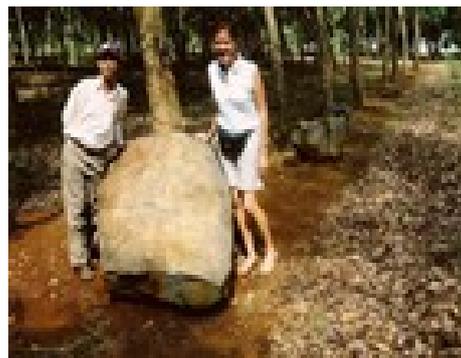
VC neck scarves! A good talking point and they asked me if I was a soldier. I said yes-and they seemed delighted.

From Saigon by plane to Hue-Imperial Capital.

The old citadel was a sight to behold. Much work going on, much resentment that the Yanks bombed the crap out of it in ’68 during TET. A trip along the Perfume River?? Talk to me first!!

By train from Hui to Hanoi, what an experience. Many many bomb craters still alongside the single, skinny gauged line. Must have been very hard to hit for the Yanks.

Large monuments to the AA Gunners showing in the fields, especially around the bridges where American aircraft had been shot down.





Beautiful country side, so much rain.

Into Hanoi at 9-30pm. What a mass of buildings-typical Asia.

Smells and stifling heat, at least the train, although dirty, was air conditioned; don't eat the food. Hanoi-very touristy and capitalistic, soldiers on every main Gov't building with AK Ms. French quarter mainly Govt or communist party minister's residences. Beautifully kept homes.

Ho Chi Minh's Tomb. Closed to top him up with formaldehyde, but still interesting, guards smart in white uniforms, similar to white mice but smarter. More interesting things in the Ho Chi Minh Museum.

Eleven days went so fast, lots of shopping and a trip to the Bay of 2000 Islands, Ha Long bay, and overnight in a junk. Fabulous. Don't swim in the water-I did

An incredible trip thanks to Anne. I would never have done it otherwise. It has turned my head around. I'll go again.

Then to Phuket-for 2 weeks-another story.

[Sgt] Adrian (Wally) Walford. (Bravo Sub SVN 1970-1971)

“Goings On” with the Prez

I have had a busy few months and more is to come. I started by cutting my Snowy Mountains winter short by a few weeks for a business trip to Sweden.

The business was just that but the enjoyable side trips to see the Army



Museum in Stockholm and the Stora Kopparberg

(Copper) mine in Falun, Darlarna, were rare treats.

The copper mine is owned by the world's oldest public company, and is the worlds longest continuously

operating mine...and a World Heritage Site no less.

The Swedish Army Museum is essentially an Artillery Museum. As Sweden has been at war since the 15th Century, probably for longer periods than it has been at peace, it developed great expertise in war-craft

and particularly the “Queen of the Battlefield” - ARTILLERY. The museum has the finest collection of trophies in the world in the form of captured guns, standards, flags, drums, battle colours and guidons, mostly from the Great Northern Wars between 1700 and 1770.

In 1813, Sweden's armed forces joined the allies against Napoleon and proved very effective in the Napoleonic Wars. I have rarely seen a better collection of artillery pieces and displays, covering such a broad time span, as exist in this modest Museum located in an old barracks in Central Stockholm merely 10 minutes walk from Central Railway station. I shall let a couple of photos tell the story.

The Falun Copper Mine in Darlarna has been active since 1347 and only ceased production in 1997 due to a lack of the very rich copper ore. It is a huge hole in the ground with cavernous workings extending a further 500 metres below. We had a stunning tour of the mine, at night, which at 500 metres depth of course made very little difference.

Again pictures tell the story.





Then a short break and I was off to Papua New Guinea where I had a re-familiarisation tour over the Kokoda Track. The last time for me was carrying 30kg. This time, 36 years later, it was a bit tougher and I only carried 10kg and shared a porter– I wonder why? The 8 days and 7 nights journey from Ower’s Corner to Kokoda was a magnificent trip, if not hard on the 60 year old joints, Some years ago, as an ex- 2RAR adoptee, I was a bit of an expert on the Battle of Eora Creek (a 2/2nd Battalion connection maybe) during the Australian’s advance to Kokoda and it looked the same except the weapon pits are a bit

dilapidated and a couple of sites have been opened up, notably the Japanese artillery position that caused so much havoc amongst the advancing 16th Brigade around Templeton’s Crossing and Eora Ck Village.

That position held one 75mm, Type 94 Mountain Gun (max range ~8,000m) and most probably two Type 92, 70mm mountain guns (max range~2,800m).

There is plenty of ammunition lying about from both, all live, as well as Japanese 50mm Mortar rounds and a

rusting but complete knee mortar.

I spent a few silent minutes

remembering the 100 or so Aussies who fell taking this position which was the first time the Japanese dropped weapons and gear and just ran – advancing in a rush to the rear !!!!

At Kokoda, the sole Japanese Memorial has the barrel of the 75mm Type 94 embedded in the concrete plinth. It was recovered by locals where it had been buried at Gorari by Japanese Artillerymen when they were given orders to abandon it. First Lieutenant Takaki Yoshijo, the “GPO” shot himself, kneeling over the buried gun having first supervised the evacuation of his fit and wounded gunners. His last words were “The Artilleryman and his Gun are One”

We had a chat at Naduri with possibly the last Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel, Ovuru Ndiki. I hope I look that good at 105.

We held a touching dawn service at the magnificent memorial at the Isurava Battle Site before the downhill run through Deniki to Kokoda village and an overnigher with a well deserved beer, before a flight back to Moresby.

Another story that has surfaced since doing the “Track” was the result of email chats with Paul Bryant (*Gnr P Bryant – 107 Fd Bty Malaysia*). Paul told me his Dad, an Artillery Officer in 2/6th Field Regiment (*Lt J R Bryant MC, NX13783, Stock Clerk of Gladesville NSW, Born Haberfield*



NSW 21 Mar 1919, won a Military Cross at The Fortress in the Northern Beaches

campaign in New Guinea, for directing fire after infiltrating enemy lines. I sent Paul a photo of a Lt R H Dawson of 2/6th firing a captured 70mm Jap Mountain Gun near Salamaua. Paul’s dad said that Roy Dawson was his best mate during the war years. What Paul didn’t mention was that his Dad was also involved in an action at Cochran Beach early on 16 Aug 43 when Lt Gamble (also Military Cross winner) of B Tp, 2/6 Fd Regt and a depleted platoon of 47 Battalion were attacked by a group of about 50 Japs at 4 am



who nicked their stuff and tried to blow up the Troops 25 pdr guns (but failed). The Japs were driven off in hand to hand





Dawn Service - Isurava Battlefield Memorial

fighting in the dark. Two Jap officers were killed and many other Japs wounded? I gather it was quite an incident. Paul's Dad was wounded and an Infantry Officer, Lt Groves, and a couple of Gunners (George and Johnson) killed, but the Troop had the guns back in action and firing in support by 9.30 that morning.

This trip caused me to read "The Bone Man of Kokoda". This is the story of Kohkichi Nishimura, a Grenadier (knee mortarman) of the Nankai Shitai and the only survivor of his company of the 144th Regiment. He returned to Kokoda in 1979 to reclaim and repatriate the bones of his regimental comrades. He has spent 20 years doing so, only giving up because of age last year. The book is a great read, no matter what your feelings on the Japanese.

Debbie and I are off to France in late December to train and race at World

Masters Cross Country Skiing – back home in February some time.

Remember, if you stop moving at our age, the joints seize up and you find it difficult to start moving again. So, keep moving old comrades – that 20 minutes a day, working in the garden, walking the dog, sweeping the driveway, having a swim, etc etc, will be the 20 minutes that will get you to the next re-union to have a beer with your mates!

*Regards to All Have a Merry Christmas
& A great New Year Noddy, The Prez*

Letter to the Editor:

“WHO WAS PETER BADCOE VC TO 107 FIELD BATTERY?”

In the last edition of the Ramblings (Vol 5: Edition 3: August 2008), you ran an extract from the 105 Fd Bty Assn newsletter "Tiger Rag" titled "Peter Badcoe VC" that stated that Capt Peter Badcoe was never in 107 Fd Bty, therefore could not have been the first Battery Commander.

I challenge that article with the facts below, determined from available records and the memories of some individuals.

While some may question the accuracy of the latter, I do not. In researching other aspects of the Battery history, I have found that individual recall has been correct in every case. What has varied, sometimes resulting in strong argument, has been the perspective of the individuals recall and sometime the timeframe. For example, manning of individual guns, CP and FO parties, 40 years ago, were fluid with members changing from one detachment to another. However, most individuals will recall a particular person in a particular duty and therefore for the entire activity/posting/tour. A different perspective may be observed, of any incident, by the OPs and the Gun Line. But each individual recall is correct. So all facts need to be moulded to get the total picture. The case of the two Robertson's in Malaysia, was a classic case where many recalled Gunner/LBdr Robertson as short and tall, young and older or with dark and bright red hair. In fact, as we now know, there were two Robertson's.

The Raising of 107 Battery.

The following are known facts on the raising of 107 Battery in 1965.

1. In the first week of May 1965, Lt Col R. Cubis, Commanding Officer 1 Fd Regt, unofficially raised 107 **Training** Bty as part of the Regiment at Holsworthy.
2. Capt Peter Badcoe (the Regimental Intelligence Officer) was appointed BC. The CO also appointed Lt L. Cooper as the BK (was Asst/QM), W02 P. Dewhurst as BSM and Sgt E. Bessy as BQMS.
3. Lt Cooper had spent the previous two weeks equipping the vacant old 103 Bty lines to hold a total strength of 250. It is understood that the CO's belief was that all IET training was to be transferred from School of Artillery and undertaken by 107 Training Bty from 1 Jul 65.
4. Capt Badcoe took over all the technical gunnery equipment from A Bty, departing for Malaysia.
5. Other appointments were drawn from within the Regt and the first officer posted-in was 2Lt G. Reed who was a Young Officer GPO "under training". Newly qualified IET gunners arrived from the S of A and others, the unwanted "dregs" from sub-units of the Regiment. Hence the origins of the "Black Sheep" within the Battery.
6. Capt Badcoe deployed his battery on a fire and movement exercise to Tianjara in the first week of June.
7. Formal authority to raise 107 **Field** Bty (not Training) issued by AHQ, was effective from 1 Aug 65.
8. Capt Badcoe was officially transferred to RAInf WEF 30 Jul 65 and promoted T/Maj on 10 Aug. In late July, he was on leave and may have attended his farewell from the Regiment wearing the rank of Major.
9. Lt Cooper was then appointed by the CO to Administer Command until the posting of Maj D. Quinn in late Oct 65.

Members recall, please!

A number of Association members were present at Holsworthy in 1965. PLEASE jot down each fact that you recall from 1965 (what you were doing in the Regt, other people present and what they did, your training activities, the barracks, sport, recreation, funny stories etc) and any photos and send them to me, **ASAP**. We can then formally finalise the matter of our first Battery Commander and publish our next "The Black Sheep at Holsworthy".

Hilton Lenard
Historian
107 Fd Bty Assn

Secretary's Report:

Since the August RAM Ramblings we welcome four new members, Lloyd Greentree-Ingham NQ, Bill Dick-Sydney, Stacy Russell-Townsville and Kerry Cooke-Sydney. Lloyd was attached from HQ Bty in 1969, Bill served in the Battery in Malaysia, Stacy is our serving Committee Member from the battery and Kerry served in Vietnam and Townsville. The Committee also welcomes Bob White as the WA State Representative and expresses their thanks to outgoing WA Rep, Ken & Pam Beaman, for their support over the last four years.

ELECTED POSITIONS (*Executive*)

President: Warren Feakes – Wanniasa ACT – m: 0417 209 360
Vice President: Barry Pearce – Meredith Vic – h: 03 5286 1545
Secretary/Treasurer: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay NSW - m: 0418 695 345

State/Territory Representative for:

Queensland: Neil Layton – Kippa-Ring – 07 3204 1125
NSW: John Shelly – Kiama – 0438 332 555
Victoria: Ken (Doc) Barclay – Mildura – 0428 251 364
Tasmania: Les Mullan – Launceston – 0408 449 006
SA: Adrian (Wally) Walford – Modbury – 08 8265 1976
WA: Bob White – Falcon - 08 9534 3738
NT: Jim Wright – Palmerston – 0419 842 158
ACT: Peter Moat – Weetangera - 0419 594 610
Serving 107 Bty Member: Sgt Stacy Russell - Townsville

NON-ELECTED POSITIONS (*Appointed by the Committee*)

Editor RAM Ramblings: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545
Webmaster: Doc Barclay – Mildura – h: 0428 251 364
Historian: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay – m: 0418 695 345

Regional Representative for:

Northern Qld: Jon Eaton – Sarina – m: 0402 248 716
Southern Qld: Neil Lunney – Tewantin – m: 0419 712 136
North NSW: Col Lowe – Tamworth – 02 6761 8936
Sydney: Brian Tapp – Narrabeen - 0410 543 743
Southern NSW: Ian Hughes – Sanctuary Point – 0417 140 250
Eastern Vic: Noel Paterson – Box Hill – 03 9890 7020
Western Vic: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545

Our Association membership has a net gain of four to 149 financial members. Like an updated membership list, then contact the Secretary. Current Association membership covers all states, NSW/ACT 60, Qld 43, Vic/Tas 22, SA/NT 12 and WA 10. Plus we have Paul Gaff in San Diego, USA and Jeff Roser in MACAU, China. Membership also covers most periods of 107 Fd Bty recent times, with 28 having served at Holsworthy, 72 in Malaysia, 70 at Townsville (1969-70), 89 in Vietnam and 51 at Townsville post Vietnam. Many have served in more than one location.

Treasurer's Report:

To date 121 members have renewed their 2008 subscription with 90 fully paid up life subscribers. Subscriptions for 2008 remain at \$15 and the life subscription is \$150. The membership renewal form is enclosed. Any questions or corrections contact hiltonlenard@hotmail.com. The Association's accounts are in a health state. All the life subscriptions received and all interest earned to date are in two premium investment accounts. As at 30 June 2008 the Association's current assets were \$16,697. If you would like a copy of the audited accounts then contact the Treasurer.

Reunion Hobart 2009:

Planning is all but complete and the final arrangements are being finalised by Peter Turner in Hobart for our ANZAC weekend Reunion. This is going to be a truly classic 107 Bty Assn Reunion. With the SAUD back to where it traditionally resides, this is the time to go on an OVERSEAS holiday without costing you three arms and two legs. Yes Tasmania is actually part of Australia! No passports, no money changing, no hassles. In fact why not DRIVE there as part of our special Spirit of Tasmania Reunion group booking while parting on at the 107 Assn Spirit Bar on-board? Registration papers are attached. Also watch the website for further developments.

Assn Items for SALE - FUND Raising:

Attached is a selection of Association items for sale to members. All proceeds to Assn projects, particularly the publication of the "Black Sheep" series in to a hard copy edition to be released at Reunion Townsville, ANZAC week April 2010 (40 years since the Battery deployed to Vietnam).

Australian War Memorial

A brief update by Hilton Lenard

Most readers have visited the Australian War Memorial in Canberra at some time in the past. In early 2008, the War Memorial opened the new Post 1945 Gallery. All post WW2 conflicts are represented from the Occupational Force in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Confrontation, Vietnam then through to and including the numerous war and war like operations since.

The Korean display gives an excellent portrayal of this almost forgotten war. Of interest is how 3 RAR reformed from occupational to war duties in one month and deployed from Japan to Korea. On landing, the Battalion was then deployed direct into battle of the line of march, to rescue the embattled 187 US Airborne Battalion, without the usual luxury of shaking out on the ground. Details of the actions of the RAN ships are included and there is even the front half a RAAF sabre fighter on display.

However, it is the Vietnam display that draws most attention. The centre piece is real live Hughie helicopter. Every fifteen minutes the lights dim, a safety warning is announced (do not remember that from the past) from the large surround



speakers. The noise from the rotors builds and the downdraft flattens the grass in front of you. The radio crackles with static and comes alive with some very familiar transmissions. Other images flashed on the two very large rear screens, to complete the sensation. If, as a veteran, you risk closing your eyes, you will be in a different place, back almost forty years ago. When you open your eyes, you will have completed a very emotional journey. But it is a good journey.

All technical aspects and many personal stories are included in the large displays of the multiple areas that mate up the Post 1945 Gallery. Tucked away in one corner is a small theatre displaying "A Letter from Long Tan" written by one of the five survivors of 11 Platoon Delta Company 6 RAR to his mother just after the Battle. The visual effects accurately

depict the battle and is an excellent representation, including the contribution of the guns. As with some displays, this one is not suitable for young children.



In one corner, near the relocated bridge of the previous HMAS Brisbane, is the display covering the Battle of Coral and Balmoral. This display tells the story of the battle and the memories of a number of the key personal involved, on a large flat screen TV. With the display is Foxtrot Sub, the actual gun that was overrun by the North Vietnamese, only to be retaken later by members of 102 Field Battery.

Vice President, Barry Pearce, inspects the M2A2 of Foxtrot Sub that is now suspended from the ceiling as if it is being delivered to FSB Coral under a Chinook, as part of the Coral Balmoral display.

The War Memorial, open from 10:00 am every day, conducts regular guided tours. Conducted by knowledgeable volunteers, the tour takes around one and half hours and give an excellent overview of the entire Museum. Each includes the light sound shows in the massive ANZAC Hall. Accompany G for George in a bombing raid over wartime Germany and witness the Japanese Mini Submarine raid in Sydney Harbour. Both G of George and the Japanese Submarine, actually made up from tow of mini subs can be inspected more closely after the tour. It is best to take the entire tour then head back to the areas which grabbed your attention. Having done over twenty of these tours, when accompanying friends around the Museum, I still enjoy them and learn new stuff every time. Each guide has a different perspective and interests and conducts their tour well.

There would be no difficulty spending at least one full day at the AWM. However, it can be emotionally demanding and it may be worth considering two half days. There are a number of other free activities to visit while in Canberra. These including Old Parliament House, New Parliament House, National Archives, National Gallery, National Museum and Questacom to mention a few.

Any fellow Rampart Rammer, and their partner, who you would like to visit Canberra but do not have friends or relatives with whom to stay, then contact Secretary Hilton, who has just finished extensions to his Kambah home and can offer up to three bedrooms for guests. He and Chris offer good "Rammer" fellowship and hospitality. References are available from the many Rammers who have already used this service.

AROUND THE WATER CART: *Furphys from Secretary Hilton.*

We have not had much in the way of updates from the Battery lately. We do know that after two years as the Battery Sergeant Major, WO2 Colin Yanner is moving on, but not sure where or who will replace him.

The Battery Commander, Maj Peter Maekin is commencing his second year. With his observation elements (JOSC or BC's Party as we referred), he will deploy to Afghanistan as part of 1 RAR ANZAC Battle Group Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF) in Oruzgan Province. Key elements of the Battle group undertook build-up training in Hohenfels, Germany during October.

There are 15 gunners from the Regiment, including 107 Fd Bty members, who are embedded with 29 Commando Regiment currently serving in Afghanistan. They are the second rotation and man one gun detachment plus other functions in the Regiment. It was in Vietnam that the RAA last fired in combat.

For us olds and bolts, it is difficult to keep up with the changes occurring in the Regiment. Today's Gunners have spun the wheel of command to come up with:

1. **Regimental Headquarters** (RHQ) remains very much as it has been, comprising the Commanding Officer, the Executive Officer [we knew him as the 2IC] Adjutant, Assistant Adjutant, Regimental Sergeant Major and the Chief Clerk with his team of clerks. The old Headquarter Battery has gone and now they have:
2. **Operational Support Battery** as it states controls the operational side of the Regiment including the bucket of money the Commanding Officer has for training and administrative support each year, and
3. **Technical Support Battery** comprises the Quartermasters' Store, Transport and Technical Support Group [we knew as the LAD]

It is strange that on one hand, the RAA has been abandoning gun batteries but on the other creating new sub-units with fancy names to administer and support the Regiments. Why not have within 4 Field Regiment for example, 104 Operational Support Battery and 106 Technical Support Battery. Batteries have traditionally changed functions. If you take 103 Battery, since WW2 it has been 103 Location Battery, 103 Heavy Anti Aircraft, followed by 103 Field Battery in the 1960's and 103 Medium Battery of late. By following this model there would be no need to remove sub units from the order of battle, just change their roll.

The Regiment's worst kept secret is that in 2009, 108 Field Battery is to be redesignated 108 Observation Battery and contain all the regiments JOSC (forward observers to us). All the guns (field and/or medium when the new ones arrive) will be concentrated into 107 Gun Battery, with up to six gun sections each of two medium guns. But surely some must remain three gun sections of field guns to provide that close support we provided and was so much appreciated by 2RAR/NZ, almost forty years ago.

For those with a concern for national security, your Secretary has not re-gained his top secret security clearance. He has just been reading our Minister for Defence's media releases on the official website. Your Secretary did dust off his old

“Mark 1 Calibrated Eyeball” and got out the “Rampart Ram Crystal Ball” from the Clogs crafted wood Plotting Table, while visiting Townsville earlier in the year.

If you have a good Furphy, be sure to let your Secretary know.

Here’s one from the Liaison letters.

MORTARS FOR RESERVE GUNNERS.....?

By Lt Col R Crawford CO 2nd/10th Field Regiment. (Edited extract taken from Spring 2008 RAA Liaison Letters)

At the time this article was written Army is considering equipping its Army reserve Artillery units with 81mm mortars. It must be stressed that Army’s final decision to conduct the ‘mortar conversion’ is still pending, so some information about the subject is still ‘in-confidence’ and obviously not included.

The idea to equip Reserve Gunners with mortars is already widely known, although the reasons for such an idea are not well understood. Many questions have been asked by the serving and ex-serving communities about the ‘mortar conversion’, particularly those of the Artillery and Infantry. Therefore, this article will outline the contemporary reasons why Army is considering mortars for its reserve Artillery units.

The article goes on

With regard to the ‘tribal’ views, mortars are not new to the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA). Even a brief glimpse at the RAA’s history shows different periods when mortars were included in its arsenal, most recently the 4.2 inch mortar.

So, why would Army now consider equipping its Reserve Artillery units with mortars again?

The following facts are known:

- 105mm guns are to be withdrawn from Australian service and replaced by a fleet of new 155mm guns.
- The technical training associated with the new 155mm fleet, in particular training time, will make delivering it to Reserve soldiers very difficult.
- Reserve Artillery units will still be expected to maintain capabilities in offensive support (OS) coordination and observation. That is the types of capabilities delivered by Joint Offensive Support teams (JOSTs or Forward Observers’ parties using older terminology).
- The requirement by Reserve infantry battalions to deliver riflemen for operations has meant maintaining mortar platoons has become extremely difficult.
- 81mm mortars are to be retained as a capability within Army.

Therefore, the situation that faces the Army Reserve in the near future is that its 105mm guns will be withdrawn from service and it is assessed that 155mm is not a practical solution. Army will keep 81mm as an indirect fire calibre: however, Reserve Infantry units will have difficulty in the extreme maintaining the capability due to the pressure of training riflemen.

As a way forward, Army has studied the viability of maintaining indirect fire support (IFS) and OS coordination capabilities for the Army reserve by employing 81mm mortars in its Artillery units. The conversion to mortars would maintain an organic IFS capability in the Army reserve, beyond the withdrawal date of 105mm. The conversion would also facilitate a regional live firing capability for training Forward Observers and their JOSTs, particularly those of the High Readiness Reserve.

(Editors note: I was particularly interested in this piece as the 2nd/10th Field Regiment is the local Reserve unit in Geelong near where I live. Not so long ago it was the 2nd/10th Medium Regiment equipped with 155’s and had little trouble training with them. It was then made a Field Regiment and equipped with 105’s and began training on them. At this time there were difficulties with recruiting and the Bandsmen were told they had to drop their instruments and man the guns.

So I don’t think the move to mortars is all about the Infantry not being able to maintain Mortar Platoons, I think the RAA in its Reserve Forces has also had trouble with manning levels and moving to Mortars relieves this pressure for a little while, but it doesn’t resolve the issue of recruitment and retention in the Regular and Reserve Army.)

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This publication was compiled and edited by Barry Pearce, 19 Creamery Road, Meredith Vic. 3333 for the 107 Field Battery Assoc. Care is taken with the correctness of all articles produced, but no responsibility.

President – Warren Feakes (ACT): VicePres. Barry Pearce (Vic): Secretary Hilton Lenard (NSW):

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John Shelley (NSW), Peter Moat (ACT), Bob White (WA), Stacy Russell (107 Field Battery)

Contributions to future editions can be e-mailed to editor@107fdbtv.com Please consider any news or events.

Ram Ramblings is published three times a year, April, August & November.

ASSISTANCE IN ORUZGAN PROVINCE: AFGHANISTAN

As mentioned elsewhere in this Ram Ramblings, there are 15 gunners from 4 Fd Regt, including some from 107 Fd Bty, who are embedded with 29 Commando Regiment and currently serving and live firing in Afghanistan. Rampant Rammers you are encouraged to offer your support by mailing a card OR parcels to the lads, via following address, and they will be distributed among the troops:

8239078 SGT Simon Hastings - OR 8269855 WO2 Paul Boswell
AFPO 14
Op Slipper/Op Herrick
Australian Defence Force
NSW
2890

Note: Postage is FREE provided the parcel does not exceed 2 Kg, has dangerous goods declaration attached and must be presented in person to any Australia Post office and as a guide DOES NOT exceed \$10 on the contents; it is the thought that counts. You can include any of the following; Aussie lapel pin, Aussie sticker, already read local magazines, a Santa cap from any \$2 shop, nuts, lollies or pencils for the local kids, a little fruit cake, vegemite etc, in fact anything that you would have appreciated when serving in Vietnam or Malaysia. I know that one battery member in VN received some cookies baked by a young lady who included a photo of herself with nothing on above the waist. Now at our age DO NOT even think about it, please! But use what is left of your grey matter. Remember we are expressing our appreciation for what they are doing on behalf of our country, regardless of any politics. Also include that the parcel is from a member of the "107 Field Battery Assoc." who is very proud of them.

Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year

TO ALL RAMPANT RAMMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

From the President and Committee of the 107 Field Battery RAA Association



Hey Santa.
Don't forget the Rammers
Currently on overseas service!



107 FIELD BATTERY RAA ASSOCIATION
HOBART ANZAC WEEKEND REUNION
24th to 28th April 2009

Reunion information and Registration Booking

Read the attached information and explanatory notes before completing registration form.
Note the Association's Privacy & Refund Policies below.
Please use BLOCK letters and print CLEARLY.

Peter Turner (our man in Hobart) and Les Mullen (our Tas State Rep) have been busy planning our next activity, the ANZAC 2009 Reunion in Hobart. The Reunion venue is award winning Old Woolstore Hotel in downtown Hobart. Highlights include (see below for more details):

- **Friday Reunion Function** evening "Tassie" buffet meal.
- **Saturday ANZAC Dawn Service**, stroll to the pre dawn morning to the service,
- **Saturday ANZAC March**, walk to the FUP for the Hobart march.
- **Saturday ANZAC Day Function**, after the march at the Hobart RSL Club.
- **Sunday Tour of Hobart**, Red-Decker "hop-on/off" bus trip and Barracks tour.
- **Monday reunion-bus trip** Mt Wellington and Cascade Brewery tour.
- **Monday Reunion farewell function dinner**, back at the Old Woolstore.
- **Drive to Tassie** on the Spirit of Tasmania with optional group booking.
- **Reunion Polo Shirt** and is also be available for those not attending the Reunion

Yes I will attend the Reunion:

First or preferred name: _____
Surname: _____
Postal address: _____
_____ PC _____

For urgent contact and reunion updates, please contact me via:

Phone: (0__) _____ h/w Fax: (0__) _____ h/w

Mobile: 04 _____ (during the reunion)

Email: _____ @ _____

My wife/partner/friends is/are accompanying me (Circle):

Name: _____ relationship: _____

Name: _____ relationship: _____

TRANSPORT & ACCOMMODATION

Please CROSS OUT that which DOES NOT apply and complete the other details.

1. Please book accommodation below at Old Woolstore Hotel, Hobart, **OR**
2. I am making my own arrangements and do not require accommodation

Are there any special requirements of which the Reunion organisers should be aware?

Physical _____ (mobility etc)

Transport _____ (access etc)

Medical _____ (any special requirements)

Food: _____ (allergies etc)

Other: _____

I am a financial member of 107 Fd Bty RAA Assn: Yes / NO (Circle) *If unsure see below.*

Years posted/attached to 107 Fd Bty: from _____ to _____ and from _____ to _____.

Posting/duties/rank while posted/attached 107 Fd Bty: _____

ACTIVITIES

Friday 24th April

The Reunion Dinner is at 6.00 pm in the function room of the Old Woolstore. The function includes a special "Tassie" dinner arranged by Peter Turner. Drinks can be purchased from the function room bar at hotel prices.

Saturday 25th April

The Hobart Dawn Service will be conducted just a short pre stroll from the hotel.

The Hobart ANZAC Day March: The FUP is a pleasant walk from the hotel. Form-up behind the 107 Fd Bty Assn Banner party commanded by VPrez Barry. (The march is just half the length of the Sydney march, so your pre-march training can be reduced). Afterwards, take the shuttle bus to Hobart RSL Club for a warming round or two into the stop-but and the traditional Rampart RAM fellowship. Make your own way back to the hotel, via the many delightful Hobart pubs. Dinner is own arrangements in any of the many restaurants in or near the Hotel.

Sunday 26th April Board the red double-decker bus (www.reddecker.com.au) for hop-on/hop-off tour of Hobart. (You can use your Red-Decker pass anytime throughout the Reunion) Then tour the Anglesea Military Museum and have afternoon tea in the Anglesea Mess. Return to the Hotel on a Reunion Bus (or go to the Wrest Point Casino and play for your taxi fare back to the Hotel). Dinner is own arrangements in one of the restaurants at or near the Hotel. Peter has an optional Ghost tour for those interested.

Monday 27th April

Reunion Tour board the reunion bus for a trip to the top of Mt Wellington then to the Cascade Brewery (www.cascadebrewery.com.au) for a tour and tasting. Lunch can be purchased at the Brewery Restaurant. Return to the hotel on the Reunion bendy-bus.

Reunion farewell buffet: An evening farewell buffet dinner at the Old Woolstore Hotel is planned. Drinks are available from bar at hotel prices.

Optional Spirit of Tasmania travel to and from Tasmania.

A group booking (minimum of 12 persons travelling together) has been secured with savings www.spiritoftasmania.com.au. A \$300 deposit has been paid by the Association (refundable if the booking is cancelled by 1 March). Full payment and the details of those travelling, including pension numbers and vehicle details, are required by 11 March (after which there is a \$25 charge for each amendment to the manifest).

The Association has made a provisional booking for:

- a. 7 * 2 berth Porthole cabins (and 7 standard 5 metre cars) boarding at Melbourne at 6:00 pm Wednesday 22 April and arrival Devonport 7:00 am Thursday 23 April 2009. Spend Thursday night in the north of Tasmania (own arrangements) or travel direct to Hobart just a three to four hour drive including a meal stop.
- b. 7 * 2 berth porthole cabins (and 7 standard 5 metre cars) boarding at Devonport at 6:00 pm on Wednesday 29th April for arrival in Melbourne 7:00 am Thursday 30th April 2009. Spend Tuesday night in the north of Tasmania (own arrangements).

It is possible to change the above group dates, but the change must suit all. If you intend more time to tour Tasmania, so plan one journey to match the group booking and get the savings for that trip. The indicative group booking price (per person per trip) is:

	No concession card	With concession card
Up to 12 persons	\$216.00	\$171.00
14 Persons (Note 1)	\$201.00	\$159.00
Standard car (5 metre)	\$72.00	\$72.00

Note 1: Based on the thirteenth passenger travelling free and this saving passed on to all travelling on that trip. Our booking was made before so is exempt of a Fuel levy imposed on 1 July 2008.

If interested in the Spirit of Tasmania option, please indicate and include \$100 deposit on the Reunion booking form above.

107 Fd Bty RAA Assn Reunion Activity and Notes

107 Fd Bty RAA Association (www.107fdbty.com) is a non-profit organisation. The registration fee includes administrative costs incurred in arranging the reunion and related functions. The Association is not registered for GST. Receipts are only issued on request.

Annual membership of the 107 Fd Bty RAA Assn is \$15.00 plus a joining fee of \$15. A life subscription can be taken at \$150.00. If unsure to your financial state contact Hilton, ph: 0418 695 345 or email: hiltonlenard@hotmail.com. Activities are arranged for the participation of Association Members and their wives/partners and friends.

The Old Woolstore Hotel Hobart (www.oldwoolstore.com.au) is provided substantial reduction in normal rate for our reunion, of just \$119 per queen room for one or two persons per night (\$35 each for additional persons as some rooms have two queen beds). This rate only applies to bookings made via the attached booking form and cannot be made direct with the Hotel. The hotel is on the edge of Hobart CBD and is close to shops, restaurants, pubs and just a short walk from the Salamanca Markets. The \$119 room-rate applies to an extended time before and after the Reunion, provided that it is booked with this registration. A one night deposit of \$119 is required when making Reunion registration. The remainder, including items charged to your room, is payable direct to The Old Woolstore on booking out. If booking direct with the hotel, their normal room rate applies.

Late Registration: Registrations will be accepted after 28th February 2009, subject to hotel & activity availability. An additional administrative charge of \$40.00 will apply. Considerable work is involved in bookings and late registration adds significantly by duplicating effort.

Changes and additions to Bookings: Changes and additions will be accepted until 1st April 2009, in email/written format and accompanied with any payment necessary. After this all efforts will be made to action changes but cannot be guaranteed.

Refunds: A refund may be requested, if for reasons beyond your control you cannot attend. The Reunion Secretary should be notified by 1st April 2009. If you are unable to attend any individual Reunion activities, please keep the Secretary informed. A refund fee of \$40.00 will apply. Cancellation after 1st April is limited to the amount, if any, recovered from The Old Woolstore, less the refund fee.

Reunion Polo Shirt: A Reunion Polo shirt is planned. Similar to the R08 shirt, the R09 reunion polo shirt will comprise of a quality Black shirt with white trim, the 107 RAM logo with the AMF and 28 Bde patches on the sleeves. If not attending the reunion but would like a polo shirt then contact the Reunion Secretary at hiltonlenard@hotmail.com or m: 0418 695 345. The polo shirts are \$50 each, delivered to the first function at the Reunion or posted after the Reunion, if you are not attending

107 Field Battery RAA Association Privacy Statement

107 Fd Bty RAA Association (hereafter referred to as The Association) collects information about members and potential members. This information is obtained from the Association's application form, other members and many historical records from like associations. The Association may also collect information about you during your subsequent membership and attendance at Association activities. The Association will not intentionally release that information to any other person, unless you have consented to the release. However, by lodging your application form, joining and/or participating in Association activities such as reunions, you are taken to have given your consent to The Association may release information about you to facilitate your membership and your participation in associated activities. In particular, The Association will collect and hold your contact details so that we can inform you of activities that may interest you. To do this, we may pass information about you to the organisers of those activities. We may also obtain and release information to enable you to receive appropriate first aid/ medical assistance, catering or other requirements at Association activities. The information held about you is available on request. If at any time you wish to have your personal details corrected or update, contact the Association's Public Officer: Hilton Lenard PO Box 199 ERINDALE, NSW 2903, phone 0418 695 345 or email: hiltonlenard@hotmail.com.

