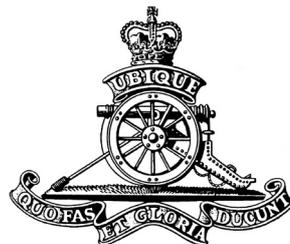


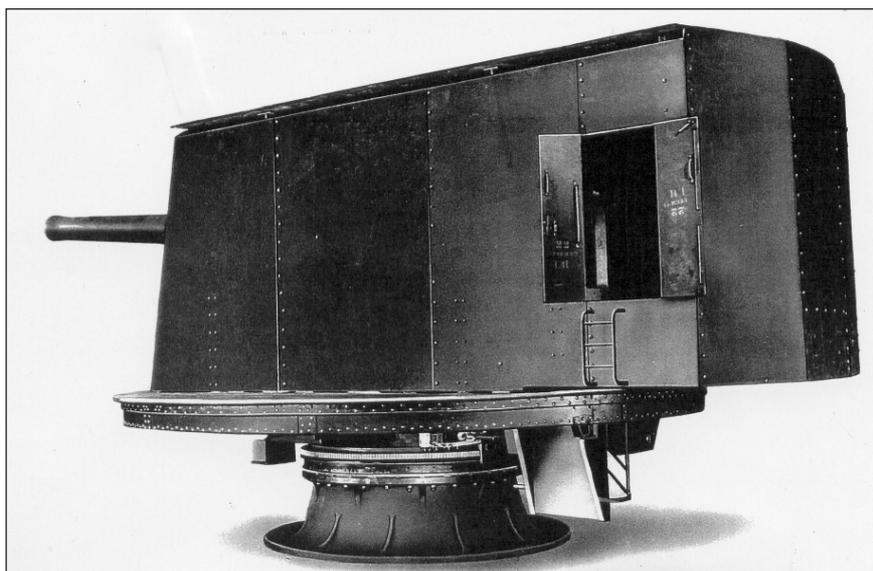
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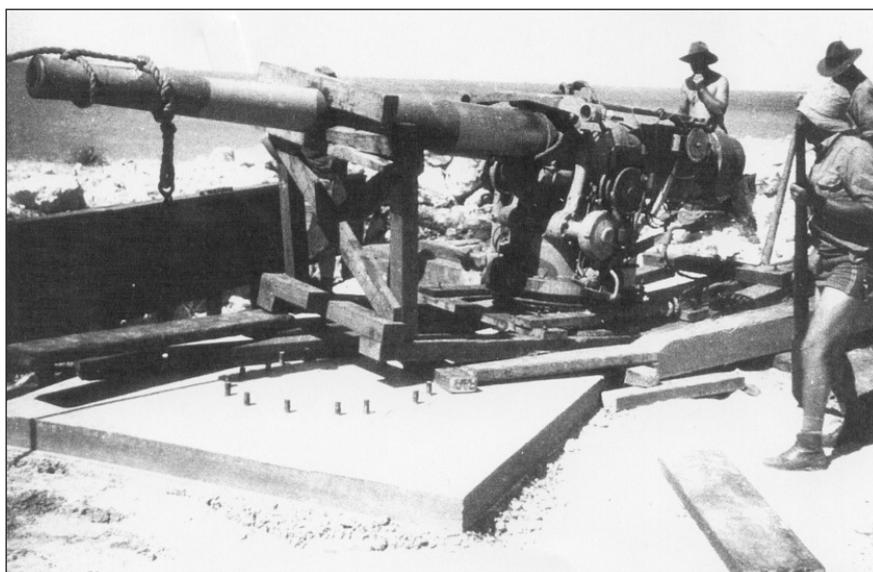
JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

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This 9.2 inch BL Mk XV Coast Gun on Mounting BL 9.2 inch Mk IX was Emplaced at SCRIVEN Battery, Garden Island in Cockburn Sound. (R Glyde photo)



BEACON Battery, Garden Island in 1943. A US 4 inch 50 calibre Mk IX Model 5 or 6 Naval gun is manoeuvred onto its mounting. (Photo Major M A Primrose)

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## EDITORIAL

The National Artillery museum is a 'happening place'. There always seems to be activities that enhance the site, and currently major work is being undertaken to make it easier for our curators to preserve our heritage in its innumerable forms. Many of these have been reported in the last three issues, but for the record our Chairman's report summarises them again.

In this issue I hope to have provided a spectrum of articles covering our history or have revealed some aspect of artillery history generally that you find interesting or even entertaining. Referring to the latter, the 'Great Moments' snippet in issue 58 had an added interest for me, in that it was a coincidence from more than 50 years ago. The hapless major whose opportunity for fame and glory were wrecked by a Sapper subaltern had a unique career in the Royal Artillery. It was one that few officers – or other ranks – would like to have emulated. In WW I, he was taken prisoner when on his first assignment as an OPO on the Western Front. Then, after a steady rise in rank to major, he gets scuppered at Port Talbot. But there is a crying need for officers in the Western Desert as a result of the depredations of the Panzer Army Afrika. So off he goes to a regimental command. On his first reconnaissance, he leaves his vehicle to determine whether the troops he can see through a haze are British. They are not. He is captured for the second time when his driver, who summed up the situation better than he did, 'did a bunk'. Next, he finished up in an Italian POW officers camp (No 49 at Fontanellato, near Parma), where it was reported by his fellow inmates that he kept their spirits up by his lively sense of humour. He certainly needed it! My interest was that I knew his daughter, whom I met in Austria and England in 1954. But I did not know that until two years ago.

We continue with Arthur Burke's interview with Captain Spark which gives us insights into a little known artillery battle. Bob Glyde's meticulously researched accounts of CA at Fremantle Fortress continues a series, and we marvel at Captain 'Bill' Goodwin's miraculous rescue from the Sea of Marmora and compassionate treatment at the hands of a Bavarian officer in 1915. It was not to last. Whilst on holiday in the Corner Country in late June I happened upon a little vignette on Gunner mateship. It was too good to let pass. Arthur Burke also reports

on his beloved 104 Battery and unravels a mystery of a missing battery standard of 101 Battery. We profile Major Mike Laurence, whose tenure as OC/Manager of the National Museum is at an end after five years. There are a couple of lighter offerings that hopefully will bring on a grin or two. If you ever wondered what happened on Rest Days on the Western Front for a horsed battery – in this case 102 Howitzer Battery – you will soon know. The museum's collection of medals has been enormously enhanced by the addition of the Whitelaw Collection, a truly wonderful gesture. Count how many different ones there are, and be amazed! For those ex-CA buffs or fugitives from Port Wakefield who crave relief from crossword puzzles and/or bridge, David Brook has a poser for you.

I have been asked whether an occasional series 'Regimental Update' will continue. The answer is yes. It will focus on where units are interacting with their communities with ceremonial and displays etc., personnel postings/promotions, and when new equipment comes into service. There is so much project work, scheduled upgrades and evaluations of new equipments and ammunition going on that, while important, several years may elapse before it comes into service or it becomes yet another hefty file (or disk).

I am hopeful that next year we will be able to feature some interesting artillery history on the Korean and Vietnam wars, subject to their authors being agreeable to publish in our small circulation media.

As notified in last issue, the move of the RA from Woolwich to Larkhill has begun. First off were the military staff of Regimental Headquarters followed by the editorial staff of the three publications (in April). The Alamein Dinner and St Barbara's Day Parade will be held at Woolwich.

By an oversight on my part I omitted the reference for the AWM archive photo on the cover page of Issue 58. It should carry the attribution 'AWM 116941'. I apologise for the omission.

Happy reading,

**Alan Smith**

## PORTON

A BEACH TOO FAR AT BOUGAINVILLE 1945

Arthur Burke

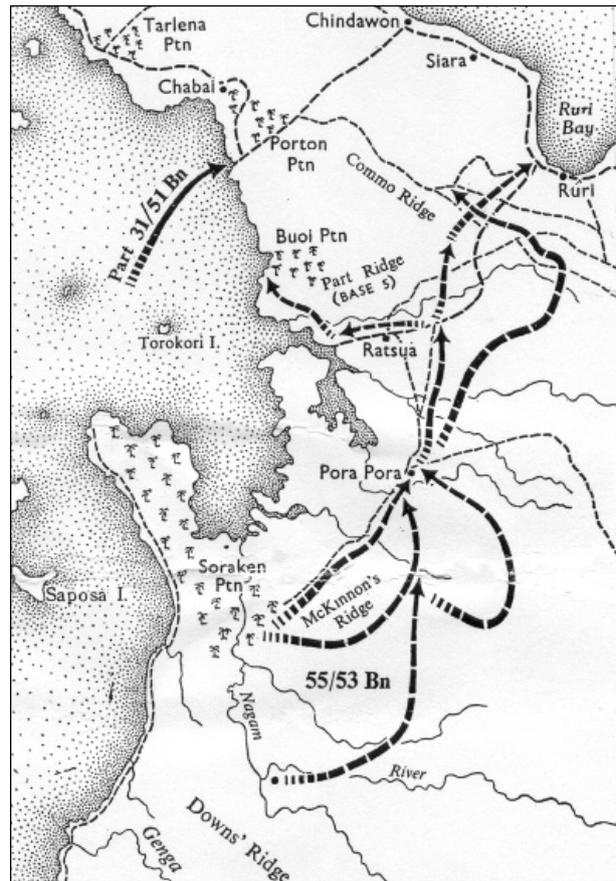
“We dropped rounds wherever we wanted . . . the Japs couldn’t get near us.”

At a sprightly 80 years of age, David Frey Spark’s eyes glistened as he relived the response to his calls for fire support covering the withdrawal from the disastrous amphibious landing at Porton Plantation. His actions earned an immediate Military Cross and “I drank my quota of beer and I was loaded onto the ship for home”, he said, making light of the wounds he sustained.

This is the story of a unique artillery officer whose deeds show the great heights to which ordinary citizens can rise to in the heat of battle. I enjoyed the pleasure of interviewing David Spark in 1996 as part of his research into the history of the 4th Field Regiment. This article is more than an amalgam of part of that interview intimately interwoven with the bibliography listed. It is a tribute to a great but relatively unknown gunner.

The first anniversary of the D-day landings at Normandy had just passed when a reinforced company of the 31st/51st Battalion made an amphibious landing in armoured barges at Porton Plantation in north Bougainville. This was an operation designed by the 11th Brigade to outflank the Japanese a withdrawal route up the Bonis Peninsula. The Australians were below strength and weary. The outflanking movement by the 31st/51st was hoped to bring fighting in this area to an end.

To understand why this Militia brigade from North Queensland was in Bougainville fighting a very frustrating war, it is necessary to drop back in time to 1 November 1943 when, as part of the Allied offensive against the stalled Japanese advance on the SWPA, the US 3rd Marine Division landed at Torokina on the



The area in which the PORTON operation took place on Torokina Island. (Ref: G Long, *The Final Campaigns*, AWM, p.207)

central western side of Bougainville Island and secured a beachhead. The US XIV Corps then relieved the Marines and established a defensive perimeter at Torokina.

Over the next year, MacArthur agreed with the Australian government that the American effort would be directed to retaking the Philippines whilst Australian troops would continue to neutralise the Japanese in the Australian and British territory; ‘mopping up’ operations as they became known. In the Solomons, Lieutenant General Stanley Savige’s II Australian Corps of four brigades (7th, 11th, 15th and 29th) completed relief of the two US divisions on Bougainville in December 1944.

For operations, Savige divided the 200 km long lozenge-shaped island into north, central (Numa Numa) and southern sectors and began to destroy enemy resistance as opportunity

offered. The 4th Australian Field Regiment (Jungle Division) AIF had been withdrawn from the Finistere Range area of the Ramu Valley and was retraining just west of Lae when it received orders to embark for Bougainville. Arriving at Torokina on 5th November 1944, it joined the 2nd Field Regiment and the 2nd Mountain Battery which, together with several anti-aircraft units, constituted the initial allocation of artillery to II Corps.

The campaign opened in the central sector with 9th Battalion (7th Brigade) supported by 12th Battery, 4th Field Regiment (eight x 25-Pounder Shorts) relieving the Americans on the Numa Numa Trail. One of this battery's Observation Post Officers (OPO), Lieutenant David Spark, was no stranger to operations. David had joined 1st Medium Brigade RAA (Militia) in 1938 and was a full-time duty sergeant before enlisting in the AIF in July 1940. Allotted to the 2/2nd Field Regiment, he was promoted bombardier as Observation Post Assistant (OPACK) in the Middle East. He was taken prisoner after the fall of Crete but escaped to Egypt. David returned to Australia, was commissioned and transferred to 4th Field Regiment in Queensland in November 1942. He was appointed an OPO in 12th Battery and remained with them (via Townsville and Lae) to the Ramu Valley where his unit relieved 2nd/4th Field Regiment, then on to Bougainville.

Lieutenant Spark returned to Torokina on 21st December again blooded in more ways than one, the unit war diary records. Lt Spark sported a small bullet wound on the left wrist as evidence of contact with the enemy during a patrol a couple of days earlier. In February 1945 the Regimental Headquarters and 12th Battery moved into the northern sector at Puto on the western coast, some 70 km north of Torokina and 10 km south of the Soraken Peninsula. By April the peninsula was secure and the guns moved to that area. The advance up the Bonis Peninsula met with dogged Japanese resistance in late May and June Spark found himself back with a reinforced A Company (190 strong)

of the 31st/51st Battalion to conduct a flank attack by sea on the Porton Plantation area to cut off the enemy's lines of communication and reinforcement. The fire units allocated in support were the 11th and 12th Batteries of 4th Field Regiment and 2nd Mountain Battery.

Lieutenant Spark's party of ten was in the first wave onto the beach at 0400 hours, 8th June. They established 'perfect communications', and all was quiet as a perimeter was established in the edge of the beach timber. However, they had landed some 250 metres north of their planned location between two machine guns in bunkers. The second wave of barges carrying mainly stores and ammunition grounded about 75 metres from the shore at 0435 hours and then, in Spark's words, "all hell broke loose", as the surprised enemy saw the Australians wading ashore in the first morning light.

The OPO began registering defensive fire tasks on the company perimeter. "It was a very lively affair and the infantry were really copping it", Spark modestly described the melee. "The orders that went down were brief and quick and [the response was] effective and accurate. It was really a challenge and I was so het up the adrenalin was really racing around." Despite this shelling, the Japanese machine guns in the bunkers continued to sweep the stranded barges and the beach. Tactical Reconnaissance aircraft directed artillery fire into rear enemy positions.

By this time the troops had dug in and mounted a patrol programme aimed to destroy the machine guns on their flanks. Enemy resistance increased throughout the morning as reinforcements arrived by vehicle. By dusk it was estimated that some 300 Japanese were surrounding A Company. At 1750 hours, the enemy began firing 50 mm mortars at the beleaguered Australians. An attempt to bring in stores that evening was thwarted by a low tide and enemy machine gun fire at the barges that were grounding some 200 metres from the shore. Enemy attacks on A Company positions continued throughout the night, but were held.

By dawn on 9th, enemy strength had grown to about 400 and they attacked on three sides, intending a final blow. The Japanese pressure forced A Company to tighten their perimeter on the beach edge. Under these conditions, the OPO party was unable to erect a good aerial but spare batteries were on the abandoned barges. The calls for fire became weaker till Spark went off the air. He took his signaller Gunner R.J. Lee and three others with the dead radio and moved out through small arms fire to one of the stranded barges to attempt to obtain fresh batteries and/or use the craft's radios to continue directing fire support.

Commander 11th Brigade decided to withdraw the company group that evening, despite there being a low tide which would necessitate the men wading out to the waiting landing craft. However, by noon, the position was becoming untenable and, with ammunition running low, A Company requested the withdrawal of rear troops immediately. By 1400 hours, RNZAF Corsair aircraft were striking opportunity targets to cover the withdrawal. At 1440 hours a message stated, "We are now on the beach and getting hell."

Though artillery ammunition had reached a critical level, David Spark's calls for fire met with an immediate response and rounds crashed down within 50 metres of the A Company perimeter. When queried whether the fire was too close, "Bring it a little closer" was the reply. The OPO crept the fire to within 25 metres. The commanding officer of 4th Field was on the gun position and advised Spark that he was about to change from the almost depleted Charge Three to Charge Super. With such a close fall of shot, this could well prove disastrous, but the CO assured the OPO that he would personally supervise the calculations required so that the fire on current targets would be maintained without the need for reverting to adjustment some distance away. "It was a terrifying experience," recalled David. "You got the shell landing before you heard the report of the gun firing." "I'm going to get these bastards,"

observed the OPO as he continued pouring in the rounds as close as 25 metres from his own troops. "It did quieten them down," he mused.

By 1630 hours, there were some 16 aircraft providing close air support. They were directed to strafe as close as 50 metres ahead of the company perimeter. At that time also, three armoured landing craft beached at Porton under cover of smoke and high explosive fire from 4th Field Regiment OPO. Machine gunners on the assault craft engaged enemy positions with heavy fire till they were killed by retaliating fire. The beach was cleared in five minutes and one barge withdrew. Unfortunately the other two were overloaded and remained stuck fast. Volunteers disembarked and one of the lightened vessels managed to withdraw.

Spark did not recall how he got into one of the withdrawing barges but was still directing fire. He was admonished by a sergeant for exposing himself, particularly after rounds impacted nearby, showering shrapnel and rendering the OPO's body red with his own blood. "I could see them [the Japs] coming out down onto the beach against a background of plantation growth and they were easily skittled . . ." Spark recalled. "They were mad -kamikaze-type," he concluded.

The last stranded craft floated off on the tide at 2240 hours that evening, by which time Spark and the four members of his OP party were safely back at the gun position. His bombardier had shrapnel wounds to the right arm and Spark himself wounded by shell splinters, but remaining on duty till he had sent a message to the gun batteries via Regimental Headquarters: "My congratulations and sincere thanks for your full cooperation during Porton operation. Arty support was excellent in every way. Good show, Gunners."

The soldiers who had jumped overboard to lighten the landing craft suffered mixed fortunes. Some were killed or wounded before they could wade to one of the original abandoned landing craft. Some began to swim the 5000 metres

to nearby Torokori island, and the remainder were rescued piecemeal by successive attempts using rafts dropped by aircraft, assault boats and landing craft guided by aircraft. Gunner E.W. Glare, though wounded, survived the swim to Torokori Island. The OP sergeant and three other gunners were all wounded but successfully evacuated at 0200 hours on 10th June. Gunner H.B. Payne was missing believed killed. Throughout and until the last vessel left the area about 0330 hours on 11 June, OPO Captain John Whitelaw continued to provide fire support and covering fire for the rescue operations. 4th Field Regiment had received fresh ammunition from Torokina during 10 June.

The 31st/51st Australian Infantry Battalion's report on the Porton operation concluded that 'The force had fought a continuous action against a numerically superior enemy, both in man-power and weapons . . . Out of the 10 officers and 180 other ranks comprising the PORTON landing force, eight officers and 168 other ranks were accounted for, including four dead and 101 wounded. Missing amounted to two officers and 12 other ranks.' The missing included Captain H.C. Downs, the officer commanding the force. Whilst the full enemy casualties will never be known, a conservative estimate was 147 confirmed killed and 50 probables. There were 26 men killed or listed missing in action.

NX47054 Lieutenant David Frey Spark, MC was discharged from the Army on medical grounds in September 1945. In December of that year, he was presented with his Military Cross by the Governor-General at Kirribilli House, Sydney. Gunner Robert James Lee, the signaller who accompanied Spark to the abandoned landing craft and re-established communications, was awarded the Military Medal.

David Spark took a year to settle down after the war then became a company secretary working for several organisations including the AMA before going into private consulting. He retired due to ill health in 1983 and became

a TPI pensioner in 1984. He was a generous man; generous in his friendship, generous in his contribution in time and effort to the community and organisations to which he belonged. David was most generous to the welfare of his former comrades by his regular, substantial donations to the funds of the 4th Field Regiment RAA AIF Unit Association. He passed away in 2000 at 84 years of age.

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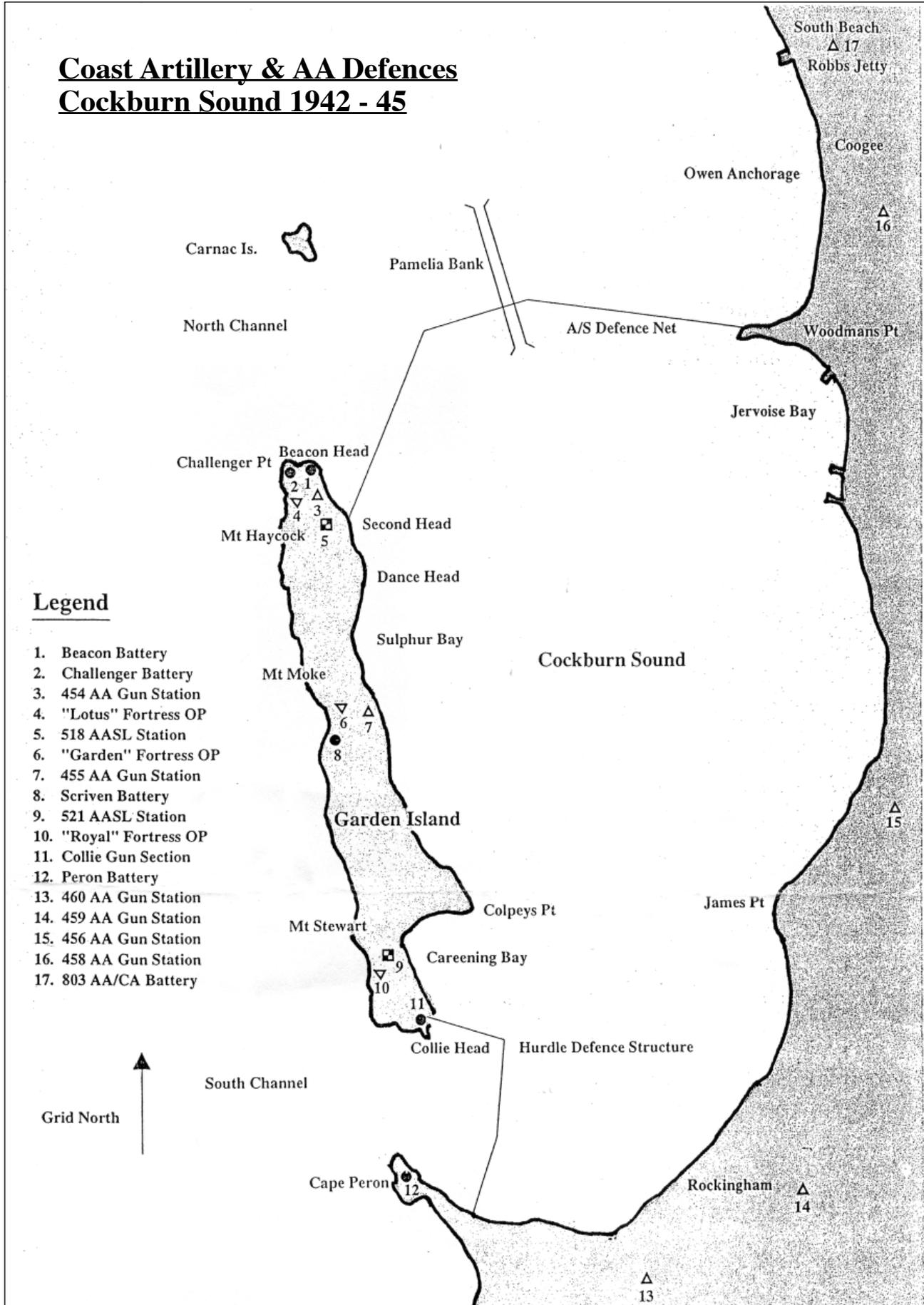
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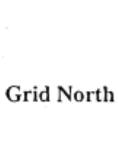
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## Coast Artillery & AA Defences Cockburn Sound 1942 - 45



### Legend

1. Beacon Battery
2. Challenger Battery
3. 454 AA Gun Station
4. "Lotus" Fortress OP
5. 518 AASL Station
6. "Garden" Fortress OP
7. 455 AA Gun Station
8. Scriven Battery
9. 521 AASL Station
10. "Royal" Fortress OP
11. Collie Gun Section
12. Peron Battery
13. 460 AA Gun Station
14. 459 AA Gun Station
15. 456 AA Gun Station
16. 458 AA Gun Station
17. 803 AA/CA Battery



## **FREMANTLE FORTRESS**

### **THE COAST GUNS OF COCKBURN SOUND**

Cockburn Sound lies south of the main port of Fremantle. It is a large anchorage protected on the west by Garden Island, to the south and east by the mainland and to the north by Parmelia Bank, Success Bank and reefs. These banks had been dredged to allow access by vessels drawing medium draught. It had been selected in 1913 as a British naval base. Preliminary work had commenced on the Henderson Naval Base as it was designated, on an area of the mainland opposite the present day Fleet Base West on Garden Island in Western Australia. Post WW1 planning by the Imperial Defence Committee had decided to develop Singapore as the Royal Navy base for the Far East and the Henderson base was abandoned.

The Sound appeared an ideal anchorage together with Gage Roads (the main anchorage for vessels using Fremantle Harbour) to meet the needs of a port classified as a convoy forming up area. Gage Roads was covered by the arc of fire of the counter bombardment 9.2 in (234 mm) and 6 in (152 mm) guns emplaced in the late 1930's on Rottnest Island. The area of sea to the south of the Cockburn Sound anchorage was outside of the effective range of the Rottnest Island guns which meant enemy vessels could stand off Garden Island and engage shipping sheltering behind the island. The defence plans in the 1930's called for the emplacement of a second battery of 9.2 in guns on Garden Island to overcome this deficiency. The commencement of World War 2 caused the cancellation of this plan.

It is necessary to re-examine the concept upon which the Australian defence was based during the first half of the 20th Century. It formed part of a plan developed by the Imperial Defence Committee based in the United Kingdom. The general opinion of the British planners was that Australia would not be attacked on a large scale by a hostile nation but rather by raiding forces of cruiser strength to destroy shipping and perhaps land parties of up to 200 marines to destroy port facilities. This policy was on the basis that the Royal Navy would be responsible to meet any threat of a large hostile naval force. Australian coast defence planning was

developed around meeting the relatively minor threat. The British Government had allocated millions of pounds to develop Singapore as the major fleet base in the Far East area to support this policy. The Imperial Defence Committee controlled the priority of allocating equipment and as we know, they misread the intentions of the Japanese military and the capabilities of their Navy. The allocation of coastal guns, once war was declared with Germany and Italy, was to sites considered by the Committee to be of greater priority than Cockburn Sound.

Early in 1942 following the loss of Singapore and the development of Fremantle as a major submarine base for the United States Navy, a study was undertaken to establish what could be done to upgrade the facilities of Cockburn Sound to relieve pressure on the Fremantle Harbour, which was very restricted in area. Existing jetties, rail links within the Sound area, dated back to colonial times.

Following closely on this, a committee, comprising Major General Whitelaw, MGRA, Captain Buchanan, RAN and Commander Hay, USN, was directed to examine the equipment required to build up the coast defence of the area utilising equipment available from the Americans through the Lend/Lease arrangement. The recommendations of that committee were quickly accepted by Land HQ – Melbourne. As an interim measure a battery of two 155 mm guns was to be installed at Cape Peron, on the mainland, opposite the southern tip of Garden Island, with a section of two 18 pr (83.8 mm) field guns covering the passage between the mainland and the island. A second 155 mm gun battery was to be established at the northern end of Garden Is, with a section of two 4 in (101.6 mm) US naval guns under command, to cover the boom defence net at the dredged channel through the Parmelia Bank into Cockburn Sound. The 155 mm guns would provide protection seaward of Garden Island.

Details of the individual batteries follow:-

**“K” Heavy Battery (Coast). Also known as Peron Battery.**

“K” Battery was raised in October 1942 and comprised personnel from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It comprised two sections, “H” and “L”. The role of “L” Section of the battery,

which comprised two 155 mm guns, was to provide protection against enemy vessels, which by standing off the South West of Garden Island could fire on shipping in the Sound. "H" section, which comprised of two 18 pr field guns was to cover the South Passage between Cape Peron and Garden Is, which although narrow and shallow, could allow access of MTBs and such craft. The passage was further protected by a boom of steel piping.. In February 1944 "H" Section 18 prs were replaced by Collie Section on Garden Island equipped with two 12 pr guns.

Approval for the construction of the battery was received on 23 November although it seems some preliminary work was already underway Personnel were initially quartered at the Fremantle Artillery Barracks on arriving from the Eastern States, then transferred to Peron House in the vicinity of the proposed battery pending the completion of their permanent accommodation An American artillery officer arrived on the 25 November bringing with him two sets of fire control instruments for both the batteries. Although there is no documentation sighted by the author of this article to indicate otherwise, it is believed Peron Battery was initially set up in a field role until the "Panama" emplacements could be constructed. A request to undertake proof firing was noted for 25 February and the two guns were proof fired on 8 March. A full calibre shoot was undertaken on 29 March and another full calibre shoot was noted for the 16 July 1943. During the period that the Fremantle Fortress War Diaries are presently available on the AWM website, there were a number of 155 mm full calibre shoot as well as 18 pr shoots undertaken for the training of the fire control personnel.

The No. 2 gun and No.17 CASL were withdrawn on the 24 November 1944 and on the 1 December, the battery ceased operational duties and arrangements were made for the disposal of equipment.

Prior to the return of the 155 mm guns to ordnance, a Field Artillery Short Course was held at Cape Peron from the 12 to 21 December for coast artillery personnel from Peron and Challenger Batteries. The course culminated in the expenditure of 100 rounds of 155 mm ammunition

### **"J" Heavy Battery (Coast), Also known as Challenger Battery.**

It was originally known as Entrance Battery until it was realised there could be confusion with Entrance Battery in Queensland, so it was renamed Challenger Battery. "J" Heavy Battery covered Challenger Passage, a narrow shallow entrance to the Sound through the reefs to the north of Garden Island as well as the seaward approaches. It also consisted of two sections, with Beacon Section comprising two American 4 inch guns emplaced at the NorthEast corner of Garden Island to cover the boom net across the dredged channel .through the Parmelia Bank. This net ran from the North East tip of Garden Island in an easterly direction to the mainland at Woodsman's Point.

Work on Challenger Battery commenced with the arrival of construction personnel at Garden Island on 26 December 1942. The island was only accessible by barges and all construction material had to be brought from the mainland. Facilities on the island were very basic, roads had to be constructed to the battery sites, a campsite developed, etc. In the meantime personnel were accommodated at the Peron Battery camp.

The guns for Challenger Battery were landed from a barge on 28 March after a delay due to inclement weather. It then took two days to haul the guns from Sulphur Bay, the nearest suitable landing beach to the temporary positions at Challenger Point at the North West tip of the island. There they were dug in and camouflaged however it was found the site was not suitable and on 6 - 8 April the guns were repositioned. Ammunition arrived on the 9 April and the battery was declared ready for action. A full calibre shoot from the temporary positions was undertaken on 1May.

The permanent emplacement were completed June/ July and on 10 August proof firing was undertaken, each gun firing three round of super charge and three rounds of standard charge. By September 1943 the Operations Room and most of the other facilities had been completed. Personnel from battery had undertaken training with Peron Battery whilst their facilities were under construction. As with Peron Battery a number of 155 mm and 18 pr shoot took place during 1944 as indicated from the Fremantle Fortress War Diaries. The battery

ceased operational duties as from 1 December 1944 and arrangements were made for the disposal of equipment..

The 155 mm field guns were used extensively in the US Coast Artillery. The guns allocated to the Cockburn Sound defence were M1917A1 and M1918M1 weapons on Carriages, Gun 155 mm, M3 the latter indicating that the carriages were fitted with pneumatic tyres. These guns are believed to have seen action in Flanders in the Great War and were apparently well worn. A note held in the Army Museum of Western Australia stated that on one of the guns the shell rammed a further eight inches (203 mm) up the barrel than originally designed. It is understood however that once the guns were calibrated they were accurate and performed well in their task. The equipment audit undertaken at 30 June 1943 shows that each battery had an M1917 and an M1918 model gun. The model designation M1917AI indicated a gun of French design whilst the M1918M1 was an American modification of the French weapon.

Between the wars, a concrete emplacement had been designed and tested for the US. It became known as a "Panama Mounting" as it was in the area of the Panama Canal Zone it was tested. Due to the cost of fixed installations around the US coast the thought was that in the event of a threat to a particular area, guns could be quickly moved to established emplacements constructed around the coast. The gun carriage was modified and fitted with a pivot, which was bolted down onto a concrete pedestal in the centre of the emplacement. The weapon could follow a fast moving target to any angle of traverse built into the emplacement. The guns in their field role only had a 60 degree traverse before the gun had to be repositioned. At the rear of the emplacement was a rail around which the gun trail, which was of a split configuration, could be moved. An Australian modification was a Bren carrier bogie wheel at the end of each trail arm, which reduced the effort of swinging the trail. The facilities at each battery varied. Fire control instruments differed from Australian equipment and were also calibrated in metres and mils. Local modifications were made to bring the system more in line with the Australian/British system which also had the advantage of increasing the rate of fire.

As field guns they had the advantage of being used in a temporary field role pending the construction of the concrete mountings but of course with the 60 degree traverse restriction. The Americans later developed a steel mounting for use in swampy areas but these were very heavy and the Australians developed a portable mounting, capable of being dismantled into small sections, for use in jungle locations

Personnel from the two disbanded 155 mm batteries were posted to AA units.

Readers interested in the 155 mm gun batteries around Australia are directed to the publication "The Letter Batteries, the history of the "Letter" Batteries in World War II". The authors, Reg Kidd and Ray Neal, served on these batteries and have produced a carefully researched book covering the establishment, life and demise of the nineteen batteries raised between 1942 and 1945.

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*(to be continued in future issue..)*

**DESPATCH FROM AIF HQ, LONDON**

Senator Russell, Acting Minister for Defence, made available for publication the following extract from a despatch received by him from AIF Headquarters, London.

**Captain ST Goodwin, 6th Battery AFA, (Attached RNAS), captured at Gaba Tepe, Gallipoli.**

On the morning of the 20th December, 1915, I was ordered to reconnoitre the enemy position, at Sulva and Anzac in order to ascertain movement of troops after the Evacuation (night 19/20 December). Owing to heavy low clouds, we were unable to proceed, over the lines and had to reconnoitre from the sea. At a distance of about a mile from the shore the engine failed at a height of well under 2,000 feet (probably about 1500 feet). The pilot, Lieutenant Frank Beason, RNAS, immediately turned towards Imbros, but we had not made more than a mile before we struck the water. We both had air belts, but that of my pilot deflated soon after descent. The aeroplane sank after about ten minutes. Though I had wirelessed for help none appeared.



We made for the Turkish shore, hoping to be able to work down behind our lines at Helles. I soon found that as far as I was concerned, that course was impossible, and made for the nearest land. I then became unconscious. When I regained consciousness I found that I was being carefully tended by a Bavarian officer. He stated that on hearing of the fall of the aeroplane, he hurried to the nearest point on the land, as the Turks were sometimes dangerous to their prisoners; that he had organised a rescue party which swam out and brought me in, but were unable to find my pilot; that I had been six hours in the water and that when rescued I was absolutely stiff; that after two hours, by means of hypodermic injections and brandy, he had restored me to consciousness.

The German officer could not have treated me with more kindness if I had been one of his comrades. He even went so far as to warn me about questions Liman Von Sanders would ask. In the morning I rode to Headquarters. On the way we called at the Headquarters of the Turkish general commanding the troops operating against Anzac (Essad Pasha), but the latter refused to see me on the ground that I belonged to the Air Service which had just dropped a bomb on a hospital and killed the wife of the Surgeon General.

At the headquarters I was interviewed by General Linman Von Sanders who was quite affable, and admitted that the first he heard of the evacuation was from a staff officer who woke him up at 4 am on the morning of the 20th December, and said that the English had gone. I stopped at Headquarters for about four days and was informed every night by a staff officer that the force at Helles was going to evacuate that night, whereas the operation was not carried out till about the 15th January 1916. From the Headquarters I was moved by sea to Constantinople where I was quartered in the military prison attached to the Ministry of War.

For six weeks we remained there, with very little exercise, sometimes being in a room with Turkish officer defaulters. From Constantinople I was moved to Afion-Kara-Hissar, where I was to remain until release. The treatment at this latter place varied considerably, but except for periods of increased rigour (owing to attempted escapes) it was on the whole, not bad, and during the last nine months was very good.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY  
SATURDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2005**

Introduction. The 2004/5 year has again been successful in providing support to the National Artillery Museum. The modest financial surplus is pleasing notwithstanding expenditure on the Cutler display, and a Defence restriction placed on the conduct of some fundraising activities.

The major activity was the unveiling of the Cutler Display by the Governor of NSW. This was preceded earlier in the day by the launch of Peter Oppenheim's book, *'The Fragile Forts'* by Mr Tony Abbott, the Federal Member for Warringah and a very staunch ally of the Museum.

A serious matter which occupied the attention of the Board for some time is the proposal by the Army History Unit (AHU) to co-locate Corps museum with Corps schools. This would mean, in time, that the National Artillery Museum would move to Puckapunyal. The reaction from members and others was unanimous for retention at North Fort given the history of gunners' involvement in the Defence of Port Jackson since first settlement, the more recent links between the Coastal Garrison and School of Artillery with Manly, and the location of the gunners' museum in a pre-eminent and historic fortification.

The AHU assertion that Corps Museums should be co-located with Corps schools ignores, in our case, that effective heritage and historical support to the School at Puckapunyal has been provided by displays, and visits by unit detachments to North Fort. Similarly, support from the large volunteer body extant in Sydney (approximately 80) would disappear as would access to a local tourism market of 4 million plus if relocation occurred.

Your Board remains confident that the 'gunners' museum will be at North Fort for the foreseeable future, and we are very grateful for the strong

support expressed by members and others when the proposal was first aired.

Indeed, the need to retain North Fort was emphasised in the speech given by Major General Richard Wilson, deputising for the Chief of Army, who said just prior to the launch of Peter Oppenheim's book; *'... changes in strategy and technology ... (that) have rendered the ...traditional fixed defence structure obsolete (and) made it more difficult for modern generations to understand why such places as North Fort were built and why it is important that we keep them as part of our heritage. They are important for more than just their architectural interest. They remain the physical manifestation of an approach to national defence that was dominant in Australia for more than one hundred years.'*

The Cutler Display. The events of 23rd February 2005 were outstanding. The unveiling of the Sir Roden Cutler Display by Her Excellency the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir was a signal occasion. A large contingent of the late Sir Roden's family was present, as were representatives of his former regiment, 2/5th Field Regiment RAA, and other organisations with which Sir Roden was associated. A highlight was the presentation of copies of *'The Fragile Forts'* and Brigadier Ken Fulford's *'We Stood and Waited'* to the Governor and Major General Wilson by the School Captains of Manly Village Public School and Sydney Boys High School respectively, the schools which Sir Roden attended.

The Company is particularly grateful for the very strong support of Lady Joan Cutler and members of the Cutler family in the creation of this auspicious display. It has become a highlight of guided tours; and when seen in concert with the John Carr Ewen display, adds greatly to the personal history component of

the Museum. The display was prepared and mounted by Kevin Browning, Graeme Hall, Bill Knight and John Saltwell with expert assistance from Peter Oppenheim and several external artisans. Major General John Stevenson kindly lent his Mameluke sword; while Sir Roden's ceremonial belt and sword knot are on loan from the AWM. I also acknowledge the financial and administrative assistance given by AHU in mounting the day's activities.

A framed poem written by MM English of Manly when Sir Roden arrived home was presented to the Museum by David Cutler just prior to the unveiling and will be added to the Display.

The Memorial Walk. This very impressive part of the fabric of North Fort continues to attract support from a wide cross section of the community. Paving and edging is complete as is the construction of a sandstone clad block at the entrance. Cladding and the laying of a Rising Sun badge appropriate to each period has been completed on the Colonial and WW1 monuments. At 30th June 2005, 29 large pavers had been laid together with 1554 engraved pavers; over 470 funded in this financial year. The reaction to the solitude and ambience of the Walk by visitors has been rewarding as has been the number of paver donors visiting the Walk. We appreciate the work undertaken by Alan Lark and Terry Waters on the Walk. The Company remains alert for the support of potential sponsors and others for additional funding to the complete the Walk.

Major pavers laid this year were provided by the following.

- 2nd/1st Survey Regiment
- 18th Field Regiment Association
- 1st Survey Regiment
- 35th Infantry Battalion (Newcastle)
- National Servicemen's Association
- Locating Artillery Association

The Air OP Display. The Air OP Display being developed by former Air OP pilot Lieutenant Colonel Dick Knight is close to completion. A

large number of photos have been collected and are being reviewed. We hope the display will be mounted by the end of 2005.

Corps of Guides. The Corps of Guides continues to be the mainstay of public Museum operations. The Corps' strength has been maintained at about last year's level, losses being replaced at about par. The additional demands of monthly tours with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust have been met satisfactorily. The red and blue tabards and white hats provided by the Company have given members of the Corps a more uniform look.

Attracting Visitors. The number of visitors has levelled this year when compared to earlier years. Several attempts to attract large numbers by mounting specific events were frustrated; one event (Jazz Festival) by bad weather. Others were limited by a Defence embargo on use of the site while a very large activity that could attract several hundreds of visitors over a four week period was deferred to ensure that all appropriate OH&S and commercial requirements were met. The Manly Explorer exercise did not succeed due to low external patronage. Publicity in local media continued and the number of school groups continues to grow. A random survey of visitors demonstrated that presentation of the Museum by guides was consistently 'excellent'. The challenge remains to get more visitors to come to North Fort.

Volunteers. The role played by Volunteers in ALL areas is essential to the continuing success of the Museum. The amount and nature of work done by our willing volunteers continues to increase viz. For the period January to September 2003, 5104 recorded voluntary hours were provided. This averaged at about 567 hours per month. For the financial year July 2003 to June 2004, 8302 voluntary hours were recorded, averaging at 692 hours per month. This year the volunteer effort amounted to 9471 hours, averaging 789 hours per month, many of which were spent as guides, but also in the ARMCO where the refurbishment of several guns and the 90cm searchlight occurred, and

in the library where a small number attend to an increasing number of enquiries. Several are involved in the refurbishment of a 25pr gun given to Manly Council, while the 18th LAA Regiment and Locating Associations lend their weight freely. Without the singular or combined efforts of all of our volunteers, North Fort would not function effectively. Members are asked to consider joining the volunteers. Like the Engineers, 'there are never enough!'

Board. The Board met on 12 occasions. By invitation, the Business Manager attends most Board meetings, while the Museum Manager has a standing invitation to attend.

Board attendance is shown below (fig1):

I again express my appreciation to Board members for their involvement and support, and their performance of duties that at times goes well beyond the norms of corporate governance. In particular, I thank Cliff Dodds as Chief Tour Guide, Nick Durrant for the very good job done in the marketing and publicity and Mick Crawford for his part in drafting the plaques yet to mounted on the remaining monuments on the Memorial Walk. Brian Armour and Kel Crozier resigned from the Board in November

and December respectively while the Board welcomed new members Robert Dick and Craig Taggart, both having appropriate service and commercial experience. Major Arnaud Ng replaced Gary Down as the nominee of the Commander Land Command Artillery. I wish to acknowledge the work done by Brian Armour and latterly Richard Hogge for their work as Company Secretary and Graeme Hall for his work as Treasurer. Brian Armour's work in updating some of the Company's corporate governance and administrative procedures is particularly appreciated.

And on behalf of the Company I record our sincere congratulations to Arthur Kennedy on his being awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia. This award recognised his lengthy and outstanding service to Museum since its formation in the Manly Training Depot 24 years ago.

Following the retirement of Dennis Sherris, the position of Commercial Business Manager was assumed by David Leyshon. I record here the Company's appreciation to both for the manner in which they undertook their many and varied tasks. David has been instrumental in introducing new 'not-for-profit' computer software which

Fig1, Board Attendance:

| Name             | Meetings | Attended | Comment                          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------------|
| Brian Armour     | 6        | 6        | Resigned December 2004           |
| Kevin Browning   | 12       | 11       |                                  |
| Michael Crawford | 12       | 10       | Leave of absence (overseas)      |
| Kel Crozier      | 4        | 1        | Resigned November 2004           |
| Robert Dick      | 3        | 2        | Filled casual vacancy April 2005 |
| Cliff Dodds      | 12       | 10       | Leave of absence (overseas)      |
| Gary Down        | 3        | 0        | Resigned October 2004            |
| Nick Durrant     | 12       | 8        | Leave granted                    |
| Graeme Hall      | 12       | 11       |                                  |
| Richard Hogge    | 12       | 9        | Leave granted                    |
| Arthur Kennedy   | 12       | 10       |                                  |
| John Macpherson  | 12       | 10       | Leave of absence (illness)       |
| Craig Taggart    | 3        | 3        | Filled casual vacancy April 2005 |

Major Arnaud Ng attended 2 meetings as an observer vice Major Gary Down

will vastly improve the Company's membership data base and communication with members.

The Company continues to have the benefit of honorary legal advice through the good offices of Colin Dunston, while Jeff Madden and John Elliott retain their appointment as Honorary Consultants to the Company in the fields of Architecture and Engineering respectively.

Cannonball. Our quarterly journal continues under the new editorship of Alan Smith who took over from Kevin Browning in mid year. Cannonball remains at the forefront of gunner journals in Australia.

Publicity and Marketing. The levelling out of visitor numbers was disappointing given the attention to publicity by Nick Durrant in this vital important field. A new visitor assessment form will be introduced later in the year to better judge our marketing endeavours. Self guiding has been restricted due to gun park floors being concreted and rearrangement of major equipments. This should be remedied by October 2005. In April 2005, we obtained free publicity as part of the National Trust of NSW Heritage Week. You will have also noted a second new sign just inside the Parkhill Driveway entrance.

Acquisitions. On 23rd October 2004, the Museum received a WWI Artillery Banner from the Gunner Signallers Club in Brisbane; a group of former 1950s National Servicemen who had been looking after the Banner for many years. 15 of their number travelled to North Fort for the presentation which took place after the 2004 AGM.

On 23rd February 2005, at the close of the launch of Peter Oppenheim's book, Major General John Whitelaw presented to the Company a framed display of the ribbons of medals and decorations which he and members of the Whitelaw family had received. This adds to the significant number of gifts and loans that General Whitelaw has placed in the care of the Museum.

North Fort Café. The Cafe remains the most scenic place for coffee on the Harbour. Under Kerry Read's management it is a critical part of the North Fort's operations. We need more volunteers to help in the Cafe, but the Company continues to value the work done by Kerry and her team.

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. The rapport developed between the Company and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust continues through the conduct of tours on a monthly basis. The future development of facilities and the creation of the North Head Sanctuary remains a key interest of the Board.

The Future. North Fort remains a site that is unequalled in its relevance and importance to Australian artillery heritage. The continued operation of the National Artillery Museum at North Head must be an imperative in the minds of all gunners.

Finally, I acknowledge the work undertaken by the staff of the Museum, in particular the efforts made in improving the infrastructure within the Museum and their assistance in several Company activities. The Board recognised the retirement on 30th June 2005 of Museum Director Major Mike Laurence by presenting him with a Certificate of Appreciation.

In conclusion, I thank all who give so much of their time and effort to running North Fort - Home of The National Artillery Museum.

John L Macpherson Lt Col RAA (Retd)  
31st August 2005

## **THE WHITELAW MEDAL COLLECTION GIFTED TO MUSEUM**

At the Museum in February, Major General John Whitelaw presented a remarkable montage of the ribbons associated with the honours and awards bestowed on his father, his brothers, his wife and family, and, of course, his own. Elegantly displayed on red velvet complete (which the photograph does not do justice to its colour), and complete with Gunner badge, the gift was accepted by the Chairman of the RAA Historical Company Board, John Macpherson.

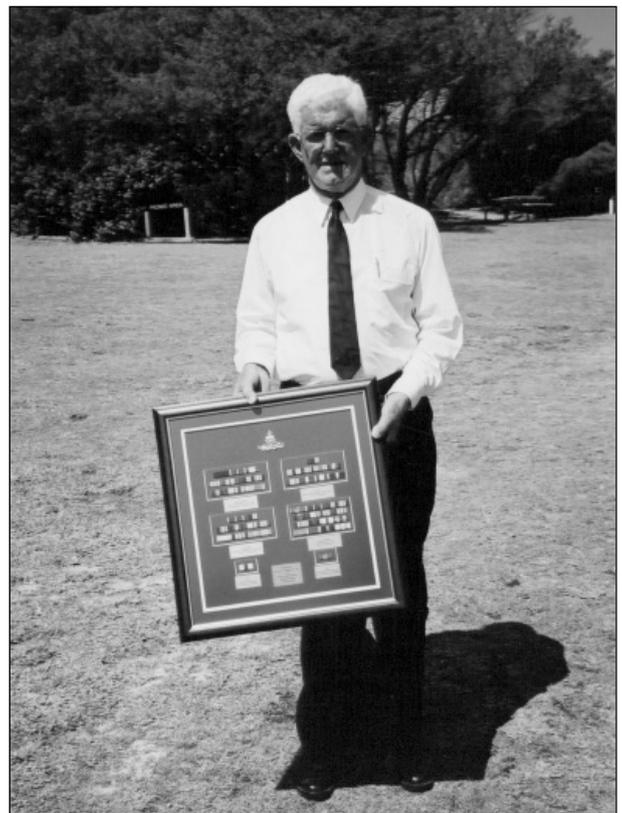
### **The Whitelaws, recipients of these medals and their defining RAA and community areas are:**

- Major General John Stewart Whitelaw, CB CBE MGRA
- Major Price Stewart (Norman) Whitelaw, ED 2/2 Field Regiment
- Brigadier Frederick Thomas Whitelaw, CBE 152 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery
- Major General John Whitelaw, AO, CBE 4 Field Regiment
- Mrs Nancy Gould Whitelaw VAD\*
- Mrs Nancy Lockhart Whitelaw, OAM AWM\*\*

### **The honours and awards (28 in total) are as follows in alphabetical order:**

- AASM 1945-75 Australian Active Service Medal
- ASM 1939-45 Australian Service Medal
- ASM 1945 Australian Service Medal
- AO Order of Australia
- Bronze Star (United States of America)
- BWM 1914-18 (British)
- BWM 1939-45 (British)
- CB Commander Order of the Bath
- CBE Commander, Order of the British Empire
- CSM Civil Service Medal
- Coronation Medal, King George VI
- Coronation Medal, Queen Elizabeth II
- Defence Medal (British)

- Defence Force Service Medal, with Clasp
- Dutch War Medal
- ED Efficiency Decoration
- EM Efficiency Medal
- Silver Jubilee Medal, Queen Elizabeth II
- Greek War Medal
- MID Mentioned in Despatches
- National Medal, with Clasp
- OAM Order of Australia Medal
- Pacific Star
- Philippines Liberty Medal
- UN Korea Medal (United Nations)
- Victory Medal WW I
- Vietnam Medal
- Vietnam Campaign Medal (Vietnamese Govt -1960)
- \* Voluntary Aid Detachment
- \*\* Australian War Memorial



RAAHC Chairman John Macpherson holds the Whitelaw Family medal collection after its presentation to the National Museum in February this year. The collection is complete with Gunner badge (Editor photo)

## AN ARTILLERYMAN'S MONUMENT AT CAMERON CORNER

**This monument is in a most unlikely place – set in the barren, red sand hills and Spinifex of the Corner Country that can only be reached by an expedition of some kind, and is not for the faint hearted.**

This little vignette of Gunner history shows how an individual and his friends applied the Digger virtues of mateship and enterprise to bring about an artillery memorial at Cameron Corner in south west Queensland. Cannonball readers will remember Arthur Burke's obituary in December last year of Alexander John Clayton 'Bwana' Nall, who retired as a warrant officer in 1985 after an adventurous life. Nall had a dream which he realised – to establish a store at Cameron Corner. This he did with the help of several Army mates, Peter Bruce, Chris Reid and Garry Jones. There, about 20 metres from the white corner post is a granite block on which is mounted a brass plaque, on which is inscribed a verse, at the bottom of which are the Gunner and Army badges, and 'UBIQUE'. The verse (see below) in its evocative way captures the spirit of the man. Behind stands a four metre flagpole.



The memorial Plaque to Sandy NALL set in stone at Cameron Corner has a flagpole directly behind it and native flowers at its base. You must pass it from the car park to approach the Corner Store. (Editor photo)

Peter Bruce said, “ that while Sandy and I were at the School of Artillery in Manly we made several trips our to Tibooburra and Cameron Corner. Sandy had been out there quite a bit and he and his then wife Katherine loved the place. One summer and I believe it was about the mid 80s Sandy and I went out to the Corner and Sandy finalised his plans to build the “Corner Store”. We camped on the very spot where the store is now. He talked about his vision for the place. We then drove to near Oakey in Queensland where the owner of the corner country lived. Sandy was able to take possession of the last square mile of South West Queensland in the form of a lease of Crown Land. After his discharge, Sandy and Katherine moved out to the Corner and established the “Corner Store”. There are many tales to be told of his exploits out there but they are probably best kept for the campfire yarns. Years later Sandy sold out the store and moved into Tibooburra, where he ended up running a vehicle recovery business and tyre repair business.

“ The corner country was very special to Sandy and over the years, Chris Reid, Garry Jones and myself at various times would gather in Tibooburra and spend some time with Sandy in the Corner Country or up at Innamincka on Cooper Creek. Sandy and his partner of later years (Wanda) would spend many happy hours on the Cooper.

“Sandy's funeral was held in Broken Hill but it was decided then and there to do something special for him at the Corner. Garry and Chris were the driving force behind it and all was completed by Anzac Day this year. Only Garry and Chris and some locals attended the service at the Corner. We thought there may have been more of his Army mates attend but perhaps he would have been happy knowing it was a fairly quiet affair.”

The inscriptions on the plaque are as follows:

Sandy NALL  
20.05.40      18.11.04  
In special places  
There is a river that runs cool and clear  
Deep in a Blue Mountain gorge'.  
There's a desert dune by the Corner Post  
And here a dream you would forge.  
There's a town not far where  
Love and Friendships ever sewn, the  
Place of many rocks you proudly call home.  
There's an outback creek where yellowbelly run  
And Corella shriek in the setting sun.  
In these special places many  
memories are strewn,  
And there your spirit is forever hewn.  
UBIQUE

## WOODEN WHEEL WONDERS OF 1939

'Horses for courses? An interesting small document unearthed recently lists the complete establishment for the 5th Military District Ordnance Workshops on 4 September 1939 (the day after World War II started). The establishment was one Lieutenant, one Warrant Officer Class 1 Artificer, two Sergeants, nine Corporals, three Privates, two 'cadets' and 11 civilian workers. Transport allotted to the workshop consisted of: 1 x Bedford soft top

utility, 1 x wheelbarrow (complete with steel wheel) and 1 x 'Sampson' hand truck. Believe it or not, even at that late date, the main work effort for the Workshop consisted of repairing wooden wagon wheels – for GS wagons, gun limbers, field kitchens and field ambulances! This apparently changed in mid-1940 when the Workshop suddenly found itself tasked with converting 18 pounder guns, 4.5 inch howitzers and their limbers to rubber tyres. From that time on the Workshop never touched another piece of horse drawn equipment.'

*Source: Le Grogard, March 2004*

## DAVID BROOK POSES: THE CONUNDRUM - 'REGULATIONS CONCERNING TARGET PRACTICE'

The following paragraph is taken from the Hydrographer RN publication 'The Australia Pilot Vol 1, 1918' and repeated in the 1930 edition. It has been deleted from the 1960 and succeeding editions:

'All ships and boats should be kept at a distance of at least 800 yards to the left and one mile to the right of the line of fire from a distance of 6000 yards from the battery.'

There seems to be quite a disproportionate buffer zone to the right of the LoF – 2000 yards compared to 800. I assume that the principal reason for this is the combined effects of drift, wind and rotation of the earth, the last depending on the direction of the LoF and range. Another factor is the ricochet of the projectile which is again dependent on range and Angle of Arrival (AofA).

I have done some calculations using the 6in Mk XI Range Tables and AT Vol V Part 1 'Coast Gunnery' Pamphlet No 5 'Ballistics' 1946, but at no stage can I reach a total drift and cross wind correction exceeding 291 yards based on a range of 6000 yards, and a cross wind of 15

knots (22fs) ! The ricochet effect is of course an added factor. With an Angle of Sight of say minus 17 minutes, an AofA of 4deg 38mins for 6000 yards, there is no doubt that the projectile will ricochet. The points of graze may be either to the right or left, a thing that I know from my time doing overwater recovery at Port Wakefield. The practical formula for estimating the range to be cleared when firing in a seawards role is Range plus one third Range where the range corresponds to an AofA of 15 degrees. For the 6in Mk XI, this range is 13833 yards.

An examination of 'The Text Book of Gunnery Part 1, 1907', page 131 describes a firing at Shoeburyness with a 9.2in gun with an elevation of 40deg and MV 2375fs and which fired a shot weighing 380lbs to a range over 20000 yards. The drift in this instance was over 1000 yards to the right of the plane of departure. The book gives no further detail regarding wind strength and direction, whether the sights automatically catered for drift or whether rotation of the earth was taken into account.

Can any former Coast Gunner comment on the above and explain why there is such a disparity between left and right distances from the LoF. Brig Ken Fullford's book 'We Stood and Waited' does not throw any light on the topic but he may know the answer. Leave it with you.

*DNB*

## RETIREMENT OF MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Were you to scatter peppercorns over on a page of text of a detailed orbat (down to NCO level) of divisional artillery and infantry arms over the last 30 plus years you would be hard pressed to find a position that Mike Laurence had not occupied during his long service. From Cadet Under Officer in The Kings School Cadets to his retirement on 30 June last as Officer Commanding/Museum Director, Mike accumulated an extraordinary varied range of jobs. Beginning as an infanteer with the Scotties of 2 RNSWR (CMF/ARES), he mastered infantry lore and weapons expertise as he rose through the ranks. As a volunteer researcher for Professor Bill Gammage on his thesis on 1914-18 soldiers' motivations, published as "The Broken Years" with Dr Bruce Kent of ANU, it kindled his abiding interest in military history.



Corporal Mike Laurence, with the Honorary Colonel Sir Roden Cutler, VC, AK, KCMG, KCVO, CBE, at Singleton 1967 ~ his first shoot since Syria in 1941.

Not content with the local scene, plus the call of an obligatory rite of passage as a young man to see the world, the ambitious Laurence soldiered for three years in the UK with two battalions of The Royal Green Jackets, rising to acting platoon commander, including service all over Europe. Of this period of his military education, Mike said, "It was fantastic experience, something you could never replicate here." By 1973 he was a warrant officer, before being commissioned with SUR in May 1977. From this milestone Mike's career blossomed when he transferred to our Regiment.

A glance at his CV for the next 25 years covers postings in virtually every gunner discipline – first a grounding in locating at 131 Div Locating Battery in sound ranging, survey, radar and artillery intelligence, and later as Radar Troop Commander at Manly and then as SR Troop Commander at Belmore with 133 Locating Battery. At HQ 2 Division he was SO3 LOG for six months on full time service. An easy transition to BK and FO and later command of field batteries (113 at Newcastle and 28 at Dee Why) followed. It was at the former posting that he first encountered the physical importance of an artillery museum, being a member of the founding board at Fort Scratchley. He never lost his enthusiasm for preserving the heritage of the Regiment. He had joined the RAA Historical Society when Manly Depot was closed down and became involved with its early development. A period as BC HQ Battery 23 Field Regt bought him in contact with the restoration of Artillery Vehicles and renewed his enthusiasm for heritage preservation. During his postings at HQ 2 Div Arty and HQ 2 Div he continued to keep up his interest in Gunner History.

Career-wise, there was for him a singular disappointment in the years 1988-89 when he had to 'scratch' from Senior Staff College due to his business commitments. The same external forces saw him forsake his third BC's role and opt for 'civvy street'. However, retirement was never part of Mike Laurence's lexicon, and five years later he was back in uniform as SO2 (ARES) to Brigadiers Peter Kirkpatrick and George Salmon on Regimental duties.

In 2000, Mike was appointed Officer Commanding/Museum Director at the RAA National Museum, whereupon he went to the Deakin University for their Museum Studies course. He has been involved at North Head as a Friend of the Museum since 1996, and was PMC from 2001-05. Membership of the Locating Association and 7 Field Regiment Association are solid links with his previous service.

Of his recent military career, Mike Laurence said, "North Head is a perfect place in Australia for the display and interpretation of our artillery heritage. The people of Manly and surrounds are very aware of this, and more importantly, very supportive. I look forward to the future with every confidence that we can mount exhibitions that are interactive, educational and have national appeal."

## A 'REST' DAY ON THE WESTERN FRONT IN 102 HOWITZER BATTERY

102 Howitzer Battery is on the Somme, where they will spend from August to October 1917. Brigade Order No. 107 issued by Lieut. Colonel D H Moore, detailed the following instructions for a 'period of rest'.

**DAILY PROGRAMME:** The current week up to and including the 16th inst. is to be treated as a period of rest. Only stable duties and necessary fatigues will be carried out. The following hours of work are given as a guide and should be closely adhered to:

|   |       |        |
|---|-------|--------|
| Reveille  | x x x | 6am    |
| Stables   | x x x | 6.30am |
| Breakfast   | x x x | 8am    |
| Parade for Fatigues - Grazing &c                                  |       | 9am    |
| Stables and Watering<br>(1 hour's grooming exclusive of watering) |       | 11am   |
| Parade – (Harness and vehicles cleaning)                          |       | 2pm    |
| Stables and watering  |       | 4 pm   |
| All work to be finished as soon after 5 pm as possible.           |       |        |

**WATERING** 2nd FAB will control watering point at Malhove. They will issue roster for watering and see troughs are erected and maintained.

**ORDNANCE** Will be administered by DADOS\*, 5th Australian Division. Indent will be handed to WO Keats attached to No.1 Australian Divisional Train.

**WAGONS** On scale of one per battery will be attached from DAC\*\*. Batteries will supply their own teams.

**GRAVEL** Authority has been obtained for a supply of gravel. Units requiring same will send for authority from this office.

**MOTOR LORRY** Motor lorry is attached to 1st FA Brigade and is available on demand for

Brigades and DAC. It may be used for obtaining stores from canteen etc.,

**LEAVE** Leave to St. Omer may be granted to 20% strength but bearer must be clear of St. Omer by 8.30 pm. St. Omer, Hazebrouck and Cassel are out of bounds to all ranks except those who have passes which will not be transferable. All passes must be handed to Battery Orderly Sergeants.

\* Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services

\*\* Divisional Ammunition Column

When out of the line, that is to say not 'at rest', the following routine was carried out.

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 6 am            | Reveille  |
| 6.30 to 7.30    | Stables   |
| 8 am            | Breakfast   |
| 9 am            | General Parade  |
| 9am to 11 am    | Drivers exercising horses<br>Gunnery laying and standing<br>gun drill |
|                 | Specialists signalling  |
| 11.30 to 12.30  | Stables   |
| 1 pm            | Dinner  |
| 2.30 to 3.30 pm | Dismounted Drill  |
| 4.30 to 5.30 pm | Stables   |
| 6 pm to 7 pm    | Extra Drill Parade  |
| 6.30 pm         | Guard mounts Retreat  |
| 9.45 pm         | Lights Out  |

*These are excerpts from an exquisitely prepared and presented family history, soon to be presented to the RAAHC Archives. It is the story of four Griffin brothers from Victoria in the Great War and the exploits of the 102nd Howitzer Battery, 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, 1st Australian Division in which Bombardier Stan Griffin served. It is illustrated with photographs, maps and documents. 159 pages in length, its author Peter G Griffin has spared nothing to create this magnificent book. This excerpt is at p. 95*

**EMULATE THE CAT.....**

*This excerpt on the introduction of strict hygiene measures into units new to Egyptian Western Desert conditions has passed into the regimental folklore of 2/1 Field Regiment. Their scribe, NX 107 (aka Ted Fulton) noted:*

“Prior to our move into the Western Desert for the Libyan campaign an Administrative Instruction and Operation Order was issued from HQ 6 Division for the campaign. The concluding paragraph to the order was, “EMULATE THE CAT AND BURY YOUR FAECE”. Under the circumstances it was an admirable instruction in personal hygiene despite the presence of the ever –present dung beetle which proved to be such an interesting insect and was a topical conversation piece to us all.

But to DOAG, our CO, the thought of many shovels, etc., which were intended to be used for the construction of gun pits and slit trenches being used for the mundane task envisioned by Div HQ was just ‘NOT ON’.

Doag’s fertile mind came up with the alternative of constructing Barker’s Bardia Bogging Boxes from discarded petrol cases and 4 gallon petrol cans which were a feature of the Libyan campaign. The unit LAD was approached to fashion a the petrol cans to suit the ides and to avoid emasculation of the user by folding the inner sides of the can – this was achieved. The next move was to fashion the wooden case to accommodate the user. This was achieved by removing the centre slat of one top of the case and all the slats of the reverse side and then placing the cans in the skeleton of the case.

The IO and LAD commander helped with the construction of the first of many BBB Boxes which were used by the regiment in the campaign with great effect and to the annoyance of the Libyan flies.”

As to the circumstances of its use in action, NX 107 added this anecdote, viz. “ I can recall one memorable occasion when Gunner R E Wright was using the device in the vicinity of RHQ. He was reading to pass the time away when we were spotted by an Italian Air OP. The observer decided to use the 8 inch guns on the grounded cruiser in Tobruk harbour and sent over a couple of rounds to stir us up. One shell landed in a cloud of smoke and dust just behind the BBB Box being used by Wright, which disturbed his reverie. When he recovered his senses he came running up to the RHQ truck with his shorts around his ankles calling out, ‘What happened? What was that?’, or words to that effect.

‘Hans’ Andersen (adjutant) and myself, who had taken cover beside the wheel of the truck, burst out laughing and reminded Gunner Wright that he said he was a friend of Goering and had been spared.’

(Gunner Wright was a scotch whiskey representative who had been stranded in Australia in 1939 by the declaration of war. He died in a German POW camp, after being taken captive in Greece.)

*Source: Kibbles Post*

**THE NUMBERS GAME - 1**

**PRODUCTION OF ALLIED & AXIS  
ARTILLERY EQUIPMENTS (incl A Tank and  
AA)**

|                | GUNS    | MORTARS |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| United States  | 257,390 | 105,054 |
| Soviet Union   | 516,648 | 403,350 |
| United Kingdom | 124,877 | 120,950 |
| Canada         | 10,552  | 20,619  |
| Australia, NZ  | 5,215   | 25,395  |

*Source: J Ellis, Data Book of WW 2, Table 88*

**THE 'ORDNANCE LAMENT'  
IN VIETNAM**

As everybody who served in or has a good working knowledge of the Viet Nam war knows, the early Australian logistic service came in for its share of criticism, sometimes unfairly. RAAOC units in the Bien Hoa and Nui Dat areas were 2 Composite Ordnance Company (2 COC) and 1 Ordnance Field Park (1OFP),

later followed by 2 Advanced Ordnance Depot (2AOD). Under the circumstances the troops, the staff and the wharfies were on the receiving end of stories that grew in exaggeration with the telling or media exposure.

This poem was penned in 1966 by a New Zealander (RNAOC), Sergeant Steve Day. The source of this story, 'The Vietnam Newsletter' (p. 23, 2004), suggests it is sung to the tune of 'The Pub With No Beer'.

"Oh its lonesome at night, away from kindred and all  
By the KVA's light and the wild Diggers call  
But there's nothing more dreadful, nor such a bore  
As an Ordnance Depot, without ordnance stores.

The boss went all cranky, his officers went mad  
When the Boonaroo came, they all acted glad  
Then she dropped forty tons, on this foreign shore  
And the Skipper called down, 'There aint any more'.

Many long hours we've spent digging sand  
Driving star pickets in this steamy land  
Running out of wire, and then shifting tents  
Without any stores, this just makes no sense.

The Units all holler, and we cringe in fear  
We gain very little courage, on hot Yankee beer  
So we put up more shelters, and try not to worry  
Those Sydney wharfies are not in a hurry.

The VC lean back and laugh off their heads  
When they pass down the road, and see empty sheds  
They know they're safe, while the Aussies are here  
'cause they landed in Vietnam without any gear.

When the Jeparit comes in we hope she will bring  
A little bit more than two balls of string  
But if she should fail, then one thing is clear  
It'll be a bloody sight safer, in a pub with no beer."

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

YOUR ADDRESS BACK PAGE OF THIS ISSUE HAS A PANEL WITH 'SUBS DUE' & DATE  
IF THIS SHOWS '9-2005', **THEN YOU MUST RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION  
ON THE FORM BELOW. MEMBERSHIP IS \$25 AND CANNONBALL \$15.  
TOTAL \$40 IF YOU RENEW BOTH.**

(payment in advance, up to five years is acceptable) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please find enclosed a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Cheque / Money Order / cash to the amount of Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Receipt Required Yes / No**

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Receipt No \_\_\_\_\_

## **'MARCH OFF 104TH FIELD BATTERY'** **ARTHUR BURKE**

To the nostalgic tune of 'Auld Lang Syne', the 104th Field Battery drove off the 1st Field Regiment RAA parade into suspended animation on Saturday afternoon, 2 July 2004.

The post Second World War version of the 104th was raised on 1 September 1965 as a medium battery during the expansion of the RAA for the Vietnam War. When the 107th Field Battery left 12th Field Regiment RAA for service in Malaysia, 104th replaced it in a field role on 1 April 1967. It deployed to Vietnam with this unit in May 1968 for 12 months in direct support to 4 RAR/NZ. It returned for a second tour in 1971, but the Labor Party's election win in December that year saw it home for Christmas. The 104th was the last RAA unit to serve in the Vietnam War.

When the 8th and 12th Regiments amalgamated in November 1973, 104th Field Battery went into suspended animation. Re-raised in November 1977 as part of the 8th/12th, it acted as an infantry company in the Army force

which secured Bowral (between Sydney and Canberra) for the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference following the bomb blast at the Sydney Hilton Hotel in February 1978. The Battery again went into suspended animation on 11 June 1979. When Army Reserve Integration became the flavour of the time in the mid 1980s, the 104th emerged once again as an Army Reserve sub-unit of 1st Field Regiment RAA at Enoggera. It became part of the Ready Reserve Scheme in 1997 until that, also, was terminated in 2000. From that time, it has remained at Enoggera with progressively decreasing numbers.

An establishment review of 1st Field Regiment last year amalgamated it with 13th Field Battery and at the RAA Regimental Conference in October 2004, it was agreed that the combined sub-unit would be known as the 13th Field Battery primarily because this was the last remaining element of the once proud 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade and later 5th Field Regiment RAA which had its home in south-east Queensland since 1921 (apart for its suspended animation 1946–54).

The 'Germs' as they proudly call themselves, were sadly once more removed from the Army's Order of Battle on 2 July 2005.

## **FINDING 101'S RAA STANDARD**

Arthur Burke saw a rather unique photo of an RAA Standard emblazoned '101' in the Golden Anniversary issue of 'Gunfire', the magazine of the RAA Association of NSW. It was being displayed by Lieutenant Neil Harden (A Field Battery) WO1 D'Arcy Hayes (RSM 1st Field Regiment) about late 1959.

Fortunately, the donor of the photo, Brigadier Ken Fullford had provided a caption stating that the RAA Association of NSW had presented this to the 101st just before they deployed to Malaya to relieve A Field Battery in 1959.

This Standard is quite unique for a couple of reasons. First, only independent RAA batteries are authorised to hold and fly a Standard; and second, because the 101st was the last RAA field battery to be independent in Malaya. Half way through its tour of duty, the Malayan Emergency was declared over, the Battery lost its independence and it became a sub-unit of 26th Field Regiment RA in Malacca.

The RAA adopted the RA Standard in 1952 and it is Arthur's assumption that when 105th Field Battery was raised in 1955 for service in Malaya, no one had thought about issuing independent batteries with such a prestigious item. By the time 100 (A) Field Battery replaced the 105th, approvals obviously included independent batteries for it deployed with its own Standard.

The big question is, of course, where is this 101st Standard now? Exhaustive enquiries with 101 members from the 1959-61 tour have included battery captain Hugh Stewart,

troop commander Jock Jenvey, TARA (Technical Assistant Royal Artillery) Sergeant Len Cooper and gun Bombardier Jim King. To the best of any of their knowledge, the RAA Standard was never flown or held whilst they were in Malaya or Malaysia.

Salvation appeared, however, when a phone call to the 101st battery commander (59-61) Peter Norton's widow, Polly brought back memories of 'that special banner that Peter said could only be flown on very rare occasions'. She confirmed its existence in Malaysia and was quite certain that Peter did not bring it back to Australia when he departed for Staff College in mid 1961.

A previous article by Arthur Burke highlighted a plaintiff plea from Len Cooper to locate the 101st Field Battery flag which was flown in Malaya 1959-61. Believe it or not, this was found in the most obvious place framed on the wall outside the Battery Commander 101st Medium Battery's office in Darwin.

Now the 101st appears to have lost their RAA Standard. This is a much more serious offence for such a unique piece of history. Arthur was just about to send out an all points bulleting offering, 'If you have 101's RAA Standard adorning the wall behind your home bar, please wrap it in plain brown paper and post it to Arthur Burke (7 Aspley Court, Aspley, Q 4034) and nothing will be said - no names and no pack drill.'

Then, out of the blue (or at least via email out of the ether), the commanding officer of 8th/12th Medium Regiment RAA advised that 'the 101 RAA Standard is currently located in Darwin within the HQ of 101 Mdm Bty. It has been encased and takes pride of place directly opposite the entrance to the HQ bld.'

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM DAVID BROOK

### MULTI BARREL ROCKET LAUNCHER

The picture of the 30 barrel rocket launcher in the June 'Cannonball' on page 7 is I believe a 'Projector, Rocket, 3-inch, No 8 Mk 1' which was introduced into the British Army in the late 1944-45 period. They were laid with a Dial Sight and Sight Clinometer. The 50% zone of a salvo at 6000yds was 235 yards long and 240 yards wide. It became known as the 'Land Mattress'. Presumably the British Government sent this one to Woomera for some trial or otherwise. A lighter version was also produced for jungle warfare. I have other technical details if needed.

Your question re 'sintered iron' brought back memories of Chemistry at Shrivenham. From memory the process was called 'sintering' at RMCS and the Germans used the process to sinter iron for driving bands on some experimental shell. We did some experiments making some but whilst we had plenty of heat, we didn't have the pressure to finish the job properly. Obviously the British used the same licence. If the book was by Ian Hogg, then I can understand because he was the Master Gunner at RMCS for many years!

## GREAT MOMENTS IN GUNNERY NO 12

*The Scene: Berbera, Italian Somaliland,  
18 August 1941.*

When Italy came into the war, Mussolini started his campaign to capture the Suez Canal. Italian troops invaded British and French Somaliland. HMAS Hobart, Capt. T K Morrison, had already, on 10 August, deployed a 3 pounder Hotchkiss gun, with 40 rounds of ammunition, crewed by three naval personnel, to help the defence of Berbera, which the Italian Regia Aeronautica had already bombed with some effect. Damage had been caused to The Residency, the Governor's home.

As the Italians advanced, the last British residents (and troops) were taken off by HMAS Hobart. As the governor came aboard, the headlights of the Italian forces could be seen coming down the road. The skipper of Hobart asked, "Is there anything we should destroy before they get there?". "Yes" replied the governor. "Put a couple of shells through that building. I never want to see it again". Capt Morrison obliged, firing 60 rounds of 6 inch into The Residency, police barracks etc.

Berbera was captured, and so was the naval gun detachment, who, after a period of captivity, were freed on 1 June 1942 after the defeat of the Italian forces in that theatre.

*Sources: 'Dial Sight', Vol. LXI/2, April 2005; H Gill, The RAN 1939-42, p.205.*

## VALE

### Major General The Rev. I G C Durie, CBE, RA (1944-2005)

Gunner officers who served in the first Gulf War of 1991 with the then CRA, 1 (UK) Armoured Division or who knew Durie during their service with the British Army will be saddened to learn of his death in a motor accident in Rumania in April this year.

Durie's career was a copybook one that coincided with the opportunity for command in 1991. He joined the Army in 1962 and after two years at Sandhurst was allotted to Artillery, following a family tradition. He took a degree in mechanical sciences at Cambridge, served in Germany, on the staff of RSA, staff college, land warfare school and his terminal appointment was DRA in 1994-6. He later took holy orders in the Anglican faith and gave the rest of his life to a wide ministry, in UK and internationally.

**Lieut Karl Robertson, 2/1 Survey Regiment,** of Camberwell, Victoria and subscriber to Cannonball and contributor to his regiment's history, died on 17 November 2004.

## NEW HELP FOR RESEARCHERS

Thanks to the interest and dedication of **Major General Michael O'Brien**, researchers and writers now have a publication that will be of enormous interest and help to them. Titled, **'Australian Army. Tactical and Instructional Pamphlets and Books: A Bibliography'**. The following is a general outline of the books Introduction.

'The Australian Army fought its battles in WWI using such principles outlined in Field Service Regulations 1909... and Field Service Pocket Books. The Australian Army developed its own doctrine and later published its own pamphlets.' As O'Brien says, 'In more recent times Army Doctrine has been almost exclusively Australian'.

The publications are extensive, and its purpose is to 'list and also help locate' the instructional and tactical literature of the Australian Army and its precursor Armies of pre-Federation Australian States.'

'The works listed were official and frequently not available to the public, at least when first issued. Few libraries have extensive holdings and none (not even AWM) is complete. The works chosen for inclusion are pamphlets published or re-published (in print or other form) in Australia. Where pamphlets (predominantly British and often first published by the War Office) have been reproduced in Australia, the local printer has been listed as publisher to help distinguish various editions and reprints.'

'The pamphlets written and published outside officialdom, particularly during wartime, and intended for military use and guidance, have also been included. **However it should be noted that a great majority of books on Army subjects that have been privately written or published have been excluded.**'

There is a bibliography at the end which lists the key writings on Australian Army Doctrine and

its publications, and other 'key sources' of Army bibliographical information. An Appendix lists abbreviations and acronyms.

The author notes that 'pamphlets' come in many forms, from hardback to ring-bound. Official books to help officers with promotion examinations are included. Classification by subject is logical and sections vary in size. More than 50 descriptive groups supplement these larger sections. No lists of amendments are included.

**The author has excluded** quite a few categories, some of which (in the broad) are:

Joint Service Publications, corps/regimental gradation lists; Australian Changes in War Materiel (incl. Repair, spare parts listings, maintenance scales, complete equipment schedules and EME instructions); MBIs and AROs; intelligence summaries produced during the war. Serials such as Commonwealth Military Journal, Salt, Army, Army Magazine, Cadet Journal, Combat Arms and Australian Army Journal; Cartographic and trench maps; roneoed précis ; no advance or draft copies of pamphlets; extensive military bibliographies from well known publishers, etc..

Michael O'Brien singles out for special praise the National Artillery Museum Library for its well organised and catalogued collection, and Mr R C M Toplis and Major General John Whitelaw in particular for their help.

*Note: Quotations are from pages iii and iv of the Introduction.*

## BEQUESTS

Many voluntary organizations depend for their survival upon money from generous supporters who have made bequests in their wills. Our RAA Historical Company, as a registered organization, is no different. Our management respectfully asks you to consider making a bequest to benefit our Museum and Collections in your will. Suggest it to your regimental colleagues who are not members of the company.

**REGIMENTAL UPDATE**

JUNE 2005

MAJGEN F X Roberts AO, has been appointed as the Head National Operations Division (HNOD) of CSIG with effect 14 Jun 05; in due course, he will transition to the APS for this appointment.

BRIG A. Power CSC, will be promoted to MAJGEN and posted to COMD DJFHQ with effect from 15 Jul 05

The Chief of Army has released the following appointments for 2006.

They are:

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| WO1 B. Franklin   | RSM 7 Fd Regt,    |
| WO1 R. J. Morland | RSM 8/12 Mdm Regt |
| WO1 P. Simic      | RSM 23 Fd Regt.   |

**LAND 17** is the Artillery Replacement Project. The project seeks to enhance or replace Army's existing fleet of 105mm and 155mm guns with a system that has greater range and lethality. Additionally, the project will introduce a network enabled command and fire control system and a family of artillery delivered high precision munitions. The project will also examine upgrading the existing 155mm M198 weapon platform. The project has yet to be approved by Cabinet.

### **7 Fd Regt (Sydney) - Queen's Birthday Salute 11 Jun 05**

Gunners from 7th Field Regiment fired a 21 Gun Salute as part of Sydney's Queen's Birthday celebrations. 30 soldiers manning four 105mm Hamel Field Guns fired the Australian Defence Force's Salute. The firing was greeted with roars of approval from spectators across Sydney Harbour.

### **16 Fd Bty (Tasmania)**

The Queens Birthday Salute conducted at the Cenotaph in Hobart was wet and windy, but proved to be a great success, A sizeable crowd braved the conditions to watch the Battery. In early June the Governor of Tasmania, His Excellency The Hon. William J.E. Cox AC, RFD, ED (former CO 6 Fd Regt) unveiled a memorial in Launceston commemorating the service of Gunners past and present and their contribution to the defence of Australia. The ceremony was well attended by the Gunner community, confirming that Gunnery in Tasmania is alive and well.

### **Anniversaries.**

The following RAA anniversaries took place in July / August

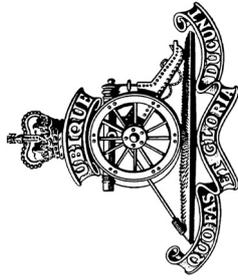
|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 6 July   | 7 Fd Bty                                  |
| 17 July  | 23 Fd Regt                                |
| 1 August | Royal Regiment of<br>Australian Artillery |
| 1 August | A Fd Battery                              |

### **ACQUISITIONS (8/2005)**

| Source      | Object  |
|-------------|---|
|             |   |
| A Bromley   | Three boxes of Predictor spare parts  |
| S Horden    | Papers, newspaper clippings and photo album belonging to LTCOL A R M Gibson, CO 2/1 AA Regt |
| P Oppenheim | Book: Submarine Mines & Torpedoes as Applied to Harbour Defence                             |

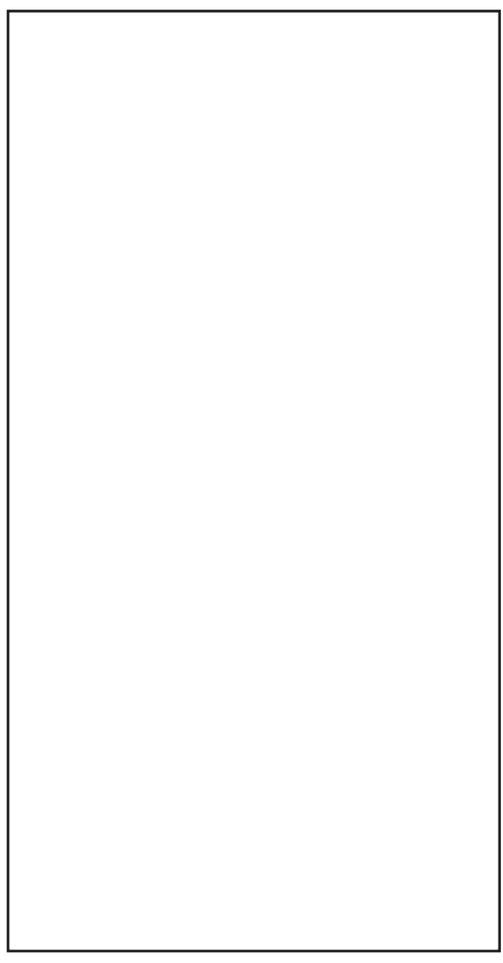
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