

THE ARTILLERY NEWS.

JUNE 2008 - AUGUST 2008



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R.A.A.A.T. NORTHERN HISTORICAL WING.

The second informal meeting for 2008 was held at the QV Museum & Art Gallery, Inveresk Complex, on Thursday 17th April.

It was well-attended and commenced at 2.00p.m. sharp.

Those in attendance were: Bevan Filce, Gunter Breier, Graeme Petterwood, Gordon Rowlings, Frank Stokes, Trevor Giles, Rick Wood, Mark Cameron, Marc Smith, Harold Mullins, and co-ordinator Norman Andrews (Hon. Sec.) Charles Tee sent an apology.

The conversations mainly centered around arrangements for Anzac Day – and it was decided that those who were unable to participate in the march from Princes Square to the Cenotaph would meet at the reserved seating area in Royal Park.

Special '*Reserved Seating*' tickets obtained from the **Launceston City Council**. were distributed by **Harold Mullins** to ensure that those non-marching ex-servicemen and women and their families or carers, who were entitled, got a seat before the general public decided to 'see an empty seat and take it' - as has happened on previous occasions - and did again just prior to the service.

It was also extremely fortunate that our new **Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmania Flag** and **Banner** were presented at our meeting by **Mark Cameron**. It was decided to use the new flag during the march and as a rallying point for the R.A.A.T. at Royal Park Cenotaph on Anzac Day – as in fact it was.



ANZAC DAY 2008

John McIntee, Gunter Breier and Graeme Petterwood with the new design R.A.A.A.T Flag.

With a scheduled Shoot being arranged for later in the year, the group had a chat about things and decided to check and discuss, at our next meeting in June, the possibility of some of us attending. However, with the pressure on the Battery - with the new logistics and structures being implemented – it may be difficult to arrange.

The 'gun-pit' talk dwindled at about 2.40 p.m. and we decided to take some very enjoyable refreshments and get away a bit earlier than usual – but we got roped into washing up and de-crumbing the meeting room.

A Gunner is capable of anything!

Handy site: - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artillery>

OBSERVATIONS OF ANZAC DAY LAUNCESTON - 25th April, 2008. By Graeme Petterwood

A phone call, a few days earlier from my daughters, asking if I wanted to attend the Dawn Service on Anzac Day with the grand-kids was regrettably declined this year due to the fact I was not 100% fit for such an early start - and also that I had already made my arrangements for the 11.00 Service at the Cenotaph in Launceston's Royal Park..

As previously mentioned, some of our R.A.A.A.T. membership had accepted reserved seating and, those of us who had, made our way to the Royal Park, fairly early, to catch up with old mates and have a talk before the Service began at 11.00 p.m. sharp.

This year's attendance was impressive and thoroughly supported the view that many more of our younger Australians were honouring the service that had – and still is – being given by our men and women in uniform.

No war glorification here – just appreciation of the dedication and sacrifices by both those who have served, or are still serving, and those who were, or are, destined to wait.

Pastor Craig Spaulding (*Chaplain to Mayor van Zetten*), introduced the official speakers: Mayor Albert van Zetten; the R.S.L. President Ivan Elgersma; and finally, a fine young Guest Speaker, Benjamin Steyne.

(Benjamin was a student from the Launceston Christian School).

Pastor Spaulding also conducted the Service – and, although the 'Recessional' hymn was sung a little later than officially programmed – an apology was well received - with a mild dash of Aussie humour from the large crowd - as well as all the true respect the soldier's dedication deserves.

Mr. Glenn Cash presented the official R.S.L Act of Remembrance address, and then invited organizations and members of the public to lay their formal wreaths and floral tributes on the Cenotaph prior to the 'Ode' and the traditional, haunting bugle call of 'The Last Post' and - after 'The Silence' - the rousing call of 'Reveille', stirringly played by Richard Clarke (*City of Launceston R.S.L Band*) and the final hymn of praise by the Launceston International Choir.

The two anthems that Australians have fought, died and suffered under – 'God Save the Queen' – and our own National Anthem 'Advance Australia Fair' – were both sung with gusto by the participants of this year's ceremony, before we dispersed - with our memories – for another year.

LEST WE FORGET!

The small group of R.A.A.T members, including Gunter Breier and myself, and some 6 Field Gunners decided to visit the Sergeant's Mess at Paterson Barracks, in Launceston, for the traditional 'after march get-together'.

A few hours into the afternoon, after a non-stop ear-bashing session about old-times (plus a cold stubby or so later) – and most of us oldies, who weren't anaesthetized by the beaut local brew, were getting very tired.

The stiffness had kicked in, and both Gunter and I were ready for home and went out onto the street and waited for Gunter's wife to arrive as arranged.

However, I must mention one small incident that has stuck in my mind.

As we waited outside the gate, we struck up a general conversation with a young female Army Cadet, who was also waiting.

She was polite, friendly and, from her enthusiasm, she obviously enjoyed her army training at cadet level.

I must add that these clean-cut young men and women from Launceston's **AAC 'A' Coy. 601 Platoon**, had provided an impressive section within the 2008 Anzac Day parade – and what happened next proved it wasn't '*just a flash in the pan!*'

As our car arrived at the kerb, the cadet stepped forward, opened the appropriate doors and bid each of us a cheery "Good Afternoon, Sir!"

She even assisted we two creaky oldies in and closed the doors - she then stepped back smartly did an about-turn and marched back to her side of the footpath and stood easy.

Two old gun-sergeants thought she was thoroughly professional!
If her bearing and behaviour is the stuff our young cadets are made of – we
Australians are still in good hands. Thank you, Cadet? You will know who
you are – you were a thorough credit to yourself and your unit!

Royal Australian Artillery “Liaison Letter”

Quite regularly, a copy of the current Royal Australian Artillery “Liaison Letter” journal appears in this Editor’s mailbox - amongst others in the Tasmanian ‘loop’..

It’s usually very interesting reading, as it contains lots of snippets, from around the nation’s ‘gunpits’, that are well worth reporting from time to time

Mark Cameron was quick enough to beat me to the punch this time in reading his copy - and he alerted me to a Tasmanian-oriented article which I now have pleasure in giving a wider circulation amongst our members.

Thanks, Mark!

Of necessity, these articles we feature have been slightly abbreviated, but all the relevant facts are included in these ‘thumbnail’ sketches of a notable Tasmanian born Gunner.

Major General Michael Peter Crane. DSC, AM.

Michael Crane was born in Hobart and educated at St. Virgil’s College before attending the Royal Military college, Duntroon.

He was commissioned into the Royal Australian Artillery in 1980.

Michael’s early appointments were in the 4th. Field Regiment and the 8th/12th Medium Regiment. He also served as a tactics instructor at Duntroon and, following advanced gunnery training in Canada, as a gunnery instructor at the School of Artillery.

As a major, Michael served as a B.C. in 4th Field Regiment, then Staff Officer to the Army’s Chief of Personnel.

Later, as a lieutenant colonel, he worked as Deputy Director Military Strategy in ADF HQ before returning to his Regiment as C.O. In this appointment he saw operational service in East Timor.

A list of his most notable achievements include:

2000 – Promoted to colonel to command the Army Recruiting Centre.

2002 – Appointed a member of the **Order of Australia** for his services as C.O. of 4th Field Regiment and the A.R.C.

2003 – Promoted to brigadier and appointed Director General Pacific in the D of D’s International Policy Division

2005 – Chief of staff in HQ Joint Operations Command.

2006 – Assumed command of Joint Task Force 633 with full responsibility for all Aust. Forces in the Middle East area of operations.

2007 - Accepted appointment as Director General Policy Support in the Policy Development Division.

2008 –. Awarded the **Distinguished Service Cross** for his service in the Middle East. Promoted to major general and current position as Head Military Strategic Commitments

Michael is married with 3 daughters and his interests include reading, listening to jazz and playing hockey..

NORM ANDREWS

Brief report on the visit to Canberra

**Combined Battles of Coral/Balmoral Service
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
10.00 am - 13th May 08**

**12th Field Regiment Plaque Dedication
Australian War Memorial
11.30 am - 13th May 08**

**RAA NATIONAL GUNNER DINNER
Federal Golf Clubrooms
7.00 pm - 13 May 08**

**RAA National Battle of Coral Commemorative Ceremony
Mt Pleasant
10.00 am 14th May 08.**

12th May - We travelled to Canberra by XPT train and Country Link bus.

13th May - Before 9.00 am; we drove to **Anzac Parade** looking for the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** where the first of the functions - the **National Combined Battles of Coral & Balmoral Memorial Service** - was to take place. However, we found that Anzac Parade was blocked off for the officials to arrive, so we found alternative parking and walked to the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** - which is quite impressive - and found ourselves a seat opposite the officials only a few meters away.

Just before 10.00am the officials started to arrive, led by Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd**; followed by Governor-General **MAJGEN Michael Jeffrey** and his wife. The GG inspected the full guard and band; the Catafalque Party then were stationed about the Vietnam Memorial and the ceremony began with a welcome address followed by prayers..

'*The Ode*' was given by **Col Ian Ahearn** (past Adjt of **6 Fd Regt RAA**) and this was followed by '*The Last Post*', '*The Silence*' - followed by '*The Rouse*'.



Floral tributes at Vietnam Veterans Memorial 13th May 2008

A march past of current serving troops - from the corps and units which took part in the Battle of Coral/Balmoral – also included M2A2 105mm Howitzer guns towed by MK3 gun tractor.

I believe the gun crews were from **8th /12th Med Regt RAA** based in Darwin and they were reviewed by His Excellency.

Following the playing of the National Anthem, the Catafalque Party were dismounted. The officials then came across the roadway and mingled with the veterans, and the crowd, in general.

Then, we went to the Australian War Memorial to the Western Courtyard area for the next ceremony, which was the **official unveiling of 12th Field Regiment Commemorative Plaque**

The gathering was welcomed by **Steve Gower AO, AO (Mil)** director of the AWM and author of *“Guns of the Regiment”* followed by Prayers and the singing of the hymn – *‘Soldiers of Australia’* led by the **Australian Rugby Choir**.

The Commemorative address was given by **COL Don Tait (Ret’d) BK 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt RAA 1968-69** and the unveiling was done by six men (*now civilians*) who represented **HQ Bty 12 Fd Regt, 104 Fd Bty 12 Fd Regt, 161 Fd Bty RNZA, 131 Div Loc Bty , 102 Fd Bty 12 Fd Regt and “A” Fd Bty 12 Fd Regt.**

Chaplain John (Tink) Tinkler dedicated the plaque, *‘The Ode’* was delivered by **Mr John Stephens MM Gun Sgt D Gun Coral**, followed by *‘The Last Post’*, *‘The Silence’* and *‘The Rouse’* – these were followed by the National Anthem and closing prayer *‘The Royal Australian Artillery Prayer’*, followed by Thanks and Farewell by **Mr Les Partridge RSM 12 Fd Regt 1968-69.**

A lone piper piped a tune during the service.

“The Guns, Thank God, The Guns...” Rudyard Kipling

That night I took a taxi to the **Federal Golf Club** for the **RAA NATIONAL GUNNER DINNER** - which was a grand affair with all states and New Zealand represented.

The guests ranged in rank from LTGEN down to GNR - and a few misters. During the evening a composite RAA Band entertained the diners.

The dinner was hosted by **MAJGEN T R Ford AO (Ret’d)** Representative Colonel Commandant and **BRIG P D Winter CSC** Head of Regiment; Dining President **LTCOL S T Ryan** Deputy Head of Regiment, Dining Vice President **LT W C Close** School of Artillery, whilst the Banner Party consisted of **LT J Casey, SGT A Feming & SGT M Rogan 8th/12th Med Regt** and the guest speaker was **COL Ian F Ahearn (Ret’d) Gun Position Officer 102 Fd Bty** at FSB Coral (*some of our R.A.A.A.T. members will remember him as Adjutant of 6th Field Regiment RAA.*)

During the later part of the evening, Col Ahearn gave a very interesting power point presentation of his personal recollections and perspective of the events at FSB Coral mid May 1968 - he was there!

Gunners who sat at table where I was seated were: **MAJGEN P Dunn, BRIG M Phelps, COL A W English, LTCOL K Broadhead, LTCOL B Armour, CAPT S Hunter, and SGT Stewart.**

The group chatted informally and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

At the end of a most successful evening the Queens Banner was marched out and the gathered gunners chatted together before dispersing.

Next day, the **14th May**, we had to be at **Duntroon** car park by 8.30am ready to be ferried, by Defence Force buses, to Mt Pleasant for the **RAA National Battle of Coral Commemorative Ceremony** commencing at 10.00 a.m..

MAJGEN Ash Power representing the Chief of Army arrived first - followed by the Minister for Veterans Affairs, **The Hon Alan Griffin MP**.

The GG arrived and the ceremony commenced at 10am. with the Catafalque Party being positioned around the memorial.

Opening Prayer was presented by **Father Greg Flynn**, as was the Scripture reading, and the Veterans' Address was by **Colonel Ian Ahearn (Ret'd)**.

The Prayer of Remembrance and Prayer for Peace were also given by **Father Flynn**, and this was followed by the main address given by His Excellency the Governor-General, **MAJGEN Michael Jeffrey**.

The Presentation – **“102nd Field Battery RAA Honour Title”** - was made by His Excellency to **LTCOL Craig Furini, CO 8th/12th Med Regt RAA** on behalf of **102 Fd Bty RAA**.

One memorable moment was when a **Bell UH-1 Iroquois “Huey” helicopter** (in **NAVY colours** - and most probably the only one still flying in the Defence Dept.) flew over the 102 Fd Bty function, on the summit of Mt. Pleasant at the **Royal Australian Artillery Memorial**; right at the time of the Presentation.

It was good for the older guys from 102 Fd Bty - and I am sure the distinctive sound would have sent a shiver down their spines.

The Official Laying of Wreaths commenced with that of His Excellency the Governor-General; followed by **MAJGEN Ash Power & Mr Geoff Knox** on behalf of **102nd Fd Bty** veterans. The *‘Ode to the Fallen’* was presented by **Mr Lindsay Elgar**, followed by the *Last Post*, the firing of a Minute Gun in memory of **Gnr Christopher Sawtell, HQ Bty 12 Fd Regt RAA**, another Minute's Silence, then the firing of a Minute Gun in memory of **Gnr James Scott HQ Bty 12 Fd Regt RAA**,

Then followed *‘The Rouse’*, Prayer of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, and the Benediction was presented by Father Flynn, our National Anthem, then, the traditional dismounting of the Catafalque Party finalised the ceremonial segment of a most memorable event

His Excellency, the Minister and MAJGEN Power met with veterans and their families, then Dispersal .

*That was officially the end of my Mission in Canberra – I must say it was well organized and run like clockwork - and it was my privilege, great pleasure and delight to be able to represent the **Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmania Inc.** at the Canberra National Artillery functions.*

Also, as a past bandsman, it was like being in heaven listening to the Army Military bands during the pomp and ceremonies – that was a real bonus!

Afterwards, as a personal treat, we visited the National Botanic Garden.

*The following day **15th May 08** we returned to Melbourne by Country Link bus and XPT train for a few days R&R, before returning to Tassie.*

Ubique: Norm Andrews, Sec/Public Officer, RAA Assoc of Tas. May 2008

R.A.A.A.T. NORTHERN HISTORICAL WING.

The most recent informal meeting – the third this year - was held as usual, at the QV Museum & Art Gallery, Railway Complex, on Thursday 12th June 2008. It was well-attended and commenced at 2.00p.m. sharp.

Those in attendance were: Bevan Filce, Gunter Breier, Graeme Petterwood, Trevor Giles, Rick Wood, Marc Smith, Des Salter, John McIntee and our co-ordinator Norman Andrews (Hon. Sec.)

Apologies were received from Joe Ferguson and Frank Stokes.

Matters touched upon were :

1. - Our next evening Dinner is scheduled for November 22nd at the Kings Meadows Bowls Club. Time: 6.00 for 6.30 pm. Free Parking at rear. All members, partners and invited guests will be welcome, as usual. Further details will be forthcoming as they are finalized.

2. - We are investigating what Artillery Emblems are available for sale.

3. – Ex- Gunners Recruitment Drive will be discussed during the next few meetings. Our next meeting will be August 14th 2008.

INVITATION - SATURDAY 28th June 2008

A relatively late invitation was received by members and invited guests to attend an 'open' day at the live exercises and shoot at the Stoney Head Training Area on Saturday 28th June 2008. Unfortunately, we could not contact all those who might be interested by means of this quarterly newsletter within the acceptance period.

"It will involve live fire demonstrations and displays of combined arms cooperation by current Army Reserve serving members of 144 Sig Sqn, 16 Fd Bty and 12/40 RTR.

The aim is to display the current capability of our weapon systems and the actual equipment used by today's serving members in order to gain your assistance in promoting the Reserve far and wide with those within your circles of influence. The activities are to be conducted on Saturday 28 Jun 08 between 11:00AM and 3:00PM within SHTA so any southern travellers will need to be at Youngtown Depot by 9:30AM. 12/40 RTR is able to provide transport from Youngtown Depot to SHTA and return for anyone interested in the day's activity.

Viewing activities will include:- A 40mm grenade launcher display supported by 7.62mm Mag 58 machine guns; 105mm artillery engaging over open sights; section and platoon activities; and viewing a section in defence live fire.

The Artillery News.

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