

# THE ARTILLERY NEWS.

MARCH – MAY 2007



Official Correspondence.

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

### February 2007

The first informal meeting of the R.A.A.A.T. Historical- Social Wing group was held at the QVM&AG at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2007 and was attended by Norman Andrews (Hon. Sec.), Gunter Breier, Joe Ferguson, Graeme Petterwood, Marc Smith and Charles Tee.

The low attendance was not unexpected due to the early February period still encompasses the vacation time-frame of some members. We did receive apologies from several members - and we were aware of others who are on the sick list - so 'Get Wells' & 'Happy Holidays' are extended to our mates.

Marc had brought along a DVD player and we were able to view scans of the members who participated in the El Alamein anniversary trip to Hobart last year and also the very successful pre-Christmas gathering at South Launceston Football Club on 9<sup>th</sup>. December 2006 - as recorded by Charles Tee. As a bonus, Marc also had a DVD featuring the Battle for Northern Africa, and, in particular, the decisive Battle of El Alamein. Unfortunately, time was limited and we had to guess which side won...!

A nice afternoon tea was enjoyed and we departed at 4.00 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for 2.00 p.m. on **Thursday April 12<sup>th</sup> 2007** at the QVM&AG.

## **R.A.A.A.T. Northern Function**

*Discussion was held regarding our next function and it was decided to book it in.*

**When: 16 June, 2007 - 12.00 for 12.30 luncheon**

**Where: South Launceston Football Club**

**Highgate St, Youngtown**

We anticipate that the cost will be the same as last year at \$25.00 per person. There will be a choice of two meats and desserts, plus tea or coffee. A lucky door ticket will be provided which will remain valid until all donated prizes have been collected. (*Donations Welcome*)

The traditional toasts will be made and our late comrades will be remembered. Please note - if additional refreshments are required it is on a 'buy your own' basis at club bar prices.

Due to the fact that an at-home game of football is also scheduled for the same day, all of our members and their guests will need to advise the gatekeeper of their intention as they arrive.

Some parking near the clubrooms will be available for our incapacitated attendees, and the drop-off area near the ramp can be used for some others - but those who are fit enough may need to park in the grounds, 'form ranks' and do a short march to join us in the clubrooms.

We won't start without you!

**BOOKINGS WILL BE NECESSARY TO ASCERTAIN NUMBERS**

**ALL R.A.A.A.T. MEMBERS, GUESTS AND FRIENDS OF THE ARTILLERY ARE WELCOME. REMIND A GUNNER FRIEND!**

**PLEASE CONTACT Hon. Sec. Mr. NORM ANDREWS AT ANY OF THE OFFICIAL ADDRESSES SHOWN ON THE LETTERHEAD ABOVE.**

## **ANZAC DAY 25th. APRIL, 2007**

Many older Australian families still have first hand knowledge of the effects of both World Wars and the ensuing conflicts that claimed or changed the youth of this nation in so many ways.

Even in times of relative peace, however, we must be vigilant. Our young men and women are still making sacrifices and devoting themselves to our national well-being in either part-time or full-time military service, and their willingness to continue extending their shielding hands to those less fortunate, can be reflected in the more recent events in the middle east and elsewhere.

It comes at a terrible price at times.

Like most Australians on Anzac Day, we unashamedly share the triumph of the spirit over adversity, weep at the underlying sadness about lives lost - and also express our gratitude for the freedoms, so hard won, that have given our nation a sense of destiny on the world stage.

Most older Australians also know the fourth verse of Laurence Binyon's famous poem written in 1914 '**For The Fallen**'; - it has been recited every year since 1921 at Remembrance Day and Anzac Day as the '**Ode of Remembrance**'.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:**

**Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.**

**At the going down of the sun and in the morning**

**We will remember them.**



**Remembrance at El Alamein - 5th November 1942.**

If we have ever attended any of the Anzac memorial services held all over our nation on this special day we will have heard or taken part in the saying of the '*Ode of Remembrance*'. To those of us who have been left behind, perhaps, to grieve or to pick up the pieces - we will repeat our vow again on 25th April 2007

***'We will remember them!'***  
**LEST WE FORGET!**



# VALE

## Lt. Col. CHARLES MERVYN FOTHERINGHAM

### Past Commanding Officer 6 Fd. Regiment RAA

*During early February 2007, the Tasmanian Gunner fellowship were saddened to learn of the passing of Charles Fotheringham (TX2092) – a thorough gentleman of the first order. Charles will be remembered by many of us with great respect for his long and honourable association with the Artillery in Tasmania – in war and in peace.*

#### **Obituary: Charles Fotheringham 1916 – 2007 - by Alison Andrews Examiner Newspaper Sat 24<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

### **Changi survivor dies**

Even when he entered his 90s, Launceston businessman Charles Fotheringham, still remembered his World War 11 experiences as the time in his life that tested his strength and survival qualities to the full.

Mr Fotheringham, who died this month in his 91<sup>st</sup> year, served in the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti Tank Regiment, part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, in the Malayan Campaign before his capture by the Japanese in Singapore in February 1942.

As an artillery intelligence officer with his battery in Muar Bakri, under constant bombing and machine gun fire from Japanese aircraft, Charles was with the Australian troops who destroyed six advancing Japanese tanks, thwarting the Japanese advance south.

But the Allied defences were spread widely and infantry battalions suffered heavy casualties so that the Japanese outflanked and over-ran the opposition to capture Singapore.

When the Australians were ordered to cease fire and surrender their weapons, Mr Fotheringham was initially imprisoned at Changi in Singapore then sent to work on the Burma Railway including the infamous "Hellfire Pass."

He kept a secret diary throughout his capture recording daily events and details of all his troops – death, injury or survival. It was never discovered by his Japanese captors and only recently transcribed for family reading.

During his time in Kanyu Camp, the young Tasmanian was singled out by a Japanese officer who called to him while he was washing in a stream.

Unaware that the officer was shouting at him, Mr Fotheringham continued to wash whereupon the enraged officer stormed from his hut and beat him with a bamboo stick. According to his journal, he was forced to stand in the rain and mud for several hours while the beatings continued, eventually collapsed, unconscious and his grave was prepared.

But he was carried into the camp kitchen where he slowly recovered by the warmth of the fires. Charles Fotheringham was born on March 6, 1916, at his family's home in High St, Launceston. He was the fourth son of six to William and Nell Fotheringham.

At East Launceston Primary and Scotch College, he was a top sportsman who went on to represent Tasmania at the national amateur Australian Rules football championships in 1938, excelled at athletics and was an experienced horse rider.

Mr Fotheringham joined the family saddlers and sporting goods firm then trained as an accountant, working at Patons and Baldwins textile mills before World War II.

He also joined the Army reserve and served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment from 1934 until he was enlisted when the war was declared in 1939.

As a first lieutenant, he was on board the Queen Mary sailing for action in the Middle East when the ship was diverted to Singapore and to experiences that changed the young officer's life.

Finally home after World War II, he continued to shine. His achievements included:

- A foundation member of the Old Scotch Football Club of which he was still a member when he died.
- Tasmanian general manager of British Paints where he stayed until his retirement.
- The last surviving member of the six Launceston Fotheringham brothers and the last of three Fotheringham colonels after his father Will and brother Max.
- He is survived by his wife, Jean, whom he married in 1949 and his two sons, Gray and Drew and their families

### Gray, Alec and Charles Fotheringham - (Examiner Photo 2005)



**Footnote:** LTCOL Charles Fotheringham was CO of the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA and was honorary Colonel Commandant Artillery Tasmania Command.

## CHANGE of Head of Regiment

**Below is the text of a personal letter to LTCOL Mark Cameron RFD Colonel Commandant Tasmanian Region from BRIG G P Fogarty AM**

*Dear Mark*

*I would like to advise you formally that due to being posted to an operational appointment I will handover the Head of Regiment responsibilities to Brigadier Phil Winter early next month.*

*While I am thrilled with the opportunity to command on operations, I am disappointed that my time as Head of Regiment has been so short.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support you have provided to me over the past 18 months and wonderful support you continue to provide to our Regiment.*

*Once again, thank you and best wishes.*

*Yours sincerely*

*G P Fogarty - Brigadier*

*Head of Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery - 9 February 2007.*

**The ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA INC.**

***“HAPPY 7<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY”***

On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000, the formation of the R.A.A.T. was officially ratified by the successful combination of several Artillery groups into one Association which participates in supporting Artillery projects and all aspects of Artillery history and, particularly, Gunner fellowship.

All serving or non-serving Artillerymen and women, plus friends of the Artillery, are openly invited to join our Association by applying to our Secretary for an Membership Application Form and details of annual subscription rates.



**Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmania  
Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000**

## **60 years of Australian Peacekeeping and the Gunner contribution**

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

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

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

Over the past few years veterans of these peacekeeping missions have felt that an Australian Peacekeeping Memorial should be built in Canberra to honor all those who have and will



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

The principal role of the military in these peace operations is to provide the basic security which encourages the peace process to strengthen. This allows all the other actors, who come from a wide range of UN agencies, international financial organizations and various other international and local aid and humanitarian organizations, to effectively coordinate their activities and to work with the local community to develop a stable environment leading to a sustainable peace. While there is no specified enemy force operating against the military in such operations, the general situation is often very dangerous and volatile, and peacekeepers are sometimes directly targeted by groups that do not support the peace process. Furthermore, the location of these missions is often remote, local infrastructure and utilities are destroyed, the areas to be covered can be huge, and there are often scattered landmines that need to be cleared. In many of these situations crime is rampant and there are often serious ethnic tensions and large distressed populations in need of humanitarian assistance. Peacekeeping is therefore a difficult assignment. Australian contingents led by young Australian military officers and NCOs and police have performed well in these difficult circumstances; but, as in other dangerous overseas operations, unfortunately Australian military and police have suffered casualties. Some have died or been injured, and many have been traumatized by peace operations. We should remember them. The RAA has played its part in the Australian peacekeeping effort. Individuals from the RAA have commanded United Nations and other international peacekeeping operations, and Gunners have served as key personnel in various mission headquarters and contingents overseas. Additionally, RAA sub-units and detachments from field, locating and air defence units have all deployed on recent peace operations. Some of these deployments have been in their primary RAA roles, while others have been in a secondary role as an "infantry company" undertaking a wide range of general security tasks in support of the particular peacekeeping mission. As I write, elements of 20 Surveillance Target Acquisition Regiment, 4th Field Regiment, 8/12<sup>th</sup> Medium Regiment, and 16 AD Regt are involved in overseas peace operations. Ubique. The Australian Federal Police also has an excellent record in peacekeeping, and has now created an International Deployment Group comprising police from federal, state and territory police forces which is specifically trained and prepared for offshore peacekeeping and stabilisation deployments. We have seen the benefit of this capability in their partnership with the ADF and other actors in recent regional operations in Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Bougainville. The proposed Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will be designed to both appropriately commemorate and celebrate all aspects of Australian peacekeeping. It will commemorate the courage, sacrifice, service and valour of Australian Peacekeepers. It will reflect the same spirit of service as do other cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and on ANZAC Parade in Canberra which honour

the service of Australians in other distinguished campaigns. It will celebrate Australia's long and distinguished contribution to international peacekeeping since its commitment to the very first UN peacekeeping mission in 1947.

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



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

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

### **Progress to Date**

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

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

Full details of the project are listed on our web site as detailed above

### ***The Artillery News.***

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