

1871



A Field Battery Association, Inc. National Newsletter February 2007



From the President's Chair, January 2007.

G'day fellows and members. Firstly I would like to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year and hope that you all had a great festive season.

This year, 2007 is going to be a very busy year, as last year was, with the successful laying of the plaque, in the Sculptured Gardens, Australian War Memorial. The site is number 105, for anyone wishing to view it, well worth the look.

2007 is our 50th. Anniversary of "A" Field Battery departing for the Malayan Emergency and it is the 40th. Anniversary of the Battery returning home from Malaysia. Also it is the 36th. Year of the Battery going to and coming home from Vietnam.

At our AGM at Maroochydore Coach House on the 9th. September 2006, it was decided to hold our next AGM in Sydney to coincide with the above anniversaries. The committee have looked at accommodation in Sydney and we found it to be very expensive. One of our members suggested the Brookvale Travel Lodge; we enquired there and got a pleasant surprise. It is only \$110.00, twin share and this includes breakfast. The Travel Lodge is right behind the Manly Warringah Leagues Club.

Bonnie and I were in Sydney last year for a wedding, so while we were there we decided to do a recon of the above establishments. They are both excellent venues and the Manager of the Travel Lodge has even offered the dining room, after breakfast is finished, for us to hold our AGM on the Saturday morning. If we had to hold the meeting at the Leagues Club, it would have cost us \$150.00 to hire the room. The dinner on the Saturday night will be at the leagues Club. For people who are coming early and staying longer, the Leagues Club has excellent meals at reasonable prices.

People intending to come to this special occasion (remember, a lot of us are starting to get on in age now), please let the Secretary know as soon as possible and also book your accommodation at the Brookvale Travel Lodge.

The Itinerary for the weekend 14th. September to 17th. September 2007

Phone Number:
02 8978 1200

Friday 14th.—Check in, drinks at Leagues Club in the evening
Saturday 15th.— 1000hrs.: Annual General Meeting at the Travel Lodge,
 Saturday afternoon, do your own thing.
 Saturday night, 1830 hrs to 1900 hrs, pre-dinner drinks, 1900hrs. till late, dinner.

Sunday 16th.— 1000hrs.: Visit to North Fort Australian Artillery Museum.

Monday 17th.— 0900hrs.: Visit to "A" Field Battery RAA, Holsworthy.

At this stage I do not know what or how the Battery will support us.

The Australian Disruptive Pattern Camouflage Uniform (DPCU) comes in two versions. The standard issue which has shades of green, and the lighter desert pattern



2007

More from the President's Chair.

The AGM and reunion at Maroochydoore Coach House on 9th./10th. September 2006 was a marvellous success, and all who attended had a great time. The office bearers were printed in the last newsletter. Ken Kennedy passed away last September, anyone who served in "A" Battery from 1957 until 1971 would have known Ken or would have heard of him.

It was Ken's wishes that his ashes be spread on Kennedy's Knoll, military range Canberra. With the assistance of John Whitelaw and Jim Ponting (BSM, HQ. Battery, 12 Field Regiment, Vietnam, 1971) this was accomplished. Our Padre, Bob Gray performed the service and a large contingent of ex-Battery members from Canberra were in attendance offering condolence to Mrs. Joan Kennedy and their son.

Brian Czislawski represented the Association.

The Association has 64 members who have not renewed their membership for 2006 / 2007.

I sent out reminder notices to everyone last September, this included email addresses. The alarming thing is, not one member from the Battery has renewed their membership. This will be the last newsletter you will receive, if fees are not forthcoming.

The "A" Field Battery Association Inc. has a new website. The URL is:

[Http ://australianartilleryassociation.com/afdbty/index.htm](http://australianartilleryassociation.com/afdbty/index.htm)

That's enough from me for this newsletter, don't forget Sydney in September.

Regards, Tex Bassan.

LEST WE FORGET



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.

KEN AGNEW

TREVOR BEER

TOM CARRUTHERS

PAT DALY

TOM DAWSON

MICK HARKEN

KEN KENNEDY

BOBBY LEWIS

JOHN MACDONALD

DAVE QUIRK

R. F. SMITH

BRIAN WHISKER

JOHN WORBOYS

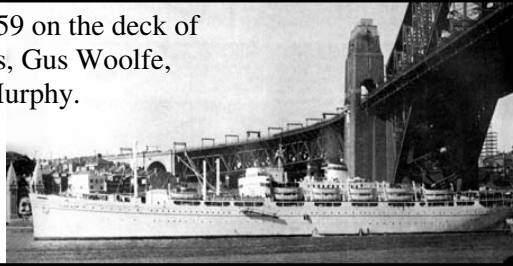




The ashes ceremony at Kennedy's Military range, Canberra. Attended by Mrs. Joan Kennedy, their son and a large contingent of ex-Battery members including our Association representative Brian Czisowski. This very moving service for our Ken Kennedy was conducted by , Padre Bob Gray

Returning from Malaya in 1959 on the deck of the Flaminia are Bobby Lewis, Gus Woolfe, Denny Atherton and Paddy Murphy.

Bobby passed away a couple of years ago after leading our Sydney Anzac Parades in his wheel chair. A brave man.



This is a welcome letter from our popular past Editor, Rex Martin. Hi Butch, thought this could be a little bit of a news item for the next publication of the, "Road Runner," come National Newsletter. I was up at the Forster Bowling Club this evening where I was talking with this bloke, and he enquired about the tattoos on my arms, asked me whether I was in the Navy. After I finished stuttering, I informed this person that I was Army.

He then asked me what corps I was in. I told him, Artillery, "Gentlemen of the."

He further asked if I was at North Head, I told him yes, as it was the School of Artillery back when I was encamped there.

He then asked what year I was there and I told him 1956/57 and that Bull Storey was the man that all Gunners feared in those days.

He then told me that he was a male nurse at 1 Army Hospital at Ingleburn, I said that was nice, he then asked me did I know of a Don Donkin, I replied yes, and I was also a member of "A" Field Battery.

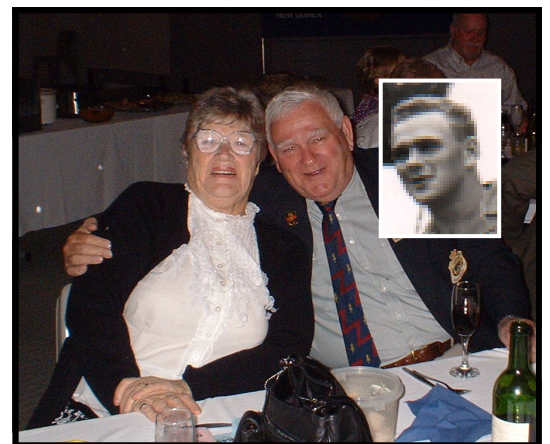
He then introduced me to Noel Donkin, brother of Don, who now resides at Queenscliff in Sydney. Small world.

Anyway sport, best for the New Year.

Regards, Rex and Noelene.



Rex and Noelene Dancing With The Stars at Bli Bli, he's not bad on the floor, but no match for Neil Harden or Banger Harris. Is it true that dancing classes were part of the curriculum at Portsea?



Above is a picture of our hard working President and Secretary, Tex and Bonnie Bassan, their organisational skills keep this Association functioning. Who is that young bloke, inset, looking over Tex's shoulder? Nah! couldn't be.

From Tom Banfield, some memories of BCOF and experiences with WO.1 W J. STOREY MBE. Hereafter known as The BSM or The Bull.

Bull Storey looks over the new boys on the recruit course at the School of Artillery. 1961-1962 (below).

Right, A Battery members having a few drinks together in a Beer Hall at Tokyo Central, 1948.



When I arrived in Japan on a posting to A Field Battery, I was marched into the BSMs office while he was reading out the Unit Standing Orders he was sifting through our Report Sheets and after a while he said, "Which one of you is Gunner Banfield." I owned up and was told that I had a bad record, and that the BC would not be very pleased to see me. My bad record was that I had been fined 10 shillings for speeding at North Head while doing the rubbish pick up run, and 3 days CB for not wearing my hat between the kitchen, where I was doing odd jobs and the Everyman's hut, a distance of about 50 yards.

I managed to keep out of the BSMs way for the next 18 months, mainly because I was on detachments and other duties,

In February 1948 the Battery went to Tokyo for guard duties on the Imperial Palace and other notable addresses such as Canadian Legation, C in Cs residence, British Embassy, Empire House and the Union Jack Club.

We were quartered with 67 Bn. 3 RAR. at Ebisu, about 10 miles from Tokyo, this place had been part of the Imperial Naval Academy and the swimming pool had been part of the submarine testing program until the end of the war.

Apart from the guard training we had plenty of time to visit the Beer Halls and other haunts in Tokyo. A tin of boot polish at the Canteen cost sixpence, the Shoe Shiners in Tokyo would give you 150 yen for a tin, with beer at 10 yen per 15 ounce glass, beer drinking became very affordable.

The Battery was due to return to Australia in December 1948, so our guns were put into preservation grease for the voyage to India and the newly formed Pakistan. On the 14th. November 1948 Prince Charles was born and we had to remove the grease from four of the guns to give a Royal Salute.

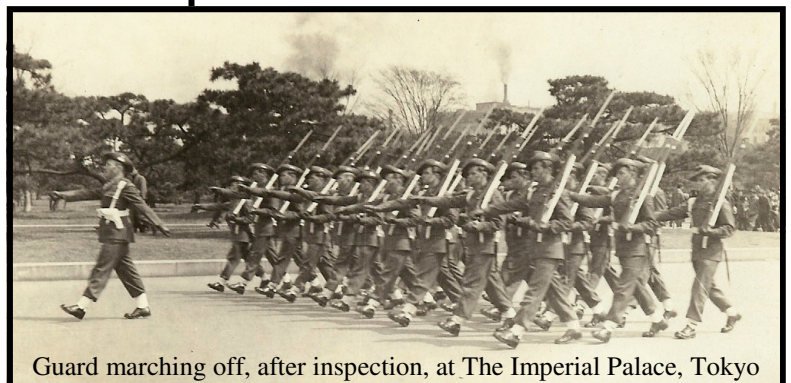
In the winding down of our time in Japan I saw a different side of the BSM. My good mate Bluey Bakewell was alleged to have trashed the local ladies house, known as The Woodheap in the town of Hiro. The next day there was a Battery line up parade with the BSM, the Provost Sgt. and "The Lady," with the idea that she would recognise the culprit, sure enough the lady stopped in front of Bluey. The BSM said in his loud voice. "But, you were on guard last night, Gunner Bakewell !" Bluey looked at the BSM and replied in a soft voice, "No Sir."

The Provost Sgt. Only heard the BSMs voice and announced, "Well, if he was on guard last night, it couldn't have been him," as he bundled the lady back into his Jeep, and took off.

A few weeks before the Battery came home we took part in a street parade in Kure. We marched to and from Hiro Railway Station and another 5 mile through Kure without once changing arms. About 100 yards from our camp gate I held my arm out for about to beats. The roar of The Bull bellowed. "Gunner Banfield; lazy on parade. One days extra training."

The Battery stood down for the rest of the day and I was told to report to the Orderly Sergeant Jack Hayes for extra training. I suspect that Jack was also on penalty duty as he marched me up and down the parade ground.

It seemed that he enjoyed what he was doing as he was standing on the steps of the RAP, in the shade, watching me sweat it out in the middle of the parade ground. I caught up with Jack Hayes many times after that.



Guard marching off, after inspection, at The Imperial Palace, Tokyo

The Bull was a very imposing figure, he was about 27 or 28 at the time, and very fit, he played a bit of football with the Battery Team, he would always go for the biggest of the opposition if they were at all rough on our smaller players.

The Bull also had two brothers in Japan at the same time, Tom was a gunner in the Battery and Charlie, a Staff Sergeant at HQ in Kure. The BSM gave very good service to the Artillery, he put out the best of our recruits and I am sure his name will be remembered.

I certainly will.

As the gun is now close to being finished I thought I would write a new article.

Our New Gun.

As ANZAC Day draws nearer we are pleased to announce that our new gun, the L5 Pack Howitzer, is almost finished. It will be in the parade towed by a long wheelbase Land Rover directly in front of "A" Field Battery, (so make sure you all turn up this year).

Having restored the 25 Pounder and now the L5, I believe we now have two fine examples of the best field gun the RAA ever had and the bloody worst field gun the RAA ever had. Maybe it was horses for courses but the L5 had to be the most complicated, most fragile and hardest piece of machinery to restore. Add that to the fact the craftsman who had the job of making it innocuous certainly had a field day with his mig wire welder. He missed

nothing; including sticking his welding gun into the traversing gearbox and filling it and the gears with weld. Well done. I never thought Bob Cunningham could say so many complimentary words about a member of RAEME.

Working at Enoggera the gun was broken down into removable pieces. This was done with the aid of grinders, cutting wheels, hacksaws, chisels, and big big hammers. These parts were then taken home to Bob and my workshops where the pieces were further broken down to pins, bolts and screws. As we removed all the paint from the whole gun it was interesting seeing all the different colours as we scrapped off layer after layer. The original colour was deep Brunswick green, the same as used in Malaya. All the paint was removed to check out all the parts for rust. What we have found with this gun and the 25 pounder is that with all the oil and grease re-



moved by the military to aid in the welding, rust forms before the gun is painted and continues to rust even under all the coats of paint. The L5 had a lot of aluminium and this was also already corroding away. It means that these old guns left out in the open are rotting away under the paint, and in years to come will become past restoration. I have already seen this happen with guns on the Esplanade in Cairns and in a park in Manly in Sydney. But ours have been stripped, and every nut bolt and pin reassembled with oil and grease, so that kept out of the weather these two guns will still be around for many years to come. This is part of the satisfaction of the job.

The L5 of course will never fire again; the barrel is still plugged with a large hole cut in the chamber. All the firing gear has been removed along with the internals of the buffer system. But the handles turn, the breech opens and from a distance it looks real enough. Look for it on ANZAC Day and relive some old memories.

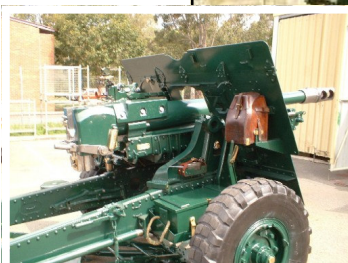
Don Sinclair.

Mine's better than yours.

The Saint's scornful "girlie gun" comments concerning the Pommy gun in the Tower of London sound as arrogant as that arms-folded stance appears. With an assured air of, "we done a better job," posing in front of this well restored relic.

What a load of bull, especially when you consider his picky, perfectionist attitude as we were painting and polishing while renovating our, inset, 25 pounder. Fussing around like Grandma doing the fine silverware, it was a relief to be granted half an hour lunch break from this meticulous, hypocritical tyrant.

I wouldn't be game to tell him that ours may be a "granny gun,"



Saint Sinclair stands besides a restored 25 pounder in the Tower of London. Saint's comments— with all that chrome and white painted dragropes, what a girlie bloody gun!

Editors note: Have you ever seen such a neat ,clean and tidy granny garage like Saint's (above), even carpeted.

My response to the Saint's remarks were spurred by my Pommy heritage, my old man was a Pommy and all those Pommy jokes about "being as dry as a Pommy towel," are not true; he had a bath once a month, whether he needed to, or not.

This is an interesting article from Capt. Adrian Bucci and Bdr. James Bell who were deployed with India Battery 7 RHA to Afghanistan

Background

The British effort during OP HERRICK IV was centred around a makeshift camp by the name of Bastion. It was placed in the middle of a plain the locals call, 'the desert of death'. The 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, was the Battle Group that BDR Bell and I were to serve with. It consisted of 3 Para, 1 Para Bty 7 Para RHA, A Sqn Household Cavalry, medics, engineers and a multitude of other arms and services. All up there were approximately 3500 soldiers on the ground. However, this equated to approximately 600 fighting troops to secure an area about twice the size of the ACT.

Roles

The role of a Fire Support Team (FST) FOO (Forward Observation Officer) is different to that of a JOST (Joint Offensive Support Team) commander. The FST FOO controls the team like a Gun Position Officer controls his Command Post during a Battery Commander's fireplan. He sits slightly back enabling him to direct, keep situational awareness of safety distances etc and communicate with the Company hierarchy. This gives the Ack, JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller – Air to Ground munitions coordinator) and MFC (Mortar Fire Controller) ownership of their task and scope to control their part of the effect. It means that they can operate without being weighed down by the noise of higher commanders asking questions and giving subsequent taskings, with what is essentially peripheral to the task at hand. The FST FOO provides this top cover giving his subordinates arcs to operate within, resources and a mission; they are then left to complete that mission.



The way we, and the British FOOs, operate as JOST FOs in a joint effects environment, could potentially lead to an over commitment to one task as the tempo of incoming tasks increases. This coupled with the MAC's (Manoeuvre Arms Commander – Infantry/Armoured Officer Commanding) need to stay informed of the OS (Offensive Support) situation can provide an apparent source of confusion. OP HERRICK 4 was the first time that the British Army used this mode of operating. It is an American doctrine that has been integrated for British Gunners. I believe it will work well for the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

First Contact

The current level of training the Australian Army conducts prepared me well for the challenges I faced in Afghanistan. Old adage of 'the way you train is the way you play' rings very true. Maintaining skills, such as minor

FLTLT JTAC, Myself and BDR Signaller in our OP in southern Afghanistan

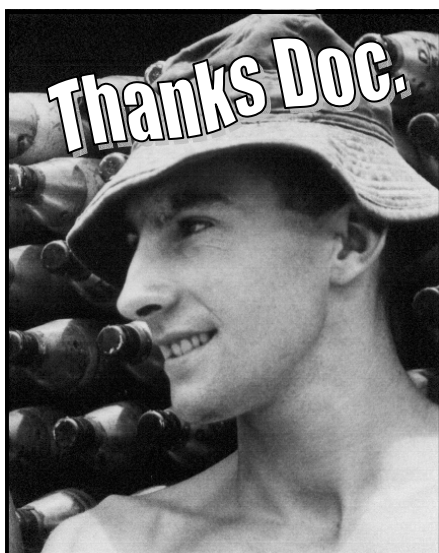
infantry tactics, is vital as operating with infantry companies is an essential part of our role.

The first contact I was engaged in lasted for approximately 25 minutes in the narrow streets of a town in the north of Helmand province in southern Afghan. The enemy three to five man raider team we fight on exercises in Singleton is alive and well. The platoon engaged the Anti Coalition Militia with small arms and the JTAC called Dutch F-16 aircraft 30mm cannon onto the targets. The first time I actually had to think about anything was a stoppage on the British SA80 assault weapon I carried; I reached for the cocking handle on the wrong side and had a bit of a fifty cent - five cent moment as I rectified it with the Austyre cleaning rods I was sent a day or so earlier.

The first time I used artillery was a couple of weeks later in another small town approximately 50kms for the first. It was a danger close mission at 380m. The Coy commander requested the guns engage the withdrawal routes the enemy was likely to use in the next few minutes. It was extremely loud, and a lot of concentration was required to be over the .50' cal machine guns, mortars, GPMGs and SA80s. The FST system shone through as each constituent concentrated on getting his task right as he was given his orders. The end of mission report was unfortunately 'result unknown', but we all had survived to fight another day.

Conclusion

Through hardship and adversity the men of 1 Para Bty, 7 Para RHA fought and showed the Taliban just what the modern Gunner is made of. The battery punched well above its weight during OP HERRICK 4 and the continuous, direct and often very close combat experience gained will serve as a firm foundation for BDR Bell's and my career in the Army. If this tour in Afghanistan has shown one thing, it is the fact that no matter how difficult the conditions or how scarce the resources, the modern Gunner is every bit as capable, resourceful, and determined as our forefathers and he will fight tenaciously with any foe in his path. I feel extremely proud to have been given the opportunity to serve as so many of our fathers and grandfathers did in the spirit of the ANZAC tradition; even if it was with a bunch of whingeing POMs who wouldn't stop reminding me about the 2005 Ashes result.



The association recently received a wonderful gift from Frank (Doc) Halliday, now living in NSW. Doc is an old "A" Battery member and served in Malaya 1957-59. Doc has generously donated his photo album covering his army career. The album will become part of the Associations heritage collection and contains some never before seen photos of the units activities in Malaya. Thank you Doc we are very grateful and hope to see you in Sydney next September. If you have any memorabilia or photographs that you would like to donate to the Association we would be happy to accept them for our display. Please contact Bob Cunningham on 07 3350 1394.



TIMES AND LOCATIONS

BRISBANE: 0930 hrs at George St. (between Elizabeth and Charlotte St). Banner will be on display. Reunion at Theodore Club.

SYDNEY: 1000hrs corner of Bent and Bligh St. Reunion at Coronation Hotel, Park St. If transport is required for the parade, contact John Smith.

MELBOURNE: Same as last year.

ADELAIDE: 0930 hrs. with the RAA Vietnam Units on Grenfell St. in Hindmarsh Square.

CANBERRA: Same as last year.

Needed Only if You Have Changed.

If you are attending the Reunion in Sydney in September and you think your appearances may have changed in the last 50 years, could we recommend an 'A' Battery ID badge. Black on a gold finish with a magnetic clip. Will last a lifetime for only \$10 posted. Contact the secretary.

Bonny Bassan at 6 Harvey's Road Beaconsfield Qld 4740.



A Message from Peter Kimball seeking information on our Photo Collection.

With regards the new photo albums that now contain in excess of 500 photos your assistance would be greatly appreciated over the next 12 months by way of advising the appropriate caption for each photo i.e. identifying personnel in photos and location and period along with a brief description. This help will enable us to maintain a comprehensive detailed catalogue of all photos for the future. So why not pick an album and go through it and select 5 photos a week and see if you can assist - it would be greatly appreciated and something we could all be very proud of.



A memory from Ray (Bubbles) Alcorn.

Do you remember Reg Clatworthy, the B Troop medical orderly? We often get together and chat about old times in Malaya. Some of our B Troop members may recall the "red pills," that Reg handed out.

When you were on the pill, it was three days on, and three days off. He said they were for iron and energy but most gunners would remember the excruciating erections the pills produced. The medical term for the red pills was; Ferrous Gluconomate. Then there was that purple stuff he painted on us after we returned from patrols was called, Castellanis paint with Resorsinal. (British issue only), the bucket and paint brush used was normal Aussie issue. For Monsoon blisters and Impetigo he used Gentian Violet and Metthiolate Cream.

Reg had a very unusual way of applying these medications, for blisters and rashes. He used a bucket and a normal paint brush. The rest I leave to your imagination, if you have not been treated by Reg.

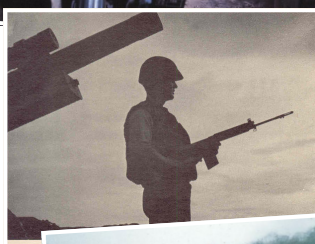
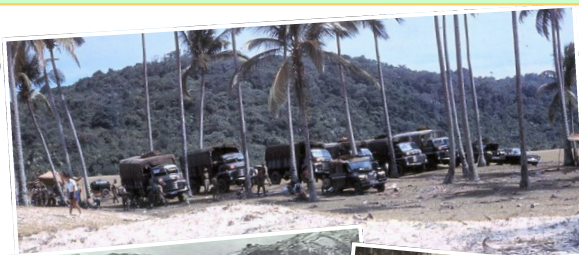
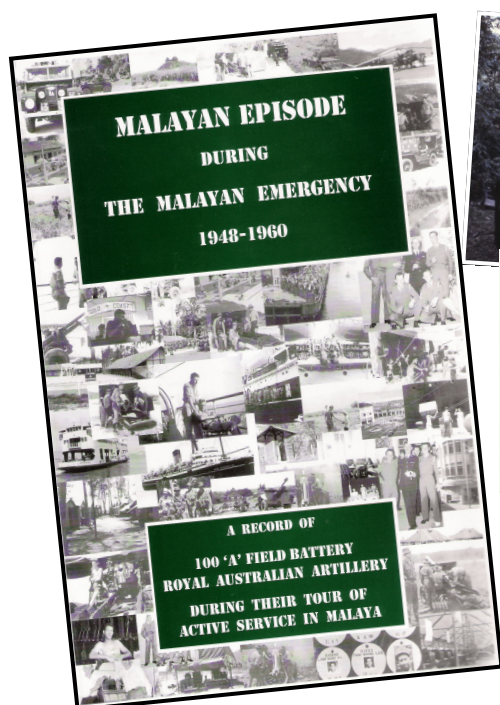


Hi Doc? ... It said on the label to call you if my erection lasts more than 4 hours...Hello Doc? ...You still there?...hello?...hello?...

Editor's Note: Hey Bubbles, What's the problem? Excruciating erection? There is a perfect therapy to relieve this condition. Just ask any A Trooper, they'll lend you a hand.

A message from our Webmaster, Kimbo. By now you have all seen the new website.

At the top are 5 photographs of personnel or places A Fd Bty has been throughout the years. From within the various photo albums in the Photo Gallery on the site what do you think are the 5 photographs that best represent A Fd Bty throughout time? Please forward your nominations to Kimbo and we will select the 5 most nominated photos to replace the existing ones.



This well researched book, boosted by access to hundreds of private photographs and news items during the two years of work and play that has shaped a lasting impression on our lives and friendships, is still available from the Saint for \$40 which includes postage in Australia.



"A" Field Battery Association Inc. Committee, 2006 - 2007

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Disclaimer

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“And on the eighth day God created Paratroopers, and the Devil stood to attention”

The following is a terrific report on recent local activities by “A” Field Battery, kindly submitted by Lt. Peter J. Watkins, Gun Position Officer. “A” Field Battery.

‘A’ Field Battery’s year commenced in late January when 29 members of the Battery made the trek to Canberra to fire a 21-gun salute to commemorate Australia Day 2007. The salute was fired on the shoreline of Lake Burley-Griffin, facing Parliament House, and was accompanied by an F-111 flyover and the Red Berets parachute team. Although the salute was not the central focus of Australia Day activities in Canberra the crowd was still respectable and the lads made the most of the opportunity to explore Canberra and its several night spots.



Panoramic view of the Battery HQ. Building



Australia Day Salute on the shore of Lake Burley-Griffin



Sergeant. Casas is farewelled

The Battery’s focus is now on training for upcoming exercises, the most pressing of which is the aptly named Exercise Semper Paratus at Singleton during the first two weeks of March, where the Battery will continue to focus on gunnery after a 12-month period where overseas deployments have prevented us from practising our primary wartime role.

In early February the Battery also dropped in on RAAF Richmond for three days in order to conduct parachute continuation training. Most members had not jumped since November 2006 and some had not jumped for more than 12 months. The descents were all made from the rear ramp of a DH4 Caribou, a new experience for many members, most of whom are more used to jumping from the side door of a C-130 Hercules. The weather stayed fine on all three days, however aircraft serviceability on day three meant no jumps were had that day, resulting in two members, LBDR Connor and GNR Hayward stuck on 49 jumps apiece and extremely frustrated with the situation.

Sadly, and especially so early in the year, February saw two members farewelled from the Battery. SGT Casas and GNR Fisher have both left the Regular Army to pursue other interests, both having made very valuable contributions during their time here.



PCT. Parachute Continuation Training

ARE YOU FINANCIAL 2006 2007 FEES DUE NOW \$20



'A' Field Battery Association (Inc).

Application: Please accept me as a yearly subscriber to the Association.

Renewal: Please renew my yearly membership of the Association from 1st August to 31st July.

I enclose cheque/money order for.....(\$20.00 Annual).

My current details are (For new members or renewing members with changes).

Full Name.....

Preferred/Known Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....**Phone (Home)**.....

(Work).....**Email Address**.....

Service Details: Regimental Number.....Highest Rank Reached.....

Dates With Battery.....

Posting(s) within Battery.....

Other Details: Wife/Partners Name.....

Next of Kin Name.....**Relationship**.....

Address.....

.....**Postcode**.....

Are you in receipt Of DVA Pension

Yes/No?

I give/do not give permission for my contact details to be given to other members of the Association.

Can we be of any immediate assistance to you? Yes/No? (Please describe separately).....

.....

All Members Please Complete and Return as a Priority.

Privacy Act Consent Form.

Below are consent details for members willing to sign to allow their names to be printed in the National Newsletter, on the Association Website and so on. Due to the Privacy Act, the Association is not permitted to print any names in it without written permission.

(Without their consent, we will not be able to publish eg: Members Lists)

I authorise the 'A' Field Battery Association (Inc).

To print my name in its correspondence, newsletter, website or any publication that the Management Committee may agree to publish from time to time, providing that the information or use of my name is not associated with or connected to any defamatory writings or publication.

Signature.....**Date**.....

Printed Name.....

Please post to: Secretary, 'A' Field Battery Association (Inc).

6 Harveys Road, Beaconsfield, Qld, 4740.

Website: <http://afdbty.australianartilleryassociation.com>