

1871

A Field Battery Association, Inc.

National Newsletter

November 2007

President Ron Bassan's Report

2007

G'day fellow members, It is with great relief that the Annual General Meeting and the Anniversaries weekend in September virtually went off without a hitch and the feedback has been quite positive.

The tour of the old School of Artillery was a big letdown. To see how the place has been let deteriorate was quite amazing, especially seeing the outer wall of the Gymnasium lying on the ground. The state of the OR's Mess and Ballroom was a disgrace and where did all that brass that we had to polish go to?, probably lining someone's pockets with cash from its sale.

I had the great fortune to be taken on a tour of Middle Head, Chowder Bay and Georges Heights. I was quite amazed to see that all the buildings are still there, except for the Guard Room at Georges Heights.

It brought back a lot of memories for me as I served in 3 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery at Middle Head before being posted to 'A' Bty at Georges Heights in 1955. When they dug up the parade ground to grass the area they found two gun emplacements in the middle of the parade ground and there is no record of why they were there. If anyone knows anything about this mystery please let us know and we will inform the Sydney Harbour Trust who have their office in our old Gun Bays. We will have to get Gen John Whitelaw and his team on to this.

It was disappointing to find out that the Clifton Gardens Hotel has been pulled down, when I was a young soldier, I had several quiet drinks at this establishment and for all those who can remember, the Show Boat used to pull in at the wharf on a Friday Night.

The trip out to 'A' Bty on Monday 17th was great and the hospitality was even greater and I must thank the Bty Commander, Damian Hill, Battery Sergeant Major, Tony Kennedy and all the Gunners from the Bty for making us very welcome.

The barbecue lunch was great and I am quite sure they would have made a good profit from the raffles towards their social club. It was disappointing to see that the Q staff are nor Artillery these days.

I would like to say a great big farewell to the BC, BSM and BG on their departure from the Bty and wish them the very best in their future endeavors. The Association would like to welcome the incoming executive and I hope we have a close association with them and the Bty. It would be nice to have some Bty Members become members of the Association this year.

I don't know if everyone knew that Peter Seddon was at Holsworthy. Peter is not well and had to leave early to return to Canberra.

The roll up for the Reunion weekend was excellent and it makes all the hard work worthwhile. I believe we now will have some new faces at Maroochydore next year.

Some of the new faces at the reunion were: Dave and Beryl Adams, Leon and Yvonne Anderson, Reg and George Anderson, Brian and Sharon Armour, John Boxer, Mark Brinkley, Mark Butler, Tom and Sheila Caldwell, Paul Clough, Greg Coleiro, Doug Collins, Don and Moira Donkin, John and Lyn Downes, Terry and Raelene Easton, Maurie Fontaine, Don and Kay Green, Jeff Grimish, Barry and Shirley Handley, Don and Janet Handley, Grahame Hill-Smith, Geoff Johnston, Greg and Margaret Kittelty, Phil Kline, Ian Leven (Who is now a committee Member), Les Maher, Lloyd, Jan and Bronwyn Mitchell, John Morrison, Daryl and Maureen Patch, Michael and Maureen Pitman, Rick and Marie Polley, Brian and Joy Privett, Dale Quigley, Peter and Vane Rainsbury, Alex and Robin Reynolds, Garry Scroggy, Alby and Alan Sheridan, Greg Single, Allan and June Sneddon Huey Spark, Don and Bev Spearpoint, Don Tait, Ian and Mary Uhlmann John Wilkinson and Gus Woolfe. (continued over page)

Hmm, How did Lofty get that cool looking cap with the peak down the side, and mines in the front ?



The bride came down the aisle and when she reached the altar, the groom was standing there with his golf bag and clubs at his side. She said: "What are your golf clubs doing here"? He looked her right in the eye and said, "This isn't going to take all day, is it?"



It seems that while some of us were attending the museum at Holsworthy, others were treated to a unique display of military precision, performed at the rear of the sheds by some of these cheeky Battery bums while singing Moon River I wondered where all the women got to.

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all you gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - nothin'!! Blokes haz gotta shave though, but its not so bad, coz there's lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing! At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Mum makes. You don't get fed again until noon, and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a 'route march' - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!! This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting awards for shooting - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's bum and it don't move and its not firing back at yer like the Johnsons did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka [State Rural Exhibition Show] last year! All yer gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - its a piece of cake!! You don't even load your own cartridges - they comes in little boxes and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes yer gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster. Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got. I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet. But I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier. I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how bloody good it is.

Your loving daughter, Jill

Two engineering friends met in the park and after the usual greetings one said, "Where did you get such a great bike? "

The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking along yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want."

The second engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice; the clothes probably wouldn't have fitted you anyway."

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers.

The engineer fumed, "What's with those blokes? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes!"

The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such inept golf!"

The priest said, "Here comes the greens keeper. Let's have a word with him". He said, "Hello, George! what's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?"

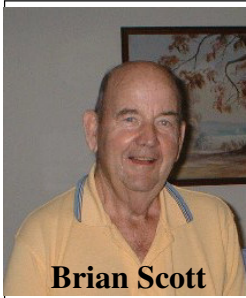
The greens keeper replied, "Oh, yes. That's a group of blind fire fighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group fell silent for a moment.

The priest said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight."

The doctor said, "Good idea. I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist colleague and see if there's anything he can do for them."

The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"



Brian Scott

Our popular LAD electrician Brian Scott, surely created a bright spark when, with a little help from wife Val, became the proud father of son Paul in the early sixties.

Paul Scott, now a lecturer in journalism in the School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, has won the coveted

2007 PRODI Award for excellence in journalism.

Open to all journalists who reside between the Hawkesbury River and the Queensland border the awards were announced on August 11th. at the Newcastle City Hall to a large audience.

Paul won the All Media Award for Best Sport Feature.

Open to all media, Paul's article on ticket scalping, Vogue Traders, published in the October 2006 edition of Inside Sport Magazine was referred to by judges as "an excellent piece of original research".

To view this unique and humorous article, work your way through this website, it's worthwhile.

http://www.insidesport.com.au/is/index?pg=features&spg=0610_voguetrade_01.htm

- It was Paul's second PRODI Award. In 2004 he won an award for the radio documentary series, Swell Dreaming he produced for the ABC.
- Other awards include, 1999 - The University of Newcastle Excellence in Teaching Award.
- 1999 - Winner, The Australian Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing.



Paul Scott

Paul has recently returned from a quick, yet productive visit to Beijing where he was negotiating with the Beijing Olympic Committee to secure positions working in the media for students from Newcastle. Let's hope he has secured a heap of free Games tickets that we can scalp.



Brian, (Scotty) is not travelling too flash at the moment, so if you would like to write and wish him well, his address is: **Mr. Brian Scott. Noosa Nursing Centre. 119 Moorindil St. Tewantin. 4565**

The following story was told by ALAN SINGH to those present at the 2006 AGM:

"Over the past 50 years, many of my friends have made fun of my name. For all those years I harboured a secret from the many jokers and larrikins of the Battery.

My grandfather and his brother did their military service in the Indian artillery, after which they moved to South Africa. My grandfather opened a tea shop, his brother was a tailor. They were in situ at the outbreak of the Boer War. Both reported their expertise to the Battery Commander who commented 'As you are not British, we cannot employ you as Gunners but you are welcome to set up your trades within Battery lines.' Joy of all joys - a tailor shop and tea shop in the Battery!!!

The bottom line is my grandfather became 'A' Field Battery's first Cha Walla. Both Indians were subsequently smuggled by boat to Australia by some of the boys from the Battery. My grandfather is buried in the Bairnsdale cemetery, his brother is buried in a small private plot at Corryong, Victoria."

Regards Alan Singh



Taken during Ex Kapyong Warrior in March 2005, this photo of a Battery member first appeared in the Army newspaper and has since appeared in Australian Infantry Magazine, the Australian Army Photo Journal, the Defence Media website, the Directorate of Officer Career Management website and newsletter, and most recently as the publicity shot in advertisements for Silva compasses.

Now the ultimate exposure, making it into the A Field Battery Inc. Newsletter

When Alan stood up to tell this story, we all thought he was gunna sing.

Update on "A" Field Battery. From, Peter Watkins LT. GPO

Since the last Association newsletter, 'A' Field Battery has not slowed down – on the contrary, the list of activities the Battery has been involved in over the past few months would run almost the length of this page.

Training-wise, the major activities for the last few months have been a two-week LFX in Puckapunyal and a one-week support exercise for a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) course in Singleton. The LFX in Puckapunyal saw the Battery (augmented by several personnel from 108 Fd Bty) fire almost 2000 bombs in it's week in the field. We also took the opportunity after the LFX to give 53 Bty a lesson on the sporting field, defeating them in Aussie Rules, Rugby and Soccer, but losing out in the Indoor Cricket by a narrow margin. The JTAC shoot in Singleton featured an open day for families and friends, who were driven to Singleton and were able to observe the gun-line and the OP in action to see first hand what it is we do when we go field.



Association members gather round the L119 on their September visit to the Battery



The CP in action during the JTAC support exercise in late October



Gnr. Pedemont shows the Battery's typically aggressive style on the Rugby field against 53 Bty.

Socially, a highlight was the visit by the 'A' Field Battery Association in September, who a few days after the Annual Association Dinner made the trip to Holsworthy. They received a tour of the facilities, a BBQ lunch and, I'm sure I don't need to tell most of you, made a slight dent in the DZ Club beer stocks.

On the operations front, the Battery welcomed back nine members who had been deployed for the last six months to Timor Leste with 107 Fd Bty as part of Op ASTUTE. As is becoming norm for Gunners on stabilisation operations they fulfilled the role of an Infantry section and all gained valuable experience. We also said farewell and goodluck to four members who are lucky enough to be deploying to Afghanistan as part of the third rotation of the Reconstruction Task Force in (RTF) Oruzgan province.

Several personnel were also named to deploy early next year on the fourth RTF rotation and they will commence training almost immediately in order to be fully prepared by their deployment date.

All that remains for the rest of the year is to conduct handovers to the incoming appointments for next year and to farewell those moving on to different (I won't say greener) pastures, including the BC, Major Damian Hill, the BSM, Warrant Officer Class Two Tony Kennedy, the BG, Warrant Officer Class Two Rod Glover, and several other key appointments.

I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Battery to wish all of you a

safe and happy Christmas and New Year period and we look forward to seeing many of you next year at various activities.

Lt. Peter Watkins

Letters to the Editor



Great time in Sydney for the 2007 AGM, but wasn't it sad to see the way the government is allowing the old School of Artillery to become so decrepit.

Guess in time we will see this "eyesore" removed and a friendly developer will offer to clean up the site and put up some lovely home units. Just mark my words for the future.

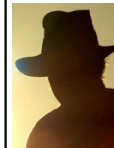
Saint.



I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and my wife Sheila to thank the committee and all the people involved in the organizing of the 50th Anniversary Reunion.

It was an experience I will cherish for ever.

Tom Caldwell



G'day Editor,
Owya going mate, just thought I'd give you the drum on what a ripper of a reunion youse all ad down in Sydney.

Tell you what, I was dead set happy as a pig in mud when I got off the train and copped an eyeful of all the good sorts there, some of those city sheilas scrub up pretty well.

Dry as a pommy's towel when I lobbed so me and a few mates went over to the club and got on the turps.

Any way ya doin a pretty good job as editor. Bloody hell, anyone who takes on that job can't be the full quid. Coupla kangaroos loose in the top paddock my old man would say.

Lookin forward to seeing youse all again at Maroochy, avin a few grogs and gettin more of that great city tucker down me cake hole.

Bert the Bushie



We offer our thanks to Tony for always being available to help our Association. With the knowledge that he will be outstandingly successful in all future endeavours

BSM 'A' FD BTY REPORT- WO2 TL KENNEDY

As the year 2007 draws to a close, I thought I might have time to reflect on the last two years. As it turns out there is little time for reflection as there are still many commitments for the Battery with members of the Battery perpetually preparing and training for operational deployments and the usual end of year 'functions'.

The present day is intense and filled with the need for personnel to do their duty and more. Doing more than your duty is now an expectation rather than the exception. Having said this I don't think soldiers would have it any other way.

2007 has been a challenge for the Battery and indeed the Regiment to maintain a high standard of gunnery training. Many of our JNCOs are newly promoted and although experienced in operations have not had the degree of gunnery practise and exposure to technical refinement they need.

The Battery has worked hard on making every opportunity that is available to get the most for our soldiers in their gunnery trade skills and to establish pride in the gunnery trade by working hard and achieving the best results.

With many soldiers and NCOs having to perform the duties of the next rank the Battery has been placed under some pressure but you would never know. The old saying 'like a duck on the water' is apt for the Battery in giving the impression that at all times things are running smoothly and success gained is no effort. Of course beneath the surface the legs are moving at lightening speed to maintain the calm and 'Always Ready' impression.

The Battery has deployed personnel to many theatres including IRAQ, Timor Leste, Sinai, Malaya and Afghanistan. We have personnel preparing now for further operations in nearly all of the above theatres next year and I would like to wish them a safe trip and good luck as they represent the Battery well.

It has been my pleasure to be involved with 'A' FD BTY Association activities during my tenure including ANZAC Day and especially the Association AGM and Dinner held in Manly this year. My wife Jill and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening witnessing the humour and camaraderie that is no doubt as it was 50 yrs previously. I also noted the strong support given by the



Tony smiles for the camera and indulges, while his lovely wife Jill remains engrossed in Bob's scintillating conversation

partners of association members. Although some folks were slow moving they made up for it in spirit and quick wit. I only hope I can manage that at your vintage. I also look forward to visiting the Battery when I retire and quizzing all subbies and SNCOs on Battery history. (Well Done Tex!) I would also like to say g'day to Don Sinclair and Bob Cunningham who made huge contributions to the Association in 2007 and are real gentlemen. I would like to thank Bob for keeping my wife occupied while I indulged at the dinner.

The Association appears in good shape and soldiers only realise how precious their connection to the army and their regiment or battery is when they leave. Many young Gunnery are yet to understand the importance of the links to the past but there is no other sub-unit or unit that nurtures this connection more than 'A' FD BTY.

There has been much discussion regarding 'A' FD BTY losing the Para role and relocating. At first this struck the 'airborne gunners' hard. But the fact remains 'A' FD BTY has remained intact for 136 yrs. In that time its role and location has changed many times. This is yet another part of the Battery's evolving history. The pride of the battery is and always will be its soldiers and their parochial loyalty to it regardless of role, equipment or head dress.

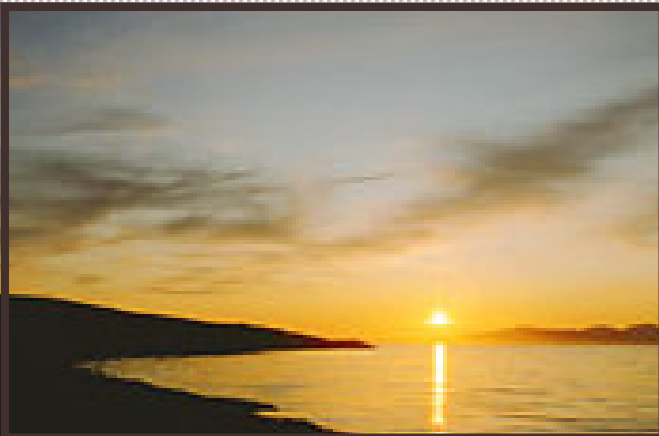
In conclusion, I leave 'A' FD BTY at the end of the year and am extremely proud that my name will join the many other names before me on the BSM's Honour Board. I hope I have left the Battery a little better than I found it, as all BSMs try to do. I leave the Battery in the hands of the new BSM, WO2 Dion McCrae and wish him the best of luck for 08/09 and know that he will enjoy the best job in the RAA.

My sincere thanks and good wishes go to all 'A' FD BTY members and their families and especially the BC, MAJ Damien Hill and Katrina and the BG, WO2 Rod Glover who carried the burden of BSM during my absence in 2006. **WO.2 Tony Kennedy**



*They shall not grow 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
S.J. BLANCH (OAS. Malaya)
TOM. CARRUTHERS
KEITH. CHRISTENSEN
RICHARD. DUGGAN
R.M. DUCAT (OAS. Malaya)
PAT. DALY
TOM. DAWSON
MICK. HARKEN
B.D. HENDERSON (OAS. Malaya)
KEN. KENNEDY
BOBBY. LEWIS
JOHN. MACDONALD
L.G. MATHERS (KIA. Vietnam)
R.J. PARKER (OAS. Vietnam)
DAVE. QUIRK
CLIVE. RALFE
R. F. SMITH
BRIAN. WHISKER
JOHN. WORBOYS



CLIVE RALFE **1937– 2007**

Clive Ralfe has passed on, but only physically, spiritually he will be with us for a long time yet, probably until we too, pass on. Clive was my mate, my friend. The story of how we first met has been told many times, a young digger with a short fuse threw a punch at this bloke Clive for some silly reason only to be hit back so hard that he was knocked right over a table and into a wall. Then found this bloke bending over him so very concerned if he was OK and apologizing for hitting him so hard. How was I to know that this bloke I had swung a punch at would end up representing the Brigade in Malaya as a champion boxer.

We became good mates from that time on. The two years I spent in Malaya with Clive as my friend has been the base for so many great stories, too many to tell here, but what I would like to say about this man is that he and I disagreed on politics, religion, the Army, and just about any subject you could name, but our ability to argue these subjects in depth and still remain mates is what I really loved about this man. Clive was a good soldier but was also a frustrated intellectual.

Everyday he would select a word from the dictionary and that would be his word of the day, eventually giving him a wonderful vocabulary, so good in fact, that whilst in Malaya he took a correspondence course in writing, and turned out some wonderful stories that I had to listen to, as I became his sounding board. Later he would leave the Army and go to University to better himself in the field of English and literature.

Then there was the other side, God he could box. Few opponents would last too many rounds with Clive in the ring, and if we were on leave and he saw an injustice that he could fix with his fists, he fixed it. But when you spent time with this man you found that he didn't like to fight, in fact he was a very quiet, gentle bloke who didn't want to be known as a boxer, but as a person with a good mind.

I kept in touch with Clive over the years and had a great time together when he visited me some years ago in Cooktown. Of course we ended up have long debates about current issues, once again disagreeing with each other. Later he would send me books on different subjects that we were debating, and I in turn would send him some back to reinforce my point of view.

We still met at reunions in Sydney and on Anzac Day with never enough time to spend in argument. Then his health started to suffer. The last time I spoke to him was when I was in Sydney and rang him to arrange a visit. He didn't want to see me. I couldn't understand what I had done, but it seems he was so sick he didn't want me to see him.

I have met many people in my life. But this is one man who was so different, so talented, so gentle, so interesting, that he could never be forgotten, and he won't be, at least not by me.

Don (Saint) Sinclair.

"A" Field Battery Association. Inc. Committee 2007-2008

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An amazing collection of photographs and news items covering the 1940s to the present day with A Field Battery.
This website is addictive, with the news, links, notice board and a great selection of music while you browse away.
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6 Harveys Rd.
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We are into a new FINANCIAL YEAR and the 78 unfinancial members, please pay your subs as soon as possible.

We do not want to send out nasty letters this year. To send out reminders costs the association a lot of money in postage. If you do not know if you are financial, give Bonnie or myself a ring and we can let you know.

The winners of the early bird membership renewal are: Ron Hassell and John Salmon. These two members are now recorded as being financial for 08/09.

The next Committee meeting is going to be held at Ray Alcorn's place, 14 Lambourn Street, Chapel Hill, Qld, 4069, on the 11th December 2007, at 1030hrs. Any interested people are welcome to attend.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new members to the association and hope we have a long and rewarding association.

One of our new associate members was a Sect Comd and GPO in H Light Bty (Ramsey's Troop) RA. At Terendak Camp, Malaysia.

That's all from me for this newsletter, DON'T FORGET YOUR SUBS.

Warmest regards, Ron (Tex) Bassan



Have a very Merry Christmas

Gnr. Hayward and Lt. Fussell explain the hi-tech binoculars



RETURN TO HOLSWORTHY

A' Field Battery is located at Holsworthy, New South Wales. It comprises six guns, a headquarters element, technical support, transport, combat service support, catering and administrative elements. 'A' Field Battery directly supports the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and forms an integral part of the Airborne Battle Group.

A' Field Battery is one of three gun batteries of 4th Field Regiment, the other two (107th Field Battery and 108th Field Battery) are located at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville. As the oldest unit in not just the Regiment, but the entire Australian Regular Army, 'A' Field Battery is the senior battery in the country.

It was on the last day of our anniversary celebrations at Manly that we were invited for a tour of the current A Field Battery lines. The day proved to be interesting and enjoyable, even for us old LAD types, or TSG as they are now known, we were shown various high tech equipment and spent some time in the museum, named The Henry Green Room which contains Mortars,

a gun, badges, books, computers, flags, portraits, gifts and anything and everything related to the Battery history.

The Henry Green Room is opened for perusal whenever there is an event held at the Battery

We were all impressed with the friendliness shown by all ranks mixing together for the lunch. No offence to Joe Cashin, but I can't remember our lot ever being this nice, even the sergeants sounded like good guys, yep there has certainly been some big changes in today's Army.

Special thanks to Major Hill, Capt. Harvey, WO2 Kennedy, Sgt. Rudder and all those who extended this fantastic hospitality to a group of oldies who remember their time in A Battery with pride. The current gunners manifest this pride of the brotherhood and I can assure them it is a lifetime legacy.



Sgt. Lak introduces Maj. Damian Hill, who welcomed us to the Mess where we enjoyed a great BBQ and a few beers with, Gnr. Owens, Cpl. Gaywood, Pte. Donald, Pte. Cleland, Gnr. Parsons, Sgt. Potter, WO2 Glover, Gnr. Broughton, Gnr. Bieracki and others.

“A” FIELD BATTERY’S - HEARTS AND MINDS PROGRAMME

1965—1967 MALAYSIAN TOUR

From Rod Althaus



Rod accepts the awards from the Governor of Malacca

During the 1965-67 tour, A Field Battery was committed to a Hearts and Minds (H&M) programme for the benefit of the local residents in the Malacca area. Funds were provided by the Australian Government through Far East Land Forces (FARELFF) Singapore, and it was up to us to find appropriate projects that would be of benefit to the local population, and be value for money.

The first project was a volley ball court in a kampong between Camp Terendak and Malacca, which was laid with RAE technical assistance. After an inaugural game between a Battery team and one from the local villages, it was handed over to the local village authorities.

Our second project was to support the local Scouting movement. My wife, Marcia, was a qualified Cub Mistress, and so she became involved in several local scouting activities. As a result, she established an ongoing liaison with the senior executive staff of the State of Malacca's Scouting Association.

From that contact, Battery Commander Alex Reynolds decided to direct H&M funds and effort to the local Scouting movement, and appointed me officer in charge of the project. The project was in three parts:

- 1. Purchase of equipment requested by the Scouting Association. (buckets, rope, cooking gear, camping equipment, tentage etc). The local hardware store as well as the Scouts, were very happy!**
- 2. General repairs and maintenance at the Scouting campsite between Malacca and Camp Terendak, at Masjid Tanah. This involved fencing repairs, roof guttering cleaning, rubbish removal etc..**
- 3. Installation of earth closet toilets. This was the main project, and we were assisted by RAE and RAAMC technical staff. We bought two concrete prefabricated kits and erected them over large concrete pipes about 1.5m diameter, which were upended and dug into the sandy soil. The existing toilets were right next to a rice paddy and because they could not drain, they contained a very healthy colony of maggots.**

On 19 November 1966, there was a formal opening of a new hostel at the State Scout Headquarters at Kuching. This occasion was used to formally hand over the equipment we purchased, and acknowledge the Battery's efforts at the camp site. Alex made a speech in Malay (which went down really well) and on behalf of the Battery, I accepted a Scouting Thanks Badge and Certificate from the Governor of the State of Malacca, no less.

I have kept the Badge, Certificate, and a letter from the National Chief Scout of Malaysia, (this being a further acknowledgment of the Battery's efforts), but I considered that they should be retained by the Battery. I had intended to formally present them to the current Battery Commander during our visit to the Battery as part of our terrific reunion activities last September. Unfortunately, we ran out of time, and this didn't happen. However, as a compromise, I handed them to Major Hill as we were leaving the Battery gun park, together with the story behind the project, as described above. The badge, Certificate, letter, and a photo of me being presented with the badge are shown with this article.

For those who were in the work parties, I don't think that the effort was too much of a chore – in fact I got the impression that you didn't mind the break away from the garrison routine. From feedback we got later from our Scouting friends, I do know that they really appreciated our efforts. If anyone is thinking of going that way, it would be great to find out if the “monuments” to our efforts are still standing.

Cheers Rod



Malaya Campaign

On the 1st September 1957, the Battery once again became an independent unit and on the 20th September embarked on the transport "New Australia" and disembarked at Penang on the 18th October 1957. During operations in Malaya the Battery fired 77,000 rounds of 25-Pounder ammunition and 2,000 rounds of 4.2" Mortar ammunition.

During its tour of Malaya the Battery supported several Commonwealth Infantry Battalions and was closely associated with the 48th Field Regiment Royal Artillery and the 2nd Field Regiment Royal Artillery.

The Battery embarked at Penang on the transport "MV Flaminia" on the 5th October 1959. On returning to Sydney the Battery once again lost its independent status and rejoined 1st Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery at Holsworthy.

In January 1965, A Field Battery, equipped with 105mm Pack Howitzers, prepared for its second tour to Malaysia.

After an air journey with Qantas, the Battery joined the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade at Terendak Garrison, near Malacca, on the 21st October 1965 as A Field Battery 45th Light Regiment Royal Artillery.

During its tour of Malaya the Battery participated in frequent exercises on both the east and west coast, and assisted with security measure to guard against possible Indonesian infiltration of West Malaysia.

On 12th September 1967 the Battery returned to Australia by air and became A Field Battery 19 Composite Regiment Royal Australian Artillery at Holsworthy.

In October 1969 the Battery was redesignated A Field Battery 12th Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery.



Vietnam Campaign

12th Field Regiment was warned for service in South Vietnam in 1971 and the Regiment moved from Tobruk Lines Holsworthy to Lavarack Barracks in Townsville in January 1970.

On 26th January 1971 the Battery assembled in Sydney and on a parade at Victoria Barracks A Field Battery, in view of the approach of its centenary birthday and its long association in Sydney, was granted Freedom of the City of Sydney, by the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor of Sydney.

On the 27th January 1971 the advance party emplaned for South Vietnam where it was joined by the main body at the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat on 4th February 1971. A Field Battery and the rest of 12th Field Regiment took part in operations in Phuoc Tuy province until the withdrawal of the 1st Australian Task Force in November 1971.

On the 7th June 1971 during a contact with North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, Second Lieutenant I. Mathers, an A Field Battery forward observer, received mortal wounds from enemy small arms fire.

His assistant, Bombardier P.M. Maher, was later awarded the Military Medal for his part in the contact.

During its tour of South Vietnam A Field Battery celebrated its centenary birthday on 1st August 1971. A Banner Party was sent home to Australia for the Centenary Celebration Parade at Victoria Barracks Sydney where His Excellency the Governor General Sir Paul Hasluck presented to the Royal Australian Artillery the Queen's Banner which replaced the 67 year old King's Banner.

In addition 50 cartridge cases, fired by the Battery to celebrate its centenary, were presented to various persons and organisations (including the Australian War Memorial which also holds the cartridge case of the first round fired by A Field Battery in South Africa in 1900).



Coco Bostock gets a big kiss of appreciation from Sexy Rexy

the last one, but Coco Bostock said they weren't quick enough. Coco grabbed it as it came out of the breech, and the others didn't even notice.

Thanks Coco, it will be polished and engraved. Saint.

One of the Goodies donated to the Association at the 2007 AGM was the cartridge case from the last round fired by 'A' Field Battery in Malaya 1957-59. Others thought they had

Hey Kimbo, those Photos of the Day cannons drive me crazy, I want some sexy gunners.

Do ya feel lucky, punk ?



Send em to Kimbo
gunner116@bigpond.com